

American University in Cairo

## AUC Knowledge Fountain

---

Archived Theses and Dissertations

---

7-1-1997

### The urban evolution of Roda Island (ca. 21H/641AD-1335H/1917AD)

Ahmed Mohamed Sabry

*The American University in Cairo AUC*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://fount.aucegypt.edu/retro\\_etds](https://fount.aucegypt.edu/retro_etds)



Part of the [Arabic Studies Commons](#), and the [Urban Studies and Planning Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

##### APA Citation

Sabry, A. (1997). *The urban evolution of Roda Island (ca. 21H/641AD-1335H/1917AD)* [Thesis, the American University in Cairo]. AUC Knowledge Fountain.

[https://fount.aucegypt.edu/retro\\_etds/1202](https://fount.aucegypt.edu/retro_etds/1202)

##### MLA Citation

Sabry, Ahmed Mohamed. *The urban evolution of Roda Island (ca. 21H/641AD-1335H/1917AD)*. 1997. American University in Cairo, Thesis. *AUC Knowledge Fountain*.

[https://fount.aucegypt.edu/retro\\_etds/1202](https://fount.aucegypt.edu/retro_etds/1202)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by AUC Knowledge Fountain. It has been accepted for inclusion in Archived Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of AUC Knowledge Fountain. For more information, please contact [fountadmin@aucegypt.edu](mailto:fountadmin@aucegypt.edu).



**THE URBAN EVOLUTION  
OF RODA ISLAND**

CA. 21H/441AD - 1335H/1917 AD

AHMED MOHAMED SABRY

1996



thesis  
1234  
c.1

2.

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO  
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF ARABIC STUDIES

THE URBAN EVOLUTION OF RODA ISLAND  
(CA. 21H/641AD - 1335H/1917 AD)

AHMED MOHAMED SABRY

A THESIS SUBMITTED  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN  
ARABIC STUDIES

JULY 1996



1996/1234  
c. 1


THIS THESIS FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE

BY


*AHMED MOHAMED SABRY*

HAS BEEN APPROVED


JULY 1996




DR. GEORGE SCANLON  
CHAIRMAN, THESIS COMMITTEE



DR. BERNARD O'KANE  
READER, THESIS COMMITTEE



DR. CHAHINDA KARIM  
READER, THESIS COMMITTEE



DR. GEORGE SCANLON  
~~ACTING~~ CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF ARABIC STUDIES



## List of contents:-

---

Acknowledgment	
List of contents	
Introduction	
Chapter 1	1
The pre-Islamic period	2
After the Islamic conquest	5
The Tulunid period 254H/868AD-292H/905AD	7
The Ikhshid period 323H/934AD-358H/969AD	9
The Fatimid period 297H/567H-567H-1171AD	10
The Ayyubid period 564H/1169-650H/1252AD	13
The Mamluk period 648H/1250AD-922H/1516AD	17
Appendix I (A)	19
Appendix I (B)	20
Appendix I (C)	21
Chapter 2	23
The decline	23
The Ottoman period	32
The French occupation of Egypt 1214H/1798AD-1216H/1801AD	41
Muhammed 'Ali (phase I) 1220H/1805AD-1264H/1848AD	54
Muhammed 'Ali	54
Ibrahim Pasha	66
'Abbas Hilmi I	67
Sa'id Pasha	70
Appendix II (A)	79
Chapter 3	81
The modernization	81
Muhammed 'Ali line (phase II)	82
Khedive Isma'il	82
Khedive Tawfiq	92
'Abbas Hilmi II	96
Phase I	100
Phase II	107
Conclusion	118
Figures	
Maps	
Plates	
Bibliography	



## Aknowledgment:-

### • INTRODUCTION •

To my Mother,

To all who helped me, specially my Proffesseur Dr\ George Scanlon  
and the staf f of the Rare Books library

mentioned in the pre-Islamic period of the Byzantine fortress which was  
there opposite Babylon (Roda al-Jadid) long before the Islamic conquest. Also destroyed  
a part of the Islamic capital of Egypt from the very beginning of the Islamic period to  
modern times. Roda has never been sufficiently studied so as to get a complete idea  
of the island as an inseparable part of the great city of Cairo.

Collecting the different accounts and information concerning Roda will help us  
to trace, interpret and understand the urban evolution of the island and its relation to the  
great capital. This study is not primarily a study of the urban evolution of Cairo but it  
is vitally important to get a clear picture of the whole evolution of greater Cairo (Cairo  
and Giza) especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when Cairo and Giza  
commenced the evolution towards becoming one great capital penetrated by the Nile,  
which acted more as a link than a minor geographical barrier between the two old  
settlements.

Through the written sources and seven maps discussing Roda, we will analyze  
the urban expansion of the island in three chapters that will adequately show the  
changes and the phases that Roda went through during our period of discussion.

In the first chapter (Ca. 2/H/641AD-784H/1382AD) we will attempt to  
describe Roda before the Islamic conquest of Egypt in the Byzantine period and later  
how it fitted in the new role of this area as the capital of Islamic Egypt. Was it a



## • INTRODUCTION:-

---

*Roda* island lies between *Misr al-Qadima* (Fustat) and Giza. This island was mentioned in the pre-Islamic sources as a part of the Byzantine fortress which was there opposite Babylon (*Bab al-Lun*) long before the Islamic conquest. Also it stayed a part of the Islamic capital of Egypt from the very beginning of the Islamic period to modern times. *Roda* has never been sufficiently studied so as to get a complete idea of the island as an inseparable entity of the great city of Cairo.

Collecting the different accounts and information concerning *Roda* will help us to trace, analyze and understand the urban evolution of the island and its relation to the great capital. This study is not primarily a study of the urban evolution of Cairo but it is vitally important to get a clear picture of the whole evolution of greater Cairo (Cairo and Giza) especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when Cairo and Giza commenced the evolution towards becoming one great capital penetrated by the Nile, which acted more as a lung than a minor geographical barrier between the two old settlements.

Through the written sources and seven maps discussing *Roda*, we will analyse the urban expansion of the island in three chapters that will adequately show the changes and the phases that *Roda* went through during our period of discussion.

In the first chapter (Ca. 21H/641AD-784H/1382AD) we will attempt to describe *Roda* before the Islamic conquest of Egypt in the Byzantine period and later how it fitted in the new role of this area as the capital of Islamic Egypt. Was it a



continuity? or had it a new and different identity? Also we will trace the change of the name of the island to become "Roda", the name that the island keeps until the present day.

In the first phase we do not face any problem in tracing the early evolution of the island as the written sources tell us of every political and social event that took place in Roda, but later references provide very little detail. Our main and primary sources of this period are the accounts and the re-accounts given to us by Ibn Duqmaq and al-Maqrizi. However we do face the problem of not having any documented maps or drawings of Cairo at that period. Also the sources sometimes contradict one another or exaggerate but this can easily be detected by comparing our several sources. For example what was the extent of the walls of the Ayyubid fortress in Roda as distinct from speculation arising in the accounts of Roda? From our sources we will also trace the ephemeral development of architecture on the island.

In the next chapter (Ca. 784H/1382AD-1280H/1863AD) we will trace the change of Roda relative to the change of Cairo from a medieval capital to a provincial capital of the Ottoman empire. We hope to demonstrate how the identity of Roda affected and was affected by the change taking place in the two urban loci to its east and west, Misr al-Qadima and Giza. We will also discuss the origins of modernization established by Muhammed 'Ali and his near successors.

Although the written sources are not as generous to us in the Ottoman period as in the previous periods, we now have the description provided by the French as a result of Bonaparte's conquest. In this description we have very accurate maps and drawings of Roda with a nearly complete documentation of everything that existed at



this period. This will not only help us to understand this particular period but it also provides a background against which to approach the beginning of the transformation towards modern Cairo.

Finally we will survey the great extent of modernization (ca. 1280H/1863AD-1335H/1914AD) that Khedive Isma'il proposed for the whole of Cairo and how that affected the urban evolution of the island and the state of *Roda* at the later period of the British occupation and last phase of the modernization. By our terminal date we will demonstrate *Roda's* status of urban development and its relation to the capital city and Giza.



## Chapter 1

Al-Roda island is situated on the Nile, opposite the Babylon fortress and Fustat. It divides the river into two branches: a narrow branch between Fustat and the island, and a much wider one between the island and the Giza bank (see map 1).

From the beginning, as far as our sources reveal, Roda was inseparable from the pre-Islamic settlement on the adjacent Fustat bank, the first Islamic capital of Egypt. Throughout history it was part of the growing capital that is now Cairo. Analysis of the island's history will reveal that its urbanization paralleled that of Islamic culture in Egypt.

At the time of the Islamic conquest in 21H/641AD, Cairo was a provincial fortress town called Babylon, the heart of which is now occupied by the Coptic Museum, the Hanging Church, and the ruins of Fustat. The fortress of Babylon guarded the northern single crossing of the Nile to and from the Delta. In this chapter, we will present a picture of this area during the Byzantine period, preceding the Islamic conquest. This is not an easy task, as theories abound and available sources contradict each other. We will therefore concentrate on established facts and, when necessary, observations which will help us understand events to follow in the Islamic period.



### • The pre-Islamic period:-

In order to control the north and south of the Nile, the Byzantines built a fortress at Babylon<sup>1</sup>. The nucleus laid at this period would later be expanded to form the larger city of Fustat. Scholars such as Butler, Herz, Gaetani, Reitmeyer and others have examined earlier records in order to form an image of that area before the Islamic conquest, but they found that their sources were mostly, although not entirely, contradictory; while a clear picture of the Pre-Islamic settlement has yet to emerge, all agree on the presence of the Byzantine fortress.

At the time of the Islamic invasion, the fortress was referred to as *al-Hisn* (the fortress). Many scholars have tried to reconstruct the site as it was in its initial state, the most recent and dedicated study being that of W.B.Kubiak. Basing his work on Butler's excavations of the pre-Islamic settlements in the area<sup>2</sup>, and beginning where Butler ended, Kubiak attempted to reconstruct the site through early records and simple use of historical logic. He drew a plan of the fortress walls with protruding towers<sup>3</sup>, estimating their height at 14m including the crenelations; a canal ran inside the fortress and a defensive ditch surrounded the structure (See fig 1).

We also know that the fortifications of Babylon extended to the island. According to Ibn-Duqmaq<sup>4</sup>, the island had been a Byzantine stronghold encircled by walls and towers. Though this information is not confirmed elsewhere, the size of the fortifications he describes is too imposing to be ignored by other chroniclers.

Furthermore, the story of the escape of *al-Muqawqis* as told by Ibn Abd al-Hakam<sup>5</sup>,

<sup>1</sup>Kubiak, W.B. Fustat, The American University of Cairo Press, 1987, pp. 50-53. [Hereinafter Kubiak]

<sup>2</sup>Butler, A.J. *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, Clarendon Press, 1895, p. 155.

<sup>3</sup>Kubiak, 1987, p. 50.

<sup>4</sup>Ibn Duqmaq. *Kitab al-Intisar l'wastet 'Aqd al-'Amsar*, IV, Al-Amiria, p. 109. [Hereinafter Ibn Duqmaq]

<sup>5</sup>Al-Maqrizi, Taqi al-Din. *Al Mawa'iz Wa al-I'tibar Bizikr al-Khitat Wa al-Amsar* (known as *al-Khitat al-Maqrizia*), Al-Halaby, Part II, p. 178. [Hereinafter Al-Maqrizi]



shows that the island was considered a safe stronghold at the time of the Muslim siege. While this establishes the presence of strong fortifications on the island during the Byzantine period, Kubiak also surmised that there were fortifications on the other side of the bridge linking the island to the fortress. However, he never stated the nature of these fortifications, nor did he try to estimate their boundaries on the island.

A broader look at this period reveals that the fortress was not built as a defense, but rather as a watch tower on the Nile, a landmark separating Upper Egypt to the south from the Delta to the north. The boat bridge from al-Giza to Roda was kept closed and ships would pass in the narrow channel of the Nile between Roda and Babylon, which then had complete control of transportation on the Nile. This control was very vital to Egypt, as the Nile provided means of transporting goods, food and people from Upper Egypt to the Delta, and to Alexandria, the capital.

While it is impossible to determine exactly the nature and the limits of the fortifications on the island, we can be sure that their purpose was to defend the bridge. We can also hypothesize that, being a secondary fortress with a smaller garrison and fewer soldiers on duty than the Babylon fortress, the island fortifications were smaller in size than that of the main fortress.

When Ahmad Ibn Tulun learned that Ibn-Bugha's army was marching on Egypt, he started building a new fortress on the island<sup>1</sup>. As he could never have finished a new fortress in such a short time as he did, he probably rebuilt and expanded an existing fortress. This is confirmed by al-Qalqashandi, who wrote that Ibn Tulun restored the Byzantine walls and towers. Since it lay outside the city, security on Roda had to be tighter; the fortress was surrounded by the Nile and near Ibn Tulun's capital,

---

<sup>1</sup> Al-Maqrizi, part II, p. 180.



al-Qat'ai'. It seems, then, that Ibn Tulun rebuilt the old fortress, also adding minor residential buildings as well as a mosque.

The Babylon fortress also included a port, however small, for the inspection of passing ships. Long before the Islamic conquest, this port was an important strategic location between the north and the south; later, it remained a local port as most of the shipping proceeded down the western branch of the Nile to Alexandria, from which cargoes could be shipped to foreign markets.

We also know that there was a shipyard on the island. Sources of the pre-Islamic period do not mention the Roda shipyard but, as we stated before, the importance of the site with regard to the Nile traffic leads us to assume that there existed a shipyard in this area. Early Islamic sources refer to the island as the island of *sina'a*<sup>1</sup> (i.e. industry), because of its shipyard. Although this shipyard might have been established at the time of the early military camp of Fustat, we know that a shipyard was already needed, and hence present, during the Byzantine period. The early Islamic name for the island is further evidence for this fact.

From a later source<sup>2</sup>, we learn of two churches on the island: Ibn Luqluq and St. Michael the Elect. It is not clear when they were founded, but since it is unlikely that they were built in the Islamic period, they must have been present since the establishment of Byzantine control over the island. We know that the church of Ibn Luqluq was located close to where the Nilometer was to be constructed, but we are unsure of St. Michael's location. These were Coptic churches and a part of a Byzantine fortress on the island.

<sup>1</sup> Al-Maqrizi discussed the meaning of this name in his account of the shipyards of Egypt which we will discuss later (see appendix B).

<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Mukaffa', Sawirus. *History of the Patriarchs*, Cairo, 1959, p. 194.



• **After the Islamic conquest:-**

‘Amr Ibn al-‘As conquered Egypt in the year 21H/641AD, but very little information is available about the ensuing period, until 254H/868AD. There is therefore a 227-year gap in what we know with regard to the evolution of the island in this period. ‘Amr Ibn Al-‘As founded the camp city of Fustat, which later became the capital of Islamic Egypt. The new capital grew rapidly, both in Islamic and Coptic population. The island, too, was becoming more important as it was now part of the port of the new capital. As stated earlier the island’s name was then *Jazirat al-Sina’a*, because of its shipyard. The Nilometer was subsequently built at the southern tip of the island. Its operation and protection became very important to the government and to the population, as it was the primary method for estimating taxes on agricultural land.

The Nilometer had previously been located in *Hilwan* and had been built by the order of Abd al-Aziz Ibn Marwan<sup>1</sup>, the Omayyad governor of Egypt. The Roda Nilometer was constructed by Usama Ibn Zayd<sup>2</sup>, Egypt’s Wali, in the Khalifate of al-Walid before *Jamad II*, 96H/February, 715AD. This Nilometer was restored several times, once by al-Ma’mun in 199H/812AD, and once by al-Mutawakkil in 247H/850AD in what could be deemed a rebuilding of the structure.

<sup>1</sup>‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Marwan was the son of the Khiliph Marwan I and the father of ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz. He was appointed as the governor of Egypt by his father, and the appointment was confirmed by ‘Abd al-Malik, when he ascended the throne. He kept that position for nearly twenty years (Zettersteen, K.V. “‘Abd al-‘Aziz Ibn Marawan”, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., Vol. I, Leiden, 1960, p. 58).

<sup>2</sup>Al-Maqrizi, I, p. 57 (Usama Ibn Zayd was mentioned by the sources as the first leader of Moslem army against the Byzantine but no role of his was ever mentioned in Egypt (Huart, Cl. “Usama Ibn Zayd”, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., Vol. IV, Leiden, 1960, pp. 1048-1049)).



Written sources also tell us about a Coptic riot on Roda in the year 117H/735AD by Christians who had been employed as forced labor in the shipyard<sup>1</sup>. This suggests two important facts: first, that the island was an important center of Coptic population ; and second, that the churches of the old fortress had probably now become Coptic churches<sup>2</sup>.

According to Duqmaq<sup>3</sup> the Byzantine fortress was destroyed by 'Amr Ibn al-'As. Qalqashandi<sup>4</sup>, for his part, tells us that the fortress was in ruins until Ibn Tulun restored the Roman walls and towers. This indicates that in the early Islamic period, the island lost its military purpose and simply became a district of the new capital, Fustat. Roda had become a district of mixed Coptic and Muslim population, except for the Nilometer which was maintained by the Muslim ruler of Egypt. The port grew rapidly and became the official port of the capital of Egypt.

#### • The Tulunid period 254H/868AD-292H/905AD:-

The first important reasonably accurate account about Roda island under the Islamic regime was written by al-Maqrizi who discussed the Tulunid period. He draws an accurate picture of this epoch, basing his study on the collective accounts of the historians of that epoch.

According to al-Maqrizi, Ibn al-Kindi said: ".....The industry was founded on the island in the year 54 (674AD) and the fortress of the island was constructed by

---

<sup>1</sup> Kubiak, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> Cresswell, K.A.G. *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, part II, Hacker Art Books, 1978, pp. 290-306.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Duqmaq, pp. 109,110.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Qalqashandi, Abu al-Abbas. *Subh al-A'sha fi Sina'at al-Insha*, III, Al Amiria Press, 1963, pp. 325-326.



Ahmad Ibn Tulun in the year 263H (914AD) to guard his harem and money against the army of Musa Ibn Bugha, who was marching from Iraq to take over Egypt and all of Ibn Tulun's interests.....He (Ibn Tulun), forced to fight to defend himself, examined the city of Fustat and found that it could not be seized, except from the Nile.....A courageous and wise person, he wanted to build a fortress on the island between the city of Fustat and Giza to guard his harem and treasures; then, later, he could fight whoever came from inland.....He ordered the construction of a fortress on the island...."<sup>1</sup>.

Abu 'Amr al-Kindi wrote of how the fortress was built in a concentrated effort, to be finished in the shortest time possible before the army of Ibn Bugha arrived. He wrote of Ibn Tulun building warships, in 263H/877AD, saying: ".....Ahmad Ibn Tulun did his best in building warships, patrolling and positioning them around the island, showing invincibility against Musa Ibn Bugha ....."

Ibn Duqmaq, in his account of the same period, wrote: "... 'Amr Ibn al-'As destroyed some of its towers and walls (the walls that were circling the island). Ibn al-Kindi said: " ..... it was known as *Jazirat al Sina'a* (island of industry) and it stayed in ruins until Ahmad Ibn Tulun restored it in the year 877 AD/263 H to defend his harem and money..."<sup>2</sup>. As we see, this account is much briefer than al-Maqrizi's, but draws from the same sources, lending more credibility to al-Maqrizi's account.

Did Ahmad Ibn Tulun build a new fortress or did he simply rebuild the old fortress? According to Qalqashandi, Ahmad Ibn Tulun only restored the walls and the towers of the Byzantine fortress, making minor modifications to the old structure.

---

<sup>1</sup>Al-Maqrizi, II, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup>Ibn-Duqmaq, IV, p. 109.



Since the purpose of rebuilding the fortress was to safeguard Ibn Tulun's harem and treasures, the new fortress must have included a residential area, made up of a palace and a mosque. Since Ibn Tulun did not know when Musa Ibn Bugha would reach Fustat, it is safe to assume that he did not attempt to modify the borders of the old fortress but only rebuilt the existing walls.

It is also likely that Ibn Tulun was busy with the shipyard, building warships to defend his island against enemy warships coming from the Nile. The shipyard's importance was now increasing, as it developed from a small shipyard for repairing passing ships to one building warships. As a result, the island was also regaining its military importance. Could this have hindered its evolution as an emerging part of the new capital?

Logically, the island was evolving as a part of Fustat. The military additions, with the accompanying development of industry on the island, raised its status and created new job opportunities. Furthermore, the rich and powerful Fustat elite wanted residences near the safety provided by Ibn Tulun's fortress. The island not only became part of a rapidly growing capital, but it also was home to the royal residence, adding weight to its newly gained status. Ibn al-Kindi wrote: "...The fortress of the island was inhabited by the Tulunids and the shipyard remained active, building warships until Muhammad Tughj al-Ikhshid took over...."<sup>1</sup>.

#### • The Ikhshid period 323H/934AD-358H/969AD:-

Again, Maqrizi's account proves the most helpful, drawing from Ibn al-Kindi's account of the island's history in this era. Of Muhammad al-Ikhshid's march and

---

<sup>1</sup>Al-Maqrizi, II, p. 180.



conquest of Egypt, Ibn al-Kindi wrote: ".....The Khalif appointed the prince Muhammad Ibn Tughj al-Ikhshid of Egypt and sent ships from al-Sham to take it over..... He defeated the Egyptian army, prepared to meet him, leaded by Ahmad Ibn Kighligh, on the order of Muhammad Ali al-Maradani, on the island of Nussa. He came by ships to Fustat and the island, and took them over in *Ramadan* of the year 323 (934 AD)....."<sup>1</sup>.

Marking the beginning of the Ikhshid period is the destruction of the Roda shipyard by Ibn Tughj in order to build his royal garden, and the relocation of the shipyard to a new location on the Fustat bank.

Of that era Maqrizi wrote: ".....They came (the Ikhshid army) in the ships of Ibn Qulqum and harbored in the island of the industry and burnt it. Muhammad Ibn Tughj said: "Industry here is wrong"....". Also, Ibn Zulaq, in his biography of Muhammad Ibn Tughj, wrote: "....I remember that I was eating with Abu al-Mansur Takin, the prince of Egypt, and that the subject of the industry was discussed. Takin said: "An industry with the sea between us and it is wrong" and he (Muhammad Tughj) summoned Salih Nafi' and said to him: "....I had in mind before taking Egypt to move the industry to the *Dar* (house) of the daughter of al-Fatih, and to build a garden in the place of the old industry on the island, and to call it *al-Mukhtar* (the chosen). So ride and plan me a garden and a house and see how much it will cost....."

»<sup>2</sup>

Ibn al-Kindi added, according to al-Maqrizi, that ".....Ibn Tughj finished his garden and moved the industry in the year 325 H/ 936 AD. His garden *al-Mukhtar* existed until the time of Fatimids.....". Although Ibn Tughj took Fustat without a

---

<sup>1</sup> Al-Maqrizi, II, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Maqrizi, II, p. 181.



fight, he burnt the island. Most probably what Ibn al-Kindi meant is that he burnt the Tulunid fortress and the palace. As we do not know the location of the shipyard, it is impossible to locate the new garden of Ibn Tughj.

After settling in Egypt, Ibn Tughj implemented new policies which changed the identity of the capital. He clearly saw the futility of giving Roda any strategic importance in defending Fustat, as he himself had conquered Egypt without battling the Fustat area. Thus, he destroyed the fortress and moved the shipyard to a more sheltered area, replacing the old one by a garden. Gardens were known to Egypt at that time, but not the almost dictatorial concept introduced by Ibn Tughj, i.e. changing a shipyard into gardens. And while the elite still wanted reside on the island, their reasons differed; whereas they had previously sought the safety of the royal fortress, they were now after the prestige of residing in or near the royal gardens.

#### • The Fatimid period 297H/567H-576H-1171AD:-

Upon the arrival of the Fatimids, Roda was an island for the elite occupied by the gardens and palaces of the rulers. The Fatimids did not try to alter the nature of the island. As Al-Maqrizi wrote: "... Mu'izz al-Din and his son al-'Aziz bi-Allah Nazir used to go walking on the island. The island became a city well populated with a *Qadi* and a *Wali* (a judge and a governor). Thus it was said at this period *al-Qahira* (Cairo), *Misr* (Egypt) and the island (Roda) "<sup>1</sup>. Ibn Duqmaq resolves the ambiguity of the last statement by showing that the word *Misr* (Egypt) referred to the Fustat area. Drawing from Qadi 'Ala' al-Din al Nabulsi's book "*Hasn al-Sarira*", he completes our understanding of Cairo's divisions (districts) at that period: "... they called it (Cairo)

---

<sup>1</sup> Al-Maqrizi, II, p. 181.



the big city composed of 'Ain Shams, Misr (Egypt), al-Qahira (Cairo), Giza and al-Jazirah (the Island)...As for Cairo, Egypt, Giza and al-Jazirah, the Hukama' (wise people) had divided this big city into four parts: the first part Fustat, which is Misr (Egypt), the second, al-Qahira (Cairo), the third, al-Jazirah (Island), and the fourth al-Giza."<sup>1</sup>

From this account, we evidently see that the island had become urbanized to the point of requiring legal and political direction and was important enough to be treated as a separate civic entity. Unfortunately, Ibn Duqmaq does not discuss the size of the island's population.

Analysis of the information supplied by Maqrizi allows us to conclude that the separation of the capital into several distinct entities was a new system introduced by the Fatimids. The building of a new capital and royal quarters (al-Qahira) by the Fatimids and the expansion of the old capital required new systems of control. Thus, the Fatimids chose to treat the city as three distinct municipal entities: al-Qahira, the new capital, Fustat; the old capital and the island, separated from both capitals by the Nile.

Maqrizi then continues: ".....Al-Afdal Shahin-Shah, son of the Army chief Badr al-Gamali who controlled the Khalifate, built a garden in the north of the island and named it *al-Roda* (i.e. the garden). Al-Afdal went to his garden frequently in a parade of boats from his palace to the island. And, as of then, the whole island became known as al-Roda."<sup>2</sup> Thus, the island was rebaptized in a name more appropriate to its function of leisure.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibn-Duqmaq, IV, p. 118.

<sup>2</sup>Al-Maqrizi, II, p. 181.



As for new buildings on the island, Creswell, using Marcel's work<sup>1</sup> as a reference, did an accurate study of Badr al-Gamali's Fatimid mosque on Roda island<sup>2</sup>. This mosque no longer exists<sup>3</sup> but it was still in good condition at the time of the French expedition (see plan of the Mosque, plate 1).

As indicated by Creswell there is no way of telling what parts of the mosque described by Marcel were Fatimid but with the help of Marcel's extra accurate drawings we can know the exact location of the of the mosque.

Al-Maqrizi, on his part, reports a later building erected by Abu 'Ali al-Mansur Ibn al-Musta'li for his Arabian concubine. The new structure was built beside the garden of al-Afdal, and was named *al-Hawdaj*<sup>4</sup>.

Thus, as the capital moved away from the Nile, and the lands were secured against potential enemies, the island's main role shifted from industry to housing the royal gardens, and the Nilometer, still used to calculate land taxes. Other than that, the island was used for agriculture.

#### • The Ayyubid period 564H/1169-650H/1252AD:-

Al-Maqrizi describes the Ayyubid period in the following terms: "....The island stayed as a royal resort and a living quarter for the people until the time of al-Malik al-Salih Nigm ad-Din Ayyub, son of al-Malik al-Kamil Muhammad, who built a fortress on Roda island. The fortress bore several names, and was in turn known as al-

<sup>1</sup> Marcel was a scholar who came with the French expedition. He worked on the book of *Description de l' Egypte*. He also wrote an excellent and accurate account of the Nilometer.

<sup>2</sup> Creswell, K.A.G. *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, Hacker Art Books, 1978, pp. 217-219.

<sup>3</sup> Creswell says that the mosque of al-Miqias was destroyed in 1246H/1830AD to make way for the construction of the *Manistirli* palace 1267H/1851AD. However our later map dated to 1314H/1897AD does not agree with this as the first accounted for building in the place of al-Miqias mosque is the "Eglise Anglaise"[see map 5].

<sup>4</sup> Al-Maqrizi, II, p. 181.



Miqyas fortress, al-Roda fortress and al-Salihiyyia fortress.....He (al-Malik al-Salih) demolished *al-Hawdaj*, *al-Mukhtar*, and destroyed thirty-three mosques that had been built by the Egyptian Khalifs and elite..... He also demolished the houses and palaces in the island in order to build his fortress in their place, he even destroyed a *Ya'qba* church (Ibn -Luqluq) beside the Nilometer....”<sup>1</sup>. Al-Maqrizi also mentions that al-Malik al-Salih built a *qa'a* on the island, but died in the Crusades before he could see its completion.....”.

A different source, Ibn al-Muqaffa', reports that in 1236 AD/634-35 H the enclosure ("*Zariba*") of the church of al-Roda at the Nilometer collapsed, allowing the river to undermine its gardens and part of the structure. It was feared that water would damage *Jami' al-Miqyas* nearby. Al-Malik al-Salih (in 1242-1243 AD/ 640 H) demolished al-Roda church (Ibn-Luqluq) to make way for the construction of his fortress. According to Ibn al-Muqaffa', the church of St. Mercurius (Abu al-Sayafayn) at Fustat was used to house the Frankish prisoners engaged in the construction of the fortress of al-Roda.

Most of this information seems accurate; however it is doubtful that as many as thirty three mosques were destroyed by al-Malik al-Salih. Given that the island was not heavily populated, it is even doubtful that it contained that many mosques. Since al-Maqrizi is the only one to report such a high figure, we feel justified in discarding it.

Al-Maqrizi also refers to what Ibn al-Mutawag wrote: “....in the year 566 H(1171 AD), al-Malik al-Muzzaffar Taqiyy al-Din 'Amr Shahin-shah Ibn Ayyub bought the Island of Misr known as al-Roda and later turned it into a *Waqf* for his school *al-Taqawiyyia*...”. As we know the island was made up of gardens and

---

<sup>1</sup> Al-Maqrizi, II, p. 183.



agricultural land, which is at odds with the use al-Malik al-Muzzafar would have made of it. As such, we must also question whether such a purchase ever took place.

Furthermore, Ibn al-Mutawag contends that : “....al-Malik al-Salih Nigm al-Din Ayyub rented the island from *al-Qadi* (Judge) Fakhr al-Din Abu Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Qadi al-Qudah (judge of judges) ‘Imad al-Din Abu al-Kasim ‘Abd al-Rahman Ibn Muhammad ‘Abd al-‘Ali Ibn ‘Abd al-Kadir al-Sukari, teacher at *al-Taqawiyyia* school. Al-Malik al-Salih rented it for a period of sixty years paid in two installments, each installment constituting a piece of land. The first piece extended from the mosque of ‘*Ain* to *al-Manazir*, length and width from sea to sea (Bahr Misr to al-Bahr al-‘Azam, from the Fustat Nile to Giza Nile); the second piece comprised the rest of the island with its palms, sycamore trees, and plants..... When al- Malik al-Salih restored *Manazir al-Qal‘a*, he cut down the palm trees and put new buildings in their place. As for the sycamore trees, the shore of the Nile had a line of forty trees.....The Sultan (al-Nasir Nasir al-Din Muhammad) then returned the first piece of land to the teacher of *al-Taqawiyyia* (school) in the year 698H/1299AD. The second piece stayed in his hands (al-Sultan) with the Roda fortress of al-Salih destroyed and only a few towers still standing (over which people had built houses), and an arched gate to the west side named *Bab al-Istabl*. After the destruction of the fortress, Roda became a park with many houses, many gardens, and mosques where gatherings and feasts were held. Most of the houses were later destroyed and only their remains abide now”<sup>1</sup>.

It seems, then, that al-Mutawag’s account contradicts much of the information gathered from other sources, for example, his contention that the island was owned by

---

<sup>1</sup> Al-Maqrizi, II, p. 184.



one person through a *Waqf* of a *Madrasa*, a fact unnoted by other sources. And while Ibn Duqmaq also refers to island being rented by al-Malik al-Salih, he uses the same words and sentences, leaving little doubt that he is relying on Ibn al-Mutawag's account as a source: "....Al-Malik al-Muzzaffar Taqi al-Din 'Amr, the nephew of al-Sultan Salah al-Din, bought the Island and kept it until al-Malik al-Nasir Salah al-Din sent his son al-Aziz 'Usman with his uncle al-Malik al-Adil, to Egypt, and asked Taqi al-Din to give them the country (Egypt) and join him in al-Sham. Leaving Egypt was difficult for Taqi al-Din, so he turned his house *Manazil al 'Izz* into a *Madrasa* called *Madrasa al Taqawiyyia*, and made the whole island its *waqf*. Later, when al-Malik al-Salih Nigm al-Din Ayyub became the Sultan of Egypt, he rented this island from *al-Madrasa al Taqawiyyia* for sixty years..."<sup>1</sup>.

Here we have the first known reconstruction of the island as accounted for by al-Maqrizi. At that time, the island was becoming a peninsula, as the mud coming from the flood was filling the canal between the island and Fustat, leaving an opening only between the island and al-Giza. Al-Malik al-Salih redug this channel, increasing its depth so that Roda remained an island; hence protecting his fortress with the Nile enclosing it.

".....When al-Malik al-Salih began to build his castle, the Nile was on the west side of the island between the Roda island and al-Giza, as it had dried on the side of Misr (Fustat), except on the days when it rose.....He (al-Malik al-Salih) kept on sinking ships in the east side and digging the sand between al-Roda and Misr (Fustat) until the water of the Nile returned to the side of Misr (Fustat) and stayed. Then, he built a great bridge from Misr to Roda island, and made its width three *kasabas*. When

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibn-Duqmaq, IV, p. 110.



the princes rode from their homes, seeking attendance in the Roda fortress, they stepped down from their horses on the land and walked the bridge to the fortress. Only the Sultan was allowed to ride on the bridge. When the fortress was finished, the Sultan moved there with his family and harem making it his royal palace in which he could accommodate his Bahri Mamluks, who numbered nearly one thousand men.....”.

During this period, Egypt was fighting a war against the Crusaders. The peace was over. Like Ibn Tulun before him, the Sultan chose the island as a secure site on which to build a fortress to protect his family and harem. Once more, the island's status changed from one of leisure to that of strategic location. However, this only lasted for the short duration of al-Malik al-Salih Nigm ad-Din Ayyub's reign.

As pointed out by al-Maqrizi, the Ayyubid fortress also had an economic impact on Fustat and Roda<sup>1</sup>. Before, Fustat had been the port through which ships transited goods carried via the Nile, resulting in cheaper prices there. As for al-Qahira, it housed *madaris* (schools), great khans, and the Amirs' palaces. But when al-Malik al-Salih built his fortress at al-Roda and turned it into his royal quarters, there was a sudden change in Fustat's economic condition as the Amirs shifted their palaces to the island, erecting beautiful buildings near the royal palace and fortress. Al-Sultan al-Salih, then, built a great *Qaysariyya*, where exclusive products were sold, and expanded all the local markets.

---

<sup>1</sup> Al-Maqrizi, I, p. 367.



- **The Mamluk period 648H/1250AD-922H/1516AD:-**

Of the subsequent Mamluk period al-Maqrizi wrote: “ .....The fortress remained populous and active until the decline of Al-Ayyub, when al Sultan al-Mu‘izz ‘Izz ad-Din Aybak al-Turkmani, the first of the Turkish Mamluk rulers in Egypt, took over. He ordered the fortress destroyed and used its parts as materials to build a school known as *al-Mu‘uziyyia* in *Rahba al-Hina*, in the city of Cairo. People with authority coveted the remains of the fortress; some took roofs, windows and many other things. Much of its wood, marble and other valuables were sold. When al-Sultan al-Malik al-Zahir Rukn al-Din Baybars al-Bunduqdari came to the throne of Egypt, he took interest in the Roda fortress and assigned the task of restoring it as before to the Amir Gamal al-Din Musa Ibn Yaghmur. The Amir fixed some of the damage done to the fortress, arranged al *Gundaria* (encampment), restored the fortress’s inviolability, and ordered its towers to be divided among the Amirs. He gave one *Burg al-Zawia* (tower of the corner) to each of Amir Saif al-Din Qalawun al-Alfi, Amir ‘Izz al-Din al Hali, Amir ‘Izz al-Din Arghun and Prince Badr al-Din al-Shamsi. The rest of the towers were divided between the other Amirs. These towers had been planned to include their housing and stables. He, Gamal al-Din, gave them (the Amirs) the keys. When al-Mansur Qalawun al-Alfi became the Sultan and started building the *Maristan*, mausoleum, and *al-Madrassa al-Mansuriyyia*, he took from al-Roda fortress the stone and marble columns which were needed, and took a great deal of marble, great lintels and other materials from the ruins.

The Sultan al-Malik al-Nasir Muhammad Ibn Qalawun took what he needed of the stone columns to build his *iwan*, known as Dar al-‘Adl (in the Citadel).....He took other things, until it (the Roda Fortress) was bare, as though it had never existed.



Only a great arch, which was known to the public as *al-Qus* (Arc), was left. That was on the west side of the island; it stayed there until the year 820H (1416 AD). Even some of its towers survived. People built their houses over these, overlooking the Nile....<sup>1</sup>.

Al-Maqrizi continues by providing a link between the island and al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh's activities: ".....On Friday the 21st al-Sultan al-Mu'yyad rode to the Nile. He visited the prophets' monuments and gave money to the poor people. Then he went to *al-Miqias* (Nilometer) on Roda, where he prayed in the Jami of al-Miqias, which he had ordered pulled down, rebuilt and enlarged....."<sup>2</sup>.

The only other information we have about the time of the Mamluk epoch is supplied by 'Ali Mubark, who only mentioned only a mosque on the island, called the Jami of Fakhr until it was later restored by al-Malik al-Ashraf Qaytbay, and renamed the Jami of Qaytbay, after him. The inscription over the entrance read:

"بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم، أمر بإنشاء هذه المدرسة المعظمة مولانا ذو  
المقام الشريف السلطان الملك أشرف أبو النصر قايتباي عز نصرته سلطان  
الإسلام و المسلمين محي العدل في العالمين ناصر شريف سيد المرسلين..."

We know that the mosque was built of stone in the four *iwan* plan, with two small *iwans*, two large ones, two rooms and a *Maida*; it had a three storey minaret, and a room that acted as a *madrasa*. It survived until in the year 1216H/1801AD, when it was burnt down accidentally<sup>3</sup>.

From these accounts, we see that the island was subjected to hasty and abrupt alterations during the Mamluk period. The Mamluk Sultans seemed to have been

<sup>1</sup> Al-Maqrizi, II, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Maqrizi, Ahmed ibn Ali. *Kitab al-Suluk Li Mi'rifat Dowal al-Muluk*, Lagnct al-Ta'lif, 1958, p. 534.

<sup>3</sup> Mubarak, 'Ali Pasha. *Al-Khitat al-Tawfiqia al-Gadida l'Masr Wa Mudunha Wa Biladha al-Qadima Wa al-Shahira*, Al-Hai' al-Misria al-'Ama lil-Kitab, 1986, p. 162. [Hereinafter al-Khitat]



indecisive as to what purpose to give the island. The only structure of which we can speak with certainty is the Nilometer, which remained the principal method of calculating taxes on agricultural land.

## Appendix I

### A. Maqrizi's account of the bridges linking Fustat and al-Giza through Roda Island:

Al-Maqrizi's account is the only one to speak of the bridges linking Cairo and Giza through Roda island<sup>1</sup>. He tells of a bridge over the Nile between Fustat and *Jazirat al-Roda*, and of another bridge between al-Roda and al-Giza. Each bridge consisted of thirty boats. He adds that the width of the boat bridge was three *Qasabas*. The existence of these bridges is confirmed by a map in the *Description de l'Egypte* (see map 1), depicting a specific bridge between Fustat and al-Roda (see map 2, plate 2.a). We also know that the bridge linking al-Giza and the island was much longer than the one linking the island to Fustat. We can therefore conclude that the bridges could not have consisted of the same number of boats, as previously posited by al-Maqrizi.

More importantly al-Maqrizi discussed the two bridges as one entity, namely the bridge of Misr (Fustat) and al-Giza. He claimed that al-Ma'mun built a new bridge and kept the old bridge (without giving a location to either of them) but that due to a storm, the two bridges were destroyed. Al-Ma'mun restored only the new bridge. In the year 355 H/965 AD, Ibn Zulaq (quoted by al-Maqrizi) mentioned that the new bridge had been restored for the army to cross on their way to fight the

---

<sup>1</sup>Al-Maqrizi, I, p. 61.



leader Gawhar. He added that, in 364H/974AD, al-Mu'iz li'Din Allah restored the bridge of Fustat and prevented the people's animals from crossing it. Ibn Hawqal added that people at this period used to cross the Nile with their horses by boat. Only the Sultan would ride on the bridge.

This situation prevailed until the reign of al-Malik al-Mu'izz Aybak al-Turkamani. After he destroyed the fortress of al-Roda in 648H/1250AD, the bridge was neglected. It was restored again by al-Malik al-Zahir Rukn al-Din Baybars as a passage for the army marching to battle against the Crusaders.

## **B. Why was the Island called "Jazirat al Sina'a"?**

Al-Maqrizi provides a powerful argument in explaining the name "*sina'a*" for the island<sup>1</sup>. The Arabic word *sina'a* comes from the verb "*sana'a*", which means *make*. But traditionally, the word *sina'a* (industry) was to be used to name places where large boats, or ships, were built, namely shipyards. We know that the only shipyard in the Fustat area at that time was on the island, hence the name "*Jazirat al-Sina'a*" or the "island of the shipyard".

According to al-Maqrizi, the shipyards of Egypt were located in Alexandria, Damietta and greater Cairo. The Alexandria and Damietta shipyards were only used for the construction of sea ships, while the Cairene shipyards was used for building Nile ships.

There existed three shipyards in Cairo: the shipyard of al Maqs, the shipyard of Misr (Fustat) and the shipyard of *al-jazirah* (i.e. *Sina'a al Jazirah*). This last shipyard was on the island known today as al-Roda island. It was the first shipyard

---

<sup>1</sup> Al-Maqrizi, II, p. 189.



built in the area of Fustat in 54H/674AD. Five hundred workers were on hand, ready to respond to any fire or other form of damage to the buildings. Later, Ahmad Ibn Tulun started building war ships to secure the Nile, hence expanding the original island shipyard. This shipyard remained active until the reign of Ibn Tughj al-Ikhshid, who moved it to the coast of Fustat and built in its place the garden of al-Mukhtar<sup>1</sup>.

### C. Duqmaq's list of the Mosques of Roda: -

Ibn Duqmaq gives a very brief account of the mosques of Roda, offering no dates for their construction. Still, his writings assist us in understanding the density of the religious buildings on the island<sup>2</sup>.

“.....**Jami' Ghabn**, was named after the leader Ghabn, who was the army leader during the reign of al-Imam al-Hakim. He died in the year 405H/1007AD..... **Jami' al-Miqias**, built by al-Afdal Amir al-Guyush Badr in front of the church of Ibn Luqluq, was then restored by al-Sultan al-Malik al-Salih Nigm al-Din Ayyub. It was destroyed in the year 824H/1421AD by al Sultan al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad, who subsequently rebuilt and enlarged it (this agrees with al-Maqrizi's account in *Kitab al-Suluk*<sup>3</sup> which reports that on Friday the eleventh, al-Sultan al Mu'ayyad rode the Nile to al-Miqias and prayed in its Jami'; after prayer, he ordered the Jami to be demolished and then rebuilt and enlarged)..... **Jami' al-Fakhr** was located at the far end of the island near *Manshiat al-Mahrani* and was built by al Qadi Fakhr al-Din, *Nazir* of

---

<sup>1</sup> Al-Maqrizi, II, p. 189

<sup>2</sup> Ibn-Duqmaq, IV, pp. 115-116.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Maqrizi, Ahmed ibn Ali. *Kitab al-Suluk Li Ma'rifat Duwal al-Muluk*, Lagnat al-Ta'lif, 1958, p. 534.



the Army.....**Al-Ra'is Jami'** was built on the first tower of the citadel....(this account was not completely found in the original)... ”.

Ibn Duqmaq also claims that there were nearly twenty mosques on the island as well as *Zawias* such as *Zawiat al-Mushtahi*, *Zawiat al-Montahi*, and *Zawiat Ikbghaas*<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibn-Duqmaq, IV, pp. 115, 116.



## CHAPTER 2

### The Decline:-

By the end of the Bahri Mamluk period (784H/1382AD), several factors would precipitate the downfall of Cairo from its peak as a cosmopolitan city to a degraded and depressed area. This would in turn cause the decline of Egypt as a major political and cultural force.

Political instability, brought about by the death of al-Nasir, was the chief cause for Egypt's demise, in fact rendering it unable to face events to come. In 781H/1380AD while several powerful amirs competed to take over the Sultanate, the Egyptian Mamluk regime was unprepared to deal with the renewed threat of the Mongols under Tamerlane's (Timur Lang) leadership. Clearly, it was also unequipped to deal with the plague which befell the country in the autumn of 786H/1384AD.

The plague epidemic originated in China and was propagated by way of Asia Minor, Syria and the Mediterranean region. In a mere nine months, it reached its peak and by the spring of 787H/1385 AD, Cairo's streets and markets were filled with unburied corpses<sup>1</sup>. To add to Egypt's woes, the plague was followed by famines. Cairo was stripped of nearly half its population as people either died or fled to the relative safety of the suburbs.

Although Egypt's decline was steep, it was briefly interrupted by the reign of al-Sultan Barquq who took power in 784H/1382AD and became the first of a series of Circassian Mamluk Sultans to rule Egypt until the Ottoman conquest in 922H/1516AD. Sultan Barquq tried to reactivate the city of Cairo by rebuilding roads and developing a new commercial area, the *Khan al-Khalili*. However, the plague struck

---

<sup>1</sup>Maqrizi, II, pp. 94,97,104



again in 790H/1388AD-791H/1389AD<sup>1</sup>, putting an end to his plans for prosperity. At the same time, political instability returned as the Mamluk amirs plotted to overthrow al-Sultan Barquq's regime. Furthermore, Timurid troops were approaching, conquering Baghdad in 795H/1393AD and Syria in 803H/1400AD. As if this were not enough, famine struck again in 806H/ 1403AD.

Ibn Tagri Birdi, describing the situation, wrote: ".....More than half of Cairo, its state and environs were ruined; two thirds of the population of Misr (the capital) died of famine and plague....."<sup>2</sup>. In fact, the once densely populated city lost more than half of its population to two successive attacks of plague and famine. Large portions of the city, entire districts even, were abandoned, and left to ruin. A belt of buildings around the heart of the old city was disappearing leaving in its place heaps of ruins. *Birkat Ratli* (Ratli lake), a resort area northwest of the city, was now deserted and the populous industrial district of al-Maqs was left in shambles, with only a few markets and mosques still active in the port<sup>3</sup>.

When al-Ashraf Sayf al-Din Barsbay took power in 825H/1422AD, he looked for ways to restore Egypt's economic power. In the face of agricultural ruin<sup>4</sup>, he turned to commerce as a means to recover. He partly achieved this as the trade route shifted from its traditional southern course (from Aden to Qusayr to Qus and, from there, by boat to the old port of al-Maqs) to a northerly one (from Qulzum across the eastern desert to Cairo)<sup>5</sup>, boosting the economy in a way that sustained commercial life in Egypt, but still fell short of restoring the country's former prosperous status.

<sup>1</sup>Popper. *History of Egypt*, Part I, 1954, PP. 19,33.

<sup>2</sup>As quoted by Ibn Tagr Birdi from Popper. *History of Egypt*, 1954, pp. 197,198.

<sup>3</sup>A.R.Guest and E.T. Richmond. "Misr In The Fifteenth Century", *Journal of The Royal Asiatic Society*, London, 1903, pp. 791- 816.

<sup>4</sup>Famines and agricultural decline are inseparable as they were due to the drought and low Nile.

<sup>5</sup>Abu Lughod, Janet L. *Cairo 1001 Years Of The City Victorious*, Princeton University Press, 1971, p. 41. [Hereinafter Abu Lughod]



However, this change had a radical impact on the city's ports, as caravans now entered Cairo by land and not by way of the Nile.

This mid-fifteenth century economic revival triggered the redevelopment of abandoned areas of the city, especially to the west of al-Khalig al-Nasri (dug by al-Nasir Ibn Qala'un as a means to transfer goods from the port of al-Maqs to the sea), which became populated with palace dwellings and gardens. Long-dormant markets and mosques of the area were also brought back to life<sup>1</sup>.

As for Misr (Fustat), it was no longer contiguous with Cairo to the north, as it had been during the early fourteenth century. While Cairo recovered, Misr steadily deteriorated. Moreover, during the later half of the fifteenth century, Misr was finally stripped of the last remnants of its economic base, from 839H/1435AD on, as commercial goods and passengers formerly transiting through the al-Maqs port were now handled by a port at Bulaq.

By the end of the fifteenth century, Roda Island had lost its relative importance as the al-Maqs port was moved, taking with it the remaining markets and population. Roda also lost its status as an elite neighborhood when the well-off started building their leisure palaces and gardens by the inner lakes of Cairo. The island's role in city life was now restricted to providing access to the Giza and the Nilometer, the only method of estimating taxes on the agricultural lands of Egypt, and to acting as a setting for the celebrations of the rise of the Nile and the opening of the Khalig.

This period (690H-/1291AD-707H/1308AD) is described by Ibn Zahira in *al-Fada'il al-Bahira li Misr wa al-Qahira*<sup>2</sup>, with Roda first being mentioned in his discussion of Misr al-Qadima: "..... Misr al-Qadima contained palaces, houses,

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 41-44

<sup>2</sup> Ibn-Zahira. *al-Fada'il al-Bahira li Misr wa al-Qahira*, Dar al-Kutub, 1969 [Hereinafter Ibn Zahira].



schools, and mosques on the bank of the Nile. Facing it (Misr al-Qadima) from the west side, taking the whole length of the Misr al-Qadima Nile bank, was Roda Island. Roda was an intermediate island between Bahr Misr (the narrow branch between Fustat and Roda) and al-Bahr al-A'zam (the wide Nile branch between Roda and Giza). It was green, full of gardens and trees. Long ago, it contained the fortress and palaces of the previous kings. On its tip lies the sacred Miqias, at the intersection of the two Bahrs (Bahr Misr and al-Bahr al-A'zam). Its homes and houses were opposite the Misr al-Qadima houses from the east side, between them (separated by) Bahr Misr. It was to be reached from Misr al-Qadima by ferries, small and large ones, to take people and, especially, their mounts across....<sup>1</sup>. Peculiarly, Ibn Zahira does not make mention of the two bridges<sup>2</sup> linking Fustat to Giza. However, his reference to the ferries being used "especially "to carry the mounts can be interpreted to mean that pedestrians were more likely not to use the boat bridge, while the ferries offered an easier and much safer means of taking the mounts across.

In his description of the island, Ibn Zahira also provides a precise location for the inhabited area of Roda, situating it on the east bank of the island, opposite the Fustat houses. In his last mention of the island, he also refers to al-Sahib Tag al-Din Ibn Hana, the owner of some sacred antiques bought for sixty thousand *dirhams* and kept at his beloved place in Roda<sup>3</sup>. While it is not clear what kind of house it is that Sahib Tag al-Din Ibn Hana owned, it can be hypothesized that such valuables as his were kept in a well guarded palace. Though not complete, Ibn Zahira's description of the island manages to supply a clear picture of Roda at that point in time.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, p. 202.

<sup>2</sup>The two bridges were referred to by al-Maqrizi at nearly the same period so we know that they existed by then.

<sup>3</sup>Ibn Zahira, p. 194.



Covering a period which goes beyond that addressed by the writings of al-Maqrizi and Ibn Duqmaq, Ibn Iyas's daily documentation of the social and political events<sup>1</sup> taking place at his time sheds light on the development of Roda. Although Ibn Iyas's account, being more historical than topographical, is not as condensed and direct as that of al-Maqrizi, it adds a new dimension to the story of the island's evolution. Indeed, integrating events specific to the island into an overall historical framework broadens our understanding of Roda's urbanism in relation to Greater Cairo and Giza.

Ibn Iyas never describes Roda *per se*, but rather, discusses events which took place around the island; as such, the interpretation of his valuable, but scarce, lines may lead to conclusions which are beyond what the author intended. However, Ibn Iyas' account is so lively that it allows a wider perspective on Roda. For instance, in his account of *Zu'l-Higga*, at the time of the Sultan al-Zahir Sayf al-Din Khushqadam (870H/1465AD), he states: "..... The Nile stopped rising and stayed like that for six successive days which worried the people. The Sultan ordered the 'ulama and judges to go to al-Miqias (mosque) and pray to God for the rise of the Nile. This continued for eleven days. On the Friday, Tamr the wali, under orders from the Sultan, headed for Roda, interrupted the audience, burnt some tents, and beat members of the audience. It was a horrible day. In the twenty-seventh of *Zu'l-Higga* God sent the rise of the Nile and that made the people very happy....."<sup>2</sup>.

Here, we get a lively image of the island at the time of the rise of the Nile, the source of prosperity for Egypt, with feasts, celebrations, wide attendance, and the

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibn Iyas, Muhammed. *Bada'i' al-Zuhur Fi Waqa'i' al-Duhur*, Dar al-M'arif, 1951. [ Hereinafter Ibn Iyas]

<sup>2</sup>Ibn Iyas, *Safahat Lam Tunshar*, p. 165.



Sultan ordering prayer in the Miqias mosque. At that time, the Miqias mosque was a sacred shrine dedicated to prayers for the rise of the Nile. However, it is not clear from Ibn Iyas's account why the Sultan ordered the celebrants attacked and the tents torn down. The answer may lie in another report by the same author, recounting the *Gamada al-'Awal* of the year 917H/1511AD, on which the Sultan al-Ghuri ordered *Hagib al-Hugab* (the head courtier) and the *wali* to head for Roda and attack the audience, which they did. Ibn Iyas continues: ".... And the reason for this was that the Nile did not rise. It was rumored among the people that this happened because Roda tolerated corruption and wrongdoing .....<sup>1</sup>". So the Sultan ordered his *wali* to put an end to the sins that disturbed the sacred land, where the *Jami' al-Miqias* lay, and prevented the rise of the Nile.

Ibn Iyas is also the first to mention the palace built by Sultan Qansuh al-Ghuri<sup>2</sup>. In his account of the *Gamada al-'Awal* of the year 917H/1511AD, he writes that Sultan Qansuh al-Ghuri had a palace built on the plain facing the Miqias<sup>3</sup>. This is not surprising given the known fact that the Sultan needed accommodations on the island, and that the most fitting location was by the Miqias. There, he could witness the rise of the Nile, then cross over to al-Fustat where he would break the dam, releasing the water into al-Khalig. The flooding celebrated the prosperity arising from the annual rise of the Nile.

Sultan Qansuh al-Ghuri's palace is again mentioned in the account of the ceremonies of the rise of the Nile and the opening of the Khalig al-Nasri for the *Gamadaal-'Awal* of the year 918H/1512AD. Here, Ibn Iyas writes: "..... Al-Sultan

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, part 4, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup>The location of the palace is pointed in the Description de l'Egypte map (see maps 2,18).

<sup>3</sup>Ibn Iyas, part 4, p. 137.



Qansuh al-Ghuri went to the palace that he built on the plain facing al-Miqias and asked all the amirs, *Tablakhanat*, *'Asharat*, and most of his soldiers to join him. The amirs arranged tents for them on the Nile bank opposite Giza. The Sultan spent the night there with all the amirs.....<sup>1</sup> The Sultan ordered *qanadil* (lanterns) to be hung inside and outside al-Miqias, the mosque and its minaret. In response, the people of Misr and Roda hung lanterns in front of their houses. The Sultan also harbored his big boat, al-Ghaliun, in front of al-Miqias and ordered lanterns to be hung all over it. To top it all, the Sultan ordered a bonfire lit through the night while the people of al-Miqias celebrated.

While prior accounts hinted at the significance of this annual ceremony<sup>2</sup>, Ibn Iyas's writings demonstrate its continued importance in relation to the Sultan's status. Furthermore, it becomes clear that while the celebrations would keep Roda busy and prosperous for several days out of the year, they were not enough to sustain it through the year.

At the time, however, Roda would also gain social importance when the Sultan descended from the Citadel for a sojourn on the island<sup>3</sup>. According to Ibn Iyas, this was a frequent event, often lasting several days, for which the *Muhtasib* or one of the Qadis provided food for the Sultan and his entourage. The Sultan would sometimes

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Iyas, part 4, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> Sanders, Paula A. *Court Cermonial Of The Fatimid Chalifate In Egypt* (Master Theises), U.M.I. Disseration Information Service, 1984, p. 176.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Gabarti explains this when he discussed an invitation of Usman Bek to 'Ali Pasha at his house saying that this never happened before. The custom was that the amirs would invite the Pasha (or al-Sultan) in an open place like al-Miqias or Qasr al-'Aini. (Al-Gabarti, Abd al-Rahman. *Taragim al-Akhbar wa 'Agaib al-Athar*, Lagnat al-Bayan al-'Arabi, 1959, p. 17)



stay in his palace whereas other times, tents were erected on *Khartoum al-Roda*<sup>1</sup>. This is illustrated, for example, in Ibn Iyas' account of *Sh'aban* of the year 919H/ 1513AD: "..... On Friday, the Sultan (Qansuh al-Ghuri) descended (from the Citadel) and crossed to Roda. Tents were set for him in Khartoum al-Roda. He spent the night there. Al-Zaini Ibn Moussa Barakat, the Muhtasib, provided the Sultan and his party with a lot of food. He (Qansuh al-Ghuri) stayed until Sunday. He liked this place very much and usually brought with him singers and musicians...."<sup>2</sup>. Similar events were reported in the fifth of *Shawal*, 919H/1513AD, *Rabi' al-Awal* 920H/ 1514AD, *Safar* 920H/ AD, *Ragab* 920H/AD, and *Shawal* 921H/1515AD.

Ibn Iyas also relates Qansuh al-Ghuri's renovation of the Nilometer and the building of a Jami' on the island. In his account of *Safar* of the year 917H/1511AD, he writes: "...When he (Qansuh al-Ghuri) finished eating he ordered the building of al-Miqias repaired, and ordered a Jami' built beside al-Miqias toward *Dar al-Nagas*..."<sup>3</sup>. While the exact location of *Dar al-Nagas* is unknown, we know that it was situated in the Miqias' vicinity<sup>4</sup>. At this point, then, we know of the mosque of al-Miqias and of a mosque built near it by Sultan al-Ghuri.

But Ibn Iyas's most important account comes with that of *Gamada al-Akhir*, 914H/1508AD, in the reign of al-Ashraf Qansuh al-Ghuri: "..... The rise of the Nile stopped at nineteen *zira*'..... The strength of the Nile currents disintegrated the western bank of Roda, destroying the well-built houses. This never happened except

<sup>1</sup>The sources never indicated the exact location of Khartum al-Roda. However, it always mentioned that the Sultan crossed from it to Ibn al-'Aini palace, allowing us to have an educated guess about its location. Khartum al-Roda must have been located opposite to Qasr al-'Aini on Bahr Misr.

<sup>2</sup>Ibn Iyas, part 4, p. 337.

<sup>3</sup>Ibn Iyas, part 4, p. 213.

<sup>4</sup>A waqf of Sultan al-Ghuri (No. 882 Awqaf) can be found in Ministry of al-Awqaf inferring that the location of the mosque was in the gardens opposite to al-Miqias.



in that year.....<sup>1</sup>. These precious lines demonstrate the instability of the Nile and its power over Roda. The destruction of houses was reason enough to halt construction on the island as housing could not be trusted to withstand floods. No doubt, the floods also affected the two bridges connecting Roda to Fustat and Giza.

From another source, we know that al-Suyuti, who died in 911H/1504AD, had a house in Roda, most likely inherited from his father. Sartain, his modern biographer<sup>2</sup>, recounts that after al-Suyuti confined himself in his home for not getting the recognition he deserved from his colleagues, he was visited by one who walked to al-Suyuti's home in Roda to ask for his forgiveness<sup>3</sup>. From al-Suyuti's autobiography<sup>4</sup>, we also learn that he was visited in Roda by the Wazir of the Indian Sultan. While these accounts allow us to conclude that al-Suyuti did in fact reside in Roda, no information is available as to the exact location of his house.

Roda is mentioned in other writings by al-Suyuti, such as *Husn al-Muhadra Fi Akhbar Misr Wa al-Qahira*<sup>5</sup>, where he discusses al-Miqias and Roda. Unfortunately, this document is only a condensation of al-Maqrizi's previously cited account, without any significant addition by al-Suyuti. A second account is found in *Bulbul al-Roda*<sup>6</sup>, a manuscript entirely devoted to Roda in which al-Suyuti mostly discusses the beauty of the island and its tranquillity, but in which he fails to offer any new insight as to its topographical development. Again, the author speaks of houses in Roda without

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, part 4, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup>Sartain, E.M. *Jalal al-Din al-Suyuuti Biography And Background*, Volume 1, Cambridge University Press, 1975 [Hereinafter Sartain].

<sup>3</sup>Sartain, p. 106.

<sup>4</sup>Al-Suyuuti, Jalal al-Din. *Kitab al-Tahadith Bi Ni'mat Allah* [Edited and Annotated by Sartain, E.M.], Cambridge University Press, 1975, p. 159.

<sup>5</sup>Al-Suyuuti, Galal al-Din. *Husn al-Muhadra Fi Akhbar Misr Wa al-Qahira*, Anglo Egyptian, [No year of Publication included].

<sup>6</sup>Al-Suyuuti, Galal al-Din. *Bulbul al-Roda*, [Edited and annotated by Ahmed, Nabil], Anglo Egyptian, 1981.



referring to their exact location, or to the number of urban nodes on the island.

However, from the sources examined at this point, we can be certain of the existence of at least two urban nodes: one on the bank opposite Fustat, and the other on the western bank, opposite Giza.

### **The Ottoman period:-**

The Ottoman reign in Egypt is divided into two periods separated by the French invasion of 1214H/1798AD-1216H/1801AD. The study of the first half of Ottoman reign cannot be separated from the Mamluk period, as it was somehow a continuity of the Mamluk reign. In essence, the Ottomans ended the Mamluk sultanate, but not Mamluk leadership as Egyptian lands continued to be run by Mamluk amirs, under the supervision of a Turkish *Pasha* (wali) who looked after the Ottoman empire's interests.

The Turks had seized Constantinople, signaling a new balance of power in the area. For more than half a century, the Ottomans had concentrated their efforts on Europe and their Eastern rivals, the Persians. Only in the sixteenth century did they turn their attention to Mamluk Egypt and Syria. In 922H/1516 AD, al-Sultan al-Ghuri led his army to Syria to engage the Ottomans near Aleppo where he was ultimately slain and his forces driven out. The Mamluks returned to Egypt in disarray to stage a final defense of Cairo. The army of Tuman-Bay, the newly appointed and last Mamluk Sultan, was defeated in *Raidaniyyah* only five months after the first battle. According to Ibn Iyas: "..... In the short space of about sixty minutes the Egyptians army was defeated and in full retreat ..... it was reported that al-Sultan Selim Shah had



moved his camp from *Raidaniyyah* to Bulaq, where it occupied the ground from the embankment to the end of the central island and that the keys of the Citadel were brought there. ”<sup>1</sup>

Having conquered Cairo, Sultan Selim confined himself to the Citadel never appearing in public<sup>2</sup>. In fact, he was preparing to face Tuman-Bay, who with the help of some Arab tribes, was forming an army to re-engage Sultan Selim<sup>3</sup>. But, Tuman-Bay was defeated, captured, and hanged over *Bab-Zuwayla* in *Rabi' al-Awwal* 923H/1517AD<sup>4</sup>, after which Sultan Selim was seen appearing in public.

During their reign, the Ottomans drained Cairo of its artistic talents by transferring its artists, craftsmen, and poets to Istanbul, thus depriving the city of the cultural life it had enjoyed under Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk patronage. We know, from Ibn Iyas's writings, that Sultan Selim Ibn Usman's wazirs put in a special request for Egyptian craftsmen, including builders, carpenters, marble craftsmen, tilers, and blacksmiths<sup>5</sup>. We also know, from the same account, that Sultan Selim collected every available piece of marble, going so far as to dismantle the Citadel's *iwans*<sup>6</sup>; also he ordered his soldiers to ransack houses and seize any marble they could find<sup>7</sup>. The marble was then shipped to Istanbul<sup>8</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> As quoted and translated by Abu Lughod, Janet L. *Cairo 1001 Years Of The City Victorious*, Princeton University Press, 1971, P. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Iyas, part 5, p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, part 5, p. 162.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, part 5, p. 175.

<sup>5</sup> Ibn Iyas, Muhammed. *Badai' al-Zuhur fi Waqai' al-Duhur*, part 3, Bulaq press, 1312H, p. 116. [Hereinafter Ibn Iyas, Bulaq]

<sup>6</sup> Ibn Iyas, part 5, p. 162.

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Iyas, Bulaq, part 3, p. 117.

<sup>8</sup> One result of such pillage can be seen in the Mosque and complex in Gebze built in 929H/1523AD, it is attributed to Sinan in the official records. The Mosque displays decoration reminiscent of Mamluk architecture, with inlay of polychrome and marble brought from Egypt (Aslanapa, Oktay. *Turkish Art And Architecture*, London, 1971, p. 218).



For the first time in five hundred and fifty years, Cairo was no longer the center of an empire. Its humiliation was complete as it was harshly demoted from its prestigious Sultanate status to that of a colony of the Ottoman empire. This change was so abrupt and extreme that Egypt was disheartened in its culture, urbanization and economy, Cairo having become a mere supplier of wheat and taxes for Istanbul. However, the defeated Mamluks managed to survive as powerful feudal lords of provincial Egypt. Cairo, for its part, retained some of its commercial importance by acting as an entrepot for African goods transiting the city on their way to Istanbul.

Egypt, now severed from Syria, was divided into twenty-four districts, each one ruled by a Mamluk Amir (Only now the Amir was called a *Bek*) responsible for collecting taxes on behalf of the *Pasha*. Wisely, Sultan Selim made no attempt to curb the traditional Mamluk habit of fighting for power thus ensuring that rivalries kept the Beks divided. The paramount Bek now assumed the title of *Shaykh al-Balad* (chief of the city), and sometimes became more powerful than the Turkish Pasha himself<sup>1</sup>.

Surprisingly, little was written about Roda during the Ottoman period. We know that it underwent considerable changes, given the demise of Misr al-Qadima (Fustat) after the transfer of the port to Bulaq, and the growth of the elite district of al-*Azbakiyya* in 881H/1476AD. These factors can certainly account for Roda's inertia during the Ottoman period.

According to Gaston Wiet, who based his work on accounts by Leo Africanus<sup>2</sup>, Roda was then considered a center of urban amusement. The island's many parks continued to act as an ideal venue for the celebrations that accompanied the first days

---

<sup>1</sup>Abu Lughod. PP, 49-51.

<sup>2</sup>Wiet, Gaston. *Cairo City Of Art And Commerce*, University Of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 1964, pp. 118,119.



of the rise of the Nile. For instance, Wiet wrote: "..... later, he (Sultan Selim) was present at a shadow theater performance on the island of Roda ..... "1. Although Wiet does not mention his source, this account is reminiscent of Ibn Iyas's and confirms what we know about festivals and other events held annually on Roda.

Chronicling the first time Sultan Selim crossed to Roda, Ibn Iyas wrote: "..... On Monday the sixth of the month (*Rabi' al-Akhir* 923H/1517AD), it was said that Sultan Selim Ibn Usman crossed to al-Miqias on a stormy day. He nearly drowned. But he survived this accident and moved to al-Miqias (most likely the al-Miqias palace built by Sultan al-Ghuri). He (Sultan Selim), also, moved his court to Roda. His amirs expelled the people of Roda and Misr al-Qadima, and stayed in their houses. He (Sultan Selim) liked al-Miqias very much and stayed there for several days during which time his wazirs had to cross every day to Roda to consult him about their affairs ..... "2.

It is obvious that Selim enjoyed spending time in the island as he returned to the island in such fashion in *Gamada al-Awal* 923H/1517AD, *Gamada al-Akhir* 923H/1517AD, *Rabi' al-Akhir* 923H/1517AD. According to Ibn Iyas, Sultan Selim even expanded the Miqias palace: ".... He built himself a wooden palace in al-Miqias, over the palace of al-Miqias built by Sultan al-Ghuri. He used to stay there in the hot days. He brought a group of builders and carpenters and built it. It was finished in a short time.. "3. Al-Ishaqi relates the same event, explaining why wood was used to build the addition: "..... Tuman-Bay was captured and hanged over Bab-Zwaila ..... On the thirteenth of *Ragab* (923H/1517AD), the Sultan was staying in Roda. He built a

<sup>1</sup>Ibid. 156. also see Ibn Iyas, Bulaq, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup>Ibn Iyas, part 5, p. 177.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, part 5, p. 193.



*Kushk* (Kiosk) over the Qa'a of al-Miqias palace, overlooking the Nile, Roda, and al-Miqias....<sup>1</sup> He goes on to write that al-Qutbi saw this kiosk and entered it. Thus, what Ibn Iyas referred to as a wooden palace was in fact a wooden kiosk which marked the introduction of Ottoman architecture to the city of Cairo. It is interesting to note that he who, on one hand, was dismantling the city in order to supply Istanbul with precious materials, was also erecting buildings in Roda.

As for the function of the island, Ibn Iyas also wrote: ".... On *Ragab* 924H/1518AD, the Nile did not rise and this greatly affected Cairo's economy. Prices rose. Sultan Selim ordered his wali (Khair Bek) to attack Roda (the audience and the tents). The audience left Roda that day...."<sup>2</sup> This indicates that Roda's festival traditions, which could be traced to the Mamluk period, were surviving the Ottoman rule. It is hardly surprising since, as indicated before, Mamluks and Qadis still held their former positions and assisted the Ottoman Sultan in running Egypt.

Finally, Ibn Iyas offers some insight as to the housing conditions on Roda: ".... At the beginning of *Rabi' al-Akhir* (923H/1517AD), a Wednesday, a messenger came with a message from Shah Ismai'l<sup>3</sup>. When Ibn Usman read it, he became furious. The messenger escaped to al-Miqias (Roda). Ibn Usman's soldiers ransacked Roda and Misr al-Qadima houses looking for him. They never found him....."<sup>4</sup> While this establishes the existence of houses on Roda, once again it does not provide any information as to their location.

<sup>1</sup> Al-Ishaqi, Muhammed. *Kitab Akhbar al-'Uwal Fiman Tasarf fi Misr Min Arbab Al-Duwal* (also known as *Tarikh al-Ishaqi*), Cairo, 1896, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Iyas, part 5, p. 262.

<sup>3</sup> The Safavid Shah of Iran (907H/1501AD-930H/1524AD). He was a Shi'i, the paramount enemy of the Sunni Ottoman.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Iyas, part 5, p. 176.



It is also not clear why Roda is sometimes referred to as al-Miqias. Ibn Iyas would often write: "He crossed to al-Miqias" but when discussing the houses, he would refer to them as "houses of Roda". Could it be that the island was divided in two parts, al-Miqias and Roda? It may be that the sacred area of al-Miqias occupied the southern half of the island, while the northern half, called Roda, remained devoted to domestic activities. However, if such was the case, we must keep in mind that the division was not deliberate (i.e. ordered by the Sultan) but rather, that it was due to social factors. Assuming that such a division existed, we must then ask when did it take place? In all probability, it occurred over a long period of time since our sources do not even seem to be aware of its existence.

**From the sources cited so far, we can thus postulate that the island was divided into two districts:**

- a) Al-Miqias area, included al-Miqias, al-Miqias mosque, and al-Miqias palace and its gardens. This area would have lain within the boundaries of the old fortress, on the southern half of the island (see fig. 10).
- b) Roda area, occupied the northern half of the island and included habitations, Kafr Qaytbay, Kafr 'Abd al-'Aziz, the mosque of Qaytbay, and the rest of the area not included in the Miqias area (see fig. 10).

In *Sha'ban* 923H/1517AD, when Sultan Selim was still in Cairo, Khair Bek replaced Yunis Pasha as Wali of Cairo<sup>1</sup>, and was named *Malik al-Umara'* (king of the amirs). However Khair Bek, did not exercise any power until Sultan Selim left Egypt

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibn Iyas, part 5, p. 203.



for Syria (Damascus) in Sha'ban 923H/1517AD, on his way to Istanbul. Sultan Selim took most of the army with him, leaving behind only 5000 Cavalry and 500 riflemen<sup>1</sup>, not enough for Khair Bek to effectively control Egypt. This lack of military power, coupled with the fact that Khair Bek was a Mamluk, inevitably led to his next move. On the twenty fifth of *Sha'ban* 923H/1517AD, Khair Bek announced that al-Mamalik al-Jarkasia (Circassian Mamluks) could safely come out of hiding promising that they would not be harmed<sup>2</sup>. He then put the former ruling Mamluks, including al-Zaini Barakat, the former Muhtasib of al-Sultan al-Ghuri<sup>3</sup>, in charge of collecting the land taxes. Mamluk rulers had finally returned to power, but in a way which significantly differed from the previous regime in the following aspects:

- a) Egypt was no longer an independent Sultanate, but rather an Ottoman province.
- b) taxes were collected as before, but had to be dispatched to Istanbul instead of being distributed among the Mamluk amirs as before.
- c) Cairo was stripped of its old political, economical and artistic status by Sultan Selim. Even exported trade goods were now transshipped to Istanbul instead of going directly to Europe.

We know, from the account of Ibn Iyas, that Khair Bek maintained the old customs, including those of Roda, and that he liked to spend his leisure time on the island. In *Zu'l-Qi'da*, Ibn Iyas writes: "..... The king of the amirs descended from the Citadel and went to Roda. Tents were set on Khartum al-Roda in front of Qasr Ibn-'Aini. He stayed there with his Ottoman amirs....."<sup>4</sup>. The surprising aspect of Ibn

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, part 5, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup>Ibn Iyas, part 5, p. 208.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, part 5, p. 210.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, part 5, p. 351.



Iyas's writings is in his discussion of industry on the island, where in his account of *Rabi' al-'Awal* 927H/1521AD he states: "..... The king of the amirs, descending for a fire ceremony, went to Roda to inspect the boats he was building there. Then he crossed the Nile to the place of Qasr Ibn al-'Aini...." <sup>1</sup>. The industry is discussed again in the account of *Muharram* 929H/1512AD<sup>2</sup>, when a group of carpenters and workers staged a demonstration because the king of the amirs had not paid them for the work done on his boats in Roda. This allows us to ask whether the shipyard was a temporary setup, or whether it was a permanent addition to the island. Since Ibn Iyas uses the phrase "inspect the boats", and not "inspect the Sina'a (shipyard)", and since the shipyard does not seem to be mentioned in other sources, we can assume that the building of the boats was only a temporary operation ordered by Khair Bek<sup>3</sup>.

Jumping ahead to the eighteenth century, we turn to al-Gabarti for a thorough account of the social and political events of the time. However, al-Gabarti only mentions Roda three times, and briefly at that. In his account of the year 1125H/1710AD, he speaks of a conflict between the Wali on one side and Ibrahim Bek on the other. The wali, assisted by Muhammed Bek (a Mamluk Amir), sent the soldiers after his opponents and the two groups engaged in a fight in the area of Qasr al-'Aini and Roda. We can therefore conclude that this area must have been fairly deserted at that time of the year for two armies to be able to engage in the combat.

Then, in his account of the year 1202H/1787AD, on the twenty-six of Ramadan

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, part 5, p. 375.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, part 5, p. 423.

<sup>3</sup>Also in Ibn Iyas account of *Safar* 927H/1521AD, he writes: "... The king of the amirs descended from the Citadel and went to Bulaq to inspect the boats that he was building there. One such was launched on the Nile, while he watched..." This could indicate that Khair Bek did not have a separate ship-yard for his boats on Roda. (Ibn Iyas, part 5, p. 380)



al-Gabarti recounts a fight between *al-Kalaiungia* (Ottoman) soldiers and Moroccan pilgrims in Bulaq. Isma'il Bek ordered the pilgrims out of the city, but they refused to leave the city and asked Isma'il Khatkhuda to intercede in obtaining Isma'il Bek's forgiveness. We know that Isma'il Khatkhuda sent for Isma'il Bek in Roda<sup>1</sup>, but al-Gabarti does not say where in Roda. The only fact we can ascertain is that, probably, al-Ghuri's palace was now still used by the Wali.

Finally, al-Gabarti mention Roda again in his account of the year 1215H/1800AD when he mentions that after the death of Muhammed Bek and the rise of Ibrahim Bek<sup>2</sup> to the position of Shaykh al-Balad, Murad Bek spent most of his time pursuing pleasure, living mostly in palaces outside the city. Sometimes, he stayed in Roda, other times on *al-Zahab* island, or in Qaymaz near *al-Madrassa al-'Adiliyya*<sup>3</sup>. We learn here that Murad Bek had a palace in Roda; however, the most interesting aspect is that al-Gabarti refers to Roda as being outside the city while al-Maqrizi hinted that Roda was a district of Cairo. It seems, then, that the contraction of the city's borders moved Roda outside city limits, possibly for the first time since the beginning of the Islamic control of Egypt.

### **The French occupation of Egypt:-**

**(1214H/1798 AD-1216H/1801 AD)**

The French army landed in Alexandria on the first of July, 1798AD (1214H) and occupied Egypt for three years, until September 1801. The most important source

<sup>1</sup> Al- Gabarti, Abd al-Rahman. *'Aga'ib al-Athar fi al-Taragim Wa al-Akhbar*, Part 4, Lagnat al-Bayan al-'Arabi, 1966, P. 78. [Hereinafter Al-Gabarti]

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix II. A.

<sup>3</sup> Al- Gabarti, Part 5, P. 248.



of knowledge about Egypt for this period is inarguably the *Description de l'Egypte* as not only is it one of the rare accounts of this particular era, it is also one of the most accurate. As a matter of fact, the *Description de l'Egypte* is still widely used by modern scholars interested in Egyptian history.

Unfortunately, the *Description* supplies very little information about Roda: "... The island fell under French control directly after the great battle of the Pyramids and was put under the control of General Mino... Due to its strategic location between Cairo and Giza, a great number of commercial operations useful to the French army were positioned on the island...."<sup>1</sup>. However, only one of these operations is described, a gunpowder factory headed by M. Champy pere. The same factory is mentioned by Ali Mubarak in his discussion of the mosque of Qaytbay in Roda, and of how the mosque was used to store the gunpowder<sup>2</sup>. We can thus conclude that the gunpowder factory was located in the immediate vicinity of the mosque.

The *Description* also reveals that the Fustat bank, opposite Roda, was used as a military fortress<sup>3</sup> connected to the island by a bridge of boats. Later, a similar bridge was erected between Roda and Giza to provide direct access to Cairo from Giza (see maps 1, 2).

The written description account of Roda stops at this point moving to a description of the Miqias (Nilometer) and the Miqias mosque (see Plate 1). Fortunately, the book offers another valuable source of information about Roda, namely the first and the most accurate maps of Cairo, Giza and Roda for that period (see map 1, 2). Indeed, the French expedition drew up detailed maps and drawings of

---

<sup>1</sup>Marcel. *Description de l'Egypte*, Etat moderne II, pp. 119, 120. [Hereinafter *Description*]

<sup>2</sup>Al-Khitat, pp. 162.

<sup>3</sup>The written source refers to a military fortress though the map shows the same building to be a military hospital (see map 2).



all Egypt, paying particular attention to Cairo. These maps, analyzed thoroughly and patiently, are a treasure of information about the island before, and at the time of the French expedition. They become even more enlightening when measured against the information garnered from previous sources, as they show the boundaries of the Roda, Fustat, Giza banks, and outline the use of the lands on the island.

### **Land use on Roda:-**

1. Gardens.
2. Agricultural land.
3. Buildings.
4. Roads.
5. The two bridges leading to Roda.

#### **1. The gardens:-**

A careful analysis of the map reveals a longitudinal section of land stretching diagonally from al-Miqias to Kafr Abd al-Aziz (see fig. 2.B). It includes Kafr Abd al-Aziz and Kafr Qaytbay, and one other garden referred to on the map as *Jardin du Miqyas* (i.e. the garden of the Nilometer), and located north of al-Miqias.

These particular gardens did not exist apart from each other, but rather all belonged to the larger garden sector. This makes sense as the trees of the gardens needed less water and more stable soil, especially at the time of the flood. This section of land would therefore have been the most appropriate in which to plant the gardens.



We do not know the exact kind of trees planted in these gardens (see plates 2B, 3B, 3C, 3D, 3E).

## **2. The agricultural land:-**

The map of the *Description* shows that most of the land on Roda was used as agricultural land suitable for seasonal cultivation. Surrounded by Nile waters, these fields must have been the most fertile and easy to cultivate in all of Cairo (see fig. 2.C).

## **3. Buildings of the island:-**

The map of the island includes only the following buildings: four mosques, one palace, the Nilometer, a small residential area in Kafr Abd al-Aziz, the ruins of the walls of the old fortress, and many mills. We can therefore conclude that very little construction activity had taken place on the island (see fig. 2.A).

### **3. I. The four mosques:-**

- 1. Jami' al-Miqias.**
- 2. Jami' Qaytbay.**
- 3. Jami' al-Bustan.**
- 4. A small mosque in Kafr Abd al-Aziz.**

Three Jami' mosques and a smaller mosque were then located on the island. These mosques were evenly distributed in relation to the area of the island and their number was more than adequate to serve the population of the island. Oddly enough,



it is the small mosque of Kafr Abd al-Aziz<sup>1</sup> which seems to have been frequented by the population of Kafr Abd al-Aziz active in the cultivation of the land (see map 2).

### 3. II. The Roda palace:-

The map shows only one palace (Roda palace), which was located on the western bank of Roda, opposite Fustat (see map 2). A closer look at the map reveals that a small pier was located near the palace. It must have been built so that the owner of the palace would not have to walk to his property, but could instead travel by boat from the mainland. This is all we know about the palace, as we do not know who owned it, or when it was built. Most probably it was the palace which al-Ghuri had built.

However, it is surprising that the map shows only one palace on Roda as previous sources tended to refer to Roda as a residential site for the elite. Had other palaces really been built there? And if so, what had become of them at the time of the French invasion? Had their owners moved to Bulaq or al-Khalig? Unfortunately, these questions may not be answered in the light of sources examined up to this point.

### 3. III. The Nilometer :-

The *Description* provides detailed drawings of the Nilometer's structure and of the inscriptions<sup>2</sup> it bears, as well as a description of it by the author (Marcel)<sup>3</sup>. The Nilometer is the only structure that can accurately be located, as it still stands today.

---

<sup>1</sup>The Kafr may have achieved its name from al-Qadi (Judge) Fakhr al-Din Abu Muhammed Ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Qadi al-Qudah who was a teacher of al-Taqauiyya school (see chapter 1, p. 14)

<sup>2</sup>Description, *Etat moderne* II (2), pp. 121-268.

<sup>3</sup>Description, *Etat moderne* II (2), pp. 156-158, 184-198.



We also know that the French studied it extensively and eventually restored it<sup>1</sup> (see map 2, plate 1).

### 3. IV. The residential area :-

The map points to only one residential area, located in Kafr 'Abd al-'Aziz. We can see that it was quite small, but that it had its own mosque, with most of the main roads of the island passing by it. Because of its nearness to the Fustat bridge, this Kafr became the most active node of residential and urban expansion on Roda (see map 2, fig. 2.C).

Again we are faced with conflicting information as the *Description* contradicts earlier accounts by al-Maqrizi. What happened to the population that al-Maqrizi referred to<sup>2</sup>? Surely, if the map is more trustworthy than earlier written material; should we assume, then, that al-Maqrizi exaggerated? Or should we conclude that the population he referred to had, by 1218H/1803AD, moved due to the transfer of Cairo's main port from Fustat to al-Maqs, and then to Bulaq. While it is impossible to answer any of these questions accurately, we do know that such a large population as that described by al-Maqrizi could not have disappeared without leaving a trace of its existence on the island. Since the *Description* map shows no such trace, it is safe to assume that the island did not include, at any time, an extensive residential area. Moreover, we can assume that the Kafr of Abd al-Aziz and the Kafr of Qaytbay were the only likely locations to include residential areas.

<sup>1</sup> Al-Gabarti also refers to a renovation of the Nilometer done in the same year but was unfinished by the French. (Al- Gabarti, part 5, P. 237).

<sup>2</sup> Al-Maqrizi, II, p. 183.



### 3. V. Ruins of al-Miqias :-

The map of the *Description de l'Egypte* referred to the "Ruines du Miqias", on the west bank (see map 2). A close look at the map reveals that the author was referring to the ruins of the western gate and of the walls of the old fortress. The map shows the ruins of eleven, unevenly spaced, towers. It also shows the remains of the old gate, a recess in the walls which defended the door to the fortress. This, in turn, provides information about the borders of the old fortress. Indeed, even though there is no trace of fortress ruins on the eastern side of Rod<sup>1</sup>a, knowing the location and the line of the western walls and with the help of drawings showing the remains of the eastern walls allows us to venture an intelligent guess as to where the borders of the fortress lay (see map 2, plate 3D, 3E, for the location of the fortress see fig 2A).

### 3. VI. Mills on the island :-

The French map shows an interesting phenomenon: the presence of a large number of mills on Roda (see map 2), one of which is located on the northern tip of the island. This mill is the only one referred to as *Moulin a vent* (windmill), while the other mills are referred to only as *moulin* (mill)<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, according to the map the windmill was strangely positioned in the water, as if it acted as a landmark or symbol. Most probably, this mill was constructed by the French to mark their presence on the island and in Cairo to every passing ship on the Nile. The rest of the mills were

---

<sup>1</sup>The drawings were published later in Denon, Dominique Vivant. *Voyage Dans La Basse et La Haute Egypte*, Institute Francais d'Archeologie Orientale du Caire, 1988.

<sup>2</sup>Description, Planches, I, pl. 16



all located on the roads overlooking the Nile, namely the road of *Gemmyz al-'Abd* or *Rue du sycamore*<sup>1</sup> (Sycamore road) as referred to in the French map, and the road opposite the Fustat bank.

Why such a number of mills on the island? Possibly, Roda's geographical position between Fustat and Giza once more gave it importance, this time in a commercial sense, for the milling of grain coming from Giza's agricultural land. This is supported by the fact that the mills overlooking the Fustat bank all had boat landings, indicating that the grains was transported by boat from the mills to the mainland. The map also shows that a *Swaiqat al-qamh* ' (small wheat market) (see map 2) was located opposite the island's southwest bank. Thus, it seems that the wheat came from Giza to the mills of Roda and after being milled, crossed the Nile to the wheat market in Fustat. It turns out that wheat coming from Giza and from other areas of Egypt could easily be transported to Roda as the island not only dominated the road from Giza to Cairo, but the Nile traffic as well. As such, Roda was a very appropriate place for constructing the mills.

#### 4. Roads of the island :-

The circuit of roads on the island can be divided into two groups. First is the main road crossing the island and connecting Fustat to Giza. The road can be seen to start by the Fustat bridge, cuts the island to the road of *Gemmayz al-Abd*, which runs by the Roda bank opposite Giza, towards the Nilometer and the Giza bridge (see map 2, plate 3A). *Gemmayz al-Abd* Road, "*Rue du sycamore*", was the only road on the

---

<sup>1</sup>The map gives the two names to the street which are the Arabic name and the French translation of it.



island named on the map. Since Maqrizi also mentioned a road believed to be the same one<sup>1</sup>, we know the significance of the road as a vibrant axis of movement on the island.

The second group of roads are those connecting different parts of the island. These are four nearly parallel roads going the length of the island from Misr al-Qadima bridge to nearly reach the Nilometer, with the two bridges acting as imaginary extensions (see map 2). These roads intersect with several secondary roads, which run nearly perpendicular to them and cut the width of the island, thus creating a random net of roads. This net of roads allowed easy movement from one part of Roda to another.

An analysis of the two groups of roads allows us to identify the axis of movement through and inside the island. This axis seems to have never initiated urban development, as was common in Cairo, acting only as an axis of movement. This may be due to two factors: one is that traffic was never sufficient on these roads to trigger an urban expansion; the other is that nobody had wished to live there immediately before the French invasion. Minor expansion did occur in the Kafr Abd al-Aziz, but our information does not explain why this was the case.

## 5. The two bridges leading to Roda:-

The analysis of Roda's bridges is vital to understanding the development of the island as these bridges provided the only access to and from the island (see map 2, plate 2A). The map provides the exact location of the two bridges, with the Fustat bridge being referred to as *pont de bateaux* (the boat bridge), and the Giza bridge as *pont volant* (the floating bridge). The *Description* tells us that the French built the two

---

<sup>1</sup> Al-Maqrizi, II, p. 184.



bridges during the French occupation<sup>1</sup>. Also, we know from Maqrizi's account that two similar bridges were present long before the French Expedition. As mentioned before, the previous bridges might have been destroyed by the Egyptians in order to hinder the French army, or as an act of resistance. Our problem lies in identifying the exact location of the older bridges.

The location of the old Giza bridge is easy to identify as it probably lay in the same place as the new bridge. This can be deduced from looking at the Giza map, on which there is only one possible place for the bridge (see map 18). However, we face a different problem when trying to locate the smaller but more important Fustat bridge. This bridge shows the relationship between the island and Cairo, the capital. From al-Maqrizi's account<sup>2</sup>, we know that al-Sultan al-Salih used the bridge to reach his royal fortress on the island. Therefore, the bridge could not have gone directly inside the fortress, but must have been located nearby so that the Sultan did not have to ride a long distance to his fortress. This, as well as knowing the location of the fortress, helps us to roughly locate and position the old Fustat bridge (see map 18).

The information derived from the various written sources, drawings, and maps gives us a better view of the cardinal problems affecting Roda until the end of the Ottoman period. Our quantum advance in understanding, analyzing and tracing the urban evolution of Roda, one giving a nearly unobstructed picture of the island, comes from the French map. Moreover, the drawings published in the *Description* and other publications, fill the gaps which prevented a precise understanding of Roda at that

---

<sup>1</sup>Description, Etat moderne II (2), pp. 121-268.

<sup>2</sup>Al-Maqrizi, I, p. 367.



time; in turn these permit a somewhat keener understanding of Roda in the previous periods.

From this information, we conclude that the expansion of domestic activity on the island was random. Whereas previous sources referred to the island as a well populated area, the French map, combined with further analysis of the sources, indicates that reality was somewhat different from what we first presumed. Roda was growing steadily, but never to the scale hinted at in earlier sources.

Also worthy of noting is the presence of an Ottoman mosque, the mosque of 'Abdin Bek also known as mosque of *Sidi al-Ruwayish*<sup>1</sup>, on the Fustat bank opposite al-Miqias (see plate 14A). The mosque still stands today. This is the only Ottoman mosque in the whole area of Misr al-Qadima so we can safely assume that this location was of no particular importance except for its nearness to the sacred Miqias and Miqias mosque.

### **Roda contained at least three nodes of domestic expansion:-**

Node (A), accounted for by Ibn Zahira, was situated on the eastern bank of Roda, opposite the houses of Fustat. While we cannot precisely establish the limits of this nucleus, we can estimate it to be ten to fifteen houses in extent. This figure appears reasonable given the complete disappearance of that node by the time the French map was drawn. This node was the common expansion from Misr al-Qadima since the previous epochs.

---

<sup>1</sup>The French and the later Survey of Egypt maps show its exact location. The Survey dates it to 1071H/1660AD. (under the number of 524)



Node (B) could be found on the western bank, opposite node (A). It was mentioned by Ibn Iyas when he accounted for the rise of the Nile and how the resulting currents disintegrated the western bank, destroying the well built houses of Roda. This node must have been located on the northern half of the western bank. Most certainly, the destroyed houses belonged to Kafr Abd al-Aziz, located near the Nile as the southern part of the western bank, in the Miqias zone, was arguably never a part of the urbanization process.

Node (C) would have been the smallest. Differing from the other nodes, it was not located on the Nile bank, but rather at the center of Roda. It was located beside the mosque of Qaytbay, where it was known as the Kafr of Qaytbay.

These three nodes had been disintegrating since the beginning of the decline of the city as a whole due to plagues and famines. By the time of the French invasion, node (A) had completely disappeared while that of Kafr Qaytbay, node (C), had little but toponomical importance. The only node still active, despite the overall decline of Fustat and Roda, was that of Kafr Abd al-Aziz. Why this particular node survived is not clear.

As for the other two nodes, the main reason for their erosion was the Nile. Just as shortage of water was stopping the expansion of the city (Greater Cairo) from the north, south and east, it was overabundance of water that stopped its expansion towards Roda. Lack of control over the Nile made building in Roda unsafe unless houses were built in the center of the island, which was apparently undesirable given that it precluded the view of the Nile. Moreover, the only crossing to the island was via the two old bridges, which must have been poorly maintained by the end of the



eighteenth century. This meant that living on the island was not congenial to someone who had to commute to Fustat or Giza on a daily basis. Furthermore, half of the island being devoted to the sacred area of the Miqias, where the Sultan's picnics and parties would take place, must have made it inconvenient to live there. Finally, the gradual development of Fustat and Giza as the focus of the neighboring urban areas was another reason for abandoning Roda.

Despite this, Roda remained attached to the city for two reasons: its cultural status, brought about by the Miqias, the celebration of the rise of the Nile, and the opening of the Khalig al-Nasri; and its geographical importance as a link between Cairo and Giza. Those two factors remained important from the beginning of the Islamic period until the French occupation.

At this point, we begin to understand the location of most activities on the island. The next step is to draft our own map of Roda at the end of the Bahri Mamluk period, drawing from the facts outlined so far and using the French map as a starting point. A contour analysis would allow us to position the areas most likely to include urban activity. Based on the French map, we can draft a map of the older period with considerable accuracy (see map 18).



• **Muhammad Ali (Phase I) :-**  
**1220H/1805AD - 1264H/1848AD**

After Khair Bek, there was no wali strong and determined enough to stay long in control of Egypt. Any wali's reign was short lived either due to the attempts by the internal powers to overthrow him, or to the policy of the Porte, not allowing any wali to rule Egypt for any length of time to ensure that he would not pose a threat to this precious part of the Ottoman empire. However, all this changed when Muhammad 'Ali came to power. Muhammad 'Ali came to Egypt as the leader of an Albanian legion<sup>1</sup>, assisting the Ottoman pasha to maintain his military power against the Mamluks, the only threat to the Porte in Egypt at the time.

When Muhammad 'Ali reached Egypt there were two internal powers competing to control Egypt's domestic affairs: the Mamluk amirs and the Ottoman wali (pasha). Each of the two powers' prime objective was to maximize its revenue through taxes and looting. At the time, all soldiers residing in Egypt were foreigners, or Mamluks of foreign origin. These soldiers were mercenaries, and their loyalty could only be ensured through money. Those mercenaries were also the only means through which Amirs or pashas were able to sustain political power. For this reason, the Turkish pasha and the Mamluk amirs were continuously struggling over control of financial resources in Egypt<sup>2</sup>.

In the meantime, Egypt's economy was worsening at alarming rate. The *fellahin* (the farmers) no longer able to afford the high taxes, were neglecting their

<sup>1</sup> Anon. *Muhammad 'Ali Siratuh Wa A'maluh*, Dar Al-Hilal, 1923, p.19 (Hereinafter Muhammad 'Ali).

<sup>2</sup> Marsot, Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid. *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 41. [Hereinafter Marsot]



lands and running away with the result that political powers were in turn unable to pay their mercenaries, resulting in great instability worsened by the soldiers' revolt.

At the time of Muhammad 'Ali's arrival Egypt was torn between *Khusrau pasha*, the Ottoman wali appointed by the Porte, and *al-Bardisi*, the leader of the Mamluk amirs. Muhammad 'Ali quickly assessed the weakness and instability of the present regime, and immediately set out to take control of Egypt. His main assets were his own shrewdness and the loyalty of his Albanian legion.

Shortly after his arrival, Muhammad 'Ali established himself as one of the most powerful men in Egypt. Through a series of brilliant schemes, he paved his way to the top, eliminating all obstacles in his path. His success was partly due to his ability to rally people's loyalty and support for his schemes. He was known for lending assistance whenever he was asked for it, thus gaining the people's love and the 'ulama's support.

Muhammad 'Ali was also acutely aware of a covert political struggle between foreign powers over the control Egypt. Following the French invasion, England and France both wished to retain power over this new "pseudo-colony" through indirect support of one of the internal powers, with France supporting the Ottoman Sultan, while England was apt to support the Mamluks in its attempt to overthrow the ruling Sultan. Muhammad 'Ali foresaw that the two European powers were even also preparing a direct invasion of Egypt. Egypt had become a pawn in the Europeans' struggle for supremacy.

On the fourteenth of May 1220H/1805AD, Muhammad 'Ali's efforts were rewarded when the 'ulama asked him to oust Khurshid pasha, the present wali, and to



take control of Egypt<sup>1</sup>. For the first time, the Egyptian people were to appoint a ruler. However, Muhammad 'Ali realized the importance of maintaining positive relations with the Porte; through bribes and with the assistance of France, through the French council in Istanbul, he secured the Porte's approval for his appointment. On the seventeenth of July of the same year, an Ottoman ship came carrying the orders for Muhammad 'Ali's appointment as ruler of Egypt. On the third of August 1220H/ 1805AD<sup>2</sup>, Khurshid pasha descended from the citadel to Bulaq, where the Ottoman ship was waiting to take him back to Turkey, signaling a new reign in Egypt<sup>3</sup>. Despite this change of power, Egypt remained a part of the Ottoman empire<sup>4</sup>.

Having achieved his aim, Muhammad 'Ali now faced the problem of maintaining his position as ruler of Egypt<sup>5</sup>. He faced several difficulties: first, the Porte's policy of appointing walis for only one year; second, the secret and public British efforts to overthrow him by supporting the Mamluks; third, his army's shifting loyalties and the soldiers' tendency to revolt; fourth, the Mamluk elite, his competitors and the British pawns, who were trying to overthrow him from Egypt's throne; and fifth Egypt's near bankruptcy, which compelled him to raise taxes, a move likely to turn the populace against him.

The threat posed by the Porte's policy materialized on June 1221H/ 1806AD, when an Ottoman ship, carrying 3000 soldiers, arrived carrying Musa Pasha, the designated successor to Muhammad 'Ali<sup>6</sup>. However, Muhammad 'Ali, assisted by the French, managed to stay in power by bribing the Porte and manipulating the soldiers by

---

<sup>1</sup>Marsot, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup>Marsot, pp. 49-50.

<sup>3</sup>Marsot, see chapter 3, pp. 36-60.

<sup>4</sup>Muhammad 'Ali, pp. 58-62.

<sup>5</sup>Marsot, p. 58.

<sup>6</sup>Marsot, p. 55.



threatening not to pay their wages. He did this every year until he became the indisputable ruler of Egypt<sup>1</sup>.

With regards to the foreign powers struggle over Egypt, Muhammad 'Ali, chose to ally himself to France. As a result, the British tried to overthrow him by striking an alliance with the Mamluks; when this approach proved fruitless, they staged an invasion of Egypt. On the 17th of March, 1222H/1807AD, the British army, under the leadership of General Frazer, reached Alexandria, landing in *al-'Agami* area<sup>2</sup>. The army took Alexandria without facing any resistance and marched on to *Rashid* (Rosetta), seizing it on the 29th of the same month, again without any resistance. But once inside the city of *Rashid*, the army was ambushed by the local wali's army from among the inhabitants of the city. The British army was severely defeated and driven out of the city.

By then, the people of Egypt were refusing to be ruled by non-Muslim foreigners, and together with Muhammad 'Ali's armies were ready to expel the invading British army. On the 22nd of April, the Egyptian and British armies engaged in a fierce fight ending in the British army's defeat and retreat to *Abu Qir*, where their ships were waiting. From there, they fled to their headquarters in Alexandria to negotiate their evacuation from Egypt. After Muhammad 'Ali had returned the soldiers he held captive, the British army left on September 14, 1222H/1807AD<sup>3</sup>. By defeating the British army on Egyptian soil, Muhammad 'Ali had in fact eradicated the threat not only of British control over Egypt but of any foreign power over Egyptian land<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup>Muhammad 'Ali, pp. 66-71 see also Marsot, p. 42-43.

<sup>2</sup>Marsot, pp. 61-64.

<sup>3</sup>Muhammad 'Ali, pp. 74-79.

<sup>4</sup>Marsot, p. 62.



The danger would now come from within Egypt, in the form of plots devised by mercenary soldiers and Mamluk Amirs.

The mercenary soldiers of Muhammad 'Ali's army were primarily interested in increasing their personal fortune through receiving bribes or looting. However, this behavior was at odds with the course which Muhammad 'Ali had chosen for Egypt<sup>1</sup>. Muhammad 'Ali faced three problems with regard to his soldiers: their tendency to revolt against him; their shifting loyalty; and their reluctance to adopt the more disciplined style of the European armies which combined with fierceness would make them invincible. Muhammad 'Ali needed such a loyal and well organized army in order to fulfill his ambition. After an unsuccessful revolt, aimed at overthrowing him, he knew without a doubt that his own soldiers were more of an obstacle than an asset in achieving his goal. However, they were, for the time being, his only way of sustaining power over Egypt, and he would have to keep them until he could find another option.

Muhammad 'Ali knew that the answer lied in enlisting the people of Egypt in a new army. On July 1231H/1816AD, he ordered the foundation of a military academy in which new soldiers could be trained; but the existing army revolted against this measure and the academy had to temporarily closed. It reopened in 1235H/1820AD<sup>2</sup>. The new academy was located in Aswan and recruited its students through the *al-Qur'a* (military conscription). Foreign professors, mainly French, were hired as instructors in order to create an Egyptian army resembling that of the foreign powers.

After securing his position as undisputed leader, and with a new army to back him, Muhammad 'Ali executed the last phase of his plan to eliminate the mercenary leaders. A perfect opportunity arose when the Ottoman Sultan ordered him to send his

---

<sup>1</sup>Marsot, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup>Muhammad 'Ali, pp. 81-85.



armies to the *Hijaz* to subdue the *Wahhabi* revolt. He sent the mercenary soldiers who opposed him<sup>1</sup>; those who returned, he then sent to the Sudan to fight. In a clever move, he sent his sons, first *Tusun* and then *Ibrahim* as leaders of the army; sure of their loyalty, he confided his to them, ensuring that they would carry out his plans on his behalf.

As for the Mamluk threat, Muhammad 'Ali fought their leaders openly. However, this internal war was impoverishing Egypt and it became imperative for Muhammad 'Ali to get rid of them<sup>2</sup>, once and for all. The perfect opportunity presented itself on March 1226H/1811AD, in a time of truce with the Mamluks, when Egypt was celebrating the departure of the Egyptian army for the *Hijaz*. Muhammad 'Ali invited the Mamluk Amirs to attend the celebrations held at the Citadel. After the celebrations, as the Mamluk Amirs were departing, Muhammad 'Ali ordered them killed. They all died in what is known now as the Citadel massacre<sup>3</sup>. Muhammad 'Ali was now the uncontested ruler of Egypt.

Wasting no time, Muhammad 'Ali entered the second phase of his plan aimed at rebuilding Egypt and restore its strength and prosperity. At this point, Egypt was near bankruptcy<sup>4</sup>. Muhammad 'Ali increased taxes and went through the old accounts of the *muhtasibs*, but these were only temporary measures, and could not solve the problem in the long run. More permanent measures came when Muhammad 'Ali

---

<sup>1</sup>Muhammad 'Ali, p.84.

<sup>2</sup>Marsot, p. 71.

<sup>3</sup>Muhammad 'Ali, pp. 95-99 see also Marsot, p. 72.

<sup>4</sup>Marsot, p. 54.



monopolized agriculture and commerce, becoming the sole land owner and trader in Egypt. He renovated and expanded the irrigation system which raised the standards of profits yielded by the cultivated lands. He also appropriated half of the *awqaf* revenues, taking all of it later, when he appointed himself *Nazir Awqaf* of Egypt<sup>1</sup>.

Next, Muhammad 'Ali initiated a long term plan with three objectives in mind. First, he sent an army south to the Sudan, thus expanding the resources available to Egypt. Second, he established a crude educational system to form the different professions, something he basically needed in order to maintain the newly acquired resources. As he had done in the military academy, he hired foreign professors to train experts in engineering, medicine, languages for translation purpose,...etc. But what started as a crude enterprise eventually became a successful and advanced educational system, as the most brilliant students were sent abroad on scholarship to continue their studies and assume teaching positions upon their return to Egypt<sup>2</sup>. Third, Muhammad 'Ali also initiated administrative changes creating several councils and dividing the administration among them; Still, these administrative bodies were only given consultative powers, and all final decisions rested with the leader of the country.

All of Muhammad 'Ali's modernization plans were very successful, due mainly to the fact that he had established political stability. As a result, Egypt, became a very strong and capable country. Education was reaching more people, a privilege that had not been present before. The graduates of the Egyptian military academy, *Nizam Jadid* (new model army), succeeded in building a reputable, strong army, defeating every

---

<sup>1</sup>Marsot, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup>Graduates of the new established schools formed a brand new class, *Afandiya* (intelligentsia). At the end of the nineteenth century, they represented the future professional classes as well as the government bureaucracy. (Sonbol, Amira al-Azhary, *The Creation Of The Medical Profession In Egypt, 1800-1922*, Syracuse University Press, 1991, p.29. [Hereinafter Sonbol] )



army that fought it. Egypt became more stable as no foreign power, including France, Britain or the Ottoman Empire, was willing to confront Muhammad 'Ali.

However, we should note that even though Egypt had become a stronger political force, the standard of living remained low. Poverty was rampant as Egyptian people still cultivated the land and worked for minimal wages. Nevertheless, Egypt advanced toward where Muhammad 'Ali had wanted it to be.

The plague, a constant visitor of Egypt by now added to Muhammad 'Ali's problems. We know that it had attacked Egypt in 1198H/1783AD, 1199H/1784AD accompanied by the smallpox and by famines. By 1199H/1784AD the population of Egypt had decreased by one fifth. The plague attacked again in 1206H/1791AD, claiming one third of the population<sup>1</sup>. It came again during Muhammad 'Ali's reign, in 1239H/1824AD, 1247H/1831AD, 1257H/1841AD and again in 1267H/1851AD. Cholera also appeared in Egypt in the summer of 1246H/1831AD and returned in 1264H/1848AD, 1266H/1850AD and 1267H/1851AD. These successive epidemics decimated the population, garnering close to 250,000 victims<sup>2</sup>. Though Muhammad 'Ali later established a Sanitation Committee and a School of Medicine, in order to fight the epidemics, Egypt remained haunted by the attacks. Most probably these were due to the poor hygiene practices of the time, as well as to the contaminated drinking water supplies<sup>3</sup>.

With all these reforms, Muhammad 'Ali did not seriously work on the development of Cairo until the last few years of his reign, after an unsuccessful campaign to conquer Istanbul, and start his own empire. Upon the defeat of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Abu Lughod, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Sonbol, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Abu Lughod, p. 87.



Ottoman-Egyptian army in Greece, Muhammad 'Ali had sensed the weakening of the Ottoman empire, and sent his son Ibrahim to invade, first, Syria in 1246-49H/1830-33AD, and later, Anatolia. At the time, Muhammad 'Ali claimed that the Ottoman Sultan had become a pawn of Europe and had abandoned the Muslim heritage; as such he was unworthy of leading the Islamic world. Muhammad 'Ali's troops were successful, but due to the interference of Russian troops, the Egyptian army had to break its march. Still, the Ottoman Sultan, assisted by Britain and France, signed a treaty in *Kutahya*, granting Muhammad 'Ali ruling power over the Syrian provinces, and making the viceroyalty of Egypt a hereditary title which could be passed to Muhammad 'Ali's descendants. This is as far as Muhammad 'Ali would go in building an empire. Content with Egypt, Sudan, and Syria Muhammad 'Ali set to run the small empire that he had acquired.

Back in Cairo, Muhammad 'Ali had always been interested in Bulaq and his royal palaces, not sparing any expense in maintaining them. He was also interested in expanding the city and started work on several other projects. He constructed his royal palace in *Shubra* in 1223H/1808AD (see plate 5A), and built a road from it to *al-Azbakiyya*. The road, flanked by sycamore trees, would later become the most important artery of *Shubra* (see map 8, plate 5B). Muhammad 'Ali also built other palaces in Bulaq and *Azbakiyya*, and extensively renovated the Citadel. For this, he ruthlessly cleared a large portion of the old walls and buildings of the Citadel, rebuilt the walls in the European style and added a palace and a mosque. The mosque's distinct Ottoman style, underscored by its high, pencil-shaped minarets rising and dominating Cairo, was probably designed as a symbol of Muhammad 'Ali's power<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Abu Lughod, pp. 96-97; see also Al-Asad, Mohammed, "The Mosque of Muhammad 'Ali in Cairo", *Muqarnas*, Vol. 9, 1992, pp. 39-56.



Unlike his plans to modernize Egypt, the development of Cairo was never part of a comprehensive scheme. It was randomly accomplished, upgrading areas of Cairo which needed improvement. Only in Bulaq can we find a conscious pattern of development. Bulaq, aided by the presence of Muhammad 'Ali's naval arsenal<sup>1</sup> and docks, flourished rapidly becoming the byport of Egypt. Muhammad 'Ali realized its strategic importance and established several factories there. In 1232H/1818AD, two factories were opened in Bulaq, one manufacturing wool and the other cotton textiles. In 1235H/1820AD, they were joined by Egypt's first iron foundry. Even the National Press was eventually established there. Moreover, Bulaq housed the Engineering School, the second school established by Muhammad 'Ali after the Military Academy. Bulaq was turning into the most important industrial zone of Egypt, and undoubtedly, the most important part of Cairo. All this activity, as well as the nearness of the royal *Shubra* palace, encouraged the development of an elite area which flourished between *Shubra* and Bulaq. As it was, the *Azbakiyyia*, *Shubra* and Bulaq triangle became the most active urban expanding part of the city in terms of urban expansion.

Muhammad 'Ali also set out to clean up the city and fill in the old ponds and swamps. He had the buildings of the old city swept dusted and. He filled the lake of Ratli, and the lake of *Azabakiyyia*, which was now the formal garden of *al-Azbakiyyia* (see map 8). But despite the clean up, these old streets did not facilitate the flow of traffic through Cairo. So Muhammad 'Ali ordered a new council, *Majlis Tanzim al-*

---

<sup>1</sup>When Muhammad 'Ali was ordered to sent an army to fight the *Wahabiyis*, he wanted to establish a naval force to help transfer the troops to *Hijaz* and fulfill his coming aims of a strong Egypt. He bought everything he needed from Turkey, and established two arsenals in Egypt, the first in *Bulaq* and the second in *Suez*. The main parts, if not all were made in Bulaq arsenal, and then numbered. The next step was to send the parts to the Suez shipyard, by camel, to be assembled and launched to sea, thus forming the Egyptian naval force (Muhammad 'Ali, p. 111).



*Mahrussa*<sup>1</sup>, to provide plans to establish several new arteries which would ease the city's traffic problems. Among those streets were the Muhammad 'Ali street and the Muski street. Unfortunately, neither of these ambitiously conceived arteries were destined for completion during Muhammad 'Ali's lifetime.

As for the southward portion of the city, two royal palaces were constructed there, *Qasr al-Dubbara*, and *Qasr al-'Ali* (in what is now Garden City, see map 8). He also converted *al-Qasr al-'Aini* into a medical school administered by Clot Bek.

Misr al-Qadima<sup>2</sup>, no longer part of the center of activity, was now mainly populated by the less attractive industries and a reviving Christian community<sup>3</sup>. The Misr al-Qadima area had been largely abandoned, its population dwindling to a mere 4000 inhabitants<sup>4</sup>. The separate, southern part was linked to the city by a tentative system of unpaved roads.

As for Roda island, our main subject, we have no records of the changes it may have undergone during the reign of Muhammad 'Ali. But we have enough information about the general state of the city to make an educated guess. The *Khalig al-Nasri* as still used and celebrated, though in a smaller scale, the Nilometer's use was limited as Muhammad 'Ali had monopolized the land and was no longer collecting taxes, deriving revenue from the sale of the crops instead. A drawing by David Roberts shows us that the Miqias by then had lost its dome (see plate 8B). As discussed above, the urbanistically active part of the city had moved north, far away from Roda. In

---

<sup>1</sup>*Al-Mahrusa*, means the guarded. This is an old name of Cairo from the time of *Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi* when he surrounded the city with walls to include it and the citadel inside the same fortifications.

<sup>2</sup>*Misr al-Qadima* was now several miles to the south, separated from the bulk of the city by rubble and swamps. It was more like a village than a district of the same city. However that does not mean that there was any alteration of the district.

<sup>3</sup>Abu Lughod, p. 97.

<sup>4</sup>Lane, Edward William, *Cairo Fifty Years Ago*, London, 1896, p. 139.



addition, and contrary to his predecessors, Muhammad 'Ali built his vacation home on the island of Bulaq, *al-Jazirah*. We may conclude, then, that Roda had lost what little importance it may have had in the past. However, its decline was not as severe as that of Misr al-Qadima. The island still acted as a link between Giza and Cairo, with the old boat bridges maintaining their old location. Although the mills were transferred to Bulaq, following the route of the grain, we know that most of the granaries were still located in Misr al-Qadima; but we cannot assume that the mills of Roda were still active, serving Fustat and Giza.

Still, Roda was a neglected area, with no hope of being revived in the near future. Only a great increase in population, accompanied by the control of the Nile, would give the long forgotten Roda the boost it needed. Until then, the island had no hope of being included in urban development.

#### • Ibrahim Pasha (1264/1848):-

In 1265H/1848AD, when Muhammad 'Ali's physical and mental abilities were declining and were affecting his ability to rule effectively, Ibrahim Pasha succeeded him to the throne of Egypt, but ruled for less than six months as he died in 1265H/1848AD. Ibrahim Pasha was more of a partner in Muhammad 'Ali's aims as he was the leader of the Egyptian army who nearly brought victory in every battle he fought. Due to his very short reign, Ibrahim was always discussed, by the sources, more as the army leader than the ruling Pasha..

It is surprising then, that Ibrahim Pasha was the one responsible for the first accountable urban activity in Roda and Fustat, since the beginning of the Ottoman



reign. Ibrahim Pasha built al-Qasr al-‘Ali (the high palace), in the location now occupied by Garden City. Roda island was turned into a botanical garden designed in 1245H/1830’s for Ibrahim Pasha by a Scotch horticulturist<sup>1</sup>. From later maps, we know that this garden was located in the al-Miqias area of the island. Mostyn, for one, mentions that: “.....Roda island was completely transformed by Ibrahim’s English gardeners.....” adding that “.....the beautiful banyan trees that fill the gardens of *al-Manial* palace (young Muhammad ‘Ali’s palace), are a fitting testament to Ibrahim’s passion for trees....”<sup>2</sup>. It not clear whether the garden occupied the whole island or whether it only occupied the area of al- Miqias. The two possibilities do not really contradict each other, as it is possible that most of the free land of the island was made into a garden, with the Miqias part more delicately planned, leaving the small populated areas untouched, or he may have planted several gardens in the island with Miqias garden the most elaborate. However, as we can not verify any of the two theories, we must abide by a later source to clear this circumstance. Ibrahim left all of the active city to rediscover the old south part and to invest his time and money on reviving parts of it for his own use. It may have been due to the long fights that he was involved in combined with his hatred for the political life, being a soldier and an army leader, that he preferred staying away of the city, hence started to build al-Qasr al-‘Ali palace and the Roda garden.

---

<sup>1</sup> Abu Lughod, p.97. There is also an account of the gardens telling us that by 1900, only a few trees were left of the Roda Gardens planted by Ibrahim pasha (Anon. *Cairo And Its Environs*, Hachette & company, 1910).

<sup>2</sup>Mostyn, Trevor. *Egypt’s Belle Epoque Cairo 1869-1952*, London, 1989, p. 37.



• ‘Abbas Hilmi I (1264H/1848AD-1270H/1854AD):-

‘Abbas Hilmi I was the grandson of Muhammad ‘Ali by his eldest son, Ahmad Tusun. Ahmed Tusun died, in 1229H/1814AD, leaving the task of raising his son, ‘Abbas, to Muhammad ‘Ali. ‘Abbas was trained in the military school of *al-Khanqa*, to serve later in the army under the command of his uncle Ibrahim. In 1255H/1839, when Muhammad ‘Ali went to Sudan, ‘Abbas was appointed General Governor of Egypt; also, prior to Muhammad ‘Ali’s death, in 1265H/1848AD, ‘Abbas was the Governor of Cairo<sup>1</sup>. After the death of Muhammad ‘Ali, Ibrahim Pasha exiled ‘Abbas to the *Hijaz*<sup>2</sup>. Upon Ibrahim’s death, ‘Abbas returned to succeed Ibrahim as Pasha of Egypt<sup>3</sup>.

‘Abbas never trusted the French and went so far as to deport a great number of them<sup>4</sup>. As a consequence, his reign saw the first alliances with Britain with ‘Abbas granting Britain authorization to build a railway between Alexandria and Suez. The agreement stipulated that the line could not directly link Alexandria and Suez but rather, that it should be constructed in two separate segments, the first between Alexandria and Cairo, and the second between Cairo and Suez. This agreement in effect counteracted the French Suez Canal project, and, in return, Britain would support Egyptian autonomy from the Porte<sup>5</sup>. The first segment of the railway was

<sup>1</sup> Sami, Amin. *Taqwim al-Nil*, III, part 1, Cairo, 1936, p.4. [Hereinafter Sami Amin]

<sup>2</sup> Audouard, Olympe. *Les Mysteres De L’Egypte Devoiles*, Paris, 1865, p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> Abbas’s succession to the throne of Egypt was granted because of the *Firman* of hereditary vicerealty granted to Muhammad ‘Ali by the Ottoman Sultan ‘Abd al-Majid in 1257H/1841AD. This *Firman* conferred the right of succession on the eldest prince of Muhammad ‘Ali’s family. With ‘Abbas older than Muhammad ‘Ali’s son Sa’id, he was the rightful prince to succeed Ibrahim (Sami Amin, III, Vol. 1, p. 3-10)

<sup>4</sup> Sami Amin, III, part 1, p. 41.

<sup>5</sup> Schoelcher, V. *L’Egypte En 1845*, Paris, 1864, pp. 76-77



completed in 1270H/1854AD, just after 'Abbas's death<sup>1</sup>. The trip between Alexandria and Cairo was considerably shortened, from four days to a matter of hours and significantly eased the access to Cairo. Cairo, which had been looking inward at the time of Muhammad 'Ali, was now stretching outward.

More important than the new railway, this period of 'Abbas's reign marked a shift in the policy maintained by the previous rulers distancing Egypt from Europe.

As his grandfather Muhammad 'Ali before him, 'Abbas I had a mania for palaces and sarays. He built *saray al-'Abbasiyya*<sup>2</sup>, as well as the palace of *al-Dar al-Bayda* (the white house) on the road to Suez, a palace on the *Banha* bank of the Nile<sup>3</sup>, and a palace in *Birkat al-Sab'*. Moreover, inside the city, he built three palaces: *Saray al-Hilmiyya*, *al-'Ataba al-Khadra* palace, and the *Khurunfish* palace in Bulaq<sup>4</sup>. In total, two Sarays and five palaces were constructed during 'Abbas I's reign, a dizzying number involving an enormous amount of money. However, 'Abbas was different from his predecessors, in that he was building all over Egypt, beyond the confines of the capital. He also, constructed many religious buildings, and founded

<sup>1</sup>The second phase of the British railway, between Cairo and Suez, was finished and opened in 1274H/1858AD but proved so poorly designed that it was abandoned ten years later (Abu Lughod, p. 99).

<sup>2</sup>The suburb of *al-Abbasiyah* was named after 'Abbas. After importing troops, he stationed them outside Cairo in the location of 'Abbasia. In 1265H/1849AD, he built them a series of Barracks on the desert edge along the route to the outlying villages of *Mattariah* and *Heliopolis*. Soon the area expanded and 'Abbas encouraging this development gave free land to whoever intended to build in the area. It soon included, beside the barracks, a hospital, a school, and 'Abbas's Saray (Abu Lughod, p.100). However after the death of 'Abbas, 'Abbasia was abandoned and left to ruins (Wilkinson. A Hand Book For Travelers In Egypt, London, 1867, p. 151). 'Abbas not only disagreed with his grandfather's policy of importing troops but also, disintegrated the schools built by Muhammad 'Ali by closing them and sending most of the teachers to Sudan. We also know that he closed the language school and gave the land to the project in the Shepherd Hotel (Al-Raf'i, Abd Al-Rahman. *Asr Isma'il*, Cairo, 1932, I, p. 21 see also Tamraz, Nihal, Nineteenth Century Domestic Architecture with 'Abbasiyya as a case study (Unpublished MA thesis, American University in Cairo), 1993 and Samy Amin, III, Vol. 1, p.21.)

<sup>3</sup>Sami Amin, III, Vol. 1, p. 42.

<sup>4</sup>Al-Khitat, I, p. 211.



two *Takiyyias* and a *Zawiyyia*<sup>1</sup>. 'Abbas continued the project of *Muski* street started by Muhammad 'Ali, but processing was slow and, by 1270H/1854AD, the street had only been extended to *Suq al-Nahasin*<sup>2</sup>. It is also worth noting that the first Shepherd Hotel (see plate 6B), a famous landmark of Cairo, was built during the reign of 'Abbas Pasha.

As previously mentioned, 'Abbas reign saw a shift in the foreign policy of Egypt in the form of a rapprochement to England. But in truth, nothing had really changed as Egypt was increasingly dependent on foreign aid. This resulted in a growing number of Europeans going to Egypt in search of profitable opportunities. European investments in Egypt were growing rapidly, but had not yet begun to interfere with the economy.

With regards to the development of the city, 'Abbas concentrated on *'Abbasiyyia* where we find a pattern of fast and unstoppable expansion. However, when considering the rest of his work, we find that he, like his grandfather, was mostly interested in palaces and Sarays. The only difference is that he was building royal residences outside of Cairo's limits; as some of the sources pointed out, his choices can hardly be explained.

Aside from *'Abbasiyyia*, very little expansion was taking place. As for Roda, again the sources say nothing. This would indicate nothing of importance was taking place in the southern part of the city, as Misr al-Qadima and Roda remained unchanged throughout the reign of 'Abbas Hilmi the first. However, it appears that Giza was growing steadily, which, in turn, would give a slight push to Roda.

<sup>1</sup>'Abbas the First founded *Tikiyyia Muhyi al-Din* in 1267H/1850AD, *Tikiyyia al-Naqshabandiyyia* Sufi order in 1268H/1851AD, a *Zawiyah* in Bualq, and the Mosque of *al-Sayyida Zaynab* in 1271H/1854AD (Denny, J. *Sommaires Des Archives Turc*, III, Cairo, 1930, p. 23 see also De Jong, F., *Turuq and Turuq Institution in the 19th Century Egypt*, London, 1978, p. 38)

<sup>2</sup>Al-Khitat, Ali, III, p. 83.



• **Sa'id Pasha (1270H/1854AD-1280H/1863AD):-**

'Abbas was assassinated by two of his servants in 1270H/1854AD, leaving the viceroyalty of Egypt to Sa'id, the son of Muhammad 'Ali<sup>1</sup>. Muhammad Sa'id Pasha was born in 1237H/1822AD and trained in the navy, later to become the General Commander of the Egyptian Navy. Sa'id maintained roughly the same building policies as his predecessors. However, his old friendship with Ferdinand de Lesseps, drove him to sign the concession to build the Suez Canal, a permission previously refused by Muhammad 'Ali and 'Abbas. This was the start of a gradual increase in the concessions granted to Europeans from then on.

Sa'id Pasha also finished the railway line between Cairo and Alexandria started at the time of 'Abbas<sup>2</sup>. As there were no bridges constructed over the Nile, the train had to cross via special boats that would move it from one bank to the other<sup>3</sup>. He also extended the rail line to reach Suez. The railway line in his reign linking Alexandria to Suez was open to the public in 1274H/1858AD, giving a much needed push to the city as everyone traveling the Alexandria -Suez line transited through Cairo<sup>4</sup>.

On the political level, Sa'id benefited from the full support of the French Empire, having allowed the French to complete the Suez Canal linking the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea. This allowed France to counter the British monopoly over the cape route. Obviously, Egypt's alliance with France renewed Britain's desire to overthrow the Egyptian ruler through the Porte. By agreeing to the

<sup>1</sup>Sami Amin, III, Vol. 1, pp. 74-75.

<sup>2</sup>Sami Amin, III, Vol. 1, p.41.

<sup>3</sup>Al-Raf'i, Abd Al-Rahman. 'Asr Isma'il, Cairo, 1932, I, p.33 [Hereinafter 'Asr Isma'il]. This may assist us in understanding the extent the problem over control of the Nile. Even the British engineers, the most experienced in railroads, had to transport the train by boats rather than build a bridge.

<sup>4</sup>'Asr Isma'il, I, p. 33.



building of the Suez Canal by the French, Sa'id literally painted himself into a corner, allowing England and France to interfere with the Egyptian policy, both at the external and internal levels. He also contracted a large loan from European banks, burdening Egypt with heavy interest payments, a move that eventually brought about the British invasion of Egypt<sup>1</sup>.

Sa'id also maintained the family trend of building palaces and Sarays, building *Qasr al-Nil* palace and barracks (see plate 6A), *al-Qal'a al-Sa'idiyya* in the vicinity of the barrage (which was completed during his reign), and *Saray al-Giza*, later rebuilt by the Khedive Isma'il. It appears that Sa'id was not interested in developing an urban area of his own, like Muhammad 'Ali's *Shubra* and 'Abbas's *'Abbasiyya*, most probably because he was preoccupied with Suez Canal which was draining Egypt's economy through the use of the *fellahin* as forced laborers, leaving the land unattended.

Discussing Roda, at this period, we need not speculate as we have in the reign of Sa'id our second map of Cairo<sup>2</sup> (the first: the map of the French *Description*). This map carries the date 1274H/ 1858AD (see map 3), and shows all of Cairo, including Roda and Giza. The map will settle the riddle of Ibrahim's garden on the island. It shows us the expansion of Fustat and Giza, and most important it will reveal the urban nodes existing on the island and the surrounding areas.

#### • Analysis of 1274H/1858AD map:-

As the map shows all Cairo, we can trace the development of the city through the last, unaccounted for, fifty years. Amazingly, the city borders were not changed; in

<sup>1</sup>Asr Isma'il, I, pp. 53-71.

<sup>2</sup>Plans de la ville du Caire et environs, Publie par W.Hammerschmidt, Au Caire, 1858.



fact, they are the same but this should not surprise us as we know that the epidemic attacks and the famines reduced the population of the city considerably thus stopping any expansion of the city. We can safely assume that the city shrank after the French invasion and when the population increased again the city re-expanded to reach its old borders, appearing unchanged after all of those years (see map 3).

Regarding Bulaq, with all the attention and expansion, encouraged by Muhammad 'Ali and accounted for by the sources, its borders appear the same with no change except for the naval arsenal, still existing in 1274H/1858AD, and located on the Nile bank to the south of Bulaq.

As for the Nile, in this fifty years, its borders were altered, the Nile branch between Roda and Giza was now wider, *al-Jazirah*, known as the island of Bulaq at that epoch, contracted in size. This change must have taken place due to the Nile currents. The vast change in the Nile bank through this fifty years indicates that the Nile's strong currents were uncontrolled at the time of the flood. However, with the barrage now complete, the Nile currents became a bit subdued. Astonishingly, the Roda banks were exactly the same which may be due to its location being tangent to the Nile currents taking away the currents strength while keeping the island intact and consistent (see map 3).

• **The map shows:-**

1. The Miqias and its garden.
2. *Saray Ibrahim Pasha*.
3. Several buildings scattered on the island.
4. Gardens.



5. *Al-Manial (Kafr Abd al-Aziz)*.

6. Cultivated land.

### 1. The Miqias:-

The Miqias as we know was unchanged as a building but the need for it ceased to exist (see plate 10B), since Muhammad 'Ali's monopoly agricultural taxes were not collected any more. However the Miqias lost most of the buildings beside it but retained its garden though larger and not likely to be having the name of the Miqias garden any longer (in fact the sources refers to it as Ibrahim's garden). We cannot be sure of the name of the garden but it is more agreeable to go with this assumption. The gardens were located in the same location but looking at their arrangement we find it was divided into two gardens: one with the normal garden pattern used at this epoch, while the other is of a very English style, most probably because it was done by the English gardeners of Ibrahim.

### 2. Saray Ibrahim Pasha:-

Saray Ibrahim is the most surprising information we uncover through this map. The sources never discussed a Saray built by Ibrahim in Roda, referring only to a garden while they never agreed on its location. Why was this Saray neglected and never discussed? The Saray was located in the middle of the island, on the western bank of Roda, facing Giza. It was surrounded by a garden from three sides with its western walls directly overlooking the Nile. The map refers to it as *Palais d'Ibrahim Pacha*. As it was, Ibrahim was responsible for the boost given to the island as his



Sarays and gardens would encourage the Egyptian aristocracy to build their palaces their as well.

### **3. Buildings scattered on the island:-**

We can divide these into two categories:

- a) Buildings with gardens, which are probably palaces.
- b) Buildings with no gardens and impossible to identify their use.

For the first category, we have eight palaces of different sizes with nothing as big as the Saray of Ibrahim. These buildings are scattered with no comprehensible pattern which does not surprise us, as, obviously, every palace owner wanted to choose a spot of his convenience with no other factor affecting his choice (see fig 3A).

But when we analyze the second category we find that all of them are located on the eastern bank overlooking the Nile, scattered with no pattern all over the eastern bank (beginning by al-Miqias and ending by gardens at the northern side of Roda).

However, the way these buildings and gardens are scattered indicates that the island was, once more, an elite island. In fact the map shows what we expected to see in the French map after the description of al-Maqrizi. Being an elite island, Roda was active again though not mentioned by the sources (see fig 3A).

### **4. The gardens:-**

Beside the gardens accounted for with the palaces we have two main garden areas in the island: one discussed before and located in the area facing al-Miqias, divided into two parts; the second divided into three gardens occupying the northern part of the island, and overlooking the eastern and the western banks of the Nile. All of



the gardens are of nearly the same pattern of design except for the English designed garden mentioned before. The presence of these gardens solves the riddle of Ibrahim's garden location. The most probable clarification is that Ibrahim, being the son of the owner of all the Egyptian lands, had taken over these parts and started fashioning his own gardens. So even as the gardens were scattered and not intact, it belonged to the same person, Ibrahim Pasha, explaining the seeming inconsistency of the sources (see fig 3B).

#### **5. Al-Manial (Kafr 'Abd al-'Aziz):-**

The area of Kafr Abd al-Aziz, now named al-Manial, was still active at its initial location and larger in size, indicating a natural development. Al-Manial was a randomly expanding area, probably poor and urbanely activated by the increase of its population of *fallahin* (farmers), cultivating the lands of Roda. The expansion axis was directed to the east away from the Nile ( see fig 3A).

#### **6. The agricultural land:-**

The parts which were not gardens and palaces were still cultivated. The area of the cultivated land, which were less than half of the island, had shrunk in comparison with the area of it at the time of the French invasion, which was then more than three quarters of Roda (see fig 3C).

The island had changed immensely since the map of the French invasion. These changes must have been accelerated by the construction of Ibrahim Pasha's Saray. The roads in the island were changed with the presence of the palaces, Sarays, and the



gardens of the elite. The roads were straightened and flanked by trees, most probably palms.

A royal sector existed, overlooking the Nile on the western bank of Misr al-Qadima. It contained Qasr al-Nil palace and barracks, Qasr al-Dubarah, and Qasr al-'Ali. This sector extended from Qasr al-Nil palace to al-Qasr al-'Aini constituting a rectangular section, overlooking the Nile from one side, and the Road to Misr al-Qadima and Roda from the other. The presence of that sector indicates how, with those royal residences extending in the direction of the island and reaching it, Roda inevitably became an elite island once more (see map 3, fig 8).

Giza grew rapidly, reaching approximately twice the size shown in the French map. It extended randomly in an axis that paralleled and overlooked the Nile. As for Sa'id Pasha Saray that was constructed in Giza, the map does not show it.

Strangely, the map reveals the disappearance of the two bridges. The island was separated from Misr al-Qadima and Giza except for ferries and boats which might have been the only transportation between Giza and Cairo<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the map indicates the absence of the mills which should not surprise us as the main mills and granaries were now located in Bulaq and the royal family and the elite rejected mills on their island. From the roads discussed before in the analysis of the French map only one road is left cutting the length of the island, it is one of the two roads that existed before. This road is minutely changed<sup>2</sup>; in fact it retains exactly the same old axis we have noted earlier. Furthermore the ruins of the old fortress walls had disappeared without leaving a trace (see map 3).

<sup>1</sup>The two bridges might have been present but not shown in the map. They may have been considered inconsistent and thus not to be drawn in the map.

<sup>2</sup>This road was transformed through the island urbanization to become the present Manial street.



As it was, the sector that begins at Qasr al-Nil and ends before al-Miqias contained only royal palaces, sarays, and gardens in addition to the elite's palaces, making that area coveted by members of the upper echelon of this period<sup>1</sup>.

Another map of Cairo and its environs appears for the year 1283H/1868AD, published by 'Ali Mubarak<sup>2</sup>. It was hand drawn based mainly on the map just discussed which makes it a personal record of 'Ali Mubarak's work. The map, with names written on it in Arabic (see map 17), shows the appearance of two new district names on the island: the area of *Kafr 'Abd al-'Aziz* was now called "al-Manial", and the area of al-Miqias had become "al-Roda"<sup>3</sup> which agrees with the prior map (see map 3).

In conclusion, we find that Muhammad 'Ali and his immediate descendants perpetuated the Ottoman policy of not building monumental civic structures while at the same time sparing no expense to build palaces and Sarays for their own use. By the end of Sa'id reign, we find royal palaces and Sarays scattered all over the city, in an unidentifiable pattern. Cairo, still plagued by poverty, was moving very slowly toward modernization with the plans imagined by Muhammad and his 'Ali descendants.

<sup>1</sup>The map shows that all of the *Birkas* (lakes) now filled. So with the disappearance of al-Azbakiyah, Ratli, and al-Khalig lakes, the only place over looking water (the Nile) was either the western bank which was already occupied by the Royal palaces and Sarays and Misr al-Qadima and Roda island and the eastern bank of al-Giza. As Giza was far from the city this left Roda as the appropriate candidate location for the elite.

<sup>2</sup>The map was published by Ali Mubarak in his Autobiography (Mubarak, Ali. *Hayati* [edited by Al-Gamal, Abd al-Rahim], Cairo, 1989, p.88-89). The map appears to be a draft of a later map; crude as it is it is very helpful for the period.

<sup>3</sup>The change of the name of al-Miqias area does not surprise us as the Miqias was no longer in use after Muhammad 'Ali monopolized the lands of Egypt. The sacred Miqias was no longer important and that was why the area lost its name.



## Chapter 3

---

### The modernization:-

Modern Cairo had been developing since the reign of Muhammed 'Ali, which saw the opening of Cairo to modernization concepts imported by European consultants and traders. However, while Cairo's development had followed an established plan under Muhammed 'Ali, it was now processing randomly. Ibrahim, 'Abbas, and Sa'id were unable, or at least not interested, in bringing Cairo up to modern European standards. Heaps of ruins and dirt surrounded the city, acting as a barrier constricting its expansion. The educational system established by Muhammed 'Ali was contracted by 'Abbas, then closed down by Sa'id<sup>1</sup>, leaving Cairo in great need of the European expertise thus against Muhammed 'Ali's former policy. Although Muhammed 'Ali successors could not be expected to be as wise and shrewd as he had been, Cairo was regressing to the Mamluk period where every Sultan acted independently of his predecessors or successor. 'Abbas and Sa'id even went so far as to cross the line established by Muhammed 'Ali who had dealt with the European powers but who had dutifully avoided being manipulated by them. Under their reign, the railroad was built, a European community grew within Cairo, royal palaces appeared everywhere, and several new areas were developed, such as *'Abbasiyyia* and *Shubra*. The city was thus expanding but without a clear direction. Most important of all, the Suez Canal was undergoing construction and when finished, would change the status of Egypt, and hence Cairo, to an extent never seen before. These factors would combine to spearhead the further modernization of Egypt.

---

<sup>1</sup>Sami Amin, III, part 1, p. 103.



However, this step would require the direction of a special ruler, who came in the form of a newly appointed Pasha. Isma'il, the son of Ibrahim Pasha and the grandson of Muhammed 'Ali would change the face of Egypt in a way none of his predecessors had been able to.

- **Muhammed 'Ali line (Phase II):-**

- **Isma'il Pasha 1280H/1863AD-1296H/1879AD.**

(assumed title of Khedive in 1284H/1867AD)

Isma'il was born on December, 31, 1830AD (1246H)<sup>1</sup> in *al-Musafir Khana* palace, in *al-Gamaliyyia*. When he was fourteen he was sent to Austria to be treated for an eye disease. He ended up spending two years there, and then moved to Paris to join the diplomatic mission there<sup>2</sup>. He returned to Egypt during the reign of his father Ibrahim and after his death, went to the Porte where Sultan 'Abd al-Majid appointed him as a member of the state judicial council. Isma'il came back to Egypt during the reign of Sa'id. Sa'id, seeing his talent in diplomatic matters, sent him to France, in 1278H/1861AD, to negotiate more freedom for Egypt within the Ottoman empire<sup>3</sup>. Contrary to his predecessors, Isma'il was not trained in military sciences; this may be due to the fact that he was never meant to become Pasha<sup>4</sup>. But after the death of Sa'id in the year of 1280H/1863AD, he became the ruler of Egypt.

<sup>1</sup>Vatikiotis, P.J. "Isma'il Pasha", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., Vol. IV, Leiden, 1960, pp. 192-193.

<sup>2</sup>Sami Amin, II, part 2, p.442.

<sup>3</sup>Sami Amin, II, part 2, p.442.

<sup>4</sup>Isma'il's older brother Prince Ahmed Rif'at, the heir to the throne of Egypt died in a train accident in 1274H/1858AD. Prince Isma'il was next in line to the succession according to the Ottoman *firman* of hereditary viceroyalty concerning Egypt. ('Asr Isma'il, part 1, pp.74-76 also see Sami Amin, III, part 1, p. 229).



While Muhammed 'Ali is traditionally known to be the founder of modern Egypt, it is in fact Isma'il who brought about the physical transformations that would catapult Egypt into the modern age. Isma'il, like his grandfather before him, had specific plans for Egypt. His first goal was to change the *firman* of the viceroyalty of Egypt, shifting the hereditary line along which the title was passed from the Muhammed 'Ali line to his own. He eventually succeeded by bribing the Porte and also raising Egypt's annual payment to it from 400,000 Ottoman pounds to 750,000; on May, 27, 1866 (12th, *Muharam*, 1283) he was granted his request<sup>1</sup>. Isma'il was not lacking the money at that time, his reign coinciding with a depletion of American cotton supplies due to the American Civil War Egypt was able to capitalize on the newly opened cotton market, a move which greatly boosted its economy<sup>2</sup>.

Isma'il's works cover such a vast expanse that it is impossible to address them all within the scope of this study. Therefore, we will only discuss what affected the evolution of the city and Roda. One of Isma'il's first projects was to launch an ambitious program of public works. Through this program, the *Isma'iliyyia* canal was finished and many city areas were stabilized, such as *Raud al-Faraj*, *Sahil Raud al-Faraj*, and the island of Bulaq (*Jazirah*) which became almost entirely flood free<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, Isma'il reactivated the educational system opening the schools which had been closed by his predecessor, Sa'id Pasha. He also reinstated 'Ali Pasha Mubarak and put him in charge of raising the standards of education to European levels<sup>4</sup>. In

<sup>1</sup> Asr Isma'il, part 1, pp. 78-82.

<sup>2</sup> The cut off of the American cotton raised the demand for the Egyptian substitute whose price was rising madly in the international markets as to almost quadruple. Egypt that was exporting 600,000 Kantars in 1278H / 1861AD for 14 tallaris per Kantar and more than two and half million Kantars for triple of the old price in 1282H/1865AD (Abu Lughod, p. 103).

<sup>3</sup> Abu-Lughod, p.193 (also see Baedeker, Karl. *Guide to Egypt*, Leipzig, 1885).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, Part 1, pp.229, 232.



1296H/1879AD, at the end of his reign, he founded the Ministry of Survey of Egypt, which was to play an important role in the coming decades in both agriculture and the urbanization of the city<sup>1</sup>. He also developed and expanded the railway system to serve nearly every city in Egypt. It reached *Hilwan*, and Upper Egyptian cities and Sudan. In addition he reconstructed the railroad between Suez and Alexandria<sup>2</sup>.

Isma'il also provided Cairo with municipal utilities, establishing Cairo's water and gas companies in 1282H/1865AD<sup>3</sup>. Gas was first supplied to Cairo and to the suburbs of Bulaq and Misr al-Qadima and gradually, to *Azbakiyya*, the new quarter of *Isma'iliyya*, and the Khedive's palaces. As for water, after several failed attempts a pumping station was installed near the *Isma'iliyya* canal to serve the *Azbakiyya* and *Isma'iliyya* quarters<sup>4</sup>. The water network extended to other parts of the city only gradually, and still failed to reach some places<sup>5</sup>.

### • The Modern City:-

Thus, by 1284/1867AD, Cairo was ready to enter a new phase. Isma'il attended the *Exposition Universelle* held in Paris in the spring of that year. The exposition mainly celebrated Baron Haussmann's<sup>6</sup> transformation of the city of Paris and its peripheral zones through the imposition of formal parks and broad streets. This type of planning was considered revolutionary at the time. The Exposition was

---

<sup>1</sup> Asr Isma'il, 2, 26.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, part 2, pp. 21, 22.

<sup>3</sup> Abu Lughod, pp. 103-104.

<sup>4</sup> The district of *Isma'iliyya* will be discussed later in this chapter, p. 83.

<sup>5</sup> Abu Lughod, p. 104.

<sup>6</sup> Hussmann, George-Eugene; A French administrator who was responsible for transforming Paris from its ancient character to one that it still preserves. He cut large straight avenues through a mass of small streets to provide rapid and easy movement across it. He created a new system of draining and water supply and opened up parks in the center of Paris (Gwinn, Robert. *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 5, 1993, pp.753-754).



designed to display the new Paris to the world, and Isma'il was very impressed with the modernization and the beauty of the renovated city. We assume that the idea of modernizing an old city and renovating it must have been strikingly enlightening to Isma'il who then felt the need to renovate his own old city in order to bring it to a par with Paris. On his way back to Cairo, he stopped in Constantinople to obtain a long-desired *firman*<sup>1</sup> from the Porte elevating his title from that of Pasha to Khedive. Isma'il returned to Egypt a greatly changed person. He was the first of Muhammed 'Ali's line to assume the title of the Khedive, and the new ideas he had been exposed to in Paris made him ashamed of his capital. With the celebrations of the opening of the Suez Canal coming up, he could not conceive of inviting the crowned heads of Europe to such an ugly city.

As a result, Isma'il planned a new huge district, *Isma'iliyyia*, which would be attached to the old city and resemble Haussmann's Paris. As the Suez canal was to be opened in 1285H/1868AD<sup>2</sup>, he had very little time to implement his plan, so started the work in haste. Two months after his return from Europe, he shuffled his ministries and appointed Ali Pasha Mubarak as Minister of Public Works<sup>3</sup>. Isma'il

<sup>1</sup>On June 8, 1284H/1867AD a *firman* was issued making Isma'il Pasha a Khedive and making the title hereditary in his line. The new title raised his status immensely. The *firman* also gave him more freedom in administrating Egypt's internal and external matters. Moreover, It recognized the right of Isma'il in drawing up treaties concerning customs, cargo transfer, and passengers via Egyptian lands ('Asr Isma'il, part 1, p. 82).

<sup>2</sup>The planned opening of the Suez canal was to be in the end of 1285H/1868AD as anticipated by de Lesseps. However delays bought Isma'il more time as the grand opening day was postponed to November 1286H/1869AD (Abu Lughod, p.105).

<sup>3</sup>Ali Mubarak, born of humble origin, was among the first bright students included in Muhammed 'Ali's educational missions abroad. Between 1260H/1844AD and 1265H/1849AD, he was sent to Paris to study military and civil engineering but had returned when 'Abbas suspended all of these missions. Under Isma'il he advised in the matters related of Cairo's development. He was appointed as the Minister of Public Works, and al-Awqaf at the same time, and even served periodically as the Minister of Education. He was also the writer of *Al-Khitat al-Tawfiqia al-Jadida*, which was devoted to an historical and topographical description of Cairo. (Abu Lughod, p.106 see also 'Asr Isma'il, part 1, p. 258 and Sami Amin, II, part 2, p. 1282)



assigned him three tasks in the realization of his new project: to supervise the planing of the new quarter of *Isma'iliyya*<sup>1</sup>, to plan the redevelopment of *Azbakiyya* and its surroundings, and to draw a plan of the city in accordance with Haussmann's style.

We know that the plans for the two projects were finished shortly afterward and that the execution of these plans commenced in 1284H/1867AD. However, the *Isma'iliyya* project was moving faster than the renovation of the *Azbakiyya* area and before 1283H/1869AD, the area of *Isma'iliyya* had been laid. It occupied a surface of about one square mile and was divided in straight wide streets flanked by sidewalks similar to those found in Paris plans<sup>2</sup>.

As for *Azbakiyya*, the area changed immensely, in the period between 1284H/1867AD-1286H/1869AD, the poor quarter giving way to a new Egyptian-Paris. Structures in the area were demolished to make way for the new European-style buildings, mainly the *National Theatre de Comedie*, and an elaborate opera house (see plate 10A), built in a mere five months, barely in time for a premiere performance staged as part of the Canal celebrations. Most of the adjacent area was also renovated to cope with the new Egyptian Paris<sup>3</sup>. As for the central park of *Azbakiyya*, Isma'il enlisted the help of the landscape architect who had designed the *Bois de Boulogne* and the *Champs de Mars*, Barillet Deschamps, and commissioned him to design the *Azbakiyya* garden. The garden was finished in time with the trees and the flowers blooming just before the arrival of the first guests in November. Isma'il completed his palace on *Jazirah* to provide accommodation for the guest of honor of the November

---

<sup>1</sup>The location of *Isma'iliyya* was bounded to the north by the road to Bulaq, to the west by the main road to Misr al-Qadima (Qasr al-'Aini street today), to the south by the lands of al-Luq, and to the east by edge of the old city, Cairo (Abu Lughod, p. 106)

<sup>2</sup>Abu Lughod, p.106.

<sup>3</sup>The sources are not accurate about these renovations, but most probably, only superficial changes were realized.



celebrations, Empress Eugenie. He also constructed Pyramid Road to allow his guests to use their carriages to reach the pyramids<sup>1</sup> (see plate 12A). Finally, Isma'il built several palaces and Sarays, *Saray al-Jazirah* (Jazirah), *Abdin* palace which he used as his administrative headquarters<sup>2</sup>, *Saray Bulaq al-Dakrur*, *Qasr al-Qubah*, *Qasr Hilwan*, *Saray al-Isma'iliyyia*, *Saray al-Za'faran* in 'Abbasiyyia, *Saray al-Raml* in Alexandria, and the biggest of them all *Saray al-Giza*<sup>3</sup>. He also renovated *al-Qasr al-'Ali*, *Qasr al-Nuzha* in *Shubra*, *Saray al-Musafir Khana*, *Qasr al-Nil*, and *Saray Ras al-Tin* in Alexandria. Isma'il even built a palace in *Roda*<sup>4</sup>.

With all this activity on Bulaq island (*Jazirah*), and on the eastern banks of the Nile in addition to the works at *Saray al-Giza* and the new railway passing through Giza, the need for a bridge to connect the Giza and the Cairo banks was becoming imperative. Ferries and small boats were still the only means of crossing the Nile, a fact which intensified the contrast of the new European *Isma'iliyyia* and *Azbakiyyia* on the eastern shore, and the rural western shore. In 1286H/1869AD, Isma'il contracted

<sup>1</sup>The way to the pyramids was over a series of dikes via uncomfortable donkeys. Isma'il, not wanting his royal guests to suffer such an indignity, built Pyramid Road. It was finished within months, in time for the guests to ride to the base of the large pyramid. Also worthy of note, Barillet Deschamps was assigned the task of flanking the road with shady trees (Abu Lughod, p. 108). The street was finished in 1869 ('Asr Isma'il, part 2, p. 30).

<sup>2</sup>It was finished in 1874 (Abu Lughod, p. 113).

<sup>3</sup>'Ali Mubarak reports that the two most magnificent palaces of Isma'il were the Sarays *al-Jazirah* and *al-Giza*. The first was built on grounds of sixty *fadaans* while the second, which was a small palace, and a bath (30 *fadaans*) that belonged to Sa'id Pasha. Isma'il bought it from his son Tusun and added lands to it to construct his Saray and garden on 465 *fadans* (al-Khitat, part I, p. 84). Abd al-Rahman al-Raf'i details the amounts of money spent on constructing each palace as follows:

• <i>Saray al-Giza</i>	1,393,374.00 L.E.
• <i>Saray 'Abdin</i>	565,570.00 L.E.
• <i>Saray al-Jazirah</i>	898,691.00 L.E.
• <i>Saray al-Isma'iliyyia</i>	201,286.00 L.E.

In view of its cost, we can be sure of the beauty of the Giza Saray and its importance to Isma'il ('Asr Isma'il, part 2, p. 56). We also know that Barillet de Champ was planting the gardens of *Saray al-Giza* until his death, leaving it unfinished, in 1291H/1874AD (al-Khitat, III, 69).

<sup>4</sup>Abd al-Rahman al-Raf'i mentions several other palaces in *al-Minya*, *al-Mansura*, and *al-Roda*. Whereas this is only mentioned by him, it agrees with Isma'il's building mania and the use of the island as an elite island. Also the later map of the survey of Egypt shows the palace and marks it as the palace of Isma'il Pasha which we will discuss later. ('Asr Isma'il, part 2, p. 32).



the French firm of Fives-Lille to construct the Qasr al-Nil bridge (see plate 11B). It was finished in 1259H/ 1872AD, costing 108,000 L.E.<sup>1</sup>. A second bridge linking *Jazirah* to Giza, now called *Jala' bridge*, was built by an English company and finished in 1259H/1872AD<sup>2</sup>, costing 40,000 L.E..

Isma'il also resuscitated the old city by establishing straighter and wider streets. These new arteries, easing circulation within the old city, connected it to the new *Azbakiyyia* and *Isma'iliyyia* quarters. He finished Muhammed 'Ali street, connecting *al-'Ataba* to the Citadel which, combined with *al-Sikkah al-Jadida*, assisted the old city circulation vastly (see map 19).

Surprisingly, one of the most ambitious projects of Khedive Isma'il is not accounted for in our sources. This project was to change the face of Giza by, changing the course of the Nile. It was started in 1280H/1863AD, at the beginning of Isma'il's reign, and finished in a period of eighteen months<sup>3</sup> (see fig. 11). Afterwards, the Nile ebbed, leaving a strip of land which lays between the present Giza street and the Nile bank. An Egyptian-French company applied for the contract of filling this strip. Isma'il granted the contract and in return, the company was awarded the lands of Giza for construction investments with a portion reserved for public projects. The company was later named "The Land Division of Giza and Roda company"<sup>4</sup>. The

<sup>1</sup>Asr Isma'il, part 2, p.30.

<sup>2</sup>Janet Abu Lughod recounts that Qasr al-Nil bridge was supposed to be finished before the November celebrations and the arrival of the empress who would stay at *Saray al-Jazirah* but due to the lack of time a boat bridge was temporarily constructed (Abu Lughod, p.108 also see 'Asr Isma'il, part 2, p. 30 and Sami Amin, II, part 2, pp. 815, 919-920).

<sup>3</sup>One of the effects of this project was that people started to use the island as a beach and started using it frequently and densely. Isma'il, having royal plans for the island, issued a command forbidding any kind building except *Zamalik* which meant the wooden room used to change clothes. and from this event the future quarter got its name (Karim, Sayed. *Kayfa Hawala Isma'il Magra Al-Nil*, Dar al-Hilal, 1981).

<sup>4</sup>Most probably Isma'il gave the company the lands of Roda in addition to the land of Giza. By this Isma'il would be swapping Roda for Giza which leads us to assume that he wanted to urbanize Giza urgently and the later construction of *Saray al-Giza* and the adjoining gardens may be our second evidence of this.



public works, referred to above, were to become the Urman Garden (see plate 11A), the Zoological park, *Saray al-Giza*, the Ministry of Survey, Cairo University and the other buildings<sup>1</sup>.

- **Misr al-Qadima, Giza, and Roda:-**

- **Grand Bey map:-**

As for the randomly developing areas unaccounted for by the sources, we can study them through the map of Grand-Bey, drawn during the reign of Isma'il 1291H/ 1874AD (see map 4). This development may prove difficult as the map shows only the eastern bank and part of Roda<sup>2</sup> with the absence of the western bank and Giza. It shows Misr al-Qadima which was, surprisingly, growing rapidly. In the time span of sixteen years Misr al-Qadima expanded to at least triple its last accounted size. It did not expand as a whole but as nodes. Misr al-Qadima was now divided into three randomly growing nodes: a node east of the Miqias and west of Jami' 'Amr; another to the south of the Khalig which is the smallest; and the third adjacent and to the south of the aqueduct which is now named *Magra al-'Iyun*. We can see a new area randomly growing on both sides of the road directly linking the old city to Misr al-Qadima, parallel to al-Khalig. This new developing area was right to the north-east of the Coptic cemeteries. As it was, Misr al-Qadima and the new developing area was growing toward the old city. The expansion of the random areas was fast and overwhelming. The parts which had been inactive nearly since the Ottoman period

<sup>1</sup>Karim, Sayed. *Kayfa Hawala Isma'il Magra Al-Nil*, Dar al-Hilal, 1981.

<sup>2</sup>The map of *Grand Bey* is dated 1874AD. Strangely, the map Key and scale is located in a rectangle that blocks most of the Roda island hence, making it partially drawn.



were flourishing as if inspired by Isma'il's vigorous construction activities<sup>1</sup>. Most probably, these random areas were reacting to the first consequences of the inner immigration from the suburbs triggered by the intensive activities prior to the grand opening of the Suez Canal and the opportunities of larger profits given by the city.

As for Roda, it was not completely drawn on the map; only part of Roda including the western bank and the northern tip of Roda can be seen with the rest of the island missing. This part shows new buildings since 1274H/ 1858AD, though with no names for these new buildings. They are all shown on the western bank but we can not establish zones of growth as we can only discuss the growth on that bank only. The gardens and the building criteria of this area had not changed since the time of Sa'id as it was still single buildings, randomly scattered, with some of them having their own gardens which indicates elite residences. The map does not show the rest of the island but we can postulate that it was developing as we assumed it would, with more palaces, especially the one of Khedive Isma'il, summer houses and the Manial, the former Kafr 'Abd al-'Aziz, steadily growing unhindered and unaffected by any known factors<sup>2</sup>.

By the end of his reign, Isma'il was emphatically guiding the expansion of the city. He established several nodes of urban expansion away from the old capital city, and directed it toward them. The most important of these nodes was Giza. Nevertheless, his choice for the stepping stone was not Roda, but *Jazirah* (formerly known as island of Bulaq). His reason for this choice is not clear. We know that he

<sup>1</sup>In fact, this expansion was assisted by the new al-Qasr al-'Ali Road which extended from Qasr al-Nil to Qasr al-'Aini (now Qasr al-'Aini street), linking the modern city to Misr al-Qadima.

<sup>2</sup>We can not account for the bridges of Roda as they are not marked on the map. However, the presence of a boat bridge prior to Qasr al-Nil bridge may help us to assume that the old bridges survived.



did not want any buildings on *Jazirah*, and yet he turned it into the single crossing to Giza. We may reason that it was the nearest path to Cairo and that having built the Qasr al-Nil bridge as a crossing to his own palace, he thought of building the other bridge so as to connect the eastern bank with the western bank. Another possible reason is that Isma'il wanted to urbanize the entire western bank of the Nile, hence building the bridge in this particular location and attaching it to a road linking *Imbaba* to Giza that would mainly serve as Cairo's urban connection to the western bank of the Nile (see fig 9).

Whatever the reasons, Isma'il's choice of *Jazirah* as a link between the two banks had the effect of limiting future expansion on Roda. Also, if it is true that Isma'il gave away Roda's land as a payment for filling the newly dredged lands of Giza, we can almost assert that Isma'il deliberately directed the expansion of Cairo toward Giza, through *Jazirah*. Isma'il did not only give the city its present, i.e. *Isma'iliyyia*, but was also directing its future toward Giza disallowing Roda any role in the expansion he had planned for the modern Capital.

#### • Khedive Tawfiq (1296H/1879AD-1309H/1892AD):-

In 1279H/1862AD, Sa'id Pasha borrowed over three million pounds from European banks, undoubtedly to finance the Suez canal. Isma'il, taking the lead from his predecessor, contracted substantial debts in 1281H/1862AD, 1285H/1865AD, 1285H/1867AD, 1286H/1868AD, 1287H/1870AD, 1290H/1873AD, 1295H/1878AD<sup>1</sup>. In 1273/1875AD, the creditors became more insistent as the debt was

---

<sup>1</sup> All the debts of Isma'il are accounted to in details in 'Asr Isma'il, part 2, pp.33-34.



enormous and Isma'il was not able to repay it, not to mention payment for the overblown interest which was charged on the loans. With nothing left, and with his rising need for money, Isma'il borrowed on Egypt's share of the Suez Canal. What Isma'il did not know was that the shares would be purchased by the then Prime Minister of Britain, Disraeli<sup>1</sup>. By 1293H/1876AD, with Egypt's debts exceeding 91 million English pounds, the European powers started to interfere in Egypt, claiming the need to protect their subjects' interests in the Egyptian economy, and creating a form of dual control by French and English controllers general. Khedive Isma'il with no hope to stop the bankruptcy, and under the pressure of the European powers, dismissed his ministers in April 1879AD (1296H), and in June of the same year the Ottoman Sultan exacted a *firman*, under European pressure, deposing Khedive Isma'il. Isma'il was exiled, leaving his place as Khedive and ruler of Egypt to his son Tawfiq<sup>2</sup>.

Tawfiq, raised to the title of Khedive, inherited a vacuous throne, a country managed by the dual control of France's and Britain's consuls, and on the brink of a revolution. In 1296H/1879AD, a revolt in the army started under the leadership of Colonel Ahmed 'Urabi. Seizing the opportunity, the British army landed in Egypt, under the leadership of General Wolseley, to quell the rebellion at *Tal al-Kabir*, crushing the budding revolution and securing the rule of Khedive Tawfiq. A few days later the British troops entered Cairo<sup>3</sup>. Theoretically, Egypt was ruled by four leaders: the Ottoman Sultan, the Khedive, and the dual control of France and Britain, but in

<sup>1</sup> Abu Lughod, p.113. We also know that Isma'il contracted more loans in 1287H/1870AD, 1290H/1873AD, 1295H/1878AD, in addition to the interests and the price of Egypt's shares in the Suez Canal (4 million English pounds). By 1878, the Egyptian debts amounted to 126,354,360 English pounds (for more information about the Egyptian debts see 'Asr Isma'il, part 2, pp. 33-54)

<sup>2</sup> 'Asr Isma'il, part 2, pp.251-254 see also Abu Lughod, 113.

<sup>3</sup> An account of all the facts is not considered at this point. We will only try to have a clear picture of the period political history that would help us understand the factors affecting the evolution of Cairo (see Lughod, p.112).



fact, it was under the control of Lord Cromer<sup>1</sup> the English consul with British troops now occupying Egypt.

From the first days the British efforts in Egypt were directed toward invigorating agriculture specially cotton cultivation. They started by repairing the irrigation system. One of their first projects was repairing the barrage, that at the time of Isma'il proved to be so poorly designed that it could not withstand the water pressure, at the rise of the Nile. The British also established elementary health and sanitation measures which seem to be responsible for the increase in population from 6.8 million in 1299H/1882AD to reach 9.6 million in 1314H/1897AD<sup>2</sup>. Correspondingly, the Suez Canal placed Egypt on the map as a country of international strategic importance. Britain ruled Egypt as a de facto colony and the new administrative system gave the country a thrust toward modernization.

Cairo's population increased from nearly 400,000 in 1299H/1882AD to 600,000 by the end of the century<sup>3</sup>. Cairo's rise of population was not due to the natural increase but mainly to the immigration from the countryside<sup>4</sup>. With this substantial growth of population, Cairo expanded physically during these years. The expansion took place in: *Isma'iliyyia*, which was mostly an open subdivision of lands until 1287H/1870AD; the region just west of *Azbakiyyia* Garden, and the major

<sup>1</sup>Evelyn Baring elevated to the title of Lord Cromer between 1300H/1883AD-1326H/1907AD. He was the British Consul General and the virtual ruler of Egypt during most of the British occupation.

<sup>2</sup>Abu Lughod, p.115

<sup>3</sup>The number of 400,000 is estimated by Abu Lughod, Janet (Abu Lughod, p.115)

<sup>4</sup>Though deaths still outnumbered births, Cairo kept a constant population through continuous replenishment from the countryside. Also, the European communities increased, as Greeks came in search of commercial opportunities and Italians to man the machine shops and minor industries. French, Swiss, Swedish, Belgian, and English were attracted by the expanding opportunities exploited with thanks to the immunities granted to foreigners in Egypt (Abu Lughod, p.115, 127; also see chapter 8, The Exploding Demand for Capital City Residence, pp. 118-131).



commercial area that leapt from the *Muski* to the vicinity of *Maydan al-Opera*<sup>1</sup>. The previously divided lands of the Isma'il's era were now converted to urban uses. At the same time, the government buildings and the ministry offices began to gravitate to *Qasr al-'Aini*, starting from *Bab al-luq* Street to form a strip of government administrative buildings. This new administrative area was opposite the Royal palaces, discussed before (see map 15), whose ownership and use were still retained by the royal family. To the north, in the *Fajjalah* district, parallel developments were taking place especially at the triangle between the *Fajjalah*, north of the *Azbakiyyia* garden, and the *Isma'iliyyia* Canal. With such active expansion taking place, Tawfiq started developing the *Tawfiqiyyia* district. It was a triangle of land surrounded by Bulaq Road to the south; *Nubar* Road to the east (now 26th of July street); and *Isma'iliyyia* Canal to the northwest. The land was subdivided and sold in 1307H/ 1890AD, finding eager buyers by virtue of its location near the heart of the modern city<sup>2</sup>.

As for the old city, it gave shelter to most of the newcomers, coping with the increase in population. The old city had stayed intact with the same borders as in pre-modern Cairo. It had contained a lot of vacant area up to this time. These were now being constructed to accommodate the influx of the rural population; the old city was becoming saturated for the first time since the Mamluk period<sup>3</sup>.

The city's expansion generally took place in the areas marked for this purpose by Isma'il but which had failed to fill up due to the lack of population. But in 1313H/1896AD the expansion took place precisely in the manner established by

<sup>1</sup>The older center of the *Muski* area, the European area, was given more and more to the Greek, Armenian, and Jewish merchants who provided cheap goods to the poorer population of the city (Abu Lughod, p.115).

<sup>2</sup>The land of *Tawfiqiyyia* was once submerged beneath the main channel of the Nile before the river changed its course. It was swamps before Tawfiq in the mid of 1880's undertook its draining and leveling. It was subdivided and sold in 1890 (Abu Lughod, p.116).

<sup>3</sup>Abu Lughod, p.117.



Isma'il's planners, filling the strip of *Isma'iliyyia* and *Azbakiyyia* and adjacent areas. Only along the eastern bank of the Nile did the former patterns of land use persist, with the royal strip still retaining the old palaces. This area was not changed.

Roda island was not mentioned by the sources. They only discussed the urban evolution of the modern city where the urban activity was at its topmost. Our information about the area of Misr al-Qadima, Roda, and Giza is spasmodic at best but we can make an educated guess regarding the evolution of the three districts: Misr al-Qadima was expanding steadily to accommodate rural immigration, retaining its old borders. Likewise Giza was expanding randomly and steadily, especially with the bridges constructed by Isma'il to allow direct access from Cairo through *Jazirah*. It expanded until it reached the Saray and Gardens established by Isma'il. With all the northern side of Giza blocked by the Giza Saray and the eastern side by the Nile, Giza grew to the south and to west. The expansion was moving mainly westward parallel to the Nile. As for Roda, the island would uphold its elitist identity. The sector of the royal palaces from Qasr al-Nil to Qasr al-'Aini had remained unchanged, as mentioned before, which would keep the lands of Roda accessible to the elite of the era. We will not be able to assert the extent of the additions to the palaces on the island. Nevertheless, with the concentrated building activities of the city, more people would seek the outskirts and with Roda a well established candidate for this move, we may assume that the construction on Roda was greater than has been accounted for in the earlier epochs, though still not much. Except for these palaces and *al-Manial* no other form of expansion would take place on Roda relative to Isma'il's new axis to Giza.



• ‘Abbas Hilmi II (1309H/1892AD-1333H/1914AD):-

‘Abbas Hilmi II was born in Alexandria on July 14, 1874AD (1291H). He was educated in the private school of his palace with his brother. They learned Arabic and English, as well as Egyptian culture. At the age of ten, he was sent to Europe to visit large factories, from Ireland to Russia. From 1300H/1883AD to 1304H/1887AD he studied in Swiss schools in Geneva, and at the age of thirteen started studying at the Theresianum in Vienna with his brother Prince Muhammed ‘Ali<sup>1</sup>. On January 7, 1892AD (1309H), Tawfiq became seriously ill and died. Not having reached the age of eighteen yet, ‘Abbas Hilmi II could not inherit the title of Khedive and the throne of Egypt. Lord Cromer, wanting to avoid a regency council, manipulated the age of the young Prince, calculating it according to the *Hijri* calendar<sup>2</sup>. ‘Abbas became Khedive of Egypt, succeeding his father, in January of 1892AD (1309H), at the age of seventeen<sup>3</sup>. He was soon in conflict with the Egypt’s Consul General, first with Sir Evelyn Baring (later Lord Cromer) and later with Lord Kitchener<sup>4</sup>. ‘Abbas Hilmi supported the Nationalist movement, thus winning great popularity among the Egyptian people. As an anti-European Khedive, ‘Abbas even sought the assistance of the Ottoman Sultan. He visited Istanbul in 1310H/1893AD and asked the Sultan to

<sup>1</sup> Hilmi, ‘Abbas. ‘Ahdi, *Muzakarat ‘Abbas Hilmi al-Thani, Khedive Misr al-Akhir*, Cairo, 1993, pp.37-39 [Hereinafter Hilmi] also see Colombe, M.. “ ‘Abbas Hilmi II ”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., Vol. I, Leiden, 1960, p.13.

<sup>2</sup> The *firman* of 1290H/1873AD stated that the rightful Prince can only inherit the throne of Egypt upon attainment of the age of eighteen. Prince ‘Abbas would be a minor until 14th, July 1892AD (1309H), being younger by five months, but according the lunar Hijri year which consists of 354 days, he attained majority on 24th, December, 1891AD (1308H). The Ottoman Sultan not wanting to challenge the British power agreed to this settlement (Cromer, Evelyn Baring. *‘Abbas II*, London, 1897, pp. 1-3 [Hereinafter Cromer].

<sup>3</sup> Colombe, M. “ ‘Abbas Hilmi II ”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., Vol. I, Leiden, 1960, p.13.

<sup>4</sup> Lord Kitchener(1328H/1909AD) was the second successor of Lord Cromer after Sir Eldon Gorst (1326H/1907AD) as a Consul-General of Egypt (Goldschmidt, Arthur, “The British Occupation”, *The Formation Of Nation State*, Cairo,1990, pp. 43-45).



liberate him from the British occupation, complaining about high handed actions of the British officials doings in Egypt, but the Sultan, not ready to confront the British, turned him down<sup>1</sup>.

### • Reforms of this period:-

The British, however, controlling the government of Egypt, were proceeding with a number of reforms, as well as improving the system of transportation and infrastructure. The reforms proceeded as follows:

- a) In 1306H/1889AD, the telephones were introduced. They were mainly used in the governmental and private offices and in hotels. Later, Alexandria and Cairo were connected through an underground telephone cable.
- b) In 1312H/1895AD the Survey department prepared several maps of Egypt on the scale of 1:250000, 1:10000.
- c) In 1313H/1896AD, a new segment of railway was planned to connect *Mansura* in the delta with *Matariyyia* in the center of the lake *al-Manzalah*. This railway boosted the transportation system in Delta.
- d) In 1321H/1902AD, The Aswan dam was completed and became operational. It was a mile and a quarter in length and capable of containing a 65 foot head of impounded water<sup>2</sup>.
- e) The sanitation and water supplies systems were developed and improved drinking water taps replaced the stagnant basins<sup>3</sup>.
- f) Three bridges started in 1321H/1902AD were finished in 1326H/ 1907AD: *al-Malik al-Salih* bridge between Roda and Giza; Muhammed 'Ali bridge between al-

---

<sup>1</sup>Cromer, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup>Later, in 1328H/1909AD it was raised to increase its storing capacity and finished in 1331H/1912AD (Abu Lughod, pp.140-141).

<sup>3</sup>Colvin, A. *The Making Of Modern Egypt*, London, 1906, pp.334-355 [Hereinafter Colvin].



Qasr al-'Aini and the extreme north of Roda, and 'Abbas bridge between Roda and Giza. In 1331H/1912AD, they were joined by another bridge linking Bulaq and the north of *Jazirah* with an extension to *Imbabah*<sup>1</sup>.

g) In 1314H/1897AD, it became essential to fill the Khalig as increased desiccation had changed it into an unattractive and dangerous source of infection. By 1317H/1900AD, it was completely filled and converted into a street linking the north and the south part of the city (now Port Sa'id street)<sup>2</sup>.

However, at this particular epoch, the British-Egyptian government was not the only reformer. There were private enterprises participating in the great changes taking place in Cairo. Among those was the tramway company headed by Baron Empain. The tramlines were first introduced in August, 1896AD (1313H) as Cairo inaugurated its first tramline linking *al-'Ataba al-Khadra* and *Maydan Muhammed 'Ali* via Muhammed 'Ali street. Between 1303H/1886AD and the opening month of 1315H/1898AD eight lines became operative, linking the various built-up portions of the city thus completing phase one. Phase one of the tramline was basically an internal network of 22 kilometers linking the existing borders of the city<sup>3</sup>. However, phase two was a more ambitious one. It was to extend to areas beyond the build-up borders of the city. It was started with the company filling up *al-Khalig* and constructing a tramline on its entire length, from Mosque of Baybars I in *Daher* to *Sayida Zaynab*.

<sup>1</sup>Raymond, Andre. *Le Caire*, Fayard, 1993, pp. 21,322 [Hereinafter Raymond].

<sup>2</sup>Abu Lughod, p.134 also see Colvin, p. 312.

<sup>3</sup>The First phase of the tramline was composed of eight lines:

- Line from al-'Ataba al-Khadra to Muhammed 'Ali street via Muhammed 'Ali street.
- Line from al-'Ataba al-Khadra to Abu al-'Ila bridge over the Isma'iliyya canal.
- Line from al-'Ataba al-Khadra to Bab al-Luq via 'Abd al-'Aziz street.
- Line from al-'Ataba al-Khadra to Fajjalah and then eastward to 'Abassiyya via Clot Bek street.
- Line from al-'Ataba al-Khadra to Qasr al-'Aini Hospital via Qasr al-'Aini street.
- Line from al-'Ataba al-Khadra to railway station via Clot Bek street.
- An extension of line 5 (above) from al-Qasr al-'Aini to Misr al-Qadima.
- An extension of line 4 (above) from 'Abbasiyya to railway.

See Abu Lughod, pp. 132-140.



As the first phase had depended on the roads newly established at the modern period, phase two<sup>1</sup> depended on expansion along newly created routes. It started in 1321H /1902AD and was finished by 1326H/1907AD, linking the city to *Sayida Zaynab*, *Midan al-Isama'iliyyia*, *Sahl Rawd al-Faraj*, *'Abbasiyyia*, *Sabtiyyia*, *Shubra al-Khaima*, and the pyramids (see plate 12B). The tramlines contracted the city borders and reaching any of the built up areas took less effort and time. After this phase was successfully achieved, a third phase was started in 1327H/1908AD<sup>2</sup> extending to link Giza, *al-Khalifah* cemetery, 'Abdin square, *Jazirah*, Zamalik, Tomb of *al-Imam al-Shafi'i*, and *Athar al-Nabi* to the city. This phase, of thirteen new lines, started in 1327H/1908AD, was finished in 1336H/ 1917AD. The tramlines were for Egypt a revolution in transportation that made the city reachable from the remote built up areas around it (see map 10).

As for the evolution of the city and due to the building boom that started between 1314H/1897AD and 1326H/1907AD, we have to divide the time span we are to study into two phases: **phase I**, before 1314H/1897AD; and **phase II**, after 1314H/1897AD untill 1335H/1914AD.

- **Phase I :-**

- **The map of 1314/1897AD:-**

In this phase, we are lucky to able to base our study on the map of the Ministry of Survey dated to 1314/1897AD (see map 5). The plan, scale 1:10,000, shows the

---

<sup>1</sup> Abu Lughod, p.135.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 137.



old city, the modern city, and the remote built up areas. It reveals that by then the modern districts encircled the old city from the west and the north. From the west the modern city grew in to absorb the royal palaces sector and al-Qasr al-'Aini hospital complex, reaching Misr al-Qadima. Misr al-Qadima was expanding north and south on a longitudinal axis flanked by the Nile from one side and the railway line to *Hilwan* from the other. Its expansion was still random but mainly it was directed to the Nile bank. As for the city growth from the north, the *Isma'iliyyia* canal -the only active canal by then- was helping the extension of the city to the north-east, but at the same time acting as a barrier hindering its expansion to the north. The modern city was expanding toward '*Abbasiyyia* and reaching for the site of *Saray al-Quba*. The city's area had doubled since the ambitious plans of Ismsa'il had started thirty years earlier, with the city stretching in every possible direction. It reached Bulaq and absorbed it to become a part of the whole city, not separate as it has always been.

Only the eastern and the western borders of the city were still the same. The eastern border of the city was still enclosed by Salah al-Din walls and the Citadel as if preventing any expansion in that direction may have been in fact reflecting a real intention. As the new city and expansion projects had never touched these borders, the old walls and the Citadel were impeding the progress beyond these limits (see plates 7B, 8A). The southern border contracted since our last examination on the map of 1274H/1858AD. This should not surprise us, as the southern border was remote and had not been linked to the new modern city and its opportunities for employment. Consequently, the population of this area had started to move out. On the other hand, the Qasr al-'Ali street (now al-Qasr al-'Aini Street) constructed by Isma'il made Roda



a more appropriate choice of residence. This also accounts for the increase of the Roda population and its sudden expansion (see map 5).

As for the western bank of the Nile, Giza's borders changed to adjust with the new Nile bank created by Isma'il's ambitious project of altering the bank of the Nile. Giza, shifted to fill the new bank and extend to the north, only to be stopped by the Giza prison building which acted as a impediment between Giza and Saray Isma'il. The Saray and a garden, named Giza garden, constituted a longitudinal section extending to the north to reach the Saray of Husain Pasha, Saray Hasan Pasha and Duqqi as indicated on the map. The presence of a web of straight and wide roads and land divisions indicates the first modern district on the western bank of the Nile. *Imbaba* was also growing in size (see map 5). As it was, Isma'il's plans for this bank were proceeding effectively. The reason that hindered Giza's expansion was that the demand for construction lands were then still concentrated on the eastern bank.

Anticipating that no change had taken place in Roda, as Isma'il shifted the direction of his expansion toward *Jazirah*, we find that Roda deteriorated further than expected. The island lost most of its gardens and palaces. It is also unclear if the land was owned by the company contracted to fill the Giza bank<sup>1</sup> or of it still belonged to the original owners.

#### • Analysis of Roda map 1314H/1897AD:-

The island contained:

1. Al-Miqias.

---

<sup>1</sup>See chapter 3, page 90.



2. Gardens.
3. Three nodes of random expanding areas.
4. Several scattered buildings.
5. Roads.
6. Agricultural lands.

### 1. Al-Miqias:-

The Miqias was no longer active and al-Khalig was being filled by the time this map was drawn. A drawing of al-Miqias in the year 1296H/1879AD shows that it was in a ruined state, its dome destroyed (see pl 10B). The Miqias was still present but was not significant having lost its importance especially after the filling of al-Khalig and the abandonment of the customary celebrations.

### 2. Gardens:-

From all the gardens that were present in 1274H/1858AD, shown on the map of the same year, there were nearly none left. Only the garden on the northern tip of the island was still present. It was redesigned to include a small canal ending with an oval shaped lake in the middle. Some of the scattered buildings still retained their own gardens. The gardens, overall area had shrunk, indicating a shift in Roda's land use toward agriculture (see fig. 4B)



### 3. Three nodes of random expanding areas:-

Now, most surprisingly, the island contained three nodes of randomly expanding areas which is three nodes more than what we would have expected. These three nodes must have flourished in the last fifty years Ca. 1263H/1847AD-1314H/1897AD. They are: al-Manial (formerly Kafr 'Abd al-'Aziz); a node in the location of Kafr Qaytbay; and a small node on the western bank of the island overlooking the Nile. The biggest of the nodes is al-Manial which had expanded immensely since 1274H/1858AD. The reason for the existence of these new nodes was probably the overgrowth of al-Manial which had expanded to reach its limits and as the expansion persisted the new generations moved, starting other nodes on the same island. If this is what actually happened then the node on the location of Qaytbay, must have been the first to develop. The size of the that node, being the largest after al-Manial's, confirms our assumption. The third node, the smallest of the three, is a further confirmation to our theory. All of this however, is in contradiction with the fact that a company owned the land and was administering it, but not developing it (see fig 4A)

### 4. Scattered buildings:-

The number of buildings on the island was greater than in the year 1274H/1858AD even though Saray Ibrahim was no longer there. Among the additions, four strikingly large constructions stands out: the first, a horse shoe shaped building, attached to the Miqias encircling it within its southern walls, with the two unequal arms of the horse shoe overlooking the eastern and western Nile bank; the



second, on the western bank of the island standing opposite to old location of Saray Ibrahim Pasha; and the third, erected on the western bank, opposite to the Khalig on the eastern bank of Misr al-Qadima. The last of these buildings was located on the eastern bank of the Nile, attached to the northern borders of al-Manial, inducing it to extend southward. The four building were not shown on the map of 1274H/1858AD which means that they were built at a later stage. Only one of these buildings carries a number, the one attached to Miqias, which is " 36 " corresponding to "Eglise Anglaise" in the map key (see map 5). Except for these four buildings we have ten other buildings, of the size of a palace, and 14 small buildings of the size of a private house. Off course these speculations based on their sizes may not be true but we can not consider any other use assigned to these buildings with our present information (see fig 4A).

## 5. Roads:-

The roads of 1274H/1858AD vanished to reveal in their place a new pattern of roads. Extensive work had been done to re-divide the island network of roads making them wider, straighter. The new roads were flanked by trees as the present map shows. Why were the roads altered? The answer to this question would help us understand the changes taking place in the whole island. The changing of these roads could have never taken place except with a change of ownership of the lands itself. This means that during the last fifty years the land ownership in Roda was vastly changed and that the old roads network was interfering with it, thus, the



necessity to alter it. We should also note that all of the roads were flanked by trees showing the limits of every piece of land held by the same owner (see map 5).

## 6. Agricultural lands:-

As noted in discussing the roads of the island (number 5, above), The agricultural lands were encircled by trees from all directions. The portion of gardens in the island decreased making room for agricultural land. So, with buildings and gardens areas decreasing on the island, the lands retained its former use as agricultural land. The increase in agricultural land also accounts for the growth of al-Manial, which housed the farmers, and the creation of two new nodes (see fig. 4C).

Also worthy of note, the western bank of the island was reinforced by retaining walls beginning from Kafr Abd al-'Aziz and ending short before al-Miqias (see map 5). One can assume in view of the location of these retaining walls, that this reinforcement must have been constructed in an effort to stabilize the Roda bank against the Nile currents and to prevent any change in its borders. The bridges, are no longer seen on this map<sup>1</sup>. Were they no longer used for crossing the Nile? An analysis of the Giza and Misr al-Qadima banks does not shows that they retained the old sites of the bridges or any new sites (see map 5), which can lead us to assume that the only way to reach the island was boats and ferries. However, with the evidence that the bridges had ceased to exist one is surprised by the fact that the island had been deprived of its boat bridges. The reason may be that the two unrefined boat bridges had been removed in order not to spoil the view of the royal Sarays overlooking the Nile, namely Qasr al-

---

<sup>1</sup>The absence of the bridges may be intended by the government to speed the modernization of the new areas developed in the western bank of the Nile.



'Ali and Saray al-Giza, with Qasr al-'Aini expanding to absorb the site of the old Misr al-Qadima-Roda bridge (see map 5). This may be an indication for the reasons why most of the expansion stopped at the Misr al-Qadima bank and did not reach the island.

At the end of the nineteenth century we find Roda stripped and deprived of every aspect of significance. The Miqias is no longer active, the royal palaces have been demolished with their gardens, the expansion and its link to Giza and Misr al-Qadima extinct by the absence of the bridges leading to the island, the only way of reaching it now being by boats and ferries. The island, without its bridges, appears as if it was tenaciously being defended against the expansion coming from Misr-al-Qadima and Giza. Thus while the city and its environs -all the way to Giza- had been developing only Roda remained underpopulated and its land use shifted to agriculture. Roda quite simply looked like a rural area.

#### • Phase II :-

#### • The Construction Boom:-

Cairo's construction boom took place between 1314H/1897AD and 1326H/1907AD<sup>1</sup>. An indication of the increase of building activities is clear when studying the number of building permits (*Rukhsa*) issued during these years: in 1323H/1886AD they were 1278; in 1312H/1895AD 1703, and in 1327H/1908AD, it

<sup>1</sup>Owen, Roger. "The Cairo Building Industry And Building Boom Of 1897-1907", *Colloque International Sur l'Histoire du Caire*, Cairo, 1969, pp.338-343 [Hereinafter Owen].



reached 3444, nearly triple the number of the past years<sup>1</sup>. This shows the increase in the building activity during the construction boom.

This building mania was accompanied by the need for new materials. As a result, local building materials, such as calcareous stone and bricks, were discarded in favor of the newly introduced materials, namely steel, glass, marble, and reinforced concrete by 1317H/1900AD. Roof tiles and sand stone were imported from England to serve in building English style villas for the British community now residing in Cairo<sup>2</sup>. The new materials were imported together with foreign workers. The Census of the year 1326H/1907AD shows the presence of 94,898 workers in Egypt, 21,744 of them in Cairo.

The rise in the demand for Capital city residence's, initiated several expansion projects investments which were responsible for the construction of several new districts, Zamalik, Garden City<sup>3</sup>, Ma'adi, and Heliopolis<sup>4</sup> (see maps 11,12,13,14). However, These new elegant modern districts reserved to the elite did not flourish in the period of our discussion<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, p.338.

<sup>2</sup>Scharabi, Mohamed. *Kairo, Stadt Und Architektur im Zeitalter des Europäischen Kolonialismus*, Tübingen, 1989, p.103 [Hereinafter Scharabi].

<sup>3</sup>Garden city and Zamlik were started at the same time with the former finished in 1325H/1906AD and the latter in 1324H/1905AD-1326H/1907AD (Raymond, p. 325 also see "Garden City", The Encyclopedia Britannica, p.119)

<sup>4</sup>Scharabi, pp. 82-91. Heliopolis was started in 1325H/1906AD (one of the sources discussing Heliopolis Abu Lughod, pp. 138-140).

<sup>5</sup>The city was getting over-populated with European communities and natural increases but mainly by the influx of countryside migrants. With the agricultural revolution due to the British reforms to the agricultural system, the profits of the countryside landowners were increasing in a way allowing them to fulfill their aims of purchasing a residence in the city and move to it. Also a lot of the lower classes would move in to seize on opportunities to profit in the city. But those would be moving to the old city and not to the modern city where the construction boom was concentrated. As for the government we should not think that it encouraged the growth of the city. On the contrary it was trying to cope with this expansion by expanding the infrastructure of the city. The newly constructed bridges must have been a project facilitating the administration of the City and its vicinity, helping to link the city with the eastern bank of the Nile than allowing the expansion to that bank. In fact the government might have been reluctant to go along with the growth of the city as it was absorbing a lot of funds to cope with the expansion. Only the non-government investors were directly responsible for the expansion plans of the city as a means of profit.



Within the city, the transformation of the new modern district *Hilmiyyia* was taking place. The site of *Hilmiyyia* was originally that of *Birkat al-Fil*, which was filled up in the nineteenth century with the palace of 'Abbas Hilmi I built on the site. In 1310H/ 1893AD, the area was declared public land with the Ministry of Public Works planning roads oriented to Muhammed 'Ali street. In 1320H/1903AD, 'Abbas Hilmi I's palace was torn down and the area subdivided by roads<sup>1</sup>.

#### • The map of 1326H/1907AD:-

The map of 1326H/1907AD shows of the evolution of Roda, Misr al Qadima, and Giza (see map 6). As for Misr al-Qadima, it was extending east and south with the new tramline crossing it. The new district of Garden City is also present on the map though there are no buildings present at the time. Giza was expanding more rapidly in the direction of the south. In the place of Saray al-Giza we find that the old Saray has been divided with straight roads which indicates that this area was going to be a part of modern city of Giza. The gardens of the Saray were now divided into the Orman garden and the Zoological park. The tram lines were reaching the old Giza through Roda while it reached the new modern part through *Jazirah* (see map 6).

#### • Analysis of Roda map 1326H/1907AD:-

The island contained:

1. Al-Miqias.
2. Gardens.

<sup>1</sup>Asfour, Khaled. "The Domestication of Knowledge: Cairo At The Turn Of The Century", *Muqarnas*, Vol. 10, 1993, p. 125.



3. Three nodes of random expanding areas.
4. Several scattered buildings.
5. Roads.
6. Agricultural lands.

We can see that three bridges have been constructed in Roda: al-Malik al-Salih bridge between Roda and Giza; Muhammed 'Ali bridge between al-Qasr al-'Aini and the extreme north of Roda, and 'Abbas II bridge between Roda and Giza. The main roads, though not constructed yet, were indicated in dotted lines to show their extent. There are mainly two streets, *Sikkat al-Manial* a straight road going the length of the island in its middle, starting from the Muhammed 'Ali bridge and extended to reach the other perpendicular road, crossing the island and connecting the *al-Malik al-Salih* bridge and Abbas II bridge. As for the rest of the island, only minute changes have taken place since 1314H/1897AD (see map 6).

### 1. Al-Miqias:-

The Miqias was not attached to any other building for the first time. Beside it was the "Maison Ibrahim Pasha", with the "Eglise Anglaise" no longer in this place. The Miqias was not destroyed but certainly still neglected (see map 6).

### 2. Gardens:-

The gardens of the island contracted more than in the map of the year 1314H/1897AD. The gardens were still concentrated on the northern tip and the eastern



bank of the island. The map does not show any garden with an elaborate design except the garden on the north of the island which still retained its oval shaped lake. The shrinkage of the gardens area gave way to an increase in the agricultural lands on the island (see fig. 5B).

### **3. Four nodes of random expanding areas:-**

The four nodes discussed before in the island were still the same with no change in their borders. During the last decade there was nearly no change in the population of the island even with the population increasing all over the city. But as has been said before, the main reason for the increase of the population was the countryside immigration which was obviously not taking place in Roda which only depended on the natural increase of the population (see fig. 5A).

### **4. Scattered buildings:-**

The buildings on the island were nearly the same. The new information coming with this map is the names given to most of the buildings on the island. The new identities are:

- A. Ibrahim Pasha house.
- B. Palace of 'Abbas Pasha Yeghen.
- C. Palace of Ali Pasha al-Sherif.
- D. Palace of Prince Muhammed.
- E. Palace of Khedive Isma'il.

There are as well several buildings scattered on the island which the map identifies as the property of 'Abbas Pasha Yeghen. Most of these building, as we



know from the earlier maps, were old dating at least from 1314H/1897AD. Even the Saray of Khedive Isma'il was still located on the island. As it is the buildings on the island were nearly unchanged. An addition the palace of Prince Muhammed 'Ali, the brother of Khedive 'Abbas Hilmi II, was now located on the island (this is not the same Palace present on Roda today) (see map 6, fig 5A).

### **5. Roads:-**

The roads of the island were still the same with no alteration but this was not to stay long as the map shows that the new roads were planned and may even have been under construction by then. However, by 1326H /1907AD the roads were still the same (see map 6).

### **6. Agricultural lands:-**

Even with the presence of the new bridges, the agricultural lands were increasing as if Roda was being changed from an elite island to a rural area (see fig. 5C).

By the end of 1326H/1907AD, several modern districts constituting the modern city were encircling the old city from the north and east. The two cities, the old one and the modern one, were now merging together through the new roads connecting them though still socially and urbanistically distinct. The tramlines had extended to reinforce the connection between the old and the modern city, especially



the new Khalig tramline and added the connection to the remote built area allowing the city to expand and engross all of these suburbs.

However this was not true for Roda. The island was metamorphosing with the decrease of its number of buildings. But this should not to continue as the new roads, when finished, would occasion new land divisions admitting the modern city to devour the island. With this still to come, Roda was surrounded by urban districts expanding from east and west neighboring the island but not yet engulfing it. In fact Roda, with its agricultural lands, provided a rural area in the middle of the growing city.

To fulfill our study agenda and trace the conclusive evolution of Roda at the span of time till 1332H/1914AD, we shall study the map of the year 1337H/1919AD. This map, of a scale factor of 1:5000, shows our most enlarged view of the island since the beginning of our study. It also displays Garden City, Misr al-Qadima, Duqqi, and Giza (see map 7).

#### • The Eastern Bank of the Nile:-

The modern city had expanded to absorb Misr al-Qadima, though still separated by the aqueduct, and reached the limits of al-Malik al-Salih bridge, leaving a space between it and the new randomly expanding area south-west of Jami' 'Amr. Garden City now flourished with several new houses though not many. The random areas were expanding exuberantly, encouraged by the roads and tramlines attending them and the overall population additions of the city. In the last twelve years, the city grew more than could be foreseen by anyone (see map 7).



## • The Western Bank of the Nile:-

What happened in the western bank was truly surprising. It grew in size to an astonishing limit, the roads were now extending everywhere reaching Bulaq al-Dakrur, Duqqi, the pyramids, and *Imbaba*. Duqqi and *Imbaba* grew to nearly twice their last reported size in 1326H/1907AD encouraged by all these roads, tramlines and the new modern Giza land divisions. Old Giza also randomly expanded to the west and the south in a very dynamic magnification. The prison to its north now expanded to the al-Haram road beginning from the 'Abbas II bridge, The Saray of Isma'il and all of the land to the west of it, until Bulaq al-Dakrur road, was now the Faculty of Agriculture, leaving only the Zoological park and the Orman gardens untouched. The new land divisions between the Nile and the old Duqqi node was now thriving with newly built structures. The western bank of the Nile had itself become a huge Modern city. The enormous expansion of the western bank undoubtedly be seen as due to the bridges constructed by isma'il and 'Abbas Hilmi II and assisted by the new transportation system that made all the suburbs of the city reachable with no effort and in less time (see map 7).

## • Roda:-

## • Analysis of the map of 1337H/1919AD:-

### 1. Al-Miqias.

The Miqias was now attached to al-Manistrli<sup>1</sup> palace in the same manner that exists at the present period (see plates 13A, 13B). The Miqias still retained no importance and in the land of Manistrli Pasha. The Miqias was unchanged.

<sup>1</sup>The *Manistirli* palace was started at 1246H/1830AD.



## 1. Gardens.

There was only three gardens on the island: the garden of Prince Muhammed 'Ali palace, now the greatest of them all; a large garden attached to a palace, most probably the palace of the former Khedive Isma'il but the garden had been redesigned, and a smaller garden in the mid distance between the earlier discussed gardens with no name to identify its owner. They were only attached to palaces leaving the rest of the island to be used in agriculture (see fig. 6B).

## 2. Five nodes of random expanding areas:-

The nodes of the island increased to five which means an increase of two nodes in the last twelve years. These were: al-Manial; Kafr Qaytbay; 'Izbat 'Ali Pasha Sherif; 'Ishash al-Roda wa al-Miqias; while the fifth node was in the Miqias vicinity and bears no name on the map. The two last nodes were the new ones. However, the word " 'Ishash " means temporary shelters mainly would be used by very poor people. They would expand in a very short duration of time as they do not need any permits or money to start. As it was, the expansion in the island was an expansion of population due to the increase of the agriculture lands, and the immense growth of Misr al-Qadima and Giza making some of its inhabitants move to Roda, leading to the creation of new random areas located near al-Miqias, most probably this location was chosen for being furthest away from the royal palaces on the north of Roda (see fig. 6A).



### 3. Buildings on the island:-

a) four palaces with the only one identified, the Saray of Prince Muhammed

‘Ali (see plate 14B).

b) Magic City restaurant and cafe (not yet built).

c) A number of religious buildings:

1. Jami‘ Qaytbay.

2. Jami‘ Shams al-Din.

3. Jami‘ Sayyid ‘Abd al-Rahman ‘Uuf.

4. Jami‘ of ‘Abd al-’Aziz.

5. Zawiyat Abd al-Yazid al-Bastany.

6. Zawiyat al-Shaykh al-Abraqi.

7. Zawiyat al-Shaykh al-Kazaruni.

All of this religious building indicates that the land was no longer an elite island, but on the contrary it was in the hands of the population and it would seem that the island did not as yet come under the modern administration of the city (see fig. 6A).

### 4. Roads:-

The roads of the island were now changed to straight wide roads with some land divisions indicated in dotted line on the northern and southern tips of the island.

The previously discussed roads of *Sikkat al-Manial*, and the other road linking ‘Abbas II bridge to al-Malik al-Salih bridge, were now active with the tramline



crossing the island through the two bridges. However, these roads still did not play any part in the evolution of the island (see map 7).

### 5. Agricultural lands.

Roda was mostly an Agriculture land, with more than 70 % of the island land cultivated making it difficult for anyone to comprehend that it is even a suburb to any of the two growing cities of Cairo and Giza (see fig. 6C).

Roda was now penetrated by the main roads that would make it a part of the modern district phenomena taking place in the eastern and the western banks of the Nile. These new roads still did not initiate any constructions on the island. The only expansion activity was small random nodes which were not intended to stay in accordance to the government plans for Roda. The reason for this inert state of the island, though the new roads were now active, was that the population of the eastern and western cities did not yet saturate the existing lands of both banks. Only when all of this land was occupied could Roda, the last "suburb" of Cairo be urbanized. At the point at which we leave our analysis, it was on the whole populated by small-scale cultivators.



## Conclusion:-

---

At the beginning of our study we meet Roda as a part of the camp-capital Fustat (later Misr al-Qadima). Misr al-Qadima extended to the west via the boat bridge connecting it to the island and by another longer boat bridge to the early agricultural settlement of Giza. Roda's identity evolved from a fortress island with a boat yard toward being an elite residential area. By the reign of Sultan Barquq the island only retained its civic identity through the Miqias, the celebration of the Khalig, and as the only road to Giza. However at the end of the Mamluk period the island contained the mosque of Qaytbay and the royal palace of Sultan Qansuh al-Ghuri. The palace continued to be used by Egyptian rulers until the French invasion of Egypt.

In Muhammed 'Ali's reign Roda had been converted to gardens with some palaces with the old agricultural land. In the beginning of Muhammed 'Ali phase II, Khedive Isma'il took two steps that ensured that Roda was left stripped of all its importance and would never become a part of his new urban expansion: he chose *al-Jazirah* to be the stepping stone between the eastern and the western banks of the Nile by constructing the Qasr al-Nil and *al-Jala'* bridges; and isolating Roda from the development of Misr al-Qadima and Giza since the two old boat bridges no longer existed. These two steps severed Roda from any urban expansion or even influence coming from the capital or Giza causing the land use of the island to shift almost entirely to agriculture.

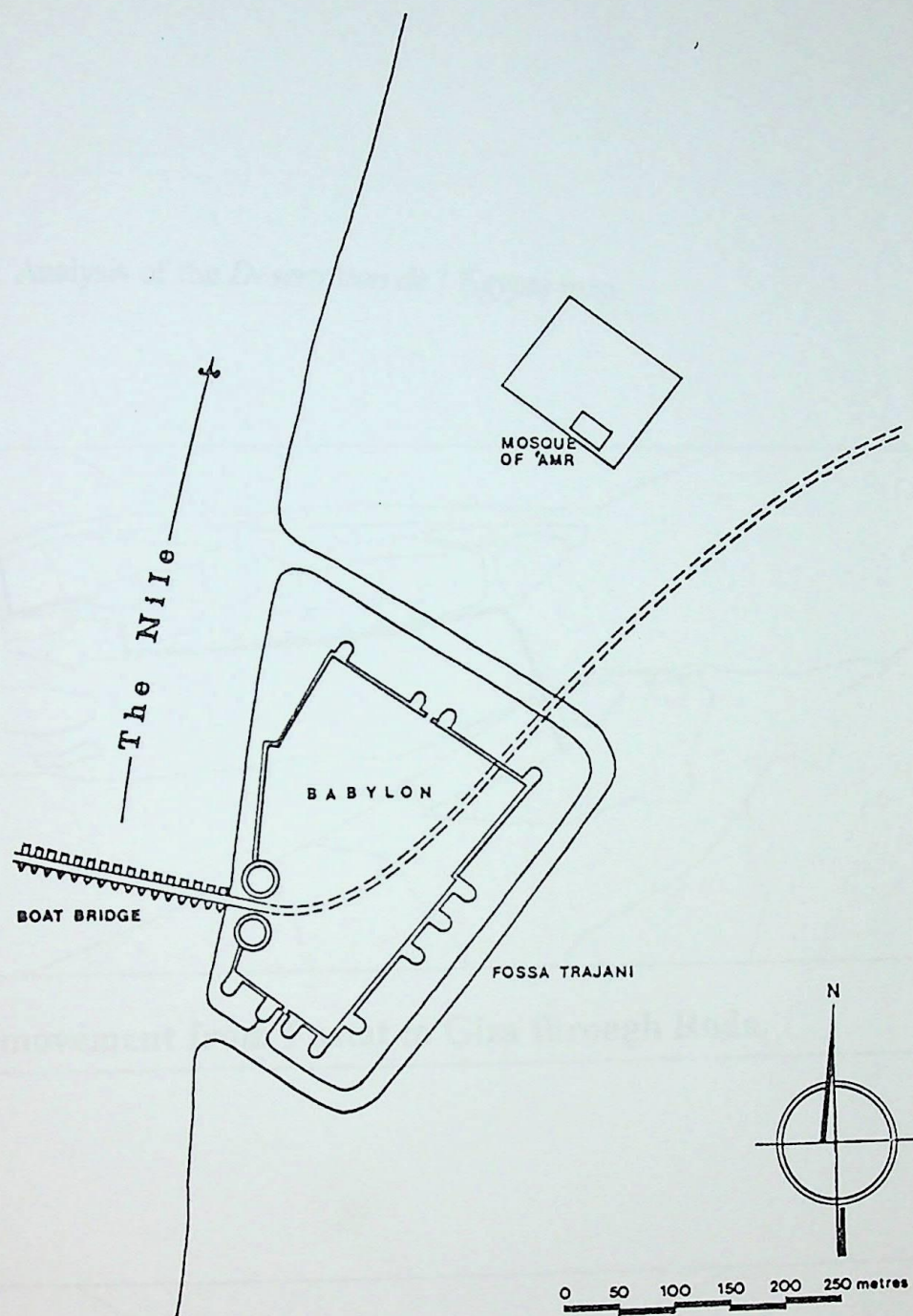
In the reign of 'Abbas Hilmi II, the reforms that took place re-established the contact between the expanding quarter of Misr al-Qadima and Giza through three bridges: Muhammed 'Ali, al-Malik al-Salih, and 'Abbas II. Nevertheless, these



changes did not cause any urban expansion within or changes to the island since by the year 1337H/1919AD Roda was mostly agricultural land with several residences located on its banks. Most of its population were farmers cultivating its extensive fields.

At the conclusion of our study we see Roda was nearly the same as it was in the early Islamic period: un-urbanized and basically unchanged except for the presence of the three bridges and the Manial road. This is really a surprise to us for how could Roda remain an untouched river suburb of Cairo while both the capital and Giza had grown into large and vibrant entities? It would seem that its real modern urban development took place after the newer parts of Qasr al-'Aini Hospital had been established on Roda in 1355H/1937AD.





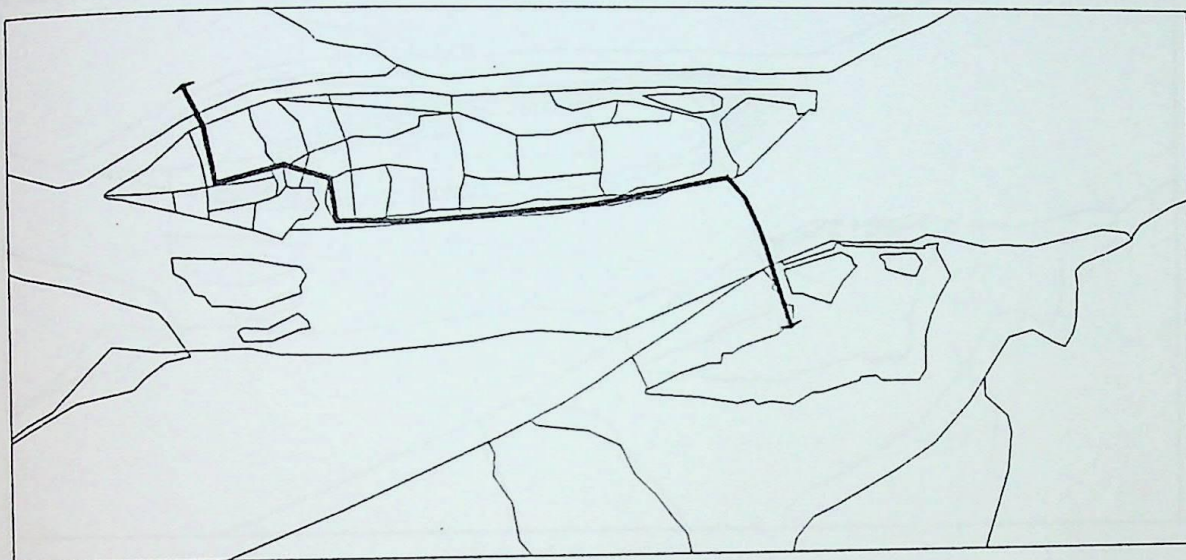
Plan 3. Babylon at the Conquest

Fig. 1 .

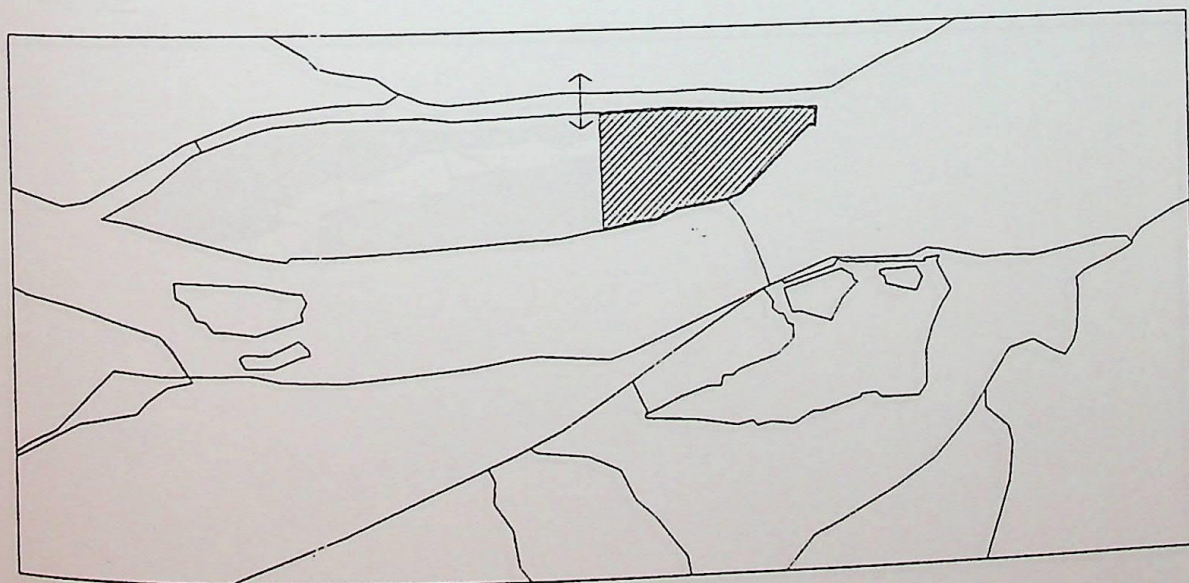


Fig. 2 ..... Analysis of the *Description de l'Egypte* map.

A



The axis of movement from Fustat to Giza through Roda.



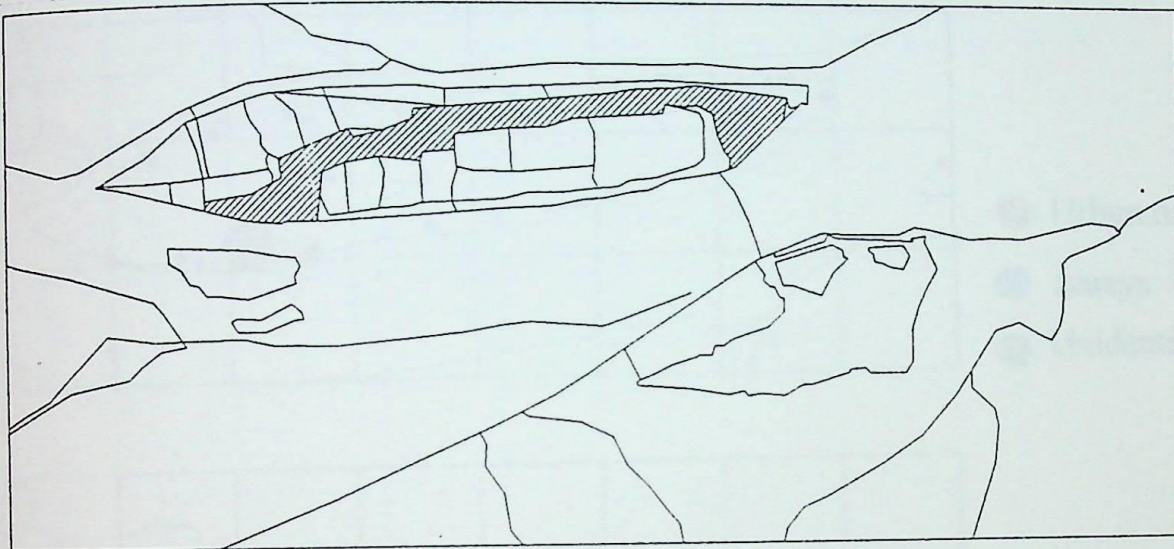
The limits of the Ayoubid fortress and the location of the bridge.



land use of Roda :-

---

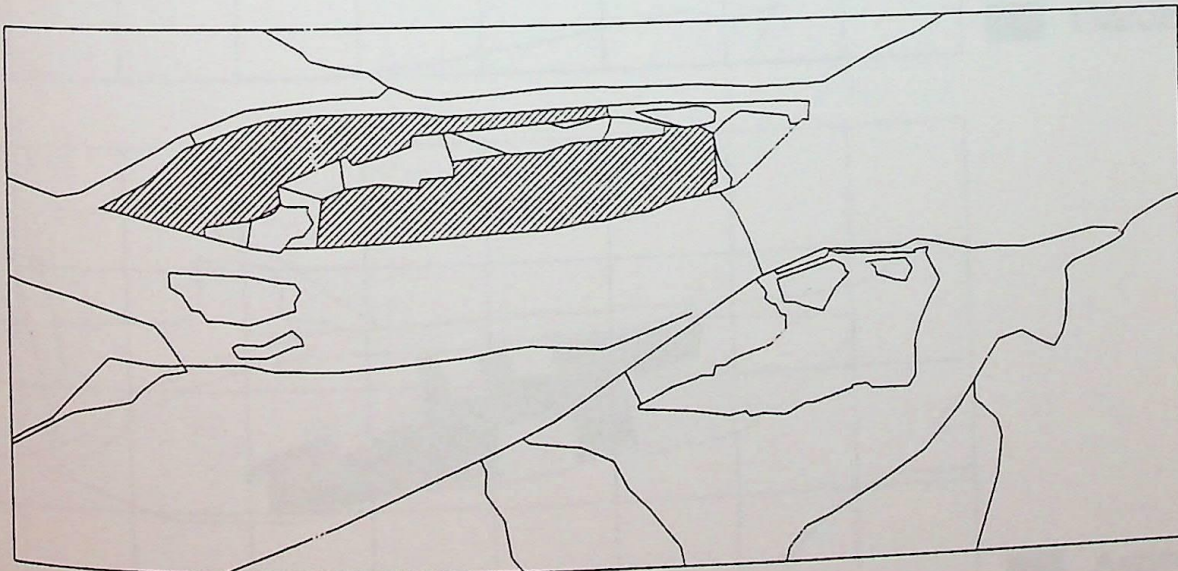
B



( The gardens )

---

C

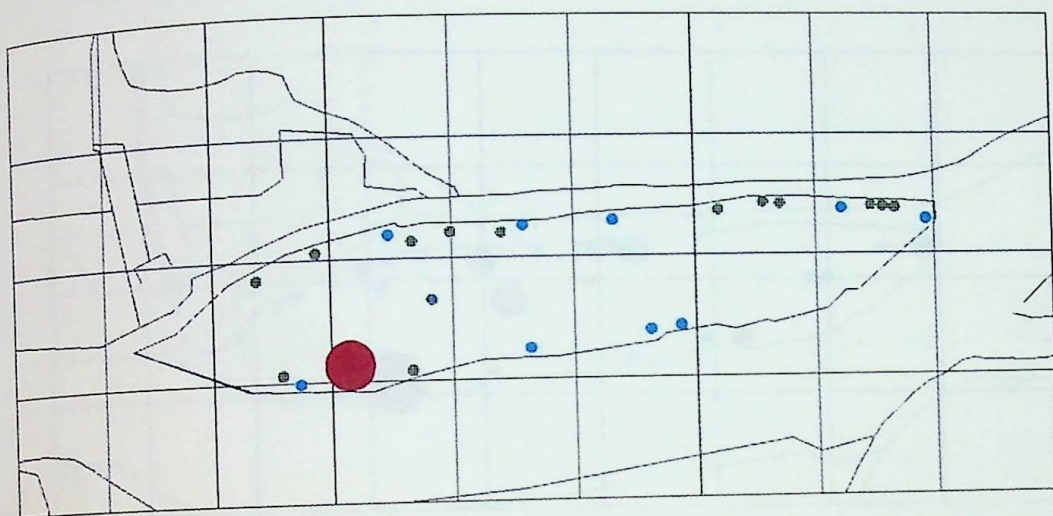


( The agricultural land )

---



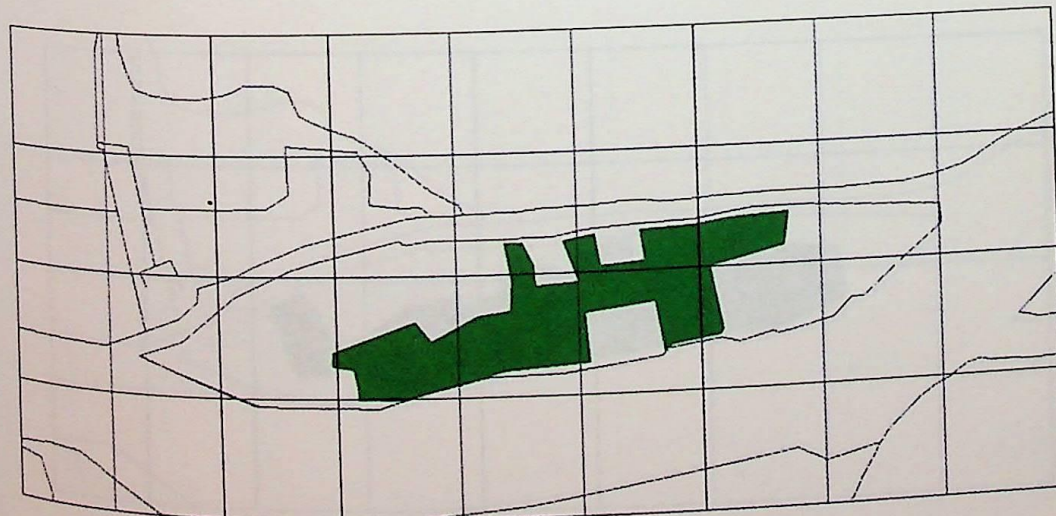
Fig. 3



- Urban node
- Sarays
- Unidentified Buildings



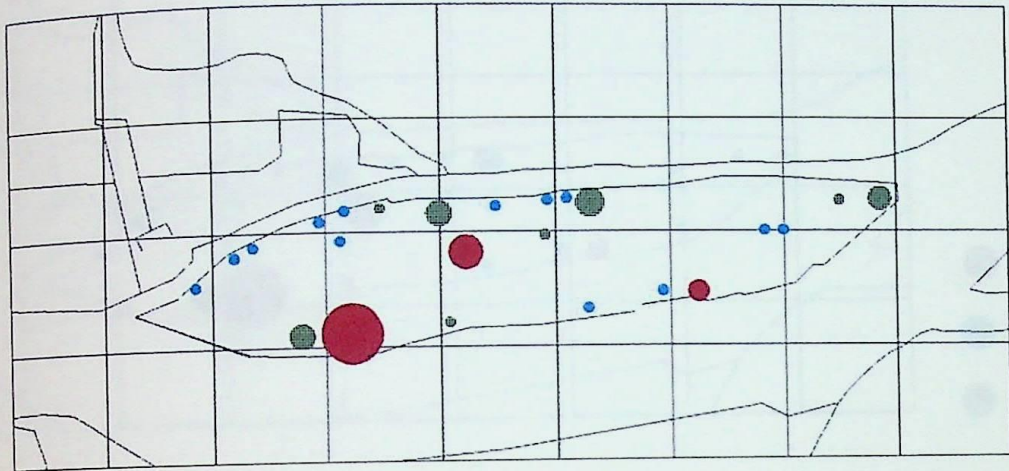
- Garden



- Agricultural land



Fig. 4



- Urban node
- Unidentified Buildings
- Sarays



- Garden



- Agricultural land



Fig. 5



- Urban node
- Unidentified Buildings
- Sarays



- Garden



- Agricultural land



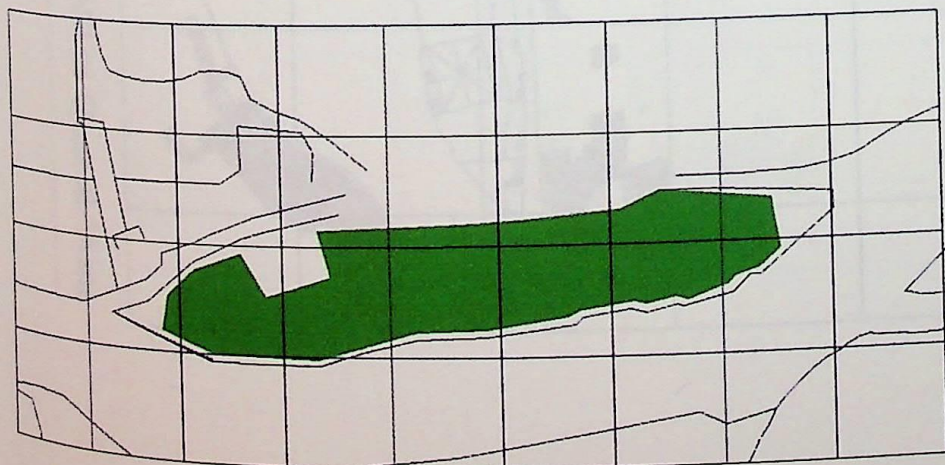
Fig. 6



- Urban node
- Unidentified Buildings
- Sarays



- Garden

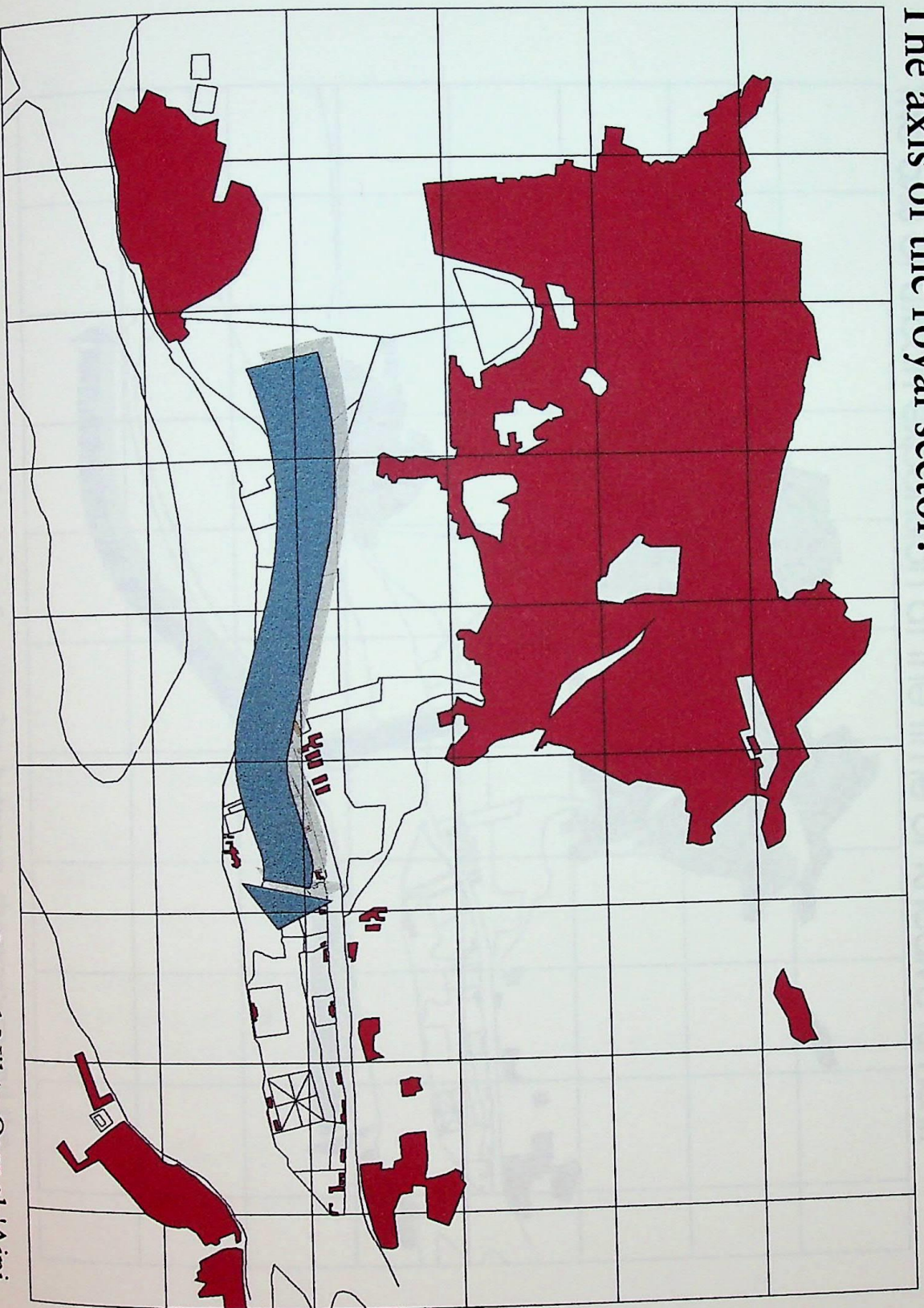


- Agricultural land



Fig. 7

The axis of the royal sector:-

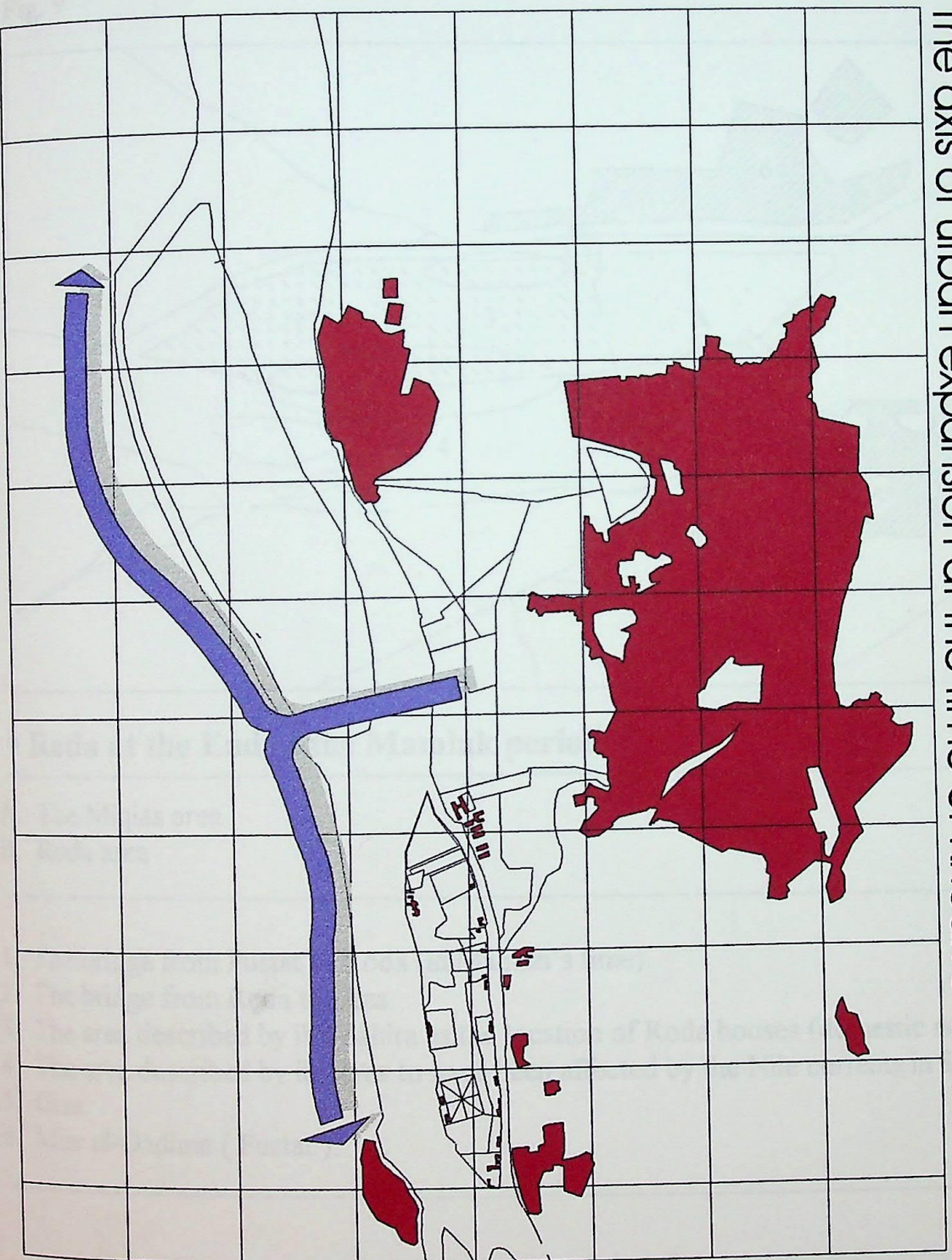


The arrow indicates how the royal sector expanded from Qasr al-Nil to Qasr al-'Aini



Fig. 8

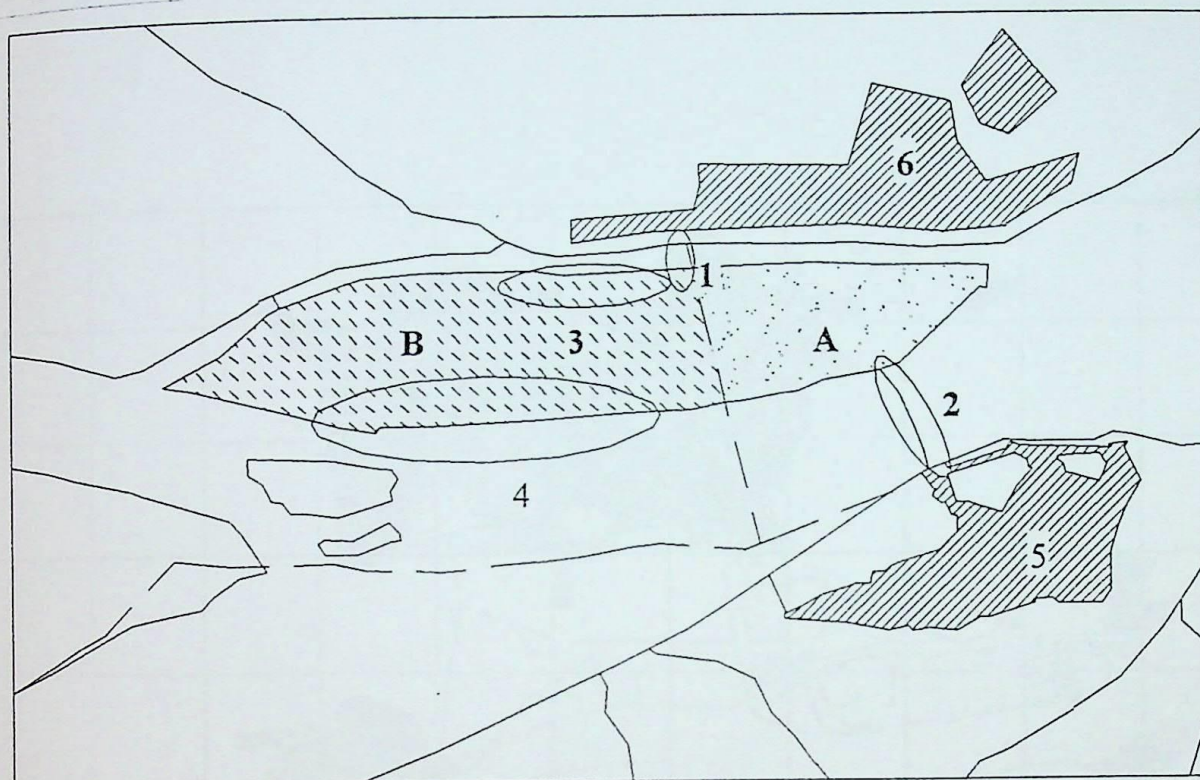
The axis of urban expansion at the time of Khedive Ismail:-



The arrow indicates the axis of expansion between the western and the eastern bank of the Nile.



Fig. 9



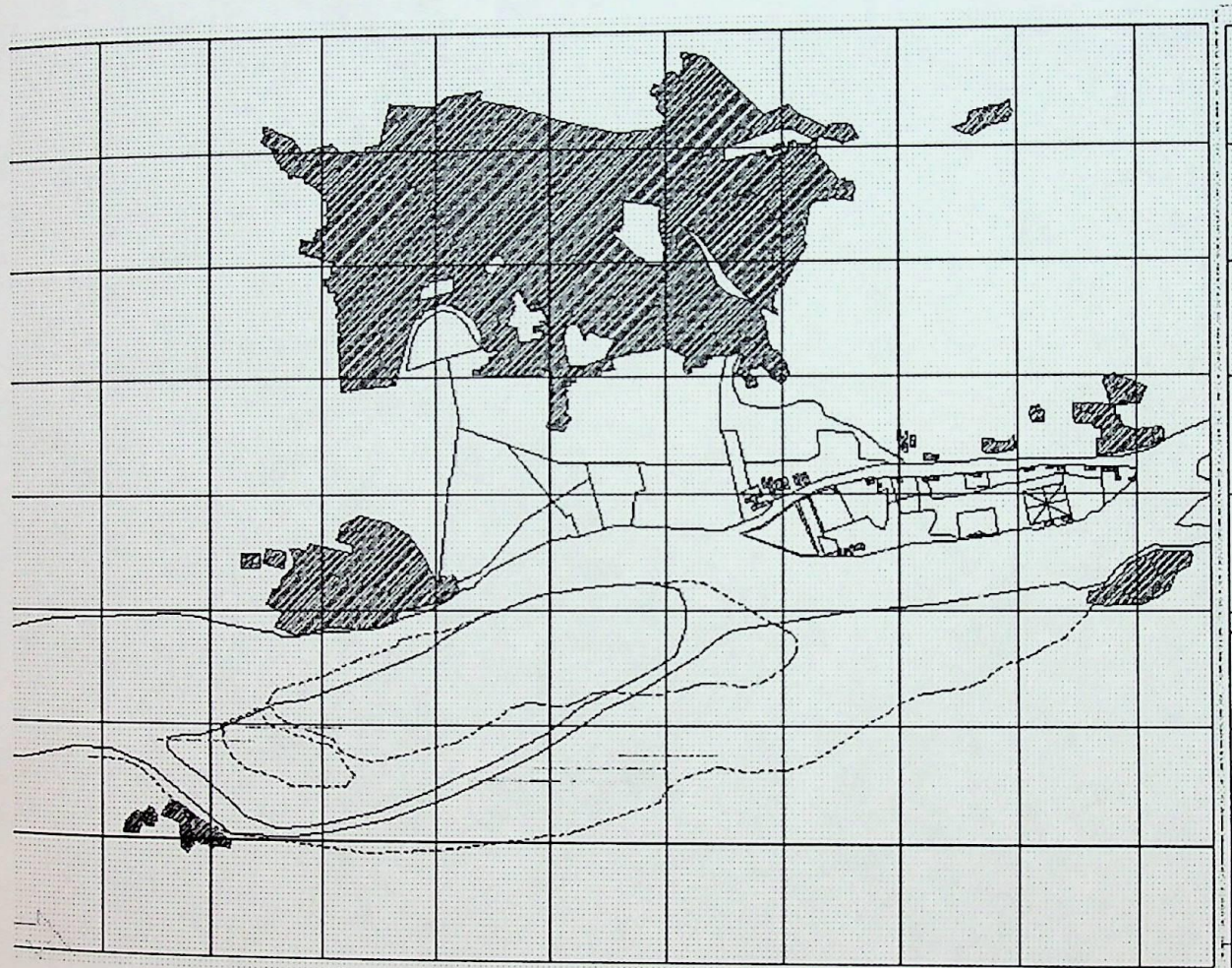
• Roda at the End of the Mamluk period.

- A. The Miqias area  
B. Roda area

1. The bridge from Fustat to Roda (in Maqrizi's time).
2. The bridge from Roda to Giza.
3. The area described by ibn Zahira as the location of Roda houses (domestic node).
4. The area described by ibn Iyas to have been affected by the Nile currents in 914H.
5. Giza.
6. Misr al-Qadima ( Fustat ).



Fig. 10.



The changes in the Giza Nile bank done by Isma'il.





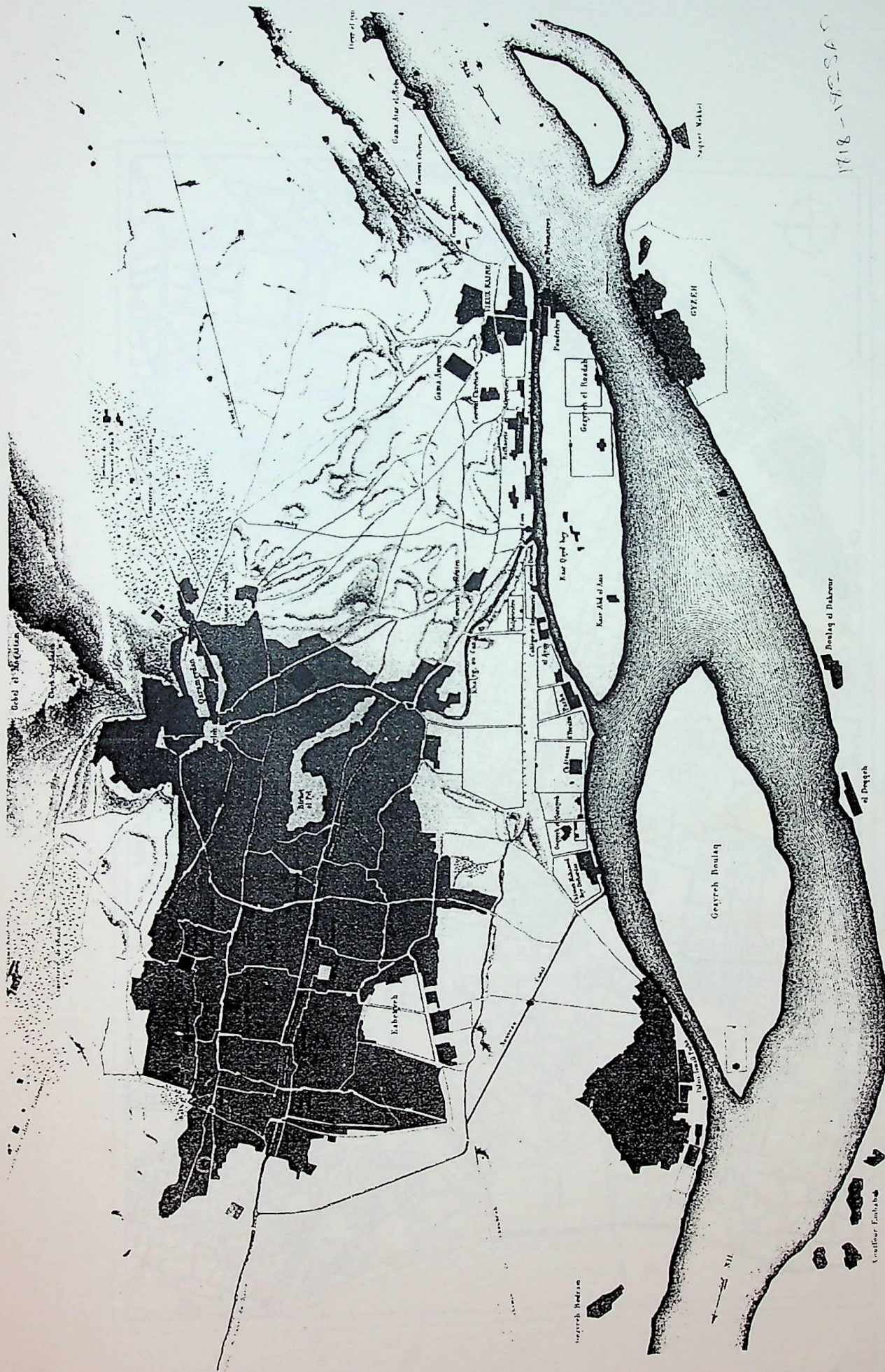
Map 1.





LE NILE





LE CAIRE ET SES ENVIRONS

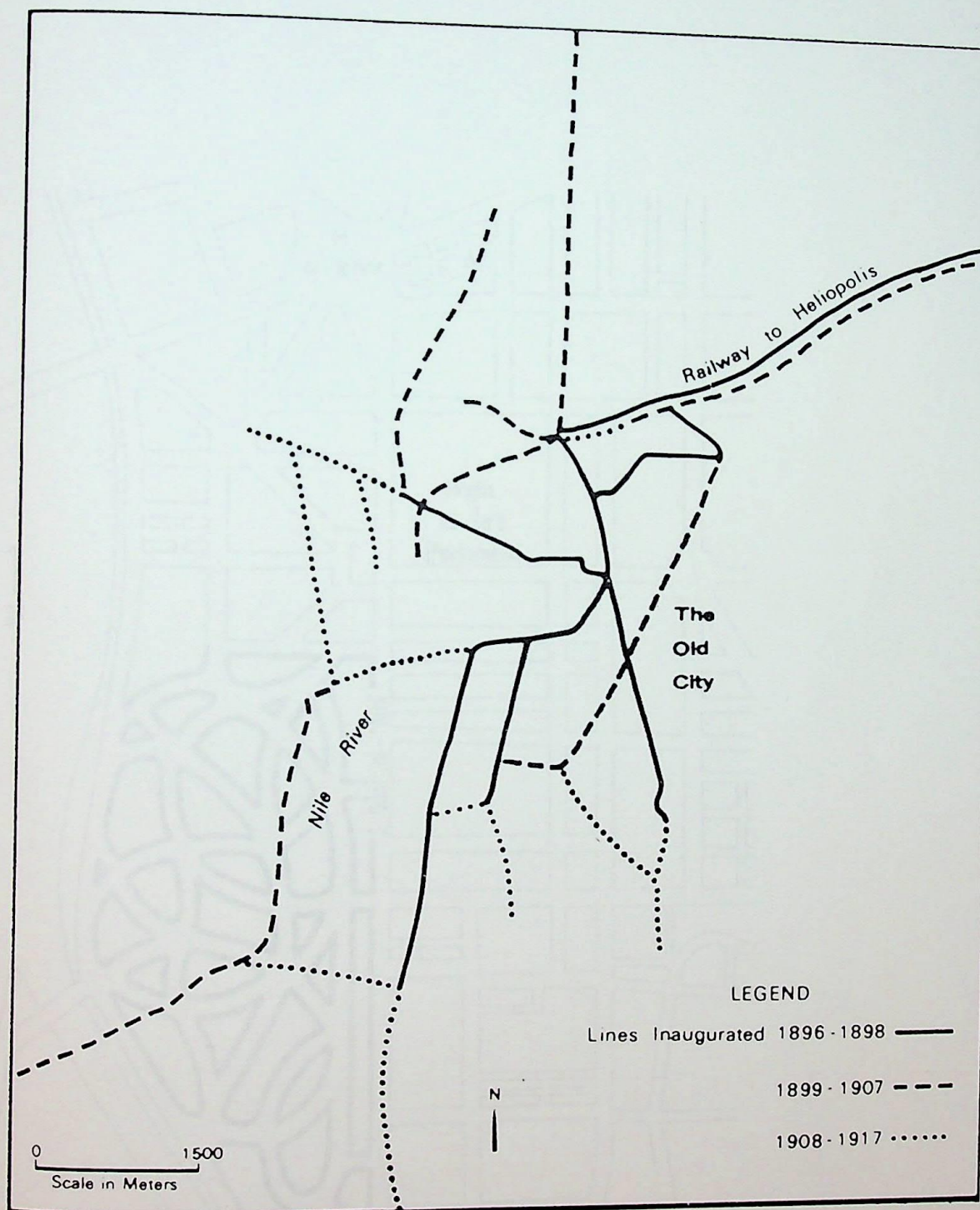
Map 8.





Map 9.





Extension of the electric tramway lines of Cairo, 1896-1917

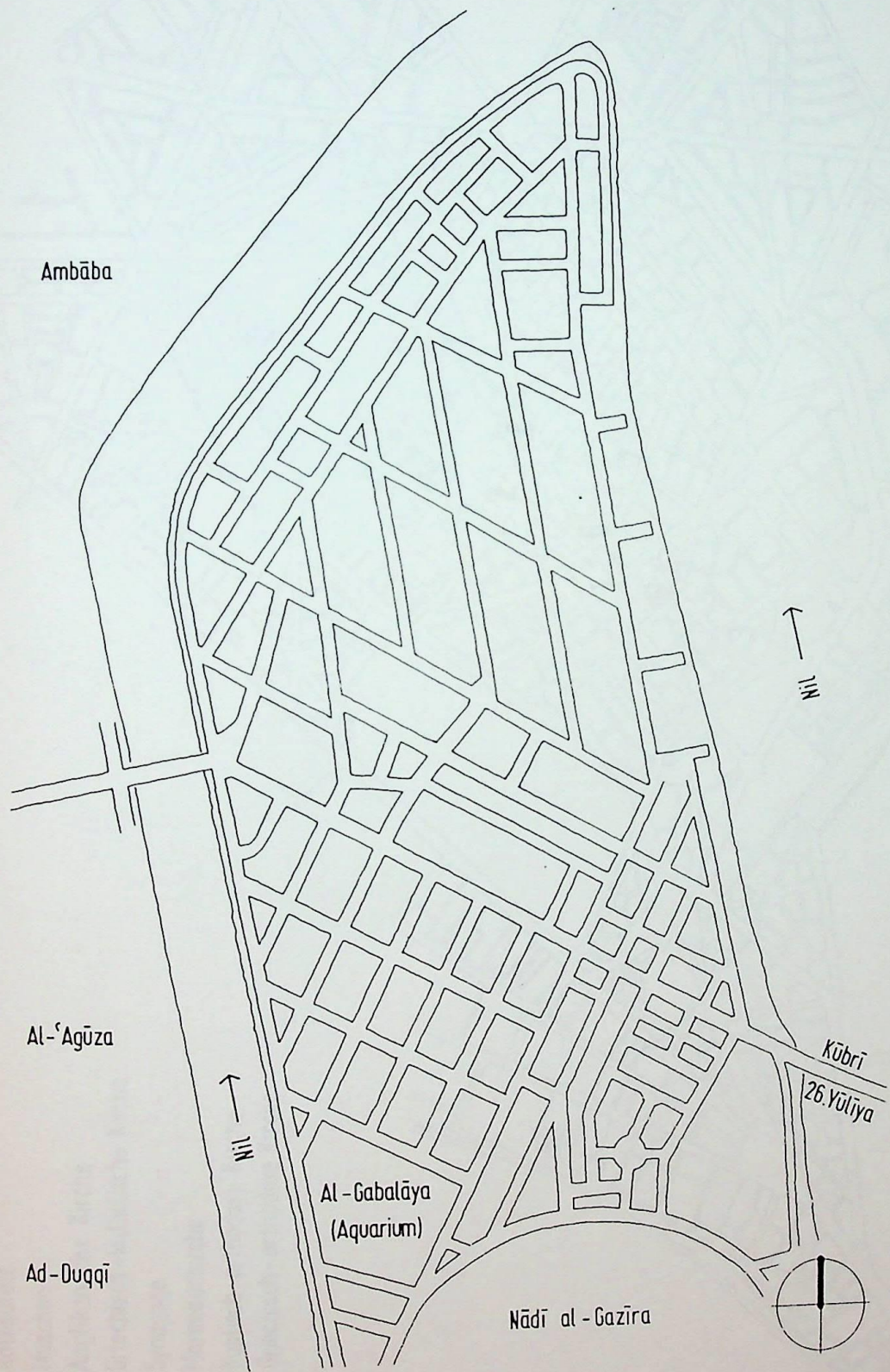
Map 10.





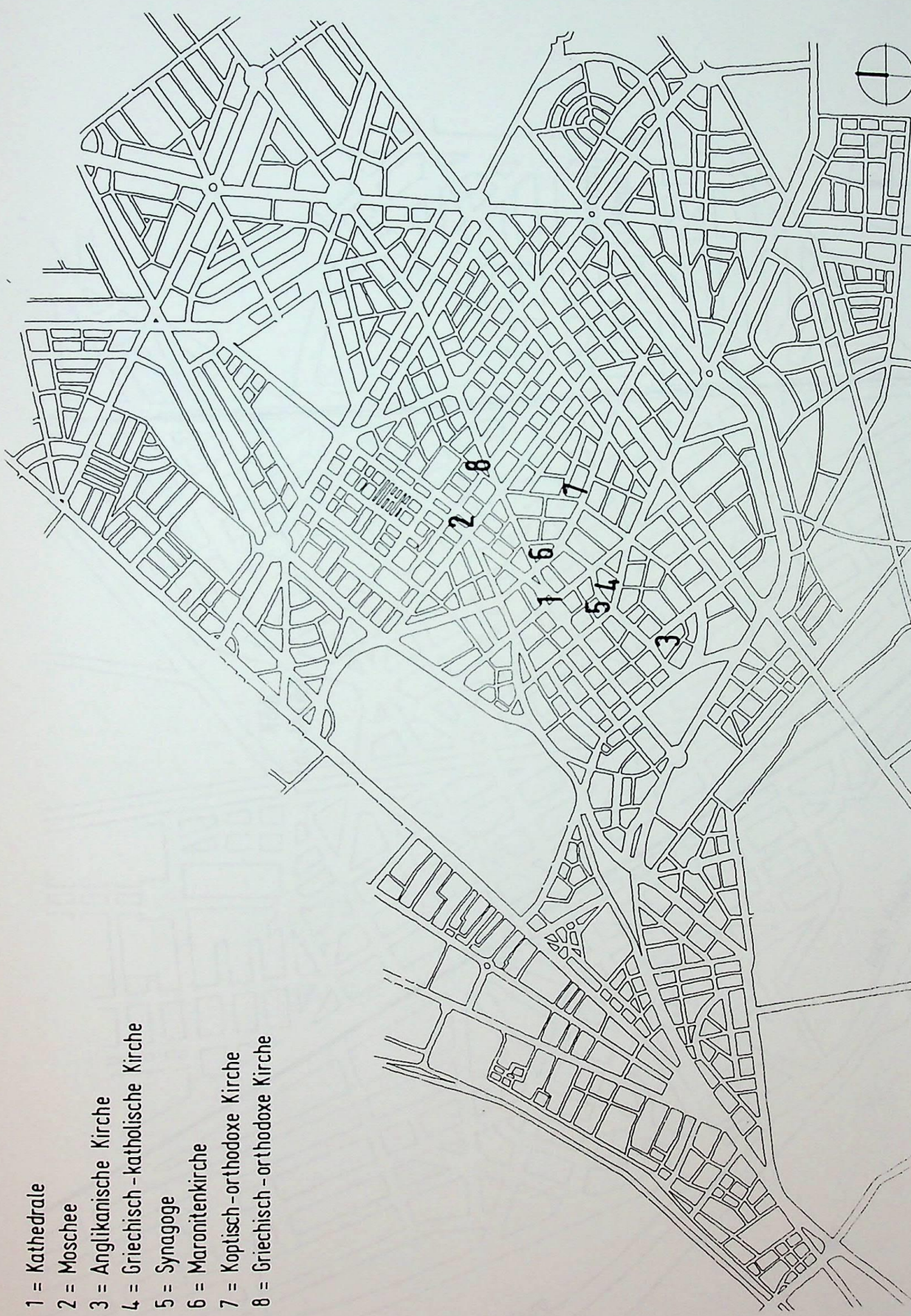
Map 11.





Map 12.





- 1 = Kathedrale
- 2 = Moschee
- 3 = Anglikanische Kirche
- 4 = Griechisch-katholische Kirche
- 5 = Synagoge
- 6 = Maronitenkirche
- 7 = Koptisch-orthodoxe Kirche
- 8 = Griechisch-orthodoxe Kirche

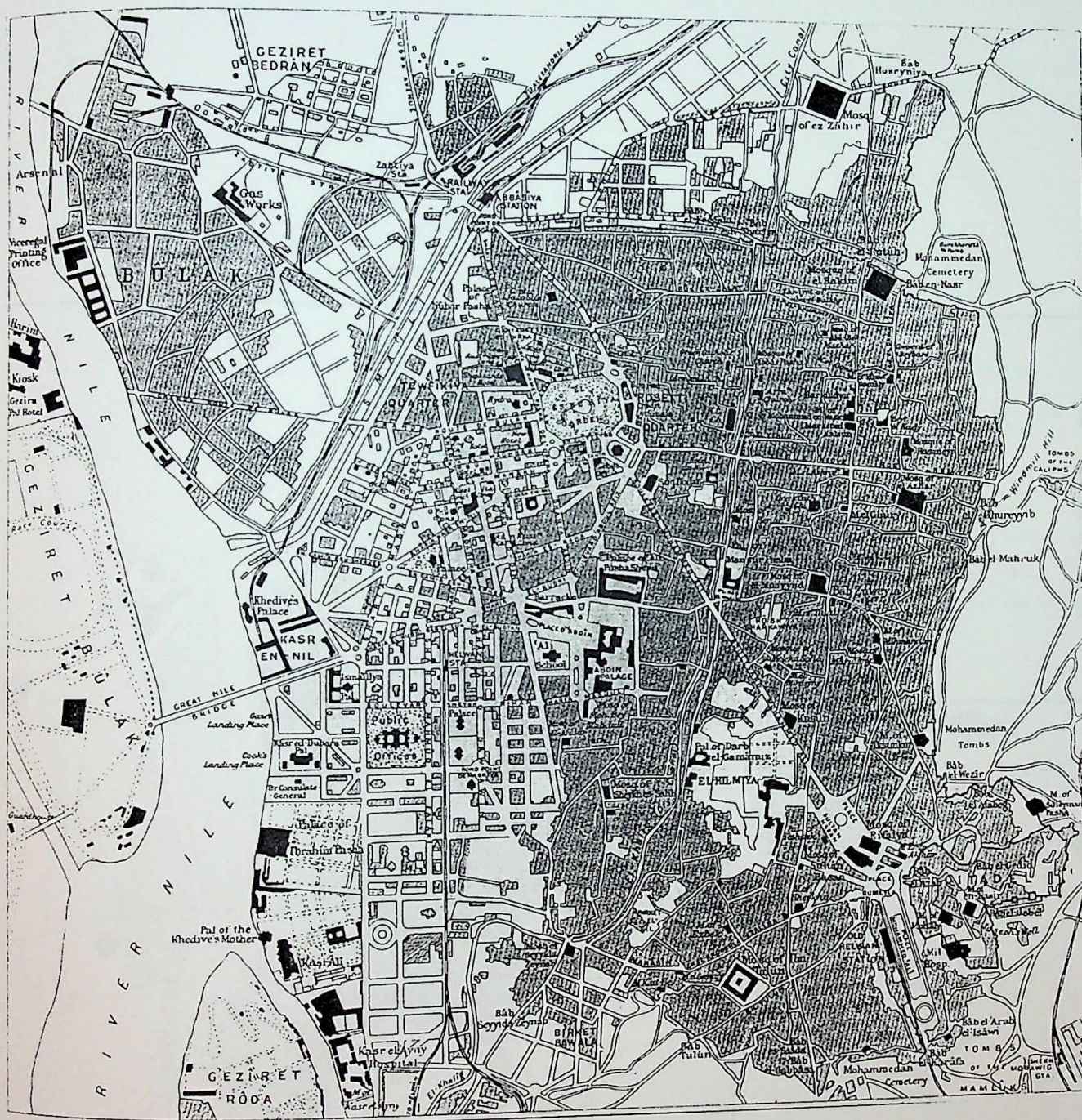
Map 13.





Map 14.

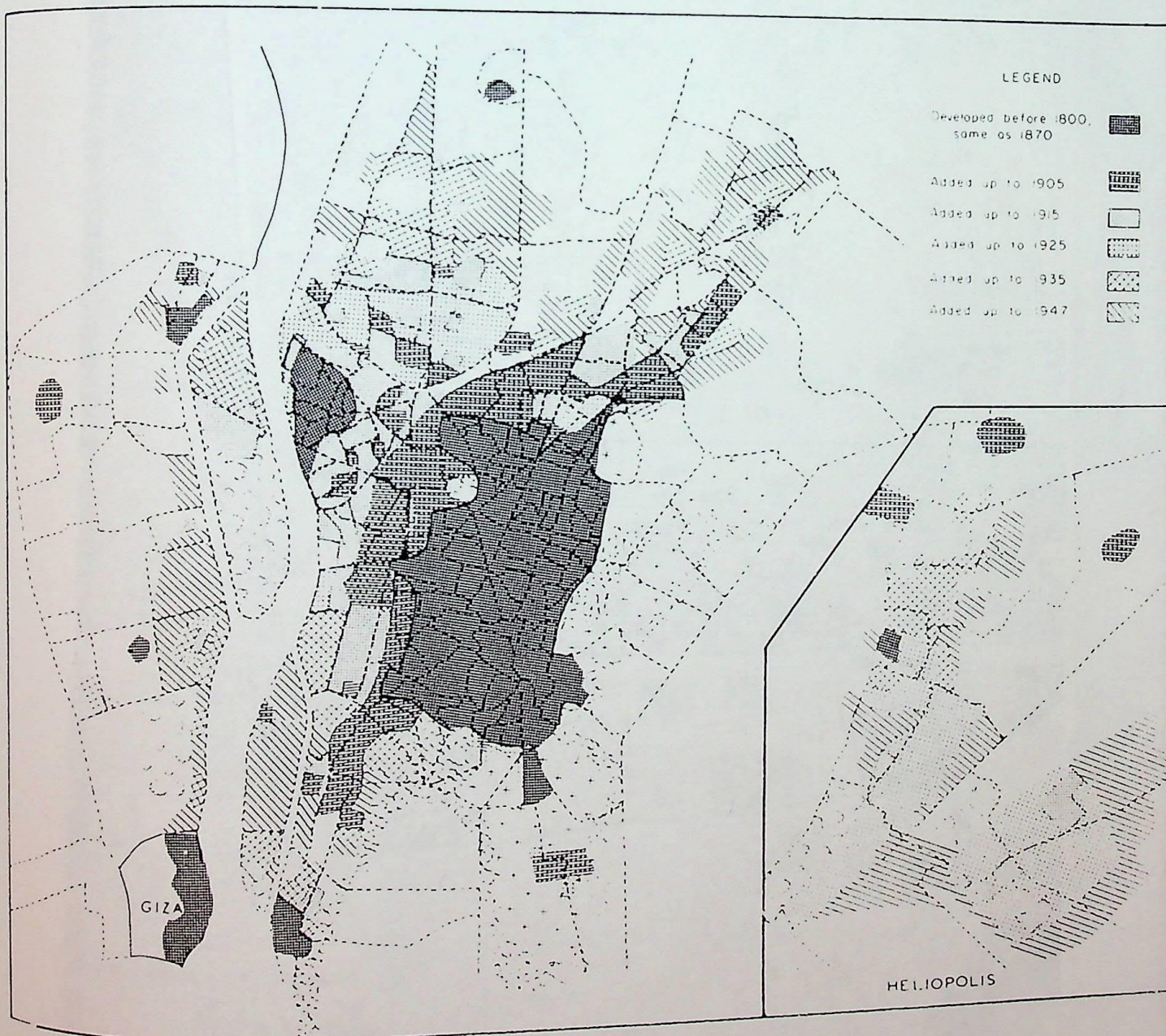




Lane-Poole: The Story of Cairo, London 1902, 1906 und 1918

Map 15.





Segments of the city developed at stages of growth

Map 16.





خريطة  
مصر ووضوحي  
م ١٨٦٨



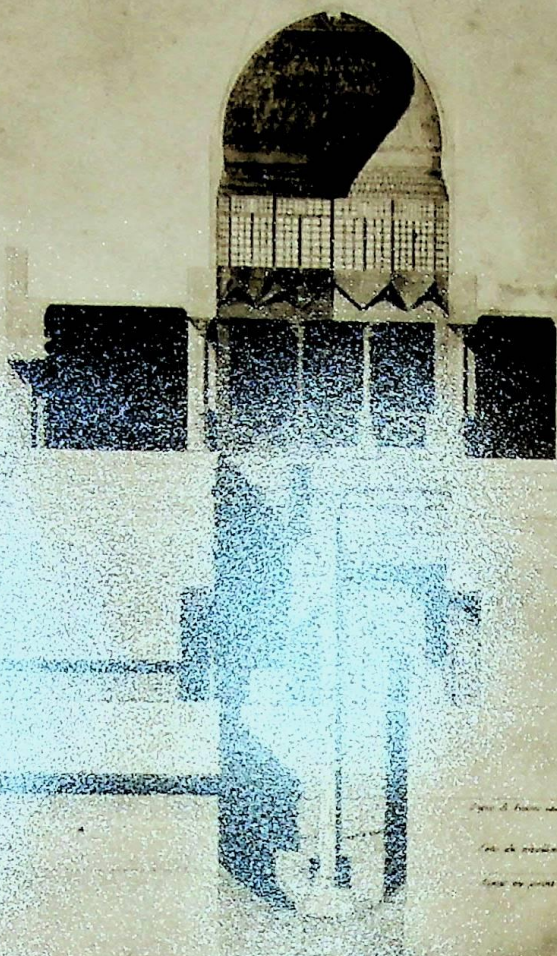


# LEGEND

- Old City
- Ismā'īl's Addition
- Planned New Arteries for Old City
- 12 Maydāns
- Railways



TABLEAU DECADAIRE DES CREUX DU MIL abonnés au Moulin de Roudah et comparés aux creux publics du Kaire			
Noms des creux	Hauteurs venues des Creux à la Colonne du Moulin	Rapports des Creux aux creux publics	Échelle Hauteur des pointes
Colonne	27	27	100
Creux	1	1	3.7
Creux	2	2	5.9
Creux	3	3	8.1
Creux	4	4	10.4
Creux	5	5	12.6
Creux	6	6	14.8
Creux	7	7	17.0
Creux	8	8	19.3
Creux	9	9	21.5
Creux	10	10	23.7
Creux	11	11	25.9
Creux	12	12	28.2
Creux	13	13	30.4
Creux	14	14	32.6
Creux	15	15	34.9
Creux	16	16	37.1
Creux	17	17	39.3
Creux	18	18	41.6
Creux	19	19	43.8
Creux	20	20	46.0
Creux	21	21	48.3
Creux	22	22	50.5
Creux	23	23	52.7
Creux	24	24	55.0
Creux	25	25	57.2
Creux	26	26	59.4
Creux	27	27	61.7
Creux	28	28	63.9
Creux	29	29	66.1
Creux	30	30	68.4
Creux	31	31	70.6
Creux	32	32	72.8
Creux	33	33	75.1
Creux	34	34	77.3
Creux	35	35	79.5
Creux	36	36	81.8
Creux	37	37	84.0
Creux	38	38	86.2
Creux	39	39	88.5
Creux	40	40	90.7
Creux	41	41	92.9
Creux	42	42	95.2
Creux	43	43	97.4
Creux	44	44	99.6
Creux	45	45	101.9
Creux	46	46	104.1
Creux	47	47	106.3
Creux	48	48	108.6
Creux	49	49	110.8
Creux	50	50	113.0
Creux	51	51	115.3
Creux	52	52	117.5
Creux	53	53	119.7
Creux	54	54	122.0
Creux	55	55	124.2
Creux	56	56	126.4
Creux	57	57	128.7
Creux	58	58	130.9
Creux	59	59	133.1
Creux	60	60	135.4
Creux	61	61	137.6
Creux	62	62	139.8
Creux	63	63	142.1
Creux	64	64	144.3
Creux	65	65	146.5
Creux	66	66	148.8
Creux	67	67	151.0
Creux	68	68	153.2
Creux	69	69	155.5
Creux	70	70	157.7
Creux	71	71	160.0
Creux	72	72	162.2
Creux	73	73	164.4
Creux	74	74	166.7
Creux	75	75	168.9
Creux	76	76	171.1
Creux	77	77	173.4
Creux	78	78	175.6
Creux	79	79	177.8
Creux	80	80	180.1
Creux	81	81	182.3
Creux	82	82	184.5
Creux	83	83	186.8
Creux	84	84	189.0
Creux	85	85	191.2
Creux	86	86	193.5
Creux	87	87	195.7
Creux	88	88	197.9
Creux	89	89	200.2
Creux	90	90	202.4
Creux	91	91	204.6
Creux	92	92	206.9
Creux	93	93	209.1
Creux	94	94	211.3
Creux	95	95	213.5
Creux	96	96	215.8
Creux	97	97	218.0
Creux	98	98	220.2
Creux	99	99	222.5
Creux	100	100	224.7



du Tableau ci-dessus à gauche de la Plancher

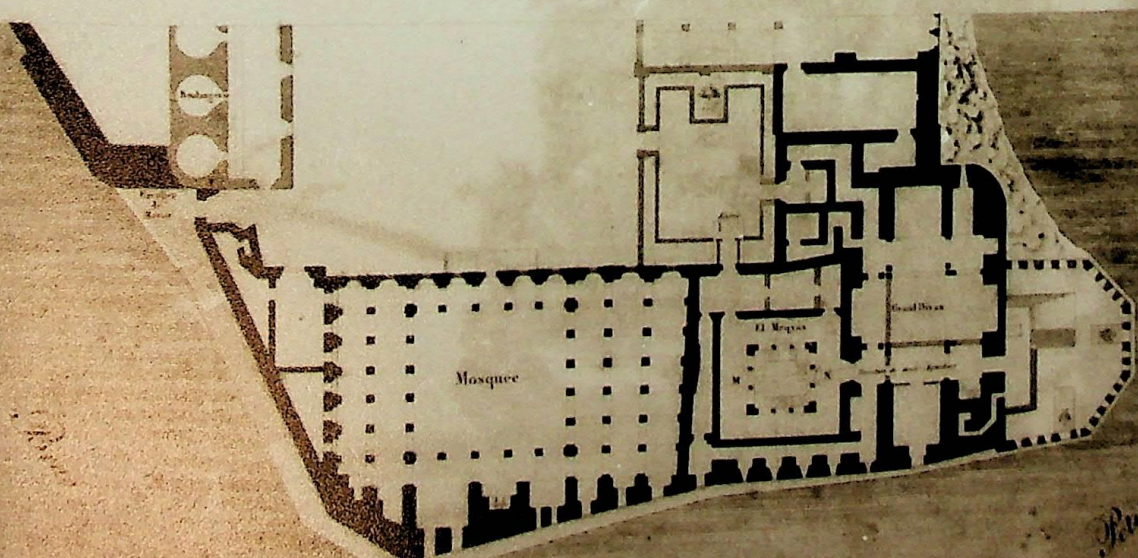
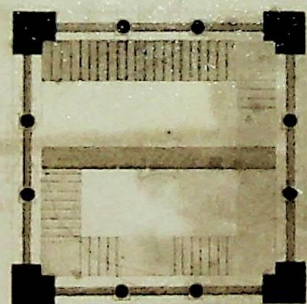
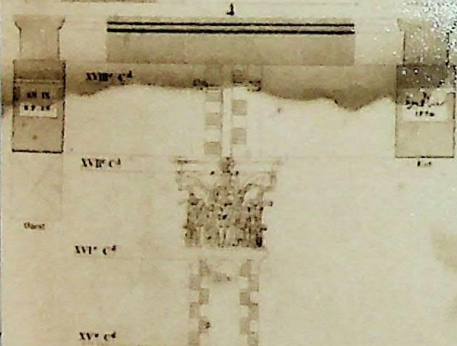
[illegible]

La Chapelle peut servir les services publics, la 4<sup>e</sup> sous-section du 11<sup>e</sup> lot d'habitation est destinée à des usages et notamment à des usages, toutes choses à la même fin. Le 12<sup>e</sup> lot est réservé à des usages professionnels et à des usages.

La Chapelle fut terminée le 16 de St et 17 Novembre des Vins. Les d'ours  
à la manière de chapel et seulement à la manière de chapel d'ours pour la table  
La table a été achetée de deux parts. L'ours principal et chapel l'année par  
à la manière de deux ours.

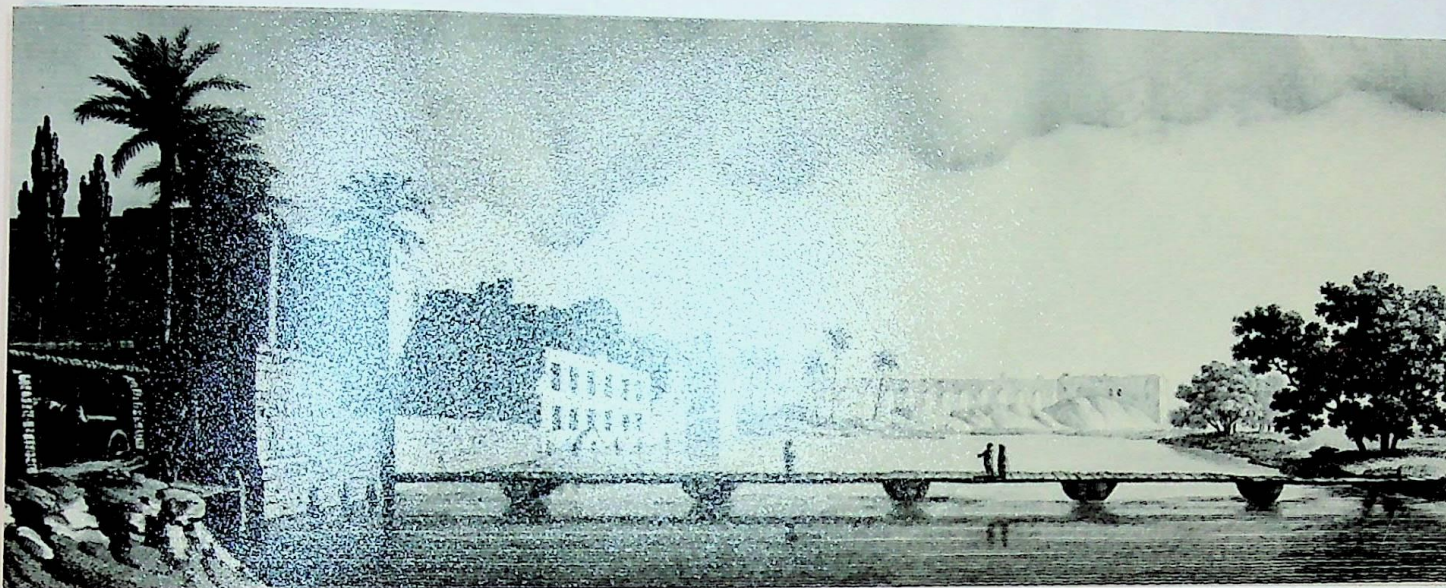
La chapelle fut peinte de St Marcien. Au VIII<sup>e</sup> il y eut deux ou trois peintures de saints et d'autres de divers groupes. St Nicaise occupe une place à l'extrémité de la nef, dans une niche, sans supports, à l'extrémité de la nef.

En 1890 on commença à correspondre dans la tribune les deux arcs de la nef, de manière que les deux piliers, au lieu d'être de la nef, le soient de la nef.



LE NIL





A.



B.



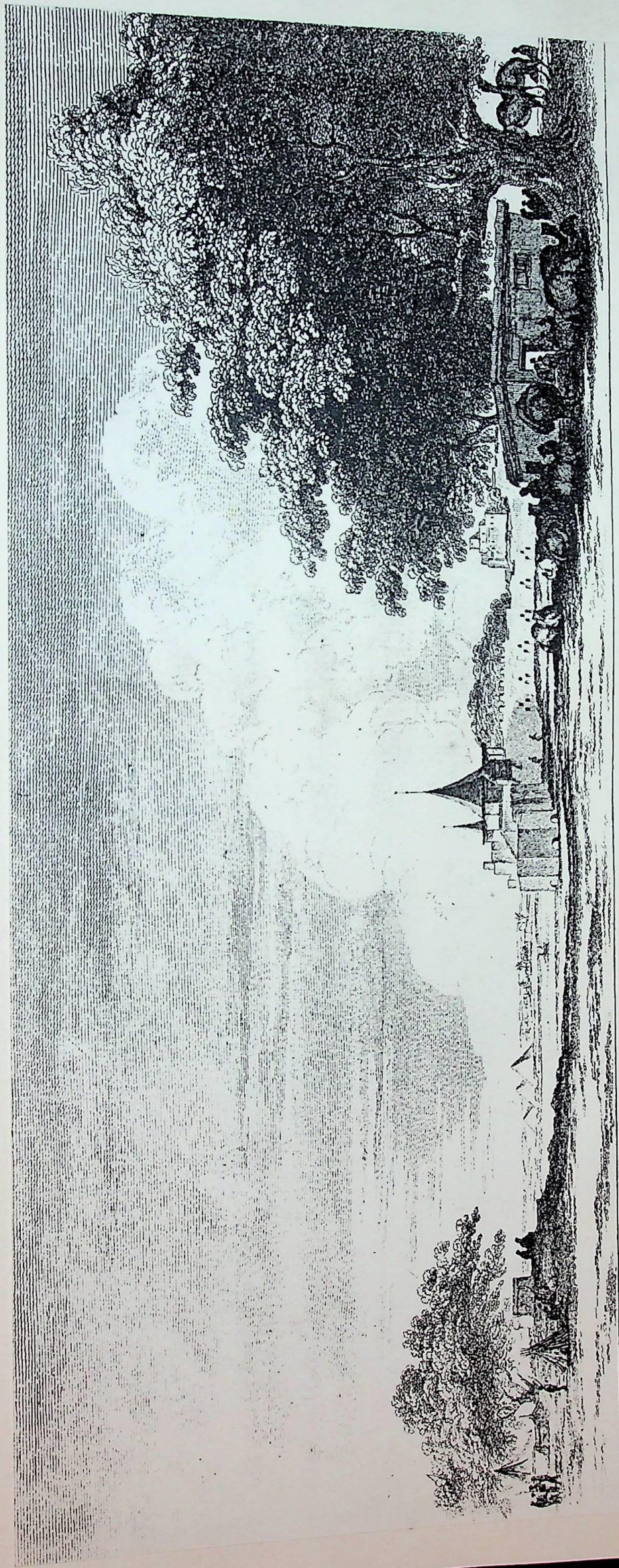


A.



B.





3. *Le Miqyâs (nilomètre).*



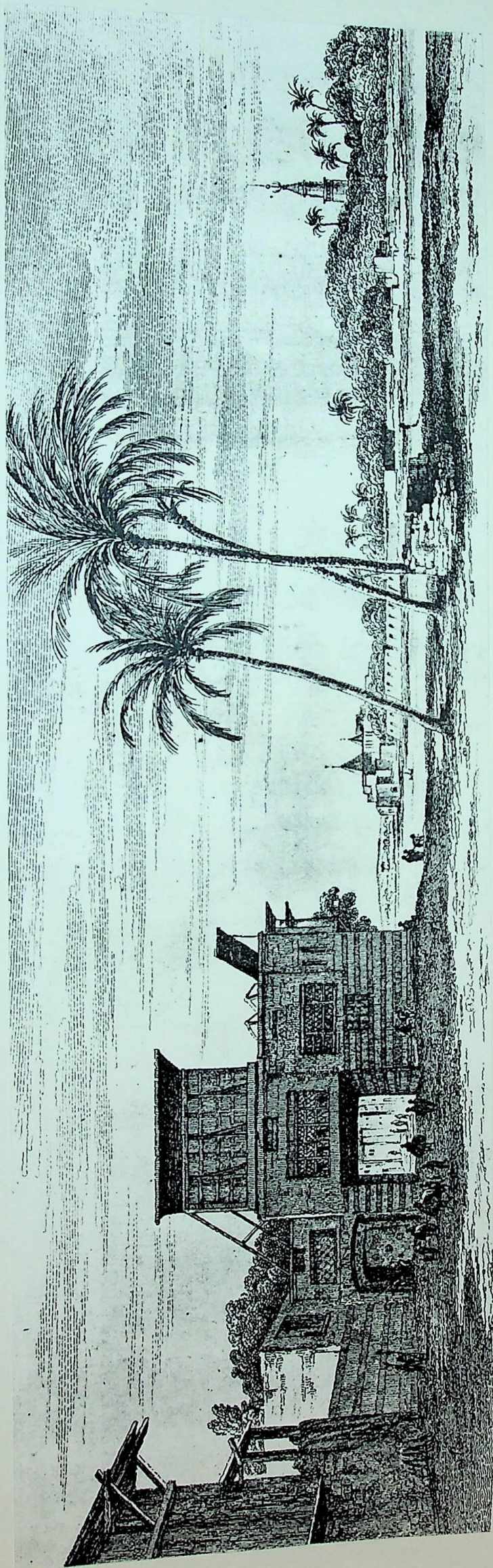
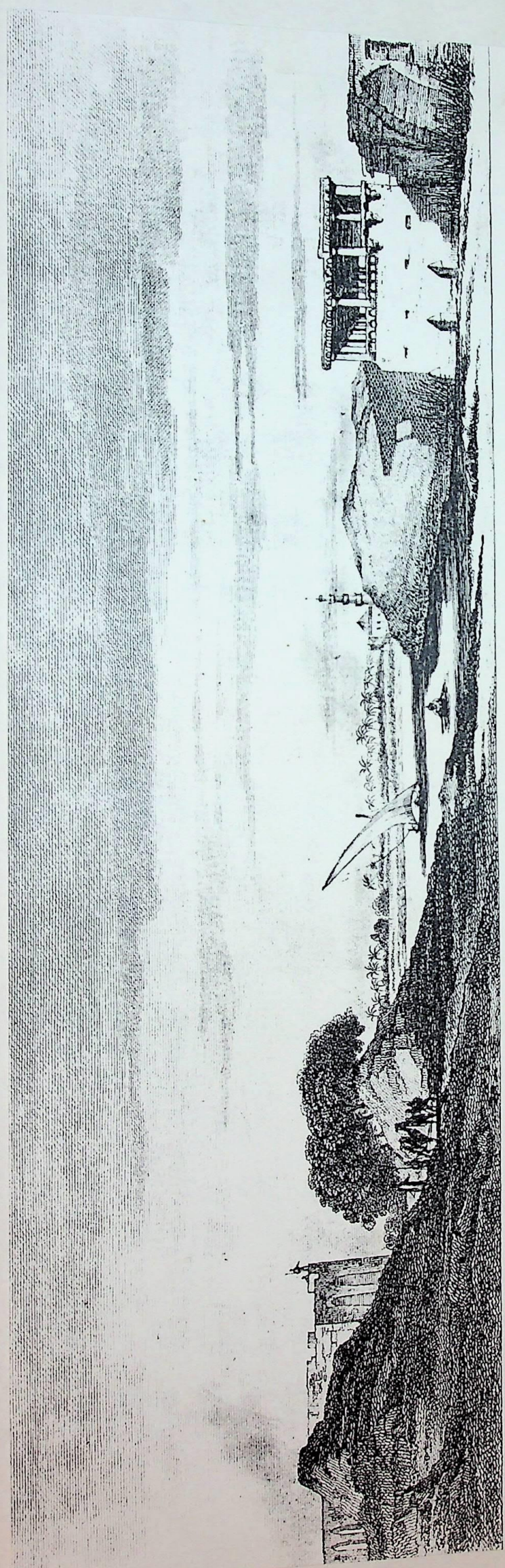


Plate 3 D

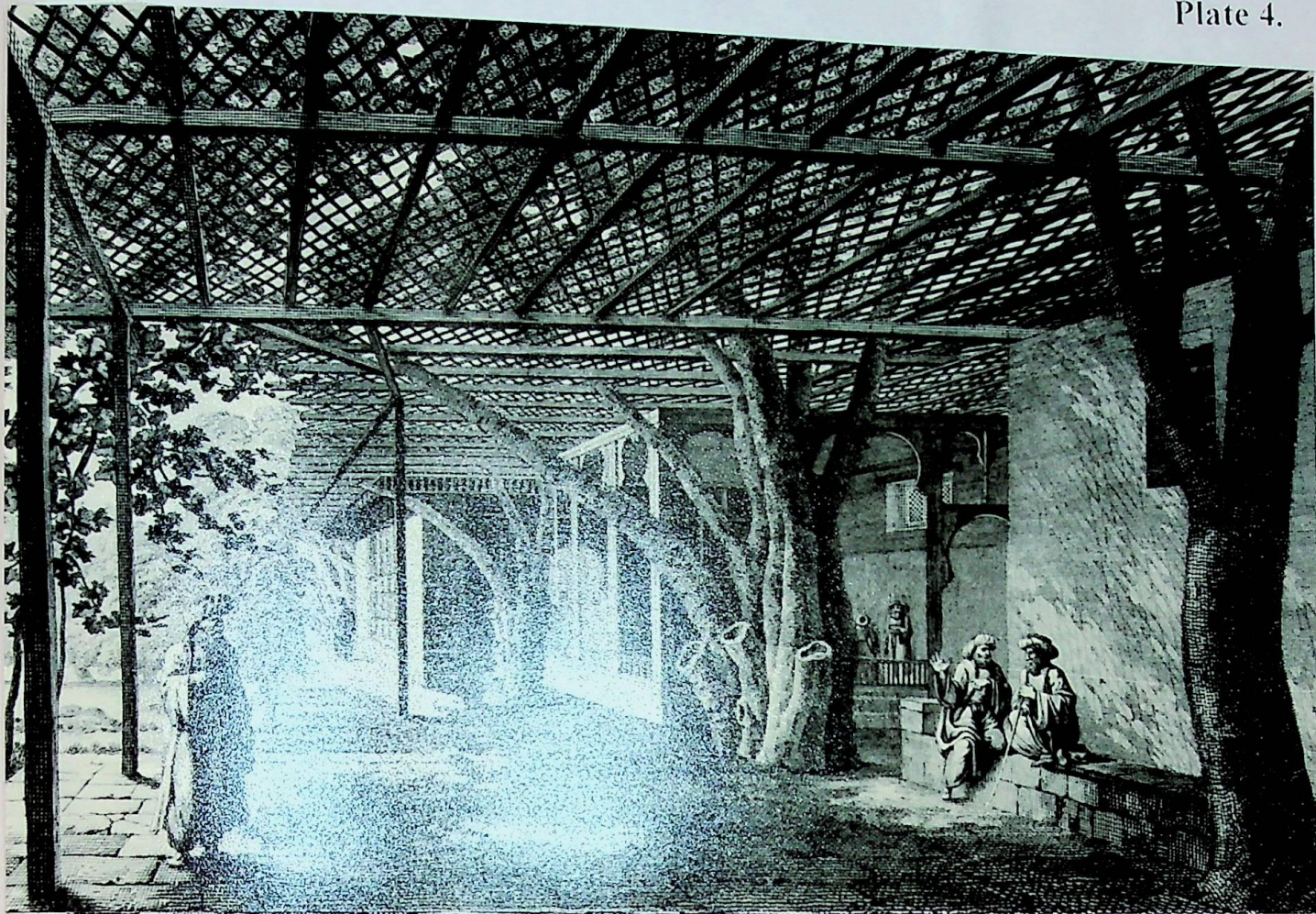




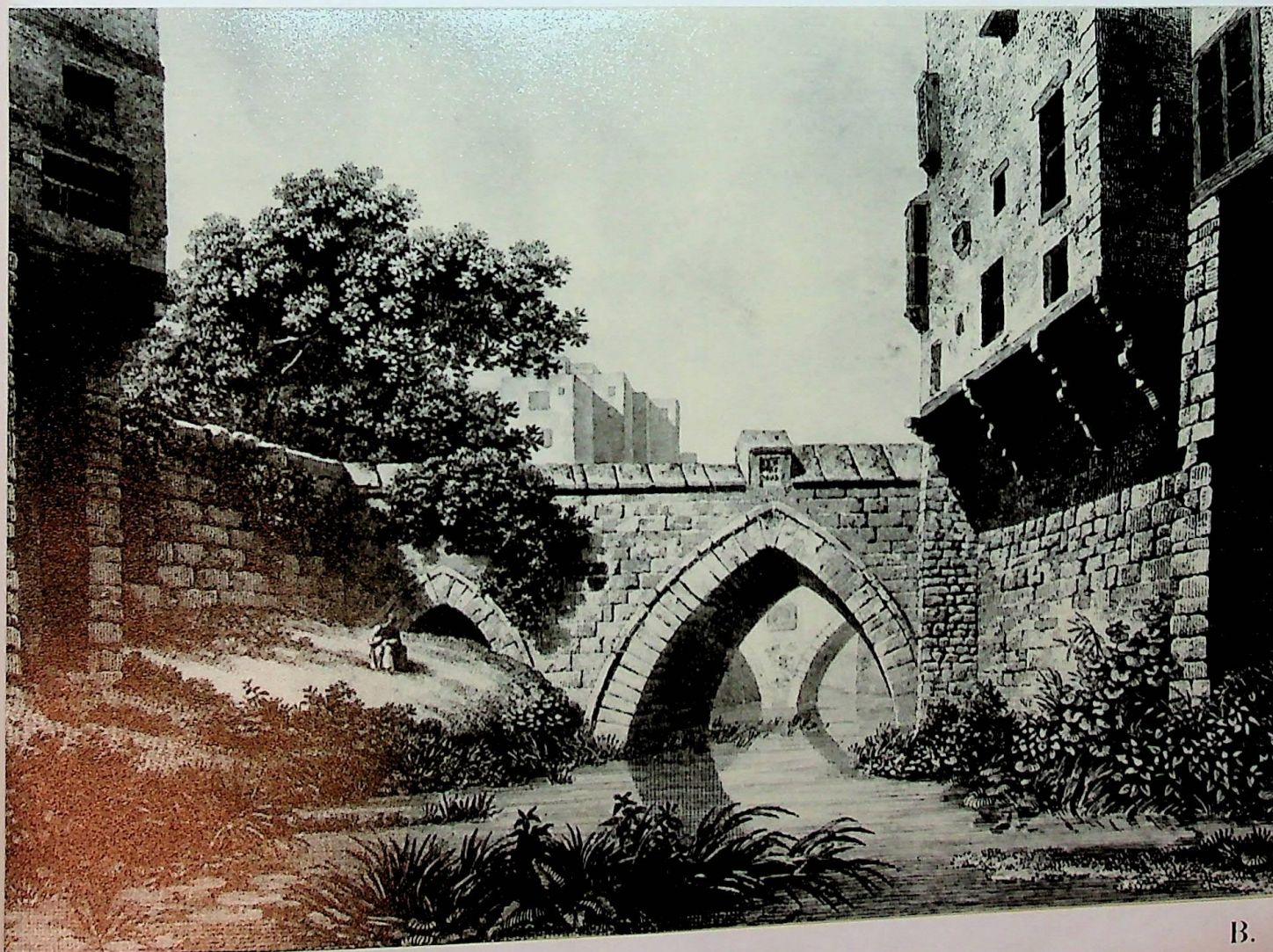
2. *Calis ou canal qui conduit l'eau au Caire.*



Plate 4.

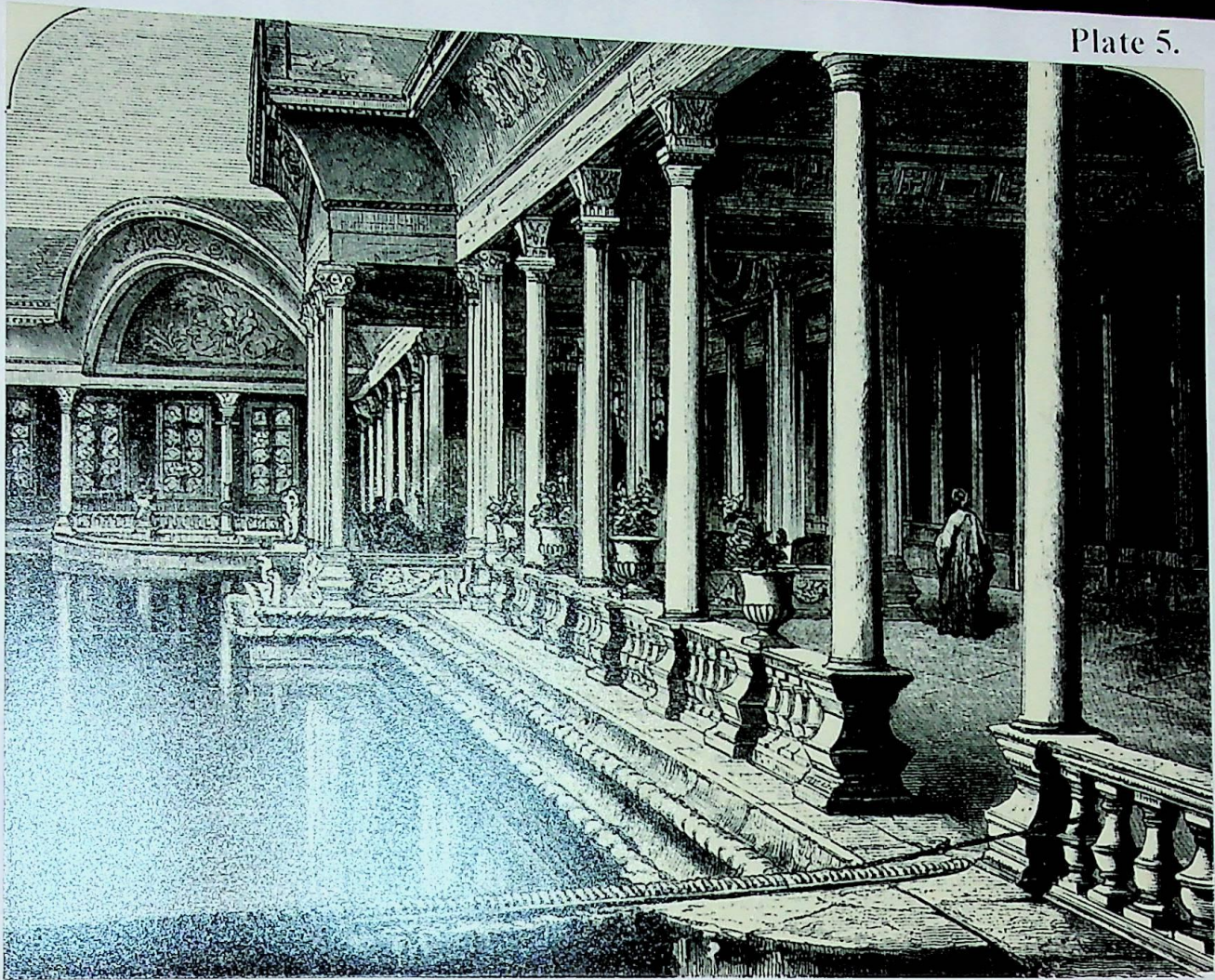


A.



B.





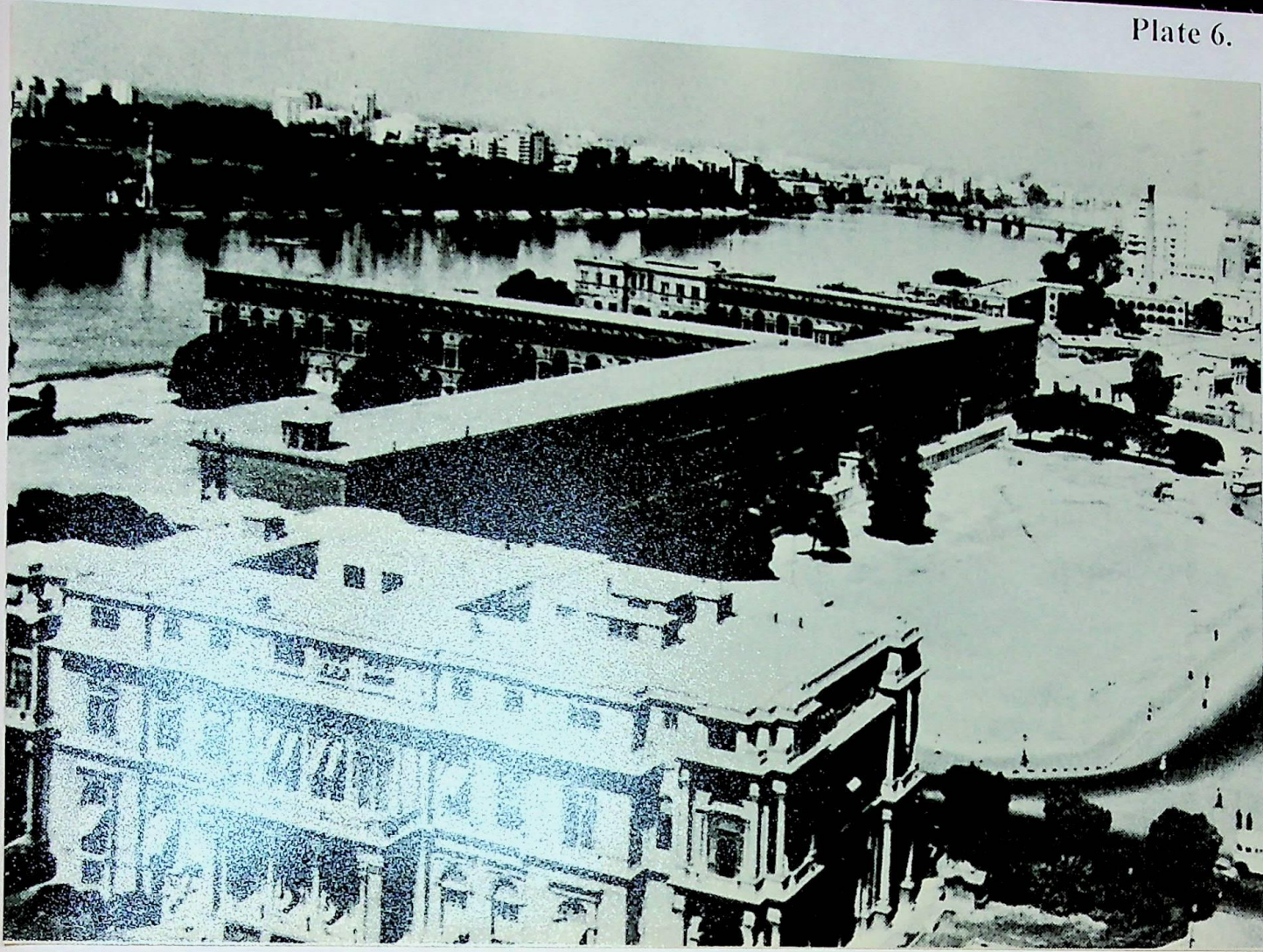
A.



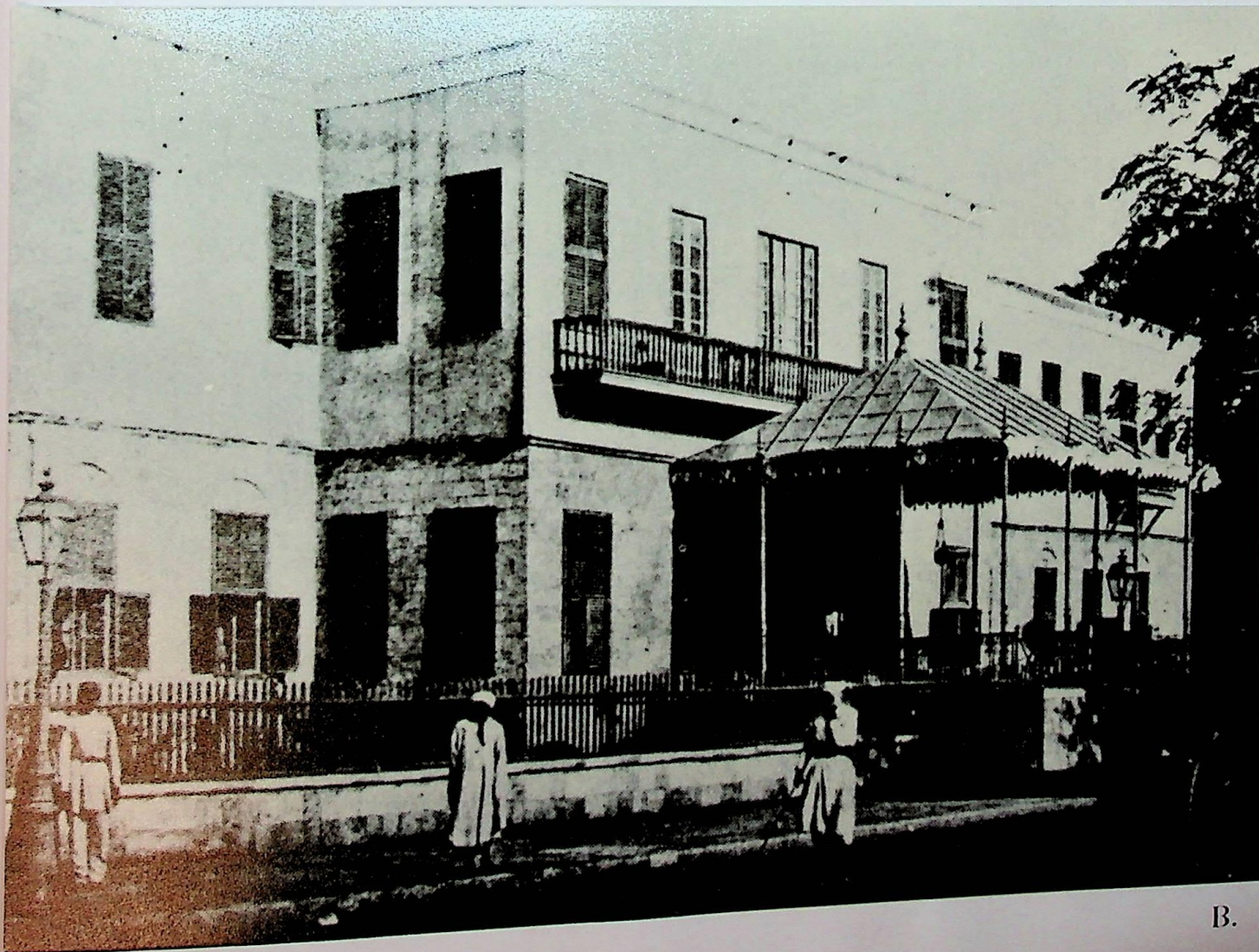
B.



Plate 6.

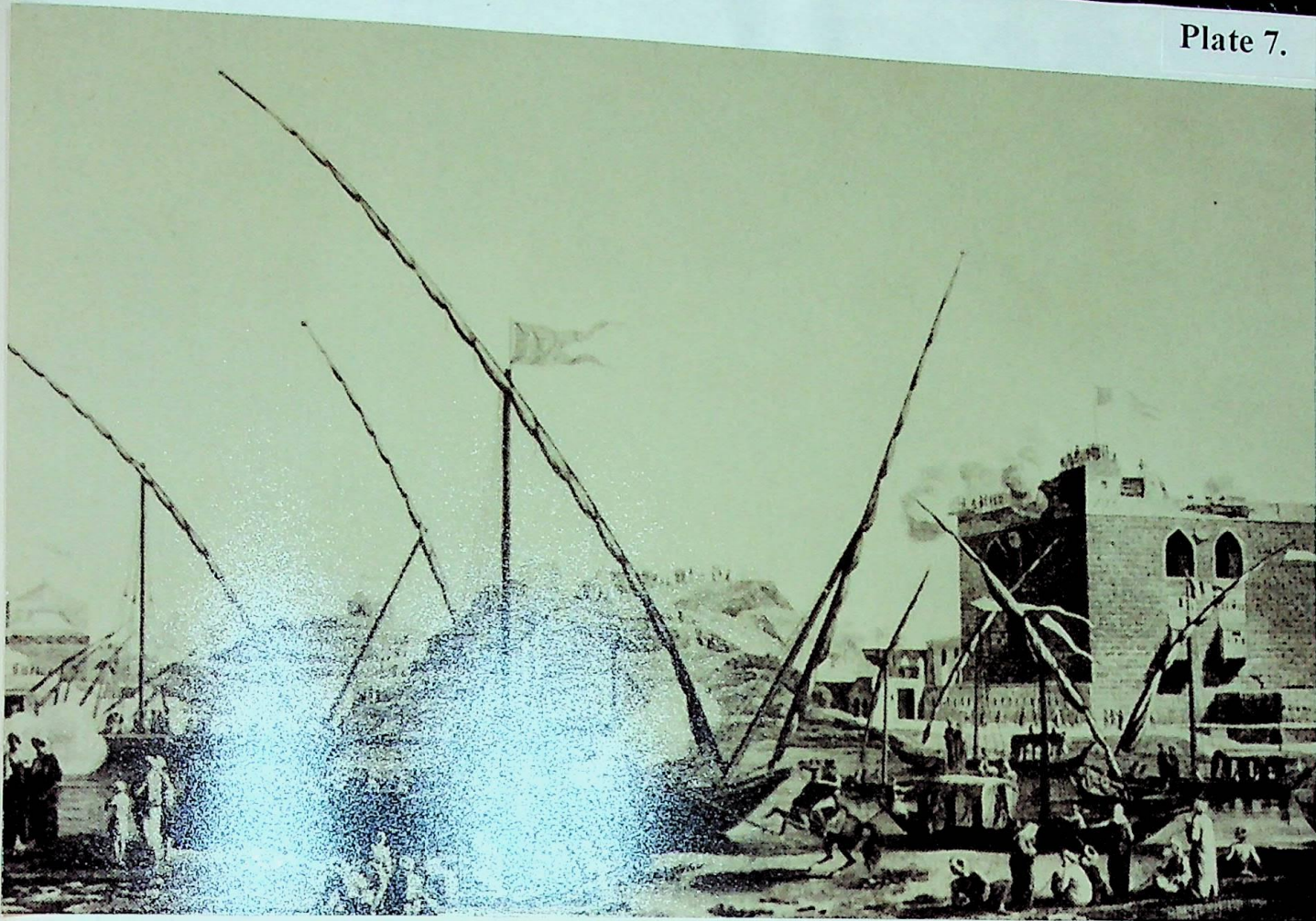


A.



B.





A.



B.





A.

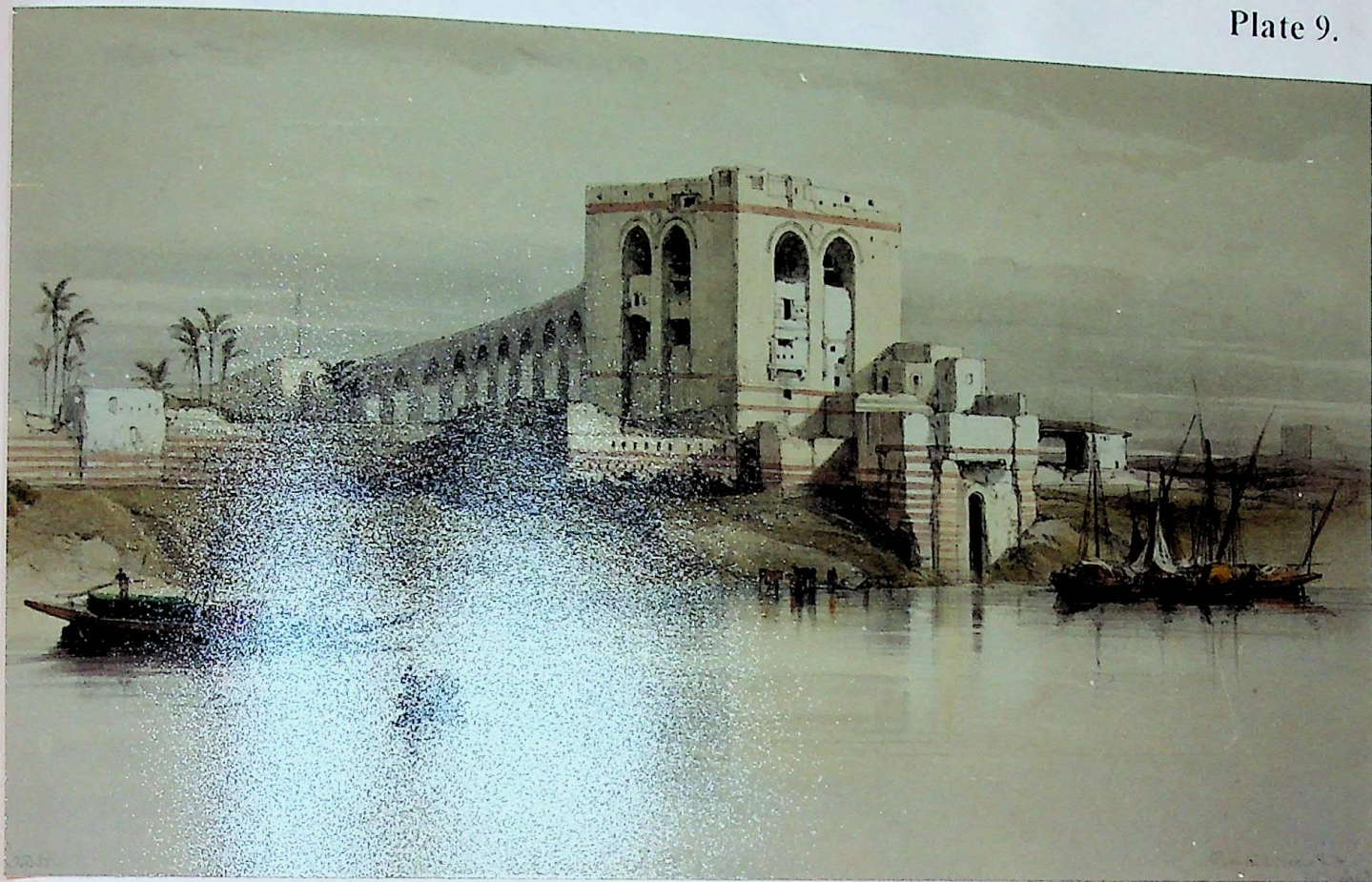


B.

Plate 8.



Plate 9.



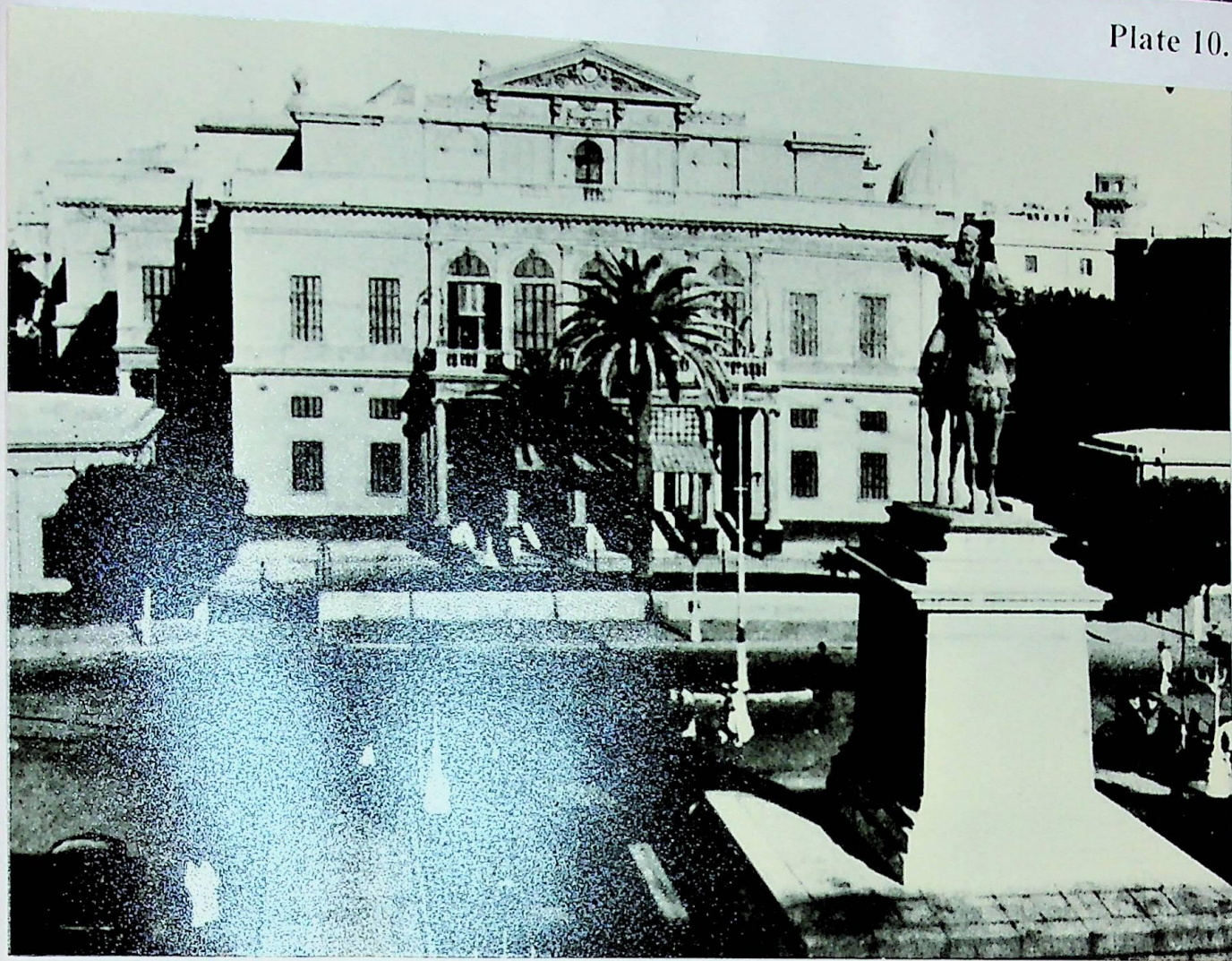
A.



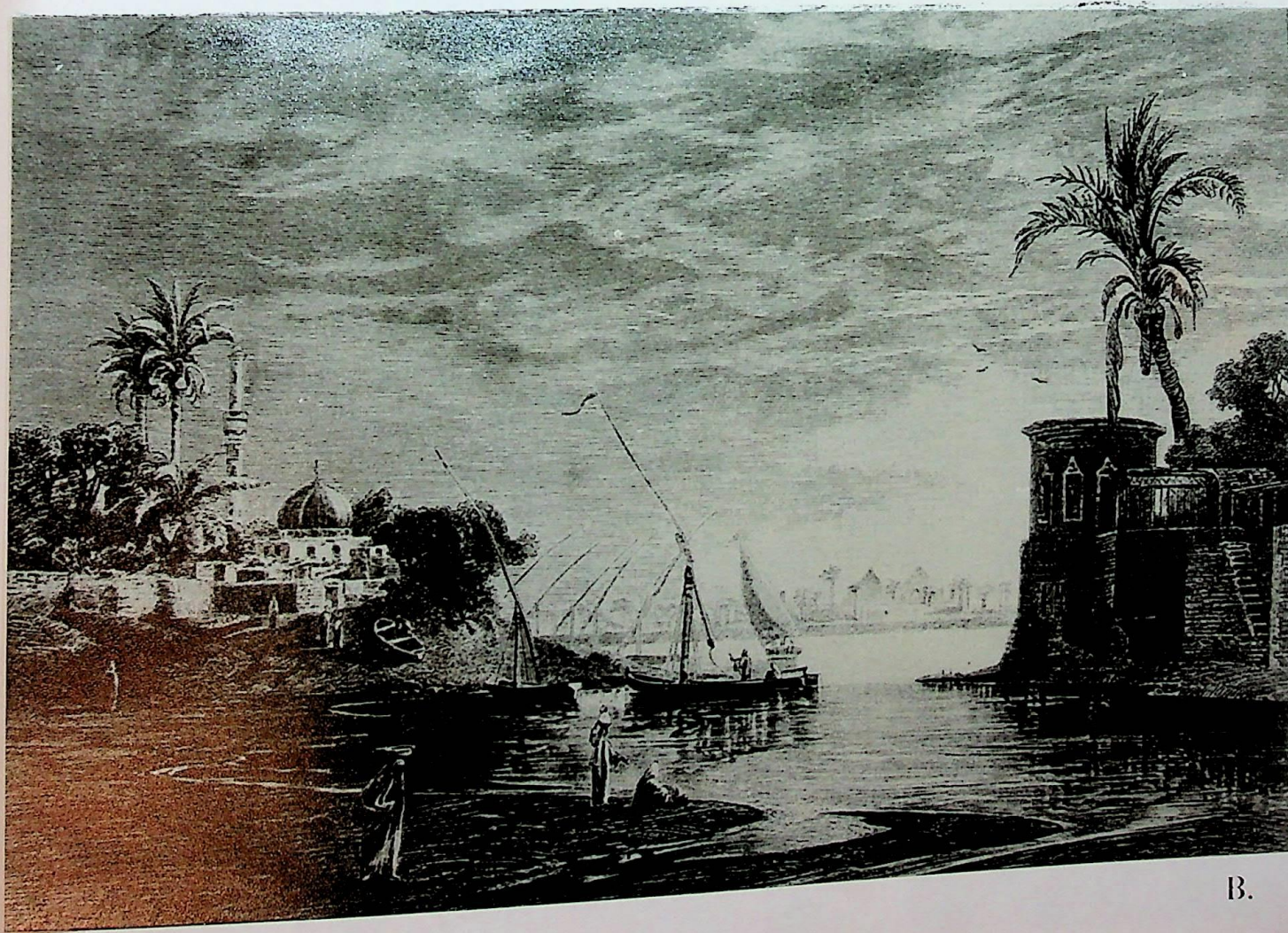
B.



Plate 10.



A.



B.



Plate II.



A.



B.



Plate 12.



A.

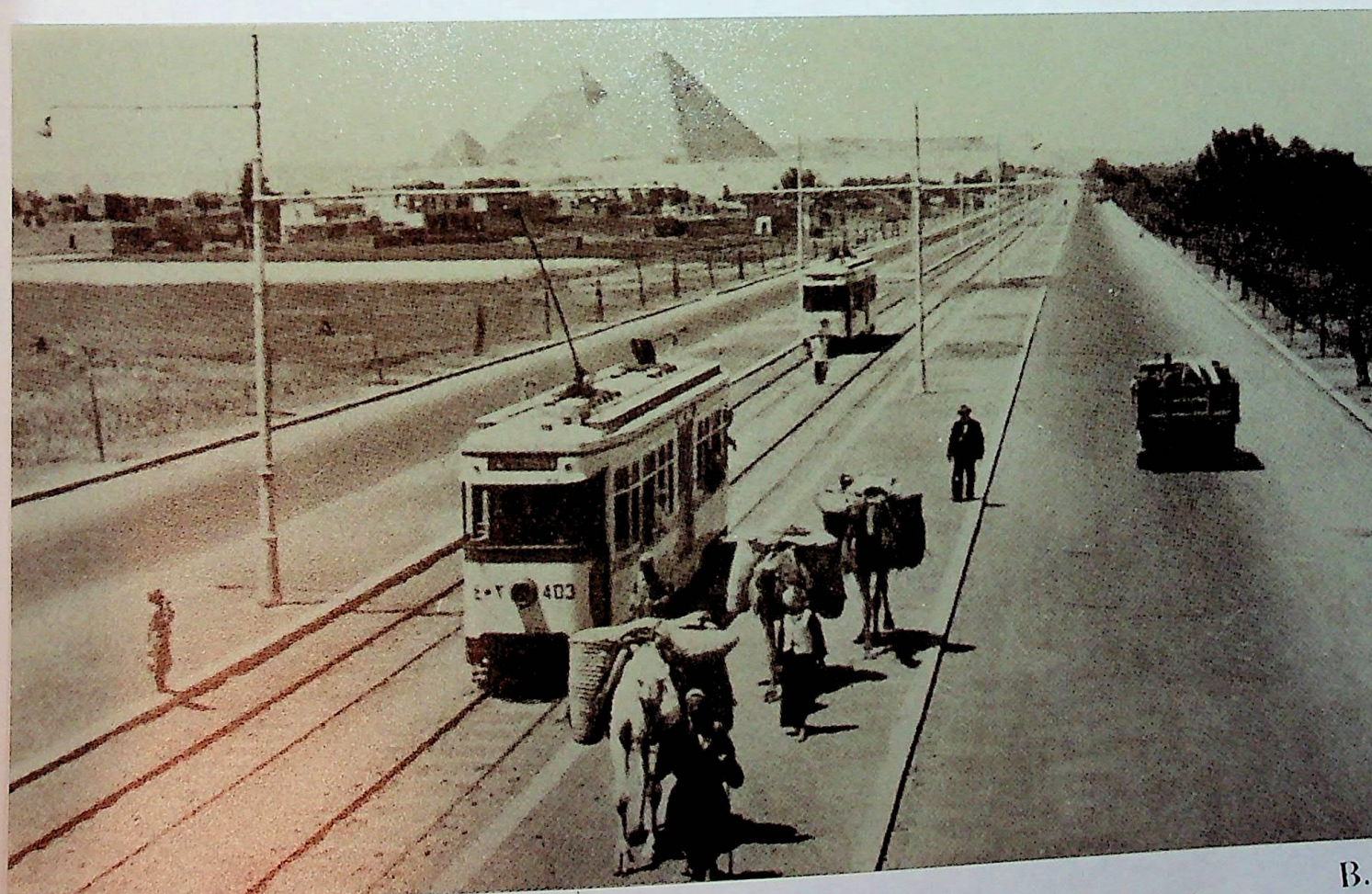


B.



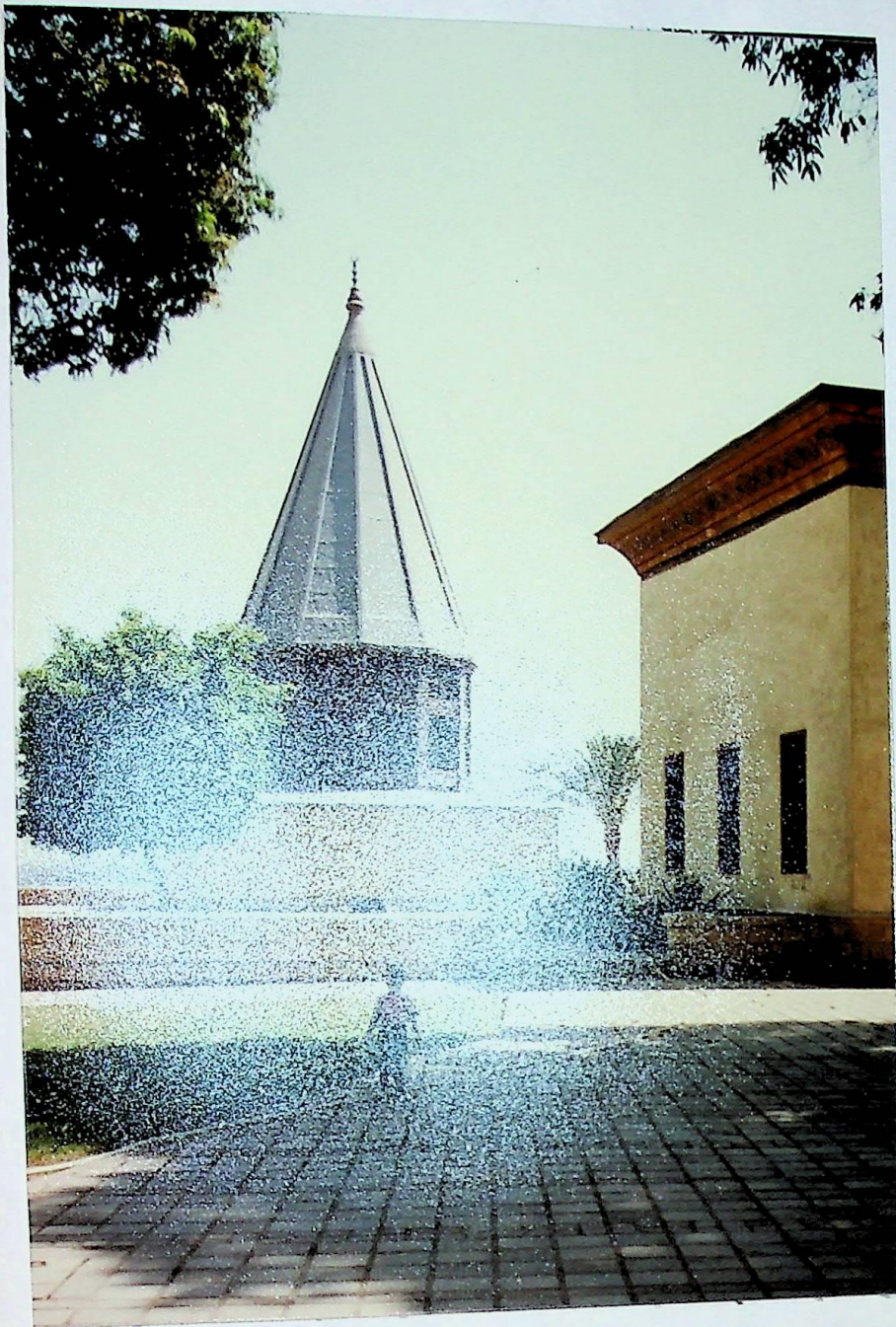


A.

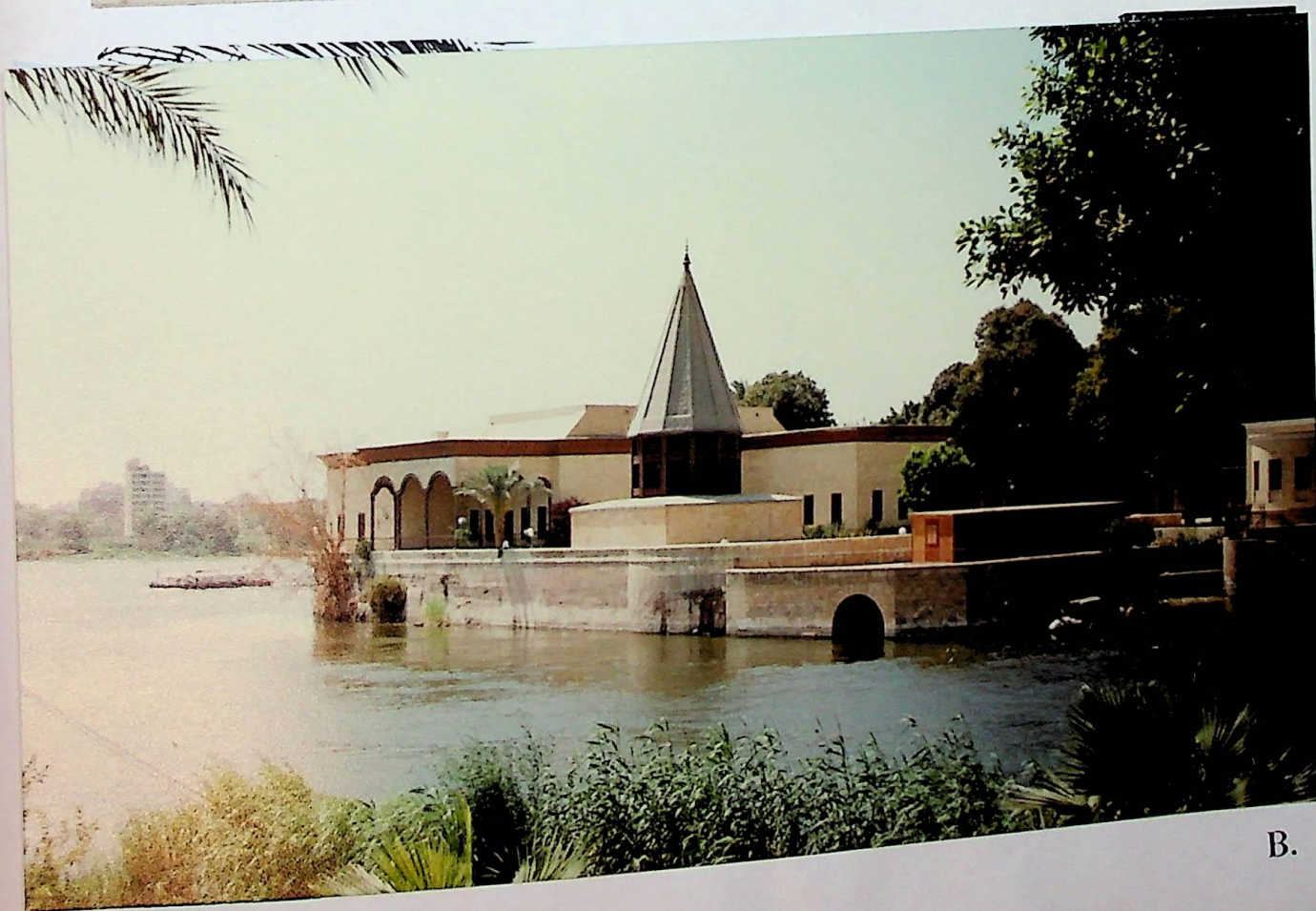


B.





A.



B.





A.



B.



## Bibliography:-

### Primary sources:-

Al- Gabarti, Abd al-Rahman. *'Aga'ib al-Athar FI al-Taragim Wa al-Akhbar*, Lagnat al-Bayan al-'Arabi, 1966.

Al-Maqrizi, Taqi al-Din. *Al Mawa'iz Wa al-I'tibar Bizikr al-Khitat Wa al-Amsar* (known as al-Khitat al-Maqrizia), Bulaq Press, 1853.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Kitab al-Suluk Li Ma'rifat Duwal al-Muluk*, Lagnet al-Ta'lif, 1958.

Al-Qalqashandi, Abu al-Abbas. *Subh al-A'sha fi Sina'at al-Insha*, Al Amiria, 1963.

Al-Raf'i, Abd Al-Rahman. *'Asr Isma'il*, Cairo, 1932.

Al-Suyuuti, Galal al-Din. *Kitab al-Tahaduth Bi N'imat Allah*, [Edited and annotated by Sartain, E.M.S.], Al-Maktba al-Arabia al-Haditha, 1975.

Anon. *Muhammed 'Ali Siratuh Wa A'maluh*, Dar al-Hilal, 1923.

Hilmi, 'Abbas. *'Ahdi Muzakirat 'Abbas Hilmi al-Thani Khidiwi Misr al-Akhir: 1892-1914*, Cairo, 1993.

Ibn Abd al-Hakam, Abu al-Qasim. *Futuh Masr Wa Akhbariha*, [Edited and annotated from the manuscripts in London, Paris and Leyden by Torrey, Charles C.], Yale University, 1920.

Ibn al-Mukaffa', Sawirus. *History of the Patriarchs*, [Translated and annotated by Burmester, Oswald Hugh Ewart], Cairo, 1959.

Ibn Duqmaq. *Kitab al-Intisar l'wastet Aqd al-Amsar*, Al-Amiria, 1893.



Ibn Tagri Birdi, Gamal al-Din. *Al-Nigum al-Zahira Fi Muhuk Masr Wa al-Qahirah*, Dar al-Kutub, 1963.

Ibn Iyas, Muhammed. *Bada'i' al-Zuhur Fi Waqa'i' al-Duhur*, Dar al-M'arif, 1951.

Mubarek, Ali Pasha. *Al-Khitat al-Tawfiqia al-Gadida l'Masr Wa Mudnha Wa Biladha al-Kadima Wa al-Shahira*, Al-Hai' al-Misria al-'Ama li al-Kitab, 1986.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Hayati* [edited by Al-Gamal, Abd al-Rahim], Cairo, 1989.

Sami, Amin. *Taqwim al-Nil*, Cairo, 1936.

### Secondary sources:-

'Abd al-Wahab, Hassan. *Tarikh al-Masajid al-Atharia*, Cairo, 1946.

Abu Lughod, Janet L. *Cairo 1001 Years Of The City Victorious*, Princeton University Press, 1971.

Audouard, Olympe. *Les Mysteres De L'Egypte Devoiles*, Paris, 1865.

Al-Amrousi, M.M. *Selected Religious Buildings from the Period of 'Abbas Hilmi II* (Unpublished MA thesis, The American University in Cairo, Center for Arabic Studies), Cairo, 1994.

Al-Asad, Mohammed. "The Mosque of Muhammed 'Ali in Cairo", *Muqarnas*, Vol. 9, 1992, pp. 39-56.

Aldridge, James. *Cairo*, Little Brown & Company, 1969.

Anon. *Cairo And Its Environs*, Hachette & Company, 1910.

Asfour, Khaled. "The Domestication of Knowledge: Cairo at the turn of the Century", *Muqarnas*, Vol. 10, 1993, pp. 125-137.

Baedeker, Karl. *Baedeker's Egypt*, London, 1929.



- Baer, Gabriel. "Social Changes in Egypt: 1800-1814", *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt* [ed. Holt, P.M.], London, 1929.
- Berchem, Max Van. (1863-1921) *Materiaux pour un Corpus Inscriptumum Arabicarum*, Paris, 1903.
- Blunt, Wilfred Scawen. *A Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*, Cairo, 1980.
- Bosworth, C.E. *The Islamic Dynasties*, Edinburgh, 1980.
- Butler, A.J. *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, Clarendon Press, 1895.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Arab Conquest Of Egypt*, Oxford, 1978.
- Clerget, Marcel. *Le Caire*, Cairo, 1934.
- Colvin, Auckland. *The Making of Modern Egypt*, London, 1906.
- Cresswell, K.A.G. *The Muslim Architecture Of Egypt*, Hacker Art Books, 1978.
- Cromer, Lord of (Evelyn Baring). *Abbas II*, London, 1915.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Modern Egypt*, London, 1908.
- Colombe, M. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., Leiden, 1960.
- De Jong, F. *Turuq and Turuq Institution in Nineteenth Century Egypt*, London, 1978.
- Denny, J. *Sommaires Des Archives Turc*, III, Cairo, 1930.
- Denon, Dominique Vivant. *Voyage Dans La Basse et La Haute Egypte*, Institute Francais d'Archeologie Orientale du Caire, 1988.
- Description de l'Egypte*, Text and plates. 22 Vols. Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1818.
- Guest, A.R. and, Richmond, E.T. "Misr In The Fifteenth Century", *Journal Of The Royal Asiatic Society* (October 1903), pp. 791-816.
- Hamdan, Gamal. *Studies in the Egyptian Urbanism*, Cairo, 1960.



- Issawi, Charles. "British Occupation", *Egypt at the Mid-20th Century: An Economic Survey*, Oxford, 1954, pp. 31-53.
- Karim, Sayed. "Kayf Hawala Isma'il Magra Al-Nil", Dar al-Hilal, 1982.
- Kubiak, W.B. *Al-Fustat*, The American University of Cairo Press, 1987.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Giza Channel Of The Nile In The Mediaeval Period. A Contribution To Historical Geography Of Greater Cairo Region", *Miscellanea Geographica*, vol. 5, 1992.
- Lane, Edward William. *Cairo Fifty Years Ago*, London, 1896.
- Lane poole, S. *Cairo-History, Monuments and Social Life*, London, 1892.
- Mackenzi, N. *Ayyubid Cairo A Topographical Study*, Cairo, 1992.
- Marsot, Afaf-Lutfi Al-Sayed. *Egypt and Cromer, A study in Anglo-Egyptian Relations*, London, 1969.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammed Ali*, Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Mostyn, Trevor. *Egypt's Belle Epoque Cairo 1869-1952*, Quarter Books, 1989.
- Tamraz, Nehal. *19th Century Domestic Architecture with 'Abbasiyya as a Case Study* (Unpublished MA thesis, The American University in Cairo, Center for Arabic Studies), Cairo, 1993.
- Owen, Roger. "The Egyptian Economy, 1882-1914", *The Midle East in the World of Economy (1800-1914)*, London, 1987, pp. 216-243.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Cairo Building Industry and Building Boom of 1897-1907", *Colloque International sur L'Histoire du Caire*, Cairo, 1969, pp. 338-343.
- Ravisse, P. *Essai sur l'histoire et sur la topographie du Caire d'apres Maqrizi*, 1890.
- Raymond, Andre. *Le Caire*, Fayard, 1993.



\_\_\_\_\_. "Essai De Geographie Des Quartiers Des Residance Aristocratique Au Caire Au XVIIIieme Sicle," *Journal Of The Economic And Social History Of The Orient*, Volume VI, Part I (May 1963), pp. 58 - 103.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Cairo's area and Population in the Early 15th Century", *Muqarnas*, Vol. 11, 1994, pp. 21-31.

Scharabi, Mohamed. *Kairo Stadt Und Architektur Im Zeitalter Des Europaischen Kolonialismus*, Verlag Ernst Wasmuth Tubingen, 1989.

Schoelcher, V. *L'Egypte En 1845*, Paris, 1864.

Stevens, Mary Anne. *The Orientalists, de la Croix to Matisse, European Painters in North Africa and the Near East*, London, 1984.

V., Meinecke-Berg. "Outline of the Urban Development of Cairo", *Islamic Cairo, Architectural Conservation and Urban Development of Historic Center* [ed. Meinecke, M.], London, 1980.

Wiet, Gaston. *Cairo City Of Art And Commerce*, University Of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 1964.

Williams, Caroline. *Islamic Monuments in Cairo A Practical Guide*, 4th Edition, Cairo, 1993.

Vatikiotis, P.J. *The Modern History of Egypt*, New york, 1969.

- The maps were obtained from the archives of the *Department of Survey and Mines* in Giza.



