Hawsh al-Basha: The Royal Cemetery in Cairo

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December, 2020
HAWSH AL-BASHA: THE ROYAL CEMETERY IN CAIRO

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Department of Arab and Islamic Civilizations
American University in Cairo

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree of Master of Arts

By
Mai M. Kolkailah
Under the Supervision of Dr. Bernard O’Kane
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This thesis focuses on Hawsh al-Basha, the royal cemetery near the mausoleum of Imam al-Shafi‘i, which is arguably one of the most intriguing architectural moments in Ottoman Cairo. Firstly, the historiography of Hawsh al-Basha is examined carefully in order to situate the mausoleum temporally and geographically. Secondly, for a critical rewriting of the historical narrative, this study systematically cross-references contemporary sources with nineteenth-century travel accounts, among other material evidence, to effectively reconstruct the complicated building chronology of Hawsh al-Basha and reassess when the mausoleum was built. Then, the study surveys the various categories of ornamentation employed at the royal cemetery, focusing on two chief categories: inscriptions and floral elements. In the process of a one-to-one mapping of Hawsh al-Basha’s eclectic blend of appropriated decorative motifs to local, eastern, and western models of inspiration, the definition of what constituted the Ottoman stylistic tradition during the nineteenth century is revised and expanded. Last but not least, this study develops a comparative trajectory between the artistic milieus in the imperial state of Istanbul and the khedival province of Cairo in order to analyze the vectors of influence driving the eclectic tendencies of Hawsh al-Basha’s stylistic evolution in relation to the broader contextual frameworks of Ottoman urban structures and socio-political agendas. Be it a strategically synthetic achievement or an unresolved hybrid monstrosity, Hawsh al-Basha represents a manifestation of power, a moment of decisive visual transformation, and a memory of a modernizing social order.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Hawsh al-Basha, also known as the Tomb of the Family of Muhammad ‘Ali (r. 1805-1848), is an architectural ensemble where cultural identities meet, artistic forms collide, and the dead keep each other company. The mausoleum is located in the Southern Cemetery in Cairo, near the shrine of Imam al-Shafi‘i. Fashioned slowly but surely throughout the nineteenth century to accommodate the increasing numbers of deaths in the sovereign family, the royal cemetery’s gradual visual transformation reveals historically relevant information about the stylistic tendencies of local and imperial artistic milieus during this period. This study will focus on Hawsh al-Basha, which is arguably one of the most intriguing architectural moments in Ottoman Cairo not only because of the significance of where it is located and who is buried there, but also, most importantly, how the mausoleum’s patterns of stylistic evolution reflect the complexity of socio-political factors that affected Cairo’s building activities at the time.

Historical Context

From the nineteenth century onwards, five cemeteries had been established as the main burial grounds in Egypt. In al-Khitat al-tawfiqiyya, a twenty-volume repository of information on nineteenth-century Egypt, the Egyptian administrator and minister of education ‘Ali Pasha Mubarak (d. 1893)\(^1\) states that, “the dead are now buried in one of five places outside the city: the Cemetery of Sayyida Nafisa, the Cemetery of Imam al-

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\(^1\) Kenny, “‘Ali Mubarak”, 51.
Shafi’i within which is the burial grounds of the royal family, the cemetery of Bab al-Wazir, the Cemetery of al-Mugawrin and Qaitbay, and the Cemetery of Bab al-Nasr.”

The grave of Imam al-Shafi’i had long been a holy site of baraka and, according to the many accounts of pious visitors cited by al-Muwaqqaf Ibn ʿUthman in Murshid al-zuwwar, a place of pilgrimage; however, according to several sources, the area of the shrine had allegedly neither been developed nor established as the Southern Cemetery referred to by Mubarak until 608/1211 when Sultan al-Kamil (r. 1218-38) made significant additions to the mausoleum of Imam al-Shafi’i. As Maqrizi states:

Know that in the old days people would only bury their dead between the Mosque of al-Fath and the foot of al-Muqattam and they also took their dead to the great burial grounds…which is now known as the Qarafa al-Kubra (Great Cemetery). When Sultan al-Kamil Muhammad b. al-ʿAdil Abu Bakr b. Ayyub buried his son in the year 608 (1211) next to the Tomb of Imam Muhammad b. Idris al-Shafiʿi and he built a great dome over the tomb and connected water to it from the pond of al-Habash by means of an aqueduct, people moved their buildings from the Qarafa al-Kubra to the area around Imam al-Shafiʿi and established the burial grounds known as the Qarafa al-Sughra (Lesser Cemetery), its buildings increased while the other’s (Great Cemetery) faded.

Maqrizi makes the mistake of saying son instead of mother, “for it was al-

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2 Mubarak, al-Khitat al-tawfiqiyya al-jadidah li-misr, vol. 1, 246; the original text reads:

و دفن الموتى الآن في خمسة محلات خارج البلد وهي قرافة السيد نقيبة، و قرافة الإمام الشافعي، وبها مشرفة القاملي، و قرافة باب الوزير، و قرافة المجاورين و قانيني، و قرافة باب التصر


4 al-Maqrizi, Kitāb al-Mawāʾiz, vol. 2, 444; the original text reads:

إعلم أن الناس في القديم إما كانوا يقيرون موتاهم فيما بين مسجد الفتح وصحف المقطم وتخاونوا الترب الحليلة أيضا فيما بينها مصلى خولان وخط المغافر التي وضعتها الآن كمام تراب وتعرف الآن بالقرافة الكبرى. أما دفن الملك الكامل محمد بن عادلة أبي بكر بن أيوب أباه في سنة لثم و ستانه بجوار قرية الإمام محمد بن إدريس الشافعي وبنى عليه عمرا عظيم صغير على فيها الشافعي. و أجري لها الماء من بركة الجيش بقايا مصممة منها ظل الناس اليوم من القرافة الكبرى إلى ما حول الشافعي. و أنشأ هناك الترب عرفت بالقرافة الصغيري. وأخذ عملانها في الزيداء ولاتثت أمر تلك
Kamil's mother (the Princess ‘Adiliya) who died on 25 Safar of this year (8th August 1211), and it is her cenotaph which is the second most important in the shrine,"5 but the point being made in this supposition is that the urbanization of the Southern Cemetery was a consequence of al-Kamil’s constructions. Mulder also confirms that earlier building activities were concentrated in the Qarafa al-Kubra and that “when the Shafi‘i complex was built, that cemetery, as well as much of Fustat, still lay in ruins after being intentionally burned by the Fatimids in 1168.”6 Whether it was al-Kamil’s building activities in the cemetery that attracted more buildings as Maqrizi and Mulder claim, or Salah al-Din’s (r. 1174-1193) earlier construction of a madrasa on site, it must be acknowledged that Imam al-Shafi‘i had always been an important figure long before the arrival of the Ayyubids.

Muhammad ‘Ali, be it consciously or organically, followed in the footsteps of his Ayyubid precursors. The Ottoman governor chose to bury his family and possibly planned at first to also have himself buried within close proximity to the Imam, just like al-Malik al-Kamil did before him, for baraka and prestige. The new presence of Hawsh al-Basha along with Muhammad ‘Ali’s efforts to provide the site with water supplies and accessibility brought with it another wave of urbanization, whereby the rich and the ruling family alike, keeping up with the trend of family madfuns and grand shrines, commissioned new structures and radically changed the landscape of the cemetery.

The location of Hawsh al-Basha and transformation of the Southern Cemetery was not only to align the rising power of Mohammad ‘Ali with the Ayyubids but also to visually

dominate the Mamluks. As stated by May al-Ibrashy on the patterns of patronage after the Ottoman conquest in 1517, the Mamluks were dispossessed of their lands and “only buildings and horticultural lands endowed as waqf were left untouched”.7 The buildings and lands that were not taken by the Ottomans were neglected, tactically showing that while the Ottomans rose and throve, the Mamluks fell and withered both visually and politically. This visual dialogue indeed resonated with the people, including nineteenth-century travelers like John Stephens who wrote:

In this grand city of the dead stand the tombs of the Mamelukes, originally slaves from the foot of the Caucasus, then the lords and tyrants of Egypt, and now an exterminated race: the tombs are large, handsome buildings, with domes and minarets, the interior of the domes beautifully wrought, and windows of stained glass, all going to ruins. Here too, is the tomb of the pacha. Fallen, changed, completely revolutionized as Egypt is.8

Whenever the tombs of the royal family are mentioned in contemporary sources, they are almost always discussed in topographical association with the mausoleum of Imam al-Shafi‘i, underlining the sacred shrine’s significance within the landscape; for example, in a biography of Muhammad ‘Ali that examines the many phases of his long life, a French historian describes the funeral of Tusun Pasha (d. 1816) as follows:

The prince's funeral was celebrated with great pomp, numerous processions of military dignitaries and civilians accompanied the funerary convoy, and Muhammad ‘Ali followed on foot the remains of his son until Imam al-Shafi‘i, at the place intended for the burial of his family members. Abundant alms were distributed to the poor and the mosques. The tomb of Tusun is a

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8 Stephens, *Incidents of Travel*, 42.
domed construction, Arabic in form.\textsuperscript{9}

This statement not only confirms the role of Imam al-Shafi‘i’s tomb as a pivotal landmark and that a ritualistic funerary procession to the Southern Cemetery was already established at the time, but it also reveals that the royal cemetery was more than a mere burial ground when Tusun Pasha died. While the significance of Hawsh al-Basha’s location might be clear, the chronology of its building is quite complicated.

**Architectural Overview**

Along al-Imam al-Layth Street currently stands the stone edifice of Hawsh al-Basha. A projecting portal flanked by octagonal buttresses greets the visitor while the words *madafīn al-‘ā’ila al-mālika* (Cemetery of the Royal Family) engraved across the doorway’s lintel formally introduce the building (figs. 3, 4). Upon entering the structure through its wooden doors, a visitor is welcomed into a domed vestibule (figs. 1.3, 5) with symmetrical extensions used originally as units for the kitchen and other dependencies (fig. 1.4). Regardless of the direction in which a visitor chooses to take from the vestibule, the architecture guides them back to the same point – the arcade (figs. 1.5, 6). Each of the bending entrance hallways leading to the arcade has a window, one frames a beautiful view of the monumental dome of Imam al-Shafi‘i while the other overlooks the domes of Hawsh al-Basha, architecturally juxtaposing the two mausoleums and deliberately creating a dialogue between them (figs. 7, 8). Surmounted by a series of small domes, the arcade

\textsuperscript{9} Marcel, *Egypte, depuis la conquête des arabes*, 43; the original texts states: “Les obsèques du prince furent célébrées avec beaucoup de pompe; un nombreux cortège de dignitaires militaires et civils accompagna le convoy funèbre, et Méhémet-Ali suivit à pied les restes de son fils jusqu’à l’Imam-Chafay, au lieu destiné à l’inhumation des membres de sa famille. D’abondantes aumônes furent distribuées aux pauvres et aux mosquées. Le sépulcre de Toussoun est une construction en dôme de forme arabe.”
opens onto the courtyard on either side and concludes at an intermediate vestibule with a stone-carved portal (fig. 1.7, 9). A rectangular hall with a wooden roof follows the stone portal, leading firstly to a separate tomb chamber made exclusively for Shafaq Nur (d. 1883), the mother of Khedive Tawfiq (r. 1879-92) and, secondly, to a series of irregular dome chambers where the sons of Muhammad ‘Ali are buried along with their wives, children, government officials, and other devoted servants.

While Shafaq Nur is buried in isolation (fig. 1.9), the rest of the royals are buried collectively in several tombs per chamber. Tusun Pasha shares his dome chamber (fig. 1.10) with the grand tomb of Mahivech Qadin Hanim (d. 1307/1889-90), the mother of Ibrahim Ilhamy Pasha, along with several other smaller, deteriorated tombs that belong to multiple figures, including Mahmud b. Muhammad (d. 1245/1829-30) and Fatima Ahmad Tusun (d. 1230/1814-15).

Caroline Williams remarks that “in an outer room, several to a cenotaph, lie the mamluks or retainers of Muhammad ‘Ali”.10 Tusun Pasha’s large bronze maqsura (fig. 10) creates somewhat of a divide between his dome chamber and the chambers behind it (fig. 1.11-12), which could be the area Williams is referring to in her text; however, there are no Mamluks buried there or anywhere else in Hawsh al-Basha for that matter. The only “retainers” that are buried in the royal cemetery are Golfidan (d. 1228/1813), the servant of Mohammad ‘Ali, and Shams Jahan (d. 1228/1813), the manumitted slave of Ahmad Tusun (fig. 1.11). This exciting notion that Muhammad ‘Ali buried his enemies in the royal

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10 Williams, Islamic Monuments in Cairo, 126.
cemetery, be it out of respect or dominance, is formed by a tangled web of misinformation elaborately perpetuated by Hawsh al-Basha’s tour guide and unfortunately circulated by modern scholars.

Across the barrel vault from Tusun’s dome chamber lies Isma’il Pasha (d. 1238/1822-23) as well as Yakan Tusun ‘Ali Pasha (d. 1241/1825-26). In the adjacent dome chamber is the wife of Muhammad ‘Ali, Amina Hanim (d. 1239/1823-24) and Isma’il Pasha’s daughter, Ruqayya Hanim (d. 1239) who shares a cenotaph with her sister Fatima Hanim (d. 1250/1834-35). The barrel vault leads to three large dome chambers where Ibrahim Pasha (d. 1264/1848) is buried amongst other prominent royal figures (fig. 1.16).

Building Chronology

Textual documentations on Hawsh al-Basha are few and far between. “The reign of Muhammad ‘Ali in Egypt (1805-48) is in general fairly documented, but the history of the arts and crafts during this period less so.” On the one hand, contemporary sources mention Hawsh al-Basha in passing, not addressing it as a dynastic mausoleum or an architectural entity but merely as the tombs of Muhammad ‘Ali’s family. On the other hand, the minority of modern scholars who acknowledge the existence of Hawsh al-Basha, mainly for its association with the Southern Cemetery, give incredibly brief and shallow overviews of the mausoleum. Therefore, this study will tread carefully as it examines all the relevant evidence in order to trace the mausoleum’s building sequence while refraining from portraying it through an unrealistic neatly comprehensive framework.

Starting at the earliest possible historical point, Muhammad Mahran suggests that the primary stage of the Hawsh originally dates back to the Mamluk period based on an account from Clot-Bey’s *Aperçu général sur l’Égypte*, which claims:

In the cemetery of Imam al-Shafi’i in Cairo, a rectangular building was built during the Mamluk period near the large dome of the Imam al-Shafi’i Mosque. In this building his highness Muhammad ‘Ali Pasha built a grand shrine for his son Tusun who died of the plague upon his return from campaigns against the Wahabin in the lands of the Arabs, along with additional tombs for other members of the family who had answered the calling of their lord and died since he (Muhammad ‘Ali) started ruling the Egyptian lands.  

Furthermore, Muhammad Mahran cites a letter written by Hasan ‘Abd al-Wahhab from the archives of Dar al-Watha’iq al-Qawmiyya, declaring “that above the mausoleum’s entrance, before its current renovations, there used to be a Turkish inscription panel made of marble and dated to the year 1223 (1808-9)”.  

Husam al-Din Isma‘il also sides with the scholarly opinion that Muhammad ‘Ali might have been working with a pre-existing structure based on stylistic reasons, such as the irregularity of the domes and the stucco decorations that have seemingly been plastered on the stone walls later; however, he ultimately dates the mausoleum to 1816 based on

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12 Clot-Bey, *Lamḥa āmma ’ilā misr*, vol. 2, 832; Clot-Bey, *Aperçu général sur l’Égypte*, vol. 2, 555-556; the original text reads: “Dans le cimetière de l’Imam, au sud de la ville du Caire, on trouve un long bâtiment construit sous la dynastie des Mamelouks, près le grand dôme de l’Imam Chafei. Dans ce bâtiment, Méhémet-Alí-Pacha, vice-roi d’Égypte, a élevé un tombeau à son fils Toussoun-Pacha, mort de la peste au retour de son expedition de Hedijaz (Arabie déserte), et plusieurs toumbeaux à d’autres membres de sa famille, morts depuis qu’il gouverne l’Egypte.”

13 Mahran, *Madafīn al-'ā’ila al-mālika*, 104; the original text reads: "انه كان يعلو باب المدفن فللتجديده الحالي لوجه رخامية مكتوبة باللغة التركية ومورخة سنة 1223 هـ.

references to the building in contemporary sources, such as that of Marcel, the previously mentioned French historian, which confirms the burial of Tusun Pasha under a dome at the royal cemetery near the mausoleum of Imam al-Shafi‘i upon his death in 1816 and al-Jabarti’s account, which states that “they took him (Tusun) to the cemetery prepared for him by the Pasha (Muhammad ‘Ali) for himself and his dead.”  

When discussing the year 1816 as a potential date for the attribution of Hawsh al-Basha, the adjacent burial place of the Sharif family should be taken into consideration. The neighboring mausoleum, which is also situated on Imam al-Laythi Street, has a foundation inscription panel that mentions the royal cemetery. The square marble panel inscribed in thuluth translates as follows:

In the name of God, the most Gracious, the most Merciful
said God, Exalted and Almighty, wherever you may be
death will overtake you even if you were in fortified towers
This mausoleum was established and renovated by the honorable Affandina
His Excellency Muhammad Sharif during his lifetime
Inside the hawsh of the benefactor the Khedive next to Sayyid
Imam al-Shafi‘i and by it he gained from God
the continuous reward so date this
with the genuineness of the mighty lights.

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15 al-Jabarti, *al-Tarīkh al-musamma*, vol. 2, 539-40; the original text reads: "وذهبوا به إلى المدفن الذي أعده البشا لنفسه ولمومته"

16 Qur’an 4:78; the original text reads: "بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
قال الله تبارك وتعالى أيضا تكونوا
يذكركم الموت ولو كنتم في بروج مشيدة
أني وجدت هذا المدفن سعادتنا أفندينا"
A central cartouche on this panel contains the date 1231/1815-16. Though the inscriptions only mention a *hawsh*, not necessarily a building, the word “inside” (*bi-dakhil*) interestingly implies an enclosure that to some extent has spatially defined parameters.

Similarly to Husam al-Din Isma‘il, Sawsan Darwish and Amany Bakr date the graveyard to 1815 in their scientific studies of Hawsh al-Basha, but report “that Muhammad ‘Ali bought this courtyard in 1805”; both scholars cite Fadya Mustafa’s thesis as well as the 2002 edition of Caroline Williams’s *Practical Guide* for this information, but the former source does not provide a thread of evidence for this alleged purchase and the latter does not mention it altogether. In fact, Caroline Williams in every edition of the *Practical Guide*, like Mustafa Barkat in *al-Nuqūsh al-kitābiyya*, assigns Hawsh al-Basha the date of 1270/1854 mentioned in the foundation inscription of Ibrahim Pasha’s dome chamber (fig. 11). The panel states the following:

In the reign of the Sultan of Sultans of the age
and Emperor of Emperors of the world
‘Abd al-Majid Khan, may God preserve his kingdom,
construction of this beautiful structure
for the sake of the heavenly dwelling of Ibrahim Pasha;
his honorable sons
Ahmad Pasha, and Isma‘il Pasha

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and his Excellency Mustafa Pasha, in the year 1270 (1854),
with the adornment of all, made it complete.
Sanglakh Khurasani numbered it.18

Certain scholars have considered this date to be the only solid evidence indicating when
the building must have existed. Though this logic is, indeed, valid, this indisputable date
unfortunately does not bring us any closer to when Hawsh al-Basha was actually first built.
If scholars are eager to settle for a *terminus ante quem*, then it might as well be the earlier
one provided by a decree from the Khedival court, dated 30 Shawwal 1279 (27 July 1853),
which authorizes the removal of a wall in Hawsh al-Basha in order to place the oversized
tomb of Ibrahim Pasha in its current position. The decree declares:

The order was issued to approve the request submitted by their excellencies Ahmad Pasha, Isma‘il
Pasha, Mustafa Bey, sons of the late Ibrahim Pasha, regarding the permit to make an opening on
the seaside (Northern) wall to enter the installation of the late Pasha’s tomb to its headquarters,
provided that the demolition and construction costs are on the aforementioned princes.19

In light of this decree, the date 1270 (1854) stated in the foundation inscription

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18 The original Persian inscriptions read:

در عهد سلطان سلطان سلمان زمان
و خلافت خواشق خان خلاف خالد الله ملکه
ابن تركيب خوش تركيب را
جهن جاه جاه جاه نا ابراهيم باشا
فرزندان نازى الاحترام
اهمد باشا و اسماعيل باشا
حضرت مصطفى باشا در سنة
۱۲۷۰
با زیبیت تمام به تمام رسیدند
رافعgeom خراسانی

19 Dar al-Watha‘iq al-Qawmiyya, *Diwan al-madaris*, p.99; the original text reads:

"صدر الأمر بالموافقة على الطلبة المقدم من أصحاب السعاده أحمد باشا وإسماعيل باشا مصطفی بك أن أجل المرحوم إبراهيم باشا بخصوص
التصريحة ما فتح فتحه في الحال البحري لبذل تركيبه في القب الباشا المرحوم إلى مقرها على أن تكون مصاريف البدم والبناء على طرف
الأمهاء المذكورين."
could arguably be referring to the completion of the chamber in terms of structural repairs after having removed the northern wall to place the oversized tomb of Ibrahim Pasha as per the conditions mentioned in the khedival decree. The word “tarkib” used in the foundation inscription could very much mean a structure and not exclusively the installation of Ibrahim Pasha’s tomb. Furthermore, the full adornment referred to by the words “zinat tamam” could imply the completion of the chamber’s decoration as well, but that requires further examination.

A painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum by the artist Antonio Schranz Jr., titled “Mausoleum of Mehmet Ali and his family at Cairo” and dated roughly to 1840 -1850 (fig. 12), depicts Hawsh al-Basha from the position of where Ibrahim Pasha’s tomb currently is (fig. 1.16) looking back towards the adjacent chamber (fig. 1.15). The painting is fairly simple and unnaturalistic, but its realistic rendering of certain architectural details provides the viewer with enough visual information to be able to effectively identify each of the illustrated tombs and evaluate the decorative status of the cemetery at the time this painting was created. The artist captures the wall segments oddly protruding to either side of the doorway in the far back as well as the tension between the grilled window and the muqarnas of the squinch directly above it (fig. 13), all of which are minute but crucial visual features that verify the painting’s realism and the artist’s location in the cemetery. Based on the motifs of the depicted cenotaphs, their relative location within each chamber, the color of the cartouches on the stele, and the design of the adorning headdresses, the tombs depicted on the left belong to ‘Ali son of Mohammad ‘Ali (d. 1252/1836-36), Ibrahim Pasha Yakan nephew of Mohammad ‘Ali (d. 1262/1845-46), and Mohammad Bey
the Daftardar (d. 1249/1833-34) (figs. 14, 15, 16). The cenotaph shared between Zahra ‘A’isha the daughter of Mohammad ‘Ali (d. 1246/1831) and Kulthum the daughter of ‘Ali Tusun (d. 1278/1861) is the tomb depicted behind the arch on the right (fig. 17). After establishing the reliability of this painting, one is able to deduce that sometime between 1845 and approximately 1850, these dome chambers were not yet decorated in the style we see today.

**Travel Accounts: Comments and Criticisms**

Similar to paintings, travel accounts can be methodologically problematic as they range from relatively accurate to whimsical; nevertheless, they become of great importance for understanding the spatial layout and visual transformation of Hawsh al-Basha. Nineteenth-century travelers possess the potential to fill scholarly gaps, which modern researchers have failed to bridge with what little information they have, by providing us with the opportunity to virtually go back in time and experience spaces as they were or, at the very least, as they seemed to be in their original historical contexts. Acknowledging the limitations set by a traveler account’s distorted perceptions, this study will situate itself on the margins of these anecdotes in the sense that it will function mainly as a commentary to first, understand the knowledge given by the text and second, cross-reference this information in order to reach plausible conclusions regarding the building chronology of Hawsh al-Basha.

One of the earliest accounts that mention Hawsh al-Basha was by a woman called Sarah Lushington who visited the mausoleum in 1827. In her book, the traveler wrote: “among the curiosities of Cairo is the cemetery of the Pasha’s family. It is a vaulted stone
building, consisting of five domes, under which, in splendid marble tombs, ornamented with painting and gold, repose the bodies of the Pasha’s two sons, Tussoon and Ismael Pasha. Here also is buried Mohammad Ali’s first and favorite wife, the mother of the present Ibrahim Pasha”.²⁰ It is unclear from this account whether the five domes Lushington refers to are, in addition to the three domes of Tusun, Isma‘il and Amina (fig. 1.10, 1.13-14), the two shallow domes behind Tusun’s chamber (fig. 1.11-12) or the domes under which Ibrahim Pasha was buried later (fig. 1.15-16). The same dilemma faces the account narrated by St. John, who visited the royal cemetery in 1834 and described his experience as follows:

On reaching the enclosed space in which stood the tombs of the Pasha’s family, we found the keeper of the grounds seated beside an elegant mausoleum, with a stone canopy supported on four columns. Of him we asked and obtained permission to enter. Over the graves an edifice divided into several apartments has been erected… The tomb of Toussoun Pasha, an ardent young man, who is said to have resembled Raphael in the manner of his death, was covered with withered flowers. That of his mother occupied, not many paces distant, the most distinguished place; and those of the other members of the family lay ranged around elegantly, tasteful, melancholy, in the midst of their golden ornaments.²¹

Since both Lushington and St. John highlight only the prominent tombs of Tusun, Isma‘il, and Amina amongst less significant others; the five domes or “several apartments” referred to in the texts could possibly be narrowed down to the contiguous chambers flanking the barrel vault (fig. 1.10-14). The two adjacent domes (fig. 1.15-16) were most

²⁰ Lushington, Narrative of a Journey, 137.
²¹ St. John and Saba, Egypt and Mohammed Ali, 135-136.
likely already constructed at the time St. John had visited the cemetery because four people who are currently buried there died before 1834, including Fatima the daughter of Muhammad ‘Ali (d. 1248/1833) and Zahra ‘Aisha Hanim the sister of Mohammad ‘Ali (d. 1246/1831), and their elaborate cenotaphs would unlikely have been left in the outdoors. Later in 1838, Stephens gives a more comprehensible description of Hawsh al-Basha:

The tomb of the pacha is called the greatest structure of modern Egypt. It is a large stone building, with several domes, strongly but coarsely made. The interior, still, solemn, and imposing, is divided into two chambers; in the first, in a conspicuous situation, is the body of his favorite wife, and around those of the other members of his family; in the other chamber several tombs, covered with large and valuable cashmere shawls; several place yet unoccupied, and in one corner a large vacant place, reserved for the pacha himself. Both apartments are carpeted, and illuminated with lamps, with divans in the recesses, and little wicker chairs for the different members of the family who come to mourn and pray.22

The American traveler divides the royal cemetery into two separate areas: the dome chambers flanking the barrel vault (fig. 1.10-14) and the dome chambers adjacent to them (fig. 1.15-16). It is unclear whether or not ‘Abbas Pasha’s dome chamber (fig. 1.17) was already built at the time, but considering the fact that several places were still unoccupied as Stephens notes, there may not have been the need to build another chamber just yet; Wilde’s account may shed more light on this matter:

We were conducted into a well-lit chamber, which strange to say, was in the form of a cross; in the center of this was a row of tombs of white marble and constructed in the usual Turkish style….

22 Stephens, Incidents of Travel in Egypt, vol. 1, 42.
Several splendid chandeliers hung from the arched roof... Many of the tombs were strewn with flowers, not yet withered, and the apartment was well lighted by windows in European style, furnished with splendid pink silken curtains. At one end of the chamber is a space left for his highness.  

Theoretically, if the stone canopy mentioned by St. John was situated at the southern end of the barrel vault where the rectangular hall was added much later and ‘Abbas Pasha’s dome chamber was not yet built at the time Wilde had visited Cairo in 1838, then the overall plan of Hawsh al-Basha would have seemingly had, through the eyes of a visitor at the very least, a cross-like shape (fig. 18). Moreover, the style of the windows Wilde makes note of in his account must simply be referring to the design of stained glass fixed in stucco that appear in Schranz’s painting and not the full-fledged European decoration Hawsh al-Basha presents today because later in 1839, a traveler called Goupil-Fesquet confirms that the interiors of the cemetery were very simple with only sumptuous carpets and some gilding on the marble ornaments of the sepulchers for decoration. Both Goupil’s account and Schranz’s painting verify that the elaborate westernized decorations of Hawsh al-Basha were added post 1845.

The first to comment on or, rather, criticize an extensive program of ornamentation at the royal cemetery was Gustave Flaubert who travelled to Cairo and other parts of the Ottoman empire in the company of Maxime du Camp sometime between 1849 and 1851. Flaubert did not hold back when he said, “all the tombs of the family of Mohammad ‘Ali

24 Goupil-Fesquet and Vernet, Voyage d’Horace, 102; the original text reads: “L’intérieur en est fort simple; des tapis somptueux et quelques dorures appliquées sur les ornements de marbre des sépulcres.”
are of a deplorable taste, rococo, canova, Euro-oriental, paintings and cabaret garlands; and above them are small ball chandeliers”. Du Camp was equally, if not more, displeased with the new style at Hawsh al-Basha:

Under a Constantinopolitan dome, in a very large room, built of very precious materials, but so ill-disposed that they become ugly, we have gathered all that can give an idea of the bad taste of Turks, the yellow, blue, red stelae, chagrined with golden foliage, topped with impossible turbans and invariable tarbouches, stand on illuminated sepulchers of tones so garish and so disparate, that they make eyes blink and irritate ears like the wrong notes of a flageolet blown by a child.

These harsh accounts report that clearly certain travelers were not fond of the newly adopted quasi-European style at Hawsh al-Basha, but also, more importantly, that the visual transformation of the mausoleum’s decorative repertoire had already started by the time these two Frenchmen visited Cairo in the mid nineteenth century.

While the lines between earlier phases of building are blurred, the dates and patrons of later architectural additions to Hawsh al-Basha are fortunately clear. The dome chamber belonging solely to Shafaq Nur has a foundation inscription above its doorway (fig. 19), attributing the chamber to the patronage of Khedive Tawfiq and the date to 1883-84 (fig. 20). In four cartouches of Arabic, the inscription proclaims:

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26 Du Camp, *Le Nil: Égypte Et Nubie*, 56; the original text reads: “Sous une coupole constantinopolitane, dans une chambre très grande, construite en matériaux fort précieux, mais si mal disposes qu’ils en deviennent laids, on a réuni tout ce qui peut donner une idée du mauvais gout des Turcs. Les stèles jaunes, bleues, rouges, chagriniées de rinceaux dorés, coiffées de turbans impossibles et de tarbouches invraisemblables, se dressent sur des sépulcres enluminés de tons si criards et si disparates, qu’ils font clinger les yeux et agacent les oreilles comme les fausses notes d’un flageolet soufflé par un enfant”.

17
Our Khedive Tawfiq created with his reverence
a tomb within which mercy shines bright
for his late mother whose date of death was:
Shafaq Nur in the house of bliss is her delight 1301.27

Following the constructions of Khedive Tawfiq, additions were made during the reign of King Faruq (r. 1936-52), marking the most recent stage of building and the completion of Hawsh al-Basha (fig. 1.1-7).28 Ibrashy verifies that “Hawsh al-Basha continued to be a popular place of burial and in 1883-4, a new dome and an arcaded corridor leading to it were added, then its façade and entrance were rebuilt in the second quarter of the twentieth century”.29

The historical narrative of Hawsh al-Basha is, first and foremost, one of evolution. The substantial lack of documentary materials poses a great challenge to the aim of dating the mausoleum’s layout, specifically that of the irregular domed chambers (fig. 1.10-17), but a plausible timeline for the mausoleum’s building phases has been reconstructed for this first time in scholarship by this study’s devised methodology of systematically cross-referencing primary sources with travel accounts and a survey of all those buried in the cemetery (fig. 2).

According to the allegedly missing foundation inscription mentioned in a documented letter, some construction at Hawsh al-Basha first happened in 1808-9. The

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27 The original text reads: خدیونا توفیق آشتی پر اکنون وامان به الرحمات لاح ضیاءاً لوالدی وافته نازیاً دا شفق تور نوری در دار الامیدی ایامها
28 Mahran, Madafin al-‘ā’ila al-mālika, 114.
royal cemetery could have primarily consisted of the two chambers with shallow domes (fig. 2.11-12), considering their lack of decoration and the fact that they contain the earliest tomb dating to 1805. It has been confirmed that by 1816, Tusun’s dome chamber was already constructed (fig. 2.10), but it is unclear whether or not the adjacent domes of his brother Isma’il and his mother Amina were also built by then (fig. 2.13-14); what is certain though is that these two chambers would have been built sometime before 1823, considering the death dates of Amina Hanim and Ruqayya Hanim. The chamber of Ibrahim Pasha and the one connected to it (fig. 2.15-16) would have been built at the same time, as early as 1831, but certainly prior to 1838. Meanwhile, the last dome chamber belonging to ‘Abbas Pasha (fig. 2.17) would have been added later to the mausoleum by 1851 because that is when his wife, Hamdim Qadin, died and was buried there. The elaborate decorative program of Hawsh al-Basha was also applied in the mid-nineteenth century and repaired later by Ibrahim Pasha’s sons after removing a wall in their father’s chamber in 1854.
Chapter 2: Categories of Ornamentation

Hawsh al-Basha is a product of, what Flood would describe as, “a dynamic condition in which signs and meanings were appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew”.\(^\text{30}\) The eclectic nature of the mausoleum’s decorative repertoire has led many scholars to label Hawsh al-Basha as a “strange building”, adding that it “belongs neither to Mamluk funerary architecture, nor the Turkish Ottoman tradition”\(^\text{31}\) without acknowledging that it is both and much more. This study will survey the various categories of ornamentation used in the royal cemetery in order to explore their sources of inspiration, focusing on two chief categories: inscriptions and floral elements. An attempt at a one-to-one mapping of the mausoleum’s various forms of floral elements to their original models would be idealistic; nevertheless, juxtaposing styles of ornamentation with their Ottoman counterparts, if possible, would allow us to understand if the creative process at Hawsh al-Basha was one of artistic inspiration or mere imitation. In this process of mediating between notions of aesthetic appropriation and cultural continuity, the definition of what constituted the Ottoman stylistic tradition during the nineteenth century will be revised and expanded.

The decorative sobriety of Hawsh al-Basha’s façade leaves a visitor unprepared for the enchanted space within, where under the filtered lights shining through stained glass, the air is filled with mystery and the stones unravel their history (fig. 21). Marble tombs stand side by side, towering over the living, as markers of where the dead lie below and

\(^{30}\) Flood, Objects of Translation, 262; Bhabha, The Location of Culture, 55.

\(^{31}\) Behrens-Abouseif and Vernoit, Islamic Art in the 19th Century, 114.
embodiments of who they were in this life. Gerard de Nerval once likened the cemetery of Hawsh al-Basha to a city; the French writer explains:

There are more than sixty graves, large and small, new for the most, and composed of white marble cenotaphs. Each of these cenotaphs is surmounted either by a turban or a woman’s headdress, which gives all Turkish tombs a character of funereal reality; it seems that one walking through a petrified crowd. The most important of these tombs are draped in rich fabrics and wear turbans of silk and cashmere: the illusion is even more poignant.32

The distinctive decorative system of coiffures and head-covering adorning the tombs represent each of the buried figures according to their gender and rank. The side of the deceased’s head is usually marked by a stele surmounted by turbans or fezzes for the men and vases or coronets for the women. Further distinctions are made amongst the women: braids in relief signify a royal mother, such as Shafak Nur, the mother of Khedive Tawfik (fig. 22) and Mahivech Qadin Hanim (d. 1307/1889-90), the mother of Ibrahim Ilhamy Pasha (fig. 23); painted braids denote a royal wife, such as Amina (d.1281/1864-65), the daughter of Isma‘il Pasha (fig. 24); and “a coil of loosely caught hair, often sprinkled with golden tears, indicates a virgin princess”,33 such as Fatima Hanim (d. 1248/1832-33), the daughter of Muhammad ‘Ali (fig. 25). The identities of the dead are fully revealed and formally introduced through the inscriptions engraved on the tombstones.

32 Wiet, Mohammed ‘Ali, 262; the original text reads: “Il y a là plus de soixante tombes, grandes et petites, neuves pour la plupart, et composées de cippes de marble blanc. Chacun de ces cippes est surmonté soit d’un turban, soit d’une coiffure de femme, ce qui donne à toutes les tombes turques un caractère de réalité funèbre; il semble que l’on marche à travers une foule pétrifiée. Les plus importants de ces tombeaux sont drapes de riches étoffes et portent des turbans de soie et de cashmere: là l’illusion est plus poignante encore”.
33 Williams, Islamic Monuments in Cairo, 126.
Inscriptions

With the appropriate absence of figural decoration, epigraphy plays a crucial role in the iconography of Hawsh al-Basha as both a key source of information and a chief element of ornamentation. The various inscriptions employed at the royal cemetery reveal information about the history of the mausoleum, the identities of the dead buried within it, and the Islamic ideologies of the patrons who commissioned it.

The Day of Judgement is the first epigraphic theme a visitor confronts at Hawsh al-Basha. Visible from afar, prior to entering the mausoleum, verses from surat al-Ghashiyya line the drum of the dome above the entrance vestibule (fig. 26). Four lines, two Quranic verses each, state:

on that Day faces will be glowing with bliss, pleased with their striving in an exalted Garden, where no idle talk will be heard in it will be a running spring, along with thrones raised high and goblets set at hand, and cushions lined up.\(^{34}\)

In this context, a parallel is established between those buried in Hawsh al-Basha and the ones referred to in these verses, as opposed to those mentioned in the preceding verses whose faces will be downcast on that day, exhausted, overburdened, and left to drink from a scalding spring. Nevertheless, upon reading the various descriptions of Hawsh al-Basha written by nineteenth-century travelers, one wonders if these verses are not just a promise to the dead royals but also a projection of what the visitor will see upon entering the cemetery.

The parallel drawn between the promised afterlife and the royal cemetery is made

\(^{34}\) Qur’an, 88:8-10.
clear by many accounts, such as those which make note of Hawsh al-Basha’s gardens, interiors, and ambiance. In 1838, Wilde notes that “a handsome courtyard, adorned with gardens and well-grown trees, surrounded the building”. In very few words, Stephens captures Hawsh al-Basha’s atmosphere when he says, “the interior, still, solemn, and imposing”; the American traveler also adds that the chambers were “carpeted, and illuminated with lamps, with divans in recesses”. Confirming Stephens’s descriptions, another account also mentions that “there are divans with cushions for the use of those who come to mourn over their departed relatives”. Last but not least, Fromentin reports that, amidst the silence of the mausoleum, scholars with volumes of the Qur’an “meditate gravely or read in an undertone; there are those who murmur prayers”.

The selected Qur’anic verses appropriately allude to thrones raised high similar to the alter-like shrines of the dead royals (fig. 27), goblets set at hand like the vases placed by their heads (fig. 28), cushions lined up such as those in the window niches, and a silence broken only by the Qur’anic recitation of the pious and the prayers of the faithful. Interestingly, had the inscription continued, the next Qur’anic verse would have mentioned how “silken carpets spread” just as Wilde described how “the floor between the tombs was covered with the most costly Persian carpets, in which we sank literally ankle deep”.

Apart from the exterior of the entrance dome, Qur’anic inscriptions in the royal

35 Wilde, Narrative of a Voyage, 217.
36 Stephens, Incidents of Travel in Egypt, vol. 1, 42.
37 Cruzon, Visit to Monasteries, 50.
38 Fromentin, Carré, and Aubier, Voyage En Egypte, (1869), 143: the original text reads: “de letters ayant sur un pupitre de main volume du Coran, sur lequel ils méditent gravement ou qu’ils lisent à demi-voix; il y en a qui murmurent des litanies.”
39 Wilde, Narrative of a Voyage, 218.
cemetry are henceforth limited to the surfaces of cenotaphs. Known in Islam for its spiritual power to protect from all evil, *ayat al-Kursi* (the Throne Verse) is the most repeated religious inscription used in Hawsh al-Basha. The favored Qur’anic verse is engraved on many of the tombs, including those of Isma‘il Pasha (d. 1822-23), Tusun Pasha (d. 1816), and his mother, Amina Hanim (d. 1829-30). The second most quoted Qur’anic verses on the tombs are of *surat al-Rahman*, which declares that “every being on earth is bound to perish and only your Lord Himself, full of Majesty and Honour, will remain”\(^{40}\).

The Islamic ideology of God alone possessing immortality is further emphasized in the non-religious inscriptions on tombstones. For example, the Turkish inscriptions on the tombstone of Ruqayya Hanim (d. 1239/1823-24), the daughter of Isma‘il Pasha, state:

He remains

Where is Hagar? Where is Sara? Where is Mariam? Where is Balqis (Queen of Sheba)?

Of course those who honor this guest house (earth) leave

This is how life in this world comes to an end, and (only) He is Alive and He remains.\(^{41}\)

The text goes on to explain how the world is at its best sorrowful and that its only blessing is salvation from all evil. Here, Ruqayya is compared to the most powerful and pious women in Islam only to show that in the end, they all died. Similarly, the inscriptions on Ibrahim Pasha’s tomb ask in Persian, “where is King Solomon now?”\(^{42}\). The point of these rhetorical questions is to assert that nobody evades death; no matter how mighty or

\(^{40}\) Qur’an, 55:26-27.

\(^{41}\) The original inscriptions read:

فِي هَالِجُ قَانِتَةَ سَارِهَ قَانِتَةَ مُرْيِمَ قَانِتَةَ يَلِبَقُ "

وَيَسِىْلُو نَخَاهُ يَبِيْتَ وَدِيْرَ يُهِلَتْ أَسِيرَ الْبَيْتِ "

يَوْمُ نَحْيَا عَافِيَتْ هُوَ الْحَيُّ وَهُوَ الْبَاقِيُّ "

وَلَكَ مَلِكُ هَمَا نَشَأَ سَلِيْمَةَ كَجَا سَتَٰ "

\(^{42}\) The original inscription reads:
important someone is, death will always prevail.

While religious inscriptions are confined to the drum of the entrance dome and the surfaces of tombs, foundation inscription panels occupy customary zones on the lintels and dado. Besides the missing foundation inscription panel that allegedly used to be above the main entrance of Hawsh al-Basha, the cemetery has a total of two other foundation inscriptions that belong explicitly to the chambers of Shafak Nur and Ibrahim Pasha.

The first panel occupies the lintel above the doorway to Shafak Nur’s tomb chamber. This foundation inscription, in addition to mentioning the names of the patron and the deceased, states the names of an architect and a “numerologist”. Between the cartouches, in fine writing, the inscribed words declare in Arabic that the dome chamber’s architect (muhandisha) is Muhammad Raja’i and that its “numerologist” (raqamahu) is Husni (fig. 29).43 Muhammad Mahran identifies the second craftsman simply as a calligrapher (khatat), which is plausible considering that the name of the craftsman inscribed on the second foundation inscription panel of Ibrahim Pasha’s tomb is that of the celebrated calligrapher Sanglakh Khurasani (d. 1294)⁴⁴ and, yet, he is also referred to in the inscriptions as the person who “numbered” the tomb.

**Chronograms**

The precise role of the second craftsman ceases to be a mystery after taking another look at the last two cartouches of Shafak Nur’s inscription panel:

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43 The original inscriptions read:

“مهندسها محمد رجائي”

44 Storey, *Persian Literature*, vol. 2, pt. 1, 1077; see page 31 for more details on Sanglakh Khurasani.
for his late mother whose date of death started
Shafaq Nur in the house of bliss is her delight 1301 (1883-84).45

The last cartouche is, in fact, a chronogram that denotes the hijri year in which the
commemorated chamber was built. Foundation chronograms were often used on madrasas,
tombs, as well as sebils of the Ottoman empire and are signified in the text by different
forms of the word tarikh. Here, the chronogram of “bada shafak nur fi dar al-na‘im
hana’uha” yields the noted date of 1301. The word raqamahu in this context, then, refers
to the art of recording dates by adding the numerical values of the letters based on the abjad
system.

Since the date in Shafak Nur’s foundation inscription is already stated numerically,
one cannot help but ask: what was the purpose of using a chronogram in this case? Clearly
the person being challenged here is the poet, rather than the reader, for passersby are neither
required nor expected to understand the content disguised in a chronogram. Masarwa
explains that “in a period of transition, like that from Mamluk to Ottoman rule, on the one
hand one might expect at least a disturbance in the local and conventionalized
communication systems, on the other hand an energetic imperial activity of establishing
and adjusting new communication channels (i.e. in order to create a new universal language
of power and order)”.46 Beirman similarly argues that chronograms appearing in the
architectural fabric of a city functioned as symbols of Ottomanization, “indexing in their

45 The original inscription reads:
١٣٠١

46 Masarwa, “Performing the Occasion”, 177.
presence and their content, significant shifts in the urban order". Therefore, chronograms were essentially a form of articulated dominance.

Displaying power was intrinsic to the Ottomans both in life and in death as indicated by the repeated use of chronograms in the royal tombs of Hawsh al-Basha, including those of ‘Abbas Pasha I (d. 1270/1853-54), Ilhamy Pasha (d. 1277/1860-61), and Ibrahim Pasha (d. 1264/1847-48). The stele crowning ‘Abbas Pasha I’s tomb presents separate cartouches containing lines of Ottoman poetry, the last few of which state:

his reign was short, but the truth was
that he had revived Egypt with his justice and benevolence
with grief his date of death was recorded
may the Garden of Eden be a place for ‘Abbas Pasha. 1270

The numerical value of this poem’s last line adds up to precisely 1270, once again communicating the noted date. Chronograms like this exemplify the interlaced relationship between form and function, whereby “on the one hand the stone may speak, while on the other hand a poem may be petrified”.

Though Hawsh al-Basha’s other foundation inscription panel belonging to Ibrahim Pasha’s dome chamber does not contain any chronograms like that of Shafak Nur’s, the tomb of Ibrahim Pasha does – one on each stele. The eastern stele narrates a poem in Arabic

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47 Bierman, “The Ottomanization of Crete”, 69.

48 The original Turkish inscription reads:

49 Masarwa, “Performing the Occasion”, 178.
that compares Ibrahim Pasha’s tomb to a holy site of pilgrimage, a garden with a whiff of delightful aroma, an elevated place with a river running beneath it, and a heaven where wishes come true. The inscriptions continue to state that Ibrahim Pasha had prayed to God for more blessings and was thus flooded with wine and welcomed by maidens with gorgeous eyes. The last two cartouches state:

the gatekeeper of heaven has called upon you with good news in the date
for your presence the heaven of Eden was decorated.\(^{50}\)

The inscription clearly indicates that the last line of the poem ought to be a chronogram, but the number 854 that it denotes is inconsistent with the dates cited in other literary and epigraphical sources, including the date provided by the other stele. The Turkish inscriptions on the western stele associate Ibrahim Pasha with Ibrahim “the builder of God’s House”, describe his bravery on the battlefield, and state that, despite his unmatched glory, time was not in his favor because he only governed Egypt for seventy-one days and departed when he was sixty years old on the fifteenth of Dhu’l-Hijja. The last two cartouches of the poem proclaim:

I have said of this perfect person the history in full
the Garden of Eden will be Ibrahim Pasha’s place.\(^{51}\)

Here, the chronogrammatic last line offers the date 1264 (1848), which is the official date of Ibrahim Pasha’s death; nevertheless, this date is different from the ones engraved on the

\(^{50}\) The original Arabic inscription reads:

و دعاء رضوان بشراك ارخ
زبئت القدوم حنة عدن

\(^{51}\) The original Turkish inscription reads:

سويلدكم كامل او ذاتك فونته تاريخ نام
كأثن عن أولي ابراهيم باشايه مكان

28
cenotaph by Sanglakh Khurasani and mentioned in the foundation inscription panel. The calligrapher repeatedly states in small cartouches engraved on every side of the cenotaph the date 1267/1850-51 under his name, which is possibly indicating the completion of this masterpiece of a tomb he designed. The foundation inscription panel mentions the date 1270 (1854), which, as previously discussed, is most likely referring to the installation of the tomb as well as the completion of the chamber’s structural and decorative repairs after having removed the northern wall in 1853.

While Arabic and Turkish inscriptions take the lead in adorning Ibrahim Pasha’s tomb, Persian plays a supporting role as it alternates with Arabic in the small cartouches surrounding each panel. This correlation between the three languages accurately reflects the trilingual nature of Hawsh al-Basha’s epigraphic program, whereby Arabic and Turkish were more prominently used, and Persian was limited to the foundation inscription of Ibrahim Pasha’s dome chamber as well as a few lines engraved on the bronze maqsura surrounding Tusun Pasha’s cenotaph. After surveying the inscriptions of Hawsh al-Basha, it appears that there is not a significant preference for either Arabic or Turkish; Arabic was used as early on as Khadija Hanim’s tomb (d. 1805) and as late as the tomb of Shafak Nur (d. 1883/84), while Turkish was used as early as Prince Mustafa’s tomb (d. 1815) and as late as the tomb of Khalil Pasha Yakan (d. 1892-93). Perhaps half a century is not a sufficient time span to detect a linguistic fluctuation, but, in general, Turkish dominated the epigraphic program of the royal cemetery. The prominent use of Turkish in the inscriptions, comparable to the conscious effort of integrating chronograms, catered to the prestige and the visually manifested power of the Ottoman empire. As O’Kane explains,
“with the increasing confidence of the Ottoman state as it colonized successive Arab lands from the early 16th century onwards, the use of Turkish increases dramatically, and Persian correspondingly declines”. The incorporation of three different languages in Hawsh al-Basha’s epigraphic program, as exemplified by the tomb of Ibrahim Pasha, reflects the cosmopolitan identity of the late Ottoman artistic milieu.

The magnificent tomb of Ibrahim Pasha may not have been originally intended for him. In a conversation with amir ‘Abbas Hilmi, grandson of Khedive ‘Abbas Hilmi II of Egypt and the last of the Ottoman royals in Cairo, he mentioned that the tomb of Ibrahim Pasha was initially made for Mohammad ‘Ali. This piece of information may be true since Ibrahim Pasha had suddenly died only ten months earlier than his father and was buried in a large space at the end of what is presumed to be one of the five main dome chambers. This space, which would have been deliberately left empty in the crowded mausoleum, is in a corner as many travelers had speculated would be the position reserved for Muhammad ‘Ali’s tomb. Furthermore, Ibrahim Pasha’s cenotaph (fig. 30) is clearly much more extravagant than any other in the royal cemetery, including those of his brothers. As noted by Eugène Fromentin, who travelled to Cairo in 1869 and likened Hawsh al-Basha to the Royal Chapel of Saint Denis:

Abbas is there under a tomb in bad taste. There are children in their tombs, smaller and less decorated. That of Ibrahim Pasha alone is beautiful and makes you very solemn, perhaps because of the name of the deceased. It has the consecrated form, raised on successive degrees or stages, in the shape of an altar, all in marble, finely, curiously, very heavily chiseled in high relief.

53 Personal communication on November 9, 2020.
Everything that is background is painted a dark indigo blue. The lace of the arabesques, the numbers, the Arabic characters with which it is loaded from top to bottom, are gilded with a very thick gold. It looks like carved wood without much taste, but with a very skillful hand. A green curtain, raised at the angles, serves as a canopy, and two large war banners, in crimson and green silk, edged and embroidered with faded gold, form on each side a noble and martial curtain.\textsuperscript{54}

The skillful hand Fromentin refers to is that of Sanglakh Khurasani (d. 1294), the same Iranian calligrapher from Tabriz who worked for Mohammad ‘Ali at his Mosque in the Citadel,\textsuperscript{55} which is another reason why this tomb could have been designed for the Khedive.

Sanglakh was known, and even criticized, for his over-florid style that weaves Arabic, Persian, and Turkish both in his stone carving and his literary work. In her brief entry on Sanglakh in Encyclopædia Iranica, Maryam Ekhtiar mentions that “his most famous and perhaps finest artistic contribution is an inscribed slab of carved marble of about 3.70 by 1.25 m., the entire surface of which is covered with Arabic and Persian poems and the epithets of the contemporary Ottoman monarch inscribed in fine nastaʿliq script. The stone was originally intended for the tomb of the Prophet Moḥammad in Medina and took Mirza Sanglak eight years to complete while he was in Egypt”\textsuperscript{56}.

\textsuperscript{54} Fromentin, Voyage En Egypte, (1869), 142-143; the original text reads: “La nécropole de Mohammed Ali vaut qu’on la visite. Chapelle royale comme à Saint-Denis. Abbas est Là sous un tombeau de mauvais goût. Il y a des enfants dans leur tombe, plus petite et moins ornée. Celle d’Ibrahim pacha seule est belle et rend très sérieux, peut-être à cause du nom du mort. Elle a la forme consacrée, élevée sur des degrés ou des paliers successifs, en forme d’autel, tout en marbre, finement, curieusement, très fortement travaillée au ciseau en haut relief. Tout ce qui est fond et peint d’un blue indigo foncé. La dentelle des arabesques, des chiffres, des caractères arabes dont elle est chargée du haute en bas, est dorée d’un or très épais. On dirait du bois sculpté sans grand goût, mais d’une main très habile. Un rideau vert, relevé par les angles, lui sert de dais, et deux grande étendards de guerre, en soie cramoisie et verte, bordée et brodée d’or fané, forment de chaque côté une noble et martiale tenture.”

\textsuperscript{55} Sanglakh’s signature can be found on the ablution fountain of Mohammad ‘Ali’s mosque along with a date on the epigraphic friezes, in quatrefoils centered below the qur’anic inscriptions.

\textsuperscript{56} Ekhtiar, "SANGLĀḴ, MOḤAMMAD-‘ALI".
(fig. 31), today in Tabriz, bears a striking resemblance to the tomb of Ibrahim Pasha with some variations in floral forms, indicating that the calligrapher was simply working in the fashion of his day and that “the Ottoman patrons had also developed a taste for highly ornate, deeply carved surfaces or sculpted forms at this time, as opposed to the traditional low-relief carving technique that had been the norm until the earlier decades of the nineteenth century.”

The Floral Ornament: Appropriation and Cultural Continuity

The floral ornament has always been a component of the Ottoman decorative tradition, but amidst the plethora of palmettes, rosettes, scrolls, arabesques, tulips, lotuses, and acanthus leaves at Hawsh al-Basha, some floral motifs were adopted, some abandoned, and others adapted. In an illustrated treatise on Ottoman Architecture titled the *Usul-i Mi’mani-i ‘Osmani* (Fundamentals of Ottoman Architecture), prepared by the Ottoman government in Turkish, French, and German for the Vienna World Exposition, the text claims:

The Ottoman artists did not go very far to seek the types of their ornamentation; they took them among the plants in the vegetable patch or the flowers in the garden of their own house. The natural form has undergone various successive modifications in their hands and has ended up taking on a conventional character, a character which is eminently suited to decoration, the shape of the foliage, fruits and flowers thus having acquired new qualities, which have put them in perfect harmony with the nature of the materials used to represent them.58

58 Launay, Chachian, Maillard, Montani, and Sébah, *L’architecture ottomane*, 71; the original text reads: “les artistes ottomans ne sont pas allés chercher bien loin les types de leur ornamentation; ils les ont pris parmi les plantes du potager ou les fleurs du jardin de leur propre maison. La forme naturelle a subi entre
The authors went to great lengths to illustrate the artistic process of transforming a living plant into the stylized and conventionalized decorative motifs we see today (fig. 32). This notion, though reasonable and perhaps even admirable, ascribes a certain naivete to the Ottoman architect as well as the modern observer. Rather than simply crediting the complex floral arrangements of the late Ottoman architecture to nature, more plausible models of ornamentation, such as chinoiserie, should be taken into consideration.

It comes as no surprise that chinoiserie appears on the chiseled and colored surfaces of Hawsh al-Basha. Chinese designs have always been a main source of inspiration for the Ottomans since their introduction to the eastern Islamic world by the Pax Mangolica in 1321. The authors of the *Usul-i Mi’mari-i ‘Osmani* admit that Ottoman artists were very much aware of the Chinese floral program but that they approached the style critically; in defense of Ottoman artists and architecture, the text states:

> Chinese designs are not unknown to them. They have studied their ingenious motives, analyzed and modified them, and have never slavishly copied them. Extremely skillful craftsmen, they attentively pursued a goal which they had drawn up in advance, and carefully calculated all the transformations which they wished to implement. By thus passing certain conceptions of Chinese artists into the dominion of Ottoman art, they did not accept them without making them undergo notable improvements, and never, for example, allowed the monstrous discontinuities which characterize Chinese ornamentation.  

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59 Ersoy, *Architecture and the Late Ottoman*, 179.  
60 Launay, Chachian, Maillard, Montani, and Sébah, *L’architecture ottomane*, 73; the original text reads: “les conceptions chinoises ne leur étaint pas inconnues. ils en ont étudié les motifs ingénieux, les ont analysés et modifiés, et ne les ont Jamais copiés servilement. Dessinateurs d’une habileté extrême, ils ont...”
Again, the authors provide illustrations of the transformative processes through which the appropriated foreign motifs undergo in order to be fully integrated into the Ottoman decorative tradition (fig. 33). By the time the Chinese floral repertoire reached the royal cemetery in Cairo, not only had it become an essential element in the decorative arts of the Ottoman empire, but it was also established locally in the architectural vocabulary of the Mamluks (figs. 34a-b). Modified or, rather, “Ottomanized” versions of peonies appear on Ibrahim Pasha’s tomb between the cartouches surrounding each panel (fig. 35) and lotuses decorate the walls of Shafak Nur’s chamber at the beginning and end of every color segment (fig. 36); lotuses similar in outline can be found on many of the sixteenth-century Ottoman decorative arts, including a prayer rug and a bowl in the Metropolitan Museum (figs. 37a-b, 38)

Different stylizations of plants in vases can be found on many of the cenotaphs at Hawsh al-Basha, some are depicted stiffly while others are relatively natural. For example, the stele surmounted on Mustafa Bey’s tomb (d. 1231/1816) has a symmetrical plant with a central stem growing out of a goblet-like vase (figs. 39a). Meanwhile, flowering plants that seem as though they are wilting decorate the sides of the cenotaph shared between Zahra ‘A’isha (d. 1246/1831) and Kulthum (d. 1278/1861), in addition to vases of intertwining stems on the corners as well as the stelae (figs. 40, 41). The plants on the latter tomb, though still symmetrical, show more fluidity in comparison with the earlier one.
With time, the same motif continued to stylistically develop in naturalism and dimensionality as indicated by the later cenotaph of Khalil Pasha Yakan (d. 1310/1892) and Mustafa Pasha Yakan (d. 1263/1846), whereby vases with three-dimensional bouquets of flowers adorn the sides and swooping curvilinear plants that flare out of cornucopias take over the stelae (figs. 42, 43). While the concept of the motif can be traced to the mosaics at the Dome of the Rock and as far back as pre-Islamic prototypes, the style in which the motif is rendered recall other diverse sources.

Scholars argue that the Ottomans were looking at seventeenth-century Mughal India for a type of naturalistic rendering of plants as opposed to their own conventionalized representations of the floral ornament. It is quite plausible that the Ottomans may have found new inspirations from India, such as the low carved reliefs on the dado of the Taj Mahal in Agra (fig. 44), yet the Ottoman artists working in Cairo at Hawsh al-Basha may have very well been simply looking at examples much closer to home – Istanbul. The Fountain of Defterdar Mehmed Efendi, also known as the Bereketzade Fountain in Galata, dates to 1732 and depicts many of the motifs carved on the cenotaphs in the royal cemetery (fig. 45). The fountains of Istanbul had not only been depicting similar vases of floral bouquets and plants with central stems since the eighteenth century, they also represented bowls of fruits and vegetables just like the ones depicted later on Mustafa Bey’s tomb (fig. 39b). The same motifs can also be found in a different medium at the Privy Chamber (“Fruit Room”) of Ahmed III, 1705 (fig. 46).

On a macroscopic scale, many of the floral elements at the royal cemetery are familiar

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when carefully looked at in isolation from their ornamentally busy contexts and can mostly be traced back to either Ottoman or local sources. The classical Roman motif of cornucopia for instance, which decorates the cenotaph of Shams (d. 1266/1850) the wife of Mohammad ‘Ali (fig. 47), was locally revived in the twelfth-century portable mihrab from the mausoleum of Sayyida Nafisa. Cornucopia had continued in popularity well into the Ayyubid period as demonstrated by the carved marble panels on the mihrab of al-Salih Najm al-Din’s mausoleum (fig. 48). Certain elements that may at first glance seem curious and unrecognizable can be traced upon further examinations to the most inconspicuous of places, such as the case with a hybrid flower-fruit on Shafak Nur’s tomb (fig. 49) that can be matched to others of its kind located amidst the vegetal scrollwork framing the panels of Sultan Ahmed III’s fountain in Istanbul (fig. 50). Similarly, the abstracted fan-like motif attached to a flower on Ibrahim Pasha’s tomb (fig. 51), which remains ambiguous because of the odd blades extending from it, might be some modified form comparable to the carnations on a Turkish turban cover in the Victoria and Albert Museum (fig. 52).

Another example from Ibrahim Pasha’s tomb would be a significant flower that was clearly magnified to stand out from the rest of the floriated scrollwork (fig. 53). This motif can arguably be attributed to the Mughals for it does appear as a central motif on many of their decorative arts, such as a seventeenth-century Indian plate currently in the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg (fig. 54). However, it must be acknowledged that this specific flower had already been integrated into the floral repertory of Ottoman decorative arts and their various mediums long before they appear on Mughal art in the

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seventeenth century and the cenotaphs of Hawsh al-Basha in the nineteenth century. From woodwork to textiles, this flower can be easily spotted as the focal point of several artifacts, including the fourteenth-century window wings (figs. 55a-b) that belonged to the tomb of Sheikh Necmeddin İshakoğlu but are currently at the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, an undated Ottoman Qur’an kursi in the Ethnography Museum in Ankara (fig. 56), and a sixteenth-century Turkish kaftan in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 57). Interestingly, a seventeenth-century rectangular Ottoman cushion cover at the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 58) also shows a form of this flower in the center, but in combination with a sunray-like motif in the corners that is incredibly similar to the compositional arrangement adorning Ibrahim Pasha’s tomb (fig. 30).

The same identity crisis faces the reciprocating design above the foundation inscription panel of Shafak Nur’s chamber (fig. 20), which can on the one hand be perceived by scholars as a simplified version of the patterns used in Mughal art, specifically manuscripts, such as the borders from a double page of a Qur’an dated to 1574 (fig. 59). On the other hand, this study argues that the basic design is mimicking the joggled lintels of monuments in Cairo. Certainly, this type of motif can also be found in Ottoman architecture, such as the surviving plasterwork in the hot room of Ismai’l Bey’s Hamam dated to the sixteenth century (fig. 60); however, the style of this repeating pattern as well as the fact that it was not applied to a larger surface area as usual and, instead, occupied a closed frame above the doorway directly points at local sources. Some of the lintel

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63 Şahin, *The Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts*, 224-5.
64 Marzuq, *al-Funūn al-zakhrafiyya*, pt. 60.
65 Ekhtiar, *Masterpieces from the Department*, 319.
examples are that of the Mausoleum of al-Salih Najm al-Din (fig. 61) and the Mosque of Baybars (fig. 62). The most comparable local example, design wise, can also be found in the mihrab of al-Mu’ayyad Sheikh’s Mosque (fig. 63).

The transmission of ornamented designs from one medium to another, from stone to plaster and paint in this case, would not have been unusual for the artists of Hawsh al-Basha who had used imitation marble for the dado and squinches in four of the dome chambers (fig. 64). The brown veins of the painted plaster capture the same effect of the Byzantine technique of slicing marble into panels of symmetrical designs, recalling the dado at the Dome of the Rock and, most importantly, the grand monument of the Ottoman Empire – Hagia Sophia.

Hawsh al-Basha demonstrates an undeniable affinity for the traditional Ottoman style and local taste in the continuation of arabesques (fig. 65), *muqarnas* elements, and geometric patterns (fig. 66). These established decorative traditions, nevertheless, are confronted by relatively novel forms of fleshy vegetal scrolls and reliefs typically labeled under the European stylistic categories of Baroque and Rococo. Flamboyant motifs grow at a massive scale, whereby sinuous Rococo reliefs are employed in a dense program of marble carving on the tombs (fig. 67) while molded overblown acanthus scrolls decorate the high domes, their zones of transition, the soffits of steeply curved arches, and the “marbled” walls of the mausoleum (fig. 68). This eclectic approach had been fully realized in Istanbul by the time it was implemented in Hawsh al-Basha almost a century later and it continued to be the style of the Ottoman court despite the fact that these adopted westernized styles eventually faded in their own countries of origin; as Michael Levey
points out, this kind of European decorative influence “(sometimes with odd chinoiserie flourishes) was never quite to die out in Ottoman art as long as the Empire lasted. It would always touch a chord left unstirred by the severities of classicism or neo-classicism. It was, after all, a style opulent as well as graceful, and nicely fitted to serve not only for interior decoration but for the small-scale monument, gateway, fountain, or tomb”.

The ornamental categories employed at the royal cemetery each serve aesthetic and symbolic purposes simultaneously. Inscriptions, qur’anic and poetic, invoked blessings to the deceased in the afterlife. Ornamental plants, flowers, and fruits evoked notions of paradise. Even the European forms, which may seem superficial and flamboyant, emerge as markers of imperialism in association with a modern image. A further royal indicator is the crescent moon and stars adorning the slabs and stele of Ibrahim Pasha’s tomb (figs. 69a-b), which in any other context would have been charged with lunar connotation as opposed to being an established symbol of the Ottoman state.

Practices of cultural appropriation and adaptation have always been characteristic of arts produced in the Islamic World and the arts of the Ottoman empire are no exception in this regard. Situated artistically somewhere between the familiar and the foreign, the decorative program of Hawsh al-Basha displays an intriguing fusion of cultural forms. Some motifs can be attributed to Ottoman and local traditions, other novel forms are suggestive of Iranian, European, and Mughal inspirations, and very few shapes remain ambiguous, but none can be identified as absolutely one or the other. There is a fluidity to the forms of Ottoman art generally and Hawsh al-Basha specifically that makes them resist

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66 Levey, The World of Ottoman Art, 117.
modern categories of analysis, a cultural flow that allows them to be concurrently Turkish and Baroque, and Chinese, and Mamluk, and infinitely more. Every element that is interwoven in the iconographic fabric of the royal cemetery is a mutation and a reproduction that has transcended temporally and geographically, representing not a single cultural identity but a manifested symbolic meaning. After studying what many of the decorative elements of the mausoleum stand for, the question becomes: what does Hawsh al-Basha as a whole represent?
Chapter 3: Independence Within Boundaries

The Ottoman empire is often stereotyped as a multi-cultural outpost and its arts as hybrids of an otherwise advanced Islamic visual culture; however, the reality is more complex. Arts of the Ottoman empire, especially towards the nineteenth century, were the products of dismantling past cultural patterns in order to create a new social order. This study argues that Hawsh al-Basha is the manifestation of this new social order and its rapid stylistic evolution is the memory of a strategic synthetic process.

While the previous chapter analyzes the blend of appropriated cultural forms, this chapter focuses on the vectors of influence driving these eclectic tendencies. Was Ottoman architecture in Cairo simply echoing the artistic milieu in Istanbul? Did the reformist agenda of the imperial state, materialized in the form of the Tanzimat documents, resonate across the empire’s provinces? If Muhammad ‘Ali had not shared the same vision of modernity for Egypt as the Ottoman Sultans did for their empire, would the alleged central authority of the state have continued to influence building activities in Cairo? Last but not least, was the culturally diverse background of the Ottoman architect a passive agent or a convenient asset in this process of architectural eclecticism? The purpose of this final chapter is to answer these questions in the hopes of understanding whether Hawsh al-Basha was indeed a strategically synthetic achievement or an unresolved hybrid monstrosity, or possibly somewhere between the two.
An Evolution of Style

The narrative of the royal cemetery’s stylistic evolution begins with the two shallow-domed chambers, which are plain to the extent that they lack any form of stylistic character (fig. 70). Though the rest of the dome chambers were also relatively plain until the mid-nineteenth century, they displayed some variations in their zones of transition. As opposed to the basic pendentives supporting the shallow domes, different styles of semi-dome squinches alternate between the adjacent domes. In the chambers of Tusun and Isma‘il, the semi-dome squinches are underlined by rows of muqarnas while the squinches in Amina Hanim’s chamber are simply trilobed (fig. 71). What is also worth noting about the zone of transition in Amina Hanim’s chamber is that the windows, which normally line the drum area of the other domes, are placed between the tri-lobed squinches on each of this chamber’s four sides; consequently, the windows above the arch shared with Isma‘il Pasha’s chamber are blocked with rubble masonry and are, in fact, purely decorative.

Certain dome chambers remained simple and bare, whereas others were entirely revamped sometime between 1845 and 1851 into the style we see today. “In the process of which subsidiary ornaments were upgraded to become the main decorative theme”, European vegetal motifs were magnified to cover many of the surfaces of the chambers. Acanthus leaves in various shapes and sizes dominated the mausoleums’ decorative repertory by framing the windows below the domes and crowning the large windows of the chambers, outlining the drum areas and adorning the soffits of the arches. Moreover,

medallions and panels of acanthus leaves were plastered between the squinches and the smaller windows. The domes were painted and the walls were marbled, transforming the artistic character of Hawsh al-Basha altogether.

Shafak Nur’s chamber (fig. 27), which was added to the mausoleum approximately thirty years after the mid-nineteenth century renovations, retained some of the previously adopted European ornamental forms but only on the marble cenotaph (fig. 72). Most of the decorative elements employed in this chamber work collectively in order to emphasize the height of Shafak Nur’s chamber; the vertical lines of the towering tomb, the marble paneling on the lower walls, and the color segments on the upper walls consistently draw the viewer’s eyes upwards. The dome, which feels lightweight and as though it is floating due to the series of windows lining the drum, is beautifully painted with an interlacing knotted grid that outlines painted arabesque foliage (fig. 73). The *muqarnas* pendentives may seem generically familiar, but the pattern on the dome recalls more specifically that of the Mosque of Sulayman Pasha (1528) (fig. 74) and, intriguingly, the exterior design on the Mamluk stone dome of Khayrbak’s Funerary Complex (1502-21) (fig. 75).

Despite committing to Hawsh al-Basha’s stylistic approach of combining old and new forms from both foreign and domestic cultural contexts, the dome chamber of Shafak Nur shows a far more developed sense of cohesive visual identity. To some scholars, the juxtaposition of the sixteenth-century Cairene dome pattern with the seventeenth-century European vegetal motifs and the novel color stripes on the walls highlights the tensions between modernity and anachronism that infamously became typical of nineteenth-century Ottoman buildings; however, in comparison to the literally superficial additions of
ornamental forms plastered on the walls of the older dome chambers of the mausoleum, the decorative elements in Nur’s chamber show balance and unity whereby earlier Ottoman experiments with the so-called eclectic forms were molded into a synthesized whole.

Admittedly, it is more convenient for decorative motifs to be fully integrated with the structure and one another when they have been planned in advance as opposed to being applied to a pre-existing structure as was the case with the mid-nineteenth century renovations. The Ottoman artists of the royal cemetery clearly tried to integrate their borrowed European styles of ornamentation by incorporating luscious garlands, rococo reliefs, and acanthus leaves into the rich marble carving program of later cenotaphs (fig. 76), but, regardless of their noble efforts, the plastered additions to the irregular dome chambers continue to function in a relatively independent manner as an artistic afterthought.

The eclectic tendencies exhibited in Hawsh al-Basha’s drastic visual transformation in the mid-nineteenth century, though arguably unresolved, hardly seem spontaneous and should not simply be attributed to the Ottoman patrons’ developed taste for the highly ornate. As Ünver Rüstem explains, “such a rapidly far-reaching shift can only have been the result of a deliberate, concerted effort orchestrated at the highest levels”,\(^{68}\) begging the question: why the growing eagerness to incorporate such a diverse range of styles, specifically features derived from western decorative programs, in the Ottoman architectural tradition?

\(^{68}\) Rüstem, *Ottoman Baroque*, 64.
Echoing Eclecticism: State Versus Province

Hawsh al-Basha was fashioned by a centuries-long tension between forces of tradition and challenges of modernity; therefore, this study must expand its scope to examine the broader historical contexts of the Ottoman building programs within which the mausoleum developed in order to rediscover the nature of its political and cultural identity. A comparative trajectory between the imperial state of Istanbul and its khedival province of Cairo could reveal how the socio-political climate and artistic milieu of one urban city was reflected on the other, consequently affecting its building activities and causing visual transformations to its cultural forms. As Avcioğlu and Volait state, “in the centuries following the incorporation of Egypt into the Ottoman empire, both Cairo and Istanbul remained distinctive but related and, at times, even mirrored each other”.

Due to its rich cultural and architectural past, Cairo remained powerful and prominent in the face of its provincial status. Egypt, though one of the few Ottoman domains that had successfully acquired administrative independence from the central authority of the imperial state during the nineteenth century, had never abandoned the empire for absolute political and ideological autonomy. Mohammad ‘Ali’s loyalty to his culture and self-image as an Ottoman was never in question, and still, paradoxically, “while dreaming of creating an Egyptian state, and even an empire, he never denied the sultan’s authority”. A canonical telling of history would read the rebellious acts of Cairo’s Ottoman governor against Istanbul as treason, when, in fact, these very acts “constituted a

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69 Nebahat Avcioğlu and Mercedes Volait, “Jeux de miroir” (New Jersey, 2017), 1123.
70 Ibid.
traditional practice in the Ottoman Empire for gaining regional power dating back to the sixteenth century”.

As the cultural and political spheres of authority between the Imperial state and the khedival province were continuously negotiated, they often overlapped with common goals. Behrens-Abouseif explains, “the 19th century was almost invariably an era of reassertion of the central authority of the state, or rather the assertion of new sorts of power by pre-existing states, themselves trying desperately to ‘modernize’.” The sharing of materials, artisans, and, naturally, building trends between the two major urban cities of the Ottoman Empire – Cairo and Istanbul – occurred, part and parcel, because they shared similar aspirations for a new modern age. The imperial power, in an effort to recentralize their authority and establish a collective sense of Ottoman identity, used urban intervention to foster a universal modern image for the empire. Recognizing the influence of patronage in visually defining a culture, the Ottomans codified their methods of architectural traditions and turned to Europe for inspiration at a time when modernity was synonymous with the West.

European stylistic features, such as ornamental swags, rounded arches, molded cornices, classical scrolls, and acanthus leaves started appearing on Ottoman architecture in the 1740’s. Rüstem argues that the style emerged when and as it did in response to a significant political moment of Sultan Mahmud I (r. 1730 – 1754), pointing out that “his victory over the Habsburgs and signing of the Treaties of Belgrade and Niš had taken place

71 Endelman, “In the Shadow of Empire”, 818.
72 Behrens-Abouseif, Islamic Art in the 19th Century, 4.
73 Ibid., 37.
in 1739, followed a year later by his suppression of the attempted revolt in Istanbul”; the scholar adds that, “it is surely no accident that the style came into being in the wake of these successes, precisely when the sultan—now entering the second decade of his reign—had proved himself domestically and internationally as a strong ruler firm on his throne.”

The so-called “Ottoman Baroque” style emerged marking deep fractures with the empire’s past as well as a celebration of its modern age both politically and culturally.

This new mode of ornamentation was rapidly adorning gates, sabils, bathhouse interiors, and much of the cityscape’s imperial architecture prior to becoming fully realized in the Nuruosmaniye Mosque (fig. 77), which was started in 1162/1749 by Sultan Mahmud I and completed in 1169/1755 by his successor Sultan Osman III (r. 1754 – 1757). A comparison of the main entrances of the Nuruosmaniye Mosque and the Suleymaniye Mosque built in 1550 (fig. 78) highlights the stylistic transformations characteristic of this modernizing era’s architecture in the elimination of the foundation inscription as well as the substitution of classical Ottoman decorative elements like the muqarnas with a plethora of shells, scrolls, and other vegetal motifs.

This period of dramatic change witnessed a multitude of foreign influences across the Ottoman Empire. Extending from the eighteenth century into the nineteenth century, this systematic shift towards modernity was consolidated by socio-political reforms that were implemented by the Ottoman state and adopted by the provinces, not necessarily in a center-periphery type of model whereby provinces were connected vertically to the center.

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74 Rüstem, *Ottoman Baroque*, 70.
and the reforms were diffused from culturally stronger to politically weaker cities; rather, in the case of a relatively independent province like Cairo, the complex interplay between authorities was one of constant cultural reciprocation and political reconciliation.

For example, the Tanzimat reforms of 1836-76, which was a modernizing program that constituted a “set of legal, administrative, and economic reforms envisioned and conducted by the Ottoman bureaucratic elite”\(^{75}\), introduced new concepts and practices to many regions of the Ottoman empire. In the process of dismantling old cultural patterns to create a modern social order, the novel policies of the Tanzimat period fueled radical transformations embodied in the forms of novel institutions, building practices, and modes of representation. Correspondingly in Cairo, this initiative of social and political reform was echoed by Muhammad ‘Ali who, to realize his goal of a modern Egypt, established new educational programs that were predominantly administrated by the French and encouraged Europeans as well as other culturally diverse communities from all over the Ottoman empire, such as the Armenians, Albanians, and Syrians, to come and work in Egypt.\(^{76}\)

The early Tanzimat architecture in both Istanbul and Cairo was by the 1840’s essentially a culmination of a long building tradition defined mostly by its appropriation of European stylistic forms. The Dolmabahçe Palace (1849-56) and the Ortaköy Mosque (1854-55) stand by the waterfront of the Bosphorus, in their parade of French neoclassical decorative features, as testaments of this period’s fully-fledged westernization (figs. 79a-

\(^{75}\) Ersoy, *Architecture and the Late Ottoman*, 12.

\(^{76}\) Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Art in the 19th Century*, 110.
b). Catching up slowly but surely, features of the new style began marking their presence on the facades of Ottoman buildings in Cairo, including the two sabils commissioned in the 1820’s by Muhammad ‘Ali to commemorate the deaths of Tusun Pasha and Isma’il Pasha (figs. 81-82). The Tanzimat period in Cairo witnessed the catalyzed progress in which the European mode of ornamentation, claiming its place in the local visual culture, developed into the style adopted by Hawsh al-Basha in the mid-nineteenth century and matured eventually into the decorative character represented by the Monasterly selamlik (figs. 83a-b) built by Hassan Fouad Pasha El-Manasterly in 1851 and the Sakakini Palace (fig. 84) built by Habib Pasha Sakakini in 1897.

The Ottoman Architect

The eclecticism of the new artistic tradition, though evidently orchestrated at the highest levels, cannot be credited single-handedly to any one entity. The stylistic orientation of nineteenth-century Ottoman architecture was first set in motion by a succession of sultans, then implemented by the Imperial state, consumed by the provinces, and, last but not least, executed by the artisans. Many scholars argue that this highly eclectic blend of appropriated forms was introduced by the ethnically diverse architects and artisans of the Ottoman empire, who were predominantly Greek and Armenian. The agency of a dhimmi craftsman’s cultural and educational background can be demonstrated by the fluency in which European motifs were executed on Ottoman Imperial buildings, but the material culture created by these craftsmen for their own communities provide compelling evidence that they were ahead of the Ottoman-Baroque trend and may have very well set some of the earliest precedents for the new style.
Two tombstones located in the Armenian cemetery of Balıklı in Istanbul employ a combination of classical Ottoman and European motifs, predating the first known structures in the new style by approximately half a decade.\textsuperscript{77} The first tombstone, made for the wife of a \textit{sedefci} (mother of pearl craftsman) and dated to 1737, shows an inscription framed by an ogee arch in the upper part of the marble slab and, in the lower part, a naturalistically depicted vase of flowers is crowned by a rounded arch adorned with scrolls and supported on columns with Corinthian capitals (fig. 85a). The other tombstone, made for a goldsmith and dated to 1746, displays an arrangement of sinuous scrolls carved in low relief and two flower vases typical of the Ottoman decorative tradition (fig. 85b). The craftsmen of these tombstones were clearly comfortable enough with both of the stylistic traditions in order to artistically dabble between them and create a third, cross-cultural style.

The transfer of Ottoman builders and, consequently, building aesthetics from Istanbul to Cairo was both imposed by the imperial state and encouraged by the Ottoman Governor. Several decrees issued in the late sixteenth century from the court of the Ottoman sultans to their representatives in Egypt provide evidence that the state was in a habit of not only concerning itself with construction matters in Cairo, but also appointing architects and craftsmen there.\textsuperscript{78} Bates claims that “whether or not continuity in local traditions of architecture is maintained in the face of political changes depends a great deal on who the architects were”, but then also states that “the continuity of a local, as opposed

\textsuperscript{77} Rüstem, \textit{Ottoman Baroque}, 95.
\textsuperscript{78} Bates, “Two Ottoman Documents,” 124.
to a central imperial, architectural tradition largely depended on the prominence and strength of regional power and authority”. This is where classic bureaucracy comes into play because, according to the register books of the imperial court preserved in the prime minister’s archives in Istanbul, many of the architects in the provinces were under the direct authority of the office of imperial chief architect.79 Therefore, between an imperial state that was desperately trying to reassert its central authority, an Ottoman governor who was eagerly wanting to modernize his province, and craftsmen who were, first and foremost, Ottoman, it was arguably just a matter of time before the new eclectic style of the late Ottoman artistic milieu inevitably presented itself in the architecture of Cairo generally and Hawsh al-Basha specifically.

Buildings and politics alike cannot be perceived in a vacuum, and only by placing them within the unique cultural circumstances that originally created them can they unravel their complex meanings. When examined in isolation, Hawsh al-Basha represents a moment of decisive architectural transformation or a sentiment of dramatic decorative rupture; however, if one chooses to take a step back and look at the bigger picture, it will become clearer that the mausoleum’s moment of visual transformation belonged to a long Ottoman tradition of stylistic synthesis formed by the rise of a distinctively modern historical consciousness across the empire.

79 Ibid., 122.
Conclusion:

This study is a critical rewriting of Hawsh al-Basha’s history, one that is meant to stimulate necessary intellectual discourse about the creation and visual transformation of the royal cemetery in relation to the broader contextual frameworks of Ottoman urban structures and political agendas. Despite growing administrative independence, Muhammad ‘Ali continued to be ideologically and culturally dependent on the Imperial state, and Egypt remained a part of the Ottoman empire. The architectural character of Hawsh al-Basha is a visual reflection of its patron, a governor who was “functionally independent, culturally Ottoman, and ideologically split”.  

In the process of examining Hawsh al-Basha’s historiography, this research managed to effectively trace the architectural development and reconstruct the first comprehensive building chronology of the royal cemetery (fig. 2). The earliest mention of a building dates some of the construction at Hawsh al-Basha to 1808-9, which could have primarily, but not exclusively, consisted of the two shallow dome chambers. Primary sources by contemporary historians confirmed that Tusun’s dome chamber was already constructed and prepared for his burial upon his death in 1816. Though it remains unclear whether or not the adjacent domes of Isma’il and Amina were also built at the same time as Tusun’s chamber, it is certain that these two chambers would have been built before 1823. Based on a survey of all those buried in the cemetery together with the information provided by nineteenth-century travelers, the chamber of Ibrahim Pasha and the one connected to it

Endelman, "In the Shadow of Empire", 818.
were built sometime between 1831 and 1838. Meanwhile, the dome chamber belonging to 'Abbas Pasha would have been added to the mausoleum by 1851.

This study was also able to establish a narrow timeframe as to when the elaborate visual transformation of Hawsh al-Basha occurred by engaging different media of texts and images, i.e., travel accounts and paintings. The compelling visual evidence provided by Schranz Jr.’s realistic painting indicates that the westernized decorative program was added to the walls of Hawsh al-Basha post 1845, while the harsh accounts of Flaubert and Du Camp provide us with the *terminus ante quem* of 1851. The decorations were later repaired by Ibrahim Pasha’s sons after removing a wall in their father’s chamber in 1854. Hawsh al-Basha evidently remained a popular burial place amongst the khedival royalties because in 1883-84, Khedive Tawfiq added Shafak Nur’s dome chamber and, in the twentieth century, further additions were made during the reign of King Farouk, including the domed entrance vestibule and the stone wall enclosing the royal cemetery.

Hawsh al-Basha is a funerary monument that commemorates partly piety, but mainly power, prestige, and progress. Every visual form in the royal cemetery is effectively employed to communicate a statement of cultural dominance. The use of three different languages for the mausoleum’s epigraphic program is a testimony to the cosmopolitan nature of the Ottoman identity, but the prominent use of the Ottoman Turkish language in comparison to Arabic and Persian creates a linguistic hierarchy in which the native language of the rulers dominates. Similarly, the repeated use of foundational chronograms in the cemetery functioned as a visual emblem of Ottomanization, indicating a local shift in the urban as well as socio-political orders. Even the content of the inscriptions, both
religious and non-religious, stresses the power of God alone to highlight primarily that
death does not undermine the power of the deceased Ottoman royals; hence, the evoked
associations between the royals and some of the most powerful and pious figures in Islam,
comparing Ibrahim Pasha to King Solomon and Ruqayya Hanim to Mariam.

The Ottoman legacy behind Hawsh al-Basha’s eclectic blend of decorative motifs
will always be one of cultural reciprocity, appropriation, integration, and innovation
unrestricted to any temporal, religious, or geographical contexts. Situated at the cultural
crossroads of nineteenth-century local and imperial artistic milieus, the royal cemetery
represents an evocation of classical Ottoman traditions that drew upon the past for stylistic
inspiration and a veneration of modernism that looked towards the West for new modes of
ornamentation. Instead of dwelling on notions of hybridity, one should approach Hawsh
al-Basha as a trilingual, intersectional being with languages to be interpreted, cultural sides
to be acknowledged, and a history of reform that ultimately altered its stylistic evolution.

Walking through this mystical funerary space, where chandeliers once lit up its
domes, Persian rugs covered its grounds, silk curtains draped over its windows, and flowers
masked its air of sorrow, one cannot help but feel an overwhelming sense of melancholy
over the cemetery’s currently abandoned state. Today, with restorations indefinitely
suspended, dimmed lights seep through the mausoleum’s broken windows to shine on
nothing but fine dust and the memories of a distant past floating through its air. Hawsh al-
Basha, a curious place waiting to be unraveled, has yet to receive the amount of scholarly
attention it merits.
Fig. 1. Plan, Hawsh al-Basha.

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