The massive expansion of Cairo's building stock, fueled by population growth, European speculation and centralised "nation building" in the post-colonial period produced few Neo-Pharaonic buildings. Why? It is relatively easy to understand the reluctance to incorporate even decorative architectural elements drawn from an ancient, polytheistic tradition in the immediate aftermath of the Islamization of Egypt. The outbreak of Egyptomania in Europe, following the appearance of the *Description de l'Egypte*, came precisely at the time when Egypt's urban elites were increasingly fascinated by "modern" Western ways. This suggests an overlap in interests that one might assume would result in a growing interest in an indigenous architectural style that was at the same time fashionably "modern".

That this did not, in fact, take place, is the result of the complex set of historical circumstances that have shaped modern Egypt. When the Khedive Ismail announced that Egypt was, henceforth, a part of Europe, he was, in effect, pronouncing a divorce from the past. In Ismail's modern, European city, there would obviously be little room for the non-European. Cairo, like so many colonial cities the world over - with the anomaly that this process was abetted by a nominally independent ruler - became a construction site for buildings that often appear to be more "European" than those of their European counterparts. The Italianate was imported wholesale to the newly laid radial streets of a European-styled city, blossoming into "a European style opulence [that] was to endure until the revolution of 1952 swept it all away."

Among the many thousands of buildings constructed during the Colonial period there remain only three extant examples displaying any Neo-Pharaonic influence: a commercial residential apartment block on the north-east corner of Ramses and 26th of July streets, the Egyptian Museum near Tahrir Square, and the Synagogue on Adly Street. This scarcity reflects the emphasis of Egypt's rulers on European design as befitting a modern, progressive city government. The Neo-Pharaonic elements exhibited in these buildings exist purely in the realm of ornament.
The massing, rhythms and organization remain European, with Egyptianizing features included simply to enliven the facade. While the Ramses Street block bristles with Neo-Pharaonic heads and scarabs, these are tailored to fit into a Neo-Baroque facade that pays homage to European style. This mixture of decorative elements applied without any concern for archaeological accuracy, pinned onto a European revivalist facade, serves as a convenient paradigm for all three Neo-Pharaonic buildings from the colonial period. In each case, where the detail is Neo-Pharaonic, its context and the reason for its placement is classical. Even the details themselves are modified in an almost Piranesian manner to make them more European in character. The result? An eclectic European take on Pharaonic decoration.

With the rise of Egyptian nationalism, from the 1920s onwards the political landscape changed. The secular nature of the movement, and its deliberate appeal to all Egyptians, encouraged the search for a uniquely Egyptian architectural language, allowing for a few, tentative forays into the Neo-Pharaonic. That a coherent nationalist movement emerged when public awareness of ancient Egypt was at a peak, following the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb, undoubtedly served to give impetus to such forays, though it would be a mistake to overstate the importance of those Neo-Pharaonic buildings erected during the Nationalist period. Rather than representing a wave of popular sentiment, they mostly comprise projects encouraged by westernized Nationalist leaders. The broad base of Egyptian Nationalism identified more deeply with a Pan-Arab and Islamic vocabulary, while many contemporary Egyptian architects questioned the validity of any kind of revivalism in a new, progressive age.

Below the balconies are alternating decorated bands centred by Egyptian styled scarabs, eagles and Ramses heads. The eagle has Pharaonic styled wings although it has taken a European body. The European body replaces the original solar disc and rearing serpents, a detail much used in the European Art Deco style.

The prominent south west corner is demarcated by a stylized Italianate ribbed concrete cupola. An eccentric mix of wreaths, garlands and winged Pharaonic heads surround the base. The wings are a curious amalgam of the Pharaonic detail swept back in an historically inaccurate or eclectic fashion.
The overall symmetry of the elevations is also classical. The treatment of the openings, as well as their location, size and proportion on all sides are directly related to classical design. As a whole, the Mausoleum stands as an object unto itself, recalling a megalomania response to the grand mausoleum of Romantic classicist design. The enclosure of the tomb recalls a type of temenos surrounding the great Mausoleum.
Such reservations apart, there nonetheless existed, in the years between 1920 and 1950, a demand on Egyptian architects - the first Egyptian architectural society had been founded, incidentally, in 1917 - to introduce a style compatible with the emergent, nationalist ideology. And, briefly, the Nationalist movement promoted an Egyptian consideration of ancient Egyptian architecture as a suitable symbolic source of inspiration for the new nation.

Once again, though, actual buildings from the period are few: the only critical examples being the Saad Zaghloul Mausoleum on Mansour and Falaky Streets, the Giza train station, and Farouk’s Pavilion near the pyramids. The Saad Zaghloul Mausoleum singularly recalls the sepulchral history of the Pharaonic age, and in doing so pays tribute to the endeavours of Zaghloul, the leader of the Nationalist delegates, to secure an end to 2,000 years of foreign domination. Adopting a Pharaonic model in constructing a mausoleum to commemorate the life of the nationalist leader, while perfectly illustrating the desire to formulate an exclusively Egyptian architectural vocabulary befitting the ideological tenor of the times, is not, by any means, a simple affair.

There is a certain irony in the way in which Neo-Pharaonic motifs, even here, are viewed through a Western filter. Compared to the apartment block on Ramses Street or the Egyptian Museum, the mausoleum may appear a blatant recollection of Egypt’s ancient past. Nor is this merely a function of ornamentation, since the overall visual form pays homage more to ancient funerary monuments and temple architecture than to a classicising, European tradition. Yet the building is also informed, in the play of solids and voids and grandiloquent size alongside pared-down ornamentation, by the European, 18th century neo-Classical desire to revive an austere, ancient vocabulary of the type that characterises Egyptian monuments.

On the other hand, while exploring Cairo’s urban fabric, the occasional building will appear to bear a vague Pharaonic resemblance. It may be the suggestion of embedded pylons, or it may be a solid, stereotypic presence as exemplified by the battered walls of the Lawyers’ Syndicate Building designed by Ali Labib Gabr in 1948 on Tharwat Street, or the National Party Headquarters on El-Giza Street.
Such resonances, however, lie in the forms and massing, not in any reference or attempt to replicate, however inaccurately, ancient Egyptian motifs. And not surprisingly it is this ill-defined, nebulous group of buildings, whose identification, must, perforce, remain highly subjective, that comprises the largest group of Neo-Pharaonic buildings in the city.

The vagueness of this category of buildings is largely a result of the unconsciousness of the reference. The Pharaonic influence has been absorbed and internalized. And though a credible case can be made for the influence of ancient Egyptian sources, certainly following the discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb, on design across the decorative arts, the canted arch windows or stylized geometric patterns that punctuate the facades of Cairo’s numerous Art Deco inspired apartment buildings, do not constitute a conscious reference to the ancient past.

Such buildings one might usefully term "abstract sympathetic", and among the most distinguished we must count the Mahmoud Mukhtar Museum on Tahrir Street in Zamalek, designed in 1962 by Ramses Wissa Wassef.
The Mukhtar Museum houses both the sculptures and tomb of Mahmoud Mukhtar, who died in 1934. Mukhtar trained in Paris and worked extensively in the Pharaonic style. One can speculate whether his Parisian training, coupled with an Egyptian background, sparked his interest in the Neo-Pharaonic. In his work, the yearning for independence is frequently combined with Neo-Pharaonic imagery, most famously in *Egypt Awakening*, the statue now occupying the University Square in Giza, but which once occupied Ramses Square. A monumental, female figure, standing beside a rampant Pharaonic sphinx, unveils herself. Mukhtar’s association between Western styled concepts of freedom and democracy - the figure is one more female personification of liberty - and a romantic interpretation of ancient Egypt is far from subtle.

Wissa Wassef’s designs for the Mukhtar Museum, while sharing few formal links with Neo-Pharaonic buildings such as the Saad Zaghoul Mausoleum, in essence address the same problem: how to articulate a national identity architecturally. In a sense, the Mukhtar Museum is a late and creative member of the Nationalist group of Neo-Pharaonic buildings.

The exterior of the building is very plain and powerful. Eschewing Pharaonic decoration, Wissa Wassef contrived to give the visitor a dramatic, abstracted, oblique view of the massive, battered columns of a pylonic portico. Inside, the free mix of Modern and Pharaonic elements continues. The plain white walls and discreet natural lighting follow modern notions of neutral gallery space. The thick, undecorated doorways are reminiscent of Pharaonic tombs. Four massive square columns mark a central lowered space. In its centre where one might expect a sarcophagus stands a statue.

In the Mahmoud Mukhtar Museum Ramses Wissa Wassef formulates an architecture pertinent to Egypt’s heritage, which relies neither on archaeological quotation nor on Western derived design principles. And by escaping the influence of Western architecture and its episodic fascination with Egypt’s Pharaonic past, it is Ramses Wissa Wassef who manages, finally, to shatter the Western lens through which all things Pharaonic had been filtered.
Mukhtar's sculpture stands out against the marble pylonic facade.
وتختلف المساحة أمام السينما الأنشطة التجارية المتوسطة ترفيهية:

# هل هذه المناطق المشتركة تظهر أي أنشطة ترفيهية؟

# هل هناك أنشطة أخرى توجد في هذه المنطقة؟

# هل هناك أي مباني تخدم هذه المنطقة؟