

CAIRO III

Transformation of the town

In 1863, Khedive Ismail's rise to power marked a decisive stage in the evolution of Cairo. The town was essentially confined to the area shown on the "Plan de la description de L'Egypte", drawn up in 1800. Naturally certain changes were instituted under the reign of Mohammad Ali and his successors. These were the most important ones:

- The drainage of some of the marshlands to make room for palaces (for example, Al Helmiya), or to turn the marshlands into plantations (like those belonging to Ibrahim Pasha, in the west of the town).
 - The refurbishment of the Shubra estate (in the north of Cairo) to accommodate the Pasha, and of the Nile Banks to house the royal family.
 - A policy to maintain the proper conditions of the streets, which was never very strongly enforced.
 - The construction of a road, cutting through the old town (the rue Mousky).
 - And finally the setting-up of Ornato, the organization responsible for improving the appearances of Cairo and Alexandria.
- These show that the main concern was not so much simply to build as to actually renovate the town. It was after 1867 - 68 that the transformations gained momentum. Under the reign of Ismail, the built-up surface of the town increased

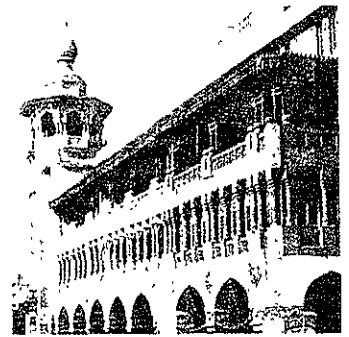
from 863 hectares to 1.218 hectares (an increase of about 50%). Later this built-up area was to become 1.630 hectares in 1897 and 3.177 hectares in 1911, and during that same year, the town was to stretch to its suburbs and outlying districts, which all together covered an area of 16.000 hectares. During this same period, its population rose from 350.000 in 1873 to 365.187 in 1897 and 790.000 in 1917. The town's population surpassed one million in 1927. The transformation of Cairo occurred during four distinct periods:

- The 1870's: the « new town » was created;
- between 1880 - 1900: the town was wholly reorganized;
- between 1900 - 1925: large public works were carried out;

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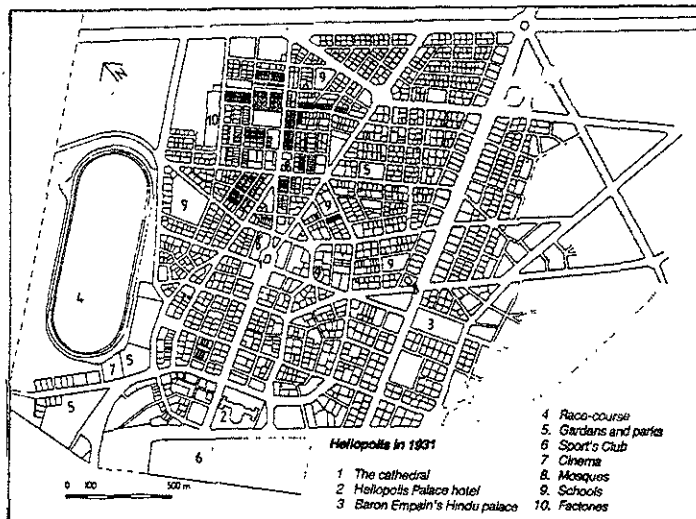
- between 1925 - 1950: town - planning and reconstruction.
- The new city / the green city, 1870.*
- In 1867, the Khedive came to Paris for the Universal Exhibition. There he marvelled at the achievements of Baron Haussman and no doubt conceived a similar project for Cairo. At his request the prefet de la seine recommended men

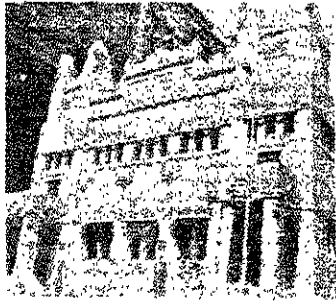


that were suitably qualified to carry out a similar project in Cairo. Thus the arrival of P. Grand in 1868, who headed the Voirie (department of roads) for 30 years, and G. Delchevalrie, who was put in charge of landscape the town between 1869 and 1878.

After a short while, a new district came into being, called Ismailiya. It was situated on the site of Ibrahim Pasha's plantation, bordered the town and was built partially according to the former lay-out. This district (presently the city centre) was made up of large plots of land and wide boulevards, linked by round-about, and stood in great contrast to the old parts of the town.

The contracts signed with La Compagnie des Eaux in 1865 and La Societe Lebon in 1869 ensured the provision of water and gas to the future housing estates. Here and there, steps had been taken for an eventual sewer system. A programme to set up gardens and small parks started up almost simultaneously. Apart from the remodelling of Azba Kiyah gardens and the creation of some small gardens, the Khedive commissioned large public parks for





the west of the town, the isle of al-Jazirah and the left bank of the Nile. This new green belt covered a space of 185 hectares.

This period also witnessed the start of Fajjalah in the north and Baghala in the south. All these new districts were connected with the old town with the following four principal meeting points from the north to the south: Bab al Hadid square, the Azbakiyah, Abdine square and Sayida zainab square.

These landmarks came under the close scrutiny of architects and many detailed studies of the squares and their surrounding buildings were made. This included the railway station at Bab al Hadid, the Opera House at Azbakiyah, the government palace at Abdine and the mosque at Sayida Zainab. And lastly, there were the roads that further connected the old town to the new town. These were: the boulevard Mohammad Ali that ran from the Opera House to the Citadel, the rue Clot-Bey between the Opera House and the station, the boulevard Abdine from the palace to the opera house and boulevard Abd Al Aziz from the palace to the entrance of Al-Muski.

Reorganization between 1880 - 1900

The great urban upheavals were succeeded by a period, during which a rather sluggish administrative machinery was installed. In 1878 the French and the British, who controlled Egypt's finances, called for an administrative reorganization,

which was to affect the Tanzim (the department of roads, an organization created in 1864 which was part of the Ministry for social services). The first new regulation came into effect in 1882, under which the Tanzim's func 1889. These laws covered regulations concerning the width of the streets, their lay-out and the strict control of projecting facades. In addition to the Tanzim, general social services department was created, for the town of Cairo, the duties of which included the cleanliness and upkeep of the streets, a service for granting building permissions, the building of roads, the plantation of trees and public lighting.

Moreover, there was a body of rules and regulations concerning the preservation of Arab monuments, expropriations, the tax imposed on built-up property, and finally public hygiene. From a morphological point of view, from this period onwards, the urban lay-out of Cairo did not undergo any spectacular alterations; instead, the town continued to swell along the lines set in the Ismaili era. The legislative apparatus was able to make interventions and thus continue to carry out works of preservation in the city. The work began from inside the town: the roads were widened following a precise hierarchical grid, cul-de-sacs were unblocked, to open up the old districts, and the entrances to the mosques were cleared up.

The town-planners presented projects for building housing estates on the open land that belonged to the government, such as the Qasr Al Doubara or Bulaq. The general lay-out of

Tawfikiya quarter was completed. An important achievement was that of draining the Khalij - a decision that was taken in 1897 after negotiations with the new Tramway Company. This company was then put in charge of part of the works.

The grand projects, 1900 - 1925

With the turn of the century, urban policies took a new orientation. From then onwards, the emphasis was put on improving sanitation and the upkeep of the town, while expansion of the town was left to individual initiative. Meanwhile the policy to open up the town continued, and two new roads were built in 1923: the rue Al-Azhar (20 meters wide), which was put in addition to the rue Al-Muski, for it had already become too narrow, and the rue Amir Faruk

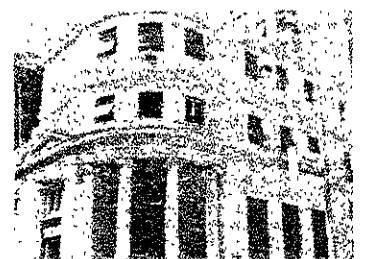
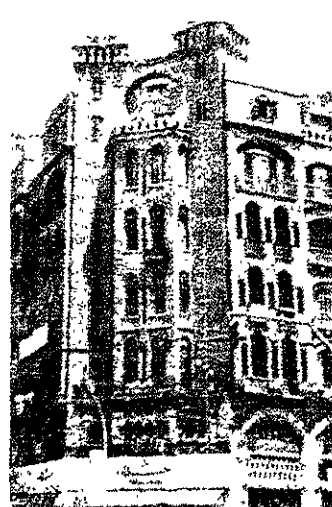
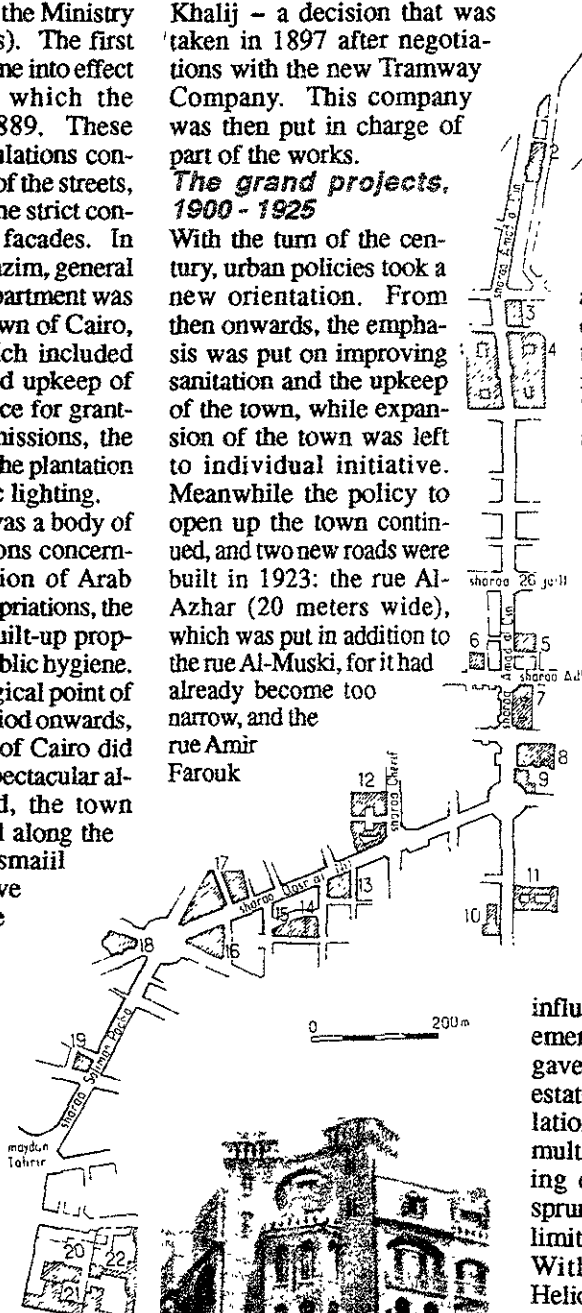
(30 meters wide) provided quick access to Abbassiyah.

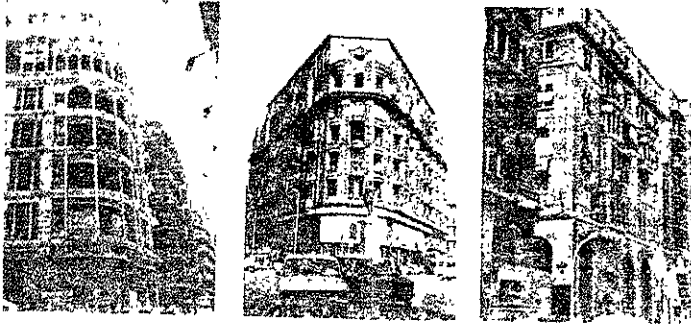
The construction of new bridges across the Nile and the improvements in the means of transport plus the creation of the Tramway Company in 1895, were a considerable boost to the development of housing in the suburbs and the outlying districts.

This company was indeed responsible for the emergence of Heliopolis in 1906. Heliopolis was a true model town in the heart of the desert some ten Kilometres outside Cairo. Similarly, the districts of Shubra and Rawd Al-Faraj owed their expansion to the new tramway lines opened up in 1902 and 1905. The same went for Zamalik and numerous districts in the north-east of the town such as Sakakini, Ghamrah and Qobba Gardens.

All these were the work of private entrepreneurs. The important influx of foreign capital and the emergence of mortgage loans gave birth to a number of real estate agencies. Land speculation gained importance. A multitude of juxtaposed housing estates of variable sizes sprung up and formed the outer limits of the town.

With the exception of Heliopolis, little care was given on the whole to planning and





organization of urban life in most areas. Heliopolis presented, in fact, an exemplary and unique model of a well laid out and organized town, and no doubt it owed this to the personality of its promoter, the Baron Enpain. In all aspects it stood out amongst all similar projects of the day: its planning, based on the model of garden cities, its highly discernible central point (around the cathedral), its infrastructure and facilities (sport, schools, hotels), its green spaces, its separate residential zones, and finally its very clear regulations on town-planning, which were strictly enforced during its construction, without forgetting the installation of industries, that provided its inhabitants with work on the spot. All these contributed to making Heliopolis into a coherently structured town and were lacking in any other town. Shubra, for example, developed around a fairly loose row of drained up canals and paved country roads. There were a collection of uniformly-sized plots and a selection of highly divided patches of land, each lined with narrow streets (which, as private paths, did not come under the jurisdiction of the Tanzim). This caused the area to become densely populated.

Garden City and Rawdah were not divided up into allotments so quickly, although the plans were drawn up around 1910. Similarly, plans were drawn up for the north of Jizah on the west bank. Finally in the south,

two new poles of urbanization developed. These were the residential areas of Maadi and Helwan. In the case of Helwan, the project had originally been drawn up during the reign of Ismail, but was partially abandoned. This was later taken up and realized by a group of capitalists.

Urban planning and reconstruction 1925 - 1950

The town of Cairo continued to expand and became more and more difficult to control and manage. The services of the town were reorganized and the 'Town-Planning Office', which was responsible for new projects, and 'The House Inspection Office', which drew up a list of houses that needed repair or had to be demolished, were created. Nevertheless, the highly complex organization of the town stood in the way of rationalization and control. By 1929, Cairo had no municipalities and the services of the town depended on five governmental departments, each functioning autonomously. These were the departments of the Tanzim, the metropolitan police, the department of public health, sewers and public buildings. A high commission created in 1929 was put in charge of coordinating the different departments. The system had become so inert and sluggish that the setting up of a global project for the town was deferred. Cairo was not to enjoy a municipality until 1949.

"The House Inspection Office" was, however, more ac-

tive. About 1,000 orders for demolition were annually drawn up. Although these were not all put into action; nevertheless, this policy played an important part in changing the town's appearance and was what lay behind the important reconstruction boom that took place in the old districts of the town. Thus a population of 12 million, three local governments (Cairo, Jizah and Qalyubiyah), 28 districts, the concentration of a 1/4 of Egypt's population on a 50 km. Stretch of land with an average density of 50,000/km² that could eventually rise to 250,000/km².

Starting in the 1960's (the Nasserite era), Cairo experienced another surge of urbanization. After the 1952 revolution, the economic revival of the sixties brought about a rise in the population of the town; between 1950 to 1960, the population rose from 2.5 million to 3.9 million, to reach finally 6 million in 1972. With the rise in population, the town expanded; this expansion was mainly on the west bank of the Nile towards Jizah (where the population rose from 215,111 in 1947 to 1.2 million in 1976), and also in the north beyond the railway had the following characteristics:

- the suburbs were linked by a network of highways.
- the west bank of the Nile was developed.
- low-cost housing projects were launched.
- satellite towns emerged.

It was within this framework that many districts were joined up: Jizah to Manial by the university bridge, Shubra al Kheyima to Helwan by an expressway "La Corniche du Nile", the old Cairo to Maydan al Tahrir by widening the rue Qasr Al Aini, and Heliopolis to the old Cairo by the route Salah Salim, which passed through the Citadel and ran along the aqueduct. The construction of these com-

munication axes resulted in the town's expansion towards the north, the west and the south. In fact, the west bank developed very rapidly and certain districts such as Duqui, Aguzah, Muhandisin and Imbaba represent a perfect model of this period's urbanization. The expressway connecting Shubra Al-Kheyima to Helwan and the resurgence of industry in these two parts caused expansion, and gave rise to settlements in the north and the south. In the north, Rawd Al-Faraj, Al-Sahel and Shubra Al-Kheyima developed even more rapidly. In the north-east, the town expanded along two axes: along what used to be the canal under the Ismailiyas and the 'route de Suez'. Some villages such as Matariya, Zeitoun, Ain Shams and Al-Marg were completely engulfed by the town. Heliopolis also lay along this principal boulevard.

The setting-up of low-cost housing added to the density of the population. Six or seven-storey buildings sprung up along the main roads in relative and all Al-Sifa in the South and Darasan in the east. The two spectacular projects,



Synopsis

* Subject of the Issue :

Lighting systems, requirements, and usage
One of the most important aspects that worries the designer is the lighting system since it has a direct effect on the space. It is important to clarify that lighting system is not only for decoration, although it is essential in this field. It was necessary to deal with general and private spaces and specially the necessary ranges that should be available through schedules showing what should be available in the space to reach the maximum efficiency of lighting with the minimum usage of power. (P. 10)

* Projects of the Issue :

- Maadi Family Land

Arch. Dr. El Ghazali Kiseba

On an area of about 8000 m² in the middle of Osman towers one of the finest places lying on the eastern side of the Nile, the Owner decided to construct a recreational center on this spot and assigned center of Planning and Architectural Studies (Dr. Abdelbaki Ibrahim) to do the preinvestment studies for this project. The project comprises an international, athletic, social center, different commercial activities, and a main commercial center in addition to a number of specialized & international restaurants and cafeterias. The designer dealt with all these aspects in a very special and professional way being aware of the real sense of mass and space and have to direct and use visitors passages. (P. 18)

- Islamic Art Center - London

Designer: Nicolas Hair

London University added to its buildings a new one for Eastern & African studies, consisting of several lectures rooms, libraries, show rooms for exhibiting halls for antiques, Islamic and African monuments. The designer bore in mind some aspects such as colours, facades, openings, and roof garden, all have the Eastern prospective. (P. 25)

- The Central Lecture Hall - Al Azhar Univ. Arch. Dr. Zakaria El-Ders

The project is situated in the area of the university campus. It consists of 4 main lecture halls. Two multi-purpose halls with their services, entrance & distribution halls, stairs, examinations rooms (in the basement), open areas (for students & parking), in addition to the main stairs, exits, stores, electricity room & toilets for students. The project was designed using the fan-shape for the lecture halls to be suitable for the angles of view & acoustics. (P. 30)

* Technical Article:

Research syllabus in architecture & architectural design

Dr. Ashraf Salama

Although knowledge represents some kind of mental activity, it does not rise to the level of research work in illustrates the basics of research work the article in architecture, and urbanization. The most important aspect in these researches is maintenance of the design program & solution of the architectural & urban problems. The research also evaluates the buildings and urban environment. (P. 36)

the 'Madinet Nasr' and the 'Madinet Al-Muqattam' were the hallmarks of Nasserite town-planning. The creation of 'Madinet Nasr' was considered a prestigious project on the part of the government, which wanted to turn it into an administrative centre. The city, located half-way between Heliopolis and the Citadel was divided into several sections: in the north-west, they roomed the administrative buildings and ministries, the stadium, the exhibition centre and the international trade fairs. In the north-east, there stood the Olympic city, the university campus, the central buildings of the Al-Azhar university and an area for the future creation of an industrial centre and housing. However, 'Madinet Nasr' changed bearings, and became a residential area with concrete buildings and wide boulevards.

The 'Madinet A-Muqattam' project, which was intended to encourage expansion towards the east, beyond Muqattam (an obstacle which was, in fact, never overcome) did not prove to be very successful and a large part of it remained unconstructed.

This was how the town took form in the 1960's: a con-

stantly changing town, which expanded and stretched at a rapid pace, completely encompassing the hill-tops, which were no longer considered simple districts.

The Al-Infita-Policy (economic liberalization) of the 60's, or the 'laissez faire' policy that encouraged speculation marked a new period - from a metropolis, the town grew to become a megalopolis. A very large construction boom on the west bank, in particular in the district of Mohandesin, meant a massive rise in population, and the town spilled over to the agricultural lands and went as far as small villages such as Mit'Uqbah with its rural cottages. Furthermore, large buildings, and even skyscrapers replaced the villas and small houses of the 60's.

Similarly, in the east, the town expanded beyond the Muqattam for the first time. The Nasserite era witnessed a massive rise in population, and an extensive project for building 'transit towns' on the neighbouring hill was accomplished.

In the south, the Maadi district underwent a complete transformation (though the centre remained untouched), and today the area has stretched to the foot of the Muqattam heights and includes a spread of prefabricated houses. Inside the town itself to combat the problem of space, the population was housed in concrete high-rise blocks, that have now replaced the previous gardens that once decorated traffic, though their number has, in fact, doubled and there are now "highroads" that cross the town and link up all the districts. These are: the road and the bridge of '6 Octobre' between Heliopolis and Jizah, the bridge of Faisal at Jizah, the Al-Azhar bridge running parallel to the Salah Salim and continuing to the centre of the town. Highways were also built to link the east of Madinet Nasr to Jizah

passing the cemeteries and the isle of Dahab (south of Rawdah). The proposals for a metro are to eventually link up Helwan, Heliopolis and Jizah to the centre. Cairo is presently a tremendous construction site, both within and on its outskirts. The latest proposal has been to force the town even further out by creating towns in the desert. Since 1956, there has been a succession of three Master Plans. The first dates back to 1956 - 57, and it foresaw the construction of highways and satellite towns in the desert.

This was followed by a second plan, drawn up between 1965 and 1970, and a third in 1980, that came under the title Long Range Urban Development Scheme. The latter suggested two ways of reorganizing Greater Cairo. One was to build a ring road to limit the growth of the town, and to conserve the agricultural land. The second was to create three different kinds of new towns:

a) in the desert some 50 to 100 Kilometers from Cairo.

b) satellite towns nearer the industrial and commercial centres.

c) twin-towns in the Nile valley, on the edge of the Delta. In all three, housing should be provided at a low cost, and they should contain an industrial infrastructure and communal facilities that would induce its inhabitants to stay. The towns should be situated in the north-east on the Ismailiyah road, in the west on the desert road that leads to Alexandria, and in the south on the other side of Helwan. These projects are at the moment under way and some of the towns are partially inhabited. *

