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THE “GATE OF HEAVEN” (SHA’AR HASHAMAYIM) SYNAGOGUE IN CAIRO (1898-1905): ON THE CONTEXTUALIZATION OF JEWISH COMMUNAL ARCHITECTURE

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Anyone walking along ‘Adly Street in downtown Cairo will discern a building (Fig.1) which at first glance looks like those described by Cynthia Myntti in her book, *Paris Along the Nile: Architecture in Cairo from the Belle Epoque*,¹ as a product of colonialist construction in Cairo in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Close inspection reveals a facade decorated with

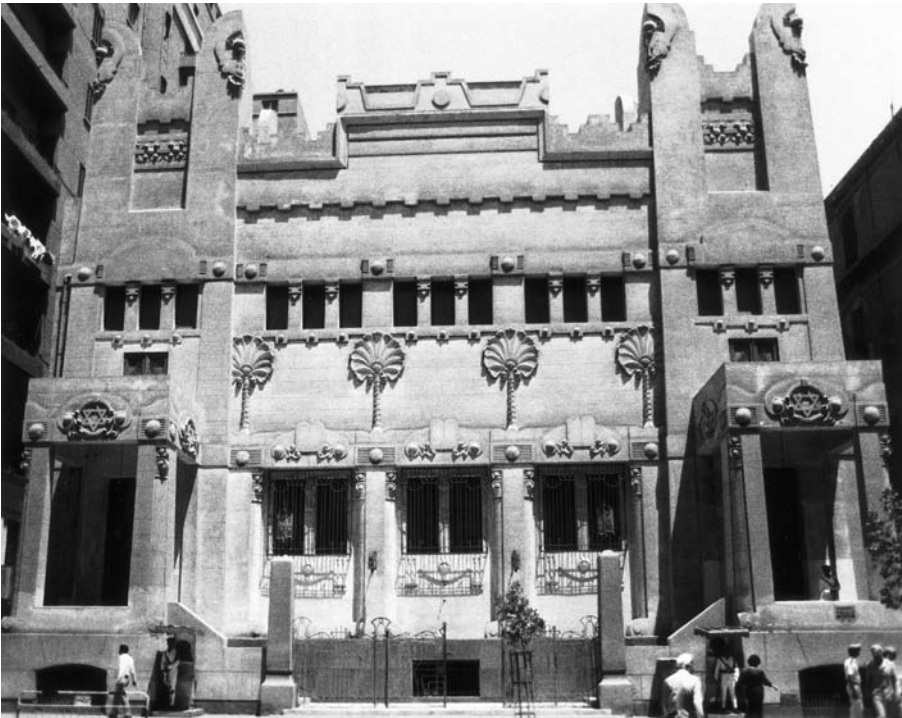


Figure 1. The “Gate of Heaven” Synagogue, Cairo. A general view. Photo: the author.

a vast quantity of elements in bas-relief stone carving which are stylistically eclectic, while over it all hovers the spirit of Pharaonic art. On entering the building the viewer is exposed to a whole *mélange* of styles: Neo-Baroque, Art Nouveau, Art Deco and Neo Pharaonic (Fig.2). It is only through the characteristic furnishings and Hebrew inscriptions that one realizes that this is in fact a synagogue, a place of Jewish worship.

Sha'ar Hashamayim (The Gate of Heaven), Cairo's most impressive synagogue, was built in the Ismailiyya Quarter. It is a landmark in the history of the wealthy, educated, Jewish elite in late nineteenth century Cairo.² However, it also forms an integral part of the process of development of urban Europeanized³ Cairo as it took shape during the nineteenth century under the Khedives' regime and from 1882 under British rule. This process was mainly dictated by European architects who took different forms and styles inspired by the past and used them all together in the same area, structure or space. While for 1,200 years there had been a clearly identifiable, Cairene-Muslim style, now a new multicultural cosmopolitan one had come into being. Thus a building in the Gothic style would be erected next to one in Romanesque or Classical style, or a Baroque-inspired building next to Pharaonic, Arab, Moorish or Mamluk structures. Moreover, beyond the rejuvenated forms and the use of a system of architectural motifs and elements that were timeless and syncretic, the decorative trends of the time were influenced either by Art Deco or the German *Jugendstil*, which venerated and glorified decoration for its own sake.

Once liberated from the rule of the Ottoman Empire, Egypt became an autonomous province (*vilayet*).⁴ Under the Khedives' regime there was an

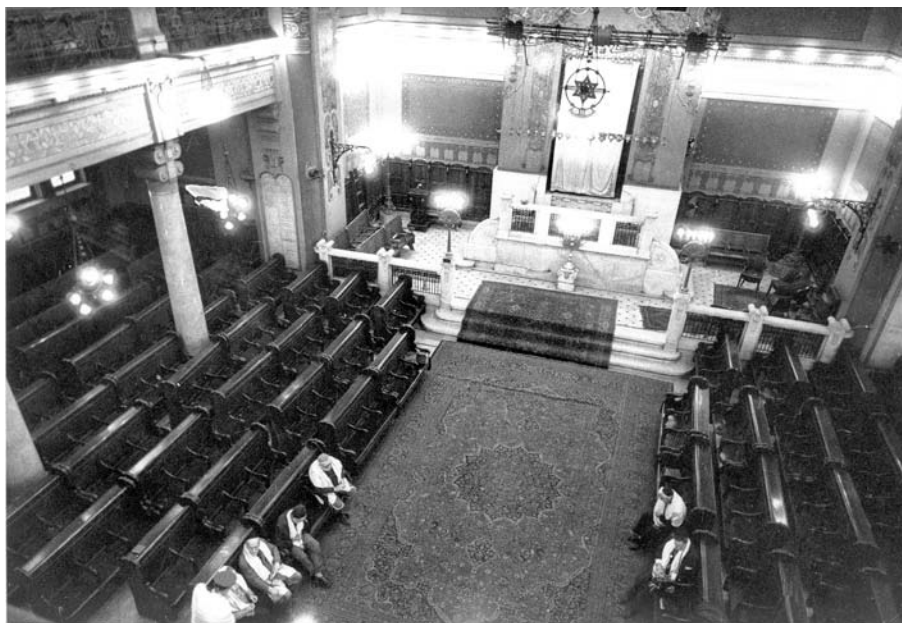


Figure 2. The "Gate of Heaven" Synagogue, Cairo. Interior view.

increasing involvement of European powers and trading companies in the country. Egypt was now exposed to Western civilization: study in Europe was encouraged, and vast numbers of foreign immigrants with Western skills and connections were absorbed (by 1900 there were some 125,000 foreigners in Cairo). All this brought about considerable economic prosperity, not only for the Egyptians but also for the Jews of Egypt in the course of the nineteenth century, and particularly during its last twenty-five years. Jewish families, mainly those from the Sephardi community, attained influential positions in commerce, finance, banking and government. Consequently, a process of what Gudrun Kramer terms "social and spatial mobility"⁵ began, and Cairo's affluent Jews started leaving the Jewish neighborhoods (*harat al-yahud*) of the Fatimid city and moving into the new, modern ones like Ismailiyya, and later into the European quarters of Heliopolis, Zamalek, Giza and Garden City.⁶

The improved economic situation of the Egyptian Jews brought with it not only a significant rise in their overall standard of living, but also the adoption of European culture. From 1882 onwards, as a result of an increased foreign presence under British rule, we can see the consolidation and reinforcement of the liberal, universal and cosmopolitan elements of European culture in Egypt and as a consequence also the strengthening of Egyptian Jewry's emancipation. It is against this backdrop that we should see the construction of numerous synagogues in the new neighborhoods of nineteenth and twentieth century Cairo. These are synagogues whose architectural styles attest to the history of the local Jews and faithfully reflect their number, group affiliation and economic status.⁷

The present article will look at the *Sha'ar Hashamayim* synagogue as the confluence of three elements: first, the historical and economic context of colonialist Cairo during that period; secondly, the urban European architectural narrative of Cairo during the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, and thirdly, the specific elite, Jewish group who built the synagogue and their cultural and economic aspirations. Some of this group had been resident in Egypt from time immemorial, while others were immigrants. They were the people who propelled Egypt's economic and intellectual dynamic forward, those who owned banks and commercial interests and had flourishing businesses, like the Cattau and Aslan families and others.⁸ I shall be asking whether there is, either in the framework of the architectural and visual elements or the choice of the subjects of decorations, both in the interior and exterior, any evidence or indication of a Jewish political or national self-conception, or any specific identity. Another question: How did the Cairo community of elite, wealthy and intellectual Jews perceive themselves? Did they see themselves as belonging to the Egyptian society? Did they identify themselves as European, and if so, what were the forces that molded their unique Jewish cultural identity?

Description and Stylistic Analysis of the Synagogue

The *Sha'ar Hashamayim* synagogue (which up to the 1940s was also known as Temple Ismailiyya), is situated in 'Adly (formerly Magrabi) Street in the

Ismailiyya Quarter, and was built between 1898 and 1905.⁹ The building was renovated in 1922 after a fire, and then again in 1940; in 1980 another fire broke out.¹⁰ The synagogue's construction was funded by members of the community, and two commemorative marble plaques on the synagogue's columns take today's visitors back 100 years, listing in Hebrew the contributions of around 100 of the community's wealthy members, including the Mosseri, Soares, Cattai, Rolo, Adess, Harari, Naggar, Cicurel, Curiel and Luzatto families, some of whom were bankers, businessmen, importers, department store owners and so forth. More marble plaques of this kind can be seen inside the prayer hall and in the courtyard. Among them is a plaque in memory of Youssef Aslan Cattai Pasha, a former Egyptian minister and one of the formulators of the 1923 Egyptian constitution, who served as president of the Sephardi Jewish council of Cairo from 1924 to 1942. The Cattais were part of Cairo Jewry's moneyed class who had amassed their fortune in the sugar industry, and were among the founders of the National Bank of Egypt.

It was a member of this family, the Jewish architect Maurice Youssef Cattai,¹¹ who was born in 1847 and completed his education in Paris, who designed the synagogue together with the Austro-Hungarian architect Eduard Matasek (1867-1912).¹² Matasek had actually come to Cairo to work with Max Herz, who played an important part in designing the Egyptian pavilion at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. When the fair ended, he stayed on to work in Cairo.

Exterior

The total area of the synagogue and its annexes (library, etc.) is 920 sq m, with the prayer hall alone being 750 sq m. The synagogue has four façades.



Figure 3. Hradec Kralove Synagogue (1905, northeast of Prague). The reconstructed façade. Photo: Amotz Osri, 2006.

Each parallel pair is identical in its decorative subjects and composition. The synagogue's northern and southern facades feature two identical pavilion-like porticoes that are approached by stairways (Fig.1).¹³ One is the entrance to the building itself and the other leads to the women's section on the second floor. Four turrets, two on each facade, rise from the corners of the synagogue and have no defined role. Their upper parts resemble the four horns of an altar, such as what might have stood in King Solomon's Temple. The four turrets are interconnected by a row of stone crenellations. The turrets, and indeed the entire facade, are decorated with images of stylized date palms. (tr. RSV), 1 Kings 6:29 mentions the palms that adorned King Solomon's Temple: "And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without."

Flanking each side of the facade, the turrets are reminiscent of the two huge brass pillars, Boaz and Jachin,¹⁴ which flanked the porch of the Temple built by Solomon (1 Kings 7:21. The two pillars are also mentioned in Ezekiel 40:49, although they are not named). Similar pairs of pillars can also be found in many large European synagogues built in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, the two pillars fronting the synagogue in Hradec Králové (Fig.3),¹⁵ some 100 km northeast of Prague (which was also built in 1905), are amazingly similar to the *Sha'ar Hashamayim* facade. The turrets at Hradec Králové are capped with the same altar-like motif, and bas-relief palms decorate their surface.¹⁶ Between the turrets the same crenellations can be seen, with the dome glimpsed from behind.

It would seem, therefore, that as with other nineteenth and early twentieth century synagogues, the motifs used in the *Sha'ar Hashamayim* synagogue were not simply a figment of the architect's or patron's imagination, but were rooted in the philosophical and aesthetic thinking of the time, whereby the synagogue is a reconstruction of the image of the Temple of Solomon. As such the synagogue can be seen both as a textual and a visual reconstruction. The reconstruction of the text seeks to remain faithful to the verbal description of the Temple of Solomon as referred to in the Bible, mainly in the book of Ezekiel, while the reconstruction of the visual image can be credited to the architects and architectural historians such as Georges Perrot (1832-1914) and Charles Chipiez (1835-1901).¹⁷

In Chipiez's drawing (1889, the depiction of Jachin and Boaz) (Fig.4) bears an amazing similarity to those in the *Sha'ar Hashamayim* synagogue (and also, as noted above, to those in the synagogue at Hradec Králové near Prague). In both cases images of palms are featured on the turrets. Chipiez's drawings faithfully reflect the image of the Temple as it was seen in the Romantic mind's eye of architects and art historians at the end of the nineteenth century¹⁸ when westerners appropriated ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations as distant ancestors of their own.

It should be noted that apart from the *Sha'ar Hashamayim* synagogue facade, similar palms are to be found in all the Cairene synagogues: in murals, on ritual objects, in halls, on doors, menorahs, furnishings, etc. Some claim that they became the symbol of Egyptian Jewry.

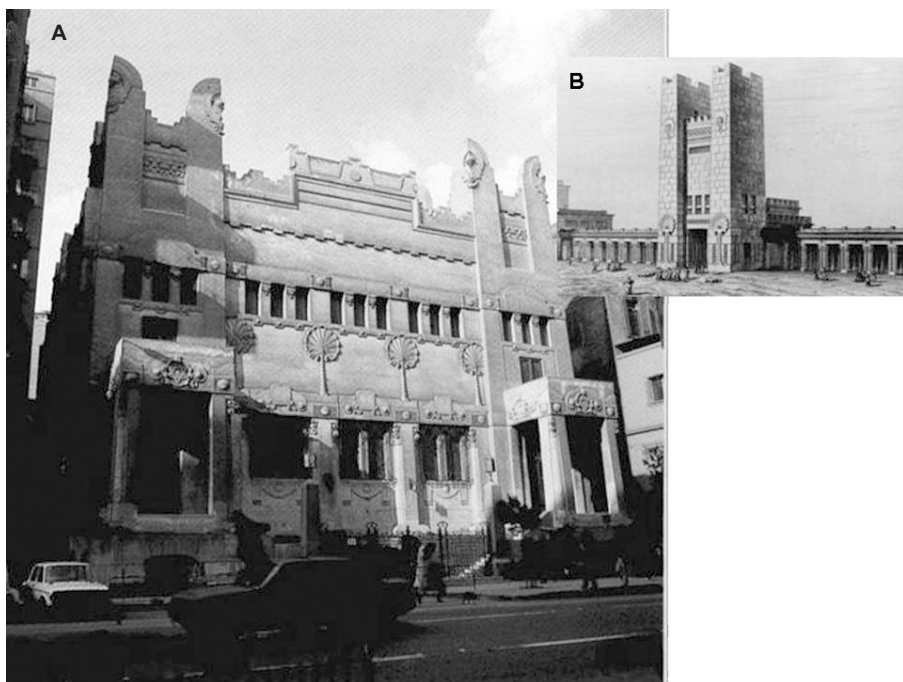


Figure 4. *The Temple of Solomon. Charles Chipiez's drawing (1889).*

In addition to the palm trees that are represented on all four of the *Sha'ar Hashamayim* synagogue's facades, the exterior of the building also includes a number of elements and motifs in the Neo-Pharaonic style. Thus there is a row of discs visible in a kind of bas-relief, that seem to have been added without any relation to the content of the building itself (Fig.5). Their effect is decorative.



Figure 5. *The "Gate of Heaven" Synagogue, Cairo. Facade, "Sun" discs and other decorative motifs, details.*

Elevating the decoration to the level of a masterwork is typical of the Art Nouveau style and spirit. However, although this is an isolated instance, we may compare these discs to the images of sun-discs appearing in pharaonic art. Solar discs appear, for example, in ancient Pharaonic architecture encircled by a *uraeus* (pl. *uraei*),

the Pharaonic cobra denoting royalty. We can find such as these placed on the gates or over the entrance of Pharaonic buildings (temples, tombs, etc.) as emblems of defense, repelling the enemy, and also as an attribute of the goddess Nekhbet.¹⁹

Further stylized forms with curved, willowy lines holding two quasi-pharaonic discs on their edges also appear on the upper part of all four of the synagogue's entrance pavilions, as well as on the facade and inside the synagogue (Fig. 6D). These curved lines embrace either a Star of David or the Tables of the Covenant. These forms are reminiscent of the falcon, the sun bird, with outspread wings holding two sun discs (Fig.6A), which appears frequently in pharaonic Egypt as a heavenly symbol and an emblem of the universal protector and holder of the sacred wisdom, an attribute of the god Horus. The formalist parallel to the winged falcon is clear, and the presentation perhaps symbolizes the Almighty's protection of the synagogue and of all those who enter it. These forms were appropriated by the foreigners in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and can be seen on many of their buildings in both Egypt and throughout the Western world (Fig. 6B, 6C).²⁰

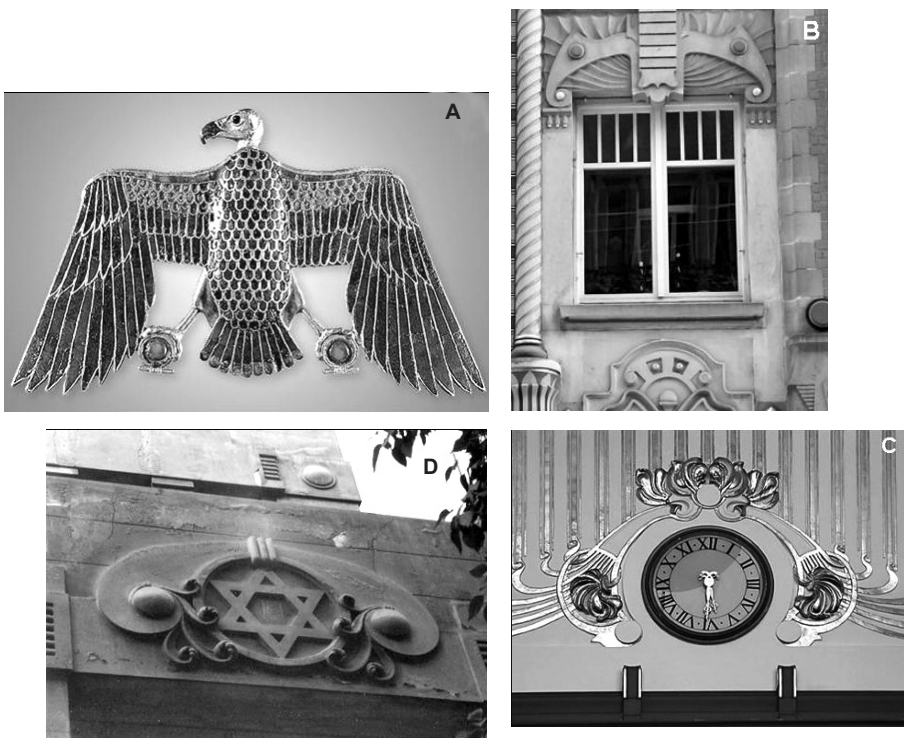


Figure 6. A. A Pharaonic falcon. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo; B. The Façade of the "Egyptian House" (1905). Strasbourg. A detail; C. Public clock in the Karlsplatz, Stadtbahn Pavilion (1898-1899), Vienna. Designed by Otto Wagner; D. The "Gate of Heaven" Synagogue, Cairo. A decorative detail with the Star of David, carved in stone

Another common decoration that appears in numerous places, both inside and outside the synagogue, is images of carved, threaded circles that twine around the upper part of the marble pillars immediately before the swelling of the capital. This is a common motif in pharaonic temples with their papyrus cluster columns that appear to be bound with a kind of thread.²¹ We may also add the two obelisks standing heraldically in the street at the entrance to the synagogue (Fig.1) to our collection of Pharaonic motifs. In the ruins of ancient Pharaonic temples, two pairs of obelisks were placed at the entrance distinct from any role in the building's construction. They symbolized the god Ra and were intended to indicate his presence, power and greatness.²²

Interior

Moving inside the synagogue, a large prayer hall with a dome in its center is revealed. It seems that the interior space is reminiscent of an Ottoman mosque.²³ However, whereas Ottoman mosque domes are huge and visible from a distance, in our synagogue the dome, hidden by the facades, cannot be seen from the outside except from a bird's eye view. The use of a central ground plan covered by a dome that is reminiscent of an Ottoman mosque is hardly surprising in Cairo, since the city has numerous mosques of this kind, and suffice to mention the mosque of Muhammad 'Ali (1830-1848), Cairo's most visible monument, located on the citadel (the *qal'a*), that became the symbol of the city. Furthermore, a building of this type could house a big congregation without interior columns restricting the view of the Holy Ark. In any event, this sort of Ottoman building style enjoyed a vogue throughout Europe in the late nineteenth century, and spacious synagogues (cathedral synagogues) were common in Europe during this period as part of the Jews' emancipation, as for the first time in hundreds of years the communities were permitted to choose their own design plans for their synagogues.

In the case of *Sha'ar Hashamyim*, it is also possible that the leaders and wealthy members of the Sephardi Jewish community may have preferred to identify with the Egyptian government and its buildings in order not to create an identity conflict.²⁴

The dome stands on four triangular pendentives emerging from four huge piers or pillars. The three roofed

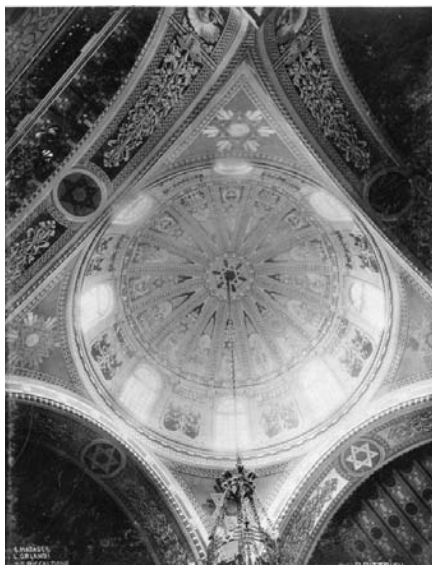


Figure 7. The "Gate of Heaven" Synagogue, Cairo. Interior: the dome. Photo: P. Dittrich, 1905.

side wings, apart from the east side where the *heichal* is located,²⁵ support the space of the women's galleries which are enclosed by a decorated iron grille. The dome is at present bare of decoration and painted light blue, but it used to be decorated at its edges with Baroque floral designs (Fig.7), with a roundel at its centre on which a Star of David was once painted. The ceilings of the wings are painted with a huge orange sun with a Star of David in its center, and an inscription surrounded by the sun's rays (Fig.8).²⁶ The walls of the hall are currently painted blue, pale green and white. In numerous places a few of the original decorations remain, showing images of a Star of David and a date palm. The windows are variegated stained glass in a decorative style that is surprisingly reminiscent of the tile decoration glass style of Pugin, the English architect and designer who was active in the first half of the nineteenth century. The columns and pillars in their corners are also decorated with flowing ribbons and wreaths (Fig.9). Both sides of the top of each pillar face the hall and display a design of the Tables of the Covenant with Hebrew inscriptions. Some feature the Ten Commandments in two columns, while others bear various sacred verses.

A marble staircase decorated in the Baroque style leads to the *heichal*, which occupies the entire eastern wall. The Holy Ark (*Aron HaQodesh*, in which the Scrolls of the Law are housed) stands high above the floor and is accessed by stairs. It is decorated with stylized Ionic capitals, garland wreaths and stylized volutes (Fig.10). The doors of the Ark are covered by a *parochet* (curtain) of either silk or velvet, upon which are embroidered Jewish symbols (like the



Figure 8. The "Gate of Heaven" Synagogue, Cairo. Interior: a painting on the ceiling. Photo courtesy of Yohay Primak, 2006.



Figure 9. The "Gate of Heaven" Synagogue, Cairo. Interior: decorative motifs.

Tables of the Covenant) above which is the Crown of the Torah and inscriptions or the names of benefactors.²⁷ The marble pillars were brought from Italy, and the Ark and the striking lamp from France.²⁸

In the center of the hall stands a raised stage, upon which the prayer leaders and readers of the Torah Scrolls stand. On the stage stands the *teiva*, the Sephardi term for the *bima* (rostrum), a raised desk upon which the Torah scroll is placed for reading. The structure of the *teiva* might be perceived as corresponding to the great altar that stood in the Temple, and so from each of its corners rise handsome columns. The stage is made of wood surrounded by a marble balustrade with two stepped openings to the right and left, and above it hangs a branched chandelier that is far more impressive than any of the others that illuminate the synagogue. Presumably it gives light for reading the scrolls by, as well as spotlighting the importance of the act of reading the Torah. The decoration includes Jewish symbols such as Stars of David and the Tables of the Covenant, as well as garland wreaths and palms.

The parallelism and identical nature of the facades, the four entrances to the hall, and the eclectic and picturesque decoration are deceptive. As we can see, the prayer hall represents a totally different architectural concept.

The absence of identicalness between interior and exterior in building design was part of the concept of eclecticism in nineteenth century Europe in the framework of questioning and rethinking on the term 'style'. Building design no longer demanded a perfect combination of interior and exterior. The interior design was adapted to the building's function, but built upon it was

an exterior shell, whose form and decoration were sometimes influenced by fashionable extra-artistic, sometimes political considerations, as in our synagogue.²⁹

It is of note that Matasek, the synagogue's architect, had worked for a time in Vienna for the architectural firm of Ferdinand Fellner and Hermann Helmer, who had designed some 47 theatres and opera houses throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany and southeastern Europe. It is perhaps from there that Matasek brought with him the picturesque approach that we see in the design of the synagogue's facade, and certainly the prominent German *Jugendstil* of the facade and the building's interior.



Figure 10. The "Gate of Heaven" Synagogue, Cairo. Interior: the Hechal, a view. Photo: P. Dittrich, 1905.

Iconography - Neo Pharonism, Architecture and Identities

The use of Jachin and Boaz pillars in Cairene and European synagogues is scarcely surprising in the light of the romantic conceptions of the period that supported a return to the hypothetical model of Solomon's Temple.³⁰ However, the tendency toward the renewed use of pharaonic art in a synagogue is somewhat more puzzling. It becomes even more so if we recollect that the other Cairo synagogues of the same period were not adorned with neo-pharaonic decoration (except for the Dar'i Karaite synagogue in 'Abbasiyya which also had two obelisks set in front of its facade). Furthermore, the magnificent Eliyahu Hanavi synagogue in Alexandria was built and decorated in the neo-Gothic style, while the Ibn Ezra synagogue, or Geniza synagogue as it is otherwise known, was renovated at the end of the nineteenth century in the neo-Mamluk style.³¹

The use of Neo Pharaonic motifs in synagogues was prevalent in Europe and the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century. Several synagogues in the United States and Europe, in contrast, especially between 1800 and 1850, employed the Neo Pharaonic style, either in their decoration or in their architecture (pillars, capitals and cornices).³² In the United States, for instance, we can note two synagogues in Philadelphia: Strickland's *Mikveh Yisrael* (1822-1825) and Walter's *Beth Israel* (1849), and also the Jewish cemetery gates.³³ With regard to Europe, Carol Herselle Krinsky provides a list of the synagogues that used what she terms the "Egyptian Style".³⁴ Krinsky also ex-

presses her astonishment at the choice of the Neo Pharaonic style for synagogues: "We may wonder why anyone ever wanted an Egyptian synagogue. Jews had been slaves in Egypt. Egyptian architecture served a pagan religion, and Jews were not supposed to imitate the practices of other religions, especially polytheistic ones..."³⁵

In Krinsky's opinion, the reasons for this choice in Europe are bound up with the lack of choice (a decision by the authorities, for instance) or with the desire not to build church-like synagogues. Churches, as we know, did not use the Neo Pharaonic style. The considerations for the use or non-use of the Neo Pharaonic style in Europe were doubtless different from those in Cairo, where the appearance of churches did not threaten the form of synagogues.

However, in Cairo itself the use of pharaonic motifs in the *Sha'ar Hashamayim* synagogue was perceived from a different, more positive perspective. Samir Raafat (2004) recently addressed the question of the choice of Pharaonic themes for the decoration of the synagogue: "In all likelihood, Matasek and Cattai wanted to remind visitors that Moses had been a prince of Egypt long before he became a prophet... Perhaps the design was a reminder that Judaism not only has its origins in the Nile valley, but that Egypt was also once home to one of the oldest Jewish communities in the world."³⁶

Richard Carrot contends that the Neo Pharaonic style conveys dignity, stability, wisdom and mystery, making it entirely appropriate for the construction of synagogues, libraries and other public buildings.³⁷ Others argue that the Jews had absorbed architecture from the pharaonic Egyptians when chopping straw to make bricks for the construction of the Pyramids, while Mohamed Tarek considers the Neo Pharaonic style to be appropriate not only for Muslims, but for Jews and Copts, too.³⁸

Writers dealing with Egyptian Jewry itself also address this subject, such as Maurice Fargeon, a Zionist member of the Jewish community in Egypt, who wrote in 1942 that: "The history of the Jewish people has been linked, since the remotest times, to that of Egypt. Already in the time of the Pharaohs of the first dynasties we find Joseph sold by his brothers becoming, because of his great wisdom and profound judgment, a powerful minister in the valley of the Nile..."³⁹

These observations, like numerous others made throughout the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, make no clear mention of the dark side of Jewish-Egyptian relationships during the Pharaonic period, a tale that the Jews recount every year at the Passover Seder and ritual meal held in every Jewish home. However, we should note here that writings on the history of the Jewish community in Egypt in general, and Cairo in particular, in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, are extremely scanty, certainly relative to what has been written about its history after World War I and the overt appearance of the Zionist movements in Egypt.

It would seem, at least from an analysis of the synagogue's design and decoration themes, that Cairo's affluent Jewish elite in the period under discussion, the same elite to which the *Sha'ar Hashamayim* synagogue belonged, chose not to employ the memory of Jewish suffering in Pharaonic Egypt (at

least not overtly), nor to refer to the Exodus from Egypt as liberation or the attainment of freedom and redemption. This clearly reflects the great repression of a community seeking to be “Egyptians of the Jewish persuasion”, as Youssef Aslan was wont to identify himself.⁴⁰ Some of this group of Jews, who lived in the splendid new Ismailiyya Quarter, had lived in Egypt since ancient times, while others had arrived there after the expulsion from Spain in 1492. The majority, however, had emigrated during the nineteenth century from Tunis, Aleppo, Damascus, Istanbul, Izmir and Thessaloniki, in order to avail themselves of the economic opportunities that had opened up in Egypt in the second half of the nineteenth century. These Jews, who were cosmopolitan in spirit and education, were both multicultural and multilingual, and it appears that to all intents and purposes they perceived themselves as Egyptians (although they did not hold Egyptian citizenship). It should be noted that the Egyptian authorities themselves at this time were particularly tolerant towards the Jewish presence. The Jews attained senior positions in the Egyptian economy and were well respected and accepted in the court of the Khedives, participating in society balls, opera premieres, etc.⁴¹ Inappropriate identification (with Zionism, for instance) might have cost them loss of status, as indeed happened from 1952 onward under the rule of the Free Officers.

Up to 1914, Egypt was part of the Ottoman Empire and its Jewish subjects were considered a community defined by its religion, whose internal affairs were managed autonomously by community institutions. This arrangement embodied a high degree of tolerance and community autonomy and, according to Joel Beinin, a symbiosis between Muslims, Christians and Jews.⁴² We have already noted that towards the end of the Ottoman Empire period, and during the period of the Egyptian monarchy, many Jews attained senior positions in the Egyptian economy and politics, and some of them even had had gained the title of ‘Bey’ and ‘Pasha’. Moreover, from 1882 onwards under British rule, the foreign presence became even more powerful, especially in light of the economic privileges and commercial and financial relief granted to the immigrant community by the colonial regime, which reached its peak after the First World War.

I believe that we should therefore connect the Neo Pharaonic style of the synagogue in Cairo not with the biblical memory of Pharaoh and the Jews, but rather with the burgeoning Neo Pharaonic style in the city, in Europe and even the United States, mainly among the policymakers and the European architects. It should be borne in mind that there were a number of other buildings in Cairo of that period that, similar to the synagogue on ‘Adly Street, had adopted the Neo Pharaonic style: for instance, a commercial residential apartment block on the northeast corner of Ramses and 26th of July Streets, and the Egyptian Museum near Tahrir Square. With respect to the Egyptian Museum,⁴³ there is a thematic connection between the decorative style (see, for example, the goddesses personifying Upper and Lower Egypt flanking the portal, Fig.11)⁴⁴ and the role of the building which was, after all, designed to house artifacts uncovered in archaeological excavations of Pharaonic sites.

The building on Ramses Street, however, can be regarded as part of the same European fashion that simply chose to decorate facades in the Neo Pharaonic

style.⁴⁵ Despite the fact that on the facade of this building there are sculptures of winged Pharaonic heads, the emphasis is on decoration: the rhythm and composition remain European, as do the scarabs that are stitched onto a completely Neo-Baroque facade. Thus it seems that the synagogue, like these buildings, embraced the Neo-Pharaonic style. Neo-pharaonic was just another European style that evolved side by side with other fashions introduced from Europe, and was used together with them.

The nineteenth century saw many Pharaonic secrets uncovered mainly by European archaeologists and scientists, artists and romantic travelers. The foreigners that dominated Egypt admired Pharaonism, for the Neo Pharaonic connection combined well with the nineteenth century Romantic historicism that included archaeological research and the history of the ancient peoples of the East.⁴⁶ The archaeologists identified the Egyptian past with wisdom and knowledge, and saw it as the foundation of Western culture. The writers and artists used this in their works.

During this period, only foreigners (usually Frenchmen) headed the service and were in effect responsible for Egyptological archaeological research and its organization in Egypt. Moreover, the foreigners, fearing that they would lose some of their power and dominance in the field, were loath to train Egyptians. Finally, 1902 saw the opening of the Egyptian Museum mentioned above. On the museum's facade there is no mention of any Egyptian researchers, but only the names of the European Egyptologists, the founding fathers, the list of which includes six Frenchmen, five Britons, four Germans, three Italians, a Dane and a Swede. On another panel of the facade there are five likenesses of classical historians and a Latin inscription, but only an incidental mention of the Hijra date.⁴⁷

The Egyptians' own interest in Egyptology began as early as the second half of the nineteenth century. In the 1870s, Khedive Ismail even opened a school for the study of archaeology and hieroglyphics (a school that was closed three



Figure 11. The Egyptian Museum (1902). Tahrir Square, Cairo. The façade: a detail. Photo: the author.

times and reopened four times), but the subject did not attain a central position and remained under European control.⁴⁸

As a consequence of this European involvement with Egypt we find the footprints of the Pharaohs in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the form of importation of obelisks, sphinxes, pyramids, etc., and their placement in city squares and at the entrances of public buildings and royal palaces. Also in evidence were Egyptian objects that filled the museums. Thus, in the wake of all this, Europe was flooded by a wave of neo-pharaonism which influenced architecture, furniture design, ornaments, etc.

In addition, every few years between 1851 and 1900, world trade fairs and industry exhibitions were held in Europe and the United States.⁴⁹ More than anything else it was these exhibitions which exposed Pharaonic-style buildings to a wide international audience. At the exhibitions held in Paris in 1867, 1878 and 1900, and in Chicago in 1893, Pharaonic-style buildings were displayed, and aroused great interest among Western audiences. While it is true that Egyptian rule played an active role in the design of the pavilions, the majority was planned by Western architects and displayed exhibits that fell into line with the expectations of the European audience.⁵⁰ It is thus very probable that it was Matasek who, together with Max Hertz, had designed the Egyptian pavilion with its 'pharaonic Temple' for the 1893 Chicago World Fair, and who applied Pharaonic-inspired motifs to the decoration of the synagogue's facade.

In different contexts and at different times, various groups have propounded Neo Pharaonic ideas with new content and new relevance. Neo Pharaonism in twentieth century Egypt became part of Egyptian nationalism and its various manifestations, the foundations of which had been laid as early as 1882 in the struggle against the British, and reached fulfillment in the 1919 revolution.⁵¹ The Egyptians quickly realized that archaeology could serve their quest for a national identity. If we seek a watershed at which Pharaonism was perceived as representative of Egyptian nationalism, it was the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922.⁵² In the wake of this event, the Egyptians began asking European museums to return their antiquities. It must be pointed out, however, that the use of the Neo-Pharaonic style for Egypt's own nationalist purposes (Egyptian Egyptology or 'indigenous Egyptology', as Donald Malcolm Reid terms it)⁵³ is totally different, as we can see from the example of the mausoleum of Sa'd Zaghlul, leader of the nationalist movement, the *Wafd* party and the 1919 revolution. The mausoleum, which was built in 1928 and planned by the Egyptian architect Mustafa Fahmi (Fig.12),⁵⁴ is situated on the corner of Mansour and Falaky Streets. Anyone passing the mausoleum can immediately identify it with Pharaonic architecture, even though the building style and decoration do not resemble the eclectic and hybrid Neo-Pharaonic styles of the nineteenth century seen on the facade of the *Sha'ar Hashamayim* synagogue. The building, whose outline is symmetrically straight, is massive and engenders a sense of respect and gravitas as befitting a mausoleum. It thus projects both the pharaonic spirit and the desire for its continuation as a glorious past leading to a glorious future.⁵⁵ It is a Neo Pharaonic building that clearly identifies with Egypt and the Egyptians, whereas the synagogue bears

a Neo-Pharaonic decoration that can be identified with Europe in Egypt.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this unique building and its Neo-Pharaonic decorations are no coincidence; they were chosen scrupulously. The synagogues in Europe and the United States that were built in this style in the first half of the nineteenth century created a precedent. The Neo Pharaonic style, perceived as dignified and prestigious, was therefore (in the European view) appropriate for an institution such as a synagogue. Conversely, it could be said that the Cairo community did not choose the Mamluk style because they did not want their synagogue to look like the Mamluk mosques that were so prevalent in the city; they did not choose the Gothic or Romanesque style so as not to be identified with the Christians, or perhaps with the Copts.

The synagogue was built in the Neo Pharaonic style because this was one of the common nineteenth century European styles. The patrons and architects chose the Neo Pharaonic style because it was identified with European Cairo, with everything that represented progress in Cairo: intellectual life, archaeological knowledge and consequently the Khedives and the regime. Through this building the wealthy, educated, Egyptianized Jews of Cairo in fact conveyed the values of Europe of the liberal, enlightened and cosmopolitan period. To this must be added the synagogue's Jewish motifs, which formed such an integral part of its style and decoration: Boaz and Jachin, and the date palms, which were associated in the nineteenth century Romantic perception with the commemoration of the Temple of Solomon.

The Jewish community, which built *Sha'ar Hashamayim*, were Egyptians to all intents and purposes and Jews only in their religion. They sought to express their power and wealth by building a big and impressive synagogue. It is clear that they sought to integrate it into accepted Cairene architecture, and yet at the same time they searched for forms that would express their religious exclusiveness as Jews. From this standpoint the synagogue reflects the



Figure 12. S'ad Zaghlul mausoleum (1928), Cairo. Planned by the Egyptian architect Mustafa Fahmi. Photo: the author.

community's dilemma – to be similar yet exclusive. This choice of style for the synagogue was thus a declaration of identification with the environment, the trendsetters and local fashion. It is a declaration of identity.

In the 1930s, however, European influence diminished and Egyptian nationalism inclined more towards the Islamic-Arab past and less towards Pharaonism. The Free Officers' revolution of 1952 put an end to the presence of the foreign communities in Egypt. Their assets were nationalized and the regime suppressed the unique cultural symbiosis that had been formed between the Jewish and Egyptian-Arab-Muslim and Coptic and Christian cultures. The multicultural dynamic that had existed in Egypt and enriched its culture for a century was no more.

By 1970 the Jews of Egypt numbered less than a thousand, and today only a few dozen remain. Yet the *Sha'ar Hashamayim* synagogue on 'Adly Street is open most days of the year and continues to serve the Jewish population, local and transient alike, as it has done since the day its doors first opened.

Endnotes

- * I dedicate this article to Mme. Carmen Weinstein, President of the Jewish Community Council of Cairo, in acknowledgment of her generosity. I am also indebted to my friends and colleagues Edina Meyer-Maril, Raphael Ventura and Israel Gershoni for their help during the various stages of the writing of the article, and for Yoram Meital and Eran Neuman for reading and commenting on it. Any errors, however, are entirely my own.
- 1 Cynthia Myntti, *Paris Along the Nile: Architecture in Cairo from the Belle Epoque* (Cairo, 1999).
 - 2 I accept Joel Beinin's assertion that it is impossible to speak about a common experience for all of Egyptian Jewry. See Joel Beinin, *The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry* (California, 1998), 1. There can be no doubt that the Jewish community in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth was not homogeneous. In general terms Egyptian Jewry was divided into four groups: Sephardi, Oriental, Ashkenazi and Karaite (and some of these can be divided into subgroups by country of origin, economic and other factors). Each group had its own synagogues and education system. The Ashkenazis as an organized group can only be discussed from 1865 onward. The Karaites, who at the beginning of the twentieth century numbered between 8,000 and 10,000, were poor and middle class in the main and most of them lived in Cairo where they formed a separate community. The present article deals with the elite stratum of Egyptian Jewry. On Egyptian Jewry in the period under discussion, see Maurice Fargeon, *Les Juifs en Egypte* (Le Caire, 1938); Gudrun Kramer, "Aliyatah ve-shkiy'atah shel qehilat q ahir," *Pe'amim* 7 (1981), 4-30 (Hebrew); Gudrun Kramer, *The Jews in Modern Egypt, 1914-1952* (Seattle, 1989); Jacob M. Landau, *The Jews in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (Jerusalem, 1967), in (Hebrew); Jacob M. Landau (ed.), *The Jews in Ottoman Egypt (1517-1914)*, (Jerusalem, 1988); Shimon Shamir (ed.), *The Jews of Egypt: A Mediterranean Society in Modern Times* (Boulder, 1987).
 - 3 On 'European Cairo' and 'Medieval Cairo', see Khaled Fahmy, "Modernizing Cairo: A Revisionist Narrative," in Nezar al-Sayyad, Irene A. Bierman, Nasser Rabbat (eds.), *Making Cairo Medieval* (Oxford, 2005), 173-200.
 - 4 Between the Ottoman rulers of Istanbul and the Egypt of Muhammad 'Ali there was an ambiguous relationship of acceptance-rejection. In 1841 the Vali Muhammad 'Ali succeeded in obtaining a special sultanic edict (ferman) appointing him and his sons as governors of Egypt. On the history of modern Egypt, see: P. J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt* (London, 1991, 4th Ed.); Andre Raymond, *Cairo, City of History* (Cairo, 2001); Janet Abu Lughod, *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious* (Princeton, 1971); Ehud R. Toledano, *State and Society in Mid-Nineteenth Century Egypt* (New York, 1990).
 - 5 Kramer, Gudrun, 'Aliyatah', 11.
 - 6 For more about harat al-yahud and the new neighborhoods in modern Cairo, see Janet Abu Lughod, *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious* (Princeton, 1971); Andre Raymond, *Cairo, 291-374*. See also, on the distribution of the Jews in the new neighborhoods, Gudrun Kramer, *The Jews in Modern Egypt*, 58-71, 86-107. Much can be learned on this subject from correspondence and books by visitors to the city, for example, Lady Duff-Gordon, *Letters from Egypt* (London, 1865).
 - 7 We know of 10 synagogues built in Cairo during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and some 20 others that were built in the medieval or post-medieval periods. After the mass departures in 1948, 1956 and 1967, the vast majority were closed and remain deserted or alternatively, their function was changed. See David Cassuto, "The Synagogues in Cairo" in J. M. Landau (ed.), *The Jews in Ottoman Egypt*, 311-368; Yoram Meital, *Jewish Sites in Egypt* (Jerusalem, 1995) (Hebrew). Throughout the generations Jews were discriminated against in Egypt, particularly by the common people. From the inception of Islam the building of synagogues and churches was forbidden to non-Muslims (*ahl al-dhimma*) and this proscription was grounded in the Pact of Omar, although this was not always enforced. Under Ottoman rule, the millet (religious community) system, which organized non-Muslim groups in the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, was instituted in Egypt. This system accorded the Jewish community – and all the non-Muslim minorities – religious and cultural autonomy. See Esther Juhasz (ed.), *Sephardi Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, (Jerusalem, 1990), 30. This change for the better came about with the influx of foreigners into Egypt encouraged by Mehmet 'Ali and his successors, particularly Khedive Ismail. To encourage foreign investment they adopt-

- ed a liberal line towards religious minorities, particularly Christians. In the mid-nineteenth century, with the encouragement of world Jewish leaders such as Montefiore, Crémieux and others who laid the foundations of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, wide-ranging Jewish communal activities were organized among the Jews of Egypt. However, it was only with the British conquest of Egypt in 1882 that the Jews received equal civic rights. The fact that most of the modern synagogues were built under British rule, including those mentioned in this article, appears to have been a consequence of the removal of building restrictions from Jewish houses of prayer. I have not found any discussion in the existing literature on the attitudes of the local non-Jewish population towards synagogue construction in the period studied here, and further research into contemporary documents is clearly necessary. This will be covered in the book I am writing on the synagogues of Cairo in the Modern Era.
- 8 The Cattai family dated their settlement in Egypt to the eighth century, and Youssef Aslan identified himself as an Egyptian of the Jewish persuasion. Under the latter's leadership the Cairo Sephardi Jewish Community Council adopted a consistently non-Zionist stance. See Joel Beinin, *The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry*, 54, and also Kramer, *The Jews in Modern Egypt*, 94-101.
 - 9 Not by chance was the synagogue named after Ismail, for the quarter was established by Khedive Ismail who ruled from 1863 to 1879. See also the description in Edwin de Leon, former agent and consul-general in Egypt, in *The Khedive's Egypt* (New York, 1878), 58: "The Ismailieh quarter of Cairo is entirely a new creation within the last six or seven years, and is one of the prettiest portions of the city. In order to encourage the erection of good houses for the European and Europeanized residents, and to attract new ones from abroad, the Khedive offered to give building lots, of the value of 2,000 pounds and upwards, to every person who would build thereon a house of a fixed value; rising in proportion to the estimated worth of the gift." On page 59, De Leon goes on to describe the new residents. Although he does not mention the word 'Jews', it is quite clear that his words 'Levantine bankers' refers to the wealthy Jews of the community: "This latter are chiefly the native or Levantine bankers, who are the richest class in the community... I do not know the exact population of the Ismailieh quarter; but it includes a greater portion of the foreign population of Cairo with a large sprinkling of richer Levantines. Some of the dwellings are quite palatial in their proportions, and there is very little of the eastern element perceptible about them generally in this neighbourhood..."
 - 10 Samir Raafat, "Gates of Heaven," *Cairo Times* (September 2, 1999).
 - 11 Cattai and Matasek's firm also designed the home of Nessim Mosseri and his wife, Elena Yacoub Cattai, which covered the area of what is today the corner of 26th of July Street and Mohammed Farid Street. Part of the garden was donated by Mosseri for the building of the Sha'ar Hashamayim synagogue. *Ibid.*
 - 12 Rudolf Agstner, "Dream and Reality: Austrian architects in Egypt 1869-1914," in Mercedes Volait, *Le Caire-Alexandrie architectures europeennes 1850-1950* (Cairo, 2004), 141-160. See also, Rudolf Agstner and Marcella Stern, "Eduard Matasek. Un architecte autrichien au Caire, 1892-1912," *Lettre OUCG* no.43 (Janvier, 1996), 35-39. See also, Samir Raafat, *Cairo, the Glory Years* (Cairo, 2003), 45-48.
 - 13 All my efforts to obtain a ground plan of the building from the authorities in Cairo, and also the Jewish authorities responsible for the synagogue, were in vain.
 - 14 Regarding Jachin and Boaz, see, Stanley Tigerman, *The Architecture of Exile* (New York, 1988), esp. 159-161. Jachin and Boaz are also crucial elements of Freemason myth and ritual. See Ivan Davidson Kalmar, "Moorish Style: Orientalism. The Jews, and Synagogue Architecture," *Jewish Social Studies* 7/3 (2001) 68-100. There is more in this subject than meets the eye, see Yosef Eliahu Chelouche, *The Story of My Life, 1870-1930* (Tel Aviv, n.d.) (Hebrew), 80-81, which describes his attempt to infiltrate the Freemasons in order to learn building and transfer the knowledge to the Jewish endeavor in Jaffa at the end of the nineteenth century. See also, Peter Merrington, "A Staggered Orientalism: The Cape-to-Cairo Imaginary," *Poetics Today* (22.2, 2001) 323-364. Merrington deals extensively with the ubiquitous influence of Freemasonry in Britain and the British Empire at the turn of the nineteenth century, and in particular Freemasonry's concern with Egyptology. See also, D. Jarrasse, *Synagogues: Architecture and Jewish Identity*, (Paris, 2001), 176-178.
 - 15 Built around 1905 by the Christian architect Vaclav Weinzettel (1862-1930). My thanks to Mr. Amotz Osri who travelled to photograph the synagogue for me. Compare also the facade of the old "Gymnasia Herzliya" (Hebrew high school, named after Theodor Herzl) in Tel

- Aviv that was built in 1905. See also, Dominique Jarrasse, *Synagogues: Architecture and Jewish Identity* (Paris, 2001), 211.
- 16 See the same palms on the facade windows of the synagogue in Nuremberg, built in 1874 by the architect A. Wolf. See also, Rachel Wischnitzer, *The Architecture*, 207, fig.183.
 - 17 C. Chipiez & G. Perrot, *Le Temple de Jerusalem* (Paris, 1889), pl. vii. See also, *Idem*, *Histoire de l'art dans l'antiquite*, vol IV, Judee,(Paris, 1887).See also, Sergey R. Kravtsov, "Reconstruction of the Temple by Charles Chipiez and its Applications in Architecture" *Ars Judaica* 4(2008), 25-42.
 - 18 Ludwig Forster, "Das israelitische Bethaus in der Wiener Vorstadt Leopoldstadt," *Allgemeine Bauzeitung* (1859), 14. See also, Kalmar, "Moorish Style," 78-79.
 - 19 Richard G. Carrott, *The Egyptian Revival, Its Sources, Monuments and Meaning 1805-1858* (California, 1978), 85, 108.
 - 20 See, for example, the Egyptian house in Strasbourg, James Stevens Curl, *The Egyptian Revival, Ancient Egypt as the inspiration for Design in the West* (London,2005), 348. "...even elsewhere art nouveau building and artefacts often acquired Egyptianising infusion: an example of 1906 can be found at 10 Rue du General-Rapp in Strasbourg by Adolf Zilly (built of course when Strasbourg was within the territory of the German Empire), in which exuberant *Jugendstil* architecture is enlivened with Nilotic scenes in polychrome decorative panels." With regard to Cairo, see the buildings in Midan Tal'at Harb. The French influence is dominant in the three streets Tal'at Harb, Qasr al-Nil and Mahmud Basyuni. Tal'at Harb Square and street were formerly named after Sulayman al-Faransawi ("The Frenchman") Pasha who was a French-born adviser to Muhammad 'Ali Paha and Ibrahim Pasha and had converted to Islam. A statue of Sulayman formerly stood in the square and was replaced in the 1960s by the present one of Tal'at Harb, an Egyptian nationalist banker.
 - 21 Richard G. Carrott, *The Egyptian Revival*, 108.
 - 22 James Stevens Curl, *The Egyptian Revival: Ancient Egypt*, 22-30.
 - 23 The Meir Y. Biton synagogue in the Ma'adi quarter (built in 1934), the Pahad Yitzhak synagogue in 'Abbasiyya (1925), and the Moshe Dar'i Karaite synagogue in 'Abbasiyya (1925-1933) all present a plan reminiscent of Ottoman mosques, with a dome supported on piers covering the entire central space. In contrast, the Hanan (Etz Hayim) synagogue in Daher (1900) or the Eliyahu Hanavi synagogue in Alexandria present a basilical plan with three or five wings leading to the heichal or the Holy Ark. The central space is usually the widest.
 - 24 Two types of synagogue prayer halls can be found in Cairo of the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As noted, the first is in the Ottoman mosque style, such as the Sha'ar Hashamayim synagogue, the Moshe Dar'i Karaite synagogue of the same period (the construction of which was decided upon in 1900, and which was built in stages between 1925 and 1933), and the Meir Y. Biton synagogue in the Ma'adi quarter dating from 1935. The second model is the basilica type with three to five wings, such as the Etz Hayim (Hanan) synagogue, built in 1900 in Daher, or the Kraym (Pahad Yitzhak) synagogue built in 1925 in 'Abbasiyya (to this group can be added the Eliyahou Hanavi synagogue in Alexandria that was destroyed by Napoleon in 1790 and rebuilt in 1850). Daher and 'Abbasiyya neighborhoods housed the lower class that was engaged in trade and made their livelihood as hired workers or clerks in government and public offices. Although the Jews living there were exposed to trends towards the winds of modernization blowing through the city in the second half of the nineteenth century, they still lived a fully traditional Jewish life. In my opinion, the model for these synagogues is the Ibn Ezra synagogue in Fustat- the old part of the city (it was apparently built in the ninth century but was renovated in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries). In this synagogue the Jewish genizah, was kept, and Maimonides prayed there. This synagogue symbolizes Cairo Jewry to this day.
 - 25 *Heichal* -- a term taken from Temple terminology, is used today to describe the eastern wall of a synagogue. The *heichal* fills the wall's entire width and is oriented toward Jerusalem.
 - 26 Regarding the shining sun: "...a favorite motif in Jugendstil design but also a traditional Jewish symbol of eternal Jerusalem," see Fredric Bedoire, *The Jewish Contribution to Modern Architecture 1830-1930* (Stockholm, 2003), 496.
 - 27 The wall where the Ark is erected is the most important in the synagogue as the Ark is erected on it. It always faces Jerusalem, and whether it be to the north or south it is considered eastward-facing, and the worshippers always face it. The Ark, also called the heichal, houses the Torah scrolls. It stands in the middle of the eastern wall and constitutes a kind of "Holy

- of Hobbies" of the "little temple" [synagogue]. It should be borne in mind that Jewish law does not stipulate special rules for the building or decoration of Arks, except for an exterior curtain, doors to the Ark and an inner curtain (in some communities) that protects the Torah scrolls. This is why the decoration of Arks is adapted to the worldview of each specific community.
- 28 Rafael Aharon Ben-Shimon, *Sefer Tov Myzraim* (Jerusalem, n.d. in Hebrew), 188-189. The author was president of the Cairo Jewish community between 1891-1921. Donald M. Reid, "Indigenous Egyptology: The Decolonization of a Profession?" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (vol. 11, 105, no. 2 April-June, 1985), 233-246.
 - 29 Penelope Woolf, "Symbol of the Second Empire: Cultural Politics and the Paris Opera House" in D. Cosgrove and St. Daniels eds., *The Iconography of Landscape*, (Cambridge, 1988), 214-253. See also, Hermann Broch (1886-1951) had already said that 'the essential character of a period can generally be deciphered from its architectural facade, and in the case of the second half of the nineteenth century... the facade is certainly one of the most wretched in world history. This was the period of eclecticism, of false Baroque, false Renaissance, false Gothic... See, H. Broch, Hugo von Hofmannsthal and his time. *The European Imagination 1860-1920*, trans. and ed. M. Steinberg (Chicago and London, 1984), 33. See also, Sharman Kadish, "Constructing Identity; Anglo-Jewry and Synagogue Architecture," *Architectural History*, (45, 2002), 386-408 esp. 387. Edina Meyer, "Synagogue Architecture in Germany from the Period of the Emancipation to World War I," *Synagogues in 19th Century Germany* (Tel Aviv, 1982), 39-42.
 - 30 Ivan Davidson Kalmar, "Moorish Style: Orientalism, the Jews and Synagogue Architecture," *Jewish Social Studies* (7.3, 2001), 68-100, esp. 78-79. It is important to note that, as some scholars have pointed out, that the turrets fronting the synagogues like those of Hradec Králové (See Fig. 4) in Europe, were seen as representative of Jachin and Boaz. However, they also resemble Egyptian pylons or obelisks . Thus they may be seen as belonging to one of the prevailing perceptions of *Architectural History* in the first half of the nineteenth century, that the Temple of Solomon was inspired by an Egyptian temple. See the facade of the Karlsruhe synagogue in the Grand Duchy of Baden that was built in 1798 and destroyed by fire in 1871. The two pillars, Boaz and Jachin, which are set against the facade, look like Egyptian pylons in their incline. See Rachel Wischnitzer, *The Architecture*, 161. Fig. 141.
 - 31 With regard to the restoration of the Ben-Ezra synagogue, see Phyllis Lambert (ed.), *Fortifications and the Synagogue: The Fortress of Babylon and the Ben Ezra Synagogue, Cairo* (London, 1994). With regard to the neo-Mamluk style, see Nasser Rabbat, "The Formation of the Neo-Mamluk Style in Modern Egypt" in Martha Pollak (ed.), *The Education of the Architect* (MIT, 1997), 363-386. Regarding Cairene synagogues in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see my survey in the forthcoming volume on the Jews in Egypt, ed. Nahem Ilan.(Yad Ben-Zvi).
 - 32 Richard G. Carrott, *The Egyptian Revival, Its Sources, Monuments and Meaning, 1805-1858* (California, 1978).
 - 33 Carol Herselle Krinsky, *Synagogues of Europe* (New York, 1985), 77-78. See also, Dominique Jarrasse, *Synagogues Architecture and Jewish Identity*, (Paris, 2001), 119-188. With regard to Great Britain, the little-known Canterbury Synagogue is the only one to have been built in the Egyptian Revival style (1849-50). See Sharman Kadish, "Constructing Identity," 391.
 - 34 Carol Herselle Krinsky, *ibid*, 127, note 162. See also, Sharman Kadish, "Constructing Identity: Anglo-Jewry and Synagogue Architecture" *Architectural History* (Vol.45, 2002), 386-408.
 - 35 Krinsky, *ibid*, 77. See also Rachel Wischnitzer, *The Architecture of the European Synagogue* (Philadelphia, 1964), 161, 183-185.
 - 36 Samir W. Raafat, Cairo, *The Glory Years* (Alexandria, 2003), 46.
 - 37 Richard G. Carrott, *The Egyptian Revival*, 108-109.
 - 38 Tarek Mohammed Refaat Sakr, *Early Twentieth Century Islamic Architecture in Cairo* (Cairo, 1992), 16.
 - 39 Maurice Fargeon (ed.), *Annuaire des Juifs d'Egypte et du proche-orient, 1942* (Cairo, 1943), 117.
 - 40 Jacob M. Landau, *The Jews in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (Jerusalem, 1967), (Hebrew), 129. On Jewish families and leading figures in Egyptian Jewry, see 268-280 in this book.
 - 41 Jacqueline Kahanoff, *Between Two Worlds*, ed. David Ohana (Jerusalem, 2005), (Hebrew). Jacqueline Kahanoff was born in Cairo in 1917 to a wealthy and privileged family of merchants and she lived in the Jewish community in Egypt until she was 24. Her words shed light on the life of Cairo's affluent Jews (translation from the Hebrew): "We also moved to the new Garden City suburb that was spread along the banks of the Nile and in whose center stood

- the residence of the British High Commissioner. The families that made their homes in the suburb were mainly Jewish and Christian. The children were educated at home by English governesses and attended either French, English or Italian mission schools, or secular schools where the study of Arabic was not compulsory. Most of the families had a car (which in the 1930s was a luxury), most of the adults belonged to clubs (especially the Gezira Sporting Club, where youngsters from the elite families played polo with British officers)."
- 42 Joel Beinin, *The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry* (California, 1998).
- 43 Ali Labib Gabr, "Neo-Pharaonic Architecture in Cairo: a Western Legacy," in *Medina Magazine* (Medina Premier Issue: Architecture, Interiors & Fine Arts, January 1998), 44-72. See Donald Malcolm Reid, "French Egyptology and the Architecture of Orientalism: Deciphering the Facade of Cairo's Egyptian Museum," in L. Carl Brown and Matthew S. Gordon (eds.), *Franco-Arab Encounters* (Beirut, 1996), 35-69.
- 44 Donald Malcolm Reid, "French Egyptology" *ibid.* See also, Christel Braae, "The Early Museums and the formation of their Publics," Hans Chr. Korsholm Nielsen and Jacob Skovgaard-Petersen (eds.), *Middle Eastern Cities 1900-1950* (Denmark, 2001), 112-132.
- 45 Mohamed Scharabi, *Kairo Stadt und Architektur im Zeitalter des europaischen Kolonialismus* (Tubingen, 1989), fig 176.
- 46 The scientific aspect can be studied through numerous seminal events that occurred throughout the nineteenth century, of which I shall mention but a few.
The first is the cover illustration of *La Description de l'Egypte* (Paris, 1809-22), 22 vols, which features a landscape of the Nile from Alexandria to Aswan that includes all the Pharaonic buildings. The book is an illustrated scientific collection resulting from the visit of Napoleon and his entourage to Egypt. It extensively documents Pharaonic Egypt, its buildings and art, and was distributed between 1809 and 1828.
The documentation of Napoleon's expedition by his advisor Baron Dominique Vivant Denon (1747-1825) was published in his book *Voyage dans la basse et l'haute Egypte* in 1802 in Paris, and 1803 in London. Denon Vivant, *Voyage dans la basse et l'haute Egypte* (Paris, 1990), (Reprint of 1802 ed.)
Following this expedition to Egypt and its detailed scientific documentation, Europe was inundated by a fashionable tidal wave of Egyptian motifs. In 1822 Jean Francois Champollion succeeded in deciphering the Egyptian hieroglyphs on the Rosetta Stone. See, Curl, *The Egyptian Revival*, 200-201.
In 1836 Edward Lane, who had lived for five years as an Egyptian in manners, dress and habits, published his book. See E.W. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1989), (1st ed., 1836), and in the same year John Gardiner Wilkinson, one of the pioneers of Egyptology, published his book on the manners and customs of the ancient Egyptians: Regarding Gardiner Wilkinson's book, *Topography of Thebes and General View of Egypt*, see Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?*, 70-72. In 1850, under the aegis of the Khedive, Auguste Mariette founded the Service des Antiquities d'Egypte, an office that would be active for a century (its last director was Etienne Drioton). Donald Malcolm Reid, "French Egyptology."
- 47 Donald Malcolm Reid, "French Egyptology and the Architecture of Orientalism," 46-50.
- 48 Indeed, it was only in 1868-89 that the first history of the Pharaohs was written in Arabic by Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, and Ali Mubarak compiled his dictionary *Al-Khitat al-tawfiqiyya al-jadida*, 20 vols. (Cairo, 1886-1887). See Donald Malcolm Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?*, 51-54, 109-112, 146-148 and 'Ali Mubarak, *Al-Khitat al-* See also Darrel Dykstra, "Pyramids, Prophets and Progress: Ancient Egypt in the Writing of 'Ali Mubarak," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, (114, 1994), 54-56. Incidentally, both writers used French sources in their work.
- 49 Zeynep Celik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth century World's Fairs* (California, 1992), 95-137, esp. 111-119.
- 50 These various "encounters" between Egypt and the West also facilitated the flow of information to Europe and the United States. As a consequence the attraction of the East increased; the tour of the East was in as great demand as was the 'Grand Tour' of the Italian antiquities in the eighteenth century. The journey to the East was perceived by Europeans as not only a tour of scientific discovery, as we have described above, but also as part of the developing romantic experience of the nineteenth century. For writers, artists and photographers the romantic aspect of the journey to the East constituted an attempt to bridge the gap between the East, as they imagined it, and the reality in which they met on a more concrete level.
- 51 Donald Malcolm Reid, "Nationalizing the Pharaonic Past: Egyptology, Imperialism and

- Egyptian Nationalism, 1922-1952," in Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski (eds.), *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, (New York, 1997). See also, Israel Gershoni, *Pyramid for the Nation, Commemoration, Memory and Nationalism in Twentieth century Twentieth century Egypt* (Tel Aviv, 2006). See also Christel Braae, "The early museums and the formation of their publics," in Hans Chr. Korsholm Nielsen and Jacob Skovgaard-Petersen (eds.), *Middle Eastern Cities 1900-1950* (Denmark, 2001), 117.
- 52 Donald Malcolm Reid, "French Egyptology," 68-69.
- 53 Ralph M. Coury, "The Politics of the Funereal: The Tomb of Sa'd Zaghlul," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, XXIX (1992), 191-200.
- 54 Actual Pharaonic buildings from this period are few. Besides the S'ad Zaghlul mausoleum on Mansour and Falaky streets also notable are the Giza train station; Farouk's pavilion near the pyramids or even the statue of "Egypt Awakening" of Mahmud Muhtar now situated in University Square in Giza, but which was formerly situated in Ramses Square. See Israel Gershoni, *Pyramid for the Nation, Commemoration, Memory and Nationalism in Twentieth century Twentieth century Egypt* (Tel Aviv, 2006) (Hebrew). See also, Ali Labib Gabr, "Pharaonic Neo-Pharaonic Architecture in Cairo," *ibid.*
- 55 In 1947 the "Jewish Period" in Egypt began to draw to an end, and the majority of the country's Jews gradually left. The Jewish elites, the subject of this article, left Egypt: some to Europe, some to the United States, and others to South America.