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Bernard O'Kane

The Architect Antonio Lasciac (1856–1946) in the Context of Mamluk Revivalisms

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BERNARD O'KANE*

The Architect Antonio Lasciac (1856–1946) in the Context of Mamluk Revivalisms

◆ ABSTRACT

Antonio Lasciac was one of the most active of European architects working in Egypt in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. His output was as eclectic as it was prolific, comprising buildings and decoration in neo-Renaissance, neo-Gothic and neo-Mamluk styles. This paper focuses on of the origins of the motifs on his buildings decorated in Mamluk revival style, and particularly on his villa at Rafut, in Slovenia, beside the modern border of Gorizia in Italy.

The paper first gives a background to the rise of the neo-Mamluk style in Egypt before analyzing Lasciac's contributions to it. In one of his early buildings, the neo-Renaissance palace of Yūsuf Kamāl at Matariyya, a newly-discovered neo-Mamluk room is discussed. The detailed analysis of his villa at Rafut and later buildings show the unusual extent to which the decorative motifs he used were accurately based on earlier Mamluk designs, reflecting his long-standing involvement as a board member of the *Comité de conservation des monuments de l'art arabe*.

Keywords: Architecture, Cairo, Gorizia, Lasciac, neo-Mamluk, style, 20th century

◆ RÉSUMÉ

L'architecte Antonio Lasciac (1856-1946) dans le contexte des renouveaux mamelouks

Antonio Lasciac était l'un des architectes européens les plus actifs travaillant en Égypte à la fin du XIX^e^ et au début du XX^e^ siècle. Sa production était aussi éclectique que prolifique,

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comprenant des bâtiments et des décorations de style néo-Renaissance, néo-gothique et néo-mamelouke. Cet article se concentre sur les origines des motifs sur ses bâtiments décorés dans le style néo-mamelouke, et en particulier sur sa villa à Rafut, en Slovénie, à côté de la frontière moderne de Gorizia en Italie.

L'article donne d'abord un aperçu de la montée du style néo-mamelouk en Égypte avant d'analyser les contributions de Lasciac. Dans l'un de ses premiers bâtiments, le palais néo-Renaissance de Yūsuf Kamāl à Matariyya, une salle néo-mamelouke nouvellement découverte est discutée. L'analyse détaillée de sa villa à Rafut et des bâtiments ultérieurs montre la mesure inhabituelle dans laquelle les motifs décoratifs qu'il a utilisés étaient fidèlement basés sur des monuments mamelouks antérieurs, reflétant son implication de longue date en tant que membre du conseil d'administration du Comité de conservation des monuments de l'art arabe.

Mots-clés : architecture, Le Caire, Gorizia, Lasciac, néo-mamlouke, style, XX^e^ siècle

ملخص

المعماري أنطونيو لاشياك (١٨٥٦–١٩٤٦) في سياق إعادة إحياء العمارة المملوكية

كان أنطونيو لاشياك من أنشط المهندسين المعماريين الأوروبيين العاملين في مصر بين نهاية القرن التاسع عشر وبدايات القرن العشرين. وكان إنتاجه انتقائيًا بقدر ما كان غزيرًا، اشتمل على مبانٍ وزخارفٍ بطرز عصر النهضة المستحدث والقوطي المستحدث والمملوكي المستحدث. تُرَكِز هذه الورقة على دراسة أصول العناصر الزخرفية الموجودة على مبانيه المزينة وفق نمط إعادة إحياء الفن المملوكي، وعلى نحو خاص قصره الريفي في رافوت بسلوفينيا، بجوار الحدود الحديثة لغوريتسيا في إيطاليا.

وبدايةً تعطي الورقة خلفية عن بزوغ الطراز المملوكي المستحدث في مصر قبل تحليل إسهامات لاشياك فيه. وفي واحد من مبانيه الأولى، وهو قصر يوسف كمال المبني بطراز النهضة المستحدث، تُناقَش قاعة مزخرفة بالطراز المملوكي المستحدث، تم اكتشافها حديثًا. ويُظهِر التحليل المفصل لقصره الريفي في رافوت ومبانيه اللاحقة المدى غير العادي لدقة استناد العناصر الزخرفية التي استخدمها على تصميمات مملوكية سابقة، ما يعكس تأثير مشاركته الطويلة كعضو في مجلس إدارة لجنة حفظ الآثار العربية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: هندسة معمارية، القاهرة، غوريتسيا، لاشياك، المملوكي المستحدث، نمط، القرن العشرون

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Antonio[1] Lasciac was one of the most active of European architects working in Egypt in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. His output was as eclectic as it was prolific, comprising buildings and decoration in neo-Renaissance, neo-Gothic, art nouveau and neo-Mamluk styles.[2] This paper will focus on of the origins of the motifs on his buildings decorated in Mamluk revival style, and particularly on his villa (1909) at Rafut, in Slovenia, beside the modern border of Gorizia in Italy.

The Origins of the Neo-Mamluk Style

I begin with an account of the origins of the style so that we can situate Lasciac's contribution within the context of diverse manifestations of Mamluk revival architecture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[3] Under Ottoman rule in Egypt many elements of the Mamluk style continued. Even in buildings whose main forms were Ottoman, inlaid marble mihrabs of Mamluk inspiration remained the norm,[4] while some mosques, particularly of local rather than Ottoman patronage, such as those of al-Burdaynī and Muṣṭafā Šurbağī, were largely in Mamluk style. This eclecticism continued into the early nineteenth century, for example at the mosque of Ḥasan Pasha Ṭāhir (1809) and in Ḥūš al-Bāšā (*ca.* 1820 and later). The latter was the funerary complex of the family of Muḥammad ʿAlī, which has European rusticated masonry substituting for characteristic Mamluk bi-coloured stone bands, Mamluk-style ribbed domes and undulating zones of transition, and Ottomanizing turrets between the windows of the dome like those of the mosques of Sinān Pasha and Abū al-Ḏahab.[5]

European artists had been making detailed drawings of the Islamic monuments in Cairo since the late eighteenth century, when Louis-François Cassas produced many accurate sketches,[6] and European architects had also been finding inspiration in the East since the

1. An anonymous reviewer pointed out that the name is inscribed as Anton, rather than the commonly cited Antonio, on some of his drawings. It appears written as Anton in Arabic on the main door to the Assicurazione Generali Apartment building in Cairo (Volait, 2017b, fig. 3), although on some of his drawings for projects in Italy he abbreviated his first name as Ant.o (Kuzmin, 2015b, p. 203). As it is also written Antonio in Arabic on his villa (fig. 10), I retain the conventional Italian spelling rather than the Slovenian one. Many thanks in general to the two anonymous reviewers and to Jere Bacharach for corrections and comments on an earlier draft of this article, leading to its substantial revision and expansion.
2. For overviews of his oeuvre see Volait, 1989; Godoli, 2006.
3. The most detailed account of the emergence of the style is to be found in Ormos, 2009, pp. 372–391. Most of the works of Volait in the attached bibliography also address the topic; for a succinct overview see Volait, 2017a, pp. 601–607.
4. In the mosques of Sinān Pasha, Malika Ṣafiyya and Abū al-Ḏahab: O'Kane, 2016, pp. 258, 264 and 294 respectively. It may be useful here to point out that the monument in Baudry's fine painting identified in Leconte, Volait, 1998, p. 28, fig. 21 as the interior of an Ottoman mosque at Gallipoli, Turkey, is in fact the interior of the Malika Ṣafiyya mosque in Cairo.
5. On this complex see now Kolkailah, 2021.
6. Gilet, Westfehling, 1994, pp. 187–190.

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eighteenth century (the Mughal-inspired Brighton pavilion, 1815–1822, being one of the best known examples). As early as 1820 a parquetry floor, possibly derived from a Mamluk pattern, appeared in an Irish country house.[7]



Fig. 1. Potsdam, pump station of Sanssouci palace, by Ludwig Persius, 1841–1843 (photo: B. O'Kane, 2013).

7. Sweetman, 1988, p. 23, fig. 10: for the rotunda of the demesne at Ballyfin see http://www.snyar.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Ballyfin-rotunda.jpg, accessed on 7 May 2020.

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Mamluk revival architecture had first materialized in a pumping station for the Sanssouci palace in Potsdam near Berlin, commissioned by Frederick Wilhelm IV, and built by Ludwig Persius between 1841 and 1843 (fig. 1). Imitating a mosque[8] with a chimney disguised as a minaret, the design was clearly selected for its exoticism. Persius had travelled to Italy and France, but not to Egypt. What were his sources? The first detailed Western illustrations of Islamic architecture in Egypt were the result of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, accompanied by scholars whose two volumes of plates, *L'État moderne* of the *Description de l'Égypte*, were published in 1809 and 1817. Another early source was Pascal Coste's *Architecture arabe : ou, monuments du Kaire, mesurés et dessinés, de 1818 à 1826*, published in 1839. Even earlier (1837) Girault de Prangey had produced a sumptuous publication resulting from his daguerreotypes of the Alhambra, which could explain the source for the Alhambresque style ornamentation inside the Potsdam pumping station.[9]

Coste had also earlier designed two mosques in Mamluk style, one for Alexdandria, and one for his patron Muḥammad ʿAlī on the Cairo citadel. The foundations of the latter were apparently started in 1827, but between 1831–1833 the patron changed his mind and the mosque which was built on the site was instead in Ottoman style.[10] The reasons for preferring an Ottoman- to a Mamluk-style mosque are not hard to find; although Muḥammad ʿAlī had succeeded in wresting hereditary rule from the Ottoman powers, he had had to contend in the early years of his reign with the still powerful Mamluk clans in Cairo. Only when he massacred their remnants in 1811 at the citadel in Cairo after inviting them to an investiture for his son was this threat eliminated,[11] so a Mamluk-style mosque would have given out the wrong signals. Situating it on the remains of earlier Mamluk monuments in a position where it would dominate the city skyline broadcast a much clearer message of supremacy. It looked nothing like the contemporary imperial Nusretiye complex (1823–1826) in Istanbul,[12] but rather the much grander size and form of mosques of the classical Ottoman period, that of Sinan and his successors.[13] It has been claimed that this choice of a classic rather than a contemporary Ottoman model was a way for Muḥammad ʿAlī to differentiate his patronage from that of the Porte,[14] but it is doubtful if such art historical consciousness was to be found in contemporary society; one prominent 19th century British historian wrote, for instance,

8. The monarch had evidently evinced a desire for a Turkish mosque (Ormos, 2009, p. 379; Staschull, 1999, p. 152) but the style of that actually built is clearly Mamluk (on the exterior). Persius realized that the Mamluk- rather than Ottoman-style style minaret would more easily conceal the chimney of the pumping station (Ormos, 2009, p. 379; Staschull, 1999, p. 154). My great thanks goes to professor Ormos for a photocopy of the relevant pages of Staschull.

9. De Prangey, 1837.

10. Hill, 1984, pp. 150–151.

11. Fahmy, 1998, p. 146.

12. Or their close successors of similar size, the Dolmabahçe (1853–1855) and Ortaköy (1854–1856) mosques.

13. *Pascal Coste*, 1998, pp. 112–113. Three models in Istanbul with the plan of a central dome supported by four axial semi-domes are possible, the Şehzade (1544), the Yeni Valide (1597–1663) and the Sultanahmet (1617).

14. Rabbat, 2010, pp. 180–181.

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that "it is… entirely in the modern taste of Constantinople".[15] More important to the patron would have been the prestige the size of the building afforded him.[16] Although the basic form of the mosque conforms to the Ottoman models, particularly on the interior, it deviates from them in important ways. It greatly reduced the number of windows as well as eliminated the subtlety of transition from cube to dome of the Ottoman models. Its baroque-style interior painting in particular would have seemed bang up-to-date,[17] fully in keeping with contemporary Istanbul models, and would likely have resonated more with visitors than the layout of the building. Its baroque style is also in keeping with the style of the succession of Cairene *sabīl*s that Muḥammad ʿAlī and later members of his family erected.[18]

Ironically, however, the first major example of Mamluk revival style envisioned in Egypt, one that was to dominate Egyptian mosque architecture for over a century, came with the commissioning by the ruling family in 1869 of the mosque of al-Rifāʿī. What occasioned this change in taste—and its subsequent popularity?

Several inter-related factors were at work:[19] a rising consciousness of links with their Arab and Egyptian subjects on the part of the successors of Muḥammad ʿAlī; increasing travel by European artists and architects to Egypt and dissemination of their works upon their return;[20] World's Fairs in Europe and the United Sates which prominently featured Cairo streets with neo-Mamluk architecture, adoption of the neo-Mamluk style by both local and expatriate non-royal patrons in Cairo in subsequent decades, and finally greater cognizance of the past with the work of the *Comité de conservation des monuments arabes* (hereafter the *Comité*), founded in 1881 in Cairo.

15. Paton, 1870, vol. 2, p. 252, who goes on to complain that it is "immeasurably inferior to the school of the period of the Mamluk Sultans, which united picturesque outline with the most luxuriant detail, presenting a striking contrast to the heavy Byzantine dome and bald minaret, of Modern Turkish building". Giuseppe Baruffi, Professor at the University of Turin, in turn wrote that the whole edifice was conceived in Arab-Egyptian style: *apud*. Wiet, 1959, p. 272.

16. While valuable in its discussion of the mosque's inscription program, GhaneaBassiri's contention (GhaneaBassiri, 2020) that analysis of the mosque as an Islamic institution rather than through the lenses of modernity, nationalism or cosmopolitanism (as in El-Ashmouni, Bartsch, 2014) leads to new findings is optimistic; earlier scholars have taken its role as an Islamic institution as a given. He also tries to link the mosque's use of alabaster to an attempt to forge links with the past, claiming that "alabaster… was widely used in both pharaonic and Mamluk architecture…". In fact it was only used for some staircases in Pharaonic architecture (I thank John Swanson for this information) and never in Mamluk architecture, it being a material that wears badly outdoors, as shown in the case of the Muḥammad ʿAlī mosque. In any case, Muḥammad ʿAlī had originally wanted marble for his mosque, and only chose alabaster when a quarry came by mistake (his advisor thought he had found marble) to his notice: Linant de Bellefonds, 1872-1873, p. 367 (the short extract from this passage in GhaneaBassiri (2020, p. 332) is, strangely, used to argue the "alabaster… was the means by which the land of Egypt impressed itself upon the mosque").

17. O'Kane, 2016, p. 202.

18. Ṭūsūn, 1820; Ismāʿīl, 1828 (these first two sons of Muḥammad ʿAlī); Umm Ḥusayn, 1851; Muṣṭafā Fāḍil, 1863; Aḥmad, 1864; Umm ʿAbbās, 1867: see Warner, 2005, cat. nos. 401, 402, U36, U69, U13 and U107 respectively.

19. See the sources in n. 3.

20. Chronicled in detail particularly in Volait, 2009a.

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The first was the reorientation of Muḥammad ʿAlī's successors from the largely Turkish-speaking Ottoman leanings of their father to Arab-speaking proponents of Egypt. Although Muḥammad ʿAlī wished to eliminate Mamluk challenges to his power, a much more urgent challenge to his power came from the very source of his initial status: the Ottoman administration. By conscripting an army of Egyptian peasants, he gradually increased his military strength until, with his son Ibrāhīm at its head, the army was eventually able to invade Syria in 1832 and take Anatolia as far as Kutahya, threatening the Porte itself.[21] The brokered peace confirmed Ibrāhīm as the *wālī* of Syria. Ibrahim inflicted a further defeat on the Ottoman army in 1839, occasioning the intervention of the European powers, but resulting two years later in a *firmān* issued by the Porte granting Muḥammad ʿAlī the governorship of Egypt for life and hereditary rule to his descendants.[22]

Under his successor ʿAbbās (who spoke some Arabic) technocratic Egyptians began to be appointed to top state posts.[23] The orientation of the dynasty away from Turkey accelerated in the reign of his successor Saʿīd (1854–1863). Long before his uprising, the future Colonel Aḥmad ʿUrābī remembered hearing a speech in which Saʿīd spoke of himself as an Egyptian and promised to raise more Egyptians to top government positions.[24] The change was accentuated when in 1867 Ismāʿīl Pasha, Muḥammad ʿAlī's grandson, received the title of viceroy (khedive) of Egypt rather than that of governor (*wālī*), rendering the country independent of the Porte in everything but name.[25]

So it may be no surprise that two years later the architect of the mosque of al-Rifāʿī, Ḥusayn Fahmī, designed it in Mamluk style.[26] Ḥusayn Fahmī was himself a member of the royal family; his client was Ḫušyār Hānim, Ismāʿīl's mother. But although the mosque was erected in her name, it was paid for by Khedive Ismāʿīl, who asked ʿAlī Mubārak Pasha to select one of two designs, Ḥusayn Fahmī's or Auguste Salzmann's.[27] We have no specific information on why this style, presumably the choice of the Ḫušyār Hānim and Ḥusayn Fahmī, was picked, but given that both were members of the royal family it may have answered to a wish to assert this newfound adherence to Egyptian identity. Khedive Ismāʿīl's financing of the project links him intimately with it[28] and Mercedes Volait has recently unearthed crucial

21. Leading to the contemporary characterization of Ibrāhīm as an Arab prince: Mestyan, 2017, p. 23.

22. Fahmy, 1998, p. 175. Marsot (1984, p. 264) suggests that the employment of foreign technocrats by Muḥammad ʿAlī may have engendered a reaction by locals that gave themselves an awareness of self and was a first step towards a sense of Egyptian national identity.

23. Hunter, 1998, p.183.

24. Hunter, 1998, p. 192.

25. Hunter, 1998, p. 193.

26. Al-Asad, 1993, p. 119. For further details on the construction, see Volait, 2005, pp. 173–178 and Ormos, 2009, pp. 431–445. For the division of labor between Fahmī and Max Herz on the building, see Ormos, 2019, pp. 117–118. For Fahmī's collecting see Volait, 2009b, p. 243.

27. Ormos, 2009, p. 431, citing a letter from Khedive Ismāʿīl to ʿAlī Mubārak. Nothing is known of Salzmann's designs.

28. Despite this, Volait, 2011a (halshs-01868309, unpaginated), suggests that because the complex was built around the shrine of a medieval Sufi saint, al-Rifāʿī, it did not have the same official and dynastic character

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information with regard to the nearly contemporary Universal Exhibitions in Paris of 1867 and Vienna of 1873 that also link the Khedive with this style. He was in fact closely involved with the architectural plans of both exhibitions. For the Paris 1867 exhibition a Moorish style originally envisaged for the *salāmlik*, as the pavilion representing medieval Cairo was called. The Khedive specified that instead an Arab style based on the ornamentation of the old houses of Cairo be used.[29] For the Vienna exhibition Ismāʿīl likewise indicated that a group of "Arab-style" buildings should be erected, the plans for which he wanted to approve.[30] Ḥusayn Fahmī, who had studied in France, is also linked with the *salāmlik* of the Paris exhibition, as he exhibited his substantial collection of Islamic art there.[31] Like Coste's prototypes and all subsequent examples, the plan of this building was not specifically related to Mamluk models.[32] The Mamluk revival style was always only skin deep, a decorative revetment on an unfamiliar core.[33] The financing of the mosque of al-Rifāʿī ran into difficulties with the death of the patron, and it was only finished in 1912 with the involvement of Max Herz, who designed the details of its decoration. However, the surviving drawings show that the basic scheme of Ḥusayn Fahmī's plan and elevation was not substantially changed by Herz.[34]

Not that the style was yet an automatic choice for royal patrons of mosques: the rebuilding of the mosque of Sayyidna al-Ḥusayn under Khedive Ismāʿīl's patronage in 1873, designed by the polymath ʿAlī Mubārak Pasha, was in Gothic style (although with an Ottoman minaret).[35]

as Coste's citadel project. However, in addition to the Khedive's personal financing of the project, the series of mausoleums that line the periphery of the building, destined for, and eventually used as, dynastic tombs, underline the official and dynastic character of the building from the beginning. Incorporating the tomb of a Sufi saint was a shrewd way to assure visits of pilgrims seeking *baraka* (blessings) who would in turn pray for the founder, and is paralleled by the other major architectural commission of Khedive Ismāʿīl's reign, the restoration of the shrine of Sayyidna al-Ḥusayn (1873). Additionally, the completion of the project after a long hiatus is also likely to be due to its official and dynastic importance.

29. Specifically that of the *Musāfirḫāna*, the Ottoman house where he was born. His agent Nūbār Pasha suddenly stopped the decorating of the *salāmlik* so that it could be remodeled after drawing and photographs of old houses in Cairo: Volait, 2019, (halshs-01868334, unpaginated).

30. Volait, 2019; 2020a, p. 103 suggest that the Schmoranz's designs (fig. 3) were the most faithful and believable of attempts at reconstructing the Mamluk aesthetic in the 20th century. But although the buildings actually erected were for the most part in neo-Mamluk style, features of Ottoman Cairene architecture are prominent in the bow-shaped front of the *sabīl maktab*, and in the upper storey that shows plastered brick instead of stone.

31. A substantial part of it later became the nucleus of the Victoria and Albert Museum's holding of Islamic art; parts were also sold at auction in Paris: Volait, 2019. Similar arrangements were made with some collections that had been displayed at the 1878 Exposition Universelle in Paris: Carey, Volait, 2020.

32. Even if the nine-bay element of the main prayer hall had appeared in several earlier Islamic buildings in Egypt from the tenth century onwards: O'Kane, 2006, pp. 189, 206.

33. As Mercedes Volait underlines in her discussion of Heliopolis villas designed in 1908, which with a few outward changes could be built on identical plans and elevation in Arab or Italian style: Volait, 2017a, p. 8.

34. Ormos, 2013, pp. 324–325, figs. 18–19.

35. Al-Asad, 1993, p. 123. Intriguingly, mixtures of Gothic (or neo-Gothic?) and Ottoman baroque had already appeared on the minaret of the Küçük Mecidiye Mosque in Istanbul (1848), on the edge of the eaves of the *sabīl* in Cairo of Ulfat Qādin (1864) (the mother of Muṣṭafā Fāḍil Pasha, brother of Khedive Ismāʿīl) (see Warner, 2005, p. 182, cat. no. U68), on the Çirağan Palace in Istanbul (1864–1871, with neo-classical elements) and,

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We are again missing any evidence (as is usual) as to whose choice this style was—the architect, the patron, a combination of both or even an unknown third party or parties are all possible. Khedive Ismāʿīl's oft-quoted dictum that "Egypt is no longer part of Africa but part of Europe" could be relevant. But despite ʿAlī Mubārak's earlier approval of the design of the mosque of al-Rifāʿī,[36] his antipathy or at least indifference to Mamluk architecture is certainly more than hinted at by a disagreement he had with the *Comité*. He suggested that the *Duhaysha*, the "Little Marvel", as contemporary chroniclers termed it, that was the mosque and *sabīl* (1408) of Farağ ibn Barqūq,[37] be demolished rather than moved, on the grounds that other *sabīl*s had been preserved and only one of each kind was needed.[38]

In the meantime neo-Islamic structures by European architects, mostly in Moorish style, such as the mausoleum of Sulaymān Pasha al-Faransāwī (von Diebitsch, 1862), elements of the Gezira Palace (von Diebitsch, 1869), and the Bāb al-Ḥadīd *sabīl* (Pantanelli, 1870) had begun to appear in Cairo.[39] These were soon supplemented by villas in neo-Mamluk style, particularly by members of the French community, many of them collectors of Islamic art who used salvaged elements of older buildings in their mansions: the villa of Delort de Gléon, by Alphonse Baudry, (1872), the Saint Maurice villa (1874–1882), by Baudry and Bonfils; or who also were involved with the *Comité*, including Alphonse Baudry's own villa (1876).[40] Delort de Gléon later financed the Egyptian Street at the Universal Exposition of Paris in 1889 (shipping authentic architectural elements from Cairo)[41] and re-erected part of it in his country estate at Arromanches;[42] he also, like Baudry, incorporated Mamluk elements in part of his residence in Paris.[43] Baudry also designed a neo-Mamluk smoking room for the residence of Edmond de Rothschild in Paris, continuing a tradition in which, for instance, orientalist-themed rooms for billiards or smoking were inserted in English country houses, and space was consistently gendered.[44]

more extensively, on the mosque of Pertevniyal Valide Sultan in Istanbul of 1872 (I thank Isa Babur for the Istanbul mosque references). And of course, not far from the mosque of Sayyidna al-Ḥusayn is the reused Gothic doorway at the complex of al-Naṣr Muḥammad (O'Kane, 2016, p. 69).

36. He only had two choices, so in comparison to Salzmann's design it may have seemed to him the lesser of two evils.

37. Behrens-Abouseif, 2007, pp. 237–238.

38. El-Habashi, 2003, pp. 161–162. Fortunately the *Comité* decided otherwise.

39. See Pflugradt-Abdel Aziz, 2009, p. 88, for a list of von Diebitsch's projects in Cairo. For drawings of Moorish-style buildings and ornamentation for the project by von Diebitsch and Owen Jone see Elfardy, 2018, figs. 3.4, 3.25-6, 3.32-4.

40. These are analyzed in detail in Volait, 1998, pp. 71–94; see also Volait, 2009a, pp. 91–109; 2012; 2016a; 2020b.

41. As was done by Max Herz for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago: Ormos, 2009; 2017.

42. Volait, 2020a, fig. 2.

43. Volait, 2016b; 2019.

44. MacKenzie, 1995, pp. 82–83; Volait, 2006b, p. 143; 2007; 2012; 2016b; 2020; Giese, Braga, 2019; Giese, Volait, Braga, 2020.

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Baudry was one of the founding members of the *Comité*. This influential body not only worked for the preservation of Egypt's medieval and pre-modern monuments,[45] it also gave them further renown both locally and internationally and helped consolidate the idea that the "Arab Style", as it was then known, was an appropriate one for local modern architecture. Members who were architects, and also frequently held prominent positions working for the government, designed many examples of Mamluk revival monuments in Cairo, including Julius Franz, Max Herz, Ṣābir Ṣabrī, Anton Lasciac and Ernesto Verrruci, to name some of the most significant.

Franz was one of the initial members of the *Comité*, having earlier (1879) been made head of the Technical Bureau of the Ministry of Waqfs. He was among the first, after Ḥusayn Fahmī mentioned above, known to have designed mosques or shrines in neo-Mamluk style, namely those of Sayyida Zaynab (1884–1885) and al-Imām al-Šāfʿī (1891–1892).[46] Secular buildings continued to be erected in neo-Mamluk style, including such important government-sponsored ones as the main Cairo railway station (Edwin Patsy, 1891–1893)[47] and the building shared between the Khedival Library and Museum of Arab Art (now the National Library and Museum of Islamic Art, Alphonse Manescalco, 1899). However, the projects of the Egyptian Ṣābir Ṣabrī, the Chief Engineer of the Ministry of Waqfs from 1892–1906, and his successors, raise the question of whether the Mamluk-revival style acquired the status of an official one for religious architecture, and whose decision this was.

Ṣabrī's oeuvre has been examined in detail[48] and raises interesting questions. His Awlād ʿInān mosque (1896) was originally erected near the Cairo Railway Station; in 1979 it was dismantled and parts of it were reassembled as the Sayyida ʿĀʾiša mosque on Ṣalāḥ Sālim Street near the citadel. The original marries Mamluk detailing from a variety of mostly 15th century sources.[49] The main facade is completely symmetrical, emphasised by the placing of the minaret above the main entrance—probably more a sign of its Beaux-Arts roots than possible Cairo precedents on Fatimid monuments.[50] Ṣabrī supervised the Riwāq al-ʿAbbāsī at the mosque of

45. For its work see in particular El-Habashi, 2001; Ormos, 2019; Volait, 2014; Reid, 2002, pp. 167–195.
46. Ormos, 2009, p. 376; Volait, 2005, p. 153.
47. Volait, 2006b, p. 142, is of the opinion that European exoticism or an association with travel and tourism better explains the choice of the Neo-Mamluk style than nationalism. Certainly, as she notes elsewhere (Volait, 2011a), Shepheard's hotel in Cairo had also acquired a room in Arab style at the same time.
48. Volait, 2006b.
49. Volait, 2006b, p. 136, suggests that the minaret reproduced the two top stories of the Qāytbāy mausoleum minaret. However, the middle tier is different, and the minaret as a whole follows a model common on a large range of minarets from that of Asanbuġā (1370) to Qurqumās (1507). She also suggests that the dome of the mosque "as visible in its current location… also evokes Qaytbay's buildings". However, the photographs and the plan (figs. 1–2) give no indication that a dome was ever part of Ṣabrī's original building; it must have been added at the 1979 rebuilding, at which time many elements in the original were altered. In any case, its arabesque pattern was current on Cairo's domes from its first appearance in the Madrasa of Jawhar al-Qunūqbāy (before 1440) until the dome of the mausoleum of Khayrbak (1502).
50. E.g. at the *mašhad* of Badr al-Ǧamālī (1085) or the mosque of al-Aqmar (1125) (the original minaret was replaced in the Mamluk period).

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al-Azhar, a project which the *Comité* signaled should be built in "Arab Style",[51] and which also combines Beaux-Arts symmetry with a variety of Mamluk borrowings.[52] Ṣabrī's work at the Sayyida Nafīsa shrine has been cited as an example of subverting historicism through its mixture of historical models and its use of epigraphic medallions with the *šahāda* rather than the usual royal titles.[53] It does not, as has been suggested, reproduce the two stories of the minaret of the complex of Qāytbāy in the Northern Cemetery,[54] the lozenge pattern on the middle storey being much closer to the minaret of the mosque of Shaykh Abū al-ʿIlā (*ca.* 1486).[55] The dome has been related to that of the complex of Farağ ibn Barqūq (1411),[56] but many similar examples of its zig-zag pattern are known from mausoleums from that of Īnāl al-Yūsufī (1392–1393) to Emir Ğanībak (1426–1427).[57]

But in any case, there was from the beginning of the appearance of Mamluk revival style no strict adherence to the use of any one chronological model. Like today's audiences, only a specialist in any case would be able to decode the precise historical references. To claim that the medallion with the *šahāda* displays Ṣabrī's subversion of the Mamluk revival style may be loading this minor decorative element with a greater weight of interpretation than it can bear. Apart from the difficulty of knowing whether it is part of the Ṣabrī's original work, medallions with the *šahāda* rather than sultanic titles are in fact not unusual in Mamluk architecture,[58] so this could simply underline the accuracy of its historicism, albeit eclectic, as usual.

The building of the Ministry of Waqf headquarters (1898) in neo-Mamluk style, also designed by Ṣabrī, does strongly suggest that, at least in matters pertaining to religion, the style had now become an official one—borne out by its subsequent stranglehold on 20th century

51. Avcioğlu, Volait, 2017, p. 1141, claim that the façade was explicitly designed to match an adjacent Mamluk building. However, no mention is made in the relevant *Comité* report (*Bulletin*, 1894, 1st ed., pp. 50–51) of any adjacent Mamluk building. It does say that the ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Katḫudā Turkish period minaret as well as the facade of an old house on the west would need to be demolished. It then mentions that the new aligned facade should be constructed in Arab style following the model of this older facade ("cette façade antique"). Quite what they mean by "cette" here is unclear—it is unlikely that they would have the anonymous house in mind. At either end of the Riwāq al-ʿAbbāsī as built are the two gates of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Katḫudā, and so being "Turkish Period" would hardly have been suitable models for "Arab style." The neo-Mamluk facade as built is, like other contemporary examples, a symmetrical composition with Mamluk elements from various periods. It does not look anything like the facade of Qāytbāy's *wakāla* which *is* adjacent to the southwest side of the facade, although it borrows one of its most conspicuous decorative features, the slightly projecting panels with dense geometric patterns.

52. The tri-lobed muqarnas-supported semi-domes of the portals of Sayyida ʿĀʾiša and the Riwāq al-ʿAbbāsī are particularly close.

53. Volait, 2006b, 136–137.

54. Volait, 2006b, p. 137.

55. Behrens-Abouseif, 2010, p. 245, fig. 200.

56. Volait, 2006b, p. 137, referencing by error the Barqūq mausoleum in the Northern Cemetery.

57. See Kessler, 1976, pp. 17–22.

58. For instance, on the sides of the zone of transition of the mausoleums of Asfūr, (1495–1500), Azrumuk al-Šarīfī (1503–1505) and Ṭarābāy al-Šarīfī (1504): see O'Kane, 2017, inscriptions nos. 87.7, 98.22, 132.2, 255.9 and 255.13-14.

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mosque design.[59] Continuing royal approval was also underlined in the neo-Mamluk design of Dimitri Fabricius for Khedive Tawfīq's mausoleum (1894). For a change we have a statement from the architect, seemingly reflecting a discussion with the patrons: "Her Majesty the Khedive's Mother and His Majesty the Khedive wishing that the building have a grand appearance and be conceived to perpetuate the memory of their August Husband and Father, Fabricius Bey took as their inspiration the most beautiful monuments of Arab architecture from the golden age".[60]

Lasciac's Oeuvre

Lasciac's background was a cosmopolitan one, with Slovenian, Friulian, Italian and Austro-Hungarian links by virtue of his upbringing in Görz/Gorizia on the Italian Slovenian border.[61] His training was apparently in Vienna,[62] but it has been suggested that his anti-Austro-Hungarian sentiments may well have encouraged him to seek employment abroad.[63] He worked in Alexandria for six years (1882–1888), spent another seven in first Naples and then Rome (1888–1895), and on his return to Egypt in 1895 settled in Cairo where he worked for a succession of members of the royal family, eventually in 1907 gaining the title of chief architect of the Khedival palaces.[64]

One of his earliest projects (1883–1887) was the Galleria Menasce in Alexandria. This large mixed commercial and residential structure has been suggested to be a fusion of the local tradition of *wakāla*s with European precedents.[65] However, much as one might like to credit his early work as being sympathetic to Egyptian models, any large building in Alexandria,[66] including private houses,[67] acquired the local term of *okelle*, and the Galleria Menasce, with its courtyard both claustrophobic and cruciform, is a far cry from any Ottoman *wakāla*s. His other work in Alexandria, like the Galleria Menasce, was also largely in neo-Renaissance style, with dashes of Baroque ornamentation.[68]

59. As in the oeuvres of Ṣabrī's successor Maḥmūd Fahmī (Volait, 2011b) and Mario Rossi (Turchiarulo, 2012). It is interesting that revivalist styles have more recently taken on an aura of state sponsorship and nationalism in Turkey, Iran and Morocco (see respectively Rizvi, 2015; Rizvi, 2003; Roberson, 2014). However, the different colonial and political background account for some elements of their widely varied trajectories.

60. Quoted from a booklet published at the time of its inauguration: Dobrowolska, Dobrowolski, 2014, p. 91.

61. Celebrated usually as an Italian architect, an identity that as we shall see may be relevant to his neo-Mamluk output, he also figures, by means of his initial Austro-Hungarian identity, in a list of Austrian architects working in Egypt: Agstner, 2001, pp. 144–145.

62. No trace of it has actually be found in the archives, but this is paralleled by the almost equally meagre records of Max Herz's study there. My thanks to the anonymous reviewer for elucidating this.

63. See below, no. 125.

64. Volait, 1989, paragraphs 14–18.

65. Volait, 2005, pp. 194–195; 2017a, p. 8; Godoli, 2006, p. 12. I am most grateful to Professor Godoli for sending me a copy of his work.

66. See the list of okelles surrounding the Place des Consuls in Pallini, 2003–2004, fig. 1.

67. Volait, 2005, p. 194.

68. Godoli, 2006, p. 12.

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One project of his years in Italy is particularly relevant, his design (1891, unbuilt) for a synagogue in Rome. This has been characterized as being in Moorish style,[69] and indeed the Moorish style was one of the most popular in late nineteenth century Europe for synagogues.[70] Not long before (1874–1882) Florence had acquired a synagogue in an eclectic style which included many neo-Mamluk elements.[71] Lasciac's composition enlarges the motif of the keel-shaped arch that was first used in Fatimid architecture, but in its derivation found on Mamluk minarets, particularly those of the Qāytbāy period where the moulding above the apex of the arch forms a pentagon rather than the usual loop.[72] Its origin in Mamluk minarets is further emphasised by the balconies supported by muqarnas corbels below each of these keel-arched recesses.

The built history of Lasciac's involvement with the Mamluk revival style began at the end of the nineteenth century with two simultaneous projects, one in which he was the architect, another the supervisor of the contractor. The first was the rooms in a palace of Ḥalīm Pasha that he refurbished 1895.[73] This included a dining room in neo-Gothic style but also a salon in Arab style. The only available photo of the salon shows a room with a conventional European fireplace and window, with only some trappings of Islamic design elements, particularly an upper gallery with an arcade of nine arches with *ablaq* (alternating black and white) voussoirs.[74] The two arches of the alcove on the right, however, have a trilobed arch that at first glance look as if they have strayed from the neo-Gothic style room that he also designed for the same palace.[75] However, they are in fact an almost exact replica of the top of the late fifteenth century Qāytbāy minbar installed in the Ḫānqāh of Faraǧ b. Barqūq which had been illustrated in Prisse d'Avennes's *L'art arabe*.[76]

A little later, from 1899–1900, Lasciac supervised the contractor, Battigelli, on the construction of the Zogheb villa facing what it now al-Qaṣr al-ʿAynī Street in Cairo, designed by Max Herz. This was one of the finest of neo-Mamluk villas in Egypt.[77] Although again the interior plan conformed to European models, the decoration and furnishing of the many rooms was almost exclusively in Mamluk revival style.[78]

69. Godoli, 2006, p. 13.
70. Krinsky, 1985, pp. 81–85.
71. Krinsky, 1985, pp. 348–351.
72. On those from Qāytbāy's Northern Cemetery complex (1472) and his minaret at al-Azhar (1495), as well as that of the mosque of emir Ḫušqadam al-Aḥmadī (1486): Behrens-Abouseif, 2010, figs. 186, 201 and 204.
73. Volait, 2017a, p. 10; my thanks to the author for this reference, correcting earlier accounts of these rooms as having been in the palace of his son, Saʿīd Ḥalīm.
74. Volait, 2009a, pl. 158.
75. Volait, 2009a, pl. 157.
76. Prisse d'Avennes, 1999, p. 49.
77. Ormos, 2009, pp. 391–400.
78. For detailed illustrations see Ormos, 2009, pp. 417–421, figs. 246–262.

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Lasciac's first construction in neo-Mamluk style came slightly later (1907–1908) with the commission to design an extension to the palace of ʿUmar Sulṭān in Cairo.[79] This was situated less than 100m from the earlier neo-Mamluk Ministry of Waqfs building designed by Ṣābir Ṣabrī.[80] The extension is termed a *salāmlik*,[81] but it was a much larger project than the term *salāmlik* would suggest: rather than being the single exterior room that was typical of the time, it also comprised a gallery for the patron's extensive collection of Pharaonic and Islamic antiquities, and three adjoining *maqʿad*s.[82] The whole building complex was known as the *Dār al-Maṭḥaf*, the Museum Residence.[83]

The imposing entrance opposite the *salāmlik* had a trilobed arch and *muqarnas* zone of transition, with a low relief carving on the spandrels with an epigraphic medallion in the manner of the late fifteenth-century portals of Qāytbāy and al-Ghawrī.[84] A small room adjoining the entrance gate was made of brick rather than the stone used for the rest of the project.[85] Different coloured bricks seem to have been used for its decoration, in the manner of the Ottoman buildings of the area between Cairo and Alexandria that Lasciac would certainly have been familiar with from his journeys between the two cities (or from their reproductions, as in fig. 11). The *salāmlik* opposite features three *maqʿad*s, one massive example with five arches (fig. 2), recalling the Mamluk example of Mamāy near the Qalāwūn complex, another of two bays to the left of the main gallery building[86] and yet another two-bay *maqʿad*, but which, surprisingly, faced the street (fig. 3).[87]

79. An earlier draft of this paper was presented at the conference *Antonio Lasciac: un architetto tra Italia, Egitto e Slovenia. Storia, disegno e tecnica* at Gorizia organized in December 2014. Subsequently my paper was sent to the editors, Drs. Barillari and Kuzmin, for publication, but lack of funding stalled the appearance of the proceedings. The attentive reader will notice many correspondences between the comparisons used in my text and in Dr. Kuzmin's *Antonio Lasciac tra oriente e occidente: La villa sul Rafut*. Dr. Kuzmin did acknowledge my conference presentation in two footnotes (17 and 28, pp. 260 and 277), but the correspondences amount to much more than those two instances, and the draft of my paper, specifically requested by Dr. Kuzmin along with its illustrations, does not figure in his bibliography. Unfortunately, but consistently, neither is his use of nine of my photographs (3.2-47, 3.2-55a-b, 3.2-57, 3.2-59, 3.2-61, 3.2-63, 3.2-66 and 3.5-20a) acknowledged in the "Fonti delle Illustrazioni" on pp. 329–331.

80. On Ǧāmiʿ Šarkas Street, now Muḥammad Ṣabrī Abū ʿAlam; the main entrance was the side street, al-Hūwayātī (now Yūsuf al-Ǧindī).

81. A reception room for male visitors; situated near the entrance to a villa so that the visitors would not have to encounter female members of the family. In Ottoman houses it was a room beside the entrance to a house, but with the erection of European style villas in which the entrance opened on to a central lobby from which the other rooms could be easily accessed it was felt that more privacy was required, and the *salāmlik* became a separate building outside the villa: Asfour, 1993, p. 133.

82. A *maqʿad*, was a deep balcony, used as a sitting place for male members of the household, usually fronted by two or more arches, with a view over a courtyard.

83. Mercedes Volait has often noted the correspondences of collectors of Islamic art and neo-Mamluk style here and in the earlier villas of French patrons in Cairo and the Museum of Islamic art.

84. Chiozza, 2005, p. 134.

85. Chiozza, 2005, p. 133.

86. Volait, 2005, fig. 151. Volait (Leconte, Volait, 1998, pp. 71–72) suggests that the *maqʿad* Mamāy might also have been invoked in the triple-arched porch of the Delort de Gléon villa in Cairo. However, *maqʿad*s never projected from a façade.

87. For another view see Volait, 2005, fig. 153.

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How successful this was as a sitting area (male only of course) we shall never know (it was not imitated, as far as I know, by other architects), but its view towards passersby on the exterior is a departure from all previous examples (which faced an interior courtyard), and was presumably sanctioned by the patron before construction began.



Fig. 2. Cairo, *maqʿad* of Antiquities Gallery of ʿUmar Pasha (1907) (Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, after Chiozza).

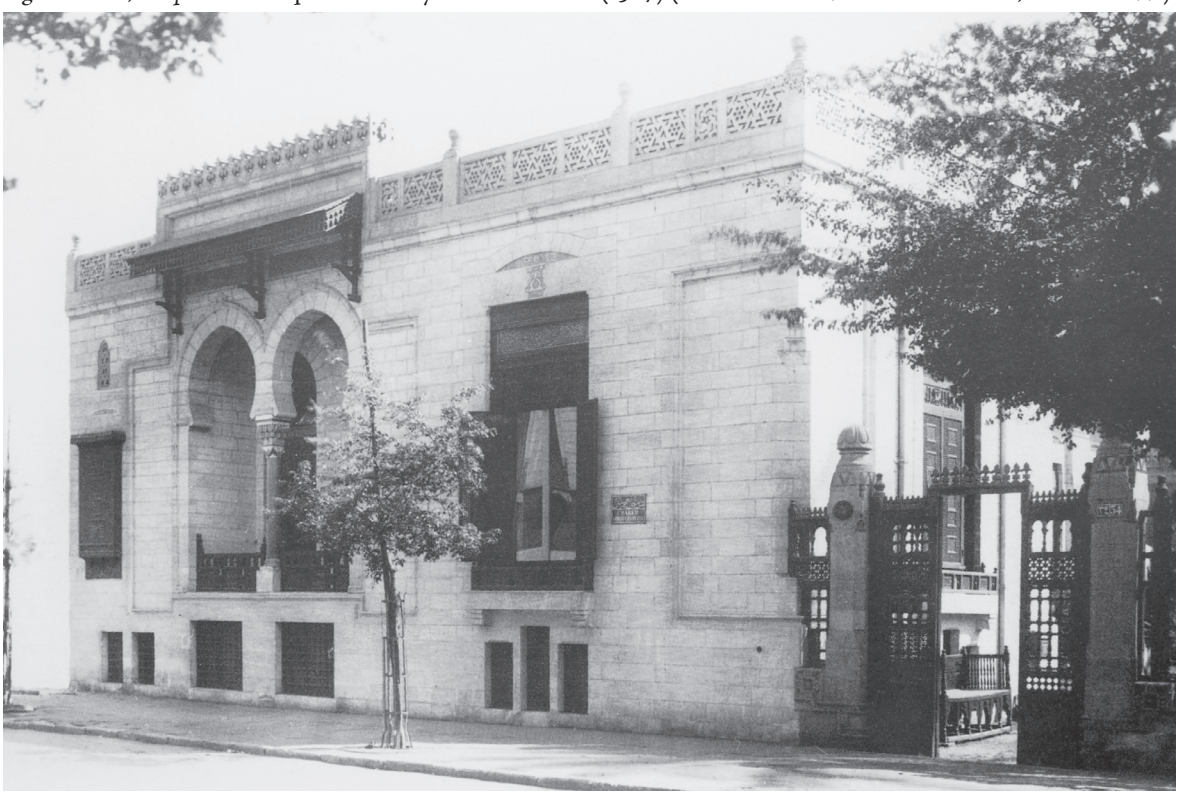


Fig. 3. Cairo, *maqʿad* of Antiquities Gallery of ʿUmar Pasha (1907) (Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, after Chiozza).

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The custom of installing one or more rooms with neo-Mamluk décor in a neo-Renaissance building continued with the palace of Yūsuf Kamāl at Matariyya on the northern outskirts of Cairo (1908).[88] Two early photographs in the collection of the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, Rome, show a room with furniture that seems to have been specially commissioned for it. One of the photographs shows a cupboard that incorporated inscriptions in the name of the Mamluk Sulṭān Barqūq (r. 1382–1389, 1390–1399) and which is now in the collection of the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, registered as having come from the collection of Yūsuf Kamāl, although earlier it was in the collection of Alphonse Baudry (fig. 4).[89] The room seems to have been designed to show off the collection of Islamic works of art collected by the patron, including tile panels on the wall, mostly probably Ottoman Syrian work. The ceiling may have incorporated some Mamluk or Ottoman work, although the resolution of the photograph does not permit certainty in this aspect. I was able to visit the palace recently, but the director had no knowledge of this room.[90] It could have been destroyed or altered out of all recognition, or perhaps the caption of the photograph collection is mistaken.[91] But intriguingly, I was shown another room there, decorated in neo Mamluk style (figs. 5–6).[92] The ceiling here is modern, but its walls are almost completely covered in Ottoman Syrian tiles (fig. 7), and it has a floor and fountain in inlaid marble of traditional design that may have come from an earlier Mamluk or Ottoman monument (fig. 8).

A drawing of the same year (1908) by Lasciac for a school at Ğabbārī in Alexandria also survives. It was to be a completely symmetrical building, and again included (here used as corridors) arcades of five bays that were seen in one of the *maqʿad*s at the ʿUmar Sulṭān palace.[93]

Lasciac's imposing villa near Gorizia in northern Italy was built in 1909.[94] It has an impressive entrance gate and porter's lodge, with two large pointed horseshoe arches framing the entrance and exit, typical of those of later Mamluk *īwān*s. It is made of brick, and an attempt has been made to imitate the decorative effect of different colored bricks found in monuments of the Egyptian Delta, although here the black color is obtained merely by painting

88. Chiozza, 2005, p. 139.

89. It can be seen above the mantlepiece on the left on the photograph of the interior of the house of Baudry in Cairo: Leconte, Volait, 1998, p. 88; my thanks to the anonymous reviewer for this information. Volait, 2016a, pp. 30–31 (repeated almost identically in Volait, 2020b, p. 89, and yet again, echoing the "Replica and Reuse" of its title, in Volait, 2020c, p. 240, and with impeccable self-plagiarism once more in Volait, 2021, p. 166) notes that the cupboard is now on display in the Mamluk halls of the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo but suggests that "le guide des collections convient que pareil mobilier est unique en son genre pour cette époque". My ignorance of the piece's earlier history was unfortunate, but my entry (O'Kane, 2012, p. 134) notes the nineteenth century European-style mouldings on it, making it clear that it must have been built to incorporate earlier panels in the name of Sulṭān Barqūq.

90. I am most grateful to Mahmud ʿEid al-Amir for his hospitality in my visit.

91. See n. 69 above for a similar case of mislabelling.

92. Also illustrated in Johnson, 2006, pp. 140–141.

93. Volait, 1989, pp. 265–273, and http://books.openedition.org/cedej/249, unnumbered and unpaginated figure; Chiozza, 2005, p. 140.

94. Barillari, 1997, pp. 19-30; Kuzmin, 2012, pp. 49–58; Chiozza, 2005, pp. 91–100; Barillari et al., 2014, pp. 59–63.

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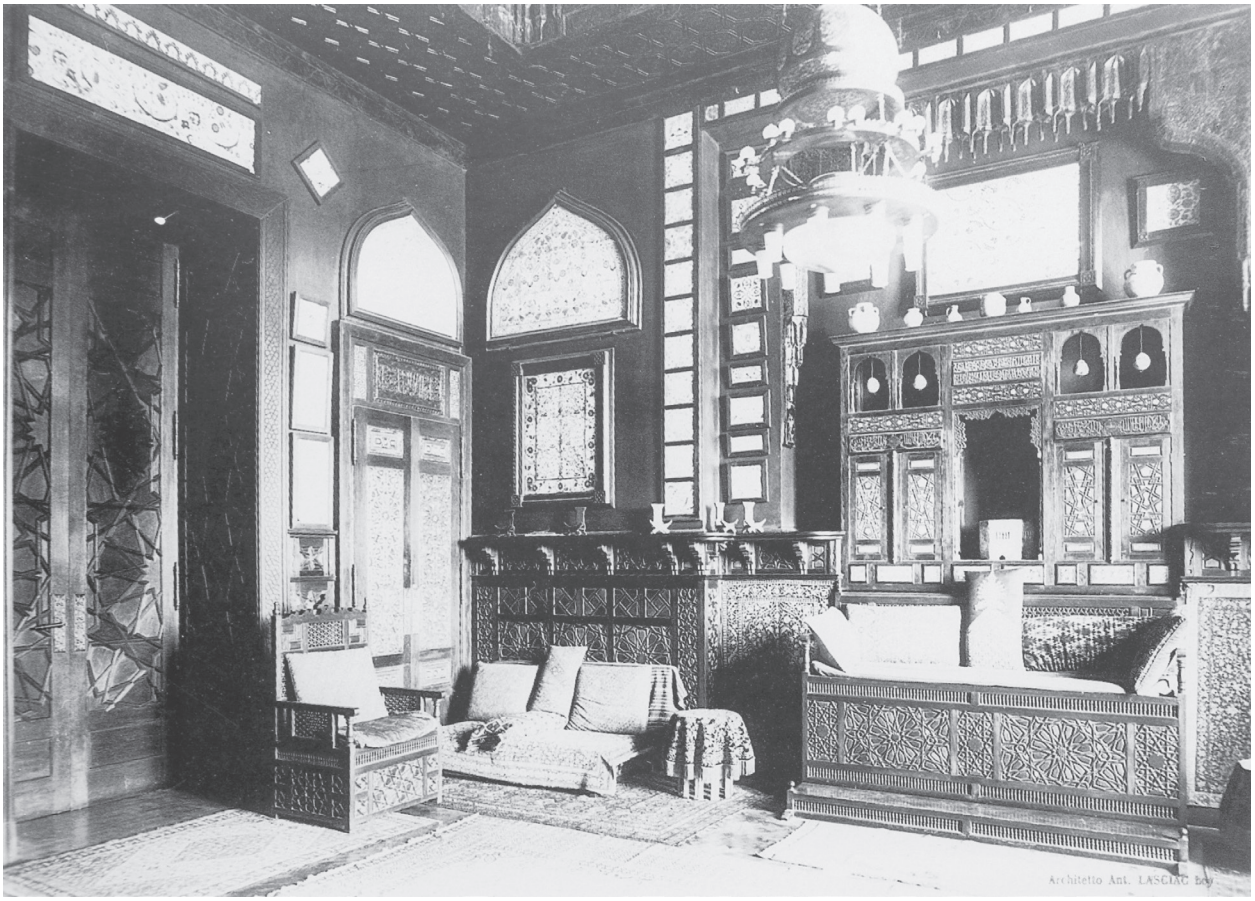


Fig. 4. Matariyya, Palace of Yūsuf Kamāl, neo-Mamluk style room (Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, after Chiozza).



Fig. 5. Matariyya, Palace of Yūsuf Kamāl, neo-Mamluk style room (photo: B. O'Kane, 2015).



Fig. 6. Matariyya, Palace of Yūsuf Kamāl, neo-Mamluk style room (photo: B. O'Kane, 2015).

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Fig. 7. Matariyya, Palace of Yūsuf Kamāl, neo-Mamluk style room, detail of Ottoman Syrian tiles (photo: B. O'Kane, 2015).



Fig. 8. Matariyya, Palace of Yūsuf Kamāl, neo-Mamluk style room, detail of fountain (photo: B. O'Kane, 2015).

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the surface of the brick. The spandrels of the arch have a most un-Mamluk pattern, however, displaying rows of two bricks placed vertically with alternating longer sides facing upwards and downwards (fig. 9). The painted brick panels on either side of the inside of the gateway spell out the names of Lasciac and his wife in large square Kufic letters (fig. 10). Square Kufic on this scale is very rare in Islamic architecture in Cairo, the only example comparable in size being that on the drum of one of the two mausoleums of the complex of the mother of Sulṭān Ḥasan in the Qarāfa al-Ṣuġrā.[95] That monochrome example may have been less likely to attract attention than the smaller but colorful inlaid marble panels within the mausoleum of Sulṭān Qalāwūn (1284) at the sides of the entrance *īwān*s of the Sulṭān Ḥasan (1363) and Muʾayyad Shaykh (1420) complexes.[96] In 1900 Lasciac had traveled to Istanbul to supervise the construction of a palace (in art nouveau style) he had designed for the mother of the Khedive.[97] There, in the grounds of the Topkapi Saray Palace, he might have come across the Çinili Kiosk, the soffit of whose entrance arch also has large scale square Kufic in mirror writing.[98] The topmost part of the gate is surrounded by wooden eaves with lambrequin patterns that correspond closely to those published in 19th century sources.[99] At the rear below the eaves are three keel-arched windows with decorative triangles on top (fig. 9); similar, but slightly taller ones, are found on the tower of the villa. This motif is not found on medieval architecture in Cairo, but an almost identical design in the same red and black colours can be seen on a plate of a house in Alexandria in Bourgoin's *Les arts arabes* (fig. 11).

The villa at Gorizia itself is, as usual, built on a western plan. The tower in the shape of a minaret attached to it is a distinctly Islamic touch that was also found in contemporary villas built in the new Cairo suburb of Heliopolis.[100] The main entrance to the villa is of stone, surmounted by a fluted semi-dome supported on muqarnas. Below is a window with a *muqarnas* lintel and two engaged columns. The door has a lintel with a geometric pattern and a relieving arch above. The composition as a whole is closely related to fifteenth century Mamluk examples, such as the complex of al-Ašraf Barsbāy (1424) or that of Sulṭān Qāytbāy (1474) in the Northern Cemetery (fig. 12). The knotted molding below the lintel encloses on either side a square containing a medallion with stylized acanthus leaves, an almost exact copy of the center of a similar medallion in the vestibule of the complex of Sulṭān Ḥasan (1363) (fig. 13). The Sulṭān Ḥasan medallion was also used as a model for the half medallions that appear

95. Behrens-Abouseif, 2007, fig. 180.

96. My thanks for Mercedes Volait for reminding me of those of al-Muʾayyad Shaykh. Reproductions of them had also been published in Bourgoin's *Précis de l'art arabe*, pl. 5.

97. Chiozza, 2005, pp. 124–126.

98. Illustrated in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiled_Kiosk#/media/File:Tiled_Kiosk_1227.jpg, accessed on 13 March 2020. Strictly speaking this is not square Kufic but a large scale *naskh* in *banna'i* technique, i.e. made of juxtaposed rectangular monochrome-glazed bricks, but the effect is very similar.

99. Bourgoin, 1892, pls. XXVII–XXVIII.

100. For example, the palace of prince Ḥusayn Kāmil: Volait, 2006a; for another smaller villa at Heliopolis, designed by André and Robbida (1907) with a minaret-like tower see Ilbert, Volait, 1984, p. 34.

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Fig. 9. Gorizia, Villa Lasciac, rear of entrance lodge (photo: B. O'Kane, 2014).

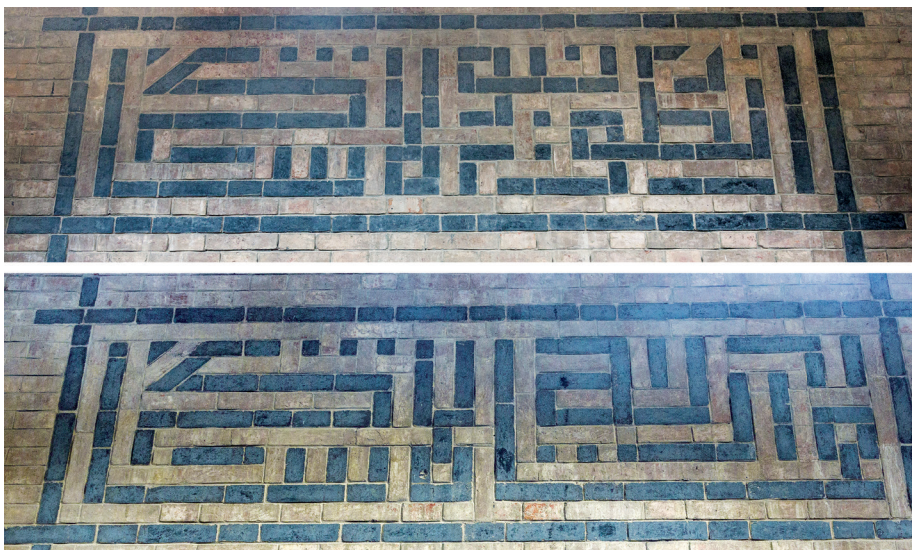


Fig. 10. Gorizia, Villa Lasciac, names of Antonio Lasciac and his wife in square Kufic, interior of entrance lodge (photo: B. O'Kane, 2014).

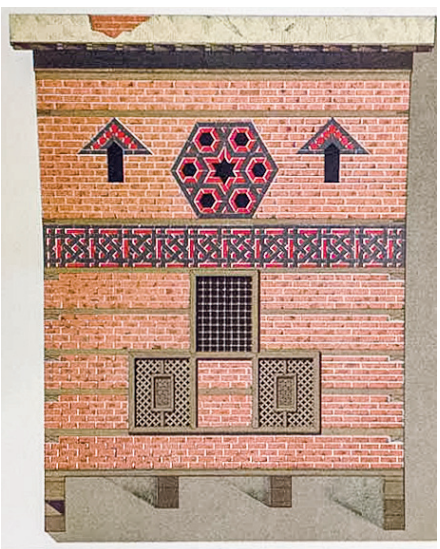


Fig. 11. Façade of House in Alexandria (after Bourgoin, *Les arts arabes, architecture*, pl. IV.g).

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between the groin-vaulted corbels[101] of the tower (fig. 14). The design had been reproduced in Bourgoin's *Les arts arabes*,[102] and its popularity in neo-Mamluk architecture is also shown by the multiple copies of it in the decoration of the courtyard of the Saint Maurice house in Cairo (1872–1879).[103] A photograph also exists of moldings made from it in the workshop of Ambroise Baudry in the nineteenth century.[104] In the same photograph, next to that of the Sulṭān Ḥasan medallion, is a molding of a geometric pattern identical to that on the lintel of the door of the Lasciac villa.



Fig. 12. Left: Cairo, Complex of Sulṭān Barsbāy (1424), entrance (photo: B. O'Kane, 2008); right: Gorizia, Villa Lasciac, entrance (photo: B. O'Kane, 2014).



Fig. 13. Left: Cairo, Complex of Sulṭān Ḥasan (1363), detail of vestibule (photo: B. O'Kane, 2006); right: Gorizia, Villa Lasciac, detail of entrance (photo: B. O'Kane, 2014).



Fig. 14. Gorizia, Villa Lasciac, detail of vault at base of tower (photo: B. O'Kane, 2014).

101. These groined fan vaults, which first occur in Islamic architecture in the mosque of Divriği (1228) in Anatolia, appear first in Cairo in the complex of Alǧāy al-Yūsufī (1373) (Behrens-Abouseif, 2007, fig. 193), and remain popular throughout the fifteenth century.
102. Bourgoin, 1892, pl. 55.
103. Volait, 2012, fig. 51. I am indebted to Mercedes Volait for this reference.
104. Volait, 2012, fig. 52.

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Above the entrance to the tower at roof level is a molded concrete band that show two intertwining band of abstract leaves (fig. 15). Similar examples are plentiful on Mamluk architecture, for instance on the stone minbar of the mosque of Aqṣunqūr (1347) (fig. 15). A late nineteenth century photograph of discarded stone carvings from the restoration of the mosque of al-Mu'ayyad also displays related examples.[105] The balconies at the base of the minaret tower have stone grilles with a central square surrounded by four rectangles (fig. 16). A model for this is shown in an illustration in Bourgoin's *Précis de l'art arabe* (fig. 16).[106]



Fig. 15. Upper: Cairo, minbar of mosque of Aqṣunqūr (1347) (photo: B. O'Kane, 2009); lower: Gorizia, Villa Lasciac, detail of vault at base of tower (photo: B. O'Kane, 2014).

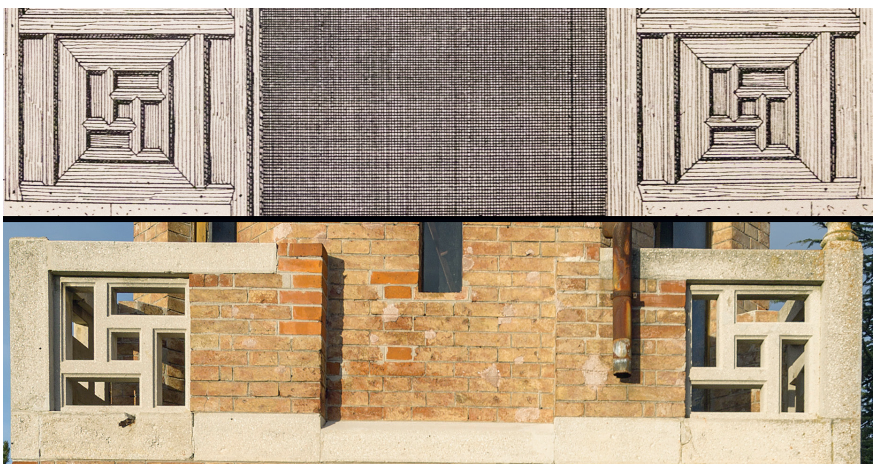


Fig. 16. Bourgoin, *Précis de l'art arabe*, detail of pl. 9; bottom: Gorizia, Villa Lasciac, detail of stone carving at base of tower (photo: B. O'Kane, 2014).

105. Volait, 2012, fig. 20.
106. Bourgoin, 1892, vol. III, pl. 9. The caption declares the model to have been an example of domestic architecture in Cairo.

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Arabesque designs are found on the lower balcony of the villa's tower, both on the balustrade and on the spandrels of the polylobed arch behind it.[107] Similar ones are used for the dome decoration, which can be seen better in the semi-circular mould that has been preserved in the garden.[108] The carved stone domes of Mamluk Cairo are unique in the Islamic world, and from the second half of the fifteenth century onwards examples with exclusively arabesque decoration are known. That of Qānībāy beside the citadel (1506) is a particularly close analogue.[109] Another arabesque is used for a cement molded lozenge set lower on the brick walls: this too is a variation on one from the Sulṭān Ḥasan complex, the original in this case being a marble one (fig. 17).



Fig. 17. Left: Gorizia, Villa Lasciac, detail of stone carving on lower walls (photo: B. O'Kane, 2014); right: Complex of Sulṭān Ḥasan (1363), detail of entrance portal (photo: B. O'Kane, 2015).

At almost the same time as the villa was being erected a luxurious apartment block designed by Lasciac was going up in Cairo, that of the Assicurazione Generali insurance company.[110] The neo-Mamluk veneer includes wooden awnings at the different roof heights, a vertical series of *mašrabiyya* windows in the middle of the façade facing the main street, carved stone balconies, and a liberal sprinkling of pointed arches. The building has recently undergone restoration and the repainting has enabled the mouldings to be seen clearly once more (fig. 18).[111] Although the central boss is different, the medallion is again identical to that used previously in the Gorizia villa, copying the original of Sulṭān Ḥasan. The imitation joggled voussoirs below are typical of those of the late fifteenth century.[112]

107. Volait, 2012, pls. 41–42, notes the similarity between the arabesques in Bourgoin, 1892, pl. 90 and those in a ceiling of the French consulate, moved from the house of Saint Maurice. Both are similar to those of the Rafut villa.
108. Chiozza, 2005, p. 94.
109. O'Kane, 2012, fig. 9.
110. Barillari, 2001.
111. Elyamani et al., 2018; thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this reference.
112. Compare those of the mosque of Qiğmās al-Isḥāqī (1482): Behrens-Abouseif, 2007, fig. 293.

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Fig. 18. Cairo, Assicurazione Generali Apartment building, detail of carving (photo: B. O'Kane, 2014).

The recent cleaning of the door of the main entrance has revealed the intricate revetment of a brass grille on wood in all its glory. The pattern of a central medallion and four quarter medallions is one that was taken from the door within the courtyard of the madrasa of Sulṭān Barqūq (1386). The design was reproduced by Prisse d'Avennes,[113] but in it the proportions were altered considerably from the original, giving it a much narrower profile. But Lasciac's door (fig. 19) matches exactly the proportions of the original, showing that he either measured or drew it himself, or worked from a more faithful source. His pride in his work is shown by the reproduction of his signature in Arabic on the central boss.[114]

Given the accuracy of his Mamluk historicism, we should not be too surprised to find that he became a member of the *Comité* in 1910. He appears in minutes of the main committee from December 1910 right up until June 1914 at the start of the First World War, when because of his Austro-Hungarian nationality he was forced to leave Egypt.

From 1911 we have drawings for the Imaret Hairie Palace at Kavala, Macedonia, the birthplace of Muḥammad ʿAlī, on land owned by the khedival family.[115] Ironically, at least from the point of view of Muḥammad ʿAlī, it has numerous neo-Mamluk features such as bi-coloured relieving arches, some with joggled voussoirs, portals with *muqarnas* supporting semi-domes

113. Prisse d'Avennes, 1999, p. 96.
114. Reproduced in Volait, 2017b, p. 37, fig. 3; see also n. 1.
115. The most detailed drawings are to be found in Kuzmin, 2015a, figs. 1.3.3-7.

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Fig. 19. Left: Cairo, Assicurazione Generali Apartment building, detail of door; middle: Prisse d'Avennes, *Islamic Art in Cairo*, courtyard door, Barqūq Complex; right: courtyard door, Barqūq Complex (photo: B. O'Kane, 2014).

(not unlike that of the Rafut villa), a dome with arabesque mouldings (again, similar that of Rafut), although it also manages to incorporate Fatimid stepped crenellations.

Lasciac was able to return to Egypt after the end of the First World War in 1920. His ability to recreate not just the decoration but the form of Mamluk monuments is shown in the plans (1922) for a mausoleum for Yūsuf Kamāl (fig. 20). It was to have been built in the Northern Cemetery near the complex of Barqūq, but it never materialized.[116] Admittedly, the enormous rose window and domed skylight of the small prayer chamber that preceded the mausoleum were out of character with the models, but the dome chamber itself has many features from what seems to have been Lasicac's and many earlier architects' favorite period to copy, the late fifteenth century. Its *muqarnas* zone of transition on the interior and carving inside the dome resemble those of the tomb of Qāytbāy (1472) in the Northern Cemetery. The faceted triangles of the external zone of transition mirror those of Qiğmās al-Isḥāqī (1482). His fondness for square Kufic (used for the names of himself and his wife at the Gorizia villa)

116. Before this Khedive ʿAbbās Ḥilmī had had a Mamluk Revival mausoleum erected in the Northern Cemetery for his father Tawfīq, designed by the Dimriti Fabricius, the Greek chief architect of Khedieval buildings: Volait, 2006b, p. 141, and even earlier, in 1881, Ambroise Baudry had designed the Chapelle L.M. Schilizzi at Livorno in Italy in the style of a Mamluk mausoleum: Leconte, Volait, 1998, p. 96, figs. 92–93. Even Hassan Fathy was not averse to building a mausoleum in this form, as the one he constructed in 1946 for Ahmad Hasanein in the northern cemetery shows: http://archnet.org/sites/2624, accessed on 15 October 2015. See also Elshahed, 2020, p. 79.

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is shown by his adoption of it for the inscription circling the base of the dome, paralleled only by those on the drum of the Sulṭāniyya complex (*ca.* 1355–1360) in the Qarāfa al-Ṣuġrā further south.[117]

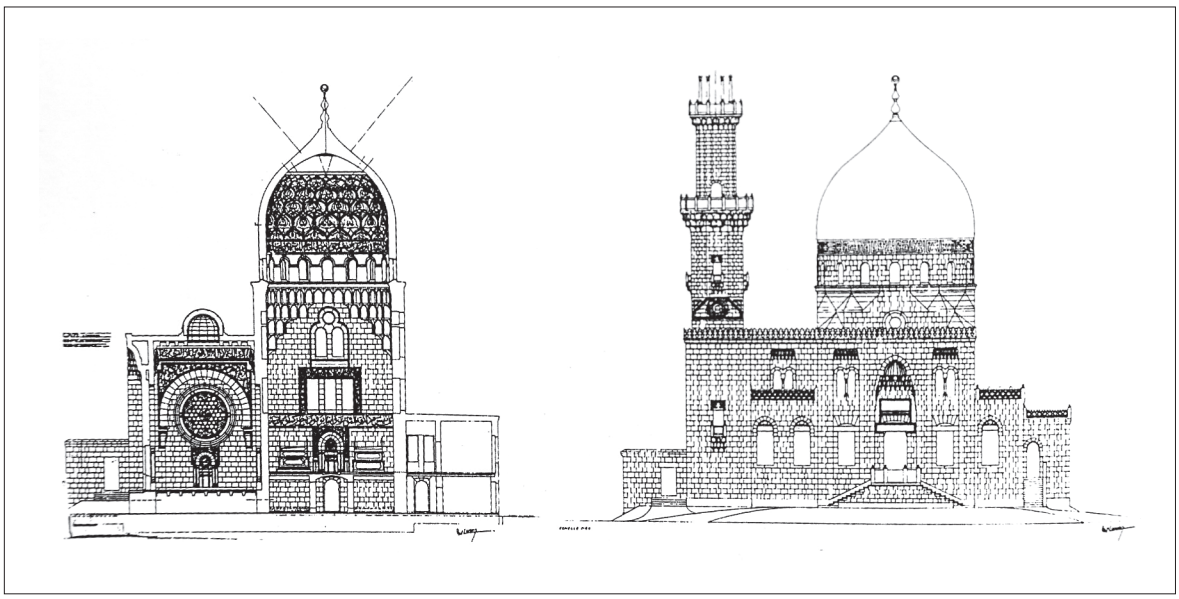


Fig. 20. Lasciac, section and elevation of a mausoleum for Yūsuf Kamāl (after Chiozza).

Undoubtedly the most impressive surviving work of Lasciac in neo-Mamluk style is the Bank Misr building on Mohamed Farid Street in Cairo (1927).[118] As Leïla El-Wakil has pointed out, the founding of the bank by Egyptians and for Egyptians was a matter of national pride.[119] An account in the main Italian newspaper *Imparziale* published in Cairo contemporary with its opening celebrates it as "an imposing edifice in Arab style".[120] Its contemporary branch at Alexandria was also made largely in neo-Mamluk style by another Italian architect, and according to an advertisement for that branch in the contemporary magazine *Alexandrie : Reine de la Méditerranée* the banks's successes were a proof of the new spirit which animated Egypt, and of which the beautiful construction on Istanbul Street was the visible symbol.[121]

Despite this overt association of nationalism with Arab style, the building's facade is quite eclectic, incorporating flanking clock towers. Its majestic eaves, with beams and coffered panels presaging the many examples inside, shade a band with semi-circles projecting alternately above and below; its closest parallel is the top panel at the back of the portable mihrab from the tomb of Sayyida Ruqayya, now in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (fig. 21), one that

117. Behrens-Abouseif, 2007, fig. 180.
118. Sakr, 1993, pp. 51–53; El-Wakil, 2016.
119. El-Wakil, 2016, pp. 173–174.
120. El-Wakil, 2016, pp. 165–166.
121. "Aussi ses succès sont-ils une preuve de l'esprit nouveau qui anime l'Égypte et dont la belle construction de la rue Stamboul est le visible symbole": anon., 1930, p. xv (not the anon., 1927 source as noted in El-Wakil, 2016, p. 174).

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had also been illustrated in Bourgoin's *Précis de l'art arabe*.[122] The background to this meander at first glance resembles conventional arabesques, but a closer inspection reveals foliage more in accord with art nouveau ornamentation, an interesting return to the decorative details that he used extensively, if incongruently, on much of his earlier work.[123]



Fig. 21. Top: detail of rear of portable mihrab of Sayyida Ruqayya (1154–1160), Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo (photo: B. O'Kane, 2012); bottom: Bank Misr building, detail of facade (photo: B. O'Kane, 2014).

Below this the façade features the same color contrasts of brick and stone found in the Rafut villa. But it is the interior that really dazzles, particularly the two halls with inlaid marble paving whose double stories each topped by a skylight permit the patterns to be viewed clearly from above. The ceilings flanking this are also outstanding. The full range of Mamluk forms and patterns is to be seen there, from the most common, beams alternating with square and rectangular coffers to the grid of octagonal coffers (popular from the 13th to the early 14th centuries), to a flat panel with a striking design of a square containing a knotted molding and a circle surrounded by eight polylobes, based on a Qāytbāy period ceiling from the mosque of al-Azhar that is now in the Museum of Islamic Art,[124] and which had earlier been reproduced in Bourgoin's *Précis de l'art arabe* (fig. 22).

A final barely perceptible neo-Islamic expression was displayed at his Children's Hospital (1931) at Sayyida Zaynab, demolished in 1987. In its scaling back of ornamentation it is in any case more in keeping with the modernist art deco style of much of the contemporary architecture in Cairo. The moldings of the panels between the first and second stories are in the shape of blind pointed arches, although their four-centered form makes them much closer to those of the Fatimid period than any Mamluk examples.[125]

122. Bourgoin, 1892, vol. 3, pl. 91.
123. Godoli, 2006, pp. 13–14. The one building that he designed completely in art nouveau style was in Istanbul, see Godoli, 2006 and n. 91 above.
124. O'Kane, 2012, p. 137.
125. Chiozza, 2005, pp. 154–155.

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Fig. 22. Left: Bank Misr building, detail of ceiling (photo: B. O'Kane, 2014); right: Bourgoin, *Précis de l'art arabe*, ceiling from al-Azhar mosque.

Conclusion

We have considered a wide range of Mamluk revival buildings in evaluating Lasciac's work. What did this style signify? There is no one answer to this, of course, and in almost all cases we are missing testimony from the patron, the architect, or anyone else who might have been involved in the architectural decision-making.

As Mercedes Volait and Godoli have shown, the term "Orientalist" in the sense of an essentialist Saidian otherness is wholly inadequate to explain the various examples of Mamluk revival in Egypt;[126] true, its earliest manifestations in Europe could reflect simple exoticism, as in the Potsdam pumping station, or a nouveaux riches taste for the flamboyant.[127] The earliest attempts at Islamic revival styles in Egypt were in neo-Moorish style, although this too has been seen as expressing a search for identity.[128] But the choice of neo-Mamluk style for the al-Rifāʿī mosque with its dynastic funerary associations was clearly something different: the determination to break from the recent past by association with a style that reflected the historical splendor of the country. This association was further underlined by khedival promotion of it at the World's Fairs of 1867 at Paris and 1873 at Vienna.

126. Volait, 2011a; 2020a; Ilbert, Volait, 1984 (in the latter article the architectural element labelled as a "mihrab" on p. 32 is in fact a *šadirwān*, the sloping marble panel below a niche than belongs to a fountain); Godoli, 2006, p. 10; 2008, p. 31; see also MacKenzie, 1995, pp. 208–209.

127. Ilbert, Volait, 1984. Referring to the neo-Mughal mansion of 1892 built by the industrialist in Tourcoing, France.

128. Ilbert, Volait, 1984, p. 34.

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The subsequent building of neo-Mamluk mansions filled with spolia from recently demolished historical monuments in Cairo by French patrons was soon followed by others of many nationalities, Syrian (the Villa Zogheb) and Egyptian (ʿUmar Sulṭān); the setting up of the *Comité* and the involvement of many of these patrons with it surely promoted the movement of a historicist architecture, which in Egypt could be seen as a neo-classicism,[129] with its many contemporary European parallels. In the meantime the Ministry of Waqfs had cemented the style for mosques, and government sponsorship had put its stamp of approval on it was structures as diverse as railway stations and national libraries or museums.

One other thesis relative to Lasciac's background, forcefully argued by Ezio Godoli, needs to be considered: was he part of the community of Italian architects and engineers working in Egypt fresh from, or with the memory of, the wars of Italian unification,[130] whose irredentist and nationalistic leanings inclined them towards Egyptian expressions of nationalism in architecture?[131] Lasciac's stay in Italy between his periods of work in Egypt would certainly hint at anti-Hapsburg sentiments, and it has been suggested that, even in circles within Europe, adoption of oriental influences was most often by those out of sympathy with the dominant ideas of imperialism.[132]

Lasciac's output from his first stay in Egypt (1882) until his death in 1946 was extraordinarily eclectic. His talent for designing in variations of the traditional Beaux Arts style, which for the early 20th century was the expected grand manner, was undoubtedly a major factor in his selection by ʿAbbās II for the post of chief architect of the Khedival palaces. Lasciac's selection of Mamluk style for his own villa could be subject to varying overlapping interpretations. It could be a wish to advertise his success in his adoptive country of Egypt, to show off his versatility, to celebrate his love of and comfort with the style, or even to relate it to his own and Egyptian empathy with nationalist sentiments. The villa remains one of Europe's most important neo-Mamluk structures. His ability in Egypt to choose in which style to build was undoubtedly limited by his patrons. But his various Mamluk revival projects, culminating in the Bank Misr, a symbol of national pride and one of Egypt's most successful neo-Mamluk buildings, are causes for celebration of a style that in his lifetime was more closely associated with Egyptian resurgence.

129. Ilbert, Volait, 1984, p. 34.

130. It may be helpful to remember that Venice only became part of a unified Italy in 1866, and Gorizia not until after the First World War.

131. In addition to Lasciac, Ciro Pantanelli, Alfonso Manescalco and Ernesto Verrucci can be cited. See Godoli, 2006, pp. 10–11; 2008, pp. 25–35; 2016.

132. MacKenzie, 1995, p. 211.

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