

2021

NOTE ON THE RESTORATION OF FIVE EGYPTIAN MOSQUES

Monica Hanna

The Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, monica.hanna@aast.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.aaru.edu.jo/jguaa>



Part of the [History Commons](#), and the [History of Art, Architecture, and Archaeology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hanna, Monica (2021) "NOTE ON THE RESTORATION OF FIVE EGYPTIAN MOSQUES," *Journal of the General Union of Arab Archaeologists*: Vol. 6 : Iss. 2 , Article 11.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.aaru.edu.jo/jguaa/vol6/iss2/11>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Arab Journals Platform. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of the General Union of Arab Archaeologists by an authorized editor. The journal is hosted on [Digital Commons](#), an Elsevier platform. For more information, please contact rakan@aarj.edu.jo, marah@aarj.edu.jo, u.murad@aarj.edu.jo. Published by Arab Journals Platform, 2021.

NOTE ON THE RESTORATION OF FIVE EGYPTIAN MOSQUES

By

Monica Samir Hanna

Acting Dean, College of Archaeology and Cultural Heritage the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the cultural loss of five Egyptian mosques in Egypt due to their renovation. While illicit digging, encroachment, and real estate unplanned development has damaged ancient Egyptian heritage, in particular in the last eleven years, Egypt has a long history of faulty restorations of Islamic monuments, which include demolition, wholesome reconstruction, and unhistorical additions. Few of the original early Islamic monuments survive today, the oldest being the Nilometer on Rawḍa Island (869 AD), which dates to two hundred years after the Arab conquest of Egypt. Interventions in the capital Cairo are often subjected to media coverage and the scrutiny of the public, but in the provinces, violations are widespread and many botched restorations go virtually unnoticed. This paper discusses five Egyptian provincial mosques whose more or less recent restoration has had catastrophic results on the original buildings: al-Mitwally mosque in Ġirġā (Sūhaġ), Qimn al-‘Arūs mosque (Bāni Sūayf), Zaġhlūl and al-Maḥally mosques in Rāšid (Baḥayra), al-‘Amry mosque in Dumiyāt. The paper will briefly describe the appearance of these buildings, discuss their history based on the few primary (including historical photographs and accounts) and secondary sources (literature in English and Arabic), and report on an eyewitness survey of their current state carried out between 2018 and 2020, after restorations that have wiped away many of their intricate historic details. The lack of coordination between the Ministry of Endowments and the Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism has resulted in renovation instead of restoration for these mosques. This does not only affect the Islamic heritage of rural Egypt, but the urban fabric around those mosques accordingly. In the conclusions, the author proposes a way forward to overcome problems in the coordination and execution of restoration works and guarantee the functionality of the buildings for the communities they serve without damaging their historical features. First, the author proposes an implemented code as an addendum to the antiquities law that is enforced on all companies working in conservation. Secondarily, workshops carried out by various academic boards and the Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism should discuss the concept of authenticity and how this should codify all future heritage practices.

KEYWORDS: Islamic heritage, Restoration, Mosques, Rāšid, Ġirġā, Dumiyāt.

I. INTRODUCTION

Damage and destruction of ancient Egyptian heritage caused by illicit digging, encroachment, and real estate unplanned development has been the focus of great attention in the last ten years¹. Approximately at the same period, increasing concern has been voiced out regarding the modern heritage of Cairo² and some of the largest Egyptian cities (Alexandria, al-Mansūra, Port Sa'id)³. Nevertheless, there seems to be less concern about the dangers Islamic heritage has been facing in Cairo and even more in the provinces, where public scrutiny is easier to avoid. The situation seems to have two main reasons: the lack of proper regulations regarding restoration of historic buildings; the fact that restoration works are often carried out under the supervision of the Ministry of Endowments rather than the Ministry of Antiquities. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that even in the case the latter is supervising the works, large irregularities have been reported.

When it comes to Islamic monuments, Egypt has a long history of intrusive restorations, sometimes with an ideological agenda⁴. These eventually resulted in an accumulation of more or less legitimate additions or demolitions, rebuilding, and unhistorical reconstructions carried out for centuries, often wiping out any trace of the original building. It is quite telling, for example, that despite the fact that Islam entered the country in 641 AD, the oldest Islamic monument standing in its original form dates to more than two hundred years later: the Nilometer on Rawḍa Island (869). The oldest part of the famous mosque of 'Amrū bin al-'Aṣ in Historic Cairo, which claims primacy in Egypt, dates to the enlargement of 827, while the next oldest original Islamic monument is the mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn, dating to 884. Several venerated shrines throughout Cairo and Egypt have faced damaging restorations or complete reconstructions during the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century: al-Rifā'i shrine (1869), al-Ḥusain mosque (1874), and Sayida Zānab mosque (1940) in Cairo alone. Other notable examples from outside the capital include Aḥmad al-Badawy mosque in Tanta (1975), al-'Aṭārīn mosque (end of the 19th century-beginning of the 20th century), Sīdy Ġābar mosque (1955) and Abū al-'Abbās al-Mursi mosque (1929-45), all in Alexandria. Heavy reconstruction work in the mosque of al-Zāhir Baībars in north-east Cairo started in the same worrisome direction in 2017, but is now at a halt.

¹ IKRAM & HANNA 2013: 34-39; HANNA 2013: 371-375; HANNA 2015: 47-64.

² DUQEIL 2020; ELSHAHED 2020.

³For example Save Mansoura (<https://www.facebook.com/SaveMansoura/>), Save Alex (<https://www.facebook.com/savealexeg/>), Egypt Heritage Task Force (<https://www.facebook.com/EgyptHeritageTaskForce/>; <https://www.facebook.com/CHEHRF/>).

⁴ ALSAYYAD 2005; SANDERS 2008.

Unfortunately, the trend is not over and extensive, unjustified demolitions are taking place all over the country. Being such a long-lasting and far-reaching phenomenon, affecting all urban spaces in Egypt, from monuments to domestic architecture, from parks to other public spaces, we can veritably speak of the disappearance of the historic Egyptian city. It is a tragedy that, if cannot be stopped, must be at least documented. I would like to present here some brief observations on five recent cases from the Governorates of Sūhaġ, Bani Sūayf, Baḥayra, and Dumiyat. Contrary to other more or less patent violations, these went virtually unnoticed and for this reason I believe it is important to report about them here.

II. AL-MITWALLY MOSQUE, ĞIRĠĀ (SŪHAĠ)

There is scarce information about this mosque, which was allegedly constructed by an Amīr Muḥammad Abū al-Sanūn in the 14th century. An inscription to the right of the original *miḥrāb* documented a renovation that was carried out in 1180 AH/ 1766 AD.⁵ The mosque collapsed already in the 19th century due to a series of devastating high Nile floods⁶ and lay in ruin until it was demolished in 1901/02. In 1947, the seat of the Ğirġā Religious Institute was built in its place; only the minaret was spared and is still standing. The latter is variably dated from the beginning of the 14th century to the beginning of the 17th century.

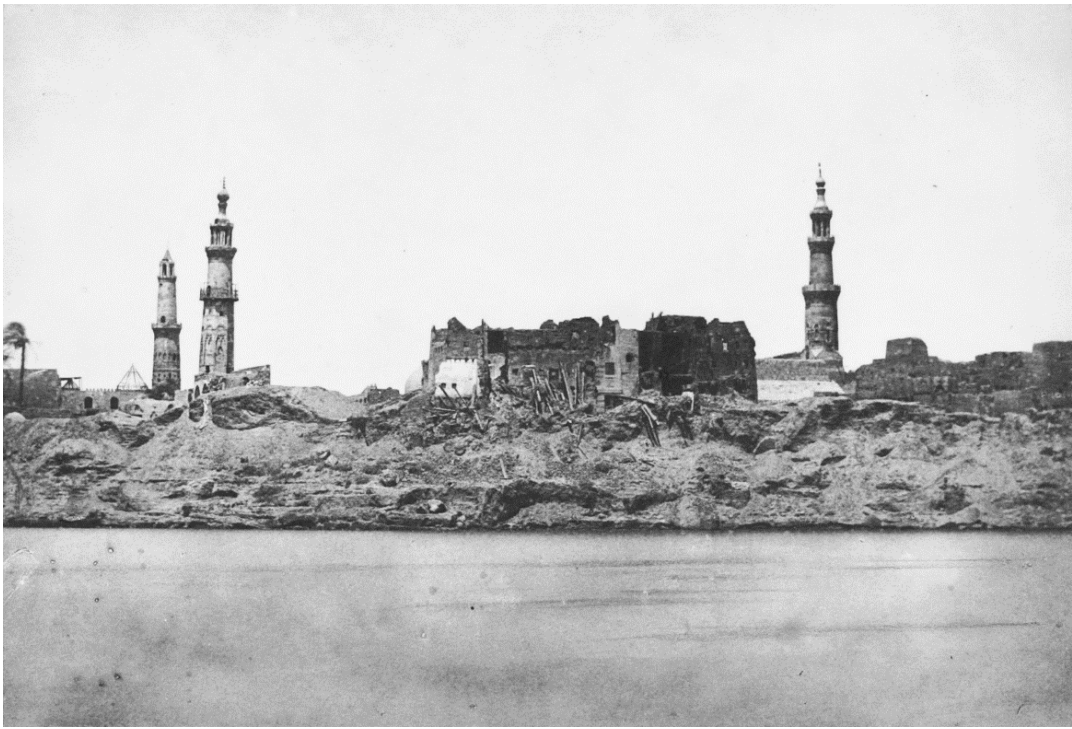
Maxime du Camp photographed the building in 1849-50 [FIGURE 1], when it was a few hundred meters from the river bank, but not much can be made of the mosque because it is behind a series of ruined buildings on the front line of the riverbank⁷. Only a portion of what looks like a white limestone wall can be made out. Another ruined mosque, that of ‘Aly Bey,⁸ with its own minaret, stands to the south, partly collapsed, the arcades around its ṣaḥn are clearly visible. In the background the minaret and the wooden dome of Šaiḥ Ġalāl mosque are visible. Another photo by Maxime du Camp [FIGURE 2] shows the mosque of ‘Aly Bey in the foreground and the mosque of al-Mitwally in the background: it was built with a low limestone wall, large pointed windows on the southern side, and recessed rectangular windows on the western side.

⁵ ‘UṬMĀN 1988: 220.

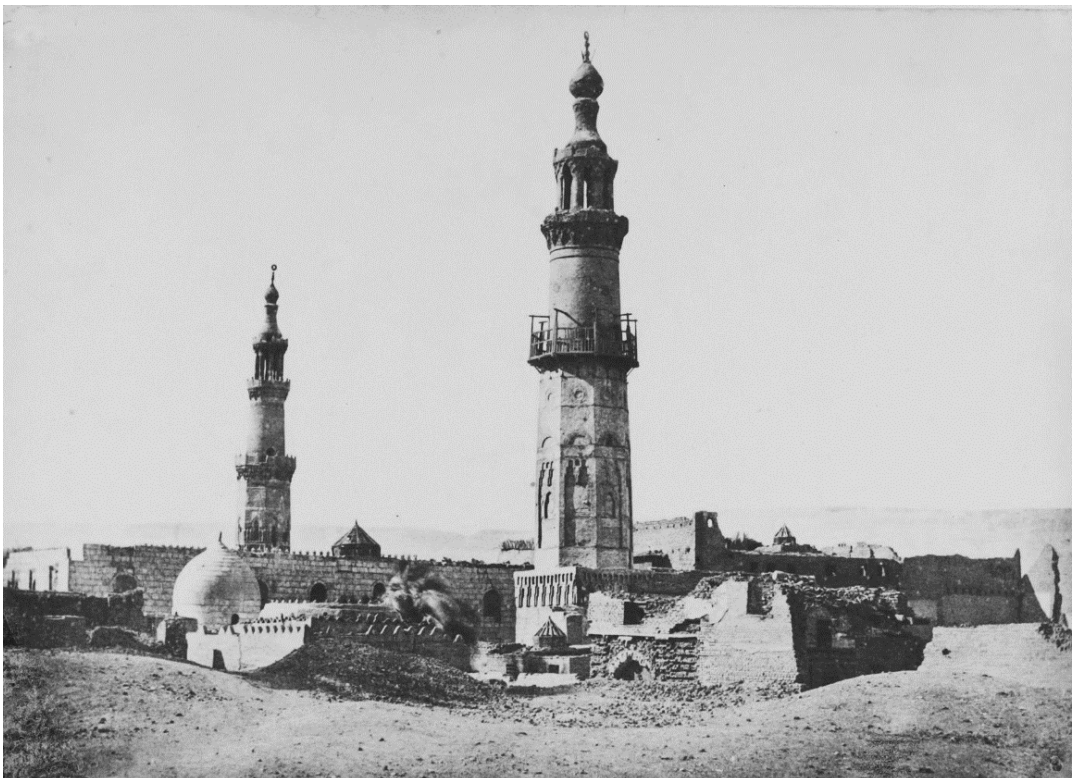
⁶ «Its numerous ma’d’nehs render its distant appearance rather imposing. Several of its mosques are very well built; and it contains extensive soo’cks. It suffers, like several other towns in Egypt, from the encroachments of the river during every successive inundation; large portions of the bank falling from the violence of the current, and from being saturated with water» LANE 2000: 274.

⁷ DU CAMP 1849-50b; DU CAMP 1849-50a.

⁸ The Turkish bath in town is also named after this man.



[FIGURE 1]: The mosque of al-Mitwally is to the right
Maxime du Camp, «Vue de Girgeh et du littoral enlevé - par l'inondation du Nil», 1849-50.



[FIGURE 2]: The mosque of al-Mitwally is to the left
«Maxime du Camp, Mosquée d'Ali-Bey, à Girgeh», 1849-50.



[FIGURE 3]: The mosque of al-Mitwally is in the background to the left
View of Ġirġa by Francis Firth, 1857.



[FIGURE 4]: The ruined mosque of al-Mitwally in a photograph from around 1865

Crenellations and a wooden pointed dome are also clearly visible. A photo by Francis Firth taken in 1857 [FIGURE 3] shows the same limestone building with large windows, crenellations, and the wooden dome still standing intact on the riverbank, which seems to have further approached. The mosque of ‘Aly Bey seems completely gone except for the minaret, which still stood at that time. Another photo, allegedly from 1865 [FIGURE 4], shows the al-Mitwally mosque now damaged: part of the exterior wall has collapsed and so the section of the two-aisled riwāq towards the Nile. Stone and brick arches, granite columns, and Corinthian capitals are clearly visible; one column reclines towards the eastern side. This is how Amelia Edwards described the building around 1874: «A ruined mosque with pointed arches, roofless cloisters, and a leaning column that must surely have come to the ground by this time, stands just above the landing-place. A hundred years ago, it lay a quarter of a mile from the river; ten years ago it was yet perfect; after a few more inundations it will be swept away»⁹.

What happens afterwards is less clear. By 1947 the mosque had been completely demolished and the bank of the Nile reclaimed and secured, while the site was used to build a large Islamic revival building. The old minaret was preserved and is now closed in a small irregular courtyard, protected by a metal door. At the base of the minaret there are some stone blocks, including a couple of Corinthian capitals, what looks like a decorated plinth, and a fragment of a column drum, undoubtedly from the original mosque [FIGURE 5]. Three more massive granite columns lay at the southern extremity of the enclosure wall of the Ğirġā Religious Institute, in the public square, until 2019 [FIGURE 6]¹⁰. During a site visit in September 2020, the wall had been rebuilt and the columns were no longer there. Thanks to the courtesy of Mr. Maḥmūd ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Aḥmad, Inspector of Islamic Archaeology, I was informed that at least one of the columns had been deposited on the ground in front of the mosque of al-Sitt Salma. If this arrangement¹¹ is certainly better than dumping the columns in a landfill, as it appeared after a first investigation, it must be said that it is not ideal as the column is exposed to the elements, the risks of further destruction, and perhaps complete loss. There is no trace of the other two columns that used to belong to the mosque of al-Mitwally. While someone might argue that these columns are not of outstanding architectural importance, I should want to stress that all heritage is relevant and deserves protection. The al-Mitwally columns are an important part of Ğirġā’s heritage as they testify the presence of nearby ancient buildings easily accessible and the practice

⁹ EDWARDS 1877: CHAP. 7.

¹⁰ Courtesy of Dr. Muḥammad Qināwy.

¹¹Other ancient columns are scattered around the city: three marble columns and a fragmentary limestone shaft half buried on the side of the Chinese mosque; a trunk of a limestone column outside mosque al-Faḡara; another fragment of a column at the corner between the Chinese mosque street and Faḡrī ‘Abd al-Nūr Street.

in Islamic architecture well into the Ottoman period to reuse older architectural elements.



[FIGURE 5]: Graeco-Roman spolia at the base of the minaret of al-Mitwally (©Monica Hanna 2020)



[FIGURE 6]: Three granite columns from the destroyed mosque of al-Mitwally dumped by the Ğirĝā Religious Institute (Photo courtesy Dr. Muḥammad Qināwy)

III. QIMN AL-‘ARŪS MOSQUE, BANI SŪAĪF

There is no information about this mosque, which used to exist in the village of Qimn al-‘Arūs, in the Bani Sūayf Governorate. Otto Meinardus includes the village in his gazetteer of Christian holy sites as the place where St. Anthony the Great was born in the third century¹². He mentions «*a large rectangular mosque, at one time a church*» with «*a few ancient columns, which, according to the testimony of the villagers, belonged to the ancient Church of Saint Anthony*»¹³ in the courtyard. I visited in January 2020 to verify Meinardus’ claims and found out that the mosque had been recently renovated under the supervision of the Ministry of Endowments. Members of the local community confirmed the existence of spolia but added that they had been discarded during the «restoration». The current mosque is a modern construction of no historical value. No other documentation was available on this building.

IV. ZAĠHLŪL MOSQUE, RĀŠID

This was one of the largest mosques in Egypt (91 x 48 m), competing in size with al-Azhar in Cairo. The irregular plan of the building betrayed a series of enlargements and modifications [FIGURE 7]. While the core of the mosque is dated to the Mamluk period, a first expansion to the south and to the west by the eponymous al-Ḥaġ Zaġhlūl, a Mamluk belonging to an Amīr Hārūn, is recorded in 1549¹⁴. More work was carried out in 1577, while the eastward expansion of the mosque was funded by al-Ḥaġ Muḥy al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir in 1587¹⁵. By that time, the mosque was divided into two large sections, or rather it was two different mosques altogether, both with its own ṣaḥn, miḥrāb, and minaret: an eastern part called al-Dīwānī and a western part called after Zaġhlūl¹⁶. The mosque was conspicuous, like much of the Ottoman architecture of the city¹⁷, in its reuse of granite and marble bases, columns, and capitals from Late Roman buildings. Most of the architecture was constructed in maṅḡūr bricks, with shallow Ottoman-style domes, and four-centered asymmetrical arches resting on piers crowned by seemingly undecorated wooden impost blocks. The asymmetry of the arcades was due to the employment of columns of different heights and sizes.

At the end of the 18th century, the mosque was still in relatively good shape and was described in these terms by the Napoleonic *savants*: «*Nous avons tâché de prendre une idée de la principale mosquée de Rosette, autant du moins que les préjugés du pays ont pu nous le*

¹² MEINARDUS 2002: 209.

¹³ MEINARDUS 2002: 209.

¹⁴ AMIN 2008: 154.

¹⁵ AMIN 2008: 154.

¹⁶ MAHIR 1966: 141-42.

¹⁷ «None of the mosques are remarkable for beauty of architecture; though containing many granite columns taken from ancient edifices», LANE 2000: 50.

*permettre, puisque nous n'avons point eu la faculté d'y entrer. Son minaret s'élève avec grâce au milieu des airs; il est à quatre étages ou rangs de balustres. La mosquée est très vaste; mais elle n'offre point dans son plan une forme régulière: des rangées de petites colonnes à côté de grosses en décorent l'intérieur. Tout le pavé est recouvert de nattes. Dans une construction attenante à la mosquée sont des privés, et des piscines ou les dévots musulmans font leurs ablutions avant la prière. Il y a en outre d'autres bassins destinés aux mêmes usages: l'eau qui les remplit est assez malpropre, et ne m'a point paru rester souvent renouvelée. Les croisées de la mosquée sont fermées par des beaux grillages en fer d'un fort bon travail, apporté de Constantinople».*¹⁸

It was still described as standing at the end of the 19th century, here in the unenthusiastic words of the Baedeker guide: «Numerous columns from edifices of the heathen and Christian periods, many of them of granite and some of marble, are seen lying in various open spaces, particularly one of considerable size near the river, and a number of others are built into the houses. The very spacious mosque of Sakhlun is embellished with many ancient columns, but is otherwise uninteresting».¹⁹

Ḥasan 'Abd al-Wahhāb describes it as a «ruin» already in 1955.²⁰ Satellite imagery shows that in 2003 a large portion of the arcades supporting the domes of the western mosque had collapsed [FIGURE 9A], the exposed floor being invaded with high vegetation and water; photographs appearing in media reports confirm the poor state of preservation of the building with extensive loss of plaster and the collapse of several walls. The eastern mosque, on the other hand, seemed relatively intact, with the exception of the single-bay riwāq towards the western mosque, which appeared demolished and replaced by a new wall closing off the western side of the ṣaḥn. Restoration work was carried out by The Arab Contractors under the supervision of both the Ministry of Endowments and the Ministry of Antiquities in 2008²¹.

Satellite imagery from July 2009 shows the construction site after most of the structure had been pulled down (with the exception, perhaps, of the perimetral walls): sand and steel bars are on the ground, while concrete beams outline the squared partitions of the prayer hall [FIGURE 9B]. By January 2012 the seemingly intact eastern mosque had also been completely demolished and the area is now abandoned [FIGURE 9C].

The western mosque was inaugurated in 2018. While the building retained its overall plan, including the position of the ṣaḥn and of the arcades, all the 244 ancient columns have been replaced by an equal number of new, standardized, polished Carrara-marble one with Corinthian capitals. They have no resemblance with the old ones in any possible way [FIGURE 8/A - B]. Further violations of restoration practice include:

¹⁸ JOLLOIS 1826: 523.

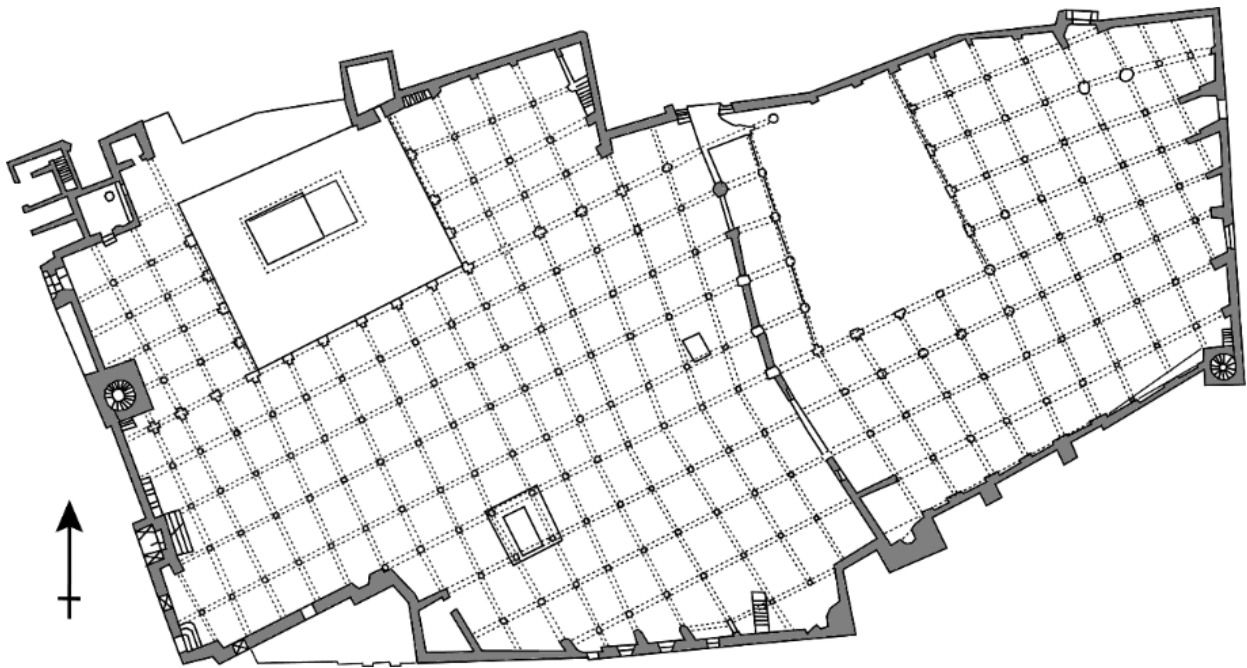
¹⁹ BAEDEKER 1885: 449.

²⁰ 'ABD AL-WAHHĀB 1956-57: 35.

²¹ «Ministers of Awqaf and Antiquities» 2018.

patching the lower part of the minaret with new stones covering the existing ones that were in a good state of preservation; the elimination of the transition between the square lower part of the tower and the octagonal recessed part on top of it; the faulty restoration of both *mihrābs* without taking into account the original, extremely elaborate, plaster decoration, instead using simple manḡūr bricks.

More than a restoration, this was a case of complete rebuilding, to the point that only few original elements of the historic mosque are still visible: a plaque with a dedicatory inscription by the entrance and part of a *tuluṭ* inscription on a wooden beam of the *dikkaṭ al-muballiḡ*.



[FIGURE 7]: Plan of the Zaḡhlūl mosque. Amin 2008: 157



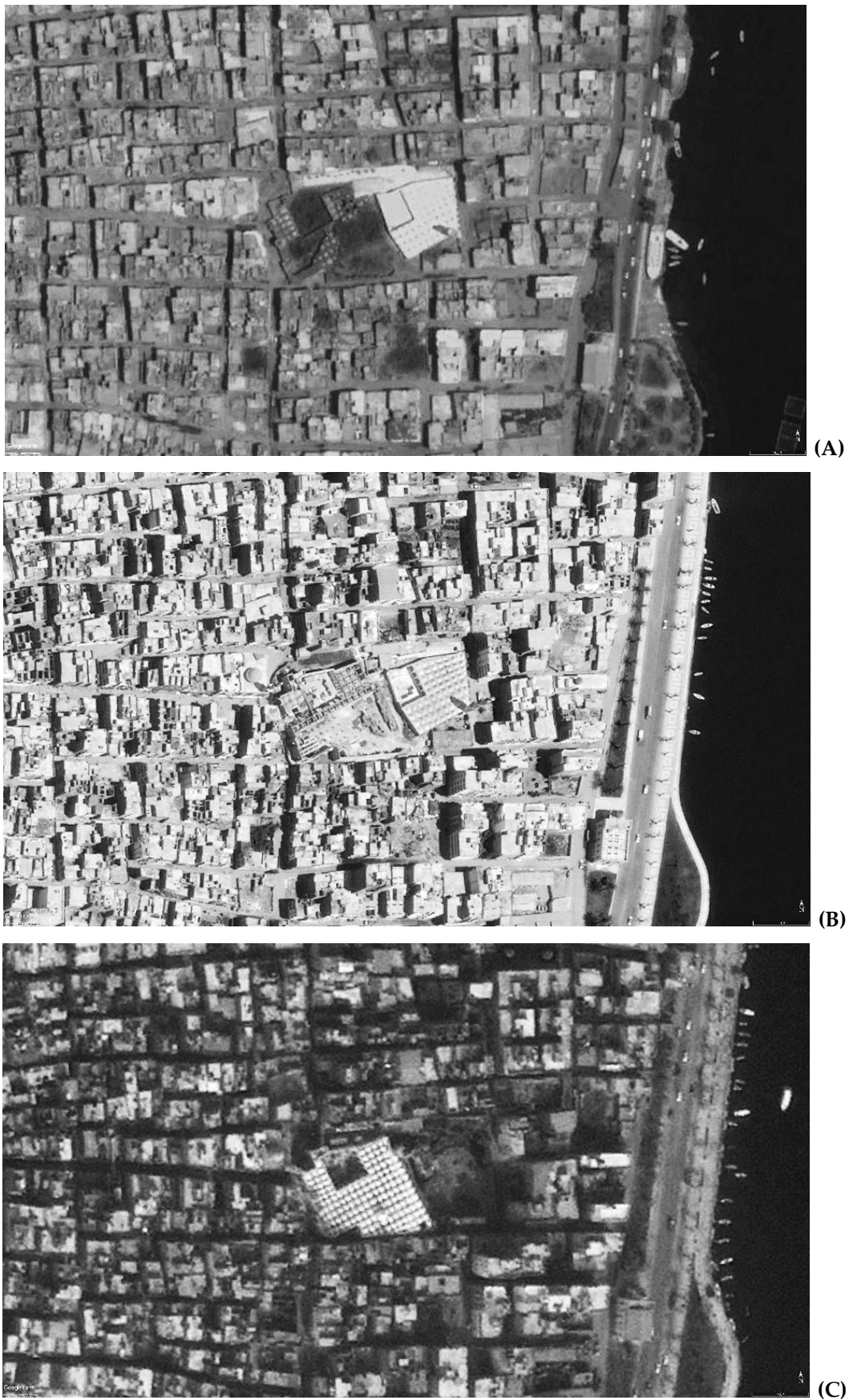
(A)



(B)

[FIGURE 8]: (A) The Zaġhlūl mosque in an undated photograph before restoration (©Google Maps 2017). (B) the Zaġhlūl mosque after restoration (©Monica Hanna 2018)

NOTE ON THE RESTORATION OF FIVE EGYPTIAN MOSQUES



[FIGURE 9]: (A) The Zaghlul mosque in 2003. (B) 2009 & (C) 2012. (©Google Earth 2020)

V. AL-MAḤALLY MOSQUE, RĀŠID

This mosque is in the center of Rāšid and covers an extensive area. The eponymous founder, al-Sayd ‘Aly al-Maḥally, died in 1495, but most documents belong to much later periods. The minbar mentions a certain Aḥmad Ni‘mat Allāh, who is credited with some renovation work in 1134 AH/AD 1721. Work on the dome in the hands of al-Ḥaḡ ‘Aly Tabaq is recorded in 1845.²² At the centre of the mosque is a *ṣaḥn*, surrounded by four *ārūqa*; the southern one, with seven aisles, is the *riwāq al-qibla* and hosts a domed mausoleum decorated with Iznik tiles. The roof is supported by 99 re-used columns of different materials and size, arguably from the Late Antique period. The minaret had a square base, an octagonal shaft, a ribbed cylindrical shaft above the *mū’adīn* balcony, and a bulbous top. The entrances are decorated with *manḡūr* brick patterns and square Kufic inscriptions.

In 1993 al-Ḥuṣary & Abū al-Ḥaṭāb Company replaced four columns, rebuilt all arches and refitted the ceiling with new wooden beams. Otherwise, recent preservation reports describe the mosque as in a good state, only suffering from humidity and salt in the lower part of the walls. Restoration work resumed around 2011 and the mosque has been closed to the public since. By 2018 all plaster in the outer walls had been removed, the bricks cleaned, and at least one of the gates was restored;²³ the minaret was enveloped by scaffoldings. Images from the same year show that the floor of the mosque was flooded with water and in 2020 it was still inaccessible, to the frustration of the local community. While the restoration of this mosque drags to extensive lengths, there are some very negative trends. Plans are for the complete removal of the original columns as in the Zaḡhlūl mosque and their substitution with standardized, brand-new ones with alien materials that belie the original appearance of the building. Most worrisome is the demolition, without apparent reason and documented in July 2019, of the top of the minaret above the *mū’adīn* balcony [FIGURES 10A and 10B].

VI. AL-‘AMRY MOSQUE, DUMIYĀT

This mosque in Dumiyāt claims to be an ancient foundation from the time of the Arab conquest of Egypt and consequently takes the name of al-‘Amry. It is one of the few buildings, if not the only one, from Old Dumiyāt, before the city was razed to the ground and moved to the south by Sultan al-Zāhir Baybars in the middle of the 13th century. The mosque plan was roughly squared, built around a *ṣaḥn* with two-aisle *ārūqa* to the north, east and west, and a four-aisle one to the south, where the trefoil *manḡūr* brick entrance

²² AMIN 2008: 122-125.

²³ HEMEDA et AL. 2018: 844.



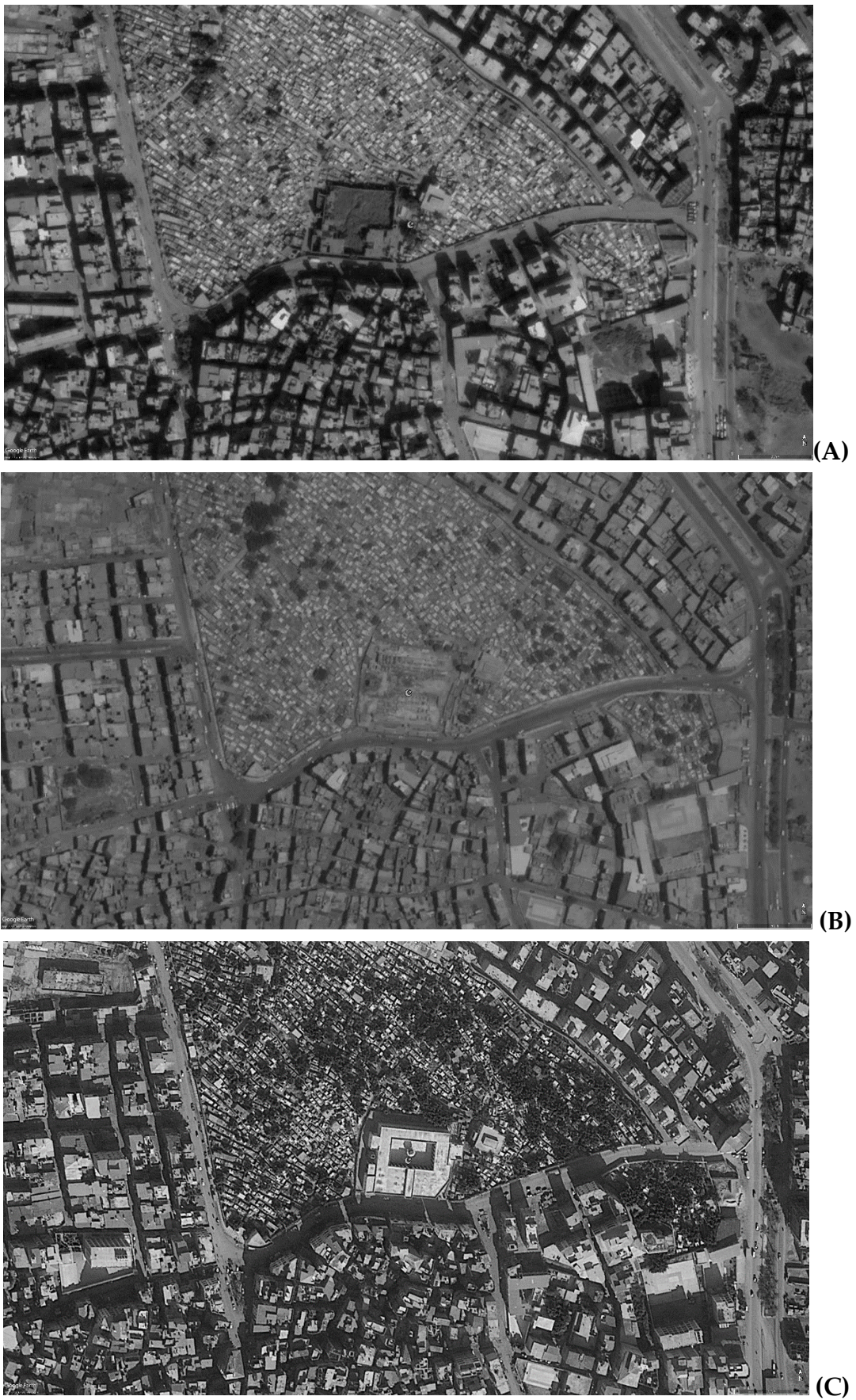
(A)

(B)

[FIGURE 10]: The minaret of al-Mahally mosque in 2018 (a) and in July 2019 (b) (©Monica Hanna 2018-2019)

Was located in a recess. The fired brick construction made extensive use of Roman and Late Antique columns of different stones, alternating them with brick and stone piers. The mosque was still in use at the end of the 19th century, when it is described in these terms by Carl Baedeker: «An interesting excursion may be made to the mosque of El-Gebâneh, situated near a cemetery, to the N. of the town. The building appears to date from the period of the old town of Damietta, and has Cufic inscriptions in front. The interior contains numerous columns dating from the Roman period, the bases of which are about 90 cm. below the level of the pavement of the nave. Two of the columns bear curious inscriptions. Some of the shafts are of beautiful verde antico, and others of porphyry. The capitals, including several in the Corinthian style, are partly of Roman and partly of Byzantine workmanship. Two columns standing on the same base are believed, like those in the Mosque of 'Amr at Cairo, to possess miraculous powers. (Fever-patients, for example, are said to be cured by licking one of them.) The minaret is embellished with early Arabian ornamentation».²⁴

²⁴ BAEDEKER 1885: 444.



[FIGURE 11]: (A) Satellite images of al-'Amry mosque in Dumiyat in 2004; (B) in 2007; (C) in 2013
(©Google Earth 2020)

Photos by Creswell at the beginning of the following century show some important signs of neglect, especially in the *ārūqa* [FIGURE 13], while most of the wood roofing seems to be still in place.²⁵ Wooden props are seen securing some of the structures and loss of plaster is widespread. The minaret must have collapsed sometime after Creswell shot it and only the fired brick square lower part remains now, with a setback top and the base of the octagonal shaft [FIGURES 14 and 15]. A Late Antique marble column with a Corinthian capital remains embedded in the south-west corner.

Several restorations took place later in the 20th century: in the second half of the 1980s under the surveillance of the Supreme Council of Antiquities; an intensive restoration done between 2004 and 2010 by The Arab Contractors;²⁶ a last intervention in 2018-2019 under the supervision of the Ministry of Endowments.²⁷ Satellite imagery shows the evolution of the building in the last twenty years [FIGURE 11A, B, and C]. In 2004, most of the building had already collapsed: all of the *ārūqa* around the *ṣaḥn* are down with the exception of the southern one, whose central part is completely on the ground and so are some sectors of the flat roofs to the east and the west. In 2007 there is no mosque: the whole structure, including the perimetral walls, has been demolished. Once again, instead of trying to salvage as much as possible of the old structure, the “restoration” process entailed the demolition of the old structure and the rebuilding of it roughly on the same lines. The new mosque follows more or less the same plan, with a main entrance to the south and a secondary gate to the west; this one roofed by an extensive porch. It nevertheless deviate from the original building in many elements: all ancient columns were removed and substituted by standardized, marble Corinthian columns, while the original mixture of columns and piers was abandoned for an all-column structure; the crenellation of the perimetral walls as well as of the *ṣaḥn* wall is arbitrary as there is no indication from the oldest photographic record of how they looked like; the entrance gate bears no resemblance with the one photographed with Creswell, which had an elaborately plastered trefoil semi-dome with wooden beams engaged in the *maṅḡūr* brick masonry; the biggest loss seems that of the *miḥrāb*, which photos by Creswell show framed by two slim marble columns with Corinthian capitals, a very elaborate plaster niche is crowned by a keel arch squared by an intricated frame of bricks. The new *miḥrāb* is framed by a different kind of columns, crowned by a pointed arch, and decorated by vertical stripes of red, black, and white marble. Of the original columns supporting the arcades, six marble columns were moved, standing with their Corinthian capitals (except for one), in the east area outside the mosque, while four other granite shafts and other marble architectural pieces were left on the ground in the northern fenced area outside the mosque (FIGURE 12). Other than this,

²⁵ CRESWELL 1900.

²⁶ «Inauguration of Amr Ibn El-Aas 2009»; «Inauguration of the Restoartion [sic]» 2009.

²⁷ Oral information from Mr Tāmar al-Rā'y, October 2020.

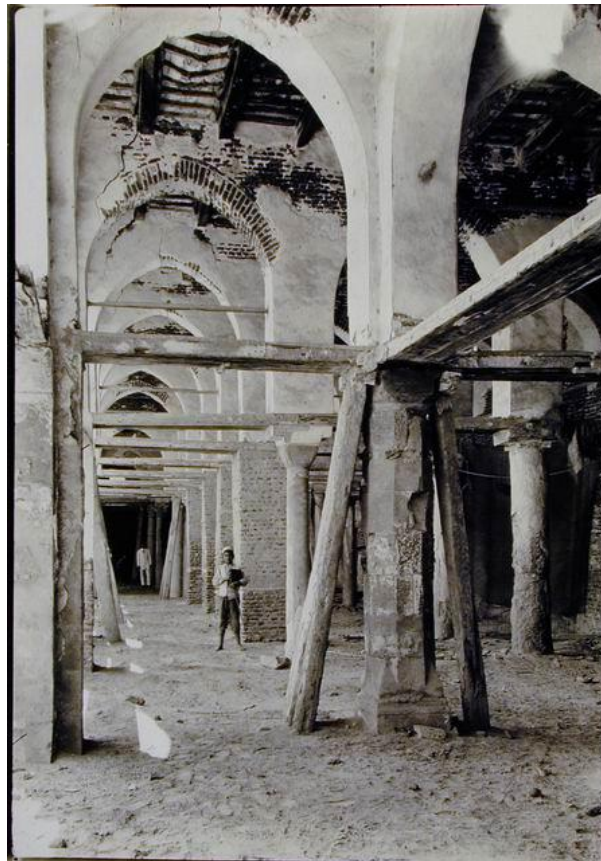
the only visible original part of the mosque is a Kufic inscription carved on a wooden beam in the southern wall and what is left of the lower part of the minaret.



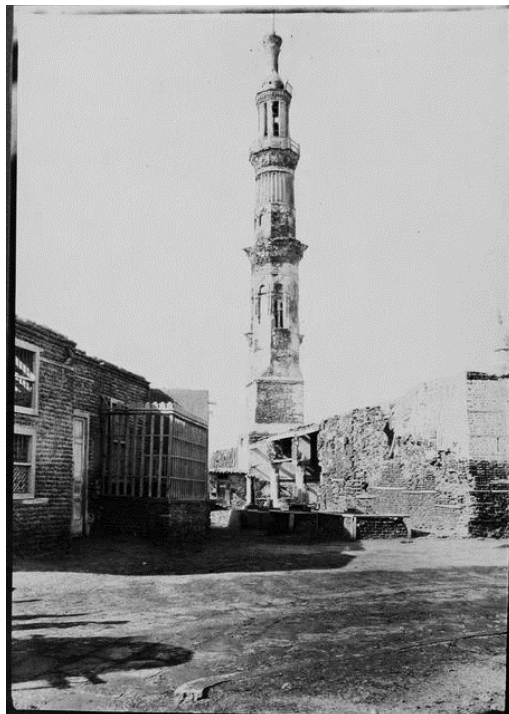
[FIGURE 12]: Roman granite columns and marble capitals at al-'Amry mosque in 2020

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The Islamic Heritage outside of Cairo is subjected to great dangers and potential of loss of authenticity. There is lack of attention by the different stakeholders to follow-up on the conservation procedures, while the documentation is often inaccessible to the public. This is amplified by the lack of a conservation code that is adopted by the Ministries of Endowments and of Antiquities and Tourism. The irreparable loss of heritage that composes Egypt's rural architectural assets affects future potential of economic development of these different cities. Most plans for future sustainable development using heritage in Egypt focus on enlarging the touristic map to have a widened scale for revenue for small and medium enterprises. Egyptian and foreign tourists would rather visit a mosque restored to its old glamour than one that looks newly built. This further affects the heritage urban fabric, discouraging individuals to conserve their old buildings since the city's mosque also has undergone sweeping renewing works; individuals' idea of restoration and rebuilding becomes to completely create a new building. The culture regarding architectural conservation must change through an implemented code as an addendum to the antiquities law that is enforced on all companies working in conservation. With this only, we can conserve Egypt's historic heritage to future generations. There should also be workshops carried out by the different academic boards involved and the Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism to discuss the concept of authenticity and how this should codify all future heritage practices.



[FIGURE 13]: al-'Amry mosque in Dumiyāt in a photo by Creswell at the beginning of the 20th century



[FIGURE 14]: al-'Amry mosque minaret in a photo by Creswell at the beginning of the 20th century



[FIGURE 15]: al-'Amry mosque minaret in 2020

HOW TO CITE

Hanna, M., « Note on the Restoration of Five Egyptian Mosques» *Journal of the General Union of Arab Archaeologists*, vol. 6/2, 2021. Doi: 10.21608/JGUAA2.2021.58863.1049.

monica.hanna@aast.edu

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ‘ABD AL-WAHHĀB, H.: «Ṭarṣ al-‘imāra al-islāmiya fy rīf Miṣr», *Bulletin de l’Institut d’Égypte/Mağallat al-Mağma‘ al-‘Ilmy al-Miṣry* 38/2, 1956-57, 5-40.
- AMIN, N.: *The Historical Monuments of Egypt. Volume I: Rosetta*, Cairo: (Supreme Council of Antiquities), 2008.
- ALSAYYAD, N., BIERMAN, I.A., Rabbat, N.: *Making Cairo Medieval*, Lanham, Md: (Lexington), 2005.
- BAEDEKER, C.: *Egypt: Handbook for Travellers. Part First, Lower Egypt, with the Fayūm and the Peninsula of Sinai*, Leipzig-London: (Baedeker), 1885.
- CRESWELL, K.A.C., «Jami’ ‘Amr ibn al-‘As», [photograph], *Archnet*, early 20th century, https://archnet.org/sites/4253/media_contents/33636, accessed on January 13, 2021.
- DU CAMP, M.: «Mosquée d’Ali-Bey, à Girgeh», [photograph] *Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 1849-50a, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/287097>, accessed on January 13, 2021.
- DU CAMP, M.: «Vue de Girgeh et du littoral enlevé - par l’inondation du Nil», [photograph] *Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 1849-50b, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/287096>, accessed on January 13, 2021.
- DUQEIL, H.: «Demolition of Egypt’s Heritage: Reality and Dangers», *al-Ma’hd al-Misri al-Dirasat*, 8 September 2020, <https://en.eipss-eg.org/demolition-of-egypts-heritage-reality-and-dangers/>, accessed on January 13, 2021.
- EDWARDS, A.: *A Thousand Miles Up the Nile*, London: (Routledge), 1877.
- ELSHAHED, M.: «Demolitions and the Urgency of Architectural History in Egypt», *Platform*, 7 September 2020, <https://www.platformspace.net/home/demolitions-and-the-urgency-of-architectural-history-in-egypt>, accessed on January 13, 2021.
- HANNA, M.: «Documenting Looting Activities in post-2011 Egypt», In *Countering Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods. The global challenge of protecting the world’s heritage*, 47-64. Paris: (ICOM), 2015.
- HANNA, M.: «What has Happened to Egyptian Heritage after the 2011 Unfinished Revolution?» *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology & Heritage Studies* 1, 4, 2013, 371-375.
- HEMEDA, S., KHALIL, M., SHOEB, A., ABD EL AZIZ, A.: «The Effectiveness of Nano Materials and Nano-modified Polymers for Preservation of Historic Brick Masonry in Rashid, Egypt», *International Journal of Conservation Science* 9, 4, 2018, 844.
- IKRAM, S., HANNA, M.: «Looting and Land Grabbing: The Current Situation in Egypt», *Bulletin of the American Research Center in Egypt* 202, 2013, 34-39.
- «Inauguration of Amr Ibn El-Aas Mosque», *The Arab Contractors*, 10 May 2009, <https://www.arabcont.com/English/Release-2009-385>, accessed on January 13, 2021.
- «Inauguration of the Restoartion [sic] Works of Amr Ibn El-Aas Mosque», *The Arab Contractors*, 21 July 2009, <https://www.arabcont.com/English/Release-2009-405>, accessed on January 13, 2021.

NOTE ON THE RESTORATION OF FIVE EGYPTIAN MOSQUES

- JOLLOIS, M.: "Notice sur la ville de Rosette", in *Description de l'Égypte ou Recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l'expédition de l'armée française, État moderne*, t. 18, part 1, 497-554. Paris : (C.L.F. Panckoucke), 1826.
- LANE, E.W.: *Description of Egypt. Edited and with an introduction by Jason Thompson*, Cairo-New York: (AUC Press), 2000.
- MĀHIR, S.: *Muḥāfazāt al-Ġumhūriya al- 'Arabiya al-muttaḥida wa aṭāruhā al-bāqiya fy al- 'aṣr al-islāmy*, Cairo: (al-Mağlis al-Āl' aly lil-Šu' ūn al-Īslāmiya), 1966.
- MEINARDUS, O.: *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity*, Cairo-New York: (AUC Press), 2002.
- «Ministers of Awqaf and Antiquities inaugurated the 1st phase of the restoration and renovation of Zaghoul Archaeological Mosque», *The Arab Contractors*, 16 May 2018, <https://www.arabcont.com/English/Release-2018-1231>, accessed on January 13, 2021.
- SANDERS, P.: *Creating Medieval Cairo. Empire, Religion and Architectural Preservation in Nineteenth-Century Egypt*, Cairo-New York: (AUC Press), 2008.
- 'UṬMĀN, M.: 1988. «Ġirġā wa aṭāruhā al-islāmiya fy al- 'aṣr al- 'uṭmāny», *Dirūsāt āthāriya al-islāmiya/Islamic Archaeological Studies* 3, 1988, 209-68.

تعليق على ترميم خمس مساجد مصرية

مونیکا سمير حنا

الأكاديمية العربية للعلوم والتكنولوجيا والنقل البحري

الملخص

يناقش هذا البحث الخسارة الثقافية لخمسة مساجد مصرية في أقاليم مصر نتيجة عمليات الترميم بها يضم البحث السجلات التاريخية المختلفة التي وصفت أهمية تلك المساجد وكيف أن الترميم الحديث قضى على الكثير من تفاصيلها التاريخية . يوضح البحث من وجهة نظر ادارة التراث غياب التنسيق بين وزارة الأوقاف ووزارة الآثار والسياحة لعمليات الترميم التي تتم للتجديد وليس للترميم بهذه المساجد التاريخية، هذا لا يؤثر فقط على التراث الإسلامي لريف مصر، بل يؤثر أيضًا على النسيج العمراني حول تلك المساجد .تناقش هذه الورقة مساجد المتولي في جرجا، قمن العروس في بني سويف، المحلي وزغول في رشيد.

الكلمات الدالة: التراث الإسلامي، الآثار الإسلامية، الترميم، المساجد.