

## **EGYPTIAN NEO-PHARAONIC ARCHITECTURE 1922-1932: A NATIONALISTIC EXPRESSIVE TOOL**

***Dr. Aly Kamal Kandil***

*Lecturer, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Cairo University  
alykandil@eng.cu.edu.eg*

### **Abstract**

The impact of Ancient Egypt civilisation on the West has taken many forms. In fact, what could be contradictory to the Egyptian fascination towards the Moderization charisma, is foreigners' empathy about the Pharaonic architecture, which has long fascinated subsequent cultures. Nonetheless, the remarkable fact is that only a scattering of buildings show Neo-Pharaonic influence in Egypt. So, our understanding of the development of the styles, and characteristic features remains stylistically and characteristically partially discovered and investigated. During such overlapping process of transition, a new field for research to be explored: the Nationalist Neo-Pharaonic style, introduced and adopted by the Egyptian Patriotic Movement, and which was influenced by the Neo-Classical and Modern features. This paper also attempts to understand why this style was so short lived by analysing 20<sup>th</sup> century Egyptian Neo-Pharaonic buildings. In this paper, selected Egyptian buildings designed according to the Neo-Pharaonic influences will be high-lighted, and analyzed from the point of view of morphology of form, architectural elements and details, in order to delineate appropriations that occurred to 20<sup>th</sup> century Western architecture. The analysis is applied against a backdrop of political, social and historical influences resulting in three categories: the Neo-Classical, Nationalist, and Abstract Pharaonic. Thereupon, the paper discovers the main characteristic features of such style, which appears to have been the domineering architectural style during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The analysis shows that because this style was derived and developed in Europe, it was alien in its own homeland. Ironically, the Neo-Pharaonic became a difficult, external, and exotic style for Egypt.

### **Keywords**

Egypt, Neo-Pharaonic, Nationalism, Egyptomania, Architecture

### **1. Introduction**

Frank Gehry states that “architecture should speak of its time and place, but yearn for timelessness”<sup>1</sup>. From the squares adorned with obelisks in Europe, to the façades of modern cinemas, the Ancient Egyptian period has never ceased to inspire at all times, all around the world. An exceptional phenomenon, perhaps for its durability, Egyptomania therefore deserves to occupy an exceptional place in the Western history<sup>2</sup>. The architecture of Ancient Egypt has long fascinated subsequent cultures. A sign of this fascination, European art and architecture adopted for their own such motifs as obelisk, pyramid, and sphinx, so that these became repetitive international themes, in much the same manner as Classical “Five Orders”<sup>3</sup>. Heretofore, this fascination was also demonstrated in the spectacular Pharaohs' Golden Parade, which saw royal mummies departing from the Egyptian Museum on April 2021, to join their new home in the recently built Grand Egyptian Museum. Neo-Pharaonic style was arguably appropriated in Western architecture to a great extent specifically in the building

façades and ornamentation. The reasons behind this could be referred to the oriental obsession since the French Expedition in 1798, followed by Colonialism, and Egyptomania. In some cases, European architects used Egyptian themes as the starting-point of their works. Some did this through second-hand experience; as reference books, catalogues, photos, ... etc

A melting pot of architectural styles: Architecture in Egypt during the 1920's was composed of a wide range of styles that are often referred to as the "*Belle Époque*" era. Yet, it is difficult to pin down the most dominant architectural movement of Cairo during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, due to the many overlapping styles, and urban development processes. But broadly speaking, European Neo-Classical styles were the most prominent features associated with Cairo's urban and architectural aspects at the time. Although the streets and buildings of khedivial Cairo are inspired by the European architecture. Reciprocally, European architects were inspired by Cairo's architecture, generating the Neo-Pharaonic and Neo-Islamic styles. During the 1920's, a new sense of a regional style started to emerge due to the newly discovered exoticism of the East.

The massive Cairo's heritage building stock, resulted from the European influences and the Egyptian Nationalist Movement during the decolonization period after the World War I, produced few Neo-Pharaonic buildings. Contradictorily, the outbreak of Egyptomania in Europe, following the appearance of the *Déscription de l'Égypte*, came precisely at the time when Egypt's urban elites were increasingly fascinated by the European modern life style. When the Khedive Ismail announced that Egypt was, henceforth, a part of Europe: "Paris along the Nile". In Ismail's French new city, obviously, left no room for the non-European; thereafter, Cairo's Downtown often appears to be more "European" than those of their European counterparts. The newly laid Haussmann's radial urban masterplan of a European-styled Cairo, blossoming into a European style opulence that was to remain, until the 1952 Egyptian Revolution swept it all away. Hence, the Egyptian Neo-Pharaonic style remains difficult to define: was it the start of an old, deeply buried morphological design instinct or simply an appropriate classic tool to express the Egyptian national identity?

Nevertheless, the Neo-Pharaonic style has not received the attention it deserves until relatively recent times; however, this paper will attempt to redress the balance by tracing its origin in the obscure byways of Western taste, and by chronicling its surprising persistence throughout the centuries. The first part of the paper outlines the manifestations of Pharaonism in Western architecture from the Roman Empire till the French Expedition in Egypt. Secondly, the Egyptian Revival after the French Campaign is examined. The third part reviews the Neo-Pharaonic style in the 19<sup>th</sup> century till the 20<sup>th</sup> century. And finally, the aspects of Western appropriation of Egyptian architecture are discussed and analysed.

## **2. Ancient Egyptian Resurrection Period: 1922-1932**

In 1851, Egypt was firstly represented at the Crystal Palace Great Exhibition; then, at major exhibitions in Paris in 1867 and 1889, and in Chicago in 1893. Such representative pavilions and exhibitions are relevant as they clarify Egypt's national and cultural aspects during a period of political transition. While Egypt's exhibition during the 19<sup>th</sup> century were prescribed by politics of empire and orientalism; 20<sup>th</sup> century ones were driven by the national identity politics. To illustrate, the Egyptian section at the Paris *Exposition Universelle* of 1867 included a Medieval Cairo's quarter with Arabic-Islamic buildings<sup>4</sup>; yet, it also included an

Ancient Egyptian rectangular “temple” in which museum antiquities were exhibited, and which was approached by a long alley flanked by sphinxes<sup>5</sup>. These mixture and multiple attempts at assembling two sets of oriental and Pharaonic aesthetic and representational architectural paradigms in the Egyptian pavilions reveal the duality that architects had to consider when representing Egypt to the Global North publics. Still, the set of architectural references represents an increasing dominance of Pharaonic theme, as a clear architectural stylistic character, which characterizes Egypt from the Arab world (Figure 1).

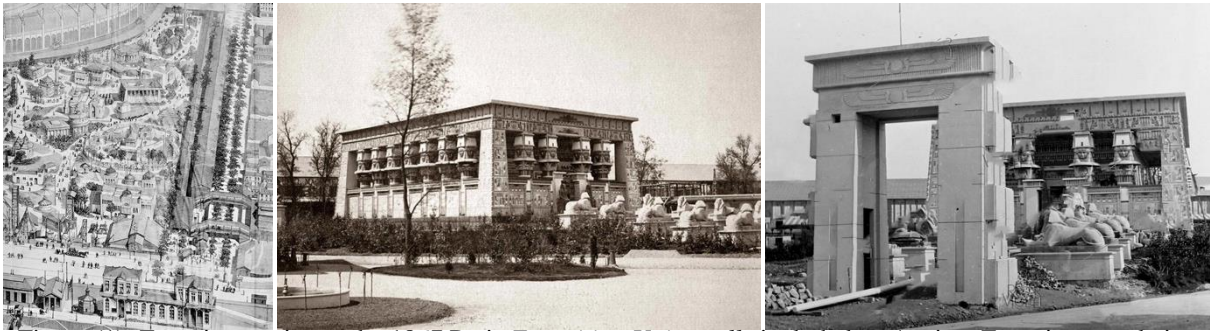


Figure (1): Egyptian section at the 1867 Paris *Exposition Universelle* included an Ancient Egyptian temple in which museum antiquities were exhibited, approached by a long alley flanked by sphinxes.

Source: Author collage plate, 2023

During the “Egyptian Renaissance” period, a generation of Egyptian modernist designers acquired during their studies in Europe, to stylize and modernize the aesthetic elements of Pharaonic style, and to reinvent a new national one<sup>6</sup>. This design movement coincided with the emergence of Egyptian Patriotic Movement, besides the archaeological discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb by Howard Carter in 1922, which revived interest in ancient Egyptian civilization worldwide. According to Colombe, he affirms that this movement remained superficial, and never went beyond the very restricted framework of a literary or artistic school<sup>7</sup>. The Egyptian Society of Engineers founded incidentally in 1917, tried to introduce a style compatible with the emergent nationalist ideology. Then, the Nationalist movement promoted an Egyptian consideration of Pharaonic architecture, as a suitable symbolic source of inspiration for the new nation<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, the Minister of Public Works Uthman Muharram was behind the foundation of the statue of *Nahdit Misr* and the statues of Saad Zaghloul in Cairo and Alexandria, besides the tomb of Saad<sup>9</sup>. In 1933, Muharram suggested that regarding the architectural character of Egypt, it should be divided into two main style-line sections: Middle and Upper Egypt should develop the Pharaonic style, while lower Egypt (the Delta) should adopt the Islamic style. This regulation was promptly implemented on governmental projects, the result of which was the design of *Mihattat Bab al-Hadid* in the Neo-Islamic style, and *Mihattat al-Giza* (Figure 2), built in 1935 by architect *Muhammad Raafat*, in the Neo-Pharaonic style<sup>10</sup>. While regularly mentioned in the architectural press, the existence of such a decision was however not confirmed by any official document<sup>11</sup>.

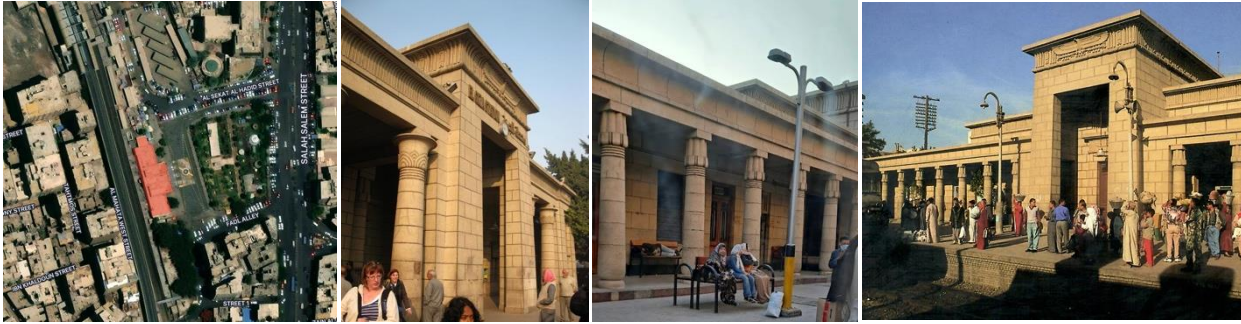


Figure (2): *Mihattat al-Giza*, built in 1935 by architect *Muhammad Raafat*, in the Neo-Pharaonic style  
Source: Author collage plate, 2023

### 3. New Architectural Expression: Pharaonic Theme at the Service of Nationalism

Among the many thousands of buildings constructed during the Europeanization period, there remain only few examples displaying the Pharaonic influence, just as purely decorative ornaments. This scarcity reflects the emphasis of Egypt's rulers on European design as befitting a modern, progressive city government. Astonishingly, the notable absence of Egyptian themes, although the passer-by will be able to discern their modest presence here and there; just as an additional element to some Cairene building: winged sphinx, naively treated, and crowning a pylon gateway in a recently demolished residence at *al-Sakakini* district; this window attic detail for *Le Club des Princes* building designed by Antonio Lasciac in 1897, showing Pharaonic winged figure hiding the lintel, and two set opposite sphinxes in the plaster frieze of the attic; and the funerary architecture with a pharaonic theme in the cemeteries of *al-Sayyida Nafissa* (Figure 3)<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, the Egyptian vestibule of the Shepherd Hotel was decorated with columns with palm-shaped capitals and a starry ceiling leading to an oriental lounge salon (Figure 4).



Figure (3): A pylon gateway in a recently demolished residence at *al-Sakakini*; window attic detail for *Le Club des Princes* building designed by Antonio Lasciac in 1897, showing Pharaonic winged figure, and two set opposite sphinxes; a pharaonic theme in the cemeteries of *al-Sayyida Nafissa*; and vestibule of Shepherd Hotel decorated with palm-shaped capitals and a starry ceiling leading to an oriental lounge salon  
Source: Source: Author collage plate, 2023

Previous to the World War I, an increased interest in the Pharaonic symbolism arose due to the Nationalist figures appropriated this theme for political ends. Mustafa Kamel, and Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid of the *al-Watani* and *al-Umma* Parties respectively, both included pride in pharaonic Egypt in their political and cultural quotes. In 1914, Mustafa Kamel's French-made sculpture shows him standing next to a sphinx's head, a motif that was developed further in Mukhtar's *Nahdit Misr* sculpture inaugurated in 1928 outside the Egyptian capital's train station<sup>13</sup>. Mausoleums for nationalist figures, such as Saad Zaghloul, were built in the pharaonic style<sup>14</sup>. By the late 1920's, the Neo-Pharaonic style was appropriated as a visual and symbolic expression of the nation in culture, art, and architecture. A similar type was



done for the two statues of Saad Zaghlul, in Cairo and Alexandria. the illustration of which had been entrusted to the artists of *La Chimère*, a group founded by Mukhtar in 1926 (Figure 4). The graphics of these warrants resolutely belonged to pharaonic imagery<sup>15</sup>.



Figure (4): Mustafa Kamel’s French-made sculpture standing next to a sphinx’s head, statues of Saad Zaghlul, in Cairo and Alexandria; and *Nahdit Misr* sculpture in 1928 outside the Egyptian capital’s train station  
Source: Author collage plate, 2023

Local manifestations of the Egyptian historic heritage on its original territory, which was often been reused and variously recreated outside its native context, were by the only formal analogy of the design inspirations: the Egyptian Neo-Pharaonic of the 1920’s to Western Egyptomania. Simultaneously in 1920, the sculptor Mahmoud Mukhtar designed and exhibited, at the *Salon des Artistes Français* in Paris, a model of his emblematic artwork in Egypt: the Egyptian Awakening Statue (*Nahdit Misr*)<sup>16</sup>. Additionally, this sudden local craze to revive the Pharaonic style, triggered by the work of Mukhtar, concurrently with the discovery of the Tutankhamun’s tomb in 1922. In fact, much more eloquent are the Neo-Pharaonic architectural manifestations following the years 1922-1932. This exotic exchange of styles, whose apogee and decline are essentially concentrated in the decade inaugurated by Carter’s discovery, which came befittingly to reinforce the Egyptian national consciousness, and was widely exploited for this purpose. It seems deliberately that the official opening ceremony of Tutankhamun tomb in March 1924, was made to coincide with the inauguration of the first Parliament of independent Egypt, whose building had been designed, with a large vestibule in the Neo-Pharaonic style (Figure 5). This movement spreaded after 1922, to all fields of art: from literature to theatre, from sculpture to music, besides the graphic arts – magazine cover models, advertisements and posters were saturated with Pharaonic icons (Figure 6). Even the landscape design; thus, after having realized the Japanese garden of Helwan between 1917-1920, the engineer director of the gardens *Muhammad Zul-Faqar*, undertook in 1928 the implementation of a pharaonic garden at al-Zamalek, which was finished in 1935 and curiously inaugurated under the name of *al-Masalah* Garden.



Figure (5): First Parliament of Egypt, designed, with a large vestibule in the Neo-Pharaonic style  
Source: Author collection, 2023



Figure (6): First Parliament of Egypt, designed, with a large vestibule in the Neo-Pharaonic style  
Source: Author collection, 2023

In 1930, Ali Labib Gabr noted that “despite the country’s plethora of ancient monuments, we have not reached to create a purely Egyptian style, free from all foreign influence”. Only the deep study of such monuments should allow, according to him, the constitution of a new architectural vocabulary specific to contemporary Egypt. He spoke highly of the experience of Heliopolis, just as in the Neo-Islamic design achievements of Mahmud Fahmi and his son Mustafa Fahmi. Gabr also added that “there are hundreds of ancient opulent mosques in Cairo, the study of which is easier for us due to their proximity”. However, he regretted that “architecture inspired by the Pharaonic style (has) not been the object of architects’ regard that it deserves”; (yet), “if architects studied this style in depth, they would arrive to create a new style fulfilling modern requirements, while retaining the simplicity, nobility and dignity which characterizes the old as well”<sup>17</sup>.

#### 4. Selected Egyptian Neo-Pharaonic Buildings

##### 4.1 *Al-Shorbagi*: Ramsis Building

The massive residential and commercial building located at the corner of Ramsis Street: *Abdul Hamid al-Shawarbi* Pasha Building (*al-Shorbagi* Building), built in 1925, and designed by architects Giacomo Alessandro Loria and Charles Habib Ayrout<sup>18</sup>. The building is primarily drawn from a Beaux-Arts classical tradition, but also incorporates some Pharaonic elements around the building’s exterior. The massing, rhythms and organization remain European, with Egyptianizing features included simply to enliven the façade. While the block bristles with Neo-Pharaonic heads and scarabs, these are tailored to fit into a European Neo-Baroque façade style. This mixture of decorative elements applied without any concern for archaeological accuracy, pinned onto a European revivalist façade. In each case, where the detail is Neo-Pharaonic, its context and the reason for its placement is classical. Even the details themselves are stylized in a Classical manner to make them more European in character, which resulted into an eclectic European take on Pharaonic decoration (Figure 7).

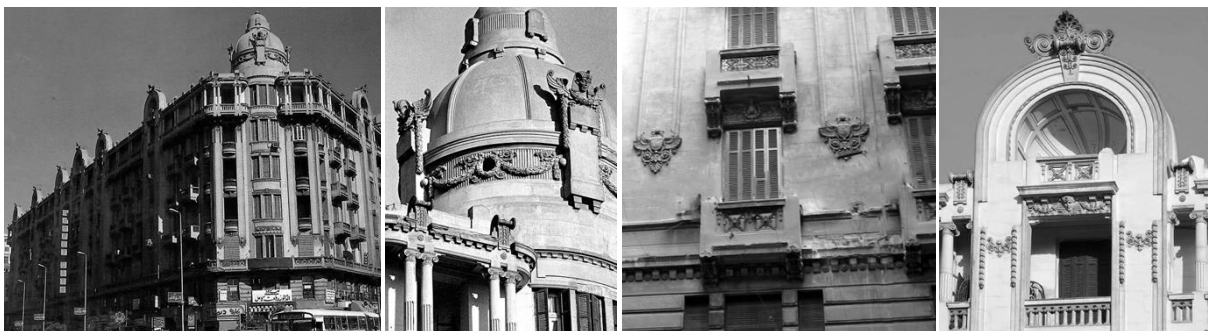


Figure (7): *Abdul Hamid al-Shawarbi* Pasha Building (*al-Shorbagi* Building), built in 1925, and designed by architects Giacomo Alessandro Loria and Charles Habib Ayrout  
Source: Gabr, 1996, Author collection, 2023

##### 4.2 Faculty of Engineering of Alexandria

The premises of the Faculty of Engineering of Alexandria undoubtedly constitute the most striking counter-example, but also the most imposing and vast example of Neo-Pharaonic architecture ever built in Egypt, with a central portico extending over more than four levels (Figure 8). Although implemented between 1946-1951, the project was linked to the name of Uthman Muharram, whose intention had been to impose this same style for certain pavilions of the University of Cairo built from 1927; which could not be done, due to budgetary

constraints cause the style had the reputation of being costly. However, Neo-Pharaonic style was no longer relevant in the post-war period. In 1945, during the competition for the construction of other pavilions of Cairo’s University, the jury members – including Mustafa Fahmi and Ali Labib Gabr – preferred to come out in favor of a completely modern project.



Figure (8): Faculty of Engineering of Alexandria, 1946-1951  
Source: Author collage plate, 2023

#### 4.3 King Farouk’s Hunting Lodge (Farouk’s Rest House near the pyramids)

King Farouk’s hunting lodge, built between 1942-1946, at the foot of the great pyramid, and was his favourite resort during the last years of his reign. The building was designed by Mustafa Fahmy, and the king wanted the building to resemble – as he imagined – as a home of a pharaoh. During the design of the lodge, Farouk visited temples and museums in order to pick himself the elements, which he preferred to be reproduced in his lodge. The stylized Neo-Pharaonic interior decorations consisted of alabaster columns, and bas-reliefs of hunting scenes adorning the panels of the vestibule, corkscrew-tailed cobras, and the replacement of the solar disc by the emblem of the reigning dynasty (the crescent and the three stars) (Figure 9). The elevation of the pavilion is however unusual, due to the composition of its main pylonic façade stretched along its length, pierced by a single horizontal bay on the first floor, and four elongated slots, flanked by the main entrance. No portico, therefore, nor columns on the facade as in previous constructions. The only fantasy of this facade is its animation by statuary, introduced here for the first time in a Neo-Pharaonic building in Egypt. Thus, two statues on pedestals framed the entrance door, wearing the royal crown symbolizing Upper and Lower Egypt. Use of statuary also for the elements supporting the entablature of the upper bay, made up of a row of telamons representing Tutankhamun.



Figure (9): King Farouk’s Hunting Lodge (Rest House), designed by Mustafa Fahmy, 1942-1946  
Source: Author collage plate, 2023

#### 4.4 Saad Zaghloul Mausoleum

Saad Zaghloul Mausoleum is the most controversial expression of the Pharaonic architectural revival in Egypt, and which is emblematic of how the movement influenced contemporary architects. The monument singularly recalls the Pharaonic sepulchral history, and pays tribute to the endeavours of the leader of the Nationalist delegates, to secure an end to foreign



domination. In 1927, the Wafd Party commissioned a public mausoleum to commemorate the memory of Saad Zaghloul. Amongst several preliminary designs prepared by the Department of Civil Construction, the Neo-Pharaonic design by Mustafa Fahmy was nominated<sup>19</sup>. The Council of Ministers took several decisions among which the purchase of his residence *Bayt al-Umma*, to be transformed into a museum, besides the two adjoining houses to build his mausoleum. These were directed by Uthman Muharram who had been responsible for supervising the installation of *Nahdit Misr* Statue – as previously noted<sup>20</sup>.

Adopting a Pharaonic model to memorialize the life of a nationalist leader, while perfectly illustrating the desire to formulate an exclusively Egyptian architectural vocabulary befitting the ideological tenor of the times, is not by any means, a simple affair<sup>21</sup>. The overall visual form pays homage more to ancient funerary monuments and temple architecture than to a classicising, European tradition. Yet the building is also informed, in the play of solids and voids and grandiose size alongside pared down ornamentation, by the French Neo-Classicism desire to revive an austere, ancient vocabulary of the type that characterises Egyptian monuments. On the other hand, while exploring Cairo's urban fabric, the occasional building will appear to bear a vague Pharaonic resemblance (Figure 10).

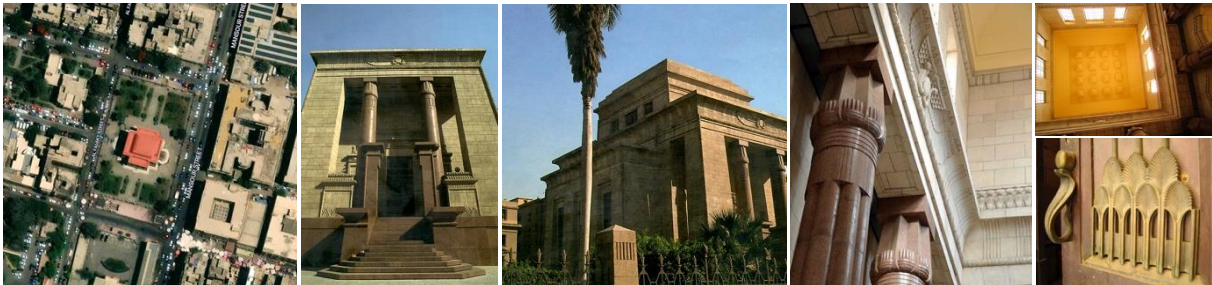


Figure (10): Saad Zaghloul Mausoleum, designed by Mustafa Fahmy  
Source: Author collage plate, 2023

Although the mausoleum style resembles ancient Egyptian design principles, regarding the overall axially, symmetry and proportions; yet, the interior space has a Neo-Classic coffered ceiling. However, the central plan of the space, consisting of a square room, is reminiscent of the great tombs of the Mamluk sultans (Figure). The design also incorporated various ancient Egyptian decorative motifs like papyriform columns, scarabs, engraved friezes on the façade, coved cornices, and even the brass door handles; all replicate Egyptian motifs but in a stylized patterns and materials typical of the Art Deco style. The details of the moldings, as well as many architectural elements were of quintessential Egyptian inspiration, regarding their design and proportions based on a rather rigorous interpretation of the ancient vocabulary, unlike many earlier architectural expressions of Western Egyptomania, which were primitive and naïve in their craftsmanship. However, the Pharaonic motifs as lotus, deities, and winged cobras, have lost its unique symbolic and religious meanings, as there is a certain irony in the way in which Neo-Pharaonic motifs are viewed through a Western filter.

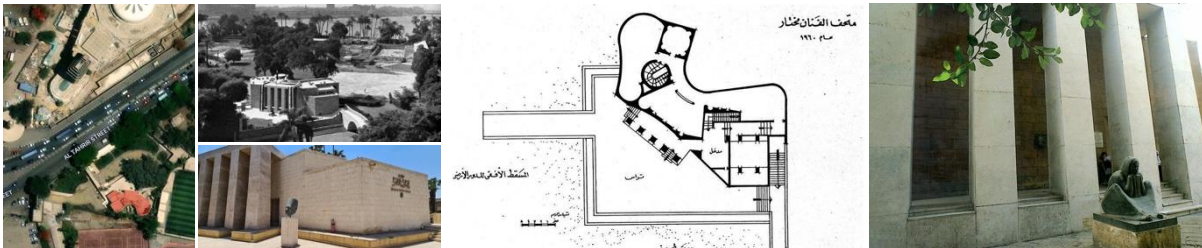
Inventively, the mausoleum itself is not an imitation of a period piece monument. On the contrary, its style is an eclectic hybrid of different architectural elements and inspirations, incorporating not only Pharaonic elements, but also Classical European influences, besides Modern Art Deco references. This typical design process of the Egyptian Renaissance, followed a modern reinvention of the historical past, which included traditional patterns, materials, and crafts, besides many foreign influences. It created a creative Egyptian style



consisting of both national and international themes. The various and distinct inspirational concepts in the mausoleum illustrate the complexity of the reciprocal influences and transfer processes between Egypt and Europe, underlying the evolution of the Neo-Pharaonic style. Thereafter, Saad Zaghloul Mausoleum, the idea of funerary architecture with a pharaonic theme represented a current popular trend in the cemeteries.

#### 4.5 Mahmoud Mukhtar Museum

The Mahmoud Mukhtar Museum on *al-Tahrir* Street, designed in 1962 by Ramses Wissa Wassef. The exterior of the building is very plain and powerful. Eschewing Pharaonic decoration, the architect contrived to give the visitor a dramatic, abstracted, oblique view of the massive, battered columns of a pylonic portico. Inside, the free mix of Modern and Pharaonic elements continues. The plain white walls and discreet natural lighting follow modern notions of neutral gallery space. The thick, undecorated doorways are reminiscent of Pharaonic tombs. Four massive square columns mark a central lowered space. In its centre where one might expect a sarcophagus stands a statue. Wissa Wassef formulates an architecture pertinent to Egypt's heritage, which relies neither on archaeological quotation nor on Western derived design principles. And by escaping the influence of Western architecture and its episodic fascination with Egypt's Pharaonic past, the architect manages to shatter the Western lens through which all things Pharaonic had been filtered. Wissa Wassef reinterpreted his views of what Pharaonic architecture was, rather than simply "cut paste" motifs and elements of it, and reassembling them into a new form (Figure 11).



Mahmoud Mukhtar Museum on *al-Tahrir* Street, designed in 1962 by Ramses Wissa Wassef  
Source: Author collage plate, 2023

To sum up, The early 20<sup>th</sup> century transformation of Egypt from colony to a modernizing independent nation; besides the population growth, European speculation and state "nation-building" have fuelled the rapid expansion of Egyptian building stock. Despite the massive construction that has occurred in 20<sup>th</sup> century; yet, the remarkable fact is that only a scarce number of buildings show Neo-Pharaonic influence. Much of this influence appears to have as much to do with European Classical architecture as it do with Ancient Egypt one. From the above analysis, Neo-Pharaonic architecture produced in the decade 1922-1932 was based on Neo-Classical, and lately Modernist lines. Nevertheless, the decorative, motifs and details change Ancient Egyptian, as though the buildings were being "dressed up" in Pharaonic style according to the wish and desire of the architect or the client.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ancient Egyptian architecture is a rich resource that has been exploited the world over, its theme and elements were particularly and liberally quoted in Western styles, and have been continuously a great source of design concepts, from Classical antiquity to the present. Richly-decorated Egyptian artefacts, craftsmanship, sculpture, and architecture of temples

have long fascinated Europeans, who responded especially to the purity of forms such as the obelisks, pyramids, pylonic walls, and the powerful geometry have demonstrably influenced 20<sup>th</sup> century architects of the Modern Movement. Probably, no culture has produced such mighty works of architecture that are so instantly memorable, grand, powerful, timeless, and impressive, as did Neo-Pharaonic. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there have been further outbreaks of Egyptomania, the most spectacular occurring after the discovery of the tomb and treasures of Tutankhamun in 1922. The *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris in 1925 stimulated more Egyptian influence in architecture, furniture design, interiors, ornaments, and gave its name to the Art Deco style.

Ironically, Egypt itself has no Neo-Pharaonic tradition; until the few Neo-Pharaonic buildings found during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been western derived – i.e. the Pharaonic architectural legacy has been exported to the west, appropriated, and then re-introduced to Egypt. Even the Egypt-based architects of the Nationalist period were educated by westerners, and instilled with western concepts. Therefore, the Neo-Pharaonic architecture of this period still appeared to deflect through a western filter. Moreover, Neo-Pharaonic style so short lived in Egypt, and the few examples show that it was unpopular. Undoubtedly, the style intended to develop more naturally in Egypt than elsewhere; yet, was less durable there. From close observation, the Neo-Pharaonic can be considered as a style derived and developed in Europe; based on Ancient Egyptian art and architecture. It also never acquired all this symbolic and esoteric interpretation, in which Western Egyptomania was immersed. On the other side, the Egyptian Modernist Movement, which began to express itself in the 1940's, this return to the past appears to be insignificant and anachronistic.

The Neo-Pharaonic, and even the Neo-Islamic styles reflect Egypt's collaboration in the global networks of nationalism ideology, besides the stylized artistic Classicism of the post-World War I. Though distinctly nationalist apparently, these designs are echoing the synthesis of nationalism and classicism in parallel transitional interwar modernisms. The broad use of these elements and forms shows the power of ancient Egyptian symbols universally. Even though both Pharaonic and Islamic styles can be considered as representative of the Egyptian identity and design cultural conceptualization; however, they each imply different narrative and resonance amongst people. Furthermore, with the rise of Egyptian nationalism, the political landscape encouraged the search for a uniquely Egyptian architectural language. That a coherent nationalist movement emerged when public awareness of ancient Egypt was at a peak, following the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb, undoubtedly served to give impetus to such tendency. The broad base of Egyptian Nationalism identified more deeply with a Pan-Arab and Islamic vocabulary, while many contemporary Egyptian architects questioned the validity of any kind of revivalism in a new, modernist age. The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a renewed interest in Egypt's ancient past. This phenomenon has been seen as one of the expressions of nationalist sentiment that rejected European influence on society. Hence, the Pharaonic Revival was a symbol of Egyptian national unity.

Neo-Pharaonic architecture was seen fit only to decorate façades of European styled buildings. Even during the Nationalist period when some Nationalist leaders turned to the glorious independent Pharaonic past for modern National symbols. Most of Neo-Pharaonic buildings wore their style lightly, like a skin over modern bones. The exception was Ramses Wissa Wassef, who reinterpreted his views of what Pharaonic architecture was, rather than simply “cut paste” motifs and elements of it, and reassembling them into a new form. In such

case, the style was appropriated. Although motifs of form and decoration were taken from Ancient Egypt; however, they were uniquely composed and stylized. Its vocabulary emphasized the qualities associated with the principles of the modernist architects, such as clearness, closed composition, planarity, and geometry. What has been called abstract Pharaonic aspect, that which gives the effect of the Egyptian architecture without using the specific archaeological details. Large geometric masses and shapes, simple and solid, made up of straight lines and angles have been used in such architectural vocabulary.

<sup>1</sup> Dokras, U. V., *Future Trends in Architecture*, Indo Nordic Authors Collective, 2020.

[https://www.academia.edu/41951670/Future\\_trends\\_in\\_Architecture](https://www.academia.edu/41951670/Future_trends_in_Architecture)

<sup>2</sup> Humbert, J.-M., *L'Égyptomanie dans l'Art Occidental*, France, Art Creation Realisation, 1989.

<sup>3</sup> Baldwin E., *Modern Egypt: New Architecture in an Ancient World*, ArchDaily, 2021,

<https://www.archdaily.com/939242/modern-egypt-new-architecture-in-an-ancient-world>

<sup>4</sup> Ormos, I., *The Cairo Street at the World's Columbian Exposition*, Chicago, 1893, Paris, Publications de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Published on OpenEdition Books: 5 December 2017, *L'Orientalisme Architectural entre Imaginaires et Savoirs*, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Elshahed, M., *Egypt Here and There: The Architectures and Images of National Exhibitions and Pavilions, 1926–1964*, Annales Islamologiques. Dossier – Bâtir, Exposer, Restaurer: Une Histoire Architecturale de l'Égypte Moderne, Dynamiques de la Modernité,, p. 111, 2016, Egypt, IFAO,

<https://www.ifao.egnet.net/anisl/050/04>

<sup>6</sup> Magnin E., *Neo-Pharaonism and National Revival: The Controversy Surrounding the Saad Zaghloul Mausoleum*, in Laura Hindelang & Nadia Radwan (eds.), *Nostalgia and Belonging in Art and Architecture from the MENA Region. A Collection of Essays*, Manazir: Swiss Platform for the Study of Visual Arts, Architecture and Heritage in the MENA Region, 18 October 2021, Pp. 13-16, <https://manazir.art/blog/nostalgia-and-belonging-art-and-architecture-mena-region/neo-pharaonism-and-national-revival-magnin>

<sup>7</sup> Colombe M., *L'Évolution de l'Égypte, 1924-1950*, p. 167, Paris: G. P. Maisonneuve, 1951.

<sup>8</sup> Gabr, A. H., *Cairene Neo-Pharaonic Architecture in the Twentieth Century: A Recurrent External Western Influence*, *Modern Practices: Interpretations of Tradition*, Volume 87/Iaste 87/96, Berkely, California, Pp.75-114, 1996.

<sup>9</sup> Al- Gawwadi, M., *ʿUṭmān Muḥarrām*, Cairo: Maktabaʾi Madbūlī, 2002, Madbouli Press, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Safran, N., *Egypt in Search of Political Community: An Analysis of the Intellectual and Political Evolution of Egypt, 1804-1952*, , p.34, USA, Harvard University Press, 1981.

<sup>11</sup> Volait, M., *Architectures de la Décennie Pharaonique en Égypte (1922-1932)*. Images d'Égypte, Pp. 163-186. Centre d'études et de documentation économiques, juridiques et sociales CEDEJ. CEDEJ - Égypte/Soudan, 1992, <https://books.openedition.org/cedej/560?lang=en>

<sup>12</sup> Volait, *Architectures de la Décennie Pharaonique en Égypte*, Pp. 163-186.

<sup>13</sup> Seggerman, A. D., *Mahmoud Mukhtar's Pharaonic Classicism and Pedagogical Nationalism*, *Modernism on the Nile: Art in Egypt between the Islamic and the Contemporary* (Chapel Hill, NC; online edn, North Carolina Scholarship Online, 21 Jan. 2021), 2019, <https://doi.org/10.5149/northcarolina/9781469653044.003.0003>

<sup>14</sup> Elshahed, *Egypt Here and There*, p.113.

<sup>15</sup> Volait, *Architectures de la Décennie Pharaonique en Égypte*, Pp. 163-186.

<sup>16</sup> Radwan, N., *Between Diana and Isis: Egypt's "Renaissance" and the Neo-Pharaonic Style (1920s–1930s)*, *Dialogues artistiques avec les passés de l'Égypte Une perspective transnationale et transmédiiale*, Publications de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Pp. 5-8, 2023, <http://books.openedition.org/inha/7194>

<sup>17</sup> Volait, *Architectures de la Décennie Pharaonique en Égypte*, Pp. 163-186.

<sup>18</sup> Enterprise, *European Neoclassicism Meets Pharaonic-inspired Design*, Cairo, Enterprise Ventures LLC, June 2022, <https://enterprise.press/stories/2022/06/30/european-neoclassicism-meets-pharaonic-inspired-design-75015/>

<sup>19</sup> Magnin, *Neo-Pharaonism and National Revival*, Pp. 13-16.

<sup>20</sup> Volait, *Architectures de la Décennie Pharaonique en Égypte*, Pp. 163-186.

<sup>21</sup> Gabr, *Cairene Neo-Pharaonic Architecture in the Twentieth Century*, Pp.75-114.