ART AND EMPIRE: KHEDIVE ISMĀʿĪL AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE CAIRO OPERA HOUSE

By

Adam Mestyan

Submitted to
Central European University
History Department

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Supervisor: Professor Nadia Al-Bagdadi
Second Reader: Professor Istvan Rev

Budapest, Hungary

2007

STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHT

ABSTRACT

This study describes the foundation of the Cairo Opera House (1869) and the creation of *Aïda* (1871) in the context of the opening ceremonies of the Suez Canal (1869). Doing so, the thesis introduces the concepts of *political aesthetics* and *aesthetical politics* as bridging principles between Opera Studies and Colonial Studies. The foundation event of the Cairo Opera is understood in the context of the "imperial set". This concept is one of the theoretical results of the work: it defines the public visual expression of the imperial imagination of the Egyptian ruler, Khedive Ismāʿīl (1863-79). His cultural foundations are shown as serving the goal of political independence from the Ottomans and as means in the negotiation with the British and French colonial empires in a nineteenth-century Mediterranean culture.

NOTE ON TRANSCRIPTION

I followed the standard of the American Library of Congress in the Romanisation of Arabic script. As I do not claim the knowledge of Ottoman Turkish, I transcribed the names of the Ottoman Sultans and institutions according to the Arabic script (ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz instead of Abdülaziz). If an Arabic or Turkish name was published in Latin characters by the person him/herself, I followed the personal authority (Aouni instead of ʿŪnī). If a Turkish name was given which had no Arabic origin, I followed the published practice (for instance, Şinasi).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am extremely grateful to my supervisor, Professor Nadia Al-Bagdadi for her help and criticism. I am also indebted to Professor Istvan Rev for his helpful and sharp insights and conversations. The person I am most indebted to is Professor Istvan Ormos who made my stay in Cairo possible with the help of the Hungarian Attaché of Culture, Laszlo Vida. Professor Ormos is also the first person who criticised my ideas and framework of research.

I am indebted to my Academic Writing Consultant, Andrea Kirchknopf, not only for her formal suggestions but for her precious criticism concerning the content of my thesis. Ferenc Laczo and Gabor Karman along with the Organising Board of the GRACEH were also helpful in offering me the possibility of discussing my ideas during the debates of the Open Scholarly Meetings at CEU and in the GRACEH conference. I have to also express my gratitude to Professor Marsha Siefert and Dr. Markian Prokopovych for initiating me into the secret boxes of Opera Studies. Finally, I am thankful to my girlfriend, Anna Selmeczi, for all her support and love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the foundation of the Cairo Opera House in 1869 ordered by Khedive Ismāʿīl (r. 1863-1879) and intends to interpret it in the framework of *political aesthetics* – a concept which was not defined before although widely used in historical studies. I use the concept of political aesthetics as a bridging principle between Opera Studies and (Post)Colonial Studies. The historical frame is the context of the opening ceremonies of the Suez Canal (16 - 23 November 1869) which was a visual frame at the same time. It was the aesthetic expression of an idea of empire, civilization and political independency. To describe the nature of this visual expression I introduce the concept of *imperial set*. These theoretical considerations will be described in detail in chapter 1.

An Opera House is understood here in three meanings: as a place of artistic pleasures, as a place for social meetings and as a place for the political representation of the state following Ruth Bereson's distinctions.[1] An Opera House is also a centre of national and international networks – it creates an audience, a public, an education and a discourse. In Opera Studies or in Musicology the foundation of the Cairo Opera House is usually connected to the genesis of *Aïda*.[2] This is the point where Colonial Studies touches upon the theme and in the person of Edward Said, a great critic interpreted the Cairo Opera House and *Aïda* as parts of the cultural colonisation in Egypt which ultimately lead to Western (British) control (1882). According to him, in *Aïda* an image of "an Orientalized Egypt" was constructed thus it was "an imperial *article de luxe* purchased by credit for a tiny clientele".[3] In my view, today this argument is worth reframing – certainly, the Cairo Opera House and

[1] Ruth Bereson, *The operatic state: cultural policy and the opera house* (London: Routledge, 2002), 14.

[2] Like in *Verdi's Aida,* ed. Hans Busch (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978).

[3] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 121, 129.

Aïda were parts of Westernisation but their genesis and later usages can be re-interpreted as results of a very unique and complex historical situation.

Thus, I argue that imperial representation (the opening of the Suez Canal) is the occasion when art as institution (Opera) arrives to a Muslim country. Political aesthetics in Egypt is an aspect of the transfer of ideas and institutions which were not only imitations of the Western style but weapons used for other goals such as independence from the Ottomans, internal political fights and early representations of nationalism. I will prove this on the basis of the case study of the Cairo Opera House.

A mysterious common surmise was that *Aïda* was composed for the Suez Canal celebrations in 1869 and thus associated with the foundation of the Cairo Opera House. The earliest academic article I found which mistakenly gives this information is Edgar Istel's essay from 1917.[4] The study of the libretto and in general, of *Aïda,* was re-vitalized in the beginning of the 1970s, after the celebrations of its one-hundred year creation (1871-1971).[5]

An early issue in Musicology was the oriental or orientalising character of certain melodies or the absence of these in *Aïda*. Although the opera as a piece of art contains "multiple semiotic systems" the relation between text and music and the affections were investigated in terms of music studies.[6] The question how to judge this opera according to an ethical substance was thus raised already before the 1980s but this was kept inside the circles of Musicology. The borderlines of this closed community were crossed by Edward

[4] Edgar Istel, "A Genetic Study of the Aida Libretto," *The Musical Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (1917): 34-52.

[5] Philip Gossett, "Verdi, Ghislanzoni and Aida: The Uses of Convention," *Critical Inquiry* 1, no. 2 (1974): 291-334.

[6] One of the best articles which also gives a comprehensive literature: Fabrizio Della Seta, "O cieli azzuri: Exoticism and Dramatic Discourse in Aida." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3, no. 1 (1991): 49-62.

Said when first in 1989 he published an essay on *Aïda* as a colonial and imperialist piece of art followed by a scholarly debate (see chapter 1).[7]

Aïda and the Cairo Opera House became objects of an ethical discourse which always insinuates the judgements of sinfulness or innocence. The main argumentation concerns the question if the circumstances of the creation *of Aïda* can be understood as frozen *in* the piece. I will show in chapter 5 that the intention of the Khedive was to produce a *national* work of art and lots of Europeans – among them chiefly Mariette – helped him to realize this. Therefore, the genesis of *Aïda* can be easily labelled as "colonial" but – using Lucia Re's distinction[8] – it is not automatically equated with European imperialism. It is the Khedive's imperialism that the idea of this work embodies.[9] This idea – Egypt as a glorious empire and a modern nation state – is the one which forms the heritage of *Aïda* in Egypt.

It can be said that colonial discourse appropriated the piece, digested and formulated as an example and means to discover political, historical and cultural discrepancies. Indeed, this opera serves well in all these agendas and efforts. The foundation of the Cairo Opera House thus generated an audience, a Westernisation process, a national work of art (*Aïda*), then, a scholarly discourse.

No Egyptian scholars participated in the debate generated by Said. The former director of the Cairo Opera House, Ṣāliḥ ʿAbdūn, published articles and books on the history of the Cairo Opera House and *Aïda* from the 1960s but it seems that he was not interested in the debate. Even in his memoirs (published in 2000), he holds that the Cairo Opera House and

[7] Said, 111-132.

[8] Lucia Re, "Alexandria Revisited – Colonialism and the Egyptian Works of Enrico Pea and Giuseppe Ungaretti," in *A Place in the Sun – Africa in Italian Colonial Culture from Post-Unification to the Present,* ed. Patrizia Palumbo, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 163-196.

[9] William Weaver, *Verdi – A documentary study* ([London:] Thames and Hudson, 1977), 225.

Aïda are great contributions to the culture of Egypt.[10] Thus, it is justified to hold that, at least until the 1990s, *Aïda* and the idea of a national opera house was recognised by the elite and the Egyptian musicians as important instances of cultural symbols.

My study aims to embrace the European and Egyptian perceptions of the Opera House and *Aïda* but more than half percent of the primary documents I used were written by Europeans. The small quantity of Arabic sources is just partly due to my limited access to the archives in Cairo. It also indicates that exactly these years (1869-1871) are the ones when the Cairo Opera House was not *yet* handled as part of the Egyptian elite's cultural identity.

The historical background, that is, the inauguration ceremonies of the Suez Canal, has been dealt with in numerous studies as parts of the narrative of Khedive Ismāʿīl's rule. Usually, these are mentioned as those events which gave Ismāʿīl the title "Magnificent" in European journals and papers. Also, the ceremonies form part of the economic history of the Egyptian public debt. As a third aspect, the Suez Canal is often treated in historical studies focusing on the Suez crisis in 1956. To my best knowledge, there was no work published which focused on the aesthetic features of the ceremonies in 1869 thus this is my contribution to the issue.

Another aspect of the historical landscape is the so-called *Nahḍa*, the Arab cultural (for the most part, literary) re-birth. The *Nahḍa* cannot be equalled with Westernisation yet this later process was certainly a part of it. My period could serve as an early phase of *Nahḍa* when the first Arab cultural-political papers (*Al-Jawāʾib* [The Answers, founded 1860, Istanbul], *Wādī al-Nīl* [The Valley of Nile, founded 1866, Cairo], *Nuzhat al-Afqār* [The Entertainment of Thoughts, founded 1869, Cairo]) were published, translations were

[10] Ṣāliḥ ʿAbdūn, *Khamsūn ʿāmān min al-mūsīqā wa-l-ūbirā* [Fifty Years of Music and Opera] (Al-Qāhira: Dār al-Shurūq, 2000), 139.

produced, and the first "historical serial-novels" were written by Salīm al-Bustānī from 1871 onwards.[11]

In chapter 1 I will deal with historiographical issues concerning the possibility of the construction of political aesthetics as a branch of scholarship which can be applied with a supposed common (colonial) concept of a Mediterranean culture in the nineteenth century. Doing so, I will introduce problems of periodization, of Egyptian national identity and of national history. Then, I will analyse four previous approaches to Egyptian cultural history (Said, Mitchell, Reid, Pollard). Finally I will deal with political aesthetics and also introduce its reverse, aesthetical politics and their special relation to Opera Studies.

A small historical comparison between Istanbul and Egypt will be made in chapter 2 (also see Table I – p. 49). This comparison focuses on the relation of the Ottoman Sultans and Egyptian rulers to Western theatre and opera in the period between 1805-1863, until the rule of Khedive Ismāʿīl. This chapter also shows how the public representation of the state with Western or traditional means became gradually important. It concludes that Ottoman and Egyptian rulers before the 1860s dealt with Western theatre and opera as a means of *private* entertainment.

In chapter 3, I will describe the historical circumstances of Ismāʿīl's rule. I will highlight his Western education and his diplomatic skills, however, this chapter aims to interpret Ismāʿīl's foreign policy as efforts of independence from the Ottomans. These efforts are paralleled by the continuous negotiation with the French and the British empires. The chapter concludes that in 1869 Ismāʿīl was only able to create an *image* of independence.

This image will be analysed in chapter 4 with the concept of the *imperial set*. The visual transformation of Cairo, the foundation of national institutions of culture will be

[11] EI², s. v. "nahḍa" (N. Tomiche). Cf. also Albert Hourani, *Arab thought in the liberal age, 1798-1939* (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 67-102.

described as parts of the formation of Egyptian modernistation. The "image of independence" created by Ismāʿīl and his men will be described through the opening ceremonies of the Suez Canal. The chapter concludes that this imperial imagination constructed a live image and thus it had an operatic character.

Chapter 5 will describe the circumstances of the Cairo Opera House, the biography of its architect and its audience. The first three years (1869-1872) will be focused on: the circumstances of the creation of *Aïda* will be interpreted which, to my knowledge, is the first time that a historical analysis tries to reframe it in a theory of aesthetical politics as a reverse of political aesthetics thus filling a research gap. The afterlife and myth of *Aïda* will described as consequences of the imperial set thus contributing to the ongoing discourse over colonialism. The chapter concludes that the man behind the Cairo Opera House and *Aïda* is Khedive Ismāʿīl and his imperial imagination.

In the Conclusion, I will summarise the above mentioned structure and try to understand political aesthetics as a general principle with which a more sensitive and detailed analyses of pre-British (pre-1882) Egypt can be achieved. Colonial Studies could be reframed along political aesthetics as the European expansion generated a reply which was so strong that its aftermath only became visible today. Political aesthetics could be used also as a general feature of the second half of the nineteenth-century Mediterranean culture but the appropriate conditions of the usage and the scope of this theory require further work.

CHAPTER 1

POLITICAL AESTHETICS AND COLONIAL THEORY

In this chapter, I introduce theoretical considerations concerning the application of political aesthetics and its reverse, aesthetical politics in the domain of Colonial Studies. This application arises from the understanding of the foundation of the Cairo Opera House (1869) as a result of a peculiar and complex historical situation which cannot be described in the simplistic terms of a power-relation between the European coloniser and the Egyptian colonised. The foundation event can be regarded as a crossroad of political history and art history. Therefore, the concept of political aesthetics is also a demand of a point of view which detects a history of the reception of European forms of art in Egypt and, in a wider context, in the Ottoman Empire throughout the 19th century.

Following Lucia Re's argument, Westernisation is understood here as not necessarily connected to European aggressive extension.[12] Edward Said, in contrast, claimed a relation between colonial (Western) works of art and European imperialism and territorial conquest.[13] I also endeavour to reconsider and reframe his theory of cultural colonisation thus contributing to an ongoing discussion on Colonial Studies.[14] For instance, following Said, *The Columbia Encyclopaedia* states that "before colonization can be effected, the indigenous population must be subdued and assimilated or converted to the culture of the colonists".[15] My thesis will challenge this view arguing that cultural colonization in Egypt took the unique form of mixed aesthetical politics.

[12] Re, 166.

[13] Said, xx.

[14] Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question – Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkely and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005).

[15] *The Columbia Encyclopaedia*, sixth edition (2001-2005), s. v. "colonialism."

First, I will consider questions of periodization and the construction of an Egyptian national identity in establishing historical narratives. Second, I will present the methods of Said and of previous researchers who dealt with the cultural history of 19th century Egypt. Third, I will define political aesthetics as a tool in Colonial Studies which can serve as an umbrella-concept for art history, political, social history and theories of representation in the nineteenth century.

1.1 History, Colonialism, National Identity

Periodization comprises a certain idea about history with which the present constitutes its own past therefore it is always teleological. Picking up events which are announced as important means the establishment of a narrative, a narrative which often takes the form of a literary artefact.[16] This narrative can also serve as an explanation for today's challenges and as an archaeology of the conditions which made a certain constellation of knowledge possible in the past. This narrative also establishes relations and connections of past perceptions to present perceptions, thus creating genealogies of meanings.[17]

The histories of modern Egypt as told by historians consequently embody certain ideas about the history of the colonial times. The structure of periodization depends upon what the history of "modern" Egypt means. I can distinguish between two "long" standards. One is when "modern" history refers to the history of the encounter with Europe and it gives as the

[16] Hayden White, "The historical text as literary artefact," in *Tropics of Discourse. Essays in cultural criticism.* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 81-100.

[17] Cf. Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 135-140 and Walter Benjamin, "Thesis on the Philosophy of History," in: *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 253-264.

first "modern" event Napoleon's conquest of the country (1798).[18] Here, an implicit assumption supposes that Egypt had been separated from Europe before the nineteenth century. Building a history on the concept of Mediterranean "culture", a new history could be probably written about cultural encounters. This would be built on the method of Fernand Braudel but applying it into the nineteenth century.[19]

The second is what I call "national" standard and this tries to reframe the periodization of Egyptian history as a process which leads to the independence of the country and a nation-state.[20] This standard usually gives the rule of Muḥammad ʿAlī (1805) as the starting point in the modern period. In recent years, another year is given as the starting point of indigenous nationalist ideology: 1879 when the ʿUrābī-revolution broke out.[21] Nor of these frameworks provides acceptable and full explanations for the foundation of the Cairo Opera House in 1869.

I propose here that another position is possible to take, namely, that, in the case of Egypt, there was a relatively *short nineteenth century* – from the rule of Muḥammad ʿAlī to the resignation of Khedive Ismāʿīl (1805-1879). This is also a standard time-frame used by, for instance, Robert Hunter.[22] This period is characterised by semi-independence from the Ottoman Empire and from the European powers. This is a period of continuous negotiations.

[18] A paradigm for this type of historiography is J. C. B. Richmond's *Egypt 1789-1952 – Her Advance Towards a Modern Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

[19] "[T]he sea has to be seen and seen again." Fernand Braudel, *Memory and the Mediterranean* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), 3.

[20] A paradigm for this type is Anwar ʿAbd al-Malik's *Naḥdat Miṣr: Takawwun al-Fikr wa-l-Aydiyūlūjiya fī nahḍat Miṣr al-waṭanīya (1805-1892)* [The awakening of Egypt: The genesis of the national idea and ideology in the awakening of Egypt] ([Cairo]: Al-Hayʾa al-Miṣrīyah al-ʿĀmma l-il-Kitāb, 1983).

[21] Like Ṣalāḥ Muntaṣir, *Min ʿUrābī ilā ʿAbd al-Nāṣir: qirāʾa jadīda li-l-tāʾrīkh* [From ʿUrābī to ʿAbd al-Nāṣir: a new study of history] (Madīnat Naṣr, al-Qāhira: Dār al-Shurūq, 2003).

[22] "Between 1805-1879, Egypt passed through a complete cycle from the creation to the disintegration of a highly centralized system of personal rule". Robert F. Hunter, *Egypt under the Khedives 1805-1879 – From Household Government to Modern Bureaucracy* (London: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984), 3.

The rulers of the country, themselves foreign to the ruled people (a paradox I will deal with later), are negotiating with three empires: the Ottomans, the British and the French.

This period, a short nineteenth century in Egypt, is a time when the rulers decide more or less freely what is good for their country. These decision-making processes involve numerous foreign advisors and models but the administrative structure of the state and the army are in the hands of the sovereigns. But even if this idea of a short nineteenth century in Egypt is not acceptable – because, for instance, the Egyptian Muslims and Copts are using their own calendars, therefore, the very idea of a "nineteenth century" loses its meaning – it would still be useful to recognize this period between 1805 and 1879 as something distinct from what precedes it (direct French rule) and what comes after (direct British rule).

How does this periodization of Egypt relate to the periodization of colonialism?[23] The simplest definition of colonialism is "the conquest and control of other people's lands and goods."[24] In my usage the first meaning of the word "colonial" defines a *direct* rule of the state of Egypt by the British with military occupation. This is the period between 1882 and 1922 (or 1956 – when the British troops left Egypt). However, and this is the second meaning of "colonial" in my study, this word is used for the designation of a type of cultural encounter which is without a direct rule and without military occupation. It is associated with the promotion of capitalism,[25] with a new, exhibition-type of representation[26] and with the exchange of ideas such as nationalism[27] led by the state or the ruler itself. In Egypt, this designates the period between 1805 and 1879.

[23] I am indebted to Professor Nadia Al-Bagdadi for this question.

[24] Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 2.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 1-33.

[27] Donald Malcom Reid, *Whose pharaos? Archeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* (Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press, 2002), 288.

It is worth mentioning that in the second sense colonial seems to be a very broad concept – it describes a general human situation, the encounter with the Other and the construction of the Self through the Other. My study is closely connected to this type of colonialism. The aggressive intervention of the British in 1882 cannot prevent us recognizing how complex and indeed unique the historical situation of Egypt in the period of 1805-1879 was. Said's argumentation united the two senses of colonialism and made the second, weaker one, condition to the first, strong one. I do not believe that culturally speaking this is true while in financial matters this is justified.[28] My study will show that works of art and institutions of art were indeed used as political means, yet, in Egypt, it was Khedive Ismāʿīl, the Egyptian ruler, behind the scenes. This also brings out the question of Egyptian national identity.

What does "Egyptian" mean? What does "colonization" mean? Could it be that these two questions ask for the same answer? Could it be that if one asks about colonization in an Egyptian context, one asks about national identity at the same time? From studies on nationalism, it is known that national identity and "nation" are constructions: "nation" is an imagined community.[29] If one considers the history of the geographical area of Egypt, then it is clear that although we apply the word "Egyptian" to a people in BCE 1500 and to people in CE 1500, these people are not the same at all in any regard. The assumption that these are the same would suppose a false essentialism.

However, it is also worth noting that the concept of Egypt and Egyptian in the European history of ideas has also a history. This is a concept of ancient Egypt or/and a

[28] David S. Landes, *Bankers and Pashas* (London: Heinemann, 1958) and Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800-1914* (London and New York: Methuen, 1987), 122-152.

[29] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991) 5-7.

Hellenistic Egypt.[30] This is the idea what was popularized by the savants of Napoleon and others in the nineteenth century and had a mirror-effect on building the Egyptian national identity. Archaeology and national identity were intimately connected and still are.[31] Discovering Egyptian history means the construction of the Egyptian self, just like in case of any national identity building.

Egypt was not ruled by indigenous people from the last dynasty of pharaohs until the 1952 revolution of Nasser: today's mixed population is a legacy of a magnificent and difficult history. It seems that the period between 1805 and 1879 is precisely the period when the meaning of Egyptian started to be filled by the concept of the nation (history, land, essence) also by the early birds of *Nahḍa,* the Arabic cultural awakening. In this period, I consider the official representatives of the Egyptian state as Egyptians and anything they do – regardless of their religion, their language or ethnicity – is "Egyptian". The events my work focuses on – the inauguration ceremonies of the Suez Canal, the foundation of the Cairo Opera House and *Aïda* – are "Egyptian" in this sense.

Between 1805 and 1879 only those were the representatives of Egypt – being Turks, Greeks, Italians, Frenchmen or Arabs – who had legitimacy blessed by the ruler. The ruler, who, in turn, was not Egypt-born at the beginning and his ruling elite until the 1840's were mainly composed of non-Arabic ethnicities.[32] Moreover, during this period, the Ottoman sultan was, in principle, the lord of the Egyptian ruler. Even Ismāʿīl in 1879 was dismissed

[30] Cf. Jan Assmann, *Moses, the Egyptian. The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[31] Cf., Reid. For the importance of archaeology today for Egyptian identity see my "Nefertiti-paradigm," *Holmi* 18, no. 8 (2006): 1075-1087 (in Hungarian).

[32] Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's men: Mehmed Ali, his army and the making of modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 85, 242-252. Cf. also Hunter, 80-99.

by a telegraph of the Sultan.[33] As a parallel process to the European influence one can find a re-Arabisation of Egypt, for instance, that the language of administration slowly changed from Turkish to Arabic (and French).[34] The dynasty of Muḥammad ʿAlī was in a constant negotiating situation. They used every means to strengthen their position and their country's position as an independent unit: European influences and technologies against the Ottomans, Muslim and Arabic traditions against the Europeans, digesting the European image of Egypt and creating an Egyptian image of Egypt. These struggles and strategies transformed the public sphere and space into a new sphere of the political.

1.2 Culture, Power, Archaeology, Family politics – Methods and Topics in the History of 19th century Egypt

In the transformation of the public sphere, and in Westernisation in general, various factors played various roles. Four methods or, rather, approaches to the cultural history of modern Egypt are to be analysed briefly. The common characteristic features of these works are that their "method" cannot be detached from the "object". Singling out themes like works of art, education and technology, museums, and family politics, the authors in fact created new topics in Egyptian historiography and in the study of Westernisation.

Said's method is "to focus as much as possible on individual works, to read them first as great products of the creative or interpretative imagination, and then to show them as part

[33] The Sultan was persuaded by the French and the British to take this step. Ilyās Al-Ayyūbī, *Taʾrikh Miṣr fī ʿahd al-khidīv Ismāʿīl bāshā min sanat 1863 ilā sanat 1879. II*. [The history of Egypt in the epoch of Khedive Ismāʿīl Pasha from the year of 1863 to the year 1879] (Al-Qāhira: Maktaba Madbūlī, 1996), 514.

[34] Lisa Pollard, *Nurturing the nation: the family politics of modernizing, colonizing and liberating Egypt (1805-1923)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 22.

of the relationship between culture and empire."[35] Said's work says nothing of the "other" side. It is primarily engaged with Western literature and the strategies used to formulate an image of the other and keep a certain imperial division between the centre and periphery, an ontological difference between white and non-white, between colonizer and colonized. Yet, with this gesture he precisely maintains the division – to apply Sadik Al-Azm's critique of *Orientalism* to *Culture and Imperialism*.[36]

It is particularly true in the case of his analysis of *Aïda* as a colonial opera. For Said, the creation of *Aïda* indicates an imperialist work of art. *Aïda* "is a hybrid, radically impure work that belongs equally to the history of culture and the historical experience of the overseas domination."[37] Analysing the circumstances of the creation, the author also states that in Verdi's method "an imperial notion of the artist dovetailed conveniently with an imperial notion of a non-European world whose claims on a European composer were either minimal or non-existent."[38] Said analyses the role of August Mariette (chief archaeologist, designer of the Egyptian parts in the Exposition Universelle of 1867) and Egyptology in general and notes that "Egyptology is Egyptology and not Egypt."[39]

In the heart of Said's argument, the *genesis* of *Aïda* stands as a model for every meaning which later was related to the piece. I believe that this observation is justified based on the analysis of its creation and afterlife in chapter 5. Therefore it is very sensitive how to judge this genesis, what colour is given to it and whose authorship is attributed to the

[35] Said, xxii.

[36] Sadik Jalal Al-ʿAzm, "Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse," *Khamsin: A Jornal of Revolutionary Socialists of the Middle East* 8 (1980): 5-26.

[37] Said, 114.

[38] Ibid., 116-117.

[39] Ibid.

piece. The first and strongest critic of Said's argumentation is Paul Robinson.[40] The most recent ones are Lucia Re[41] and Ralph Locke[42]. The idea that there is indeed a relation between culture and empire was entertained by many, most notably, by Martin Evans, who even claimed that Said suggested that *Aïda* is "recreating the French view of ancient Egypt".[43]

Paul Robinson accepts that *Aïda* "was to form part of the cultural superstructure of the European presence in Egypt" but at the same time notes that it "was intended by Ismail to serve as a significant piece of nationalistic propaganda."[44] According to Robinson, Verdi constructed a "Europeanized Egypt" and an "orientalized Ethiopia" – thus he refutes Said's claim that there is an "Orientalized Egypt" in *Aïda.*[45] Robinson's final conclusion is that *Aïda* is an Italian opera, "first and foremost."[46]

Lucia Re looks at Said's argument in the context of the Italian colonial culture and the relationship of Italy to Egypt in the nineteenth century, particularly, to Alexandria. She also argues that the plot of the piece is anti-colonial, moreover, that it embraces "Khedive Ismail's perspective and points to the desirability of Ethiopia joining Egypt."[47] Re underlines that "Khedive Ismail is likely to have seen in Verdi's music a political symbol of

[40] Paul Robinson, "Is Aida an Orientalist Opera?" *Cambridge Opera Journal* 5, no. 2 (1993): 133-140.

[41] Re, 163-165.

[42] Raph P. Locke, "Beyond the exotic: How 'Eastern' is Aida?" *Cambridge Opera Journal* 17, no. 2 (2005): 105–139.

[43] *Culture and Empire – The French Experience, 1830-1940*, ed. Martin Evans (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 9.

[44] Robinson, 134.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Re, 164.

the spirit of national independence rather than a means to enslave Egypt […] to Europe."[48] She argues that it is anachronistic to speak about an imperialist pattern in Verdi's work, considering the Italians' relation to Egypt which became nationalist-imperialist only in the 1890s. "Prior to the 1890s, colonialism and imperialism were widely perceived as glaringly contradictory […] to the spirit of Risorgimento."[49] The author goes further with a distinction between the colonial and the imperialist arguing against Said's equation of these two.[50]

Ralph Locke understands the staged *Aïda* as a *visual object*. Doing so the author emphasises that "the various Others – people who are Others to us, whether they be the Egyptian imperialists or the Ethiopian victims/rebels – turn out to be Us after all". [51] Locke's main argument is the special use of stereotypes in this work of art, being these the stereotypes of empire. The result of his interpretations is a synthesis of the former opinions that in *Aïda* "the metaphors of empire and conquest can resonate in many ways at once. One can accept a 'colonialist' interpretation of the opera's Egypt without denying that it might also refer to oppressive European militarism more generally."[52]

For my part, Said's basic insight of the relation between imperial ideology and nineteenth-century art is essential and forms a starting point. I will historicize and involve the notions of representations – because I believe that the world is not only composed of texts. Narration is probably as characteristic of images as of texts. Power probably more associated with images than with texts in this regard. The relation between imperial

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., 165.

[50] Ibid., 166.

[51] Locke, 107.

[52] Ibid., 135.

ideology and imperial culture is a relation which was not only important to a Western discourse but to an Egyptian discourse as well.

If Said uses Foucault in *The order of things,* then Timothy Mitchell uses Foucault's *Discipline and Punishment* and *Power and Knowledge*: for Mitchell, the main point is not the relation between power and works of art, but the relation between power and knowledge. His other theoretical sources are the works of Walter Benjamin (foremost, *Paris: The Capital of Nineteenth Century*) and Theodor W. Adorno.[53] His main aim is to study "the power to colonise". In his usage, "colonising refers […] to the spread of political power that inscribes in the social world a new conception of space, new forms of personhood, and a new means of manufacturing the experience of the real."[54]

This Foucault-based view of the colonial project is re-framed in a Benjaminian concept of the nineteenth century – this is what Mitchell calls "the World as Exhibition"-view. Based on the analyses of the World Exhibitions and the Expositions Universelles, he states that the exhibition-character was doubled outside the actual exhibitions and the experience of reality became a lineage of created images.[55] This was how the Europeans experienced Egypt as an object for exhibit and observation – and from a literary point of view, this argument is similar to the core of Said's argumentation.

At the same time, the new technologies and strategies (like the modernization of the army, the re-building of Cairo, the methods of education, etc.) all served the aims of colonizers in spreading and framing a new political order in Egypt, with or without European military presence. I believe that Mitchell's book can be criticized from numerous points of view. For instance, he also keeps a certain ontological and metaphysical difference

[53] Mitchell, 1-33.

[54] Ibid., ix.

[55] "World exhibition here refers not to an exhibition of the world but to the world conceived and grasped as though it were an exhibition." Ibid., 13.

between coloniser and colonised, even at the level of architecture, when he tries to state that the real "Arabic" structure of dwelling is a Kabylian village house and "planning" itself is a Western concept.[56]

For the present study, *Colonising Egypt* offers a rich source of information and I also maintain the study of the intimate relation between images, exhibition and political power. I apply Mitchell's understanding of nineteenth century-Europe (especially France) as a place where meaning is produced, also serving political and economic goals (but not exclusively). The form of this meaning is the aesthetical, that is, representations.

Representations are partly also the objects of Reid's *Whose Pharaohs? – Archeology, Museums and Egyptian national identity from Napoleon to the World War I* which is a study in the institutional history of the Egyptian Museum. Here, the relation between archaeology, the archaeological understanding of the past and the construction of national identity are analysed. The main goal of the author is to "write modern Egyptians into" the history of Egyptology and the histories of the Egyptian museums.[57] Reid also wants to insert "the history of archaeology and museums into the mainstream history of Egypt."[58]

He deals with four historical disciplines (Egyptology, Greco-Roman studies, Coptology and Islamic art and archaeology) as forming *one* history of Egypt. Reid shows how Egyptomania and Egyptology were not separated. He uses a Said-based insight on the relation between imperialism and Orientalism. At the same time, the author tries to formulate "spaces within which supplementary or alternative narratives might be developed" between Orientalism as a full imperialist art and Orientalism as a non-

[56] Ibid., 48-62.

[57] Reid, 9.

[58] Ibid., 11.

imperialist art.[59] For periodization, he uses the "long nineteenth century" framework which is fully justified the French expedition being the basis of the Egyptology-project.

Representations and institutions are used in a gender-sensitive framework by Lisa Pollard in her *Nurturing the Nation – The Family Politics of Modernizing, colonizing, and liberating Egypt 1805-1923*. As the title suggests, she deals with the concept of family, the role of women and images of women as strategies used in the formation of an image of an Egyptian nation-state. Her book "addresses the ascendance of the image of the monogamous couple, their children, and the reformed, modernized domicile as templates for discussing political transformation from the middle of the nineteenth century through the Egyptian 1919 Revolution."[60]

The time-frame used in this book is the one I called "national" and this is precisely so because the topic of the book, the family strategies, were first thematized by the Egyptian ruler, Muḥammad ʿAlī and his new state. The traditional practices were faced with the European models, especially with the French and British concepts of family and women. But the very situation that made this "facing" possible – and this my supposition too – was not a foreign, colonizer, "strong" interest but a "home-made" intention with an aim to place "Egypt vis-à-vis other nations in a hierarchy of development at the apex of which sat 'modernity'."[61]

Pollard states that before 1882 the family-discourse was a "means of distinguishing oneself as a member of a new, elite class and as 'Egyptian' rather than 'Ottoman'."[62] She concludes that "the occupation of 1882 thus did not serve as a defining moment after which

[59] Ibid., 14.

[60] Pollard, 5.

[61] Ibid., 15.

[62] Ibid., 10.

unwitting Egyptians were subjected to a colonial discourse and simply swayed by its messages."[63] This insight is one of my basic starting points as well.

However, as the author states, the establishment during the British occupation was indeed a militarily controlled power with a colonial discourse on helping and "nurturing" a nation. Pollard's book based on a thorough archival work which makes it a *Kontrapunkt* of Reid's *Whose pharaohs*. One of her assets is the usage of the feminist discourse on Egyptian or Arabian politics using the works of Leila Ahmed, Beth Baron and Margot Badran. She also argues that the feminist historians overlooked that the Egyptian debates about womanhood not only served a new concept of women but a part of "a larger project remaking men and women alike."[64] Although, in the following, my theoretical framework is not based on a gender-sensitive view none the less I will use Pollard's data and theoretical observations to point out a politics which made the existence of an Egyptian bourgeoisie possible as an *audience* of works of art – and "family-politics" had an enormous role in these strategies.

Summing up, my method will be a combination of the above mentioned approaches. I will describe the circumstances of a Western institution of art in the service of politics just as Said argued but I will attribute the foundation event to a general representational feature of the second half of the nineteenth century in the Mediterranean. I also pay attention to the Europeans' perceptions of representations the same way as Mitchell did, but at the same time I used all the Egyptian sources that were available for me. Following Reid, I also claim a huge role of Egyptology in the service of the nationalist idea and just as Pollard did, I will try to detect the first seeds of the transformation of the Egyptian elite into an audience of an

[63] Ibid., 11.

[64] Ibid., 5.

opera. Thus, Musicology, Colonial Studies, Museum Studies, post-structuralism and Gender/Family studies are combined under the umbrella of *political aesthetics*.

1.3 Political Aesthetics in Egypt

In this study, I combine the above presented approaches. Of Said and Foucault I will use the understanding of artistic strategies as certain formations of concepts of political power. Of Mitchell, I utilize of the "World as Exhibition"-concept as a general nineteenth-century feature. Of Reid, I use the creation of museums and institutions of knowledge as instances of an indigenous and a foreign intention. Of Pollard I borrow the formation of a new class-consciousness and the discourses of domestic behaviour as serving nationalist and political purposes. In general, I accept the relation between culture and empire, but I would rather characterize the nineteenth century in the Mediterranean with a *repository* of imperial representations (a French, a British and an Ottoman-Islamic) from which Ismāʿīl tried to formulate his own choosing a mixture of French and Egyptian symbols.

I have chosen for the purposes of a general framework the concept of *political aesthetics*. It can be striking because, to my best knowledge, no-one used this concept in connection with nineteenth century Egypt so far. Political aesthetics is a bit too general and somehow an obscure notion. In the following I will give a small clarification and also a justification answering two questions: What does political aesthetics mean in this context? What reasons can be given for the application of this concept here?

1.3.1 Political aesthetics

Political aesthetics is a strange word-juncture: it combines the field of politics – which is associated with commonwealth, power and state – and the field of aesthetics – which is usually associated with art, representations, senses and beauty. The full genealogy of this concept is not known. Probably, one of the earliest thinkers on political aesthetics was Marx when he pointed out that the French Revolution and Napoleon utilised the Roman imperial representations.[65] Another forefather is Walter Benjamin as he took up Marx's insight:"[T]he French Revolution viewed itself as Rome incarnate. It evoked ancient Rome the way fashion evokes costumes of the past."[66] This observation is the core of political aesthetics: official representations of the state create a lineage of historical memory and serve the strategies of the legitimizing political power.

Carl Schmitt understood political aesthetics differently, and in his eyes this concept was a critique of aesthetics itself. For him, *political romanticism* served as a leading concept and he stated that its core is an observation that "the state is a work of art."[67] He suggested that Romantic aesthetics was only an intermediary phase in the process of depoliticization which "promoted economical thinking and is a typical attendant phenomenon."[68] However, Schmitt's own concept of the aesthetic is politicized because he also understood it as a form of power.

The term "political aesthetics" is widely used in all discourses which deal with autocratic regimes. It is also often used in Holocaust-studies and refers to the representation

[65] Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1984), 11.

[66] Benjamin, 261.

[67] Carl Schmitt, *Political Romanticism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The MIT Press, 1986), 125.

[68] Victoria Kahn, "Hamlet or Hecuba: Carl Schmitt's Decision," *Representations* no. 83 (2003): 67-96. 68.

of the Holocaust as a means serving political goals. I argue that political aesthetics has always something to do with the idea of empire. The concept and idea of empire was visualized in the Roman Empire and its visual models were taken by, for instance, the Holy German Empire, Napoleon I and Napoleon III, until the USA today (as a visual expression of the *translatio imperii*).[69] It is a European concept, yet, ceremonial art and the art of ceremony are found everywhere in the world. The re-invention of tradition – so characteristic of the nineteenth century – was also in the service of political goals: imperial traditions as such were re-discovered in the French, British and Ottoman empires alike: the neo-Muslim symbolism and the re-invention of the caliphate in the Hamidian era were also part of Ottoman political aesthetics.[70] The usage of imperial representation as a "costume"[71] is peculiar to the nineteenth century empires. Imperial representation therefore is the field of political aesthetics *par excellence*.

An important distinction must be made. Political aesthetics is used here in two meanings. First, it refers to a practice: the representations of power *by* itself which result in a representation of the political in public. It is always official and formal. It always carries a certain idea about history and thus the representation of power becomes the representation of this idea as well.

Second, it defines a branch of scholarship, a reflexive study of the representation of power *as* it was represented in any kind of public sphere and also the study of the *perceptions* through which these representations were seen, understood, and appropriated.

[69] Charles S. Maier, *Among Empires – American Ascendency and Its Predecessors* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2006), 36-39.

[70] Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domain – Ideology and the legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998), 16-44.

[71] Marx, ibid and Benjamin, ibid.

I may introduce here the term *aesthetical politics*. By this I understand a sub-concept: in the case of political aesthetics, the aesthetic serves the goal and means of politics. In the case of aesthetical politics, politics is in the power of an aesthetical demand. It is not done by the state or the dominant power-structure but by artists and art, even if in the service of political ideologies. It is suitable to embrace a certain challenge or modus in the nineteenth century which was described by Mitchell as the "World of Exhibition".[72] Aesthetical politics refers to a condition in which representation is always given priority over reality.

1.3.1 Political aesthetics in Egypt and Opera Studies

Can these terms be applied in Egypt? I argue for the application because Egypt is a part of a game played by the colonising empires between 1805 and 1879 and needed and created a representation of its (imagined, desired) independence. Also, it is a part of the nineteenth-century Mediterranean culture of which political aesthetics formed a part. During this period, Egypt even wanted to be a "coloniser" country and in fact, occupied the Sudan. Second, this period is the one in which the apparatus of a modern nation state, i.e. bureaucracy is created.[73] The transformation of Cairo, the new family politics and the constant negotiation between the French, British and the Ottomans created a demand for a visual representation of the state in a search for the construction a distinct identity.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the French and British imperial self-representations were embodied in historicizing styles, Victorian and *empire* buildings and objects. As Selim Deringil showed, the Ottoman state (under Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd) used the traditional

[72] Mitchell, 13.

[73] Hunter, 80-122.

occasions as self-representations: circumcisions, Friday prayers and military parades within a new Westernised visual set (uniforms, ranks and medals).[74] All Mediterranean empires created a symbolism which was embodied in public ceremonies: exhibitions, memorial events, prayers, public buildings (like courts), museums and so forth. Through and by this symbolism – which was also the representation of the ideas of empire and modernisation – a new concept of the public sphere and public politics was created. Khedive Ismāʿīl had his own answer for these political-aesthetical challenges. This answer will be described in terms of an Egyptian political aesthetics which later failed.

With the creation of new politics and a new elite, a new kind of public sphere had to be made. The term "public sphere" came to life from Jürgen Habermas' book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere.* It is associated with two important patterns: secularization and bourgeoisie.[75] It is a "bourgeois category". Therefore as the Egyptian bourgeoisie was created, a new public sphere was also offered. Fatma Müge Göçek called the attention to the problems of the *universalization* of the concept of the bourgeois and noted that "the search for an intact agent of change in the non-Western contexts leads many to [...] the state."[76] In my study, Egyptian bourgeoisie is understood as an Egyptian audience for the Cairo Opera House. However, I am lead to the state just as Göçek indicated because I believe that, in these years (1869-1871), this audience is a manifestation of the will of the state.

At the same time, the Egyptian elite were also composed of foreigners, in increasing number. The Greek and Italian community in Alexandria created their "public sphere" along

[74] Deringil, ibid.

[75] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere – An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Polity Press, 1992), 1-26.

[76] Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire – Ottoman Westernization and Social Change* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3-19. 3, 9.

with the home-countries. In Cairo, a serious transformation project was initiated by Muḥammad ʿAlī (new palaces, roads, homes, army and courtly celebrations) which was accelerated by his grandson, Ismāʿīl. Hygienic and canalling projects were started and Cairo became a "modern" capital along with new practices of medicine.[77] This modernizing project came from above and the active participants (and beneficiaries) were mostly in the environment of the ruler.

The creation of an Egyptian bourgeois public sphere was not an economic or class interest but a political aim. This is why the concepts of political aesthetics and aesthetical politics are used here. The political aims were to produce images for European powers, for the Ottomans, and for the Egyptians. At the same time, these three angles also had their own images and presuppositions. The creation of the visual features of the Suez Canal ceremonies is what I call "imperial set": it embodies an imperial imagination and uses the exhibition-character of nineteenth century France.[78] This will serve as a paradigm for Egyptian political aesthetics.

In close connection with the exhibition-character, the foundation of the Cairo Opera House stands in the centre of my study. I use Ruth Bereson's distinction between opera as a work of art, opera as a place for the political and civic representation and opera as a place for socializing.[79] Opera Studies, therefore, provides an additional theoretical basis. The Opera House is at the same time a national and an international place. It generates the concept of the "operatic state": the state as representing itself in the Opera House.[8o]

[77] Laverne Kuhnke, *Lives at Risk – Public Health in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 33-48.

[78] Mitchell, 8-10.

[79] Bereson, 14.

[80] Ibid., 178.

The foundation event and the creation of *Aïda* (chapter 5) can be analysed in two historical contexts: first, in the process of the private usage of the Western arts by the Ottoman and Egyptian rulers as these entertainments became gradually public (chapter 2) and second, in the political-cultural context of the Suez Canal ceremonies as the embodiment of political aesthetics (chapter 3-4). In European imagination – and also in the Egyptian one – the foundation of the Cairo Opera House, the Suez Canal and the creation and first staging of *Aïda* somehow connected. It is also demanding what *Aïda* as an opera and as a cultural *topos* did with Egypt in European imagination.[81]

In the case of the Opera House and *Aïda,* political aesthetics meets aesthetical politics, Westernisation meets nationalism and representation meets an imperial imagination (see chapter 5). The general context is the representations and meanings of an empire. The concepts of a short nineteenth century in a Mediterranean culture will be combined in order to create an alternative reading of colonial times. In the following, this is what forms a theoretical framework for my study: political aesthetics is the discourse over representations of power which are constructing identities and ideas of otherness and expressions of a political will.

[81] I am indebted to Professor Istvan Rev for this question.

CHAPTER 2

ARTS AND POLITICS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND IN EGYPT (1805-1861)

After setting up the theoretical framework of political aesthetics in the first chapter, this second chapter will deal with the phenomena of European-style theatre and opera in the Ottoman Empire focusing on Egypt from the beginning of the nineteenth century until 1863. I will introduce a comparative study between the "centre", Istanbul, and "periphery", Egypt, dealing with the roots of the relation between politics (sultans and pashas) and Western-style theatre and opera (see Table I – p. 49). First, this relation can be detected as a private or "diplomatic" one. Second, this private usage will be shown as it gradually becomes a public means of entertainment. Along with this process, the public representation of the Ottoman and Egyptian state also arouses within the framework of political aesthetics.

2.1 Western Theatre in Ottoman Lands (Istanbul and Egypt) Before 1805

One of the earliest accounts when an Ottoman, Muslim subject was present in a theatrical performance is about a kind of ballet organized by the Italian community in 1524 in Pera, in that part of Istanbul which was mainly inhabited by the religious minorities (Armenians, Greeks, Jews) and foreigners, and this ballet was partly performed (!) and

viewed by Turks.[82] Pera was also the place where the ambassador of Louis XIV, Marquis de Nointel, established a theatre between 1670 and 1680, and here happened an early cultural interaction, when in 1730, "the Re'is ül-Küttāb was a guest" and "a group of fourty-five dancers from the Palace performed Turkish dances."[83]

The amateur and, I may call it, "diplomatic" theatres had been flourishing in Pera and although these were maintained and enjoyed by the Europeans and some of the members of the religious communities, there is evidence that the notables and leading officers of the Ottoman Sultans had been among the audience in the eighteenth century.[84] These performances were parts of both the "popular" and "high" culture, but predominantly used as diplomatic occasions. The Ottoman ambassadors in Paris, Vienna, St. Petersburg and London also attended in theatrical events. In 1721, Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi, the ambassador to Paris, "saw a performance of Quinault's *Thésée*, with music by Lulli at the Palais Royal."[85] The reports of the ambassadors, the presence of the "diplomatic" theatre and the economic and technical development of the Europeans made theatre interesting to the Sultans. This interest in Western arts has traces back to the "Tulip period" (1703-1757) when the first Western-style public buildings have been built, or, far earlier, back to Mehmed II's portrait by Bellini painted in 1480.[86]

The first Sultan who had a fascination reportedly for Western music and theatre in the modern era is Sālim III (1789-1807), who was a player of *nay* and wrote poems apart from

[82] Nermin Menemencioglu, "The Ottoman Theatre 1839-1923**,"** *Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)* 10, no. 1. (1983): 48-58. 49.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid., 50.

[85] Ibid., 49.

[86] See the catalogue of the exhibition "Ressam, Sultan ve Portesi – The Artist, the Sultan and His Portrait" in Yapı Kredi Cultural Center Kazım Taşkent Art Gallery between 7 December 1999 – 7 January 2000. Project coordinator: Burçak Madran. Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Cultural Activities, Art and Publishing, 1999. (without page numbers)

being a modernizer. For his own pleasure, a foreign opera company gave a performance in 1797.[87] In Vienna, Paris and Poznan, Turkish manuscripts of plays were found, dated *1809*, written by possibly some of the stuff of the Ottoman embassy who taught in the School of Languages, training diplomats.[88] The existence of these manuscripts is an indicator of the knowledge of Ottoman diplomats of Western theatre-practices and also it indicates that the beginnings of the Ottoman-Turkish theatre can be dated earlier as it was thought.

There is no evidence if these Ottoman accounts of Western theatres have ever reached the Arabic provinces before the nineteenth century. The first account of an Arabic traveller on theatre was given by a presumably Moroccan, Muḥammad b. ʿUthmān al-Miknāsī (al-Miknāsī – "from Meknès") who describes a Spanish theatre as follows:

> A huge building with four levels and an abundant of candles can be found in it. Musicians are in the lowest level of this building. And in one of the levels [others] presented us with a situation [*mawdiʿ*] in accordance with the situation in which they were playing and entertaining. We saw with amazement in that building things which cannot be described like different kinds of images, buildings and animals.[89]

This event happened in 1780 when theatre was already well known among the notables in the Ottoman capital. Yet, Morocco was not a part of the empire and although Arabic mimetic traditions were strong in the East, people in the West, in Morocco – or at least al-Miknāsī – were not familiar with such mimetic representations. And presumably Al-Miknāsī was not among the rich elite.

But Egypt, in contrast her ever-going fight for independence, was a part of the Ottoman Empire. It is worth mentioning that the French "expedition" in 1798-1802 was the first one

[87] Menemencioglu, 49.

[88] EI², s. v. "masraḥ" [theatre] (3. in Turkey - Metın And).

[89] In *Naẓariyyāt al-maṣraḥ* [Theories of Theatre], ed. Muḥammad Kāmil Al-Khaṭīb (Dimashq: Manshūrāt Wizārat ath-Thaqāfa, 1994), 13.

which established Western-style theatre in Arabic lands, although exclusively for the French's own sake – yet, natives visited it as well.[90] It is reported that this theatre was named as the "Theatre of the Republic and the Arts" by General Menou.[91] The general – who turned to Muslim with the name of ʿAbdallah – followed a pattern from home: in the years of the Revolution, the Comédie Française was called "Théâtre de la Republique" (from 1791 to 1799).[92]

It seems that Napoleon was aware of the political implications of art and theatre and used it as conscious means of aesthetical politics. In one of his letters sent to General Kléber, the ill-fated predecessor of Menou, Napoleon wrote: "I send you a troupe of the Comédie Française, take care of them, because they are sent, first, in order to entertain our soldiers and second, to change the customs of this country [Egypt] by arousing affections."[93] This fact suggests that *cultural* colonisation was a process initiated consciously by the French and aesthetics of the French Revolution was consciously applied outside Europe.

The Egyptians observed the French activities and the famous Al-Jabartī in his chronicle writes about the French theatre (28. Dec. 1800):

> At Azbakīya, at the point known as Bāb al-Hawāʾ, the construction was completed of what in their tongue is called La Comédie [*al-kamarī* in the text]. It is a place where Frenchmen assemble once every 10 night [Schulze notes, that according to the new time-counting, this meant once a week] for some four hours to see plays performed by

[90] Philip C. Sadgrove, *The Egyptian Theatre in the Nineteenth Century (1799-1882)* (Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 1996), 28.

[91] Muḥammad Yūsuf Najm, *Al-masraḥīya fī-l-adab al-ʿarabī al-ḥadīth* [The drama in the new Arabic literature] (Bayrūth: Dār Al-Thaqāfa, c. 1967), 18.

[92] Barry Daniels and Jacqueline Razgonnikoff, *Patriotes en scène : Théâtre de la République (1790-1799)* (Artlys, 2007).

[93] Quoted in: Najm, 27, footnote 3. Also in Reinhard Schulze, "Schauspiel oder Nachahmung? Zum Theaterbegriff Arabischer Reiseschriftsteller im 19. Jahrhundert," *Welt des Islams* 34, no 1 (1994): 67-84, 69. Shulze mistakenly attributes these words to Klebert.

> a French troupe, in French, for pleasure and entertainment. To enter, one has to have an admission ticket and suitable garb.[94]

This account is sandwiched between a story about a slain woman found in the garden of ʿUmar Kāshif and another event with much importance: the announcement to the *Dīwān* (the Egyptian council during the occupation) that the French want to "introduce the registration and statistics of births and deaths among the Muslims."[95] It seems that for al-Jabartī, theatre was not a real innovation. He immediately uses the word "plays" (*malāʿīb*) and does not find anything strange in it, apart from the note that it is a *regular* event and one has to have a ticket.[96] This fact suggests that it was not a novelty that it is "art" and people are using it to entertain themselves but the form and its *social implications* were alien.

It is because – although the Ottomans' experiences with the European-style theatre may not reach Egypt or reached only the Turkish notables residing there – Egypt and to some extent, all Muslim territories had strong mimetic traditions. M. M. Badawi wrote an essay on these forms of art in his book *Early Arabic Drama*, so I do not want to dwell on these.[97] It is enough mentioning that the existence of the Shīʿī Muslims' "religious passion play" (*taʿziya*) on commemorating the death of Ḥusayn (the son of ʿAlī), the puppet-theatre in Egypt and Turkey (*Qaraqōz* or *Ḳaragöz*) and the shadow-play (*khayāl al-ẓill*) suggests that mimicry, and also, textual representations (public poetry), were parts of the indigenous

[94] *ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī's History of Egypt – ʿAjāʾib al-Āthār fī'l-Tarājim wa'l-Akhbār,* vol. III-IV, ed. Thomas Philip and Moshe Perlmann. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1994), 224. In Arabic: Al-Khaṭīb, 15. In German: Schulze, 69.

[95] Al-Jabartī, ibid.

[96] The difference between the knowledge that it is theatre as a form of art and representation and the knowledge that it is 'real' was analyzed by Schulze.

[97] Muhammad Mustafa Badawi, *Early Arabic Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), "The indigenous dramatic tradition", 7-30.

dramatic tradition which had a strong folk and popular character, and these activities were also used to entertain the rulers in sophisticated forms.

2.2 Theatre, Arts, and the Sultans Until 1861

It was already mentioned that Sultan Sālim III (1789-1807) received an opera company in his palace for his own pleasure in the 1790s. He was a man of arts, composing poems and playing music. During his reign happened the above mentioned French occupation of Egypt in 1798, yet this event seemingly did not alienate him from the Western arts and sciences. Although "until the period of Westernisation, [Otttoman] court theatre simply imitated popular theatre"[98] the court of the Sultan was always a place of refinement in Ottoman history. Sālim III, in the name of his new order, *Nīẓām-i Jadīd*, not only created a new-style army, but new public buildings and styles were introduced, notwithstanding with the first permanent ambassadors sent to London, Paris, Vienna and Berlin.[99] The revolt against his reforms demanded Sālim's life. But two years later an even more powerful Sultan came to throne who was a real admirer of Western arts.

The rule of this Sultan, Maḥmūd II (1808-1839) is the first period in Ottoman lands when one can speak of both a popular/public and an elite/private usage of *alafranca* (foreigner, European) entertainments. Maḥmūd II abolished the Janissary corps in 1826 and although this event seems nothing to do with the reception of Western arts, it is significant, because for the new style-troops he had to find a band playing appropriate marching

[98] EI², s. v. "masraḥ" [theatre] (3. In Turkey – Metın And).

[99] Ibid., s. v. "Selim III" (Virginia Aksan).

music.[100] Around the same time, Muḥammad ʿAlī in Egypt also looking for musicians for his troops.[101] The first "art" school in the Muslim world was founded in the same year, the *Muzika-i Hümayun.* Giuseppe Donizetti, the brother of the famous composer, Gaetano, "was invited to supervise the training" of the musicians.[102] Thus, the trained men were familiar also with the newest Italian operas and they gave the first palace band. This was accompanied with the establishment of a *bureau of translation* which later produced the leaders of Ottoman reform.[103]

Maḥmūd II was also a man of theatre, he often visited the theatres – it is said that he had a library of "500 plays, of which 40 were tragedies, 40 were dramas, 30 were comedies, and the rest farces and vaudevilles."[104] The theatres this time were still in Pera, but these were not only theatres for the Europeans, but also for the local communities. The Armenian community had a leading role in theatre: the earliest Ottoman drama was published in 1813 in Armenian, which was a translation of Molière's *Le médecin malgré lui*.[105] Maḥmūd II had four theatres to visit, two were built for the purposes of travelling companies and two were for the Western-style theatre, the *Théâtre Français* and the *Théâtre Bosco,* and as a fifth theatre: his own palace.[106] His reign from the perspective of the history of cultural Westernisation is the *period of transition*: the Western taste gradually became popular. This

[100] Menemencioglu, 50.

[101] Salwa El-Shawan, "Western Music and Its Practitioners in Egypt (ca. 1825-1950): The Integration of a New Musical Tradition into a Changing Environment," *Asian Music* 17, no. 1. (1985): 143-153, 143-144.

[102] Menemencioglu, ibid.

[103] Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876* (New York: Gordian Press, 1973), 28.

[104] EI², s. v. "masraḥ" (3. in Turkey - Metın And).

[105] Ibid.

[106] Menemencioglu, ibid.

popularity clearly signs that Western tradition was promoted by the Sultans and this promotion was not restricted at all to the palace and the notables.

In the Tanẓīmāt-period a new order is created, this time legally. The *Hatt-i Şerif of Gülhane*, the edict of 3 November 1839, the first order in the name of the new Sultan, ʿAbd al-Majīd I (1839-1861) (but in fact the work of Muṣṭafā Rashīd Pasha, minister of foreign affairs)[107] brought not only a new legal system for the empire, but caused a boom in Western-style arts. He himself studied painting and had his images sent to the whole territory of the empire including Egypt.[108] (These were received with celebrations, see below.) The portraits made the whole empire an exhibition of the Sultan's face, and, in this way, everywhere *the eyes of the Sultan* were symbolically present. This meant also that after a period of transition, the entertainments of the elite (of the Sultan) and the masses were again *separated*. The most visible – or invisible – signs of this process were the Sultan's own theatres. As a counterargument it is reported that ʿAbd al-Majīd I kept the custom of visiting frequently the Pera theatres, while his own theatre built next to his palace where operas were performed.[109] Verdi's Ernani was staged in 1846.[110]

To this theatre owes the history of Turkish and Ottoman theatre its first play written by a Turk in Turkish in 1859. The author is the poet Ibrahim Şinasi Efendi, who also translated in the same year works from Racine, La Fontaine and Fénelon. The title is "Şāir Evlenmesi" (*The poet's marriage*) and it is about a mistaken identity – a one-act comedy with characters

[107] Davison, 36.

[108] Ayla Ersoy, "The Ottoman Sultans and the art of painting," available from http://newspot.byegm.gov.tr/arsiv/2000/May/N22.htm; Internet; accessed 14 January.

[109] Menemencioglu, ibid.

[110] The Turkish Ministry of Culture – *Opera in Turkey*, available from http://goturkey.kulturturizm.gov.tr/BelgeGoster.aspx?17A16AE30572D313679A66406202CCB0C312D1DD2E9EA986, Internet, accessed 24 May 2007.

familiar from the shadow-plays.[111] Although this play is counted as the first Turkish play commissioned by the Sultan, it is worth mentioning that Mīrzā Fatḥ ʿAlī Akhundov, an Azerbaijani, wrote five comedies in Turkish between 1850 and 1855. Matın And states that Şinasi's play is of a better quality and this is the reason for holding it the first in the national canon, yet, it might be possible that in the formation of a canon nationality also plays a small role.[112]

Apart from the highest elitist occurrences during the 1850s, a theatrical boom was under way in Istanbul; it is reported that by 1860 there were more than 200 Armenian actors in the city.[113] The theatres spread from Pera to other districts and even to countrytowns. This is the artistic "golden age of Ottoman theatres" when a new Sultan, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz was enthroned (1861-1876). By now, the Armenian companies were strong, popular and also employed Turks in order to teach the right pronunciation of Turkish. An Armenian actor and director, Güllü Agop, who turned to Muslim, rebuilt an old theatre and opened it as the "Ottoman Theatre" (*Osmanlı Tiyatrosu*) in 1867. Thus, this first official public theatre of the Ottoman state was inaugurated in the same year when the Sultan for the first time visited a European country, France, on the occasion of the *Exposition Universelle*. I will mention this extraordinary visit in the next chapter. After showing briefly the situation in the capital, now I turn to Egypt.

[111] Ibid., 51.

[112] EI², s. v. "masraḥ" [theatre] (3. In Turkey, Metın And).

[113] Menemencioglu, ibid.

2.3 Egypt and the Western Arts between 1805-1863

2.3.1 Under Muḥammad ʿAlī and Ibrāhīm (1805-1848)

After the French left Egypt with the help of a joined British and Ottoman army, an Ottoman Albanian officer, Muḥammad ʿAlī became the *wālī* (governor of the province) by smart political and military tactics in 1805. He established his household and with this household a small elite was formed who ruled the country without a serious counter-movement. This elite is called by Ehud Toledano "Ottoman-Egyptian", because its members were mostly Turkish-Ottomans.[114] Muḥammad ʿAlī himself was not very keen on Western arts in his first decades but later he gradually used more and more Western images and styles (probably, imitating Maḥmūd II). His modernization efforts (creating a new army, a new structure of taxation, improving the institutions of public health and Western-style public education) implied the presence of European (mostly French) experts and also initiated a new "visual culture".[115]

Muḥammad ʿAlī had new gardens, palaces and numerous portraits. With the new army he also had new military musicians and music schools with Italian musicians, exactly the same way as Maḥmūd II did.[116] In this time, the split between religious and secular architecture was also introduced.[117] Yet a forgotten person had an enormous role in the

[114] Ehud R Toledano, *State and society in nineteenth century Egypt,* Cambridge Middle East Library, vol. 22 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 16.

[115] Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "The visual transformation of Egypt during the reign of Muḥammad ʿAlī," in *Islamic Art in the 19th Century: Tradition, Innovation, and Eclecticism*, eds. Doris Behrens-Abouseif and Stephen Vernoit (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 109-129 (with images). 109.

[116] El-Shawan, Salwa. "Western Music and Its Practitioners in Egypt (ca. 1825-1950): The Integration of a New Musical Tradition into a Changing Environment." *Asian Music* 17, no. 1. (1985): 143-153. 143-144.

[117] Behrens-Abouseif, 120.

history of state-celebrations and representations of the state in Egypt throughout the nineteenth century. This man is called Pietro Avoscani (1816-1890), an Italian, who came to Egypt in 1837 and was immediately charged by Muḥammad ʿAlī to decorate his palace.[118] He was so delighted what Avoscani did that he planned to name him as a director of "peinture et de dessin" [painting and drawing]. He served Muḥammad ʿAlī probably as a secret agent as well, he was sent to Greece and Russia.[119] On the occasion of giving a large sum to a theatre troupe (which was probably backed by Avoscani), the ruler expressed that he thinks of the artists as "le pays peut profiter de leur presence" [the country can profit from their presence]. [120] Avoscani will later design the Zizinia theatre in Alexandria (1862) and he will be charged with the construction of the Cairo Opera House (1869, chapter 5).

The first data concerning a Western-style opera in the court of Muḥammad ʿAlī, is connected to this Italian. Amateur and European groups already played operas in Alexandria.[121] Avoscani was charged with helping to stage three operas *(Gemma, Ernani, Barbarier de Séville)* for the occasion of one of the sons of the Viceroy, Kiamil (Kamil?) Pasha's marriage (before 1839).[122] The Italian was also charged with designing a royal coat of arms and he reportedly designed six sculptures in the Gabbari-palace which represented very unusual figures: Jean-Bart, Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Nelson, and two allegories: the Astronomy and "la Nautique".[123] He designed the celebrations of the return of Muḥammad

[118] Jacques Tagher, "Pietro Avoscani, artiste-décorateur et home d'affaires," *Cahiers d'histoire égyptienne* n. 4. (1949): 306-314. 307.

[119] Niccola Ulacacci, *Pietro Avoscani – cenni biografici* (Leghorn, 1871), 18.

[120] Tagher, 308.

[121] Sadgrove, 31-34.

[122] Tagher, 309-310.

[123] Ibid., 310.

ʿAlī from Napoli.[124] If this is true, then, the official state-celebrations have already been started under the rule of Muḥammad ʿAlī.

The growing French community opened his theatre in 1829, and possibly this was the one what Gérard de Nerval described in 1843.[125] There existed a French and later an Italian theatre in Alexandria in 1837.[126] In Cairo, a Teatro del Cairo was operating in the 1840's and this was visited at least three times by Muḥammad ʿAlī in 1844, once with all the *ʿulamāʾ*.[127]

The music, shadow-play, mimicry, farces and puppet-show were still vivid traditions in the 1830s in Egypt. The ruler of Egypt was entertained by these forms. Edward William Lane lived in Cairo under the rule of Muḥammad ʿAlī. He notes that the puppet-shows were of Turkish import and were performed exclusively in Turkish,[128] therefore, I believe that puppet-play was the "art of the elite" that time, if we accept that under Muḥammad ʿAlī the elite was Ottoman (Turkish)-Egyptian. In the folk-theatre, the players are called "mohabbazeen" *(muḥabbaḍūn)*, "those who are making others cheerful" and obviously their art was a kind of *commedia dell'arte* genre.

> The Egyptians are often amused by players of low and ridiculus farces, who are called 'Mohabbazeen'. These frequently perform at the festivals prior to weddings and circumcisions, at the houses of great […] Their public performances are scarcely worthy of description; it is chiefly by vulgar jests and indecent actions that they amuse and obtain applause.[129]

[124] Ibid.

[125] Najm, 20-21 and Sadgrove, 31-34.

[126] Shulze, 81.

[127] Sadgrove, 39.

[128] Edward William Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (The Hague and London: East-West Publications, 1978), 385-386.

[129] Ibid., 384.

Lane seemingly hates these actors, yet he shortly describes a performance given as a part of the celebrations for the circumcision of one of Muḥammad ʿAlī's sons (I suspect that it was the circumcision of Saʿīd).[130] It was a story about a *fellāḥ* who owed with money to the government, but could not pay therefore he was imprisoned, but his wife bribes the "*shaykh al-balad*" and finally, he releases the man. The play before Muḥammad ʿAlī had a peculiar aim to sign a moral lesson. This was clear to Lane as well: "this farce was played before the Básha [Muḥammad ʿAlī] with the view of opening his eyes to the conduct of those persons to whom was committed the office of collecting taxes."[131] To my best knowledge this is a unique data concerning an indigenous Arabic theatrical production which intends to *teach* the ruler or at least communicate a moral message through *mimetic* art (teaching morals through *Fürstenspiegel* was a common habit). Muḥammad ʿAlī used the traditional forms of entertainment as courtly and ceremonial art along with the Western-style performances.

Another man who was probably present in the above mentioned celebration of the circumcision was Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ al-Ṭahṭāwī, who returned from Paris in 1831 after a five-year stay. He was one of the four imams of a mission of Egyptian students to Paris where he studied French and was initiated to the high society by the French Orientalists who adored him.[132] His book on the French customs pleased Muḥammad ʿAlī so much that it was printed in 1834 and also translated to Turkish and published in 1839-40.[133] He writes about theatres in Paris in the following manner (Part 3. chapter 7. "On the promenades of Paris"):

[130] Ibid., 384-385.

[131] Ibid., 385.

[132] James Heyworth-Dunne, "Rifa'ah Badawi Rafi' al-Tahtawi: The Egyptian Revivalist," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London* 9, no. 4 (1939): 961-967, 964.

[133] James Heyworth-Dunne, "Rifa'ah Badawi Rafi' al-Tahtawi: The Egyptian Revivalist (continued)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London* 10, no. 2 (1940): 399-415, 401.

> Some of them gather at places of entertainment in a place called *tiyātr* […] and *sbaktākl*. In these the imitation of every kind of things is played. It is true that these plays are serious in the forms of joke, because marvellous lessons can be learned from them, and it is indeed so, considering that every kind of good and bad acts are shown in it praising the first and blaming the second. The French even say that these educate and refine the morals of the people.[134]

Al-Ṭahṭāwī interpreted the theatres as "general schools in which study both the wise and the ignorant."[135] He had problems with translating word "theatre" in Arabic:

> The term *tiyātr* originally meant the same [observed things, spectacles], then the play and its place got this name. The most similar to it [in Arabic] are the players who are called shadow-players *khayālī*], but the shadow-players are only a kind of it. Yet, it became famous among the Turks in the name of *kumdiya* [comedia]. But the [meaning of] this term is limited save if its meaning is to be extended.[136]

This is *the first sign* that an Egyptian shows knowledge of the then (in the 1820s-30s) flourishing Ottoman theatre-culture in Pera.

The event Lane describes interestingly has the same "educational" character with what al-Ṭahṭāwī was so familiar with. The ideas of Schiller about the aesthetical education of man and about art as a moral paradigm have long traditions in European culture. Lane and al-Ṭahṭāwī probably were in the same group watching the Egyptian farces playing a moral play for Muḥammad ʿAlī. Al-Ṭahṭāwī is also the first Arab writer who gives a description of the Opera in Paris. "The biggest *sbaktakl* in the city of Paris is called "Opera" […] and there are the most male singers and dancers. Here happens the instrumental singing and dance of gestures [*al-raqs bi-ishārāt*] which are like the gestures of the dumb signing marvellous

[134] Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ Al-Ṭahṭāwī, *Ad-Dīwān an-Nafīs fī īwān Bārīs aw takhlīṣ al-ibrīz fī talkhīṣ Báriz* [c. The Refinement of the Gold in a Comprehensive Depiction of Paris] (Bayrūt: Al-Muʾassasa al-ʿArabīya li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Nashar, 2002), 139. My translation.

[135] Ibid., my translation.

[136] Ibid.,141, my translation.

things."[137] This wonderful description finds the essence of narrative ballet and 'operatic' motion. The opera and theatre-life became vivid only in the 1840s in Alexandria which served for Cairo as Pera for the Muslim Istanbul. Artin Pasha, the minister of foreign Affairs of Muḥammad ʿAlī, even wrote a regulation for the Italian theatre in Alexandra what Flaubert visited in 1849 and 1850.[138] However, the successor of Muḥammad ʿAlī (after the early death of Ibrāhīm), ʿAbbās, wanted to imitate the court in Istanbul stronger then ever before.[139]

The first Turkish play was a result of an order for the private theatre of ʿAbd al-Majīd in 1859. Somehow, the first Arabic play was born among very "civil" circumstances, far away from the courts. It was in 1847, after coming back from a trip to Italy, that a cultured businessman, Mārūn al-Naqqāsh (d. 1855), in Beirut, Lebanon, wrote a play and performed in his own house with the help of his family. He was the first in this way who wrote a play, the *al-Bakhīl* [The Miser] in Arabic, and it is also him, who can be considered as the first "Western-style" actor. He invited to the first staging an audience of the elite: "the local notables and foreign consuls."[140] Later on, with an Ottoman decree, he built a *theatre* close to his house, and this is the place, where he played his last (and the third) play in 1853. The Arabic drama as a civil expression later will serve for the criticism of the ruler.

[137] Ibid., my translation.

[138] Sadgrove, 41. The regulation is in Appendix 1, 169-171. It is very interesting how Artin Bey wants to regulate the social behaviour of the audience: „Any person, without exception, who takes the liberty of making a noise in the Theatre [...] will be immediatly ejected the first time, and if the offence occurs again, will be barred from the Theatre for life", 171.

[139] Toledano, 22.

[140] Badawi, 43.

2.3.2 Under ʿAbbās and Saʿīd (1849-1863)

ʿAbbās ruled Egypt from 1849 until 1854, and these years are in a certain sense lost for the historiography of Egypt, with Toledano's words: these are "the forgotten years" along with his successor's, Saʿīd's rule (1854-63).[141] ʿAbbās is commonly held a conservative ruler who demolished the reforms of his grandfather and his rule was "the most Turkish". Toledano shows that this is not true entirely, although still, ʿAbbās had a different style of rule than his father's. None the less, the country was prospering in his period. Concerning Western art and artists, their relation to the court, ʿAbbās' five years were not very fruitful but the public representation of the state *à la turc* was approved.

We know that the customs of the huge street-festivals and some of the popular plays were still preserved in this period what Lane described earlier with such arrogance. In addition, we have data "that from time to time, the government also sponsored public entertainment."[142] Toledano gives account in a footnote of a certain Romanini, an acrobat, who was sponsored by the state in 1849 to perform, but later he "went to Syria, leaving unpaid debts."[143] ʿAbbās modelled his court after the Ottoman one.[144] He gave antiquities as a gift to Sultan ʿAbd al-Majīd.[145] The ceremonies: circumcisions, marriages (the son of ʿAbbās was married to a daughter of Sultan ʿAbd al-Majīd), Muslim, religious *ʿīd*s, and the leaving and arriving of pilgrim-caravans were the main occasions when ʿAbbās and later Saʿīd presented the state as an *aesthetical force*.

[141] Toledano, 25.

[142] Ibid., 233.

[143] Ibid., 298, footnote 3.

[144] Ibid., 55.

[145] Reid, 58. Reid states that he gave this gift to Sultan ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, but it is impossible, regarding, that ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz was enthroned in 1861, after seven years of the death of ʿAbbās.

Representing the state was not a challenge for Muḥammad ʿAlī – apart from the already-mentioned celebration of his return from Naples, I do not have any data concerning a public representation of power. It is ʿAbbās who first made huge state-founded occasions like the greeting of his mother-in-law arriving back from pilgrimage in 1850 as it was described by the poet Gustav Flaubert who was present in the ceremony incidentally.[146] Toledano explains that "because of the challenge of his rule from within [Saʿīd was his opposition] and the need to use the trappings of dynastic rule, ʿAbbās relied on ceremony and ritual."[147] This was certainly not only the character of ʿAbbas' rule but the whole Ottoman Empire gradually became a *net of representations,* very much the same way as the then contemporary Europe. The receiving ceremony and celebrations of three portraits of Sultan ʿAbd al-Majīd lasted for three days[148] – at the same time these portraits were sent to the whole territory of the empire and also to European rulers and ambassadors.[149]

ʿAbbās was very keen on constructing new palaces (following in this habit Sultan ʿAbd al-Majīd who also constructed palaces). He had at least seven, in the *Rūmī* style, that is, a kind of mixture of Greek, Italian and Spanish Mediterranean common architectural style, which was for him "the" Ottoman style – and this was true for some extent.[150] ʿAbbās also hired Avoscani as a *décorateur* of his palaces.[151] His creation of public representations of the state (palaces, ceremonies) is a sign of a changing view of the mode of rule and state. However, this change is not at all automatically Western-sided or even Ottoman. It can be

[146] Gustave Flaubert, *Voyage en Égypt* (Paris: Grasset, 1992), 242-243.

[147] Toledano, 52.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Ersoy, ibid.

[150] Toledano, 55.

[151] Tagher, 310.

interpreted as a *return* to an older Islamic-Arabic tradition in Egypt, namely, the practices of the Fatimid rulers. The image of an empire what was constructed in the first decade of Muḥammad ʿAlī had the possibility of return as the positions of Egypt were reinforced. The first meeting between the idea of a "mini-empire" (a term of Toledano) and the official representation of this idea through ceremonies, happened under the rule of ʿAbbās.

In these years, theatre and Western-style artistic life in Egypt gradually aroused. The reign of Saʿīd (1854-63) was in general more favourable for artists and Western-minded intellectuals then the period of ʿAbbās, not missing the fact, that Saʿīd was the first ruler of Egypt who was Western-educated and spoke fluently French. He was the last son of Muḥammad ʿAlī and was trained in Paris, in the Egyptian School. It was under his rule that al-Ṭahṭāwī, who was exiled by ʿAbbās, returned to the country and started a huge educational mission. [152] During this exile he translated Fénelon's *Télémaque* which was the first translation of French belles-lettres into Arabic.[153]

If the rule of ʿAbbas can be considered as a period during which the court and the state started in a growing number to represent itself *publicly* and works of art started to play a role in this representation (as ʿAbd al-Majīd's portraits and also the palaces as places of *representational exclusion*), the reign of Saʿīd made every condition possible for the later flourishing of Western-style cultural productions in the sixties. It was under his rule that growing numbers of foreign troupes came to Cairo, not to speak of Alexandria. It is reported that the later so-called "father of Arabic theatre", Yaʿqūb Sanūʿ, during the second half of the fifties and in the sixties attended in theatrical performances and also participated in

[152] Toledano, 92.

[153] Pierre Cachia , "Translations and adaptations," in *Modern Arabic Literarure,* ed. by M. M. Badawi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 27.

"French and Italian productions given in the open-air theatre at Azbakiyya Gardens by two local European groups".[154]

Saʿīd initiated lots of processes whose results – being those judged either positive or negative – would be only visible later, during the rule of Ismāʿīl. These are composed of the following elements: the growth of the national debt (when Saʿīd died it was much more the 4 million pounds), a new code of law, the establishment of the National Bank of Egypt, improving the communications and infrastructure of the country and two highly important decisions: declaring Arabic as the official language of Egypt (including the administration which was mostly on Turkish until then), and signing the contract with Ferdinand De Lesseps of the construction of the Suez Canal, who was a friend of the then young prince since the 1830s.[155] These processes and events had an enormous role in what followed in the later decades.

Palaces, courtly celebrations, and entertainments charactarized also the rule of Saʿīd. Saʿīd made the first steps in formulating a class of Arabic landowners who later became the first patrons of art. He himself was a two-faced patron of arts: he made lavish gifts of art (like in the case when he gave a huge part of ancient Egyptian antiquities to the Archduke Maximilan in 1855).[156] When prince Napoleon was expected to come to Egypt, he gave the Egyptologist Mariette an order to dig, and although prince Napoleon's visit finally was not realized, he gave the findings to the Louvre.[157]

[154] Badawi, 31.

[155] Richmond, 73 and 92. Cf. Hunter, 38-39.

[156] Reid, 58.

[157] Ibid., 100.

Saʿīd built new palaces, refund the Egyptian Antiquities Service (although under pressure)[158] and its Museum, and had huge celebrations with artistic events. Saʿīd also hired Avoscani as his forbearers did. Avoscani far now seems to become someone like an official court-*décorateur*, and the new ruler hired him for organizing a three day-and-night celebration. Here again were (for the second time since the days of Muḥammad ʿAlī) "operas, feux d'artifice, illuminations, loges grillages reserves aux femmes du harem, rien ne manqua."[159] It is not really clear why did he fall out of the favours of the ruler after this huge celebration, but Saʿīd had never hired him again. Still, it was under his rule, that Avoscani constructed the Theatre Zizinia in Alexandria in 1862 with 2000 seats for the Greek community.[160] Avoscani's great time, the public festivities and representations of state and the real breakthrough of the Western arts will come only with the rule of Ismāʿīl.

This chapter described the short history of Western style theatre in Ottoman lands (including Egypt) between 1805 and 1861. This narrative of cultural encounter also provided a history of the rulers' courtly theatres both in Istanbul and Cairo as one of the most important element in understanding the later years and evaluating the role of Khedive Ismāʿīl. It seems that in the first half of the nineteenth century the Egyptian rulers tried to catch up with the Ottoman Sultans in dealing with arts. By the 1860s a tradition of applying Western-style arts was established in *private* ceremonies of the rulers' courts and also increasingly in *public* ceremonies of (the Egyptian and the Ottoman) state. When Ismāʿīl came to power in 1863, everything is ready to begin a magnificent performance. But Ismāʿīl will deal with Western theatre and opera regardless the Ottoman model. In fact, against it.

[158] Ibid.

[159] Tagher, 311.

[160] Ibid.

TABLE I.

SULTANS, PASHAS, AND THEATRES, OPERAS (1805-1879)

Ottoman Sultans	Egyptian Viceroys	Ottoman theatre-opera	Egyptian theatre-opera
Sālim III (1789-1807) Muṣṭafā IV (1807-1808) Maḥmūd II (1808-1839) ʿAbd al-Majīd I (1839-1861) ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (1861-1876) Murād V (1876) ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (1876-1909)	Muḥammad ʿAlī (1805-1849) Ibrāhīm (1848) ʿAbbās (1849-1854) Saʿīd (1854- 1863) Ismāʿīl (1863-1879) [1869: the opening of the Suez Canal] Tawfīq (1879-1892)	1820s-30s: Maḥmūd II's own palace-theatre 1840s: ʿAbd al-Majīd's own theatre, operas performed 1846: Verdi's Ernani in Istanbul 1859: first Turkish play (by Şinasi Efendi) 1860s: "theatrical boom" in Pera 1867: Sultan ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz in the Exposition Universelle, Paris 1867: opening of the "Ottoman theatre" in Istanbul 1885: *Aïda* is staged in Istanbul	c.1838: Three operas are played for Muḥammad ʿAlī 1847: the first Arabic play in Lebanon (by Mārūn al-Naqqāsh) 1850s: visiting French troupes in Cairo – theatres in Alexandria 1867: Ismāʿīl in the Exposition Universelle, Paris 1869 (January): Théâtre de la Comédie in Cairo 1869 (February): Circus in Cairo 1869 (November): Cairo Opera House 1871 (December): The premier of *Aïda*

CHAPTER 3

ISMĀʿĪL AND HIS POLITICAL AESTHETICS

As we have seen in the last chapter, the relation of Ottoman and Egyptian rulers to the Western arts before the 1860s could be understood mainly in terms of private entertainments. At the same time, a demand gradually aroused for the public representation of the (Ottoman, Egyptian) state. In this chapter, the reign of Khedive Ismāʿīl (lived: 1830-1895 reigned: 1863-1879), will be shortly described concentrating on his relation to arts as public means and goods. Ismāʿil's concept of Egyptian independence as his personal independence will be also narrated. The nineteenth century European ideology and practice of exhibiting the world as an image (with the concept of Mitchell, the World-as-Exhibition) created an aesthetical model which numerous countries (European and non-European alike) used for political purposes.[161] Following from this insight, in the first chapter I introduced the concept of "imperial set" as the representation of an idea of empire with exhibition-like means. This idea will be used by Ismāʿīl to create an image of independence.

3.1 From Wālī to Khedive

The first half of Ismāʿīl's rule can be understood as a negotiation with Sultan ʿAbd al-Azīz for growing independence of Egypt and his own person. This can be traced back through the change of his official title, *wālī* – governor or representative of the Sultan – to

[161] Mitchell, 10-13.

khidīw, Khedive – in Persian it meant "lord, prince, ruler". This title and the donating *firmān* gave "virtual independence" to Egypt concerning foreign affairs.[162]

Ismāʿīl was the second son of Muḥammad ʿAlī's second son, Ibrāhīm and was born on 31 December 1830. Until 1858 when his brother Aḥmad died in an accident he was not the official heir of Saʿīd – a contemporary said that until then "he lived a life of a rich planter, and was devoted to the acquisition and cultivation of land."[163] This description is rather curious regarding Ismāʿīl's education and early life.[164] His Western education contributed to his later principles of government. In his early childhood, he was educated in a special school in Cairo established by Muḥammad ʿAlī, learning Turkish, Arabic and Persian. Then he had an eye-disease and was sent to Vienna to heal when he was fourteen, that is, in 1844. He spent two years there when finally he had to move to Paris.[165]

Paris in 1846 was a city that became – with the words of Walter Benjamin – "the capital of the nineteenth century". There was already a history of an Arab community in Paris before the 1820s,[166] Muḥammad ʿAlī also established there an Egyptian school (an École militaire) (on the advice of Jomard, and under the direction of two Armenians) where his sons, Ḥalīm and Ḥusayn, studied just like Ismāʿīl's brother, Aḥmad, along with the later members of elite, like ʿAlī Mubārak.[167] Ismāʿīl studied here engineering and arts like

[162] EI², s. v. "khidīw" [khedive] (P. J. Vatikiotis).

[163] Blanchard Jerrold, *Egypt under Ismail Pacha – Some Chapters of Contemporary History* (London: Samuel Tinsley and Co., 1879), 20.

[164] There are numerous more or less detailed accounts of his life and reign, I considered here three of them: 1. Al-Ayyūbī. 2. Gaston Zananiri, *Le Khédive Ismail et L'Egypte (1830-1894)* (Alexandrie: „Typo-Lithographie Nouvelle", C. Molco and Comp.,) 1923. 3. Georges Douin, *Histoire du Règne du Khédive Ismail* (Rome: Nell'Istituto poligrafico dello Stato per reale società di geografia d'Egitto, 1934).

[165] Al-Ayyūbī I, 8-9.

[166] Ian Coller, "Egypte-sur-Seine: The Making of an Arabic Community in Paris 1800-1830," in *French History and Civilization – Papers from the George Rudé Seminar, Vol 1,* eds. Ian Coller, Helen Davies, and Julie Kalman (Melbourne: The George Rudé Society, 2005), 206-214. 206.

[167] Al-Ayyūbī, ibid and Mitchell, 71-74.

drawing, and also acquired a fine French.[168] He had to go home in 1848 – his father, Ibrāhīm became the Pasha of Egypt for six months in 1848. He soon died and in 1849, after Muḥammad ʿAlī's death, ʿAbbās I (1849-1854) ascended the throne.

He was not in favour of Ismāʿīl and the young prince went to exile to Istanbul where he took part in the Crimean War (1853-56) and established good relations with the Porte.[169] Ismāʿīl returned to Cairo when Saʿīd (1854-63) came to power and he appointed him as the Head of the Highest Court of Egypt. He was also used as a diplomat and was sent to Europe in 1855 with important missions to Napoleon III and to the Pope (Pius IX.).[170] In 1858 his brother died in an accident and there was rumour that Ismāʿīl had had a hand in it.[171] From now on, he was the first heir of Saʿīd. He was sent in 1860 to fight against a revolt in the Sudan what he accomplished quickly. When Saʿīd died in 1863, Ismāʿīl became the *wālī*, the governor (the representative of the Ottoman Sultan) in Egypt. It is clear that before his reign he was not at all a "rich planter" but a diplomat and man of state affairs. His French education and his diplomatic skill explain how under his rule the representations of the Egyptian state were transformed into Western images.

Ismāʿīl had two heritages: one from his grandfather, Muḥammad ʿAlī and one from his uncle, Saʿīd. First, he continued the modernization of the country and the visual transformation of Cairo. Second, he had to deal with the economic-political heritage of the Suez Canal works. These two tasks were united in the grandiose opening ceremony of the Suez Canal and its exhibition-like setting (see chapter 4). Doing so, he had numerous men around him – Europeans, Armenians and Arabs, Muslims, Jews and Christians alike. In

[168] Al-Ayyūbī, ibid.

[169] Ibid., 12.

[170] Ibid., 13.

[171] Jerrold, 21.

these years, what once Muḥammad ʿAlī sewed has ripped and a strong administrative system came to life – the social structures and family-customs were also changing.[172] Ismāʿīl initiated numerous reforms in all the fields of cultural, intellectual, political, social and administrative life.[173]

Egypt was a local power at this time – semi-independent from the Ottomans but still a part of their empire. Also, with the Suez Canal works and the cotton boom, it became a precious prey for international politics, caught between the British and the French. However, Ismāʿīl had dreams of an empire – in his dream he might have been also backed by Egyptology and August Mariette, the chief archaeologist in Egypt who contributed a lot to build ancient Egypt into Egyptian history along with Al-Ṭahṭāwī (who wrote an ancient Egyptian history in Arabic) and doing so delivered a noble dream of a powerful past.[174] Ismāʿīl tried in early 1869 to put an end on the slave trade in the White Nile and also to have new territories.[175] In these years, the Khedive was engaged in creating an aesthetical environment for a modern empire by the visual and architectural transformation of Cairo. The political and the aesthetic aims were simultaneously carried out. In 1875, his proposed "conquest" of the East Coast was also for economic reasons as in his secret letters to the British commanders[176] he emphasised the security in these regions "that traders and

[172] Hunter, 80-122. Also cf. Pollard, 106.

[173] For the cultural reforms, see *Ismāʿil – bi-munāsibat murūr khamsīn ʿāmman ʿalā wafātihi* [Ismāʿīl – for the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his death] (Al-Qāhira: Maṭbaʿa Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīya, 1945).(A chronological list of his educational and cultural reforms [the dates are not always correct]: 483-488.)

[174] Reid, 93-136.

[175] Samuel Baker, *Ismailïa: a narrative of the expedition to Central Africa for the suppression of the slave trade organized by Ismail Khedive of Egypt* (Macmillan: [s.n.], 1886), 1.

[176] E. A. Stanton, "Secret Letters from the Khedive Ismail in Connection with an Occupation of the East Coast of Africa," *Journal of the Royal African Society* 34, no. 136 (1935): 269-282. 281.

travellers shall be able to traverse the country in safety. I shall spare no efforts to this end, and if it becomes necessary to use force, I shall use it."[177]

Ismāʿīl politically wanted to become independent from the Sultan or at least to be seen as independent. This intention is important in understanding the visual set of the later years and the striking absence of the Ottoman symbols from it. However, during the history of his negotiation with two sultans, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (1861-76) and ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II (1876-1909 [Murād V died too quickly in 1876]), is rich in episodes when he showed himself as a loyal servant of the Sultans. Sultan ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz already knew him from the fifties when he served in Istanbul first as an exile, later as a diplomat.

Two important *firmān*s issued by ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz must be mentioned here, both negotiated by bribing and Nūbār Pasha's (the Foreign Minister of Ismāʿīl) genius diplomacy: first, that the line of succession was changed from primogeniture to hereditary in 1866 (following ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's visit to Egypt,[178] when Ismāʿīl offered an increased tax). This *firmān* also permitted the coinage of his own currency.[179] Second, a *firmān* of 1867 which gave the title *khidīw* (khedive) to Ismāʿīl instead of *wālī* with the right to contract with the foreign powers. This meant a recognition of independence– back to the time of Muḥammad ʿAlī, a *firmān* from 1841 fixed the title of the governor of Egypt as *wālī* and its rank as a vizier.[180] The new rank and title of *khidīw* was something new in the Ottoman system – in fact, it posed Ismāʿīl outside of it.

Although the Europeans called the rulers in Egypt "Vice-Roy", in the official Ottoman and international concert they were only recognised as the subjects of the Sultan. Ismāʿīl

[177] Stanton, 273.

[178] Al-Ayyūbī, 26-55.

[179] Vatikiotis, 75.

[180] Al-Ayyūbi, 384.

wanted independence (or the image of it) in his title as well, and he and his advisors considered first the title *al-ʿazīz* (mighty) as a possible name for his new rank. This is the epithet (*laqab*) of Yūsuf, the governor of the Pharaoh in the Qurʾān. Yet, against the introduction of it there were two objections: first, that it is not splendid enough (after all, Yūsuf was the servant of the Pharaoh) and second, that in turn, the actual Sultan's name (ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz) could have been read as the servant of Ismāʿīl.[181] The solution was an old semi-official practice in the chancellery: since the time of Muḥammad ʿAlī the *dīwān* (chancellery) was called *al-dīwān al-khidīwī* and occasionally ʿAbbās I and Saʿīd also used *khidīw* as unofficial title.[182] Finally, Ismāʿīl adopted this custom because *khidīw* in Persian meant "ruler", thus it suggested that he is "closer to royalty".[183] Ismāʿīl had a new title, a new hereditary rule and he wanted also a new nation or at least, an image of a nation – Egypt.

For unknown reasons, Ismāʿīl and Sultan ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz did not meet in Paris when both visited the Exposition Universelle of 1867 within a few weeks and themselves became spectacles for the Parisians.[184] In the new Paris of Haussmann, Ismāʿīl did not only visit the exhibition which was designed by Auguste Mariette but made numerous visits in the town accompanied by Baron Haussmann himself.[185] Mariette was also a person who accomplished PR-tasks for the Khedive. The design and the catalogue of the Egyptian part

[181] The Arabic origin of is *ʿabd al-ʿazīz* – the servant of the mighty. *Al-ʿAzīz* "the (Al)mighty" is also one of the names of God in Islam.

[182] EI², s. v. "khidīw" [khedive] (P. J. Vatikiotis).

[183] Ibid., and Al-Ayyūbī, 384-387.

[184] Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: architecture of Islam at nineteenth-century world's fairs* (University of California Press, 1992), 32-34.

[185] Reid, 219.

in the 1867 Exposition is his work.[186] Due to the growing fame of Egypt and its improving facilities, and to the good international relations of the Khedive, numerous important political figures started to make excursions to Egypt.[187] Along with these visits, the Khedive started to transform Cairo into a modern metropolis. This descriptive story of Ismāʿīl's rule is important because focusing on his complex intentions and backgrounds (French education, diplomacy – political independence, modernisation) the historical event of the foundation of the Cairo Opera House can be understood in a new context of political aesthetics.

3.2 Cairo and the New Institutions of Art

In chapter 2, I have already presented the theatre-life in Cairo and in Alexandria maintained and subsidised by the European community which almost alone formed the audience either by the exclusion of the indigenous population or by the latter's non-interest. With the reign of Ismāʿīl, the situation changed: the Egyptian state (that is, Ismāʿīl) started to invest into institutions of culture, first and foremost in Cairo while keeping the already existing Alexandrian theatres. The visual and architectural landscape of Cairo was already touched under Muḥammad ʿAlī (who rejected the neo-Mamluk style)[188] and under ʿAbbās (under whom new Ottoman-style palaces were built and also, the Shepheard Hotel).[189]

[186] Çelik, 39.

[187] For instance, the Prince of Wales. Cf. J. Carlile McCoan, *Egypt under Ismail* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1889), 87-89.

[188] Behrens-Abouseif, 118.

[189] Janet L. Abu-Lughod (1971), *Cairo – 1001 Years of The City Victorious* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971), 100.

Ismāʿīl first had a new canal built between Cairo and Lake Thimshah– the Ismāʿīlīya Canal (completed in 1866) which served also as "a part of a broader program of public works."[190] He started building a new palace in 1863 (finished in 1868) and also had a plan for a new quarter – Ismāʿīlīya.[191] Gas and water were introduced to Cairo and new public gardens were planned in the first years of his reign. The works were even accelerated when Ismāʿīl was back from Paris in 1867 after visiting the *Exposition Universelle*. He appointed a new minister of public works – ʿAlī Mubārak – who did everything in making and surveying the old and the new city. "Old" and "new" are used here because the visual transformation of Cairo was not a proper transformation of the old *into* the new but rather the creation of new districts while leaving the old parts mostly *intact* thus dividing Cairo into two parts. The new, increased efforts were also due to the final permission of the Sultan in 1866 to the Suez Canal and that De Lesseps promised the end of the works for 1868 which was only realised in 1869 – the one-year delay permitted to erect more buildings of entertainment in the new district of Ismāʿīlīya and Ezbekīya.[192] The new, Western-style buildings and gardens were part of the imperial set, themselves embodying a new idea of the city and state – in chapter 4 this idea will be characterized by the description of the Suez Canal ceremonies. The whole process of Westernisation was accompanied with the erection of new places for education and entertainment where a new social class and a new identity were born.

Among the institutions of culture one has to first mention the numerous schools which were opened by Ismāʿīl.[193] The first school for girls was also established in 1867, then in

[190] Ibid., 103.

[191] Ibid., 108.

[192] Ibid., 105.

[193] Cf., for instance, Al-Ayyūbī, 187-210 and Pollard, 101-106.

1873 (under the patronage of Ismāʿīl's third wife, Cheshmā Khānim).[194] One of the most important symbolical buildings was the Egyptian Museum whose history was researched thoroughly by Reid. He states that the local National Museums (in Greece, Istanbul and Cairo) and their departments were "also arenas in which local citizens began forging their modern identities."[195] The Egyptian (Bulaq) Museum was opened in 1863 immediately after Ismāʿīl came to power and reassured Mariette,[196] the building itself "may have been Egypt's first building in neopharaonic style."[197] Mariette tells us that "the viceroy intends it should above all be accessible to the natives."[198] It is clear from this statement that Ismāʿīl from the beginning of his rule intended his modernising project as a creation and transformation of a public and as means of education. In 1869 an Egyptian school of Egyptology had been opened by the order of the Khedive with Heinrich Brugsch, a German Egyptologist, as its first director.[199]

Ismāʿīl was keen on opera and theatre. His favourite play was *La Belle Hélène* by Offenbach. Probably, in his youth he became fond of these arts, but it is sure that during his stay in Paris in 1867, he often visited the theatres and operas.[200] He commissioned a Théâtre de la Comédie (Théâtre Français) in 1868 and it was inaugurated with the Offenbach-opera on 4 January 1869.[201] This event was announced in the new and short-lived cultural Arabic

[194] Al-Ayyūbī, 204 and Pollard, 104.

[195] Reid, 103.

[196] Georges Bey Guindi and Jacques Tagher, *Ismaïl d'après les documents officiels avec avant-propos et introduction historique* (Le Caire: Institut francais d'Archéologie orientale, 1945), 115-116.

[197] Reid, 105.

[198] Quoted in Reid, 106.

[199] Ibid., 116-118.

[200] "Le vice-roi avait la passion du théâtre. Le 18 juin soir [1867], il assista à la représentation de Don Carlos à l'Opéra. Le lendemain, il se rendit incognito au Châtelet oú l'on jouait Cendrillon." Douin, 9.

[201] Sadgrove, 46.

newspaper, *Wādī al-Nīl* [The Valley of Nile], with other plans: "fountains, paths, coffee-houses, theatres [*tiyātrāt/malāʿib*]".[202] The inauguration of the Comédie was also the occasion for the first opera-translation into Arabic which was the *Hilāna al-Jamīla (La Belle Hélène)*, and was printed in Būlāq three days before the premiere – the work was done most probably by Al-Ṭahṭāwī.[203] One explanation for this translation would be that the Khedive and his court became aware of the necessity of translating into Arabic as a national language of culture. None the less, there is another, less sophisticated explanation for the translation: that the ladies of the harem did not know French and therefore "could not follow the performance of these Parisian favourites in the Gallic origin."[204] These translations later will establish a sophisticated audience (see chapter 5).

A forgotten person today, Pavlos (Paul, Paolino) Draneht or Draneht Bey became the superintendant of the Khedivial theatres from 1867 until 1879 when he retired as a very rich man (probably he gave up his post already in 1876).[205] He was originally a Cypriote and originally having the name Pavlos Pavlidis, being a chemist under Saʿīd, then became a director of the railway in Egypt.[206] It is not known why he was appointed in 1867 as the superintendent of the theatres. The Cairo circus was also under his supervision which opened 11 February 1869.[207] Not only public buildings were erected but a palace-theatre operated as well – again under Draneht's eye. We know that a French group gave

[202]Ibid.

[203] Ibid., 48 and 61.

[204] McCoan, 86.

[205] ʿAbdūn,147.

[206] To my best knowledge there is no full biography of Draneht Bey. The most about him is available in an article of Samir Raafat, "The Gezira Palace a.k.a. the Marriott Hotel." *Cairo Times* 14 October 1999; available from http://www.egy.com/cgi-bin/go?section=landmarks&article=99-10-14, Internet, accessed 13 April 2007. There is a small biographical sketch in Busch's *Verdi's Aida* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978) based on memoires of the family members.

[207] Sadgrove, 49.

performances "in an improvised theatre in the palace of Qaṣr al-Nīl."[208] Also, later Turkish groups came to Egypt to play in the palace-theatre.[209] Draneht had an enormous role in setting up the imperial set – his theatres and his efforts to serve the Khedive (and the audience) with new means of entertainment play a role in the formation of Egyptian identity as well.

The most important of all theatres in Egypt, home of myths and legends, the Cairo Opera House was inaugurated in 1 November 1869. Chapter 5 will describe its foundation and builders. It seems that the transformation of Cairo into a modern city was a continuous project which was accelerated by Ismāʿīl. During 1868 and 1869, basically in *twelve months*, all the theatres and public entertainment buildings were built with a "frantic pace of municipal improvement".[210] Creating an aesthetic environment for political reasons by the state is cultural policy and political aesthetics – and it is very hard to judge if implanting European institutions, using European or Mediterranean architecture and styles was a part of cultural colonisation or of a political set or part of an indigenous Westernisation project. I argue here that these together formed a mixture of aims which can be best interpreted as Egyptian political aesthetics.

The social life also changed during these years – the elite (of men) started to become slowly Westernized in their family customs.[211] This meant also that the harem ladies wore French cloths but were invisible in the theatres.[212] The court and the Khedive himself followed the French customs of behaviour – with the exception that Egyptian ladies were

[208] Ibid., 67.

[209] Sadgrove, 66.

[210] Abu-Lughod (1971), 105.

[211] Hunter, 101-102.

[212] Edwin de Leon, *The Khedive's Egypt* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1878), 329.

not present at balls and that most of the Egyptian gentlemen did not dance.[213] The ruler – as a good diplomat – also used these occasions for diplomatic issues.[214] Yet, these were mostly private, courtly entertainments. The masses of native society lived unchanged – at least, on the surface.

In this chapter I have described Ismāʿīl's education and early life as a preparatory phase for his later politics. This politics was characterized by his dream of an independent Egypt which was only realised as an image of independency. The creation of this image involved the visual and architectural transformation of Cairo. Ismāʿīl's relation to arts and public institutions of art can also be characterized by the public festivities and state-celebrations. The state festival *par excellence* was the inauguration ceremony (ceremonies) of the Suez Canal from 17 November 1869. This event embodied his political aesthetics in an imperial set: the political aims of independence and the representation of a new state are united. This will be described in the next chapter.

[213] Ibid., 339.

[214] Ibid., 340.

CHAPTER 4

THE SUEZ CANAL AND ITS INAUGURATION: THE IMPERIAL SET

As we have seen, the transformation of Cairo into a "modern" capital went hand in hand with the political intention of a new-old independent "mini-empire" or at least, the image of this political idea. This image was embodied in the Suez Canal ceremonies in 1869 and this is what I call the "imperial set" which is the focus of this chapter. The roots of the political aesthetics of Ismāʿīl were shown in the last chapter and here these will be elaborated by the European-Egyptian image of the ceremonies. This event also serves as the direct background of the foundation of the Cairo Opera House. Indeed, the ceremonies and their imperial set share something common with operas and exhibitions – this "World-as-Exhibition"[215] character describes a general feature of nineteenth-century Mediterranean culture.

4.1. The Suez Canal

The history of the Suez Canal goes back to the ancient Egyptian and Persian empires when a canal existed already in 2000 BC.[216] Arab writers preserved its memory and repeatedly wrote about it, even, some of the caliphs (for instance, Hārūn al-Rashīd) considered reviving the project in the Middle Ages.[217] In western (French) thought the idea of the Canal occurred again and again, finally was re-invented by the savants of Napoleon,

[215] Mitchell, 13.

[216] Mohamed Anour Moghira, *L'Isthme de Suez, Passage millénaire (640-2000)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002), 22-25.

[217] Ibid., 26-28.

namely by Gratien Le Père.[218] He judged it impossible based on false counting but later the Saint-Simonists corrected the mistake in 1821.[219] However, Muḥammad ʿAlī was not interested in the project, nor ʿAbbās I. Ferdinand de Lesseps, a French diplomat and geographer (1805-1894), was the person who made the last step: he was not the inventor of the idea, but the one who had the networks and energy to get finance. Due to his friendship with Saʿīd (he was his tutor when the older De Lesseps was the French Consul in Egypt), he hurried to Egypt when Saʿīd was appointed as the new *wālī* in 1854 and the contract was signed between them immediately.[220] Although the Sultan gave no permission, the works begun in 1859.[221] The Suez Canal Company (*Compagnie Universelle du Canal Maritime de Suez*) was established in 1858 with 52% of French private subscriptions, 44% of the Vice-Roy of Egypt (Saʿīd originally did not want such a share but he was "given" by his "friend") and 4% of other subscriptions.[222]

From the beginning, the Suez Canal, even its plan, was not only a technical or economic question but a political one too. By the British it was regarded as a French project and although thousands of Egyptians workers died during the construction, it was also regarded by the French themselves as part of their *mission civilisatoire*.[223] The Ottomans, however, saw in it a sign of the desire for Egyptian independence.[224] In 1866, Ismāʿīl had a new contract with the Company (that is, with De Lesseps) in which they re-formulated the

[218] Ibid., 61.

[219] Ibid., 63.

[220] Cf. footnote 153 in chapter 2.

[221] Abu-Lughod (1971), 102.

[222] Moghira, 30. Also Landes, 177.

[223] Cf. the speech in the blessing ceremony given by Mgr. Bauer (see later).

[224] Moghira, 56.

former agreements and stated that the Company is *Egyptian* therefore it is under Egyptian jurisdiction, *yet* "it is modelled - as a special case - on the French laws concerning the anonym societies."[225] It is a difficult story how Ismāʿīl and De Lesseps negotiated with each other over financing the works because Ismāʿīl refused the use of forced labour but finally, when the day of inauguration was approaching, they agreed.[226] The Channel today is 170 km long and the widest at 150 m. The Marseille-Bombay rout was 10.400 miles before the construction, the Canal shortened this distance to 4600 miles.

In the summer of 1869, Ismāʿīl travelled to Europe to invite nearly everyone to the ceremonies.[227] The official reason of this trip (presented for the Ottomans) was a throat-disease and its cure in Vichy.[228] When the real reason of his travel became public, the Sultan, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, became very angry because not enough that Ismāʿīl did not invite him first as the real sovereign in Egypt but the first invited was the King of Greece, George, in Corfu, who just finished the war with the Sultan, and Ismāʿīl also presented money to the Queen of Greece for the refugees of war.[229] The warning of the Sultan was not regarded by Ismāʿīl as serious and he went on to Italy, Vienna, Berlin, Paris and London – everywhere he was received as an independent ruler, *en souverain*.[230] Sultan ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and his vezir, ʿAlī Pasha were upset and demanded explanation, and when it was judged as not sufficient, an ultimatum was sent to Egypt by calling the Khedive (among other demands) to

[225] "[…] elle [the company] est régie par les lois et usages du pays [Egypt]. Toutefois, en ce qui regarde sa constitution comme société et rapports des associés entre eux, elle est, par une convention spéciale, réglée par les lois qui, en France, régissent les sociétés anonymes." – The 16th article of the 1866 Concession. In: Moghira, Appendix, 452.

[226] McCoan, 92.

[227] Al-Ayyūbī, 408-410.

[228] McCoan, 92.

[229] Al-Ayyūbī, 409 and McCoan, 93-94.

[230] McCoan, 95-98 and Al-Ayyūbī, ibid.

communicate with the European powers *only* through the Ottoman ambassadors.[231] This ultimatum seemed to cancel all the privileges gained by the title of Khedive (see chapter 3). Ismāʿīl did not answer until the end of November when the guests started to come to Egypt. The Porte had to wait while they leave Egypt – thus the royal guests served as protection for Ismāʿīl. After the ceremonies, Nubār Pasha, the clever Foreign Minister of Ismāʿīl, quietened the Porte's anger.[232]

Al-Ayyūbī claims that the absence of the mention of the Sultan's name at the opening ceremonies of the Suez Canal was an "evidence of the Khedive's place among the Kings and of the independence of Egypt from Turkey."[233] This view is justified with the reservation that the independence finally proved to be only an image. In 1879, Ismāʿīl was dismissed by a telegraph of the Sultan. The opening ceremonies of the Suez Canal were held in a highly tense political atmosphere, in a game between Egypt and the Ottomans and between France and England. The aesthetical features of this game and the desired independence were embodied in what I call an "imperial set".

4.2. The Ceremonies: the Imperial Set

This was one of the first world-famous tourist-events – numerous guide-books had been made for the purposes of the tourists, in Egypt by the order of the Khedive,[234] in

[231] McCoan, 102.

[232] McCoan, 100-103, 111 and Al-Ayyūbī, 410-418.

[233] Al-Ayyūbī, 417-418.

[234] *Itinéraire des invités aux fêtes d'Inauguration du Canal de Suez qui séjournent au Caire et font le voyage du Nile.* Le Caire, October 1869. Publie par Ordre de S. A. le Khédive. (Presumably this was written by August Mariette.)

England by Cook's agency,[235] in France by Bernard and Tissot. This last one had a small French-Egyptian dictionary and a plan of Egypt with a map of the railways.[236] The booklet gave information on Alexandria, Cairo and the cities of the Suez Canal and also provided the reader with the shipping routes and times to Egypt. Characteristically, the authors described Alexandria as a half-Western city with cafés and theatres while the afternoon can be spent in the bazaar.[237] They wrote about Cairo that "il est devenu aussi une élégante station hivernale, digne de rivaliser, par le confort et les plaisirs, avec Nice et Monaco" [it became an elegant autumn-resort which, regarding the comfort and the pleasures, can rival with Nice and Monaco].[238] However, as Cairo "est en train d'avoir son opéra et son hippodrome, comme il a eu son cirque et son théâtre de vaudeville" [will acquire its opera house and its Hippodrome, as it already has its circus and its comedy] the authors only recommend the old monuments of Cairo.[239] As we will see, by the time the French tourists arrived to the city, the Opera was finished.

The ceremonies can be reconstructed through various eyes and agendas. The reason of this reconstruction is that it offers a unique historical situation which can help for a better understanding of what "colonial" means here in November 1869. One of the first visitors of Cairo for this occasion was Empress Eugénie. In the following I will describe her voyage in Egypt as her presence was certainly the main feature of Ismāʿīl's "exhibition" based on the letters of the captain of her yacht, M. Surveille. Another chosen memoire is the diary of an

[235] Cf. John Sleigh Pudney, *Suez: De Lesseps' Canal* (New York – Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), 141-142.

[236] M. M. H Bernard and E. Tissot, *Itinéraire pour L'Isthme de Suez et les Grandes Villes d'Égypte* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Cie., Libraires-Éditeurs, 1869).

[237] Ibid., 17-41.

[238] Ibid., 44.

[239] Ibid., 50, 51-58.

Italian noblemen, Comte di Lavriano. I also used in the reconstruction numerous scholarly historical works.[240] It must be stated here that no Egyptian-Arab memoire or diary is known to me which describe these events – it can be partly due to my limited access to the Egyptian archives but also to the fact that it was not a held as a "national" event by the contemporary Egyptians. Still, I believe that there must be found some Arab sources, regarding the fact that it fascinated lots of Arab-Ottoman travellers.[241]

Eugenie left Paris on the 30th of September and arrived to Venice next day where after a fortnight she embarked the yacht *L'Aigle* (The Eagle). She stopped in Athens and then in Istanbul (Constantinople in the official letters) – there she had an excursion with Sultan ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and a dinner with all the diplomats. Finally, the *impératrice* arrived to Alexandria in 22 October. She immediately went to Cairo in the company of the captain of *L'Aigle* and got accommodation in the new palace of Qaṣr al-Nīl. After a trip in Upper Egypt (from the 25th October) among "les meilleures conditions possible" she returned to Cairo on the 12th and to the board of *L'Aigle* next day. Now the empress expressed her wishes to return to France right after the inauguration. Eugenie wished that the Le Forbin would be at the disposal of the Emir ʿAbd al-Kader. They left Alexandria on the 15th of Novembre and arrive to Port Suez the 16th. There *L'Aigle* hardly manoeuvred and the captain became terribly angry. He writes that it needed "une veritable precision mathématique pour suivre le chanel" [a real mathematic precision to follow the chanel]. He also notes that even De Lesseps and the engineers seemed very anxious. Eugénie was so

[240] McCoan, 85-111; Zananiri, 82-92; Pudnay, 141-168; cf. also *Journal de Voyage en Egypte – Inauguration du Canal de Suez de Roberto Morra Di Lavriano*, ed. Alberto Siliotti and Alain Vidal Naquet (Paris: Librairie Gründ, 1997). Cf. also the wonderful project of the *Fondation Napoleon* available from http://www.napoleon.org/en/special_dossier/suez/index.html, Internet, accessed 05 May 2007.

[241] Pudnay, 149.

frightened that she wept, at night she had a "crise nerveuse" but it lasted only for a few minutes, "heureusment".[242]

Mariette during this trip served as a tour-guide for the Empress.[243] The one who designed an image of Egypt for the 1867 Exposition, now, and this time in Egypt, guides the French *in* this image and behaves as a personal servant. The image-like being of the whole ceremony can be characterized by the often used words of "scene", "image", "fair" in the memoires and reports. On the 16th the blessing of the Canal started the whole series which certainly had aesthetical features and can be regarded as a great exhibition in Egypt: "The festivities Khedive Ismail, de Lesseps, Mariette, and Ali Mubarak staged [...] were something of an Egyptian answer to the great exhibitions."[244] The exhibited "objects" being the rulers themselves and the "frame" is the opening of the Canal. It also resembles to a World Exhibition in that it was a celebration of universalism and technical progress. The imperial background, the political and cultural absolutism of the Khedive served as a proper "curator" of this exhibition and also, it generated an image of Egypt as a lavishly rich country. Mariette could learn the taste of the Khedive and probably associated himself with his dreams of Egypt as a cultural unit. The scenario of the *Aïda* will be born soon (see chapter 5).

Franz-Joseph was also there in the entourage of Count Gyula Andrássy, the Prime Minister of the Monarchy, who wrote to home that the French Empress looked good as

[242] I used the documents found in the dossier BB/4/1048 (*Archives Nationales – Services Historique de la Défanse, Departement de Marine, Chateau de Vincennes, Paris*) – this contains the letters of the captain of *L'Aigle*, Captain Surville to „l'Amiral Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies".

[243] Gilles Lambert, *Auguste Mariette – L'Égypte ancienne sauvée des sables* (Paris: J.-C. Lattés, 1997), 235-239.

[244] Reid, 129.

usual just gained some weight.[245] The two organizers were Ismāʿīl and De Lesseps, or rather, Ismāʿīl gave the orders and had the wishes which were executed by De Lesseps, Mariette and 1000 servants, 500 cooks.[246] The tourists and invited persons arrived in huge masses – not only Europeans, but also "Anatolians, Circassians, Bokharans", Turkish and Arab visitors hurried to Port Suez and Ismāʿīliya.[247] The sovereigns arrived in the following order: Ismāʿīl as host arrived on the 12th. The prince and princess of Holland arrived on the 13th, next day De Lesseps and his family, on the 15th Emperor Franz-Joseph with Andrássy, on the 16th the French corvette Le Forbin arrived with Algerian Emir ʿAbd al-Qādir (who at this time was a friend of the French), and finally in the morning of the 17th the Crown Prince of Prussia (Friedrich Wilhelm, later: Friedrich III) with his wife Princess Victoria and as the last, most precious object, Eugenie arrived on the board of the *L'Aigle*.[248] Apart from the royal visitors, "of more value in the Khedive's eyes was a whole army of *hommes des lettres* and newspaper correspondents"[249] who created an image of modern Egypt in the papers (like the *Illustrated London News* or the *Le Monde Illustré*) and sang the praise of the Khedive. As a diplomat, the ruler knew the value of publicity. Probably, he was the first modern ruler who advertised his country by the help of the press.

The inauguration ceremonies and balls were described in detail to the readers in the European countries – it was not only written documents, but a few weeks later paintings (mostly by Eduard Riou) and drawings were published to communicate the "universal

[245] *Kedves Idám! – Erzsébet királyné, Ferenc József, Andrássy Gyula és Schratt Katalin levelei Ferenczy Idához,* [Dear Ida! – Letters of Queen Elizabeth, Franz Joseph, Gyula Andrássy, and Katalin Schratt to Ida Ferenczy] ed.Tolnayné Kiss Mária (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1992), 60.

[246] Pudney, 143.

[247] Ibid., 149.

[248] MacCoan, 85-111 and Zananiri, 83-84.

[249] MacCoan, 103.

importance" of the event.[250] The blessing ceremony was at the heart of the whole embodying the political aesthetics of Egypt and France together. The blessing started at three o'clock in the afternoon the 16th of November and it has a real theatrical character. It is described in the Illustrated London News in the following manner:

> It was performed in the pavilions erected on the sand of the seashore [...] A footway of planks had been constructed from the landing place to the pavilions. It was lined along its whole length with Egyptian infantry. [...] The pavilions were three in number, one containing seats for the Khedive and the Imperial and Royal guests and their immediate attendants, another an altar dressed according to the regulations of the Catholic church, and the third a pulpit for the Mussulman Ulemah. They were all builts of wood, prettily carved, and adorned with tropical plants and flowers and the flags of all nations. The masts at the four corners of each pavilion were surmounted with the gilt crescent; but in front of the Christian sanctuary was a shield bearing the cross of Jerusalem, with four small crosses arranged round the large one. The Moslem pulpit, surmounted by an inscription from the Koran, faced eastwards, looking towards Mecca; and the grand pavilion for the visitors fronted both the others. [...] The Viceroy's uniform was blue, with gold lace, and with a broad green ribbon; the hilt of his scimitar blazing with jewels. Entering the pavilion, the Empress took the central seat, having the Emperor of Austria upon her right and the Khedive upon her left. Behind were a crowd of distinguished persons in every variety of uniform, including M. de Lesseps.[251]

In this imperial set defined as a representation of an idea of empire, whose aesthetic, even, sensual features made it resemble a live image, first the Muslim chief *qādī* blessed the audience and the canal – "this part [...] was very brief but the scene was a striking one".[252] The Christian mass was conducted by the Patriarch of Alexandria (in some sources, the Archbishop of Jerusalem) and after they all sang the Te Deum.[253] After this, Mgr. Bauer,

[250] Lord Houghton could say to the members of the *Royal Geographical Society* on 10 January 1870 that he feels himself uncomfortable for his presentation because they "have read so much upon the subject". Lord Houghton, "Opening of the Suez Canal," *Proceedings of the of London Royal Geographical Society* 14, no. 2 (1869-70): 88-105. 89.

[251] Cited in Pudney, 152-153.

[252] Ibid., 153.

[253] Zananiri, 85.

who was the personal almoner of Eugenie, delivered a long speech in honour of the Khedive, the Empress, the Emperor and Ferdinand de Lesseps[254] – and he compared De Lesseps to Columbus.[255] This speech glorified the French technical innovations and also the universal values. The representations of this blessing ceremony by Riou show a colourful crowd which surrounds the huge pavilions – however, a contemporary photograph reflects that these were not that monstrous.[256]

After the inauguration ceremony in Port Suez, the participants were shipped next day to Ismāʿīlīya, where they met with three ships coming from Port Saʿīd, thus symbolically completed the rout. On the evening of the 18th there was a grandiose ball. This ball itself had a picture-value as di Livorno notes: "Bien que la tenue civile fût de rigueur, la variété des rares uniformes militaires et des costumes arabes de cérémonie, dont certains étaient vraiment élégants, rendait cette fête cosmopolite très pittoresque" [Although the civic behaviour was compulsory, the variety of the rare military uniforms and ceremonial Arabic clothes (some of which were really elegant), made this cosmopolite feast really picturesque].[257]

The inauguration ceremonies ate up the money and the Khedive asked for more loans. However, it is worth noting that the real cause was the Ismāʿīl's decision to refuse providing

[254] Parts of the speech are published in Zananiri, 85-87, the whole speech is available at the website of the Fondation Napoleon: www.napoleon.org, Internet, accessed 05 May 2007.

[255] "Let us proclaim to very end of the age that just as the New World (discovered in the 15th century) is a permanent reminder to posterity of the name of that man of genius who discovered it, Christopher Columbus, just so the canal between these two continents will be a continuous memorial to the name of a man of the 19th century, a name which I am proud to pronounce on this shore and cry aloud to the four corners of the world, that of Ferdinand de Lesseps." *Fondation Napoleon*, available from http://www.napoleon.org/en/special_dossier/suez/html-content/inauguration/ceremonie/ceremonie.html, Internet, accessed 05 May 2007.

[256] In the collection of the Fondation Napoleon, available from http://www.napoleon.org/en/special_dossier/suez/html-content/inauguration/ceremonie/ceremonie.html, accessed 05 May 2007.

[257] Di Livarno, 122.

the corvée labour for the construction of the Suez Canal which provoked Napoleon III to decide that Egypt has to pay 38.000.000 francs for the Suez Canal company.[258] The disastrous process finally led to the taking care of the country's financial matters by the European powers and which caused Ismāʿīl's fall. It would be all too easy to judge this "live exhibition", if I may call it so, as a Potemkin-like set. However, these events generated a Western image of Egypt which can only present and represent Egypt in accordance with the day's European notions: the joining of two seas as the final victory of civilisation. Nonetheless, there were sceptical voices as well.[259] This image at this time was an Egyptian image too – in fact, this is precisely the time when the word "Egyptian" started to be filled with (European) national ideas and the history of Egypt is created as a continuous history whose subject is the Egyptian people.[260] However, this image first was an image of a modernised state which can be achieved under the umbrella of a powerful sovereign – Ismāʿīl. The Egyptian image of Egypt was tied to the European image of Egypt at this time but soon, at the end of the 1870s came a will to understand the Egyptian self-perception in new lights.

In November 1869, Ismāʿīl's Egypt indeed was a hybrid image of a nation and a state. The Suez Canal ceremonies and their political aesthetics formed the background of the foundation of national institutions and vice-versa. In the beginning of the seventies, as we have seen, one national institution after the other was founded (like the *Dār Al-Kutub*

[258] Owen, 126-127.

[259] Lorg Houghton, 89-90.

[260] See, for instance, the (first) Arabic history of ancient Egypt in Al-Ṭahṭāwī's educational journal: *Rawḍat al-Madāris al-Miṣrīya* [The garden of the Egyptian schools], ed. Jābir ʿAṣfūr. Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1997. (Al-sana al-thālitha [[The third year] 1872 March - 1873 February]: ʿAdad 4, 7-12.: *Jadwal tarīkh mashāhir qudamāʾ Mulūk al-miṣriyyūn bi-qalam masyu Barūksh, wa-taʿrīb ḥaḍrat Ḥusayn Zakī Effendī min talāmidhihi Madrasat al-Lisān al-Maṣrī al-Qadīm* [Historical table of the famous ancient Egyptian kings written by Monsieur Brugsch and translated into Arabic by one of his students in the School of Ancient Egyptian, Mr. Ḥusayn Zakī Effendī]. (Then it continues until the no. 12.)

[Egyptian National Library] in 1870[261]) continuing a process which was initiated by the Khedive from the time of his enthronement. The foundation of the Cairo Opera House in the context of the Suez Canal events, in the context of the imperial set, can easily be seen as the personal hobby of the Khedive[262] while it becomes soon clear that he later wanted to create an audience thus transforming the country by artistic means and provide public institutions of art to everyone (who had the money for the ticket). This foundation event will be described in the following chapter.

[261] Guindi-Tagher, 117.

[262] Sadgrove, 82.

CHAPTER 5

AESTHETICAL POLITICS IN EGYPT: THE CAIRO OPERA HOUSE AND AĪDA

As we have seen in the last chapter, the imperial set was a construction by the order of the Khedive to express the idea of Egypt as an independent empire. This chapter focuses on the foundation of the Cairo Opera House in this imperial set. The political aesthetics of Ismāʿīl (embodied in the Suez Canal ceremonies) was transformed as aesthetical politics: the representation of political ideas by artists and institutions of art. With the Opera House everything arrived to Egypt what characterizes the operatic state, applying Ruth Bereson's concept (see chapter 1). The Opera House will be used as a core around which a public and a cultural ideology were built and also the "operatic" idea behind it which produced *Aïda*. The afterlife of this piece of art and its connection to nationalism will close this chapter.

5.1 The Building and Its Architect(s)

5.1.1 Construction

In Chapter 2, the Italian architect, Pietro Avoscani was mentioned in relation with the Western-style entertainments of Muḥammad ʿAlī. It was also indicated that he was the one who in 1862 under the rule of Saʿīd designed the Zizinia Theatre in Alexandria for the Greek Community. Already Muḥammad ʿAlī planned a theatre with him as a constructor. [263] In 1861 he decorated the Jazīra palace where Ismāʿīl (then prince) lived.[264] Probably this is

[263] Tagher, 310.

[264] Ibid., 311.

why later he was entrusted with artistic works and the decoration of the khedivial gardens, and finally was ordered to design an Opera House, with all its furnishing. Also, Avoscani was charged with programme of the first night.[265] With him, the name of a certain Rossi is mentioned usually as a co-architect, but I did not find anything concerning this person.[266] The order of the Khedive for the construction was given in mid-April, 1869.[267]

The place for the building itself was in the edge of the Ezbekīya Gardens, at the borderline of the quarter Ismāʿīlīya. For some of the urban historians, the Opera House therefore symbolises the distinction between old and new.[268] An old palace (Qaṣr al-Amīr Azbak) that time used as a store was demolished for clarifying the place for the Opera. It was constructed in six month, so when Eugenie arrived in late October, she could participate in the first night. The capacity of the house was around 800 people and Sadgrove gives that its cost was 160.000 English pounds.[269] It was constructed mainly of wood which was the main cause why it burnt down so easily in 1971.[270] The interior was beautified with gold and fine woodwork and had royal boxes, separately for the ladies of the harem "with thin lattice work". [271] Outside it was an impressive Italian building with a massive façade. Its square was the Opera Square (Mīdān Ubarā) and in the middle of it the statue of Ibrāhīm

[265] Ibid. and Sadgrove, 52.

[266] There was a real flow of Italian architectes in Egypt. I identified Mario Rossi (d. 1961) but he was another architect who built and reconstructed mosques in Egypt. Dalu Jones, "Va penseiro… Italian Architects in Egypt at the time of the Khedive," *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* (1990): 86-93. 90.

[267] Sadgrove, 52.

[268] "The Opera still stands, anachronistically, in its currently not too fashionable district but there have been recent rumours of its planned demolition." Thus wrote Abu-Lughod in a footnote in 1965: Janet Abu-Lughod (1965), "Tale of Two Cities: The Origins of Modern Cairo*," Comparative Studies in Society and History* 7, no 4 (1965): 429-457444.

[269] Sadgrove, 52. Al-Ayyūbī also gives this amount: 292.

[270] ʿAbdūn, 99.

[271] Sadgrove, 56 and Baron de Kusel, *An Englishman's recollections of Egypt 1863 to 1887* (New York, London: John Lane, 1915), 89.

(Ismāʿīl's father) was erected later. Today, this square is still called Mīdān Ubarā yet in the place of the burnt building a multistorey car park was built.

Avoscani was later asked to enlarge the house in 1873.[272] However, as one can see from his debts, he had problems with the money – he did not accomplish the work and spent all the money.[273] Indeed, he is seen now as a bad businessmen who tried to make the best for himself of the Khedive's intentions – he is used by Jean-Luc Arnaud as an example of the soldier of fortune.[274] In his final twenty years, Avoscani tried to make businesses and to establish societies but was always without luck. In 1874 he proposed a plan to the Khedive for a society for promoting public works but this was refused.[275] Then he begged for the ruler's mercy for his miserable financial conditions and finally he was entrusted with the enlargement of the new port of Alexandria and with construction of a cement-factory in 1875.[276] After the Khedive's abdication in 1879, Avoscani lived among miserable conditions and died in 1890, completely forgotten.

5.1.2 The Inauguration of the House

The inauguration of the Cairo Opera House happened on the 1st of November 1869. Sadgrove gives that among the audience was "the Khedive, his guests, including the Empress Eugénie and the Crown Prince of Prussia, the Khedive's retinue, some of his

[272] Jean-Luc Arnaud, *Le Caire – mise en place d'une ville moderne 1867-1907* (Sindbad – Actes Sud, 1998) 59.

[273] Tagher, 311 and Arnaud, ibid.

[274] Arnaud, 59-61.

[275] Tagher, 313.

[276] Ibid.

officials and military officers."[277] This description gives the representation of the Egyptian government: Ismāʿīl's presence is the presence of the state. Therefore here an early use of the operatic state can be detected as this can be regarded as a preparatory phase of the imperial set. Avoscani was responsible for this first night – most probably, hand in hand with Draneht Bey. The programme was the following as Douin narrated.

First, a cantata was played for the honor of the Khedive composed by prince Poniatowsky. Eight singers stood around a bust of Ismāʿīl and while executing the cantata they represented eight allegories: Justice, Mercy, Fame, Music (Mélodie), History, Agriculture, Industry, Commerce. The end of the cantata was accompanied with a hurray and the shouting of the name of the Khedive. Then Verdi's *Rigoletto* was given by the finest Italian singers.[278]

This play is a European entertainment for a modern *empereur*. The allegorical representation of the forces represents Ismāʿīl's innovations and characteristics. However, it is a product of European imagination and shows the characteristics of an exhibition: modernity and representation along with an imperial imagination. It would be interesting to know the opinions of the Egyptian officers among the audience – but there is no written source. The short-lived Arabic cultural journal of Cairo, Wādī al-Nīl [The Valley of Nile], praised "the singers in Rigoletto for their skill and adroitness."[279]

It is hard to miss the fact that in the first month the artists of the Opera House were used as entertainers exclusively for royal purposes – they performed "on the royal yacht, al-Maḥrūsa, for the opening of the canal."[28o] The tradition of using the Western arts as

[277] Sadgrove, 53.

[278] Douin, 470-471.

[279] Sadgrove, 56.

[280] Ibid., 53.

precious private entertainments (see chapter 2) was followed during the Suez Canal ceremonies by Ismāʿīl. However, after the inauguration ceremonies, the Khedive tried to create an audience also with means of an aesthetical politics and thus, a public use of the Western arts gradually aroused.

5.2 Repertoire and Audience

The Cairo Opera House had the most illustrious visitors in its first month. After Ismāʿīl and Eugenie, other notables visited the house. It was Ismāʿīl's habit to take the court and state-officers with himself (this was also a possible way to gain a new rank or office in the governmental structure) – as we saw, the first night in the opera was already packed with statesmen and later this habit continued, at least, the reports we have from the premiere of the *Aïda* two years later confirm this (24 december 1871). This presence of the state in the opera house meant not only a private use but at the same time the "operatic behaviour". The aesthetical politics of Ismāʿīl can be also traced in his numerous funds for pieces of art: as a paradigm I will describe *Aïda*.

The state-funded *Wādī al-Nīl* published descriptions of opera-themes, but no descriptions of the actual performances. The son of the editor of *Wādī al-Nīl* – this editor, ʿAbd Allāh Abu al-Suʿūd (d. 1885/6) two years later will translate the libretto of *Aïda* – Muḥammad Unsī expressed his hope in 1870 that in the next season in 1870/71, the Opera House will play also in Arabic language.[281] This claim is the probably the first sign when a nationalist (Arabist) intention is connected to the Opera House. However, in this first period the Opera House played exclusively Italian pieces in Italian. The editors and writers of *Wādī*

[281] Sadgrove, 56.

al-Nīl had seats in the Opera House paid by the Khedive. This journal tried to "create a climate in which Arabic dramatic pieces could be written and performed" and also "ensured [its Arabic readers] that they were ready to respond to the experiments in Arab drama".[282] Thus the Opera House served as a central point to create a national art of drama and opera and also tried to transform and create an audience. Its primary understanding was the educational nature of the opera but soon the "catharsis"-effect of the opera mentioned by the journal: "we feel grief and anguish as if we had been ill".[283] This emotional power of the piece shows an understanding which is now not only constrained to the educational features of theatre.

The national (first Arabic, then Egyptian) identity and the spread of theatre and opera were supplied by those, who – like the rich Al-Muwaylihī – translated and distributed librettos freely.[284] The *Wādī al-Nīl* continued to report on the Opera – from these reports the audience is also known. In the new season of 1870/71, the first night was again the 1 November 1870 (this date later became established as the beginning of the Cairo Opera season), and for this occasion Donizetti's *La Favorite* was played – among the audience sit Ismāʿīl, his sons, Muḥammad Tawfīq and Ḥusayn, and the usual notables.[285] On Friday, 4th of November 1870 the Opera gave the *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* – this and the *La Favorite* were both translated into Arabic and the critic of *Wādī al-Nīl* discovered the similarities between Rossini's barber and the Barber of Baghdad in Thousend and One Nights.[286] The discovery of this similarity is a way to understand and appropriate a foreign work of art –

[282] Sadgrove, 58.

[283] Ibid., 57.

[284] Quoted in Sadgrove., 58.

[285] Ibid., 60.

[286] Ibid.

comparison is a tool to make the alien familiar. The very possibility of this comparison is produced by the intentions of the Khedive – it is a result of his political aesthetics and aesthetical politics.

The reports on the composition of the audience are somehow ambiguous. For instance, a contemporary European visitor in 1872 noted that "the native population, whether rich or poor, seem to care nothing either for the [Ezbekīya] gardens, or Opera, nor for any of the grand things the Khedive has created."[287] Also, the Italian critic, Filippo Filippi wrote on the occasion of the premiere of *Aïda* that

> When I say Egyptian public, I refer especially to the European colony; for the Arabs, even the wealthy, do not like our theatre; they prefer the miauing [sic!] of their chants, the monotonous banging of the drums to all the melodies of past, present, and future. It is a clear miracle to see a fez in the theatres of Cairo.[288]

However, the *Al-Jawāʿib* [The Answers] newspaper (a highly influential Arabic paper in Istanbul with Ottomanizing agenda[289]) writes in 1871 that "many Egyptian notables (*wuǰūh* and *aʿyān*), Indians, foreigners and others attended" and the correspondent also notes that

> I saw a black slave in a white turban, and in his hand was a translation of Don Juan [...] the Director of the Theatre [...] said to me: Nothing delights me more than to see the people of Egypt pleased with these theatres. Now they have entered through all the doors of civilisation, with the theatre providing its relaxing side.[290]

The observers focused their attention if they were speaking about different audiences. The European observes did not find the Egyptians in the audience. The Ottoman-influenced

[287] William George Armstrong, *A visit to Egypt in 1872: described in four lectures to the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: J. M. Carr, 1874), 7.

[288] Weaver, 228-229.

[289] Cf. EI², s.v. "Fāris Al-Shiyāq" (A. G. Karam).

[290] Quoted in Sadgrove, 61-62.

correspondent underlined the presence of the Ottoman elite. For everyone the opera house meant a different idea: for Filippi, it was a European entertainment and the natives were not involved, for the *Al-Jawāʿīb* it was sign of modernisation and the natives were involved. The discrepancy between these two views is the result of the different ideological backgrounds.

The "Director of the Opera" mentioned in the article is presumably Draneht Bey (see chapter 3) who also placed Arabic advertisements of operas in *Wādī al-Nīl*.[291] His words about civilisation and theatre as a relaxing place are indicative for the hidden relation between Western art and cultural ideology. This relation could be described in terms of the "progress". It was Draneht and the European stuff of the Cairo Opera who "nurtured" an audience among the Egyptian elite – it was marginal, but politically dominant. This nurturing served the ideas and aesthetical politics of the Khedive.

Ballet-performances were also held in the Opera House and next to it a Cirque was erected where "Draneht had engaged the Italian Cirque of David-Guillaume" in the season 1870/1871.[292] This Cirque was later destroyed for the enlargement of the House. The first two-three years of the Opera was an embryonic state of affairs when the public and private uses of the theatre were not always separated. It was maintained by the Khedive but it was not his personal theatre. In the first season, 1869/70, 66 performances were held, in the next year, 1870/71, 85, while in 1871/72 the *Aïda* crowns the repertoire.[293] Although the Cairo Opera House was not held among the political institutions it was certainly a centre from which a Westernised lifestyle radiated. Finally, the creation of the *Aïda* embodies this aesthetical-cultural politics in 1871.

[291] Sadgrove, 62.

[292] Sadgrove, 63.

[293] ʿAbdūn, 141.

The Opera House was in operation until 1877 when it had to be closed because the Khedive could not subside it anymore. Until then, even in its last season in 1877, the Opera gave yearly around 80 performances.[294] It is a lot considering that it was usually open only from 1 November to around 30 March, that is, five months. When the Cairo Opera was closed for the summer, the plays and actors went to Alexandria where the Zizinia Theatre showed the pieces in the hot months as well.[295] It is probable that Draneht Bey quitted the superintendence in 1876 because in the last two years a certain Leopold Larouse (?) took over the affairs of the Opera.[296] After 1877, until the 1890s, the opera was closed and only occasionally opened for balls, visiting groups or festivals.

However, from 1909 an Englishman, Frederick Kitchener, could report that "the great feature of Cairene musical life is the opera" and "Cairenes are almost note-perfect in all the principal Italian and French operas, ancient and modern."[297] It seems that the high society already revitalized the opera in the beginning of the twentieth century. Mr. Kitchener also taught children to music and chatted with their mothers:

> I had at Cairo pianoforte pupils of twenty-two nationalities - British, Australian, American, French, Italian, Greek, Spanish, Belgian, Swiss, Russian, Danish, Austrian, Maltese, Egyptian, Turkish, Syrian, Jewish, Albanian, Circassian, one Norwegian, one Hungarian, and one pure-blooded Arab [note the distinction between Egyptian and Arab – A.M.]. The Egyptian and Turco-Egyptian ladies, chiefly of the families of Pashas, were especially interesting and engaging; some of them played Bach, Beethoven, and Chopin very well, spoke several languages fluently, and were well read and facile in conversation. They would often entertain me at tea-parties, and always treated me with the greatest kindness. There is a movement on foot among the better-educated Egyptians, especially the women, to cultivate and understand the best European music.[298]

[294] See the statistics in ʿAbdūn, 141-146.

[295] *Aida – Egypt (Miṣr – ʿAīda),* ed. Walid Aouni (Cairo: Sharouk Press – Cairo Opera House, 1997), 59.

[296] ʿAbdūn, 147.

[297] Frederick Kitchener, "Recollections of Life at Cairo," *The Musical Times* 64, no. 961 (1923): 203-204. 203.

[298] Ibid.

There is an untold story about the relation of Egyptian women and the Western arts. It was already mentioned that the first translation of operas were probably intended also to the ladies of the harem. The fashion of Western music, its spread, and the popularity of the Opera House as a place for socializing were partly maintained by the ladies – Egyptian or European alike.

5.3 Nationalism and Aïda

The name of the Opera House was changing according to the titles of the rulers. First, it was called the Khedivial, then Royal, then Sultaniale, then again Royal, and in the 1950s' and 60s' socialism simply Opera House. The new Opera House today is found in the National Cultural Centre and bears the name Cairo Opera House. As every opera house, it is a place for a representation of the state – this is what was described by Bereson as the "operatic state". The national opera play even today is *Aïda*,[299] although numerous original Arabic operas were written especially in the first half of the twentieth century.

The position of the director of the Opera House was occupied first Draneht Bey, then Pasquale Clemente (1886-1910), then Gennaro Forniaro (1911-1931), after him, Fortunato Cantoni (1932-1937). The first Egyptian director of the Opera was Manṣūr Ghānim (1937-1938) and after him the directors were all Egyptians.[300]

[299] The Cairo Opera House today repeteatedly presents *Aïda*,it is an integral part of the standard repertoire, available from the wesbsite of the Cairo Opera Company, http://www.egyptguide.net/opera/ocompany.html, Internet, accessed 23 May 2007.

[300] Aouni, 140.

The creation of *Aïda* is from the beginning associated with nationalism. This opera is about ancient Egypt and about modern Egypt at the same time. I call the *project* of *Aïda* the actual creation and the aim and idea of Ismāʿīl behind it: aesthetical politics.

5.3.1 The Project of *Aïda*

August Mariette (see chapter 3), is the one who is usually credited with the plot of *Aïda* in 1870. It is about an Ethiopian princess (Aïda) who is captured by the Egyptian Empire, but the leader of the Egyptian army (Radames) falls in love with her and finally accused with being traitor because they are being unveiled by the daughter of the pharaoh who is also in love with Radames. Finally Radames is sent to his death digging him alive in the rocks and Aïda dies with him. This is the today-known plot of the opera.

However, there are other suggestions: that this *final* libretto and the plot of *Aïda* was a work of a small 'manufactory' – that it was first drawn by Mariette, then Camille Du Locle, a French impresario (Mariette and Du Locle knew each other – Du Locle made an excursion in Egypt in 1868[301]) composed the final story in French and later Verdi re-structured it while Antonio Ghislanzoni translated and "versed it" into Italian.[302] Some suggest that Mariette even wrote the whole libretto.[303] However, concerning the *original* idea there are differences: there is one suggestion that it is Eduard Mariette, August's brother who had the original sketch of such an ancient Egyptian story.[304] Another one, that it was probably the

[301] *Verdi's Aida,* ed. Hans Busch (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978), 3.

[302] Uwe Schweikert, "Aida" in *Verdi Handbuch,* ed. Anselm Gerhard and Uwe Schweikert (Stuttgart: Bärenreiter-Metzler, 2001), 461-474. 461.

[303] Jean Humbert, "A propos de l'egyptomanie dans l'oeuvre de Verdi: Attribution a Auguste Mariette d'un scenario anonyme de l'opera Aida," *Revue de musicologie* 62, no 2. (1976): 229-256.

[304] Charles Osborne, "The Plot of Aida," *The Musical Times* 110, no. 1520 (Oct. 1969): 1034-1036. 1034.

Khedive's idea and it was his hands which wrote the first lines.[305] And finally, that the *final* dramaturgy and scenario was enriched by Du Locle with small insertions from Italian and French dramas (Metastasio, Racine and others).[306]

After reading the plot, Verdi writes to Du Locle that "it shows a very expert hand, accustomed to this craft, and one who knows the theatre very well" and the composer asks who did it. Du Locle's answer: "the Egyptian libretto is the work of the Viceroy and of Mariette Bey, the famous archaeologist, nobody else has touched it."[307] It is certainly justified to regard this opera as a result of a collaborative work and intention, both Egyptian and European to give form to a common idea. This is what I call the *project of Aïda*, to create a "national" opera and thus a political intention of an imperial imagination is embodied in the work.

Verdi was already asked by the Khedive in the summer of 1869 to compose a hymn for the Suez Canal celebrations (chapter 3).[308] It is worth to note that Verdi in those years was the number one composer of Europe – although already struggling with the fame of Wagner. He refuted the hymn, writing to Draneht Bey, "both because my numerous present occupations and because it is not my custom to compose occasional pieces."[309] Draneht Bey's correspondence with Verdi is important because he organized the first staging of *Aïda*.

It is certain that Du Locle from France continuously bombarded Verdi during the autumn of 1869 and spring 1870 with new and new plots that the composer refused. Being

[305] Aouni, 34-35. "He [Mariette] received from the Khedive the outline of a plot".

[306] Osborne, 1036.

[307] Weaver, 223.

[308] Ibid.

[309] Ibid., 222. The original letter in French is published in *Egypte et Verdi – Miṣr wa-Verdi.* Cairo: 1951. No page numbers.

the director of the Paris *Opéra-Comique* Du Locle probably wanted a special Verdi-opera for Paris. Mariette gave the original plot to Du Locle and Du Locle immediately sent it to Verdi, who answered with the above quoted words. Finally, a contract was signed by Verdi and in the name of the Khedive, by Mariette who was sent to Paris in July 1870 with being charged to set up the design of the opera.[310] Draneht Bey and Verdi (possibly Mariette also) met in early June in Italy.[311] Verdi got 150.000 francs for the work – plus he had conditions: he will pay the libretto, he will send persons to Cairo to prepare and conduct the opera (this means that Verdi will not go to Egypt to direct the premiere), and he can keep the rights outside Egypt.[312] Verdi immediately started working with the librettist Ghislonzini and their correspondence shows how the composer had a strong hold not only on the music but on the text as well.[313] The premiere in Cairo was scheduled in January, 1871.

But there have been a serious obstacle: the Franco-Prussian war. In a few weeks after Mariette arrived to Paris, France declared war on Prussia (17 July 1870). After the battle of Sedan, the French emperor, Napoleon III, was captured with his army and a *coup d'etat* was launched by the republicans in Paris.[314] The Second French Empire was over yet the war continued: the Prussians besieged Paris from September 1870 to January 1871 when the French gave up the city and announced armistice. Against the new, conservative French government in Versailles quickly arose an opposition: the Paris Commune which was oppressed bloodily in May, 1871. In Paris, Mariette in a complete depression was drawing

[310] Lambert, 244.

[311] J.-G Prod'homme and Theodore Baker, "Unpublished letters from Verdi to Camille Du Locle (1866-1876)," *The Musical Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (1921): 73-103. 94.

[312] Published in numerous sources, here I quote from Prod'homme, 89.

[313] Julian Budden, *Verdi* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), 105.

[314] John Bierman, *Napoleon III and His Carnival Empire* (New York: St. Martin's Press,1988), 332-376.

the costumes and design of *Aïda* and chose the materials for the set.[315] When it turned out that his plans were not suitable in every detail to a theatrical function, "they went to Henry du Monto"[316] – probably to Henry de Montant. In Italy, Verdi was sad about the news for his beloved Paris – he was anyway angry to the Germans because of the growing influence of Wagner.[317] It is not a surprise that in *Aïda* there is a continuous war in the background.

The premier had to be postponed. Mariette could only leave Paris in January, 1871 after the armistice. Verdi was ready with the opera in November 1870. However, he did not know that Mariette was stocked in Paris. Verdi wrote to Egypt but he had an answer from Draneht Bey that Verdi has to wait because of the war and appeals to the *force majeure*. In the next letter, at December 22, 1870, Draneht tries to beg Verdi for waiting with the European premiere until the Cairo one. He writes also that Khedive Ismāʿīl "in selecting you, dear Maestro, to write the score of a new work whose action takes place in His States, His Highness had conceived the thought of creating a *national work* [my Italics A. M.] which could later be one of the most precious memories of his reign."[318] It is clear from this letter that the Khedive was conscious about the *topos*-being of *Aïda* and indeed was the creator of the *idea* of an Egyptian national opera: he was the *éminence grise* and the public donator at the same time.

The spring and the summer of 1871 was spent by Verdi and Draneht with selecting actors and singers of the Cairo premiere and the proposed European premiere in La Scala, Milano. Two different sets of orchestra and staff had to be chosen. The Cairo premiere was finally scheduled to 24 December 1871, the Milan premier to 8 February 1872. For Verdi,

[315] Lamber, 252.

[316] Aouni, 83.

[317] Weaver, 224.

[318] Ibid., 225.

the casting was also a personal issue because Miss Stolz, a beautiful Czech actress was close to him and she was elected to sing the role of *Aïda* in Milan. Draneth wanted Mariani to conduct the Cairo premiere but because he was in love with Stolz he refused – it must be partly another impulse that Mariani conducted the first Wagner opera (Lohengrin) in Italy in Bologna the same year, 1871.[319] The final casts of both premieres therefore were the results of personal desires, negotiations and so forth. Finally, Bottesini accepted the invitation to be the first conductor of *Aïda* in Cairo (and he remained there until 1877).[320]

For the Cairo premier, the Khedive invited celebrities and critiques. The libretto was translated into Arabic and (from the Arabic) into Turkish. For the Egyptian perception of the work it is worth to translate the title page of the Arabic libretto:

> The translation of the play called *Aïda*. This is a theatrical piece from the kind which is known as opera (that is, the representation [*taṣwīr*] of a famous historical event). It is composed of marvellous scenes and strange [or: Western - *mustaghriba*] dances mixed with charming musical songs. It is divided into three parts and seven scenes. Written by Mr. Ghislanzoni and composed [*tawqīʿ al-awsatih* – print-mistake probably – *ṣawt* with *sīn* instead of *ṣād*!] by Verdi. Compiled for the order of His Highness, the Khedive of Egypt, with the aim to show it in the Theatre and Opera of Cairo, Egypt. The play happened in the above mentioned theatre in the season of the year 71/72. Translation into Arabic: Al-ʿAbd Al-Faqīr Abī Al-Suʿūd Efendī, the editor of the journal Wādī al-Nīl. [321]

As we have seen previously, the Arabic journal *Wādī al-Nīl* made serious efforts to make its audience familiar with the meaning of Opera while "the Egyptian upper class soon accepted

[319] Budden, 110.

[320] Sadgrove,54 and Budden, ibid.

[321] In fact, there are two title pages published: the above translated one in Weaver, 228. Another one in ʿAbdūn, 141. It reads: "The translation of the opera called Aïda. Written by Mr. Ghislanzoni and composed [*tawqīʿ al-awsatih* – sīn instead of ṣād!] by Verdi. Compiled according to the order of His Highness, the Khedive of Egypt. Translation into Arabic: Al-ʿAbd Al-Faqīr Abī Al-Suʿūd Efendī, the editor of the journal (*ṣaḥīfa*) Wādī al-Nīl. (First edition). In the press of the journal (*jurnāl*) Wādī al-Nīl in Cairo, year 1288." My translations. Probably this shorter one is the earliest and probably this is the one which was published for the premiere to distribute among the Arabic-speaking notabilities.

the idea of regularly attending the Opéra and the Comédie".[322] The definition of the opera given above was already established one or two years before ("It is composed of marvellous scenes and strange [or: Western - *mustaghriba*] dances mixed with charming musical songs").[323] As I argued earlier in chapter 3 and 4, these are the years when the formation of a new *bourgeoisie* was accompanied by a formation of an aesthetical environment. One major part of this growing discourse was the premier of the *Aïda*. The number of the printed booklets is suggesting the composition of the Egyptian elite that time: three hundred was printed in Arabic and four hundred in Turkish.[324]

We have an eye-witness, Baron de Kusel's account of the premiere which was – just as the ceremonies of the Suez Canal – reported the European audience:

> [T]he Khedive with all the princes were there, and the Khadivah was present, and the Egyptian princesses were in the Royal Harem Boxes, the fronts of which were covered in with thin lattice work, through which one could see, hazily, the forms of the ladies, with their diamonds and precious stones sparkling as they moved to and fro in the large royal box. All the Consul-Generals and their wives were present, the ministers and the Khedival staff officers in their brilliant uniforms while in every box were many lovely women, resplendent with jewels.[325]

This means that the audience was mixed: the Egyptian high society (Arabs and Turks) and the Europeans. The Khedive invited the most famous critics in Europe – two accepted and came to Cairo for the premier: the already mentioned Italian Filippo Filippi and the French Ernest Reyer. They gave accounts Egypt, its society and the opera itself.

The genesis and project of *Aïda* embodies aesthetical politics, when a ruler's intention is taken by artists and finally the political conceals itself in the cloth of the cultural. Just as

[322] Sadgrove, 54-55.

[323] Ibid.

[324] Ibid., 65.

[325] Kusel, 89.

the Suez Canal-ceremonies, the premiere of the *Aïda* was used by Ismāʿīl for a creation of an image of a modern ruler with an independent country. He knew the power of the media; as I already noted, probably he was one of the first modern rulers who advertised himself and his country with the help of the journalists. The idea was – as we have seen – the creation of a national opera.

It is a question if the Opera House and *Aïda* was later accepted by the Egyptian population or at least, by the intellectuals as something which can stand for their country as a public symbol. There is an unwritten history of the reception and usages (and non-usages) of *Aïda* in Egypt. This is the object of my last sub-chapter.

5.3.2 The Afterlife of *Aïda*

Filippi also informed his European audience that the Khedive got the applause in Egypt, not Verdi.[326] At the Scala-premier Verdi is the one who before the end of the piece is summoned to the stage by the enthusiastic audience.[327] From these two premiers, in Cairo and Milan, starts the career of *Aïda*. In Cairo, it was given in the season of 1871/72 *sixteen* times (which is a lot considering that its premier was at Christmas Eve, 1871), and it was on repertoire until 1877.[328] From this point onwards, it is a very interesting issue how the Egyptians considered *Aïda*, what this opera meant for them and how they used it as an artistic tool in national struggles or how and why they did not make any use of it.

[326] Ibid., 229.

[327] Budden, 111.

[328] Cf. *Egypte et Verdi*, the list of performances (no page number) and ʿAbdūn, 141-147.

Certainly, it was played, although in less numbers, during the British occupation (1882-1921). It was staged in the season 1903/04 by a French Company.[329] We know that the Europeans also staged it for the first time in front of the pyramids in 1912.[330] Also, in the nineteen-twenties *Aïda* was on the repertoire in the Italian-influenced Opera House. Since the end of the 1930's, the directors of the Opera House have been Egyptian-born Arabs – and they also often staged the piece. An Egyptian *Aïda* movie was made in 1942 with the famous singer (then young actress) Umm Kulthūm (this movie was restored in 1992). It is not clear if after the reign of Ismāʿīl, the idea of the *Aïda* as a national opera was taken over and maintained by the Egyptian nationalists before the revolution in 1952 or it was maintained and handled as such by the Europeans in this period. After 1952, it became a *topos* indeed in Egypt also supported by researchers like Ṣāliḥ ʿAbdūn who was the director of the Opera House in the 1960's. In 2001 as a tourist-attraction and also as an artistic project, *Aïda* was shown at the Giza pyramids as a "natural" background. It was advertised as "AIDA comes back to Cairo, its first audience - for the world to see what had inspired Verdi and for whom it was originally written."[331] We know that Verdi never visited Egypt.

In Europe, after the success in Milan 1872, the piece was quickly showed in other Italian cities, then in Vienna (1874), Budapest (1875) and finally Verdi conducted it in Paris himself in 1876.[332] Verdi slightly changed some of the parts in 1872, but overall it remained the same musical composition which was shown in Cairo. It soon became a symbol of

[329] ʿAbdūn, 150.

[330] "[...] here was also an unforgettable performance of Aida at the Great Pyramid in the spring of 1912, given by the Company which was at the Opera House that season, Alvarez taking the title-Ale. This original idea came from the fertile brain of Saint-Saens, who regularly wintered at Cairo before the war." Kitchener, 203.

[331] Available from Egyptvoyager.com; http://www.egyptvoyager.com/aida_mainpage.htm, Internet, accessed 15 April 2007. (The info given at this website contains serious errors and mistakes.)

[332] See the OperaGlass at Stanford University with a performance-history of *Aïda*, available from http://opera.stanford.edu/Verdi/Aida/history.html, Internet, accessed 27 April 2007.

something which was ancient Egypt in European imagination and was thought as a real spectacle. In the USA, the premiere was in 1873 in New York (Academy of Music), later it was first fully played (in German) at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1886. In Turkey it was staged in 1885.[333] The first Western *Aïda* movie as a silent movie was released in 1911 in the USA, then soon in 1917 another one in Mexico. In 1953 an Italian Aïda-movie was made with Sophia Loren. There is also a famous Zeffirelli-version staged in the small theatre of Verdi's home town, Bussetto in 2001 and was re-staged in La Scala, 2006. Today, it is still one of the most popular opera-pieces – it was given in the season of 2006/2007 more than 120 times in the great opera houses of the world.[334]

An early example how the Egyptian and the European images of *Aïda* met happened at Stockholm in 1889, at the Eight International Congress of Orientalists (ICO).[335] An Egyptian delegation was sent there, lead by ʿAbd Allah Fikri Pasha, former minister of education and his French-educated son, Amin Fikri was their translator. *Aïda* was the out-of-congress cultural event which "Amin Fikri thought a particularly appropriate choice".[336] This event means that Europeans thought that *Aïda* is appropriate for showing respect for the Egyptian guests and the Egyptian guests found it also appropriate. But let me call the attention that Amin Fikri was educated in Paris and this is his opinion – we do not know the views of the other members in the mission. This means that Fikri probably was under a European influence and watched it with European eyes. As another counterargument, one could say that the fact that an opera can be viewed as appropriate or inappropriate is a European situation itself.

[333] Ibid.

[334] Based on the data in Operabase, available from www.operabase.com, Internet, accessed 15 April 2007.

[335] Reid, 250.

[336] Ibid.

The same approach is mirrored in two texts written by Egyptians as obituaries of Verdi's death in 1901. The first, anonymous one, was published in the Beirut journal *Al-Muqtaṭaf* (Selection) and praises Verdi as a political artist who gave expression the Italians desire for freedom. In the author's memoires *Aïda* was the piece which helped him to understand how the polytheism "captivated [the ancient Egyptians'] minds".[337] The other obituary is written by Aḥmad Shawqī who in an elegy envisions the future glory of Egypt in *Aïda*: "[Aïda] represents Egypt, for this [our present] era,/ As it was in the ages gone by./ On the basis of [Aïda] we recall those [long-ago] nights/ And seek [in the Egyptian reality of the present] those visions/ that go out from it."[338] Here, one can clearly observe how early the piece became a part of the discourse of Egyptian intellectuals' nationalism. Also, it embodies a certain hope and glory for the intellectuals themselves – this is a peculiar Egyptian view of *Aïda*. This view and the conditions of this perception were created by the aesthetical politics of Ismāʿīl which politics in fact is the creator of *Aïda*.

However, there may not be made so easily such a distinction between a Western and an Egyptian image of *Aïda*. Probably, the very being of this opera signs an appropriation process in which the European influence is stronger than the native views and intentions – and finally, when, after the 1950's, *Aïda* emerges in an Egyptian-lead Opera House under a nationalist government as a proper national value and symbol of Egypt, this emergence only refers to a more or less completed process of appropriation and digestion of Western forms.

My aim in this chapter was to show how the creation of the Cairo Opera House served as a core around which an audience, a publicity, a national piece of art and finally a history of reception of Western ideas could be built. The man behind the Cairo Opera House and

[337] Quoted in Locke, 137. (With a reference to Peter Bachmann, "Zwei arabische Verdi-Würdigungen aus dem Jahre 1901," *Musikalische Quellen – Quellen zur Musikgeschichte:Festschrift für Martin Staehelin zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Ulrich Konrad with Jürgen Heidrich and Hans Joachim Marx, [Göttingen, 2002], 439–47. 443–4.)

[338] Ibid., 138.

Aïda is Khedive Ismāʿīl and his imperial imagination which was only left from a dream of an independent sovereignty. His political aesthetics was turned into aesthetical politics in dealing with institutions of art and works of art. Aesthetical politics was shown as one of the numerous components of Egyptian nationalist discourse.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the political aesthetics of Khedive Ismāʿīl was described which was transformed into aesthetical politics that embodied in the foundation of the Cairo Opera House and in the creation of *Aïda*. The concept of political aesthetics was used as a bridging principle between Opera Studies and (Post)Colonial studies thus reframing the discourse on cultural colonialism initiated by Edward Said.

In the Introduction I introduced my thesis claiming that the foundation of the Cairo Opera House in the general context of the opening of the Suez Canal was a part of political aesthetics and an imperial set created by Khedive Ismāʿīl as a means of his dream of an independent Egypt as a modern empire. This statement was intended to re-examine the argument of Said if the Cairo Opera House and *Aïda* were colonial artefacts thus part of a network which ultimately lead to military occupation.

In chapter 1 I intended to set up a theoretical framework for a new understanding of the foundation event and *Aïda*. The attempt involved first the problems of periodization where I argued for a concept of a short nineteenth century in Egypt and for the application of a concept of nineteenth century Mediterranean culture. Second, I introduced previous methods concerning the cultural history of nineteenth century Egypt (I analysed the debate on Said's claim and showed how *Aïda* itself became a *topos* of postcolonial theories). Third, the unification of the previous results and methods was accomplished under the umbrella of political aesthetics which was also defined. The concept of "the operatic state" was taken from Opera Studies and was introduced as a helping concept in political aesthetics.

After setting up the theoretical framework, a comparative study between Istanbul and Egypt was done in chapter 2. It investigated the relation of the Ottoman Sultans and Egyptian viceroys to Western theatre and opera with an outlook to the practice of public

representation and early political aesthetics of the (Ottoman and Egyptian) state. The conclusion was that the private usage of Western arts was gradually transformed to a public usage along with a growing audience and civic performance, but before the 1860s it was constrained to the courts and elites.

In chapter 3 I sketched the roots of the political aesthetics of Khedive Ismāʿīl. His education, early life and rule were described as a preparatory phase for his political aesthetics. First, his intention and negations for independence with Sultan ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, the British, and French empires were depicted using his change of title (from *wālī* to khedive) as a guideline. Second, his architectural and visual transformation of Cairo was introduced as a part of his political aesthetics along with the establishment of new institutions of culture.

The embodiment *par excellence* of Ismāʿīl's political aesthetics is the imperial set of the inauguration ceremonies of the Suez Canal. This chain of events was reconstructed in chapter 4 with a historical background. The concept of imperial set was applied to describe the exhibition-character of the visual image of the blessing ceremony and it also connected this character to the European perceptions of the event. The conclusion of this chapter was that only an image of independence was set up using European strategies and credit.

In chapter 5 the aesthetical politics of Khedive Ismāʿīl was introduced which was embodied in the foundation of the Cairo Opera House and in the idea of a national opera, *Aïda*. The forgotten history of its inception and its architect, Pietro Avoscani, were narrated. The Cairo Opera House was understood as an artistic part of the imperial set. The intention of the Khedive to create an audience and acceptance of the opera among Egyptians was shown along with the creation of *Aïda* as connected to an idea of the Egyptian empire. This chapter concludes with a relation between *Aïda*, the Opera House and Egyptian nationalism arguing that the political aesthetics and the aesthetical politics of Ismāʿīl were the forces

which created a visual manifestation of nationalist ideas, even before the peak of Egyptian nationalism.

Aïda indeed served the image of an imperial idea which was described here as an imperial set. Yet, this imperial representation was the manifestation of Ismāʿīl's political will and also an image of a general landscape of the nineteenth century Mediterranean culture. The imperial set and political aesthetics are not only characteristic to Egypt, but to France, Italy, the Ottomans, and even to Central Europe. The exhibition character of this pattern and its relation with opera houses as public places where the state as an aesthetic force can represent itself was studied here on the foundation of the Cairo Opera House, also with an aim to unite (Post)Colonial and Opera Studies under the umbrella of political aesthetics.

The nature of the opera does not let it to be very popular. I believe that in any given country huge masses of the population do not visit their opera houses regularly or even, never. The opera is everywhere the place of the elite, a marginal but important place. A strange location: a national institution and a cosmopolitan, universalistic *locus*. The Egyptian elite indeed visited the Opera House (first, following the model of the Khedive, then as a bourgeois social practice) – and here it must be mentioned that the Cairo Opera House is the only opera house in the Arabic-speaking world.

An opera house can fulfil various functions. It can have political, social, economic and artistic sides. Most importantly, it is a place for various kinds of representations – there everyone is being seen. The Cairo audience was created through and by the press: translations, advertisements and explanations were published. The Khedive's behaviour constituted a model for the political and cultural elite. One of the places where all the changes could be visualized and measured is the Cairo Opera House which offered a proper

place for new social ideas and practices. Nationalism in this context means nothing else then creating new public spaces for being represented.

For the further analysis of this peculiar epoch before the British occupation (when the previous social processes nevertheless continued) it is required to test and built a firm concept of Mediterranean culture in a short period, in the nineteenth century. Westernisation must be paralleled with Ottomanization and Arabization as three principles along which the cultural and social changes were organised. The Cairo Opera House in its first years can be seen as a meeting point of these three aspects. The usage of symbols, ceremonies and works of art by the Egyptian rulers should be analysed with a continuous outlook to the Ottoman context. The images of Egypt were created, distorted and appropriated within the palaces of Mediterranean political aesthetics.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Documents:

BB/4/1048: Archives Nationales – Services Historique de la Défanse, Departement de Marine, Chateau de Vincennes, Paris.

Internet sources:

Cairo Opera House. http://www.cairooperahouse.org/opera_home_english.aspx and http://www.egyptguide.net/opera/, accessed 28 May 2007.

Ersoy, Ayla. "The Ottoman Sultans and the art of painting," available from http://newspot.byegm.gov.tr/arsiv/2000/May/N22.htm, accessed 14 January.

Egyptvoyager. http://www.egyptvoyager.com/aida_mainpage.htm, accessed 28 May 2007.

Fondation Napoleon. www.napoleon.org, accessed 28 May 2007.

Moussinga, Paul-Maixcent. *L'Egypte et la question d'Egypte à travers la presse britannique de 1869 à 1882.* L'Université Charles-De-Gaulles - Lille III, 2004. Unpublished thesis, available from http://www.univ-lille3.fr/theses/moussinga-pail-maixcent/html/these_front.html, accessed 23 May 2007.

Operabase. www.operabase.com, accessed 28 May 2007.

OperaGlass. http://opera.stanford.edu, accessed 28 May 2007.

The Turkish Ministry of Culture – *Opera in Turkey*. http://goturkey.kulturturizm.gov.tr/BelgeGoster.aspx?17A16AE30572D313679A66406202CCB0C312D1DD2E9EA986, accessed 24 May 2007.

Encyclopaedia entries:

EI²: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition. S. v. "masraḥ" [theatre] (J. M. Landau, Metın And), "Selim III" (Virginia Aksan), "khidīw" [khedive] (P. J. Vatikiotis), "ḳibṭ" [Copt] (A. S. Atiya), "Fāris Al-Shiyāq" (A. G. Karam), "nahḍa" [cultural awakening] (N. Tomiche).

The Columbia Encyclopaedia, Sixth Edition. S. v. "colonisation".

Journals in Arabic:

ʿAṣfūr, Jābir, ed. *Rawdat al-madāris al-miṣrīya*. Al-sanat al-thālitha [The gardens of the Egyptian schools. The third year] (1872 March – 1873 February). Cairo: Dār al-Kutub. 1997.

General literature:

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* London and New York: Verso, 1991.

Assmann, Jan. *Moses, the Egyptian. The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Al-ʿAzm, Sadik Jalal. "Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse." *Khamsin: A Jornal of Revolutionary Socialists of the Middle East* 8 (1980): 5-26.

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken Books, 1969.

Bereson, Ruth. *The operatic state: cultural policy and the opera house.* London: Routledge, 2002.

Bierman, John. *Napoleon III and His Carnival Empire.* New York: St. Martin's Press,1988.

Braudel, Fernand. *Memory and the Mediterranean*. New York: Vintage Books, 2002.

Choueiri, Youssef M. *Modern Arab Historiography – Historical Discourse and the Nation-State.* London, New York: Routledge, 2003.

Çelik, Zeynep. *Displaying the Orient: architecture of Islam at nineteenth-century world's fairs.* University of California Press, c1992.

Coller, Ian, Helen Davies, and Julie Kalman, eds. *French History and Civilization – Papers from the George Rudé Seminar, Vol 1.* Melbourne: The George Rudé Society, 2005.

Cooper, Frederick. *Colonialism in Question – Theory, Knowledge, History*. Berkely and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005.

Curl, James Stevens. *Egyptomania: the Egyptian revival, a recurring theme in the history of taste* . Manchester: Manchester University Press, c1994.

Davison, Roderic H. *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876.* New York: Gordian Press, 1973.

Deringil, Selim. *The Well-Protected Domain – Ideology and the legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909*. London: I. B. Tauris, 1998.

Evans, Martin ed. *Culture and Empire – The French Experience, 1830-1940*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Foucault, Michel. *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.

Göçek, Fatma Müge. *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire – Ottoman Westernization and Social Change*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Harlow, Barbara and Mia Carter, eds. *Imperialism and Orientalism – A documentary sourcebook.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999.

Hourani, Albert. *Arab thought in the liberal age, 1798-1939*. London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Kiddie, Nikki R. *Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn "Al-Afghānī"*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972.

Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.

Maier, Charles S. *Among Empires – American Ascendency and Its Predecessors*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Owen, Roger. *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800-1914*. London and New York: Methuen, 1987.

Sharīf, Muḥammad Badīʿ and Aḥmad Zakī ʿAbd al-Karīm, ed. *Dirāsāt tārīkhīya fī-l-nahḍa al-ʿarabīya al-ḥadītha.* [Historical studies in the modern Arabic awakening.] Bayrūt: Dār al-Iqrāʾ, 1984.

White, Hayden. *Tropics of Discourse. Essays in cultural criticism.* Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1978.

Zubaida, Sami. 'The Nation State in the Middle East', in ibid: *Islam, the People and the State. Essays on Political Ideas and Movements in the Middle East*. Tauris: New York, 1993.

History of Egypt and Cairo:

ʿAbd al-Karīm, Aḥmad ʿIzzat. *Taʾrīkh at-taʿlīm fī Miṣr min nihāyat ḥukm Muḥammad ʿAlī ilā awāʾil ḥukm Tawfīq, 1848-1882*. 4 vols. [The history of education in Egypt from the end of the rule of Muḥammad ʿAlī until the beginning of the rule of Tawfīq.] Cairo: Maṭbaʿa an-Naṣr, 1945.

ʿAbd al-Malik, Anwar. *Naḥdat Miṣr: Takawwun al-Fikr wa-l-Aydiyūlūjīya fī nahḍat Miṣr al-waṭanīya (1805-1892).* [The awakening of Egypt: The genesis of the national idea and ideology in the awakening of Egypt.] [Cairo]: Al-Hayʾa al-Miṣrīyah al-ʿĀmma l-il-Kitāb, 1983.

Abu-Lughod, Janet. "Tale of Two Cities: The Origins of Modern Cairo" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 7, no 4 (1965): 429-457.

_____. *Cairo – 1001 Years of The City Victorious.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971.

ʿAlī, ʿArafah ʿAbduh. *Al-Qāhira fī ʿaṣr Ismāʿīl*. [Cairo in the epoch of Ismāʿīl.] Al-Qāhira: Al-Dār al-Miṣrīya Al-Lubnānīya, 1998.

Arnaud, Jean-Luc. *Le Caire – mise en place d'une ville moderne 1867-1907.* Sindbad – Actes Sud, 1998.

Baer, Gabriel. *Studies in the Social History of Modern Egypt*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.

Baron, Beth. *The women's awakening in Egypt: culture, society, and the press*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, c1994.

Crabbs, Jack A. *The Writing of History in Nineteenth-Century Egypt – A study in National Transformation*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1984.

Delanoue, Gilbert. *Moralistes et politiques musulmans dans l'Egypte du XIXe siècle (1798-1882). I-II.* Le Caire: L'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire, 1982.

Fahmy, Khaled. *All the Pasha's men: Mehmed Ali, his army and the making of modern Egypt.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Ghannam, Farha. *Remaking the Modern – Space, Relocation, and the Politics of Identity in a Global Cairo*. Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 2002.

Heyworth-Dunne, James. *An introduction to the history of education in modern Egypt*. London: Frank Cass, 1968 (1938).

Hunter, Robert F. *Egypt under the Khedives 1805-1879 – From Household Government to Modern Bureaucracy*. London: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984.

Al-Jabartī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān. *ʿAjā'ib al-āthār fī-l-tarājim wa-l-akhbār*. Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīya, 1997. [Napoleon in Egypt: Al-Jabarti's Chronicle of the French Occupation, 1798, tr. Smuel Moreh, Princeton: M. Wiener Publications, 1993].

Kuhnke, Laverne. *Lives at Risk – Public Health in Nineteenth Century Egypt*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

Lane, Edward William. *An account of the manners and customs of the modern Egyptians*. The Hague and London: East-West Publications, 1978.

Leon, Edwin de. *Egypt under its Khedives*. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Revington, 1882.

Marlowe, John. *Spoiling the Egyptians.* London: André Deutsch, 1974.

Merruau, M. Paul. *L'Égypte contemporaine, 1840-1857: de Méhémet-Ali à Said Pacha*. Paris: Didier, 1858.

Mitchell, Timothy. *Colonising Egypt*. Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Mubārak, ʿAlī Bāshā. *Al-Khiṭaṭ at-Tawfīqīya al-Jadīda li-Miṣr al-Qāhira.* [The new plans of Tawfīq for the city of Cairo.] Al-Qāhira: Al-Hayʾa al-Miṣrīya al-ʿAmma al-Kitāb, 1980.

Muntaṣir, Ṣalāḥ. *Min ʿUrābī ilā ʿAbd al-Nāṣir: qirāʾa jadīda li-l-tāʾrīkh.* [From ʿUrābī to ʿAbd al-Nāṣir: a new study of history.] Madīnat Naṣr, al-Qāhira: Dār al-Shurūq, 2003.

Pollard, Lisa. *Nurturing the nation: the family politics of modernizing, colonizing and liberating Egypt (1805-1923).* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Reid, Donald Malcolm. *Cairo University and the making of modern Egypt.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Sammarco, Angelo. *Histoire de l'Egypte moderne, depuis Mohammed Ali jusqu`a occupation Britannique 1801-1882 – D'apres les documents originaux Egyptiens et étrangèrs.* Le Caire: L'Institut Français d'Archeologie Orientale, 1937.

aṭ-Ṭahṭāwī, Rifāʿat Rāfiʿ. *Al-tamaddun wa-l-ḥiḍāra wa-l-ʿumrān. Al-Aʿmal al-kāmila I.* [Civilization, culture and urbanization. Collected works I.] Bayrūt: Al-Muʾassasa al-ʿArabīya li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Nashar, 1973.

_____. *Al-siyāsa wa-l-waṭanīya wa-l-tarbīya. Al-Aʿmal al-kāmila II.* [Politics, nationalism and education. Collcted works II.] Bayrūt: Al-Muʾassasa al-ʿArabīya li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Nashar, 1973.

_____. *Fī-l-dīn wa-l-lugha wa-l-adab. Al-Aʿmal al-kāmila V.* [On Religion, language and literature. Collected works V.] Bayrūt: Al-Muʾassasa al-ʿArabīya li-d-Dirāsāt wa-n-Nashar, 1981.

Toledano, Ehud R. *State and society in nineteenth century Egypt.* (Cambridge Middle East Library: 22) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Vatikiotis, P. J. *The history of modern Egypt from Muhammad Ali to Ali Mubarak.* London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1991.

On Khedive Ismāʿīl:

Ismāʿil – bi-munāsibat murūr khamsīn ʿāmman ʿalā wafātihi. [Ismāʿīl – on the 50th anniversary of his death.] Al-Qāhira: Maṭbaʿa Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīya, 1945.

Al-Ayyūbī, Ilyās. *Taʾrikh Miṣr fī ʿahd al-khadīv Ismāʿīl bāshā min sanat 1863 ilā sanat 1879. I-II.* [The history of Egypt in the time of Khedive Ismāʿīl Pasha from 1863 to 1879.] Al-Qāhira: Maktaba Madbūlī, 1996.

Butler, Alfred J. *Court Life in Egypt.* London: Chapman and Hall, 1887.

Douin, Georges. *Histoire du Règne du Khédive Ismail II. 1867-73. L'Apogée.* Roma: Nell'Istituto poligrafico dello Stato per reale società di geografia d'Egitto, 1934.

Guindi Bey, Georges et Tagher, Jacques. *Ismaïl d'après les documents officiels.* Le Caire: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale au Caire, 1945.

Jerrold, Blanchard. *Egypt under Ismail Pacha – Some Chapters of Contemporary History*. London: Samuel Tinsley and Co., 1879.

Leon, Edwin de. *The Khedive's Egypt*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1878.

Malet, Edward Sir. *Egypt 1879-1883; edited and arranged at the request of Lady Ermyntrude Malet by Lord Sanderson*. London: John Murray, 1909.

McCoan, J. Carlile. *Egypt under Ismail.* London: Chapman and Hall, 1889.

Sabry, Mohammad. *La Genèse de l'Esprit Natinal Egyptien (1863-1882).* Paris: Libraire Picart, 1924.

Sabry, Mohammad. *L'Empire Egyptien sous Ismail et L'Ingérence Anglo-Francaise (1863-1879).* Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1933.

Sammarco, Angelo. *Le règne du Khédive Ismaïl de 1863 à 1875*. Le Caire : L'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1937.

Stanton, E. A. "Secret Letters from the Khedive Ismail in Connection with an Occupation of the East Coast of Africa." *Journal of the Royal African Society* 34, no. 136 (1935): 269-282.

Zananiri, Gaston. *Le Khédive Ismail et L'Egypte (1830-1894).* Alexandrie: „Typo-Lithographie Nouvelle", C. Molco and Comp., 1923.

On Arabic, Egyptian and Ottoman art and theatre in the 19th century*:*

Badawi, Muhammad Mustafa. *Early Arabic Drama.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Barbour, Nevill. "The Arabic Theatre in Egypt." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* 8, no. 1 (1935): 173-187.

_____. "The Arabic Theatre in Egypt. Part III." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* 8, no. 4 (1937): 991-1012.

Behrens-Abouseif, Doris and Stephen Vernoit, eds. *Islamic Art in the 19th Century: Tradition, Innovation, and Eclecticism*. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Bunduq, Mahdī. *Al-masraḥ wa-taḥawwulāt al-ʿaql al-ʿarabī.* [Theatre and the changes of the Arab thought.] Al-Majlis al-Āʿlī li-l-thaqāfa, 1998.

Cachia, Pierre. "Translations and adaptations." In *Modern Arabic Literarure,* ed. M. M. Badawi, 23-35. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Ersoy, Ayla. "The Ottoman Sultans and the art of painting." Available from http://newspot.byegm.gov.tr/arsiv/2000/May/N22.htm, Internet, accessed 17 May 2007.

Al-Khatīb, Muḥammad Kámil, ed. *Naẓariyyāt al-maṣraḥ*. [Theories of Theatre.] Dimashq: Manshūrāt Wizārat ath-Thaqāfa, 1994.

Landau, Jacob M. *Studies in the Arab Theater and Cinema*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958.

Menemencioglu, Nermin. "The Ottoman Theatre 1839-1923**."** *Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)* 10, no. 1. (1983): 48-58.

Najm, Muḥammad Yūsuf. *Al-masraḥīya fī-l-adab al-ʿarabī al-ḥadīth.* [The drama in modern Arabic literature.] Bayrūth: Dār Al-Thaqāfa, c. 1967.

Sadgrove, P. C. *The Egyptian Theatre in the Nineteenth Century (1799-1882).* Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 1996.

Schulze, Reinhard. "Schauspiel oder Nachahmung? Zum Theaterbegriff Arabischer Reiseschriftsteller im 19. Jahrhundert." *Welt des Islams*, New Ser., Vol. 34, Issue 1 (1994): 67-84.

El-Shawan, Salwa. "Western Music and Its Practitioners in Egypt (ca. 1825-1985): The Integration of a New Musical Tradition in a Changing Environment." Asian Music (1985).

On the Cairo Opera House and Pietro Avoscani*:*

ʿAbdūn, Ṣāliḥ. *Khamsūn ʿāmān min al-mūsīqā wa-l-ūbirā*. [Fifty years of Music and Opera.] Al-Qāhira: Dār al-Shurūq, 2000.

Jones, Dalu. "Va penseiro… Italian Architects in Egypt at the time of the Khedive." *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* (1990): 86-93.

Tagher, Jacques. "Pietro Avoscani, artiste-décorateur et home d'affaires." *Cahiers d'histoire égyptienne* no. 4. (1949): 306-314.

Ulacacci, Nicola. *Pietro Avoscani – cenni biografici*. Leghorn, 1871.

Muslim and Arabic travellers in Europe in the 19th century:

al-Murrāsh, Fransīs Fatḥ Allah. *Riḥlat Bārīs, 1867.* [A journey to Paris] Bayrūt: Al-Muʾassasa al-ʿArabīya li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Nashar, 2004.

aṭ-Ṭahṭāwī, Rifāʿat Rāfiʿ. *Ad-Dīwān an-Nafīs fī-īwān Bārīs aw takhlīṣ al-ibrīz fī-talkhīṣ bāriz.* [c. The Refinement of the Gold in a Comprehensive Depiction of Paris] Bayrūt: Al-Muʾassasa al-ʿArabīya li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Nashar, 2002.

European travellers in Egypt in the 19th century:

Armstrong, William George. *A visit to Egypt in 1872: described in four lectures to the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.* Newcastle-upon-Tyne: J. M. Carr, 1874.

Blottière, Alain**.** *Vintage Egypt: Cruising the Nile in the Golden Age of Travel*. Paris; Great Britain: Flammarion, 2003.

Charmes, Gabriel. *Five Months at Cairo and in Lower Egypt*. London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1883.

Fahmy Pacha, Gallini. *Souvenirs I-II.* Le Caire: „Le Patrie", 1935.

Flaubert, Gustave. *Voyage en Égypt*. Paris: Grasset, 1992.

Lord Houghton. "Opening of the Suez Canal." *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 14, no. 2 (1869-70): 88-105.

Kitchener, Frederick. "Recollections of Life at Cairo." *The Musical Times* 64, no 961 (1923): 203-204.

Kusel, Baron de. *An Englishman's recollections of Egypt 1863 to 1887*. New York, London: John Lane, 1915.

Perriéres, Carle de. *Un Parisien au Caire*. Cairo: Librairie Nouvelle, Ebner et Cie., 1873.

Western dwellers in Egypt:

Balboni, Luigi Antonio. *Gl'Italiani nella Civiltà Egiziana del Secolo XIX. Vol. I. – III.* Alessandria D'Egitto: Stabilimento Tipo-Litografico V. Penasson. Opera publicata sotto gli auspici del comitato Alessandrino della Società Dante Alighieri, 1906.

Carré, Jean Marie. *Voyageurs et écrivains francais en Égypte* (1517-1869), 2. Vols., Le Caire: L'Institut Francais d'Archéologie Orientale, 1992 (1932).

Cox, Frederick J. "The American Naval Mission in Egypt" The Journal of Modern History (1954).

On Aïda and Verdi:

Auni, Walid, ed. *Aida – Egypt.* Cairo: Cairo Opera House, Sharouq Press, 1997.

Busch, Hans, ed. *Verdi's Aida*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978.

Della Seta, Fabrizio. "O cieli azzuri: Exoticism and Dramatic Discourse in Aida." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3, no. 1 (1991): 49-62.

L'Égypte et Verdi (Miṣr wa-Fardī). [Cairo]: Dār al-Ūbirā, 1951.

Gossett, Philip. "Verdi, Ghislanzoni and Aida: The Uses of Convention." *Critical Inquiry* 1, no. 2 (1974): 291-334.

Humbert, Jean. “A propos de l’egyptomanie dans l’oeuvre de Verdi: Attribution a Auguste Mariette d’un scenario anonyme de l’opera Aida.” *Revue de musicologie* 62, no 2. (1976): 229-256.

Humbert, Jean-Marcel. Les Expositions universelles de 1867 et 1878 et la création d’*Aïda*: l’image de l’Égypte transmise par Auguste Mariette. In: *La France & l'Égypte: à l'époque des vice-rois 1805-1882*, ed. Daniel Panzac et André Raymond. Le Caire: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2002.

Istel, Edgar and Otto Kinkeldey. “A Genetic Study of the Aida Libretto.” *The Musical Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (1917): 34-52.

Locke, Raph P. “Beyond the exotic: How ‘Eastern’ is *Aida*?” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 17, no. 2 (2005): 105–139.

Osborne, Charles. “The Plot of Aida.” *The Musical Times* 110, no. 1520 (Oct. 1969): 1034-1036.

Prod’homme, J.-G and Theodore Baker. “Unpublished letters from Verdi to Camille Du Locle (1866-1876).” *The Musical Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (1921): 73-103.

Robinson, Paul. “Is Aida an Orientalist Opera?” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 5, no. 2 (1993): 133-140.

Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism.* New York: Vintage Books, 1993.

Schweikert, Uwe. “Aida.” In *Verdi Handbuch*, ed. Anselm Gerhard and Uwe Schweikert. 461-474. Stuttgart: Bärenreiter-Metzler, 2001.

On the Suez Canal:

Charles-Roux, Jules. *L’Isthme et le Canal de Suez Historique – État Actuel*. Tome Premier, Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1901.

Fletcher, Max E. “The Suez Canal and World Shipping, 1869-1914.” *The Journal of Economic History*, 18, no. 4 (1958): 556-573.

Itinéraire des invités aux fétes d’Inauguration du Canal de Suez qui séjournent au Caire et font le voyage du Nile. Caire, October 1869. Publie par Ordre de S. A. le Khédive. Le Caire: Mourès, 1869.

Kashey, Elizabeth. *Empress Eugenie's State Visit to the Opening of the Suez Canal, 1869. Drawings by Alfred-Henri Darjou and P. Moutand.* New York: The Shepherd Gallery, 1988.

Moghira, Mohamed Anour. *L’Isthme de Suez, Passage millénaire (640-2000).* Paris: L’Harmattan, 2002.

Pudney, John Sleigh. *Suez: De Lesseps' Canal*. New York, Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969.

Sammarco, Angelo. *Les Régne s de 'Abbas, de Sa'id et d'Isma'il, 1848-1879. Avec un aperçu de l 'histoire du Canal de Suez.* [Précis de l 'histoire d'Égypte. tom. 4.] Roma: 1935.

Siliotti, Alberto and Alain Vidal Naquet. *Journal de Voyage en Egypte – Inauguration du Canal de Suez de Roberto Morra Di Lavriano*. Paris: Librairie Gründ, 1997.

Tolnayné, Mária Kiss ed. *Kedves Idám! – Erzsébet királyné, Ferenc József, Andrássy Gyula és Schratt Katalin levelei Ferenczy Idához.* [Dear Ida! – Letters of Queen Elizabeth, Franz Joseph, Gyula Andrássy, and Katalin Schratt to Ida Ferenczy] Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1992.

On Mariette and Egyptology:

Lambert, Gilles. *Auguste Mariette – L'Égypte ancienne sauvée des sables.* Paris: J.-C. Lattés, 1997.

Reid, Donald Malcom. *Whose pharaos? Archeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I.* Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press, 2002.

Shaw, Wendy M. K. *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire.* Berkely and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003.