Tracing the History of Museums in Egypt from the Ptolemaic Period to the Fall of Mohamed Ali’s Dynasty (323 BC - AD 1952)

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Abstract

Establishing museums was an ancient tradition that was only revived at the beginning of the Renaissance period. In the distant past, Egypt was the home of the first institution-termed museum that was founded and very well maintained by the early Egyptians. In the modern era, rulers of Mohamed Ali’s dynasty sought to accrete the power of the state by founding various types of museums that were for the most part the first of their kind in the region. Under the monarchy, museum notions witnessed a dramatic change. Such institutions were mostly used as powerful tools to inspire the public in the course of nation building, so as to finally form a distinctive modern Egyptian identity, which is in fact the outcome of long episodes of various successive eras. Besides unfolding the past, museums fostered the sense of national allegiance among the public and reflect the modernity of the state of its time; therefore, this article aims to explore the history of the Egyptian museums from ancient times until modern times up to 1952.

Introduction

The term museum comes from the Greek word Mouseion meaning the temple or the haunt of the Muses, the nine daughters of the god Zeus, who presided over arts and sciences; and whose mention was as early as the Homeric poems. The ancient meaning of the term is an academic and religious community of scholars, that is a religiously toned research institute. Curiously, Horapollo stated that among the interpretations of the “seven letters included within two fingers” (which may apply to the symbol of the ancient Egyptian goddess Seshat) is Muse. Such symbol was never precisely identified however, the total number of the symbols constituting it is nine, which is the number of Muses in Greek mythology. A possible link between Seshat in Croton in the southern coast of Italy that was called by the inhabitants “the temple of Muses”. Then the idea was moved to Athens, which housed two schools in the Classical period: the Academy of Plato and the Lyceum of Aristotle. In these institutions, the scholars were centered around a shrine of Muses, thus the study of philosophy there was considered as a rite to the nine goddesses. Worthy of note is that Pythagoras who originated the Mouseion notion was a student of a priest in Egypt.\(^1\)

Knowing that there were places for learning within the precincts of Egyptian temples,\(^2\) the idea of education within a temple, preferably dedicated to the goddessess of knowledge, could have been then transmitted to Pythagoras who applied it in Italy. Intriguingly, Plato also studied in Egypt under priest-scholars.\(^3\) On the other hand, there is no clear indication that Aristotle visited Egypt;\(^4\) however, being Plato’s student is enough to confirm the Egyptian influence on him. In all cases, such earlier institutions, i.e. Plato’s Academy and Aristotle’s School, were never termed Mouseion by early historians\(^5\) despite the fact that they were both institutions of research and learning centered around a shrine for the Muses, with the former being specialized mainly in Mathematics and the latter having wide range of subjects embracing almost all areas of interest to humanity;\(^6\) they can be rather regarded as prototypes or forerunners of the global scaled and first-termed Mouseion in the ancient world.

Alexandria: Birthplace of Materializing Museum Notion

Upon seizing control of Egypt, Ptolemy, son of Lagne, needed to be enveloped in a Hellenic mantle so as to legitimize his rule as a successor of Alexander. Within this context, he succeeded in conveying the body of Alexander to be buried in Egypt, moved the capital to the new city founded by Alexander and named after him, and managed in promoting a scholarly activity through the establishment of the celebrated Museum and Library of Alexandria; and enticing intellectuals, especially from Greece, to settle in Egypt,\(^7\) thus creating an institution similar to the Lyceum of Alexander’s tutor, Aristotle, at Athens.\(^8\) It is stated that Demetrius of Phalerum, who was a student of Theophrastus,\(^9\) and whom had been unfairly ousted from Athens, went to Ptolemy Soter’s court in Alexandria and became among the kings’ friends,\(^10\) most likely advised Soter to create the museum and library,\(^11\) the collection of the latter had been so much enlarged under Ptolemy Philadelphus who had given Demetrius, then the head of the library, a huge sum of money for that purpose.\(^12\) The Museum was called so since it was embraced a shrine for the Muses so as to seek their inspiration.\(^13\) Strabo described the museum as being a part of the royal palace in the Bruchium quarter, having been a shrine to the Muses.

7. The establishment of the celebrated Museum and Library of Alexandria 15 and enticing intellectuals, especially from Greece, to settle in Egypt, thus creating an institution similar to the Lyceum of Alexander’s tutor, Aristotle, at Athens. It is stated that Demetrius of Phalerum, who was a student of Theophrastus, and whom had been unfairly ousted from Athens, went to Ptolemy Soter’s court in Alexandria and became among the kings’ friends, most likely advised Soter to create the museum and library, the collection of the latter had been so much enlarged under Ptolemy Philadelphus who had given Demetrius, then the head of the library, a huge sum of money for that purpose. The Museum was called so since it was embraced a shrine for the Muses so as to seek their inspiration. Strabo described the museum as being a part of the royal palace in the Bruchium quarter, having been a shrine to the Muses. Para the term museum comes from the Greek word (Mouseion) meaning the temple or the haunt of the Muses, the nine daughters of the god Zeus, who presided over arts and sciences; and whose mention was as early as the Homeric poems. The ancient meaning of the term is an academic and religious community of scholars, that is a religiously toned research institute. Curiously, Horapollo stated that among the interpretations of the “seven letters included within two fingers” (which may apply to the symbol of the ancient Egyptian goddess Seshat) is Muse. Such symbol was never precisely identified however, the total number of the symbols constituting it is nine, which is the number of Muses in Greek mythology. A possible link between Seshat in Croton in the southern coast of Italy that was called by the inhabitants “the temple of Muses”. Then the idea was moved to Athens, which housed two schools in the Classical period: the Academy of Plato and the Lyceum of Aristotle. In these institutions, the scholars were centered around a shrine of Muses, thus the study of philosophy there was considered as a rite to the nine goddesses. Worthy of note is that Pythagoras who originated the Mouseion notion was a student of a priest in Egypt. Knowing that there were places for learning within the precincts of Egyptian temples, the idea of education within a temple, preferably dedicated to the goddessess of knowledge, could have been then transmitted to Pythagoras who applied it in Italy. Intriguingly, Plato also studied in Egypt under priest-scholars. On the other hand, there is no clear indication that Aristotle visited Egypt; however, being Plato’s student is enough to confirm the Egyptian influence on him. In all cases, such earlier institutions, i.e. Plato’s Academy and Aristotle’s School, were never termed Mouseion by early historians despite the fact that they were both institutions of research and learning centered around a shrine for the Muses, with the former being specialized mainly in Mathematics and the latter having wide range of subjects embracing almost all areas of interest to humanity; they can be rather regarded as prototypes or forerunners of the global scaled and first-termed Mouseion in the ancient world.
in public walk and a place furnished with seats in addition to a large dining hall for the museum scholars.23 Such description bears resemblance to the two previously mentioned institutions at Athens in both form and function.24 In such remote era, museum meant a research center encompassing specialists devoted to the study of arts and sciences; that it was merely a house for scientific and literary knowledge and was not meant to house a collection of objects.25 Alexandria Museum, however, had some objects including statues of thinkers, astronomical and surgical instruments, elephant trunks and animal hides, and a botanical and zoological park.26 This could have been done only for the purpose of research, but was never meant for public display. Such acquisition of valuable material gives in the validation of being akin to modern museums.27 The museum and library functioned for nearly 6 centuries when they were finally destroyed. Several accounts had been given in this regard; it is hard to believe a total damage during the Alexandrian War in 48 BC since Strabo used the library in the course of his visit to Egypt between 25-20 BC, during which he had written the description of the Museum. Ammian Marcellinus’ account, stating the loss of a greater part of the Royal Quarter which had long been the home for prominent scholars, marks their destruction during the war between Aurelianus and Zenobia (ca. 270-275 AD).28 Following the fame of Alexandria Museum, other museums were established during the Roman Republic time,29 e.g. Polybius pointed out to the presence of a museum in Taranto in Southern Italy.30

**Rome: Formulating the Concept of Public Display**

Roman individuals’ tendency of acquiring private collections increased after their conquests reaching its peak in the Republic last century, the emperors had halls in their palaces used as private museums. But this was discouraged by the generals; Agrippa delivered a speech to the public calling for opening the treasures of the palaces to the public for purposes of education and raising the intellectual awareness; then Julius Caesar forbade private artifact collecting and made all of them state property. Hence, the idea of public display was initiated. The Romans displayed paintings and sculptures, brought from their conquests, in gardens, temples, theaters and baths. In the 2nd century AD, Emperor Hadrian specifically was a pioneer in creating what is called in the modern sense: an open-air museum; when he reconstructed a number of landmarks that he had seen during his travels at his villa in Tivoli.31

**From Medieval Age to the Renaissance: Between Absence and Revival of Museums**

The Medieval Age is generally characterized by the absence of true museums and the rising of private collections. Throughout the various Islamic periods, the Arabs had the tradition of collecting valuable objects; they had private collections in the palaces of their Caliphs or Sultans and Emirs/Princes (especially Abbasids, Fatimids and Mamluks) for the purposes of showing off and boasting. Moreover, it is very likely that the Fatimids were the first to imitate the concept of specialization in museums/collections; they possessed number of houses, the contents of each house (Dar) were of only one type (for example, Dar Al-Adheqa [House for Weapons], Dar Al-Seroug [House for Saddles], Dar Al-Tarai [House for Antiques]...etc.). On the other hand, the Arabs never knew public museums, but rather private small museums. It is nearly about the same time of the fall of the Islamic rule at Al-Andalus in the late 13th century, emerged a wave of collecting high quality objects by European private individuals32 starting with Italy and France,33 and later on to other European countries, notably England.34 Such connection was absolutely not a coincidence; it is possible that the idea of forming collections, which is the basis of museum concept, was transmitted to Europe, the same way as Arab sciences and cultures, through Spain in France and Italy.35 The way to both countries had been previously opened by the Arabs via Pyrenees Mountains.36 It had been also claimed that what paved the way for such hypothetical theory were the treasures taken from the houses of Granada Muslim kings, which allegedly formed the nucleus of the European museums.37 The Renaissance witnessed museums revival. At the beginning of that period, the public museum in its modern sense had been originated by the Europeans. They adopted the idea of collections, developed it and maximized its benefit by changing the ownership from private individuals to the public.38 The earliest example existed in Italy in 1471; that is, the Capitoline Museum, which housed the oldest public art collection in the world.39 The latter consisted of seven bronze sculptures in the round donated by Pope Sixtus IV to be placed in the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Capitoline Hill, the most sacred site in ancient Rome.40 It was followed by another similar example at the Vatican with the installation of Laocoon group sculpture by Pope Julius II at the Cortile del Belvedere in 1506.41 Both modest natures of Capitoline and Vatican were then gradually enlarged by later donations. In the late 17th century, Basel opened the first University museum in 1671, followed by the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford University in 1683.

In Modern Era, establishing museums spread worldwide widely. In 1756, the Vatican founded several museums. In 1753, the British Museum was founded with a collection mainly dedicated to natural science. In USA, the Charleston Museum was established in 1773 with a collection of Natural History materials. In 1793, the Palace of Louvre in Paris was opened to the public that may well be considered as the first great national art museum.42 In the 19th century, there occurred a change in the way of the exhibition from being haphazard to follow a specific system. This began in German and Swiss museums, whose directors placed the objects in a chronological order in what was called Period Rooms.43 Of the great museums in USA that had been established in that century in 1870 are the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston,44 and at the beginning of the 20th century, the number of museums exceeded 200. Also, a similar number existed in Russia near at the same time.45

**Rediscovering the Distinct Past of Egypt and the Necessity for its Safeguarding**

Before the decipherment of hieroglyphics, the Westerns knew very little about Egypt through the antiquities that were moved to their countries or the images from the historical places drawn by travelling artists or the more comprehensive work “Description de L’Égypte”. However, the effort of several European scholars, particularly Thomas Young and Champollion, decoding the Rosetta Stone, brought the mystery of such unique civilization, with which the Europeans were fascinated. This raised awareness of the Egyptians and their rulers about the value of their past and started to take actions to preserve their antiquities, of which the priority was given to extensive collections dating to the Pharaonic Period that was followed by significant measures to establish other homes for the three successive periods of Egypt.

23 Strabo, Geography, 17.1.8.
32 27
36 27
The Earliest Initiatives to Establish a Museum in Modern Egypt

The initial steps for creating a national museum in Egypt goes back to the reign of Mohamed Ali Pasha (r. 1805-1848), the founder of modern Egypt, when he issued a decree in 1833 prohibiting the exportation of all kinds of antiquities and ordering the establishment of a museum for the exhibition and the preservation of such artifacts. 49 Yusuf Diya Effendi was entrusted to transform this task into a reality under the supervision of Rifaa El-Tahtawy. 50 Close to the school of Foreign Languages, Diya housed the discovered antiquities in a building constructed by Engineer Yusuf Helekyan in the Egyptian gardens of Cairo. This museum was either known as the Museum of Sheikh Rifaa or Al-Antiquakhana. After putting the blame on the Europeans for plundering the antiquities, Mohamed Ali demonstrated his shrewd prowess in the mentioned decree by assuming that the proposed scheme would be in the Europeans’ interests and he posted foreigners instead of the locals as the projected visitors of the museum. El-Tahtawy and Diya optimized the museum by enlarging the collection and preserving the artifacts. They also appointed inspectors all over the country to send any discovered antiquities to the museum. 51

Nevertheless, the decree posed little effect, as the despoliation of the Egyptian antiquities continued by foreign excavators and collectors. Even the British and the French Consuls in Cairo at the time, Henry Salt and Bernardino Drovetti, competed with each other in carrying off antiquities to enrich their museums in Europe. In 1842, Mohamed Ali somberly informed Richard Lepsius, a German Egyptologist and linguist, that his idea of creating a museum had failed, as “the excavations are made without knowledge and energy, the Pasha is cheated by those who work, and no one there has any interest in a museum.” 52 It was also reported by Sir John Gardner Wilkinson, an English pioneer Egyptologist, that there was another museum in one of the palaces of Ibrahim Pasha—Mohamed Ali’s son. However, by 1841, only a few remnants of this collection had been found like “mass of broken mummies, cases and various fragments.” 53

Following the deaths of Ibrahim Pasha and Mohamed Ali, the new Viceroy Abbas Helmy I (r. 1848-1854) paid intermittent attention to antiquities, ordering the transfer of the remaining objects of Rifle’s Museum to the School of Engineering in Boulaq in October 1849. Later, in 1851, it was decided that a small hall used for the storage of food and coats of the employees of the Ministry of Education within the Citadel would be a sufficient space to store the objects that had not yet been given away or sold. 54

By 1855, the story of Egypt’s first indigenous museum came to an end when Abbas Helmy I gifted part of the collection to the Ottoman Sultan Abdul-Aziz and then his successor Said Pasha (r. 1854-1863) presented what was left to Archduke Maximilian of Austria as a souvenir during his official visit to Egypt, believing that the Egyptian antiquities could be used as a perfect diplomatic leverage. 55 Despite the failure of such a project, the Egyptian state’s initial movement to form a museum during the early years of the nineteenth century illustrates the enlightened visions of Mohamed Ali Pasha and the Egyptian intelligentsia towards the concept of dedicating a building for the exhibition and preservation of the Egyptian antiquities. Ignoring these abortive initial endeavors of Mohamed Ali and Rifaa El-Tahtawy, most of the Egyptologists regarded Marciene Pasha 56 as the legitimate initiator of Egypt’s national museum in 1863.

Due to the tenacious attempts of Egypt vireos to ban trade in the Egyptian antiquities and because of the growing Anglo-French political and Ethnological rivalry, France worked on having the upper hand on the excavations in Egypt through Marciene. Accordingly, Ferdinand De Lesseps, with Napoleon III’s backing, succeeded in convincing Said Pasha in 1858 to create the Egyptian Antiquities Service under the direction of Marciene himself with an annual salary of 10,000 Francs. 57 Seeking to put obstacles in front of the agents of the different European missions who were justifying their plundering of the Egyptian antiquities on the grounds of Egypt’s incompetence of preserving and supervising its own heritage, Marciene persuaded Said Pasha to execute the essential prerequisite of self-establishing an Egyptian national museum. 58 This museum came to reality in 1863 under the reign of Isma'il Pasha (r. 1863-1879), who was looking for representing himself as an enlightened European-style sovereign. Isma'il thought of a huge complex with museums for pharaonic, Greek and Islamic antiquities. At the same time, he demonstrated a new perspective of making these museums accessible to the natives to teach them the history of their country, as he believed that pride in Egypt past was crucial for national revival. 59 Isma'il inaugurated Boulaq Museum in the presence of one of Napoleon III’s deputies on 16th of October 1863 with a total cost of about 60,000 pounds, funded mainly by the state and partially by Marciene’s own money. At that time, Boulaq Museum was appraised as the world’s largest museum of antiquities. 60

With the aim of serving the Egyptians interests as advised by Isma'il, an Arabic guidebook of the museum was issued. Its contents were addressed to readers of Islamic background. Afirming compatibility between Pharaonic belief and Islamic religion to correct the false image about the ancient Egyptians who were portrayed as being polytheistic, the text began with a bismillah invocation, invoked Prophet Mohamed and declared that this museum was established for the purpose of introducing the Egyptians to the history of their ancestors. It presented the modern Egyptians as the direct descendants of the pharaohs. 61 Aiming to crack the European monopoly, Isma'il also ordered the construction of the school of the Ancient Egyptian Language to generate Egyptian calibers to work alongside foreigners in the museum. 62

In the wake of Isma'il’s modernization projects of Cairo, the government let bids in 1873 for the foundation of a great new museum in Gezira. However, the proposed project vanished because of the fiscal crisis that broke out. 63 Being on the brink of the Nile, Boulaq Museum had flooded in 1878 and was closed until 1880 when it was renovated and reopened to the public. By 1890, the museum could not accommodate the growing collections, a matter that prompted Khedive Tawfik (r. 1877-1909) to hand over Isma'il’s palace at Giza as a new place for the museum. 64

Under the British occupation and with the displacement of the Museum to the Giza Palace, a new perplexing phase began when relations between the Antiquities Services dominated by the French and the British interests in Egypt were strained. During this period, the School for Preservation of the Monuments of Ancient Egypt in Bubastis started to press for more British engagement in the archaeological service as well as the necessity of constructing a new museum building. Accordingly, Lord Cromer, the British Consul and the de facto ruler of Egypt, decided to allocate a budget for the construction of a new museum. Khedive Abbas Helmy II (r. 1892-1914), who ascended to the throne of Egypt after the death of Khedive Tawfik, laid the foundations in April 1897; however, financial constraints delayed the opening. 65

56  August Marciene, a French young archaeologist, was sent to Egypt by the French government in 1858 for the purpose of obtaining some Coptic manuscripts for Louvre Museum. Upon his arrival, he started to work on excavations at Saqqara, succeeding in sending more than 7000 antiquities to Louvre without taking the permission from the Egyptian government. Bakal, “Egypt’s Past Regenerated by its Own People,” 124; Tom Murray, Wilkinson in Egypt: A Chronological Encyclopedia (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2007), 226; Christian Ursprung, “Turning Points in Egyptian Archaeology: 1880-1950,” in Egypt and the Pharaohs: Pharoahs, Egyptians in Egypt: The Archives and Libraries of the Universita degli Studi di Milano, ed. Patrizia Piacentini (Universita degli Studi di Milano, 1993), 117-18.


59  Reif, Whose Pharaohs?, 104.

60  It is worth mentioning that Isma’il refused to enter the museum and remained in the gardens during the opening ceremony, owing to his museum’s feeling about being in a building that had immense in it. Reif, Whose Pharaohs? 107; Greenfield, The Return of Cultural Treasures, 93.


62  In 1874, the school was closed due to Marciene’s opposition to the hiring of the natives in the Antiquities Service and in the Museum, fearing that the Egyptians would ethnically replace France’s monopoly on Egyptian antiquities. Reif, “Indigenous Egyptology,” 235.

63  Reif, Whose Pharaohs?, 155-56.


After almost five years, the Egyptian antiquities found its last destination when the new museum (current museum in Al-Tahrir Square) was officially opened on 15th of December 1902 by Khedive Abbas Helmy II, with the attendance of Lord Cromer and other representatives of the European foreign dignitaries. The total cost of construction was estimated to be EE 189 220. It is considered as one of the oldest museums in the world to have a building that was specifically constructed for use as a museum rather than being a palace or an old edifice rehabilitated for this purpose. The design of the French architect Marcel Bourignoux devised created Western colonial supremacy, by decorating the façade in a neo-classical style with statues of the European Egyptologists worked in the museum and a text written in the Latin Language with which the Europeans often used for the decoration of their monuments. Following the European model, the museum is provided with a library, laboratory and a vast open area for future expansions. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the Egyptians’ struggle for autonomous control over their own antiquities. For the Westerners, however, it is worth noticing that the Egyptian National Museum of Islamic Art was a sordid French construction almost a hundred years since the time of the appointment of Maricette Pasha as director of the Antiquities Service by Said Pasha till the overthrow of King Farouk in 1952.73

- Museums under Kheivial Egypt

In addition to the Egyptian Museum that was established mainly for the antiquities of the Pharaonic period, Khedivial Egypt witnessed the foundation of three other archaeological museums, which are the Arab Art Museum, the Graeco-Roman Museum and Coptic Museum; each represents an important era of Egypt’s long history. The establishment of these four museums were among many other great projects that Egypt witnessed in the wake of the Khedivial project of forming a modern nation-state. While these four museums were mainly products of European initiative, their establishments were under the auspices of Egypt’s rulers.

- Museum of Arab Art (Museum of Islamic Art)

Despite the fact that the Westerners’ passion for Pharaonic relics preceded their wave of admiration for what was called Arab Art (later termed Islamic Art), attempts to convey images from Islamic Cairo made its debut in the late 19th century through the travelling artists, Louis-François Cassas, the French draftsman, made remarkable sketches of the Mosque of El-Sultan arrived in Egypt in 1827 and stayed for 19 years; he made an excellent survey on Islamic art and architecture materialized in his work “Architecture Arabe ou Monuments du Caire” in 1837. Also, Emile Prisse D’Avenne, French engineer and draftsman, arrived in Egypt in 1827 and stayed for 19 years; he made an excellent survey on Islamic art and architecture materialized in his publication “L’art arabe d’après les monuments du Caire, depuis le VIIè siècle jusqu’à la fin du XVIIIè siècle, Paris, 1877.” Such apathy for antiquities led the initiative made by the Austro-Hungarian architect August Salaman in 1899 proposing the foundation of a museum of Arab art in the mosque of Al-Zahir Bibars at Al-Musayyuna district, which was approved by Khedive Isma'il; however, it was not carried out during his rule. In 1874, the former British consul in Egypt, E. T. Rogers proposed establishing a committee for the preservation of the monuments of Arab art in the Second International Congress of Orientalists held in London, but it did not receive any support neither from Great Britain nor from Egypt.74 In 1880, the ministry of the Arab Art museum finally emerged when Khedive Tawfik ordered the Ministry of Awqaf to collect the monuments of Arab art found in mosques and archaeological sites during the period before the mid-19th century in one place. The task of selecting the place had been assigned to Franz, the Hungarian Head of Technical Section of the Warf Administration, who chose the eastern Iwan of the Mosque of El Hakem for this purpose. However, the true creation of the museum was in December 1881 with the establishment of the Comité de Conservation de l’Art Arabe.75 The establishment decree was issued when Khedive Tawfik was so desperate being under the siege of Uarah’s army and consequently was in bad need of any European support that he thought of satisfying the small group of European amateurs of Arab art by this action. In the Comité, he appointed eight Egyptians and three Europeans76 with the principal task being to make an account of the remains from the buildings that should be transferred to the Museum.77 When the Eastern Iwan of the Mosque became overloaded with artifacts, Franz moved the place of the museum to a temporary building in the courtyard of the same mosque in 1883,78 which opened in 1884; yet this location was not quite visible to the tourists.79 The collections finally settled in the present “handsome” building, upon the request of the Comité, designed in Arabic style at Bab El-Khalaj,80 whose foundation stone was laid by Khedive Abbas Helmy II in 1898 and was inaugurated in 1903.81 This new building then was still known as “Museum of Arab Art”; it was renamed “Museum of Islamic Art” in 1932, shortly prior to the revolution.82

- The Graeco-Roman Museum

Alexandria, which remained a capital in the ancient times for nearly a millennium, undoubtedly needed a museum symbolizing its identity and displaying its antiquities that were scattered in many places or possessed by private collectors. The concept of creating an entity concerned with studying archaeology can be traced back to 1835 upon establishing the “Oriental Society”, which was shortly dissolved in favor of a more effective body -yet still with limited benefit- that is the “Egyptian Society”, whose main achievement was creating a library that mostly served the travelers within Alexandria. In 1875, the “Institut Egyptien” was established for the purposes of documentation, research and most importantly for collecting the discovered antiquities83 since the first public collection of Graeco-Roman antiquities in Alexandria had been exhibited at Tossaïda Palace in 1859 under its auspices. This institution, however, was transferred together with its collection to Cairo in 1879 giving rise to the foundation of a museum to keep the flow of archaeological finds from the city and its hinterland.84 A fruitful discussion that had gathered the British Consul, Sir Charles Cookson, the Italian Archaeologist, Giuseppe Botti together with the Oxford

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73 Vahè, “Amateurs français et dynamique patrimoniale,” 320; Reid, Whose Pharaohs?, 223.
74 Zahi, Misr. in Madinat Al-Qahir, 247.
76 Reid, “Cultural Imperialism and Nationalism,” 61 id., Whose Pharaohs?, 223.
78 Max Heye and Stanley Lane-Poole, Catalogue of the National Museum of Arab Art of Cairo (London: American Press, 1906), Zahi, Misr. in Madinat Al-Qahir & Al-Fan’ 3 1, 327.
79 Reid, Whose Pharaohs?, 257.
81 Bernard O’Kane. The Illustrated Guide to the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (Cairo: the American University in Cairo, 2012), 9-10.
82 The term “Islamic” replaced “Arab” in Cairo in 1933 when Creswell established a program there termed Islamic Archaeology; despite this, no such event occurred when referring to this field; it took nearly 30 years to change the name of the museum; see Donald Malcolm Reid, Contesting Antiquity in Egypt: Archaeologists, Museums and the Struggle for Identities from World War I to Nasser, (Cairo: the American University in Cairo, 2012), 170. https://aims.orf/history.html
85 C. Bout, Catalogue des monuments in Egypte, un musee Caire nommé Alexandre (Alexandrie: Imprimerie Generale A. Moureaux, 1900), III.
This Museum was the last of the four main antiquities museums to be established, representing the missing link between the Graeco-Roman period and the Islamic era. The idea of collecting Coptic objects started in the mid-19th century when Mariette was primarily sent by the French government to buy Coptic manuscripts for the Louvre before turning his attention to the excavations in Pharaonic sites, as previously mentioned. In 1860s-1890s, several studies were made on Coptic language and literature; however the widest field that raised the awareness of Coptic art and architecture was the publication of Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt in 1884 by the Oxford Classicist A. J. Butler. The French Egyptologist and Coptologist, Émile Amélineau, who joined the French Archaeology Mission in Cairo in 1882, was the first to promote for the idea of preserving the scattered Coptic antiquities in a private museum. As a result, the Coptic monuments were put under the control of the Comité de Conservation de l’Art Arabe in 1896. In December 1897, the Hungarian architect, Max Herz proposed to the Comité the foundation of a museum for Coptic antiquities after the Patriarchs approved. The Comité commissioned Husain Fakhry to start discussions with the Patriarch. In the session of March 1898, Fakhry, with the advice of the Comité that the Patriarch promised to collect the Coptic antiquities in a certain place that was afterwards suggested to be a room at Al-Mu‘allaqa Church by Nakhlá Al-Baratí Bey (Overseer of the Church); yet it was more like a storage area. At the very beginning of the 20th century, Mayerte, the High Ottoman Commissary, and consuls from several countries. Several Alexandrian private collectors donated their collections to the museum such as Antoniadis and Zizim. In 1906, two other halls were added; then it was further enlarged in 1910 to include a total of 16 Halls. In 1904, the number of halls increased to 22.

- The Coptic Museum

This Museum was founded by the Ministry of Public Works in 1913 in Elephantine Island in the residence of the chief engineer of Aswan Dam, which itself was built in 1902. The building was extended towards the east. It included the antiquities from the Graeco-Roman period and the Islamic era. The idea of collecting Coptic objects started in the mid-19th century when Mariette was primarily sent by the French government to buy Coptic manuscripts for the Louvre before turning his attention to the excavations in Pharaonic sites, as previously mentioned. In 1860s-1890s, several studies were made on Coptic language and literature; however the widest field that raised the awareness of Coptic art and architecture was the publication of Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt in 1884 by the Oxford Classicist A. J. Butler. The French Egyptologist and Coptologist, Émile Amélineau, who joined the French Archaeology Mission in Cairo in 1882, was the first to promote for the idea of preserving the scattered Coptic antiquities in a private museum. As a result, the Coptic monuments were put under the control of the Comité de Conservation de l’Art Arabe in 1896. In December 1897, the Hungarian architect, Max Herz proposed to the Comité the foundation of a museum for Coptic antiquities after the Patriarchs approved. The Comité commissioned Husain Fakhry to start discussions with the Patriarch. In the session of March 1898, Fakhry, with the advice of the Comité that the Patriarch promised to collect the Coptic antiquities in a certain place that was afterwards suggested to be a room at Al-Mu‘allaqa Church by Nakhlá Al-Baratí Bey (Overseer of the Church); yet it was more like a storage area. At the very beginning of the

20th century, Mustafa allocated his first public display for artifacts dating to that era. Under the frame of releasing the Egyptian Museums-Catalogue Général, the volume Koptische Kunst was published in 1904 by Josef Zervos with the contribution from excavations in Alexandria. Apart from all the previous efforts, the real birth of the Coptic Museum is linked with Marcus Simaika who is considered the founder. Although he was not specialized in archaeology, excavations or Coptic language and literature, Simaika is entitled “The Father of Coptic Archaeology.” He began a career in state railways in 1883, but he soon developed a passion for Coptic antiquities upon reading Butler’s Church of Egypt. In 1896, he got a seat in the Comité, and two years later he managed to convince the Patriarch Cyril V, to found the Coptic Museum. He made the perfect decision for the museum location in the historical site of the Roman fortress Babylon, which is surrounded by the oldest churches of Cairo. The museum was inaugurated in 1910. Despite the fact that Simaika was inspired by the Europeans regarding the foundation of the museum, it is worth mentioning that this museum was the only exception for not being under the European hegemony as Simaika was the first Egyptian to found and direct a museum. Another exceptional point is that this museum belonged to a religious community, possessed by the Coptic Patriarchy rather than to the state for about two decades until 1931, yet under King Fouad’s regime, it became under the authority of the state since it represents an important episode of the history of Egypt. By that time, the museum was only the building known at present as the Old Wing. In 1917, a larger new wing was inaugurated.

- Regional Museums

After a while, when the museums in Cairo became overcrowded with antiquities, the idea of establishing regional museums in Egypt was initiated by the Egyptologist Ahmed Pasha Kamal in 1910 and together with Mustapha, they urged the local authorities to establish small regional museums to house the discoveries. In 1912-13, four museums were established in Assiut, Aswan, Al-Minya and Tanta. 

Assiut Museum

It was founded in 1912 by El-Sayed Pasha Khashaba, who was the first Egyptian to get permission for archaeological digs under the supervision of Ahmed Pasha Kamal. The museum was a miniature copy of the Egyptian Museum. It existed until the early 1960s and is now replaced by Al-Sha‘ma‘a Tower and its surroundings at Al-Mahatta Square.

Aswan Museum

This museum was founded by the Ministry of Public Works in 1913 in Elephantine Island in the residence of the chief engineer of Aswan Dam, which itself was built in 1902. The building was extended towards the east. It included the antiquities from the...
early excavations in Elephantine as well as the excavations of Lower Nubia shortly before the construction of the Dam.117

Al-Minya Museum

The Municipality of El-Minya had taken the decision to establish its own museum in 1913; however, it was opened to the public in March 1919. It consisted of four rooms and a hall including the antiquities found in the course of raising the height of Aswan Dam for the first time.118

Tanta Museum

Also, the Municipality of Tanta, by its turn, had established its local museum in 1913.119 It was provided by collections from Daar Al-Ahār Al-Maṣreya (The Egyptian Museum) and Daar Al-Ahār Al-Arabiya (Museum of Arab Art).120 It was closed in 1932; the ancient Egyptian artifacts were put in storage while the Islamic collection was returned to the Museum of Islamic Art. In 1935, the museum was re-founded as recommended by the Ministry of Public Education.121

- Ethnographic Museum(s) of the Kheider Global Geographical Society122

Apart from the archaeological museums, Kheider Egypt witnessed the foundation of other types of museums that reflected the cultural discourse of that time. As Khedive Isma`il was eager to represent himself as an enlightened ruler and to show that Egypt was following the civilized Western nations, he ordered the foundation of the Egyptian Geographical Society in 1873 on the occasion of convening the second International Geographical Congress in Paris. Under the reign of Khedive Abbas Helmy II, a museum was set up in a hall inside the Society headquarter in an Italian school in December 1898, based on the occasion of convening the second International Geographical Congress in Paris.123

- Irrigation Museum/Museum of Delta Barrages

Also Egypt also witnessed the foundation of the Irrigation Museum/Museum of Delta Barrages in 1900 in the middle of the gardens of Qunater Al-Khayriyah on the occasion of the construction of the submerged weirs behind the Delta Barrages, which was a part of a gigantic project for improving the irrigation system in Egypt under the British occupation.124 The idea for this museum was initiated earlier during the reign of Mohammad Ali when he ordered the establishment of a museum to celebrate the foundation of the Delta Barrages. It was only one simple display hall125 and mainly consisted of deals related to the constructed barrages. Later on, the museum was provided by models of all the irrigation and drainage works in Egypt and Sudan, as well as three-dimensional geographical maps of some of the country provinces.126

- Geological Museum

As a part of the Egyptian Geological Survey that was established earlier under the rule of Khedive Abbas Helmy II in 1896,127 the Geological Museum was established in the gardens of the Ministry of Public Works in downtown Cairo and inaugurated in 1904.128 The building129 consisted of two floors; all of its exhibits had been collected by the teams of the Geological Survey including minerals, rocks, invertebrate and vertebrate fossils.130 Worthy of mention is that the first collection to be displayed in the museum was the Fayum Vertebrate Fossils that is the large horned mammal known as Arsinoitherium Zitteli unearthed in 1898 and was sent to London for identification before returning back for display.131 The museum has a library with a large collection exceeding 11,000 books and periodicals including original rare books versions.132

- Animal Museum in Giza Zoological Garden

In 1906, after the official inauguration of the first public zoo133 in Egypt, a new museum was established in Giza Zoological garden known by “Animal Museum” for entertainment, educational and research purposes.134 In 1920, a special building was particularly allocated within the Zoo for the museum.135 It includes halls for the mammals, skeletons, mumified heads, various kinds of birds, reptiles, aquatic shells, Nile fish, as well as a special section for selling the excess birds and animals that are not required in the Zoo; it also monitors the execution of the law concerned with the immigration of various birds to and from Egypt.136

118. Zaki, Dar Al-Tofal Al-Mier, 106; Mohammed Al-Minshadi, 130.
119. Reid, Whose Pharaohs?, 204.
120. Zaki, Dar Al-Tofal Al-Mier, p. 106.
121. Mohammed Al-Minshadi, 130.
122. The political changes that Egypt witnessed in this era resulted in changing the Society name twice, which became Royal Geographical Society and then Egyptian Geographic Society.
123. On 19th of May 1875, Khedive Ismail founded the Egyptian Geographical Society under the name of the Khedival Geographical Society with the aim of: “Studying all the branches of Geography and exploring the African countries that are completely unknown or little known about them.” According to Reid, this Society was established in order to give a firmer place of Egypt towards Africa. This Society became popular among the Egyptian intellectuals and the Europeans, as it played an important role in the cultural revival of the society, especially under the reign of Khedive Ismail and King Fouad I.
125. The exact date of inauguration of the museum was given on 12 December, 1898, see Mohammed Al-Minshadi, 239. However, El-Nejnini mentioned the year of inauguration as 1895, see Moustafa El-Nejnini, Dar Al-Minshadi Al-Akhbar (Cairo, 1976), 6.
127. Zaki, Dar Al-Tofal Al-Mier, 83.
129. Zaki, Dar Al-Tofal Al-Mier, 83.
131. Zaki, Dar Al-Tofal Al-Mier, 83.
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134. Zaki, Dar Al-Tofal Al-Mier, 83.
136. Zaki, Dar Al-Tofal Al-Mier, 91.
137. Zaki, Dar Al-Tofal Al-Mier, 91.
138. Zaki, Dar Al-Tofal Al-Mier, 91.
139. Zaki, Dar Al-Tofal Al-Mier, 91.
140. Zaki, Dar Al-Tofal Al-Mier, 91.
141. Zaki, Dar Al-Tofal Al-Mier, 91.
142. Zaki, Dar Al-Tofal Al-Mier, 91.
143. Zaki, Dar Al-Tofal Al-Mier, 91.
144. Zaki, Dar Al-Tofal Al-Mier, 91.
Museums under the Monarchy

Realizing the fact that museum was a token of modernity and it had the potential of being a reflection of the country national pride and its scientific and cultural development, King Fouad 140 (r. 1917-1936, Sultan until 1922) sponsored the foundation of several museums throughout Egypt. In the wave of the revolution of 1919 and the British Unilateral Declaration of partial independence in 1922 was enough autonomy to challenge the European domination over its cultural institutions. Accordingly, King Fouad tried to retrieve hegemony over the country’s heritage from the hands of the foreigners, who had controlled the museum establishment since the time of Mohamed Ali Pasha, by resuming the studies of Egyptology. He also sent number of graduated students abroad to study museology and to be trained in the European museums. 141 On the other hand, he aimed at using the museums as an instrument for securing a place for Mohamed Ali dynasty among the great rulers that reigned Egypt since the dawn of history. So, it can be stated that his reign ushered in a new era for the creation of several new types of museums apart from the classic antiquities museums. King Fouad was called by the “Father of the Egyptian Nationalist Museology” because of the construction of numerous museums under his patronage. 142 Europeans also identified him by “Marecenus”, the famous Roman patron of letters under the reign of Emperor Augustus. 143

- **Abdeen Palace Museums**

Following the European royal palaces practice of having museums within the royal residence like Kensington Palace of London, the magnificent Palace of Versailles of Paris and Wilanów Palace in Poland, 144 King Fouad gave orders for setting aside some of Abdeen Palace rooms, located on the eastern side in front of Paris gate, for a permanent museum gallery. As Fouad contended that the exhibition of the royal family collection was a symbol of royal authority, therefore, the Palace housed two museums within its walls under his reign: one dedicated for the exhibition of weapons and munitions, and the other one for medals, decorations and precious artifacts. These objects were either inherited among Mohamed Ali’s family, or gifts from kings and leaders from all over the world he bought from international auctions. His successor, King Fuad II (r. 1936-1952), provided the museums with many other objects, especially different and precious kinds of weapons, as he was famed as one of the world’s greatest collectors of weapons and artifacts. He also augmented it with a library specialized in resources related to arms and warfare. 145

- **Museum of Prince Mohamed Ali’s Palace**

The practice of having a museum within the royal palaces was not only limited to the main palaces of the kings of Egypt, but it extended to the private residence of the princes of the royal family. Among these famous palaces was the Palace of Prince Mohamed Ali in Manial Al-Rhodah Island. In 1938, Prince Mohamed Ali, the younger brother of Khedive Abbas Hilmi II and cousin of King Farouk, commissioned the construction of a special separate building within his great complex to function as a museum for the exhibition and preservation of about 1200 artifacts of his great collection. Located at the southeastern side of the palace, this building has an open courtyard in the center that is surrounded by 15 halls, each hall is dedicated for the exhibition of particular collection. To commemorate his name, Prince Mohamed Ali revealed his intention to Prime Minister, Tawfiq Nessim, for turning his palace and his newly-added private museum into a museum accessible to the public as well as the garden of the palace into a public park after his death. 146

140. Princess Fouad was born 40 years old when his father, Khedive Ismail, was exiled to Naples, Italy. As he got his education in the military academy in Turin and spent his childhood there, he became under the influence of the Western civilization and the Renaissance art. Khalil Ali Shah, Fouad, King of Egypt, (London: H. Jenkins, 1936), 26.


142. Wien, Arab Nationalism, 16, 145.

143. Reid, Contrasting Asymps in Egypt, 246.

144. It was a common tradition in the European palaces throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to have a special room for displaying the previous collections of the kings, queens and princes, known by a “Wunderkammer”, which means room of wonders. John E. Simmons, Museums: A History, (New York: H. Jenkins, 1999), 20.


### Museum of Prince Youssuf Kamal’s Palace

The magnificent palace of Prince Youssuf Kamal, the grandson of Ibrahim Pasha and an enthusiastic patron of arts, in Mataria east of Cairo, 147 also comprised a museum for the exhibition of his rare artistic collection and mummiﬁed animals that hunted by the Prince himself. After the resolution of 1932, this palace was converted into a museum for mummiﬁed animals and it is now used as a headquarters of the desert research center. 148

### Agricultural Museum

Besides the tradition of establishing museums within palaces, the Egyptian royal family also used to transform some of the old palaces into museums. The Giza Palace of Khedive Ismail, as previously mentioned, was the ﬁrst royal palace to be converted into a national museum. Under King Fouad’s reign, some of the old palaces were used as museums. The palace of Princess Fatma Fouad’s sister, which was donated earlier by herself to Cairo University in the suburb of Dokki is a good example of such museums. When the University erected its own buildings, the palace was given to the Ministry of Agriculture. Being inspired by the Royal Agricultural Museum during his visit to Budapest, King Fouad ordered the conversion of Princess Fatma’s Palace into a museum for tracing the long history of agriculture in Egypt from prehistory to modern time. Subsequently, he hired the architectural director of the museum, Alain Peckert, to construct a similar one in Egypt to be the second of its kind in the world. 149 Before the foundation of this museum, the Kedivial Agricultural Society (later Royal Agricultural Society) established a small museum under the name of the Cotton Museum, 150 which became a part of “Fouad I Agricultural Museum” after its opening. Since museums could be used as an instrument for public enlightenment and for making inspiring contributions to the national revival of the state, King Fouad made a declaration to the nation on the occasion of the inauguration of the Agricultural Museum on 26th January 1931, asking the Egyptians with all their different classes to improve Egyptian agriculture. 151 In 1935, a new building with the same architectural style of the palace was added; in 1937, another building was constructed to house a lecture hall, cinema and library was constructed, so it can be said that the museum became an agricultural culture center under the reign of King Farouk. On the 16th of January 1938, the museum was opened to the public only after King Farouk ofﬁcially inaugurated it on the occasion of the selection of the museum as venue to host the 16th International Cotton Congress. 152

### Military Museum

In the wave of the construction of national museums in 1930s, the Egyptian government issued a decree for transferring the Military museum that once occupied the palace of Princess Amina, the mother of Abbas Hilmi II, in the suburb of Garden City, to its permanent residence in the haremlik quarter of Mohamed Ali’s palace complex in Salah el-Din Citadel after its evacuation by British forces in 1947. 153 Unlike the Agricultural Museum, the Military Museum, founded in 1930, was established by the Egyptian royal family in opposition to the idea, favoring arousing national feelings. Instead, they offered Zaki the chance to visit military museums in various European capitals to be acquainted with the new methods employed in this type of museums. In 1936, Zaki revisited the idea by submitting a memorandum to the Palace, asking King Farouk to emulate the European military museums

147. This magnificent palace was constructed by the famous Italian architect Antonio Lusardi for around 13 years from 1908 to 1921.


151. Tracing the History of Museums in Egypt from the Ptolemaic Period to the Fall of Mohamed Ali’s Dynasty (323 BC – AD 1952) Rania Ali Maher, Noha Moustafa Shalaby


Rania Abul Ali, Noha Moustafa Shalaby
with the aim of referring to the grandeur of the ruling dynasty and its army and of bolstering the civilians’ bond with the Egyptian army. Being a man of military principles, King Farouk ordered the refurbishment of the three adjoining interconnected palaces known collectively as Al-Haremlik Palace, which was constructed by Mohamed Ali in 1835 on the western side of the citadel, to accommodate this great museum. The main aim of this museum was to glorify the permanence of Egyptian military prowess from the ancient Egyptian history to modern era. The museum did not merely display objects, but illustrated them in a more easily accessible way, reflecting the longevity of the Egyptian military history and inspired by the military spirit of the oldest army in the world. Accordingly, it can be stated that this museum was the most vocally nationalist museum in Egypt during this period. On the other hand, choosing palaces to house such museums was an indication that these museums were not hailed only for their comprehensive collections, but also for their outstanding architecture.

### House of the Nation (Museum of Saad Zaghloul)

In the time that the concept of transforming certain houses into historic museums became in vogue in the United States and in Europe during the 20th century, the emergence of this type of museum in Egypt coincided with the growth of Egyptian nationalism. In 1927, the Liberal Constitutionalists-Wafd coalition cabinet of Abd Al-Khaliq Tharwat issued a decree for the conversion of the private residence of Saad Zaghloul -the icon of the revolution of 1919 and the founder of Wafad Party- into a national museum as a kind of honor for him. The main purpose behind this decree was to use this historic house museum, popularly known as the House of the Nation, as a vehicle to stimulate the national spirit by recounting the story of this national prominent figure through displaying his belongings that were kept in their original places and the house itself, which embodied the symbolism of Egypt’s struggle for independence.

### - Railway Museum

Desiring to show off Egypt’s achievements in the field of science and technology and to make them understandable to the public, King Fouad gave orders for the establishment of a railway museum on the occasion that Egypt was celebrating nearly 90 years since the inauguration of its first railway line between Cairo and Alexandria in 1854. King Fouad ordered the completion of the construction of the museum before 1933, the year on which the International Railways Conference would be held in Cairo. Indeed, the museum was opened on 15th of January 1933 to the guests and the members of the conference to the first of its kind in the region and the second national railway museum in the world after the British one. The museum, which occupies a part of Cairo Railway station, displays hundreds of models of locomotives of every kind, documents, maps of several Egyptian stations and bridges, revealing the evolution of the Egyptian railway.

### - Museum of Gayer Anderson

Another example for the private houses that were turned into a museum during this period was the Museum of Gayer Anderson that is located to the southeast corner of the Mosque of Ahmed Ibn Tulun in Al-Sarieda Zeinab. This museum is composed of two old Islamic houses that date back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In 1935, Major Gayer Anderson, a British physician officer, was authorized by the Egyptian Government to stay in these two houses that were joined together by a bridge at the first floor level, they became collectively known as Beit el Kritliyya. Inside the house, Anderson amassed a remarkable collection of furniture, faience, carpets and other objects that date back to the ancient Egyptian period, Graeco-Roman, Coptic, and Islamic eras, as well as other artifacts collected by him from the Near East, in a perfect setting to be displayed to the public. However, in 1942, he was forced to return back to his country because of his ill health. So, he decided to bequeath his precious collection to the Egyptian Government. Subsequently, the house with its contents was converted into a museum under his name as a kind of recognition to him and it became accessible to the public under the supervision of the Arab Art Museum in 1945. Also, King Farouk bestowed on Anderson the title of Pasha as a gratitude of his kind bequest to the country.

### - Postal Museum

As Egypt was the destination spot for international congresses during this period, King Fouad also seized the opportunity of holding the tenth Universal Postal Conference in Cairo to establish a Postal Museum at the General Post Office in ‘Attaba Square, Central Cairo. The museum was founded in 1934, but only opened to the public in 1940. The museum’s initial collection consisted of the personal stamp collection of King Fouad as he was an avid collector of postage stamps. The museum was also intended to demonstrate the development of Egypt’s postal services since the Pharaonic period, revealing the wider modernization of the state under Mohamed Ali Pasha and his successors.

### - Hygiene Museum

Realizing the educational role that museums could play in raising awareness among people and that museum could be used as a method of health education, King Fouad directed the Egyptian government to create a museum concerned by giving hygienic advices and information, which was founded by King Fouad as he was an avid collector of postage stamps. The museum was also intended to demonstrate the development of Egypt’s postal services since the Pharaonic period, revealing the wider modernization of the state under Mohamed Ali Pasha and his successors.

### - Museum of Modern Art

In the wake of the cultural revival project under the auspices of King Fouad, the Egyptian government had played a vital role in developing the modern art movement in the country since the 1920’s and had funded exhibitions and purchased works of art from Europe. Therefore, in 1927, King Fouad sponsored the foundation of the first Museum of Modern Art in the region. A committee, under the supervision of the famous Egyptian sculptor Mahmoud Khalil, was formed to obtain a collection of sculptures and paintings of Egyptian and European artists. The initial collection was purchased by Khalil himself together with the Ministry of Education and exhibited in a hall of the Fine Arts Lovers Society in Tigany Pasha House in Bahrin Pasha street (El-Gamhoria Street nowadays). Then, in 1931, the collection was moved with the new artifacts to the rented Palace of Momst the museum was officially opened with the exhibition of 584 pieces of art. The expanding collection was then moved in 1935 to El-Bustan Palace where it was housed until the Second World War. From 1947 to 1983, the museum was moved to different places until it reached its final destination in the current Cairo Opera House in the southern part of Gezira Island.

### - Wax Museum

Unlike the public museums that were constructed under the patronage of the Egyptian government during this period, the Wax Museum, established in 1934 by the artist and businessman, Fouad Abd Al-Malik, was a private enterprise for profit. Abd Al-Malik, after studying fine arts in Europe and working for a while in the Wax Museum of Paris (Musée Grévin) where he had the
chance to learn the craft, returned back to Egypt in 1919 and set up his own exhibition of wax figures in a rented small gallery in Ismailia Square (nowadays Tahrite Square). Later, he founded his museum in Qasr Al-Aini street near Garden City, and then finally in its present location in Ain Helwan, south of Cairo. Cairo Wax Museum was probably the first of its kind in the region.164 Seeking to address the growing trends of nationalist identification at that time, Abd Al-Malik declared that the mission of his museum was not only to show off his works of art, but also to provide evidence for the modernity of the Egyptian nation through depicting the Egyptian history from the earliest time to the present in educational manner. Despite complaint that his museum did not receive a governmental financial support, Abd Al-Malik asserted that he had received moral supports from the royal household (particularly from Crown Prince Farouk and his mother Queen Nazli), prime minister, ministers and high officials, who admired the spectacle of his museum.165

- Museum of Education

Within the changes in the nationalist and cultural discourses during this period, the Ministry of Public Education became concerned with educating the youth Egypt’s past. Hence, in 1929, museums as an educational instrument, became under the purview of the Ministry of Education instead of the Ministry of Public Works. The Ministry of Education, by its turn, founded its own museum, under the name of the Museum of Education, on the occasion of its centenary in 1957 under the supervision of the Islamic historian Ahmed Aria Allah. The schools and various scientific organizations had responded to the call of the museum curators providing the museum with the necessary documents and related objects. The main aim of the museum were to clarify the stages of education in Egypt during the last 100 years, to illustrate the history of education in ancient and modern Egypt, and to shed light on the evolution of education and the use of the advanced teaching methods in Egypt.166

- Museum of Foulad’s University

Egypt has known a distinctive type of museums during this period, the university museum, when Foulad University (Cairo University nowadays) had within its campus a museum to act as a teaching institution for the students of the Institute of Islamic Archaeology at that time. The idea of its establishment was initiated by Professor Zaki Mohamed Hassan, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts in 1943, after Dr. Aly Ibrahim Pasha had bequeathed about 500 pieces of artifacts of carvings, faience, copper, glass, wood, linen and textiles that go back to the Islamic era to the University. As a kind of endorsement to this educational institution, the Committee of the Conservation of Arab Monuments also offered the museum a valuable collection of precious marble stones dating back to the Fatimid, Mamluk and Ottoman periods.167

- Port Said Museum

In addition to the regional museums that were established during the reign of Khedive Abbas Helmy II, the city of Port Said witnessed the building of its regional museum under the monarch in 1922. Unlike the early regional museums that were established only with the purpose of housing the discovered antiquities in the province, this museum was established to present the development of Egyptian civilization throughout its historical epochs from the early Pharaonic age to the reign of Khaled Ismail, shedding light on the history of the city, as it was a part of the great project of the Suez Canal.168 The museum was officially opened in 1922 in a rented house in Sultan Hussein street overlooking the Suez Canal.169 Aiming at raising awareness of the masses of the city and attracting local visitors, the museum opened its gate to the public freely on every Tuesday since 1925. From 1927, the museum offered free admission all over the week. In 1947, the museum, being under the supervision of the Antiquities Service like all the other regional museums, exhibited about 735 pieces of artifacts, dating back to the Pharaonic, Greco-Roman, Coptic, Islamic eras, and Modern Egypt until the end of its reign of Khaled Ismail.170

164. Wien, Arab Nationalism, 104-6; Zaki, Musa’a Muslih Al-Qahir, 2:46.
165. Wien, Arab Nationalism, 104.
166. Zaki, Musa’a Muslih Al-Qahir, 2:42. Mohammed, Madkhul ila Fan Al-Mat’ahif, 231.
168. The city of Port Said was founded by Said Pasha in 1859 to be the headquarters of the Suez Canal and witnessed the great celebration of its inauguration in 1869.

169. After the revolution of 1952, the collection of the Museum was transferred to the Egyptian Museum until Port Said established its own new museum in 1967. Ditta Al-Din Hisston Al-Qubti, Musa’a Tawfs Al-Musilim (Cairo: Al-Hak-Al-Mut’al Al-Qaima, 1977), 132.
170. Mohammed, Madkhul ila Fan Al-Mat’ahif, 125-27; Al-Qubti, Musa’a Tawfs Al-Musilim, 133.
the continuation of this grandeur after Mohamed Ali, the founder of Modern Egypt, restored the splendor of the country after centuries of deterioration and lethargy under Ottoman regime. Following the general committee meeting, sub-committees were formed from members of the different museums of the country, including the European directors of the old classic museums and the Egyptian directors of King Fouad’s new museums, to deliberate over the themes of the museum exhibits, to review the history and the impact of each era, and to propose topics that the museum should include. These committees were under the supervision of the distinguished modern historian and the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Education, Shafiq Churban. Tracking the contextualization that the museum had to follow, it was agreed to divide the museum into several sections, starting by the prehistoric age, then the Pharaonic period that was divided into three thematic subsections narrating the life of the individuals, society and the artistic life in ancient Egypt, then followed by the Graeco-Roman period, Coptic and the Arab Ages. Modern history section was added with four subdivisions: the French Expedition, Egyptian expansion into the Sudan, dynasty of Mohamed Ali until 1917 on the reign of Mohamed Ali and Khedive Isma'il; and finally, the climactic half of King Fouad and Farouk.

Following the new trends in the European museums during this period, panoramic paintings, scaled dioramas, stereoscopic maps and models were used to record the customs, tradition, clothing, agriculture, crafts, communications, and conquests all over Egypt’s long history. It was also decided that only skilled and famous Egyptian artists had to be involved in the preparation of the exhibition, aiming at having a real Egyptian spirit in the museum. Accordingly, it can be stated that this museum was the outcome of the efforts of different members of the Egyptian museums that joined together to create a museum that would reflect the distinctive Egyptian identity. However, the outbreak of the Second World War and budgetary concerns delayed the opening of the museum until 10 February 1949 when King Farouk inaugurated it on the occasion of the celebration of his birthday. The news of the inauguration of the museum was covered worldwide linking the museum with the resumption of tourism in Egypt after the Arab-Israeli war of 1948 and designating it as “a museum of life rather than artifacts.” The Museum was located in the grand Serail of the Agricultural Society on Southern Gezira, which is now a part of the new Opera House. After the resolution of 1952, it was left to crumble and decay, until it was decided by the Egyptian government under the rule of former President Hosni Mubarak to revive the idea by constructing a new museum for the Egyptian civilization under the name of the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in cooperation with the UNESCO near the ruins of Egypt’s old capital, Al-Fustat.

181 According to Reid, Contesting Antiquities, 352; Wien, Arab Nationalism, 108, 113-14; Mūḥammed, Madḫal īlā Fan Al-Matāḥef, 182-84.
182 Reid, Contesting Antiquities, 352; Zākī, Mūsūʽt Mādīnt  Al-Qahīra, 244-45; Wien, Arab Nationalism, 109; Mātḥaf Al-Ḥđāraa, 10.
183 Reid, Contesting Antiquities, 352; Wien, Arab Nationalism, 117.

Conclusions

Being the earliest and the most advanced civilization in the ancient world, Egypt was the home for nearly all the branches of knowledge and the source of various methods of education, of which learning within temple was most probably transmitted to India and then to Greece through the founders of the earliest school-termed institutions where scholars were centered round Muses-shrine, thus reflecting the museum concept. The first museum-termed institution was established in Alexandria during early Ptolemaic Period in Egypt. It was the greatest center of learning in the ancient world, the fame of which - though vanished - is everlasting. The Medieval Age lacked museums and witnessed the rise of private collections possessed by Arabs, and later by Europeans. Particularly, with the advent of the Renaissance, the museum notion was revived, but in its modern sense, that is for the purpose of public display - as was originated - in Italy despite starting with a small number of exhibits. This period is distinguished by the return for such institutions by the Europeans; however, it is only from the mid-18th century that establishing museums started to spread all over the world. Egypt was not behind to catch up with that new wave; the tradition of founding museums in Egypt was revived after a long absence of nearly fifteen centuries starting with Al-Antiquaphana at Al-Ezbekiy in 1835. From the mid 19th century to the first decade of the 20th century, the largest and major four archaeological museums covering the four successive periods starting with the Pharaonic era were established, in addition to other four museums of different types rather than archaeology, which are Ethnography, Geology, Technology and Zoology. The foundation of these types reflects the advancement of museological thought by that time. The increasing flow of antiquities imposed the necessity of establishing regional museums: four in the second decade of the 19th century and other two added later. Under the monarchy, there occurred a change in museums perspective moving beyond collections and collecting to become a place for forging the Egyptian modern national identity. Museums became a part of the scientific and cultural enlightenment project of the Egyptian Kings. Royal patronage of the museums peaked during this period and new different types of museums were established, either to show off the state’s achievements in the field of science and technology or to reassert the Palace supremacy. The glorification of the dynasty of Mohamed Ali was the focal point in the historical narrative of most of these new museums. However, as the ancient Egyptian history was an essential component of modern Egyptian identity, the theme of continuity and unity of the Egyptian civilization from Pharaonic Egypt to the rule of Mohamed Ali’s dynasty emerged clearly in the storyline of most of the museums that were established during this period specially under the reign of King Farouk. The museum notion has greatly changed from merely housing objects to have a double function, which is display and learning; thus, for the most part returning back to its ancient conception.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Reigns</th>
<th>Year of Foundation</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Museum of Sheikh Rifa'a or Al-Antiqakhana/ Boulaq Museum/ Giza Museum/ Present Egyptian Museum</td>
<td>Ezbekiyeh/ Boulaq/ Palace of Khedive Ismail in Giza/Ismailia Square (nowadays Al-Tahrir Square)</td>
<td>Mohamed Ali Pasha/ Said Pasha/ Khedive Tawfik/Khedive Abbas Helmy II</td>
<td>1835/1858/1890/1897</td>
<td>Archaeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Museum of Arab Art (Museum of Islamic Art)</td>
<td>Mosque of El-Hakim/ Bab Al-Khalq, Cairo</td>
<td>Khedive Abbas Helmy II</td>
<td>1881/1898</td>
<td>Archaeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Graeco-Roman Museum</td>
<td>Ramil Station, Central Alexandria</td>
<td>Khedive Abbas Helmy II</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Archaeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ethnographic Museum</td>
<td>Al-Quar Al-'Am</td>
<td>Khedive Abbas Helmy II</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Ethnography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Irrigation Museum</td>
<td>Al-Qanater-Al-Khairiyah</td>
<td>Khedive Abbas Helmy II</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Geological Museum</td>
<td>Asfar Al-Nab, M'audi</td>
<td>Khedive Abbas Helmy II</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Natural History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Animal Museum</td>
<td>Giza Zoological garden</td>
<td>Khedive Abbas Helmy II</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Natural History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Coptic Museum</td>
<td>Old Cairo</td>
<td>Khedive Abbas Helmy II</td>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Archaeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Assiut Museum</td>
<td>Assiut</td>
<td>Khedive Abbas Helmy II</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Regional (Archaeology)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Aswan Museum</td>
<td>Aswan</td>
<td>Khedive Abbas Helmy II</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Regional (Archaeology)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Al-Minya Museum</td>
<td>Al-Minya</td>
<td>Khedive Abbas Helmy II</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Regional (Archaeology)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tanta Museum</td>
<td>Tanta</td>
<td>Khedive Abbas Helmy II</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Regional (Archaeology)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Cotton Museum</td>
<td>El-Dokki</td>
<td>Sultan Fouad</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Natural History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Private Museum of Prince Youssuf Kamal</td>
<td>Palace of Prince Youssuf Kamal in Maturiat</td>
<td>Sultan Fouad</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Private Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Port Said Museum</td>
<td>Port Said</td>
<td>King Fouad</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Regional (National)</td>
</tr>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Abdoura Museum</td>
<td>Abdoura Palace</td>
<td>King Fouad</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Military and History Museums</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>House of the Nation (Beit El-Umma)</td>
<td>House of Saad Zaghloul in Mounira, Cairo</td>
<td>King Fouad</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Historic House</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Hygiene Museum</td>
<td>Ministry of Public Health in Al-Quar Al-'Am</td>
<td>King Fouad</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Science</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Modern Art Museum</td>
<td>Gezira Island</td>
<td>King Fouad</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Art</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Agricultural Museum</td>
<td>Palace of Princess Fatma in Dokki</td>
<td>King Fouad</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>History</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Railway Museum</td>
<td>Cairo Railway Station</td>
<td>King Fouad</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
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<td>Central Post Office: Al-'Attaba, Central Cairo</td>
<td>King Fouad</td>
<td>1934</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Wax Museum</td>
<td>Helwan</td>
<td>King Fouad</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>History</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Ismailia Museum</td>
<td>Ismailia</td>
<td>King Fouad</td>
<td>1934</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Museum of Education</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, El-Falky St., Cairo</td>
<td>King Farouk</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>History</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Museum of Fouad I University</td>
<td>Fouad I University (Cairo University</td>
<td>King Farouk</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>University Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Gayer Anderson Museum</td>
<td>Beit Al-Kermitiyyah in Ahmed Ibn Tahir Square, Sayida Zeinab, Cairo</td>
<td>King Farouk</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Historic House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Military Museum</td>
<td>Al-Haramlik quarter of Mohamed Ali’s complex in Salah el-Din Citadel</td>
<td>King Farouk</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Military</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Museum of Egyptian Civilization</td>
<td>Gezira Island</td>
<td>King Farouk</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Civilization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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