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The built heritage of Egypt in tension between identity & ideology

using the example of Tunis Village

تونس

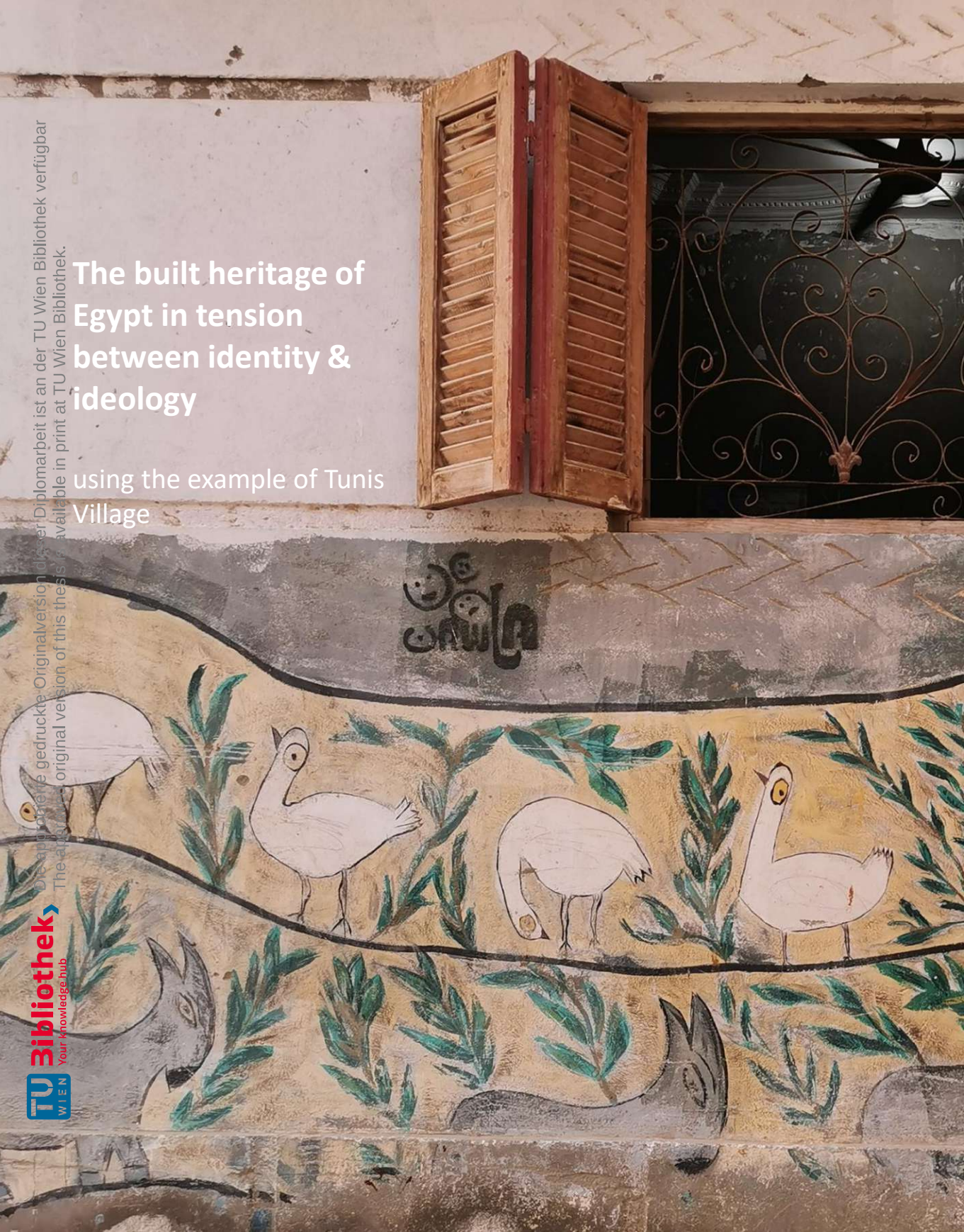


fig. 1. architecture and identity demonstrated on the house wall of Tunis Village

The Egyptians' confrontation with the issue of identity and their built environment is being addressed in different ways around Egypt. Above all, the reference to the ancient people seems to become more important than ever for today's society.

Diplomarbeit

[dbt]

- metamorphosis of a building material

The built heritage of Egypt in tension between identity & ideology
using the example of Tunis Village

carried out for the purpose of obtaining the academic degree

Master of Science (Dipl.-Ing.)

Under the supervision of

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Abstract [German]

Das antike ägyptische Wort *dbt* ist die etymologische Abfolge des heutigen Wortes für Adobe und impliziert somit eine Abfolge historisch kultureller Entwicklung von der Antike bis hin zur Gegenwart. Gleichzeitig impliziert das etymologische Netzwerk des Begriffes die tiefe Beziehung von Worten, Herkunft und Tradition und dem Ergebnis eines in das Netzwerk integrierten Menschen.

Je weiter die Globalisierung voranschreitet, umso mehr scheint die Frage nach der eigenen Identität und dem eigenen baukulturellem Erbe in den Vordergrund zu rücken. Identität kann im Allgemeinen als eine konstante formbare Masse verstanden werden, die durch fortlaufende neue Ideologien und historischen sowie soziokulturellen Ereignissen je nach Bedarf und Beeinflussungen verformt wird. Hierbei dient Architektur als sozialer Spiegel, der die Umgebung und den Menschen in ihr reflektiert, und trägt daher als Rolle eines identitätsstiftenden Elementes einen wesentlichen Beitrag zur Transformierung einer Gesellschaft bei. Elemente wie die geografische Lage, das Klima sowie auch Tradition, Kultur und der soziale Standard des Menschen spielen eine essentielle Rolle im Identitätsprozess. In einem überwiegend islamisch geprägten Land wie Ägypten, mit einer jahrhundertealten Geschichte rückführend auf die Pharaonenzeit, ist die gebaute Tradition ein Seelenbild des Menschen, indem Kultur, Religion sowie die Auseinandersetzung von Leben und Tod eine starke gesellschaftliche Rolle spielen die auch in den privaten Wohnbereich eingreifen. Dadurch wird das Wohnen nicht mehr als private Sache verstanden, sondern als Teil eines gemeinschaftlichen Lebens betrachtet, weshalb der Bezug zur eigenen Identität in einem ständigen Spannungsfeld zwischen kulturell-traditionellem und dem modern-forcierten Leben steht. Begriffe wie Identität, Tradition und Kultur finden sich dadurch plötzlich inmitten eines Geflechtes zwischen einer traditionell-bekanntem und einer überregionalen Formensprache wieder. Denn jeder Mensch besitzt eine Identität – sei sie kollektiv oder individuell betrachtet – und diese Form von Identität steht äußeren Beeinflussungen des sozialen und schnelllebigem Umfeldes entgegen. Anhand einer Feldstudie in Tunis Village, Ägypten wird der Konflikt einer sozio-kulturellen Bausprache und der neuen Ideologie einer scheinbar intellektuellen ländlichen Bauideologie untersucht. Hierbei wird das Verlangen von Stadtmenschen nach einer romantisierten und symbolischen Architektur innerhalb einer modernen und verwestlichten Gemeinschaft Ägyptens in Diskurs gestellt, die als Kontrast zur stark traditionellen ländlichen Baukultur und den kulturell-ländlichen Werten steht. Dabei wird vor allem die essenzielle Bedeutung von einer traditionellen Kultur, und dem damit inbegriffenen *genius loci* innerhalb der dörflichen Gemeinschaft aufgegriffen. Anhand des Beispiels wird klar, wie verstrickt das Netzwerk von Identität und Ideologie im Zusammenhang mit Architektur ist, und welchen Einfluss es auf das Bewusstsein des Menschen hinsichtlich seiner gebauten Umgebung hat.

Abstract [English]

The ancient Egyptian word *dbt* is the etymological sequence of today's word for adobe and thus implies a sequence of historical-cultural development from ancient times to the present. At the same time, the etymological network of the term implies the deep relationship of words, origin and tradition and the result of an individual integrated into the network.

The more globalization advances, the more the question of one's identity and architectural heritage seems to come into focus. Identity can in general be understood as a constant malleable mass, which is deformed by continuous new ideologies and historical as well as socio-cultural events according to needs and influences. In this regard, architecture serves as a social mirror that reflects the environment and the people within it and therefore, as the role of an identity-forming element, it contributes significantly to the transformation of a society. Which is why elements such as geographic location, climate, as well as tradition, culture and the social standard of the people play an essential role in the identity process. In a predominantly Islamic country such as Egypt, with a centuries-old history dating back to the Pharaonic era, the built tradition is a soul image of the human being, in which culture, religion and the confrontation of life and death play a strong social role that also intervenes in the private living area. As a result, housing is no longer seen as a private matter, but as part of a communal life, which is why the reference to a person's own identity constantly stands in tension between the cultural-traditional and modern-forced life. Concepts such as identity, tradition and culture suddenly find themselves entangled between a traditionally familiar and a supra-regional formal language. After all, every human being has an identity - be it collective or individual - which is opposed to the external influences of the social and fast-paced environment. Through a field study in Tunis Village, Egypt, the conflict of a socio-cultural building language and the new ideology of a seemingly intellectual rural building ideology is examined. In this context, a certain longing of urbanites for a romanticized and symbolic architecture within a modern and westernized society of Egypt is addressed, which stands in contrast to the strongly traditional rural building culture and the cultural-rural values of the peasants. The essential importance of a traditional culture and the genius loci within the village community is addressed. Based on the example, it will become clear how entangled the network of identity and ideology is in the context of architecture, and what influence it has on people's consciousness regarding their built environment.

expression of thanks

With the accomplishment of this thesis and with it a new stage in my educational path, I would like to express my gratitude to the following people:

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THANK YOU!

[*dbt*]

metamorphosis of a building material

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INTRODUCTION

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For reasons of better readability, masculine and feminine forms of speech are not used simultaneously. Corresponding terms apply in principle to all genders for the purpose of equal treatment. This refers especially to the Arabic and German terms of the work.

In addition, the village Tunis Village in Fayoum is also referred to as Tunis in the course of the work. The name always refers to the village in Fayoum, Egypt and should in no way be confused with the city of Tunis of the land Tunisia. The bibliographic references are abbreviated in brackets with the name, the year of issue and, if necessary, the page of the work. The exact literature references can be gained from the bibliography at page 345.

The Egyptian-Arabic terms shown in italics can be looked up in the glossary starting on page 339.

Research **MOTIVATION**: Introduction of myself

Over many years, I always faced the question of identity. What is identity and what defines it? Or what kind of forces shape an identity? As a person with roots in Egypt, I was driven to the question of identity. In Egypt, I am an Egyptian with Austrian roots. In Austria on the other hand, I am an Austrian with Egyptian roots. For a long time I thought that I would never consider myself as "completed". I was constantly caught between my cultural identity, whose roots are in Egypt, and the ideology of a perfectly integrated child. All these years it was a path of deforming and reshaping my personal self and finding out who I truly am. As a fairly young child, my identity was vulnerable. Could not find itself, let alone find itself somewhere. Within the process of self-discovery and adaptation, in a certain period of time, the interest in realizing oneself disappears, in hope of becoming part of a collective. But where would we be heading if we only imitated each other, or worse – we would try miserably to become a part of something we can't connect to – instead of forming our own individual self and completing our own self? Growing up, I also realized that my identity will never be constant and will always change. Looking at architecture, I noticed certain patterns that were reflected in my personal exploration of identity. The own search for identity against the struggle of prescribed ideologies, which in turn were idealized by others, has been an emblematic conflict for me, which can be reflected in the struggle for the preservation of the built culture:

If rural regions would suddenly try to imitate urban regions, if instead of the robust natural material like stone, suddenly the red brick would peek through at every corner, or if the traditional would simply be completely replaced by the modern and global. If all this would occur, which is already happening step by step, there would no longer be a difference between a city or a country. Instead, there would exist one homogenous urban structure that would grow to infinity, without regard for any formerly built patterns. Due to the strong globalization and the rapid increase in population, industrially-manufactured and supra-regional materials are often used today. As a result, the regional architectural stands in constant tension with the supra-regional, which is the result of a new modern building language which distances itself from the former built structure of the local environment and rejects its cultural references. In the course of a few years, the relationship between culture and people could therefore be completely lost. As a consequence, a dangerous rejection of the cultural building language would arise and this could eventually lead to culture and tradition being rejected and seen as a product, considered old-fashioned and outdated. Only by accepting the existence of different people, cultures and the associated building language can a multi-layered society and co-existence take place

A few years ago I began my personal search for my heritage and cultural identity. Since then, the idea for my research by incorporating my family's roots and heritage into my work was simply born. Thanks to the many frequent visits to my parents' home country, it was not only possible to observe first-hand the rapid growth of the country and the associated changes. But also a change within the society itself. From the once small cozy towns of childhood memories, only a fraction remained, which evokes a certain nostalgia.

INTRODUCTION

The ancient Egyptians always had the desire to preserve their gods and kings through monumental buildings for eternity. The building was always symbolic of immortality and was seen as a bridge between present life and the hereafter. Guided by the urge of preserving, they reached the peak of preservation methodology not only through mummification, but the intention also led to creating of written language. This technique not only allowed the ancient people to build more buildings for eternity hence to also to preserve their people, the human being. But more importantly the reliefs as preservation method could not only be considered as historic documentation of the ancient, but also as identity serving document of a whole population and their traditions, looks and habits.

Comparing the ancient philosophy of life with today's, the question arises as to what has become of the former striving and profound fanaticism towards the preservation of culture that gave rise to a human beings and his undoubtable identity. Today's fast-paced society is based on the moment. Life is no longer lived for eternity, but for the here and now. In the process, people not only lose their relationship to themselves - the "ego"-, but also the relationship between oneself and the environment - the "we" - is lost. That "we" can be understood as the relationship between people and their built environment, or people and society. In both cases it is necessary to understand the individual within a collective.

Today's zeitgeist restricts the development of individual identity and the space for self-development, which means that an increasing number of people tend, whether intentionally or not, to turn towards a collective, by inserting themselves as a partly produced component of an ideology of a homogeneous machine-produced conglomerate of a society. For this purpose, instruments such as culture and origin are dropped

and set aside. Such terms no longer find a proper context within the homogeneous philosophy of life of modern society and are increasingly being forgotten. This leads to a cultural detachment of people from their surroundings and leads to the question of the own, but also of the common identity within a collective. A closer look at Egypt shows that the country is currently in a state of cultural drift. Due to the rapid population growth and the resulting mass construction, there is not enough room for an identity-forming architecture for the majority of the population.

Traditional architectural styles are increasingly being replaced by modern and industrially produced building elements. Old historical city grids are being broken up in order to appear attractive to modern society. Meanwhile, only a few steps afar from the historical old towns, meter-high skyscrapers made of brick and concrete are shooting out of every corner, of the flat countryside. Where once palm trees grew as a symbol of a fertile land, today's modern treatment of the land through the transformation of tall apartment buildings indicates the dilemma of today's society and the associated related uprooting. With the constant thought of being an economical underdog, a large part of the population tends to turn its gaze to Europe. Lifestyles and building methods are being adopted, and the traditional-regional building language is being replaced by modern Western-European styles. As a result, the vernacular style of architecture is not only losing its importance, but is also being completely forgotten with the ravages of time. Over decades and generations perfected architecture adapted to the environment, is now being dominated by vertical foreign bodies. With the modern decay, further development and optimization of cultural heritage also comes to a standstill. The power of architecture as an identity-creating element, is underestimated or simply not considered by many. not considered by many.

As a result, many find themselves in a conflict between themselves and their new built environment. This is mainly due to the new language of building, which does not try to adapt to the human being and his socio-cultural reference, but partly only refers to a supra-regional architectural language of mainly western-European styles. Moreover, in Egyptian-Arab culture, housing is always related to the family. Life is lived within a collective, which in turn forms a individual community within the structure of a big heterogenous society. The house in Egyptian culture represents the fulfilment of one's own family and embodies metamorphically as a successful founding of family and culture. The creation of a home therefore never stands singularly but represents a collective. Due to the strong connection between family, culture, daily life with the housing, the construct of identity has been considered an ideal instrument of political power since ancient times. Due the fact that identity is never static and constantly shapeable, new political ideologies are exploited under the cloak of a favored identity and serve to civilize and shape society as desired. In the case of Egypt, the population is therefore forced to

constantly adapt to new socio-economic conditions. In this process, the own and cultural identity is intentionally or unintentionally turned their backs on. At the same time, architecture becomes the epitomized victim of new ideological world views. It can be seen as a social game, in which different ideologies of an identity can be used as a gaming block according to the needs for winning. And in order to win the game of ideology, the blocks are strategically used to achieve the victory of a newly shaped identity.

In order to investigate the problematic treatment of the built heritage, the work attempts to provide an overview of Egyptian society and its circumstances, which seem to always be in the crossroad between ideology and identity. The aim is to draw the individual connections between people, culture and politics in connection with architecture, and to successively break down the construct of a network. For this purpose, the book is divided into 5 essential sections. Each of the 5 chapters are introduced with a short autobiographical introduction due to the personal closeness to the country Egypt and the own search for identity.

These 5 chapters - Approaching - Understanding - Mapping - Shaping - Future - not only define the thematic approach of the book, but also reflect the personal finding and acceptance of identity and culture:

The first part, "Approaching," focuses on the initial understanding and definition of identity and its relation to architecture. Thereby, the role of traditional architecture as an identity-forming element is examined precisely.

The second part "Understanding" overviews Egypt's situation from a cultural-historical, as well as socio-political point of view. A historical outline of Egypt's most distinctive architectural heritage from the Pharaohs to the Arab-Islamic architecture is presented, which can still be found in the architectural and social structures of today. During that historical process, new building structures were accompanied by new ideologization of the power holders. With the instrument of 'identity,' especially since the founding of the Republic of Egypt, hence to the **geopolitical and geographic location**, the Egyptian people have been reshaped whenever required. As a result, politics can be understood as an essential driving force of a new ideology in the process of a new formation of identity of the people. Slogans such as "Egypt to Egyptians" or "We are not Arabs" have played a significant role in changing and deforming the identity of the Egyptian. New political ideologies are introduced primarily through architecture, and thus intervene directly in the private living space of the people. This part of the chapter is intended to provide the reader with an overview of the highly entangled problem of Egyptian identity in which many Egyptians find themselves, as well as the profound conflict of the identity question within society.

In the third part of the work "Mapping", the conflict between identity and ideology and its impact on traditional architecture was investigated in the course of a field study based on a selected village "Tunis Village" of Fayoum, Egypt. The once insignificant village experienced not only a social change in the 1960s due to the arrival of some people from Cairo, defined by the local villagers as architecture got replaced by a romantically transfigured image of a peasant village. In addition, due to the great interest in the village, land prices are rising, which is why many farmers (Arabic *fallah*) feel pressured to adopt a new affordable building languages. The choice often falls on the simple urban building structure of reinforced concrete construction. The formerly small rectangular mud houses are mostly replaced by 3-story houses made of brick or concrete. Because of this drastic change in the building language and new dome-ideology of the village, within a few years, the *fallah* feels cornered in his culture and faces an unexpected question of identity. With this architectural change, also the *fallahs* starts see his own traditional rural architecture often as old-fashioned and underdeveloped due to the influence of the new "intellectual" building language. In order to understand this conflict, not only the existing architecture consisting of native building heritage and new romantic-western building language is analyzed, but also the peasant/ the *fallah* himself will be examined more closely. His lifestyle, culture and everyday life inside and outside the living space is considered.

The findings from chapters 2 and 3 are now taken up and critically examined in chapter 4. What pattern can be drawn from the cultural-historical building history of Egypt to the village of Tunis? What do these structural changes mean for local farmers? To what extent does a new building ideology have a future for the village? These questions will be answered to then lead to the final chapter of the book "Future".

In the last part of the work "Future" the investigated network of the built heritage in connection to identity and ideology is presented through the conclusio with the view of a future-oriented dealing of the building culture, using the example of Tunis Village.

RESEARCH TOPIC & QUESTIONS

The built culture and the in terms related identity of the Egyptian people has changed due to constant new political and social ideologies. The constant forming moreover has literally drowned the Egyptians' interest in their own culture and origins. The latest research trends in Egyptian architecture tend to turn away from the regional and traditional building language, looking further and further to the West and supra-regional architectural language. This not only changes the outlook of Egypt, but also its population is caught at the crossroads between Arabic-Islamic and Western-European culture. In this process, their own national origins are lost and forgotten. In order to present the issue surrounding this tension between identity and ideology within the built heritage, the thesis addresses the following question:

- In what context can architecture and identity be understood?
- Which architectural and ideological elements were most influential for Egyptian society and still have an impact today?

Fieldstudy: Tunis Village

- How did the built heritage in Tunis Village develop?
- What elements contribute to an architecture that creates identity? (furniture, rooms, built in elements)
- To what extent can a new ideology influence the architecture and the consciousness of the inhabitants
- How to deal with identity-creating architecture in the future?

METHODOLOGY

The first part of the research required a historical and theoretical approach regarding the meaning of identity in the context of culture, and the history of Egypt. In addition to the literature research, an on-site analysis was attempted to analyze the topic using the rural village 'Tunis Village' as a field study in Egypt. For this purpose, the ethnographic research methodology was used: different Interview questions were prepared in advance to provide an overview of the life situation and the understanding of the built tradition.

To rather understand the conflict regards the built tradition, the interviews were done with different groups of people: Expert interviews to investigate building methods and building culture were mainly prepared interviews with questions around the material and their traditional working methodology. The interviews with residents focused on different social groups in order to get an insight into the interaction between the built culture and the person itself as well as the persons connected identity. These interviews were conducted in a narrative form by simply introducing the subject matter to the person through guiding questions. This methodology allowed not only a certain freedom in conversation, but also analysis and understanding of the mindset and value

systems of the individuals involved. In the course of the resident-interviews, some properties could be visited in order to record the floor plans and structure within the house.

It was important to analyze the personal characteristics of the furnishings in order to be able to draw a line regards on differences within the concept of "living". As well as to understand the way of living in relation to culture and ideology. Some of the visited houses, are presented in the work as an example typology, in order to put the spatial flow, as well as the associated cultural reference in connection.

On the streets of Cairo and Fayoum, in the course of the research trip, passers-by as well as young architects from Cairo were also asked spontaneous questions about the topic of identity, the interaction with ideologies and the built heritage. This not only allowed to get an overview of today's problems of the society, but also the relation of the society to its own history and the cultural identity connected with it.

In order to translate from Arabic to English, with the help of some architecture graduates from Cairo, my family as well as my personal Arabic knowledge were used.

TERMINOLOGY

Throughout the work, certain terminology will recur. In order to provide an insight into the terms as well as an initial overview of the subject matter surrounding the network of identity, ideology and architecture, the following list defines an overview of the personal reference and understanding regarding the most essential terms of the work.

Vernacular architecture The term vernacular architecture is used to describe architecture that has been in use as traditional architecture within a certain region and by a certain society for many years. From the Latin term "vernaculus" meaning native - this is also often understood as traditional or regional architecture, and should in the best case adapt to the natural environment and the economic and social circumstances of a region. In this context, climate, culture, religion, tradition or culture can be understood as elements that are essential factors to indicate and adapt an architecture. Materials are regional and are considered sustainable with today's knowledge. The goal is not to exploit nature, but to adapt to the natural environment. Thus, architecture evolves through a natural process that is found in a historical and regional context. Vernacular architecture has therefore always been able to adapt to the needs and living conditions of people and can be understood as "human" architecture in the context of work that can be realized without architects or planners. Rudofsky speaks here of an "architecture without architects", and implies here the need to understand living environment as a social and cultural space of a society, developed from current

regional and local requirements by the common mass. Thus, architecture is closely related to culture and tradition. The vernacular architecture can therefore be seen as a traditional and regional cultural asset that has developed through the compromise between nature and the need to live also the available regional resources and the craftsmanship of the locals. In today's architectural language, it can also be understood as architecture that borrows traditional stylistic elements.

Tradition Traditions a product that is preserved through the transmission and inheritance of behavioral patterns and mind-sets across generations. A tradition does not have to be old, but can also exist as a new product within a certain collective. This collective can be a family or an entire village. In the work, the definition refers to Fathy's paraphrase that tradition arises via a solution to an existing problem, and by passing it on to further generations develops into a tradition, and thus a cultural heritage. (see Fathy, 1973: 24)¹ From the Latin "trade" - handing over, handing down" - a passing on of knowledge or behavioral patterns is implied. In this context, tradition can be understood as a "cultural heritage" in which not only language or religion are passed on, but also craftsmanship such as architecture. Unlike a culture, tradition is formable and changeable. And can therefore continue to change as the way of life progresses.

identity Identity is a concept every person experiences as a personal lifelong process in which one's own "I" is filtered out in order to understand and classify the individual layers that form the totality of

Tradition is not necessarily old-fashioned and is not synonymous with stagnation. Furthermore, a tradition need no date from long ago but may have in quiet recently. As soon as a workman meets a new problem and decides how to overcome it, the first step has been taken in the establishment of a tradition. When another workman has decided to adopt the same solution, the tradition is moving and by the time a third man has followed the first two and added his contribution, the tradition is fairly establishes. (Fathy, 1973:24)

an "I". The understanding of identity in this work is fundamentally based on Erik Erikson's identity theory, in which he distinguishes between an "ego-identity" and a "personal-identity". Here he tries to characterize the personality by dividing one's persona into an "individual" and "collective". This means that each personality of a person is separated into a collective and an individual part. Erik Erikson describes identity as "The conscious sense of having a personal identity is based on two simultaneous observations: the immediate perception of one's own sameness and continuity in time, and the related perception that others also recognize this sameness and continuity" (Erik Erikson, 1973: 18). In this context, personal events, environment, and socio-historical events play as major factors in shaping and unifying persona. Thus, identity can be understood as the sum of many individual parts that make up the image of a person.

Cultural identity The term culture is closely related to tradition. However, while values or behaviors are passed down from one generation to another through tradition, culture is often associated with a certain art form. Unlike tradition, culture is often visually and physically tangible. Dances, food or customs are not only passed on by one person, but are always connected to an entire society. Due to the close branching of a person and inheritance of art, the term "cultural identity" is also used within the work. The term summarizes a certain group - a collective - that identifies with each other through cultural elements such as nationality, ethnicity, gender or religion. In this context, the element is always drawn from a collective knowledge through the process of sharing, such as: tradition, cultural and historical heritage, language, gestures or customs. Generally, a person often shares with more than one group a cultural identity, which is why this form of identity can be seen in spectrum of a

collective as extensive. The modern form of a cultural identity is constantly exposed to new conditions and circumstances due to intercultural relations in today strong modernized globalization. This makes cultural identity a multifaceted and highly malleable construct that stands in a certain negotiation between modern culture and tradition.

ideology Ideology is an art form that conveys world views or values to a group or even individual persons and transforms them mentally. Thus a certain value-conception bonds itself to a group, and can be understood as collective thought with associated change. In this work the ideology stands repeatedly in the context of the policy, in which ideology is used as instrument of change and civilization of a society by political power. Here, the term can be understood as "state ideology." Etymologically, the term derives from the ancient Greek word *ιδέα* [*idéa*] and means 'idea' or 'doctrine of ideas'. within the living space. The interaction within the living space therefore influences the personality development of the person and develops as well as shapes the person in addition to the social aspects through the built environment in which the person is located.

Identity-creating architecture/ built identity In architecture, the relationship between an identity and the built environment is referred to as a built identity. This identity is strongly linked to materialistic, formal and conceptual elements of architecture, through which an identity has developed within architecture. The power of architecture of forming an identity is therefore considered to be an identity-forming element. Space is seen here as a place to influence and shape a person and the associated identity. This occurs not only through formal or materialistic elements, but also through the cultural expression

Chapter 1

approaching

Chapter 1: Approaching: theoretical background

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personal prologue 1

Approaching my background

fig. 2. Nubian vaults used for a horse stable in Giza, Cairo



APPROACHING my background

Since I was a kid I would spend every summer at my grandparents' house in Egypt. It was always a huge culture difference when I would leave the calm life of Austria and be thrown into the hot and hectic desert life of Egypt. I never understood it to be honest. And also found it quite unfair to always have to spend my vacations with family members, while my friends would spend it at beaches or travel to different cities of Europe. They would come back and tell me about the other cultures they have experienced and got to know.

And there was me... always telling them how my family members were doing. It was like a family reunion. 2 months that sometimes felt like forever. One month at my grandmother's house, and the other month at my grandfather's. That was the arrangement. But however, my parents always preached me how important it was to go back to one's own roots. To understand where I come from and how my culture looks like.

The problem with Egypt was – when I was still young – that I always felt left out. I never saw myself as a part of the community. I didn't watch the same TV shows as the other children, never understood the jokes because I wasn't fluent in Arabic, Never had the same interests as the other children, because my Austrian-European lifestyle didn't quite fit into the Egyptian one. Therefore, I would spend most of the time inside the houses of my grandparents and absorb every inch of them. Maybe at the end, the only thing that motivated me at that time was knowing that I would see my grandparents again. I don't know why, but Egypt without my grandparents was never the same. It was their old soul, that made me love certain things. The way they handled things, told stories, dressed or talked. I loved being around them. It was like I finally felt what it meant to be at home. When I would enter my grandmother's house there was always this beautiful dust in the air at the entrance of her stairs. It was a warm dust, kissing my skin with a warm welcoming.

With a certain smell. Wrapped around with the sunbeams that were coming from a small lid. I knocked on the big door knocker, fixed exactly in the middle of the door. But I never really needed to knock on because the door was always open. My sister and I took off our shoes and ran into the courtyard, that was in the centre of the house. All rooms were enclosed around the courtyard. Therefore, we sat down in the courtyard, so we could hear everything going around. We giggled, ate watermelons and lipin seeds/ *termis* [ترمس] and laid down. The sun was covering us with warmth and the cool wind in the courtyard cooled us down again. We would spend the whole day there until our grandma had time for us and told us little anecdotes of her life. She also told us where she got the furniture and how this house was built. Which at this point didn't really interest us. We just wanted to pinch, kisses and tickle her and enjoy her presence.

I thought this feeling would stay forever. And that I could always come back to my grandparents house. Little did I know that globalisation and migration would destroy my little naive hope: An investor had brought my grandmothers house and torn it down. She wasn't even given the choice of staying in it. She had to move into a building on the 9th floor. Surrounded by other skyscrapers. Kept away from everything that was happening around. I called it the "Air prison". Now in my 20s, whenever I would visit her old small house, I now see a building – 10 stores high, without any character. A building I could find now at every single corner of the town. The old, small and lovely building is now gone. And with him all his people and stories. Now, grown up, Growing up I understood that I probably had the best holidays out of my friends. 2 month of love, fun and family.

Chapter 1

Theoretical Background

Before diving into the main topic of Egypt, an overview of the understanding and relationship between architecture and idea of cultural identity is provided. The deep anchoring of an identity (collective and individual) and a built environment is inescapable and is an essential component in today's architectural discourse. Moreover, identity is often associated with traditional architecture, which - like identity - represents a broad entanglement of environment and object. Therefore, a digression on the value and significance of vernacular architecture in our society will also be given at the end of the chapter.

IDENTITY & ARCHITECTURE

My own personal

experience of a loss reminded me ever since of a story I used to read when I was younger. In "The House of Pooh Corner" by A. A. Milne the story tells from Puh and Tiger, who wanted to build a house for their friend Eeyore, because he apparently doesn't have one and winter was coming. In search for suitable materials, Piglet drew their attention on "a heap of stick on the other side of the wood" (Milne, 1928: 4). When the friends went to Eeyore full of excitement because of the new house they had built him, they wanted to know first where his old house was. To their surprise it was the "heap of sticks" that turned out to be his old house.

This story shows the type of definition of a house. What might have looked to the friends of Eeyore as a heap of sticks was not acknowledged by them as a complete house by their definition. But a house resembles much more than just the looks. Its deeply rooted with a rich history which makes up a big part of the own identity. As Eeyore later says to his friends „So what it all comes to is that I built myself a house down by my little wood. [...] It is my house, and I built it where I said I did, [...].“ (Milne, 1928: 5) So, his definition of a house, was the meaning of building it on his own or choosing the location. Even though the new house was much prettier and stable, the old house's location was ideal for the wind. He had chosen the old place on purpose.

In this story as well as the personal prologue shows that architecture is equalized with the existence of the human being and one's own personal decision. It begins where each individual perceives himself and sees himself as part of his own "I/ Me". The concept of identity has been the subject of ongoing discourses for many years now. Identity is therefore not something static or fixed. Meaning that the identity relies not only on one thing, but is built upon different layers, which make up one whole identity of a person. Rather, it is in a constant state of development and is reflected in various factors such as family, social environment, or religion. Looking up the terminus of identity, which origins from the Latin word "*idem*" and means "sameness", the concept of identity can therefore no longer be seen

as a single construct, but rather be divided into the individual processes no longer be seen as a single construct, but rather be divided into the individual processes that make up an identity and filter it into its individual parts. Each individual person must therefore be peeled, like an onion, in order to understand the core. Since the ancient times, Greek and Roman philosophers accepted that each person is his own individual, built upon his own personal identity. As Heraclitus said “*panta rhei*” which means “everything flows” meaning “No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same.” [*Πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει Pánta chorei kai oudèn méne*] (de Crescenzo, 1995: 177). Even though no one steps into the same river twice, there are parts of us who step into similar rivers, which is why people inside and outside communities tend to have matching personalities or identities. Thus why people with similar historical, religious or family background can be seen as collective. At the same time, the process of trying to unite a multitude of people with similar characteristics into a homogeneous group happens. The superficial unification of people shows the basic human need of a constant desire to assign people to a group. The first one to see this collective identity was German psychoanalyst Erik H. Erikson. He divided the identity into two parts (1974,123): The Ego-Identity and the personal Identity. While the personal-identity was dealing with the own existence. The ego-identity, on the other hand, was understood as the part that occurs at the end of adolescence, when the individual becomes aware of his or her role in society. (cf. Unterweger, 2007) By taking on a role in society, the ego-persona also becomes a group identity. At that point we start to talk about a collective identity that isn't just part of one person but unites a group of people together. Sometimes also called as ‘identity of origin’, it is based on outer features like culture, religion tradition or the past. (vgl. Rieger-Jandl, 2009: 35)

Globalization, colonization, occupations or simply today's change of time, however, mix up this uniform pot to which certain characteristics can be attached to. Formerly familiar forms are seen as foreign, and inversely foreign ones as familiar. The human struggles to find himself in today's modern society. Where once an identity was tied to tradition or culture, there is now a certain uncertainty for many that has developed with a particular emptiness and ignorance. Architecture plays a major role in the construction and maintenance of a social identity. Especially rural regions, which have only been increasingly affected by globalization in the recent years, are experiencing a strong and sudden loss of cultural architecture. Local building traditions are predominantly overshadowed by supra-local, western building forms. Century-old cultural processes are being lost and are no longer valued by the younger generation. One could speak of a new wave of creolization. What was initially only a concept of historical-cultural change among the Creoles can now be applied to many cultures and countries. Social processes are changed and influenced by cultural mixing. The bond of the culture-of-origin is interrupted and reinterpreted by "foreign" ideas. This

form of Creolization has rose to its peak in recent years, especially through westernization and globalization. Manfred Faßler describes the „ability to accept continuously new hybrids as provisional originals (creolization) and to develop and live identity through them is exemplarily developed in migrant cultures. But in the same way, mixtures are emerging in ancestral relations, which do not only refer to eating habits, interior and house architectures, aesthetic styles or fashion. They concern ways of knowing, styles of communication, and patterns of living with space and time, near presences and far presences.”(Krönecke, 2007: 33)²

² [translated by author from German] “Diese Fähigkeit, immer neue Mischformen als vorläufige Originale (Creolisierung) zu akzeptieren und durch sie hindurch Identität zu entwickeln und zu leben, ist beispielhaft in Migrantenkulturen entwickelt. Aber ebenso zeichnen sich in angestammten Verhältnissen Mischungen ab, die sich nicht nur auf Essensgewohnheiten, Innen- und Hausarchitekturen, ästhetische Stile oder Mode beziehen. Sie betreffen die Art zu Wissen, die Stile der Kommunikation sowie die Muster, mit Raum und Zeit, Nah-Anwesenheit und Fern-Anwesenheiten zu leben.” (Krönecke, 2007: 33)

ROLE OF ARCHITECTURE

When we think of a personal experience of architecture, it is often connected with personal feelings or experiences. We think of the feeling in our hands as we roam the walls, or the smell of sun-soaked furniture, or even the cracks in the wall. Architecture does not stand singularly for most of the people. Only few look at the statics, the building material or the construction per se. The main interest lies more in the feeling and the atmosphere that the building expresses, which is why we as humans tend to combine certain thoughts and views with feelings. Design and architecture therefore have a strong influence on our (sub)consciousness and are not only seen on the level of materialism. Architecture critic Sara Williams Goldhagen describes it in her autobiography "Welcome to your world: How the built environment shapes our lives" as follows: "If you think about your childhood memories there's always detritus of place. There's the swimming pool you cut your foot on or the backyard you chased your dog in," she says.“, [...] „It turns out we simply cannot remember these long-term memories without remembering something of the place in which they occurred.“ (ABC News, 2017)

At the same time, the own relationship to architecture must be accompanied by a reference to the place itself. Fathy talks about a “colorful and emphatic visual language of their own that suits perfectly their character and their homeland” (Fathy, 1973:19) The choice of a certain place therefore plays a decisive role for the architecture itself. Seeing it as the ‘*genius loci*’ - the spirit or essence of a place – a place plays an important role in the understanding and perception of architecture. Originating from Latin mythology, it can be understood as spirit or also essence of a place, which connects architecture with the soul of a place. In ancient time,

the genius (Latin for guardian spirit) was believed to accompany people and places throughout their lives. (cf. Norberg-Schulz, 1982) Throughout the ages, the *genius loci* has developed and is today associated as the character of a place. An architecture without its inner essence would be soulless. Therefore, in order to understand an architecture, a certain understanding of culture, religion, tradition, history and origin must be given. Architecture does not only describe itself through superficial-visible objects. It is a collective of many individual stories, people or adjustment strategies to the environment, that have led to the construction of a personal monument. As with identity, architecture is a constantly developing and growing craft. It does not stand still in its time and tries to adapt to global changes. As an omnipresent element, architecture should therefore be mobile and be capable of an easy adjustment to new social norms. But still remain inheritable and regional in order to argue the idea of an identity-creating object. Ingeborg Flagge describes the meaning of a place as follows: “The understanding of a place is not simply there. It needs to be worked out, with curiosity and meticulousness. Places always tell a story and form a reality that comes to light in their forms and their spaces. But beyond their material nature, places are shaped by cultural sensitivities. Understanding these requires sensitivity, respect and experience from architects, especially in places that are foreign to them.” (Flagge, 2008)³

³ [translated by the author from german] „Das Verständnis für einen Ort ist nicht einfach da. Es will erarbeitet werden, mit Neugierde und Akribie. Orte erzählen immer eine Geschichte und bilden eine Realität, die in ihren Formen und ihren Räumen zutage tritt. Aber über ihre materielle Beschaffenheit hinaus werden Orte von kulturellen Befindlichkeiten geprägt. Diese zu verstehen verlangt von Architekten gerade an ihnen fremden Orten Sensibilität, Respekt und Erfahrung.“ (Flagge, 2008)

VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE

Since the beginning, housing always had one main mission: to give people protection and shelter. Over the years, humans have continued to adapt to their environment, eventually perfecting solutions of suitable room temperatures, lighting and ventilation methods. Houses have evolved at the same time as people and simple buildings became regionally adapted dwellings. These in turn became a traditional cultural heritage that can be followed and admired to this day. Fathy describes the conception of culture and architecture by the inheritance of a knowledge from certain situations or problems: "Tradition is not necessarily old-fashioned and not synonymous with stagnation. Moreover, a tradition does not have to come from a time long past, but can also be recent. Once a craftsman encounters a new problem and decides how to solve it, the first step in establishing a tradition is taken. When another craftsman has decided to adopt the same solution, the tradition is in motion, and when a third man has followed the first two and made his contribution, the tradition is fairly established." (Fathy, 1973: 24)

fig. 3. Hotel in Dahab, Sinai

The domes of lower Egypt (Luxor & Assuan) became a symbol for the vernacular architecture of Egypt. And can be especially seen in touristic



generations, an independent local building culture has developed far away from any architecture and planning methods. Vernacular architecture is therefore a traditional building culture that has been developed by an indigenous group on the basis of local and traditional customs. Bernard Rudofsky describes the value and achievements of such an architecture cure as "architecture without architects". In his book he says: "Architecture without Architects attempts to break down our narrow concepts of the art of building by introducing the unfamiliar world of nonpedigreed architecture. It is so little known that we don't even have a name for it. For want of generic label, we shall call it vernacular, anonymous, spontaneous, indigenous, rural, as the case may be." (Rudofsky, 1964: 12) This building tradition has always been driven by a certain impulse - be it climatic, social or cultural.

People have learned early on to adapt and keep up with new challenges and conditions. Where it was changeable up to a certain point, since modern times traditional architecture has been in a state of rigidity. Such architecture is usually regarded as outdated and old-fashioned. Even formerly indigenous people have been changed by new customs and cultures. With globalization, it seems, every single corner of the world is now connected. Similar lifestyles, ways of speaking and dressing characterize life today. The international or mostly western style dominates and usually overshadows small indigenous and cultural traditions. It therefore takes a few steps back to understand the problems of today's society and the identity crisis of many people. Maybe a return to the vernacular – up until a certain point – "a new renaissance" for the small groups in today's society must be undertaken, so that the modern era its supra-local construction radiations.

"Yet even before men and beast walked the earth, there existed some kind of architecture, coarsely by the primeval forces of creation and occasionally polished by wind and water into elegant structures. Natural caves, especially, hold a great fascination for us." (Rudofsky, 1964:

14)

Chapter 2

understanding

“When I touch clay, it feels like I am touching my wife. Something that has always been familiar to me.” (Dr. Adel Fahmy)

Chapter 2: Understanding

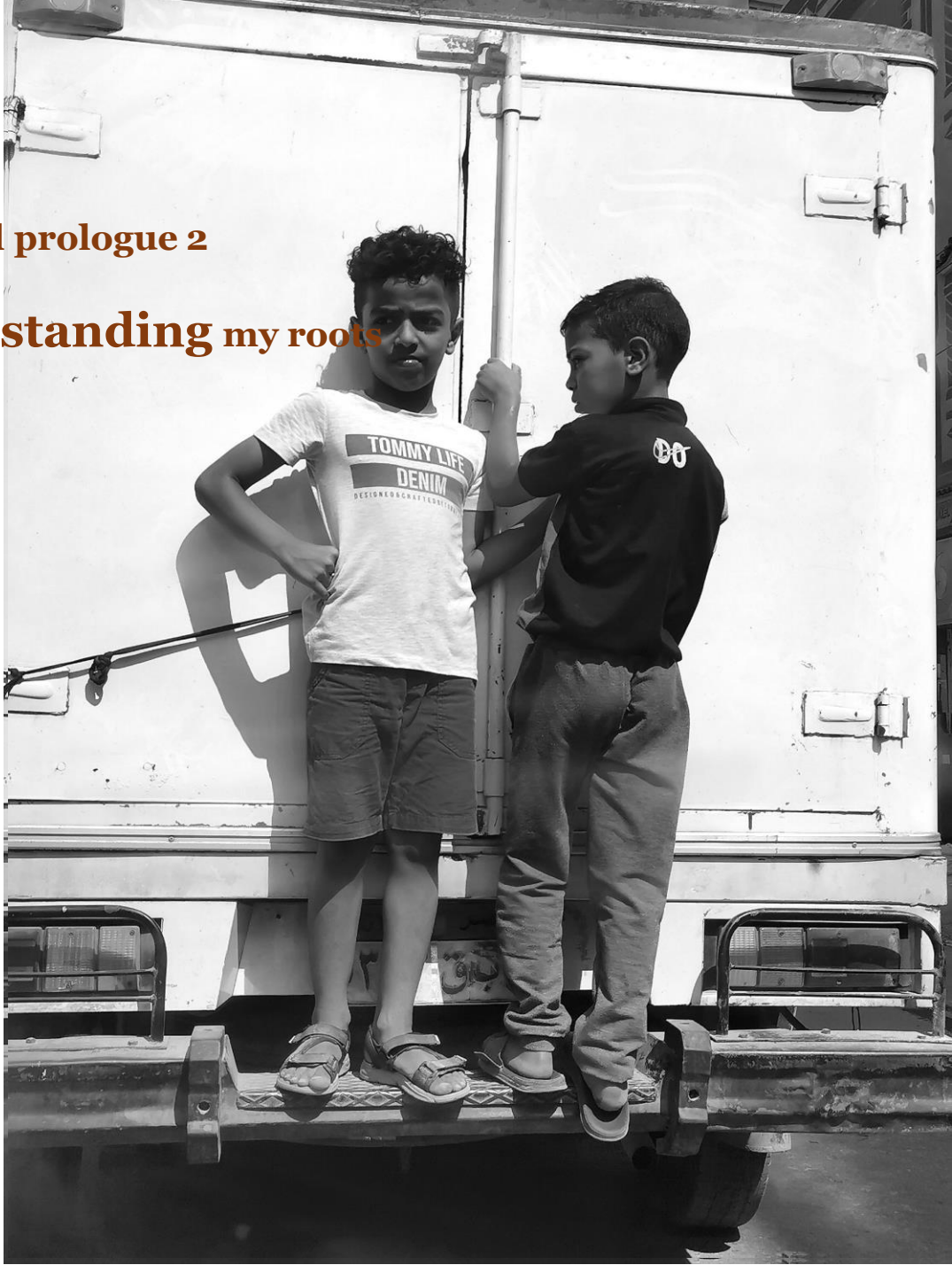
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personal prologue 2

Understanding my roots

fig. 4. kids on the back of a truck



UNDERSTANDING my roots

I was born in Austria, to Egyptian parents. So there was always the struggle of knowing who I really belonged to: Was I Austrian? Or was I Egyptian? And if I was Egyptian, where do my roots belong too? – Arab, Italian, Greek or even Amazigh. This question always followed me wherever I was or whatever I did. I went to school in Austria but was culturally influenced at home. I spoke German with my friends but spoke Arabic at home. It was always a back and forth. This dual identity sometimes put me in an identity crisis. It was only when I grew up, and started to understand more about cultures, identity and heritage, that I finally was in peace with my inner self. But it was again my grandparents who helped me on the path of self-discovery. When I think back about the conversations I had with my grandfather, he would tell me a lot about his belongings and their history. It was mostly material stuff that he would tell me about, but he would always tell me these stories with such amazement and love towards these objects. He saw them as part of himself. Once fascinated by the wall clock in the living room, that made a unique sound every hour, he told me that he had purchased it from a Greek who was living nearby. And before the Greek man wanted to leave Egypt and go back to Greece he sold it to him. He was telling me this story, while wearing his basquet from France and his pyjama made out of fine Egyptian cotton. After telling me all these stories he usually sat onto his bed, which was covered with fine satin bed linen from Turkey. While I was looking at the clock, my eyes swept to the barque mirror on the other side of the room, that was hanging next to a traditional Egyptian wooden chair. Looking at all these materialistic things, I kept asking myself what exactly defines us. - Us the human race as an individual person. – It can't be materialistic. It had to be something way deeper. Something I couldn't even describe. Something that can't be touched. Like a spirit, a nostalgic feeling, that ties us to the construct of the evolution of our personality. Would I relay on the materialistic part, like dressing up or possessing something, it would make only. one small visual part of myself. And I could only feel part as a collective while having these things with me. As soon as I put them down, I wouldn't be part of this community anymore. Even though we all tend to define ourselves – even if it is just a small part – through materialistic belongings, we can't hold on them. They only define us temporary And with owning antiquities or other belongings, I think we don't tend to show off, rather we try to understand how our identity has come from. And this thread of historic belongings, shapes our understanding of who we might really are and come from. Knowing that, I understood that my roots where much deeper connected to invisible manners. I had to overcome myself and understand that nothing is superficial. And that the construct of an identity is much more then what we tend to see. Being part of something, comes with a certain lifestyle, mannerism, mentality and even language. Already struggling with being Egyptian or Austrian, I understood how complex my Egyptian identity itself was. It was a mixture of different ethnicities and different influences. Influences that could be traced back to the ancient origin. Having that in mind, I knew I understood that it was totally fine, to go through different stages of the own personal roots, until I could accept who I really was. Thinking back, whenever I used to ask my grandparents where our roots belonged too, I would hear Turkish, Algerian, Arabic or even French as an answer. But at the end, the final answer was Egyptian. But on the other hand, some of my relatives would tell with no doubt that we are full-blooded Egyptians. Because identity came with a certain ideology of being an Egyptian. Of having an Egyptian lifestyle, that could be seen inside a house. Of having an Egyptian family, that was part of your life no matter what was happening. Of having old antiquities form different countries, that became part of the cultural heritage through the different occupations. Or even the Egyptian-Arabic language that derived from the ancient language and could be distinguished from other Arabic languages.

Chapter 3

Research Context

مصر أم الدنيا – Egypt mother of the world.

The interest in Egypt lies not only in the personal approach as will appear from the prologues in the course of the work, but also the historical-cultural and geographic and geopolitical location of the country indicates a uniqueness of identity and ideology, which points to a motivation in terms of the topic around identity and ideology in relation to the built heritage. A historical background, with architectural approach shall therefore provide as an introduction to the situation of Egypt and it's people. As the oldest known civilization, Egypt offers not only a variety of historical events, but also a broad development of culture and identity in relation to the people. In the course of the chapter, it becomes especially clear how closely political ideologies are used with the formation of a new identity through the instrument of architecture.



fig. 5. overview of Giza, Cairo

Due to the high population, the former green areas are becoming more and more dense residential areas. Most of the built areas in Egypt are built along the Nile, which is why most of the cities fight with density and overpopulation.

EGYPT'S DEMOGRAPHY

Since the early days, due to Egypt's unique geographical location, the country has been considered a bridge between Africa, Europe and the Middle East. Egypt belonged to everyone, and yet to no one. It neither belonged fully to the Maghreb countries nor to the Middle East, was often drawn to the European Mediterranean countries, but again was divided by the sea. Despite the similarities to the individual-neighbouring countries in culture, language, the way of life or even religion, Egypt somehow has a certain uniqueness due to its centuries-old historical background, which sets it apart from its surroundings and belonging to a collective.

Egypt is governed by 4 levels of administration: governorates, cities, counties/ *marakiz* [مراكز], districts (subdivisions of cities) and villages (subdivisions of counties). The land is divided into 27 governorates/ *muhafazah* [محافظة]. The governorate is considered as the highest of the 4 tiers of administration. A governorate is administered by a governor who is appointed by the Egyptian president and acts at his discretion. (cf. ARE Presidency) With a population of 100.9 million (as of 2020 Statistics), Egypt is one of the most populous countries, most of whom reside along the Nile Valley. With a total area of 1,001,449 (UN 2007) km², only 77.041 km² are inhabited. Of which 57% (cf. TheGlobalEconomy, 2021) of the population live in rural areas with some smaller communities spread around the Egyptian desert. The number of rural inhabitants has been decreasing for several years now and made them the biggest migration group into cities: poor living conditions, lack of education, higher standard of living or prospects are often the reason for urban migration. Most of the migrants move to the megacities such as Cairo, Alexandria, Fayoum City or even Luxor. With the rich land history and one of the oldest civilizations, Egypt's population is as diverse as its landscape. From people living and coming from desert areas to people from rural and urban areas.⁴

⁴ Urban migration has always existed. But in recent years, due to the strong influence of modernity within society, a strong rejection within in the society of rural life can be seen in Egypt. In addition, many farmers sell their land in order to make profit from the increase in population and the accompanying housing shortage. (cf. Verme, 2014)



fig. 6. map of Egypt

Almost only 20% of the land of Egypt is used as living area. Most of the built areas in Egypt are built along the Nile, which is why most of the cities fight with density and overpopulation.

POPULATION

With 95%, the Egyptians –including the Copts- form the largest ethnic group. The remaining 5% are made up of minorities such as the Bedouins around the Sinai Peninsula or the Libyan desert, Amazigh of Siwa Oasis and Nubian of southern Nile. Smaller groups, some of whose either ethnic background cannot be fully traced back or left after the end of the occupation, are Greeks, Italians or French. Egypt is also host to almost 90,000 refugees coming from Palestine and Syria. The vast majority speaks the official language, Egyptian-Arabic. Tracing back its roots, it originally comes from Coptic Arabic - which in turn draws its roots from the ancient Egyptian language of the Pharaohs. The Nubian language and the Bedouin language is only used within their communities and territories. Almost 90% of the population are Muslim – of which almost 85% are Sunni. The second largest religious group are the Coptic-Orthodox Christians, who make up 9,6%. (cf. Kinuthia, 2018)

CLIMATE

Egypt is located in a hot-desert climate. With exception of the northern part of Egypt along the Mediterranean Sea, the land consists of four geographical regions: The River Nile Valley, the Delta, the Western Desert, the Eastern Desert and the Sinai Peninsula. The biggest part of Egypt settles inside the desert area which is why the climate is predominantly dry and hot. The summers are hot, with up to 50° C and humid. The temperatures can vary between day and night. The winters are mild and dry. With average winter minimum of 14° C. The temperatures in the desert vary completely between of those along the sea and the Nile valley. Especially during the summer, the temperatures can fall between 7°C at night and rise up to 43°C during the day. During the winter period, temperatures do not fluctuate so drastically, and are mostly between 18°C during the day and 0°C at nights. From March till May, hot windstorms, called “*khamzin*” meaning “fifty” in Arabic, can cause sudden heat waves. This interval is exactly 49 days Sunday. The storms increase the temperatures by 20°C in 2 hours and can sometimes last for several days. During that period, the wind picks up fine sand particles and sweeps the dust across the northern coast. (cf. Climate Centre, 2021) Due to its arid condition, the annual precipitation is low.⁵ With an annual rainfall of 200mm-184mm Alexandria counts as the rainiest area in Egypt. Areas such as of Cairo, get little to no rainfall during the year. With the only exception of Sinai, a peninsula located between the Mediterranean Sea to the north and the Red Sea to the south. Even though it is located in the desert, thanks to its numerous oasis and wells, it receives more rainfall than other desert areas. (cf. Philologos, 2003)

⁵ *riah el khamzin* [رياح الخمسين] “the wind of the fifty”

One theory of the name is referring to the intervals of the wind of 50 days, But some say that the name “*khamzin*” goes back to the Islamic calendar, which calculates the period as follows: Khamzin is always supposed to follow immediately one day after the Coptic festival of Easter Sunday and end with the Saturday of Pentecost. (cf. Mitchell, 1869: 476-509)



fig. 7. tradition meets westernization: peasant [fallah] sitting next to a kiosk in traditional clothing

The built identity: Building tradition throughout the different eras

Egypt's settlement

runs predominantly vertically along the Nile. In the process, the country crosses different climatic zones, which have also shaped the regional building heritage in different ways. Therefore, Egypt's building tradition is as diverse as its population itself. In principle, when describing 'Egyptian architecture', attention must be paid to the different eras as well as influences and the ethnicities of these time periods, which have produced different regional building languages depending on the influence. There is the Nubian architecture in lowest southern area of Egypt and bordering Sudan. The Upper Egypt architecture that originated around Luxor and Aswan. The Bedouin architecture in the region of Sinai Peninsula. The Mediterranean architecture along the Mediterranean Sea, and the Lower Egypt architecture that developed in the region around Cairo and Fayoum. Also this subdivision is to be considered only roughly and can be subdivided again into many individual groupings. To avoid misunderstandings, the 'Egyptian architecture' or 'typologies' mentioned in the text will be referenced to the architecture used in Lower Egypt around the region of Fayoum and Cairo

The land of eternal stories and immortal kings. Egypt's building tradition tells of monumental pyramids, simple mud houses and skyscrapers sprouting into the sky/ infinity. The land of the Egyptians has been in a constant state of change since the beginning. Different conquests, colonial powers and occupiers have not only changed the people through their importation of new cultures and languages, but also graced the building culture with rich architectural traditions. These not only make Egypt rich in architecture, but also provide them with a wealth of historical treasures.

⁶ Egypt's timeline begins with the Old Kingdom (2575-2134 B.C) which starts with the Union of Lower and Upper Egypt. During that period the astonishing and infamous pyramids of Giza were built. (cf. Teeter: 2003)

With the coming together of Upper and Lower Egypt, by King Menes, the era of Egypt begins.⁶ Despite the union of the two parts, Egypt has retained its dual character throughout the years, which can be seen within the population and the different types of architectural designs. The building tradition in Egypt, however, does not only find itself in a historical context, but is also constantly confronted with the political instrumentalization of identity and collective social ideology. Therefore, architecture is seen above all as an instrument for civilizing and shaping an ideal society. For this purpose, the language of architecture deeply intervenes in the social and cultural lifestyles and ways of the population. Spaces, streets or simply the geometry was and still is a reflection of the people and the housing. Due to constant changes of power, the Egyptian citizen never saw himself in a permanent state. Instead, he has always tried to establish his identity through a constantly growing interweaving of architecture and way of life.

ANCIENT EGYPT

With regard to ancient architecture, it is divided into 3 major periods: the old kingdom, the middle kingdom, the new kingdom. The transition of these should not be seen as a clear linear sequence, but as a development with certain intermediate phases, which finally led to a totality of an epoch. For this chapter section, the focus lies first on the tomb architecture of the old kingdom. The second section focuses on the urban planning of the Middle Kingdom, in which new governmental legislation of a new ideology of a civilized population led to a unification of a ubiquitous basic concept of a ‘population architecture’.

The ancient Egypt has given us a lot: system of measurement, mathematics, astronomy, medicine or the writing. But the most distinguished heritage they left for the world, was their architecture. Which up to today still raises questions and admiration. The architecture of the ancient empire was primarily dominated by tomb- and sacred architecture. Residential architecture or service buildings, especially for those of the common people, were secondary.⁷ (cf. Fauerbach, 2014: 10) The ancient architecture can therefore be kindly considered as tool of forming the civilization and linking “monumental propaganda” (Mazzone, 2017: 28). Like so many other places, the history of architecture begins by settling along a fertile place. As one of the first cultivated areas in the world, life in ancient times could only develop around the fertile soils along the Nile River. With the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt by King Menes, the river became not only a symbol of fertility, but also an important transportation route. Shortly after the reunion by King Menes, the introduction of the “God-Kingdom” and around the 3rd Dynasty the so-called "hierarchy of officials" began, which allowed ruling houses until the Middle Kingdom (2040 to 1782 BC) to use the rich resource of the land for own purposes such as building projects. (cf. Fauerbach, 2014: 8-10)

Due to the hierarchy of officials, the focus of ancient building projects was on the construction of royal tomb architecture, to which we owe monuments such as the many pyramids and countless necropolises. The most striking feature of the ancient building tradition is the clear hierarchy. Starting with the building materials and ending with the construction method. The royal building materials included various types of stone such as, sandstone, limestone or various hard stones, sometimes even wood. Wood, which was already back then a rare material and had to be imported, was considered particularly precious. The rest of the population made use of non-fired bricks from the Nile mud. (cf. Fauerbach, 2014: 8)

⁷ During the Old Kingdom, the elite consisted of the ruling royal family and their direct relatives, viziers, priests, royal advisors, officials and governors. The middle class included craftsmen and merchants. The lowest class of the population consisted of the peasants. It wasn't up until the beginning of the New Kingdom (2040-1782 BC), that task of the “hierarchy of officials” got finally assigned to the state and administrative centers. As well the idea of the god-kingdom vanished. From the Middle Kingdom on, pharaohs didn't consider themselves as gods anymore, rather as representatives of the gods on earth. (cf. Fauerbach, 2014)

fig. 8. historical development: old meets new

With the view over Giza, the clear separation of old and modern can be observed. This creates a certain imbalance of an individual (the pyramids) versus a collective (the urban building construction). The two building cultures are in direct contrast to each other, and represent the evolution of the building language within the mentality of the society, where the pyramids serve as a homogeneous mass and cultural carrier, and appear outnumbered by the meter-high vertical reinforced concrete scaffolds.





⁸The representational buildings also included baths, marrow, court and public assembly buildings. These were mainly accessible to the rich social class, which made up only a small part of the population. In addition to the royal family, they also included wealthy families. (cf. Fauerbach: 2014)

While the royal architecture focused more on monumental symbolism, the settlement structures for most of the population, starting with the middle Kingdom, consisted mainly of structural design principles such as orientation to the cardinal points, regularity in the city layout with a rectangular street network, a regular layout of the city quarters and clear wall boundaries against the surrounding countryside. (cf. Universität Kassel, 2001: 15) The tool of architecture became an essential symbol of an instrument for the creation of "monumental propaganda" (Mazzone, 2017: 28) and new social ideologies during the ancient times. With the scale of architecture, the elite hoped to structure the people and reformat entire cities. In the process, architecture was used as a physical force to shape a new ideology of civilization within society, which as a symbolic element undoubtedly influenced the built environment. Homogeneous groups, such as the farmers, had to be broken up and integrated into the rest of the heterogeneous, predominantly urban society. This way the rulers should be able to control the population and, at the same time, progressively civilize it. This form of "urban revolution" (Mazzone, 2017: 19-26) thus had the goal of transforming rural forms into urban ones. For this purpose, social life was replaced by narrow urban grids and new patterns in the form of new typologies, construction methods and hence newly constructed lifestyles. Such a transformation had specifically the evolution of the whole society in mind, which was supposed to adapt to the growing and changing rests of the world. (Mazzone, 2017: 19-26) The new cultural development had a strong impact on society and the social fabric through this abandonment of conservative thinking, which was typical of the traditionally rural.

A. TOMB ARCHITECTURE The bond between present life and the hereafter was part of everyday life in ancient Egypt. It was the obsession with the afterlife that drove the elite of building the sacred and tomb architecture. Each monument was supposed to become more imposing and magnificent from generation to generation. After all, it were the buildings that would go on to eternity after their deaths and be considered immortal.⁸ As "buildings for eternity" (Fauerbach, 2014: 10), the building material stone should represent perseverance in terms of construction. Also symbolically, the choice of stone was to represent the strength and resilience of the kings and elite. (cf. Fauerbach, 2014: 10) From the outside, the execution of the architecture seemed as if they focused on simple geometric shapes, but inside it had a complexity due to narrow and branched paths. The simplicity was visible to the common people. The complexity and mysticism to the kings and elite. The upper class of society reflected their knowledge and seemingly infinite possibility of building through their architecture. In addition to durable and noble materials, the public-profane architecture⁹

⁹These buildings were open to the public. The concept of the public, however, is in no way comparable to that of the ancient Rome or Greece. Only annually a festival of the gods took place in those sacred buildings, in which the building itself served as a stage, and hence an insight into the sacred building was possible. It was believed that on this occasion the god should leave its statue in the temple and ascend into the sky. Grave goods were part of the ritual and were placed either next to or in the sarcophagus itself. (cf. Fauerbach, 2014: 22/23)



fig. 9. Pyramids of Giza

No matter where you might stand in the area of Giza, the pyramids will always peak through. Even through bushes, and skyscrapers.

was adorned by ornamentation such as wall paintings and writings. These writings were primarily dedicated to the gods, for though life in ancient Egypt revolved around the gods and their worship. Knowledge, language and art were considered as stylistic devices of the elite. Therefore, it can be understood as a clear "social class language", which was accessible only to a small part of the population and served as a tool of representation of knowledge and wisdom. (cf. Fauerbach, 2014) Only a vizier, the highest official of the state and as such also the highest building administrator, was allowed to build and enter a royal tomb. The main focus of construction was on the elevation of the buildings. The buildings had to be placed mainly on slopes or rocks. For this, a strong foundation of stone was essential. With the shift to flat desert soils, there was also an increased focus on the foundation, which was primarily intended to protect against moisture, earthquakes and was religiously attributed the function of purity and the "primeval hill motif" (Fauerbach, 2014: 45). While the exterior focused on stone, column foundations were sometimes built from mud brick foundations. (cf. Fauerbach, 2014: 44/45)

EXAMPLE: mastaba [مصطبة] In addition to temple buildings, *mastaba* were also built. *Mastaba*, Arabic bank, was seen as a gateway between the afterlife and present life. Initially, the *mastaba* was a flat structure resembling a truncated pyramid. Inside it were the chapel and *serdab*¹⁰, and in an underground substructure the burial chamber, where the dead body was finally interred. Along the four sides of the wall were sacrificial niches, called *ka-door* or sometimes called "false door" (Reisner, 1934: 580). Inside them burial objects such as valuables or statues were placed. After some time, this construction was reinforced with a brick wall along the base. After the tomb robbery became more and more popular, people wanted to prevent lateral intrusion into the burial chambers. The two separate layers (walls and *mastaba*) were gradually extended in height. The resulting stepped pyramid, on one hand, a protective purpose, and on the other hand, it served representative purposes. The last transformation of the *mastaba* finally ends in the 4th dynasty with the form of a pointed pyramid (e.g. Cheops pyramid). Unlike the previous types, the actual burial place was not underneath the structure as usual, but inside the pyramid structure itself. Narrow and branched paths "robber tunnels" usually led to a false chamber or door, in order to deter potential tomb robbers as well. (cf. Reisner, 1934: 579-584) The flat, usually quite low superstructure was built of brick or limestone. Unlike the clay buildings, limestone could withstand weathering, which is why mainly tomb architecture were built of solid and stable materials. It is considered a form of materialistic hierarchy, by granting the best available material of tomb architecture to the elite.

¹⁰ *serdab* [سرداب] is a small and narrow chamber inside the *mastaba*, in which as statue [ka] of the deceased person is placed. Also comparable with a niche inside a tomb. (Teeter, 2003)

Most *mastaba* were built with crude bricks. The Cheops pyramid was the first to be built of limestone, thus initiated a new construction method. The first buildings made of crude bricks date back before King Menes. There were two types of limestone: a yellowish stone, which was softer in texture and a harder gray stone. Nevertheless, the two stones were not strongly distinguished from each other, since they were cut from the same quarry, and some buildings were even built from both stones. (cf. Reisner, 1952-55: 37) As the rest of the temple architecture, the *mastaba* served purely symbolic purposes. Due to its location and construction, it had little or no spatial relationship to its surroundings and people. The focus in the construction of these was clearly in the representation and monumentality, as well as the proximity to the gods were the aim of the ever-growing buildings.

B. GRIDTOWNS With the flourishing of the ancient empire, ancient Egypt during the Middle Kingdom was also the focus of contemporary development. "gridtowns" or also "pyramid city" (Mazzone, 2017: 19) were settlements, which were cultivated along the Nile river. From the 4th dynasty onwards, "farming villages" began to be gradually redesigned into an urban fabric, and the simple farmhouses were converted into town houses that could be integrated into a new urban ideology. (Mazzone, 2017: 27) The aim was to resettle the rural people from their comfortable environment and to adapt them to the new urban way of life. Through this resettlement, a hoped-for civilization of society was planned to be adapted to new urban ideologies.

The cities consisted of simple farmhouses, which were built in close rows. These were surrounded by neighbouring houses on three sides for stability. Each small house had a piece of green space, whose size varied based on the class society. (cf. Universität Kassel, 2001: 15/16) The intention was to move away from the farming villages and build new settlements of solid buildings and structured system. With the beginning of the Middle and New Kingdoms, the construction of such settlements began to flourish. (cf. Mazzone, 2017) The close-knit building structure also had the purpose of shading and ventilation. Narrow alleys and paths served to cool air circulation within the houses. Even when there was a slight or small movement of air, a draft was created. Most houses also had small courtyards and private entrances. (cf. Universität Kassel, 2001: 15/16) The focus of these settlement structures was to use a "maximum of interior and living space and a minimum of exterior space." (Universität Kassel, 2001: 16) The life of the people was to take place either during work or inside the house itself. (cf. Fauerbach, 2014)

¹¹ The name goes back to the founder of the city, King Senwosret II and was built as another part next to the Lahun Pyramid and the now already destroyed valley building. (cf. Snape, 2019)

¹² The reason for this has remained unclear to this day. According to some researches, the gap between the west and the south could have been a housing area for Aamu Asiatics, who were resident in Egypt at that time. (cf. Snape, 2019)

EXAMPLE: Settlement of *al-Kahun* [اللاهون] in Fayoum, Egypt, Middle Kingdom

Kahun, ca. 1897 BC (cf. Mazzone, 2017: 28/29), is considered one of the few well-preserved settlements of antiquity and is located in the lower part of Fayoum. The settlement originated from the Middle Kingdom and was called Hetep-Senwosret ¹¹, which meant "the king is content/in peace". (cf. Snape, 2019)

The settlement was based on an orthogonal ground plan, which was surrounded by a city wall measuring 384m x 355m. The wall framed the city to the north, west and east. To the south, the city faced the Nile. The buildings were built along a strict grid, one after the other and could be divided into three main sections: Northwest was the highest point of the settlement. On top of it there was a house, built like the Acropolis, with a view of the entire settlement. Presumably, this served the king. To the west was a dense strip of houses made of mud brick, separated from the rest of the city by a thick wall.¹² The eastern part is the core area of the city. That is where most of the population lived. The houses were larger and grouped around a center. (cf. Snape, 2019)

the Western houses: Courtyard houses The houses were built small from their basic dimensions and consisted of a small number of rooms. The smallest houses were not larger than 8x7,5m and followed the strict square grid of the city. Each house had a garden and a portico located in the center of the house. The roofs were made of wooden beams and were covered with bundles of straw and plastered with clay. (cf. Snape, 2019) The rooms were accessible through a central entrance hall made of columns, around which they were all arranged. These were quite narrow and corridor-like in their proportions and were eventually covered with a barrel vault. The narrow corridor connected the individual units, thus always formed a block from the terraces that were strung together. This part of the city was different from the rest of the buildings and seemed more like an individual unit. The peculiarity of these houses was the freedom of change: due to the square grid, interior walls could be removed and added, adapting to the circumstances of each family. Even individual houses could be joined together to form a larger living unit. (cf. Snape, 2019)



fig. 10. Plan of *el Kahum* urban-settlement reproduced by Mazzone by Petrie’s report. (2017)

The city of Hotepsenusret [*sꜣm snwrt mꜣꜥ-xrw*] was founded by pharaoh Senusret II (12th dynasty; Middle Kingdom) in Fayoum. The blue part is the “elite” quarter. And the yellow part the “worker” quarter , or sometimes even referred as ‘ghetto’.

North of the city larger residential buildings were located. They faced the main street and were intended for community leaders of the settlements. Elite houses or villas always had a granary integrated in their houses. The villas were built in an orthogonal style with the dimensions of 27.5x31.5m. The center of the house is formed by a colonnaded courtyard, resembling the peristyle and encircling all the rooms, which are also parallel to the storerooms. (cf. Snape, 2019)

Despite different sizes, the planning was always based on certain structural characteristics (cf. Snape, 2019):

- Each house entered from the main street through a porter's lodge/ pillared room.
- Rooms lined up one after the other, sometimes used as a stable, as a room or workplace depending on the needs. These rooms were always connected by a central room.
- There was always a courtyard at the back end of the house.
- Elite houses also had a granary. Depending on the size of the house, the granary could also be more complex in its function. Some also had the task of serving as " junction points " of the city and could be considered as a central meeting spot of many. This shows the central values that the economy had for the community of a settlement.

C. SIMPLE FARMHOUSE DURING OLD KINGDOM The architecture of the houses had formed by the environment and the natural occurrences from nature. Initially, the dwelling consisted of small huts roofed with interwoven papyrus reeds, which only gave protection from the sun and wind. It was not until the discovery of the Nile mud that the building industry changed for the peasants. Due to the annual flooding of the Nile, there was a large residue of mud - the Nile mud "*Tamj*" - which was made by adding straw to sun-dried mud bricks. (cf. Salem Media) This building material was mainly used by the poor population, who could not afford stone or wood. Due to the weak construction, which consisted only of mud bricks, the one-story houses often did not last longer than a few years. Most of the houses had at least three rooms and a flat roof, which sometimes served as a living area for the whole family. Small and few openings served as protection from the sun and the entry of wind. The openings were high, to give privacy protection on the one hand and to be able to take in air on the other. The floors were made of solid earth.

Wood was too expensive for the poor farmer, so the roof was protected from the weather and sand by several bundles of reeds. Perfectly adapted to the weather conditions, it was only hygiene and the lack of durable construction methods that required constant repair and renewal of the houses. The importance of the house was that of a sleeping village: The farmer worked throughout the day, coming home only to sleep and gather the family. While men worked on the fields during the day, women were responsible for cooking and taking care of the children. Weaving baskets or sewing clothes were also among the basic tasks of women. Some also worked at the farmers market to help out their husbands. Since the outdoor area was not designed in many villages, most of the activity took place outside in front of the house or on the roof. For this purpose, some houses had the outdoor areas attached by a kind of awning "canopy" on their roofs or in front of their entrance. (cf. Salem Media 2023)

**fig. 12. mosque in Sharm el Sheikh, Sinai
in Islamic-ornamental style**

The mosque in Sharm el sheikh is built in a traditional Islamic architectural language and ornamentation



ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE (641-1952) The meaning

of an 'Islamic architecture' is still strongly present in Egypt today. Even if the formal architectural language no longer corresponds to the contemporary zeitgeist and is often only used in public buildings, it is above all the Islamic values of life that can still be found in Egyptian households and the traditional value system of a Muslim society. Characteristics of an 'Islamic architecture' can be found especially in old preserved quarters like al-Fustat in Cairo.

¹³The terminus Middle Age refers to the period of 641-1517, when Egypt got conquered by the Arabs, such as the Fatimids, Ummayyaden or Abbasids. (cf. Meyer-Wiese, 2014)

With the end of the ancient era and the pharaonic dynasty, the ancient buildings have remained as witnesses of a cultural heritage and unique culture. It was especially the temples and large representative buildings, which years ago could be perceived as an indestructible mass, that served as building material for the new Middle Age in Egypt¹³. In this Islamic building period, too, the focus was on regional building materials or those available through existing trade structures. Stone, however, this time was not only used for public-profane buildings, but was also used by the broad masses, and was no longer considered a building material of the elite. Besides stone, mud and clay were also used in raw form or as mud bricks. In addition, lime, gypsum, glass and iron were added. (cf. Lorenz, 2008: 92) Thus, after antiquity, a new great chapter of Egypt's building tradition opened. The Islamic era began with the 7th century conquests, from the early 641 to the 1517 by the Islamic Empire of various Arab Caliphate such as the Fatimids or the Mamluks. And was eventually continued by the Ottoman Turks from 1517-1798.–(cf. Meyer-Wiese, 2014) With this new Islamic influence after an age of simple geometric forms and wall paintings and engravings, a new building period full of ornamentation, domed buildings, and public squares began. It began an epoque of new forms of cultivation, language and way of life that left its mark until today.

The term "Islamic architecture"¹⁴ refers to the architecture which was built under the rule of the Fatimids, Ayyubids, Mamluks, Ottomans and the time of Pasha Mohamed Ali. The term also includes not only a specific building period, but also all those types of buildings that were built under an Islamic knowledge: This includes not only the houses and buildings, but also the development systems and urban structures. (cf. Lorenz, 2008: 85/86) The Islamic faith also implied a strict separation as well as a spatial order inside and outside the living space. The faith ran as a standard through the daily life and co-conceptualized as an inevitable part of the people.

¹⁴With the term 'Islamic architecture' not only the architecture from the Middle Age (641-1517) and the Ottoman Turks (1517-1798) is understood. But also those building phases during the French conquest (1798-1801), the British conquest (1801-1956). This is due to the fact that during the period of 1798-1953, a certain semi-autonomous rule by Mamluks or Ottomans (such as Ali Pasha from 1805-1953) could take place. (cf. Meyer-Wiese, 2014)

As a result, a homogeneous architecture has developed based on the inhabitants and views of life. Therefore, the buildings of the Islamic architecture represented not only an age of great conquerors and culture bearers but is also a carrier and an expression of a common spiritual basis. Values, behaviour and attitudes towards life were supported and influenced by religion. (cf. Lorenz, 2008: 83/84) The Islamic building language is based on a horizontal direction, variety of spaces, and a strict unity that is shown on the outside. Details and the arrangement of interior spaces are the key points of Islamic architecture and can only be discovered by entering the house. Unlike many European countries at that time, housing estates and sacred buildings were built to width. Nebel describes these buildings as "huge masses of stone" and "colossi flattened in two dimensions" (Villanueva, 2009: 15) that extended horizontally.

Islamic architecture, at the same time, introduces a new Islamic ideology within society. In this context, public space plays an important role in the creating of a society. The public space should be a place of social and spiritual gathering. The focus of public buildings was to create a large, shaded area for as many people as possible. Rows of columns, resembling a multitude of palm trees in a row, supported roofs like vaulted roofs, or arcades. The building structure should be as cheap as possible, but still effective. (cf. Villanueva, 2009:15) The public space should be a place of social and spiritual gathering. The focus of public buildings was to create a large, shaded area for as many people as possible. Rows of columns, resembling a multitude of palm trees in a row, supported roofs like vaulted roofs, or arcades. The building structure should be as cheap as possible, but still effective. (cf. Villanueva, 2009:15)

In Islamic architecture, however, privacy should not be understood as isolation. Rather, the outwardly closed life demonstrated an inwardly spiritual and lively inner life. The house was the center and turning point of all events. In addition to public spaces, such as markets [*suqs*] or mosques [*masjid*], living spaces were the place of family and friendship gatherings. The house has shed its protective role from ancient times and has turned to new tasks in which gathering plays a major role in life.



fig. 13. narrow streets inside the masjid complex of masjid Al-Mustafa, in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt

The mosque in Sharm is directly connected to the old market of the city. And together with the *suq* and bazaar it forms an urban structure of a public square. The narrow streets were the main feature of the oriental cities. The angularity and dimensioning allowed cool air to circulate through, as well as shade.

THE BUILT ISLAMIC-ARCHITECTURE

The

'Islamic architecture' goes over different epochs and rulerships. For a generalization of 'the' Islamic architecture, during the Egyptian expedition of the French in 1798-1801, a work was published in 1805 titled *Description de l'Égypte*, which summarized a series of scientific texts about Egypt, including the description and documentation of an oriental city. This work also serves to this day as the primary literature for many literary works on Egypt's Islamic era to summarize the Islamic architecture in form and content. (Meyer-Wieser, 2014)

“The cities of the entire Islamic world have a number of common features that - thanks to the preformed Islamic lifestyle - have hardly changed over the centuries. Thus, everywhere between Morocco and India, the Muslim found related social reference systems and spatial arrangements that were never entirely foreign to him. The architectural styles of public and private buildings may have varied from region to region, but the spatial fabric always remained essentially the same.” (Meyer-Wieser, 2014: 63)¹⁵

¹⁵[translated by the author from german]

„Die Städte der gesamten islamischen Welt weisen eine Reihe gemeinsamer Merkmale auf, die sich – dank der vorgeprägten islamischen Lebensform – über Jahrhunderte kaum verändert haben. So fand der Muslim zwischen Marokko und Indien überall verwandte soziale Bezugssysteme und räumliche Anordnungen wieder, die ihm nie ganz fremd waren. Die architektonische Stilformen der öffentlichen und privaten Bauten mochten zwar von Region zu Region unterschiedlich sein, doch das räumliche Gefüge blieb im Wesentlichen immer gleich.“ [from *Description de l'Égypte* in Meyer-Wieser, 2014: 63]

A. MOSQUE, *masjid* [مسجد] Islam was a part of everyday life. To support and represent it to the outside world, mosques were considered one of the most important representative buildings of Islamic architecture. The first mosque in Cairo was built under the rule of the Umayyads in 640 AD¹⁶. For ritual ablutions, an ablution basin was the main feature in the design of mosques." (cf. Fathy, 19733: 73-76) Islamic sacred architecture always tried to connect present world with the hereafter.

Referring to the creation between heaven and earth. Columned courtyards looked to the open sky and the central fountain connecting the building to the earth and its flowing water, which once covered the earth. That in between, is the human, who associates the present world. According to the story of creation in Islam, the earth was once covered with water. "Nothing existed except Him, nothing under Him and nothing above Him. Then He created His throne on the water." - Prophet Mohamed according to tradition of Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah. (Imam Mufti, 2018) Therefore, the presence of water, which not only symbolizes the world but can also reflect the sky and the view into infinity, plays a big role in religious-Islamic building and faith. The construction of the *masjid* consisted of simple geometries and focused on a large usable area. (cf. Lorenz, 2008: 95/96) Later, the mosques were provided with domes, which, along with the minaret -a pillar attached to the roof from which the muezzin calls the call to prayer- is the symbol of the Islamic houses of faith. The large bright atrium is supposed to represent the light and hence the presence of God.

¹⁶ It was based on the Prophet Muhammad's residence in Medina, in whose courtyard the faithful gathered to pray. (cf. Imam Mufti, 2018)

B. PUBLIC SPACE: MARKET, *suq* [سوق] In addition to sacred buildings, trading and marketplaces were among the most important public gathering places in the orient. The *suq* was a trading hub and had a great social and economic role in society. Here most of the exchanges, far from religion, could take place.

There was trade in goods, as well as other retail and wholesale trade, such as finance, handicrafts, or service trades. The markets arose from a narrow network of winding and elongated alleyways and were built not far from mosques. In some cases, *masjids* and *suqs* were designed as a structural system to strengthen the social and communal interaction through the engagement of both meeting places. Due to the narrow alleys, cloth or palm frond covers placed along the facades surrounding the *suq*, provided a cool and shady atmosphere. (cf. Lorenz, 2008: 98)

¹⁷ ancient Egypt
 see page 42.

C. THE HOUSE, *bait* [بيت] Protected from outside views and away from the busy alleys, the house served as a private retreat and place of tranquility. The rooms were kept simple in their design. They had no uniform purpose and, with the exception of sanitary rooms and the kitchen, they were flexible in their function and could easily be extended or altered according to their intended use. Rooms were therefore not seen as a closed unit, but as individual parts of a multitude which formed a system of rooms in total. (cf. Villanueva, 2009: 16)

The interiors also bore witness to a clear separation between public and private. However, a spatial separation of husband and wife existed only when guests visited. The reception room was intended for the master of the house – the father. The rooms on the upper floor, as well as the kitchen area, belonged to the women. No social separation can be seen from the outside. Also in terms of social and class society rich tradesmen had the same facades from the outside as the poor inhabitants. The houses were built close to each other. Similar to the ancient times, the narrow streets had the purpose of shading and cool drafts.¹⁷ The main area is the center of the house. Often designed as an inner- or garden courtyard, *riyadh* [الرياض], all the remaining rooms were grouped along the core of the house. (Lorenz, 2008: 107) The courtyard provided light and ventilation to the rooms. Moreover, its dimensions offered an additional shading purpose. "Sun-shyness helped build these white, light and glow reflecting walls of closed boxes, behind which no one suspects a paradise enchanted by earthly living. Inside, the many courtyards do not form the center of the building, they are not a public sphere also created in the private house like the ancient courtyards." (Hamann, 1952: 618)

Like a small oasis in the midst of the hectic and busy city, the central rooms of the houses served as a place of rest and gathering. At first, the windows were small and built high. Later, windows were provided as *mashraybiya* [مشربية] a wooden latticed bay window facing the alley. The few openings of the house allowed dense rows of dwellings, which were characteristic of the oriental cities. The interior reflected the living conditions of the people. The rough and cool building material of the stone, with the warm colors of the wood and the carpets, reveals the interior a soft and calm atmosphere. The few openings of the house allowed dense rows of dwellings, which were characteristic of the oriental cities. (cf. Universität Kassel, 2001:17) The interior reflected the living conditions of the people. The rough and cool building material of the stone, with the warm colors of the wood and the carpets, giving the interior a soft and calm atmosphere.

fig. 14. University of Ain Shams, Cairo

The Saffron „Zafaran“ Palace was built 1901-1902 for the two princesses Jananiar and Jeshem Avat, widows of Ismail Pasha. 1912 King Fouad I. bought the palace and sold it to the government 1925. In 1952 it became the headquarter for the „Ismail Pasha University“, which later got renamed as „Ain Shams University“. (Interview Habib)

The building in the heart of Cairo is a prime example of Islamic architecture, the simplicity of the facade and the details of the wooden windows are impressive. As well as the solidity due to the building material of stone. (AinShamsUniversity)



D. DECORATIVE ELEMENTS AND ORNAMENTATION

Many

interiors had little to no furniture. In the room itself, its interior elements should be flexible. (cf. Lorenz, 2008: 83) As in ancient times, a certain "floor culture" existed in the daily life of the people. Much of everyday life and spare time was spent sitting down: Prayer, eating or even manual labor. Hence why pillows and carpets were more important than high-seating furniture. This partly carried a cultural, but also a spiritual thought: People wanted to be close to earthly life to protect the afterlife and present life. Thus, the concept between life and death has continued to drag along in the lives of the Egyptian people.

Even in ancient times, people decorated their houses, tombs and temples with reliefs and wall paintings. In Islamic-Oriental art, it was mainly mosaics and frescoes that served as decorative elements. The most important decorative element was the ornament. At first, naturalistic floral patterns such as blossoms or leaves served as stylistic devices. These forms were later abstracted and extended by geometric and arabesque forms. As a motif, there are three types of ornaments: floral, calligraphic and geometric.

Like architecture, the system of ornamentation was also based on simple geometric patterns. As in oriental architecture, in the system of measurement of ornaments a complexity that arises from a simplicity can be seen. Significant for the Islamic architecture, is the flexible and free change of the interior spaces by adding or removing spatial structures. Thus, the ornaments also consist of a structure of combined or abstracted simple geometric patterns. (cf. Lorenz, 2008: 110-112) Hamann describes the art of ornamentation, as "a way of uniting geometric closed forms" (Hamann, 1952: 267)



fig. 15. *suq*, Chan el-Chalili [الخان الخليلي] in old Cairo, 14th century

The Chan al-Chalili *suq* or *bazaar*, was founded by the Mamluks in the 14th century. It is still considered an essential public place for enthusiastic tourists, as well as for the Egyptian people. The *suq* is surrounded by several mosques from the Islamic period and making the entire place serve since the 14th century as a caravanserai/ *chan* [خان]. To this day, decorative elements are decorated with Islamic embossing or floral as well as geometric patterns. (Radwan Mahfouz, 2015)

IDENTITY AS INSTRUMENT OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

In this section of the work, an attempt is made to give an overview of the identity of the Egyptians. It considers only that part of the population that was subject to colonization and settlement, and was influenced politically, historically and culturally. Other ethnic groups such as the Nubians, Bedouins or Amazigh are not included in this section due to clearly defined origins. Identity is always changeable and a fixed state. This mutability of an identity has therefore been used since ancient Egypt as an instrument for political ideologies. The propagation on the behalf of politics presupposes an instrumentalization of architecture, which aims at the deformation and transformation of a society. The focus lays always on the transformation of an entire collective. In the course of the chapter, it becomes clear that ethnicity and religious in particular, are always at the center of the deformation of a malleable mass.

Geopolitically, Egypt tends to connect with the Arabian Peninsula. Geographically, it is located in Africa. Historically, they feel closer to the Pharaohs than to the Ottomans, although the second had ruled the country for a long time and is closer to our present era than the pharaonic kingdoms. For politicians, the conceptualization and use of identity has become an influential instrument of political power, which is used over and over again. Words such as "community" or "national pride" are often used here to lead people to embrace one another and to be able to keep the people and the political events connected with them in mind. For the Egyptian society, the question of identity is therefore not a simple question that can be answered quickly. If one asks Egypt's passers-by about identity on the streets, two clear answers emerge: There are those who hardly want to deal with the concept of their origin and feel connected to the Arabs because of the language and religious culture. For those it is clear "We are Arab". Then there are those, however, who have a strong connection to their country and do not want to be influenced by the appearance of visual architecture or language development. For these it is clear: "We are not Arabs, we are the people of the Pharaohs. We are Egyptians. Quite simply. We were and they are the successors of our pharaohs." The people themselves are divided on this issue. It cannot settle on a clearly defined answer. "I have asked with this question many times. But could never aim at a decision who we really are." (Interview, Ahmed Abdulhakeem) But why does the question of origin play such an important role in society? Origin makes up a large part of one's individual identity, and instinctively adds each individual to a collective. For the Egyptian people, however, the search for and belonging to a nationality was abused as a political tool. Sometimes one was Arab, sometimes Egyptian, in between one was colonized and afterwards one wanted to be Western. With such a network of different influences and interactions, how can people recognize their cultural identity and themselves in today's society?

Identity is always used as a political instrument of a new social ideology. And as in many other cases, Egyptian identity, is not and never has been static and thus changeable. It is in a constant state of change and is always being reshaped. Society is seen as a malleable mass that can be reshaped according to the needs of the head of state. In this way this is also supported by a continuously running construction industry, which as it seems never comes to a standstill. Like small dots in between new desert cities, skyscrapers or entire vacation regions fill up the free regions in Egypt in a patchy manner and intervene in the natural-historical cultural heritage. As a result, the role of architecture within the question of identity and shaping a new ideology is always brought into focus.

From the materials to the spatial arrangement to the exterior design. All of these are tools of a new ideology to change and influence people through their built environment. The goal of politicians and political movements is always to shape the collective as a whole. And thus to shape a society that meets the desires of a new civilized population. But it is precisely this ability of shaping that is ultimately the problem of the current identity crisis. As a result, the role of architecture within the question of identity, is always brought into focus when talking about creating new ideologies. Since the Republic of Egypt (since 1952), Egyptian identity has always been at the center of a new ideology. "The tradition is lost, and we have been cut off from our past ever since Mohammed Ali cut the throat of the last Mameluke. This gap in the continuity of Egyptian tradition has been felt by many people, and all sorts of remedies have been proposed." (Fathy, 1973:19)

With the ending era of the Mamluks, the Egyptian people found themselves in a deep self-discovery phase that has been shaped by different ideologies. Due to the research about the ideology of the Egyptian and the conversations on the streets of Cairo as well as Fayoum, 5 formative ideologies of the last years have turned out to be interesting, which are presented under the following part. Because of the great range around the topic of Egyptian identity, the 5 chosen phases will be described in a short form.

1. el-Nahda "Renaissance" (1875-1925)
2. Taha Hussein and the "Pharaonism" (1920's-1930'ss)
3. Gamal Abd el Nasser's "Arab identity" (1960's)
4. Anwar as-Sadat's "Re-Islamization" (1970's-1980's)
5. Abd al-Fatah as-Sisi's "re- pharaonization." (since 2014)

fig. 16. Research sketch: built architecture in form of new ideologies

During the research trip with regard to the subject of ideology and architecture as forming element, the most impressive and monumental buildings of the epochs were captured.

el Nahda: Pyramids of Giza. Pharaonism: Tomb of Saad Zaghloul (1931). Arab identity: Cairo Tower (1961). Re-Islamization: Cairo Opera House (1998). re-pharaonization: grand Egyptian Museum (2023).



- 1. el-Nahda "Renaissance"
(1875-1925)**
- 2. Taha Hussein and the "Pharaonism"
(1920's-1930'ss)**
- 3. Gamal Abd el Nasser's "Arab identity"
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- 5. Abd al-Fatah as-Sisi's "re- pharaonization."
(since 2014)**

1. AL-NAHDA [عصر النهضة] “AWAKENING”: EGYPT’S RENAISSANCE 1875-1925

In the period of Egypt's last monarchy (1522-1952), Egypt was under the rule of the Ottomans and the British. A group of young Egyptians initiated a new movement - "Urabi Movement"- calling for a boycott of British and Arab culture and lifestyle and the return to their own "Egyptian" lifeline and ancient Egypt. When the popular journalist Yaqub Sanu first wrote an article in Egyptian-Arabic in a magazine, it also reached out to the common masses to inspire them to a revived national pride and thus the Egypt’s renaissance – known as *al-Nahda* - was initiated, which was to become a wake-up call to the Egyptian cultural heritage. . With the slogan "Egypt for Egyptians“ (Motyl, 2001: 138) he ushered in a new collective ideology in society, whose adherents included not only intellectuals, elite of dissatisfied Ottomans or constitutionalists, but also peasants became part of it. They demanded to build a "new Egypt" in which structural inequality and the exploitation of an unjust class system would be abolished. (cf. Colla, 2007:168)

Tyranny and inequality stretched like a shadow through the narrow and dark alleys of the city. The pasha was considered equal to the position of a Pharaoh, in which he was not only the ruler but also a tyrann for those he who were defeated by his power. Under his rule the elite had no freedom of speech and the peasant had to work for him in small villages and under miserable conditions. Shawqi wrote a poem about this and described it as follows: *„You threatened us with perpetual slavery and continuing humiliation, and a state of being that would never see change. Did you think that God was less powerful than you, incapable of effecting change or alteration? God rules over kings, and states that vie with him for power do not last. Before you Pharaoh was greater in strength, and a mightier backer to have in this world.“*(cf. Colla, 2007:171)

With the new return to the ancient world, architecture also changed. The architectural language consisted no longer only of Islamic or Arabic forms, but also of modern and ancient designs. Large buildings with pompous staircases with columned halls embellished the new cultural identity of the Egyptians. (cf. Meyer-Wieser, 2014: 218)

2. TAHA HUSSEIN “PHARAONISM”: ACKNOWLEDGING THE ROOTS

Not far away from "Nahda," another ideological movement developed at the same time. Between the 1920s and 1930s, another ideological movement called "Pharaonism" developed, which continues to be to his day, the subject of identity-related discourses. Among its greatest and significant pioneers was the famous writer and Nobel prize-winner Taha Hussein. He once wrote: “Pharaonism is deeply rooted in the spirits of the Egyptians. It will remain so, and it must continue and become stronger. The Egyptian is Pharaonic before being Arab. Egypt must not be asked to deny its Pharaonism because that would mean: Egypt, destroy your Sphinx and your pyramids, forget who you are and follow us! Do not ask of Egypt more than it can offer. Egypt will never become part of some Arab unity, whether the capital [of this unity] were to be Cairo, Damascus, or Baghdad.”(Taha Hussein, 1933)

Pharaonism was intended primarily for intellectuals as a new form of Egyptian cultural identity. The ideology of the Nahda did not represent their own ideas adequately. On the one hand, they wanted to turn away from Islamic stereotypes and ideologies, and on the other hand, they did not take the dominant Islamic culture into consideration for their new ideology. (Colla, 2007: 18) It is supposed to be different than in the Nahda. They did not want to refer to the tyrannies of the Pharaoh, and they wanted to move away from the pan-Arab ideology. The language and the culture moved into the foreground. Only the word "*fir'awna*," which meant Pharaoh in the ancient Egyptian language and was likewise "*fir'awna*" [الفرعون] in Egyptian, was intended to establish a reference to antiquity and its ancestors. The movement leaned towards the spiritual and aesthetic. In addition, the movement wanted to deprive the West and the Europeans of the power of deformation, and further cultural appropriation of their own history and culture. (cf. Potenza, 2021: 71) The return to the ancient pharaohs reached its peak through the uncontrolled ancient diggings of French and British archaeologists in their own land. Egyptians experienced a sense of new cultural imperialism through the constant lecturing of foreign scholars, this time on a historical level. Statements like that of a French archaeologist, "Egyptians don't know the treasures they possess." (Colla, 2011: 162), are what constantly led the Egyptian people to a standstill of their own identity and animated them to a search for identity. Elliott Colla views the return to the ancient as a goal of the representatives and how „to help create Egyptian identity itself“ (Colla, 2011: 155) through a new pedagogical form. This could only take place through the knowledge of the intellectuals, who’s narratives about the Nahda and ancient Egypt, would lead to a „powerful literary narrative of a rebirth that was as personal as it was communal.“(Colla, 2011: 155)

But this form of a new ideology was limited only to a part of the population, which is why it could not eventually establish itself among the masses. Moreover, the dogma was subject only to existing Egyptian archaeological excavations. Therefore, the reference to the

ancient becomes something fictitious. And with the term fictitious shall mean 'what is no longer existential'. Namely, that part of the ancient world that has died out with its people: culture, everyday life or language. It represents a conflict between reality and fiction. And shows the desire for something "untouchable", which the intellectuals seem to desire. This desire was linked to the fascination with the ancient people: at that time the people were civilized, language and writing were developed, architecture was at its peak, the kingdom was competitive in foreign policy as well as economically. Therefore, this movement was more about the recognition of the antique achievements of the ancient people and their life. „Nowhere was their advanced learning more clearly evidenced than in the architecture they left behind. Again, the pyramids were identified as incontestable examples of the perfection of Egyptian science, even if the civilization that produced it was heathen.“ (Baghadi in Colla, 2011: 84) With the hope that this desire of an ancient progressive ideology would lead to a collective cultural identity, Phraonism could be seen as a form of decolonization that would give rise to a new strengthened Egyptian-nationalism. And could rather be seen as a turning away from the colonial powers, as an anti-Arab movement.

3. GAMAL ABD EL NASSER'S ARAB IDENTITY: BUILDING A COALITION AGAINST THE WEST

After the military coup in 1952 and the overthrow of King Faruk, the history of the Egyptian Republic and the conflict of many Egyptians with their own identity began. Simply the change of the name from "Kingdom of Egypt" to "United Arab Republic" initiated a new ideology of a nationality. After the long conquest of power by the Arabs, the country, its people and its culture were changed and influenced in a decisive way. No power, like the Arabs, has been able to influence the Egyptian people to such a great extent since the Pharaohs. Arabization" is usually referred to in technical language. The Egyptian people adopted the Arabic language as well as the Arabic religion, Islam. The Arabic-Islamic culture took over the everyday life, and influenced thereby not only architecture, but also considerably the associated way of life. Since then, it was clear that the political could hardly be separated from the cultural.

Although Muhammad Nagib (1954) was Egypt's first president, he was quickly replaced by Gamal Abd el Nasser. For the first time, an Egyptian leader was at the top and since 343 BC, Egypt has been ruled not by a Macedonian Greek, nor a Roman, nor an Arab, nor a Turk, but finally by an Egyptian. As the first socialist in Egypt, he initiated a completely new economic-social as well as social course in Egypt. Nasser, whose supporters were called *Nasserists*, wanted to strengthen the alliance with the Arab countries. The Republic of Egypt suddenly

became an Arab Republic, which became the center of the established Arab Union. Nasser was popular in all Arabic-speaking countries. If you were Egyptian at that time, you were to be Pharaonic people and ancient life poses a somewhat abstract problem. The return to the considered as one of the most popular Arabic ethnicities in the Middle East. (cf. Brroke, 2020) Arab national pride suddenly blossomed after years of occupation. The people were given back what had been taken away from them for years. He told a close friend about his new ideological strategy: "Formerly I believed neither in the Arabs nor in Arabism. Each time that you or someone else spoke to me of the Arabs, I laughed at what you said. But then I realized all the potential possessed by the Arab states! That is what made me change my mind!" (Karsh, 2007: 152)

For Nasser, the connection of the Egyptian people with the Arab ideology was primarily, a political power strategy. As a result of new agreements with Arab countries, a foreign policy independence and the introduction of socialism, Egypt's construction industry has also changed: He wanted to "increase the number of service companies to create investment capital." (Meyer-Wieser, 2014: 261) This resulted in a huge increase in population, which requires the construction of new desert cities, such as Nasr City. Large concrete blocks, resembling communal housing estates, suddenly dominated the cityscape. Only representative buildings within tourist complexes were decorated with pharaonic motifs. Rural areas also underwent a major change as a result of the new land reform. The Arab farmer was granted a cultivated area of "2-5 feddan, a donkey and a house", remembers Dr. Adel Fahmy (Interview, Dr. Adel). The "Nasserist reforms have enhanced the cultivator's position by small land grants and by legally securing tenure systems in his favor and at the same time the reforms thus had the effect of securing the cultivator's attachment to the land" (Weyland, 2002: 97) Which led to the advantage of farmers to suddenly possess pieces of land and provide for themselves.

The discourse on the Arabization of Egypt is still at the forefront of many genetic questions today. More and more Egyptians are turning away from the stereotype "Arab". Today's DNA results also strengthen the idea of Pharaonic ancestors. According to NGGP, about 68% of the population share the same phenotype as the indigenous population of ancient Egypt. Only 17% have Arab genes. (cf. Weyland, 2002: 97) "We are not Arabs, we are Egyptians" one reads in articles. The idea of not being Arab, of not having been genetically colonized or altered, helps the people to value their roots and origins. The language, the appearance and the way of life have always differentiated them from the Arabs, which is why they never clearly felt as part of the Arab people.

4. ANWAR AS-SADAT “RE-ISLAMIZATION”: BRINGING BACK ISLAMIC VALUES

After a long era of Nasser, Sadat, as the first capitalist, replaced him. His plan was to give the Egyptian a way to slay capital from any sector. It was to put Egypt above everything and: "Under his time, everyone could reach prosperity. Be it through illegal or legal business. He left everything open." says an old man in one of Cairo's oldest cafés. Sadat's policy, however, was primarily anti-Nasser. He wanted to reverse everything Nasser stood for, namely away from the - "pan-Arab socialist" ideology and back to an "Egyptian Islamic" one. Although he was not an Islamist, he initiated a strategic "re-Islamization of Egypt" to fight the *Nasserists*. After an Arab cultural identity, Islam was now suddenly back at the center of ideology. His reign began with the slogan "Egypt first" (Karsh, 2007: 168) and the "United Arab Republic" became "the Arab republic of Egypt". This was intended to lead to a reconsideration of Egypt's own identity and to reaffirm national pride and Islamic identity. Through the peace agreement with Israel, a new economic period of "infitah - opening" [انفتاح] began in Egypt, with many foreign investors investing in Egypt economically. The country opened up more to the West as a result. Daily life and the pattern of life changed significantly as a result, and the Western building language took over the former Oriental-influenced country. In this way, more Western urban models, such as those from America, became the focus of Egyptian urban planning. (Meyer-Wieser, 2014: 276)

5. ABD AL-FATAH AS SISI'S “RE-PHARANONIZATION”: BETWEEN YESTERDAY AND TODAY

After the fall of Mubarak and the riots of the Arab Spring, society had to recover. The rapid overthrow of the democratically elected president Mursi and the military's quick takeover of power created a strong tension and unequal reflection within society. Sisi wanted, therefore, to develop a new construct of the Egyptian. As well as to affirm a new nationality that would unify both the historical and religious identities of Egyptians. During his second campaign, he promoted "building the new Egyptian" [binaa' al-insan al-masri al-jaded - بناء الانسان المصرى الجديد] (Winter, 2019: 66) This "new Egyptian" was designed from a mosaic of 7 pilasters: Pharaonic, Greco-Roman, Coptic, Islamic, Arab, Mediterranean, and African. (cf, Winter, 2019: 65)

The goal is to form a modern society through certain dogmas of re-pharaonization. The aim is to create a collective identity in which every single inhabitant of Egypt feels represented, by

welcoming all ethnicities and origins of Egypt. The Egyptian author Fathy Embaby associated this form of the new ideology with the "game of musical chairs"(cf. Winter, 2019: 66) in which a particular identity can be played depending on its use, where the identities can stand up and sit down whenever they would be needed. This points out the great difference with Sisi's predecessors: each identity plays along and is ready for use. And no identity ever leaves its chair and thus can never drop out of the game. He wants to form a fundamental homogeneity out of a heterogeneous society in which no one feels excluded and to propagate himself as the "protector of the Egyptian identity". (Winter, 2019: 67) Such political instrumentalization takes place primarily through public events in which identity is staged under a theatrical cloak of politics.

An example: On April 3, 2021, the "Golden Parade" took place in the course of the opening of the new National Museum of Egyptian Civilization. A live broadcast of the opening of the new museum is shown on television: blue modern cars decorated with gold, dressed in ancient wagon-style, are driven through the city by Egyptians, costumed as pharaohs. Representatively, the wagons pass through a specific route to the museum: the Old City is shown from where Tahrir Square, dating back to "Renaissance" times, is crossed. Past the ancient pyramids of Gizeh, to the new modern museum. The mummies themselves, are brought in across a red carpet passing through a giant gate of the museum. The President and Minister of Culture are present to welcome the new opening The guests wear clothes in reference to the ancient patterns of the pharaohs by Egyptian designers and sung in the ancient Egyptian language. (Youtube, 2021)

Sisi's promise of a "new Egyptian" quickly turns out to be a demonstrative symbol of power. The construct of a collective serves only propaganda purposes. New lavish museums were built, dedicated to the pharaohs and resembling the pyramids and temples in appearance. As well as "new desert cities" and a shift of the capital Cairo in a "New Cairo" are inserted by the development of a better and modern infrastructure, characteristically into the new townscape. Nevertheless, these changes remain accessible only to a certain mass. Although no distinction is made in terms of ethnicity or religion, only a fraction of the population, namely the elite and intellectuals, have access to Sisi's newly formed identity. This social group is formed into a collective due to their access of the new modern Egypt, while the rest of the Egyptian population is left behind and continues to be overlooked.

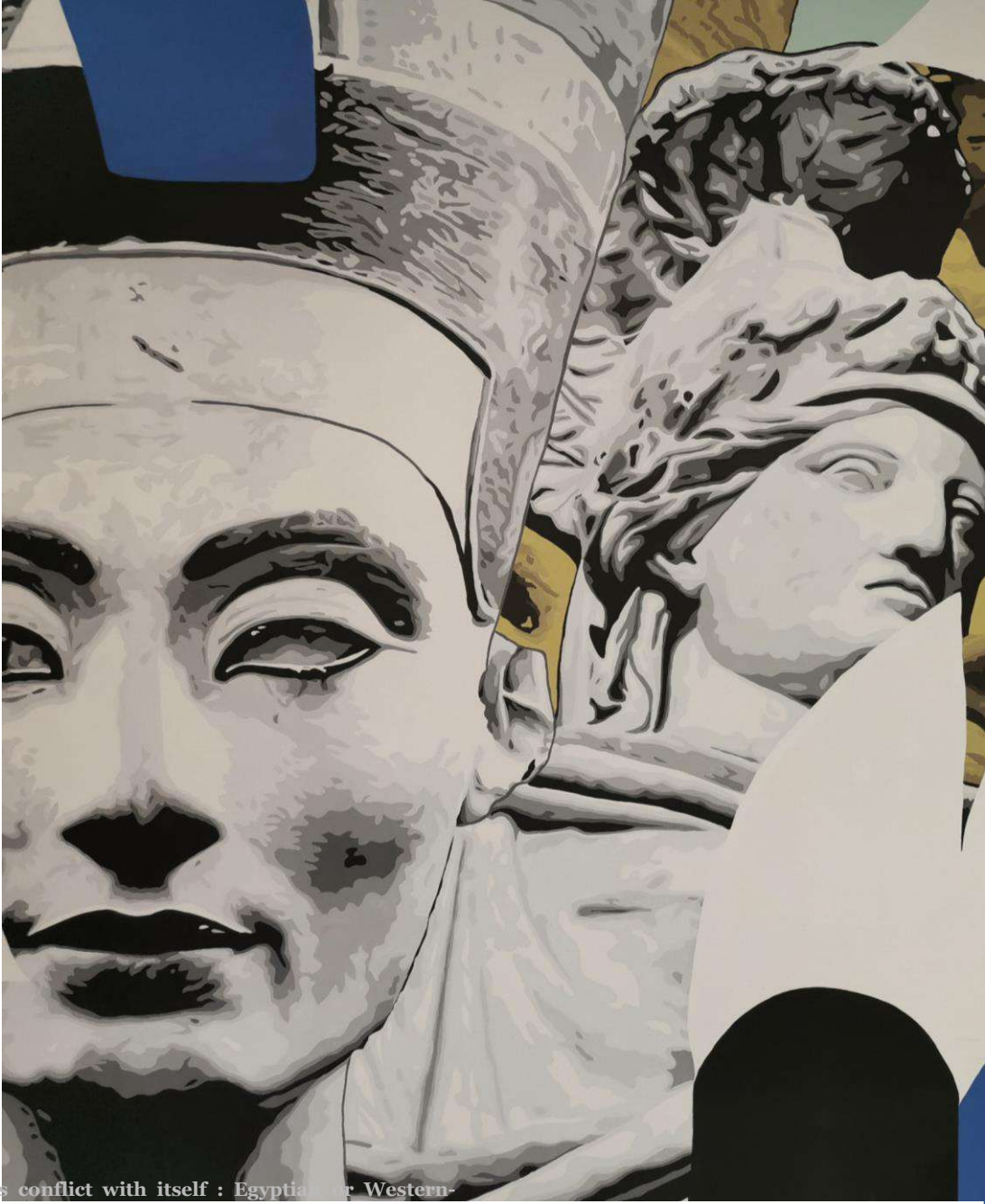


fig. 17. Egypt's conflict with itself : Egyptian or Western-European? , wall in Cairo

The question of identity, as well as belonging, is also externalized by society. In many places of the city can be seen the approach to the internal conflict, which is represented by the turn between the West and the Orient. Here the interaction of a traditional cultural origin meets a modern Western ideology.



Chapter 3

mapping

“At the end of the day, when I built with clay, my hands are soft. Because it is natural. It belongs to us. We were made out of clay!” (Interview, Haj Essam)

Chapter 3: Mapping

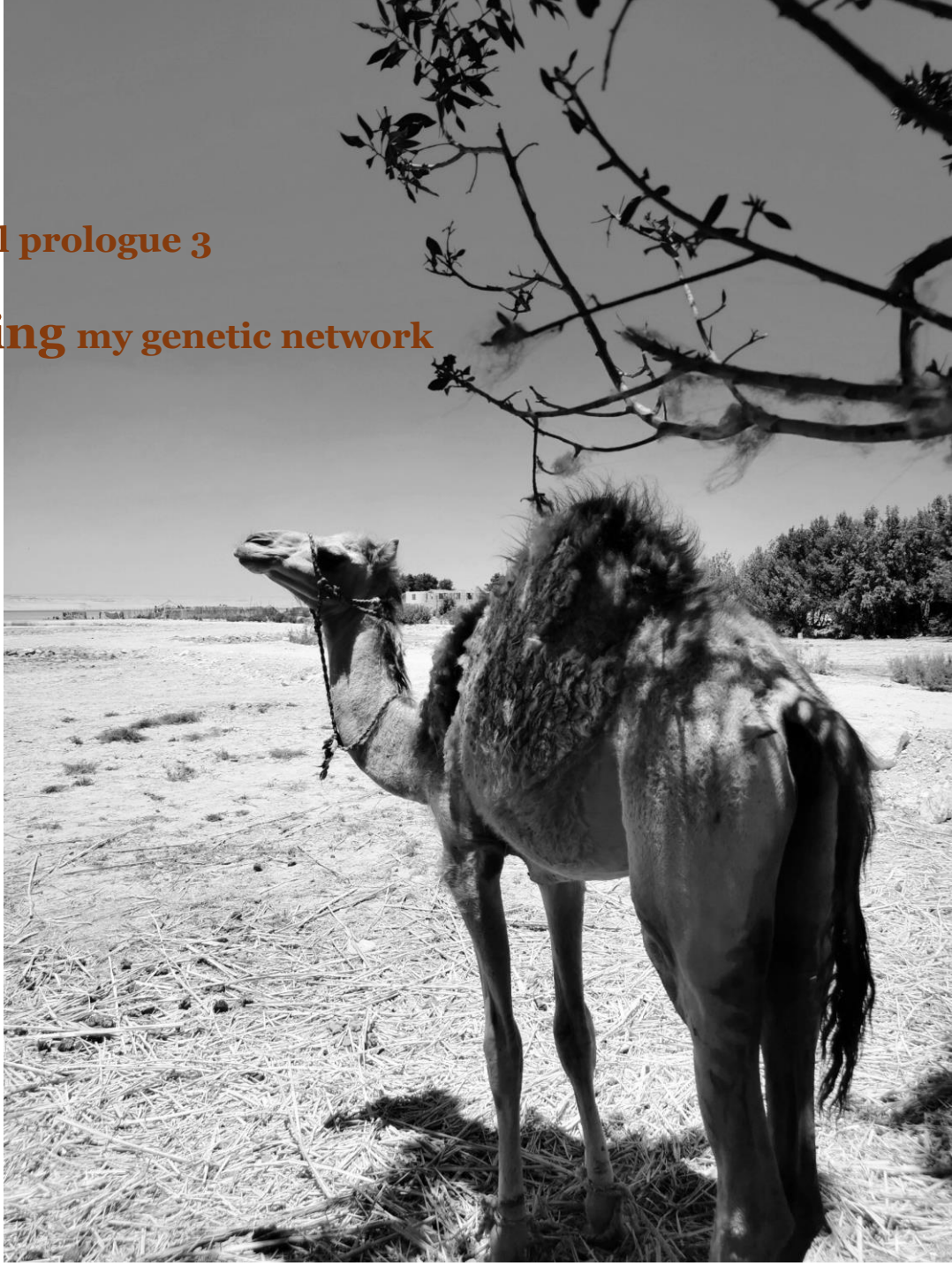
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personal prologue 3

Mapping my genetic network

fig. 18. Camel at the Lake Quarun, Fayoum



MAPPING my genetic network

Not long ago, while sitting on the balcony of my grandmother's new house and overlooking the whole city, the Adhan of the mosques started. The Maghreb prayers was announced through the high minaret of the mosque not far from the house. Five times a day, I could hear the beautiful sound that came out of the high tower, and the usual loud and hectic city suddenly seemed to be frozen. Quietness would overcome the people whenever the sound of the mosque rang through the narrow streets of the city.

While sitting there and enjoying the sunset and peace of the deserted area, overlooking the new high buildings, next to green areas and bundle of animals on the rooftops, I started to talk with my father about the origin of our roots. Even though my grandparents always told me we were Egyptians, I never fully understood why in Europe they would identify me as an Arab. I didn't look like coming from the Arabic gulf, nor did I speak the same Arabic language. Even my culture was different from theirs. So the construct of my identity still wasn't fulfilled, and I still had the urge to know my exact roots in a seemingly intrusive way. My father on the other hand, was quietly sitting next to me sipping on his tea and told me "Every Egyptians is a *fallah* (an Egyptian word for farmer). We were all once farmers. Even though many of us life in cities or have different works nowadays."

These few sentences hit me. It felt like my own box of Pandora got opened, and everything I thought I understood was flying around me, shattered into pieces and causing an inner catastrophe. After doing my research I understood what was meant by these words. And I also realized how much the Egyptian identity is rooted to the old traditional ancient lifestyle. Even though we lost track our ancient part. We still got connected to them by simple wordings, festivities or definitions the modern Egyptians unintentionally or maybe intentionally tend to us. But still, how much can a person retract ancient roots? Not just the ancient roots, but also the habits. What does still exist over many years and over generations. This question kept me fascinating. Reading Hassan Fathy's ideology, culture is something a person inherits from its predecessor. And with the inheritance to the next generation, a tradition is created that people tend to follow mindlessly. It was a coincident when around that time a traditional festival took place. "*Eid Wafaa el Neil*" [عيد وفاء النيل] – "The Feast of the Resurrection of the Nile". During the ancient time, whenever the Nile River would flood over, due to heavy rains in Ethiopia, the mud of the river was washed on the shores. Called *Tamj*, the people used to build their houses out of the washed up clay. In gratitude, the most beautiful girl of the village was sacrificed to the Nile. This sacrifice was then followed by a feast. Today people still use to celebrate that day. Even though the Nile mud can't be washed up anymore, due the regulation of the Assiut-dam, let alone a women being sacrificed. Followed by that visual and historical information, I realized, that even though modern society and the zeitgeist can affect traditional habits. Like building houses out of the Nile mud. And that cultural part of an identity can be connected to parts of old memories or habits and inheritance. The power of heritage and memory was therefore much bigger, then the simple theory of an ideology.

Chapter 3

Fayoum Oasis -

al-Fayyum [الفيوم]

The geographical location of Fayoum in Egypt is unique. Neither entirely in Upper Egypt nor in Lower Egypt, lies Fayoum sideways in the Libyan Desert, creating the perfect transition from Mediterranean to desert life. This geographic duality gives Fayoum a certain double identity within the already big web of "Egyptian" identity. Through historical artifacts such as the ancient "Fayoumi mummy portraits"¹⁸ or the strong reference to the agricultural culture and the ancient Sobek cult, the uniqueness is understood not only geographically but also socio-culturally. At the same time, due to the rising globalization and modernism, part of the population constantly faces a conflict between the urban modernity and the rural tradition. Some are attracted to urbanity by its geographic proximity to the capital city of Cairo, while others identify strongly with the rural lifestyle and peasant life of the oasis and its *fallah* population. The following chapter section 'Fayoum Oasis' provides a topographical overview as well as a historical excursus about the oasis, which will serve as an introduction to the region for the following field example of the village of Tunis in the Fayoum Oasis.

¹⁸ 'Fayoumi mummy portraits' is the term given to a collection of ancient portraits of the dead that were mostly found from the Roman era in Fayoum. The artefacts are very well preserved and each piece shows a person in frontal view in a head-chest-portrait. Due to the physical similarity of the portraits to today's rural population of Fayoum, many farmers are particularly attracted to the mummy portraits and consider themselves direct descendants of the ancient world. From an anthropological point of view, the close connection to the portraits by today's population can be seen as a clear identification with the ancient cultural history, which has also eventually led to a deep attachment their ancestors simple rural lifestyle. *Fellahen* also cultivate their love and closeness to the portraits to the outside world, which is why in many regions, such as Tunis Village, the portraits can be found on house facades. The portraits play an important role around the topic of identity search and cultural heritage of the *fallahen* of Fayoum. (cf. Büyükyıldırım, 2022)
 These representations can be seen in images fig. 1, fig. 40, fig. 97.



fig. 19. Fayoumi mummy portraits, Tunis Village

artist: Mohamed Sedky – owner of ‘from Skylark

The fayoumi portraits can be seen in various occasions in Fayoum. On the walls of the houses or even here on bags, sold mostly to tourists from Cairo. Especially the younger generation have interest in valuing old historical culture.

„Cool are the dawns; tall are the trees; many are the fruits; little are the rains.“ –
 former governor of Fayoum ,

Syrian amir Abu Uthman al-Nabulsi (Hewison , 2008: 1)

Almost 750 years ago the former Syrian amir Abu ‘Uthmân al-Nabulsi caught the beauty of the oasis desert Fayoum. The land of Fayoum reminded him of Damascus, with its rare beauty focusing on the nature and the richness of the land not knowing that it will stay as a unique oasis full of its own stories and local people. Even the way of description, he kept focusing on the captivating nature

On the way from Cairo to Fayoum one might begin to understand the rare beauty captured in those words of Nabulsi. The cool dawns and tall trees refer to the endless rows of palm trees that seem to be sprouting out of the earth uncontrollably and giving the land the rare beauty of a desert covered with trees and shadow. Wherever you look around you see fruit. Although the rural areas are known to be struggling with poverty and misery, the natural wonder of fruits growing everywhere in the Fayoum Oasis, seems as if there is still a blessing from mother nature and fertility of the soil. The infamous Fayoumi mangos filling up whole narrow streets not only with their beautiful yellow colour, but also with their smell that fills up the whole area with its sweet scent. Thick red pomegranates growing next to Egyptian pink and yellow guavas. Dates falling out from the trees everywhere you look around. Fields filled with tall grasses full of rice and wheat. Again and again, between the fields full of fruit and palm trees, the heart of Fayoum - The Lake Quarun/ *birqet Quarun* [بركة قارون]¹⁹ – can be seen from afar. What might look like a sea or the ocean at first sight, turns out to be the *birqet Quarun*, Egypt’s biggest salt-lake. A lake full of stories and history. As Strabo wrote in his Egypt journey B.C.:

“But since they [the ancient Egyptians] neglected this matter, although they make much oil, it has a bad smell (the rest of Aegept has no olive trees, except the gardens near Alexandria, which are sufficient for supplying olives, but furnish no oil). And it produces wine in no small quantity, as well as grain, pulse, and the other see-plants in very great varieties. It also contains the wonderful lake called the Lake of Moeris, which is an open sea in size and like a sea in colour; and its shores, also, resemble those of a sea, so that one may take the same supposition about this region about that of Ammon (...) that, just as from the numerous evidences one may surmise that that temple was in earlier times situated on the sea, so likewise these districts were in earlier times on the sea.” (Strabo, 17.1.34-35)

¹⁹ *Birqet Quarun* also known as Lake Moeris, is fed through the *bahr Yousef* (a canal which connects Fayoum with the Nile). Hence why sometimes Fayoum is not considered as official Oasis. The name “Moeris” derives from the Coptic name “mer wer” – great canal. (cf. Hewison , 2008)
 The Lake is also known under the name *buhairat quarun* [بحيرة قارون]



fig. 20. Map of Fayoum with an overview in Egypt

TOPOGRAPHY

Neither quite in the north, nor quite in the central of Egypt. Fayoum only 62 miles from Cairo “grows out on one side of the Nile stem” (Hewison , 2008: 2) and therefore doesn’t certainly belong to the northern Nile Valley, nor to the Delta. And therefore it can not be described as Lower or Upper Egypt. Nor does it fully count as an oasis, due to depending on water from the Nile. It appears as if Fayoum has a dual identity (cf. Hewison , 2008: 2) due to its unclear situation. The strong bond to the Nile and Lower Egypt is to be seen on the map. The Oasis appears to have a placenta like shape, that is tied through an umbilical cord [*bahr Yousuf*] to its mother, the Nile. Almost independent, but still vitally liked to its mother Nile. Even though Fayoum is a natural depression in the Western Desert it still needs a direct water supply from the Nile, coming through the Lake Yousuf/ *bahr Yousuf* [بحر يوسف], a canalized river. (cf. Hewison , 2008: 2)

Fayoum depression lies in the West of Cairo, South to the Nile and is being bounded in the northwest by a high limestone scarp. The Quarun River and Fayoum depression lies in the West of Cairo, South to the Nile and is being bounded in the northwest by a high limestone scarp. The Quarun River and the northern part of Fayoum is completely below sea level, which is about 45 meters below sea level. In the middle of the river, with an area of 800 cubic meters, there is a small island, called Golden Horn Island, with an area of 2 km². Only the southern part of the lake is fertile and can be used as economic land. In the Southwest of Fayoum lie two smaller depression, Wadi al-Rayan, which has no natural water nor soil and Wadi al-Hitan, also called Valley of the Whales. Wadi al-Hitan has been declared 2005 as an UNESCO World Heritage Site, because of the discovery of the first fossil whale skeletons in 1902. 35 million years ago the area of northern Egypt was under water of the prehistoric Mediterranean Tethys Sea. (cf. Hewison, 2008: 69)

The rest of the Fayoum basin is surrounded by desert dunes and low hills, also called mushroom pillars by the locals . Therefore the Fayoum depression not only differentiates itself from other depressions of Egypt due to water supply, but also its rich land history, which led to the result of a high population density. With more then 3.9 million (cf. City Population, 2021) residents it can be count as one of the densest depressions in Egypt. A population that can be tracked millions of years back witch a rich history that affected the outcome of the land and its small villages. Central areas of the depression tend to have a larger rural population as the one within the areas near the desert. Only 23,2% live in urban areas, whereas 76,8% in rural areas. (cf. Knoema)

Fayoum now is under one central governing body, the Fayoum Governorate. His administrations stretches beyond the depression and has a total area of 4,578km² or 1,089,564 *feddan* [فدان]²⁰. The area is divided into six administrative *markaz*/ centres [مراكز]: Sunnuris and Ibshaway in the north, Yusuf al-Siddiq in northwest, Tamiya in northeast, Itsa in the south and the Fayoum City in the centre – Fayoums capital. The next administrative level are 163 villages, called *qarya* [قرية], each of them has an *umda* [عمدة], which resembles a mayor and who is responsible for representing the government in his community, settling disputed and keeping a general peace. The authority of an *umda* not only covers the main villages, but also the hamlets known as *izba* [عزبه], that lie within the village boundaries. A hamlet is basically any nuclear settlement which is too small to have its own *umda*. (cf.

Hewison, 2001: 4)

²⁰ The *feddan* [فدان] is a measurement used in Egypt. A *feddan* is divided into 24 *kirat* [قيراط]. 1 *kirat* equals 175m². which makes 1 *feddan* = 0.420 hectares

History of settlements

Where the earliest

evidence for farming in Egypt and the centre for royal amusement took place, from building pyramids to a legend of the ancient gods: Fayoum landscape and people track back a richness of history. To fully understand the identity and culture of the Fayoum's people and their land, one has to go back to the roots and discover the history of settlements. In pre-history Fayoum got occupied by different dynasties and nations, thus the indigenous being exposed to several different cultures. Even more than the Nile Valley. Because of its unique natural environment and soil, the land was always the interest of foreign rule. (Hewison ,

2008)

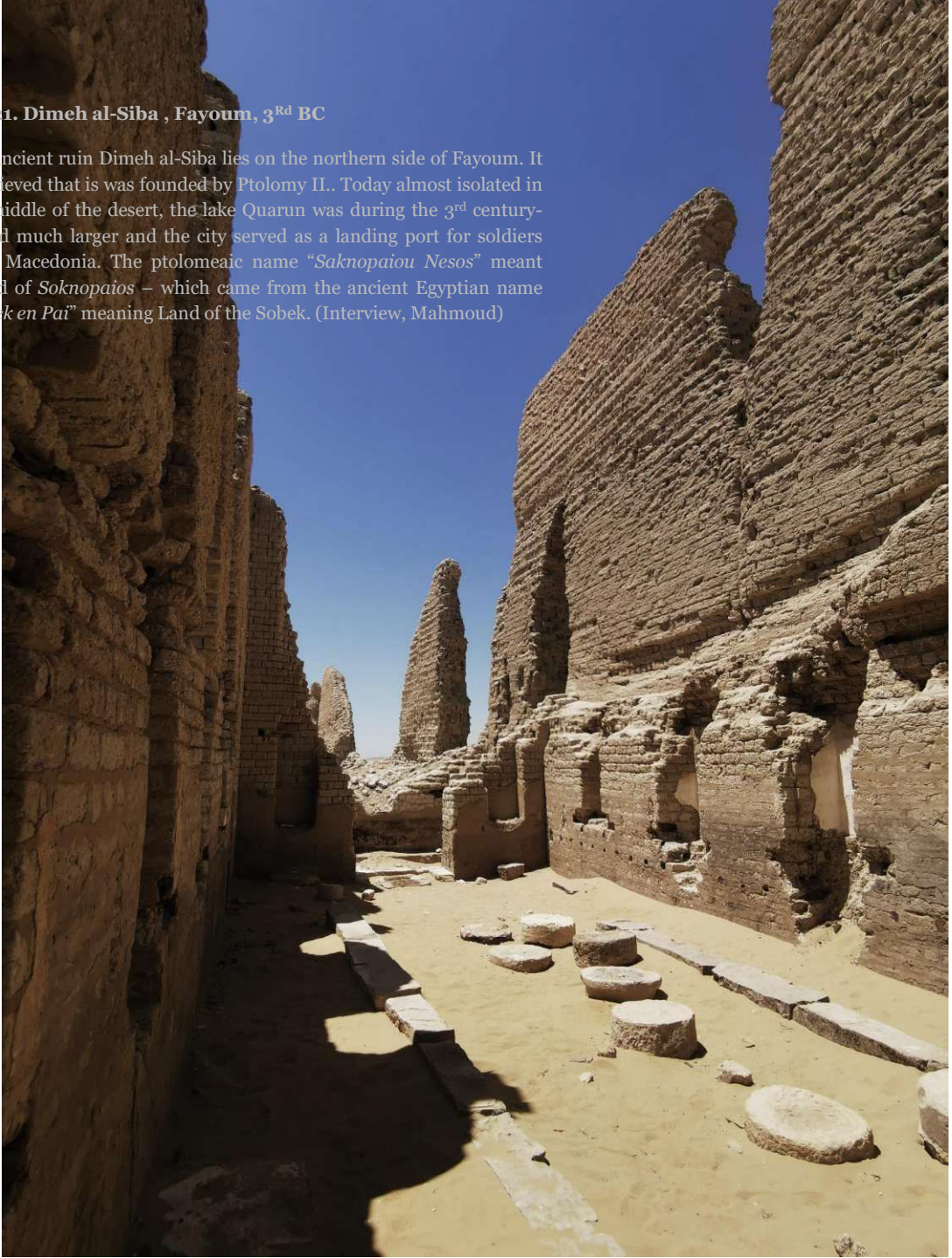
PHARAONIC DYNASTY AND THE CULT OF SOBEK – THE CROCODILE

According to ancient mythology the lake Moeris which was identified as Nun – father of the Gods and also the primeval Ocean in ancient Egypt – was the origin of all lives. The hill *Shedyet* – the primeval hill - arose out of this ocean and was the place on earth where life existed for the first time. The water of the lake was home to the crocodile Sobek who was believed to “embody the elementary powers of creation” (Aldred, 1978: p.32/33). The strong presence of the Sobek cult in Fayoum left such a strong mark on the country and its people that it did not escape the attention of the Greek writer Herodotus during his trip to Egypt: „When anyone, be he Egyptian or stranger, is known to have been carted off by a crocodile or drowned by the river itself, such a one must by all means be embalmed and tended as fairly as may be and buried in a sacred coffin by the townsmen of the place where he is cast up; nor may his kinfolk or his friends touch him, but his body is deemed something more than human, and is handled and buried by the priests of the Nile themselves“ - Herodotus, fifth century BC . (Herodotus, II.90) To this day the Sobek Cult remains as part of the culture of the Fayoumi people and their identity. ²¹

²¹ Sobek cult: A legend says that King Menes - the uniter of Lower and Upper Egypt - was once attacked by his own dogs during a hunting expedition near the lake. The crocodile, usually feared in stories and described as treacherous creature, rescued the king and carried him safely across the lake. In gratitude Lake Moeris and its crocodile were declared a sanctuary. And thus, the cult around the god and crocodile Sobek has its beginnings in and even remained during the Greek and Roman times until today as a part of the culture of the Fayoumi citizen. The strong roots of the cult can be seen can be seen within the villages of Fayoum. Drawings along walls as well as hotels, cafes or restaurants with the Sobek name, show the preserved relationship with the cult and the close relationship of culture and identification with the environment. (cf. Hewison , 2008)

fig. 21. Dimeh al-Siba , Fayoum, 3rd BC

The ancient ruin Dimeh al-Siba lies on the northern side of Fayoum. It is believed that it was founded by Ptolemy II.. Today almost isolated in the middle of the desert, the lake Quarun was during the 3rd century-period much larger and the city served as a landing port for soldiers from Macedonia. The ptolomeaic name “*Saknopaiou Nesos*” meant Island of *Saknopaios* – which came from the ancient Egyptian name “*Sobek en Pai*” meaning Land of the Sobek. (Interview, Mahmoud)



During the prehistory time, from 7200-4000 BC called the Quarunian period, Fayoum around the lake was one of the most populated areas in Egypt. Because of the lush land and abundance of water the area was an ideal habitat due to its fishing and hunting possibilities. The first documented people who lived in the area of Fayoum were predominantly nomadic hunters and gathers, who settled down around the lake. During this period the first agricultural communities evolved. With the drying up of the lake, Fayoum's population also disappeared. Until the early dynasty Fayoum up until the middle Kingdom Fayoum remained undeveloped and mostly irrelevant, only becoming known for as a popular hunting and fishing ground for the elite. It wasn't until the 12th Dynasty, when some kings started to focus on Fayoum. Amenemhat I, who visibly started to change the area, opened up a line of kings who slowly contributed to the change and rise of Fayoum. Senwosret I build the obelisk of Abgig and the infamous Lahun pyramids²². Amenemhat III was responsible for a number of monuments including the colossi Biahmu, temples at Madinat Madi and Kiman Faris. (cf. Hewison, 2008: 25-28)

²² The gridtown, also called pyramid city, in el-Kahun presented in chapter 2 - ancient - was located in the region around the Lahûn pyramid and is considered today as one of the main attractions for the ancient Egyptian architecture in in Fayoum. (Interview, Mahmoud)

GREEK AND PTOLEMIES AND THE LOVE FOR ARISNOE After the golden Age of the middle Kingdom the interest on Fayoum dropped off again until the Greek invaded the area, which started with the death of Alexander the Great 323 BC. Ptolemy I started to drain land and was able to to reclaim 1200 km² of agricultural land. This work was passed on to the next few generations. One remarkable king, king Ptolemy II has left a considerable story to Fayoum. He married his sister Arisnoe II, who became a popular queen by that time. Well known for his progressive and wise decisions, under his rule the Library of Alexandria was founded and due to his settlement policy Fayoum blossomed and became one of the most productive areas. And by that time it was also known as the "Garden of Egypt." Ptolomey also renamed some settlements and also renamed the whole in honour for the love of his sister "*Arisinoite*", with its capital "*Arisnoe*" (formerly *Crododilopolis*). (cf. Hewison, 2008: 27/28) During the Ptolemaic settlement new groups of settlers arrived to Fayoum. Greeks, Macedonians, Jews, Persians, Arabs and Syrians. Unlike the Greeks in Alexandria, the Greeks in Fayoum began to intermarry with the natives. While the Alexandrian Greeks remained as an homogenous community, Fayoum started to become a melting pot. (cf. Hewison, 2008: 25-28)

ROMANS 395 CE, when the Roman Empire was portioned, Egypt got ruled by the eastern emperor, the Byzantium. With it Christianity became the official religion. 451 the Egyptian church spilt and the Byzantine rule became unpopular amongst the population. (cf. Hewison, 2008: 28)

**fig. 22: Dionysias town and Kanaris temple [*qasr qarun*],
323 -30 BC , Fayoum**

The temple is built of yellow limestone. Next to the temple lies the ruins of Dionysias, a Greco-roman town. Mostly made of mud bricks. (FayoumEgypt)



CALIPHATE AND ARABS The Byzantine didn't last long, and their unpopularity amongst the people welcomed the Arab conquest of the caliphate. With the fall of Babylon, the Arabs received help from the Berber reinforcement. The fall of the military fortress of Babylon also marked the end of the Roman period in Fayoum. Also here it became clear that in Fayoum the culture and the way of dealing with a new rulership was handled differently than in the other areas of Egypt. For it was not an Arab but a Copt named Philoxenos who was the first governor of Fayoum under Arab leadership. Despite of the many settlements Fayoum kept its rich province and was the main food and wheat provider of the Islamic era. One of the many reasons why the Arab golden age was able to reign in Egypt for a long time was through their purposeful integration of different cultures and religions, which is how the Arabs also managed to maintain the melting pot. (cf. Hewison, 2008: 28/29)

FATIMID It wasn't until the invasion of the Fatimids, that Fayoum experienced its first bad suffering. The Fatimid invasion destroyed the land and had left it with poverty and famine. From then on, things went downhill for Fayoum and his economy. The tax revenues were too high and the people too poor. (cf. Hewison, 2008: 29/30)

SALAH EL DIN: EGYPT'S FIRST SULTAN AND THE OTTOMAN TURKS Known as Saladin, who was the first Sultan of Egypt. He even owned his own land in Fayoum and brought in some more different cultures into the area. By now also Syrians, Arabs, Kurds and Turks were living in Fayoum. Under his rule Syrian amir Nabulsi wrote a book about the province and learned about the landscape of Fayoum. But he also discovered in what bad shape the land was. Under the Fatimid Fayoum got completely neglected. New channels and better water regulations had been made to improve the worse state of Fayoum. After Saladin's rulership the Ottomans ruled over Egypt and were able to improve the conditions, but they still had difficulties with the Bedouins lifestyle that seemed to be uncontrollable. (cf. Hewison, 2008: 30)

FRENCH 1797 French army of Napoleon invaded Egypt, known as the battle of the Pyramids. Mamluk bey Murad fled and was able to keep Fayoum under ottoman governorship. After several attempts of French General Desaix, Desaix had to negotiate the rulership with Murad. Peace was made between the two and Murad remained governor of Upper Egypt for the Republic of France, which include the Fayoum area. Because of the French invasion the relationship between the remaining Turks and the Mamluks started to struggle. (cf. Hewison, 2008: 30/31)

MUHAMMED ALIS SETTLEMENT POLICY In the midst of the rivalry between the two, an Albanian cafe dealer from Macedonia brilliantly outplayed both opponents and gained power over Fayoum. Even after a new Mamluk Yasin Bey recaptured Fayoum, it was the people who sided with Muhammed Ali and helped him recapture Fayoum again after 4 years. Muhammed Ali was able to reform the agricultural culture and economy by not only relying on fruit and vegetables, but also by allowing the cotton industry to flourish. It was also he who was able to settle the ongoing rivalry between the Bedouin tribes. After numerous attempts, he finally succeeded in 1980 by giving the respective tribesmen of the Bedouin tribes – called *shêks* – a district, appointing them as governors and granting them large private plots of land. Through his policy, he not only was able to stop the riots, but also to settle the tribes. The *shêks* settled down and became rich landowners and engaged a different lifestyle. (cf. Hewison, 2008: 31/32)

BRITISH With the English ruler around the 12th century, also the railways and new transportation arrived to Fayoum. They built good roads, flourished the infrastructure and revised the irrigation system. People were able to reclaim land in large scales and Fayoum started to recover after all the settlements and started to slowly return to its natural beauty and richness. (cf. Hewison, 2008: 31/32)

REPUBLIC OF EGYPT AND GAMALS ABD EL NASSER Until 1897 the large-scale ownership remained until the second President of Egypt Gamal Abd el Nasir granted his land reform of the 1950s. It was the first time, after years of settlement and colonialism, that ordinary farmers were allowed to own their land again. (cf. Hewison, 2008: 32)

After years of different cultures and invasions, today's name Fayoum, returned to its origin. Known in the old dynasty for its lake "*Shedet*", it earned itself the name "*Shedet*". Thus Fayoum derives from the ancient Coptic-Egyptian word "*Pa-yuum*" or "*Pa-yom*" which means Lake or Sea and refers to the sanctuary Lake Quarun (or Lake Moeris). After Arabic invasions the land got renamed and remained until today under its name Fayoum. (cf. Hewison, 2008: 27/28)

fig. 23. Helnan L'auberge, Fayoum

In the middle of the Touraine Road, the main route through Fayoum, a pompous hotel "Helnan Auberge" is located and shines with its pink hue amidst the palm trees and desert oasis. Built in 1973 on King Farouk's request, the palace was known as hunting and fishing lodge for the high society, today it has been converted into a hotel complex and symbolically serves as a landmark for Fayoum's elite. (Helnan)





Hassan Fathy and his rural building

ideology

As a thematic introduction to Egyptian rural architecture, Hassan Fathy's major work "Architecture of the Poor" serves as the main reference in Egyptian rural architecture. Here, the Egyptian architect describes Egyptian architecture through his understanding and value of a rural architecture, as well as the role of the *fallahen* [peasants] as a historical architectural carrier of tradition and culture. Through his pilot project New Gurna, he attempted to realize his ideology of an identity-based architecture within a conservative and traditional rural society. This part of the chapter is not only meant to be an introduction to rural ideology, but also is meant to show the difficulties and obstacles of introducing a new architecture within the rural community.

Egypt's architectural development and progress focused predominantly on the urban environment. This could also be seen in the shaping of identity through ideological new approaches of an urban population. Thereby the rural living space, as well as the people in it - the fellah - came to an architectural, as well as social standstill. Little interest was shown in the understanding and design of a new rural structure, and so it came to pass that for many years rural architecture could be understood as architecture without architects and remained in a certain backwardness, in which the peasant heritage was based on the knowledge of the construction worker called *banaa* [البنى]²³. Only a handful of notable architects turned their attention to rural architecture in the 21st century during the urban building boom. Among the pioneers are Ramses Wissa Wassef and Hassan Fathy. While Wassef's success remained at the national level, Fathy's ideology was granted success mainly in the West. Nevertheless, until his death, he got avoided the recognition of his own country and the acceptance of his new rural ideology. Especially for his ideological view of a new upgraded rural architecture made of clay, he at first was ridiculed and strongly criticized. His architecture was seen as outdated and backward, unable to find a place in the modern age and the fast-paced lifestyle of the people. (cf. [caiobserver](#))

²³ see more on page 188.



Fig. 24. Fathy's Nubian Vaults in Tunis Village, Fayoum

Fathy's rural ideology was so impressive that to this day his legacy lives on through his followers in an expressive and culturally borrowed architecture.

HASSAN FATHY (1900-1989)

Hassan Fathy was an Egyptian architect, born in the metropolis of Alexandria in an upper-class family. In his lifetime achievement "Architecture of the poor", he recounts how he was drawn to rural architecture with the concept of identity and his own personal affiliation. The search for his own 'original' self, eventually led him to undertake a search for the rural architecture of Egypt, which he understood to be in danger of its existence due to increasing globalization and urbanization. After a long hopeless search for traditional rural architecture, Fathy came to realize the importance of historical culture combined with tradition in regards of shaping an identity and the importance of recording and documenting it: "It was clear that, if the ancients had known how to build vaults without centering, the secret had died with them." (Fathy, 1973: 6) It was only when he arrived in Luxor that he found small colorful houses made of Nubian vaults, from which he eventually drew inspiration in the continuation of his rural architecture. (cf. Fathy, 1973)

THE PILOT PROJECT "NEW GOURNA" AND ITS DOWNFALL

When a new archaeological site was found under the small village of Old Gournā in Luxor (in Upper Egypt), and after repeated grave robberies, the state ordered the relocation of the settled village. As a result, Fathy was entrusted with the planning of a new village "new Gournā". These conditions were ideal for Fathy, because they allowed him to realize his rural ideology, namely a reactivation of culture and identity through a simple and cheap construction method made of mud, using the technique of the Nubian vaults. His concept was accompanied by the progressive documentation of the approach as well as the cultural and economic circumstances of the village in his work "architecture of the poor". Thus, the 'New Gournā Project' is considered to be Fathy's pilot project of his new rural architecture. (cf. Fathy, 1973)

A. CONCEPTUAL IDEA OF A HEALTHY AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

For Fathy, the building material played a much greater role than just static or climatic one. For him, the building material should represent the region, the surrounding area and its people, and be understood as part of their identity. The architecture of the village of old Gournā was very simple. The people there all lived predominantly in poor conditions, and so have their houses also been built without further architectural planning. The buildings consisted of simple rectangular shapes of flat roofs, with a simple interior separation. "Their owners were forced by their poverty into genuine design. Because they could afford in their

houses neither the rather tasteless elaborations that their richer neighbors affected, nor the help of a paid builder, they had to contrive every part of their dwelling themselves. Thus the plan of a room or the line of a wall would not be a dull, square, measured thing but a sensitively molded shape, like a pot. In many of these very poor houses, if one can see past the incidental mess and dirt, the lines of the building present an instructive lesson in architecture." (Fathy, 1973: 41)

Since the construction of an entire new village was costly, a low-cost yet humane architecture for the residents was to be conceived. Fathy's goal was hence to not only develop affordability with good architecture, but also to incorporate traditional and cultural value systems into the design, hoping to provide the poor peasants with a life-worth living without a severe uprooting of their familiar surroundings. "If it is only once in a lifetime or once in several generations that the individual has a chance to make any big change in his environment, how often does it happen has a whole village is presented the same such an opportunity?" (Fathy, 1973:38)

B. THE CONCEPT AND THE REALIZATION (1948-1954) Fathy's focus on the architectural concept aimed the realization of a new rural architecture, based on old pre-existing structures and socio-cultural values, which could be implemented in the future by the farmers in a self-interested way. The process should always be approached in a participatory way, in order to integrate the affected people and new residents in the plan. The elementary human self-dependent building is to become thereby an ideal case, in order to distance humans from the technical-industrial building method.

The southern village in Luxor, was not only located on an ancient historical site, but had was also close to a centuries-old building tradition through the nearby ethnic population of the Nubians. The houses, known as Nubian vaults ²⁴, were not only a regional construction method of the Nubians, but allowed building without any framework and thus a simple construction that could be easily adapted by local builders. After several attempts, Fathy was able to develop a contemporary construction method of the Nubian vaults, which he believed to be adapted to the traditional construction method of southern Egyptian architecture. The domes, made of clay, are not only supposed to regulate the temperature better, but also to allow the air to circulate better due to the vaulted interior structure. Small openings – *claustrum*- along the roof help to ensure that less warm desert air is taken in, and that the air can also be purposefully circulated out. This prototype, a revolutionized rural architecture of Nubian vaults, was intended to resurrect the vernacular architecture of Egypt and lead to a rebirth of culture and tradition. (cf. Fathy, 1973) This form of a new rural and cultured building ideology, will be referred to as "dome ideology" throughout the chapter.

²⁴see more on page 153.

C. THE PLAN OF NEW GOURNA The inhabitants of the village were divided into 5 family tribes. These were assigned to 4 zones, which were divided into 4 quarters/zones in the village by a main street. The main street serves as a wide main traffic axis that connected all public buildings. The village was based on the traditional Islamic oriental city. The alleys were narrow and winding. The houses had few openings and were thus closed to the public from the outside. "I did not give the streets this crooked plan simply to make them quaint or because of some love for the middle ages. If I had adopted a regular plan like a gridiron, the houses would have been forced into a uniform design too. In long, straight streets, and even in symmetrical curves, the houses must all be exactly the same if the general appearance is not to be messy; yet the families who live in these houses will not be all the same." (Fathy, 1973: 71) In the center was designed as a large public square, which was accessed from the main street. All the activities of public life took place there: Sports field, theatre, mosque, and girls' and boys' school. Everything gathered in the center of the village and thus it functioned as the main meeting place of the inhabitants. The *khan* [خان] formed as a large market hall as the central meeting place and marketplace. Different crafts were also to be taught there and passed on to younger generations. The houses were all dome or vaulted, and were built as individual plots based on the size of the family. (cf. Fathy, 1973)

D. DOWNFALL OF A HOPED IDEOLOGY Despite the efforts of planning and the direct involvement of residents in the planning, Fathy's pilot project failed and its desired success, became its greatest failure. The reasons for this varied. On Fathy's part, the failure was due to lack of funding. Although political and economic aspects were a partial reason for the failure, planning aspects were also partly responsible for the downfall. Planning met with disfavor, especially among the younger village generation. The ideas were too outdated and old-fashioned, and the architectural guiding principle too obsessive. One could literally say that the residents felt suffocated by the monotonous dome image within the village. Despite the anticipated identity-creating architecture, the dome ideology had no personal connection to the residents. The design idea was possibly anchored too utopian. Moreover, despite its proximity to the Nubian people, the dome architecture did not originate in the region, which is why many still could not identify with it. For although Fathy felt that the exchange and incorporation of cultural and traditional values within the planning process was important, the strict adherence to an old-traditional way of life was too outdated. Despite sustainable and future-oriented planning, Fathy implemented old-fashioned ways of life such as separating girls from boys. Therefore, the failure of this rural ideology is due, on the one hand, to certain differences in values between planners and residents. As well as to the aspiration for a certain prosperity architecture of the people of the city.

The Fathy building project shows the cultural crisis within rural structures. The *fallahs* find themselves in a constant struggle between value systems and modern aspirations. Unfortunately, Fathy's striving project became a dreary utopian thought. As of last update, since 2010, UNSECO, with the Egyptian Ministry of Culture and the Governorate of Luxor, has launched a project to protect and restore the partially dilapidated village of New Gourna Village. In principle, Fathy's dome ideology shows the approach to revive forgotten building heritage. In doing so, the planner is confronted with the challenge between a utopian ideal and the current problems of an identity-creating architecture. (cf. Espazium)

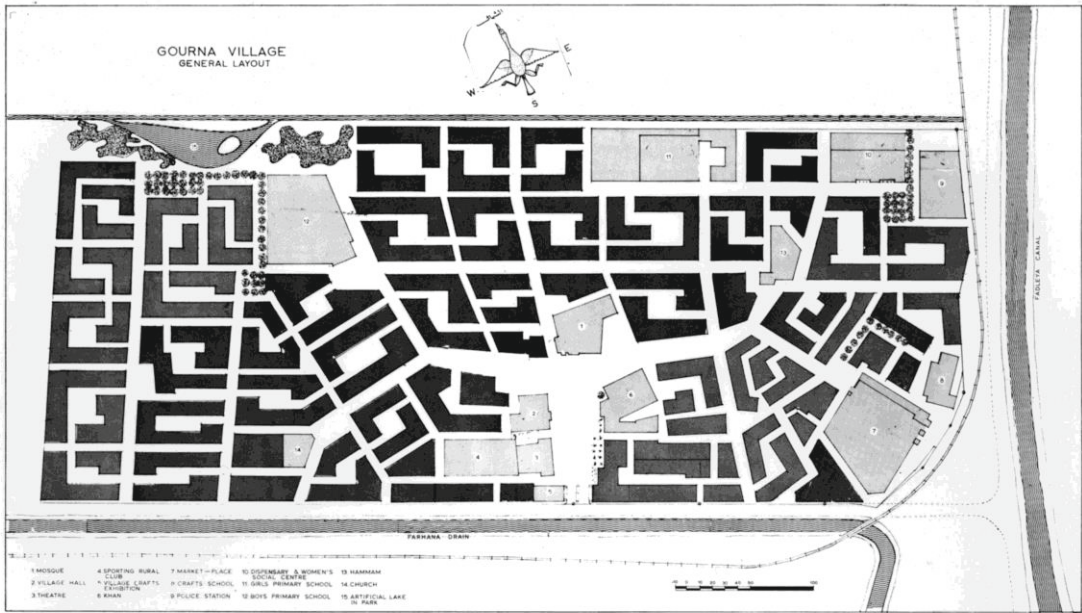


fig. 25. Fathy's plan of New Gournā (from his book 'architecture of the poor'), 1973

The houses were built as individual parcels. Each plot belonged to a family. In this way, the rural principle of a family unit within an area was maintained. The gray colored buildings are the public buildings. In the center are the main buildings as well as schools or market hall. Fathy's primary goal in building a center was to give the residents a public area where social contacts could be made. In the traditional sense, he wanted to give, for example, marriageable girls the opportunity of self-presentation - in a rather old-fashioned form of introduction - within a village community. These and similar old-fashioned reasons eventually led to the failure of Fathy's pilot project. (Fathy, 1973)

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Field Research Tunis Village



fig. 26. green-blue-yellow – colors of Fayoum represented over the view Tunis Village

In the picture the hotel Kom el Dikka can be seen built in a traditional architecture style with upper Egyptians Nubian vaults.



Chapter 3

Field-research

During a 3-month research trip in Tunis Village in Egypt, the theoretical approach around the discourse and the issue of ideology and identity was researched in more detail. In the village, the *fallahen* forms the largest indigenous group, of which 7 families are considered as founding families of the village. From what was once an ordinary village, due an arrival of city people from Cairo's intellectual scene has drastically changed the village. – Both socio-culturally and traditionally. From the once ordinary village, due to the revolutionary rediscovery by the intellectuals, the village first became a secret pilgrimage place known for its tranquility and return to the simplicity and nature of Egypt. With the new societies amidst the quite traditional *fallahs* as well as the urban intrusion into their lifestyle, for the first time the *fallah* experienced a tension between of identity and new social ideology. Because not only the social aspect has caused a change, out of their simple rectangular farmhouses [often called *fallah*-house in the text] gradually massive domed mansions nestled among the simple farmhouses, which cannot be overlooked even from a distance. Between traditional architecture and Fathy's dome ideology, the village community has been grappling with the question of identity and the value of their traditional architecture for about 60 years now – marked with the first dome building in the village.

Content information draws on interviews and on-site as well as independent daily observations of residents and their built environment from mid-July 2022- mid-September 2022. The texts will be supported by own photographs and research sketches during the stay for clarity.



fig. 27. Fayoum Map with the *marakiz* Yousef el Sediq and the location of Tunis Village.



fig. 28. village girls on bikes, hording their sheep

METHODOLOGY AND CONTENT

The following

knowledge in the chapter "Tunis Village" is based on the information of the interviews, as well as observations and interactions of the inhabitants. During and after the research trip, the basic elements that emerged in the course of the analysis and research of the village were elaborated as important points in this following chapter. During the stay, interviews were conducted using a narrative approach. In principle, the trip was approached with the intention of using a structured interview technique, but this method quickly proved unsuitable for the locals, as the interview questions were too structured and detailed for many. Therefore, a semi-structured interview in form of a narrative technique was used during the course of the trip using introductory questions about the topic allowing a free form of narration of the people.

In order to get an overview of the applied construction techniques as well as construction history of the village, expert interviews were conducted with so-called *banaa*, Arabic for experienced construction workers. From this, it was possible to not only explore the structural development as well as the construction methods used in the village, but to also understand the importance of clay within the *banaa* community.

The second group of respondents represent the rest of the inhabitants of the village. In this process, from preliminary external observations, profound conversations accompanied by sketches of the houses were carried out. The systematic approach in the village, is also gradually addressed in the chapter: Here, the village structure is first to be introduced from independent observations, to then be filled in by the inhabitants from the initial interactions and as well as the subsequent conversations and observations. In doing so, the village community groups divides itself into two major main categories of residents: The indigenous peasants "*fallahen*" and the urbanites who moved from the big city of Cairo and are referred to by the *fallahs* as "intellectuals." A third small category is formed by the Bedouin and *fallahen* from the surrounding area (*fallah-immigrant*). The two main groups of inhabitants (*fallah* and intellectuals) are each considered here as a separate ensemble of a collective within the village community, which are also presented from the analysis of the field research in the large main part of the paper through their housing situation and typologies.

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fig. 29. Interviews with the *fallah* during the field research

Most of the interviews took place as if its more like an invitation, rather than a interview session. Though the interview was taken more in a narrative war, letting the person talk about the knowledge he is personally interested at.

On this picture you can see Haj Ahmed, and a friend who happened to be at the same moment with us. He offered me a homemade mango juice, while smoking his water pipe. While talking he would always show me picture of his work on his mobile phone. His friend casually would interact with me and tell me more about the rural life style of Tunis Village.

TUNIS VILLAGE, FAYOUM [*quaryat tunis* -

[قرية تونس]

Not far from Cairo - about 115 km from Giza, northwest of Fayoum, on a small rock of the Libyan desert - overlooking the river Quarun - extends a small idyllic village called Tunis Village.

Within an hour and a half, from Cairo, the village can be reached by car through the main road "Touristic Road". The drive from Cairo begins with an impressive view of the Giza pyramids, which accompany you from every angle until you reach the border of Cairo. Next to them stretches the new "Grand Egyptian Museum", which captivates the eye with its huge pharaonic column sculptures. Passing the ancient site of Giza, the newly built desert cities, called "6th of October" – which supposedly got built for the benefit of the many commuters from rural Fayoum- are passed by. From there on, large communal buildings follow you along the way, until suddenly they are gradually blurred by small cube-shaped buildings. In the flash of a second, one has arrived from urban Cairo to rural Fayoum. Little by little, village after village can be seen. Without a clear boundary, the individual villages seem to be interwoven. Only a row of palm trees, which seem to sprout unrestrained from the soil of Fayoum, give the impression of some kind of village separation. The rural image relieves the eye from the hectic cityscape: trucks full of vegetables and fruits on the way to the city, men in traditional clothing on motorcycles and kiosk stands in the middle of the road. North of the road, like a blue veil, stretches Lake Quarun. The lake, resembling a sea in appearance, accompanies the magnificent Touristic Road to the entrance gates of the village of Tunis. For the observer, the way to the village reveals the beauty of its landscape: in the village, greenery blooms from all sides. Pink *Bougainvillea* flowers and dates run across the ground. Lifting the gaze, the golden sand dunes stretch to infinity and seem tangibly close. Only the blue of the lake separates the desert from the village, where felucca/ *falawka* [فلوكة]²⁵ with their spread-out sails seem like single little white dots swimming around the lake.

²⁵ A *falawka* [فلوكة] is a traditional wooden sailboat used in the areas around the eastern Mediterranean – particularly around Egypt. The manual sailboat is still one of the most used boat types around Egypt and can be seen especially in Luxor and Tunis Village.

"Azumet *falawka*" - Boatsman invitation

is a common term used by the Egyptian, by only implying an invitation, that should not be accepted by the guest. The Egyptian people are very hospitable people, and so one hears with every encounter a personal invitation into someone's house. Often, however, the invitations are purely formal and respectful invitations that are accepted by the guest with only verbal thanks, but not implemented. Derived from the symbolism that one would be on the boat and therefore the invitation generally can not take place. (Interview, Dr.

Adel)

fig. 30. Research sketch: Journey from Cairo to Tunis Village during the car journey.

Driving away from Cairo, the high-rise city buildings, first became a desert and palm landscape, which as approaching Tunis Village, became more and more filled with small farmhouses and domed buildings.

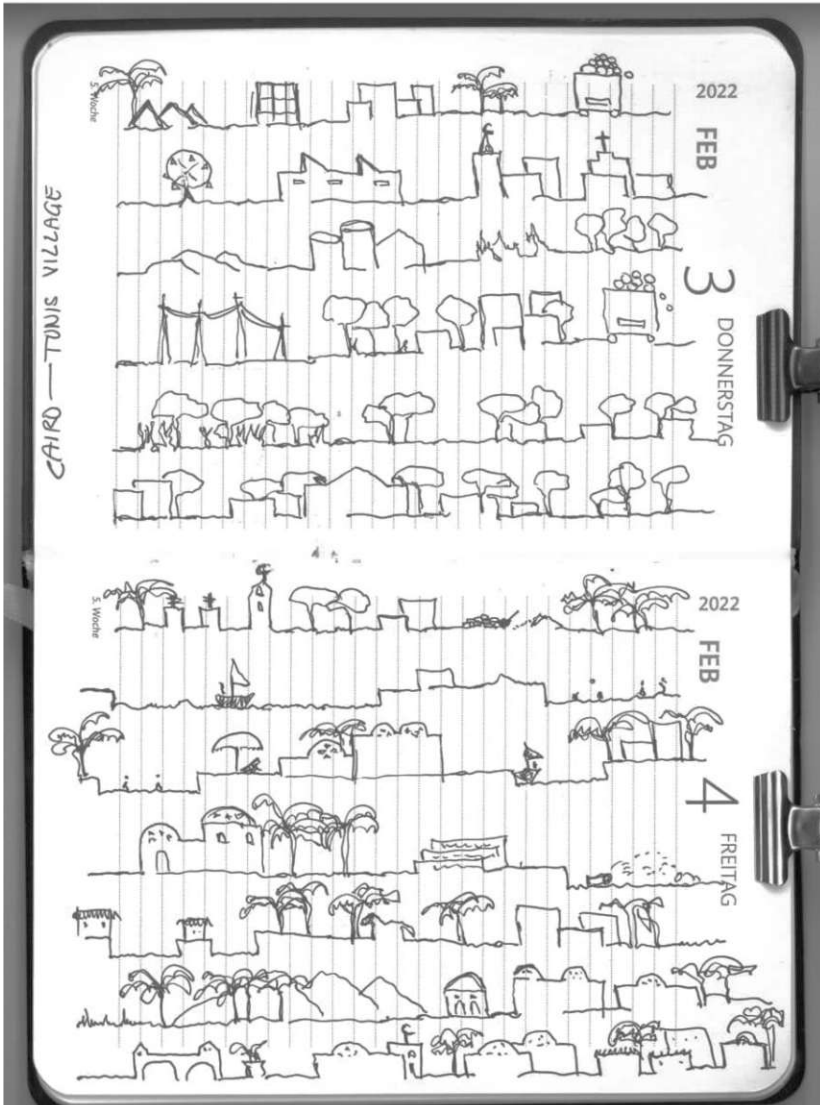






fig. 31. Buffalo in front of an old *fallah* house

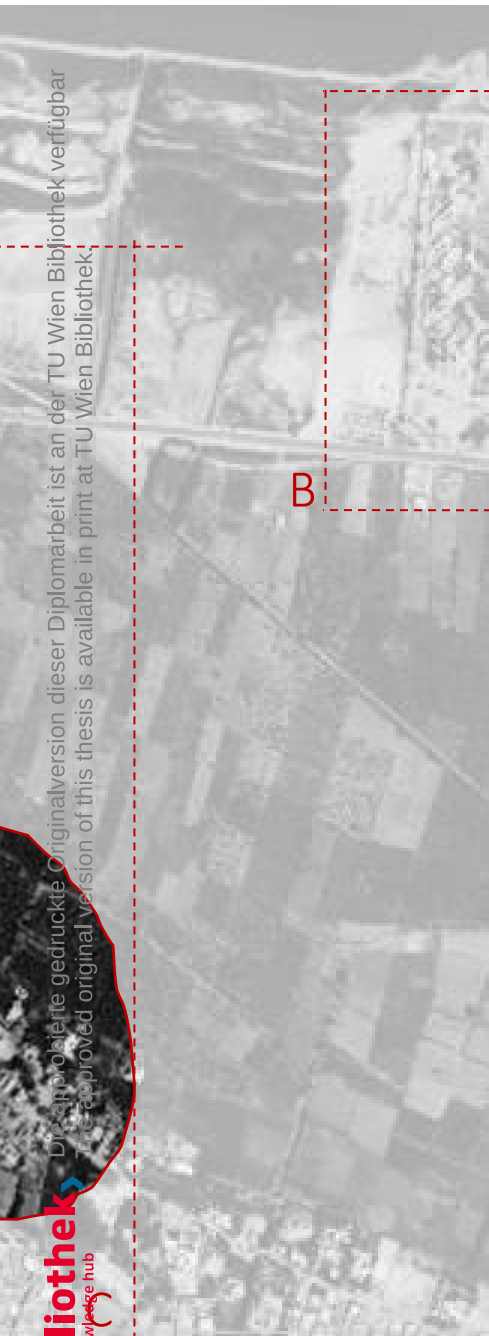
The old traditional houses in Tunis Village are mostly characterized through animals in front of the peoples houses and tons of palm trees. Almost all small houses are mostly being overshadowed through new residential buildings (on the left of the picture) and massive vaulted villas (can be seen slightly in the back)

fig. 32. Village map of Tunis Village with the region-sections

The sections resemble the different group of inhabitants living in Tunis.

A – the locals/ the original who started out with 7 main families. This part of the village is known as the old village part. Outside of Tunis Village a villa compound was built, counting as part of Tunis Village.
B – the intellectuals who built their villas starting from the 1960's
C – the newest part of the village starting with 1980's. Peasant from areas around Tunis Village, started to migrate to the village, settling along the main village structure.





TOPOGRAPHY

The village, officially called *izbat Tunis*, belongs to the youngest *markaz* Fayoum 'Yousef el Seqid'. It is located in the Wadi El-Rayan nature reserve and faces southwest the Lake Quarun - " *buḥairat quarun* ". The river stretches across the entire village as a symbol of power and fertility.

Due to the quiet and unspoiled atmosphere of the village, it contrasts with the boisterousness of the city. Drawing the border lines along Tunis Village turns out to be a hard work: The historical part of the village can be clearly identified by its simple buildings and narrow streets. In addition, the new villas made of domes of the intellectuals from Cairo, were built outside the historical part. This form of urban migrants bought up the plots of the then poor farmers and had them built along a horizontal line, facing the lake. The new part from neighbouring villages is located far from the main road and clearly separates itself from the rest of the village. It becomes unclear with the line drawing with the new hotel and residential complexes that have settled outside the village gate and are marketed unofficially as Tunis Village. Like a spider web, the boundaries of the village spread outside original village boundaries, depending on the demand and revealing an uncontrolled continued growth of a once small village. Spider's web, the boundaries of the village, according to demand, spread outside original village boundaries and shows an uncontrolled further growth of a once small village. This way, the village can be divided by its historical and architectural development into three regions (see *fig. 30*): the historical regional part, inhabited by the first settled families - region A. The "intellectual-tourist area, made up of villas and hotel complexes - region B. And the new area, developed by migrants from nearby villages - region C.

RURAL STRUCTURE

The village is entered through a towering entrance gate that resembles an ancient temple gate or Islamic Arab fortress tower. From there, only one road leads through the village. The first thing you see when you enter the village is a small domed building surrounded by walls - resembling a temple - which, as it seems, has no other use. Even the inhabitants are not clear about the purpose of the building. "We don't even know who owns this property. The owner started the construction. But never finished it. Or maybe it was supposed to look like this?" Passing by the significant building, at the first turn a towering minaret of a mosque catches one's eye. The mosque building is guarded by 2 policemen. Built by a well-known Egyptian architect Omar al Faruq in a typical Arabic-Islamic architectural style of stone with an imposing dome as the central place of prayer for the men. Past the mosque begins a straight path, unofficially called "Evelyn Street/ *shareh evelyn*" [شارع إيفلين] or "Villa Street/ *shareh alfila*" [شارع الفيلا] starts. After a few meters from the mosque, a row of full villas of 1 or maximum 2 floors and with an imposing domed building rising into the sky, can be seen one after one. Where there used to be green fields, there now stand numerous villas of wealthy people from abroad or from the big city, protected by walls and denied to the passer-by. As a result, even the formerly direct access to the river is denied to the locals and the passer-by and can nowadays only be reached directly through private entrances. The villas, each provided with a name, present themselves all in a uniform earthy color and are considered since the last 20 years as a symbol of the village. After a few miles of villas and a path full of pink flowers, you will find the village's first two hotel complexes: One of the most prestigious spa hotels in Egypt "Lazib Inn", which is the only one built in pink shades and blue decorative elements, and the first hotel from the village "Zad al Musafir".

From there, after a few meters, you reach a crossroads that was designed as a public square and is called the "village center" by the locals. In the center there is a fountain with a seat and a center sculpture resembling a small obelisk. The square is also considered an important place for celebrations such as the "*zaffa*"²⁶. Past the square, continuing down the street, there is a patch shaded with pieces of cloth. Here handicrafts such as woven baskets or traditional carpets are sold and represented. Continuing along the road, slowly the historical center of the village is reached. From here on the famous pottery production – for which the village is famous for - begins to present itself.

The individual artists, who are all local villagers, have built their workshops in the lower floors

²⁶ *zaffa* [زففة] is a gathering that often takes place before or after a wedding, where the guests meet with all the traffic vehicles and announce the wedding with loud traditional music and dances

of their homes. In addition, you can still catch a glimpse of small farmhouses in between the monstrous brick houses/ *musalah* [مسلح]²⁷ whose owners have built around as new residence. Individual distances there are still villa buildings, which also here have cut off the reference to the lake for the inhabitants and thus from the historical center, which also many inhabitants strongly regret. Way before the many villa buildings were added, this street was known as "craft/*sanaia*" [صناییه] street, and served as a knot for local residents: "Until a few years ago, I could look out over the lake. Today, a villa stands here. Only when its gates open can I catch a glimpse of the lake." regrets Taufwik, ceramic artist from Tunis Village. (Interview, Taufwik) During the pottery festival, this street also serves as a sales area, decorated as a bazaar. For some years now, annual pottery festival takes place in Tunis Village, which gathers not only handcrafters from Tunis Village, but from all around Egypt. During the pottery festival, this street also serves as a sales area, which is decorated as a bazaar. While walking you can watch the workers working on old manual pottery machines, and see the traditional old handcraft being made. Some of the house's facades have different kind of drawings on them, which mostly represent the village or the people. The paintings were the outcome of an art project during the pottery festival. Passing the numerous workshops, the road ends in a small intersection. To the south the road leads to the new village quarter of migrants from neighbouring villages and to the north-east the road continues to "Evelyn Street/ *shareh evelyn* " [شارع إيفلين] or also often referred by the locals as "Villa Street/*shareh alfila*" [شارع الفيلال]. To the south, a massive 3-story brick construction can be seen from a distance. As the road continues it is followed by small farmhouses as well as brick masonry superstructures. Approaching the end of Evelyn Street, scattered villa buildings with a dome style can be seen once again. But unlike those from the former area, they are not built of mud, but are mostly of brick or concrete construction and a white color. Arriving at the end of Evelyn Street, and thus the official end of the village Southeast of Evelyn Street stands the only surviving pigeon house in the traditional Fayoum form. Next to it stands the Pottery School and the private house and estate of Evelyn. The boundary to the nearest village is not clear, and blurs into the Tunis village through the same construction of domed buildings of wealthy migrants who couldn't find any properties within the main village anymore.

Only due to the rush of tourists, kiosk stores can be found at certain intervals. As a marketplace there is an open square, about 10 minute's drive outside the village. Here you can find gas station, eateries, fruit vendors or even simple furnishings

²⁷ *musalah'* [مسلح] is a term used by the *banaa* of Tunis in local language, in which they refer to the construction of reinforced concrete. In the correct linguistic usage one speaks *kharasanat musa* [خرسانة مسلحة]

fig. 33. Research sketch: Tunis Village evolution before 1960-today





fig. 34. Research sketch: evolution of a built heritage



fig. 35. Tunis Village around 1960 (personal picture from villager Mansour)

Tunis Village consisted of the *umda's* house (in the picture the highest building) which was surrounded by the village peoples' small houses made out of *touf* (see section '*touf*', page 145). The village consisted out of 7 original families, who up to today remained in the village.



HISTORY: EVELYN AND HER CHILDREN

In order to understand and analyze the built environment and regional built language of the village, the questioning of the village people also referred to the historical development of the village. The consensus of the interviewees regarding the development of the village was particularly interesting because each of the interviewees began the development of the village with the arrival of a Swiss ceramic artist named Evelyn. Upon interviewing some of the local residents of Tunis 7 original *fallah*-families, they tended to promote themselves as "children of Evelyn" who experienced upon her arrival and interaction with the village people, a not only a social but also an economic uplift through her teaching of her craftsmanship. For this reason, the history of the village will be told as the story of Evelyn and her children.

PART I: The start of a village The history of the village is still quite young. However, this does not have to do with its young settlement history, but rather with a certain recognition and documentation of the village. Until the 1960s, Tunis Village was a fairly unknown village, known mainly for its agricultural and fishing community. It also did not distinguish itself much from other Egyptian villages in its appearance. The history of the village began with a settlement of a rich gentleman, called “*umda*” [عمدة], who held a position similar to that of a mayor. "There was nothing in the village. The highest building was the one of the *Haj* (referring to the *umda*). He was the *umda* of the village - the owner of the village. It was this house. And around it were small houses of the local peasants. The *fallahin* would go to his house and work for him. That's how he would give them a house. If he was satisfied with their work, he would leave him [that person]. If not, he would let him go and bring new people," says Nabil, who moved to the village in 1977. (Interview, Dr.Nabil) The farmers working there lived under miserable conditions. Their mud houses, formed by free hand, had no running water, no electricity. The houses were simple in their construction and had to be renewed almost every year, due to its simple materials such as palm fronds or straw roofs. The floor of the house was the earth. There were no blankets, just as there were no beds. When in 1952 a new land reform was introduced by Gamal Abd El Nasser and private properties of rich landowners were expropriated so the fertile farmland was confiscated and distributed to the farmer- population. Each peasant family was given 2 *feddan* [about 0.84ha] for their own agriculture, which allowed the poor peasants to free themselves from the subservience of the *umd*as. Except for 1-2 families, who were able to make a better life for themselves by buying more land, the village remained in poor conditions. It was only through the rediscovery by an Egyptian poet, Sayed Hegab and his Swiss wife Evelyn Porret, that the village experienced an extraordinary transformation. The rural countryside of Egypt has always been: popular among poets and artists, who got inspired by the natural and romantic atmosphere. It is not known exactly why the couple chose the village of Tunis. However, it was probably the blue of the lake that spreads along the village that caught their eyes. At first the couple did not stay long in the village and traveled back to Cairo. But shortly Evelyn's longing for peace and serenity remained. She decided to move back to the village she had fallen in love with a few years back: "Just about everything I loved in Egypt was there before my eyes." (Porret, 1984: 84)

The village, which she found to be extremely beautiful and surprisingly peaceful as well as the natural charm of the people drew the Swiss woman back to the village. After two years of marriage with the Egyptian poet, they got separated and Evelyn married the French artist Michel Pastore, with whom she decided to move back to the village and start a new life in the rural Egypt. Thus began the story of Evelyn and her children:



fig. 36. picture of the old village – around 1960
(personal picture from Evelyn Porret)

People had a simple lifestyle. Donkey's, family and agricultural work determined their day. In the background of the lake Quarun can be seen. As well as one of the first domed buildings in Tunis Village.

fig. 37. Evelyn with village children – around 1970 (personal picture from villager Mansour)

Evelyn had a huge role in the changing of the village. Due that she developed a close bond to the children of the village and their lifestyle. (form left to right: village girl, Evelyn, Mansours sister, Evelyn's daughter)



PART II: Evelyn's children After arriving in Tunis and being hospitably accepted by the locals, she saw the children playing with mud and forming figures out of it. Inspired by the children's creativity and simplicity, Evelyn decided to give the people something back that already belonged to them but had been lost through the many years of unsettlement and historical change.

At that time, she was friends with the famous Egyptian architect Ramses Wissa Wassef, who taught the community in course of a project in the village of Harraneya the craft of carpet weaving and gave them a new chance for the future. Perhaps inspired by her good friend, Evelyn took it upon herself to reshape the village and its community. She wanted to teach the children their ancient pottery art of their Pharaonic ancestors and at the same time give them a better future perspective through craftsmanship. Starting with the construction of her own house, which was build of regional materials such as clay and straw. Evelyn wanted to set a new zeitgeist of a traditional rural style by using Fathy's domes in the village. Hearing from Evelyn's idea, Fathy then sent some of his construction workers from Luxor to Tunis Village to teach them the knowledge of dome construction. After building their house, Evelyn turned to the children of the village, teaching them the art of ceramics. The children were asked to design shapes or figures from their everyday lives out of mud. It didn't have to be precise and was meant to represent childishness. "This is how our Fayoum donkeys evolved. We all shaped donkeys or buffaloes. But she liked the donkeys the most. She kept the best figures in her house on a rule. Our donkeys here are different from those around us." (Interview, Tauwfik)

So the story of the art of pottery in Tunis Village has found its beginning and the children were put under her wing. However, she taught them not only pottery, but also moral and ethnic principles, such as coexistence and the value of culture. She wanted to strengthen their relationship to culture and land and lead them to their way back as a strong rural community. She wanted the village's children to value their common origins and history and encouraged them to build them up. Once again, Fathy's ideology of a new village can be seen in Evelyn's action, and new "when the fill power of a human imagination is backed by the weight of a living tradition, the resulting work of art is far greater than any that an artist can achieve when he has no tradition to work in or when he willfully abandons his tradition." (Fathy, 1973: 25)



fig. 38. generation

Since Evelyn's arrival, Tunis village has developed into a pottery village. Meanwhile, the 3rd generation of pottery artists is already being trained. For many architects in Egypt, like Hassan Fathy, change within a community usually comes through the teaching of a craft and with it the opportunity to participate in the economic sector.

fig. 39. for rent

A lot of people started to buy agricultural land in order to built opulent houses with domes and vaults for rent. Most of these people tend to come from big cities such as Alexandria or Cairo, and mostly never visit Tunis Village.





Evelyn was part of the intellectual scene of Cairo and so, shortly after her arrival, an influx of her friends from the big city, mainly artists and writers, followed her and also settled in Tunis Village. Very well informed about the benefits of the clay and the domes of Fathy, they replicated Fathy's ideology in their houses in a new vernacular style made of domes and clay. With the arrival of the new social society, the village experienced another turnaround and a new social advancement occurred. In the 1980's, the village finally had its first "Pottery School" built, which became a place of union for the entire village community and intellect. She sent some children abroad to give them a better school education. "She changed everything. She made us 'clean'. Tells Mansour, who was one of those children. (Interview, Mansour)

PART III: Tourism in Tunis Village: the popular pottery village in Fayoum

About 35 years ago, around 1987, Evelyn presented the village's pottery artwork at an exhibition in Cairo. The unique craftsmanship was quickly highly recognized and regarded in the pottery art scene. Until then, 20 years ago, Tunis Village was considered a secret treasure of the intellectuals and art lovers' scene. But also, shortly due the revolts of the Arab Spring in 2010, the desert region of Sinai, which is considered a popular vacation destination among many Egyptians, were closed, and the focus of the domestic tourism turned to the Libyan desert region. At that time, one heard only about a pottery village, but it was not really known. Subsequently, hotel complexes and other houses rented out as summer cottages were built. The increasing tourism also attracted many farmers from neighbouring villages, who settled a little far from the old village structure as well. Since then, Tunis Village, formerly a small and unknown village, has since then become one of the most popular destinations for national tourism. The 7 original families have now grown to over 300 families and 4000 residents from a wide variety of social and ethnic backgrounds. (Interview, Mahmoud)

fig. 40. fallah house with cultural culture-conscious drawings

Most of the *fallah* houses can be seen decorated with drawings resembling their heritage and their big bond to the traditional Egyptian lifestyle.

In this particular house on the side wall a portrait of a boy from the ancient time, called “Fayoumi mummy portraits”, can be seen as well as the pattern of a traditional carpet above the window. The front wall has drawings of the animals of Tunis Village like the horse or the “abu elrdan”. With drawings of pharaohs and the waves of the Nile river.





RURAL POPULATION In terms of traditional architecture, the built environment stands in a constant context with the local people. In order to understand an identity-creating architecture more precisely, an understanding of the different inhabitants of the village was needed. Their value systems, their lifestyle or even their appearance were essential elements to which attention was paid. The individual elements not only form the construct of a person, but are also directly related to the built environment and the human spirit. In order to be able to accurately analyze the people and their behaviors, or as an outsider to understand only a fraction of their behaviors, through the narrative interview methodology, it was possible to trace a specific behavior and mindset that could be clearly differentiated into the various groupings within the village. The information in this chapter is based on the observations, the conversations with the residents of the village as well as through the daily encounters and interactions with the people during the course of the research

Very well known by the visitors as the “garden of Egypt” or the “paradise of the dessert” the rural Fayoum has always been appreciated for its beauty of land. What many writers and travelers always seem to miss out, is the rare beauty of its people and their traditional and natural lifestyle. When talking about the people, we mean a community or a group of a specific type of persons. A collective of persons who share the same cultural background, same language, or the same look. Due to its location near the lake and the desert, Tunis Village has become a place of home for different ethnicities. Digging into the roots of the locals, it shows that what looks like a rural collective society on the surface, divides itself in the “main” people, who call themselves “countrymen/*ahl al-balad*” [أهل البلد] and the “others”, referring to the intellectuals.

“All these people related in a complex web of blood and marriage ties, with their habits and prejudices, their friendships and their feuds - a delicately balanced social organism intimately integrated with the topography, with the very bricks and timber of village – this whole society had, as it were, to be dismantled and put together again in another setting.” (Fathy, 1973: 17)

the fallah [فَلَّاح] “We cannot, therefore, see the world as a fellah sees it;” – William Matthew Flinders Petrie (Petrie, 1881-1891: 167)

Known as the “*fallah*” they make up the largest part of the rural population. The word “*fallah*” can be kindly translated to ‘farmer’ or ‘peasant’. But it defines not only a person engaged in agricultural work, but as a whole lifestyle. Due to their historical background, the fellah has often been referred as being the real descendants of the ancient Egyptians and is often described as ‘true Egyptians’. Very well known for their simple agricultural lifestyle, that got deeply rooted in their ancestor’s life, the conquerors wanted to distinguish the upper classes, who mostly were Greeks and Jews, from the lower classes that got mostly made up from the indigenous Egyptians. Since then, the Egyptian peasants wear the name “*fallah*” with pride and see themselves as a unique and own-individual part of the Egyptian population. The spiritual and cultural separation from the rest of the Egyptian community, has also been noticed by the British author Moberly Bell on his Egypt survey: In the story of his book “From Pharaoh to Fellah” he writes a conversation between two Englishmen and a waiter:

“Then you give the Egyptian no part, whatever?”

“If you mean by the Egyptian the Fellah of Egypt Proper of to-day – the Egyptian of Arabi – The Egyptian of Blunt, and of the ravers of “Egypt for the Egyptian” – I give them one unbroken past, a servitude of 7000 years, during which they have been hewers of wood and drawers of water to successive conquerors.” (Bell, 2013: 3)

According to this, the fallah is not only attributed the genetic descent of the pharaonic people, but also their daily work is being resembled with those of the ancient Egyptian peasants of antiquity.” But with the term *fallah* also a certain character comes with. Known amongst the Egyptians for their determination and also stubbornness, even people from urban areas often don’t understand them. Looking at the reliefs of the ancient tombs or the drawings on the papyrus, it looks like the ancient farmer rose again amongst the *fallahin*. However, the *fallah* differs not only in his attitude to life and lifestyle, but also in his use of language, which is different from that of urban Egypt. Their Egyptian is stretched out, with many breaks in between, which are repeatedly filled with quotes or life wisdom. Simple head movements articulate whole sentences without any words.

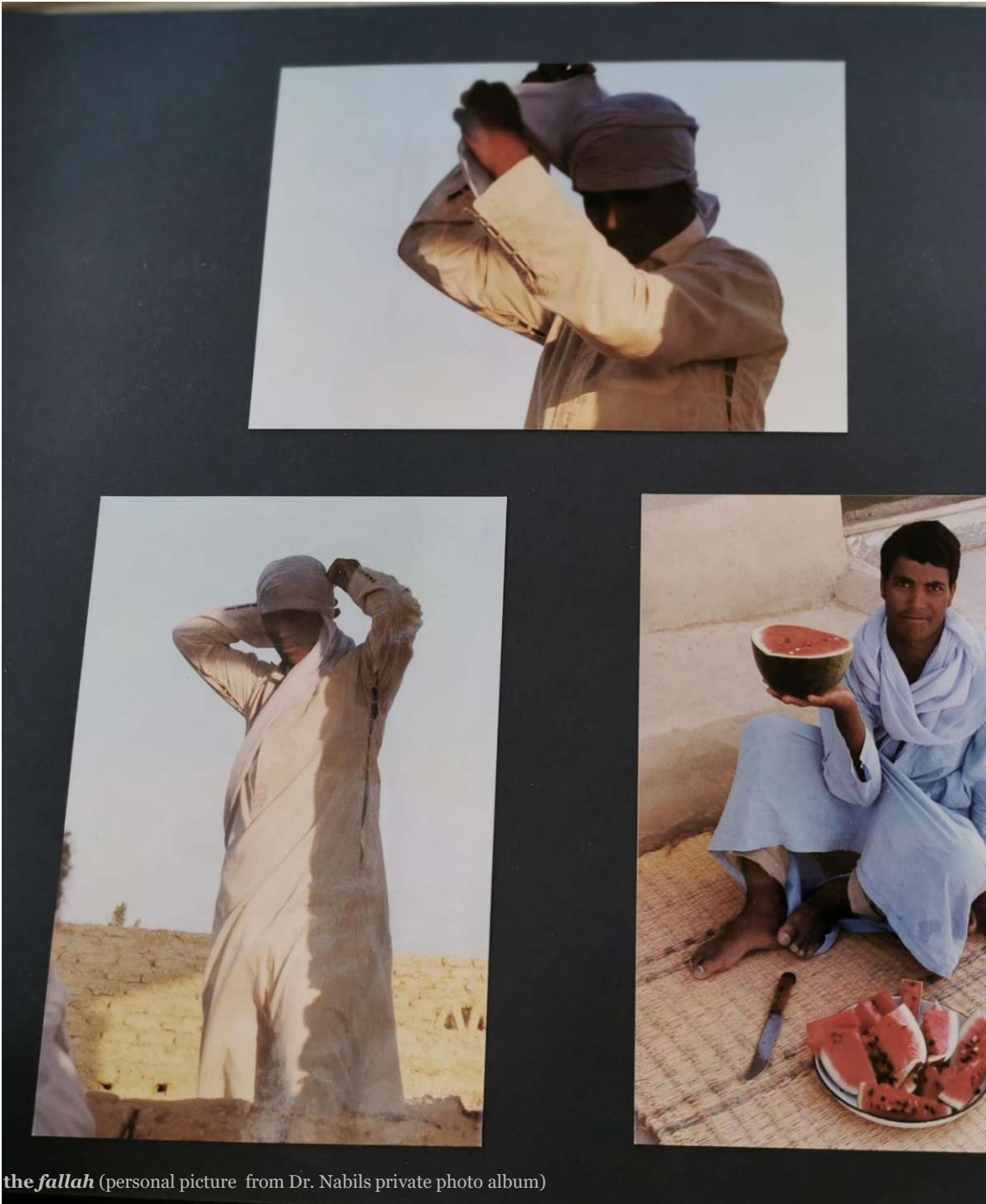


fig. 41. the *fallah* (personal picture from Dr. Nabils private photo album)

On the pictures a man can be seen wrapping a *sirwal* around his head. The long clothing worn in all pictures is the *gallabiya*.



Despite serious and profound conversations, the joke is not missing. And one notices the serenity and simplicity of their attitude to life.

The second obvious characteristic of the *fallah* is their clothing. Clothes reflect the social and traditional heritage. Though why they represent a large part of their rural identity. Like their ancient ancestors, whose clothes mainly were made from line increased with patterns, the main rural garment resembles the traditional attire in its simplicity. Called *gallabiya* [جلابية] which is worn by both men and women, is a long robe made from Egyptian Cotton. Due to the hot and arid climate the clothing is mostly about layering. The *gallabiya* are worn over an undershirt *kamees* [قميص] and a simple light pant *sirwal* [سِرْوَال] made out of cotton. If one performs heavy work or wants to sit, the toga-like garment is pulled up.

The fellah man starts his day early in the morning after the *Fajr* prayer/sunrise [الفجر]. For the daily work in the field, he wears his *gallabiya*, which he ties around his waist with a fine white cotton cloth. The shades of the *gallabiya* are often light colors to block the rays of the sun. When the rays of the sun increase, the cloth is removed from the waist and tied on the head as a turban/ *emma* [عمامة] that gives the farmer protection from sun and the sand. At 12 noon, when the sun is at its highest point, a break is often taken under the shade of a palm plant. Around 6 o'clock in the evening the working day of many comes to an end.

fig. 42. the *fallah* and his donkey

Most of the *fallah* nowadays put the animals aside for engine cars or motorcycles. But in Tunis Village a lot, especially older generations, can still be seen riding donkey, horses or sometimes even camels. The clothing mostly exists out of the *gallabiya* and the white scarf.



While some ride back home on donkeys, in these days most of the people use other means of transportation like motorcycles, on which usually two take place, or *tuk-tuks* [توك توك], small two-stroke engines. Therefore, the *gallabiya* is pulled up, revealing the fine pants and sandals. On occasions, such as visits or the Friday prayers, the men put on different form of a *gallabiya*, called *kamees*, which is much finer in structure and texture. Some also have fine traditional patterns –*tatriz* [تتريز]. The cloth around the waist is left at home on this day.

The wardrobe of the women - *fallaha* [فَالْحَاة] - also consists similar type to the *gallabiya* called *abaya* [عباية]. Other than the ones of the men, they are usually more colorful with mostly floral patterns or some with *tatriz*. Most of them cover their hair with a headscarf/ *tarha* [طرحة] or *hiyab* [حجاب], which is discreet in its color.

Unlike in many other cultures, the woman is as much a part of the public image as the man. When they are not helping their husbands farm, they run kiosks or sell products at the market. The representative portrayal of women also caught Heradot's eye when he visited Egypt in the 5th century B.C.: "With them the women sit at market and trade, but the men stay at home and weave [...]." (Stein, 1984: 35) The position of women has not changed much from the past due to westernization or globalization in rural areas. She is the focus of social and cultural values as a symbol of a good and successful household. They appear stricter and tighter than men in their appearance, and outwardly give the appearance of knowing the value of themselves within a well-functioning community.

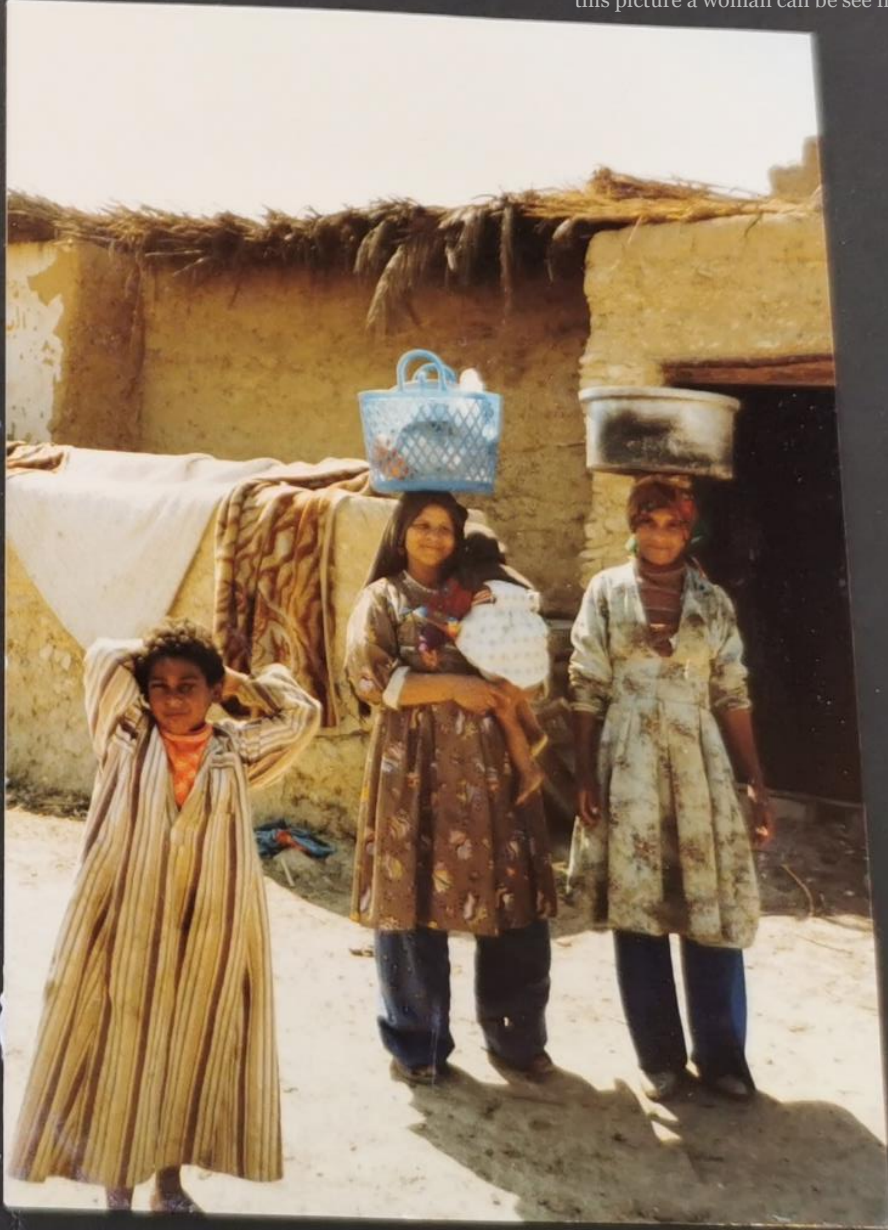


fig. 43. the female *fallaha* [فَالْحَاةُ]

The women of the village are the carrying pillar of their houses. They work as much as their husbands throughout the day. Mostly dressed in colourful and patterned *abaya* with a *hiyab* wrapped around their head , they can often me see balancing baskets or bags on their heads, in order to have free hands. In this picture a woman can be see holding her baby.

***fallah* -Immigrant** The *fallah* group is divided into two communities⁰, each forming a collective: Those who are descended from the 7 original families and call themselves the "main" and those *fallahs* who, after the economic and social advancement of the village, immigrated from neighbouring villages and are described as the "other" *fallahs*.

The *fallah*-immigrants have culturally same or similar traditions as those *fallahen* from Tunis Village. However, they differ significantly in their way of life from the rest of the *Fellahin*. It is the way they deal with culture and tradition that distinguishes them from their families of origin. For the *fallah*-immigrants, the preservation of culture plays a secondary role. Their primary focus is on earning a living, for which, it seems, many are willing to sacrifice old traditions. Because of this attitude, the representative image of the village suffers massively. Around the borders of Tunis Village, they have gradually erected their own buildings. Like parasites, multi-storey brick and concrete construction intrude into the village, defacing the romantic-cultural village image. But just as the architecture has changed due to new influences, there is also that part of the residents who have reshaped their optical appearance due to the new economic opportunities such as pottery or their work in Cairo. Meanwhile one can see especially young men with western style inspired clothing. Jeans pants, T-shirts and sports shoes seem to replace the traditional clothing of the older generation and displace them out of the rural picture.



fig. 44. modern *fallah*

The modern *fallah* can be mostly distinguished through his clothing. Instead of a traditional *gallabiya*, often jeans and a simple t-shirt are worn. In Tunis village most of the modern *fallah*, come from neighboring villages. Hence why they are referred to as *fallah-immigrant*.

**fig. 45. traditional meets modern
– boy on a donkey in front of a
kiosk**

Casual scenery of Tunis Village: Little child riding his donkey to buy some groceries from a local kiosk/ *kushk* [كشك]





the intellectuals Urged by a longing for tranquillity and nature, shortly after Evelyn's arrival, many of her friends from Cairo's intellectual scene followed her to Tunis Village. Most of them were artists or writers originally from big cities like Cairo or Alexandria, or from European countries like Switzerland or Germany. Some of the Egyptians who arrived were originally from rural areas but had lived in urban areas since their youth.

Their appearance was completely different compared to that of a *fallah*. Their clothing was modern. The hair of the women was worn open, without any covering like the *hijab*. The language was elevated, and the intellect was on a different level. Some of them couldn't speak Arabic. And those who knew the language had to get used to the dialect. But somehow, despite their obvious differences, through the empathy of "intruders" and the hospitality of the *fallah*, a friendship was formed. "We were all the same. Artists, architects and writers sat on the floor together with us *fallahin* and ate with us. There was no difference between us." (Interview, Haj Ahmed)

Despite the equality described by the *fallah* within the village society, there were nonetheless clear social divisions, which show a clear separation of the two social groups through the use of individual words. They referred to themselves as "the intellectuals" or are characterized by the *fallahin* as "wise" and "knowledgeable." This choice of words splits off the "common we" into a "we and the others" and accordingly shows a certain 'spiritual turning away' from a desired collective within the village. The outwardly visible homogeneous construct is thereby divided into two clear groupings, which not only lead back to different cultural or social ways of life, but are underlined verbally. However, the poor peasants of that time hoped for social advancement through the new intellectual group, which is why their acceptance of this "other" was more evident than, for example, that of those *fallahs* from other villages. Because the intellectuals apparently knew better and wanted to give them back what they supposedly lost throughout the years. With Fathy's dogmas of an "architecture for the poor," the intellectuals progressively changed the village construct through domed buildings, thus creating a new era of an intellectual and cultural identity for the peasants.



fig. 46. Tourism in rural Egypt, Tunis Village

Since the arrival of the intellectuals of Cairo (around 2000), Tourism has become a huge part of the village. Handicrafts out of bamboo, rice

Bedouin, badawi [بدووي] Most Bedouins in Fayoum, and therefore also those of Tunis Village, descend from the Libyan desert regions. With increasing globalization, the nomadic life of the Bedouin has also changed. The settled Bedouin tribes now live within the village community and are almost indistinguishable from the *fallahs*. Hence also their customs and traditions have influenced those of the *fallahs* and have been integrated into their lifestyle. Despite the excellent integration of the Bedouins, there are a few Bedouins who nevertheless want to write themselves off from the rest of the *fallah* community and seem to maintain their life within the desert and the associated nomadic life.

The Bedouins, described as independent free spirits, outwardly differ just as little from the *fallahs*. They also wear a light garment consisting of layers. Their form of *gallabiya*, also called *thwab* [ثوب] or *dishdash* [دشداشة], is usually white or equally seen in light earth tones. On their heads, regardless of the occasion, they wear cloth, called *kufiya* [كوفية] or *shemagh* [شماغ]. The women are hardly, if at all, visible in public spaces. Everything takes place in or near their house. Since most of the Bedouins were not farmers, they are still not used to that kind of work in the field of agriculture. Traditionally, among the Bedouins, it is the women who do all-day work such as activities as milking the sheep or doing the housework. The men tend to socialize or make plans for the clan. Despite their more clannish spirit, they are quite open to guests. And even since tourism has grown in Tunis Village, their traditional pattern has been also broken up due to the urban immigrants and tourists. Today most of the men are now working in the desert tourism sector. Due to the increased interaction with tourists, seen in the eye of the Bedouin as "other tribes" with "other cultures", conflicts arise within the Bedouin community. Especially their women don't approve of the work, because the Bedouin men "tend to have conversations with female tourists, who mostly book the activity. And this behavior is not common in the Bedouin culture. Though why the wives don't like it" (Interview, Bedouin of Qatrani Camp). The intrusion of the foreigner is shown here in a negative and socio-cultural conflict. While the man must still carry the role of the breadwinner of the family, the women of the Bedouin society feel oppressed in their cultural and traditional role image. Therefore, within the Bedouin, the work in the tourism industry is demonized and has no respected position.



fig. 47. *badawi* at market place

The *badawi* often wear their Arabic version of *gallabiya*, *thwab* and with a white *kufiya* on their head. Most of the Bedouins have integrated themselves into the rural community and can hardly be distinguished from the *fallahs*, both visually and externally.

Building with earth

Like a dramatic narrative of the evolution of the different building techniques in Tunis Village, which presented itself through the research trip in 3 acts of a structural metamorphosis, this chapter describes the transformation of the traditional building in the village. The information on the construction technique of the *fallahin* is based on two research methods. The first source is derived from expert-interviews with experienced construction workers, called *banaa*. These theory-based interviews were then supported through workshops of some construction techniques and visits of some construction sites. This allowed, in addition to the theory, to be introduced to some practical and better understanding of the “talent of the craftsmanship/ *muharet el sanai*“ [مهارة الصنعية] and the traditional construction techniques in Egypt. This was documented and recorded during the research trip through sketches and photographs.

Rural architecture in Egypt traditionally consisted mainly of simple mud houses. In the beginning, just as their ancient ancestors did, these houses were formed by hand, which later got replaced by limestones. By that the residents not only lost their knowledge of traditional architecture but also their bond with their ancestors cultural building techniques. It was only with the arrival of intellectuals that a certain return to the building material took place and the mud technique experienced a rebirth.



fig. 48. Let's clay! "I build with something we were made of." (Interview, Haj Essam)

ACT I. resurrection: **Traditional building techniques**

fallah house





fig. 49. *fallah* house made of limestone

Most of the remaining *fallah* houses are now made of other material than the traditional clay. The shape itself remained untouched.

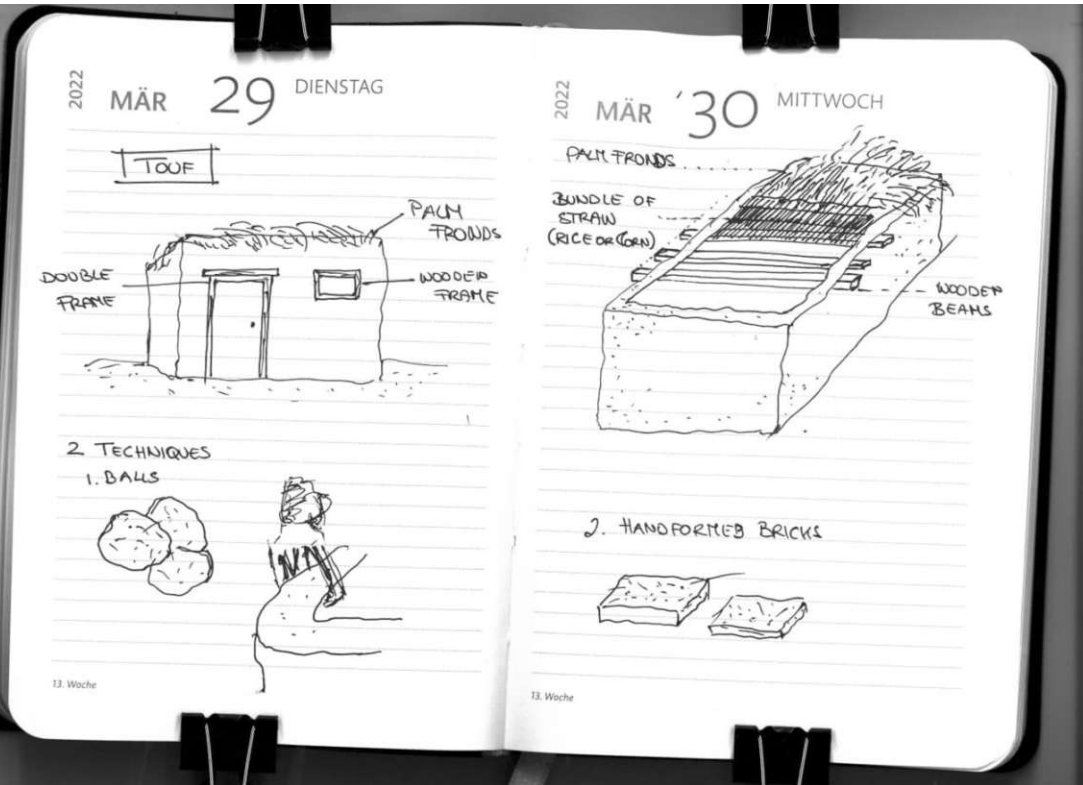
ACT I: Resurrection TOUF [توف] The traditional construction of *touf* nowadays barely exists in rural Egypt. In Tunis Village this construction method can only be seen on old stable walls. The information rely on the narrations of the elderly people of the village’s community. Almost all of them spent their childhood inside these mudhouses and some of them even used to built it with their parents. In addition, during the research stay, a workshop was attended in which the practice of the Cob-method was studied. This has been helpful in terms of the traditional *touf* methodology, which has similar approaches in practice.

The origin of the house in Tunis Village, consisted of the construction method named “*touf*”. *Touf* indicated the building technique made out of the Nile mud and is commonly known among the majority of the urban population in Egypt as *tamj*²⁸. The clay was retrieved from the *bahr Quarun*, which got provided from the bahr Yousef, a direct canal canalization coming from the Nile river. The Nile mud²⁹ is fertile and thick in his consistency, hence why due its thickness the clay required no tools and could easily be shaped by hand. In order to strengthened the construction, the *fallahs* would add straw/*ash* [قشنة] or small pebbles/ *zalat* [زلط]. to the natural mixture of the clay. Because of its natural stick consistence, no mortar was used. It was formed by hand by simply throwing, beating or pressing it. (Minke, 2021: 73-75)

²⁸ In gratitude for the Nile flood, the Egyptian farmers celebrated by making an offering to the Nile: the most beautiful girl was sacrificed to the Nile. Despite the decline of the Nile mud, a festival is still held on the Nile every spring.

²⁹ The Nile mud is a fertile mud created from the volcanic mountains of Ethiopia, and washed onto the land through the Nile River, which happens annually due the known Nile floods. The mud was not only ideal for building houses, but also served as an excellent breeding ground for agriculture due to its fertile, nutrient-rich content.

fig. 50. research sketch, *touf* construction



In general, two building techniques with *touf* were used in Tunis Village: The first method was a simple forming by the hands. Here balls of the wet clay consistence from the lake were formed into balls and then splashed with high pressure onto the construction. By throwing the balls with a certain strength, the single layers would become more compacted and adhere to the base. Because of the hot climate of Tunis, the surface of the paste would dry fast, which enabled a quick stacking of layers. After some layers, the surface would be smoothed and polished with wet hands. Some would also use tools with a flat surface to even out the walls by removing excess clay. The walls would reach a thickness of 50-60 cm and due the free forming they would come out amorphous, giving them a natural shape. The ceilings were made of wooden beams with palm fronds/ *grid al-nakhl* [جرید النخل] or reeds/ *bus* [بوص] on top.

As second technique, some would take the clay mixture and form it with their bare hands to clay-blocks, which they would stack onto each other like normal bricks. While this method was a far neater method, it required much more of a time commitment, as the clay blocks had to be sun-dried first in order to be used afterwards.

The biggest advantage of this building technique, lays in the capacity of the free forming and shaping of the building, in which the human physic is simply connected with the building material, as well as their deeply rooted connection to their ancient ancestors who used the same construction method. Unfortunately, this type of houses no longer exists in Tunis Village and can only be found in some corners as walls of stables. According to Fares, a local villager, this type of houses can still be found in certain villages, such as "Village 8". Also many of the elderly locals fondly remember those days inside the clay-houses: "It was the best time of my life. We didn't have much. We slept on the floors. But how I would love to live in a mud house again." (Interview, Mansour)

The reason for the complete 'extinction' of the Nile mud houses, traces back to the construction of the Aswan Dam³⁰, which led to the final decrease of the Nile mud. Since in Tunis the usual familiar clayey upper layer on the shore of the lake could not be found anymore, the inhabitants abandoned the clay building method and replaced it with the limestone/ *hagar gir* [حجر جير]. This led not only to the search for a new building material, but also to a complete separation from the traditional clay within the village community.

³⁰At the time of the Ottoman dynasty of Egypt, three dams were built by King Muhamed Ali Pasha and Ismail Pasha (Sannar Dam, Roseires Dam and Meroew Dam). These initially significantly curbed the transport of Nile mud. With the subsequent construction of the Aswan Dam under President Gamal Abd el Nasser, the mud was then eventually significantly restricted. The consequences could not only be seen in the traditional construction of the Fellah houses, but the once nutrient-rich mud soil has since had to be nourished with artificial fertilizer.



fig.51. touf wall

The traditional building were made out of *touf*. Usually, the *fallah* would use anything they could find in his natural surroundings. Gravel, straw or sometimes even small wooden pieces were used as support. Today none of these houses remained and got mostly replaced through limestone and bricks. Only walls of stables can still be seen having this construction type.



fig. 52. roufbricks

Some would built their walls with hand formed bricks.

limestone - *hagar gir* [حجر جير] A large part of the village community still lives in houses made of *hagar gir*. Known among the locals as “*Fayoumi-stone*”, it is still considered as one of the best regional building materials. Through the large number of interviews with the residents, a knowledge of the traditional construction methods of *hagar gir* could be gained. Most of the locals are familiar the construction technique of the *hagar gir* which is why they often refer the buildings made of this material as “*eimaret el muktamanin*” [عماره المجتمع]– meaning “the building of the people”, referring by that to the well known and easy technique that every person can build on its own. Most of the *fallah* houses that were visited were made out of the limestone technique, which can be seen after the traditional mud houses as the “main” vernacular architecture among the villagers.

When many villagers emigrated to countries such as Libya or Saudi Arabia in the hope for better money, with their return they not only brought money with them, but also new building influences. After the amount of the familiar clay has decreased, the locals have replaced the clay with limestone. This replacement came not only due to the lack of the existing and known clay, but also with the return to limestone many advantages, already recognized in ancient times, were rediscovered. After all, the building material limestone was already one of the prestige building materials during ancient times due to its robust resistance to any weather conditions. The houses made of *hagar gir* can still be found in the village today. And in general, the unofficial law says: the poorer the owner, the more likely the traditional architecture is still present. Nevertheless, nothing has changed in the houses shape or layout. The simple rectangular buildings, consist of walls of trimmed limestones, joined with clay mortar/ *muna* [مونة]. These usually have a height of 2 meters and a width of 0.50 - 0.60 meters. The walls are usually plastered with clay/ *fetisah* [فتيسه]. Therefore, many inhabitants often still speak of "traditional mud houses", as they remained visually unchanged. The mud mortar and mud plaster are made from mud with the addition of materials such as straw [*ash*] or reeds [*grid*]. As reeds two types are used: rice reed/ *ash el ros* [قش الارز] or corn reed/*ash el-dorra* [ش الذرة]. The flat roof/ *sahf musatah* [سقف مسطح] also here consist of wooden beams, spaced 0.80 - 1.00 meters.

Since Egypt is a very wood-poor country, the ceilings are built from every possible available woods: Eucalyptus, cedar - a pine similar plant or even sometimes palm trunks/ al-nākh [النخل] are the most common ones used in Tunis. On top of this is a dense layer of palm frond or reed, which are layered on top of each other as bundles. In some roofs, clay mortar is also found on the roofing reeds. Along the facade, the *mastaba*, a longitudinal bench made of clay, was also placed, decorated with overhanging ceiling wooden beams, which, due to their symmetrical distance from each other, look like small dots.

Due to the new building influences and the view of the building methods of the big city, some farmers began to replace the *fetisah* with a cement plaster called *mahara* [محارة]. Whenever the layer would start to crumble, or had to be changed, it is carefully knocked off little by little with a sledgehammer in order to apply a new layer of cement on top of it. On some ceilings, a layer of lime/ *gir al'abyad* [الجير الأبيض] can also be found on the inside of the ceilings, which is supposed to give an additional protection against weather. The floor is made of smoothed, tamped natural earth. Whoever could afford it, covered the floors of kitchen or bathrooms with ceramic tiles. Most of the houses also have a stable/ *zariba* [زريبة] at the other end of their houses. These are commonly still made of clay are being attached on the limestone construction, simply to the clay's sticky consistence. The roofs of the barn are usually made of a simple and light constructions with some layers of reeds or branches folded together.



fig. 53. a traditional *fallah* house made of limestone and cement plastering



fig. 55. roof construction of a fallah house

fig. 54 & 55 show a Wooden beams are integrated into the structure and covered with rice or corn reeds. This serves not only as a shading element, but also as a semi-public space that helps to occupy the space through the canope-like construction.



fig. 54. roof construction of a fallah house



fig. 57. cement plastering of the fallah house



fig. 56. chimney

after the kitchen also found a space within the house, chimney was added subsequently.



ACT II. reformation technique of a new ideology domes & vaults

fig. 58. traditional *fallaha* next to the new built ideology of the domes

ACT II: Reformation

With the arrival of intellectuals such as architect Dr. Adel Fahmy, Evelyn and her husband Michel, or Fathy's construction workers from Aswan, adobe construction was reintroduced. All of them knew Fathy's ideology of a new peasant village. They were all familiar with his work "Architecture for the poor", with which he aimed to give back a culture to peasants they sadly lost due to globalization. Accordingly, many firmly believed that only through the incorporation of adobe buildings, preferably made of domes, the village would experience a socio-cultural advancement, and something could be given back to the "culturally rootless poor." (cf. Roesler, 2013: 526) In a report by Evelyn, she described her desire to build an earthen building after all the necessary materials were found in front of her in the village: „Everything what you need is there for stoneware production: sand, ashes and clay for glazes; sand, clay and straw to build with.“(Porret, 1984: 42) Accordingly, everything necessary for clay construction was available. Only the building knowledge was missing. So it happened that through Evelyn's desire to build with mud bricks in order to realize Fathy's concept of vaults needed to be followed. After Fathy send his construction workers to Tunis Village, the workers started to teach the residents the traditional upper Egyptian construction art of vault building. The arrival of the vaults in general was unfamiliar to the construction workers and to the villagers. Only the building material clay was known to them in handling. They had never built vaults before. Neither structurally nor culturally, this technique was known to them. Some of them maybe knew it from the history books, in which the vault of the ancient tomb architecture was shown, or they saw it sometime during a trip to Southern Egypt, where it belonged to the cultural heritage of the ethnic group, the Nubians. Nevertheless, the locals started to learn the craftsmanship and was accepted by the majority: „It changed. I don't want to say tourism. It changed with the intellectual people who came. Like Evelyn and Dr. Adel. Tunis was beautiful with the intellectual people who came. [...] Those were the ones who developed us mentally.“ (Interview, Haj Essam) Just as the "intellectuals" were accepted within the village community, the newly introduced architecture was quickly integrated into the lifestyle, as well as the architectural style. The houses of the intellectuals became nevertheless, as already criticized by Fathy as symbol of the rich and “an improvement on the old type of country house. [...] In spite of their economical mud brick walls, they were not so very much cheaper than houses built of more conventional materials, because the timber for the roofs was expensive.” (Fathy, 1973: 5)

NUBIAN VAULT TECHNIQUES

Most of Tunis's local

***fallahs* have since the arrival of the intellectuals mastered the construction technique of the Nubian Vaults. Some *banaa* specialized in certain the Nubian vault technique using one specific materials. In general, the Tunis locals and builders distinguish 3 different types of *banaa* and their domes: mud, limestone and brick/concrete. An interview was conducted with each of the main representatives and, where possible, construction sites were visited.**

The Nubian vault originates from Upper Egypt and represents a century-old building technique of an Egyptian ethnical groups of the Nubians. After decades, the Nubian vaults almost vanished, and it was due to Fathy's personal research that the old traditional building technique found itself in a rediscovery and reinvention. The main advantage of Nubian vaults, was that „the whole vault could be build straight out in the air, with no support or centering, with no instrument, with no drawn plan [...].” (Fathy, 1973: 10) In order to enable a construction without a framework, the bricks themselves need to be light-weight. Usually their measuring is 15cm in width, 25cm inn length and around 5-6cm in thickness. To built the vault the bricks need to be placed inclined on each other, fixed with a of mortar. This light –weight building technique prevents the inclined structure from sliding down. The inclination of the arche should therefore be between 65°-70°.

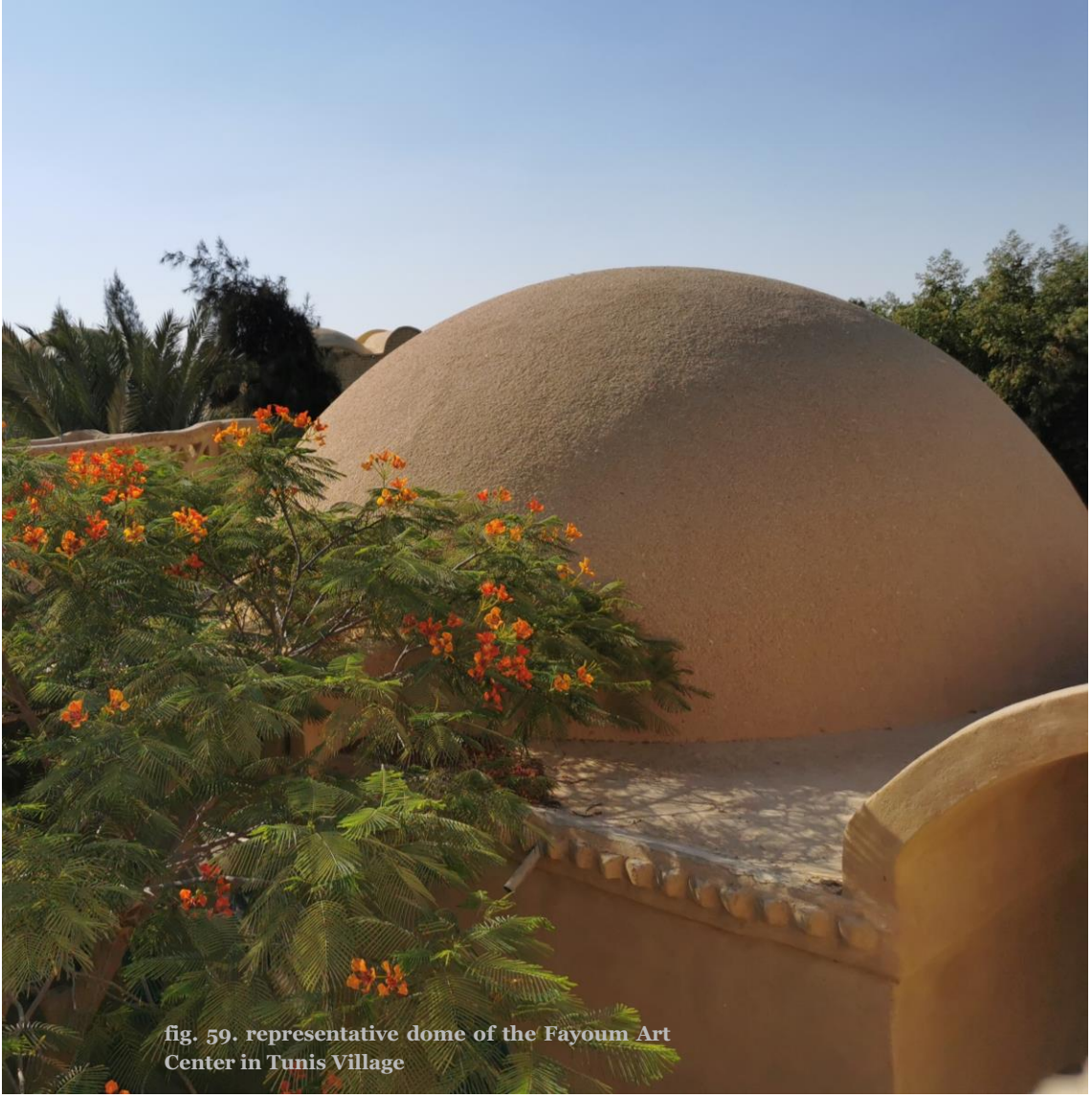


fig. 59. representative dome of the Fayoum Art Center in Tunis Village

The new architecture ideology of a “perfect new village” has spread around the village in a timelapse of only 60 years. Instead of the traditional flat roofs, almost everywhere vaults and domes peak out in between the trees, representing a new transformation of rural architecture.

NUBIAN VAULTS IN TUNIS VILLAGE

In Tunis Village the people, heavily influenced by Fathy's construction workers from Upper Egypt and architects like Dr. Adel Fahmy, redefined the old building method into two types: the dome/*quba* [قبعة] and the vaults/ *qabw* [قبو]. At first the people started to build with clay. Nowadays some also use bricks or stones from the region, known by the locals as "Fayoumi stone". The first construction – the *quba* – relies on a non-framework construction. The domes are often built for squared rooms like bedrooms, bathrooms or kitchen. Usually, the dome is supported by 3-4 arches. In special cases it even relies on a pentagonal wall shape. When the walls reach a height of 1.00-1.50 meters, the construction of dome begins. Here, a cylinder/ *barkal* [برجل], usually made of wood, is placed in the center of the room. In the center of the *barkal*, a thread or sometimes a steel bar is stuck inside of it with a needle. This form of construction serves as eccentric guide along the dome and guides similar to a compass the constructor along the radius of the dome. When the walls reach a height of 1.00 – 1.50 meters, the bricks are now laid on top of each other at an angle along the load-bearing walls in a circular motion.. In construction terminology, the dome [*quba*] is also usually referred to informally as "*nos kora*" [نص كوره], which translates as "half circle".

The second construction are the vaults. Usually seen as corridors leading from one room to another. Other than the domes, for the vault [*qabw*] a framework is required. The framework, usually made of steel or in rare cases of wood, lays on the two longitudinal supporting walls who serve as guiding line of the *qabw*. Colloquially, the workers often therefore use the term "*quba el matfusa*" [القبة المنفوسه], which means pressed dome.

fig. 60. research sketch Nubian Vaults

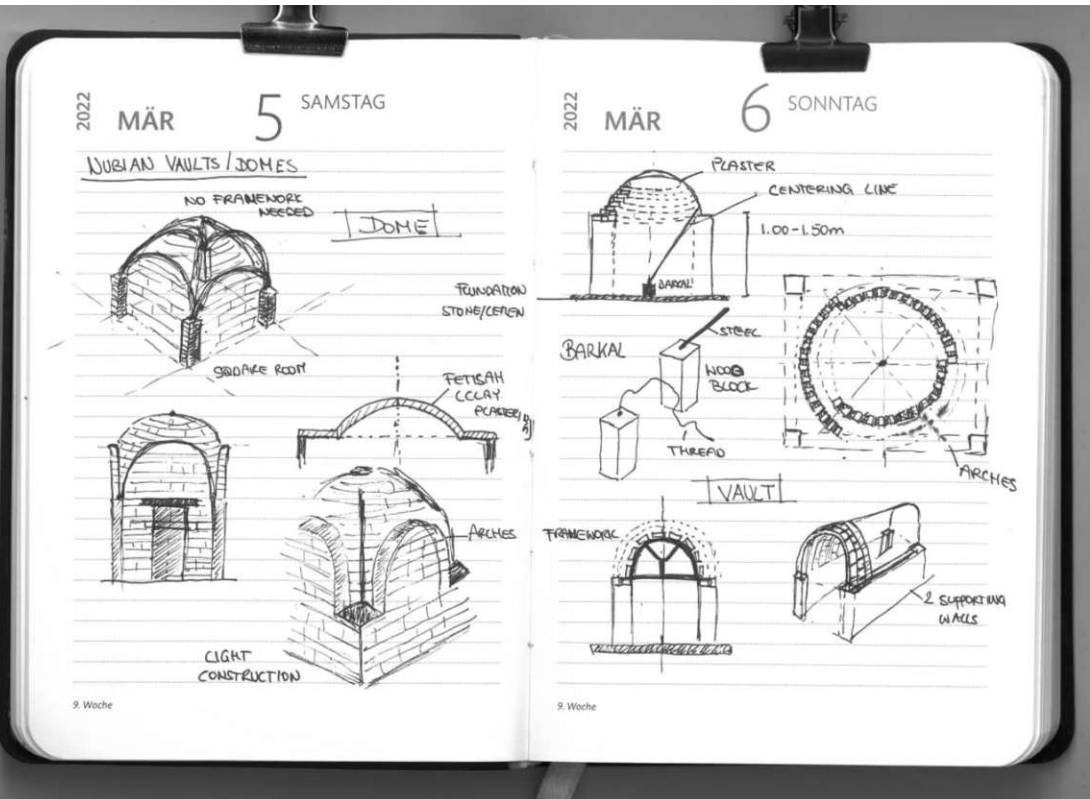




fig. 61. building with clay and mortar [*mouna*]



fig. 62. *barkal* in action

in the center of the room a *barkal* is placed with a secured thread or metal lath. With this the radius of the dome can be measured with increasing height without the need of a frame. The bricks are placed one after the other in steps and fixed with the mortar/ *mouna*.

***toub el neij* [الطوب الني] – SUN DRIED AND UNFIRED CLAY BRICKS**

The main representatives of the mud construction and in general vaults and domes are Haj Ahmed and Haj Essam. In addition to the information obtained from the interviews of the *banaa*, the mud dome construction could also be observed and practiced through a workshop given by the Egyptian architect Dr. Adel Fahmy in Tunis Village

After the seemingly loss of the familiar clay from the lake, the locals focused on building limestone and neglected the traditional clay culture of the village. It was only through Dr. Adel and Evelyn that the village experienced some sort of rebirth of clay during the 1960s. In the process, Dr. Adel's research showed that the rich soil of agricultural properties of the *fallahs* had a huge amount of clay-bearing clods, which today they refer to as "*tafla*" [طافله]. This rock revolutionized adobe construction in Tunis. The *tafla* lies in vast quantities under the nutrient-rich soil and is usually dug out from the main earth of the construction property. To work with the *tafla*, it first has to be prepared. The clay's can be molded with some added water easily and in general don't require mechanical work. To produce a certain amount of mud brick, the mass of *tafla* dug out from the construction site, is first washed to then be placed in a covered basin of water for about 2-4 days. This process of water curing brings two advantages. Firstly, the salt content of the *tafla* is deionized, which increases the binding power of the clay particles in the *tafla*. On the other hand, a certain "molding process" occurs. This mold, explains *banaa* Haj Essam, "is intended to prevent later mold growth of the building material after it is finished construction". (Interview, Haj Essam)

The wet *tafla* is then mixed with additives such as straw and small pebbles and thinned with sand. The mixture is usually blended on the ground with a shovel while adding gradually water as much as needed. The avoidance of machines in this process enables the *banaa* to observe the mixture as well as to get a better feeling of its consistency. If the consistency is too hard, more water needs to be added. If it is too soft, more sand. During the mixing process on the ground, on-site tests of the clay are also carried out. The main aim here is to measure the water and salt content. *banaa* such as Haj Essam can measure the salt content, often based on their experience: "Whenever I start to work somewhere, I have to taste the fresh dig out *tafla*. To know the percentage of salt in it. Therefore I only need to lick it, and I know the salt amount." (Interview, Haj Essam) This talent is referred to as "*muhart el sanaia*" [مهارة الصنيعة], which literally translates as 'talent of the worker' or in general also conveys the relationship between the building material and the construction worker. The second on-site test is the cigar test. A sample is taken from the mixture and a cigar-shaped roll with a radius of 4 cm will be formed. It is gradually pushed down along a solid smooth surface. If it breaks off, the part remaining on the solid surface is measured. If the length is 8cm, the mixture is good. If it's too short, there is too much sand. If too long, more sand needs to be added.



fig. 63. natural color of the building

clay in symbiose with palm trees and wood. Clay requires annual service as the top layer cracks due to rain or in the case of Tunis Village the high humidity.

For the production of the clay block in Tunis Village two processes are used. The still wet muddy and sticky consistency is either put into rectangular molds by hand or produced by a pressing machine:

1- MANUAL PRODUCTION THROUGH WOODEN FRAME The use of wooden frames is considered as one of the oldest techniques associated with earthen construction in the village. However, since it requires a lot of physical labor for production in quantity, it is no longer widespread. This can lastly be attributed to the mentality of the locals, where they prefer to use simple manufacturing methods, such as the bricks or concrete constructions. Since in Tunis Village nobody produces clay bricks with wooden molds anymore, during the research the construction methodology was reproduced through a scale – model, reproducing the technique and bricks. With the supervision and help of Dr. Adel, clay bricks were produced out of a small wooden mold of a scale 1:10 . The clay mixture used was the usual mixture of *tafla*, sand, pebbles and straw.

For this technique, the clay texture is placed in a timber. The first type is made by wooden frames - equally open from the bottom. In this case, the mixture is placed on the floor, in order, in the trough, with the dimensions 25*12*6. The surface and the excess clay are smoothed either by hand or with a flat piece of wood.

The bricks are then laid on the floor and left to dry for about 1 week under the natural heat of the sun and air. A single person can make about 300 blocks per week. Therefore, pressing clay blocks is now preferred, which can produce 2 blocks at the same time.



fig. 64. Wooden frame production m 1:10

Reenacting traditional old building techniques. The clay structure was made out of *tafla*, straw, sand and water

2- COMPRESSED EARTH BLOCKS – CEB The second production technique consists of a mechanical pressed method of architect Dr. Adel Fahmy for clay blocks. During the workshop with Dr. Adel Fahmy in Tunis Village, the construction technique was introduced, as well as an own clay block was produced, which was used to build a dome and a vault the next day. As the only person in the village, Dr. Adel Fahmy was able to organize a pressing machine for the village through his good friend, an Austrian architect Martin Rauch. It was important to Dr. Adel to use a machine, that was not only accessible for the locals, but also a simple machine construction that could be repaired by the locals if necessary

For this process two strong persons are needed to operate the machine. The clay mixture consists of the clay *tafla*, sand, pebbles and small portion of water. Unlike the manually produced clay bricks -which require a high-water content - due the pressing method, mixed clay with a low water content can be used, which allows the use of the blocks after a short time. And compared to the other clay textures of the mold- or *touf* technique, the texture will appear rough and dry, which is the exact consistence the *banaa* are looking for. After mixing the clay with the additives the clay mixture will be then placed in the two molds of the machine. After filling the mixture into the molds, a hole is pressed into the texture at all four corners with the fingers. This allows the water contained in the brick to escape, enhancing the drying of the brick. With a lot of force and pressure, the handle of the machine is pressed down by two people. For this process two strong persons are needed to operate the machine. The pressure is released by pushing the lever up again and allowing to open the lid of the press. With care, the pressed bricks are removed from the mold and stacked one on top of the other, always in the opposite direction, for drying. After just one day, the CEB were able to be used for building.

Despite the advantage of fast production of clay blocks, the machine can be found in only a few construction companies. One of the reason locals often refer to, is low demand for pressed clay blocks in the construction industry, which leads to high production costs for the very few who would like to use them.



fig. 65. CEB – pressing machine

The clay-mixture is placed inside the two molds. And pressed down with pressure, enable a solid mass of a clay-block.

fig. 66. CEB- clay bricks

After pressing, they are carefully but aside under the sun. To order to fully dry, the brick needs to stay at least 3-5 days outside.



3-RAMMED EARTH The 3rd introduced building technique with clay during the workshop is the rammed earth construction. Mostly common in the rural area with the use of manual tools, also here Dr. Adel Fahmy not only taught the locals the rammed earth technique, but also provides a power-controlled machine, the so-called pneumatic rammer.

The percentage of the soil mixture for the rammed earth construction is important. The mixture of earth has to consist of 50-70% gravel and sands, 15-30% of silt and 10-20% of clay. For big project a lab analysis of the percentage of the soil is needed. But as a first and on-site test often the cigar test can be applied.

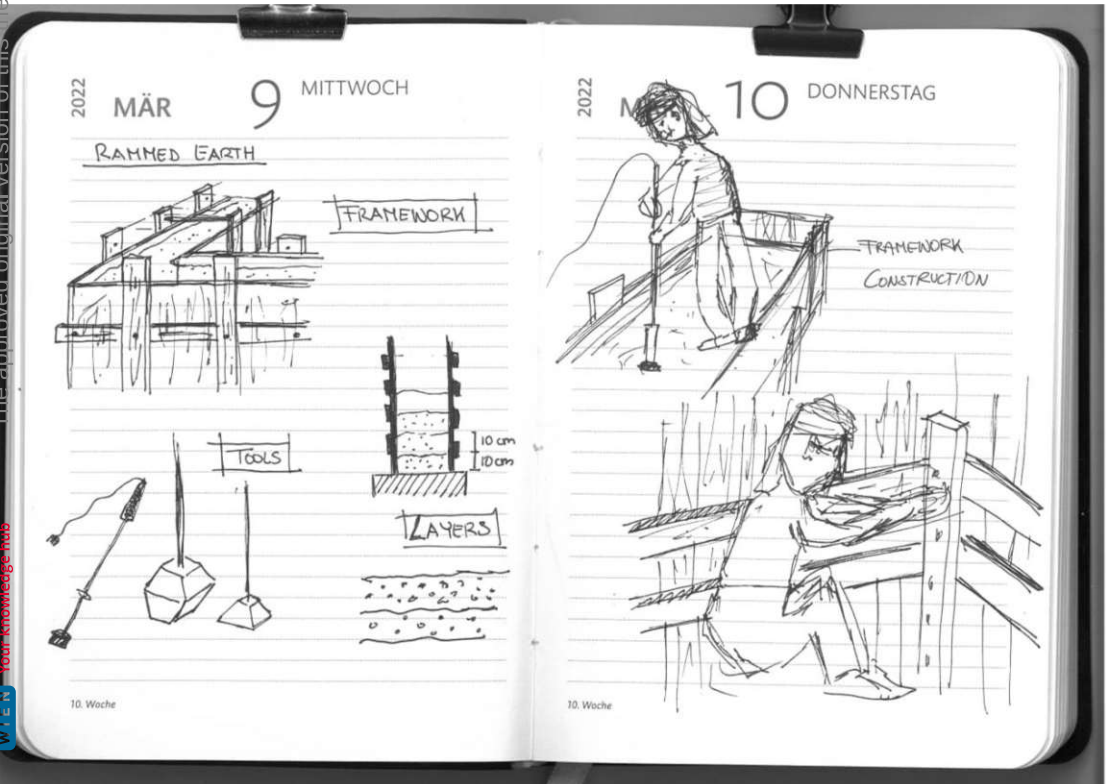
Before working with the soil-mixture, the framework has to be prepared. Here often wooden frames are used, who will be set up on site. The wooden frames must be sturdy in nature, but also light to make it easy to remove and install. Both wall sides are held and kept together with wooden spacers, which will be positioned at similar distances from each other. The length of the wooden slats is 1.50-3.00m and the height is usually between 0.50-1.00m. A certain width must be given, in order to enable the work process inside the box with the machine or other used tools, and should ideally range between 0.50-0.60 meters. After the finishing of the frame, the production process of the walls is carried out step by step. In the process, layer after layer of poured moist soil mass is tamped with the used tool. In the process, each layer has a thickness of about 10cm. This technique results in a layer-like structure, where each layer is visible. After tamping the framework can be removed immediately. This is due to the fact that the tamping of the clay, which is done with great pressure, provides the wall with strength immediately after compaction.

2 Types of used tools in Tunis Village can be considered here:

1. Manual Rammers: When using a manual rammer, it is important to have a tool with high pressure, but which should not be heavy. For this purpose, the handles are usually made of wood with a metallic head. The head can occur circular or even square shaped.

2. Pneumatic Rammers: operate through air compressor and can reach a high frequency, which is advantageous in rammed earth construction as it rams the soil properly.

fig. 67. research sketch, rammed earth



***dabsch* [دبش] Haj Mabrouk is the main *banaa* specialised in the *dabsch* method and has been working in this field for more then 30 years now. He not only provided information through the interview, but also allowed observation at one of his construction sites.**

Many builders have remained faithful to stone construction and have adapted to demand of vaulted buildings. This method of construction with stone is called "*dabsch*". The word derives from the Arabic word "*dabscha*" [دبشه] and means "to hew". Just as in the case of the clay-construction, the construction of the dome starts when the height of the wall is reached. Because of the heavy weight of the stone, bricks or white limestone are used for the vaults and dome construction. In order to not lose the natural shape of the stone, the bricks are roughly trimmed along a guiding line/ *shabaka* [شبكة] of the wall width. In this case, the wall is built as a "shell wall". The cavity is filled with stone scraps that each construction worker carries in his pants pocket or "*gallabiya* pockets".

As mortar either cement or clay is used. A lime brush/ *firsha al-jir* [فرشه الجير] is used to scrape off excess mortar in order to create a clean facade. If a stone lies incorrectly, or if it prevents symmetrical building, all the layers of stones that are built over it must be removed. While the constructors are working on the walls, Mabrouk – as the leading builder- tells that working with stone "is not very popular amongst young generations, because it is a physically exhausting power work" (Interview, Mansour). In addition, hewing the stone requires not only physical strength, but also requires a lot of experience. Most in this field have been working for over 30 years.

Similar as to the clay construction, with *dabsch* up to 3 floors can be reached. But here, too, a well-thought-out substructure is required to make this possible. Other than clay, the advantage of limestone is its resistance to weathering and does not require any service or preparation.

fig. 68. *dabsch*-construction of the dome, Mannsour's construction site

In the center lays the *barkal* with a thread, which is used as centric guide. The domes of the *dabsch* construction are usually made of a lighter material such as bricks.





Fig. 69. *shabaka, dabsch*-construction, Mansour's construction site

The inner wall is filled with individual stone fragments



Fig. 70. hewing the „fayoumi stones“, Mansour's construction site

a construction worker, *banaa*, can be seen breaking a stone into shape with a stonemason's hammer.

fig. 71. *dabsch*, Mansour's construction site



ACT III. deformation: urban ideology *musalah*/ residential buildings



fig. 72. *musalah*, residential buildings instead of small village houses in Tunis Village

ACT III: Deformation Due the increasing tourism in the village, more *fallahs* from surrounding villages started to settle in Tunis Village, in hope of better work opportunities. Due the increase of city dwellers and the influx of *fallah*-immigrants, the village's land prices have raised up enormously. As a result, more local farmers are forced to build vertically and leave their familiar 1-store *fallah* house behind. In addition, the vertical construction is supported by the *fallah*-immigrants, since they strive for a cheap construction anyway. The information here is based on own observations, as well as conversations with residents of the high-rise buildings.

musalah' [مسلح] - REINFORCED STEEL-CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION

Due to the increasing interest of the construction industry in the village, land prices started to skyrocket, and it became unreasonable for villagers to purchase free land. Looking to the city and the west, the interest in skeleton construction/*musalah'* with brick infill/ *charazana* [خرسانه] with the connected verticality became larger. For rural families, living together inside a house is an important part of their culture. Modernization and globalization have partially modernized this aspect of their way of life. Now, most families build entire homes for themselves, assigning one floor to each family member.

Like a parasite, the red brick interferes within rural building architecture. Instead of fighting it, it continues to spread out, taking over the traditional of mud architecture. Meanwhile also the residents and the contractors build domed buildings out of bricks, and giving the houses only through an outer clay plastering/ *fetisah*, an external appearance of the clay. This form of "fake architecture" also seems to largely see no end coming. Also, the increase of houses built annually, both inside and outside the village, lead to a serial production in the building industry who imitates "traditional houses". This is not only supported by rich entrepreneurs who want to strike capital on behalf the image of the village. But also due to migrant workers from neighbouring villages who want to live in cheap housing. Thus the economic change forces to change the farmer who has to leave his culture aside his survival instinct.

„My life dream was to built a house out of clay. But of course the property dimensions matter. To built with clay you need a lot of space. That’s one thing. And the other thing is, you want your brother and sister to love above you. That’s the other problem“ (Interview, Haj

Essam



fig. 73. supra-regional architecture next to small traditional *fallah* house

Steel can be seen a lot more often in the rural areas of Egypt's villages. The mixture is usually mixed on the floor by experienced



fig. 74: a boy knocks off the top layer of cement



fig. 75. cement and steel

The new 3-story residential buildings of the village today use cement, concrete and steel instead of the former traditional clay and limestone.

fig. 76. Camp Qatrani, Bedouin Camp, Tunis Village

The natural shape of the mountains serve as preconstruction of the houses



BEDOUIN TENT It is true that most of the Bedouins now also live in the villages. Some of them nevertheless prefer to live a little outside the Tunis Village boundary, in the desert areas. Many build their homes inside a cave, and use mats or rugs as exterior walls. Their construction is traditionally always light and easy to remove.



fig. 77. Bedouin tent from inside, Camp Qatrani

The roof structure is often made of bamboo or other wooden beams, which are covered with rice mats.

Housing Typologies

According to the observations and the information obtained from the conversations with the inhabitants throughout the research, the inhabitants of the village can be divided into two main groups: the local *fallah* and the urban intellectuals. There is also a certain tendency in the building style with regard to individual collective groups. While almost all intellectuals (with exception of 2-3 intellectuals) prefer a construction of domes and vaults³¹ the indigenous *fallahen*, on the other hand, inhabit small and simple rectangular houses made of limestone or, nowadays also of brick and cement.³² Out from the two groups of inhabitants, a clear reference to the building material clay can be drawn. While for many locals the building material has a traditional-historical value, it serves in turn for the partly rich intellectuals as a modern and sustainable building material more than as cultural meaning. Hence why in the village, a certain tendency from the building material of the poor to the building material of the rich can be observed. From these conclusions drawn, it was possible to produce a list of the used dwelling typologies that form subgroups according to application and use.³³ For this purpose, in the course of the following chapter sections, each typology will be introduced with an example representing the owner and the built environment of the person. This not only gives an overview of the individual and collective building culture inside the village, but also shows knowledge about the residential situation in connection with the socio-historical situation of the inhabitants, who, as it will be shown in the following section, are rooted in clear socio-economic reasoning.

³¹Type II. *Dar'* see page 253.

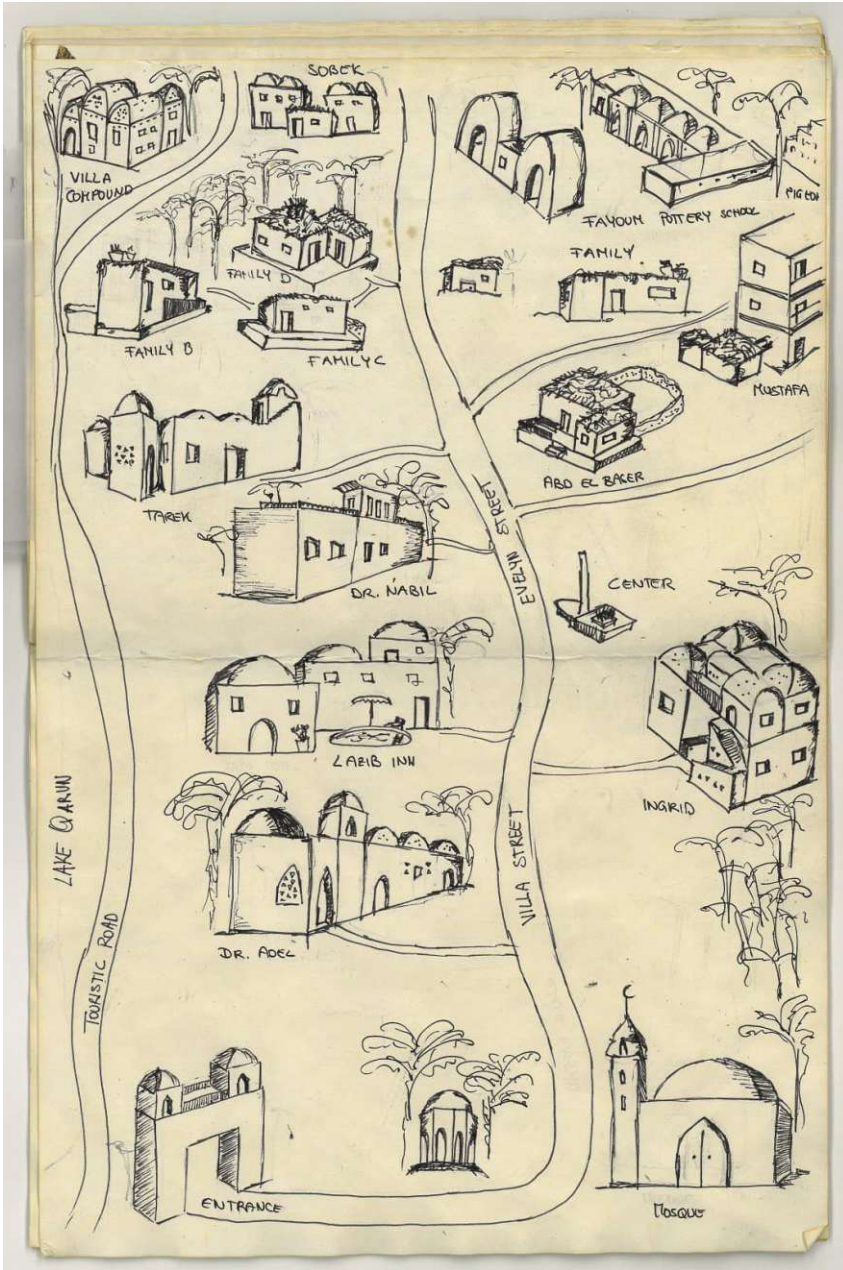
³²Type I. *fallah* - house see page 185.

³³Type III. *musalah'* - house see page 281.

In Tunis Village are 3 specific housing types. The traditional dwelling is considered as the traditional *fallah*-house made out of *touf*, *tafla* or limestones with a *fetisah* (clay-mortar with straw). This typology is located in the traditional old village area. Since Evelyn's arrival in the 1960's, housing type of a villa/ *dar'* [دار'] of the intellectuals have settled along the lake view - *bahari*. The gaps have been filled up with hotel complexes and vacation homes. Furthermore, away from the old village structure, 3-story brick buildings have grown up due to the increasing influence of the tourist industry. In general the villas usually are oriented to the south/ *bahari*, overlooking the lake. The old traditional *fallah*-house are centered in the main village part, and historically were surrounded by abnormal amount of green fields. Nowadays 3-story buildings and some villas replaced the former green spaces. In order to distinguish the individual typologies, a large number of houses and their residents were analyzed. As a result, the individual housing categories have again been broken down into subgroups. Therefore the houses in Tunis Village can be divided into the following typologies, as listed on the following page.

Furthermore, it is important to understand the Egyptian orientation system, which will occur repeatedly in the course of the coming chapters. In Arabic, orientation is mostly divided into "*bahari*" and "*sharqi*". *Bahari* [بحري] - English nautically - implies the northwestern and northeastern area, which is wind and air directed. *Sharqi* [شرقي] English southern, is used to describe the sides who are exposed to the sun. Sometimes also *qibli* [قبلي], meaning west, would be also used for the sunny side. According to the residents, the windows are located on the *bahari* side, and the small openings turn to the *qibli* side.

fig. 78. research sketch, houses of Tunis Village



HOUSING TYPOLOGIES IN TUNIS VILLAGE

I. Traditional *fallah* House „*bait al- fallah*“ [بيت الفلاح]

1. renovated: Abd el Baser grandparents house
2. new building technique: Dr. nabil
3. in use & good condition: 3 different families
4. reuse: storage, barns and community kitchens
5. farmhouse: of Mustafa's father
6. demolished & new construction: Lazib Inn Hotel

II. Villa „*Dar*“ with vaults and domes

1. Adobe/ *adubi* [أدوبي] “*tafla*”: Dr. Adel
2. Brick/“*al toub al-ahmar*” [الطوب الأحمر]: Ingrid
3. Stone “*dabsch*” [ديش]: Mansour and Dr. Somaya

III. Generation buildings „*eimaret*“ [عمارة]

1. Brick “*al toub al-ahmar*” [الطوب الأحمر]: Mustafa

IV. Special typologies

1. pigeon tower/ burj al-hamam [برج حمام]
2. Fayoum pottery school [مدرسه الفخار]

Type I: traditional *fallah* - House: its use and the inhabitant – architecture as cultural expression

THE MEANING OF THE EARTH MATERIAL

Clay is one of the oldest building materials in the world. Due to its predominantly positive characteristics, it has been experiencing a resurrection for some years now. In Tunis Village, the methodology of the ability to build one's own house is referred “*eimaret el muktamanin*” [عمارته المجتمع]. This is said to include architecture that can be built by the hands of any ordinary person in Egyptian society. Therefore, earthen building enjoys recognition in rural architecture not only because of its ecological and physical advantages, but also because of the social-cultural aspect associated with a long history of construction.

Natural raw materials such as clay or limestone, have been used for building houses since the times of the Pharaohs, and also contribute a strong historical value. Today's farmhouses are amazingly similar to those of the ancient in terms of layout, form and function, and have an additional commonality with the building material. Because of its ancient existence, the building material has different names Adobe, Clay, Mud, Soil. All of these represent the material clay. Coming from the ancient Egyptian language *dbt*, meaning brick, the term adobe has a much deeper cultural and historical meaning for Egyptian culture. Through the transformation of the ancient language into Coptic - which is considered as the last modification of the Pharaonic language- the Coptic word for adobe τωβε , was translated into the Arabic Al-ṭūb. After the invasion of Spain by the Arabs, the language of the Spaniards was also influenced and so the word ' *a Thob*' was also changed into '*a Dob*'.

Usually, clay is connected by the locals in a positive manner. It is still regarded as „livable“ material among the *fallahs*. And most of the interviewed *fallahs* are aware of the positive elements that come with clay. But however, the fast forward lifestyle in the modern society, as well as the expensive real estate prices, leads most of the *fallahs* to drop the clay for materials such as bricks or cement. This also comes with the production of the clay itself. The clay blocks can be formed either by hand or with machines. In case of the manual production a lot of workers and time is needed. Regards the machines, temporary residents like Dr. Adel offer though his private machine, but still time and people are therefore needed to enable a production of a quantity. In addition, you won't find a production company that produces clay bricks in quantities. And the ones that exist are forced to sell the bricks with high prices, due the general low demand of clay bricks within the construction industry in Egypt. This puts the *fallah* in a crisis, in which he still desires clay as a building material, but because of the fast pace of modernity, he is also striving for a fast construction method.



fig. 79. clay sculptures

ADVANTAGE OF CLAY

Therefore, historically and culturally, clay enjoys a great reputation among the population. In Fayoum, moreover, the clay color is a light beige, which for many is perceived as a pleasant color for the eyes. Moreover, building with light colors is an important aspect in hot climates. The light color absorbs the sun's rays, and the house can store its cool indoor climate during the day.

Although many *fallah* are now turning away from clay as a building material, they recognize its benefits and advantages, and yet also hope for a return as well as a reversion from rural populations to the regional building material. Some advantages of the building material are as follows (Minke, 11/12):

- natural resource
- balances Air humidity: absorbs and desorbs humidity faster
- saves energy and stores heat
- always reusable
- saves material- and importation costs

BANAA [البنّي]

The *banaa*/ [construction worker] as a high and recognized status within the village community. In the former as well as in today's society he is usually considered more important than the architect, and his knowledge is far more superior to that of the architect.

The knowledge is derived from experience. Learning is done from an early age with the eye and the hand. The technical terms are changed by simple names from the rural language. Instead of construction plans, the ideas exist on in the head, or on sand that is already blurred away after. Their way of life is similar to the looseness and simplicity of the environment. Within a village community, everyone can build independently, but a certain building knowledge is needed for the construction or any problems that may arise. Each village community has at least 1-2 experienced builders, most of whom have built all the existing houses within the village itself. In the Tunis village, because of the large demand, meanwhile more than only 2 became. Each *banaa*, is attributed a building material as expertise - Haj Ahmed in clay and dome construction. Haj Mabrouk in stone construction [*dabsch*] and Haj Essam in clay plastering and the art of *tadelakt*. Haj Sayed is further specialised in mixed construction, such as perforated bricks with clay fillings. All of them have inherited the craft from their fathers and intend to pass it on to their sons.

With the definition of "*muhart el sanaia*" (talent of the craftsman), not only the talent is being described, but also the connection between *banna* and material. Whenever talking with the *banna* about their work, they tend to describe their work with it in a romanticised way. Their relationship with their natural material is being described as "working with something you tend to know from when you are small". Or working with something so natural "that it won't damage your skin, no matter how long you work with it." (Interview, Haj Mabrouk)



fig. 80. *bamaa* using the *dabsch* technique



fig. 81. family in front of their house [bait] : father (ab) wearing the traditional galabiya, with his two daughters

STATUS OF THE HOUSE

In the Egyptian cultural, and especially in the rural countryside, the house serves to protect family and culture and everyone in it is inviolable and has sentimental value. Any guest who is allowed to cross this threshold is therefore a welcome guest. The origin of the dwelling in all cultures refers to the basic need for protection and security. In the rural context of Egypt, nevertheless, the simplicity in the interior and exterior design of the house has remained unchanged. Drawing heavily from its ancient ancestors, the house continues to serve primary purposes such as shelter and security. Over the years, only one new parameter has been added, that of the family reunion. Nowadays, the house stands as a symbol of security and family. It has proven to be a place of family gathering, as well as gathering within family clans.

The deep roots of family and house can be seen from the etymology of the Egyptian Arabic verb *bana* [بنى] and translates as "to base something on" or "to establish". From this, the noun for house, *bait* [بيت] is derived. The construction worker is referred to as *bina* [بناء]. The adjective built! Is translated in Arabic as "*ibni*" [ابن]. This word, in turn, can be derived in "*ibn*" and "*benti*" [بنتي], which means son and daughter. If one adds this network of those words together, the symbolism of house is based on the founding of daughter and son, thus of a family, and thereby the house can be derived symbolically as a place of family. The house finds itself in a constant relationship with the family. The Arabic proverb "*ibni bayt!*" [ابني بيت] means translated "found a house". However, this does not mean founding the house itself, but rather *bait* symbolizes the family. Accordingly, the literal derivation would have to be translated as "Found a family".

Another word for building is *eimara* [عمارة]. This word is used for the term "*eimarat el-muktamaen*", symbolizing the building of the society that everyone can build with his own hands. Another word that is associated with the building in Arabic vocabulary is the word *nafsiya* [نفسية], which translates as "psyche" or "well-being". In association with the house, it is referred to internally as the *emarat el nafsiya* [عمارته النفسيه]- "the building of well-being". Looking more closely at the word *nafsiya*, it derives from the word *nafsi* [نفسى], "oneself", and establishes the connection of well-being and the representation of "oneself". *Nafsi*, in turn, indicates the Arabic word "*nefs*" [نفس], pleasure. This network implies the close connection between the built house and the desire to represent oneself. With "oneself" on the one hand the own "I" is meant, as well as the "we", which is carried by family and village community members. And therefore "*emarat el nafsiya*" [عمارته النفسيه] can be understood as well-being within the house and within a village community. It can therefore be understood, that in the Egyptian culture, and especially in rural areas, the word house never stands alone. It always unifies a place or a building of a collective. This collective can be a whole village community or a family. And the essence of "house" is meant to "unify" something or someone.

THE IDEOLOGY OF A HOUSE: THE HOUSE AND FAMILY ROLE

Family in Egyptian culture is some sort of institution. The house and everyday life, as well as work - is in terms of the family. The house envelops different life stages. And stands symbolically as a legacy of an individual in this world. The entire life takes place in the house. If one does not work in the country, he is most likely at home with his family. Cooking, playing or even working is done in it. The houses have deep cultural roots to which the inhabitants are attached to and where they can always find a place within society. The constant connection between family and society allows each individual to develop a certain commitment to the village community and family. In principle, one never lives for oneself alone, but forms a part of an entire family and cultural construct. The traditional farmhouses are found scattered as individual plots within the village. The free spaces in between have now been filled by new houses or generational houses. A traditional house is rectangular and simple in its external appearance. A few window openings with a mastaba along the facade decorate the exterior of the house. In a small village like Tunis Village, people know each other. To link connections between family networks, mothers and fathers are associated with the name of their eldest child. One is either “*Abu*” [أبو] or “*Oum*” [أم] of – meaning “father” or “mother” of. If the firstborn is a boy, his name is used. If the firstborn is a girl and there is a younger son, the boy's name is also used. Only if there is no son, the name of the firstborn girl is used. The reason here is a fairly simple one: Families are related by the surname of the father. This is passed on to all children but is lost when a girl marries through her husband's surname. In the public eye within the village community, the father carries the role of representative of a good house. The inheritance as well as representation of a house in the village, represents the role of the man within society, which is why the man has a much more important role in the public-social space than the woman. By only following his family tree through his surname, all the owned land, houses and children can be traced back and therefore the “owns” and the father obtains a higher position within the village community.

Privately, it is seen that women are the pillars of the house. In front of the entrance doors, often the mothers can be seen standing in front of their houses like guardians. Looking over what is happening in their area. As “*sit el bait*” /woman of the house [سبت البيت], she is given a high-ranking status within her own house and within the village community, respected both by the private and public eye. Well-behaved children, a well-kept house, and a moral husband are the virtues of the woman.



fig. 82. semi-public working space of the *fallah*

a lot of the peasants use their private rooms as working space. Often doors can be seen open, to implement the open place

FAMILY AND HOUSE INSIDE – FLOOR PLAN

In traditional peasant houses, the role of functionality and flexibility within the floor plan plays an essential role. The nature of the rooms must allow for different uses whenever its needed. The same goes for the interior decoration of the rooms. Most of the rooms are furnished with simple furniture that can be easily removed or moved. Mats serve here as a multifunctional furnishing element that can be used as a room divider, floor covering or seating set. Despite tourism and the new architecture brought in, be it that from the big city or from Fathy's ideology, the typical farmhouse with its traditional floor plan can still be found in isolated regions. The floor plan is usually square or rectangular and in most cases it consists of one floor. The roof is developed as a flat roof and it either has no use or in many cases it is used for storage or rooftop farming. The entrance area for the family is located in the center. The entrance exists of a longitudinal space called *sala* [صالة], with the minimum dimensions of 2-5 meters. This holds the function of living and dining area. Around the room other small rooms, *gourfa* [غرفة] or *oda* [اوضه], are grouped. These rooms serve either as bedrooms or guest rooms or can serve as a separate living unit if the family expands. The guest room/*salon* [صالون] is located just off the entryway, and in many homes can be entered through a separate door. The kitchen and bathroom are located at the end of the house. At the end of the long living hallway is another door which connects the service area, such as barn or warehouse, directly to the house.

Egypt's social structure still has a fairly patriarchal norm in rural areas. While both men and women have always worked, the man is still given a certain amount of space within the home, which can be seen inside the floor plan and private social behaviours. If the man does not require any help with work and the house can do without the woman working, the wife maintains her day mostly structured inside and around the house. While the men are out of the house during the day, the women can move freely without restriction.

fig. 83. sketch of Mansour (a local of Tunis Village), while explain the traditional fallah house structure

The center is the *sala* – the living room (usually between 2-4 meters), the *sala* serves as distribution center and connects all the other rooms – called *gourfa*. These rooms can either be bedrooms or working spaces. Only one room out of them (the one with a cubic in it) serves as *salon* – guest room. Often the salon can be entered from the outside, as seen in the picture. At the end of the *sala*, a stable/ *zariba* would be attached to the house.

The other drawing demonstrates the movement within the house

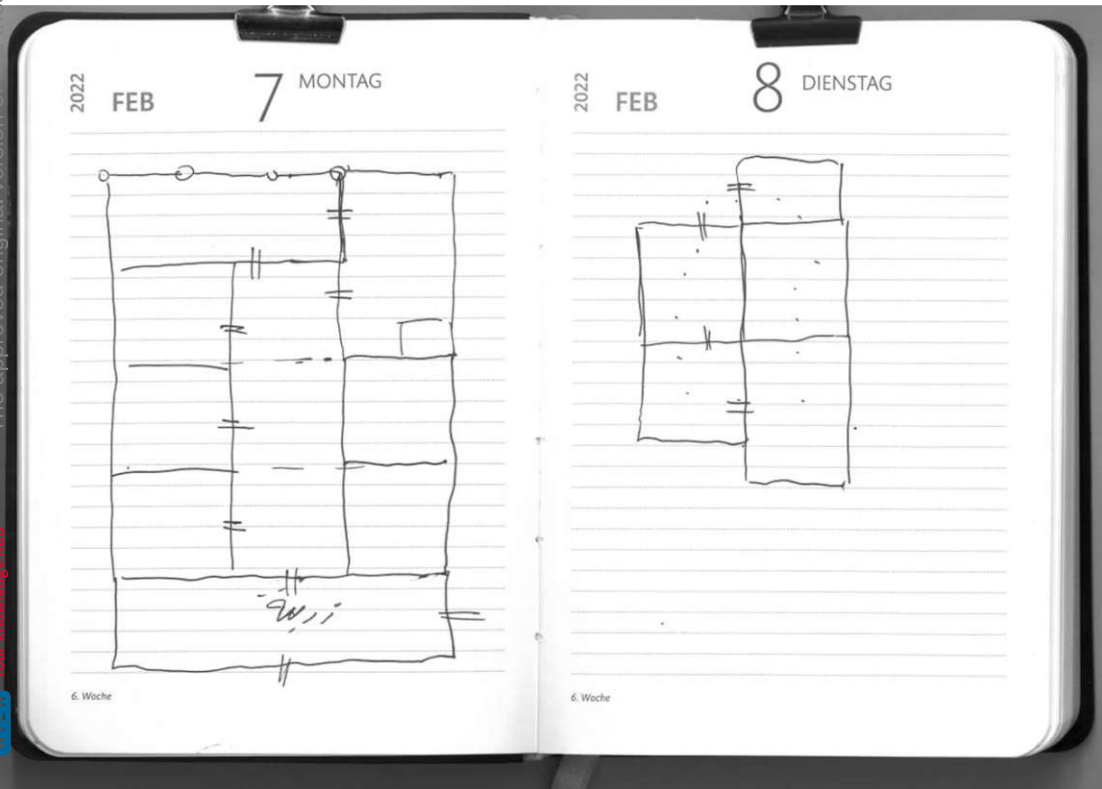
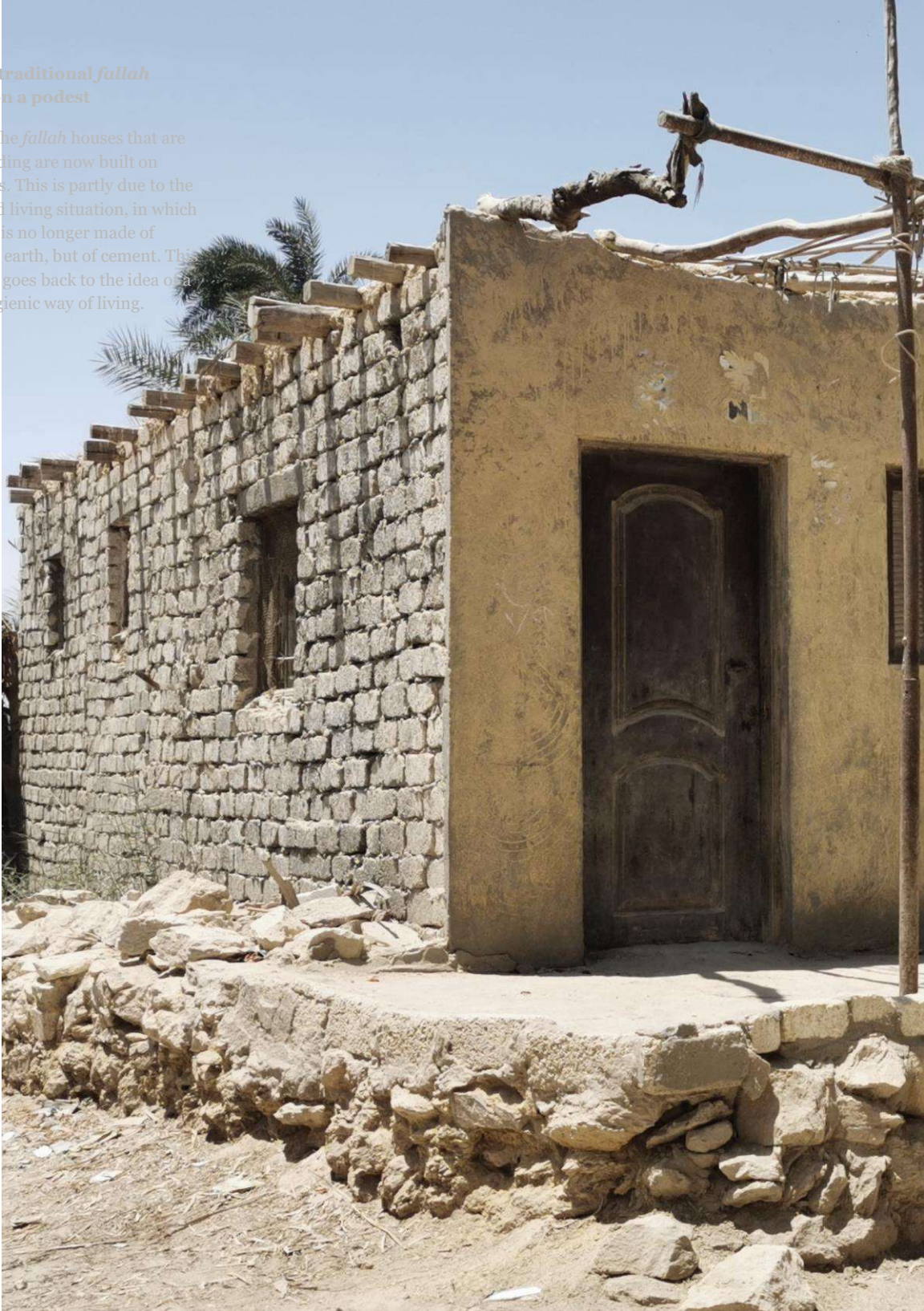


fig. 84. traditional *fallah* house on a podest

Most of the *fallah* houses that are still standing are now built on platforms. This is partly due to the improved living situation, in which the floor is no longer made of pounded earth, but of cement. This idea also goes back to the idea of a more hygienic way of living.





“If only the government will change its attitude to housing, will remember that a house is the visible symbol of a family’s identity, the most important material possession a man can ever have, the enduring witness to his existence, its lack one of the most potent cause of civil discontent and conversely is possession one of the most effective guarantees of social stability, then it will recognize that nothing less will do than the utmost a man can give in thought, care, time, and favour to the making of a house he will live in.” (Fathy, 1973: 33)

ROOMS AND THEIR FUNCTION **SALA** [صالة] *Sala* is

the core of the house. As the first room of the house, it forms the center and hub of the domestic-family day. Resembling a corridor, it surrounds all the remaining rooms and serves as a living, dining and working area. Most houses have a width of 2-4 meters. The length varies from each house. Ventilation and light are gained through small opening on the *bahari* (south side) facade, at the entrance door and through 1-2 built-in windows. If no guests are present, the entire family, usually including close relatives, sits together casually in the *sala*. A clear gender separation is only made by the appearance of a foreign male guest. In this case, the men go to the guest room, while the *sala* is the reserved for women and children.

High representative valuables like television also as wash basin (see point 7.8.3) can be found at most houses inside the *sala*. In the Egyptian popular belief since the ancient times the people are afraid of the *hassad*³⁴, the evil eye. In addition, it is not welcomed to present high-quality and expensive objects to the visitor, in the fear he has less. Moreover, this form of furnishing has the purpose of resting and not for harbouring.

³⁴ *hassad* [حسد]

the term *hassad* is translated into „jealousy“. Culturally, it means the "evil eye". Therefore, when *hassad* is spoken of, it implies not directly jealousy but rather the evil eye or a bad omen, that comes with jealousy.



fig. 85. sala (House of Dr. Nabil)

most sala's dimension lies between 2-4 meters. The floor covering here is often the *hasira* mat.

SALON [صالون]– GUEST ROOM

When a guest comes to visit, he first announces himself at the front door by calling "ya Haj/ ya Haja"³⁵ or "Oum/ Abu" von. In doing so, he stands 1 meter off to the side, away from the front door, so he is not to take a direct look into the private house without permission. And in addition, the woman in particular should be given the opportunity to get ready. If the guest is invited into the house, he is invited into the *salon*. In most cases, the *salon* is one of the connected rooms of the *sala* and can only be reached through it. However, if someone is of a higher social status within the community or belongs to the wealthy inhabitants, the *salon* is located at an additional attached room next to the family house and can be entered separately through a separate door next to the main house entrance. From the orientation, the reception room must always be next to the entrance door, and ideally in the *bahari* direction. Due to the *bahari* direction, the room is cooler and more pleasant in its atmosphere because of the suitable air circulation. Sufficient light comes through the windows or the entrance door, which is often left open when visiting. The windows of the room are at a normal height, about 0.80-1.00 meters from the floor and are usually located on two sides of the walls. Despite the strict separation within the house, the windows are at a normal height, about 0.80-1.00 meters from the floor. If the residents are standing, they can be seen from the outside. However, if they are sitting, which takes place most of the interior-lifetime, the sitter can no longer be seen from the outside.

Shoes are removed before entering the house at the front door. Here, the trespassing takes place between semi-public and private areas. Guests have a high status within the house. The best room is made available for them. While there is little to hardly any furniture in the *sala*, the *salon* has a fully furnished seating area made of Arabic seating corners³⁶ or various carpets. Traditional seating rugs such as the *hasira*, are spread out on the natural floor of the earth. In some households, also a minimalist decoration can be seen. Traditionally, tea is offered and if available a small dessert. The guests are seated on the floor. If the visitors are exclusively male, the *salon* is transformed into a men's room, while the *sala* becomes the women's and children's room. Meanwhile, in more developed farmhouses there are chairs or armchairs.

³⁶furniture see page 205.

³⁵The term *Haj* [حاج] or *Haja* [حاجة], comes from the Arabic word "Haj" meaning the Islamic pilgrimage. Originally, *Haj/Haja* referred to those people who returned from pilgrimages. Today, the term is attributed out of respect to older residents.



fig. 86. salon (House of Dr.Nabil)

The *salon* is often furnished by *hasira*-mats on the floor and an Arabic seating area. The furnishings are simple and are not meant to represent, but rather to serve. Sometimes also a small round table [*tablia*] can be found in the *salon*.

GOURFA [غرفة]– SLEEPING ROOM A room is not called a *gourfa* until they are accessible through another central room, such as the *sala* in this case. Apart from the *sala*, the remaining rooms can be used as needed. Until a few years ago, several generations of families lived in one house. For this purpose, each married child was given a room for himself and his family. If more rooms were needed, the concept of rooms lined up along the *sala*, was expanded. Nowadays, the concept of extended family life is found less and less often. In some cases, however, siblings live with their spouses or married women together with their parents. Sometimes this is due to the fact that family fathers are abroad for better work, and mothers tend to live with their parents or in-laws during this time.

Most *gourfa's* are used as bedrooms. Depending on the daily routine, a bedroom can also be converted into another function without further ado. The furniture, like the room, is flexible and can be rearranged as needed. In many cases, bedrooms are kept simple. Beds and various types of blankets, such as the traditional "*cuverta*" [كوفرتة] can be found on beds or sometimes on floors that are used as mattresses.

HAMMAM [حمام] & MADBACH [مطبخ] – BATHROOM & KITCHEN

Just a few years ago, most households did not have bathrooms or kitchens. Cooking was done in the *sala*. The bathroom was the nature. With the installation of water pipes and electricity came the use as well as necessity of kitchens and bathrooms. Both spaces are built next to each other and separated only by a thin wall. Most households have dry toilets. Kitchens usually consist of only a stove and a few shelves. To this day, the kitchen belongs exclusively to the domain of women.

ZARIBA [زربية] – STABLE At the end of the long hallway, in a separate part of the house, there is a stable, called *istabl* / *hosh* or *zarba*. This part of the house is unroofed, and the floors are often made of straw [*ash*]. Buffalo, donkeys or chickens are raised here. Usually there are also small separate huts for chickens or small pigeon houses on the roofs. If there is no separate access to the stable, the animals enter the house through the same door as the inhabitants. "Sometimes you would be sitting in the *sala* and a buffalo would just walk through the house" (Interview, Family Ibschwiya). In addition to the kitchen, the woman is usually in charge here as well.

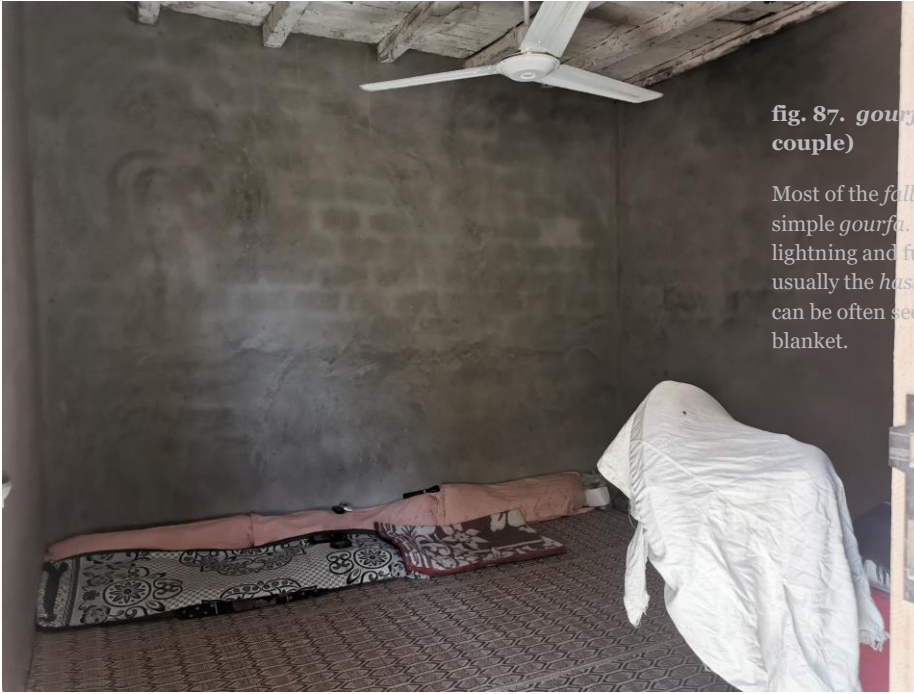


fig. 87. gourfa (house of old couple)

Most of the *fallahs* have a small and simple *gourfa*. Without much lightning and furniture. The floor is usually the *hasira*-mat. And the beds can be often seen as the *cuverta* blanket.



fig. 88. zariba next to a pigeon tower

Stables are either attached to the house, through a simple construction like the *touf* method. Or today, many tend to built small houses as stables.

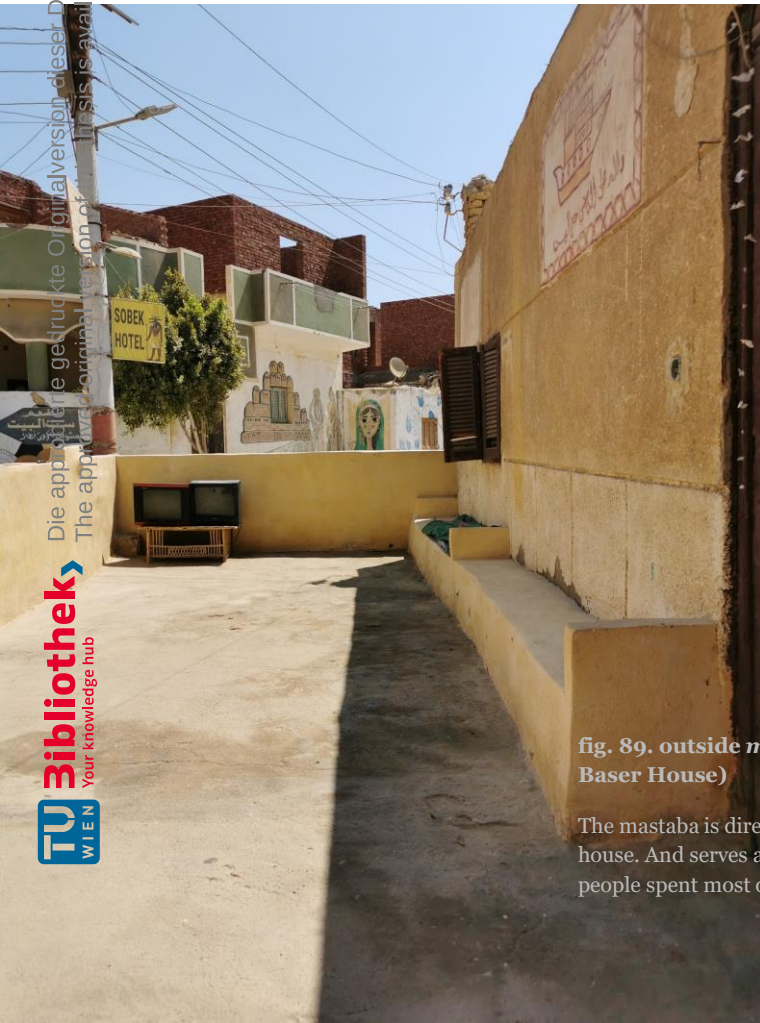


fig. 89. outside *mastaba* (Abd el Baser House)

The mastaba is directly connected to the house. And serves as a terrace, where people spent most of the day outside.

fig. 90. inside *mastaba*

Some houses can be seen having a built in mastaba. Like a balcony the doors open on the outside, implying the semi-public space.





MASTABA [مصطبة]: addition into the street room – between private & semi public

Probably the most important meeting place is the *mastaba*, a resting bench, along the facade. This is made of clay and usually has a width of 0.60 meters. The length always depends on the length of the facade. The *mastaba* is considered as an extension of the house into the street space. Some also have a covered *mastaba* made of simple canopy constructions.

In addition to the urban extension, the *mastaba* carries a great socio-social value. Until late in the afternoon, the *fallahs* can be seen sitting or standing at the doorstep of their homes, with a friend sitting next to them on the *mastaba*, while drinking tea. Due to why the *mastaba* in most cases replace open spaces. During the day, mostly the women sit along family member, and can be seen either working, talking or paying attention to the children playing. In the evening, after most *fallahs* return from their work there is also a change in the dominance of the *mastaba*. Often men can be seen drinking tea with friends sitting next to the *mastaba*.

Only from assumptions it is possible to derive the reference to the ancient shape of the *mastaba* through the Arabic word "*taba*" [طبقة] - layer. Also, the elongated form, can be derived by the layered form of the *mastaba*, like the Saqqara pyramid. Even though it seems that most *fallahs* don't draw any connections to their ancestors, they secretly connect not only their lifestyle around those of the old civilization, but also tend to use wordings coming from their ancestors. Even though it may seem as a "coincidence".

FURNITURE

Rural architecture is in the spirit of flexibility and transformation. Therefore, even in most simple farmhouses you will not find lavish decoration or furniture. Just like the rooms, the furniture is mobile and rarely fixed. Depending on the needs, the light interior design allows the inhabitants to remove the furniture and convert the use of space whenever they need to do so. Due to the rather poor situation of the people, most families can only afford a full and complete furnishing of their house once in their life. This basically, in most cases, takes place through marriage, through her "*mahr*" [مصدق]- bride money, a certain sum of money the newly weds get through a marriage from family and relatives. With it the bride is able buy the desired furnishings: "If it is only once in a lifetime or once in several generations that the individual has a chance to make any big change in his environment, how often does it happen that a whole village is presented the same such an opportunity?" (Fathy, 1973: 38)

HASIRA [حصيره] Rural Egypt is known for its "foot culture". Almost everything takes place on the ground. Working, eating or being together. Therefore, the most important piece of furniture is the traditional mat, the *hasira*. This is a handmade mat made of rice reeds [*ash el ros*]. Most of them measure 2.50 x 2.50 metres and can be found in a wide variety of colours and patterns. The patterns are mostly geometric and based on Islamic oriental elements. Some also have floral designs and are based on the flowers of the region. Due to its sturdy consistency, it is used in different rooms. It is highly resistant to water and moisture, and can survive on smooth earth surfaces, such as the floors of houses, for several years. The mats are made by a weaving art already used in ancient Egypt. In this process, the young reeds of the plants, which are still soft and malleable in texture, are pulled through a carpet shape individually, one leaf at a time. A few years ago, both the men and women of the village were still able to produce this craft independently. Due to fast-fashion and industrialisation, the talent gradually disappears with the new generation and is slowly dying out.

KILIM [كليم] *Kilim* is a further form of floor decoration. The carpet is made regionally from sheep's wool and is traditionally made from a mixture of different colours. This is due to the fact that in the past, the rugs were produced from leftover pieces of other woven products. Unlike the rice reed mat, the carpet is usually laid on top of a solid floor covering such as cement or clay like the *mastaba*, or as an addition over the *hasira* mat. *Kilim* have the purpose of providing more warmth and cosiness, and are especially popular during the cold months. In addition, their design looks a little more attractive than most rice mats. Depending on the use, there are different dimensions of the rug. After being considered unfashionable and outdated by the younger generation, the *kilim* is experiencing a rebirth due to new fabric designs such as camels or palm trees and is sold in many shops along the main street of the village.



fig. 91. Kilim used outside as seating furniture

fig. 92. *hasira*-mat



fig. 93. *kilim* rug

BAMBOO CHAIRS The art of bamboo weaving exists of an ancient traditional art of weaving. Baskets, boxes, bags or chairs sometimes even beds were created out of bamboo. For the old wickerwork art, the fresh plants are worked in while they are still fresh. When dry, they are given a yellowish colour. In most houses, such as chairs are found in outdoor areas or usually in the living area and the *sala*. In addition, bamboo chairs are part of the main furnishings in public places such as cafés or restaurants.

ARABIC SEATING Originally, the guest rooms were provided with only a *Hasira*. The idea of the Arabic sitting area might descend from the Arab Bedouin from Libya. A row of cushions forms the bench (*kanaba*) and is sewn in with traditional Arabic patterns, *tatriz*. Between each unit, consisting of 2-3 cushions, there is a round pillow, which on the one hand breaks up the strict square shape as a decorative element and on the other hand sections the seating areas into parts. This type of furnishing is usually found in better-equipped rural houses. With the arrival of tourists, an entire economic sector has developed around the Arabic sitting areas, which led most hotels having set up Bedouin-Arabic sitting areas in the outdoor areas. Instead of the traditional fireplaces, there are now low-rural traditional table placed, the so called *tablia*.

FELLAH OVEN/ *forn al-fallahi* [فرن فلاحي] Most households did not have ovens until a few years ago. If a household owned an oven, many housewives of each house would gather there for one day a week and bake a variety of fresh bread. The oven is always located outside and is made of clay and built on the open ground. In shape, the oven is oval. The height is usually no more than 1 metre. In the centre there is a hole where the fire is lit and it can be used as an oven, especially for baking bread. Ash or combustible branches are used for this purpose. The actual cooking place is on the surface. With the financial rise of the village, the use of the traditional stove was replaced by gas stoves in the households. While the *fallahs* are gradually shifting away from their traditional stoves, some of the villas are seen with a fellah stove in their courtyards or gardens as a decorative element.

TABLIA [طبلية] Most *fallahs* eat on the floor, which is why high tables would not be in the spirit of the traditional way of life. In most houses people can be found eating on a *tablia*, a traditional round wooden table. Its round shape is due to the *sanja* [صنية], a round stainless-steel tray, who's shape fits on perfectly on the *tablia*. On the tray, which can come in different colours, all the food is traditionally served in the kitchen and then placed on the table.



fig. 94. *fallah-oven*

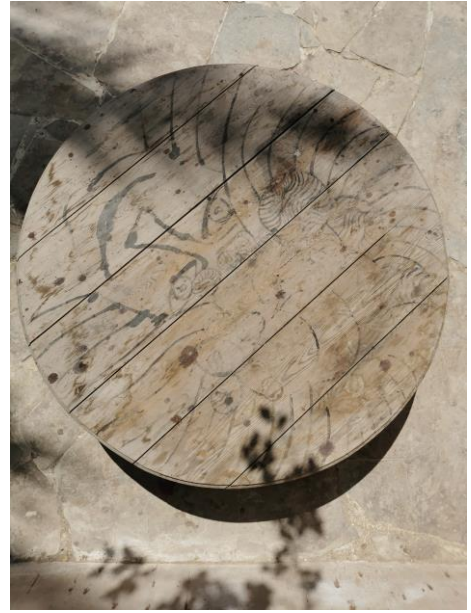


fig.95. *tablia*



fig. 96. Arabic seating on a mastaba with kilim rugs as seating furniture



fig. 97. *fallah*-house façade with colored door and wall painting

Almost all *fallah*-houses can be seen having a colorful door, with drawing on the façade. Here a “fayummi mummy portrait” can be seen, behind a sack of onion.



FACADES Wall facades and house facades were decorated with various drawings by a collective of artists a few years ago. The graphics refer mainly to cultural and rural elements and were intended to give the inhabitants of the village a connection to their house and their environment. The otherwise rather dull and simple façade is given a new expressive face through drawings with which they can identify. From the eagle of the Egyptian flag, portraits of the ancient world to the fellah. All these drawings symbolise the people and their origins. With the drawings, the facade not only draws attention to the building, but also resembles the inhabitant himself.

DOORS Doors are usually made of wood and have a double door construction with double leaves. The frame of the door is kept by the building material on the side. Above the door frame is an elongated beam, the lintel. It is slightly wider than the door and is used for further fixation and load transfer. The lintel is not concealed and is considered a decorative element, so that even new buildings now have the lintel installed for decorative purposes. Most of the doors in the village are painted with different colours. The door leaf is filled with different geometric shapes such as circles or squares. The threshold area of the door is at the same level as the floor. Due to constant heaping up of floors as a result of new buildings or the change in the ground caused by the lake, some unused old buildings have sunk deep into the earth.

OLLA [قله] Another demonstrative presence of water within the house can also be seen through the establishment of a traditional water jug called "the *olla*". The *olla* is made of fired clay and has existed in different sizes and shapes since ancient times. The basic form, however, a shape that narrows from the bottom to the top, is kept the same in principle. Due to the cave area of the *olla*, which occupies the largest volume and the material clay, the water inside the jug remains cold. The neck area of the *olla* is long and has a filtering function due to its natural materials. The fact that it is made of clay, the water inside can be kept cool for a long period of time and resembles in concept of functions the same as the inside of a house made of clay. Along the streets of the village, you will find various forms of *ollas* in every corner and kiosk. *Ollas* filled with water are available to any thirsty passer-by. Also, many drawings and photographs show how the *fallah* woman in traditional dress always walks with an *olla* on her head. Today, this image is not uncommon, but it is becoming increasingly rare in the village image.

Today, the *olla* is varied in its form and use, and no longer serves merely a cultural reasons but became also economic purpose, and therefore is also found in some areas only as a decorative element. Depending on its form, the *olla* has a different purposes:

1. *olla*: Sometimes hanging along the roofs of kiosk shops, the typical *olla* can be found in almost every household, as well as in every corner of the village. During the Ottoman period in Egypt, it was common to keep the *olla* inside a niche of the *mashrabiya*, using the clay and cool water to cool the room. Hence the word *mashrabiya* is derived from the Arabic word "*y'asrhab*" [يشرب] to drink.
2. *zeer* [زير]: *Zeer* is a somewhat larger drinking vessel and is also used to store water in cool places.
3. *tagen* [طاجن]: are cooking pots made of clay in which special traditional dishes such as *bamia/okra* [البامية] or *molokhia* [ملوخية] (Egyptian spinach) are served.
4. *qasreya* [قصريه]: the *qasreya* is a modified form of all *olla*-types, and is made in different sizes, and can be found along street spaces, as plant pots. Or in shops as rubbish bins. Some also use them as dustbins. The pot is often seen with two holders on the side. It is a popular decorative element, especially among tourists and hotels.
5. *machwal* [مخول]: Traditionally it was used for storing water and wheat grains. Every household had *machwal* made of clay and could be found either inside a *gourfa* or sometimes on the roofs. Due to the natural availability of water, the *olla* is now only used to store grains of wheat or rice.



fig. 98. olla used for decoration





fig. 99. small *ollas* sold as plant pots

POTTERY/ *khazaf* [خزف] Long before Evelyn, the art of ceramics was part of the inhabitants of the village. The only difference was in the production. Before that, ceramic tiles or *ollas* were bought from neighbouring regions such as el Nazla, a well-known pottery village for *ollas*, or from the al-Fustat region in Cairo. The ceramic art of Evelyn differs from that of other Egyptian regions in its burning method. While the others burn the clay twice, the Tunis Village method is made by burning once. In the international ceramic art scene, this production method is highly respected, which is why most of the villagers are proud of the craft, and why young generations want to learn it. The production started in the 1960's with 9 children of the village: Rawja (the first girl), Ibrahim Samir, Hakeem, Mohamed Mahmoud, Mohamed Gomja, Abdel Satar and Mahmoud Yousef. After they all mastered the art from Evelyn, she required each of them to open their own studio and pass on the craft to the next generation. Mid-wave, there is already a third generation of artists.

Along the streets of the village, ceramic art cannot be overlooked. Cafés, restaurants, walls or kiosk shops, they all have ceramic art displayed in different ways. The patterns are guided by the natural environment of their surroundings. Donkeys, buffaloes, pigeons and chickens or floral drawings such as palm trees, corn and rice fields. Some works also show the fellah himself. Dressed in his traditional clothing. The ceramic art reflects the soul of the village, which is brought to life by its people and natural environment. The simple drawings, some of them childlike, make each piece unique and give both artist and buyer a sense of attachment to each work.

Households that have a direct connection to the craft, be it due to themselves being the artist or because they have a connections to it through friends or family members, now use ceramic art as a historical decorative element. These are often displayed representatively at a certain height on walls or ceilings. Along some walls, ceramic tiles can also be found alongside the artists wall-paintings.

In addition to ceramic art, there are also traditional terracotta tiles from Fayoum. These are mainly found in larger houses or villas at the entrance door threshold.

BATHROOM SINK Water is very important in hot-arid zones such as Egypt. In every mosque, there is usually a watering station inside the building. They embody the proximity to earthly and above-ground life. Moreover, water is always symbolically associated with religion, and is seen by many as “*baraka*” [بركة] - "God's blessing". The powerful connection between religion and the norm of life was also noticed by Fathy during his village analysis for New Gourná, and was noted above all as a stylistic device of traditional Islamic mosques: "If the worshiper was not clean, he would enter at a door leading directly into the ablution rooms. Here he would find on his right a passage leading past the water closets to a double row of shower cubicles, where he could wash himself completely; in front of him he would see a hall for minor ablutions - the washing of the head, arms, and legs." (Fathy, 1973: 75) Which is why water should never be denied to anyone and signifies purity and privilege.

Tunis Village did not have access to running water until about 40 years ago. The nearest water point was about 1 hour away by donkey, and each person could only take as much as they could carry. So, it is understandable that water is a precious element which for many holds a high position in their lives and thus also in their homes. It so happened that with access to water, washbasins existed not only in places of assembly such as the mosque, but also within the home. Water became a private favour that in many households was demonstratively placed in the middle of the *sala*. The washbasin in the middle of the *sala* also draws on some social-moral modes of action: the house is seen as a private sanctuary - The mosque as a public one. With the "privatisation" of water, the religious washing ritual, as well as praying as a family collective act, was now suddenly possible to also be performed within the house. Especially for women, who do not like to overrepresent themselves in public space, the washbasin within their own living area serves as a spiritual element in which Islamic rituals can be lived out. Another explanation for the washbasin is the gratitude for God's blessing, which does not have a demonstrative aspect, but does not want to withhold the natural gift from anyone. Every visitor is offered the opportunity to wash himself of the dust of the wind after entering the house



fig. 100. pottery used for decoration, underneath a sink in the middle of the working place

Pottery and sinks have become a decorative element within the *fallah* houses, that can be also used.



fig. 101. the *fallah* as muse of the pottery art

the pottery artists always draw their surroundings and what they observe. The *fallah* and his rural life are the main protagonists of their works, which is why each artist has a close personal relationship with his work.

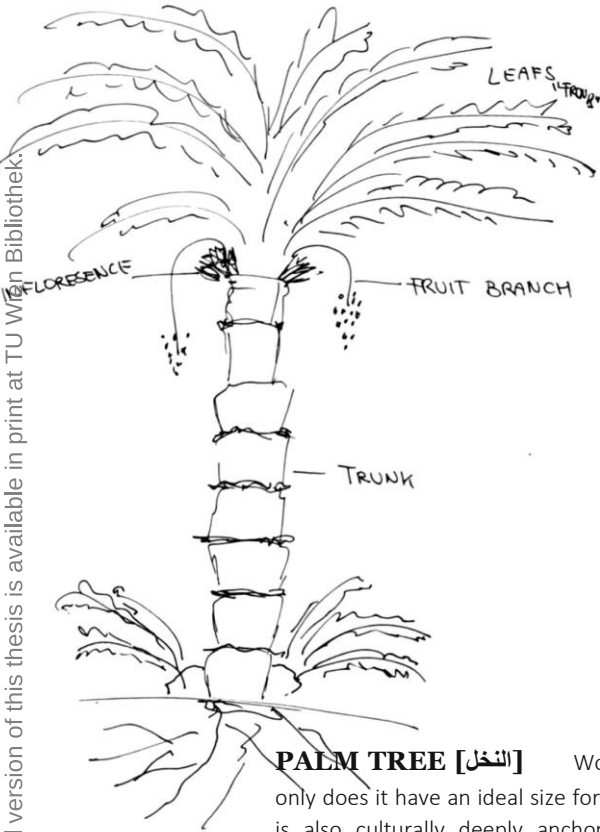




fig. 102. pottery drying on the middle of the street of Tunis Village

Strolling through the streets, the village lives up to its name as a "pottery village". The soul of the pottery artists is not only visually visible, but also can be felt through the smell of the fired clay and the sound of the pottery machines.

fig. 103. research sketch, palm tree and its use

**PALM TREE [النخل]**

Worth mentioning in the furnishing is also the palm tree. Not only does it have an ideal size for covering and shading thanks to its broad leaves [fronds], it is also culturally deeply anchored in the rural lifestyle because of its multifunctional structure. Like a columnar forest, the palm trees seem to pop out of the ground everywhere you look around and symbolizes the fertility of the land. Not a single tree was planted on purpose, but "all of them came into being by chance". (Interview, Mustafa).

At the age of 3, the first fruits of the plant grow. At the age of about 20 years, it reaches a height of about 20 metres. Like a small child, the plant needs a lot of water and care. Palm trees are long-lived and often reach an age of 100 years.

Every part of the palm plant is used: The fruit of the female plant is eaten. The crown of the male plant is put on the female plant in order to get a sweetish version of dates/ *balah* [بلح] during growth. The godly fruit of the plant carries a high value in many households and is distributed as a gift to friends and neighbours at harvest time. The palm fronds [*grid*] and leaves/ *chus* [خوص] of the male plants are used for roofing huts or houses. The young leaves are also used for weaving baskets. The young inflorescences are used as sponge cloths/ *lifa* [ليفه] when dried. The tree trunks of the date plant are flexible and long. The palm bast is used as a natural firewood. In rare cases, they can also be used as roof beams. For this purpose, they are cut in half. The divine fruit of the plant carries a high value in many households, and is distributed as a gift to friends and neighbours at harvest time.



fig. 104. *fallah* boy climbing up a palm tree to get some dates

EXAMPLES of Type I

Type I.1 traditional *fallah* – House of Abd el Baser’s grandmother

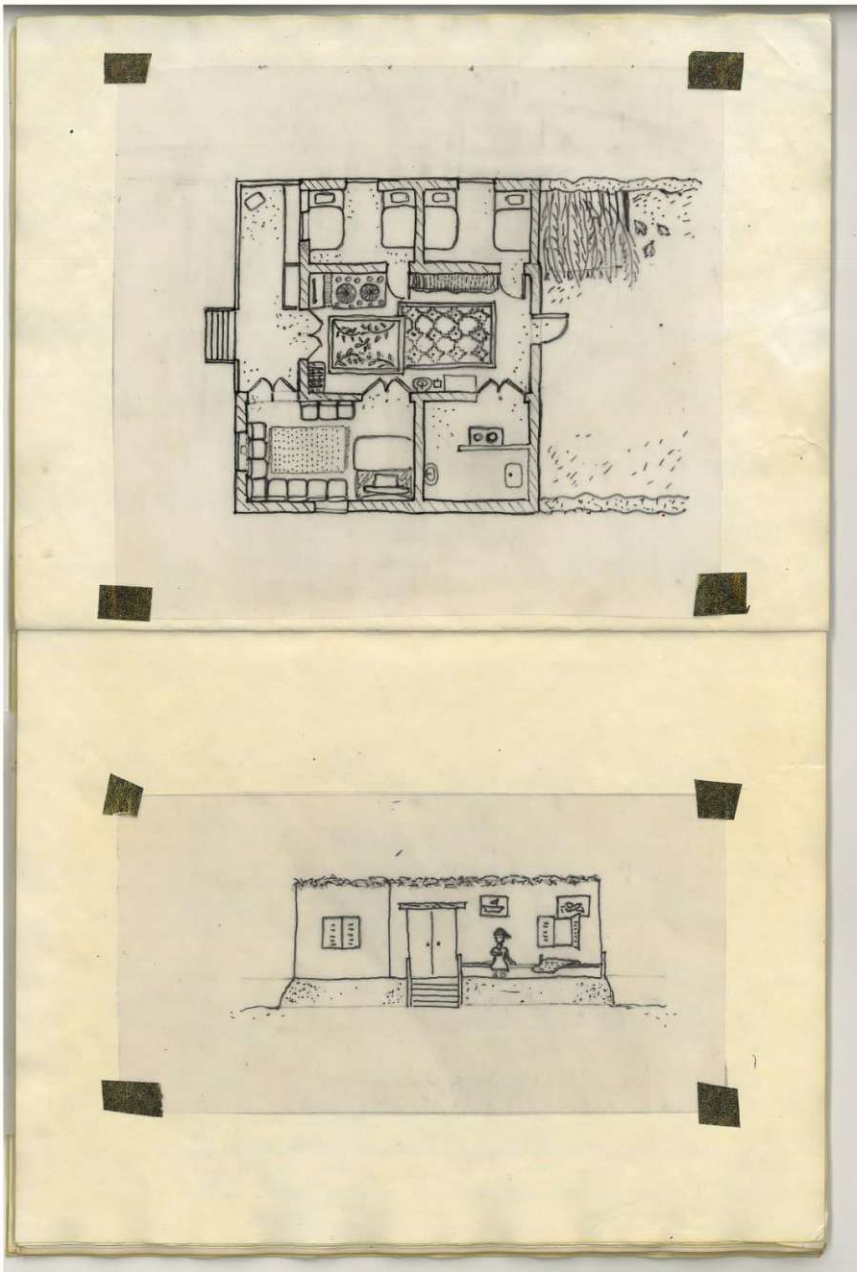
Interview: Abd el Baser
 Age: 24
 Nationality: Egyptian – from Tunis Village
 Profession: student
 House: permanent family house of
 Abd el Baser’s grandmother
 Place of the Interview: inside the house
 Date: 01.09.2022

fig. 105. Abd el Baser’ grandmother house



Abdel el Basirs family is one of the 7 main families [*ahl el balad*] of Tunis Village. They always had more money than the rest of the citizen. Therefore, their house is in a much better condition than some other ones. When the grandparents of Abd el Baser build their house, it was the grandmother who chose all the design and furniture for it. The house gathered all family members and was known as “family home”. Even after the death of both grandparents, their house is still considered a gathering place for the entire family. Because the grandparents had only one son and two daughters, mostly the son inherited the house. Since then, the family home is in hands of the parents of Abd el Baser. Their son Abd el Baser is 24 years old and grew up in this house. Above all, he finds it important to pay attention to the furnishings and the condition of the house. For him, it is not only culture, but deeply connected with memories and family.

fig. 106. research sketch, floor plan and front view of
Abd el Baser's grandmother's house



The house is not only often visited by family members but has also been a location of a Spanish telenovela. To the side of the gate, lies the house with the view towards *Bahary*. Back before all the new buildings were constructed, the house looked directly onto large areas of land and from afar you could catch a glimpse of the lake. The house is formed externally by two rectangles joined together. The large wide part forms the family house facing *Bahari*. The lateral elongated part the guest house. Due to the clear external separation, both parts can also be entered through separate entrance doors. Like a small temple, the house lies on a pedestal, the *verranda* (Arabic: *berranda*), and forms a stable foundation. Along the facade extends the *mastaba*. Due to the *bahari* side, the shadow of the house provides a cosy outdoor area of the *mastaba* with protection from the sun.

The facade is decorated with a few simple drawings. You can see on one part a boat and on another part an airplane. The pictures were dedicated to a person after the holy pilgrimage to Mecca. A lettering with date and a text symbolizes for whom the pilgrimage was made. Before entering the house, the shoes are placed next to the door. The guest area is furnished with an Arabic sitting area. Two layers of carpets are rolled up on the floor. A *hasira* mat and a *kilim* rug. At the end of the room is a bed made of wood. Abd el Baser remembers that before his grandmother passed away, she became very weak. In order to still be able to receive guests, she wanted to have a bed in the guest area. She would lay or sit on the bed, while the guest would sit either on a wooden chair next to the bed or along the sitting area next to the bed or along the sitting area. Thinking back, Abd el Baser always saw how his grandmother would also spend hours on the wooden chair looking out of the adjacent window and gazing at the property, which was full of greens and animals. Today, a large part of the property has been built up and brick buildings can be seen from far away. Looking up, one regales a freshly painted wood-beamed ceiling that was refinished not too long ago. A beam ceiling made of high-quality wood, painted white, contrasts with the light clay tone of the wall color. On the wall side, in the direction of *bahari*, there is a window niche on whose window shelf where a large ceramic bowl handmade by Evelyn herself is represented. As the only decorative element in the room, the ceramic bowl tells of the friendship between Abd el Baser's grandfather and Evelyn Porret, who had welcomed her as one of the first inhabitants of the village and sold a piece of land to her. Left to the room is a door. When there were guests, the door would be closed, so both men and women could sit comfortably. The men would usually sit in the guest *salon*, and the women with children would have the main family house for themselves.

The first room you enter in the family area is the *sala*. With a preference for wide rooms, the grandmother wanted a wide *sala* where the whole family could sit together in peace. With dimensions of about 5m x 7m, the *sala* is one of the largest in the village. The floor is made of a thin layer of cement. Along the lateral facades one can find benches made of cement, leaning against the external *mastaba*, which have been upholstered with a *kilim*.



fig. 107. *salon*, Abd el Baser's grandmother's house

With a *Kilim* rug as floor furniture, and an Arabic seating. The roof was recently renovated with new logs and painted with white cement from the inside. In the back the window with the pottery made from Evelyn can be seen.

The large room is divided by a transparent line implied by the *hasira* mats on the floor: The back part acts as a dining room. Where people eat or drink tea. The front area, near the door forms the living area. On the side there is a bed made of bamboo. Whenever she came back from the country tired and exhausted after a long day of work, she wanted to sit down after entering the house. Sometimes she would also fall asleep directly because of the through the hot weather, a light blanket, *cuverta* [كوفرته], has always been on it. Behind the bed lies a stomped in table into the wall and floor. This is used as a storage place for TV sets and controls. Opposite the bed, in the corner of the floor, there is a box also made of bamboo. The grandmother used to keep her valuables inside of it. Today, the youngest of the family use it as a hiding place and storage for their Playstation games. Next to the entrance door of the guest room, there is a sink with a ceramic cover in the back. Under it lays a *kulman* [كولمان] that is always filled with cool water. ""Back in the days, there was often a water outage. And when someone would want to wash. his hands, like when a guest would come, you'd have a *jirken* [جركن] or *kulman* prepared. The guest would hold it and use it.“

The *sala* surrounds 4 other rooms. To the right of the room is the guest room, and on the other end is an opening to the kitchen and bathroom, separated only by a thin wall. To the left of the room are two bedrooms. The first bedroom near the entrance door belongs to the grandparents. Other than the rest of the house, it is richly furnished. Provided with two beds made of highly finished wood, a closet and a clothes-hook on one side of the wall. The windows have steel bars to keep out possible robbers. Another window, the one facing south, is covered with a wooden board to keep out the strong rays of the sun during the daylight. On the wall there are markings and scribbles of some grandchildren, as well as a writing that tells about a trip to Mecca, but has mostly faded away. The second bedroom belongs to two family members who are both deaf and mute. In rural areas, when a family member is impaired, it is common for the entire family to care for it for generations. The ceiling of the room is likewise developed in a beam construction. The type of wood appears a little finer and unadorned, then the one of the Salon. The beams are made of whole logs with a layer of vertical smooth wooden laths that is placed on top of the beams. Above this is a layer of reeds and palm fronds. At the end of the *sala* is the door that leads to the *zariba*. This is also accessible from the outside, through a separate entrance area outside the house property. The wall of the *zariba* is made of the old construction method *touf*. Depending on the needs, the walls can be extended or dismantled. On Eid, the Sugar Festival of the Muslims, the *Zina* (traditional decoration) was hung in the middle of the room. Even today, a small hook can be found on the wooden ceiling, still hanging on it. While the children played, the grandmother slaughtered a sheep in the *zariba*, and due to the close location of the kitchen to the barn, she was able to process the animal.



fig. 108. *sala*, Abd el Baser's grandmother's house

The bamboo bed with the *cuverta* on top.
The door in the background serves as the main family entrance door.
On the floor the *hasira*-mat can be slightly seen. The *hasira*-mat divides the open room into two sections. The living room and the dining room.

fig. 109. *sala* with *mastaba*, Abd el Baser's grandmother's house

Inside the *sala* is a built in *mastaba*, which serves as chairs. The *hasira* mat defines the inside structure of the room.



fig. 110. *kulman* on the *mastaba* and sink next to it, Abd el Baser's grandmother's house

Type I.2

new building technique for the *fallah* House

Dr. Nabil

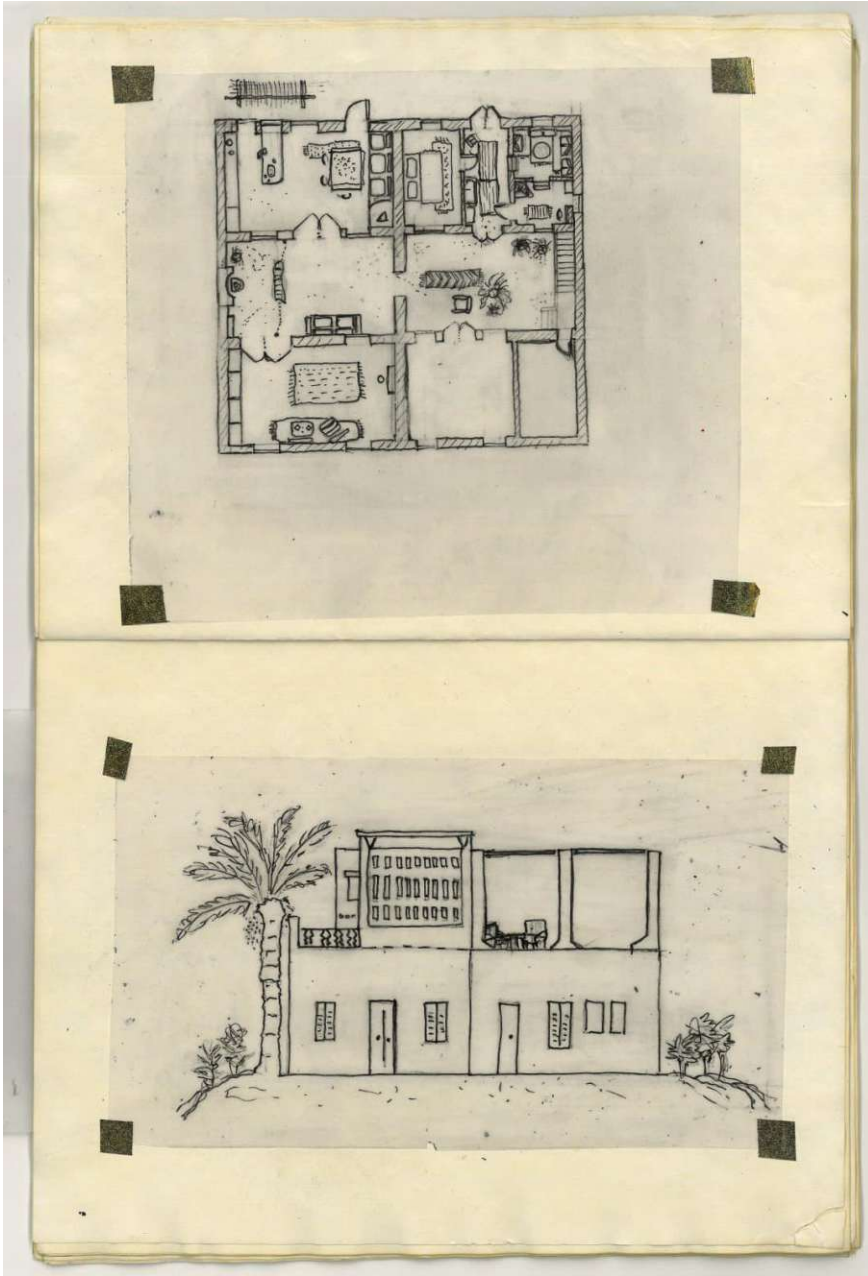
Interview: Dr. Nabil
Age: 50-60
Nationality: Egyptian – from village near Cairo
Profession: artist
House: temporary family house
Place of the Interview: on the terrace
Date: 28.08.2022

fig. 111. a new *fallah* house, Dr. Nabil house



Dr. Nabil is an artist from Cairo. Coming originally from a rural area, he wanted his new house to be adapted into its traditional rural environment and by people. Unlike the other intellectuals, he didn't want to build with vaults and domes, because it certainly wasn't how their building tradition was. Therefore, he opted for a simple farmhouse typology, with an upgraded construction and materials. "I don't have domes. I don't feel comfortable underneath them. They say they give strength. I tried sleeping underneath one but I didn't feel comfortable." (Interview, Dr. Nabil) He moved to Tunis Village in 1977. With his wife he bought, compared to the rest of the intellectual scene, a small plot of land near a hillside and with direct view of the lake.

fig. 112. research sketch, floor plan and front view of Dr. Nabil's house



*“I always told my wife, its 1000 times better to die inside a mud building, then inside cement. There is something personal with mud.”
 (Interview, Dr. Nabil)*

The house consists of two parts. A new and old-original area. Both parts, however, were designed in a rectangular shape, each separated in the center by a courtyard and can be entered through separate entrances. The old parts floor plan is based on the traditional farmhouse. Through the entrance, the *sala* is being entered first. Unlike the farmhouses, Dr. Nabil built this area much narrower than the traditional houses, with a width of only 2 meters, because he simply didn't need the space there. Though basically the *sala* had a family function in which the entire family would spend the rest of the day together. The *sala* also acts as a distributor and leads to 3 other rooms (*qourfa*). The entrance door can be opened as a window. Next to it is a traditional bamboo chair, where you can sit on and look outside the door-window viewing the lake. On the floor lays a long *hasira* mat and on the side a wood bench. The lightning comes through the entrance and a door opened to the courtyard. Along the walls lamps hanging in an old gas lamp style were displayed along the wall.

To the left side of the room is the sleeping area. The sleeping room gains light only through the *bahari* and south side, since the side wall was used for the new construction. To the right of the *sala* is the guest room and a working space. Both rooms are accessible through an opening to each other. The *sala* is furnished with an Arabic sitting area, on a raised platform. The upholstery is not typically Arabic and is based on a floral design. The room gets light through a window on the *bahari* side. Through the elevated seating area, which is how the visitor should have a direct view of the lake. On the floor lays a *hasira* mat and a *tablia* in the center. Through an opening the working space, the second room, can be entered. Originally this room was the kitchen, which was then relocated by the new added house part. The working area is filled with decorative elements and furnishings. Asian-style tapestries hang on the walls. On the side the window niche is displayed as an exhibition space for a small ceramic tea set. In another window niche, facing the courtyard, sits a small leather horse from the Cairo Bazaar. Leaving the first section of the old house, you enter the courtyard. Just on the other side is another part of the house. The courtyard is completely open to the sun.

On the side is a staircase leading to the roof terrace. Next to the stairs is the former dry toilet, which is now used as storage. Beside it, a room rises two storeys high in an Islamic-oriental style. The upper structure is made of brick, while the lower structure was built of mud, like the rest of the house. The high part was originally the same height as the rest of the house and served as an open terrace. When his wife constantly received visitors from Europe, he closed off the space and added an additional storey. Opposite the building is another Bamboo Chair. If you stand exactly in the area of the chair, the cool sea breeze bounces off the high façade and throws a cool breeze back into the area.

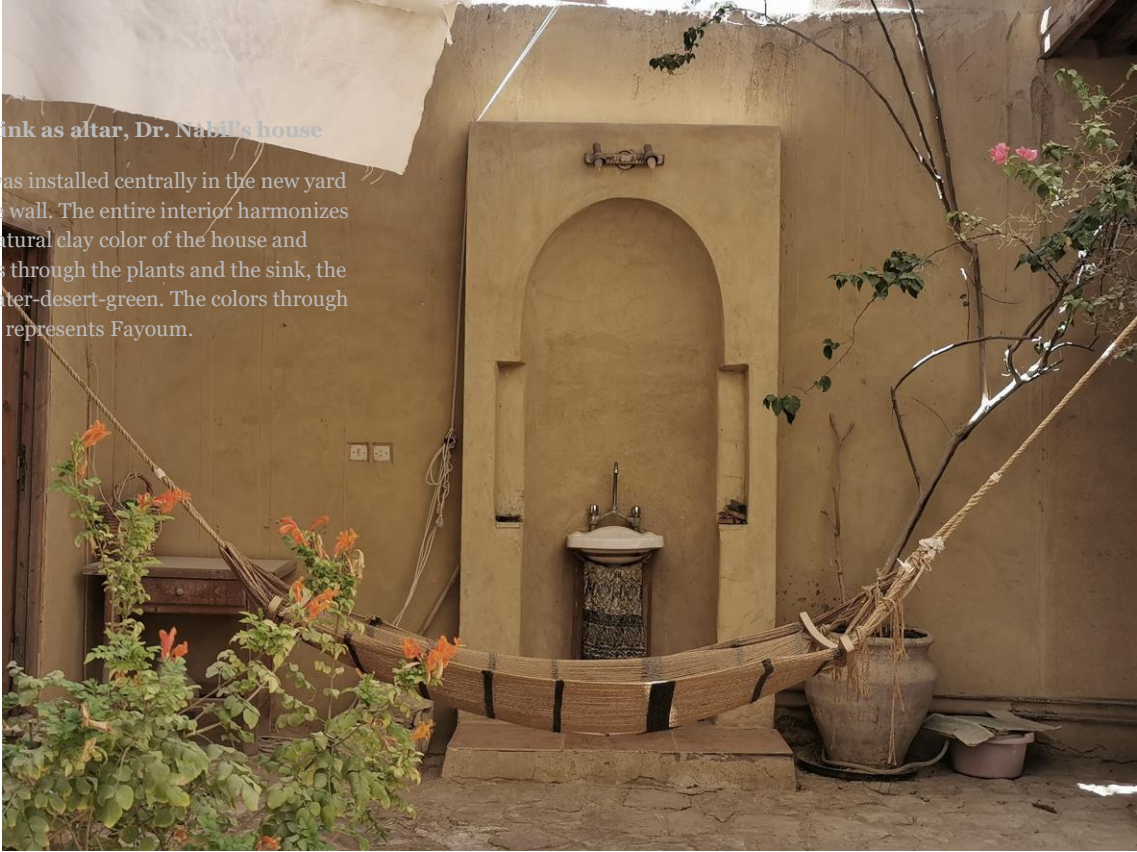


fig. 113. courtyard of the old part, Dr. Nabil's house

Dr. Nabil's house is one of the very few new houses built in a traditional way, and got inspired by the heritage of the environment

fig. 114. sink as altar, Dr. Nabili's house

The sink was installed centrally in the new yard on the side wall. The entire interior harmonizes with the natural clay color of the house and symbolizes through the plants and the sink, the unity of water-desert-green. The colors through which also represents Fayoum.



Through an opening, the new section of the house is reached. In the first part of the house, docking with the living area of the old part, there is an open kitchen-living room area. The windows are large and overlook the lake and the garden area of the house. A fireplace has been added to the side. This part of the house is quite western in its décor and finish. The dining area consists of a normal-height table. Both the kitchen style and the rest of the furnishings are similar to a European holiday home. high façade and throws a cool breeze back into the area. Through an opening, the new section of the house is reached. In the first part of the house, docking with the living area of the old part, there is an open kitchen-living room area. The windows are large and overlook the lake and the garden area of the house. A fireplace has been added to the side. This part of the house is quite western in its décor and finish. The dining area consists of a normal-height table. Both the kitchen style and the rest of the furnishings are similar to a European holiday home. The second area of the new house was designed as a studio. No walls separate the interior of the room, and it is only here so that the size of the previous rooms becomes apparent. The walls are filled with works of art. A box of different colours was built into the side. On the parquet floor are two individual pieces of the Arabian seating area. The second courtyard is shaded with cloths hanging from the roof of the house. They were fixed by a rope wire along the facade with former curtain rods placed in between. The shading gives the courtyard a cool atmosphere and allow small rays of sunlight to peep through. Here too, the elements match the natural colour of the clay. All forms of olla are found on the floor, and a hammock has been hung in the centre. A washbasin stands demonstratively at the side, inside a niche in the shape of an Islamic Mosque door.

Through the first courtyard you finally reach the last area of the house, the roof terrace. The shading elements consist of a typical perforated Islamic-Oriental wall. The matching of the two materials, the warm clay-earth tone and the warm wooden colour, is an ideal duo that reflects the tranquillity and closeness to nature of the region

**fig. 115. connecting door
of the two courtyards, Dr.
Nabil's house**



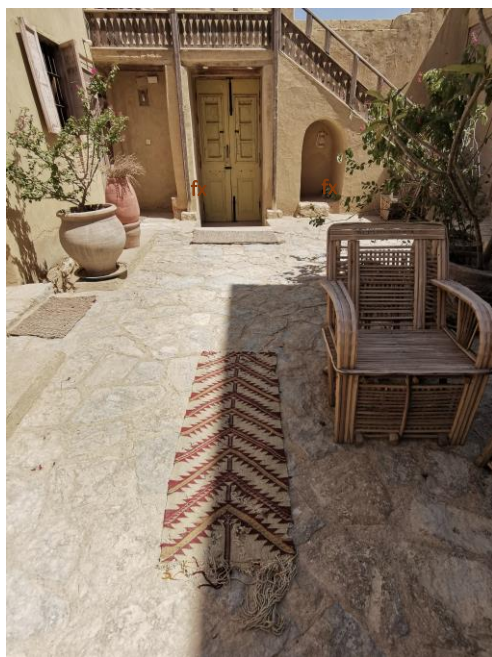
**fig. 117. Cloths as shading
elements, Dr. Nabil's house**



**fig. 116. courtyard of the old
house, Dr. Nabil's house**

The courtyard is decorated with a variation of different ollas used as plant pots, and rugs with traditional patterns.

In the picture next to the rug a traditional bamboo chair can be seen.



Type I.3

in use & good condition

3 different families

„I don't want to change anything. I would only love to repair everything.“(old lday)

fig. 118. motorcycle in front of a traditional *fallah* house



The part of the population that could not afford a new house still tends to live in the old farmhouses. These exist in different conditions depending on the financial situation of the people concerned. These houses and their families usually depend on help from others, such as aid organisations or residents. Their income is below subsistence level. In many cases, old, house structures are merely replaced by new materials such as bricks or white limestones from Minya. All houses consist partly of mixed forms of newly brought building materials such as brick or limestone blocks. Three visited farmhouses in different locations and with different family situations are presented here:



fig. 119. painted façade of a
fallah house in Tunis Village

Family A

divorced woman living alone

Interview: divorced woman

Age: 50-60

Nationality: Egyptian – from village Tunis Village

House: permanent family house

Place of the Interview: in the *salon*

Date: 27.08.2022

The lady in the age between 40-50 years, has been living alone for quite some time and earns her money by sewing. Her monthly salary is far below the minimum limit, which is why she relies on donations, whenever she needs to fix something in her house. The floor plan of the house is comparatively small to the other traditional houses. The *sala* area is in a wide room, with the measurement of 4x2 meters. The floor is made of solidified earth and the roof is made of newly installed wooden beams. Next to a gas stove, the room has no other furniture. Right on the right side is the *ghorfa* of a sleeping- and working room. This part has just recently been restored. The old clay-and limestone part of the building was removed and replaced by bricks. It contains a bed and the sewing machine. Straight forward from the *sala* there is a courtyard. The roof is not solid and consists of remnants of reed and palm frond constructions. On the side, a staircase leads to the roof, where there is nothing else. Under the stairs lies another room, which serves as a storage area and stores in nothing. The house consists of materials built on top of each other in different ways, and meanwhile resembles a patchwork quilt that one tries to repair piece by piece.

fig. 120. house of family A: entrance to the *gourfa*

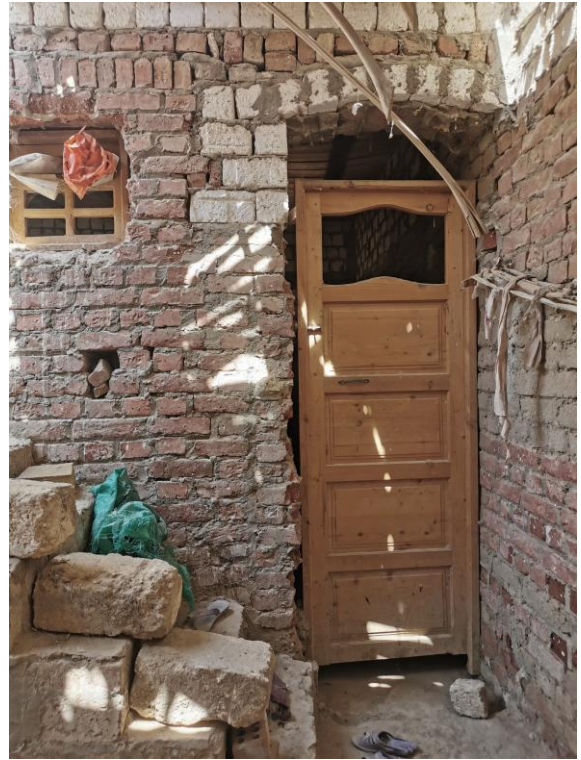
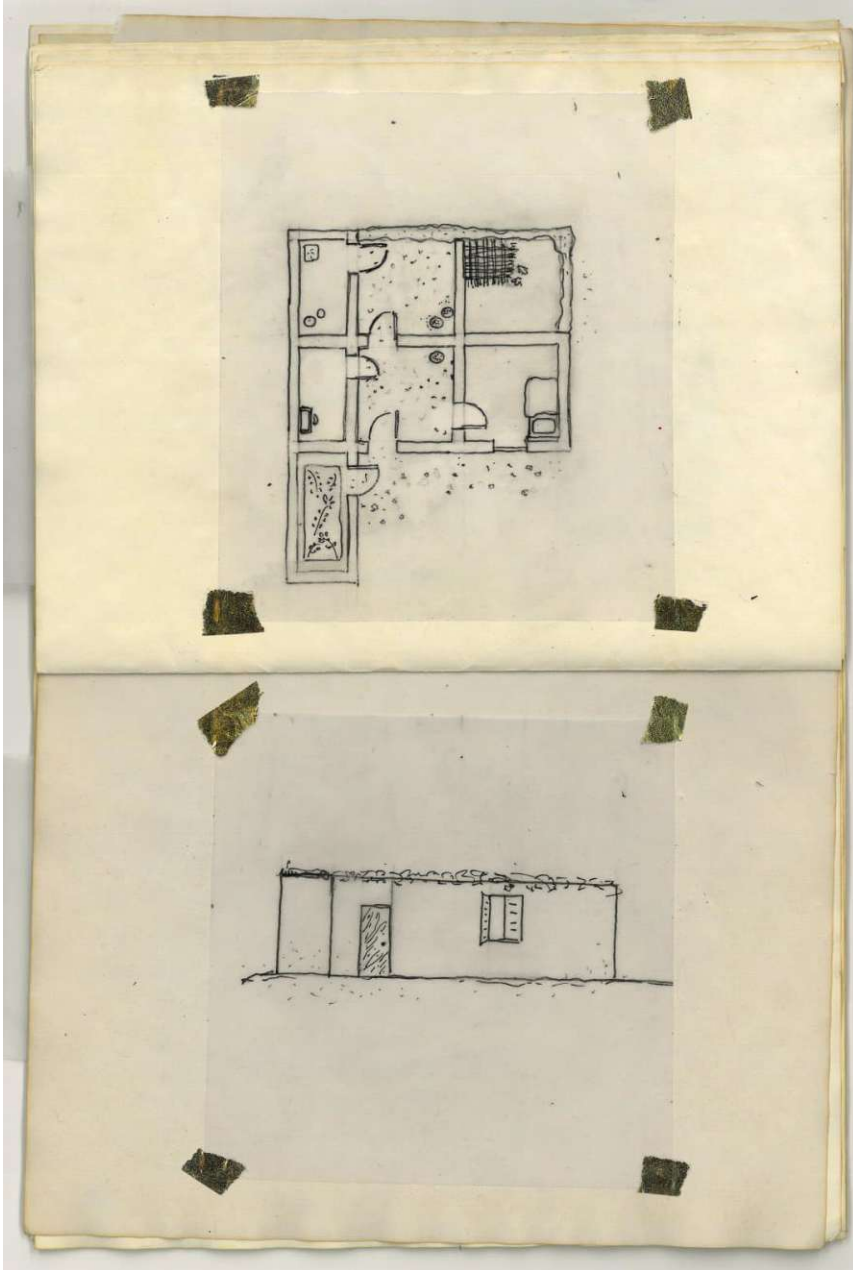


fig. 121. research sketch, floor plan and front view of house of family A



Family B

Old married couple

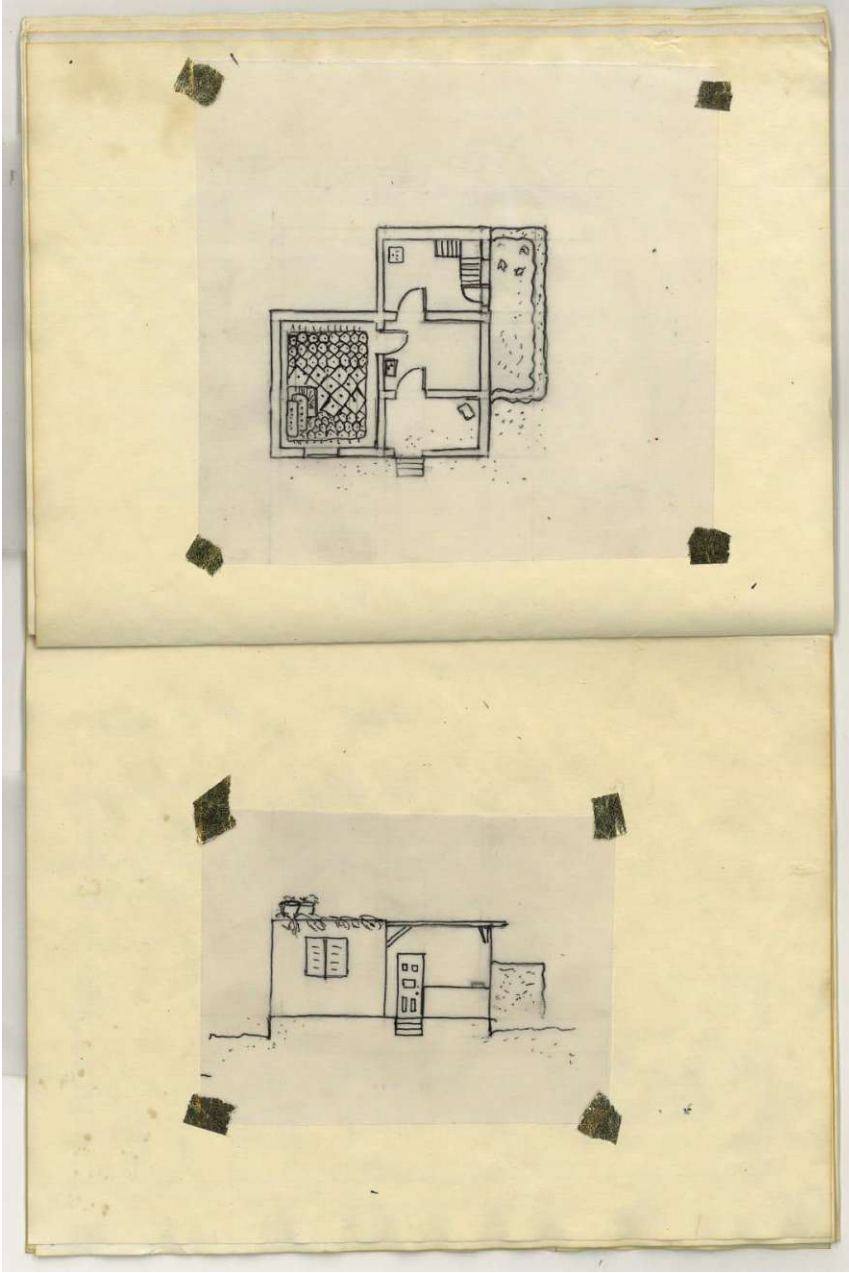
Interview: married woman
 Age: 50-60
 Nationality: Egyptian – from village Tunis Village
 Profession: farmer
 House: permanent family house
 Place of the Interview: in the *salon*
 Date: 27.08.2022

fig. 122. house of family B: terrace instead of *mastaba*



The house is owned by an elderly couple without children. Whenever something needed to be fixed, they renovated the house step by step. Their goal is to continue to maintain the house without having to completely demolish it. The house stands on a small elevation. From the outside it has a dark grey plaster color. Instead of a *mastaba*, the exterior is equipped with a covered porch. The roofing consists of a wooden ceiling from which the multi-layered layer of rice reeds can be seen. Two separate accessible doors lead into the house. The stairs lead directly to the main entrance and inside of the *sala*. The room has no furniture and connects only one room – the *salon* - which is entered on the left side of the *sala*. The *sala* has a sink made of cement and built directly into the floor. The guest area can be reached either directly from the outside door through a side door, or from the *sala*. This room is also renovated and has a new wooden beam construction and a cement floor. The *sala* is currently used as a sleeping area, which is why on the floor there are two blankets, *cuvetta*. These can be used either as a place to sleep or as a mat to sit on when visitors come. At the end of the *sala* is an open courtyard used as a stable and storage.

fig. 123. research sketch, floor plan and front view of house of family B



Family C

Sister with two children + brother and his wife and children

Interview: sister
 Age: 40-50
 Nationality: Egyptian – from village Tunis Village
 Profession: farmer
 House: permanent family house
 Place of the Interview: in the *sala*
 Date: 01.09.2022

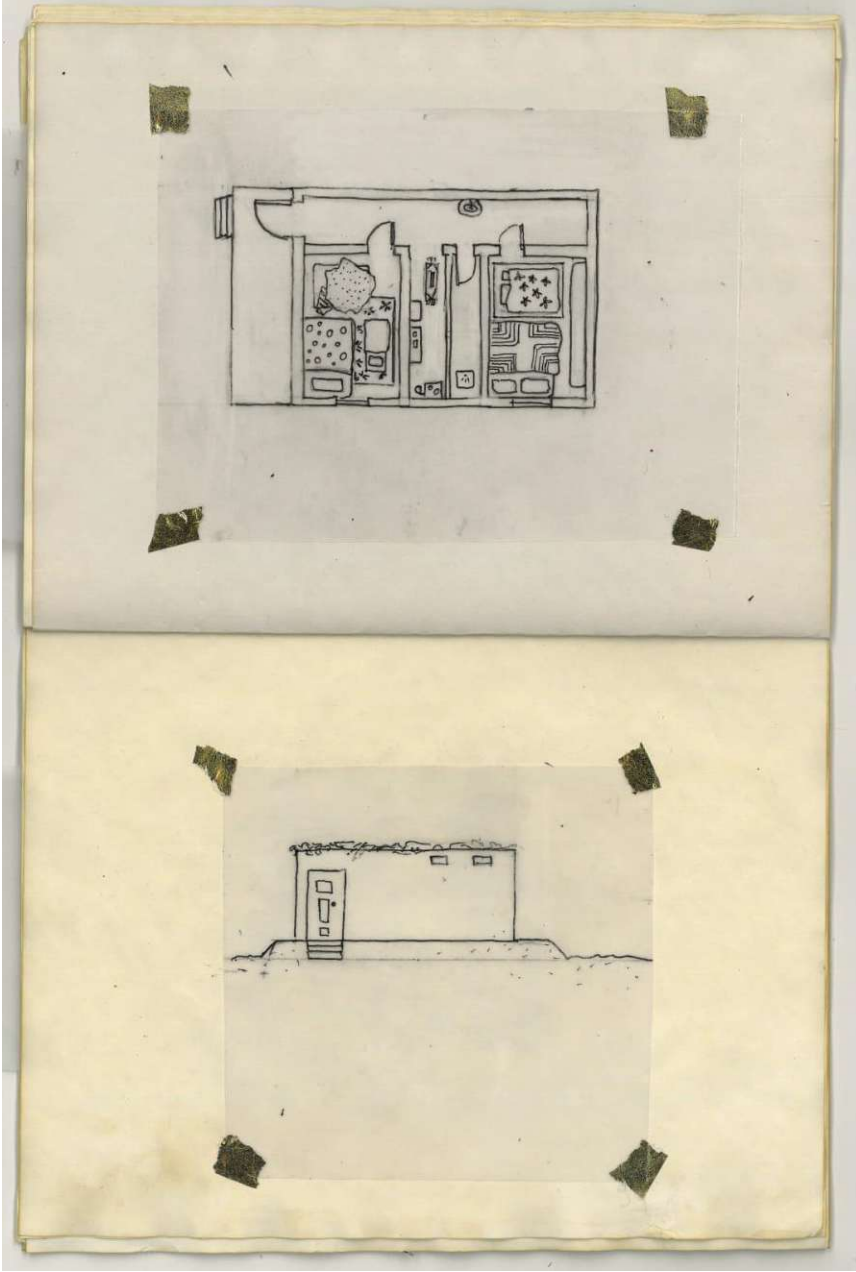
fig. 124. house of family C: The sister's room (*gourfa*)



The house belongs to a brother with his wife and children. After the divorce of his sister, she moved out from her husband's family house and had to move in with her two children to her brother's house. Outside the front door is a mountain full of shoes. Entering the front door, there is a long 2-meter-wide corridor to the end of the house. The corridor leads over one side to 3 more rooms. In the first room sleeps the sister and her two children. The room is filled with blankets over and on the floor. Sleeping is done in a cramped quarters anywhere space can be found in the room. Small openings in the upper part of the wall provide air supply.

The next room is a kitchen stretched in length with a maximum width of 2 meters. The kitchen is equipped with ceramic tile floor as well as a fully equipped kitchen with refrigerator and oven. Next to the kitchen is a small bathroom with a dry-toilet, which in front of the door a sink is built. In the last room live the brother, his wife and his child. Here, as well, blankets and mattresses lay on the floor, serving as beds.

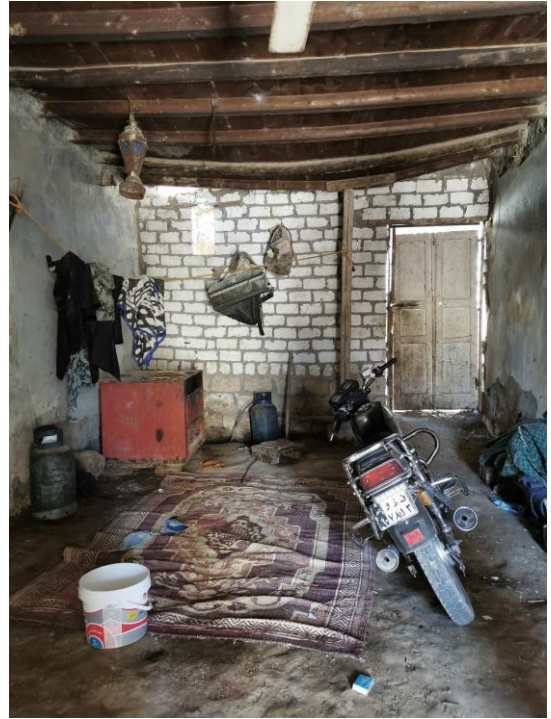
research sketch, floor plan and front view of house of family C



Type I.4

reuse: storage, barns, kitchen restaurant

fig. 126. abandoned house used for storage



After some residents left the village for work in neighbouring countries, they came back with different ideas of buildings and materials. Those who could afford it, abounded their houses, and built not far from the old house a new storage building made of bricks.

The buildings left behind were either demolished or left empty. Some, on the other hand, have other uses such as that of a warehouse or stable. The warehouses are used as garage space for the motorcycles or bicycles. As a storage space for unused kitchen utensils or living room furniture. Those that are used as a barn, use it primarily as a chicken coop. The condition of the houses varies. While some only have crumbling facades, others have perforated ceilings or sunken houses waiting only to be demolished or saved. Some old houses have been converted into hotel or community kitchens. These can often be found integrated into a new residential complex.

**fig. 127. abandoned house
used as chicken coop**

on the floor was laid a few straw.
The crumbling facade shows the
abandonment of the house.



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fig. 128. Sobek Lodge – old family house turned into kitchen
 old family house reused as kitchen for the lodge “Sobek”



fig. 129. old sewing machine as a reception table – Sobek Lodge

In the area of the hotel, old family heirlooms can always be found as new elements of use. The business is managed by the 3 Samir brothers. The kitchen is run by the mother. (Interview, Ibrahim Samir)

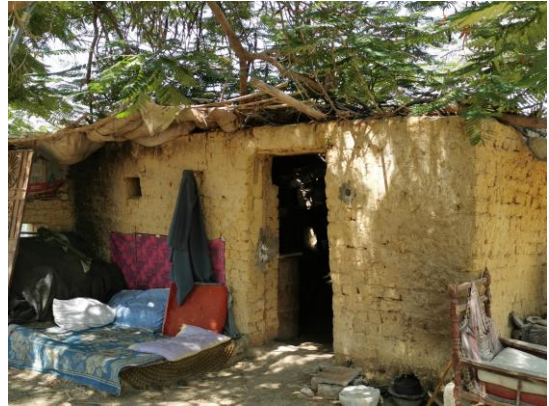
Type I.5

farmhouse

Mustafa

Interview: Mustafa's father
Age: 60-70
Nationality: Egyptian – from village Tunis Village
Profession: farmer
House: family farmhouse
Place of the Interview: on the farm
Date: 08.08.2022

fig. 130. Mustafa's farmhouse



Most farmers in the village still own agricultural land about 10-20 minutes outside the village. The land areas have no clear external boundaries and can practically be accessed by anyone. Despite the sober state of the cottage and the simple structure, for Mustafa the country house has a sentimental value. For many farmers, the country house was considered an actual family gathering place next to the *sala* of house. They would spend hours together, day by day. Tea, fresh fruit from the trees, natural space and sun were poured with the love of family. After the death of the mother, nothing was changed in the house, because it was mainly her who had expanded the house and restructured it and was the mainstay of the family.

In the middle of the land stands an old mud house built of *touf* and *tafla*. Whose mixture of stone, straw and stone is clearly visible through the crumbling of the facade. Inside of it is a small kitchen, as well as a storage room for tools. The roof is covered with palm fronds and bundled reeds. Part of the roof covering was covered with *hasira* mat, but exposed to the weather, after many years may it may have cracked some parts. The outdoor area is equipped by a partly old seating set, and resembles the function of a *mastaba*. The simple house, almost resembling a hut, is intended to offer the farmers during the day at the height of the sun a place of rest and tranquillity. Originally, the cottage consisted of a small section, which is now the kitchen. Later it was extended by the storage area. The junction of the two substructures is still clearly visible today. In the interior it is separated by the use of space, and in the exterior the different mixture of materials is recognizable. Along the upper part of the roof of the facade, rectangular openings were installed at regular intervals, which serve as a light and air supply. In addition to the small openings in the upper area, there is a slightly larger opening that is covered with a net and should serve more for ventilation purposes than lighting. This part was added later, which can be seen mainly through the finishing along the opening. For shading, wooden branches are inserted along the facade, on which palm fronds or even reeds were placed above. At the ends of the *canope* construction, empty can containers are hung as wind chimes to observe any wind changes. In front of the hut there is a traditional Fellah oven made of clay and stamped out of earth. The facade of the house is decorated with diagonal stones.

A little further next to the hut is a temporary stable, made of walls which are about 1.50 meters high and covered with a roof of palm fronds and reeds. The floor is firmly pressed and covered with hay. The walls are also made of different materials. The original part was made of limestone, while new sections are made of brick. As a restroom serves a hut tied together from branches, on the side of the country house. Across the field are scarecrows filled with straw. The purpose of these scarecrows is not to keep away birds, but to keep away possible robbers though why they are dressed in traditional clothing of the farmer. Throughout the whole agricultural area of one single farmer, a number of such small farmer houses are built. Depending on where the farmer is located in the field, he will find a place to rest.

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fig. 131. scarecrow wearing traditional *fallah* clothing

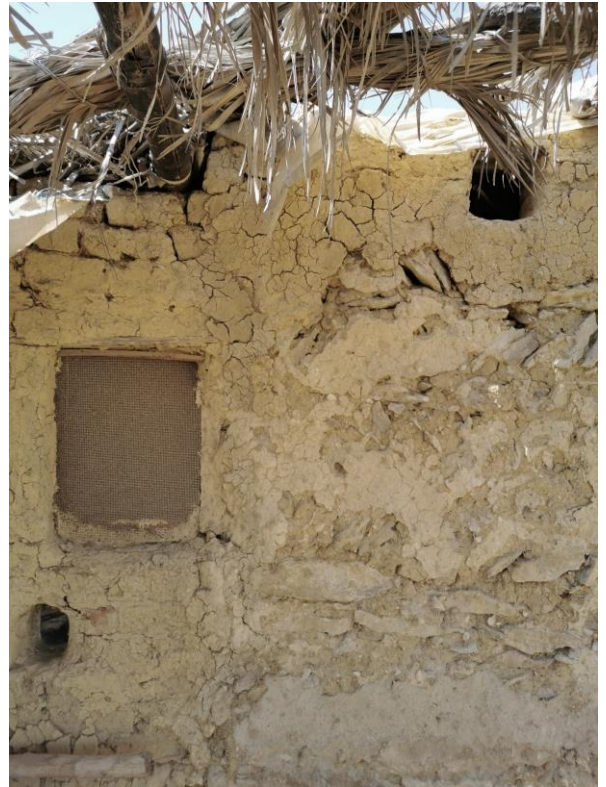


fig. 133. old and new construction of the farmhouse, Mustaf's farmhouse



fig. 132. old farmhouse made of *touf* and *tafla*, Mustaf's farmhouse

fig. 134. small opening and simple construction, Mustaf's farmhouse

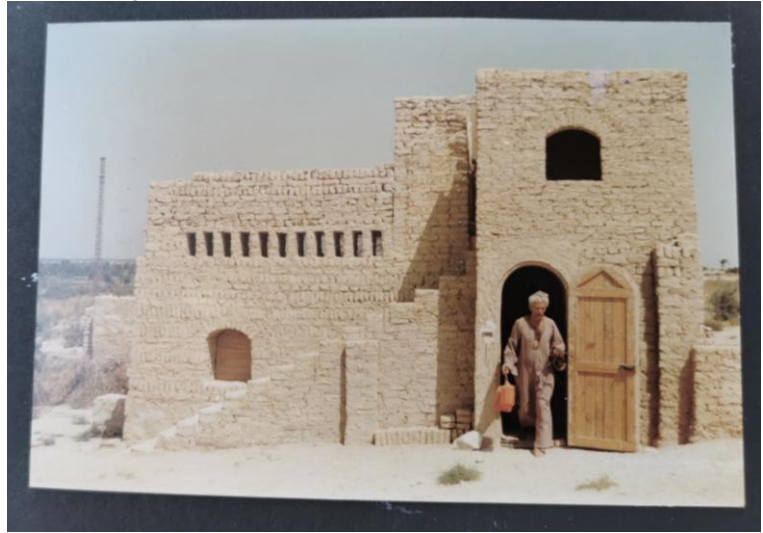


Type I.6

Demolished

Lazib Inn Spa

fig. 135. Hans in front his original house made of clay



This type can be seen as a transition to the new vaulted buildings of Tunis Village. Originally a German architect called Hans built with the help of the other intellectuals like Dr. Adel, Dr. Nabil and the people of Tunis Village a small vaulted house made of mud bricks.

After he died, a Swiss businessman bought off the house with a large area of land that runs down to the lake. The original small house was demolished, and replaced it with a luxurious arial with individual distributed accommodation units of the hotel complex. Advertised on their website as a "charming Fayoumi-style villa" (Lazib Inn) the hotel complex was made of concrete-brick construction plastered with a red earth tone. In terms of urban design, the hotel hardly relates to its surroundings. As one of the first buildings with a red color tone, it broke not only the visual uniform of natural clay tone of the region. But it also separates passers and locals through a high wall, which is guarded daily by police officers, from the rest of the hotel's guests and activity. The visitors mostly stay exclusively inside the complex, where they are offered tourist day tours, an own hotel-restaurant with a swimming pool. Even the path to the lake is accessible to visitors through an integrated paved path.

Thus, in the midst of a rural idyll, a luxurious spa hotel has nestled inside the village, which wants to cut itself off from the rest of the village, both in terms of appearance and content. Even residents have questioned the existence of the hotel and criticized it at the beginning for its radical plan of demolition. "I even showed him (owner of Lazib Inn) the picture, so he could hang it in the hotel. But he didn't want to. He doesn't want any connection to the old building."

(Interview, Dr. Nabil)



fig. 137. Lazib Inn small style

described on its webpage as a traditional Fayoumi house, the architectural style integrates Nubian vaults with wooden Islamic decorative elements.



fig. 136. Lazib Inn small rental houses

The new houses are made of bricks and cement, and have expect of the domes nothing more in common with the original house of Hans.

TYPE II: DAR'

INTRODUCTION OF THE PROBLEM OF THE NEW DOME IDEOLOGY

The friends and followers of Fathy's ideology of a new rural peasant village, had produced a complete transformation of the village. Although primarily it focused on reclaiming the traditional architecture of the *fallahs*, it was rather more of a self-realization of their romanticized idea of rural Egypt. As a result, the peasant was to be reshaped by the assimilated intellectuals and taught in that way a better way of living and building. For Fathy, living and the associated construction of a shelter is always linked to a "decision". And with the arrival of the Nubian vaults, the decision was instinctively made by the intellectuals who attempted to rebuild the village: "Decision making, choosing, is another word for self-expression - or perhaps better, is the necessary prelude to all self-expression. A conscious decision may be reached either by consulting tradition or by logical reasoning and scientific analysis." (Fathy, 1973: 23)

Based on their needs and conception of a liveable life and living conditions, new architectural forms and languages were imported. The domes, whose construction technique where not known by the inhabitants until then, have been introduced into the village without any announcement and have been propagated until today as an expression of a rich architectural language. In theory, the naturalization of the domed buildings into the village community should progressively transform the simple village and its people. Eating was now done on tables, sleeping on beds, sitting on sofas, and the public area with the view of the lake became the pleasure of pleasure for recreational use. Although these new ways of life were in many respects not in any way negative, the essence was to civilize the uneducated people of the *fallahs*. To this day, most of the intellectuals stand proudly in front of their domed houses and tell how they made the village into the heart jewel of Fayoum that it is today. When asked why the *fallahs* did not adapt the new form of the houses, one often finds the answer "because they do not understand the usefulness of the domes until today". (Interview, Christine)

For the *fallahs*, however, their own recognition of the dome has fundamentally nothing to do with a lack of knowledge. Their personal rejection of the dome is deeply rooted in their way of life and cultural practice. For them, the domes and vaults stands symbolically for tomb architecture. The references to the ancient buildings for the dead are too similar for them, and a personal cultural reference is too distant. The relation to death mirrors that of the ancient ancestors. Until today in the modern Egyptian philosophy of life, death is still integrated into life as it was in ancient times. People live together with the death together and it belongs to the daily life as much as the life itself. In the use of language as well as in philosophy, death creeps into life. Nevertheless, people do not want to provoke death by voluntarily lying down under a dome.

Another failure of the acceptance of new architecture, is the associated need for floor space. The construction of a dome requires a massive substructure. The walls must have a minimum thickness of about 0.50 meters in order to build at least one more floor. Since the great interest in land in and around Tunis Village, land prices have skyrocketed and became unaffordable for local farmers. In addition, due to his financial situation, the fellah often has the opportunity to build a house only once in his life. Therefore, especially when building a family house, attention is paid to the continuity and sustainability value in terms of further use and reuse. On small property areas should, accordingly ideally a building from at least 3 floors exists, which can be used in the sense of a generation house. In theory and in practise this is possible with an earthen construction. The problem, however, is the related wall thickness, which must be built thicker and stronger as the number of floors increases. The fellah finds himself faced with a major dilemma, which he can only circumvent by using industrially manufactured materials such as brick, cement or white limestone. The old traditional known building patterns of their farmhouses are therefore increasingly abandoned for the sake of survival instinct. For the intellectuals, this problem seems to be largely linked to a lack of understanding and empathy. Despite the closeness to the rural residents, there is a clear transparent unofficial line between them and the *fallahs*. While the *fallahs* have allowed the architecture of the intellectual's access on their floors, there is no empathy the other way around towards the personal decisions to "be forced" to build in height. From a once homogeneous building language consisting of simple forms, an inhomogeneous village construct, from which a clear social class hierarchy can be read, was developed by the "intellectual" influence from the city. The dome architecture symbolizes an architecture with which a certain demonstration of power emerges. Thus, in fact, the financial situation as well as the class status that goes along with it is publicly replanned through a formal building language of the dome. In the process, the helpless fellah can only watch his familiar surroundings gradually change through an external and more powerful influence. And the formally desired social inclusion through the intellectuals, leads deeper and deeper to a symbolic architectural exclusion. A supposed "we" became a "the others and we". And the supposed "architecture of the poor" became an "architecture of the rich". Due to the *fallahs*'s personal relationship to vaults and their distancing to domes, Fathy's form of a new rural dome ideology unfolded as a symbol of intellectuals and the rich, and basically proved true of what Fathy's wanted to separate himself of "These houses, mostly for rich clients, were certainly an improvement on the old town type of country house, but largely because they were beautiful. In spite of their economical mud brick walls, they were not so very much cheaper than houses built of more conventional materials, because the timber for the roofs was expensive." (Fathy, 1973: 5)

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fig. 138. domes and Vaults representing the village





DEALING WITH IT *The fallah*

is in the habit of adapting to natural changes. The same happened with the new architectural language of the domes. The craft was learned and made their own. Today, the master builders and construction workers of the village are considered specialists in the art of domes. Although the willingness to adopt the new building technique means that they still personally maintain a certain distance, the new building knowledge has been appropriated for the purpose of a new economic and economic principle. Haj Sayeed, for example, tries to fill with clay mortar perforated bricks to create at least a similar familiarity of the industrial building material within the living space. With the new change in the village, not only has the building knowledge of the craftsmen fundamentally changed, but also the way they view change and deal with the new enemy of globalization and capitalism.

DIFFERENCE TO THE TRADITIONAL *FALLAH* HOUSE

The houses of the intellectuals are much more opulent and representative in their external appearance. Interior functions are based on similar basic forms to those of the *fallahs'* houses, but they are far larger and more complex in their design. The rooms are not designed according to any standard layout pattern and can be found relating more to basic urban patterns. Depending on the orientation and location of the sky, as well as the size of the building lot, a variety of rooms are designed, sometimes forming an overflow of rooms. While traditional floor plans focus on simple and multifunctional elements, the villas, which are also referred to as "*Dar*" in Arabic, consist of a majority of fixed installations. Traditional items such as *Hasira* mats or *olla* are not used as functional elements rather used in highly finished quality and serve purely decorative purposes. Despite the differences in the construction type of the *Dar'*, certain rooms occur repeatedly and imply a certain pattern of a certain social class of society:

Each villa is protected by a gate or wall, of which usually only the domed structure is peeks out from outside. A long-paved path eventually leads to entrance of the mansion. In many cases, one first enters a large anteroom, also called *sala*, or advanced courtyard space which are furnished with lush decorative elements. The *sala* is usually wide and brightly lit and is furnished with luxurious decorative elements. Shoes are taken off only when entering the house. From the *sala* you can reach the living area. Which is often divided into guest rooms - *salon* and a living room - *entreè*. Both rooms serve as representative spaces and are decorated with precious and personal objects. The guest area can often be reached only through the living area or through the garden area. Kitchens are built wide and consist of fully furnished interiors. the living area. Which is often divided into guest rooms - *salon* and a living room - *entreè*. Both rooms serve as representative spaces and are decorated with precious and personal objects. The guest area can often be reached only through the living area or through the garden area. Kitchens are built wide and consist of fully furnished interiors.

They do not group the bedrooms around one room as in the farmhouses, and therefore they are not called *gourfa*, but instead called *oda* اوضة [], meaning a simple room. A distinction is made between winter and summer rooms. The summer rooms are oriented towards *bahari* and the winter rooms towards *ibli*. Some houses have separate dining rooms or integrated living areas, in which design plays a major role. Due to the strong isolations to the outside of the village, only previously announced guests can enter, who usually get welcomed in the garden areas instead of the *mastaba*. The garden patios act in this case as an own private space.

Entering the gardens, the eye is filled with magnificent green with a variety of fruit and plants. The view is underlined with the panorama of the lake and the desert dunes. Outside the house is often also a *fallah* stove, which in many cases serves only decorative purposes and has no other use.



fig. 139. water silo on the rooftop

WATER – BLUE THREAD The symbolism of water runs through the entire plan of the house like a blue thread. Most of the villas are situated on hills and allow a wide view over the endless river, which had been blocked due the Villas and their barriers every since for the local people. In the gardens are meter-long pools, filled to the brim with water which remain unused for entire periods of time. On roofs or in garage spaces, private water tanks are stored at all the houses. Like small globes, they sit, usually even with a canopy for shading purposes, as their own decorative element. The symbolism of water is represented here with an abundance, in which a reservoir full of water is demonstrated as inaccessible and reserved. Only in case of water hoarding would one open the tank.



fig. 140. Gates decorated with the Egyptian 7 & 8 filled in with colorful glasses



GATES INSTEAD OF DOORS – DECORATION OF V & ^

The colorful doors and facades of *fallahs* are translated as a representative stylistic device. The facades of the private villa complexes are sober and uniformly present the color regional materials. While the facades remain undecorated, the walls of the residential complexes are decorated with different elements. Most of them use small decorative elements such as ceramic tiles, which are mostly related to the surrounding environment than to the locals.

However, the most common ornamentation is the Egyptian number 7 and 8 [*sabaeh* & *thamania*]. For the Arabic number 7 is represented as V: "V". And the 8 as a twisted V: "A". Often the symbolism is found as an opening along the top bar of facades or walls. In closed form, especially vaults are filled with different colors of glass, which late at night when the interior lights are turned on, a colorful network of colors radiates to the outside.

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fig. 141. villa in Tunis Village: Islamic architecture style



SOCIAL SEPARATION WITHIN THE PROPERTY

AREA As a urban escape of intellectuals, most of them hoped to find a quiet idyll along the river in the heart of the village of Tunis. At the same time, after the friendly acceptance of the inhabitants, they wanted to offer them a part of their knowledge as a form of gratitude. Although both sides always praised the good and equal communication and coexistence on one level, the obvious different execution of the private housing nevertheless shows a clear social separation.

While most fellahs know how the intellectuals live, only a few have a little to no idea what the lives of their fellow countrymen are like in private. Even though many maintain friendships with one another, there are clear distinctions in their interactions with one another, some of which fall back on hierarchical patterns that can be seen in the layout of the properties. Next to the entrance gates are small domed houses, consisting of only a room and a bathroom and are supposed to serve as a small resting place for the *bawab* [بواب], the doorman, during the day. Most of the *bawabs* are from the village itself, and besides the agricultural work, they maintain the houses of the intellectuals. Since most of the villas are used only temporarily, the role of the *bawab* is an extremely important one. His duties include not only taking care of the properties, but also providing protection and security. Picking and caring for the fruit and plants is also part of the *bawab's* job. Shopping is often done by the women of the *bawabs*. In some cases they also cook entire meals for the owners. At the entrance of the gate, due to the close connection of the servant's house, the guest is often welcomed first by the *bawab*. Like a domestic servant he leads the guest to the front door of the villa. Before the owner steps in front of the door, the *bawab* must first announce the guest.

If the owners are not present, only the front gate key and that of the servants' cottage are given to the *bawab*. Access to the main house is not granted in most cases. During the absence of the owners, the property - so it seems - is reclaimed by the entire family of the *bawab* during the day. While the husband waters the plants. His wife cleans the driveway and the children play in the meantime on ground areas otherwise denied to them. In the evenings, most families tend to enjoy a tea - *caj* - over the river during sunset. "We used to be able to see the river no matter where we walked along. Today, everything is covered with walls." [Mustafa, *Bawab* of one of the villas along Villa Street]. (Interview, Mustafa)

fig. 142. *bawab* house

Some owner use them as a guest house instead for the *bawab*. They are usually made of the same material as the house. But offer smaller rooms.



EXAMPLES of Type II

Type II.1

Adobe “*tafla*”

Dar’ Wanis

Interview: Dr. Adel Fahmy
 Age: 70-80
 Nationality: Egyptian – from Cairo
 Profession: architect
 House: temporary family house
 Place of the Interview: in the *sala*
 Date: 27.07.2022

fig. 143. Dar Wanis , dr. Adel’s house



Dr Adel Fahmy is an architect, specialised in adobe and sustainable-earth architecture. He is one of the best-known intellects that came to the village and changed the villages knowledge. Besides Fathy’s constructor from Assuan, it was Dr. Adels who mostly engaged the *fallahen* into the vault technique. His main goal was to teach every person who was interested in adobe buildings, new techniques like the rammed earth construction or the *tafla*. After many years living outside of Egypt, he decided to build his own house in the rural Egypt. Coming himself from a rural area of Upper Egypt, he had the feeling to coming back to his roots. In love for his only son, the dedicated the house to his child Wanis, and called it “*Dar’ Wanis*”. Dr. Adel himself says, that his house „tells stories. And so does each room.“ (Interview, Dr. Adel) The house was built in several stages. When he came to Tunis Village, there wasn’t much. And he also didn’t have a lot of money. So, he started to build one room, which currently represents today the winter room. Whenever he was able to continue building, he extended the winter room with the two summer rooms. After he got married, his wife wished for a proper house with kitchen and living space. After some years of the Dar’ was completed in stages, through the help of friends and construction workers of the village.

fig. 144. research sketch, floor plan and front view of Dr. Adel's house



fig. 145. shapes of a rooftop, Dr. Adel's house

The roof offers a variation of shapes. Domes, vaults and flat roofs on which you can also sit and stand. The entire shape can be sensed from the interior, on the roof and offers the negative of the interior of the room.



fig. 146. façade, Dr. Adel's house

The pattern of the facade is created by birds eating fruits from surrounding plants and throwing the seed against the facade while flying.



The Dar is surrounded by massive walls of clay. Still wet, the wall was decorated with the hands by drawings such as camels and figures in typical fellah clothing. For this process, the children of the workers and some students of Fahmy were involved. Entering the property, on the left side will you will encounter two interlocking rooms, provided with two domes. Originally used as a guest house for a close friend, over the years it has been converted into a worker's house and warehouse. To the right of the entrance is an empty space referred to as the "*warsha*" [ورشة], meaning workshop. Here Dr. Adel experiments with new clay mixtures of the region in order to achieve new improvements or create new achievements of the clay. In addition at the *warsha* workshops about building with earth materials are always held in hope to "bring interest in traditional and sustainable architecture to the new generation" (Interview, Dr. Adel). To enter the house you first pass through a wooden door a small courtyard open to the top. On the side, a staircase leads to the roof and a small water silo, as well as a warehouse formerly used as a dry toilet. The entrance of the courtyard is opened on the other side with the traditional openings of the so called 7 and 8, which lightly sheds the sun's rays during the day and allows a cool breeze to pass through at night. Inside the gaps are exhibited small objects made of clay, by the locals of the village. Past the stairs, across a small corner stands a striking green door, with the inscription "Adel Fahmy Architect". Next to it a now dusty bicycle, which in the young years of the architect served as the main means of transportation within the village. Knocked on a small traditional door knocker as a.



fig. 147. roof of the sala, Dr. Adel's house

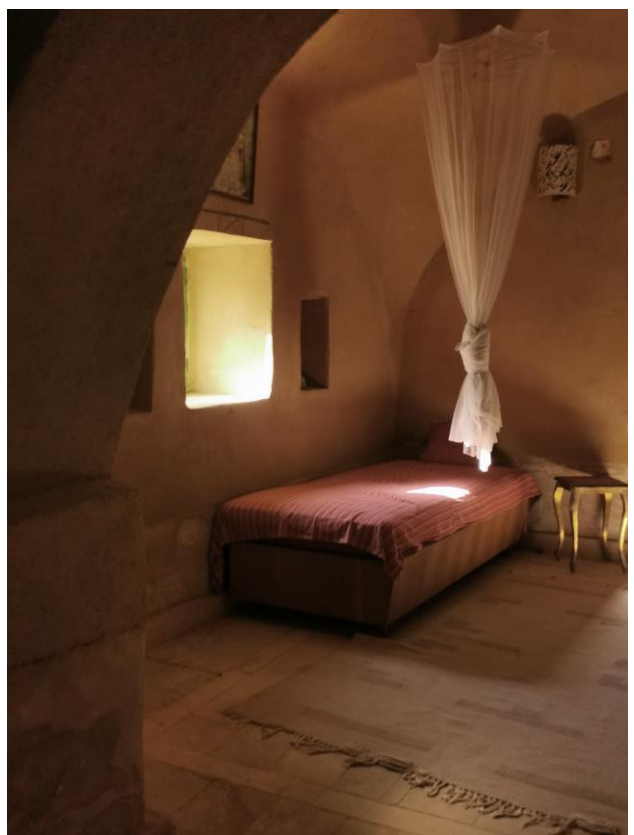
The sala and another bedroom are the only rooms with flat roofs.

fig. 148. sala with the door to the terrasse, Dr. Adel's house



on the floor rugs from Cairo and the Kanafihi Assyti

fig. 149. doomed bedroom, Dr. Adel's house



hand, one is first welcomed by a 5 meter high and widely open living room with the measurement 5x7meters. The roof is made out of wooden beams, imported outside from Fayoum, and the floor tiles are made of terracotta. Doorstep of the entrance door has traditional Ceramic tiles from Fayoum. The room has discreet openings as well as a door to the terrace facing *bahari* and is furnished with old personal antiques. The seating furniture consists of the traditional "*kanabihi assyti*" [أسيوط كنبية]. The cover of the seat cushions was sewn by his late wife. In order not to lose his rural roots, Dr. Adel tries to bring out his background through traditional elements such as the typical *tablia* or a *sania* - platter in a bright red hung on the wall, of his grandmother from Sohag. On the *ibli* side of the living room there two green doors between the red *tablia*. One leads to the kitchen, which has an additional exit to the outside space. And the other door leads to the bathroom. Both rooms were the only ones with a floor of ceramic tiles and both have a dome roof. The bathroom has an additional protruding corridor designed as a barrel vault (*quba*), where there are electrical boxes and a small storage room. Behind the living room area there is a room elevated on a small podium and communicates with the living room through an arch opening. Formerly used as a doll room for his son, it has now been converted into a bedroom. On both sides of the room, *ibli* and *bahari*, are two patio doors.

The sleeping area which was the first built-up part of the house, is accessed through a green door to the east of the living room. Entering through the door, you first find yourself in a small barrel-vaulted passage room. On the right, *ibli*, lies the winter room. Separated from the rest through a wooden door, you enter the sleeping room. Vaulted through a dome, it is used only throughout cold days and therefore packed with blankets and mattresses. To the left you enter the summer area. The first room is used as a sitting area or bedroom, depending on the needs. Also with a dome, it is ventilated and lit from the *ibli* side and a small opening to the living room. All the domes tend to extract more light, which is achieved by the holes lanced through the dome and filled with colored glass-bottles. The last room, is designed as a bedroom and is connected to the previous area only by an opening. The summer bedroom is designed as the only bedroom with a wooden beam ceiling to use the roof structure as a roof terrace. There are windows on bothside, the *bahari* and *ibli* sides. To the west, a door in the room leads directly to the outside area. The outdoor area has a breath-taking view over the entire river. White sailboats and the sand dunes peek out from afar. Surrounded by palm trees and green areas. Along the facade a mastaba was added. Over time, this was extended with a covered sitting area built of clay. The columns of the roofing look like palm trunks due to their carving. The roof is made of ash decorated with the pink flower. Looking at the roof of the house, small perforated water pipes stick out along the facade. On the one hand, they are used for roof drainage, and on the other hand, traditionally in rural areas, pipes are often perforated to serve as beehives. At the end of the property, one stands on a slope that allows to see the wide view over some other houses of domed buildings.

EXAMPLES of Type III

Type II.2

Brick “*toub el ahmar*”

Ingrid’s family & Airbnb Villa

Interview: Ingrid
Age: 40-50
Nationality: French – from Cairo
Profession: teacher & yoga instructor
House: temporary family house
Place of the Interview: on the terrasse
Date: 22.08.2022

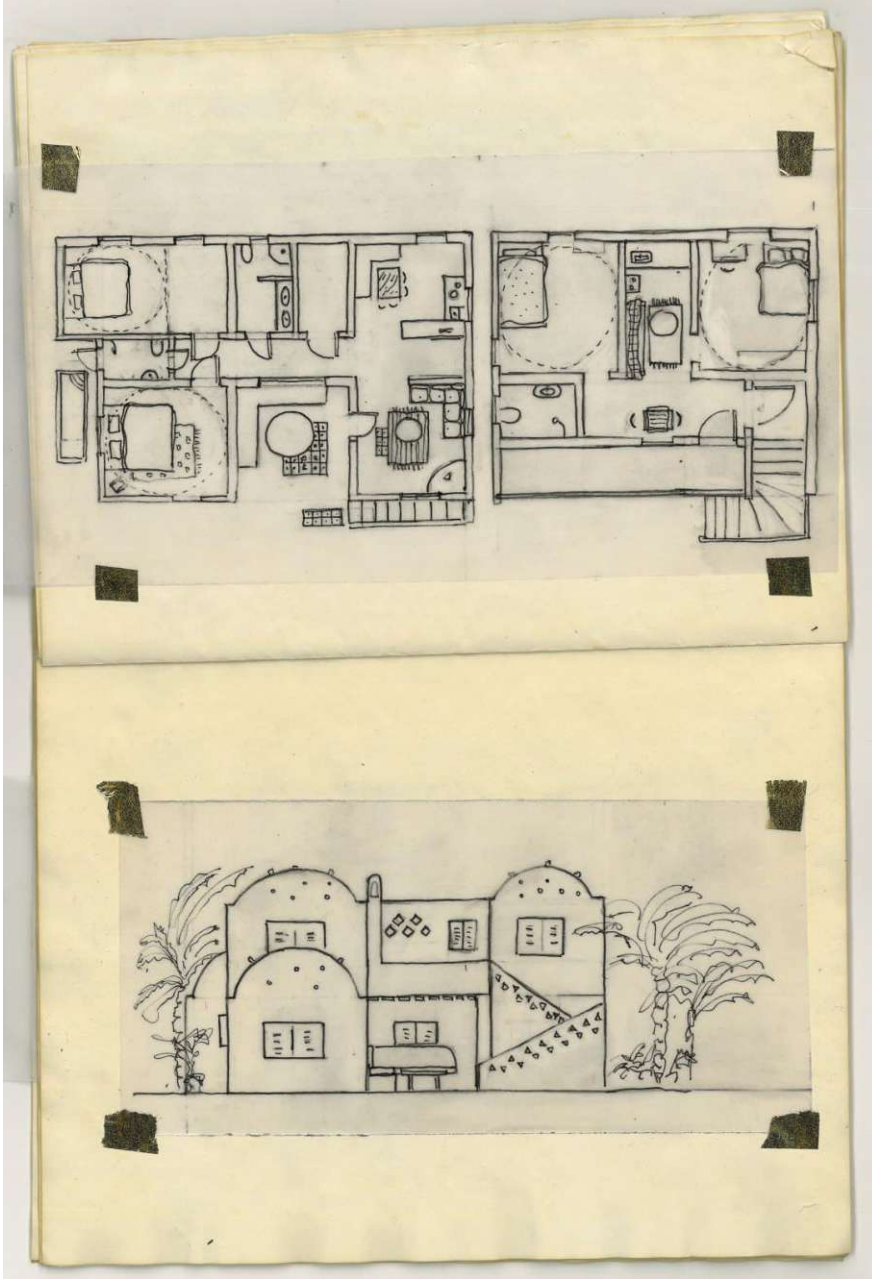
fig. 150. Ingrid’s house

terrasse with the terracotta tiles from Cairo



Ingrid’s house happened by chance. When she moved from France to Cairo, so she could be with her husband, a close friend of hers told her about a village, “not far away from Cairo, with many French people” in it. At first Ingrid used to always rent a house in Tunis Village. Her husband wasn’t impressed first by the village. As an Egyptian, he himself didn’t have any connection to the village. But after a few years, always spending the holidays in Tunis Village, it was him who all of sudden purchased a piece of land in Tunis Village. By that time, a lot of intellectuals have already built their houses facing the lake. So, they could only buy a house a little bit deeper inside the village. It was Haj Ahmed who designed their house. Like all the other intellectuals, the couple wanted a “typical and traditional rural building”. While drinking a cup of tea, he designed the house on the sand. Made out of bricks [*toub el ahmar*], with the clay-plastering [*fetisah*] the house was finished within only two months. After hearing from a good friend, how every year he had to make a service for the building, she has never considered to use pure clay for the construction. Knowing that, she wanted only the looks of it, she decided to make it with the plastering.

fig. 151. research sketch, floor plan and front view of Ingrid's house



The house is being entered through a wide gate, where a path next to a garden full of lemon trees and palm trees are facing you. The shape of the building itself can't be recognized very well. Because of the many trees, the exterior shape of the building is hardly recognizable. The building consists of two storeys. The ground floor belongs to the family. The second floor, due to insufficient use, was converted as a vacation apartment for guests and tourists. In front of the house entrance you pass by a *mastaba* with a big cubic wooden *tablia*, which she purchased from a *bazaar* in Cairo, in the centre. Under the table you can see a sample of flooring that Ingrid bought from an old Islamic-style apartment in Cairo. It is shaded by the wooden beam construction of the balcony from the upper floor. From the terrace you enter the living-dining area of the house. In the living area again a *mastaba* along the facade as well as the ceramic tiles from the outdoor terrace can be seen again. The traditional *tablia* serves as a coffee table, under which lies an oriental carpet. On one side a chimney was constructed into the wall. Drawings or paintings referring to rural Egypt or Tunis Village can be found along the walls of the entire house. The kitchen is connected to the living area by a large open arch and is equipped with a cooking island and table.

The ceiling of the living-dining area was designed as a wooden beam ceiling for the purpose of an upper floor. From the living-dining area a long corridor leads to two bathrooms and two bedrooms. Along the corridor, small wall niches are repeatedly found, in which cultural or antique-Islamic objects are displayed. The bathrooms are fitted with high quality ceramic tiles. To the west is the children's room. Over half of the children's room runs the upper floor, so the ceiling up to the half was built as wooden beams, while the other back part reaches the height of the upper floor and was designed as a dome. The master bedroom is located on the *bahari* side and was also designed with a dome. The furnishings of both rooms are kept quite simple. Ingrid brought some of the furnishing elements to Egypt from her grandparents' house in France. The upper floor is reached via a staircase opposite the terrace entrance. The first thing you enter is also a living-dining area, but it is much smaller in its shape and interior. Along the floor again in irregular intervals the ceramic tiles will be found. The living area is furnished with a typical rural wooden bench and *tablia*. *kilim* is found here both as a carpet, as well as bench cover.

The first sleeping area is connected to the living area by a round arch. Also, here the furnishing is quite simple and rather rural. The ceiling is a wooden beam construction that spans over the living area. On the other side of the living area, at the end of an arched corridor, you reach the bathroom, which also has a somewhat raised vault. Finally, around the corner is the second bedroom with a domed roof. Through the living area you reach the terrace-balcony over which you can catch a glimpse of the vaulted construction of the house. The domes, as well as some areas of the wall, were decorated with the stained glass. In one corner of the balcony the chimney flue passes through. Only on the roof, you can finally overlook the natural

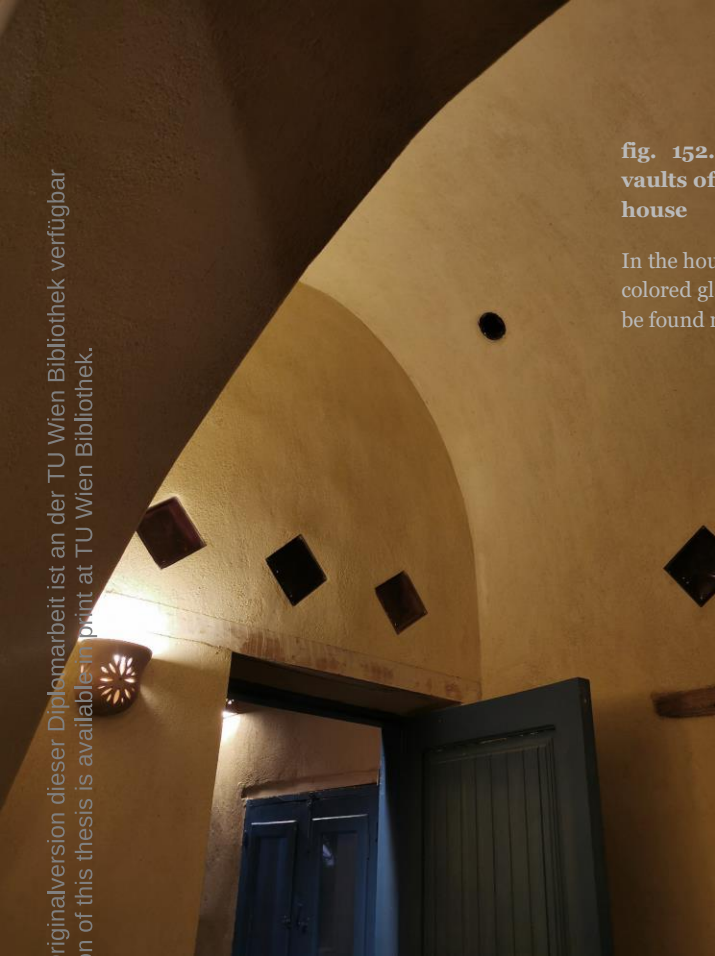


fig. 152. Play of light at the vaults of the corridors, Ingrid's house

In the house in the area of the vaults colored glasses in angular shape can be found repeatedly.

fig. 153. Interior of the guest house, Ingrid's house

The interior is kept traditional. Ingrid uses both urban and rural elements.



Type II.3

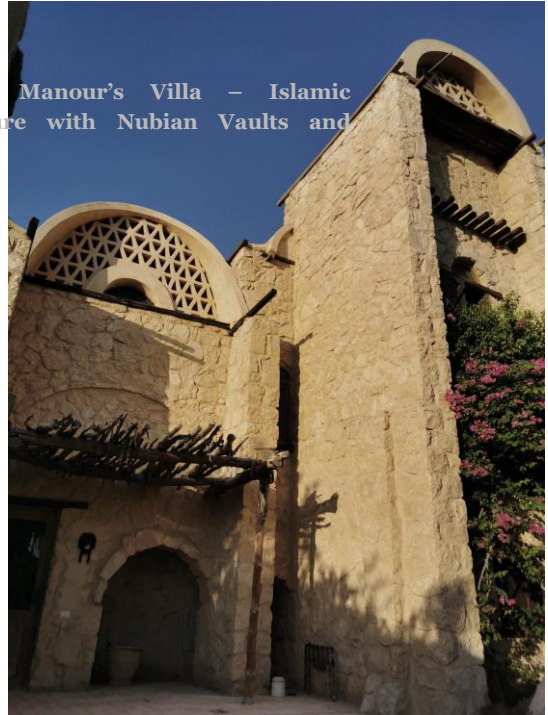
Stone “*dabsch*”

Villa Compound

Interview: Mansour
Age: 40-50
Nationality: Egyptian – from Tunis Village
Profession: teacher
House: rental house
Place of the Interview: in the *sala*
Date: 20.07.2022

Interview: Dr. Somya
Age: 50-60
Nationality: Egyptian – from Cairo
Profession: Dr. in Engineering, Dean of University
House: temporary family house
Place of the Interview: on the terrace
Date: 21.07.2022

fig. 154. Manour’s Villa – Islamic Architecture with Nubian Vaults and Openings



Just a few kilometres outside the official boundary of the village, lies a compound of magnificent stone villas with domed roofs. The compound of Islamic-Oriental style houses consists of 4 different types of houses that are arranged like a flower. It can only be entered through a guarded gate. In front of the house, each house usually has its own personal *bawab*. After the purchase of the Egyptian billionaire Saweris, the compound was renovated and the houses many houses attracted real estate investors and wealthy people.

Mansour, one of the 7 original family members of Tunis Village, bought a house of the same design as Dr. Somaya. When Evelyn arrived at the Village, he was one of the children she sent to Europa for better education. While some stuck to pottery or building, he studied French. Since then, he worked in Saudi Arabia as French-School teacher, and was able to purchase one of the houses.

Dr. Somoya, an engineer and professor at the Canadian University is also one of the people who bought 2010 one of the houses and uses it as holiday residence and family gathering. With no connection to rural Egypt, it was her daughter who drew her mother’s attention on this property, after marrying a landowner from Fayoum. Every year she comes and spends 1-2 months with some family members in the residence. The entire floor plan of the house resembles Mansour’s. For the free-selectable section during planning, Dr. Somoya opted for room enlargement. Her interior has been designed by precious and familiar pieces of furniture

fig. 155. research sketch, floor plan and front view of Mansour's Villa

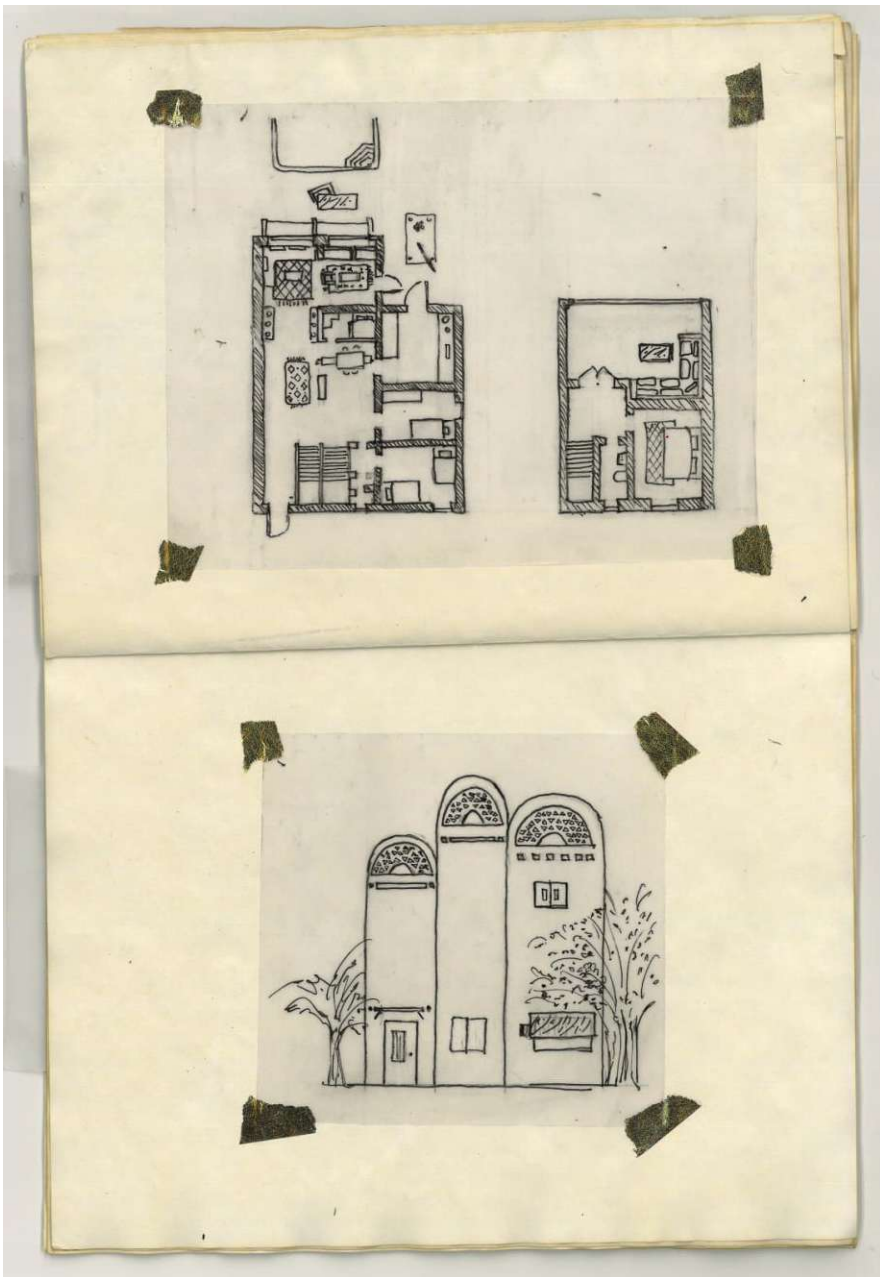


fig. 157. Terrasse and the Islamic wooden window-shedding systeme, Dr. Somay's villa





fig. 156. Vaults view from the window of the second floor, Dr. Somaya's Villa

The Houses privacy is additionally protected by a steel grid. On the right side to the entrance gate is a vaulted house, with bathroom as well as bedroom. Originally intended for the *bawab*, it is used as a guest room. In front of the small house is an open fireplace with a *fallah*-oven, which is hardly being used. A path paved with stone follows to the entrance door of the villa. The villa, made of solid stone from Fayoum, appears in its external appearance at first like a 3-nave sacred building with attached domes and vaults. The domes are decorated with openings in 7 and 8 shape. The dome openings borrow heavily from the idea of vaulted glass and are filled with different colors of glass that create a remarkable play of light at night. The first thing that greets you is a room that is almost 7-10 meters high, with the dome running over the entire length of the room. On the ground floor, straight ahead is a *salon* and *entree* area, furnished with high quality furniture and antiques from Cairo and Saudi Arabia. Slightly to the side is a glazed room that is used as a bedroom. This area was open to all buyers to help design during the planning process. Originally, a palm tree that rises through the house was planned. Many opted for an enlargement of the living space, or like Mansour for a locked room. The entire interior is described by Arabic oriental patterns and seating furniture. In between, *ollas* of different shapes are repeatedly exhibited as sculptures. From the living area you can enjoy the view of the garden and swimming pools. Next to the entrance door around the corner is the kitchen with front dining area and the first sleeping area of the house. Through a corridor there are two high rooms, clad in wood accessible. This sleeping area, due to its corridor structure, forms a separate living unit within the house. From the ground floor you go to the upper floor using a wide massive wooden staircase. Across the corner you enter the Master Bedroom. As the only room with a vaulted ceiling, it also has a view over the *ibli* and *bahari* side and provides the room with a cool breeze and air circulation. Next to the bedroom you reach the terrace over which the lake and some other vaulted buildings are visible from afar. The outdoor area of the villa complex is large and offer enough space for different uses. Along the villa facade is a sitting area, behind which is an interesting old oriental window construction, comparable with blinds. To ward off the strong rays of the sun during the day, the dense wooden panels can be pulled down. In the evening they can be pulled up again. The orientation of each villa of the compound must have a direct view of the lake. In addition, each resident can access a private area of the lake via a short walkway.



fig. 158. sala, Mansour's Villa

Today, the material stone is emblematic for Islamic architecture. For the interior design of the house, Mansour leans heavily on Islamic-Arabic design. For this purpose, he brought some furnishing elements from Saudi Arabia.



fig. 159. salon in Islamic style, Mansour's Villa

The wooden beam construction is visible in the interior and works as a design element. Under the vaults shelves have been built on which ollas are displayed as a decorative element. Unlike the traditional *fallah* houses, the interior is lush and staged.

Type III: *MUSALAH'*

WITH THE VIEW TOWARDS THE CITY In Egypt's

rural regions, brick construction is emblematic of a strong support of modernity and the future. The fellah tends to the attitude of always striving for something that he himself does not possess. It was no different in architecture. While brick and concrete construction experienced its architectural boom in the cities, people in the villages still lived largely in adobe or stone buildings. Through the nationalization of land areas of the Nasser Land Reform, it was possible for the farmers to make their own decisions for the first time. which is why many aspired to the urban image they could never touch.

“Whatever the peasant may want to do, whatever rich men’s villas he may wish to copy, he won’t be able to escape the severe restraint imposed upon him by his material. Whether, when he has lived in a truly beautiful and dignified village, he will still hanker after imported modernity, we shall have to wait and see – his wealth, his culture, and his consequence – then too he will cease to envy him his house.” (Fathy, 1973: 37)

Encouraged by political and social ideologies that always tried to convey to many peasants a life of living in a certain backwardness, the peasant longingly imitates the city man. Almost like in a marathon, the peasant tries to adapt to the building language of the elite and urban areas so he could catch up to their level of knowledge. With the prospect on the city, the peasant started to imitate. At first it started villas full of splendid ornamentation that suddenly appeared in rural environments. After that reinforced concrete skeleton construction with brick infills followed.

After the fellah used to develop his own solution from a problem, which as Fathy put it, eventually developed into a culture over generations (cf. Fathy, 1973: 24), the late arrival of industrialization also undermined the laziness and comfort in looking for new solutions.

Fathy, “Tradition is not necessarily old-fashioned and is not synonymous with stagnation. Furthermore, a tradition need no date from long ago but may have begun quiet recently. As soon as a workman meets a new problem and decides how to overcome it, the first step has been taken in the establishment of a tradition. When another workman has decided to adopt the same solution, the tradition is moving and by the time a third man has followed the first two and added his contribution, the tradition is fairly establishes. The peasant, once driven by diligence, tries to adapt to urban patterns of life that are difficult to translate to his own living situations. Starting from the clothes to the architecture and language of the youth. Everything should resemble that from the city.



fig. 160. streets of Tunis Village



fig. 161. *fallah* between the domes and the *touf* construction

CULTURAL CHANGE

The *fallah*, and especially the youngest rural generation, continues to reject their cultural traits. Modern city life has also has a tremendous impact on the familiar and thus strongly influenced private family life of the peasants. While it was traditionally considered normal to live as a married child with the entire family (consisting of parents and siblings) under one roof, and only retreat to the housing units at the end of the day - today's relationships between parents and children are increasingly distancing themselves from each other. Most prefer the generation houses, in order to own not only an entire floor, but to get a private life with its own founded family. By separating the housing units into entire floors, the woman in particular can move freely in her house, without being in constant contact with the (husbands) mother or sisters. Life becomes private and turns away from conflicts and problems. Although housing retains its family purpose, it becomes more a matter of one's own family, due in no small part to Western and modern lifestyles from the city



fig. 162. *fallah* house in between the new vertical buildings

EXAMPLES of Type III

Type III

Residential building “*musalah'*”

Mustafa’s family generation-building

Interview: Mustafa

Age: 30-40

Nationality: Egyptian – from Tunis Village

Profession: farmer & *banaa*

House: permanent family house

Place of the Interview: inside the house

Date: 23.07.2022

Fig. 163. Mustafa's generation-building



Within a residential house it maintains an entire family live. Mustafa's family dwelling house was built right next to the old farmhouse. Due to lack of space and privacy, as well as the urge for modernity within its own life situation, the 3-storey brick house built as modern solution. The floor plan of the apartment looks like a traditional house stretched into the height. Structurally and spatially, functions and units of all rooms were retained.

fig. 164. research sketch, floor plan and front view of Mustafa's generation house

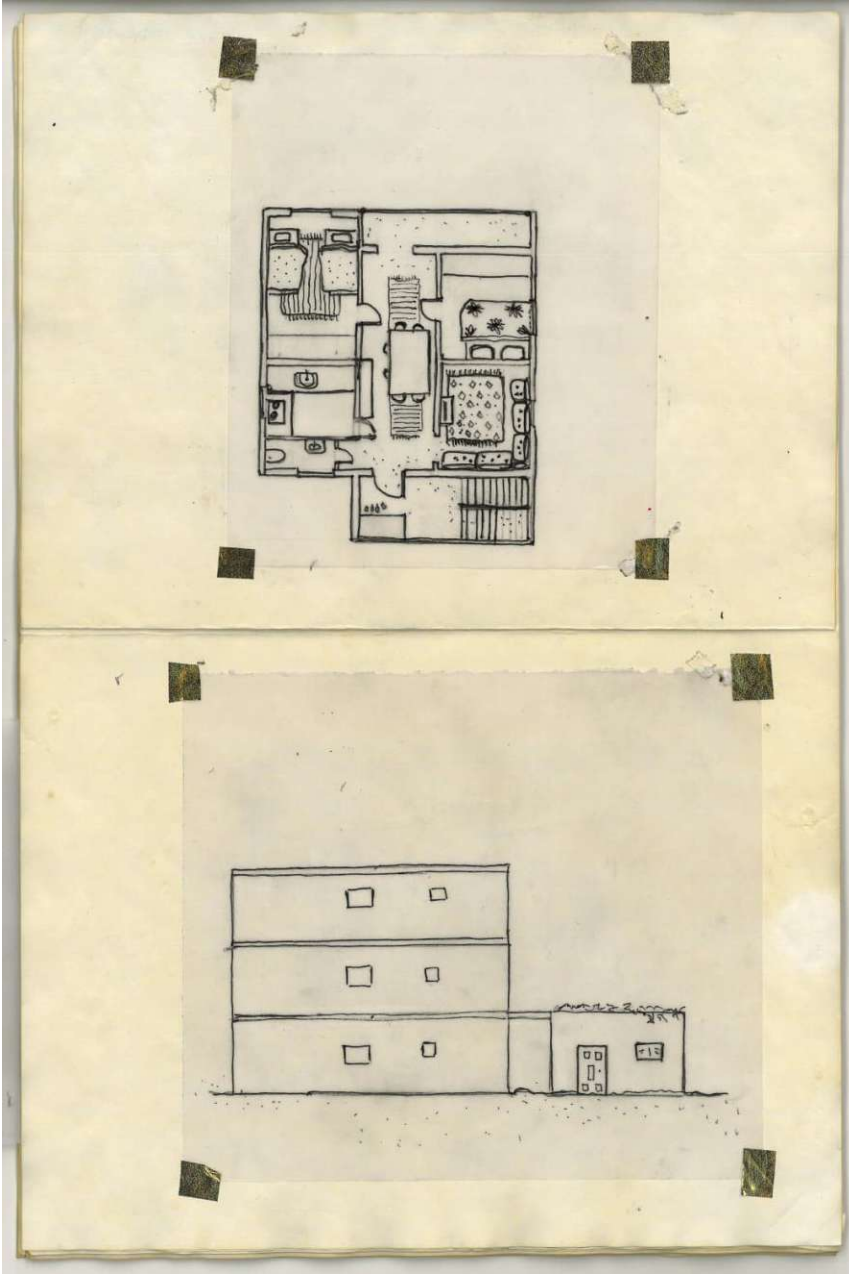




fig. 165. composition of old and new,
Mustafa's generation house

the old *fallah* house is still attached to the new
generation-building



The parents live in the old farmhouse. The eldest sister on the ground floor. The second oldest on the 1st floor and Mustafa on the 2nd floor. Each floor associates the room as a living unit. The staircase forms a storage area for shoes in front of the entrance door. Entering the apartment, you find yourself in a corridor-like space that extends to the end of the apartment and groups all the rooms around it. The first room you pass is the guest room.

The floor is covered with an oriental carpet and equipped with an Ada Arabia. On the wall there is a television.

In the middle of the *sala*, there is a dining table with a "niche" behind it. The niche is a glazed box in which the most valuable dishes are displayed, "incredibly expensive and rarely if ever, used" (Interview, Mustafa). Opposite the *sala*, there is a fully equipped kitchen with adjoining bathroom. Continuing down the *sala*, on the left is the children's room. On the other side, opposite, the bedroom, made of a uniform furniture consisting of wardrobe and bed, as well as small box. The children's room is located at the end of the corridor, and thus at the end of the apartment, you get to the balcony. Similar to the traditional farmhouse, the apartment is closed with a solitary room, which used to be a stable, but is now a balcony. Differently, however, the function of the *mastaba* has now acquired.

EXAMPLES of Type IV

Type IV.1

pigeon tower/ *burj al-hamam* [برج حمام]

fig. 166. pigeon tower in Tunis Village



In Tunis Village, in addition to the typical dwellings, a number of unique traditional architecture can be found. From hotel facilities to the pigeon tower. These buildings represent an example of architecture that is in harmony with its surroundings.

In Egypt, the Egyptian pigeon is known as a delicacy, somewhat more fragile and smaller in species than those city pigeons from Europe. Originally from the mountains of the regions, the pigeons have been domesticated and bred for decades. The breeding of the pigeons takes place in the so-called "*burj al-hamam*", pigeon tower. Due to their simple breeding and their large number, the towers have become a major landmark in Egypt. True to their name, the towers can always be seen from afar through their magnificent dotted openings and protruding branches. Whether in the city or on the countryside, they are found everywhere and adapt their form to their surroundings.

Depending on the region, Delta or Upper Egypt, or even the urban regions, their form differs according to the region.

fig. 167. research sketch: floor plan and front view of the pigeon tower

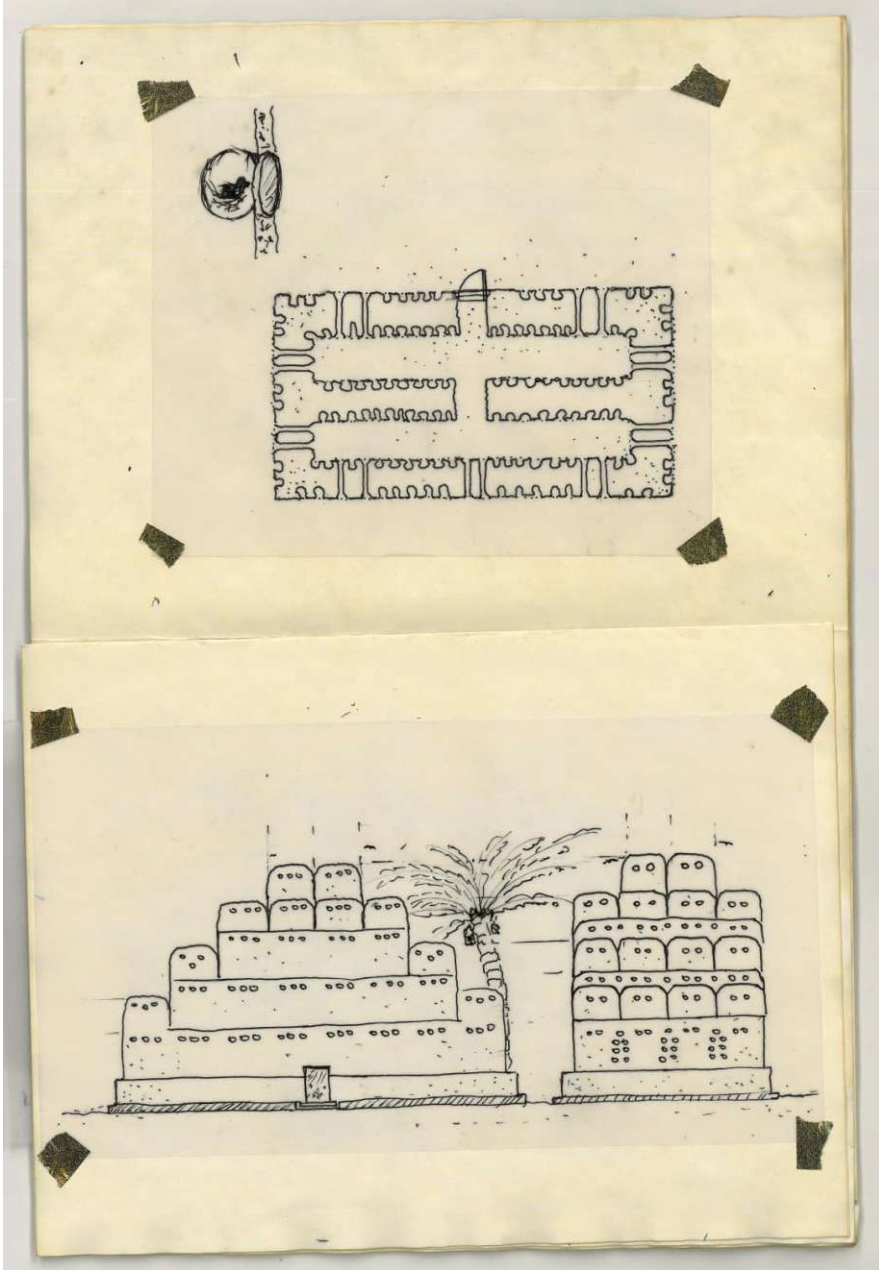




fig. 168. pigeon nest, pigeon tower

as a nest or in this case a house for the pigeon serves here the traditional ollas. Some of them are open from both sides (inside and outside) and serve as passage for the pigeons.



fig. 169. construction of the pigeon tower

construction of the tower is usually made of *touf*, wooden beams and *ollas*. The walls, as well as the corridors, measure approximately 0.60m in width.

In Tunis Village and around the region, the shape is like a stepped pyramid. As one of the only surviving traditional towers in the village, the largest pigeon tower in the region is located within Evelyn's property. Standing on a pedestal, the tower resembles the shape of the Saqqara pyramid. With increasing height, the broad side moves inwards by a certain distance. The length of the tower remains unchanged. Each step is defined by a certain number of rectangles, which decreases with the height. In the first two step areas, there are 8 rectangles on the long side and 4 on the wide side. While the wide side remains the same number of rectangles, along the long side, with each next incoming step, 1 rectangle is subtracted at each corner. As a result, the wide side moves inwards, always by a distance, and the tower gradually narrows towards the top. Only the top area, and thus the top of the tower, consists of 2 rectangles in both length and width, and is thus completed with 4 shapes set at the top.

Each rectangle is provided with a certain number of openings above each stands branches continuously along the entire façade. The openings serve as entrances for the pigeons into the tower. On the branches, the birds can rest during the day under the rays of the sun. The openings are made of a long tube of burnt clay, which is open from both ends, and serves as a door for the pigeons.

Entering the pigeon tower, at first glance it looks like a labyrinth inside the pyramid. On closer observation, the strict symmetry of the exterior can also be found in the interior. From the external rectangles, every second one serves as the passage of the people and every other one as the house of the pigeons. This creates a uniformly symmetrical division, which allows a uniform use of the interior structure.

The openings visible from the outside, serve in the interior not only as a gateway for the birds, but also for the entrance of light into the interior. Between the openings, the rest of the wall area of the rectangles inside is filled by *ollas*, which serve as a sleeping space and nest for the pigeons.

The entire structure is made of the construction of the *touf*, which is held in the interior by the branches that project outward.

Type IV.2

Fayoum Pottery School

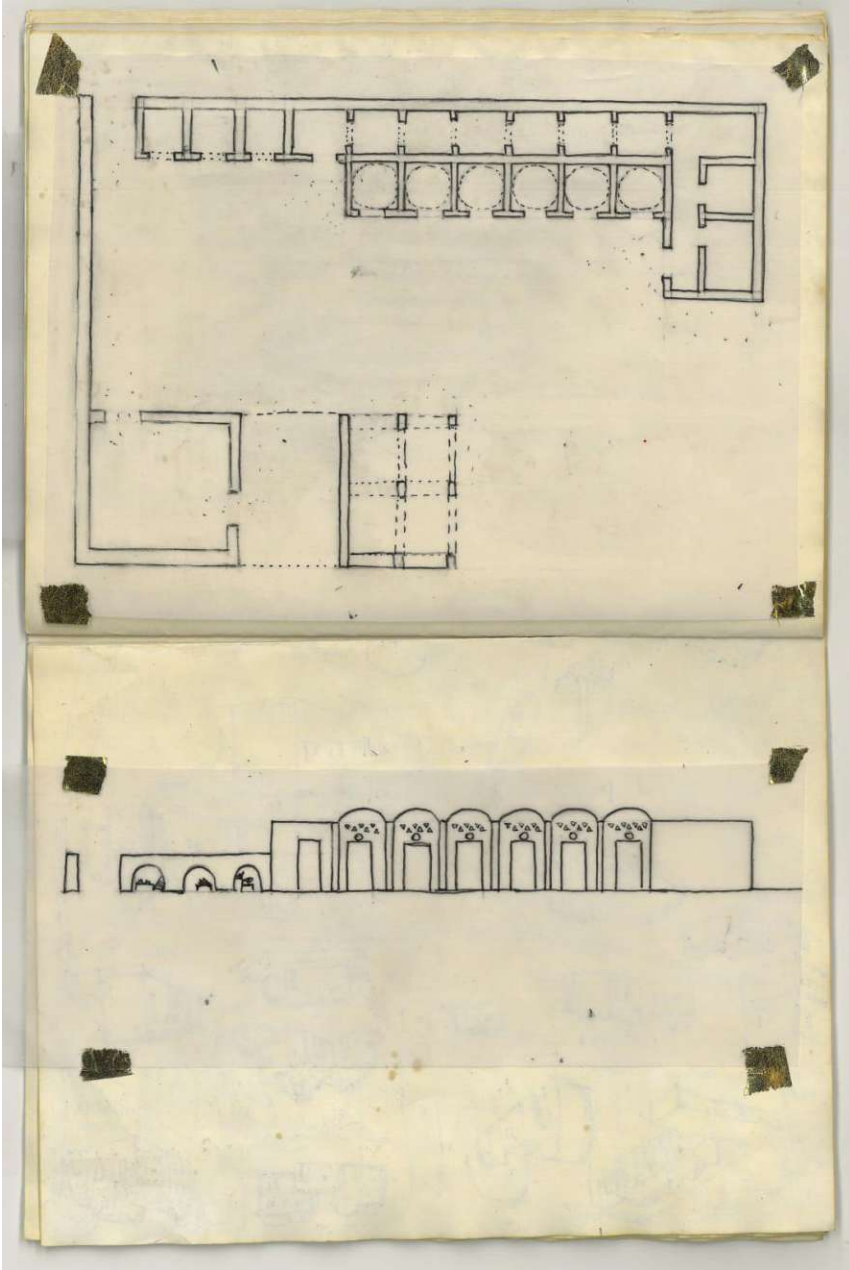
fig. 170. *fallaha* in traditional clothing in front of entrance of the Fayoum Pottery School



Most of the information of the pottery school's building were derived out of conversations with pottery artists working at the school, and the bawab.

After Evelyn's return with her second husband Michel, she decided to establish a Pottery School to manifest the spirit of the new ceramic generation. On the same property as her own house, she had in the 1960s, according to some villagers, the concept of the school which was designed by her husband Michel Pastore and her friend Hassan Fathy. Hassan Fathy, however, has never personally visited the village and has taken the necessary information through photographs and his then sent construction work from Aswan in the village.

fig. 171. research sketch, floor plan and front view of the Fayoum Pottery School



The entire complex of the school was built from clay target. The bricks were mixed here from mud from Aswan and the addition of straw and pebbles. The exterior of the school looks like a fortress in its shape. Two front entrances and exits stand by their height like fortress columns which are connected by a long drawn fortress wall. The first entrance serves as the school entrance. The second served as a private entrance to their house. The entrances are protected, by wide wooden gates made of massive with openings as patterns, perforated doors.

In the tunnel of the vault, on the left side, there is an entrance to the pottery store, where the produced art is sold. The right wall of the vault is opened by two arcades to the courtyard area of the school. The courtyard builds the central and forms a gathering point, as well as a sales area for the artists. Opposite the entrance area is a longitudinal building that forms the main area of the school. The first part consists of a somewhat low section of vaults and serves as a storage area for materials and equipment. Next to it is a building complex about 2 meters in height. The building can be divided into two individual sections by length. In the front area locates the individual studios of the artists. Each studio forms a separate unit and has a domed roof. The back part is connected with the storage area and forms the production hall. The entire length of the hall is open to each other through arcade openings. In the first part there are two basins for the production of clay.. Next to them are shelves for the various stages of work such as drying, coating, firing and painting. In the last part of the long building there are two ceramic ovens. Through a side door of the room, around the corner, you pass the washroom and eventually to the exit. Next to it is a building complex about 2 meters in height. The building can be divided into two individual sections by length. In the front area locates the individual studios of the artists. Each studio forms a separate unit and has a domed roof.

The back part is connected with the storage area and forms the production hall. The entire length of the hall is open to each other through arcade openings. In the first part there are two basins for the production of clay. Next to them are shelves for the various stages of work such as drying, coating, firing and painting. In the last part of the long building there are two ceramic ovens. Through a side door of the room, around the corner, you pass the washroom and eventually to the exit. Around the courtyard, as a separate construction, are two more additional houses built, which serve as a kitchen and office. The surrounding space is shaded by many niches as rest areas by a large number of palm trees. A little to the side there is a sandbox for the youngest generation of ceramic artists. Wherever you look, you can see the children of the village playing with sand and making their first attempts at the manual ceramic machines.

fig. 172.
Palmbenches,
Fayoum Pottery
School

Palm trunks are used
as benches for sitting
areas



fig. 173. Nubian
vaults as entrance
gate, Fayoum
Pottery School

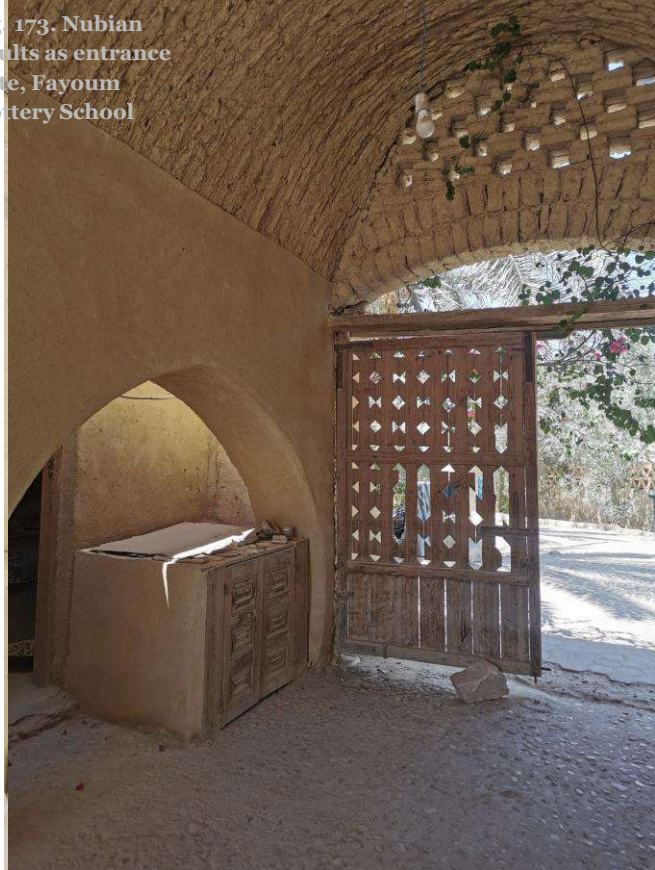


fig. 174.
pottery artists,
Fayoum
Pottery School





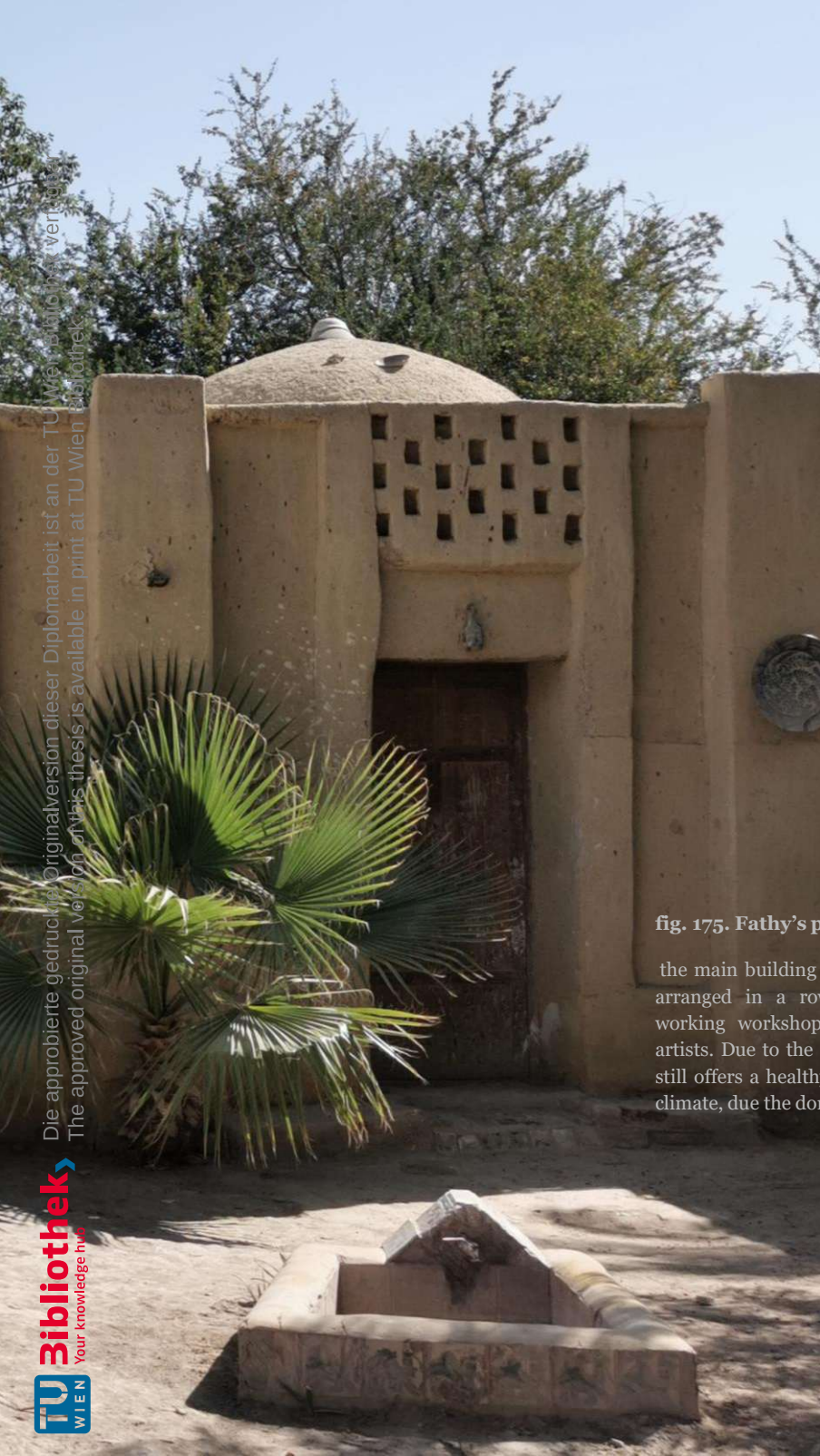


fig. 175. Fathy's pottery working areas

the main building is formed by 5 small rooms arranged in a row. These each serve as a working workshop for the advanced pottery artists. Due to the small dimensions the rooms still offers a healthy and well ventilated indoor climate, due the domes.

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fig. 176 – 178. youngest pottery-generation playing at the Pottery School



fig. 179. toys on the ground of the Pottery School

Type IV.3

Zad el MUSAfer Ecolodge

Interview: Abd el Baser

Age: 24

Nationality: Egyptian – from Tunis Village

Profession: student

Reference: son of the today's owner

Place of the Interview: walking through the ecolodge

Date: 01.09.2022

fig. 180. Zad el MUSAfer complex



In Tunis Village, some of the architecture can be seen as a After Abdulla Gubear, a writer from Cairo, decided to build a house in Tunis Village in the 1980s, the idea of a simple lodging came to him through the many visits of his friends from Cairo. The original idea was to build a simple hut [*ashas*] and serve as a hostel for his traveling friends. The name "Zad el MUSAfer", which means "place of travellers", refers back to the name of an old traditional mountain hut of travellers, that had been part of the Egyptian culture for years. Due to the great demand with the growing tourism in the village, the property was expanded from former small huts by adding hotel rooms. In the meantime, Gubear has sold his Ecolodge to the Abd el Baser family, who have increasingly altered the original property with further additions. The original parts of the lodge are still partly preserved today, and are quite popular especially with foreign tourists.

The present hotel area can therefore be divided into 3 groups of buildings: the original lodge part. The subsequent hotel rooms. And the present new building:



fig. 181. chalets construction, Zad el Musafer

at some parts of the walls, the construction can still be seen.



fig. 182. original chaltres, Zad el Musafer

fig. 183. amorphous walls, Zad el Musafer

In front of new brick constructions



The cabins [*ashas*]

Gubear's idea was based on simplicity and tradition. He borrowed regional materials as well as traditional-regional building technique of the *touf*. The walls were gradually made of wooden beams, which were provided with an external net on the outer parts and filled with any material such as sand, pebbles or straw. Then the facade was covered with clay plaster from the inside and outside. Due to the free moulding, the interior walls are amorphous and on the exterior facade the shape of the wooden beams is visible. The roof is designed as a flat roof and consists of dark wooden beams on which a layer of palm fronds was placed from the outside. The furniture was made of stone built into the structure and furnished with Kilim, Ada Arabia, or Bamboo cabinets. *ollas* can also be found as decorative elements in some rooms.

Hotel room and villa

With the expansion of the facilities, a 2-story hotel area was added. Like a separate section, two building elements are connected by a wooden enclosed Islamic bridge structure with a sloping roof. A pool was built under the bridge structure, which was surrounded by a wall. The hotel room structure consists of a mixed construction of bricks and adobe, which were plastered with clay. In each room, a wooden hinged roof staircase leads to a private terrace area overlooking part of the large grounds and the lake.

Both the cottages and the hotel grounds were decorated with hand drawings, which were pressed in with fingers while the clay plaster was still wet. In addition, the hotel area was completed by building a villa in the *dabsch* construction. The villa leans on the domes of the intellectuals of the village and the design is oriented to the Islamic-Oriental architecture. Along the facade a mastaba was built, which is covered with Kilim. The interior is furnished with different ancient and oriental elements. The upper floor contains a modification of the *mashrabiya* and is decorated with antique oriental carpets. The exterior of the villa, on the other hand, has a rural feel. A fellah-oven and olla along the path represent the village. The villa somehow forms a composite of the entire built environment and combines Islamic architecture, with rural traditional as well as rural new architecture.

New construction

After the purchase, the once simple mud houses were extended by high and massive stone and brick buildings with domed roofs. Some huts were demolished, as well as partial areas such as a Bedouin corner with *canope* was replaced by an arcaded courtyard built of brick with a sitting area. According to the owners, it is still unclear what will happen to the old original huts.



fig. 184. illustrations, Zad el Musafer

at some part the construction can be seen. Before drying the clay, the walls were engraved with childlike drawings.



fig. 185. story telling walls, Zad el Musafer

fig. 186. the red veil, Zad el Musafer

Arabic-Islamic elements can be found throughout the interior. In contrast to rural furniture, the focus lays on high seating areas and lots of fabric.



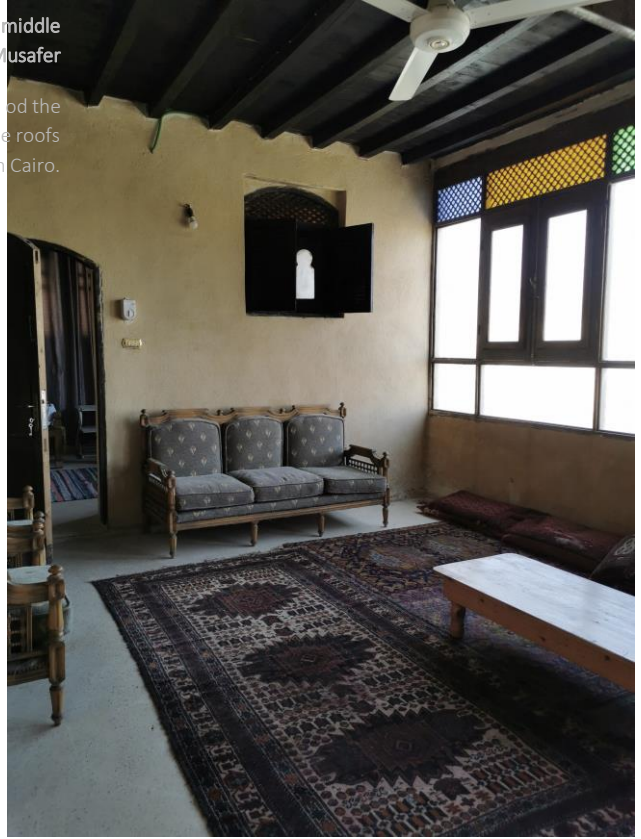


fig. 188. Arabic *mastaba*, at the Villa, Zad el Musafer

Arabic seating elements on a *mastaba* outside the villa

fig. 187. Islamic Villa in the middle of the village, Zad el Musafer

The villa has elements of the Islamic architecture, even the roofs are from Cairo.



Chapter 4

recap

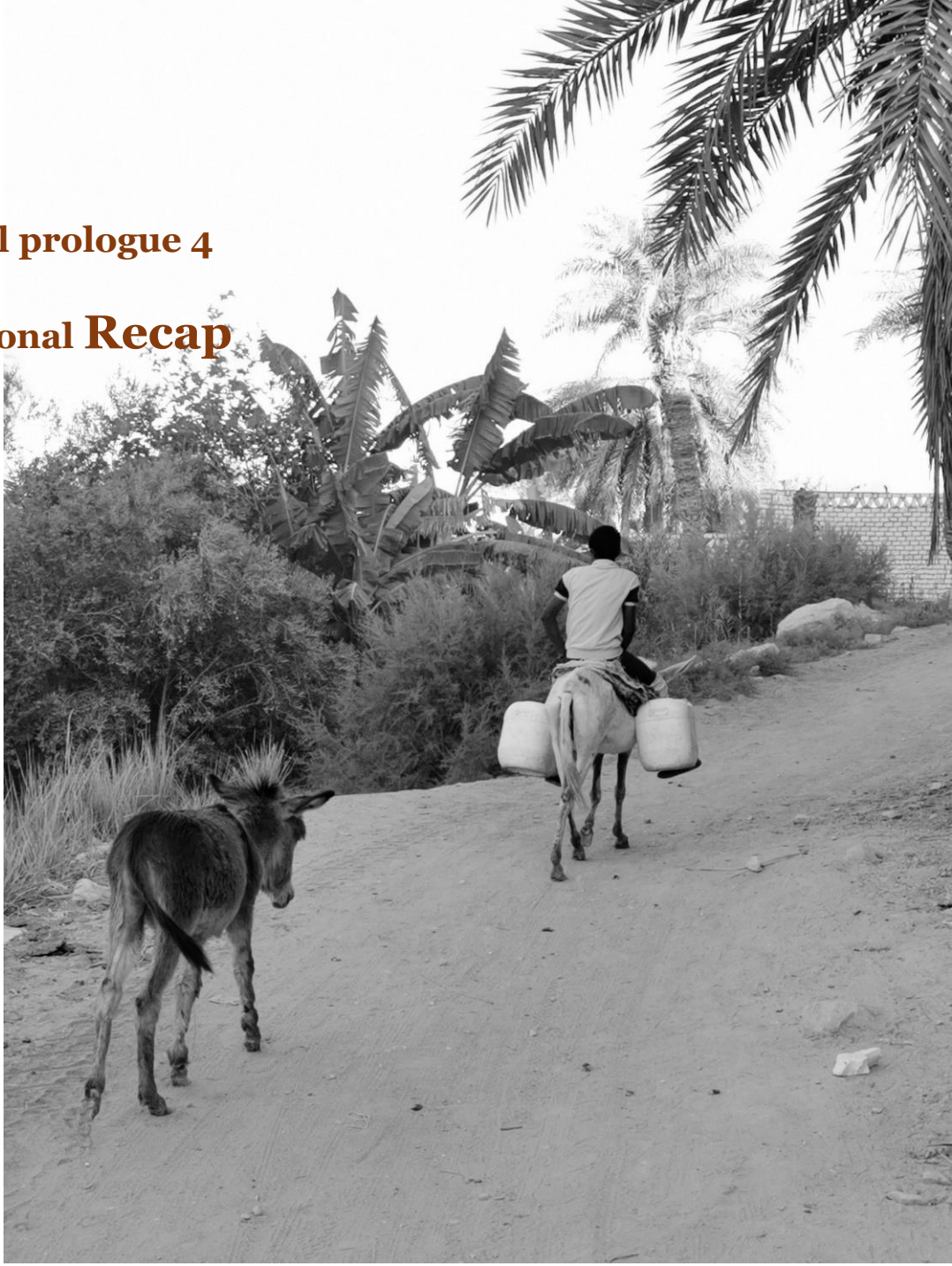
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personal prologue 4

my personal Recap

fig. 189. end of a working day: boy riding a donkey on his way back home after



my personal **RECAP**

Parents tend to give us advise, no matter what the stage we find ourselves in. Growing up, I understood that identity is a complex of many different aspects. That there are collective and individual parts of an identity. And that it is totally fine to struggle within the self-finding process. As much the definition on identity can change throughout different life stages, the individual always tend to shape himself around his surroundings. Especially in today' society, where we are put in front many obstacles regard culture and tradition. And as a person who doesn't want to lose its roots it is even more important to value cultural identity.

My mother, sometimes confused of how much I want to know my "real" heritage, always advised me, that no matter what is happening, I will always have my roots in Egypt. By saying that she meant family. And with family she meant home. A home I could always return to, regardless of what stage I will find myself in.

So growing up, I realised identity has a lot to do with location and the built environment. As a prospective architecture student at the time, this intrigued me even more. With that came the realization that architecture can not only have a positive effect on us, but can also strongly deform us. When I look back at Egypt today, it is no longer the country I once knew from my childhood memories. Everything has become dense, the individual structures broken up and traditional historical things are simply no longer visible. Everything that was remarkable of the country as a child suddenly disappeared from one day to the next, or at least that's how it felt. The saddest realization was that the people and their ideologies also changed. Culture was suddenly considered outdated and unfashionable. And the older generation, namely those of my grandparents, were the mainstays of a tradition-conscious environment. At the same time, there is a certain nostalgia that often raises the question of whether everything was better in the past, or whether we as human beings simply become wittier with age and no longer see the world through rose-colored glasses.

From my mother's conversations, it was always clear in the end how hard she tried to find a middle way between the Egyptian tradition she knew and grew up with and the "new" Austrian culture she got introduced to as an adult. In the process, there was a constant absorption and release of certain elements to enable an adaptation in society. This process of the connection and bonding of different identities and traditions should not be overlooked at the identity process. Certain elements can be carried forward and adopted, while possibly elements that are considered unfashionable or unsuitable for today's society, although not completely discarded, may need to be further developed and reformed. Through this constant exchange and dialogue between the known and the unknown, a unity can emerge in the core, which can embed into the environment.

Chapter 4

Recap Tunis Village

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS ABOUT BUILT IDENTITY AND THE IDEOLOGY: FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE PRESENT DAY

With a review of the architectural ideologies presented in the course of the work and the building tradition associated with them, it is possible to look at the current discussion of an identity-creating architecture. The issue of identity in the web of designed and newly constructed ideologies was represented by different historical periods - ancient times - Islamic era - modern times - modernity. The historical course of an architectural design and its temporal and structural changes has become a reflection of the social polemics within the country, as well as of the related question of how to deal with identity and built heritage. Architecture stands here as the most representative expression of a new ideology. This can also be seen in the architecture within Egypt, which is constantly being adapted to different cultural affiliations. Sometimes Islamic architecture is used, then again ancient influenced architecture stand in the spotlight, followed by a modern Western architecture to counteract it. Due to a weakened sense of belonging, in the case of the Egyptian - torn between individual continents and ethnic ideologies - the people of the country are easily attacked and influenced. With the focus on the city, which forms a pot of different heterogeneous masses and remains as such, the rural area in particular has remained for a long time as a homogeneous mass within globalization. In the process, the fellah house is being severely tested in today's modern society, and in this process, familiar tradition and culture are also in danger of losing themselves:

Because the *fellah's* individuality within the heterogeneous urban mixture, is identified here with backwardness, since it is not equal to the mindset of the broad masses or intellectual class. While the urban social class is constantly trying to realize new ideologies or forms of construction, the peasant can be seen until today to remain in his old lifestyle. In the case of Tunis Village, this can be seen through the dome ideology, which is not primarily about dome construction as such, but rather about representation of a certain intellectual knowledge that can only be found in a certain social circle. Here, the dome merely symbolizes the success of a collective. Often, in the realization of a built identity or identity-creating architecture, the hidden agenda of a regionality and the accompanying genius loci is forgotten. Despite this aversion to the simple *fellah* house, historically this very typology of house in its form turns out to be the uniqueness of a summary of different building traditions of Egypt. Because with all the traditional and historical features from past eras, within the *fellah* house many features and conclusions can be drawn from other formative periods. And so current tendencies can be clearly drawn to the different historical and cultural ideologies from the past years and centuries. The traditional *fellah* builds his houses borrowed from his ancestors of the ancient world: his house is kept in a simple orthogonal shape and built from regional building materials. Thereby the living space is a reflection of the simple lifestyle of



fig. 190. staircase to nature, Sara's House

Clay or in general adobe architecture has emerged as a symbol of rich and intellectual architecture. The pleasant and soft shade of clay, symbolizes for many city inhabitants the relationship with nature and simplicity.

the farmer, which also the ancient ancestors used to cherish. The ancient *mastaba*, once a building that stood for the symbolic eternity of a high ranked person, is now found as a contemporary form of a robust, stone-built, longitudinal bench. Not only a definition of the term can be inferred, where the word *mastaba* is derived from the Arabic word *taba* - layer - and thus the layers for a bench are implied. But also the symbolic power of an important place within the house, which can be understood for a gathering and for staying of familiar people. Spatial structures within the house in particular have been interpreted from Islamic architecture. The status of the family as the foundation of a house, the separation of genders when visiting, small-narrow streets and the separation of private and semi-public are inferred by many *fallahs* from Tunis Village to the religion and the way of life that goes with it.

Although the *fellah* house is an architectural and period masterpiece of gathering of various eras, it is considered "backward" by the intellectuals or even the social middle and upper classes. Because of this dislike, which now comes from the urban population, an urban modern building idea has also taken root within the rural village community. Elements of culture and tradition are put aside and aspiring the modern urban space. Thereby the *fellah* finds himself in a marathon, in which he constantly tries to translate new constructional approaches from the city miserably into his village structure and lifestyle. As a result, 3-story apartment buildings were built, detached from the natural environment of the village and its socio-cultural environment. This new rural architecture, as well as the distance from culture and tradition, affects the identity of the *fallahen*, where he suddenly finds himself, like the urban citizen, in a mixture of different ideologies. Compared to the example of Fathy's New Gourn, a socio-cultural similarity can be witnessed within the departure of a traditional architecture. This is because both villages are trying to adapt to new urban values. They strive for a certain urban prosperity architecture, where they do not want to be seen as backward from the outside. In doing so, they encounter the conflict of a strictly traditional way of life and value system, where the imitative translation from urban architecture does not seem to work.

Also the situation of both villages regarding the approach to the dome ideology shows a certain problematic. Indeed, in both cases, the *fallahen* tend to prefer the urban type of vertical dwelling to that of a domed house. Although there is an acceptance of the construction within their rural community on the part of the Tunis residents, they don't consider it as their own living space. The residents in New Gourn, on the other hand, would have accepted the domed houses as living space in general, but had no understanding and appreciation for the architecture. Thus, both villages have fundamentally different cultural and traditional reasons for rejection, but in both cases they draw on traditional value systems and an understanding. Although the two villages are culturally and geographically distant from each other, the village changes show that in both cases the formal desires of the

fallahen were not directly addressed, rather the new ideology of architecture was based only on the desire and hope of "new" or "other" people from outside. This rejection of an architectural vernacular architecture, automatically generates - so it seems to be the case - among the *fallahen* a certain aversion to a building ideology that takes no account of their own traditional architecture. This is because it is indirectly implied to them that their traditional building language would not be suitable to the modern world, and that the new architecture which is brought in to them must 'exemplify' a certain life for them. But indeed, the *fallah* does not need a better lifestyle, but a better living situation, which goes hand in hand with economic and financial problems. In many cases from Tunis Village, it was clear from the *fallahen* that they prefer and want to keep their old traditional low-rise construction. All *fallahs* interviewed (about 15 people) do not want to move away from their traditional architecture, but feel forced to adapt to urban ideologies and norms due to the strong urban encroachment within their region. Fathy's approach to his pilot project was not immediately wrong either. After all, he leaned toward the *fallah* tradition and living situation. But the compulsive living within a life strongly reduced to culture and tradition was again too outdated for today's society. For even the *fallah*, despite his strong ties to tradition and the surrounding countryside, is developing enormously rapidly from a socio-cultural point of view. Due to the rapprochement of rural regions to urban structures and the aspiration of a certain prosperity architecture, the *fallah* does not want to experience a pre-lived building ideology, but an architecture adapted to his situation and the modern world.

IDENTITY-CREATING ARCHITECTURE IN COMPARISON

Despite the structural changes that the village and its community have undergone within the last 60 years, certain elements continue to be pulled along for cultural and traditional purposes. It is interesting to see how elements that create identity are used differently within the living space. While among the *fallahs* all elements serve traditional and cultural purposes, among the intellectuals the elements are used for decorative purposes. In this case, it is more about a staging as well as romanticization of culture and tradition, and less about an appreciation and living out of these.

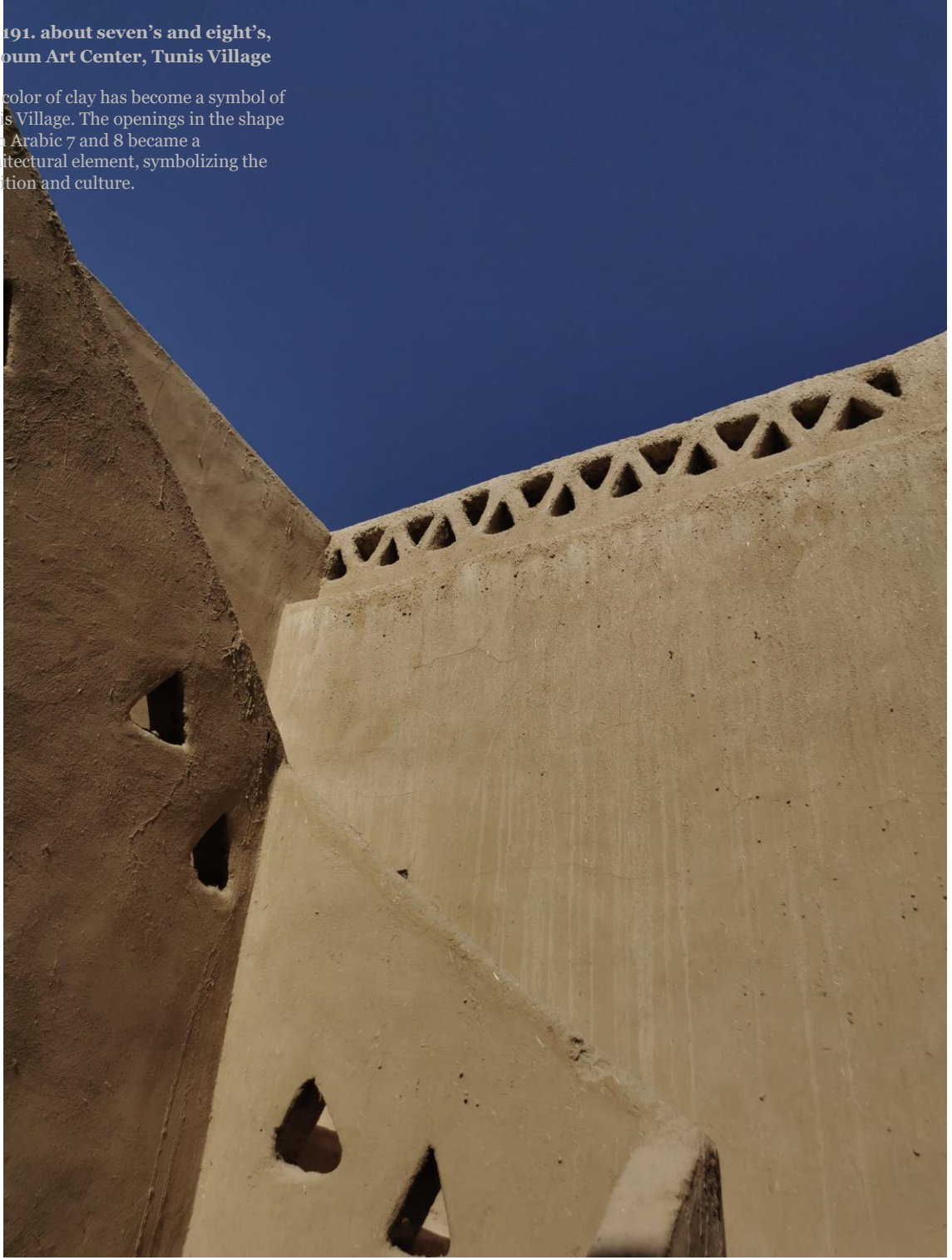
In *fallah's* house furnishing element serve functional use. The furniture is simple and serves its purpose. Moreover, everything that is exposed does not belong to just one person, or one family, rather it is at available the whole village. Here, in general, the theory applies: 'What is yours, is mine.' The basic pattern of the house is based on the foundation of the establishment of a family. Thereby, an ideology of an excellent family can be seen here, which form the pilasters of the house. Thus, the house implies the success of a family foundation. Depending on the needs, the house constantly evolves and tells the course of development of the family.

The villas [*dar*] of the intellectuals, on the other hand, are fundamentally about the representation of the self. Success and intellect need to be reflected in the form and construction of the house. The furnishing elements consist of family inheritance or have a high historical value. The interior construction of the house is based on the value systems of a self-realization. Depending on the needs, there are individual rooms to which certain functions such as work or reception are assigned. Here the individual functions do not mix into each other as in the *fallah* house, but carry only one use assigned to them.

As a result, it can be spoken of as a kind of "individual institution" of the intellectuals versus a "collective institution" of the *fallahs*. Identity-based architecture provides an overview of those elements of the people and their built environment, as well as the accompanying culture, through which users identify and feel bound to. From this, a new ideology and architecture can be realized that is adjusted to the user and his or her identity. In this way, in addition to the planner and those affected, the role of architecture within a community is simultaneously questioned and held accountable.

**fig. 191. about seven's and eight's,
Fayoum Art Center, Tunis Village**

The color of clay has become a symbol of Tunis Village. The openings in the shape of an Arabic 7 and 8 became a architectural element, symbolizing the tradition and culture.



ARCHITECTURE OF THE RICH

In contrast to Fathy's pilot project in New Gurna, there was some acceptance of the dome buildings by the rural population in Tunis Village. Nevertheless, still a clear division can be seen between the rural population (us) and the new urban population (the others) in the village. The *fallahs* accept the domes visually within the village structure, but still avoid living in them themselves. "Domes are reminiscent of the tombs architecture of the pharaohs. Why would I want to lie under them while I am alive." explains Haj Ahmed. (Interview, Haj Ahmed)

While for the *fallahs* the dome is emblematic of death architecture, for the urban intellectual community it is emblematic of sustainable and regional progress, which carries a certain romanticized idea of a rural life. Nevertheless, the value of clay as a building material is interesting. In some countries, it is considered a backward building material, used primarily - and so did Fathy hope in his rural ideology - as a building material of the poor. In Tunis Village, on the other hand, it is marketed as the building material of the rich and elite, which is why we can speak here of a transformation of Fathy's dome ideology and thus introduce the idea of mud architecture as "architecture for the rich". The domes have developed, therefore, significantly as architecture for the rich, to which the native inhabitants, with the exception of the *banaa*, have little or no connection. In doing so, a certain appropriation emerges of the architecture formally intended for a specific social group, which is now stolen by the 'rich man'. This symbolic interpretation of an unequal social group is also reflected within the language of construction. While the domed buildings appear massive in form yet singular, they immensely overpower the traditional *fellah* houses in the rural built environment - even though the *fellah* house outnumbers the domed buildings they appear weaker and more sensitive in their appearance. With the addition of the third building structure of reinforced concrete residential buildings, the residential buildings tower are taller and overtop the massive domed buildings in height, but still appear much more fragile and unstable than the domed buildings. Theoretically, through the built environment of the village, the dilemma of an entire society is shown, where the poor population is outnumbered but overshadowed by the robust upper class through a certain intellect and a dominant mode of expression. In the village of Tunis, this can additionally be seen primarily through marketing within tourism. Here, while the village is marketed namely as a 'traditional peasant village' with progressive rural society, it is represented at the same moment by the domed-architecture of the rich and intellectuals. Thus, the dome ideology is no longer part of the context of a rural architecture, but rather finds itself in the context of a partly propagandistic and representative architecture of a socially high-ranking and identity-conscious Egyptian society. And although Fathy's ideology was originally conceived for the rural poor, it is primarily Egypt's intellectual and elite class that has adopted the building language and seemingly just hopped on the bandwagon of a new trend.



fig. 192. Fayoum Art Center, Tunis Village

Today it has been transformed into a museum, and as a cultural public venue, provides a meeting place for culture and art lovers.

Social behavior towards an authentic vernacular architecture

Between Fathy's dome ideology and today, there is an intervening period of about 50 years. Since then, the ideology around rural and traditional architecture has settled within the society. Young architects, or even those generations influenced from Fathy's lifetime such as architect Dr. Adel Fahmy, have been inspired by the regionality and sustainability of the dome ideology. But not only can a tendency to traditional architecture be seen on the part of the architects, but also within the economic sector there is an increasing focus on vernacular architecture and its symbolism of culture.

It is interesting to look at the embodiment of vernacular architecture in the modern society. In Egypt, there is currently a certain trend going on and demand for vernacular architecture with its focus on Nubian domes and vaults. Thereby one sees the original building tradition from Upper Egypt suddenly migrate to Cairo up to the Sinai Peninsula of the Bedouins. This fascination encounters the question of whether the urge for vernacular architecture is only exploited for representative purposes in order to represent an identity-conscious and culturally marked Egypt on the one hand. Or, for example, to present tourists with a transfigured and romanticized image of a mystical and oriental Egypt. Felicia Clark shapes this phenomenon as a question of whether "this is the result of a vogue for indigenous styling or springs from an in-depth appreciation of Fathy's convictions." (Clark, 1980: 189)

The sudden desire for tradition from "urbanites" is somehow intriguing, because many of them seem to be longing for something they have never been a part of, let alone had any reference to. As in the case of Tunis Village, the desire for domed buildings came not from the *fallahs*, but from an intellectual social upper class from urban Cairo. The analyzed buildings that follow Fathy's dome ideology in Tunis are all inhabited by temporary residents from the city. They are either used as vacation homes or partly rented out to tourists. In other words, the domed buildings are inhabitant from an urban collective that wanted to build a new oasis not far from the city of Cairo. Although the arrival of the dome ideology had a positive socio-economic impact on the poor *fallahen*, the new ideology does not take any account of the socio-historical aspect of the village and renounces on principle of the genius loci. And just as it was in case of New Gournia, a certain architecture was relocated from one region to another. This form of relocation of traditional architecture seems to be becoming more and more of a trend and vernacular architecture is being mindlessly used everywhere without any regard to regional cultural and traditional architectural language. This form of romanticized desire also often meets the question of authenticity of a rural and regional architecture. Attention must be paid to whether the architecture leans purely visually or also formally follows the principles of sustainable, rural and tradition-conscious architecture.

In the course of the field research, a large number of houses were visited as well as their residents interviewed. An interesting finding showed that of the approximately 20 interviewed homeowners with a domed house design, half had their houses built of a building material other than clay. To the question "why not clay?", often came the answer of the clay-associated incoming annual preservation, as well as the inexpensive manufactured brick. Though why the residents of the domed houses could be divided into two groups. The first group came from the first generation of intellectuals who voluntarily settled in Tunis Village. They were all well aware of Fathy's ideology, and through a close friendship with Fathy himself, attention was paid not only to the external form, but also to the regional and natural building material, clay. Within the village, a somehow a cult of intellectuals from Cairo developed as a result, who attempted to recreate Fathy's failed pilot project of New Gourna, in Tunis Village.

The second group is formed by those urbanites who are the result of regional tourism. About 20 years ago, the village experienced a second major turnaround with a new arrival of new residents. This has transformed the village from an urban idyll of Cairo's intellectual scene, to a regional electoral destination and weekend getaway for the urbanite. This tourism shift required a variety of accommodations. As a result, a number of domed buildings have emerged that visually follow Fathy's dome ideology, but are conceptually built of brick or concrete. The question of an authenticity is interpreted here with a falsification and initiation of an intentional and romanticized building language, which is not based on ideological principles of a desired rural architecture, but is based on the economic branch. The second group tends to have no relationship with either Fathy or the village of Tunis, which is why there is no interest on the part of an authentic and realistic architectural form. While the first generation of intellectuals from Cairo clung to the authenticity of the building material, many newcomers, who primarily hope to achieve an economic purpose from the village and its tourism, tend to replace clay with concrete or brick, and only to adapt it visually to the surroundings by means of a clay plaster.

The importance of authenticity can be clearly explained by the essential purpose behind the migration to the rural region. Those intellectuals who had a romanticized and partially transfigured image of rural Egypt, hoped to create a certain monumental architecture, based on Fathy's ideology, through the use of clay. Profit-seeking followers, on the other hand, do not care much for about the idea of a building material and its benefits. In the main focus is purely the visual thought, in which the architecture can attract tourists and in particular does not have to prove its building material Fathy's building language, however, reaches far beyond Fayoum or Luxor. In tourist areas such as the Sinai Peninsula, domes are being added successively to hotels. This new trend of a cultural and tradition-conscious architecture can be seen as a trend that is spreading like a veil over Egypt's landscape.

fig. 193. Kid riding the bike next to a cow

The future is still open in Tunis Village, and belongs above all to the young people. The roots of the rural lifestyle should be improved, but not completely lost.



Especially young city people show a great interest in their own culture and tradition. Handicrafts, clothes or even traditional lifestyles are interpreted in an increasingly modern and contemporary way. Therefore, the desire for traditional architecture brings an advantage, even if it is partly distorted with regard to the building materials. After all, it values identity and cultural external heritage and draws attention to the importance of an essential vernacular architecture within today's western and supra-regional building language. Nevertheless, the authenticity and the interpretation of such a building language as a falsified and romanticized traditional architecture, which is presented to tourists and Egyptians eager for historical identity, must be considered negatively. In fact, it is dangerous to turn away from a regional language adapted to the region, in which the genius loci no longer plays a role. And instead of vertical urban architecture, a certain copy and paste is now developing with regard to a newly interpreted rural architecture. This trend in Egypt goes partly so far that in some hotel complexes in Sinai, which are provided with domes, only Nubian portiers are wanted in front of their entrances, in order to be able to work authentically in the sense of vernacular architecture. Authenticity, however, does not just go with an appearance, but is much more profound. Elements like material, environment and culture, up to historical approaches impregnate an authenticity.

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Perspective of a Future



fig. 194. peek through an opening

construction workers gathered around to solve a problem of the construction of the street.

Perspectives of a **FUTURE**

With growing up also comes a change of thinking. All the many visits to Egypt during my childhood were gradually analyzed and understood. What was not valued slowly found understanding in my life, which formed into acceptance, and then formed into pride. Through the pride of the rediscovered identity, the focus as a prospective architect was to capture and analyze the building heritage with the associated people and their culture as knowledge.

And when I look at my sister today, and see both of us as individuals embedded in this complex of today's society, I realize how important it is to know and understand ourselves in it. Identity is malleable. And I look at myself like a clay mass that can no longer be strongly molded, but can still be pressed into certain places. Clay is reusable. That means that the once formed mass never disappears and remains the same. It only reshapes itself. My self-discovery phase will therefore never end, and that is also fine. The acceptance of the understanding to realize a never ending process in the own life journey is a step to find oneself also with the hurdles of the future and our society.

The human being has been malleable from the beginning and will remain so. Rigidity and stagnation did not finally bring us to that forced lifestyle we have today.

Nevertheless, in order not to lose myself completely, the reference to my own culture, and that means for me - the reference to my family and my roots - serves as a firm foothold in today's fast-paced society. In this way I avoid completely losing access to myself and my own historical development. Also with getting older comes the own fascination, or in some cases the rejection, with the search for the own self and its roots. Here we can talk about a process that can also be called "adult identity", where the question of identity does not have a negative connotation, but deals with the search for origins. It is not reprehensible to want to become part of a collective that functions from the outside and to integrate oneself into modern society. But maybe it helps to keep the smallest part of an identity-forming element for oneself in order to keep a relation to its own culture and origin.

Just like architecture, identity is an ongoing process that will adapt to new contemporary problems and influences.

Chapter 5

Conclusio

Terms such as identity, tradition, ideology and culture have shaped the path within this work and self-discovery. The proximity of the individual terms, as well as their close connection to each other, shows in which conglomerate of terms the human being finds himself in relation to the built environment. As within a community, a word can be seen as an individual, but can often only be understood in the context with others - a collective of words. By introducing the topic with the ancient Egyptian term *dbt.*, the meaning and value of heritage can be traced through the derivation of the individual terms and their understanding. The collective of the individual words forms in this way the (building) heritage and the people connected within a certain cultural area.

The power as well as the role of architecture as an identity-forming element are underestimated by many. Especially in times of cultural change, such as industrialization or modernity, it is even more important to have a familiar and social-cultural environment in order not to lose oneself within a homogeneous mass. Ideologies support the idea of a certain way of life and philosophy of life. However, this is often used, as in the case of Egypt, as an instrument of power by political or socio-hierarchical forms of society to achieve their own romanticized idea of a civilized and idealized architecture-based society.

Ideology as an instrument of power for change

Egypt's history shows how present ideology can be as an instrument of power within political and social restructuring. In this context, architecture is often abused as a victim of new ideologies and is considered an essential tool of representation, which can be visually realized through the architectural language. The genius loci mentioned in the first chapter is completely set aside here. From the moment of a political ideology, architecture no longer tries to adapt to its environment, rather it simply serves to pursue new ideologies. The power of the creation of a new society, would be represented in the excerpt of the building culture of Egypt. During ancient times, the large population, mostly consisting of peasants, should be civilized. New building forms and lifestyles were intended to deform the peasant in order to make him accessible to the broad heterogeneous urban mass. During Islamic architecture, religion no longer became part of the public space, instead it invaded the way of life and its philosophy. Thus, the building structure inside became not only a private thing, but had to adapt to the mass and Islamic guidelines. In both cases, the ideology of a new society compulsively tries to form a homogeneous mass out of different groups. In the process, people lose all connection to architecture and try to serve only as part of a collective. Architecture separates itself from culture and tradition and serves only as a representative shell of an ideology. Through the separation of human beings from the built environment, the Egyptian population remains locally consistent, but is constantly reshaped by geopolitical or geographic interests within politics. In this process, the less privileged population suffers the most. Helplessly seeking to attach themselves to the majority of society in order to be

recognized as part of it. The constant exchange between identity and ideology ultimately leads to a debate within the Egyptian population, which nowadays is increasingly turning away from any prescribed ideologies -be they Arab, Islamic or even North African- and wants to refocus on Egyptian identity. Culture passes through generations by inheritance of knowledge, it is even more interesting how deeply-rooted and long-lasting traditions and its associated ideology can be drawn up to this day into the lifestyle of Egyptians society.

Example Tunis Village: The situation of the *fallah* [peasants] and population within a village.

The assumption that architecture is in a constant state of change due to new ideologies, and that people change with it, can also be found in the case of the current situation of Tunis Village in the Fayoum Oasis. Most of the *fallahs* are currently caught between tradition and progress. For many, the question of their own existence within the grown society arises. The otherwise quite traditional *fallah* feels displaced in his cultural attitude towards life due to the invasion of new values of life. Urbanization, the supra-local language of forms, as well as the newly introduced dome-ideology suppress the traditional image and allows new structures and lifeforms to arise. In this process, some *fallahs* find themselves in the urge to wanting to be understood as part of a whole – the collective. This forces many to turn towards the need for change and transformation and abandon familiar forms and value systems. Through the new rural ideology, inspired by Fathy and implemented by the intellectual scene of Cairo, new attitudes towards life were introduced into the village. Suddenly the peasant was expected to reinvent himself and at the same time deform his built environment. With the arrival of the intellectuals came the arrival of the domes. In this context, the construction of domes is in conflict between a romanticized idea of a rural architecture and a traditional cultural carrier. Although the dome buildings were not part of Tunis Village's building tradition, they were nevertheless accepted and embraced amongst the population. However, the new architecture is only accepted as part of the built environment, and the *fallah* himself still has a certain amount of disapproval towards it. Indeed, the domed buildings are too reminiscent of ancient tomb architecture, from which the *fallahs* wish to distance himself. This goes back to a deep-rooted cultural mentality, in which death is indeed accepted as part of life, but by sleeping under a dome, people do not want to provoke death and the afterlife and thereby put it to the test. As a result, the *fallah* accepted the construction itself, as well as the adoption of the construction method, but did not necessarily want to see the construction as part of himself, and despite the new construction ideology and the strong new social influence, keeps his distance and holds on to his old value systems that go hand in hand with culture and tradition. The acceptance of a new dome ideology, therefore, has not necessarily led to a personal acceptance within the village society, but rather implies the acceptance of socio-cultural changes brought about by globalization and modernity.

from the rest of the population. Despite the attempted integration of both groups, there is a certain underlying separation within the groups, which are implemented through daily used such as "intellectual" or "the others". In this way the desired "we" is separated into an "I and the others". What happens here is that the invasive group of intellectuals, through a certain ignorance on the part of the building culture of the region, pushes the actual native to search for a new form of himself. Through the new built architecture, which according to the intellectuals is presented as "traditional" and "better", the peasant is at the same time implied the expression of inadequacy and obsolescence. As a result, the fallah is forced to turn away from his old building structure and abandon culture and tradition for the sake of a more progressive life. This idea is additionally supported by new groups, such as those of the fellah-migrants, who supposedly come from similar cultural life situations, but have discarded any reference to culture and tradition anyway and merely pursue profit through the tourism economy. With the introduction of urban structural patterns of dense population and vertical building types, the village is undergoing a gradual urbanization. The boundaries of the village continue to expand and there is no longer a clear line of demarcation with no end in sight.

Identity-creating architecture

A human being rarely finds the opportunity to create a new self, and though it is even more rarely the case for an entire village. The more interesting is the way the local villagers deal with the changes introduced by the new architectural and socio-cultural ideology, which draws attention to a certain dual phenomenon within the dealing with traditional-cultural values: Outwardly, the *fallah* tends to embrace supra-local and urban architecture. In doing so, the regional building language, such as that of clay or limestone, is turned its back and the *fallah* borrows from supralocal and urban stylistic elements. Through the urge to be integrated as part of modern society, some formal principles such as that of a one-story house are set aside. In the process, the *fallah* finds himself in a personal crisis, struggling between the desire for progress and the need to be seen as a main pillar of culture and tradition of Egyptian society. On the inside, however, many still cling to old elements. The simple life of the peasant continues to reflect the simple furnishings and design of the house. The focus is on the flexibility and repurposing of the elements of space. Nothing should be stiff and fixed, but should be changeable as needed. Just like dealing with the own identity, the *fallah* constantly tries to adapt to new situations and circumstances according to the norm. It is therefore remarkable that the poorer and more miserable the *fallah*'s living situation, the more likely it is to find a traditionally linked architecture and lifestyle. The better the financial situation of the farmer, the more likely he is to orient himself to urban-western building structures such as concrete and skeleton buildings. By turning away from old building forms, the *fallah*

hopes to create a new "self" that appears more modern and progressive, so he no longer needs to be stigmatized by his former rural work and life. Noticeable here is nevertheless the attempt to retain many old structural patterns within the living space. Instead of the housing units within the family houses, entire apartment buildings consisting of 3 floors are built. In this way the ideas attempts, with a view to the future and modernity, to keep the family together by providing each child with one floor for his future. These dwellings consist nevertheless of the same formal principles as those of the traditional buildings. Long corridor-like living rooms, guest rooms made of simple furnishings and bedrooms with beds and carpets still can be see inside the new houses. But also old formal principles tend to vanish and get lost due to modernity: Instead of the mastaba, there are now outdoor areas such as balconies or terraces. Where once colorful facade designs differentiated the houses from each other, there are brick walls of lifeless facades.

Dealing with new architecture through new ideology

With the arrival of new rural ideologies from the intellectuals, the *fallahs's* lifestyle finds himself under attack. In the course of this, the new dome-ideology of the intellectuals tries to forcibly instruct the peasant and draws a transparent line through the formerly homogeneous rural society. The visual representative stylistic device of the domes, separates itself not only visually from the rest of the masses, but also culturally separated from the rest of the population. Despite the attempted integration of both groups, there is a certain underlying separation within the groups, which are implemented through daily used such as "intellectual" or "the others". In this way the desired "we" is separated into an "I and the others". What happens here is that the invasive group of intellectuals, through a certain ignorance on the part of the building culture of the region, pushes the actual native to search for a new form of himself. Through the new built architecture, which according to the intellectuals is presented as "traditional" and "better", the peasant is at the same time implied the expression of inadequacy and obsolescence. As a result, the *fallah* is forced to turn away from his old building structure and abandon culture and tradition for the sake of a more progressive life. This idea is additionally supported by new groups, such as those of the fellah-migrants, who supposedly come from similar cultural life situations, but have discarded any reference to culture and tradition anyway and merely pursue profit through the tourism economy. With the introduction of urban structural patterns of dense population and vertical building types, the village is undergoing a gradual urbanization. The boundaries of the village continue to expand and there is no longer a clear line of demarcation with no end in sight

With an eye on the future

In rural areas, the house plays an important role of one's own personal representation. While most of the *fallah's* houses look alike on the outside, they still try to create their own "I" in the interior. The "I" is always presented as a family unit. In the villa buildings, on the other hand, the "I" puts himself demonstratively in the front as an actor of its own, which does not attempt to represent a collective, but rather an individual. Thus, the ideology of a new rural architecture of the intellectuals does not turn out to be an attempt to transform the *fallah*, but rather the intellectual tries to present himself as the main actor of his representative building, in which the *fallah* and the rural environment only play a supporting role. In this way, the migrant - or the intellectual - stages himself as the hero of his own story of a new revolutionary rural architecture. The conflict between ideology and identity, as well as the culture of the village, reflects the problems of today's society, in which society is turning increasingly towards egoism. Each individual tries not to be part of an overall family network, but strives to develop his or her own persona within the (village) community. When the feeling of being part of a collective, or in the case of Tunis Village, of being part of a village community, is lost, those affected individuals also lose touch with the traditional architecture that has developed out of social and economic aspects. In addition, a social problem occurs within society, in which today's society has simply forgotten how to solve problems independently. The attitude of people towards developing solutions out of problems - which can eventually be passed on as tradition after being carried on for generations- no longer plays a role in the fast-moving society. Where once an entire group, whether in rural or urban areas, dealt with the solution of a problem that arose - today there is merely copying and imitating of existing solutions. In this process, all people witness the loss of a tradition and culture, which quietly and silently leaves the living space and attitude to life. This leads not only to a senselessness and dehumanization of architecture, but also to a dissociation and rejection between the built environment and the human being. This causes the person to lose touch with himself and his traditional environment, as well as the accompanying *genius loci*. Furthermore it leads them to fall further and further into a low of an own self-discovery. To be able to counteract these problems, there must first be a change in the understanding and perception of identity and the built environment. People and society as a whole must become aware that architecture can do much more than just serve as a shelter. In the course of this awareness, ideologies of new villages or new residential communities may eventually emerge that can be adaptable and adjust to life circumstances. This goes hand in hand with an understanding of the culture and lifestyles of the involved people, which must be understood up front. Architecture is always omnipresent and must be understood and appreciated as such an element. At the same time, as in the case of the village of Tunis, the *fallah* should not wait for a particular group to tell him how to live or to exemplify him a particular lifestyle, but rather he must act independently and with an

Time for a new identity?

It is inevitable to see Fathy as a major

figure and a guiding path within the concept of identity architecture and as a protector of traditional architecture of the 20th century. He revolutionized the ancient dome buildings of Egypt and inspired especially young architects and generation to a vernacular architecture. Thanks to him, the importance and significance of tradition within a large heterogeneous mass are increasing in value of today's fast-paced society.

"Isn't it time to create a new identity?" was noted to me during the research trip by a prospective doctoral student. And the answer is, in general, yes. Because people have to evolve and face new regional challenges, as well as adapt to them. If you look at the historical course of "traditional" architecture, each era evolves from its own ideology. The ancient ideology envisioned the civilization and ideologization of a unique society and empire during its time. In the Islamic architecture of the Arab Caliphate, the focus was also on the domination and development of an Islamic great empire, in which the religion of Islam was a fundamental element in the transformation of an identity. With regard to our current zeitgeist and the change of modernity, as well as the ecological and socio-economic changes within our society, we also need a change in the way we deal with cultural assets and tradition. This change, however, must be based on a certain socio-historical line, in which we do not completely renounce to already existing things like culture and tradition. Looking at today's Egyptian society and focusing on Tunis Village, it shows that the urge and desire for an individual, non-mainstream architecture is here within the community. However, in order to realize this, the *fallahs* encounter many obstacles, which theoretically can be overcome with the help of a decent housing policy. However, up to today tradition is still exploited by politics only for self-purposes and representation. While monumental architecture such as museums or parliaments follows a certain pattern of tradition and cultural aspects, residential buildings are built as an endless construct of vertical skyscrapers, one after the other. In this process, the construction within the quite cultural and socio-historical society acts like a parasite and does not represent the desire of the life that many Egyptians hope to have in the housing. In fact, in Tunis Village, the difference between the old traditional *fellah* houses and the new dwellings has shown that even within the new vertical buildings, there is a desire for traditional structures inside the floor plan. Floor plans are based on the old *fellah* houses and are built upwards due to the financial situation of the *fallahs*. The result is a construct of individual stacked farmhouses, which is emblematic as a polemic of a housing policy unworthy of human beings. In fact, the surveys in the village have proved that the will of a simple regional, as well as tradition-conscious architecture is here. And perhaps, a strong tendency towards an ideology adapted to the *fellahs* has to be developed, which can give them the possibility and the desire for an independent search of a new architecture adapted to the present time.

How to deal with it?

In order to preserve the culture or identity, a certain cultural life should not be imposed on people, or in this case the *fallahs*, in any way. However, as everyone strives for a comfortable lifestyle, new ideas must be built on the pillars of the elements that create identity, in order not to have to abandon the culture or tradition despite any progress. In the case of the Tunis Village field study, these changes can take place through different cultural and traditional elements:

Furnishing elements in Tunis Village have a strong cultural reference. Many elements are based on a strong traditional value system, in which the furnishings not only serve a purpose, but are also partly culturally and historically connoted. Elements, such as the robust and durable *hasira*-mat can serve not only for furnishing purposes but also structurally. Hence to its strong water repellency, the mat can also be used as a structural element inside the construction of the building. As in the case of the Pigeon Tower, the olla does not have to serve only as a structural element or provide a decorative benefit, but can also be used for built-in elements such as cables or lamps. In this way, not only can the culture be reused in an advanced and modern way, but it can also open an economic sector for the villages or regions involved. This can create a cycle in which, on the one hand, the culture is preserved, but on the other hand, new, contemporary innovations are developed through traditional craftsmanship to gain recognition not only as a decorative element. In terms of active change, participatory processes such as workshops are an essential element to lead target groups to awareness and attention for existing structural elements and traditional architecture. Through workshops, the issues around the role and importance of culture and identity in the network of architecture and the built environment can be communicated in different ways. In doing so, personification within the workshop can teach the importance and essence of regional materials within a tradition.

Another important aspect must be the architectural approach on the part of the planners. The known and traditional structures should not be broken up and completely replaced as in the case of the dome ideology. There should be a symbiosis of the familiar with the contemporary to develop in the best case a new, modern *fallah* architecture that adheres to the traditional and usual forms. In this way, on the one hand, the farmer is given the possibility of an improved and modern living condition, and on the other hand, the relationship with the socio-cultural values is maintained. In order for a new building language to also correlate with the contemporary value of sustainable and future-oriented architecture, it should, as best as possible, not be energy-intensive. Of course, a complete abandonment of concrete or steel from one moment to the next is not possible or difficult. But this process must be carried out in stages over several procedures. The first planning approaches should focus on the goal of a return to clay on the part of the farming community. Once this step has occurred, the focus can turn to the replacement of steel or concrete. Recent findings show that thick bamboo tubes in particular have strong tensile strength, and can partially replace steel. Since the Egyptian Bamboo would not be thick

enough, a thick Bamboo would have to be planted first. Some residents, such as Dr. Adel Fahmy have already begun this with a private planting in their own backyards. If this approach of planting a new ecological and sustainable building material were adopted, it could not only advance and revolutionize the future of the *fallah* mud house, but also open up a new economic sector in the rural area of Egypt. In addition to bamboo, the focus can also be placed on timber infill, where the aim is to develop ideal frame structures from existing timber types. The palm tree is probably the most widespread tree species in Tunis Village, as well as in Egypt in general. Due to the soft trunk of the palm tree, an ideal frame construction would therefore have to be found, which could also be used in the area of a building with at least 2 stories. Hassan Fathy had started an attempt in 1973 to develop a truss made of palm trunks. (*Barasti* Truss). If the focus would be on the local and regional materials by adapting the original habit of the solution search, a new contemporary architecture could emerge again in the Egyptian rural architecture, which would be based on the old building culture. Perhaps the new building language does not need to be a visual reference in the typical *fallah* house, but can be a new translation of a new *fallah* house that adapts to modern approaches. From the elasticity and flexibility of palm trees, other constructions can be developed, which do not have to be formally angular.

Of course, in every sustainable new approach, the farmer is faced with the test of a high-rise house, which he tends to imitate. This means that, on the one hand, social change must be accompanied by economic change. In order to protect the rural architecture and the land of the peasants and to enable them to live a life worth living. This means that there must be a general awareness on the part of the *fallahen*, in order to be able to push for a change at all. In the case of the village of Tunis, there seems to be a certain interest and knowledge of the importance and essence of the building material clay, but for the *fallahen* most solutions always seem to fail because of the problem of economics and financing. This would have to be supported on the one hand, of course, by the state, but also on the other hand by planners and builders who can basically redefine the interests in clay by basically supporting the construction industry to produce clay brick.

The phenomenon of vernacular architecture as a tourist attraction, as well as romanticized image of the city people, has the advantage that at least a certain interest in rural architecture has developed in recent years. Unfortunately, it often happens that a certain form of architecture, such as the Nubian vaults, is suddenly adopted as the generalized architectural language of an entire rural region. Therefore, in addition to the awareness of the local population, certain monumental buildings can be built in the form of a contemporary rural architecture, which serve as landmarks and can become a symbol of the culture and thus the identity of the village. In this way, on the one hand, the traditional identity of a whole village collective is symbolically carried, and on the other hand, the danger of a further historical falsification by new brought in architecture to fall.

In order to develop a contemporary architecture, the needs of the *fallahen* must be addressed. It was clear from the study that most people no longer want to live in close family housing units but strive for an individual residence. This, of course, is in complete contrast to the traditional rural architecture. And yet, it must be given consideration, because every person strives for a better living circumstance and wants to achieve a certain privacy. To be able to solve this approach, it requires an exact deep consideration, and it also shows up as the most difficult solution proposal. Because culturally, the term house/ bait includes the entire inclusion of a family inside a house. Nevertheless, respect must be given to the modern life, and each inhabitant must be allowed an individual's private life. In order to unite this quest of a community as well as an isolation, the ideal solution would be to break up the single rooms/*gourfa* of the traditional *fallah* house into small houses, separated from each other. Thereby each family house could form a unit, which would be grouped around each other. The principle of *sala* around which the spatial units are grouped could be taken up, whereby here the *sala* is an open space that groups all the individual houses around it. This approach would be an ideal, almost utopian realization of a perfect reinterpreted *fallah* house, but again it would encounter the same problem of financing.

It is therefore evident that the solution approaches, as well as the network of identity - culture - tradition and architecture, must be connected with each other in order to find ideal responses to the present time. Therefore, these solution approaches in this chapter section are only to be taken as an impulse of thoughts as well as a suggestions. They build on the studied elements of an identity-creating architecture from the field study of Tunis Village and can possibly be understood as an improvement in the conception of identity in relation to culture and tradition.

The practical example of Tunis Village shows a potential way of dealing with identity-creating architecture as well as how ideologies can deform regions and society as a whole. Through an increasing intensity of urban structures or new imposed ideologies, people increasingly reject the familiar and traditional. And in their desperation, people seek refuge in supra-local and urban structural patterns, ultimately uprooting people from their built environment. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on avoiding the perceived loss of architecture in our fast-paced society and to understand the value of an individual and collective community by gradually trying to understand people in the context of their environment and history.

fig. 195. new domes of Tunis Village, Tzila Lodge

The Symbol of Domes and Vaults has emerged as striving elements for hotels.



Chapter 6

references & appendix

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Glossary

“al inftah” [انفتاح] – “the opening”

“masr om el donja” [مصر أم الدنيا] – “Egypt mother of world” – slogan referring to Egypt’s diverse and dual identity

abaya [عباية] – traditional garment of the woman

abu [ابو] – father

adubi [أدوبي] – adobe

ahl al-balad [أهل البلد] – countrymen

al fajr [الفجر] – morning prayer

al fir’awna [الفراعنة] – pharaohs

al toub al-ahmar [الطوب الأحمر] – the red brick

al-fayyum [الفيوم] – Fayoum – often referred as Fayoum oasis

al-kahun [اللاهون] – Kahun, ancient city in Fayoum

al-nakhl [النخل] – palm tree

ash [قَشَّة] - straw

ash el dorra [قش الذرة] – corn straw

ash el ros [قش الارز] - rice straw

badawi [بدووي] - bedouin

bahari [بحري] – northwest, northeast

bahr yousef [بحر يوسف] - the word **bahr** [بحر] is translated into sea/ lake – Yousef sea

bahr yusuf [بحر يوسف] - lake Yousef

bait [بيت] – house

bait [بيت] or **dar’** [دار] - house

balah [بلح] – dates

bamia [البامية] – Egyptian dish made of okra

bana [بنى] – to built, to establish, to base something on

banaa [البنّي] – master builder

baraka [بركة] – god’s blessing

barkal [برجل] – cylinder, used as centric line for building the Nubian vaults

bawab [بواب] - doorman

benti [بنتي] - daughter

bina [بناء] - building

binaa' al-insan al-masri al-jaded [بناء الانسان المصرى الجديد] – building the new Egyptian human

buhairat quarun [بحيرة قارون] / **birqet quarun** [بركة قارون] – Lake Quarun – lake can be found translated into several words in arabic

buhera [بحيرة] – Lake

buna [بنى] - building

burj al-hamam [برج حمام] – pigeon tower

bus [بوص] – reed

chan el-chalili [خان الخليلي] – khan el chalili, Egyptian bazaar street in Cairo

charazana [خرسانه] - skeleton construction with brick infill

chus [خوص] – palm leaves

cuverta [كوفرتة] – Cuverta, light cotton blanket with patterns. It comes in different colors, like red, blue, red or green.

Dabsch [دبش] – traditional building technique with stones

dabscha [دبشه] – to hew

eid wafaa el Neil [عيد وفاء النيل] - *The Feast of the Resurrection of the Nile*

eimara [عمارة] – building – often referred to as residential building

eimaret el muktama [عماراه المجتمع] - the building of the people

emarat el nafsiya [عماراه النفسيه] – the building of the psyche

emma [عمامة] – Emma is a turban

fallah [فَلَّاح] / feminine **fallaha** [فَلَّاحَة] / plural **fallahin** [فلاحين] – peasant, not only a term but also a lifestyle and ethnicity

fun fallahi [فرن فلاحى] – “peasant oven” – oven made of clay, specifically used by the peasants

falwaka [فلوكة] – Egyptian sailboat

feddan [فَدَّان] – Egyptian measurement system

fetisah [فتيسه] – clay mortar

fuchar [خزف] - ceramic

fursha aljir [فرشه الجير] – lime brush

gallabiya [جلابية] – gallabiyah

gir al'abyad [الجير الأبيض] – white limestone

gourfa [غرفة] – room enclosed by a **sala**/ living room

grid al-nakhl [جريد النخل] palmfronds

hagar gir [حجر جير] – limestone

haj [حاج] – old men

haja [حاجه] – old lady

hammam [حمام] - bathroom

hasira [حصيره] – hasira mat a traditional rice straw mat

hassad [حسد] – translated into “jealousy”, but meaning the evil eye

hiyab [حجاب] or **tarha** [طرحة] - kopftuch

ibni [ابن] - son

ibni bait! [ابني بيت] – translated into „my son is at home, but in Egyptian language meaning “to build a house!”

izbat [عزبه] – translated "manors": meaning a neighborhood within a municipality ruled by an umda [mayor]

kamees [قميص] – white cotton shirt

kanaba [كنبة] – bench, also often used for the term sofa

kanaba assyuti - [أسيرط كنبه] – assyuti bench – dark wooden benches

khamsin [خمسين] – fifty

khan [خان] – khan: public place for bazaars, suqs or hotels.

kilim [كليم] – kilim, traditional egyptian rug

kulman [كولمان] – ice box or jirken [جركن]

koshk [كشك] – kiosk

kufiya [كوفية] - arabic turban

ifa [ليفه] - sponge

- machwal*** [مخول] – big clay vessel used as store for wheat or farine
- madbach*** [مطبخ] - kitchen
- madrast al fuchar*** [مدرسه الفخار] - pottery school
- mahara*** [محاره] - plaster
- mahr*** [صداق] – bridal money
- manga fayoumi*** [مانجو فيومي] – fayoumi mangos
- marakiz*** [مراكز] - center
- mashraybiya*** [مشربية] – mashrabiya, islamic form of oriel, made of wood
- masjid*** [مسجد] – mosque
- mastaba*** [مصطبة] – translated into stonebench or terrasse
- molokhia*** [ملوخية] – molokhia, a egyptian dish, made of egyptian spinach
- muhafazah*** [محافظة] - governorate
- muharet el sanaia*** [مهارة الصنعيه] – talent of the craftsman
- muna*** [مونة] - mortar
- musalah*** [مسلح] – steel construction, colloquial for reinforced concrete construction
- nafsi*** [نفسي] – myself
- nafsiya*** [نفسية] - psyche
- nefs*** [نفس] – colloquial for pleasure
- nos kora*** [نص كوره] – half ball
- oda*** [اوضه] - room
- olla*** [قله] – olla, a clay vessel which keeps water cold
- oum*** [أم] – mother
- fuchar*** [خزف] - ceramic
- qabw*** [قبو] - vault
- qasreya*** [قصرية] – modified form of an olla
- qibli*** [قبلي] – south, referring to the south, or the sunny side

qirat [قيراط] - kirat

quarja [قرية] - village

quaryat tunis [قرية تونس] – tunis village

quba [قبة] - dome

quba el matfusa [القبه المتفوسه] – pressed dome, colloquial for vault

riah el khamasin [رياح الخمسين] – winds of fifty

riyadh [الرياض] – courtyard

koshk [كشك] – kiosk

sahf musatah [سقف مسطح] - flachdach

sala [صالة] – living room

salon [صالون] – guest room

sanaia [صناعيه] – craft

sania [صنيه] – round tray

serdab [سرداب] – small chamber inside the *mastaba*

shabaka [شبكة] – grid, referring a guiding line for building the walls

shareh alfilal [شارع الفيلال] – villa street

shareh evelyn - evelyn street [شارع إيفلين]

sharqi [شرقي] – west

shemagh [شماغ] – tuch often used by the palestinian arabs, with a chequered pattern

sirwal [بيزوال] – light cotton pants, worn underneath the gallabiya

sit el bait [ست البيت] - woman of the house

suq [سوق] – suq, also often referred as bazar in islamic-oriental places

taba'a [طبقة] - layer

tablia [طبلية] – low round wooden table; the term is also often used for a tray in the shape of the *tablia*

tafla [طافله] – clay found in tunis cillage

tagen [طاجين] - *tagen* is a clay pot – a form of an *olla* – usually used as pot for the oven

tamj [طمي] - a term used for the Nile mud

tatrız [تتريز] – tatrız

thwab [ثوب] or dishdasha [دشداشة] – Arabic version of the Egyptian gallabiyah, men’s clothing

toub el neij [الطوب الني] – building technique with natural clay

touf [توف] – touf is a traditional building technique with mud

tuk tuk [توك توك] – small

umda [عمدة] – mayor

warsha [ورشة] – workshop space

y’ashrab [يشرب] – to drink

yasr al-nahda [عصر النهضة] – renaissance, often referred in political terms as “the awakening” of the Egyptian population

zaffa [زفنة] – traditional pre-wedding march with cars and drums

zalat [زلط] – pebbles

zariba [زريبة] – shed, stable

zeer [زير] – Zeer is a clay jug – a form of an *olla*

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 اهدمى يا مصر : كذلك بل يجب أن تبقى وتقوى ، والمصري فرعونى قبل أن يكون عربياً ولا يطلب من مصر أن تتخلى عن فرعونيتها وإلا كان معنى ذلك
 لا تطلبوا من مصر أكثر مما تستطيع أن تعطى ، مصر لن تدخل فى وحدة عربية سواء كانت العاصمة القاهرة ...أبا الهول والأهرام، وانسى نفسك واتبعنا
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fig. 196. hello! new generation

fallah boy sitting on the back of car, heading with a bundle of wooden beams to a construction site

attendance letter Kairos City Lab



Ain Shams University
Faculty of Engineering



Kairos City Lab

Statement of Attendance

KAIROS CITY LAB

This is to certify that

Nessim Tawady El Batory

registered post-grad student in Technische Universität, Vienna, Austria
has completed a duration from
24th of June to 23th of September, 2022,

during which she participated in research work visiting Kairos City lab, conducted her field case study in Tunis village, Fayoum city. She made interviews with experts and local communities in Mousa Mizar village in El Fayoum about vernacular and traditional architecture. All her research work was under the supervision of Associate Professor Dr. Manal El Shahat.

Training Main Supervisor
Prof. Dr. Manal El Shahat

Training Supervision Committee
Prof. Dr. Mohamed El Fayoumi

Eng. Ahmed Habbib

