

Was” Qasr Al Dubara” Square Suitable for the Statue of the Venezuelan Hero Simon Bolivar?**Enas Fares Yahiya****Faculty of Tourism and Hotels-Minia University****Abstract**

Simon Bolivar Square is a famous square in central Cairo; a number of important companies, hotels, and embassies are located there. Grand funerals still take place at Midan Simon Bolivar in the Mosque of Omar Makram. This square is located a few meters from El Tahrir Square;. It was, and still is, the most prestigious area in Cairo. It was known as Midan Qasr Al Dubara, until the Venezuelan gift to Egypt in 1979 of the statue of the Venezuelan hero Simon Bolivar, which is now located in the central part of the square. Simon Bolivar is pointing with his sword as if he had a message for the Egyptians to achieve their dream of freedom and democracy. The existence of this statue is a reflection of the friendship between Egypt and Venezuela. The choice of this square to put the statue of Simon Bolivar was not by luck but had a meaning. It is important to reveal the relation of both Egypt and Venezuela to the history of this famous square.

Keywords: Simon Bolivar, Venezuela, Qasr Al Dubara

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Introduction

The first capital of Egypt was constructed after the Arab opening of Egypt by the Arab leader Amr Ibn Elas, who built a new city in 642A.D. called Fustat. The Abbasids constructed Al Askar city in 750 to the north east of Fustat, then Ahmed Ibn Tulun constructed a city called Al Qatac. During the Fatimid period, in 969, Gawhar El Saqali founded Cairo. Thus Cairo became the fourth Islamic capital of Egypt. The planning of the former three cities was a round a mosque, the palace of the ruler and the houses of the soldiers, but Cairo differed from as it was surrounded by an enclosure wall and was separated from the other three capitals by Berkat Elfeel and Berkat Qalawon.¹

Cairo extended in all directions, due to the increasing number of the Fatimid, especially after the arrival of the Fatimid Caliph El Moezz Lden Allahin 973. It is worth mentioning here that Cairo was the accommodation place for the Caliph and his men only, and the other Egyptians were in the previous former three Egyptian capitals. Cairo extended north to El Abasia (formerly El Rydinia); to the west it reached the Nile, to the East it extended to the Muqattam hills and the southern side was accommodation for the soldiers and other Egyptians.²

From an historical perspective, Cairo has passed through three eras. The first is the Islamic Cairo from 969 to 1863, the first period of the growth of Cairo, starting from the Fatimid period and continuing through the Ayyubid, Mamluk and Ottoman dynasties to the foundation of Modern Egypt by Mohamed Ali. The second era is European Cairo, from 1863 to the July Revolution of 1952. This era began with the rule of Khedive Ismail who added a European city to the Islamic one. The last era is from 1952 to the present, which has been affected by international relations together with the internal political situation.³

¹ Abd El Rhman Zaki, *El Qahira Tarekhaha WaAtharha mi Gwahr El Qaedela El Jabarti El Moarekh*, (Cairo, 1966), pp.15-16.

² Andre Raymond, *Cairo. City of History*, translated by Willard Wood, (Cairo, 1994), p.55.

³ Heba Farouk Ahmed; Basil Kamel, “Cairo Three Cities, Three Periods, Three Maidans”, *Built Environment* 1978, vol.22, No.2, Islamic Architecture and Urbanism, 1996, pp.104-123.

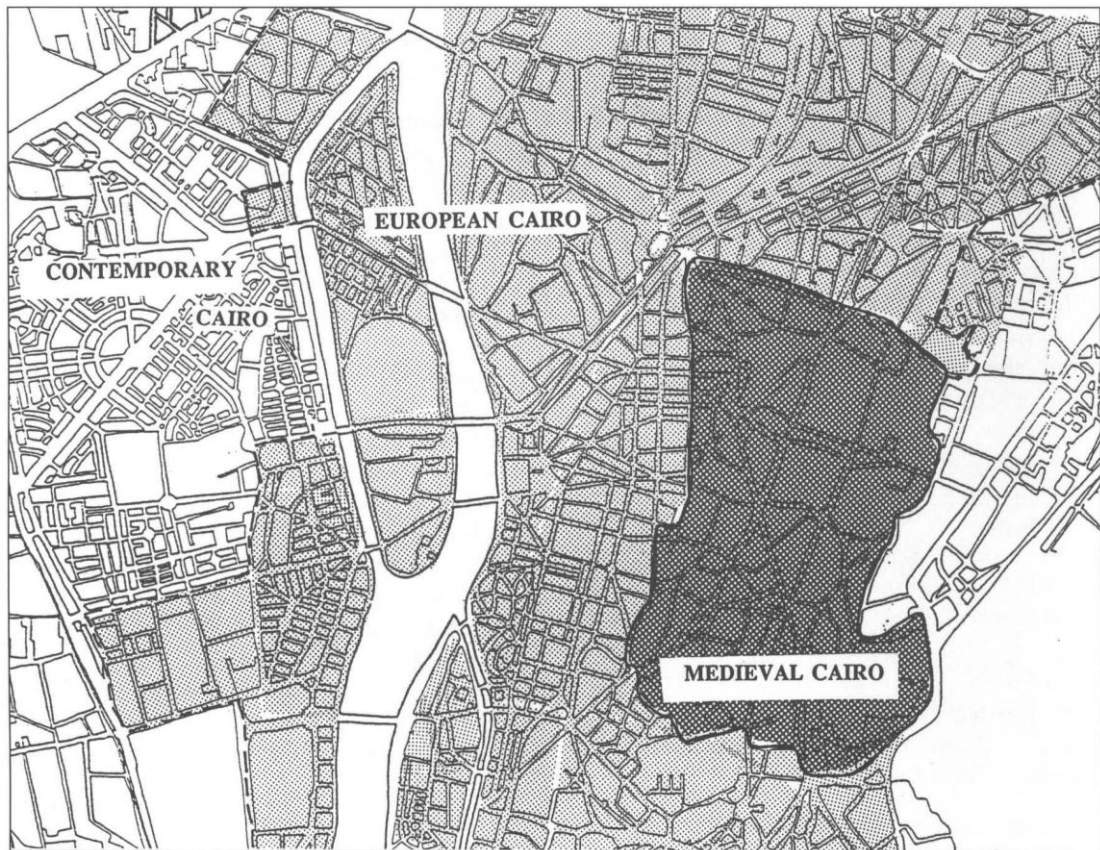


Fig. I Cairo's Three Main Sections

After, Heba Farouk Ahmed, Basil Kamel, *Cairo: Three Cities, Three Periods, Three Midans, Built Environment*, vol.22, No.2, 1996, p.106.

The Foundation of the Square

The “Midan” or square is an open space, first created in the 10th century, during the Fatimid rule, to accommodate the caliph’s palace. It was created by the caliph to reflect imperial ambition and accommodate official celebrations, and was mainly used for the display of the army. Squares in Islamic Egypt were old, and the construction of squares was attributed to Ahmed Ibn Tulun as his square extended from Sayda Nafisa to Salah El Din Square. This square was followed by other squares, such as Ekhsheds had a square in Fustat, and during the Fatimid period Ben Al Qasreen Square was the central part of the city.¹

From the 15th Century, Cairo was reconstructed, especially the area of the western gulf of the Nile.² Actually, during the Mamluk period many squares appeared in Cairo such as Midan Rumila, Midan Al Qala, and Midan al Nasiry on the Nile.³ This square was constructed during the Mamluk era.

Maqrize determined the western border of Cairo, to be the Nile, an area which consisted of Orchards until the 14th Century. After the Nile had receded this area consisted of sand only between Manshat Elmahrany and Gazerat Elfeel, until the reign of the Mamluk sultan Nasser Ibn Qalawon who constructed the gulf known as the Nassirian Gulf. This part was known by many names, such as Khat El Mahrany, Khat Elmarees, Khat Manshat Elkataba, Khat Qanater Elsabec, khat Midan El Sultan, Khat El Berka El Nasyria, Khat El Hakwara, Khat Eltabresi Mosque, Rubc Buctmor, Zrebat El Sultan, Khat Bab El Luk, Qantrat El Kharq, Khat Bustan Elada, Khat Zrebat Qwson, Khat Hekr Ibn Al Atheer, Fum Elkhour, Khat ElKhalej El Nassry, Khat Bulak, Khat Jzerat Elfeel, Khat Eldeka, Khat Elmaqas, Khat Berkat Qarmot, Khat Ard Eltabala,

¹El Maqrize, *Al Mwaiez Wa Al Eatbar Bi Zekr Al khitat Wa Al Athar*, vol.1, (Cairo, 1854), p.313.

²Ali Mubark, *Al Khitat Al Twfikia Al Jadida Li Masr Al Qahera Wa Beladaha Al Qadima Wa Al Shahira*, vol.3, (Cairo, 1970), p.3.

³Mohamed Al Sheshtawy, *Mayadeen Al Qahira Fi Al Asr Al Mamluky*, (Cairo, 1999), p.6.

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Khat Elgorf, Ard Elbacl, Kom Elreesh, Midan Elqmah, Khat Bab Elqantra, Khat Bab El Sharia and Khat Bab El Bahr.¹

Nasiry Square was second in importance after Rumila Square. It was filled by Nile water and was built by Nasser Mohammed Ibn Qalawon² in 718 A.H.³This square is now a part of Garden City, having on the western side Kornish El Neel Street (formerly Qasr Al Ali), on the South Aesha Altimoryia Street (Al Walda Pasha), on the east Qasr AlEni Street and on the north Rostom Pasha Street.⁴ Simon Bolivar square was a part of Nasiry square.

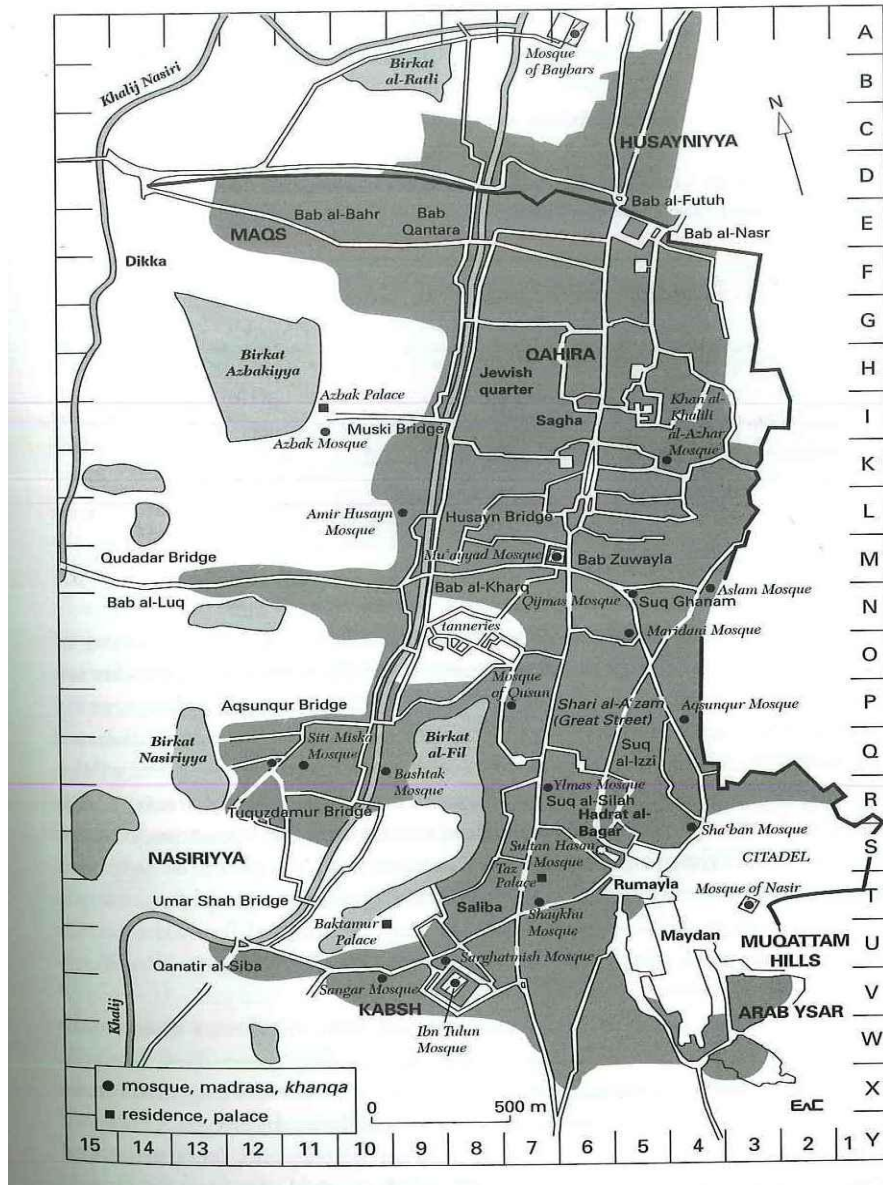


Fig.II, Nasiry Square

After, Andre Raymond, Cairo, p.119.

¹El Maqrize, *Al khitat*, vol. 2, pp.109-110.

²Nasser Mohammed Ibn Qalawn was a Mamluk sultan, who had a great role in the development of Cairo, especially to the west.

³El Maqrize, *Al khitat*, vol. 2,p.200.

⁴Mohammed Ramzi, *Elnjom El Zaharahfi Mlook Masr Wa Al Qahira*, vol. 9, (Cairo, 1951), p.97.

Nasser Ibn Qalawn built palaces around it, with an enclosure wall.¹ During the reign of El Zaher Barqouk it was neglected and was just a resting place for pilgrims;² this neglect may be attributed to his interest in Rumilah Square. Then Muayad Sheikh had it rebuilt in 823 A.H. by his vizier Badr Eldin Nasr Allah.³

Both Sultan Gakmak and Qaitbay renewed the square from 844 A.H. until 897.⁴ The square was used by the Mamluk sultans for playing, especially on Saturdays⁵. Also the famous festival of transforming the vesture of El Kacba to Mecca which was known as *El Mahmal* passed by this square, as happened in 868.⁶

The square was a place for guests and envoys, who were accommodated inside the square's palaces, or tents in the square for the envoys of Qan Abi Said the ruler of Iraq and Iran during the reign of Nassir Mohamed.⁷ Also guests in the square were a large number of Moroccan pilgrims in 738 A.H.⁸ as well as princes and judges of Persia and Iraq. During the reign of sultan Al Kamel Shaban ibn Nassir Mohamed the square had an important guest, Amir Mecca. In the reign of Ashraf Bersbay from 825 to 841 the number of the square's guests and ambassadors increased, and the square was also a centre for gathering armies.⁹

This means that the square was very important during the Mamluk period; a place for recreation and celebrations. After the Ottoman conquest of Egypt, the square became completely neglected and its lands were transformed into gardens, may be because the Nile water was covering it. Another square was made parallel with the old one, known as Nashapa square due to the military training of throwing archer above the horses.¹⁰

In spite of the westward expansion of Cairo during the Mamluk period, it was not inhabited until the beginning of the eighteenth century, when urbanization occurred in this area and along the main streets linking the centre of Cairo with the both Bulaq and Old Cairo.¹¹

Actually the growing urbanization of the southern sector of Cairo attracted the wealthy, who were in need of space for their gardens. So they moved to the western area, and this may answer the question of why this area was inhabited by princes and the elite.

During the Ottoman period the squares were generally neglected. Some of them were transformed into gardens and the others were neglected completely. However a new square was added on the Nile instead of Nasiry Square. The squares were used for ceremonies, and some of the squares had palaces as a rest place for the ruler. During the French campaign scientists prepared the first map of Cairo, Bulak, and Old Cairo, showing the streets, gardens and pools. The Cairo map consisted of eight departments. It is worth mentioning here that Cairo was divided according to the Fatimid plan, inside an enclosure, divided from the interior by lanes (khitat).¹² Simon Bolivar square was located in the third department, which started from Berkat Elfeel on the western side, together with the western gulf and Berkat El Nasiriya, and it consisted of 293 streets.

The Square during the Era of the Mohamed Ali Dynasty

¹El Maqrize, *El SelwokLi Mareft Doal Al Mlook*, vol. 2, (Cairo, 1997), p.182; El Qalqashandi, *Sobh El Asha fi Ktabet Al Ensha*, vol.4, (Cairo, 1922), p.47.

²Ibn Tughrabardy, *Al Njoom Al Zahera Fi Mlook Masr wa Al Qahira*, vol.14, (Cairo, 1992), p.95.

³Ibn Eias, *Bdac Elzhoor Fi Wqae Al Dhoor*, vol.2,(Cairo, 1984) p.53.

⁴Ibn Eias, *Bdac Elzhoor*, vol.3, p.292.

⁵El Maqrize, *El Selwok*, vol.3, p.196,232.

⁶ Ibn Tughrabardy, *Hawadth El Dohoor fi Mda Al Ayam wa Al Dhoor*, vol.3, (Beirut, 1990), p. 469.

⁷Ibn Tughrabardy, *Al Njoom*, vol.14,p.95.

⁸El Maqrize, *El Selwok*, vol. 2, p.283.

⁹El Maqrize, *El Selwok*, vol. 4, p.718.

¹⁰Ali Mubarak, *El Khitat Al Tawfikya*, vol. 3, p.226.

¹¹Andre Raymond, *Cairo*, p.221.

¹²Jomard, "Description Abreege de la Ville et de la Citadelle du Kaire", in *Description de l' Egypt*, vol.22, (Paris, 1822), p.580.

Was "Qasr Al Dubara" Square Suitable for the Statue of the Venezuelan Hero Simon Bolivar?

During the 19th Century, Cairo moved westward towards the Nile; firstly as a series of palaces and gardens along the banks.¹ Mohammed Ali cared for developing Egypt. He was interested in the urbanization of the country and care of the grand enterprises that helped at growing Egypt, such as digging canals, building bridges, paving routes and erecting factories. Furthermore, Mohamed Ali started developing the urbanization of Cairo and enhancing its conditions. After the demolition, he removed the ruined houses and rebuilt it. Mohamed Ali was substantially interested in architecture. Thus, once he ruled, orders were issued to gather all architects and building materials for the state, as he wanted Cairo to emerge with a beautiful image. He did not neglect the western part of Cairo.

On the west of Cairo, his son Ibrahim Pasha ordered Ali Effendi the financial employee to reveal the dust between AlQasr Al Ali and Tel Aqareb (the modern Garden City). This area was about 3feddans and they also revealed the hills which were located between Nasiriya and Qasr Al Ali, which was about 38 feddans and was planted with olive trees. The work ended in 1830.²

Mohamed Ali constructed the Mobtadyan School on Nasiriya Street that was formerly a house for Prince Hassan Kashef Garkes. He took the house and transformed it into a school from Qasr El Eni to Nasiriya Street in 1836.³ Many palaces were also constructed in this area such as Maghara Palace which was built by Ibrahim Pasha in front of El Qasr ElAli⁴, which was just one of many palaces with stables constructed by him for the members of his family.⁵ Actually Qasr Al Ali consisted of two palaces within an enclosure, the southern palace was for Khoshiar Hanem Qadeen,⁶ and the northern palace was for his wife, princess Sheokar Qadeen.⁷

Ali Mubarak determined the streets of Qasr Ali, starting from (QasrAlEni), to be as follows: Sheikh Youssef Street(Abd El Qader Hamza) ended by Emad Eldeen Street, Dakhliya Street(Mohamed Said Street-HusseinHegazy) ended by Mansour Street, then Turqa Street(Ismail Abaza) ended by Safia Zaghoul Street. Khedive Ismail donated this palace to his mother Khoshiar Hanem by an order. The small Ismailia Palace near Qasr ElNeel Bridge was known as El Abeet Island, Ahmed Refaat Pasha, son of Ibrahim Pasha rebuilt a palace which was built by his father between Qasr Al-Ali and Qasr El Neel (now the American Embassy).⁸

So Simon Bolivar Square in this area was part of what was called El Abeet Island. During this era they started to build palaces for rulers in the area surrounding the square. Mohamed Ali's successors completed his interest in caring for Western Cairo, Abbas I cared about Berkat El Azbakia; he covered the Nile canal which was formed by Mohammed Ali around the pool and he gave land to his uncle Said Pasha to build a palace on.⁹Said Pasha constructed Qasr El Nil barracks for the Egyptian troops, which were a centre for the Egyptian army, and witnessed the Orabi Revolution in 1881. Under the British rule they became the main residence for the British army. These barracks were razed after the British evacuation from Egypt, and were where the Nile Hilton Hotel now stands.¹⁰

The most important era for this square was the rule of Khedive Ismail. During Khedive Ismail's visit to Paris in 1867 for the Exposition Universelle, he met the famous architect George Eugene Haussmam, who designed Paris' new quarters, and asked him to construct modern Cairo. Firstly, he established the Ministry for Public Works, and appointed Ali Mubarak as the head of this ministry. He tried to complete the work in Cairo before the celebration of the Suez Canal inauguration, to present modernity in front of the guests.¹¹The interest in the urbanization and architecture of Cairo increased. In addition to his significantly caring for building palaces, he demolished the pools which separated Cairo and the Nile, as they caused

¹Caroline Williams, *Islamic Monuments in Cairo. The Practical Guide*, (Cairo, 2002), p.8.

²Amin Samy, *Taqweem El Neel*, vol. 2, (Cairo, 1928), p.361; Hassan Abd El Wahab, *Takhteet Al Qahira*, (Cairo,1955), p.17.

³Ali Mubarak, *El Khitat*, vol.1, p.83.

⁴Ali Mubarak, *El Khitat*, vol.3, p.96.

⁵Al Jabrti, *Ajaeb El Athar*, p.7; Amin Samy, *Taqweem El Neel*, vol.2, p.449.

⁶The mother of Khedive Ismail and was commonly known as Al Walda Pasha.

⁷Arafa Abdu Ali, *Al Qahira fi Ahd Esmail*, (Cairo, 1998), p.81.

⁸Ali Mubarak, *El Khitat*, vol.3, p.59.

⁹Amin Samy, *Taqweem El Neel*, vol.3, p.21.

¹⁰Patrick Richard Carstens(ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Egypt during the Reign of the Mehmet Ali Dynasty 1798-1952*, (Canada, 2014), p.555.

¹¹Andre Raymond, *Cairo*, p.269.

diseases like malaria.¹ He also modified the streets. The boundaries of the new centre ran from Bulaq and Maydan Bab Al Hadid (later known as Maydan Ramsis) to the north, to Old Cairo to the south; from Al Azbakia, Maydan Al Opera, Maydan Al Ataba and Abdine Palace to the east, and the Nile River to the west. Ali Mubarak described this square before the reign of Khedive Ismail as hills, pools and forests without cultivated lands or population, Khedive Ismail ordered the area to be cleaned and organized.²

Ismalia square was the most important project for khedive Ismail, it extended from Ramses' Square in the north to Old Cairo in the south, and from Ataba Square in the east to the Nile in the west. Worth mentioning here is that this area was in a bad state at the end of the Mamluk rule to the beginning of the era of Khedive Ismail.³

The Khedive cared a lot about this square, the argument here, that he may be wanted an area to be just for the members of the Royal Family, or those who were close to him. He started to construct a number of palaces for the members of his family there.

Ismail built a great palace, a sprawling area with two palaces at its centre. Nearby El Abeet Mosque once stood instead of the famous Omar Makram Mosque.⁴ The streets which formed this area were Sheikh Youssef Street which is now known as Majlis El Shab Street, Dakhliya Street now known as Mohamed Said Street, Torka Street which is now known as Ismail Abaza Street, and El Ensha Street now known as Safia Zaghloul Street.⁵ Ismail had a land in El Jazira⁶ in which was the area that Omar Makram Mosque was a part of. One of the palaces which was built in the square was the palace of Zeinab Hanem, daughter of Khedive Ismail, which was located near Qasr Al Ali, almost at the location of the American Embassy today. This was built in 1873.⁷

Ismail Pasha El Mofatesh palace was built in 1874. Khedive Ismail offered him land in Qasr El Ali Street.⁸ In this palace he took the house of Othman Bey and part of Nasyrian pool. The palace was in the form of three palaces with gardens surrounded by an enclosure. It overlooked Laz Oghly Square and was transformed by the government into the financial Ministry, Ministry of Justice, and ministry of Interior Ministry.⁹ Amin Bek Al Azmrley had a house built there in 1874.

Qasr Al Dubara Square

The area, from the reign of Khedive Ismail, was called Qasr Al Dubara square referring to the Dubara palace which he built there. After the demolishing in 1906 of Qasr Al-Ali, its land was distributed, starting from Qasr Al Dubara, which was a palace of Amina Hanem daughter of Elhamy Pasha son of Abbas I, and the wife of Khedive Tawfik. Then this area had many other palaces such as that of Princess Nemat Allah daughter of Khedive Tewfik, Abbas Haleem Palace, Elhamy Hussein Palace and a series of modern buildings between these palaces.

¹Sayed Karim, *Qaherat Ismail*, p.18.

²Ali Mubarak, *El Khitat*, vol.9, p.53.

³Ali Mubarak, *El Khitat*, vol.3, p.117.

⁴Samir W. Raafat, *Cairo, The Glory Years. Who Built, What, When, and for Whom*, (Alexandria, 2003), p.87.

⁵Ali Mubarak, *El Khitat*, vol.3, p.118.

⁶Ali Mubarak, *El Khitat*, vol.1, p.85.

⁷Amin Sami, *Taqweem El Neel*, vol.3, p.1066.

⁸Amin Sami, *Taqweem El Neel*, vol.3, p.1046.

⁹Ali Mubarak, *El Khitat*, vol.2, p.41.

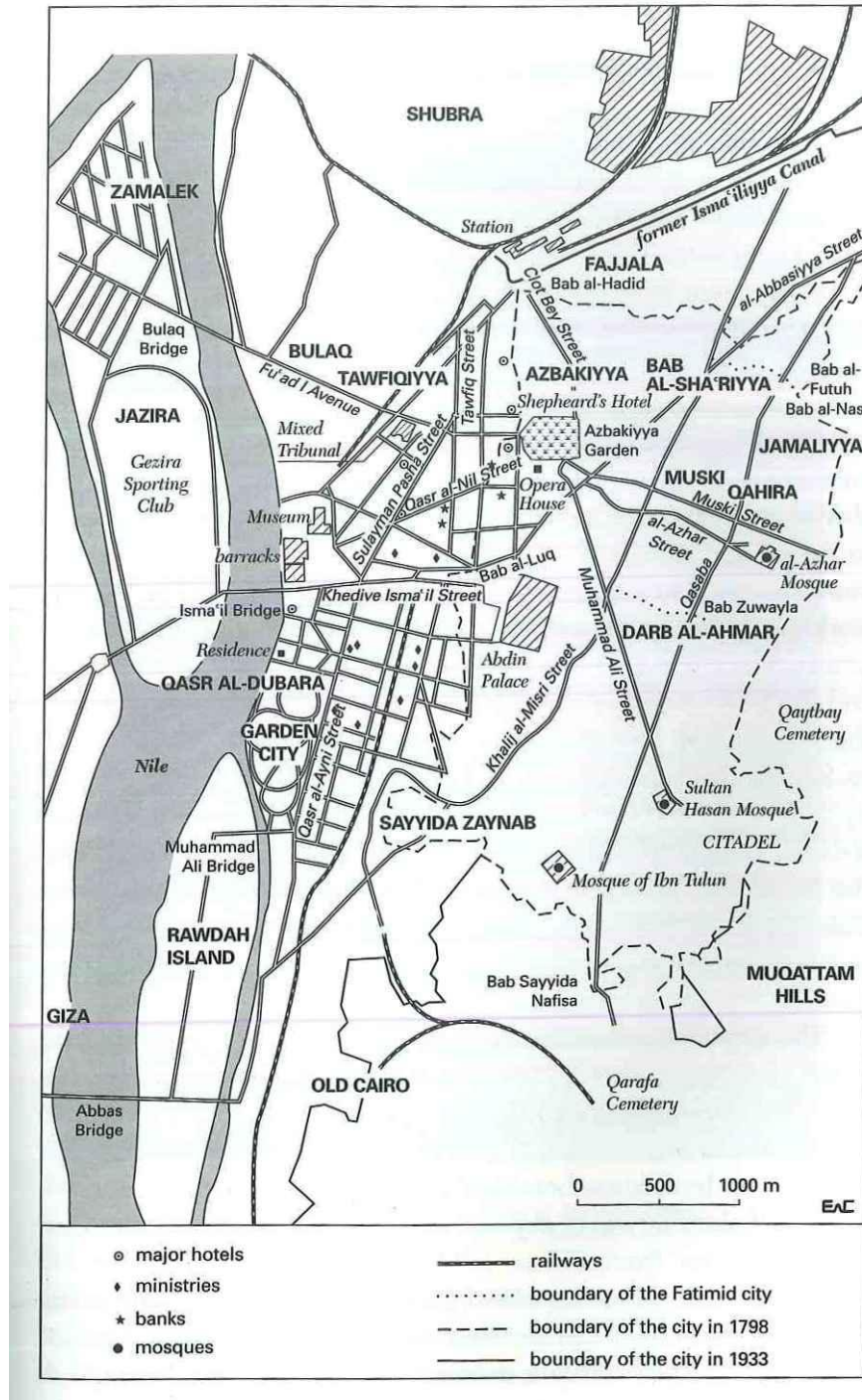


Fig.III, Qasr Al Dubara Square

After, Andre Raymond, Cairo, p.323.

At Qasr AlDubara Ismail built several palaces. Two of them overlooked Midan Qasr AlDubara: Qasr Al-Ali and Qasr al-Walda Pasha. A third palace was commissioned by his granddaughter Princess Nimet Kamal al-Din which she later donated to the Foreign Office. Standing opposite the Arab League with half of its garden already axed; Qasr Al Dubara was built by the Italian architect Di Corel Wel Rousseu and a large number of Egyptian, Italian, French and Turkish decorators.¹

Qasr Al Dubara square was divided into lots following the establishment of the British Consulate General (the Residency). Cromer and his family, together with his staff, in 1893-1894 moved to a new

¹Nihal Tamarz, *Nineteenth Century Cairene Houses and Palaces*, (Cairo, 1998), p.32.

agency at Qasr Al Dubara, only a few hundred yards from the Nile barracks which were occupied by the British. This agency was built by the British architect R.H.Boyce, and costed around 40,000 pound. It was a fantastic building. To the left was Cromer's study, the chancery where the diplomats worked and the dining room; to the right was a reception. Cromer's living quarters were founded on the northern hall on the first floor.¹

As Egypt was ruled from the British Residency and not from the Abdine Palace,² we can consider this square to be the centre of rule during the British presence in Egypt. The location of the British military and administrative headquarters, transformed the area into a centre of vibrant national activity. Protests by the Egyptian nationalists, and attempts by the British forces to disperse the demonstrations, became a regular occurrence.³ Worth mentioning here, that the square witnessed also the demonstrations of the 25 January revolution.

To the west, between the Bridge of Ismail and the northern tip of Rawdah, was the prestigious quarter of Garden City. In 1906, the area of Garden City started to become like the European squares in its beauty. After that came the hotels and embassies. First among the big names to grace Midan Qasr AlDubara was the Semiramis in 1908. Built in phases, it occupied most of the block between the Square and the Nile. The middle of the century saw the arrival of the Shepheard.⁴

The great palaces of Qasr Al-Ali and Qasr Al Dubara had been demolished by the turn of the century and their vast grounds broken up.⁵The college named Qasr Al Dubara was built in the square to attract girls from upper-class families, who still favoured foreign schools.⁶

The western part of Cairo was just poles, converted to hotels, banks, and other modern buildings. After that, the villas were demolished and replaced by large buildings, but were still occupied by foreigners and diplomats. The square witnessed a lot of important events which added a lot to its history, and transformed it as a witness of the history. On 17th December 1930, the executive board voted to depose Ratib and elect Abbas Halim as their president, the dissidents managed to seize the organization's papers and take refuge in Abbas Halim's palace in Qasr AlDubara.⁷

The villa of the merchant Emanuel Casdagli directly fronts the square. This building was built by the Austrian architect Edward Matasek (1867-1912). The building is situated next to the US Embassy. Later the villa became a school for girls named after Sudanese revolutionary, Ali-Abdelatif, and was burnt and seriously damaged in January 2013⁸. In front of the square was a ladies tennis club, which was the only tennis club for ladies in Egypt. This club was demolished in 1940, and in its place is the building of El-Shams Real Estate Company.

So, the square was a place for elites only under the monarchy area, no Egyptian had one house in this square. The area was just the right of the rulers and those who were close from them. It witnessed also the royal weddings of some from princes. Although they did not prevent the Egyptians from having dwellings in this square by a specific decree, but the Egyptians knew well that they did not have any right in this area.

¹Roger Owen, *Lord Cromer. Victorian, Imperialist, Edwardian Proconsul*, (Oxford, 2004), p.277.

²Afaf Lutfi Al Sayyid Marsot, *Egypt's Liberal Experiment 1922-1936*, (California, 1977), p.60.

³Yaram Meital, Central Cairo, "Street Naming and the Struggle over Historical Representations", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.43, No.6,2007, pp.857-878.

⁴The Shepheard Hotel is located now in Garden City at Cornish Al Nil after moved it from its old location in Al Azbakiya. The hotel goes back more than 170 years to when it was originally built by Englishman Samuel Shepheard in 1841. It was during the reign of Abbas I when Shepheard took a promise from him to build a hotel. Until 1870 Shepheard's Hotel was considered the only hotel worthy of foreign visitors to Cairo, and was the most celebrated hotel during the ceremony of the opening of the Suez Canal. Many famous characters who attended the event were accommodated in the hotel, including Empress Eugenie. The old Shepheard was burnt in the famous Cairo Fire of 26 January 1952, and was rebuilt in its present place.

⁵Hassan Hassan, *In the House of Muhammed Ali. A Family Album 1805-1952*, (Cairo, 2006), p.59.

⁶Margot Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and Nation*, (New Jersey, 1995), p.143.

⁷Joel Beinin, Zachary Lockman, *Workers on the Nile. Nationalism, Communism, Islam and the Egyptian Working Class 1882-1954*, (Cairo, 1998), p.197.

⁸Joris D. Killa, "From Crimes against Art to Crimes Against Cultural Property, New Perspectives and Dimensions in the Crime", *Cultural Property Crime. An Overview and Analysis of Contemporary world*, (Leiden, 2014), p.190.

After the outbreak of the July Revolution and the evacuation of the British troops from Egypt, the matter completely differed; the Egyptian government cared about this area as it was a symbol of the occupation. So they demolished everything that referred to the British presence in the square. The departure of foreigners and the decline of the old Egyptian elite made way for a new bourgeoisie, less wealthy but more numerous.¹ Actually, the 1952 July revolution transformed the square from a place for the rulers and occupiers, into a place just for Egypt and the benefit of the Egyptians, no palace was built in the square after the revolution, and what was built were just companies which in turn would serve the Egyptian economy. Worth mentioning here, that the palaces and villas of the square were harmed a lot by the Free Officers.

Although Qasr Al Dubara was demolished, the district retained this name until 1979 when the Statue of Simon Bolivar was erected and the square was transformed into Simon Bolivar Square.²

From Qasr Al-Dubara to Simon Bolivar

When we pass this square, some of us look at the statue which is located at its centre and wonder who it is, and why he is here in the heart of the Egyptian capital, Cairo.

Simon Bolivar was the most influential figure in Latin American political history. Known as the 'liberator', he was a South American revolutionary leader who fought against Spanish domination in Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Panama, and Bolivia. He dedicated his life to the independence of the Spanish colonies and the unification of Latin America.³ Anyone who has ever been to South America knows that in every city there is a plaza named Bolivar, an Avenue Bolivar, a Hotel Bolivar, and even an airport in Caracas named after Simon Bolivar. There are statues of Bolivar in almost every plaza that bears his name; he is the idol of Latin America.⁴

He had great charisma, and he was renowned for his eloquent speeches and literary skills. He spoke eloquently and free of error. He founded, and became the first president of Bolivia, and despite his considerable abilities and influence, he was humble and prone to lead a simple and ordinary life, even though he was born into a wealthy family. When he died he was almost as poor as the residents of Latin America, as he spent his fortune on the cause of South American unity.⁵

He was born in Caracas on 24 July 1783, and his father died when he was young. His mother cared a lot about his education until her death when he was just 15 years old. Bolivar then lived in Madrid with his relatives and had an occasion to be in touch with the highest members of society, even King Charles IV.⁶

The cult of Bolivar was born in Venezuela, a country without a distinguished history or an outstanding colonial experience, and great only in the independence he had won for it. In his life he gathered around him the Bolivarians, a select group of soldiers and officials who served him loyally out of respect for his talents and defence of his leadership.⁷ Every two years the international Simon Bolivar Prize celebrates his memory.⁸ This was established by the Venezuelan government and is awarded through UNESCO. The prize rewards activities that contribute to the freedom, independence and dignity of people, or activities that have facilitated the quest for a new international economic social and cultural order.⁹

It has been said that no historical person has as many statues around the world as Simon Bolivar, the Venezuelan hero of the Wars of Independence, including ones standing in Ottawa, New York, Washington, New Orleans, Paris, London's Belgrade Square, and the statue in Cairo in the square which bears his

¹ Andre Raymond, "Cairo", in *The Modern Middle East*, (California, 1993), p.333.

² Lesley Lababidi, *Cairo's Street Stories: Exploring the City's Statues, Squares, and Bridges*, (Cairo, 2008), p.45.

³ Gregory Fremont Barends (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Age of Political Revolutions and New Ideologies 1760-1815*, Vol.I, (London, 2007), p.77.

⁴ Bill Boyd, William Young Boyd, *Bolivar. Liberator of a Continent*, (New York, 1998), p.iii.

⁵ Gregory Fremont Barends (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Age of Political Revolutions and New Ideologies 1760-1815*, p.77.

⁶ Guillermo A. Sherwell, *Simon Bolivar*, (1st World Library, 2005), pp.21-22.

⁷ John Lynch, *Simon Bolivar: A Life*, (Yale University press, 2006), p.301.

⁸ Mahmud Fawzy the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs was chosen for this prize: <http://modernegypt.bibalex.org/NewDocumentViewer.aspx?DocumentI>

⁹ Richard W. Salatta, Jane Lucas De Grummond, *Simon Bolivar's Quest for Glory*, (Texas, 2003), p.303. The first award was made during the bicentennial of Bolivar's birth.

name.¹ It seems that there was a good relationship between Egypt and Venezuela to give her the statue of Simon Bolivar.

Egyptian- Venezuelan Relations

Egypt could not face political relations with Latin America because of the expansion of the Egyptian legation in Washington. Egyptian-Latin American relations started during the Second World War. Brazil had anlegation in Cairo and a consulate in Alexandria; but Egypt had no representation inside Brazil.² So the Plenipotentiary Brazilian Minister asked Nahass Pasha to establish an Egyptian legation in Rio De Janeiro in March 1942. He said that it was a vital matter for the Egyptian economy to have a diplomatic mission in Brazil; the Egyptian government accepted in July 1943.³

Then Egypt focused on Latin American countries, not only Brazil, because Egypt wanted new cotton markets away from the traditional markets of Europe. They established an Egyptian legation in Argentina on 27 June 1946.⁴ To serve the Egyptian economy the Egyptian government had relations with Uruguay, and it is worth mentioning that a street in Egypt bears the name Latin America.

The first diplomatic relations between Egypt and Venezuela started in April 1950, when the Venezuelan ambassador in Washington presented a proposal to the Egyptian ambassador about the exchange of diplomatic relations between the two countries, and the Egyptian representation was being added to the Minister Plenipotentiary in Brazil.⁵ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared a statement the next month, pointing to the consolidation of political and economic Egyptian-Venezuelan relations.⁶

Actually, the decision of the Council of Ministers did not mean an exchange of diplomatic relations between the two countries, it meant that they should offer Venezuela the same treatment. Venezuela sent a political mission to Egypt in 1949 with three ambassadors rather than only one, Dr. Edmond Wleonego Kabelo, Louis Emilio Monsanto and Dr. Ezekel Monsalfy⁷. Dr. Edmond, the head of the mission, pointed out that the purpose of the mission was preparing for diplomatic relations between Egypt and Venezuela, and then economic relations.⁸

It seems that what prevented Egypt from getting representation in Venezuela was the lack of agreement on the form of credentials concerning the title of King Farouk in March 1952⁹. A royal decree, issued in 1950, appointed Hussien Shawqy as the Plenipotentiary Minister and an extraordinary delegate for Brazil and Venezuela.¹⁰

The first Arab Petroleum Congress was held in Cairo in 1959. The government of Venezuela was invited to send delegates as observers. Venezuela sent a large delegation comprising two ministers, deputies from the Venezuelan parliament, technicians and representatives of the press. The head of the delegation was Juan-Pablo Perez Alfonso. This congress achieved a basic framework of cooperation among oil-exporting countries.¹¹

¹Margaret Baker, *Discovering London Statues and Monuments*, (Oxford, 2002), p.71; Michele H. Bogart, *The Politics of Urban Beauty. New York and its Art Commission*, (University of Chicago press, 2006), p.103.

²*Al Ahram Newspaper*, 1 January 1942. The diplomatic relations with Brazil were good, as Brazil supported the Allies during the Second World War, and as Egypt was under the British rule, they did not cut relations with Brazil.

³*Al Ahram Newspaper*, 15 July 1943.

⁴Firstly it was directed by the Egyptian Ambassador in Rio Di Janeiro, a year after the Egyptian government appointed another delegate for it. *Al Ahram Newspaper*, 23 June 1947.

⁵*Al Ahram newspaper*, 17 November 1950 under the title "Establishing relations with Venezuela"

⁶*Ministry of Foreign Affairs Documents*, Folder 1127, file 46/40/3 vol2, secret minister publication, no.7, issued in 27 December 1953.

⁷*Al Waqa Al Masria*, 13 November 1949.

⁸*Al Ahram newspaper*, 17 November 1950.

⁹*Ministry of Foreign Affairs Documents*, Folder 1127, file 46/40/3 vol2, secret minister publication, no.7, issued in 27 December 1953.

¹⁰*Al Waqa Al Masria*, 11 January 1951, decree number 67.

¹¹Fehmy Saidy (ed.), *Arab Latin American Relations. Energy, Trade, and Investment*, (New Jersey, 1983), p.29.



Fig.IV,President Nasser with the Venezuelean delegation during the ptoleum congressin Cairo
After, <http://nasser.bibalex.org/common/MapView.aspx?ID>

The statue which is located in our square was transferred to Cairo and unveiled on 11February 1979. The official delegation was led by the wife of the president of Venezuela and the Venezuelan Minister of Education.¹ The Egyptian delegation was under the leadership of Dr. Hassan Ismail, and the Egyptian Minister of Education. Venezuela decided to dedicate the statue to Egypt during the rule of Sadat, which may be attributed to the Egyptian victory and liberation of Sinai in the October War of 1973. They also chose the square in which to erect their hero, as this was the centre of the British rule, so it should have the Venezuelan liberator.



Fig.V Simon Bolivar Statue in the centre of the Square
After, <https://www.google.com.eg/search?biw>

¹*The Tuscaloosa News*, 13 February, 1979, p.2.

The statue is made of bronze¹ and weighs 500kg. The height of the statue is 2.30m, and the width of the shoulders 0.82m. The sculptor is Venezuelan, called Carnello Tabaco; he is of Italian extraction. The architect Manuel Selirra Blanco, supervised the placing of the statue and the pedestal. The statue was flown from Caracas to Cairo.

The statue represents Bolivar standing, with one leg in front of the other, to give the impression that he strides towards an important work. He leans on a sword as a sign that he is ready to fight for his goal. He looks up to the sky as if praying to god for success in his achievements, and wears the clothes of a fighter. On the pedestal is a metal stela with the text: "Symbol of friendship between the Republic of Venezuela and Republic of Egypt" and another inscription: "With peace one enjoys the full meaning of liberty, glory and independence. Bolivar".²

Actually, the Venezuelan government was the one who chose the place to put the statue of the Hero. The choice was accepted from the Egyptian government without any discussions, they saw that this Square is the suitable place for the position of this hero. Worth mentioning that Venezuela chose this Square exactly after studying the history of this Square, and it found it the right place for Simon Bolivar.³

During the 25th January revolution in Egypt, this Square suffered a lot of demonstrations. Large modern buildings are now found in the square, the palaces of the British Embassy and the Suez Canal Company, with the famous American Research Centre. You can still smell the history when you enter the area surrounding the statue, and the appearance of the Venezuelan hero encourages us that nothing is difficult and freedom is the most important demand for any country.

Conclusion

This square was very important, from its foundation during the Mamluk era until the present day. It was a place of recreation and celebration under the Mamluk rule. It was a prestigious area used by princes and the elite during the monarchy era. The most important phase of the history of the square was during the era of Khedive Ismail. It was the centre of rule of the British occupation. It was a symbol of socialism after the outbreak of the July Revolution of 1952, when most of its villas and palaces were demolished and companies were built instead, reflecting the demolition of the bourgeoisie. It is the most sensitive area in Cairo nowadays, because of the presence of many important embassies there. There were diplomatic relations between Egypt and Venezuela. It was not by luck that this area was chosen for the statue, but because of the meaning hidden behind the area, which was a residence of the British occupiers until the evacuation of the British troops from Egypt. As a way of celebrating this liberation Venezuela chose this place to put her famous liberator Simon Bolivar. So from what has been mentioned, Qasr Al Dubara Square, with its history, was suitable for the statue of the Venezuelan hero Simon Bolivar.

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هل كان ميدان قصر الدوبارة مناسباً لتمثال البطل الفنزويلي سيمون بوليفار؟

إيناس فارس يحيى

مدرس التاريخ الحديث والمعاصر كلية السياحة والفنادق

جامعة المنيا

ميدان سيمون بوليفار هو ميدان هام يقع في وسط القاهرة و يحوي عددا كبيرا و هاما من الشركات والفنادق والسفارات ، وقد كان مكانا هاما منذ إنشائه حتي الآن. فقد كان مكانا للاحتفالات واستقبال السفراء زمن المماليك. وفي ظل حكم الأسرة العلوية كان الميدان قاصرا علي الأمراء والملوك، وأهم فترة شهدها الميدان كان إبان حكم الخديوي إسماعيل. ويبعد هذا الميدان أمتارا قليلة عن ميدان التحرير الشهير، و كان ولازال من أرقى المناطق في محافظة القاهرة. وقد عرف هذا الميدان بميدان قصر الدوبارة حتى قامت الحكومة الفنزويلية بإهداء تمثال القائد والمحرر الفنزويلي سيمون بوليفار إليها عام 1979، والذي يقع الآن بمنتصف الميدان. وكان سيمون بوليفار يشير بسهمه كأن لديه رسالة للمصريين لتحقيق حلمهم بالحريّة والديمقراطية. ومما لا شك فيه أن وجود تمثال البطل الفنزويلي هو انعكاس للعلاقات الطيبة بين كل من مصر وفنزويلا. ولم يكن اختيار الميدان لوضع التمثال عشوائيا، بل كان قرارا مدروسا. فقد كان ميدان قصر الدوبارة مقرا للإدارة البريطانية في خلال سنوات الاحتلال، لذا اعتبرت الحكومة الفنزويلية أن وجود بطلها المحرر تأكيد علي استقلال البلاد، وعلي ذلك فان ميدان قصر الدوبارة كان مناسباً لوضع تمثال المحرر الفنزويلي سيمون بوليفار.