



Saints' Heritage and the Egyptian Urban Forms Through History

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Abstract

When examining the traditional Egyptian community since the beginning of time, it would be found that the Egyptian individual is no different from any other traditional one. His life images and perceptions have some strong collective roots, they interweave strongly with the religion. He uses religious references to formulate images and manifestations to create a sacred universe where he can inhabit and function.

The aim of this paper is to analyze vernacular/ traditional Egyptian architecture and its religious/cultural manifestations through the Egyptian heritage. It will focus on the cultural heritage of "Saints" and how they affected both traditional architecture and urban through time. This paper will cover the following:

Presenting several psychological concepts in relation to the Egyptian vernacular urban forms. It will focus on the psychological Jungian concepts of "center of the world, Axis Mundi and sacred orientations". It will also investigate their corresponding anthropological concept of the "sacred hero" which has its manifestations in the innumerable number of the Egyptian saints / "Awliaa" through history.

Transcending the limitations of perspective by analyzing the urban product of a number of Egyptian case studies in the light of psychological and anthropological concepts to lay out certain popular principles and constraints that control their urban manifestation.

Exploring The huge legacy of Saints/ Awliaa with all their related festive ceremonies as this collective belief of saints leads to an important socio-cultural event that is held in most of Egyptian urban settlements. It is "Al-Moulid", a religious ceremonial festival that is held to celebrate the birth of the saints. These religious ceremonies have a strong role in formulating the Egyptian cultural and religious identities.

Finally, presenting a classification for the Egyptian villages and cities on corresponding to this cultural / religious heritage and their manifestations on the Egyptian urban forms.

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Keywords

Vernacular Architecture; Saints' Heritage; Shrines; Moulids; Archetypes

1. Introduction

1.1. Problem

Egypt since the beginning of time was a rural community and the Egyptian village was the heart of it. Most of the Egyptian cities were once a village that has grown -sometimes over thousands of years- into a huge urban center. Till this day, although this growth may appear to be a random one that is only governed by physical constraints or

topography, it has many layers of cultural and social aspects that resulted such urban forms through history.

1.2. Objectives

First, it is to read and interpret vernacular and popular architecture and urbanism in the light of contemporary sustainable, psychological and anthropological theories. Second, to analyze the existing Egyptian vernacular urban forms from a socio-cultural perspective. Finally, to reach an urban pattern language that are truly developed from the Egyptian vernacular and popular thinking.

1.3. Methodology

First, conducting an analytical approach based on psychological and anthropological theories to understand the human psyche and how an ethnic group or a community develops a collective pattern of thinking and behavior. This paper will work under the umbrella of the Jungian psychological school with their famous theory of “The Archetypes of the collective Unconscious” along with Mircea Eliade’s theory of “System of the world”. Finally, Presenting several case studies from all around Egypt to reach a classification of urban forms based on the past mentioned theories.

2. The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious and Their Manifestations in Architecture

According to Carl Jostav Jung (1934), there are certain images that are rooted deep in the collective unconscious of the human kind. These images are universal in type and leave their significant imprint on immaterial cultural components, such as religion, myth and folklore. (Salman, 2008)

Since architecture, or in other words the Art of Dwelling, is one of the significant products of material culture, the universal images of the collective unconscious found their way to such an art. The concept of archetypes are one of the strongest ones that affect consciously or unconsciously the universal act of dwelling of the traditional man. They reveal themselves clearly on the various levels of dwelling process: from laying the first stone to construct the main unit “the house” - its location, and the existential choice of its external and internal orientations - to the urban level and the choice of settlement location, shape and spatial orientations. They even reveal themselves in all rituals and ceremonies that are associated with the building process itself.

There is no known knowledge of the number of archetypes but there are certain ones that are accustomedly known to manifest themselves in traditional architecture through history. There are fundamental archetypes such as the sacred Center, Axis Mundi, sacred Orientation and there are other number of secondary/ supportive archetypes such as territoriality, the threshold, Opposition and purification. They appear in tangled forms and complete one another.

This paper will cover the most fundamental archetypes of the sacred center, Axis Mundi, sacred orientations, their relation to the concept of “Wali” and their manifestations on the Egyptian Urban Forms.

The fundamental archetypes include:

2.1. The Sacred Center

It is the center of the self, house, temple and settlement that function as the center of the universe. It can be argued that the conceptual image of “Center” is the most fundamental archetype. It was studied by several religion researchers and anthropologists such as Mercea Eliade (1954, 1957) and Joseph Campbell (1949). It was proved to be a fundamental concept as old as the era of first settlements in the Paleolithic Age. It basically adapts the idea that the individual fashions his world and dwells at the center of the universe. The architectonic symbolism in such a concept has taken many forms through history. It can be seen on different levels starting from symbolizing the

house as the exact center of the universe to the level of considering the city as a sacred mountain that also works as the center of the universe (Eliade, 1957).

2.2. Axis Mundi

As the sacred manifests itself in the center, it must establish a direct connection between Celestial Archetype and its imago mundi built terrestrially as a house / settlement. This link is the direct vertical connection to the absolute reality and central axis for all future orientations.

The Axis mundi or the sacred central axis has many forms in historical and present vernacular/ popular architecture. It can be seen as a sacred pole or a sacred tree in the middle of a primitive settlement, a minaret in a shrine or a mosque, or in the city itself that functions as an axis mundi symbolically introduced as a sacred mountain. This archetypal image of "Axis Mundi" is countlessly used in architecture throughout history especially in the architecture that carries a religious function. For example, the pharaonic Obelisk, the Totem Tower of native North American Indians, the several forms of the Buddhist's Pagoda towers of Central and East Asia, and mosque minarets in Islamic communities. In fact, the Islamic minaret is one of the strongest images of "Axis mundi". It represents the concept of "Monotheism" through its strong symbolical language. It emphasizes the concept of unity through its vertical transformations in Pure/Sacred geometrical shapes to connect the two realms (the sacred and the profane) starting from Square/ Earth to reach one point/ one god (Allah).

2.3. Orientation

When Eliade explained his "System of The World" Theory, he stated that: The break effected in space that allows the world to be constituted, because it reveals the fixed point, the central axis for all future orientation. When the sacred manifests itself in any hierophany, there is not only a break in the homogeneity of space; there is also a revelation of an absolute reality, opposed to the non-reality of the vast surrounding expanse. The manifestation of the sacred ontologically creates the world. In the homogeneous and infinite expanse, in which no point of reference is possible and hence no orientation can be established, the hierophany reveals an absolute fixed point, a center. (Eliade, 1979; Gray, 1996)

When analyzing such a system it should be noted that Archetypes manifest themselves in every step of it. The incredible consistency of appearance of such unique patterns open a window to how a traditional social group thinks and functions accordingly while constructing their own world. This paradigmatic act of creation can be summarized in the following steps:

- a. A sacred space constitutes a break in the homogeneity of space (chaos).
- b. This break is symbolized by an opening by which a passage from one cosmic region to another is made possible: from the heaven to earth and vice versa, from earth to the underworld, recognizing the boundaries (Territoriality Archetype).
- c. Communication with the heaven is expressed by one or another of certain images. All of which refers to the (Axis Mundi Archetypes) such as a pillar, a universal column or a sacred mountain.
- d. Around the cosmic axis lies the world and hence the axis is located in the middle so this exact point is considered to be the center of the earth (the archetype of "Center").
- e. Around this center with its connective vertical axis all future orientation is directed to such a point. (Archetype of Orientation) (Eliade, 1957)

Based on several cases and examples throughout the world, it was clear that this significant archetype is not limited to primitive societies or small scale urban settlements. In fact, it exists almost in every known culture taking one form or another. For example, the most well acknowledged center of orientation that affects the life of over 2 billion people on an everyday basis is the Holy house of Allah "*Kabaa*" in Islam and its sacred direction to it of what is known as "*Al Quibla*" in all languages of Islamic commonwealth. It plays a fundamental rule in the lives

of every Muslim and is involved in an immense number of religious rituals and performances.

Allah Says in his Holy Quraan:

"قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۚ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ" (سورة البقرة, الآية 144).

(We have certainly seen the turning of your face, [O Muhammad], toward the heaven, and We will surely turn you to a qiblah with which you will be pleased. So turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Haram. And wherever you [believers] are, turn your faces toward it [in prayer]. Indeed, those who have been given the Scripture well know that it is the truth from their Lord. And Allah is not unaware of what they do. (King Saud University project for Digital Mosahaf and translations)

Figure1 . A scheme of sacred geometry with eight sectors of the world around Kaaba. The Scheme is found only in a fifteenth-century manuscript of geographical treaties by the tenth-century Abu Abdallah al-Maqaddasi. As early as this scheme is, please note that it has differences from the new ones based on the cardinal point. This was defined in terms of polar star and the rising and sitting of Canopus; the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek (Preussischer Kulturbesitz), Berlin.



Figure 1.

Based on this blished “Aya” , all niches “Mehrab” and consequently mosques are directed to the direction of “Kabaa” wherever their place in the world is. This orientation did not only affect the orientation of mosques in muslim urban societies. It expanded to other architectural forms and functions to include Madrasas, which were adjoined to mosques in the early and medieval Islam era, tombs, the dead are buried so as to rise facing “Quibla” at the day of resurrection, some private houses and their facilities. It even dominated part of city planning of the orientation of the whole city such as in the case of early city of Kufa. (King 1995: .254.)

Furthermore, the archetype of orientation is not only seen in “qibla” in Muslim communities and cities. It also can be seen in the internal arrangement of urban space within the city as the mosque can work as a sacred center of its own for settlement orientation. For instance, in the description of the early city of Kufa and the city of Basra, it should be noted that a remarkable procedure was taken while laying out those cities. At the beginning the mosque is layed out and then from its center, the boundaries of surrounding space were set by shooting arrows in the

four directions - cardinal points - and marked by a surrounding ditch. Then the residential zones were established around those boundaries. Similar concept was used in Baghdad where residential zones were laid in concentric circles around the central space, which consisted of the mosque and caliph's palace. The residential zone formed a belt around the sacred central space and punctured with four fortified gates marking the end of two perpendicular axes intersecting at the center of the city. (Akkash, 2005: 196.)

2.4. The Sacred Centers of Orientation; the Concept of the Paradigmatic Cosmic Hero

From this religious concept, a Mytho- Religious one emerged, which is the concept of "Wali". The Wali is a saint or a pious man who sought and was granted a blessed state of enlightenment. This blessing transformed him from his regular mortal state to a sacred hero who is known for his miracles and his attachment to the holy and the entire sacred realm. At this point, the popular mind starts to express his need to be connected to what is sacred by attaching and orienting themselves physically and emotionally to such a hero in order to be contained and protected from the surrounding chaos.

Thus, an example from Egypt, Sudan and North Africa and according to Trimmingham (1965) it is shown that:

Every Muslim believes that beside the visible order of believers there exists an invisible order of saints who, under the direction of Allah, manage the affairs of the world for him. So bound up are the saints with the religious life in the Sudan that to think of Allah without his intermediaries is impossible. (Kennedy, 1978: 12.)

3. The Development of the Egyptian Village Through History

Whether living in Upper Egypt or Lower Egypt, rural traditional Egyptians share the same local culture with slight changes related to tribal and folklore considerations. In general, and through thousands of years, they view themselves and the world through unique representations and manifestations that reflect interwoven religious and cosmological beliefs.

The typical Egyptian village is circular in shape. It is constructed on an Elevated ground more shaped like Inverted saucer. The Elevated natural/ artificial hill is the remaining legacy of the flooding nature of the Nile valley where the Nile flood used to literally isolate villages from one another to the point that Herodotus described the villages at the time of the flood appear to one's sight as the islands of the Greek archipelago. (Hemdan:1967, par.2, p.214)

The village is concentric in form with a condensed urban tissue (Figure 1). The roads are twisted and narrow dead-ends that start from the ring road that surrounds the village "Dayer Al Nahya" and lead to the center. at the center, there is usually the village mosque surrounded by the mayor's house and commercial uses. The exception, cases of the circular form can be found on the far north of the fishermen's villages on the Mediterranean Sea and far south in the Nubian villages on the Nile where the villages are linear and oriented towards the sea / Nile. The village mosque which represent the sacred center of the village and located in its highest level was in most cases dedicated to a certain *Wali*.

4. The Egyptian Settlements' Morphological Types

According the past mentioned of sacred orientations, the Egyptian urban settlements can be divided into 6 significant classifications. These classifications are presented with different number of examples from villages and cities across Egypt

- Concentric settlements with urban orientation around a sacred center with a central ceremonial urban space.
- Concentric settlements with urban orientation around a sacred center without a central ceremonial urban space.
- Multi-nuclei urban settlements.
- Wali/Nile oriented urban settlements.



Figure 2. Abo Awali Village, Monofya Governate

- Nile oriented settlements.
- A sacred node with a ceremonial sacred space without urban settlement.

4.1. Concentric Settlements with Urban Orientation around Sacred Center and Central Ceremonial Urban Space

In this classification, an urban settlement form is oriented around a sacred center that is, in some cases, a single standing domed shrine or, in other cases, a shrine attached to a mosque/minaret. In this category, there are central urban spaces attached where ceremonial religious celebrations "Mawlid" are held at a certain time of year. Sometimes it is a small one attended by locals and nearby villagers and sometimes it is a major event with attendees from all Sufi orders and Egyptians from all the country as in the case of Sidi Ahmed Al Badawy 's Mawlid in Tanta.

This type can be seen several cities and villages for example, in Sidi Ghazi Kafr Alshiekh. Dier Jabel Altair Al Menya. Desouk, Kafr Alsheikh and in Tanta, Gharbya.

4.1.1. Example 1: Sidi Ghazy. Kafr AlShiekh. Saint / Wali Name: Sidi Mohamed Al Moghazi **History**

It was mentioned as Dair Shobra Kalsa in Ibn Mamti book and Deirab Shobra Kalsa in Tohfet AL Ershad as a part of Ghabya district. Since it was famous for the shrine of Sidi Mohamed Almoghazy, it became famous among the locals with the name of Sidi Ghazy more than its original name. It was mentioned in public records with the name of Al Kafr Al Gharby in 1228 Hijri (1813AD) and in 1259 Hijri (1844 AD). (Ramsy:1945, p.142)

In 1939, public authorities changed its name officially to Sidi Ghazy; then it was declared as a city in 2013.

Description:

Sidi Mohamed AL Moghazy Alkabar, the founder of Al Moghazya Al Khlwatya Sufi order. a decend from Prophet Mohamed (PBUH), He was born in Fez in 583 Hijri (1187 AD). He came to Egypt in Bybars AL Bendqdary Ruling Era and the sultan met him himself when he arrived from Mecca. Sidi Ghazy Settled and died near a small village called Dier Shobra Kalsa. People started to inhabit the space around the shrine and the village expanded and oriented. and became known to locals as Zawyet Sidi Ghazi . In 1284 Hijri (1867 AD), Khoshyar Hanem, the mother of Khidiwi Ismail, built a new shrine and a mosque to Sidi Ghazi at the same location of his shrine. Over the years, especially after the post 1952-Revolution land reform, the village started to sprawl from its oriented pattern spreading at the expense of its agricultural fields taking the same pattern of the agricultural division system and boundies.



Figure 3. Sidi Ghazi, Kafr Alshiekh Governate



Figure 4. Satellite map of Sidi Ghazy Center

Verified Archetypes: Sacred Center, Orientation around the Sacred Center, Territoriality.

4.1.2. Example 2: Dair Jabel AlTair Village, Samalot, Almanyia Saint / Wali Name: Saint Mary Monastery

History

Also named as Jabel al Kaf, it was one of the stops of the holy family in their journey when they stayed in a cave there for 3 days. It was named as “Jabel Al Tier” as it was a stop point for thousands of birds in their winter migrations. The name of “Jabel al Kaf” derived from a hand mark that is said to be left palm of the hand of the Christ, which was made when he touched the mountain when it bowed in adoration before him. A church was established at the same place of the cave during the third century by queen Helyana.



Figure 5. Sidi Ghazy (Egyptian Survey Authority, 1917,1927)

Description

As an important stop on the holy family journey, the mountain has become sacred in the Christian/Coptic religious life. A big festival “Mawlid” is held annually for “Aladra” or Virgin Mary in the mid of May for one week attended by more than a million devotees. This sacred mountain and its church are considered to be the heart and soul of the village that was established on the rocky high ground above the Nile to serve the church, monastery and their devotees.



Figure 6. Dair Jabel Altair, Al Manya

Verified Archetypes: Sacred Center, Orientation around the Sacred Center, Territoriality.

4.1.3. Example 3: Desouk, Kafer Al Sheikh Saint / Wali: Sidi Ibrahim Al Desouky

History

An old village that grew later into a city and a famous center. It was mentioned in Ibn Mamati Book and in Tohft Al Ershad as a big well-inhabited village with a great shrine of Sidi Ibrahim Al Desouky. (Ramsy: 1945, p.47)

Description

Ibrahim Ibn Abd Alaziz Abo AL Magd , a decend of Emam Ali, was named “Al Desouky” as he was born in a small village called Desouk. One of the four pillars of Sufi philosophy, he was born in 653 Hijri (1255 AD) (Mostafa:1981,p.331) and died 596 Hijri (1296 AD).

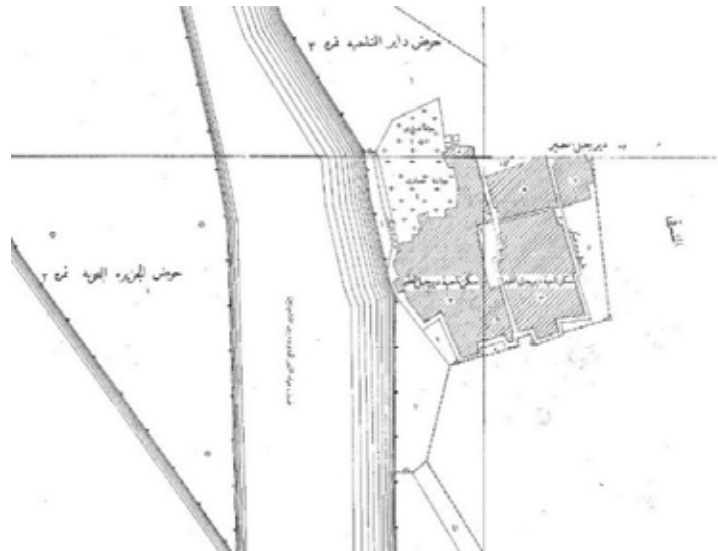


Figure 7. Dair Jabel Al Tair (Egyptian Survey Authority,1906)



Figure 8. Dair Jabel Al Tair Center

Sidi Ibrahim el Desouky was assigned to be “*Shiekh Al Islam*” by Sultan Bybers Al Bendeqdari who ordered to build a small “Zawya” for him in his village to meet his students in and teach. After his death, he was buried at the same spot that became his shrine and mosque. The village started to grow around the shrine and became the center of a big festival “Mawluid” that is held twice a year: one in the month of October to celebrate Sidi Ibrahim’s birth, and the other one - in the Hijri month of Rajab. His mawlud is attended by more than a million attendees and more that 77 Sufi orders from around the world.



Figure 9. Desouk Satellite map



Figure 10. Desouk’s center

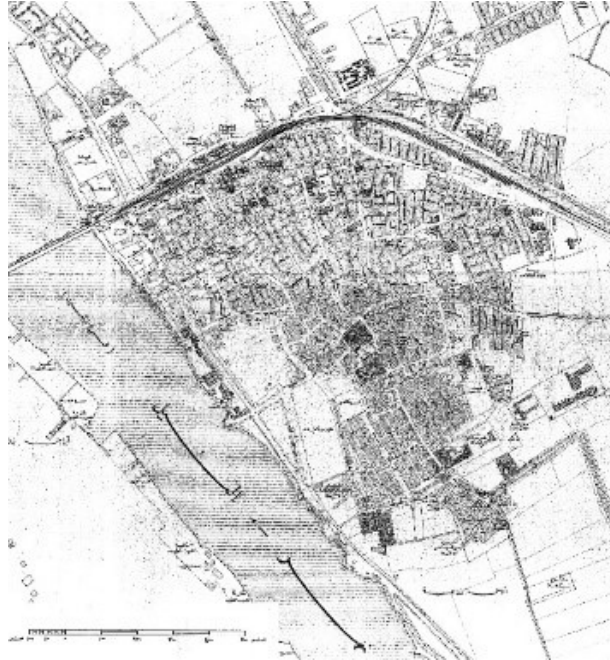


Figure 11. Desouk (Egyptian Survey Authority, 1955, 1966)

Verified Archetypes: Sacred Center, Orientation around the Sacred Center, Territoriality.

4.2. Concentric Settlements With Urban Orientation around Sacred Center Without Central Ceremonial Urban Space

In this type, an urban settlement is oriented around a sacred center without the centered ceremonial space. All those settlements share certain characteristics:

- Though beliefs in his sacred still stand, the history of the “Wali”, his transformation and miracles start to fade.
- The Mawlid has disappeared. Instead of the Mawlid, a small ceremonial ritual starts taking place in the middle of the Hijri month of Shabaan: “Laylat Alnesf Men Shabaan” where Quran Karim and “Zekr” rings are held or, on a smaller scale, Quran is broadcasted through microphones in the village streets without any certain direct relation between the ritual and the “Wali”.
- This can be seen for an example in Tafahna Al Azab Monofya., Banaweet, Sohag, Al Magbra Sohag, Al Kalabya, Qena.

4.2.1. Example: Tafahna Al Azab Village, Qwesna, Al Monofya Saint/ Wali’s Name : Sidi Dawood Al Azab

History

An old village that was mentioned in *Mogam Al Beldaan* under the name of *Tafhna Beledah* as a part of Qwesna Island and in Ibn Mamati’s book *Tohfet Al Ershad* under the name of *Tafhna Al Kobra* (Qwesna Island) to distinguish it from *Tafhna Al Soghra* (which is *Tafhna Al Ashraf* in *Meet Ghamr*). In 1228 Hijri (1813AD), its name changed to Tafhna Al Azab as it was known among locals to honor Wali Allah Sidi Dawood Al Azab, whose shrine is located at the exact middle of the village. (Ramsy: 1945, p. 56)

Description

Dawood Ibn Merhef Ibn Ahmed was born in 606 Hijri (1209 AD). A well known shiekh of the Refaiee movment with lots of followers and known miracles, he was named Sidi Dawood Al Azab as he never married, like his mentors, Sidi Ahmed Al Badawy and Sidi Ibrahim Al Desouky



Figure 12. Tafahna AlAzab Satellite map

After he died in 668 Hijri (1269AD), he was buried on a high ground where the village started to orient around. It was said that the meaning of “Tafana” referred to the high ground in old hieroglyphic language, though this information has not been confirmed.



Figure 13. Tafahna Al Azab's center

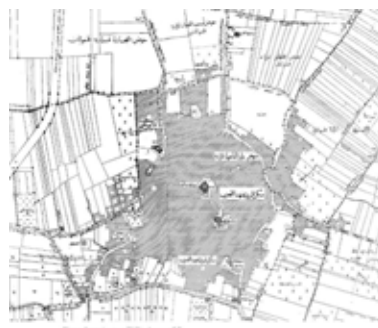


Figure 14. Tafahna Al Azab (Egyptian Survey Authority,1941, 1961- 2005

Verified Archetypes: Sacred Center, Orientation around the Sacred Center, Territoriality.

4.3. Multi-Nuclei Urban Settlements

In such settlements, in one case, a sacred center appears in a certain era. Locals start inhabiting its surrounding areas and urban development starts orienting around the sacred node. Later and with the change of social and cultural environments, a new sacred center appears and again, urban development starts orienting around the new

center. The result would be a multi-centered or a multi-nuclei urban settlement with two or more sacred centers for orientation within one territory.

Such a case is evident in “Al Batanon, Monofya”, where the first sacred center is Saint Aba Cragon Al Batanoni church and the shrine established beside a small village “*Kafir*” during the Coptic empire. Coptic locals started inhabiting the surrounding areas of the church. In around a thousand years later, during the Mamluk era when most locals converted to Islam with time, a new sacred center appeared manifested in the form of Sidi Abu Saleh Shrine that became the focus of the new urban orientation.

In other cases, two villages with two different sacred centers grow and develop until they merge together forming either one settlement under one name or two attached settlements, each with its own name and boundaries despite the merged and attached territories.

As an example for this case : El Batanon, AL Monofia., Al Qurashya & Meet Yazeed Gharbya.

4.3.1. Al Batanon, Shebeen Al Kom, Monofya Saint /Wali’s Name: St. Aba Cragon, Sidi Abo Saleh

History

An old village, it was mentioned in Gotie’s Dictionary with its Egyptian name “Pathnon” and its Coptic name Bathanon”, which became its current name after turning “th” to “t” in Tohfet Alershad & Ibn Mamati’s . It was also known as “Hasyet Al Acpat” Copt’s village. (Ramsy:1945, p.185)

Description

One of the remarkable examples that validate the archetypal model. The first sacred center existed in Coptic era. Saint Aba Cragon Al Batanoni was a famous pious priest with lots of healing miracles. After a long journey, he was killed in Alexandria by Maksemenious ceaser.

After his death, the priest of Mounof had a vision that showed the place where Aba Cragon Al Batanoni was buried. His holy body was relocated and reburied beside his hometown Al Batanon; and a small church was built to contain the holy body.



Figure 15. Al Batanon Satellite map

A small village started to orient urbanely around the sacred shrine of Aba Cragon Al Batanoni and continued its growth until the early days of Islam. With the spread of Islam among the village inhabitants, a new center appeared after the death of another pious man who was Sidi Abo Saleh. A shrine was established to the south of the existing village of Batanon. The village started to extend to the south forming a new orientation around the new sacred center creating multi-centered urban settlements.



Figure 16. Al Batanon's Center



Figure 17. Al Batanon (Egyptian Survey Authority, 1922, 1932)

Verified Archetypes: Sacred Center, Orientation around the Sacred Center, Territoriality.

4.4. Wali/Nile Oriented Urban Settlements

In such settlements, the sacredness of Saint/Wali is combined with the veneration of the River Nile. In such settlements, a shrine is usually attached to the river Nile, located on the riverbanks where the urban orientation is directed to both the shrine and river Nile. This Wali/ Nile relation is not only limited to urban orientation; it extends to the practice of several rituals and ceremonial acts in both ceremonial festivals “Mawlid” and Wali offerings in everyday life activities.

For example, Sidi Abo Al Hagag Al Oqsori shrine is located in Luxor Temple. This is a strong example of the sacred center with strong relation to the river Nile (Purification). In this example, the River Nile and Sacred Wali were side by side and worked as the center for all future urban orientation.

One evidence of the Wali/River relation appears in ceremonial festivals “Mawlid”. For example, in Abo Al Hagag’s mawlid, three boats are carried in a big marching, or “Zafa”, as an attribute to the Nile. This space occupied by Louxor Temple on the riverbank proved to be one of the sacred centers throughout time as, in the same location, Louxor Temple, a small church, and then later on Sidi Abo Al Hagag shrine were built replacing each other. All city urban elements are oriented around this sacred spot.

Another example of Wali/River relation is obvious in Mawlid of Sidi Ismail Al Embabi, Embaba, Cairo. This mawlid was last seen in late 1920. It was held on the same day with an ancient pharaonic celebration “Eid al Noqta”, or the “drop festival” when it was believed that the Nile flood is created by the teardrops of Isis. In this mawlid, numerous boats float in the River Nile - “Zafa” - starting from the Wali’s shrine which is located on the riverbank.

Verified Archetypes: Sacred Center, Orientation around the Sacred Center, Purification.

4.5. Nile Oriented Settlements

An example of the strong orientation along the river Nile was evident in an old Nubian village (before the construction of the High Dam). In those villages, the river Nile was involved in almost every ceremonial act and everyday ritual. It worked as the sacred center, a threshold to other worlds, and method of purification and transformations. It was believed that under the water of the Nile (threshold Archetype) another reversed world existed (Opposition Archetype), which was occupied by river beings “Banat Al Bahr”. Sometimes a Wali used to take a journey, as mentioned in the previous chapter, representing the journey of the sacred hero where he crosses the threshold to the otherworld of the Nile beings and comes back in a new state on illumination that transforms him into a more sacred state.



Figure 18. Offerings for Sidi Mansour, whose shrine is located at the middle of the Nile, usually include sweets made from milk and rice thrown in the Nile to guarantee pregnancy and children for the newlyweds. Aswan

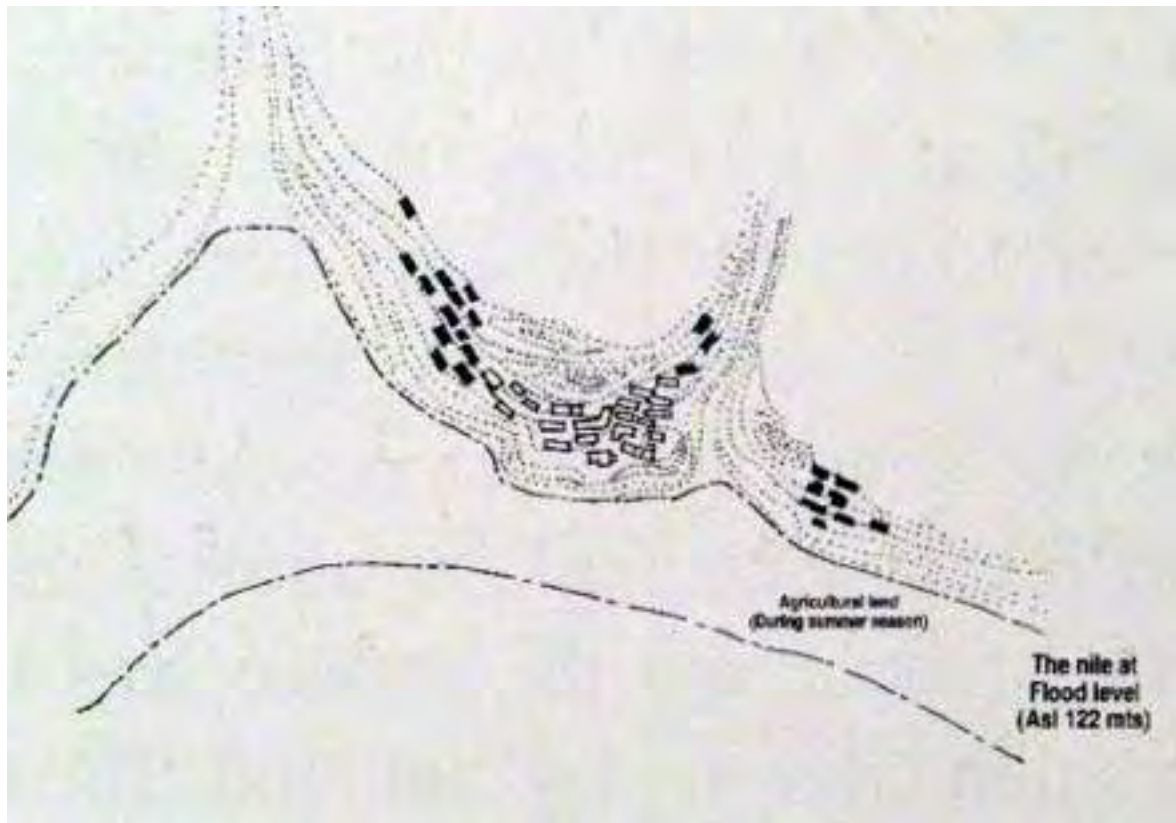


Figure 19. A village in the district of Kenouz , Old Nubia(Al Hakim, 1998).

Verified Archetypes: Purification, Threshold, Hero's Sacred Journey

4.6. Sacred Node With Ceremonial Sacred Space Without Urban Settlement

In this case, the sacred point is so strong that although it is located in an isolated deserted location, which is uninhabitable, it works as a strong attraction point for devotees who travel hundreds of kilometers to attend the ceremonies. An example for this is Sidi Abo Al Hassan Al Shazli's Mawlid in the deserted area of Wadi Humaythera, in Al Qusair.

5. Conclusion

Cultural components such as religion and folklore are very important to be understood and analyzed in order to realize the concept of dwelling in the human mind. The social and psychological role of religion is not only in providing specific symbolic language or symbols. Its importance also rests on the fact that it is the matter of understanding of men's notion of the "absolute reality" and of how it induces, implies and colors his sense of reasonable, moral and practical of the world.

- The mechanism of the traditional thought must be explored and analyzed in order to understand the reasons behind symbols and metaphors used in the spatial arrangements within buildings and urban landscape.
- The importance of the given analytical classification of the Egyptian traditional urban settlements that it gives a tool of understanding the mechanism and the methods on urban growth through history. Such understanding opens the door for more sustainable designs in urban planning for the Egyptian communities. a design that not only presents solutions and upgrades of the physical existing infrastructures but presents a method of growth for existing communities and the development of new ones.

- The strong belief in sacred heroes in the Egyptian heritage with its strong and reach elements can be interpreted in urban design sustainably through creating fixed nodes of public spaces for urban orientations. These nodes act socially as a gathering ceremonial spaces, culturally as a public space of self and personal development/ training, and economically by creating more customized job opportunities

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