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Prince Omar Toussoun

A member of the Egyptian royal family, Prince Omar Toussoun acquired a legendary status as a nationalist, scholar, man of action, patron of many of Alexandria's societies, agricultural reformer, and archeologist. This study of his life shows the Prince of Alexandria as he lives through some of the most momentous events of Egyptian history, from the bombardment of 1882 to World War II.

Editors

Mohamed Awad & Carole Escoffey



The Alexandria and Mediterranean
Research Center

OMAR TOUSSOUN PRINCE OF ALEXANDRIA

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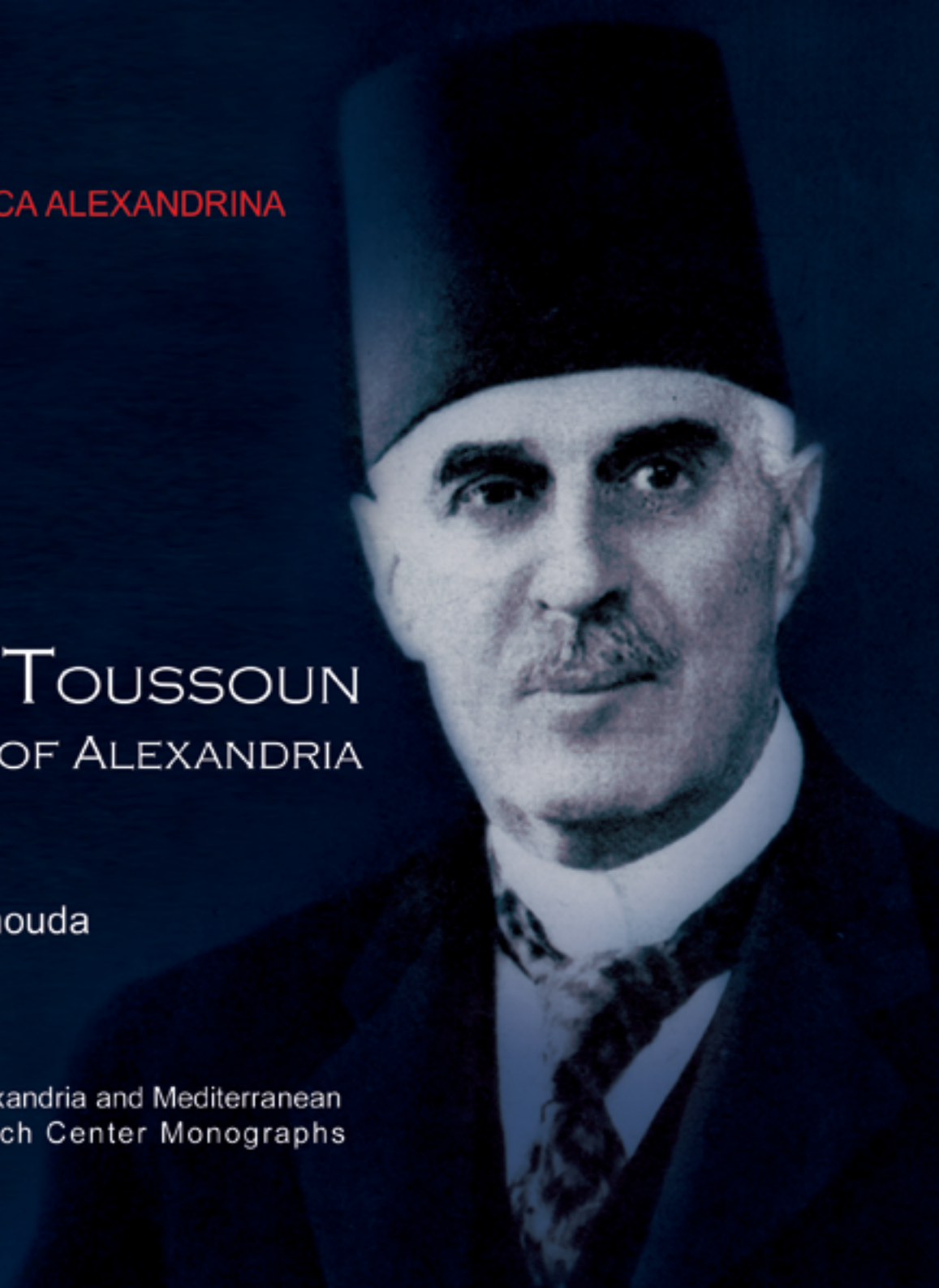
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Sahar Hamouda

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The Alexandria and Mediterranean
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OMAR TOUSSOUN

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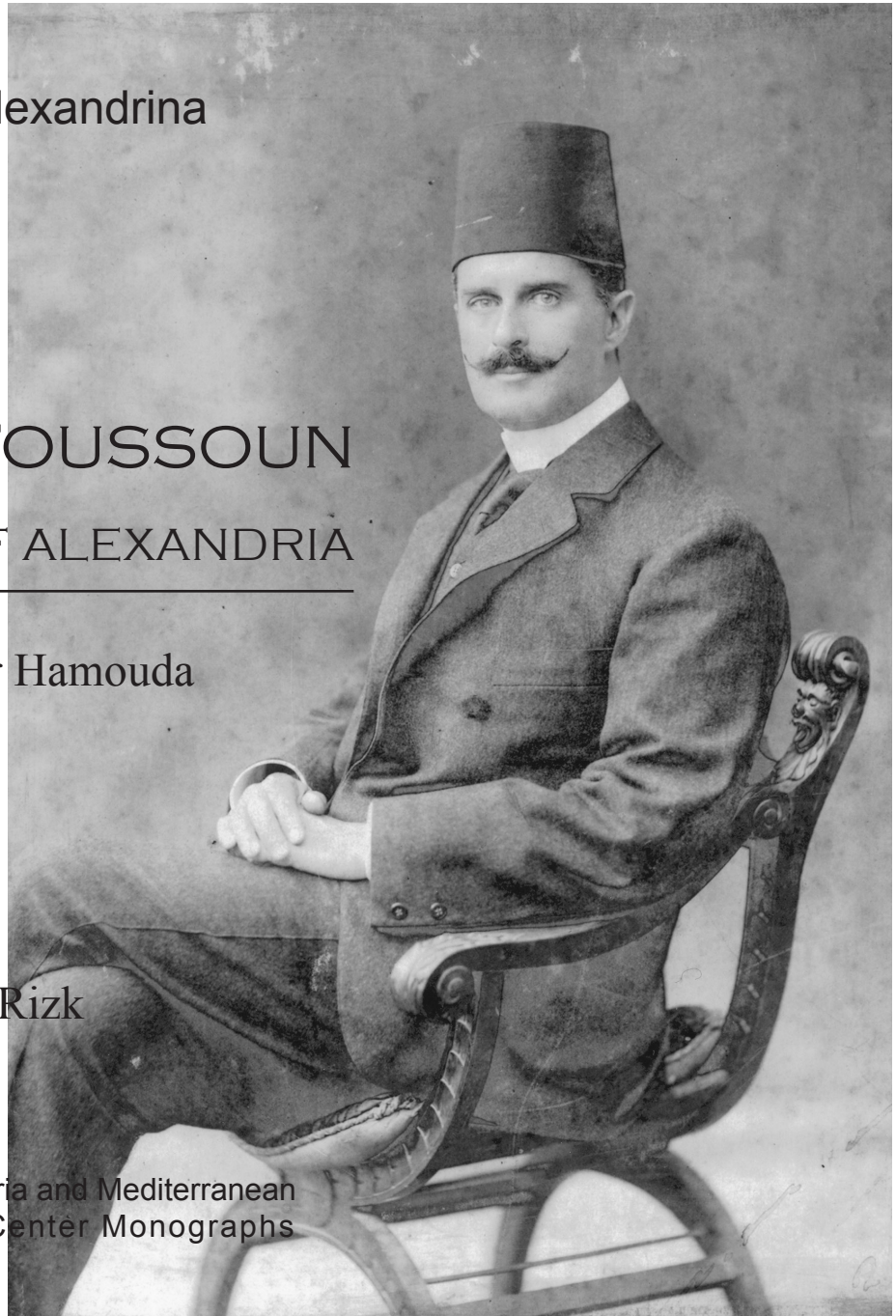
OMAR TOUSSOUN
PRINCE OF ALEXANDRIA

Sahar Hamouda

Foreword by
Younan Labib Rizk

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Bibliotheca Alexandrina Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hamouda, Sahar.

Omar Toussoun: Prince of Alexandria. Alexandria: Bibliotheca Alexandrina, 2004.

132 p. cm 21.5 x 21.5

Registration number in Dar EL Koutob 2004/16442

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CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS	iiv
EDITORS' INTRODUCTION	xi
FOREWORD	xiii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xv
CHAPTER ONE: PRINCE OF ALEXANDRIA	1
CHAPTER TWO: OMAR ABUL-FELLAH	17
CHAPTER THREE: BENEVOLENCE AND TRADITION	29
CHAPTER FOUR: KING OR NATIONAL HERO?	41
CHAPTER FIVE: OF DESERTS, SEAS AND BOOKS	63
EPILOGUE:	79
END NOTES	83
APPENDICES	87
GLOSSARY OF NAMES	99
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	103
GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY	107



ILLUSTRATIONS

Omar Toussoun card	ix
Palace No. 3 on the Mahmoudieh Canal	1
The Garden of the Mahmoudieh Palace No. 3	2
The royal mausoleum on Nebi Daniel Street	4
Prince Mohamed Toussoun	5
Princess Melek Per	5
Princess Bahiga Hassan	6
Hassan and Said Toussoun	7
Family tree	9
With one of his grandsons	10
The Alexandria Sporting Club	11
Prince Omar Tossoun with King Farouk in the Alexandria Sporting Club	11
Villa Toussoun in Bacos,	11
At Victoria College	12
Prince Omar Toussoun's desk and personal library	13
Prince Toussoun's funeral	14
Prince Toussoun's funeral	15
The <i>Daira</i> In Taftesh-el-Khazzan	17
The house in Abu Kir	19
Window detail at the local Agriculture Society in Taftesh -el-Khazzan	21
One of the houses Prince Toussoun had built for his employees	21
The remaining house of one of the two supervisors of Taftesh-el-Khazzan	22
The Prince's private phone in the <i>Daira</i> in Taftesh-el-Khazzan	22
The shrine of el Sheikh Abul-Kassem in Taftesh-el-Khazzan	23
The portrait of Omar Toussoun in the Agricultural Museum	24
The inauguration ceremony of the Agricultural Society's exhibition in 1936.	25
Prince Omar Toussoun and King Farouk at the agricultural exhibition	27
Prince Omar Toussoun with narghile	29



With the Queen of Belgium	30
The Nebi Daniel Mosque to the left, with the royal mausoleum to the right	36
Zamalek Palace in Neo-Islamic style	38
Prince Omar Toussoun King Farouk	41
Letter from Prince Omar Toussoun to King Farouk	42
The British Fleet bombarding Alexandria in 1882. Photographer L. Fiorillo	46
The forts of Alexandria and the British ships that bombarded them on 11th July 1882	48
The Shubra Palace	51
Omar Toussoun with Saad Zaghloul Pasha and Ahmed Mazloun Pasha in Beit-el-Umma in 1923	53
King Farouk in the center, with Prince Omar Toussoun to his right, and Ahmed Hassanein Pasha to his left	55
King Farouk's wedding	61
Prince Toussoun at his desk	63
The Mareotis Mosaics	64
The Cellia pottery	67
At the Greco-Roman Museum	67
In the Western Desert	68
Alexander the Great's route to Siwa Oasis	70
Alexander the Great's marble head in the Greco-Roman Museum	71
Prince Omar Toussoun paying a visit to the Coast Guards Center at Mex	72
Map of Abu Kir Bay showing the underwater sites and monuments	73
The Anfouchi Necropolis	74
Interest in underwater archeology continues: Hussein and Mounira Toussoun with Frank Goddio on board <i>Princess Douda</i> at Abu Kir Bay, 2002	77
<i>The Renaissance of Egypt</i> by Mahmoud Mokhtar	79
Letter from Prince Omar Toussoun to Prince Mohamed Ali Tewfik	94
letter to <i>Al Ahram Al Massa'i</i> 4 February 2000	96



الإمير عبد طوسون

سدي مولف هذا الاطمان العز عبد الجبار الصني نبك سدي
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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION
TO THE ALEXANDRIA AND MEDITERRANEAN RESEARCH CENTER
MONOGRAPHS

The Alexandria and Mediterranean Research Center (Alex-Med) is one of several research centers affiliated to the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. One of its main objectives is to conduct research on Alexandria and the Mediterranean, and to publish monographs on related issues. These may cover topics as diverse as history, art, travel, literature, and architecture, and may also include memoirs and autobiographies.

Toussoun: Prince of Alexandria is the first monograph to be published in the Alexandria and Mediterranean Research Center Monographs, and was written to commemorate the occasion of the donation to the Bibliotheca Alexandrina of Prince Omar Toussoun's publications, by his grandson Hussein Toussoun and his family. Toussoun was a man of great stature, much loved and respected by Alexandrians, a prince who had everything - but who generously gave of it to his country. This monograph is dedicated to his memory.

FOREWORD

During his lifetime, Prince Omar Toussoun was a much loved member of the Egyptian royal family. Academic interest in his life and works has continued to grow since his death in 1944. Much research has been conducted on his scholarly work, statesmanship, contribution to the development of agriculture in Egypt, and archeological discoveries and explorations.

History may go on being rewritten. This monograph complements existing research on one of the important public figures in Alexandria and modern Egypt, and aims to throw light on a controversial period in Egyptian history. It is a portrait of a man who commanded the love and respect of the Egyptian nation, and who contributed much to the progress of Egypt.

Younan Labib Rizk

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have contributed in different ways to this monograph, and Alex-Med extends heartfelt thanks to them all.

Magdy Mesbah undertook the preliminary stages of research and provided the bulk of the material, and Mohamed Abdel Hafeez conducted research in Dar el Watha'ek el Arabiya and the Agricultural Museum in Cairo.

Makram Salama and Nagwa Kami were tireless in compiling and collecting books, articles and publications by or on Prince Omar Toussoun: without him the project would not have been possible.

Younan Labib Rizk, Mohamed and Maissa SidAhmed, Mustafa el Abbadi, Azza Kararah and Farouk Abaza all read the several drafts through. Their comments, revisions, insights, and memories are truly invaluable. We are grateful for their time and guidance.

For the photographs we thank Hussein and Mounira Toussoun, Mohamed Awad, Mohamed Abul Amayem, and Ahmed Hamada, Gawad Hamada, and Islam Fayed in the Alexandria Sporting Club. We also thank Abdel Fattah Ahmed Youssef for the Mex photograph.

Ahmed Abdel Moneim Fahmy was generous with his memories of Omar Toussoun and of life in Taftesh el Khazzan. Our trip to Fisha, to which he was our knowledgeable guide, was made memorable by the kind and hospitable reception of its people.

Last but not least, our thanks to Mohamed el Ekiaby, who was patient with us as we made numerous changes in the layout and graphics.

CHAPTER ONE
PRINCE OF ALEXANDRIA



Palace No. 3 on the Mahmoudieh Canal



The Garden of the Mahmoudieh Palace No.3



Called by the nation the prince of Alexandria – *amir el Iskindiriyah* – Omar Toussoun was perhaps the best loved individual in Alexandria during the first half of the twentieth century. He was a familiar figure in the city, driving about in his horse drawn carriage. When he went for a walk along the Mahmoudieh Canal, people would salaam as he passed by, asking for favors that were never turned down. His generosity was proverbial, but that was not the only thing that earned him the love of the nation. He won fame at home and abroad for his patriotism, scholarship in history and geography, expertise in agriculture and horse breeding, explorations and discoveries, sportsmanship, philanthropy, and uncompromising integrity. Alternatively referred to as the patriot prince, the Egyptian prince, the scholar prince, prince of the Nile Valley, the democratic prince, the humane prince, and as the prince of Alexandria, he was also commonly known by a very different name: *abul fellah*, or, the father of the peasant.

Omar Toussoun was a direct descendant of Mohamed Ali, the founder of modern Egypt. Mohamed Ali's second son to be viceroy of Egypt, Said Pasha, was Admiral of the Fleet, and for this reason he and his descendants lived and died in Alexandria, and were buried in the family mausoleum on Nebi Daniel Street – right next to where Alexander the Great is said to have been buried. These royal tombs were built by Mohamed Ali for his children who died young or were stillborn. Though the mausoleum no longer exists, it seems to have been a unique structure, as E. M. Forster's description indicates:

The tombs of the Khedivial family [are] worth seeing for their queerness; there is nothing like them in Alexandria. The Mausoleum is cruciform, painted to imitate marble, and covered with Turkey carpets. Out of the carpet rise the tombs, of all sizes but of similar design, and all painted white and gold. A red *tarboosh* indicates a man, a crown with conventional hair a woman. The most important person buried here is Said Pacha – third tomb on the right. He was the son of Mohamed Ali and ruled Egypt 1854-63.¹



While it is the name of Khedive Ismail that is best known in connection with the Suez Canal - in view of the magnificent celebrations that accompanied its inauguration - it was Said Pasha who signed the agreement with Ferdinand de Lesseps, granting the concession to dig the Canal. However, Said Pasha is most remembered for his love of the Egyptians, since it was he who first allowed them to hold high ranking posts in the army and other official functions which had previously been reserved for Turks, Circassians and foreigners. It was also he who in 1855 promulgated the Land Law allowing Egyptian peasants to own land, thereby reforming the state system of land ownership that had been practiced since ancient times. Another of his humane acts was the law he passed outlawing the slave trade in Egypt and freeing the slaves (though it would be several decades before slavery died out). This was the grandfather of Omar Toussoun. A brief summary of Toussoun's life was given by the prince himself in a note he wrote for the Arab Academy of Science in Damascus:



The royal mausoleum on Nebi Daniel Street



I am Prince Mohamed Omar Toussoun, son of Prince Mohamed Toussoun Pasha, son of Mohamed Said Pasha, the viceroy of Egypt, son of the great Mohamed Ali Pasha, head of the royal family of Egypt. My mother is Princess Bahshat Hour and my paternal grandmother is Princess Melek Per.

I was born in Alexandria on Sunday 5 Ragab, 1289 Hegira; 8 September 1872 AD. When I was four years old my father died, so my paternal grandmother looked after me and brought me up. I studied elementary sciences under specialized tutors in my father's palace, and when I reached puberty went to Switzerland where I continued my studies. I then toured England and France and observed various forms of social, scientific, industrial and agricultural progress, before returning to Egypt. I read and write Turkish, Arabic, French and English fluently, and can claim some knowledge in a number of fields.

When I came of age I took over my *daira*² and managed it myself. Supervising and administering my business did not distract me from reading and doing research in my library. I am fascinated by all that has to do with the history and geography of Egypt and Sudan, and have, since childhood, loved my country. I am proud of what I did during the Tripolitanian



Prince Mohamed Toussoun



Princess Melek Per



and Balkan wars. It was I who first thought of sending an Egyptian delegation to Versailles on 11 November 1918 to demand Egypt's independence. Then I had a part to play in the Abyssinian war, when I defended it against the Italians. I also contributed towards helping neighboring countries, and to many charitable organizations in Egypt. I have made contributions towards building and renovating mosques in Sudan, and to its religious and academic institutions and social clubs. I have encouraged agricultural exhibitions and worked towards strengthening brotherly and commercial relations between Egypt and Sudan.

I married one of the daughters of Prince Hassan Pasha, the son of Khedive Ismail Pasha, on 14 August 1898. God has blessed me with two sons: the Nabil Said Toussoun born on Sunday evening, 15 Ramadan 1318 Hegira; 7 January 1901 AD, and the Nabil Hassan Toussoun born on 19 Shaaban 1319 Hegira; 1 December 1901 AD. My daughters are the Nabila Emina born on 4 Thee el Ki'da 1320 Hegira; 2 February



Princess Bahiga Hassan



1903 AD, and the Nabila Esmat born on 30 Thee el Hijja 1321 Hegira; 17 March 1904 AD. She died in Istanbul on 8 Ramadan 1336 Hegira; 18 June 1918 AD. Her body was carried to Alexandria, where she was buried in the Nebi Daniel mausoleum.

This is all that has come to our mind regarding our autobiography, which we send to you in response to the request of the esteemed Arab Academy of Science.

20 June 1943.³



Hassan and Said Toussoun

These few lines were written barely six months before the prince died, but in spite of the formidable achievements listed, they hardly do justice to all that can be attributed to him. In fact, they are a perfect example of his modesty, for which he was also famed. But it must be noted that other members of the royal family were also erudite men of action. For instance, Prince Kamal el Din Hussein, son of the Sultan Hussein Kamel, was fluent in these four languages, was involved in nationalist work, and was a traveler and explorer. Prince Mohamed Ali went further afield in his travels, and published books on Syria and Egypt, North America and South Africa, and was also involved in a lot of social work. What was special about Omar Toussoun was that the scope of his activities was far broader.

Perhaps a quick description of the prince should be attempted before his achievements are reviewed in the following chapters. Omar Toussoun was described by his contemporaries as a tall, imposing, awe-inspiring man, handsome of face and straight of gait, with bright eyes that shone with intelligence. He was always impeccably dressed, and wore special outfits on his desert expeditions. It was a matter of pride with him that his clothes were all made in Egypt, for the whole purpose of his existence was bent towards one goal: the good of his country. Despite his princely bearing, he had a kind countenance and a ready ear, regardless of who the speaker was. Both at work and in the many societies he belonged to or headed, he was referred to as



the “democratic prince” because he allowed everybody to talk freely. However, his low voice expressed a firm opinion once it was formed, and it was said that he never shirked his duties nor minced his words, though he always softened them with a winning smile.

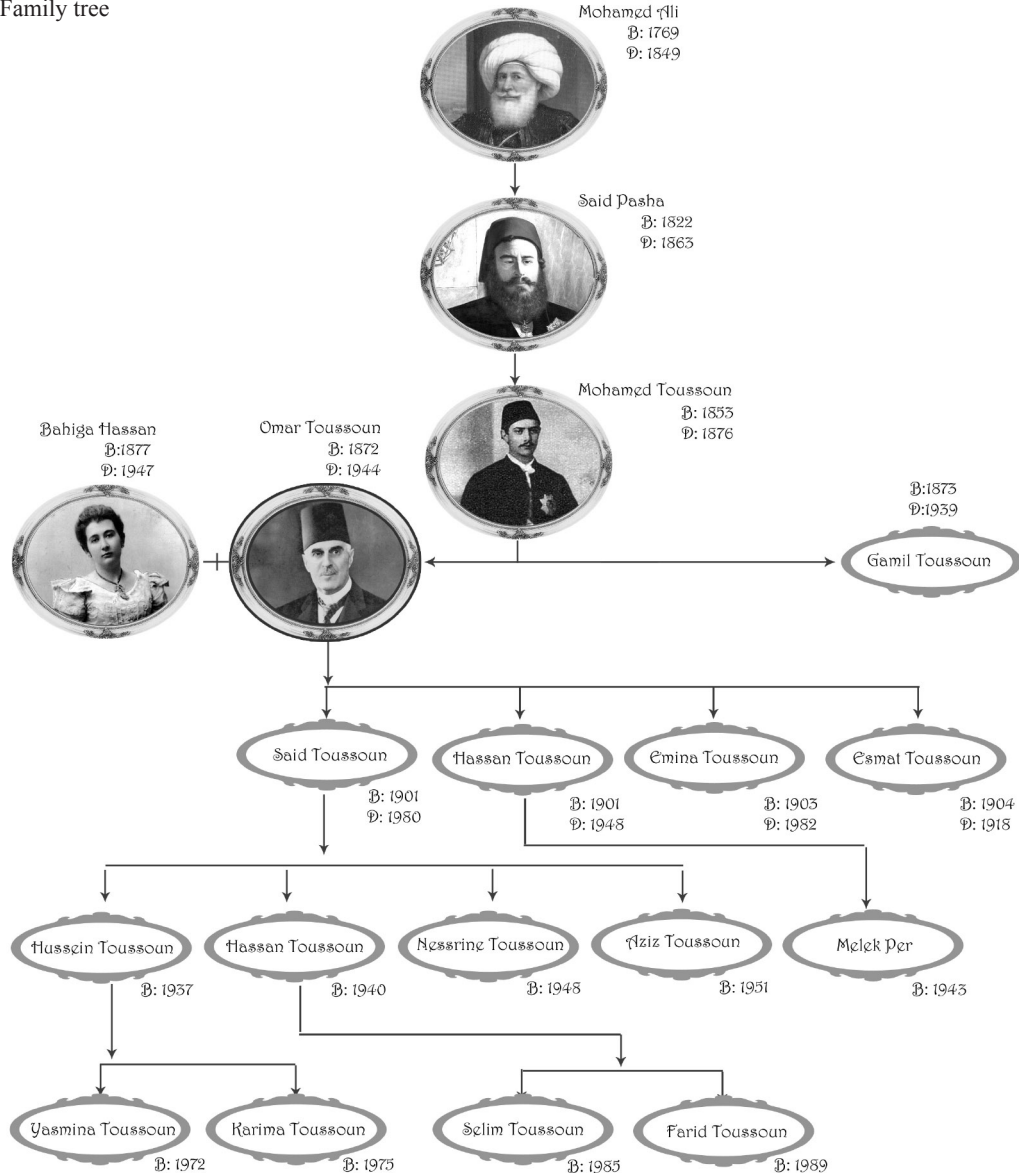
When he came of age, he inherited immense lands and wealth. He could have frittered them away, or else have led a life of leisure without ever putting in a stroke of work. Princes of the royal family, after all, did not need to exert themselves at anything more strenuous than their pleasure. Not so Omar Toussoun, who was not even given to youthful impulses. Much of the land he inherited was good for neither cultivation nor pasture, but within a few years he had reclaimed a great deal of it. The first thing he did was buy back the shares his brother and sister had sold off, so that all the property would remain intact within the *Daira* Toussoun. Then he set about organizing his affairs. In that sense he was a self-made man.

One of the secrets of his success was management: management of his time and his affairs. He was extremely punctual and all things were run according to a precise schedule. Even smoking the narghile, or water pipe he was so fond of, was timed. He slept very little and lived next to his palace, in a small house where he kept his library and accounts. His affairs he chose to run himself. In spite of the army of employees and overseers that supervised his vast estates and his *daira*, he knew the most minute details of everything he was involved in. The wisdom and discipline that he displayed in the management of the *daira* was such that its profits increased and he was requested to manage the *dairas* of other family members: Prince Hassan Pasha and his wife Princess Khadiga Hanem, as well as Prince Mohamed Ibrahim. This he undertook with honesty and good will and their profits increased also.

The life he led was simple – more so than that of ordinary people, let alone of princes. Sports were one of his passions, perhaps his only weakness. An excellent marksman, hunter and rider, he practiced sports not simply as a pastime, but because it disciplined the body. A turn around the garden for half an hour after dinner was mandatory. When he went on his desert expeditions, which could last for a month or two, he would take along his children, who had to bear all the inconveniences and discomfort of desert life, including sleeping on the ground. While he gave away money lavishly to all the causes he believed in, he was careful lest his children



Family tree





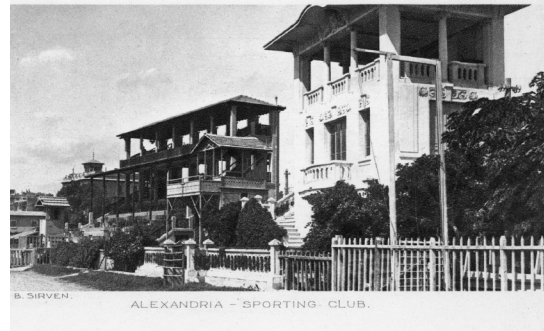
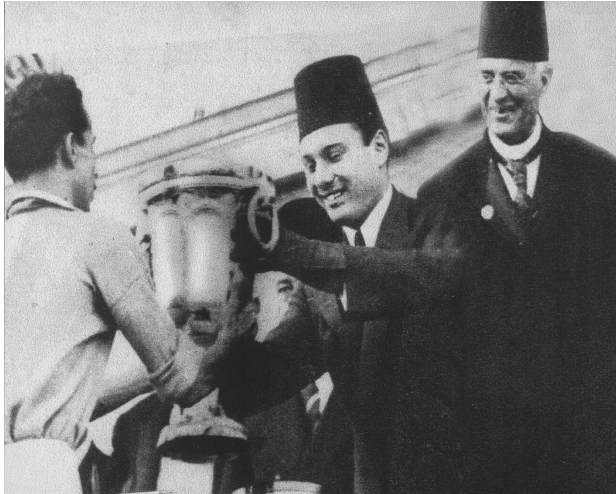
grow up spoiled or unaware of the value of money, so they had a monthly allowance which they were not allowed to exceed. His sons had to join him at the *daira* to see how its affairs were run. But there was always the other side, the father who cared for his family, and paid personal attention to their needs. For all his busy schedule, he was very much a family man and insisted on having his meals with his wife and children. In Ramadan in particular, the whole extended family had to sit down to *iftar* in his house.

Like many Muslim families of the time, there was the difficult balance to strike between the customs and traditions of a conventional Oriental society, and the enlightenment of the modern period. He took his family to Europe on holidays: to France, Prague, Budapest, Switzerland, Italy, and, of course, to Turkey. As he himself was an erudite scholar, he insisted that his daughters receive a sound education. But that was as far as their liberties went. They were expected to be dutiful and to attend all the charitable events of the eighty odd organizations which the family belonged to, among them the Lady Lampson Society for the entertainment of soldiers. One wonders why the prince would care about the entertainment of the British army, but maybe he was too much of a gentleman to turn down a lady's request.



With one of his grandsons

Alexandrians remember the prince's numerous gestures of kindness and encouragement, both great and small. The prince's many duties took him to Cairo, Beheira, Sudan, Europe and Turkey, but he was always the prince of Alexandria, and Alexandrians took pride in him. In addition to material donations he also donated land and buildings to many of the causes he believed in. Because of his love of sports and horses he was the person to donate the largest sum of money for the building of the Stadium of Alexandria, and was one of the strongest supporters of the founding of the Alexandria Sporting Club, founded originally as a response to Alexandria's need for a race course. He was the only Muslim member of its general committee, and was its president from its inception in 1890 until his death in 1944.⁴ On account if



The Alexandria Sporting Club

Prince Omar Toussoun with King Farouk in the Alexandria Sporting Club

Toussoun's lifelong commitment to the club, his son Said succeeded him as its president. If on the one hand he encouraged fitness of the body through sport, on the other, he promoted the development of the mind through education. There was a school near his house in Bacos outside whose gates he would stand when the bell rang. As the boys came out, he would ask them general knowledge questions, and if they knew the right answer he would give them five piastres, a considerable sum of money in those days. He also gave the bright boys scholarships. Streets and areas were named after him, as were schools, such as the two schools of the Orwa Woska benevolent society to which the prince contributed, and several others which were set up in villas donated by him. Whether the school was a British, Jewish or state school was immaterial to him: he attended prize giving day at Victoria College and the Jewish schools alike. The first girls' state school to be built in Alexandria was the Ramleh Kindergarten and Elementary School in Mustafa Pasha, and as it was still the only state school for girls at that time, it received his special attention. One of its early



Villa Toussoun in Bacos, designed by Jean Nicolaidis, and which later housed the Faculty of Nursing



pupils, Azza Kararah, recalls how as a little girl of around six she played the part of Snow White in the school play which the prince attended. Impressed by her performance, he immediately sent one of his men off to the patisserie Trianon to buy her a box of *marrons glacés*, which he presented to her personally. She also recalls that later on in 1944, the Faculty of Arts of Alexandria University first opened in his palace, known as Palace No. 3, situated on the Mahmoudieh Canal. This palace was described by D.J. Enright in his *Academic Year* as being «eccentric both in its original structure and in its present adaptation, for it was in the first place the summer palace of some royal prince.»⁵ Azza Kararah attended her first lectures in English literature there, where the classes were held in what had been the stables, and also in the lovely gardens. She remembers that as they read poetry in the sunshine, the Faculty of Law students would come round to pressurize them into going on strike and participating in demonstrations against the British, but the Arts Faculty students hardly responded. Enright, who taught English literature there during that period, describes with irony the lack of interest displayed by the Arts students regarding these strikes:



At Victoria College

when Medicine was throwing its professors into the street and breaking policemen's heads, Arts might be gossiping in its refectory over coffee while its grateful teachers caught trams home or strolled into town to look round the bookshops. There had even been occasions when Arts was absentmindedly at work in spite of the fact that more reputable faculties were sweating away at a really spectacular holocaust. And therefore it had become the custom for the responsible faculties to send round representatives to stiffen Arts, to bring it to a sense of its obligations and make sure that it toed the line.⁶



However, all these events were to take place a few months after the prince's death.

In 1933 Omar Toussoun wrote his will and appointed his two sons as its executors. In it he bequeathed his personal library of eight thousand books to a number of institutions. His historical and archeological books were to go to the Greco-Roman Museum in Alexandria, to which he had donated the archeological artifacts he had discovered; his books dealing with military affairs and history were to go to the library of the War Museum in Cairo, to which during his lifetime he had donated certain items such as family swords, as well as publications, books, photographs, engravings and documents; while the books that were related to neither

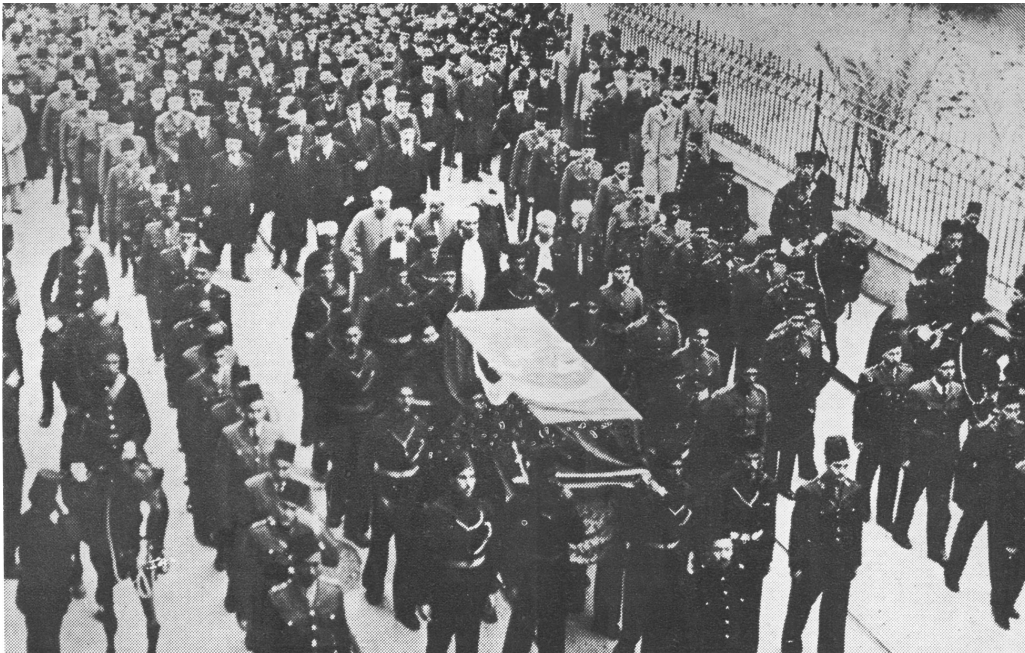


Prince Omar Toussoun's desk and personal library



history nor military matters were to go to the Municipal Library of Alexandria.

Considerate to the end, he also expressed the desire that there be no official mourning for him when he died, so that people should not be inconvenienced. In fact, he determined that his funeral procession would start from the square facing Misr train station, so that mourners would not have to walk a long distance.



Prince Toussoun's funeral

The prince died on 26 January 1944. As he had wished, the procession started from Cairo Station in Alexandria. His coffin was wrapped in the Egyptian flag, and was carried by officers of the Egyptian fleet – a fitting gesture, since his grandfather, Said Pasha, had been Admiral of the Fleet. It was surrounded by officers from the Egyptian army, and preceded by mounted police. While the family, nobility, ministers and representatives of the crown walked closest to the coffin, the common folk of Alexandria lined the streets, congregated on rooftops, crowded



onto balconies and climbed up trees to bid their last goodbye to their beloved prince. Because of the unexpected number of mourners, the procession took a long time to reach the royal family's mausoleum on Nebi Daniel Street, which in actual fact was not a long walking distance away. When they arrived the crowds roared, "You are in God's care, Omar"; "The nation bids you farewell, prince of Alexandria!"

Flags were flown at half-mast for two weeks. A year after his death, the Royal Agricultural Society published a special volume on the prince compiled by those who knew him, including some obituaries published in the newspapers at the time of his death. While the volume pays tribute to many of his achievements, one sentence aptly summarizes the life and death of Prince Omar Toussoun: "It is thus that men live, and heroes die."⁷



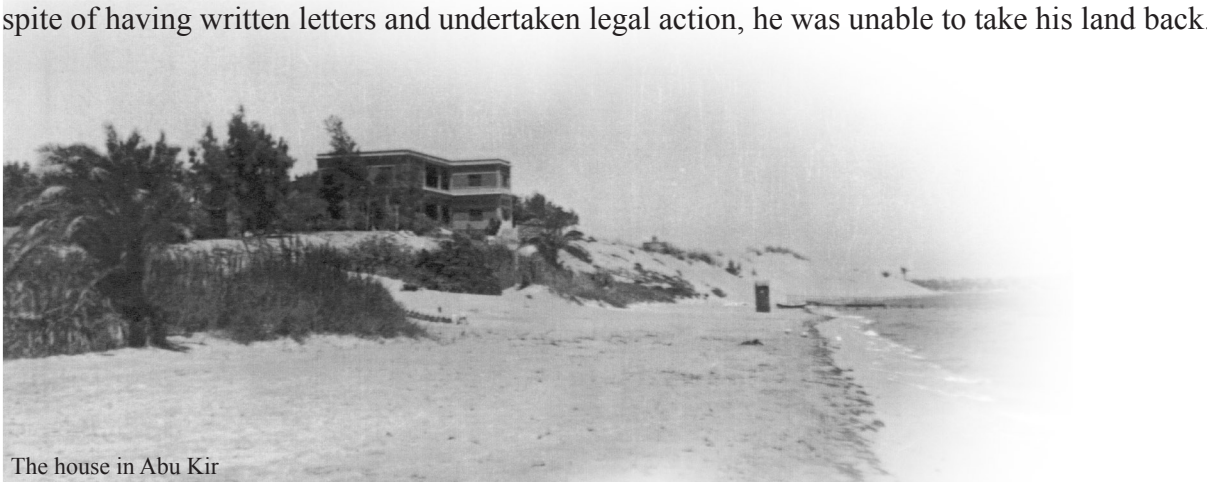
CHAPTER TWO
OMAR: ABUL-FELLAH



The *Daira* in Taftesh-el-Khazzan



Toussoun was to become one of the wealthiest men in Egypt, yet he started out with somewhat of a disadvantage. Much of the land he inherited was not arable, and had he not been such a successful economist and agriculturalist – or so devoted to the land – it would have remained unused (See Appendix I for an inventory of his property). Some he sold off. The area of Smouha in Alexandria was originally part of Lake Hadra, which he owned. He sold it to Joseph Smouha, an Iraqi Jew with a British passport who had initially come to set up a textile plant in Alexandria. Instead, he bought the marshlands, drained them, and, with the help of the engineer Alexandre de Naglowsky and the contractors Cartareggia & Dentamaro, built a beautiful suburban garden city. The prince also sold some land in Abu Kir, including a plot on which the famous Zephyrion fish restaurant was built. However, he did not always willingly dispose of his land. In Abu Kir especially he had a dispute with the British army when in 1916 they approached him with a view to buying 240 *feddans* on which to build a military airport. He refused the principle, and when they changed the request to renting the land, he refused again. Then, seeing that it was needed for military purposes during the war, he reconsidered and agreed to rent it for the duration of the war only on condition that it would be returned to him in its original state as soon as the war ended. However, until 1925, in spite of having written letters and undertaken legal action, he was unable to take his land back.



The house in Abu Kir



However, most of his land was reclaimed and turned into farms that yielded good crops. As the farms were enlarged and their crops increased, they were included in the administrative system known as *tafteesh* or domain. He possessed two: Tafteesh-el-Khazzan in Beheira, and Tafteesh Demeira in Gharibiyah, in addition to a number of smaller farms.

The most outstanding example of his success was his achievements in Beheira, where he had thousands of *feddans*. Using first the primitive machinery that was available at the time, then more modern equipment and Lanz tractors when they became available, he reclaimed a great deal of the land. On every piece of reclaimed land, he established a model village. These villages were linked by a small railway line called the Ducoville, where the trains consisted of a number of small open carriages drawn either by horses or engine. In addition to the rail there was a road connecting the villages, which the prince insisted be lined with trees so that the peasants could walk in the shade rather than in the searing sun. The son of one of the accountants at the *Daira* Toussoun, Ahmed Abdel-Moneim Osman Fahmy, was raised in Tafteesh-el-Khazzan, and his recollections of life in those model villages helps to explain why they were called model villages and what made them exemplary. Now a retired army officer, this is how he remembers his boyhood living under the care of El Basha, as Toussoun was referred to in Beheira:

El Basha considered himself *in loco parentis* to all who worked for him or lived on his land. Stretching the principle of noblesse oblige to its limit, he took full care of the peasants and the employees of his *daira*, and hired a special employee whose sole duty was to see to it that donations and extra material help were given according to schedule. In addition, El Basha contributed to their happy occasions: weddings, births and circumcisions. A mother who gave birth to a boy was granted a specified sum of money, whilst a mother who gave birth to a girl was given a lesser sum. Moreover, a woman who miscarried received a smaller one in compensation. Doctors and medical care were provided, and a special hospital was built for them. Their day to day affairs were also fully taken care of. El Basha built houses of two floors for his employees. Each family was allotted food in the following way: an *ardeb* (a large measure of weight of wheat) per head was given to the family, so that for example the family of Abdel-Moneim received ten *ardebs* of wheat for the ten children. Then, there were communal



stables and pens where the prince kept water buffaloes. Whereas it was the prince who bought and fed the water buffaloes, he allotted each family a number of them, according to its size. A special keeper hired by the prince would bring each family its allotted buffaloes twice a day for milking. If a buffalo's milk dried up, all the family had to do was write a report and the animal would be replaced accordingly. Similarly, each family was allotted a number of date palms from which it could eat the dates to its heart's content. In hard times the prince gave away seeds. All the above services and foods were provided for free. The only thing the prince charged for were pigeons. His pigeoncotes were opened on Mondays and Thursdays, and the pigeons were sold at the nominal price of a piastre and a half the pair, whereas the market price was five piastres. However, not only were their basic daily needs seen to, but education was also provided: elementary schooling and books were freely available for the children, and the employees themselves were given lessons in Arabic after working hours. Outstanding pupils were awarded prizes and the really gifted ones were sent to Europe to continue their education. For those who continued their secondary schooling in Damanshour, he provided a car and driver to transport them there daily. And just as he cared for their physical and intellectual welfare, the prince also took care of their spiritual wellbeing: he had mosques built and funerals attended to. It appeared almost as though Prince Omar Toussoun was seeking the means to give away his money to all his dependants. There was, however, one particular incident when he utterly refused to help. The British had installed a system of so-called exchange, whereby a conscript could pay a sum of



Window detail at the local Agriculture Society in Taftteesh-el-Khazzan



One of the houses Prince Omar Toussoun had built for his employees in Taftteesh-el-Khazzan as it is today



money instead of joining the army. One of the farmers had borrowed the sum to pay the British but being unable to repay it, went to see El Basha, confident that the benefactor never turned away anybody in need. He was in for a surprise. If all Egyptians stayed away from the army, argued El Basha, who would fight for Egypt? Who would be in the Egyptian army? The British? The supplicant left empty-handed.

During World War II, as the German forces advanced through the desert, and bombs increasingly fell on the port of Alexandria, El Basha took his family to Taftesh-el-Khazzan for a while, to keep them out of danger. Throughout Ramadan he would slaughter sheep and cows on a daily basis to feed the whole village. In addition, he would distribute sweets and a hot cinnamon drink to the children. The memories that Ahmed Abdel-Moneim Osman Fahmy has of his boyhood, under the care of Omar Toussoun, are of endless bounty and plenty. No wonder then, that when El Basha died, the father used to visit his grave every single Friday.

Tales sprang up around the prince. The shrine of el Sheikh Abul-Kassem in Taftesh-el-Khazzan was his special responsibility. He gave it a new *kiswa* or cover every year, and joyfully celebrated the sheikh's *moulid* or festival with great respect. The reason, all the villagers knew, was because the sheikh had appeared to the prince in a dream and warned him against accepting a cup of coffee that would be offered to him by a certain man. Sure enough, when this man did offer the prince a cup of coffee, the prince ordered him to drink it himself. The man blanched, but the prince was adamant. The fellow drank



The remaining house of one of the two supervisors of Taftesh-el-Khazzan



The Prince's private phone in the *Daira* in Taftesh-el-Khazzan



the coffee, and dropped down dead. And that is why, the villagers say, the prince specially revered the sheikh. There is yet another supernatural anecdote related to the prince and his dreams. The keeper of the Abul Dardar shrine in Alexandria, Adel el Bannan, whose father and grandfather were also its keepers, recounts that it was Prince Omar Toussoun who was responsible for the building of the shrine. The story, handed down through the generations, goes that the holy man appeared to the prince in a dream and ordered him to have a shrine built for him. According to the story, that is precisely what the prince did, and so Alexandria owes one of its most famous shrines to Omar Toussoun. Obviously, the prince's munificence was so well engraved in people's memory that it has survived in folk heritage as the source of all good in the city and in Beheira.



The shrine of el Sheikh Abul-Kassem in Taftesh-el-Khazzan

Whatever his experience of the supernatural may have been, in reality he went to Beheira every week to attend to his property and the livelihood of the peasants living on his land. When he arrived, he had a huge tent put up, sat down to lunch with all his farmers and employees, and discussed the affairs of the land with them. Occasionally he brought along his brass band to provide some entertainment. This was his own band which was referred to as "the soldiers" because he made the musicians wear a velvet uniform. Though he later disbanded it, it was for quite a while a well-known and joyful sight in Alexandria. Sometimes he would send it to an employee who had a wedding or a special celebration, and at others to Beheira. If there was much work to be done there, he could stay for as long as a week. He was really a simple farmer at heart.

For this reason he devoted a great deal of his time to the Royal Agricultural Society. He joined it when it was first founded in 1898 by Prince Hussein Kamel (who remained its president until



1914, to be followed by Prince Kamal el Din Hussein), became its vice president in 1907 and then its president in 1932. Perhaps he had inherited his love for the Egyptian farmer and soil from his grandfather Said Pasha, but the fact is that he was as keen on improving the agriculture and economy of Egypt as he was keen on improving its political and moral life. As soon as he became its president, he started reforming the Society by giving it a parliamentary, legislative and constitutional framework based on democratic principles. When debate or discussion reached a deadlock, professional opinion was always sought. He established Arabic as the language to be used by the Society, (it was Said Pasha who had passed a law in 1856 making Arabic instead of Turkish the official language of Egypt), and started recruiting Egyptians to replace the foreign experts and auditors.

The Society was divided into the following departments: Chemistry, Botany, Seed Propagation, Entomology, and Animal and Poultry Husbandry. The prince gave close attention to each one of these. For example, when concerning himself with issues of animal husbandry, he stipulated that cattle must be worked equally and given a day of rest. He was the first to offer a prize of 15,000 Egyptian pounds – a considerably large sum of money in those days – to the person who could find a way of eradicating the devastating cotton worm. Laboratories were encouraged to experiment with fertilizers and develop chemicals, as was research into seeds and new breeds of crops. During his term of presidency, the Society's farm at Bahtim was increased from 140 to 500 *feddans*, and became a technical and agricultural school where all aspects of farming were studied. Model villages were created following the example of the model villages of Meit Zanqar and Kafr Bosat which he had built on his own land. His studies of these model villages were forerunners in agricultural reform. Grand



The portrait of Omar Toussoun in the Agricultural Museum



buildings were erected on the exhibition grounds in Gezira where the Society displayed its produce in its annual show which the prince greatly encouraged. A famous incident occurred in 1931, at a time when Egypt was going through an economic crisis and even foreign newspapers



The inauguration ceremony of the Agricultural Society's exhibition in 1936. King Fouad's delegate, Prince Mohamed Ali Hassan, is presiding over the ceremony with Prince Omar Toussoun and Prince Abdel Moneim on his right, and Ali Maher Pasha, Mustafa-el-Nahhas Pasha and Ismail Sidky Pasha to his left.

discussed how badly the country was hit. It looked as though the Society would be unable to hold its annual exhibition. Prince Omar Toussoun asked Fouad Abaza Pasha, a member of the board of directors and the general manager of the Society, how much the exhibition would cost. Fouad Abaza Pasha answered that it would cost at least 55,000 Egyptian pounds, to which the prince responded resolutely, "We will pay the sum to save Egypt's financial reputation. If we postpone the exhibition, Egypt will lose face."⁸ By 1936 the agricultural and industrial exhibition had become a most impressive affair the likes of which the East had not seen before,



with national and international representation.

Always the scholar, Toussoun also encouraged the publication of research. But being a practical man as well, the prince was rather disheartened by the attitude of Egyptian youth. He believed that young men needed the persistence and resilience necessary for enterprise. Egypt, he thought, could provide many opportunities for entrepreneurial work, particularly in agriculture and its related industries, and if only young men could liberate themselves from the restrictions and humiliations of an office job, they could raise their standard of living. The attachment to government jobs was the bane of Egyptian youth.

The prince's love of animals and sport found an ultimate expression in his passion for horse riding, racing and breeding. The breeding of Arabian horses in Egypt dates back to the Pharaohs (or according to tradition, even further back to Ishmael, who introduced them into Egypt from the Arabian desert). Egyptian Arabian horses in particular were a magnificent breed appreciated and improved upon by the Arab conquerors and successive Mameluke dynasties. The next dynasty to rule Egypt, the family of Mohamed Ali, was equally enamored of horses and enlarged their stables when Mohamed Ali's two sons, Toussoun Pasha and Ibrahim Pasha, went to fight the Wahhabis in Nejd and came back with priceless specimens.⁹ Mohamed Ali bequeathed his passion for horses to other members of his family, among them Omar Toussoun, who despite his youth seemed to have a keener eye than his older relatives with more experience. In 1892 the government established the Horse Commission to improve horse breeding which had deteriorated in the country, and appointed as president Omar Toussoun, then only twenty years old. In January of the following year, he held the first of a series of Arabian horse shows, in Damanhour. These shows became regular events, mainly attended by Turks,¹⁰ with the prince handing out the prizes. Under his guidance and supervision, and with the collaboration of the Royal Agricultural Society, Egyptian Arabian horses regained their previous reputation and excellence. A special stud farm was created for them in Kafr Farouk to provide the proper breeding environment.

Although - or perhaps because - he was an important landowner Toussoun campaigned to form a farmers' union in Egypt to protect Egyptian agriculture and especially the price of cotton.



The price of the cotton crop fell in 1908 which led to demands by Egyptian farmers to protect it and their interests. The movement took a long time to materialize into something concrete: it was not until 1916 that the prince managed to meet those with a vested interest such as the big landowners, in his palace in Alexandria, to discuss the decisions taken by the Cotton Exchange regarding fixing the price of cotton. This was the beginning of the solidarity between landowners and would lead to the formation of the union in 1921.¹¹

Much of Egypt's wealth in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the result of its agricultural superiority and the cotton boom. When Prince Mohamed Ali declared that "The current agricultural prosperity and renaissance of Egypt are to a great extent due to the efforts of Prince Omar Toussoun"¹² he was not just paying a great compliment. He was simply stating a fact.



Prince Omar Toussoun and King Farouk at the agricultural exhibition

CHAPTER THREE
BENEVOLENCE AND TRADITION



Prince Omar Toussoun with narghile



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SOCIÉTÉ ÉDITRICE:
LES ILLUSTRÉS D'ÉGYPTE
Soc. Anon. Egypt.

Abonnements pour un An
Égypte P.T. 50 - Étranger # 1


**Le MAGAZINE
EGYPTIEN**
HEBDOMADAIRE ILLUSTRÉ

Secrétaire Général
Léon Grunspan

Rédaction et Administration
Rue El Qadi
Téléph. B. 7004 - Le Caire

Service d'Alexandrie
27, rue Cherif - Tél. 58-90

Agence de Londres: The Overseas Publicity & Service Agency, 33 Chancery Lane, W.C. 2
Agence d'Amérique: Eric Pusinelli & Co. 67 West 44th Street, New York, U.S.A.
Agence de Paris: Vélox-Publicité, 92 Avenue des Champs-Élysées.



*S. M. la Reine de Belgique le jour de son arrivée dans notre capitale
accompagnée par S. A. le Prince Toussoun*

Photo Zacha

With the Queen of Belgium



H*e who lives for himself alone does not deserve to be born*” was the prince’s motto and was how he spent his life: living for others. Somehow, he felt that humanity was his responsibility. It was not only his domestic staff, peasants and employees who benefited from his infinite bounty, for he donated generously – of his money, time and effort – to all the causes he believed in, and did his best to support all who were downtrodden. His help extended to many organizations in Alexandria as well as some in Cairo, and further, beyond the borders of Egypt, to countries and individuals who were suffering in one way or the other.

His benevolence focused on issues regarding Islamic tradition, liberty, progress and scholarship. Where Islam and tradition were involved, the prince was an uncompromising conservative. But when it came to issues of liberty, progress and scholarship, he revealed an enlightened and progressive mentality that was the result of a disciplined mind capable of rigorous rational thinking. It could thus be said of him that he was morally conservative and intellectually progressive.

Prince Omar Toussoun’s conservative attitude was not an observation of restrictive social codes for the sake of appearances and respectability. On the contrary, the prince was so immersed in his interests, causes and books that he had no time for social niceties. Rarely did he attend social functions just for the sake of conforming. Rather, it was a deep-seated belief in the teachings of religion, and a respect for the past and the traditions of his country and forefathers. To him, it was in adhering to what one’s ancestors had revered that one’s identity could be preserved and one’s well being be guaranteed.

One obvious example of his conservative attitude is his strongly criticized stand against women working. Toussoun the scholar insisted that his daughters acquire a good education. But Toussoun the conservative Muslim was dead set against women working at what he considered to be male occupations. It was one thing for them to work as nurses and teachers if they had to



earn a living, quite another thing altogether to compete with men in the labor market and look for jobs such as engineers. To him, the evils of such an endeavor were manifold. On the one hand he felt that it did not suit their feminine nature and would be detrimental to their moral character – they would have to dress unsuitably and mix freely with men. “It is no concern of ours,” he said, “that European women do these things or call for them. They have their ways. Our women have other ways.”¹³ It was a woman’s natural role to breed fine, upright sons, and not to gallivant all over the country trying to put men out of work. Her proper place was the house: looking after her husband and children. It was in that direction that lay her true happiness and that of the nation. He unequivocally stated: “There is no doubt that the home alone is the decent place for a woman to work. If she devotes herself to it and supervises it herself, she will guarantee the happiness of herself, her husband and her children. And with the happiness of husband and children the nation itself will be happy and progress.”¹⁴ On the other hand, he believed that the engagement of women in certain occupations would drive men out of the work market. Possibly the severe stand he took against female employment at male occupations had to do with the Great Depression of 1929: unemployment rose and was made worse by women competing with men for certain jobs. Toussoun’s anti-feminism (or conservatism, as he would have viewed it) raised a furor in feminist circles and societies, but he was undeterred, and practiced his beliefs by forbidding women from attending the religious festivals of the Young Muslims Association, even if they sat in segregated, isolated boxes.

The other famous story illustrating his reverence for tradition involved his attachment to the *tarboush*, or fez. When a suggestion was made that men should stop wearing the *tarboush* and wear hats instead, the prince was outraged. He considered it a national symbol, and objected to the importation of newfangled ideas and customs, such as the wearing of hats, without first giving them due consideration. To him it was the first step towards loss of identity and dignity. One reason why the East could never rise and unite was that it unthinkingly adopted the meaningless, superficial practices of the West. To counter the menace of the hat, he encouraged the Piastre Project to manufacture the *tarboush*. This project was started in Cairo by Ahmed Hussein (who had founded the Young Egypt Party, later the Socialist Party) with the aim of asking each Egyptian to pay a piastre a year. With that money the first factory for woolen products was established, and the first item to be manufactured was the *tarboush*.¹⁵ The



prince donated the annual sum of 40 Egyptian pounds to the project, which was managed in Alexandria by the Young Muslims Association of which he was president. Omar Toussoun took his duties as its president very seriously, attending all its functions in spite of his many other commitments. He insisted that men had to wear the *tarboush* and did not allow anyone to attend any religious occasion bareheaded, thus making the *tarboush* both a national and a religious symbol.

When the Ministry of Defense announced that it had almost finished building a factory to manufacture the army's needs, the prince was ecstatic and wrote the following article in the *Al-Ahram* of 27 June 1939: "We thank the Ministry of Defense for keeping the headgear of the Egyptian army the same as the soldiers have been wearing for over a century. It is no secret that the *tarboush* is the emblem by which Egyptians are recognized from other nations. It is the national symbol and must remain thus; other countries that are proud of their national identity and protect all that is dear to them. Giving that up, to our mind, would lead to giving other things up so that the nation would lose its identity and become a nation in name only!"¹⁶ Although today such an anecdote may seem amusing, making the prince seem at times eccentric, the issues involved in the blind imitation of foreign customs are still relevant and far-reaching.

Some time later, a Sudanese lawyer who had been under the prince's patronage as a student, met with him. In his excitement at being with the prince, he took off his *tarboush* as he was talking, forgetting the prince's feelings on the subject. The prince gently rebuked him, saying, "Your *tarboush*, Mr. el Dardiry. It seems that in Sudan you do not wear anything on your heads." The lawyer returned the smile and affirmed that they only wore hats, which they took off in court. That was why he was not used to the *tarboush* and had taken it off. After that, the two continued to chat amicably and remained on good terms.¹⁷

Where Islam was concerned, he spared no effort to support or promote his faith. In England, he donated money for a Muslim cemetery. In Sudan, he helped build or renovate numerous mosques. At home, he combated various forms of vice. The Society for the Prohibition of Alcohol, to which he gave his royal patronage in 1922, was just the right arena for his religious



energy. Both he and its members were encouraged by the fact that, during that time, Prohibition was being enforced in the United States of America, a Christian country. The prince took up the cause with his customary zeal. First he allocated an annual sum of money to be paid to the Society until it had fulfilled its mission. Then he vigorously started his campaign. He requested medical societies to write reports on how damaging alcohol was to the health, in addition to its being a vice. Next he knocked at all the political doors and approached prime ministers and ministers as they were appointed: Yehia Ibrahim Pasha, Saad Zaghloul Pasha, Adly Yeken Pasha, Mustafa-el-Nahhas Pasha – even Ras el Tin Palace and the king were not spared his badgering. They all lent a most sympathetic ear, but were rather slow in complying. As it was not in his nature to be disheartened, the prince took practical steps. As President of the Royal Agricultural Society and supervisor of its exhibition, he had some say in what went on display. In 1932 he refused to allow wine growers to display their wines. Instead, he displayed a newly imported drink called “nectar” made from the juice of grapes and other fruit. King Fouad inaugurated the exhibition and, after tasting this drink, expressed a wish that Egyptians drink it instead of alcohol. However, the king did not consolidate this wish with any form of legislation. The prince’s next act towards achieving prohibition went a step further. In May 1939 the Finnish government held its 22nd international conference on prohibition, and sent a formal invitation to the Egyptian government. Not to miss out on such an opportunity, Toussoun requested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to send the president of the Society for the Prohibition of Alcohol as the Egyptian representative. The government agreed, and the man was sent off with the prince’s blessings and encouragement. No sooner had he been dispatched when World War II broke out and the hapless man was held prisoner in Berlin. It took all the prince’s influence, and the efforts of the Swiss Red Cross, to have him freed.

Islamic crises won his special sympathy. Medina, the city to which the Prophet Mohammed migrated, was poverty stricken, and the prince donated 500 Egyptian pounds towards its relief. A group of pilgrims from Bukhara were trapped on their way home when World War I broke out, and he volunteered to look after them until the roads cleared. Muslims under Dutch occupation in Indonesia and French occupation in Morocco were provided with help and money. But it was for Turkey that his heart most consistently bled. As the seat of the Muslim Caliphate, it had his full loyalty. But it was going through its most difficult period with endless



suffering. His support likewise knew no bounds. In all its wars – the Tripolitanian war (1911), the Balkan wars (1912), the war between Turkey and Greece (1921-3) – he was its staunch ally, sending money and relief. He sent help after the fire of Istanbul in 1911. The greatest blow was the final fall of the Muslim Caliphate between 1922-3. The victory of Mustafa Kamal Attaturk in Turkey and the establishment of a republic meant that the Ottoman family and Sultan Abdel-Meguid had to go into exile. Who but Prince Toussoun would support this destitute family now? He created a society to see to the welfare of the deposed Sultan and his family, and the first batch of money he sent amounted to 4,000 Egyptian pounds.¹⁹ He also tried to establish the Caliphate in Egypt, but the project was blocked by the constitution which forbade the king from holding any other post without the permission of Parliament. The conference which was eventually held in 1926 to discuss the matter did not meet with much success.¹⁹

Toussoun's magnanimity and adherence to Islam did not mean he was intolerant of other religions. The Jewish newspaper *El Mimbar el Yahoudi* sadly mourned his death, for he had been a great patron and friend of the Jewish community and attended their annual prize giving day. Christians received similar treatment: Copts were employed in his *daira*, just as Muslims were. His research on the monasteries of Wadi el Natroun and the Western Desert show how much he revered monks and the monastic way of life. And just as he was the president of the Archeological Society of Alexandria, he was also the first honorary president of the Coptic Archeological Society, whose meetings he attended religiously. He gave donations to two Coptic schools, the sum of 5,000 Egyptian pounds to the building of the Coptic hospital, and was patron of the Coptic Welfare Society. When Italy attacked Abyssinia in 1935, he rose to its defense, and solicited the help of the patriarchate. Under his leadership, a medical committee was formed of Muslims and Copts which sent medical aid to the beleaguered country and its resistance fighters. When Abyssinia was defeated and its emperor exiled, the committee came to the help of the exiles.

However, Omar Toussoun's numerous religious, moral and humanitarian activities, did not prevent him from following other pursuits. An issue that continued to intrigue him for decades was the burial site of Alexander the Great. He believed that his tomb was in Alexandria, on the site of the mosque of the prophet Daniel (the Nebi Daniel Mosque), which lay next to the



royal cemeteries. The prince felt that since this prophet had died around three centuries before Alexander, long before the city had been founded, he would have been buried in central Asia. Thus the mosque of Nebi Daniel must really conceal the tomb of Alexander the Great. But how could he get permission to dig on the site of a mosque? After a careful study of the history and geography of the site, and of the prophet's life, he published an article in *Al-Ahram* newspaper providing well documented results of his scholarly research in the matter, and pleaded with the Ministry of Islamic Endowments (*Awqaf*) to grant the Greco-Roman Museum permission to excavate the site. His argument went as follows: "Is there any religious reason why the Ministry of Islamic Endowments, which is in charge of this mosque, should not permit the director of the Greco-Roman Museum to excavate the tomb for purposes of research? Does the mere illusion that it is the tomb of the prophet Daniel – although we have proved beyond the shadow of a



The Nebi Daniel Mosque to the left, with the royal mausoleum to the right



doubt that it is not his tomb – deter us from undertaking this worthy search to reveal what is inside? We, personally, do not see that there is any difference between excavating Pharaonic tombs and this tomb, especially as its non Islamic nature provides indisputable evidence that it is a tomb belonging to original inhabitants. If it is the tomb of Alexander the Great, which is most likely, what difference can there be between excavating Alexander the Great’s tomb or Tutankhamun’s, for example?”²⁰ The prince was a pious Muslim, but he was also a rational man who zealously pursued scholarly activities. Thus, when he was convinced that no holy Muslim man was buried in that tomb, he pressurized the authorities to grant permission to dig there. However, it was a good ten years, in 1943, before he was able to commission Hassan Abdel-Wahab, an inspector from the Arab Antiquities Association (Dar el Athar el Arabiya) to excavate in search of Alexander’s tomb on the site of the mosque. After much digging, the inspector declared that there was no tomb at all: neither of Alexander the Great nor of the prophet Daniel. But, there were Turkish and Islamic ruins dating back 250 years, and evidence that the site had been used for burials for a thousand years.

As well as helping the numerous benevolent societies in the city, Toussoun also gave his support to individuals who worked for public causes. Among these was his friend and neighbor Antoine Arcache Bey. Toussoun was supportive of Arcache’s long personal struggle to stamp out corruption at the heart of the Municipality of Alexandria. Over many years Arcache fought to change the then common practice which enabled the municipal councillors to also be leading shareholders as well as members of governing boards of local companies. The monopolies resulting from this practice meant that Alexandrians were overcharged for such basic utilities as water, gas and transport. Arcache, like Toussoun, was highly esteemed by the people for his unscrupulous honesty and in 1924 a committee under the patronage of Omar Toussoun organized a grand celebration at San Stefano Casino in recognition of Arcache’s achievements.

Omar Toussoun was president, honorary president or member of over 80 benevolent and social organizations and societies, the most known of which were: the Moassat, the Young Muslims Association, the Islamic Welfare Society, the Coptic Welfare Society, the El Orwa el Wosqa Islamic Benevolent Society, and the Sudanese Club. Less known ones, but desperately in need



and proud of his patronage, were: The Society for the Poor of Alexandria in Moharrem Bey, The Society for the Poor in Gumrok, The Society for the Poor of Attarine, The Society for the Homeless, The Society of the Catholic Copts, The Nubian Salvation Society, The Armenian Benevolent Society, The Israelite Hospital, and The Greek Orphanage – to name but a few. His moral conservatism notwithstanding, he was a pioneer in many areas, and instigated several fields of activity in Alexandria and Egypt. He was one of the founding members of the Turf Club, the Alexandria Rotary Club, the Alexandria First Aid society, the Egyptian Red Crescent, and the Scouts in Egypt. Because of his keen enthusiasm and excellent performance at sport,



Zamalek Palace in Neo-Islamic style

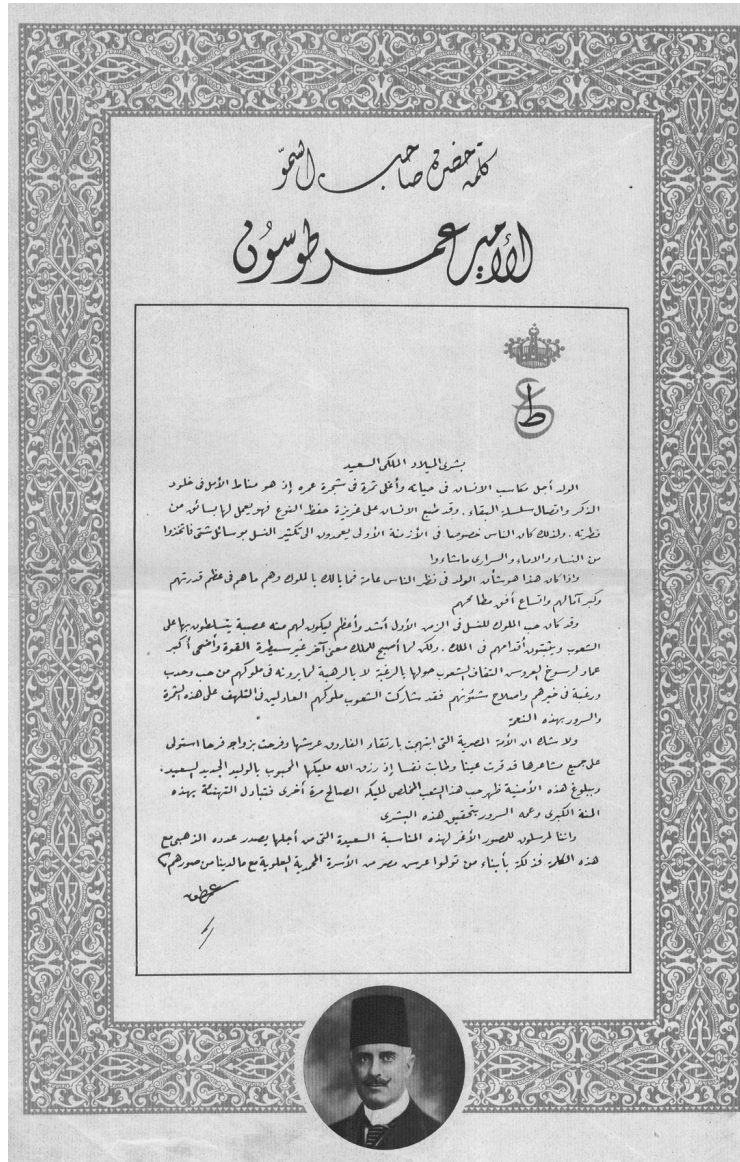


as well as the generous donations he had given them, Toussoun was permanent president of the Egyptian Jockey Club and the Alexandria Sporting Club, the president of the Egyptian Olympic Committee and of the Egyptian Union of Sporting Clubs. This is not the place to list all the activities that the prince was involved with in these societies and organizations. Suffice to say that he took all his duties seriously. He attended meetings, wrote articles, headed campaigns, made speeches and raised money. Regardless of whether he was a founder, president, honorary president, patron, or just a member of this or that organization, he threw himself heart and soul into whatever he committed himself to.

CHAPTER FOUR
KING OR NATIONAL HERO?



Prince Omar Toussoun and King Farouk



Letter from Prince Omar Toussoun to King Farouk congratulating the king on the birth of his daughter



Osman Toussoun was a member of the royal family, which did not always enjoy much popularity in Egypt. Yet, when he died, the *El Rissala* literary weekly reported: “Egypt is bereft of its prince, although rarely can Egypt be said to be bereft of a prince”.²¹ So why did Egypt consider this particular prince hers, and why did his death unleash a flood of obituaries published by the Arabic and foreign press in Egypt and Sudan? The answer probably lies in the fact that Toussoun loved Egypt and the Egyptians loved him. Fouad Abaza Pasha said, “We loved the prince because he was one of us and we felt akin to him.”²² In everything he did, he was motivated by a single aim: the welfare of Egypt. For that reason, he marched straight into the thick of political battles, which princes of the royal family usually stayed away from.

Political life in Egypt was confusing at best. The country was nominally ruled by a royal family of foreign origin. Mohamed Ali was an Albanian soldier born in Kavalla, on the Macedonian coast. He became viceroy of Egypt, wrested the concession of hereditary rule from the Ottoman Empire (Egypt was then an Ottoman province), and followed the custom of the Ottoman dynasty by decreeing that the eldest of the family should rule the country. Under his leadership, and the military genius of his son Ibrahim Pasha, Egypt extended its frontiers as far as the Hijaz, Sudan, and Syria. This sudden expansion and increase in power rang alarm bells in Europe, with the Sublime Porte joining in the general clamor. Egypt was ordered to restrict its borders again, and the European powers gradually closed in. When Khedive Ismail came to power, he desired to win hereditary rule for his own line, and this he did achieve when in 1866 a firman was issued granting his descendents, rather than the eldest member of the royal family, the right to the throne. Nevertheless, he still sought to free Egypt from the Turkish yoke, all the while sinking deeper into debt and more into Britain’s clutches. He succeeded in wrenching himself from the arms of Turkey merely to throw himself into those of Britain, which readily received him. In 1882, during the reign of his son, Khedive Tawfik, Britain bombarded Alexandria, put down the Orabi revolt, and occupied Egypt. The royal family was by turns in opposition or subservient to the British occupiers, and its popularity with the Egyptian population rose or fell



accordingly.

The British occupation at first stunned Egypt. It was declared to be only a temporary occupation, then the audacious British show of power began to aggravate the people, especially as no signs were displayed that the British were about to leave. On the contrary, they acted as if they were in Egypt to stay. Under the pretext that they were undertaking the reform of the country, they liquidated the Egyptian army – at least the patriotic elements in it – and created a British army commanded by a British sirdar. It went on an annual parade in Abdin Palace to celebrate Queen Victoria’s birthday, under the beaming face and approving eye of Sir Evelyn Baring (the British agent and consul general, later Lord Cromer the high commissioner). Soon the British took over everything: the police force, the administration, the ministries, and the finances. They abolished the constitution. They *were* in Egypt to stay.

National feeling started rising and the stupor the Egyptians had sunk into subsequent to the occupation was giving way to resistance. Mustafa Kamel was giving fiery speeches and had turned public opinion even in Britain against Lord Cromer. He formed the National Party *El Hizb el Watany*, and until the emergence of Saad Zaghloul as the hero of the nation in 1919, it was this National Party which people supported. World War I broke out, and Egypt was declared a British protectorate. With the end of the war there were expectations that Egypt would now win its independence. It was only in 1922 that the protectorate was ended and Egypt’s independence announced, though virtual power remained in the hands of the British high commissioner, or ambassador, as his title became after the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty.

Toussoun’s disapproval of the British presence was no secret. In 1934, when the high commissioner, Sir Miles Lampson (later Lord Killearn) was at the height of his power, Toussoun published a book on the 1882 bombardment of Alexandria, entitled *11 July 1882*. In the introduction he called it a “black day”: the day when Britain trampled all over international treaties and used the weakest of pretexts to attack Alexandria. That, Toussoun said in no equivocal terms, was a sin and an act of aggression against a country that had done it no harm. However, his courage in voicing the wrongs Britain had done by occupying Egypt was matched by his courage in laying part of the blame at Egypt’s door. His purpose in writing the book,



he said, was to examine the events leading up to the bombardment, and decide whether it could have been avoided. The nation had to know the truth. Could the forts of Alexandria have withstood the British fleet? Did the Egyptian army resist the enemy to the bitter end? More importantly, could Egyptian statesmen have avoided the whole debacle if they had followed a different policy? In order to give rational answers to these questions, the prince documented the history of Alexandria's forts starting from the Arab conquest. He listed their numbers, positions and the kind of cannons and ammunition they had. This was to compare them to the cannons and guns that were on board the British warships lined strategically in the harbor. Then, using the letters of Sir Beauchamp Seymour, Admiral of the British Fleet, and the letters and memoirs of other parties and eyewitnesses involved, he reconstructs the whole sorry affair. He provides many testimonies, including foreign ones, to the bravery of the Egyptian soldiers who stood their ground but were blown to pieces by British cannon balls and shrapnel. Thus he found that the Egyptian soldiers valiantly defended their country, but that they were outmatched by the superior armaments of the enemy. However, he did find fault with the Egyptian leaders. The British, totally unjustified in their attack, simply intended to occupy the country. But, he argued, could the matter have been handled differently ?

Admiral Seymour, on board the *Invincible*, issued one ultimatum after another to Egypt to stop fortifying the forts or the British would attack. Finally, on 10 July 1882 Khedive Tawfik held an emergency meeting with 23 of the most important men and ministers in the country including Ahmed Orabi Pasha, minister of the army and the fleet. The session was extremely heated and opinions clashed. A few believed that it would be better to give in to Seymour's ultimatum, since the forts would never stand up to the superiority of the British artillery. One of those who thought along those lines was Mar'ashly Pasha, the previous director of fortifications. In his report on what happened during that meeting he said that what would tip the scales in favor of resisting or submitting would be the condition of the forts. Mahmoud Fahmy Pasha was then director of the fortifications, and he assured the assembly that they were in perfect condition and could resist the bombardment for three full months. Mar'ashly commented that this reply meant that he was either ignorant of what he was saying, or he was provoking the side all in favor of war. When the khedive asked him about the condition of the forts he replied that they would not last longer than 24 hours under heavy bombardment. Within five hours they would



be laid waste and the soldiers inside them massacred. This response caused the warmongers, including Orabi, to criticize him sharply and agitate the assembly's anti-British sentiment. The result was that Mar'ashly was booed and the majority opted to defy Seymour. The consequence, as we know, was that on 11 July 1882, that one day war, much of Alexandria was destroyed, many Egyptian lives were lost (seven hundred Egyptians as opposed to six Englishmen), and this led to the eventual occupation of Egypt.

What is interesting is the response of Prince Omar Toussoun to what happened during this meeting. Given his zeal for patriotic causes, one would have imagined him to be on the side of



The British Fleet bombarding Alexandria in 1882. Photographer L. Fiorillo



the warmongers, agitating for battle and headlong confrontation. But he commented as follows on Mar'ashly's opinion: "We find that the opinion of this man, who is a knowledgeable expert in his field, was perfectly rational. But, unfortunately, the wise view that this expert presented was ignored and bypassed in a situation dominated by emotion."²³ He was full of admiration for Mar'ashly's logical reasoning based on the hard facts of the situation rather than on a fiery emotional response. Equally interesting is the criticism he chose to make of the way the bombardment was reported by the *El Ta'ef* newspaper, the mouthpiece of the Egyptian national hero, Abdullah el Nadim. Here are the extracts the prince chose to cite:

On Tuesday 24 Shaaban 1299 Hegira (11 July 1882) at 12 o'clock Arab time (7 o'clock foreign time) in the morning the British fired at the forts of Alexandria and we answered back.

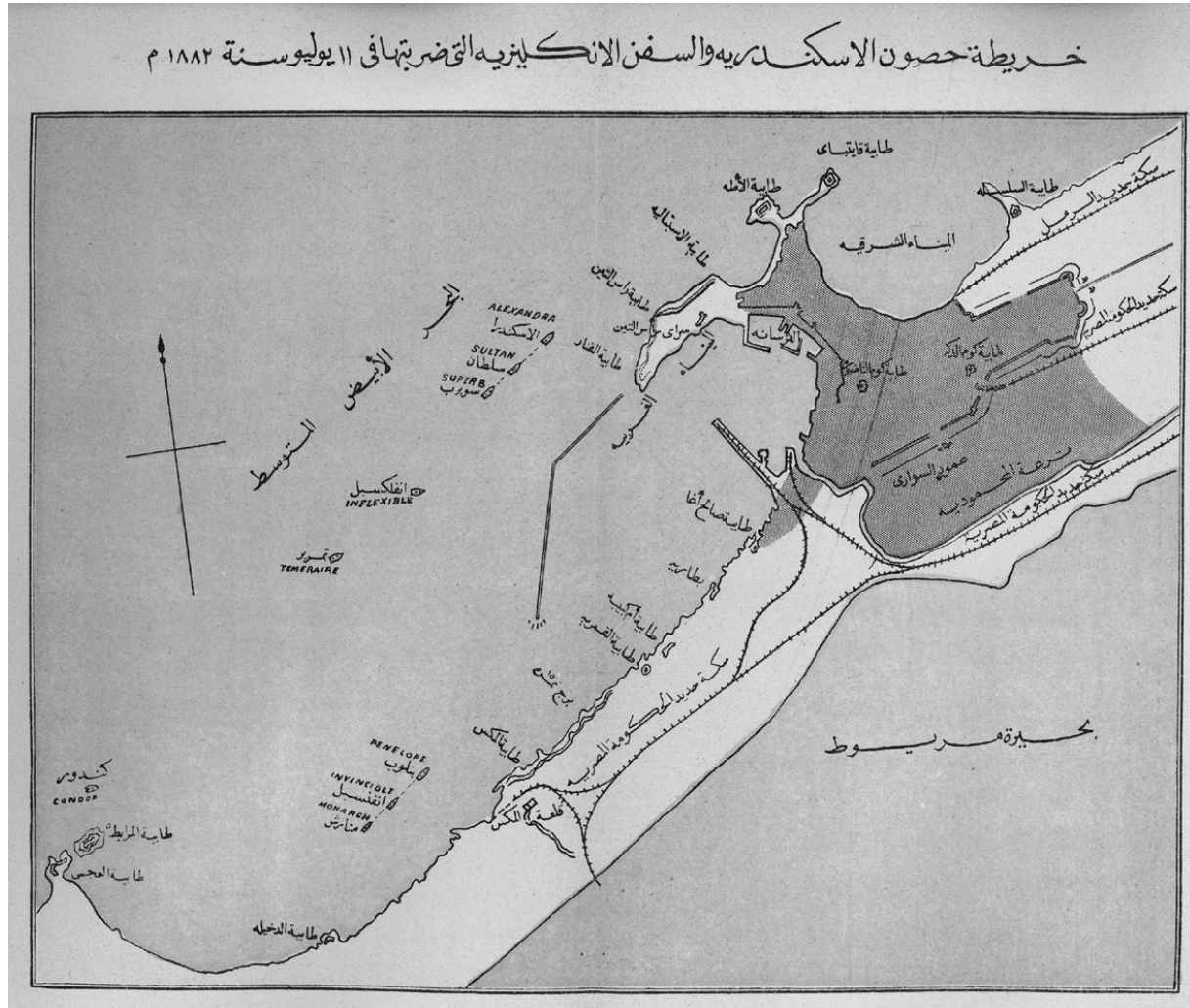
At 2 o'clock Arab time (9 a.m. foreign time) an ironclad sank in front of Atta Fort.

At 6 o'clock Arab time (noon) two ships sank between Qait Bey Fortress and Agami Fort.

At 7.30 Arab time (2.30 p.m. foreign time) a wooden warship carrying eight cannons sank.

At 10 o'clock Arab time (5 p.m. foreign time) the large ironclad was shot at from Qait Bey Fortress and was damaged. It raised the white flag, indicating a cease-fire. A cease-fire was observed by both sides after ten hours of continuous firing. Some of the walls of the forts were damaged but they were repaired overnight. The shots and bombs that were fired by both sides amounted to around six thousand. This is the first time such a volley was fired in such a short time.

No soldier in the world could have stood as bravely at his post facing



The forts of Alexandria and the British ships that bombarded them on 11th July 1882



such shooting, as the Egyptians faced the fire of 28 warships for ten hours.

The prince's comment on this report was: "These are examples of the news that this newspaper publishes. Sadly, they are all fabrications without a grain of truth in them – save for the last paragraph."²⁴

The result of the prince's research led him to conclude that the Egyptian soldiers fought heroically, but did not stand a chance against the British artillery and sophisticated weapons. The forts were too outdated and low lying to provide the necessary protection. Given Egypt's weak position in the face of these facts, could the catastrophe have been averted? In his opinion, yes. If the assembly of 10 July had been less demagogic and more rational like Mar'ashly, Britain's designs upon Egypt could have been thwarted.

There were two ways Egypt could have solved the crisis. The first was to follow Mar'ashly's advice and refrain from firing back at the British fleet. The forts could have been emptied. Thus the British ultimatum would have been met, and if they went on firing after that they would have looked extremely dishonorable. Toussoun felt that this course would have deprived the British of a pretext to occupy the city, and Egypt would not have lost so many brave soldiers on that "accursed day". The second course of action would have been to appeal to the foreign consuls, whose country each had a warship in the harbor. If each one had sent a contingent to control the Egyptian soldiers stationed in the coastal forts, Admiral Seymour would not have been able to claim that he was being threatened. If he had then persisted in carrying out his plan instead of seeking peace, he would have found all of Europe against him.²⁵

What emerges from this lengthy exposition of the prince's analysis of the 1882 bombardment is that he was a rational man, not swayed by the excessive feelings of the majority, despite the fervor of his patriotic sentiments. He always chose peaceful and carefully thought out alternatives to rash action or bloody rioting.



As the nationalist movement developed under Mustafa Kamel, the prince found that the ideology of this national hero and his party, the *Hizb el Watani*, and their demands for the evacuation of the British, of independence and the unity of the Nile Valley, accorded perfectly with his own opinions. He gave Mustafa Kamel his full support. Then, when World War I ended, Prince Toussoun was inspired by President Woodrow Wilson's declaration that each nation had the right to self-determination, and wanted to send an Egyptian delegation to Versailles in 1918 to plead for Egypt's independence. He broached the subject with his friend the former prime minister Mohamed Said Pasha, who advised him to take the opinion of Saad Zaghloul Pasha. On 9 October 1918 he met Saad Zaghloul Pasha at a ball in San Stefano Casino and Hotel in Alexandria, held in honor of the coronation of Sultan Fouad, and when he mentioned the idea to him, Zaghloul approved. They agreed to hold further discussions on the project of sending a delegation or *wafd* to Versailles. What then followed was rather unclear. Suddenly there was a controversy over whose idea it originally was, who should form the delegation, who its members were to be, who should head it and go to Versailles. According to the prince's own narration of the events, what actually happened is as follows. In his *Memorandum* published in 1942, regarding his involvement in the Egyptian national movement from 1918 to 1928, he specifies that the idea was certainly his, and that when he spoke of it to Saad Zaghloul the latter never hinted that he too had had the same idea. Toussoun states that Zaghloul simply approved and promised to discuss it with his friends. They met again at a tea party held by Sir Reginald Wingate, the British high commissioner, in the house of Mrs. Zervudachi in Bacos, on 23 October 1918. Saad Zaghloul told the prince that his friends too approved of the idea and that they should discuss it more fully. The following morning they boarded the train to Cairo together and discussed the matter at length. What the prince reports is that Saad Zaghloul informed him that the project would cost 100,000 Egyptian pounds, which he doubted the Egyptian people would be able to raise, and that though somebody like Shaarawy Pasha could well afford to pay 10,000 Egyptian pounds, he doubted that Shaarawy Pasha would put forward the sum. Then they drifted on to other subjects, and decided to hold a meeting with the others. Toussoun comments that he did not continue discussing the financial aspect because he did not think it was not for them alone to resolve this issue. For Toussoun, it was the responsibility of the meeting of the whole assembly to discuss what should be done and determine the required sum of money, as well as the means by which it would be collected.



Indeed, the assembly might decide not to determine such matters. In any case, reports the prince, he felt that it was premature to consider the financial aspect and therefore refrained from discussing the matter with Zaghoul. After that, Zaghoul said no more on the subject to him, however the prince heard that he had been actively organizing the project. The prince hurried to Cairo on 11 November where he stayed at the Shepherd Hotel, as was his habit. There he discovered that Zaghoul and his friends Ali Shaarawy Pasha and Abdel Aziz Fahmy Bey had arranged an appointment with Wingate for the thirteenth to discuss the country's demands with him. He called upon Zaghoul and agreed with him and those present to hold a general meeting in the prince's Shubra palace on the nineteenth, and that there was no harm in Zaghoul and the two others going ahead with their meeting with Wingate *to discuss the subject generally and test the ground, and then present a report at the general meeting*. Confident that he had matters under control, Toussoun returned



The Shubra Palace

to Alexandria and sent out invitations to the general meeting. Soon afterwards the prime minister notified him that the government had forbidden this meeting, so he called it off. He went to Cairo once more where he met with Mohamed Said Pasha and Amin Yehia Pasha who told him that a rumor was spreading that Zaghoul wanted to hijack the project and that maybe it was he who was behind the government banning the meeting of the nineteenth. At this point the prince did not attempt to meet Zaghoul, but on another occasion, while Mohamed Said Pasha, Ismail Sidky Pasha, Hassan Sabry Pasha, and Amin Yehia Pasha were at the prince's palace, Zaghoul dropped in and denied the rumor that he wanted to be the one to carry the project through, adding that he would like the two parties to join forces. But this was not to be. Soon afterwards, at another meeting Amin Yehia told the prince that King Fouad had issued specific orders that Prince Omar Toussoun was to stay away from the whole matter. So the prince returned to Alexandria and there, according to his narrative, the matter ended.²⁶



Other versions of the story floating around during that period, and some memoirs, report that the idea had occurred to Zaghoul, to which the prince responds in his *Memorandum*. «If that is true, why did he never mention it to me on any of those occasions when we met and discussed it?»²⁷ As recently as 9 August 2001 the *Al-Wafd* newspaper, in a special article on Omar Toussoun, said that two things were typical of Zaghoul: his utter secrecy, and his sound choice of leaders. The article goes on to describe how Zaghoul had already formed the delegation or *wafd* that would go to Versailles, and chosen the members who would be meeting with Wingate on 13 November, a full month before, and that when Omar Toussoun spoke to him of a similar project, Zaghoul never breathed a word to him that preparations were already under way.²⁸ However, most contemporary opinions, all the obituaries published at Toussoun's death, and recent historians conclude that the idea was Toussoun's.

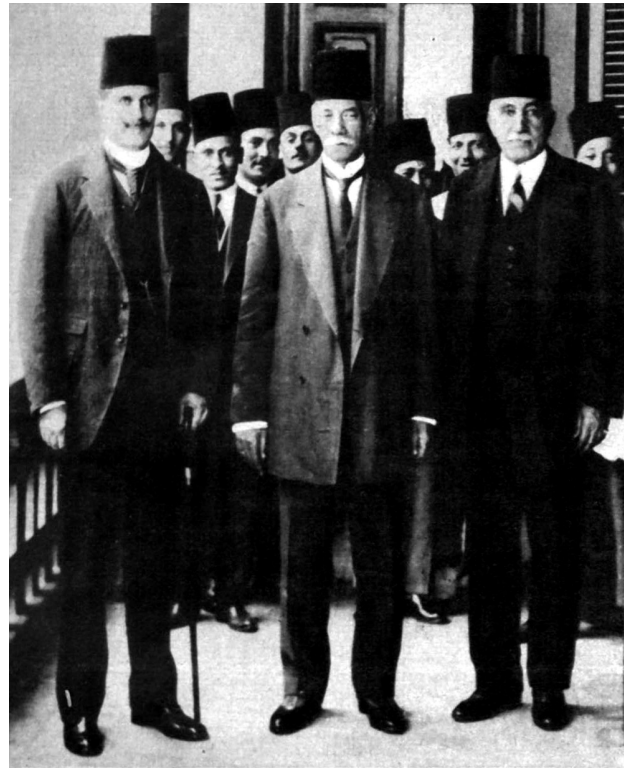
In the final instance however, despite various interpretations, the bare facts remain that on 9 October 1918 Omar Toussoun discussed the idea of sending a *wafd* to Versailles to demand Egypt's independence. Zaghoul did not mention that he had had a similar idea or that he had been working along such lines with his friends. At another meeting Zaghoul specifically said that the project would need 100,000 Egyptian pounds, and Toussoun did not comment. After that, there was no word from Zaghoul. Toussoun discovered that Zaghoul, with the government's blessing, had already nominated some delegates and was going to attend a meeting with the British high commissioner. The prince called for a general meeting but was forbidden by the government from holding it. When Toussoun started forming his own party composed of members of the old National Party (*El Hizb el Watany*) that he had supported in the days of Mustafa Kamel then afterwards of Mohamed Farid, Zaghoul asked for a reconciliation between the two groups. Then the prince was ordered by the king to stay away from the whole affair. This he did.

It must be said however, that the Zaghoul party preferred not to have Toussoun in the *wafd* because it wanted the movement to be a popular movement, not a royalist one, a movement for independence, not succession. Some sources also indicate that Zaghoul did not want Toussoun involved in the *wafd* because the prince's stiff and uncompromising attitude towards the British



would doom the whole project to failure from the beginning.²⁹ The prince, however, had a long history of mobilizing the masses under his leadership. the fact that he was popularly know as Abul Fellah “Father of the Peasant” showed his allegiance to the common people, his ties to the land, and to Egypt itself. It was a mark of both his simplicity and his loyalty.

In the end it was Saad Zaghloul who became head of the *wafd* delegation, which Toussoun supported. The *wafd* eventually left for Europe without him. However he supported it morally,



Omar Toussoun with Saad Zaghloul Pasha and Ahmed Mazloum Pasha in Beit-el-Umma in 1923



and also financially by donating tens of thousands of Egyptian pounds. It was his policy to unite the Egyptian front in the face of the British, regardless of internal differences. While Saad Zaghloul was in exile, Toussoun used to visit Beit-el-Umma, the house of Saad Zaghloul which had become known as the House of the Nation. And when Zaghloul finally returned from exile, the prince was there to welcome him home.

In addition, certain facts provided by the British shed further light on the episode. The secret document that Sir Reginald Wingate sent to the British undersecretary of foreign affairs, Lord Harding, on 24 November 1918, gives more details. Wingate says he met with the prime minister, Hussein Rushdy Pasha, to ascertain the position of Sultan Fouad (later King Fouad) regarding Prince Omar Toussoun. The impression Wingate got from Rushdy Pasha was that Sultan Fouad was extremely angry at Toussoun for having involved himself in politics, especially as he considered the prince – given his popularity with the people, his religious leanings and his allegiance to Turkey – a “hateful rival to his throne”.³⁰ For this reason he used Adly Yeken Pasha and Hussein Rushdy Pasha to insist on the prince’s return to his house in Alexandria. Wingate also says that Rushdy Pasha did not think Sultan Fouad would go as far as to request the prince’s exile, for the time being. Wingate held another meeting with the prince’s friend, Mohamed Said Pasha, who iterated that it was Sultan Fouad who had forbidden the general meeting of the nineteenth owing to his hatred of his “illusory rival”. But Mohamed Said Pasha added that Saad Zaghloul had also played a part in the events: up until ten days earlier Zaghloul had been in perfect agreement with the prince, but suddenly abandoned Toussoun and adopted in extremist line. Wingate himself seems to agree that Zaghloul and his party were extremists, compared to Toussoun’s moderation – though he does appear to think that Toussoun had some far-reaching, hidden aim. He suspected that this had to do with the people’s allegiance to the Sublime Porte and their desire to return to the Turkish fold, with the possibility of re-establishing the Turkish empire on a new basis. This would explain Sultan Fouad’s strong animosity towards the prince, because, regardless of the sultan’s desire for personal independence and more freedom, he could not show friendship towards Turkey because without doubt the candidate it would choose for the throne would be either the previous Khedive Abbas Hilmi or any member of his family – or maybe even Prince Omar Toussoun himself.

This was the gist of some of Wingate’s remarks in his report. He was not mistaken about Sultan



Fouad having fears that Toussoun might make a grab for the throne. These were fears that also plagued his son, the future King Farouk. But the prince had no such designs upon the crown. In fact, according to the memoirs of Mustafa-el-Nahhas Pasha, Omar Toussoun *had* been offered the throne by the British after the death of Sultan Hussein Kamel. He informed Nahhas Pasha of this in 1941, in his house in Bacos. Nahhas Pasha had gone to visit him, and in the course of discussing the moral decline of King Farouk, Toussoun admitted that he was unable to give the king any advice, because the king would then think he was after the throne. Nahhas Pasha records the prince as saying: “If he had a mind that recollected history, or honest advisors, he



King Farouk in the center, with Prince Omar Toussoun to his right, and Ahmed Hassanein Pasha to his left



would have known that the throne was offered to us before it was offered to his father, after the death of Sultan Hussein Kamel, and that we refused it categorically. Our refusal angered the British and aroused their enmity against us. But their enmity meant nothing to us. We joined the ranks of the nation and announced our support of Saad when he formed the *wafd*, and at every opportunity we still announce our support of the *wafd* and of its leader who succeeded Saad”.³¹

It seems that even Saad Zaghloul suspected Omar Toussoun to be a candidate for the throne, and that some British members of parliament discussed the possibility of Sultan Fouad being replaced by either Omar Toussoun or Prince Kamal el Din Hussein.³² Yet despite all these strong allegations, the prince remained a staunch nationalist who showed no sign of aspiring to be king. His support of the nationalist movement did not cease with his “exile” in Alexandria. A few princes rallied round him, among them Kamal el Din Hussein, Mohamed Ali Ibrahim, Youssef Kamal, Ismail Daoud and Mansour Daoud. Together they lent their voice to that of the masses and the nation. They issued declarations, wrote to the press, and objected to the Milner Commission. During the 1919 revolution, Alexandrians crowded in the streets to demonstrate their allegiance to Saad Zaghloul, but also to Omar Toussoun. They went about the streets of Alexandria chanting:

Omar Pasha, you're a wondrous sight
And you've filled the world with light

عمر باشا يا غندور انت مليت الدنيا نور

After the 1919 revolution, Lord Milner was sent to Egypt to investigate into the causes of discontent, and the whole of Egypt would have nothing to do with him. “Go to Saad,” he was told over and over again. Omar Toussoun and the other princes took a similar stand. They wrote to Milner and asserted that they, like the Egyptian nation, called for the total and unconditional independence of Egypt. Later on, they requested the king to re-institute parliamentary life. Toussoun in particular pleaded with the factious parties to stop their selfish bickering and to unite in the interests of the nation. He always regretted that the Egyptians could not unite, and that they occasionally resorted to violence, which he hated. He condemned the riots that broke out in Alexandria when the government chose Adly Yeken rather than Saad Zaghloul



to represent Egypt in the Wafd Party. When conflicts arose in 1921 between Egyptians and foreigners living in the city, he wrote several articles asking the people to respect the foreign guests living in their country and not to project a negative and false image of Egypt. Moreover, with his usual generosity he paid compensation and helped to rebuild the city.³³ In his survey of the 1882 bombardment, he had criticized the Egyptians for having given Britain its longed for pretext by their recklessness and aggressive stance.³⁴ Similarly, he condemned the assassination of the British sirdar in the Sudan, Sir Lee Stack – though he did not condone Britain’s brutal reprisals.

In addition to his efforts to win Egypt’s independence from the British, and his demands for a constitution, the prince also looked beyond to secure the country’s safety and borders. His first priority was Sudan, in which he invested a lot of time and money. He studied the geographical and historical relationship between Egypt and Sudan very carefully. The wisdom of his great grandfather Mohamed Ali, in annexing Sudan, lay in his realization that the two were organically bound, and that Egypt depended on the Sudan for its life source, since the country that controlled the waters of the Nile controlled the fate of Egypt. The prince also considered the two countries one entity, with a single Nilotic culture. When the British started squeezing Egypt out of Sudan and ruling the latter alone, he saw the danger of Egypt being cut off from its source of water, and of cutting Sudan off from Egypt, which had historically been its cultural and military support.

He was unstinting in providing funds for Sudan. Mosques, schools and hospitals were built using his own money. Sudanese students studying in Egypt were fully sponsored by him, and his house was the hub of meetings held by the Sudanese on all affairs relating to their country. At home, he employed a lot of domestic help from Dongola, who were treated as members of the household. Many lived, got married and died on his estates. As the president of the Royal Agricultural Society, the prince founded the Egyptian Mission which he sent to Sudan in 1935 and 1937, thus strengthening ties with Egypt’s sister country and achieving what politicians failed to do.³⁵ Sheikh Merghani and the son of the Mahdi were his personal friends. In addition to practical help, he encouraged scholarship on Sudan and himself set the example. The extent of the importance of this country for him is evident from the fact that this was the only subject he wrote about in three languages: English, French and Arabic. He undertook a serious study



of the branches of the Nile, and of the history and geography of the Sudan, which he published at his own expense and distributed for free. Sudanese scholars were encouraged to write the history of their country, and likewise, their books were published by him and distributed free of charge. In gratitude for his help, the newly founded Sudanese Club invited him in 1935 to be its honorary president. As the prince always took his duties seriously, he attended and supervised many of the club's functions. "The great prince of the Nile Valley" was how the Sudanese called him. In 1922, during the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations for Egypt's independence, Britain held on to Sudan. This led Toussoun to object in writing to Hussein Rushdy Pasha, saying that Sudan should be included within Egypt's borders, as had been the case before the occupation, and that parliament should include representatives from Sudan.

He was also extremely concerned about Libya, and when it was attacked by Italy, his anger and disgust were aroused. Libya was a neighbor, a Muslim country, and an Ottoman province. That last issue alone would have roused the prince to action. It was one of his points of pride that he personally traveled all over Egypt collecting money and making speeches in aid of the Libyan cause. Because he was such a fine orator capable of rousing national and popular feeling, and moving people's hearts by his eloquence and passion, he always got a response to his requests for donations. He headed the committee formed to manage the money collected and to help soldiers and resistance fighters cross the borders between Egypt and Libya by sending them arms, despite the British injunction against it. Prince Mohamed Ali and the Red Crescent were his most active supporters in this campaign, managing to send four medical missions to Libya. As for financial aid, as soon as a certain sum was collected, he sent it to the Ottoman Ministry of War, and informed the Sublime Porte, which eventually expressed its gratitude by bestowing upon him a decoration.

He reacted in the same way when Italy attacked Abyssinia. Weak countries that tried to resist powerful colonial powers, and fought for their freedom, had his full support – usually in the form of large financial contributions and medical missions for the relief of soldiers and casualties. Toussoun's outrage at Italy's attacks on Abyssinia and Libya was so deep that when King Victor Emmanuel visited Egypt, the prince refused to meet him, although he was always called upon to meet visiting dignitaries, heads of state and guests of Egypt, and he always hosted them in Alexandria. This time however, his refusal was meant to send a clear message.



Arguably, of course, the prince assisted Libya and Abyssinia for ideological reasons, because as a matter of principle he helped those countries whose liberties were being violated by the European colonizers. But Libya was also a neighbor and whoever occupied Libya could cross over and march into Egypt – as was demonstrated in World War II when German forces reached as far as El Alamein. Abyssinia posed a different threat: through it Egypt's water supply could be controlled.³⁶ This may have been the prince's real concern, for Abyssinia was close to the sources of the Nile and from there Egypt's lifeline could be cut off.

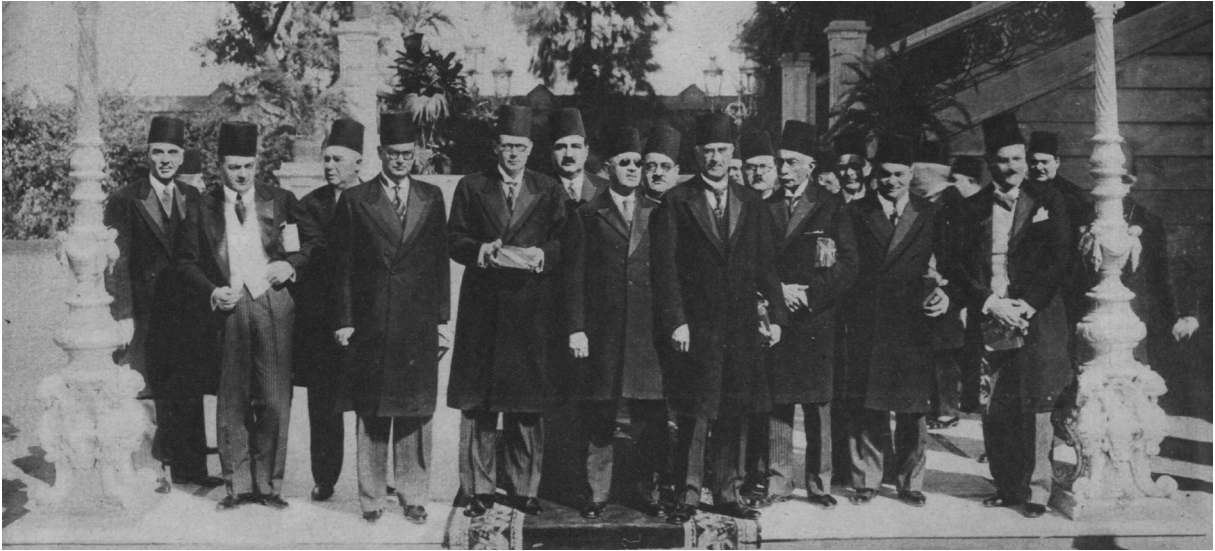
Next to his anxiety for Egypt, came Toussoun's preoccupation with the state of the Ottoman empire, which was crumbling. One by one its provinces were either invaded or involved in a war of independence, and the prince always sought to play a role. The Balkan wars broke out when Bulgaria and Serbia demanded independence from Turkey, and Greece demanded the return of the Greek Islands. In response, Turkey asked for help from its Muslim allies and provinces, and the prince, as was his wont, rose to the occasion. Once again he headed a campaign to collect money, and donated out of his personal funds until the sum of 300,000 Egyptian pounds was reached. The success of the campaign led the Ottomans to request further help. Again, Prince Mohamed Ali joined hands with Toussoun, and the Red Crescent too was active in helping with the war casualties. Following Turkey's defeat in World War I, the European powers started helping themselves to slices of the Ottoman cake. The Greek wars began, the Ottoman capital was occupied, and the Turkish army was pushed into Anatolia. At the request of the Egyptian nation, Toussoun once more headed a campaign to collect money and all forms of relief for the Ottoman soldiers and the casualties in Anatolia. But he was fighting against the forces of history: the age of the Ottomans, and the Islamic Caliphate, was truly over.

The situation in Palestine was another heartbreaking affair. The outcry began with the Balfour Declaration in 1917, and went through several stages of crisis. At each step the prince contributed once more out of his personal funds. In fact, he believed in the league of Eastern nations, and wished it to be consolidated and to extend to the whole of the Middle East. One major obstacle to this happening, he thought, was the sectarianism and religious strife in the East, which the West was encouraging. This was one of the reasons why Toussoun looked upon the West disparagingly. He believed that "East is East and West is West". Being such a devout



Muslim and staunch supporter of Egypt and the East meant that he would fight against the Western policy of “divide and rule” that Europe had always propagated.

Thus far the account of his numerous deeds and interests has portrayed the prince as a man of action, into which he flung himself wholeheartedly. Whether it was in agriculture, horse breeding, sports, social work, charity work, nationalism, international affairs, relief work, or simple support for the underprivileged, Prince Omar Toussoun’s name was synonymous with genuine concern, generosity, commitment and dedication.

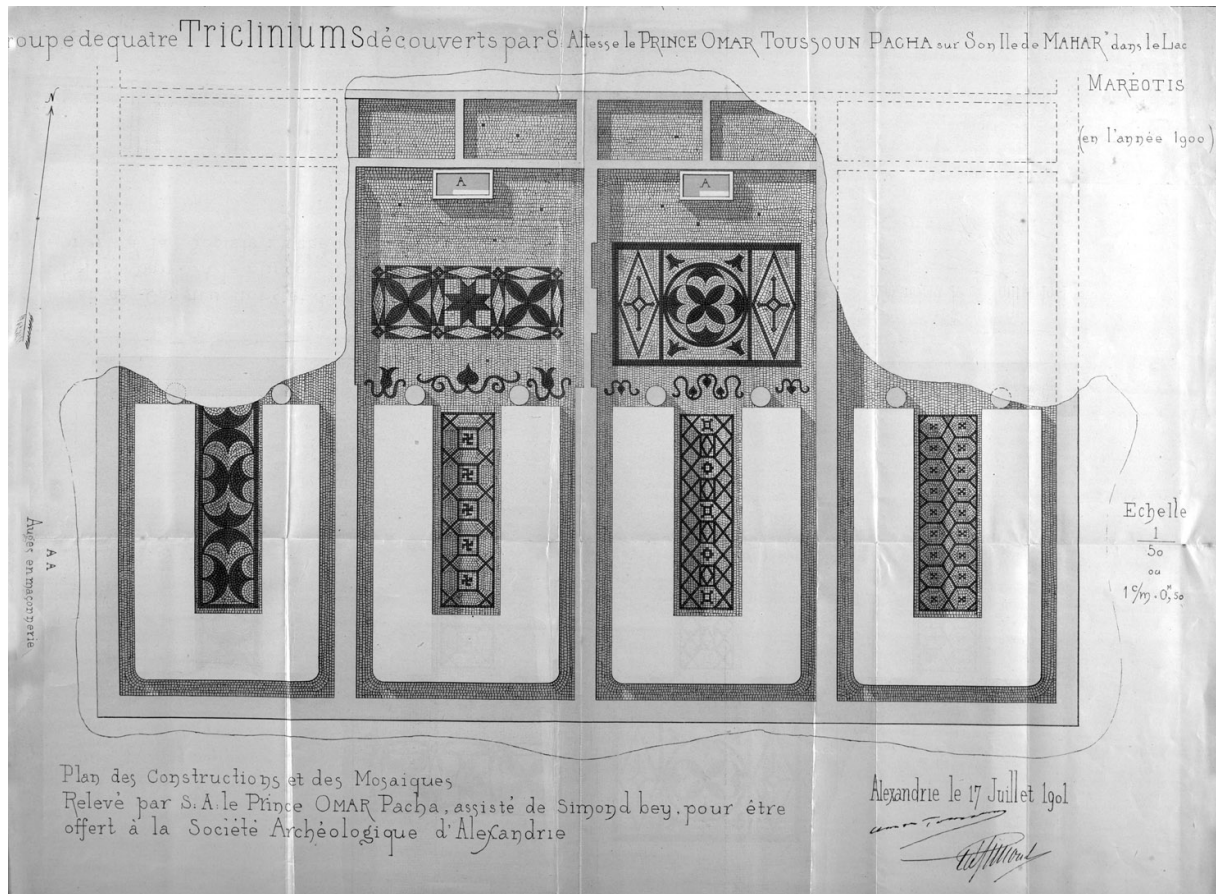


King Farouk's wedding

CHAPTER FIVE
OF DESERTS, SEAS, AND BOOKS



Prince Toussoun at his desk



The Mareotis Mosaics



It is a wonder he had time for anything else. But he did. For much more. If Prince Omar Toussoun were to be remembered for his scholarship, explorations and archeological discoveries alone, he would still be a famous man. It was not for nothing that he was the honorary president of the Archeological Society of Alexandria and of the Coptic Archeological Society since their founding, and of the Egyptian Academy of Science (l'Institut d'Egypte), and a member of the Arab Academy of Science in Damascus and of the Royal Geographical Society. Like a true archeologist, he could not stop digging. He was constantly looking for information: on his family, on the history and geography of Egypt and the Sudan, the origins and branches of the Nile, Alexandria modern and ancient, the tomb of Alexander, and the Western Desert. He studied, did research, went on desert expeditions. He wrote and published what he had researched, discovered and thought about.

It is difficult to understand what Georges Zananiri Pasha, who was secretary general of the Board of Quarantine and Sanitation in Alexandria, meant when he described the prince's desert expeditions in the following words: "His desert trips, famed for being well organized and fully equipped, remind one of the historical travels of Arabian princes we read about in *A Thousand and One Nights*."³⁷ His expeditions might have been well organized, but they were far from exotic in any romantic sense, since he was ascetic and disciplined enough to make even his family sleep on the ground. Nor is it easy to see the connection between *A Thousand and One Nights* and historical Arabian princes and their travels. But the general idea that Zananiri wanted to convey was that these expeditions had an air of fantasy about them. Toussoun had a love for horses and riding, as well as for the desert. He had a small band of Libyan and Sudanese horsemen and with whom he would ride through the desert. Its people and their leaders knew and loved him. Ahmed el Senoussi and Mohamed Idris el Senoussi, who later became king of Libya, were his personal friends, and his intimate knowledge of the Western Desert facilitated the help he was giving the Libyan patriots during their resistance to the Italian occupation. With a little bit of imagination, one can perhaps recreate Zananiri's description, and visualize Omar Toussoun, in his princely demeanor, riding like the wind across the wide empty spaces – or



skirting Lake Mareotis – surrounded by the Sudanese horsemen in their flowing white robes and turbans and the Libyans in their bedouin clothes:

There is little indication from the prince himself of how closely his trips resembled *A Thousand and One Nights*. His publications were factual and scholarly expositions of the discoveries or sites he was writing about. There are no descriptions of the setting and surroundings, nor of his personal impressions. Luckily, though, the Italian archeologist Evaristo Brecchia recorded his impressions of the trip he went on with the prince to Wadi el Natroun in the early 1930s, where they visited the four remaining monasteries there. His description of the desert does evoke a romantic exotic setting:

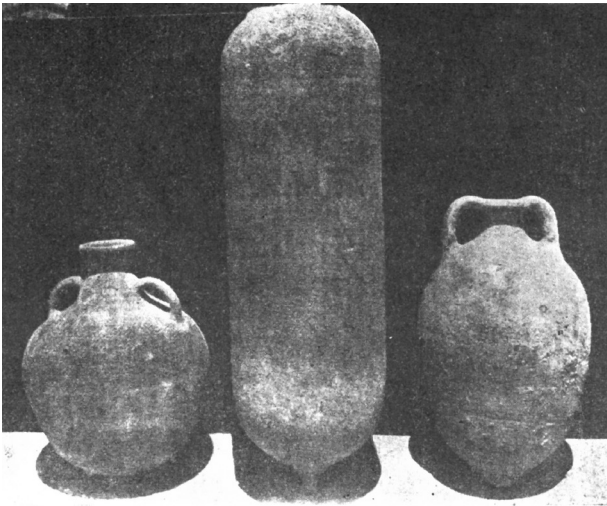
Behind us, the early dawn tints the sky with a golden hue, and dispels the darkness above us and before us with waves of pearly light, while the last stars grow pale and fade one after the other. In the desert, objects still in the shadows begin to stand out against the horizon. Surrounded by a clear outline, they appear magnified and enormous. In that perfect silence, only the flutter of a light, fresh breeze can be felt. The only thing to disturb the quiet of this expanse is the occasional leap of a gazelle. Each one of us is alone with himself. None dares break the magic. The soul, freed from all cares and burdens, seems to dissolve into the boundless desert and infinite sky.³⁸

But there is no documentation of swift steeds racing across the desert, only the mention of “swift machines”³⁹ that soon brought them to the monastery of Deir el Baramus, the northernmost of the four monasteries. So much for the romance. But there is still a touch of the exotic, found, surprisingly enough, in the description of the monks themselves. After the travelers arrive and knock at the gate several times, this is what they get: “After a few seconds of waiting, the bells began to peal joyfully to greet us. The gate opened, and we saw an amazing group of monks hurrying towards us, wearing simple skullcaps of a rather dubious white and coarse tunics. They were barefoot, with long beards and thick unkempt hair.”⁴⁰ For all his happiness with their primitive appearance, Brecchia is offended by their brief



encounter with modernity. He is outraged that they are *not* as basic as they should be, as he says in his afterthought: “PS: There is no religion anymore! Mechanical civilization kills poetry everywhere. The monasteries of Wadi el Natroun have recently been cleaned, whitewashed, and painted in bright colors like small village inns, and the cells are lit by electricity. What horror!”⁴¹

The desert provided much scope for discoveries, excavations and scholarship. Toussoun wrote the history of the monasteries of Wadi el Natroun, including the thirty or so monasteries that had existed before the eleventh century. These he located and identified, and erected on their ruins bronze plaques bearing his name. There were also expeditions, discoveries and publications related to Cellia (derived from the cells the monks lived in) west of Wadi el Natroun, where he discovered some 90 ruined cells. Southwest of Dalla Oasis he discovered a fifth or sixth century Coptic bronze cross and some pottery dating back to the fourth century AD. As was his wont, he donated these finds to the Greco-Roman Museum in Alexandria.



The Cellia pottery At the Greco-Roman Museum

What is certain about Omar Toussoun is that he was very concerned about the Western Desert from both the archeological and the humane points of view. Out of pity for thirsty travelers, he ordered the digging of 14 wells where potable water was available, at his own expense. Out of pity in particular for the Libyans who had been exiled by the Italians and who trekked the desert in caravans, he had the spring of Ein el Dalla cleaned out and cemented in the 1920s. Thus the migrants traveling from Libya to the Farafra Oasis could rest there and find drinking water. The water in that spring was plentiful and sufficient for a small caravan. Up until the thirties travelers could find in the small hut



the prince had stored jerry cans of petrol and all sorts of equipment that might be needed in that forsaken place.

It also seems that he had had plans to cultivate and populate the desert, for during the thirties he addressed the government and published in the newspapers suggestions for building an asphalt road west out of Alexandria at least as far as Abu Sir, and for extending the Noubariya Canal so



In the Western Desert

that the desert could be irrigated. With the right sort of planning and technology, the desert and oases could yield much for Egypt. But as with his crusade regarding prohibition, his words fell on apparently sympathetic ears but no action was undertaken.

The salt lake of Mareotis, which lay to the south and west of Alexandria, offered several attractions. Traditionally, it was the place to go for duck shooting. The prince had five thousand



feddans of uncultivated land in this region as well as in other parts of the desert. He possessed three small summer houses in Mareotis – one for himself and his family, and two for guests. Moreover, being on the way to the Western Desert, it also became the focus of his archeological pursuits. One of his finds there included a beautiful mosaic.

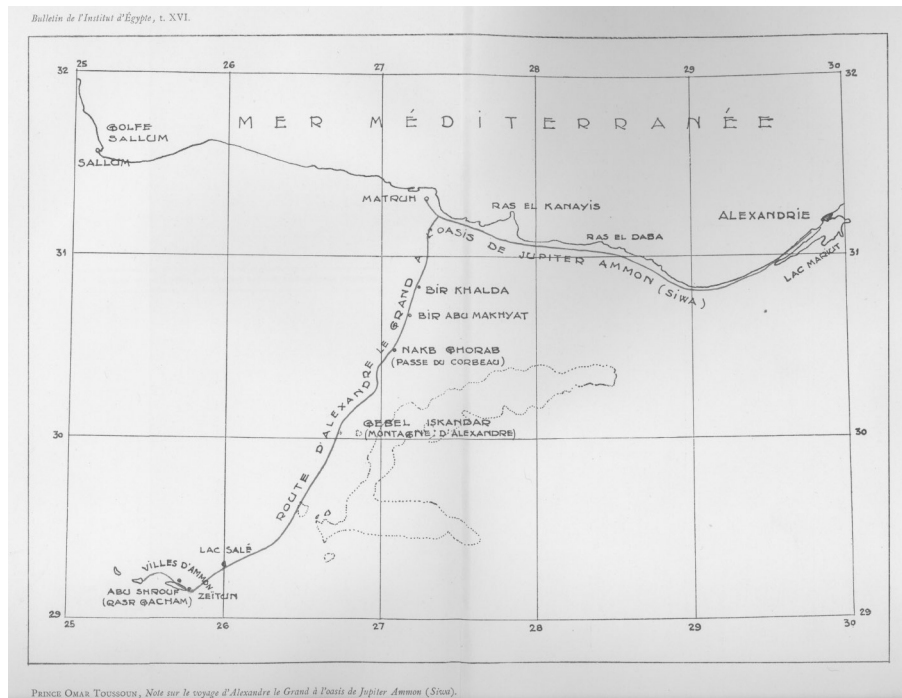
Why this passion for the Western Desert? Perhaps the answer can be found with E. M. Forster, one of the writers who captured the magic of cosmopolitan Alexandria and fixed it in people's imagination. This is how he describes Alexandria and the Western Desert:

Alexandria, though so cosmopolitan, lies on the verge of civilization. Westward begins an enormous desert of limestone that stretches into the heart of Africa. The very existence of this desert is forgotten by most of the dwellers in the city, but it has played a great part in her history, especially in Christian times, and no one who would understand her career can ignore it.⁴²

Perhaps the prince would not have cared much for the phrase “on the verge of civilization” which somehow smacked of Western ideology and condescension, but he could not have agreed more with the fact that one needed to know the desert in order to understand the history of Alexandria and its development. Being such a devoted historian, he would naturally have been curious about the part played in Egypt's history by Alexandria and the desert oases such as Siwa in particular. In a letter to the Egyptian Academy of Science, he traced Alexander the Great's famous journey to Siwa and the temple of Jupiter-Amon. He described how Alexander had kept to the coast, then traveled along the Qattara Depression, and south to Siwa. This was the same route Mohamed Ali had taken. Did the prince see a continuity between Alexander, the founder of the ancient city, and his great grandfather, the founder of the modern one? Did he feel therefore, that he had inherited some kind of responsibility towards Egypt? When it came to desert exploration, Toussoun could well compete with the other famous Egyptian explorer of the same period, Ahmed Hassanein Pasha (head of the Royal Diwan in 1940), who discovered two oases, drew up a map of the Libyan desert and its oases, and also went south to the Kufra Oasis on the boundaries between Libya, Egypt and Sudan, and as far as Darfour. Toussoun, on the other hand, made discoveries in Alexandria itself, to the east of the city, and in the sea.



At the westernmost tip of Alexandria stands Qait Bey Fortress, situated on what used to be the island of Pharos but has long been linked to the mainland by a neck of land called Anfouchi. This fortress was once the site of the ancient lighthouse of Alexandria, the Pharos, named after the island on which it stood. To the east of the fortress stretches a large harbor which ends in



Alexander the Great's route to Siwa Oasis

a promontory called Silsileh, known in ancient times as Cape Lochias. This Eastern Harbor as it is called today, once referred to as the Great Harbor (Portus Magnus), is where long ago all the glamour, magic and tragedies of Hellenistic Alexandria were played out. If one followed the coastline east of Alexandria, one would eventually reach ancient Canopus – today Abu Kir – where Cleopatra was said to have had her baths, and where in more recent times Nelson



destroyed Napoleon's fleet at the famous Battle of Abu Kir.

Canopus, situated at the mouth of the Nile's Canopic branch, was one of the two principal harbors before the founding of Alexandria. The towns of Menouthis and Herakleion nearby could have been suburbs of Canopus. They were probably founded in the sixth or seventh century BC, and were described by both Herodotus and Strabo when they visited Egypt, almost four centuries apart. Strabo mentions seeing them as late as 26 BC. It seems that Herakleion derived its name from a temple dedicated to Herakles, and continued to function as a port until Alexandria was founded. What happened was perhaps that between the fourth and the fourteenth century AD, series of earthquakes hit the Egyptian coast damaging a number of coastal cities. As the coastline started sinking, the cities sank with it and were submerged under water.

In 1933 Captain Cull, a British aircraft pilot, sighted from the air some horseshoe shaped archeological remains two kilometers offshore and about five meters under the sea. When he got to hear of it, Toussoun, who owned almost all Abu Kir, asked the local fishermen, who confirmed that there were submerged antiquities and indicated the spot. The prince immediately had a diver explore the sites. A white marble head of Alexander the Great, around one foot high, was pulled out of the sea. Also discovered were granite and marble columns, dikes and masonry, from which Toussoun identified the city of Menouthis and its temple to Isis. The prince donated all the artifacts that were retrieved from the sea to the Greco-Roman Museum in Alexandria, and published his finds, complete with map on which the sites were determined, in the bulletin of the Archeological Society in 1934. Then these cities and temples remained untouched until the Egyptian diver Kamal Aboul Saadat undertook more excavations in



Alexander the Great's marble head in the Greco-Roman Museum

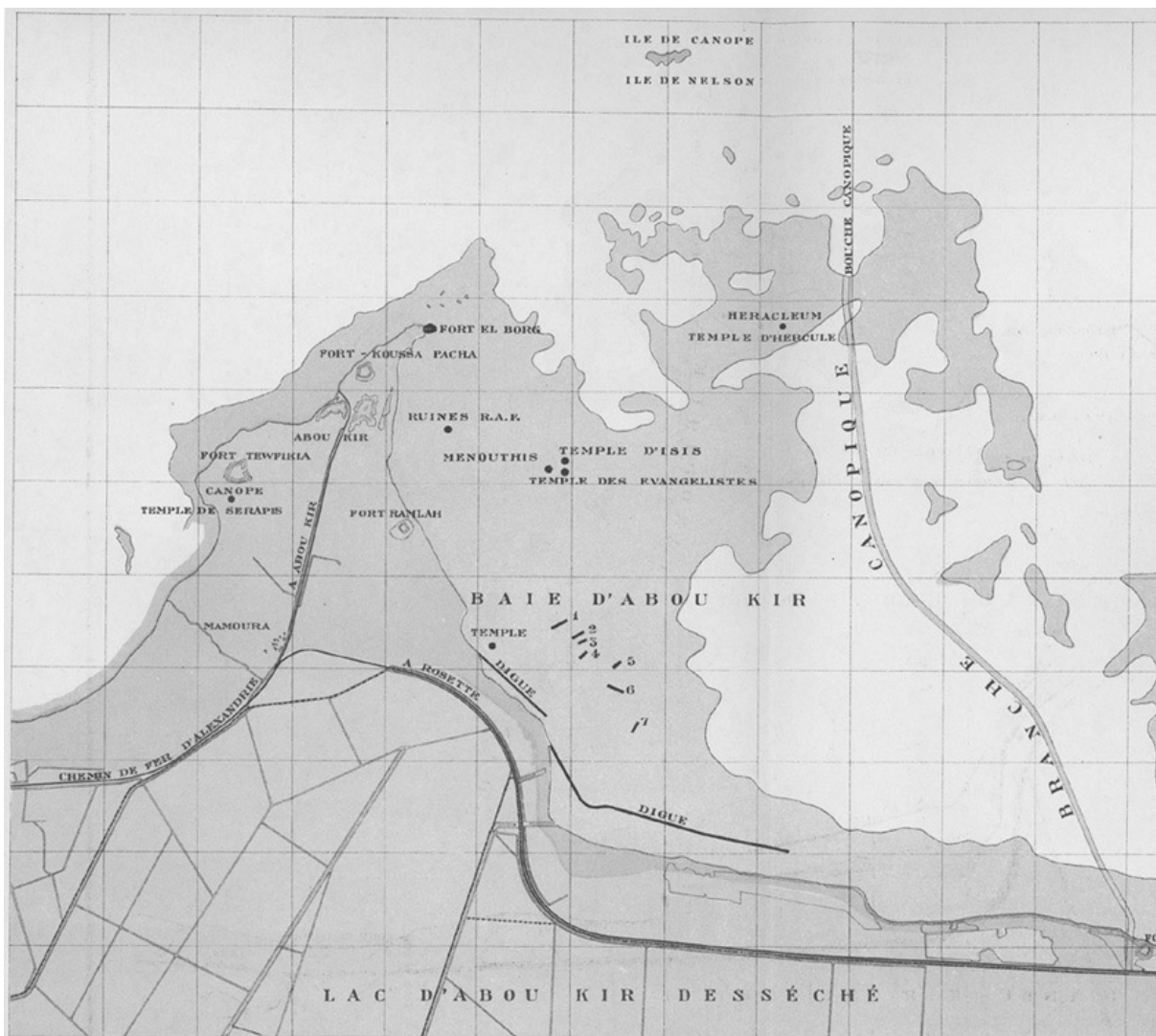


Prince Omar Toussoun paying a visit to the Coast Guards Center at Mex

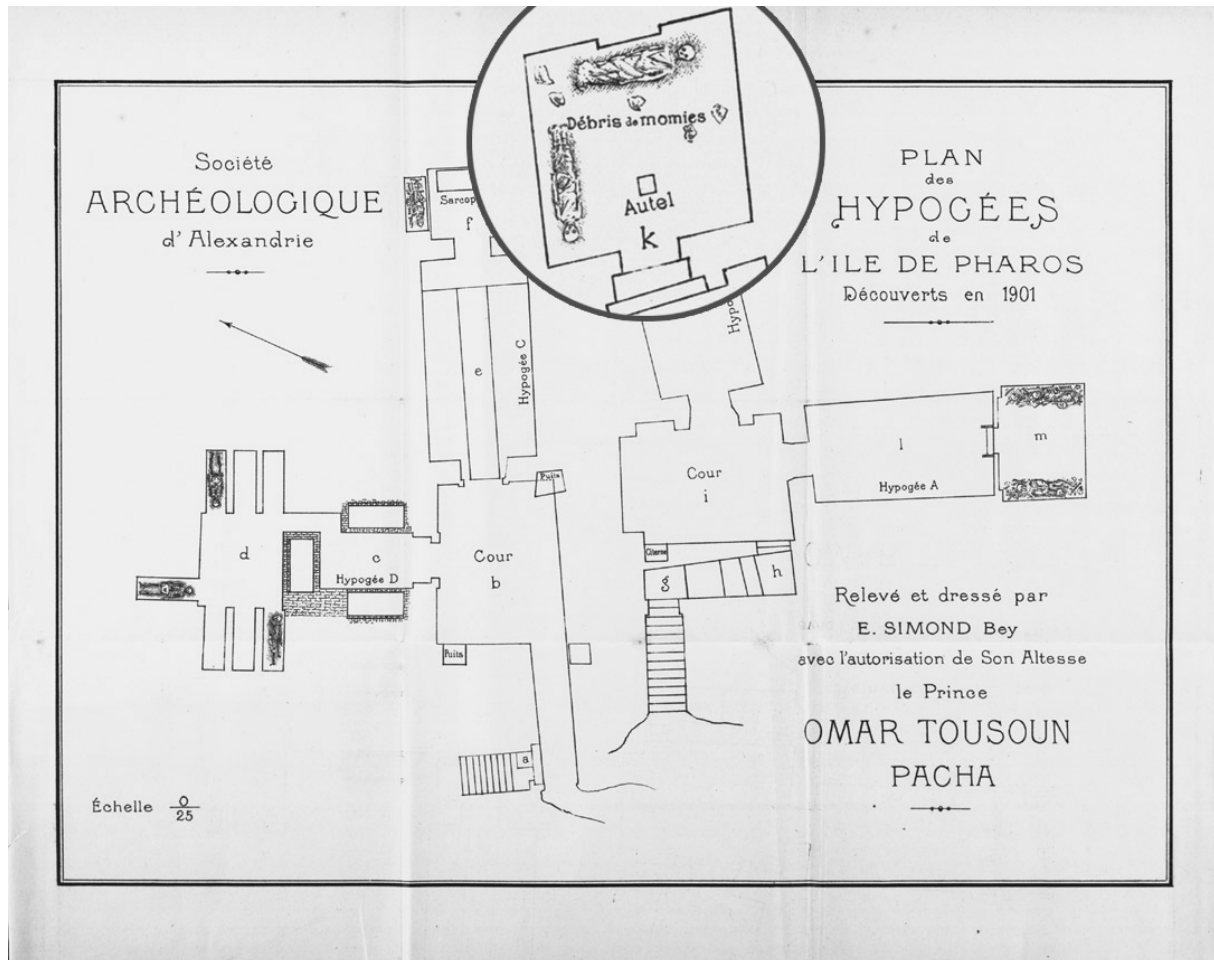
the 1970s, as did Frank Goddio in the 1990s. Goddio is reported to have said that Herakleion in particular was “frozen in time”.⁴³

Prince Toussoun also discovered antiquities on his land in Abu Kir. In 1905 he invited Breccia to inspect them, who believed they could be the remains of a temple to Serapis. They unearthed the remains of a mosaic, statues and buildings. These findings too were published in the bulletin of the Archeological Society, and were donated to the Greco-Roman Museum.

In 1901, during the process of preparing the surface of his grounds in Anfouchi – ancient Pharos – to lay the pavement adjacent to the coast, the prince discovered yet more archeological remains. He alerted the Archeological Society and the Council for Antiquities, and encouraged excavations on the site, which unearthed a necropolis and important cisterns. This part of his property he then donated to the city.



Map of Abu Kir Bay showing the underwater sites and monuments



The Anfouchi Necropolis



One can easily conclude that Prince Omar Toussoun's achievements in exploration and archeology were sufficient reason to establish his reputation as a pioneer in these fields alone. However, his written output can likewise be considered a monumental achievement. (See Appendix II for a list of his publications in Arabic and French). His publications ranged from newspaper articles, to research papers published in the journals of the army or the farmers' union or in bulletins of societies (such as the Archeological Society, the Royal Geographical Society, the Egyptian Academy of Science), to fully fledged, three volume books and atlases. Studies ranged from the ancient history of Alexandria to the modern history of Egypt, dealing with subjects as varied as the Pharos of Alexandria, the tomb of Alexander, Pompey's Pillar, Siwa Oasis, and the Egyptian desert. In terms of more recent history he studied the forts of Alexandria, the bombardment of 1882, the digging of the Mahmoudieh Canal, and Alexandria in 1868. Some of his books on Egyptian history were studies on obscure or little known subjects such as the Egyptian expeditions to Mexico, the Equator, the Balkans, and the Crimea. This resulted from his passion in documenting his family's military history, which by default was also that of his country. His other history books included certain aspects of the rule of Mohamed Ali and Said Pasha, such as the history of the army and the fleet, of schools and education, of scholarships to Europe, industry, agriculture, and the finances of Egypt from the days of the Pharaohs. The Nile and Sudan were a seminal part of his publications, as well as the three volumes on the Equator. There were, of course, documents of more contemporary history relating to the political condition of Egypt and his role in it, especially in the formation of the *wafd*, the delegation that went to Versailles to demand Egypt's independence. Whether they were newspaper articles or three volume tomes, they had one thing in common: they were all scholarly and well documented and rarely expressed a personal opinion that was not substantiated by evidence.

Among the prince's valuable contributions was the atlas that provided ten maps of the Delta and Lower Egypt spanning a period of 1,000 years. Toussoun first presented it at the international conference held by the Egyptian Geographical Society in Cairo in 1925. The atlas was translated from its original French into Arabic and published over a number of years, from 1931-35. Its importance lay in the fact that it was not a mere compilation of maps, but a detailed



study of the area laid out chronologically, starting with the description of George the Byzantine in the seventh century, just before the Arab conquest, and continuing through various periods leading up to the middle of the nineteenth century. The study also included the development, size and boundaries of the area's administrative units, and its system of taxation during the reign of Mohamed Ali.

In between helping countries fighting for their independence, supporting the Muslim Caliphate, reforming the agriculture of Egypt, improving the morals of his people and relieving all forms of distress, discovering monasteries buried under sand and towns submerged under water, the prince managed to accumulate a written output which will remain an invaluable source of material for generations of scholars in the future.



Interest in underwater archeology continues: Hussein and Mounira Toussoun with Frank Goddio on board *Princess Doua* at Abu Kir Bay, 2002

EPILOGUE

The Renaissance of Egypt
by Mahmoud Mokhtar





The poet Khalil Mutran wrote the introduction to the volume compiled in memory of Prince Omar Toussoun in 1946 by the Royal Agricultural Society. He summarized the prince's character and attributes, adding that the articles included in the volume had revealed Toussoun's qualities at many levels: they showed the upright, serious and God fearing individual and devout Muslim; the descendent of noble lineage who did credit to his family; the Egyptian who sacrificed all that was near and dear for the sake of his country's dignity and independence; the Oriental who called for Eastern states to unite; the benefactor whose help extended to all those in need, whether states or associations or individuals; the scholar whose publications contributed significantly to many fields of research.

In the final analysis however, it is people's testimonies and love that stand out, and bear witness to a person's character. The enduring love people had for Toussoun during his lifetime, the anguish the nation displayed at his death, the memory those who knew him cherish of him, and the interest researchers still have in him, all bear witness to what a genuine benefactor, patriot and scholar he was.

It remains to be said that he donated 500 Egyptian pounds towards Mahmoud Mokhtar's sculpture *The Renaissance of Egypt*, which is one of the symbols of modern Egypt. This donation carries much symbolism, for the prince himself was a true renaissance figure, given his achievements in all these diverse fields. More importantly, through his dedication in all he undertook, notably in agricultural reform, he did much to help Egypt develop. It now remains for us to revive his memory and immortalize the man who contributed a great deal to Egypt and its renaissance.



ENDNOTES

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- ⁷ Mohamed Ibrahim Lotfy el Masry, “The Great Hero of the East” *In Memoriam*, Royal Society of Agriculture. p. 167.
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- ⁹ Judith Freni Forbis, “*In Celebration of the Egyptian Arabian Horse*”, www.second-wind-arabians.com/res_celebra4.html
- ¹⁰ Iman el Tohamy, *Omar Toussoun and his Role in the Political, Social and Intellectual Life of Egypt*, unpublished Masters Thesis, Mansoura University, 2002, p. 210.
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- ¹¹ Assem el Dessouki, *The Great Landowners and their Role in Egyptian Society (1914-1952)*, Cairo, Dar el Thakafa el Gadida, 1975, p. 101.



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- 13 Cit in Quiliny Fahmy, p. 74.
- 14 Cit in Quiliny Fahmy, p. 83.
- 15 Sabry Abul Magd, *The Years Before the Revolution (1930-1952)*, Cairo, the Egyptian
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- صبري أبو الجمد، سنوات ما قبل الثورة (١٩٣٠-١٩٥٢)، القاهرة: الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب، ١٩٨٧ . ص ٤٥١-٤٥٢ .
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⁴¹ Ibid, p.24

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APPENDIX I

INVENTORY OF OMAR TOUSSOUN'S PROPERTY*

1-Agricultural property:

- a- The Governorate of Alexandria lands in Abu-Kir, Ramleh Fort, Tarh el Melaha and el Hezab. (960 *feddans*)
- b- The Governorate of Alexandria lands in Maamoura and Mandara. (626 *feddans*)
- c- The Governorate of Beheira lands including Tafteesh-el-Khazzan. (3,724 *feddans*)
- d- The Governorate of Gharbiya, Markaz el Mahala el Kubra - Sedness (741 *feddans*); Markaz Talkha and Bulkas and Tafteesh Demeira (590 *feddans*); Markaz Talkha from the side of Sharnakash and el Tawila (30 *feddans*). In Tafteesh el Gharbiya – Markaz Talkha Tafteesh Demeira, which includes New Kafr Demeira, Meit Zangar, el Manahla, el Manial – he had 357 *feddans*.
- e- The Governorate of Giza lands: Markaz Imbaba/Abou Ghali 176 *feddans*; Markaz Imbaba/Taftesh el Wardan 126 *feddans*.

2- Estates:

Cairo Estates:

- The 13 Abdel Wahab Street villa in Maadi, now put to public benefit.
- The 11 Hassan Sabry Street palace in Zamalek, now the premises of the Information Center for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The Shubra palace that is now the Faculty of Agriculture.
- A stable in 9 El Na'aam street in Matareyah which was part of the Daira Tous-soun. Now it is the Eastern District in Cairo.



Alexandria Estates:

- A palace on Horreya Avenue, now the property of the Ministry of Culture.
- A palace in Bacos, now part of Alexandria University.
- Villa 4 Elwy Street, and Palace no. 1 on Halim Street in Bacos, which are now the headquarters of the Broadcasting and Television Service in Alexandria.
- The Mahmoudieh Palace on Mahmoudieh Canal Street, known as Palace no. 3. It was the premises of the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Engineering (1944-1947) and now belongs to the Ministry of Education.
- The 9 Abdel Aziz Fahmy Street villa in Bulkley, which now belongs to the Ministry of Education.
- A villa in Saba Pasha that was sold in 1960.
- Building no. 2 on Toussoun Street in Attarine, currently let for accommodation.
- Building no. 3 on Horreya Avenue, sold to the Bank of Agricultural Development and Insurance.
- Building no. 24 on Misr Station Road, Attarine, now units for rent.
- He also owned approximately 24 houses each consisting of two, three or four rooms in Abu Kir.
- Mareotis Estate included 3 hunting lodges.

N.B. The uncultivated land in the *daira* including the Mareotis Estate was estimated at approximately 5000 *feddans*.

His estates in the Governorate of Dakahlia:

Prince Toussoun owned a palace in Taftesh Demeirah, which is now occupied by the Armed Forces.

* Summarized from Iman Tohamy, *Prince Omar Toussoun and his Role in the Political, Social and Intellectual Life of Egypt*, op cit, pp. 29-33.



APPENDIX II

OMAR TOUSSOUN'S PUBLICATIONS

I. In French

The Archeological Society in Alexandria Publications

Mémoire sur les anciennes branches du Nil. Epoque ancienne. Epoque Arabe. 1922-1923.

Mémoire sur les finances de l'Égypte depuis les pharaons jusqu'à nos jours. 1924.

Mémoire sur l'histoire du Nil. Tomes III, IV, V. 1925.

La géographie de l'Égypte à l'époque arabe. (1926, 1928, 1936)

Étude sur le Wadi Natroun, ses moines et ses couvents. 1931

Notes sur le désert libyque. Cellia et ses couvents. 1935.

Articles Published in the Bulletin of the Archeological Society in Alexandria

La conquête de l'Égypte par Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam. no. 20, 1924.

Dans le désert de Nitrée. no. 27 1932.

Les ruines sous-marines de la baie d'Aboukir. no.29, 1934.

Une ascension de la colonne de Pompée en 1843. no. 30, 1937.

Description du Phare d'Alexandrie d'après un auteur arabe du XIIIe siècle. no. 30, 1937.

A.F.C De Cosson. no. 34, 1941.

Note sur les forts d'Alexandrie et de ses environs. no. 34, 1941.

Le Kasr el Katagi. no. 34, 1941.

La conquête égyptienne de Siwa en 1820. no.35, 1942.



Publications of l'Institut d'Égypte (the Egyptian Academy of Science)

Mémoire sur les anciennes branches du Nil. Epoque ancienne. Epoque Arabe. Tome IV. 1922-1923.

Mémoire sur les finances de l'Égypte depuis les pharaons jusqu'à nos jours. Tome VI. 1924.

Mémoire sur l'histoire du Nil. Tomes VII, IX, X. 1925.

Notes sur les déserts de l'Égypte. 1931- 1932.

La fin des mamlouks. 1932-1933.

Note sur le voyage d'Alexandre le Grand à l'oasis de Jupiter Ammon (Siwa). 1933-1934.

Publications of the Egyptian Geographical Society

La Géographie de l'Égypte à l'époque arabe. Tome VIII . 1936.

La Basse-Egypte d'après le cadastre de Naciri au VIIIe siècle H. -XIVe J.C., carte murale. 1929.

II. In Arabic

حسب تاريخ النشر

- الجيش المصري البري والبحري في عهد محمد علي باشا (١٩٢٣م) وايضا (١٩٣٢م و١٩٣٥م)
المدارس الحربية والمعامل العسكرية (١٩٢٤م) .
مالية مصر منذ عهد الفراعنة إلى الآن (١٩٢٤م بالفرنسية) و(١٩٣٣م بالعربية) .
الصنائع والمدارس الحربية والبعثات العلمية في عهد محمد علي باشا (١٩٢٦م) .
مصر والسودان (١٩٢٧م) ، وطبعة ثانية (١٩٣٥م) .
كلمات في سبيل مصر (١٩٢٨م) .
مذكرة في المسألة السودانية (١٩٢٩م) باللغة الفرنسية .



Mémoire sur la question du Soudan. Alexandrie, 1929.

Memorandum on the Question of the Sudan, 1936.

- مذكرة في مسألة السودان بين مصر وإنجلترا (١٩٢٩م).
- وادي النظرون وورهبانه وأديرتة ومختصر تاريخ البطارقة (١٩٣١م باللغة الفرنسية)، باللغة العربية (١٩٣٥م).
- الصنائع والمدارس الحربية في عهد محمد علي باشا (١٩٣٢م) و(١٩٣٥م).
- الإسكندرية في عام ١٨٦٨م (١٩٣٣م) باللغة الفرنسية

Alexandrie en 1868. Alexandrie, 1933.

- بطولة الأورطة السودانية المصرية في حرب المكسيك (١٩٣٣م).
- الأطلس التاريخي الجغرافي لمصر السفلى منذ الفتح الإسلامي إلى الآن (١٩٣٤م).
- البعثات العلمية في عهد محمد علي ثم في عهد عباس الأول وسعيد (١٩٣٤م).
- يوم ١١ يولييه ١٨٨٢م (١٩٣٤م).
- الجيش المصري في الحرب الروسية المعروفة بحرب القرم (١٨٥٣ - ١٨٥٥م) (١٩٣٦م).
- مذكرة عن مسألة السودان (١٩٣٦م) باللغتين العربية والفرنسية.
- مذكرتان للمرحومان أمير اللواء محمد باشا لبيب الشاهد وأمير الالائي احمد بك رفعت عن أعمال الجيش المصري في السودان (١٩٣٦).
- تاريخ مديرية خط الاستواء المصرية (في ثلاث مجلدات) (١٩٣٧م).
- صفحة من تاريخ مصر في عهد محمد علي (١٩٤٠م).
- أراضي الدومين والدائرة السنينة (١٩٤٢م).
- تاريخ خليج الإسكندرية القديم وترعة الحمودية (١٩٤٢م).
- صفحة من تاريخ مصر في عهد محمد علي باشا الجيش المصري البري والبحري (١٩٤٢م).
- مذكرة بما صدر عنا منذ فجر الحركة الوطنية من سنة ١٩١٨ إلى سنة ١٩٢٨ (١٩٤٢م).
- مذكرة حول التشريع لتنظيم الوقف (١٩٤٣م).
- وكتب الأمير عمر طوسون مقدمة كتاب :

Notions D' Economie Rurale Egyptienne .

وكتاب: زعيم المجاهدين الطرابلسيين سليمان الباروني.

مؤلفات طبعت علي نفقة الأمير

- ضحايا مصر في السودان وخفايا السياسة الإنجليزية (١٩٣٥م).
- أعمال الجيش المصري في السودان ومأساة خروجه منه (١٩٣٦م).
- فتح دارفور عام ١٩١٦ (١٩٣٧م).



مؤلفات لم تطبع

تحقيقات جغرافية عن بعض بلاد الجزيرة العربية أيام حروب إبراهيم باشا في بلاد العرب .
تحقيقات عن البلدان المصرية الواردة في الباب الثالث من كتاب قوانين الدواوين لابن مماتي الذي طبعته الجمعية الزراعية الملكية عام ١٩٤٤م .

الدوريات

نشرة اتحاد مزارعي مصر

- مذكرة عن أعمال لجنة تربية المواشي (١٩٠٢م) .
- تقرير عن سير أعمال لجنة تربية المواشي (١٩٠٣م) و (١٩٠٥م) .
- تحقيق في زراعة الدخان بمصر (١٩١٣م) .
- قلة نظافة القطن العفيني (١٩١٣م) .

مطبوعات الجيش المصري

- مقتبسات من تاريخ مديرية خط الاستواء مايو، يوليو، أكتوبر (١٩٣٩م) يناير ويوليو (١٩٤٠م) .
- صفحة من تاريخ الجيش المصري في حرب القرن . أكتوبر (١٩٤٠م) .
- خرائط موقعة حمص . يناير (١٩٤١م) .
- خريطة موقعة بيلان . أبريل (١٩٤١م) .
- حرب جزيرة العرب . يوليو (١٩٤٠م) .
- خريطة موقعة قوينة . يوليو (١٩٤١م) .
- حرب اليونان (١٨٢٣ - ١٨٢٨) . أكتوبر (١٩٤١م) .
- الحرب السورية الأولى . يناير (١٩٤٢م) .
- تمرد فلسطين . (١٨٣٤م) أبريل (١٩٤٢م) .
- محاكمة الجنود المصرية النظامية للدروز في حوران . أكتوبر (١٩٤٢م)، يناير (١٩٤٣م) .
- الحرب السورية الثانية . أبريل (١٩٤٣م) .
- الجنود المصرية في حرب القرم . يوليو (١٩٤٣م) .
- الأورطة السودانية المصرية في حرب المكسيك أكتوبر (١٩٤٣م) .
- خرائط موقعة نزيب (١٩٤٣م) .
- ثورة العسير . يناير (١٩٤٤م) .
- الحملة المصرية في البوسنة . أبريل (١٩٤٤م) .



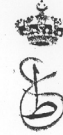
مقالات في الجرائد

- الاسكندر المقدوني وقبر النبي دانيال . الأهرام ٢٨ مارس ١٩٣٠ .
لقب الخديوي ولقب عزيز مصر . الأهرام ٥ ديسمبر ١٩٣٣ .
مواقع أبي قبر البحرية . الهلال مايو ١٩٣٨ .



APPENDIX III

Letter from Prince Omar Toussoun to Prince Mohamaed Ali Tewfik



هذه ايضا العزيز صاحب السمو الملكى الامير محمد على توفيق
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد فقد اطلعنا على بحوثه صور الابرار الجريه التى تفصلكم سدكم باعمارنا الينا
واننا نشكركم على ذلك اهلنا نشكره وشئنا اعظم الشكر على احفظكم لهذه الامار القويه الجيده . ولقد عنت لنا 2 اساطيرنا
على بعضه مدونات تدرها فيما يلى :-
1- الصورة رقم ٤ - والبر السلطانية : هذا الابرار اسمه 2 بوسل « فير جواد » وكانه حاصرا برلونه حينما المنقره السيد
اشا وقد طعمه من السلطان على القبر فلم يقبل . ولما قولى القديرا اسئل عرسه صرا هدى الى السلطان الدوله هذا الابرار فسمى
والبر السلطانية وضم الى اسطول الدوله العليه
2- الصورة رقم ٩ عند ما قولى القديرا اسئل اوصى بوضع ثلثه والبران جريه مدعى 2 اوريا و 8 ر هذا العمل مخالفه بعض فرسانه
فدلته اسئله الدوله العليه مع هذه الابرار الشلاه وضمته الى اسطولنا فسمى هذه الابرار بعد شهاد الدوله
على « انار شوقه » وصورة رقم ٩ من الجيوشه وكان طولها ٨٠٠ قدم وكان اسمها ب ٨ مدفع عيار ٩ بوسلات وزنته ١٤ لنا
وتجميع طائفته ٦٤٠ بجارا
3- انا الابرار الاخرايه فكانا تتألفه من حيث الطول والاسلح وعدد الطائفه وسمى اسمها « نجوشونك » وصورتها رقم
(١٤) من الجيوشه وسمى الاخر « انار شوقه » وطور موجود بالجيوشه وكانه طول كل منها ٤٠ قدم وكانه اسمها مدفع شهاب
٩ بوسلات وزنته ١٤ لنا وباريه مدافع اخرى مد عيار ٧ بوسلات وزنته ٦ الطائفه ونصف وعدد طائفته ٤٠ بجارا
فذا وقد اعادنا الى سدكم الجيوشه الدوله مع اعظم الشكر
وقصصنا فيقول الطيب سماسا وجعل ههنا ٤٤٤ ١ ١٩٤٤



Dear brother and Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Ali Tewfik

May peace be upon you. We have examined the photographs of the steamboats which Your Highness has so kindly lent us, and for which we extend our heartfelt thanks. We greatly appreciate your keeping of these glorious and valuable antiquities. Upon examination of these photographs we discovered the following:

- 1- Photograph number 2 - *The Sultaneya*: This steamboat was originally called [...] and it belonged to our late grandfather, Said Pasha. Sultan Abdul Aziz had asked for it but Said Pasha refused. Then when Khedive Ismail ascended to the throne of Egypt, he gave the steamboat to the sultan, and so it was named *Sultaneya*, and was added to the fleet of the Sublime Porte.
- 2- Photograph number 9 - When Khedive Ismail ascended to the throne, he had three ironclads built in Europe. Since that violated the text of the firman of his appointment, the Sublime Porte confiscated them and added them to its fleet. One of them was then named *Athar Tewfik*. That is the one in photograph number 9. It is 800 feet long, is armed with 8 nine inch cannons, weighs 12 tons, and has a capacity for 640 sailors.
- 3- The other two steamers were similar to each other in length, armory, and crew capacity. One was called *Negm Shawkat* and is in photograph number 13, and the other was *Athar Shawkat*, and is not in the group of photographs. Each was 220 feet long, weighed 12 tons. They were each armed with a nine inch cannon, and 4 other seven inch cannons, weighing 6 ½ tons, and with a capacity of 220 sailors.

By this we return to Your Highness the aforementioned group of photographs with our sincerest thanks.

Please accept our best wishes and greatest respect.

Omar Toussoun.

24/1/1943



APPENDIX IV

عودة الأمير

القصر الذي كان يمتلكه ويسكن فيه الأمير/ عمر طوسون هو الآن بمحطة أبو شبانة «باكوس سابقاً» كلية التمريض حالياً.

أما الحديقة التي كانت ملحقة بالقصر فهي الآن محطة إذاعة الإسكندرية والقناة الخامسة للتلفزيون كما أنه قد تبرع بجزء من حديقة قصره لبناء كنسية الفاتيكان ومدرسة سان جوزيف بباكوس للجنوب من القصر.

والفيلات التي كان يمتلكها بالقرب من القصر وفيها جميعها لجمعية العروة الوثقى لاستعمالها في اغراض اذكر منها مدرسة عمر طوسون التحضيرية «الروضة حالياً» كما كان من ضمن مؤسسى جمعية العروة الوثقى وجمعية المواطنة كما كانت تبرعاته تشمل الكثير من المؤسسات الخيرية في الاسكندرية وكانت ملجأ لكل صاحب حاجة وعمر طوسون كان ذا شعبية جارفة ورغم انه كان من أحفاد محمد على الابانى مؤسس الدولة الحديثة بمصر الا انه قد تمصر وكان يعتز بمصريته ولقد امتدت يد الضرر في الستينات وانتزعت اللافتة التي كانت تحمل اسمه من على الشارع الملاصق لقصره حيث كان يسمى «شارع الامير عمر طوسون».

هل يتدخل السيد/ عبد السلام المحجوب محافظ الاسكندرية ويعيد تسمية هذا الشارع «شارع الامير عمر طوسون» تخليدا لما قام به هذا الرجل من اعمال مجيدة يذكرها له التاريخ.

عبد الفتاح أحمد يوسف

٩ ش أبو شبانة - رمل الاسكندرية

A letter to Al Ahram Al Massa 'i 4 February 2000



The Return of the Prince

The villa that Prince Omar Toussoun owned and lived in is now the Faculty of Nursing in Abu Shabana Station, previously Bacos, and the garden that was attached to it is now the Alexandria Broadcasting Station and TV Channel Five. He had also donated part of the garden, south of the palace, for the Vatican Church and the St Joseph School in Bacos to be built on. He donated all the villas that he owned near the palace to the El Orwa el Woska Society to be used for whatever purpose was needed. Among them was the Omar Toussoun Preparatory School (now the Rawda). He was founder of the El Orwa el Woska Society and the Moassat Society, and he donated to many charity organizations in Alexandria. Those in need went to him. His popularity was overwhelming. Although he was the descendent of the Albanian Mohamed Ali, the founder of modern Egypt, Prince Omar Toussoun was extremely Egyptianized and proud of being Egyptian. In the sixties malignant hands tore down the street sign bearing his name next to his palace, which was called “Prince Omar Toussoun Street”.

Could the Governor of Alexandria, General Abdel Salam Mahjoub, intervene and rename this street “Prince Omar Toussoun Street”, to immortalize this man and his glorious deeds, which history is witness to.

Abdel Fattah Ahmed Youssef
9 Abou Shabana Street
Ramleh, Alexandria

Al Ahram al Massa'i, 4 February 2004.



GLOSSARY OF NAMES

Baring, Evelyn: (1841-1917). British Agent and Consul General in Egypt (1900-1907), later Lord Cromer.

Brecchia, Evaristo: (dates?) Italian archeologist. Director of the Greco-Roman Museum in Alexandria (when?) and President of the Archeological Society in Alexandria.

Farid, Mohamed: (1868-1919). Though of Turkish origins, he was one of the leaders of the Egyptian national movement and succeeded Mustafa Kamel as leader of the National Party.

Farouk, King: (1920-1965). Ascended the throne of Egypt in 1936, at the death of his father King Fouad. He left Egypt after the revolution of 1952.

Fouad, King: (1868-1936). Ascended the throne of Egypt as sultan in 1917, then became king in 1922 - the first of Mohamed Ali's family to hold that title.

Goddio, Frank director of the European Underwater Archeological Mission

Ismail Pasha, Khedive: (1830-1895) viceroy (1863-1866) and khedive (1867-1879) of Egypt. He brought his country close to bankruptcy and was forced to abdicate in 1879.

Kamel, Mustafa: (1884-1908). Egyptian nationalist, leader and orator who formed the National Party (El Hizb el Watani) in 1907.

Lampson, Sir Miles: British Ambassador to Egypt and High Commissioner from 1934-1945, later 1st Lord Killearn

Mahmoud, Mohamed: (1878-1941). Prime Minister of Egypt from 1928-9, and 1937-8.

Milner, Alfred: (1854-1925). British Secretary of State for the Colonies.



Mohamed Ali, Viceroy: (1769-1849) an Albanian officer in the Ottoman army, he was made viceroy of Egypt in 1805, and founded a dynasty that ruled until 1952.

Mohamed Ali, Prince: (1875-1954) A member of the royal family. Renowned for his piety, his love for the fine arts (especially from the Islamic period) and his passion for horse breeding. He traveled extensively abroad and published three books: on Egypt and Syria; on North America, and on South Africa. Also a benefactor and an aid to Omar Toussoun in the latter's campaigns to aid the Ottoman empire in its crises. He did not recognize the legitimacy of the reigns of Sultan Hussein Kamel or King Fouad or King Farouk, for if Khedive Ismail had not changed the succession to the eldest of his sons, none of these kings would have sat on the throne of Egypt. After the deposition of his brother Khedive Abbas Helmi, he should have been the successor to the throne.

el Nahhas, Mustafa: (1876-1965): Prime Minister of Egypt seven times, from 1928-1952.

Orabi, Ahmed: (1841-1911) An Egyptian soldier who was promoted when Said Pasha allowed Egyptians to hold high ranks in the army. In 1881 he headed the revolt of the Egyptian officers against the Minister of War, and himself occupied that position. The riots of Alexandria in 1882 led to the British bombardment of the city, the defeat of Orabi and the occupation of Egypt. He was exiled to Ceylon in 1882 and returned to Egypt in 1901.

Rushdy, Hussein: (1863-1928). Prime Minister of Egypt four times, from 1914-1919.

Said, Mohamed: (1863-1928). Prime Minister of Egypt twice between 1910 and 1919.

Said Pasha: Son of Mohamed Ali and viceroy of Egypt from 1854-1863.

Seymour, Admiral Beauchamp: (1821-1895) Admiral of the British fleet during the 1882 bombardment of Alexandria, later Lord Alcester.



Shaarawy, Ali: He was the only Egyptian member of the Daira Sania, a statesman, a member of Parliament in 1881, of the Shura Council and of the Legislative Association. He was Treasurer of the Wafd Party and died in 1922.

Tharwat, Abdel Khalek: (1873-1928). Prime Minister of Egypt twice, between 1922- and 1928.

Wingate, Sir Reginald: (1861-1953). Sirdar of the Egyptian army; British High Commissioner for Egypt 1917-1919).

Yeken, Adly : (1864-1933). Prime Minister of Egypt three times, from 1921-1930.

Zaghloul, Saad: (1859-1927). Led the 1919 revolution and became the undisputed leader of the nation, both during his time in exile and as Prime Minister in 1924.

Ziwer, Ahmed: (1864-1945): Prime Minister of Egypt twice, from 1924-1926.



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