

INTRODUCTION

Few buildings embody the waxing and waning of European influence in Egypt during the 19th and 20th centuries as profoundly as Shepheard's Hotel in Cairo. Prior to its total destruction during the infamous "Black Saturday" riots of January 1952, the building was a potent symbol of the problematic relationship between native and foreigner, Orient and Occident, colonized and colonizer. Located on the site previously occupied by Napoleon's headquarters during his ill-fated Egyptian campaign, the building, originally a humble lodge, was transformed over the following 150 years into one of the world's most glamorous and legendary hotels.

Given its historical, cultural and social importance, there has been surprisingly little scholarly work devoted to the lost building. This was because primary source material was thought to have disappeared. Research for the thesis – the prelude to this book – began by gathering as much visual material related to the building as possible. Because conclusive documentation as to the architect of the building did not exist, primary sources (floor plans, sections, drawings, etc.) were also unknown. To that end, photographs provided the initial leads. A significant set of glass negative prints (many of which have never been previously published) were generously provided by Edouard and Eveline Lambelet, the owners of Lehnert & Landrock bookstore in Cairo. These photos, taken by the photographer Rudolf Lehnert, can largely be dated to the 1920s, but no later than 1930, when he moved from Egypt to Tunisia.¹ Several individuals recommended searching the online auction website eBay (www.ebay.de) as a potential source for postcards, letters and memorabilia (ashtrays, luggage labels, brochures, etc.) from the hotel. Although initially treated with skepticism and perceived as

un-academic, searches on eBay resulted in the discovery of another set of images taken in 1948 by the Egyptian-Armenian photographer Kerop (Hagop Keropian). In 2013, Mr. Vahe Varjebedian purchased prints of the hotel from Mr. Keropian's son and sold them on eBay.² Mr. Varjebedian has kindly granted permission to use these prints in the study of the building.

It was a chance discovery on eBay that in fact resulted in the most spectacular breakthrough in the research on the hotel. In April 2014, an eBay seller auctioned a guide booklet published by Shepheard's Hotel in 1895, titled *Cairo and Egypt. A practical handbook for visitors to the land of the Pharaohs*. The work was probably written and distributed as a quick reference for hotel guests. Although an attempt to purchase or obtain a copy of the booklet online was unsuccessful,³ a surviving copy was obtained via inter-library loan from the Staatliche Landesbibliothek in Dresden. The booklet proved to be a primary source of inestimable value, since it described the layout and amenities of the hotel at the end of the 19th century.⁴ Most important, however, it disclosed the name of an architect and designer of the building, a certain "J. Rennebaum,"⁵ who had not appeared in any secondary literature on the hotel. Further online research revealed a reference to a German architect named Johann Adam Rennebaum, active in Cairo at the turn of the 20th century.⁶ The *Verzeichnis der Kartensammlungen in Deutschland* (Directory of Map Collections in Germany) noted that a large part of Rennebaum's estate had been donated to the Department of Islamic and Oriental Studies at the University of Tübingen by the Stromersche Stiftung (Stromer Foundation) housed at Grünsberg Castle in Altdorf by Nuremberg.⁷ Several departments in

1 Edouard Lambelet, e-mail message to author, March 16, 2014.

2 Vahe Varjebedian, e-mail message to author via eBay, March 17, 2014 and April 4, 2014.

3 eBay seller king-foster, e-mail message to author, April 9, 2014.

4 *Cairo and Egypt*, 9–22.

5 Ibid., 12.

6 "Ergebnisliste – Anfangsbuchstabe: R", Franken Gesucht & Gewusst – Baierpedia, accessed June 2, 2014, <https://www.frankenbaier.de/franken/R>.

7 Zögner/Maurer 1998, 5–6.

Tübingen denied having any material from Rennebaum's estate; the claim in the *Verzeichnis* was in all likelihood false. While the news in Tübingen seemed like a dead end, retracing the steps back to Grünsberg Castle and contacting the Stromer Foundation directly resulted in a breakthrough that far exceeded expectations.

Baron and Baroness von Stromer-Baumbauer are the owners and caretakers of the foundation and confirmed that numerous documents related to the legendary hotel (including floor plans, photographs, sketches and correspondence) were preserved at Grünsberg Castle. Baroness von Stromer-Baumbauer is in fact the great-granddaughter of Johann Adam Rennebaum, whose estate passed through her grandmother (i.e., Rennebaum's daughter) into the Stromer Foundation. Through the extraordinary generosity of the Baron and the Baroness, in June 2014, I was first able to see and digitize the enormous corpus of material and artifacts which, to date, remains the sole known surviving documentation related to the art, architecture and decor of the lost building.

Of paramount importance is the set of floor plans on a metric scale of 1:500. These plans provide proof of the architect of the hotel, documentation of the interior of the building, the sequence and location of rooms, plumbing, sanitation and egress. Furthermore, the archives in the Stromer Foundation contain selected correspondence, a number of photographs of the hotel's interior, as well as countless drawings, rough sketches and watercolors from the hand of Johann Adam Rennebaum, which cover a broad array of "oriental" subjects: landscapes with pyramids, palm groves, camels, egyptianizing motifs and patterns, and a separate portfolio titled *Ornamente und Formen des Islam* (Ornaments and Forms of Islam). This was a kind of pattern book wherein Rennebaum compiled drawings, charcoal rubbings, and photographs of Islamic monuments in Cairo, further afield in Spain, and photographs of "Moorish" buildings in Europe. This collection of images almost certainly provided the inspiration for much of the "oriental" style decoration in the hotel.

The Stromer Foundation in Grünsberg also preserves pieces of furniture, mirrors, carpets, appliqué textiles and *Kunstgegenstände* made for the hotel. These objects remain in all likelihood the only surviving artifacts from the building. In various states of preservation, these works should be restored as

quickly as possible, reassembled, and presented together as a reconstructed "period room" of one of the hotel spaces as it may have appeared around 1900.

Several months after the visit to Grünsberg, Baroness von Stromer-Baumbauer was able to facilitate an introduction to and meeting with Mrs. Eva Stahlmann (née Rennebaum) in Berlin, a surviving granddaughter of the architect. Mrs. Stahlmann is in possession of a smaller, but no less fascinating cache of documents (including letters, obituaries, newspaper clippings, contracts, family photographs and a smattering of drawings) passed down to her from her father, i.e., Rennebaum's only son, which give insight into his private life, his career working for the Khedival authorities and his commissions from private clients. In an excellent state of preservation, these documents could be catalogued and digitized. Along with the main group of documents at Grünsberg, they form the foundation for a more comprehensive monograph of Rennebaum's oeuvre in Egypt.

At the outset of my research, there was concern that the material available on the building would not suffice for a thesis, much less for a book. With the discovery of Rennebaum's estates in Altdorf and Berlin, the opposite occurred. To that end, drawings, floor plans, correspondence and other primary source documents have been carefully selected from the two caches for their relevance to the architecture and decor of the hotel.

Following a brief overview of the history of the hotel and Rennebaum's career, the book turns to a systematic documentation of the hotel's component parts: urban setting, façade, public and private spaces. These descriptions of the building and the changes it underwent provide the foundation upon which to consider and trace the motifs and prototypes Rennebaum employed in the design of the building; the Pharaonic Lobby and Arab Lounge best embody these. These evocative, theatrical and fantastic spaces are then considered in relation to Western representations of Egypt in the late 19th century, in particular to the world's fairs and to museums of ancient Egyptian art. Finally, the book briefly considers the reception of the building through the eyes of hotel guests from 1891 until 1952 in relation to the nebulous, fickle and ever-changing nature of taste. The fantasy architecture of Shephard's is briefly considered and compared to later themed hotel architecture (in particular Las Vegas) and to the 20th century notion of the hyperreal.

FROM NAPOLEON TO NASSER:

THE HOTEL AS THE EMBODIMENT OF EUROPEAN INVOLVEMENT IN EGYPT

Few places in Egypt reflected the profound social, cultural and political changes in Egypt in the 19th century, as did Shepherd's Hotel. For nearly a hundred years it was the meeting place of the world's well-heeled elite, including politicians, members of the nobility, industrialists, high-ranking military personnel, as well as countless prominent social and artistic figures. Although this book focuses on the art and architecture of the hotel, some of the prominent guests may be named, such as Edward VII, Prince of Wales (later the Duke of Windsor); Sultan Muhammad Shah (Aga Khan III); Ferdinand von Zeppelin; Saad Zaghlul; T. E. Lawrence ("Lawrence of Arabia"); Mark Twain; George Bernard Shaw; Josephine Baker; Henry Morton Stanley; Prince Hubertus of Prussia; Theodore Roosevelt; General Charles George Gordon; King Leopold of Belgium; Haile Selassie; the Maharajah of Jodhpur; Winston Churchill; King Fuad and King Farouk of Egypt.⁸ This list represents only a tiny fraction of the notable guests. A comprehensive list of illustrious visitors would have been contained in the hotel's "Golden Books" which were lost in the fire that destroyed the building in 1952. Although the books initially survived in the manager's cast-iron floor safe, insufficient time was allowed for the safe to cool down, and the sudden influx of oxygen when the safe was finally opened caused the books to combust.⁹

At the start of the 19th century, the site where the hotel would eventually be erected was located on the outskirts of Cairo, by the shores of the *Birkat al-Azbakiyya* (Azbakiyya Lake, later to become the Azbakiyya Gardens). Beginning in the Mamluk Period (1382–1517 CE), the lake – named after Emir Azbak, commander-in-chief of the armies of Sultan Qa'it Bey – became the site of prominent estates and palaces for Cairo's elite who wanted a retreat from the congestion and squalor of the medieval city.¹⁰ Napoleon

Bonaparte chose the palace of Alfi Bey, head of the Egyptian Mamluks, as the headquarters of the French military command during his disastrous campaign in Egypt and Syria from 1798 until 1801 (Fig. 1). After Napoleon's furtive departure back to France in 1799, he left control of Egypt in the hands of General Kléber, who in 1800 was murdered adjacent to the palace while strolling in the lakeside gardens.¹¹ Following the expulsion of the French, Muhammad Ali used the building as a school for languages.¹²

In 1849, permission to use the palace as a lodging for travellers was granted to the Englishman Samuel Shepherd (1816–1866) by Abbas Pasha, *Khedive* (Viceroy) of Egypt (1813–1854). The more socially conservative Abbas – generally wary of European influence – had abolished the language school several years before; the building had since been left unused. Shepherd had arrived in Egypt in 1842 as a junior captain on a P&O mail ship, but was fired and forced to disembark at the port of Suez after taking the crew's side during a mutiny.¹³ He made his way to Cairo, where he eventually found favor with Khedive Abbas who, like Shepherd, had a passion for hunting. In 1849, Shepherd wrote to his cousins: "I have to tell you that his Highness, Abbas Pasha ... has given me a grant of a large college to build an Hotel on the site ... This he did when he was out at one of my post houses on the desert ... where he was much pleased with the arrangements made for his reception and also delighted with the speed of my greyhounds with the gazelle hunting."¹⁴ Shepherd gave these greyhounds to Abbas as a gift that gained him favor: not only did the Khedive hand over the palace and its grounds, but Abbas was also ready to help him financially in establishing the hotel.¹⁵

The former language school-turned-hotel, the first incarnation of Shepherd's, opened its doors to

8 Nelson 1974, 4, 105; Humphreys 2011, 80, 94.

9 Humphreys 2011, 98.

10 Behrens-Abouseif 1985, 20–25.

11 Humphreys 2011, 76.

12 Bird 1957, 47.

13 Humphreys 2011, 76.

14 Bird 1957, 46.

15 Ibid., 47.



Fig. 1 *Palace of Alfi Bey, view from the north, 1809.*

travellers in 1851.¹⁶ The venture flourished, as it was increasingly seen as a reliable way-stop by travellers en route from Britain to India who were forced to disembark in Egypt (generally at the port of Alexandria) and journey via Cairo overland to Suez, where the voyage to the East would continue again by sea.¹⁷ Just a few years after the opening of the hotel, the overland journey was expedited and made considerably more comfortable by the construction of a railway link between Alexandria and Cairo. This had been ordered by Khedive Abbas and had commenced service in 1854.¹⁸ A shrewd businessman, Samuel Shephard seized the opportunity to provide comfortable (but by no means yet luxurious) accommodation to the ever-growing number of visitors to (and through) Cairo.

In 1855, a cholera epidemic struck Cairo, which took the life of Samuel Shephard's infant son. Fearing for the health of the other children, his wife took them back to England. In failing health himself, Shephard decided to sell the inn in 1860 to the Bavarian hotelier Philip Zech (or Zeck) and follow his wife home.¹⁹ The hotel was renovated in 1869 after a fire destroyed the south wing of the building.²⁰ By the last decade of the 19th century, it was apparent that the original building (Fig. 2) was dated; for it to remain competitive, a new structure would have to be constructed *ex novo*.²¹ Zech employed the services of a fellow German living in Egypt, the young architect Johann Adam Rennebaum, to design a hotel on the same plot that would far exceed its predecessors in size and luxury. The construction

16 Humphreys 2011, 77.

17 Sattin 2011, 55.

18 Ibid., 54.

19 Bird 1957, 216–217.

20 This fire was accidental, and should not be confused with the fire that destroyed the building entirely in 1952. *Illustrated London News* 1868, 207–208.

21 *Cairo and Egypt*, 10.

of this final building was completed in 1891 in less than six months (Fig. 3) and soon became the most famous and well-documented incarnation of the hotel (Fig. 4).²² In 1898, the Arab Hall (also probably designed by Rennebaum) was added in the central courtyard of the building, and further changes and expansions occurred in 1904, 1909 and 1927.²³

Ownership of the hotel passed into the hands of Zech's daughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Kemmerich. In 1896, the Kemmerichs sold the hotel to Egyptian Hotels Ltd., an English company that subsequently leased Shepherd's to the Compagnie Internationale des Grands Hôtels (a subsidiary of the Compagnie Internationale des Wagon-Lits). In 1905, shares held in Egyptian Hotels Ltd. by the Compagnie Internationale des Wagon-Lits were bought by the Swiss hotel magnate Charles Baehler. Baehler, originally an accountant from Switzerland, had settled in Egypt in 1889 and worked his way up at Shepherd's from a junior position to manager of the hotel. By the time of his death in 1937, he was in control of almost all of Egypt's luxury hotels, including such legendary institutions as the Winter Palace, the Old Cataract, and the Mena House. During his ownership, Shepherd's was expanded once again in the summer of 1924 to boast a staggering 500 bedrooms,²⁴ 270 with en suite bathrooms.²⁵

The growth and expansion of the hotel (both in terms of its physical size and its reputation amongst travellers) reflected the tremendous social, economic and political changes in Egypt during the second half of the 19th century. The boom in the cotton and sugar cane industries transformed the Nile Valley into an "auxiliary and client of industrial civilization."²⁶ Of paramount importance was the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869 (the same year that Zech renovated the hotel), which henceforth linked "Great Britain to India (and) industrial Europe to the world which it was exploiting."²⁷ Although it was initially feared that the hotel industry in Cairo would suffer a downturn because the Suez Canal had rendered the overland route via Cairo obsolete, this proved to be unfounded.²⁸ In the last quarter of the 19th century,

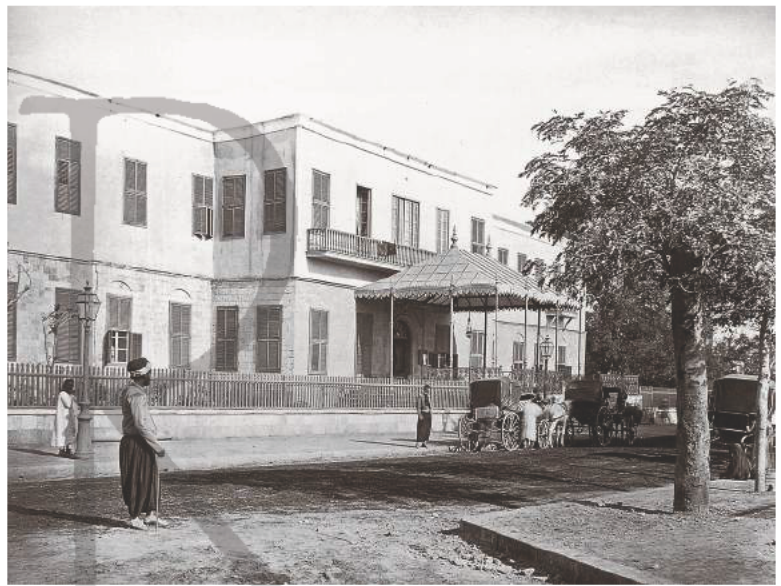


Fig. 2 *Shepherd's Hotel, façade viewed from Sharia al-Kamel, before 1891.*

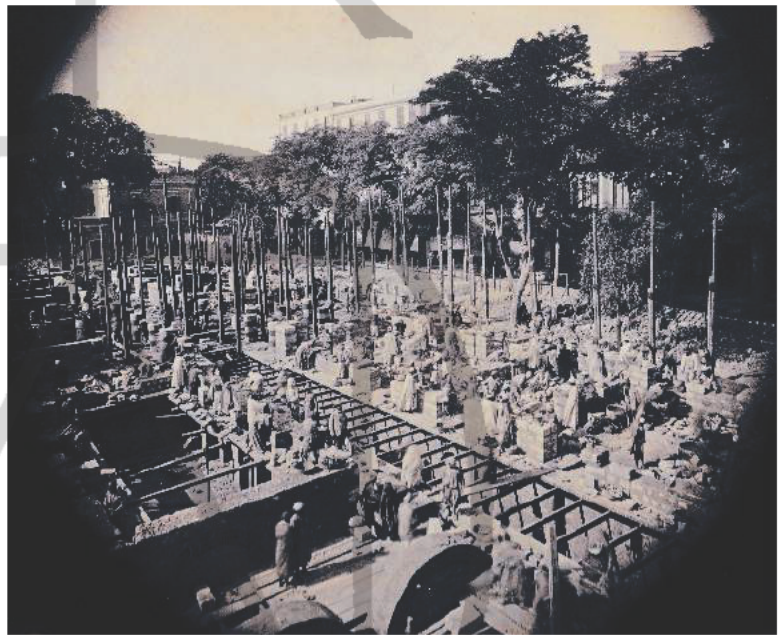


Fig. 3 *Construction of Shepherd's Hotel, 1891.*

22 Ibid., 10.

23 Humphreys 2011, 85–87.

24 In comparison, the Savoy in London had 268 hotel rooms, and the Ritz in Paris had 210 rooms. The latter hotel, it must be admitted, was not a new building and was constrained by a pre-existing building and façade on the Place Vendôme.

25 Humphreys 2011, 92.

26 Berque 1972, 39.

27 Ibid., 31.

28 Humphreys 2011, 79.



Fig. 4 *Shepherd's Hotel, façade viewed from Sharia al-Kamel, circa 1900.*

the number of foreigners coming to Cairo continued to increase: in transit to further destinations in India or East Asia, as tourists visiting the sights in Egypt and Palestine or as long-term residents, expatriates seeking their fortune along the banks of the Nile. Indeed, the increasing number of general package-holiday tourists coming to Cairo and Egypt necessitated the establishment of Thomas Cook's first office in the Middle East, on the grounds of Shepherd's Hotel, in 1872.²⁹

The Suez Canal was only one of many projects sponsored by the spendthrift Khedive Ismail Pasha. Under his reign, Cairo grew rapidly, its western quarters transformed into a veritable "Paris on the Nile" with grand Beaux-Arts edifices, tree-lined boulevards and all the amenities of modern European life: trams, sanitation and streetlamps. Culture

played a significant role as well, most notably in the completion of Cairo's opera house, located a few blocks south of Shepherd's Hotel. These projects were meant in part to demonstrate a modern and civilized Egypt in the face of ever-growing European involvement in native affairs.

The projects undertaken by Khedive Ismail resulted in the accrual of a massive and unsustainable debt. European (in particular British) creditors took control of the finances of Egypt, which sparked a revolt amongst Egyptian nationalist groups in 1882. The ensuing conflict resulted in an Anglo-French invasion of Egypt; this effectively made the Khedives of Egypt mere figureheads of a government that was now largely under the control of British colonial advisors who effectively ran the country. To

29 Hunter 2004, 35.



Fig. 5 Ruins of Shepherd's Hotel after the Black Saturday riots, 1952.

varying degrees, the British maintained their military presence in Egypt for the next 70 years, particularly during the First and Second World Wars, when Shepherd's Hotel – always the preferred accommodation amongst British travellers – became the headquarters of the British command in the Near East. Long seen as the bastion of European influence in Egypt, Shepherd's was increasingly perceived as the direct representation of British colonial occupation.

Although British troops withdrew from Egypt proper after 1947, they maintained control of the

Suez Canal, which became the focus of anti-British sentiment among Egyptian nationalists. On January 25th 1952, British forces attempted to occupy the auxiliary Egyptian police force barracks in the city of Ismailia and throw out its occupants. The Egyptian police resisted the eviction, and a siege ensued in which 50 Egyptians were killed.³⁰ When the news of the massacre reached Cairo the following day, it unleashed protests that quickly turned into a rioting mob that “poured into the wealthy districts, setting fire, as though by a prearranged plan, to any

30 Berque 1972, 670.



Fig. 6 Former location of Shepherd's Hotel, looking north from the corner of Sharia al-Kamel (now Sharia al-Gumhurriyya) and Sharia el-Alfi, July 2016.

establishments displaying a certain degree of luxury or suggesting collusion with the foreigner.”³¹ The smoke billowing from the countless buildings destroyed by arson eventually gave the event its name: Black Saturday.

As one of the most potent symbols of European influence in Egypt (the service buttons in the hotel rooms were supposedly marked “Native”³²) the hotel quickly became the focus of the mob’s fury. Breaking into the building, rioters “stacked the lobby furniture and cheered as the whole grand Victorian pile burned to the ground in twenty minutes flat.”³³ Fortunately, the death toll was minimal: only two bodies were found in the ruins.³⁴ A photo taken from

the balcony of the building across the street (now 55 Sharia al-Gumhurriyya)³⁵ by the Egyptian-Armenian photographer Kerop (Hagop Keropian) after the fire showed the extent of the destruction: with the exception of the Arab Hall, the entire building had been reduced to smoldering rubble (Fig. 5).

Shepherd’s might be seen as the architectural embodiment of Egyptian politics from Napoleon to Nasser: on the same site where the European occupation of the Nile Valley began some 150 years before, it also came to a sudden, spectacular and fiery end. Black Saturday marked the start of a sequence of events that culminated six months later in the Free Officers Movement that deposed King Farouk, expelled the remaining British forces from the Suez Canal and transformed Egypt into a republic. Although a new hotel bearing the name “Shepherd” was built a few years later further west on the Nile Corniche, save for the name, it bears little, if any, resemblance to its predecessor. The new hotel “never reassumed the social mantle of the old Shepherd’s.”³⁶ After 1952, the Hilton Hotel on Tahrir Square “took its place as the site of foreign and local entitlement” and mirrored the transition from British to US supremacy in the politics of the Middle East.³⁷

Although there are reports that the ruins of the building were still visible in the last decades of the 20th century, today no trace of the hotel remains. The site is now occupied by a gas station and a series of concrete office blocks constructed in the 1980s, part of which houses the Egyptian government’s Social Security offices (Fig. 6).³⁸

31 Ibid., 671.

32 Rodenbeck 1999, 156.

33 Ibid., 156.

34 Humphreys 2011, 98.

35 Capresi/Pampe 2015, 161–165.

36 Wharton 2001, 45.

37 Ibid., 45.

38 El-Kadi 2012, 219.

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL

While Shepherd's was one of the most important buildings in Cairo during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the study of the hotel has been very limited. Analysis of the structure was largely limited to the outside (in particular the terrace), and was based almost exclusively on a small set of photographs as well as textual descriptions provided by visitors to the hotel. Surviving photographic material of the hotel tended to document the same set of public spaces, especially the entrance hall in Pharaonic style, the lounge in Arab style and the main façade of the building facing out onto *Sharia al-Kamel* (Kamel Street), designed in a supposedly Italianate style. Naturally, these images were more marketable than those of simple hotel rooms: visitors were keen to keep mementos of the hotel's opulent and exotic decor, which represented a sense of luxury in an oriental setting. Likewise, the recipients of postcards and photographs would be more enthralled, impressed – and envious – of the spectacular settings. In addition, the technical limitations of photography at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries meant that scenes well illuminated by natural light (especially building exteriors or rooms with a large number of windows) were easier to photograph than obscure interiors.

Written accounts of the building are of limited value due to the nature of the medium ("a picture is worth a thousand words") and beyond providing a cursory description of the architecture. Those who wrote about the hotel tended to refer to its *dramatis personae* and the events that occurred in and around it, not the building itself. In Egypt, where buildings have been standing for millennia, it seems unlikely that a visitor could have imagined that this venerable institution – the very embodiment of a self-assured European technical superiority and political dominance – would ever cease to exist.

The speed by which Egypt changed from a foreign-dominated monarchy under King Farouk to an independent republic under Gamal Abdel Nasser may also account for the paucity of material on the subject. The revolution of 1952 (right on the heels of

Shepherd's destruction) resulted in profound social disruptions and a break with a political system that went back to the reign of Muhammad Ali Pasha at the start of the 19th century. Both Egyptians and outsiders ignored an empirical documentation of Shepherd's Hotel in the years immediately after its destruction. Perhaps many Egyptians saw the hotel as an embarrassing and shameful embodiment of foreign occupation and the *ancien régime*; to the British, (and other foreign nationals) the destruction of the hotel mirrored their decline in world affairs, their exile from Egypt and the twilight of their empire.

The single work that deals exclusively with Shepherd's Hotel is a book by Nina Nelson, first published in 1960. The book is not an objective account of the building, rather it romanticizes the hotel and is concerned primarily with the guests and scandalous events that occurred there. Hoping to "avoid dullness",³⁹ she relied on a few secondary sources, hearsay and her own imagination. Later writers have had to rely on it, but had no opportunity to question its accuracy. The result has been the dissemination of information that lacks primary corroborative material.

More recent scholarship has begun to deconstruct the myths and present the building more objectively. In her 2001 work *Building the Cold War. Hilton International Hotels and modern architecture*, Annabel Wharton considered the architecture as an introduction and precursor to her main focus on hotels built after the Second World War.⁴⁰ Further study on the transformation of the urban fabric of Cairo after 1952 – including the site once occupied by Shepherd's Hotel – is excellently documented in Galila El-Kadi's *Le Caire. Centre en mouvement* published in 2012.⁴¹ Most relevant to the study of Egyptian hotel architecture during the colonial period is Andrew Humphreys' encyclopedic *Grand Hotels of Egypt*, published in 2011. While to a certain degree the book still employs typical romantic anecdotes in the description of Shepherd's Hotel, the research is more extensive and academically rigorous, drawing extensively upon primary visual and textual material.⁴²

39 Nelson 1974, xiii–xv, 215–216.

40 Wharton 2001, 43–45, 212.

41 El-Kadi 2012, 216–219.

42 Humphreys 2011, 76–99.



Fig. 7 Portrait of Johann Adam Rennebaum, circa 1888.

JOHANN ADAM RENNEBAUM, ARCHITECT

The attribution of the building's design to the correct architect has been hindered due to the lack of primary source material and the dissemination of false information as a result of hearsay; this in turn has resulted in a corpus of secondary material that has credited several architects with the design of the building.

Most frequently, the building has been attributed to the English architect Somers Clarke (1841–1926), active in Egypt at the end of the 19th

and beginning of the 20th century, and who is perhaps best known for his design of the famous Reid's Palace Hotel in Madeira, Portugal.⁴³ Nonetheless, enquiries at archives and libraries that preserve his works, including the Library of the British Museum,⁴⁴ the Society of Antiquaries in London,⁴⁵ and the Griffith Institute at Oxford⁴⁶ produced not a single primary source document related in any way to Shepherd's Hotel. It seemed surprising (and suspect) that no documentation by and of the architect of this illustrious building would have been preserved. Furthermore, British architecture and design journals, in particular, *The Builder*, made frequent mention of Clarke's works and commissions in Britain as well as in Egypt, but there are no references to designing, or participating in the design of Shepherd's Hotel. Dr. Nicholas Warner, who has studied the work of Somers Clarke in Egypt, mentioned that he was certain that Clarke was *not* responsible for the design of Shepherd's Hotel.⁴⁷

The hotel is ascribed by Rudolf Agstner to the Italian architect Francesco Battigelli in Mercedes Volait's seminal *Le Caire – Alexandrie. Architecture européennes, 1850–1950*.⁴⁸ Agstner cites an article by Dalu Jones, which mentions that Battigelli designed Shepherd's Hotel, but Jones' article does not provide a primary source to support this claim.⁴⁹

Through the discovery of his estate in Grünsberg Castle in Altdorf by Nuremberg, it is now possible to provide an indisputable attribution of the building to the German architect Johann Adam Rennebaum (1858–1937) (Fig. 7). A comprehensive overview of Rennebaum's works during the half-century he lived and worked in Egypt cannot be given. Save for the drawings and material he brought back to Germany, nearly all documents related to his work prior to 1914 were lost in the social and political upheavals of the First World War.

Although Egypt was nominally a province of the Ottoman Empire, the country was de facto under British sovereignty after 1882. With the outbreak of the war, German and Austro-Hungarian nationals were

43 Warner 2012, 237–238.

44 Patricia Usick, e-mail message to author, January 14, 2014.

45 Adrian James, e-mail message to author, January 13, 2014.

46 Cat Warsi, e-mail message to author, January 9, 2014.

47 Nicholas Warner, e-mail message to author, January 9, 2014.

48 Volait 2001, 155.

49 Jones 1990, 90.

50 Ormos 2009 I, 26–28.