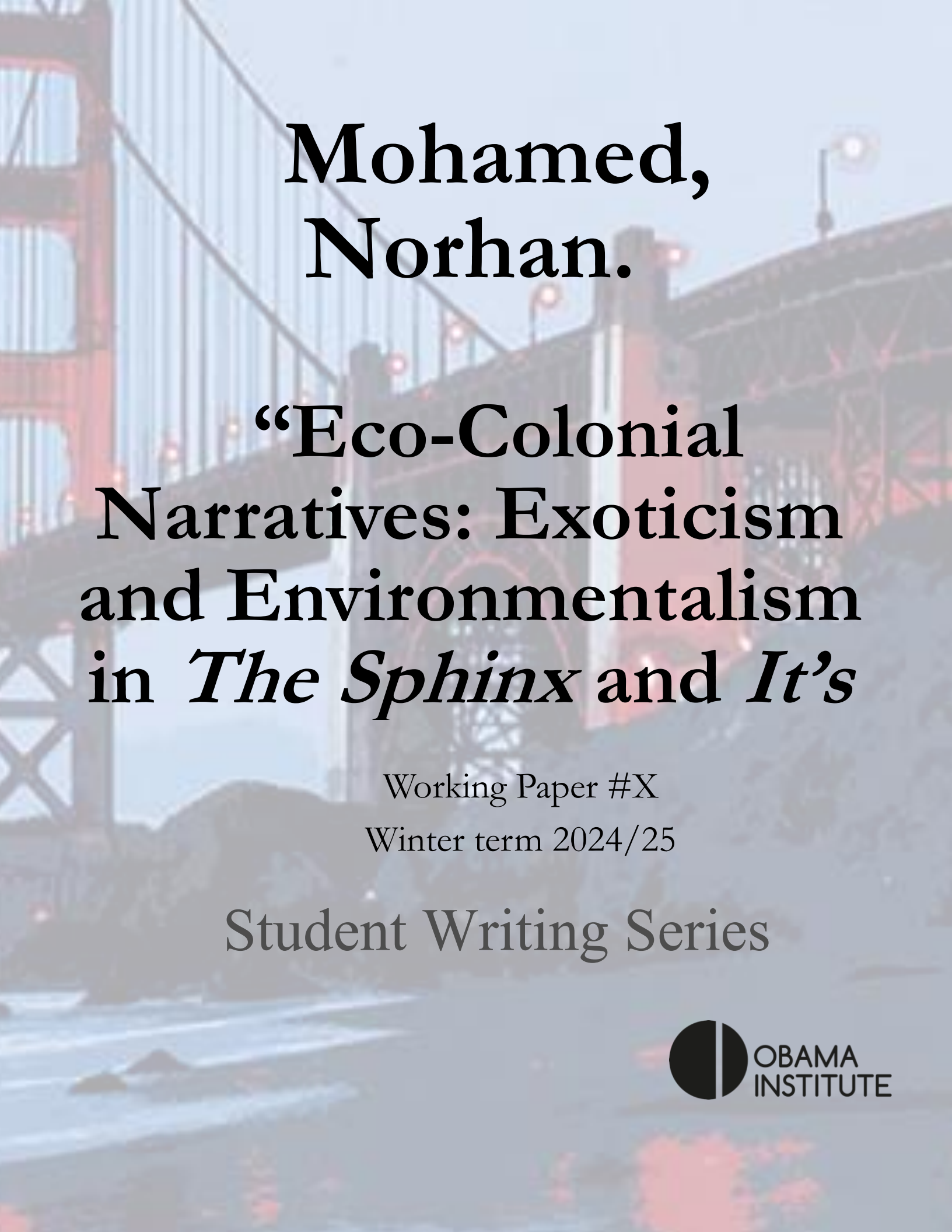




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**“Eco-Colonial
Narratives: Exoticism
and Environmentalism
in *The Sphinx* and *It’s*”**

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Eco-Colonial Narratives. Exoticism and Environmentalism in *The Sphinx* and *It's Freezing in LA!*

Introduction

The idea that colonialism is a relic of the past is a very misleading notion; colonialism and its legacy are not just alive and well but even thriving. From exoticized landscapes in colonial archives to modern tales of greenwashing, the environment remains a battleground for power. With that, the seeming promise of a greener future is nothing more than a recycled narrative of colonial control. The growing climate crisis has also gained increased importance in recent decades, particularly among younger audiences who feel its disastrous effects encroaching upon them. The role of magazines and serialized media has contributed significantly to this heightened awareness of environmentalism. A magazine's ability to encompass a wide range of issues while combining "hard-hitting reportage with photojournalism" makes it "highly attractive as a vehicle of advocacy" (Sternadori and Holmes, pp. 360-361). With effective messaging, magazines have become crucial for relaying and understanding social and environmental issues, even disrupting the status quo (Sternadori and Holmes 370). While topics such as environmentalism have developed into acceptable mainstream issues, the role of magazines, especially independent ones, remains unequivocal.

One example is the UK-based magazine *It's Freezing in LA! (IFLA!)*, which addresses ecological issues with an emphasis on slow journalism coupled with artistic illustrations that effectively convey those messages. Although colonialism and environmental exploitation have long been intertwined, many perspectives remain overlooked. Through the article "Colonialism and Greenwashing in Occupied Palestinian Territories" by Zainab Mahmood, *IFLA!* offers its readers a viewpoint often ignored by (Western) mainstream outlets: that of Palestinians. From here, I intend to examine the link between eco-colonialism and serialized media and how they may potentially subvert or reinforce colonial rhetoric and exploitations. In this context, *The Sphinx*, a colonial British magazine from Egypt, serves as a contrasting example to *IFLA!* and its article. By analyzing the differing portrayals of ecological interventions in *The Sphinx* and *It's Freezing in LA!*, I argue that environmental policies have historically been and continue to be employed as ideological tools to justify colonial domination and resource extraction, perpetuating power imbalances. These narratives obscure the social and ecological costs of development and hinder genuine efforts toward ecological and social justice. Serialized media have served as powerful instruments in shaping these narratives, and by comparing these case studies, this research reveals enduring patterns in how environmental projects are framed as modernizing endeavors while simultaneously erasing Indigenous agency.

The ensuing analysis of *The Sphinx* will mainly focus first on agricultural and irrigation projects and second on the Orientalist depiction of the people and the landscape embodied through luxury tourism. Subsequently, the article on greenwashing in Palestine will be examined and contrasted with the ecological narrative in *The Sphinx*. This paper also incorporates secondary

scholarship that includes Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), Timothy Mitchell's *Colonising Egypt* (1988), Greco's *Environment, Engineering and Authority* (2016), and the edited volume *Dismantling Green Colonialism: Energy and Climate Justice in the Arab Region* (2023). Together, these sources situate our case studies within the broader framework of ecological imperialism and neocolonial environmental policy.

Magazines have been key players in shaping public perceptions of both environmental progress and exploitation. *The Sphinx*, as a serialized publication, was central to British efforts to legitimize their colonial project in Egypt. It was an English-language illustrated weekly magazine published by the Société Orientale de Publicité in Cairo, Egypt, from 1892 until 1947. Its intended audience included British expatriates residing in Egypt and elite English-speaking Egyptians. The magazine reported news of interest to the English-speaking community and offered accounts of social and cultural events ("Rare Books"). Through recurring articles, advertisements, and visual imagery, it constructed an image of Egypt that was both exotic and in need of Western intervention. Such sentiments were not limited to *The Sphinx* alone but are found in other publications (*Punch*) as well (see fig. 1). While alluring to a European audience, these portrayals effectively commodified Egypt's natural resources and obscured the harsh realities of occupation and ecological disruption.

In contrast, independent media like *It's Freezing in LA!* use serialized formats to contest these narratives. *IFLA!* is an independent, non-profit magazine based in London, dedicated to exploring climate change through a multidisciplinary lens. Established in 2018, *IFLA!* publishes biannual print editions that blend art, politics, and science to make complex environmental topics accessible and engaging. The magazine emphasizes collaborations with emerging and underrepresented writers and illustrators, aiming to present diverse perspectives on the climate crisis. The name "It's Freezing in LA!" originates from a 2013 tweet by U.S. President Donald Trump, who stated: "I'm in Los Angeles and it's freezing. Global warming is a total, and very expensive, hoax!" (De la Garza). In addition to its print editions, *IFLA!* has expanded its platform to include digital content and audiobooks, further broadening its reach and impact. By highlighting stories of greenwashing and environmental injustice, these publications create space for marginalized voices and critique mainstream environmental policies. This transformation in

media, from propagandistic colonial periodicals to activist publications, illustrates the evolving role of serialized media in mediating and contesting power.

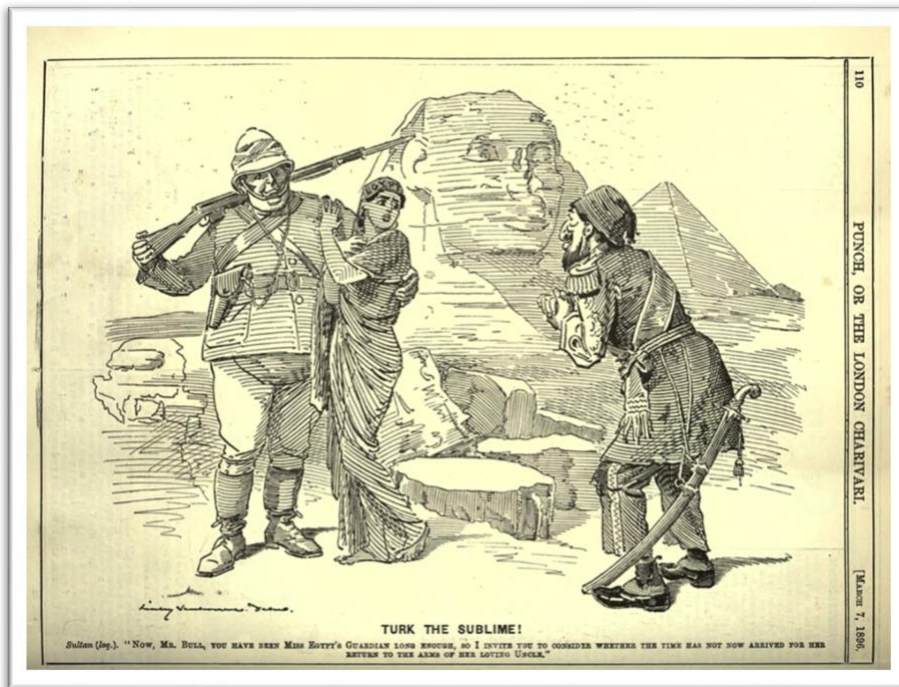


Fig. 1, political cartoon in *PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI*. 1896, no. 7, p. 110.

Historical Context

The British occupation of Egypt began in 1882, following the Anglo-Egyptian War, and lasted until 1956 (Whipple Library). While officially under Ottoman rule, Egypt was controlled by Britain, which exerted influence over its economy, administration, and infrastructure. The Suez Canal was a major point of strategic interest, prompting Britain to ensure its dominance in the region. As is the case with most colonial endeavors, British colonial officials framed their presence as a civilizing mission, using infrastructure projects such as irrigation systems and transportation networks to justify their continued rule. One of the central justifications for British control was the management of the Nile River. The construction of irrigation projects like the Delta Barrage and the expansion of perennial irrigation were hailed as triumphs of European engineering, ignoring the long-standing Indigenous knowledge systems that had effectively managed Egypt's water supply for centuries (Mitchell, 76).

Palestine, under British mandate from 1917 to 1948, experienced similar colonial rhetoric (Dana and Jarbawi 6). The British justified their presence through promises of modernization, infrastructure development, and governance. However, these efforts also facilitated Zionist settler-colonial expansion, culminating in the dispossession of Palestinian land and resources with the Balfour Declaration (Anderson 171). Hereby, environmental narratives played a crucial role in this process, with afforestation and agricultural development projects often leading to the erasure of Palestinian presence. This historical precedent informs contemporary environmental policies in

Israel-Palestine, which *It's Freezing in LA!* critiques as modern-day greenwashing. Innovative programs labeled as ecological restoration, such as the afforestation of Palestinian lands with European pine forests, serve as a means of territorial control, displacing native populations under the guise of environmental conservation (Mahmood 20).

Environmental Narratives as Justification for Occupation

British colonial authorities in Egypt depicted the country's environmental and agricultural systems as disorganized and in need of rational Western intervention. This narrative served as a crucial ideological tool for legitimizing the occupation. British officials argued that Egyptians lacked the administrative capacity to effectively manage the Nile's irrigation and land systems, thus necessitating British control. According to Mitchell, such portrayals positioned the environment as a passive entity to be rescued through imperial expertise, with infrastructure projects like the Aswan Low Dam (1902) and the expansion of irrigation canals presented as evidence of benevolent governance (29). This rationale was repeatedly expressed in *The Sphinx*, a magazine that essentially functioned as a mouthpiece for colonial perspectives. For instance, a 1907 article dedicated to Lord Cromer describes him as a paragon of British virtue, stating that he possessed qualities "among the most valuable characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon race" and was therefore well-suited to administer Egypt (vol. 14, no. 212, 1907, p. 9). The same article highlights Egypt's agricultural potential while undermining Indigenous agency, particularly that of the farmer ("fellah"), asserting that:

Egypt has a fertile soil and an industrious population, the finest agricultural labourers in the world. The fields required water, the fellah encouragement to work, and both of these have been provided. And there was no opposition from them to British guidance. The people had been long accustomed to alien domination, and the mere substitution of one set of foreign advisers for another was to them of little moment. (vol. 14, no. 212, 1907, p. 9)

Here, the Egyptian fellah is portrayed as a passive recipient of colonial guidance, a racialized and infantilized subject whose autonomy is erased. The rhetorical strategy exemplifies what Edward Said (1978) would later describe as "Orientalist" thinking, an epistemological framing that positions the colonized as inherently incapable of self-governance.

Irrigation & Water Control as Tools of Power in Egypt

Moreover, agriculture played a central role in the imperial economy, as Egypt's prosperity was increasingly tied to export crops such as cotton. British economic policy, portrayed in *The Sphinx* as pragmatic and generous, included institutions such as agricultural banks, which allegedly supported farmers through low-interest loans. These measures were held up as markers of progress and justice:

Among the many good works that have been done in Egypt, the formation of the Assouan Reservoir and the construction of the most important system of irrigation

ever devised, which cannot fail to exercise an enormous influence on the material prospects of the country, must not be forgotten. Nor should the formation of an Agricultural Bank with its loans at small interest, and with Government guarantee, to the fellaheen be overlooked. (vol. 14, no. 212, 1907, p. 9)

Such narratives obscured the exploitative nature of colonial capitalism, presenting British extraction of agricultural resources as mutually beneficial. In another issue from 1918, an article about a Horticultural Society exhibition further illustrates this commodification of land and labor:

Vegetables form a most important part of our daily life and it is an excellent idea to encourage the growing of these necessities. As perhaps many people know, the Government has limited the cotton growing area in order that more vegetables shall be grown not only to supply this country, but in order to export. Intending exhibitors in Cairo should apply for all information to the Hon. Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, and in the provinces to the Inspectors of Agriculture. Silver and bronze medals, as well as certificates, will be awarded. (vol. 25, no. 402, 1918, p. 9)

Egyptian agricultural production is celebrated not for its contribution to local food sovereignty but for its service to export markets. Even in its financial reporting, *The Sphinx* reflects this logic of dependency. One 1906 issue notes that Egypt is “essentially an agricultural country and its prosperity is entirely dependent on the success of the farmer,” highlighting crops such as cotton, dates, and even ostrich feathers as indicators of colonial productivity (vol. 13, no. 199, 1906, p. 8). Hence, the emphasis is on British benefit and imperial prestige that was achieved through a thriving agricultural economy. The British occupation of Egypt was thus not only a political and economic project but also an environmental one. Control over the Nile and its irrigation systems became a central means through which colonial authority was exercised, justified, and naturalized. In *The Sphinx*, this control is routinely presented as essential to the agricultural prosperity of Egypt and framed in terms that obscure its exploitative underpinnings (see figs. 2-3). For instance, a 1906 article asserts that the prosperity of the country “depends on irrigation and on the height of the Nile, so in endeavoring to regulate the rise of the river, to make it uniform each year and to provide for the proper distribution of the water, the government is working on scientific lines to ensure prosperity” (vol. 13, no. 199, 1906, p. 8). By emphasizing the use of “scientific lines,” the article positions British intervention as rational, benevolent, and necessary. This framing masks the ecological and social consequences of colonial water control while legitimizing the extensive reengineering of Egypt’s landscape. The invocation of science usually served as a way that enabled colonial powers to claim neutrality and objectivity while restructuring local ecologies to ensure imperial exploitation (Mitchell, pp. 29-32). Notably absent from such portrayals are the lived experiences and economic disruptions faced by the Indigenous population, especially those most dependent on access to land and water. By presenting irrigation reform as a civilizing mission, *The Sphinx* effectively erases the human costs of colonial hydrology and reinforces the logic of imperial paternalism.

Additionally, a 1906 finance article illustrates how irrigation policy was tightly linked to the commodification of Egypt's land and its transformation into a speculative asset: "A report made to the board indicates that the saleable value of land has been underestimated, and in view of the extensive character of the land grants and of the estimated cost of irrigation a very large margin of profit should result when the directors are ready to proceed with land sales" (vol. 14, no. 203, 1906). Hereby, irrigation is not merely a tool of agricultural enhancement, but a financial instrument designed to maximize British profit. Nature, specifically land and water, is reimagined as a series of quantifiable assets to be optimized and traded. Infrastructure projects were thus essential in the colonial project, both in Egypt and Palestine.

British colonial rule in Egypt was underpinned by massive investments in irrigation and railway networks that reshaped the Nile to serve export-oriented agriculture. Greco's work, *Environment, Engineering and Authority*, examines the role of British engineers in monopolizing water resources. Greco states: "The monopolization of Egypt's irrigation systems by British engineers was central to the establishment of colonial authority, forcing Indigenous farmers into subordinate roles" (54). Beyond agricultural use, control over water infrastructure extended to major geopolitical interests. The Suez Canal, a crucial passage for imperial logistics, is repeatedly discussed in the magazine as vital to British hegemony. In a 1924 article, its significance is made explicit:

After demonstrating the vital importance of the Suez Canal to the British Empire, Mr. MacDonald pointed out that the international treaty of 1888, relating to the free passage of the canal, [...] and in the light of that experience no British Cabinet could yield, even to an ally, the custody of this important link in British communications. (vol. 31, no. 585, p. 4)

This passage frames the canal not only as a hydro-engineering achievement but also as a symbol of strategic requirement. The narrative ties together environmental control and political sovereignty, reinforcing the belief that British control over waterways was crucial to global stability and trade (Mitchell, pp. 47-48). Moreover, the construction of major dams and barrages, such as the Assouan Dam (1902), is also celebrated in the publication as evidence of British ingenuity and imperial benevolence: "[...] thanks to the concurrence of Great Britain, [...] engineering feats have been performed, which guarantee the continued prosperity of the country, notably the building of the Assouan dam" (vol. 14, no. 206, 1907). Again, the dam is presented as a monument to progress, with no mention of its downstream effects such as ecological disruption, forced labor, or the displacement of communities. Rather than acknowledging the costs of such interventions, *The Sphinx* promotes a narrative in which control over the Nile is equated with modernization, reinforcing the civilizing discourse that underpinned the entire colonial project.

AN INVASION OF THE BARRAGE.

THE Australians within our gates have grown familiar with most of the sights and scenes of the capital though few of them have travelled beyond the usual haunts of the tourist. Thus when a picnic was mooted a few days ago, and a visit to the Barrage was suggested it transpired that not one of the party had ever heard of the monumental achievement, though more than one was certain that his Australia could boast a better! However no sooner was the outing settled than it was put into execution; and on the morning in question a merry party bundled into an imposing array of automobiles in quest of the day's adventure. Over the crowded bridge alongside of the station we threaded our way through the tram-lines down the Shubra road, rounded the walls of the dwelling of the late Meferieh over whose latter days a thick veil of mystery still lingers, and out on the dusty road which was the second to be laid by Lord Kitchener's orders. Past string of heavily laden camels, past fields of lush vegetation, through the narrow streets of Shubrah village, down past the great power station of the Heliopolis Ouzo Co. with glimpses of river water in the near distance, and so to Gohub where elders sat and philosophized and small children screamed unutterable maledictions upon our forebears and the grand-parents of our machines. The wind drew salt tears from our eyes as we trundled down the road which if dusty is far improved since a twelve-month ago, and after a run of not more than thirty minutes from our start we passed the railway station of the Barrage, bumped through the little Arab village on the east of the great weir (where a full market was in progress) and passed through the first of the castellated draw-bridges which lend it such an effective air.

Had we been out for intellectual pursuits we should doubtless have stayed our mad career to ponder over the elaborate formation and uses of sluices & double canals, the advantages of curved surfaces and oblique piers, and many other matters of soul wracking anguish; but as we



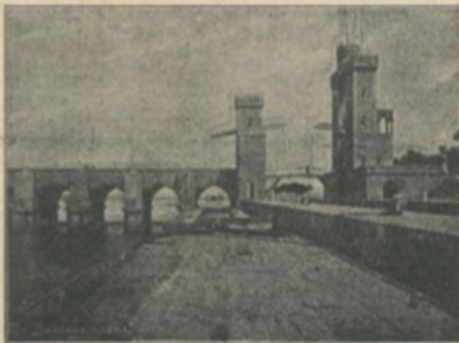
Still using the primitive plough of Biblical days.

happened to be out for pleasure pure and simple, and our drive had made the satisfaction of our material appetites the first consideration we were content to pass historical, architectural and technical details and to switch-back over lock-gates &c. till we fetched up alongside of the most beautiful garden in all the world. Avenues of ancient lebbaks quivered their welcome with speechless tongues, clumps of feathery palms waved their delicate fronds to us, trails of bougainvillea swept us overhead, roses trailed sweetness in our path, the very flowers in their gay borders, and the stretches of emerald sward invited us to pause a while—while the boxes and baskets, parcels and Billy (how they must love their Billy tea down under) drew us irresistibly to a sheltered drill. Self-

appointed *maitres d'hôtel* appeared from out of nowhere, so also the local Arab Juggler with eggs attached horribly to his ears, the custodian of a low-class monkey and numerous other busy helpers with one eye for us and many others as to the extent of *kahsheesh* and leavings. In a trice the table-cloth was heaped with eatables, the Billy brought back boiling from its fire in the dry canal-bed, the expansive jelly shaken from its mould, and the turkey resolved into an unrecognisable carcass; and for a brief but pleasant period we housed ourselves in satisfying nature's needs.

With the processes of digestion came the juggler with its wheedling ways, and after he had received his honorarium, the determination of ardent amateur photographers to record the fleeting impressions of the moment. Thus for a voyage of discovery of the interior of the little salmons which divides the two main branches of the Nile; and mounted upon a chain of trailers we sped our way through unknown routes, sighting the remains of ancient fortifications, (built by Mohamed Aly in defence of the capital) receiving salutes from the sentries at the frowning prison, passing the Gaffers at their physical exercise, diving through narrow masonry gates, skirting the immaculate camp of the Travelling Eye Hospital and back at last to the gardens once again. Then a visit to the Museum, where the duties of the old brass gun are reduced to the firing of occasional salutes, and to the various models of irrigation works both in India and Egypt which ask for attention; so also the wonderful representation of the waterways of middle Egypt, with real water coursing through its veins. And if our attention and appreciation of these practical works was rather frivolous than serious, our visit to them added just one last touch to a day which was full of pleasure and interest.

Many other visits to the Barrage can we remember in days gone by, since that first journey by a dusty train, when somehow we managed to lose count of time, and so had to spend endless hours of waiting in a meagre Greek coffee house, and felt very forlorn in



One of the Norman castellated gates of the superstructure of the Barrage which dates from its early design by Mougel Bey, when it was proposed to act as a defence for Cairo in addition to its irrigation purposes.

Cotton Growing in Egypt.



THE GROWTH OF COTTON IN EGYPT—A UNIQUE COTTON TRAIN ON THE EGYPTIAN DELTA LIGHT RAILWAYS.



A SUCCESSFUL EGYPTIAN COTTON PLANT.

In view of the great interest which is at present being shown in the movement to supply our Lancashire cotton mills with an increasing supply of cotton grown within the Empire, and thus making us less dependent on one source of supply, the following particulars have been prepared for *The Sphinx* concerning the interesting story of the cotton industry in Egypt. The illustrations of the types of Egyptian cotton plants and the descriptions of the plants are given through the courtesy of M. Augustin Chailant, 17, Rue Jacob, Paris, publisher of M. Henri Lecomte's *Coton en Egypte*. The volume, which originally formed a report prepared for presentation to the governor of Senegal when recently in Egypt, contains a mass of information dealing with the cultivation and exportation of Egyptian cotton.

THE BEGINNING OF THE COTTON ERA

The cultivation of cotton in Egypt dates from 1820; previous to that year the cotton plant was unknown in all the land of Egypt. A Turkish dervish returning from India gave to Maho Bey El Oefali, a high Egyptian official, some grains of Indian cotton. Maho Bey contented himself with cultivating the plants as an ornament, when one day M. Jumel, an European merchant whom reverses of fortune had led to Egypt, passed by Maho Bey's garden at Boulac, perceived this cotton in flower, and induced Mehemet Ali to undertake its culture. The attempt succeeded beyond all expectation, and from that moment the cultivation of cotton has received liberal governmental

support. Once started cultivation of the plant spread rapidly. The name of one of the pioneers of these early days is perpetuated in France, for Egyptian cotton is known in the Republic as Jumel cotton. (In Egypt, Germany, and Switzerland it is known as Maho).

Directly the serious cultivation was undertaken experiments were made with the principal cotton grains used in America and India, and it has been found that the three plants known as *Gossypium Barbadosense* (L.) (sea island variety), *Gossypium herbaceum* (L.), and *Gossypium arboreum* (L.) have chiefly prospered.

ACHMOUNI.—This variety made its first appearance at Achmoun, a town of Menoufieh. Achmoun, which is still cultivated in Upper Egypt and in the Fayoum but which used to have a much wider area, successfully resists heat and lack of water. It can grow in the districts where the system of periodic irrigation has not yet been organised. Its production in the Fayoum scarcely exceeds 4 cantars (4 cwt.) to the foddan (foddan = 1¼ acres). The plant is somewhat scanty in shape. For twenty years this plant was cultivated extensively in the Delta, in Upper Egypt, and the Fayoum, but now it has been replaced in the whole of the region north of Cairo by varieties of greater producing capacity.

JANOVITCH.—The Janovitch cotton obtained its name from an Albanian living at Fagalia near Cairo. It is a form of Affifi, having the same leaf, flower, and fruit as mit affifi. It supplies a cotton of very beautiful quality and has produced the longest and finest fibres. Unfortunately its cultivation is very delicate and its crops small.

THE MIT AFFIFI is the variety most extensively cultivated in the Delta; as for the other varieties they are scarcely represented. In Upper Egypt—that is to say, south of Cairo and Fayoum—one can scarcely see anything but the achmouni.

EGYPTIAN COTTON IN INDIA

Within the last two years two varieties of Egyptian cotton plants, the mit affifi and the abassi, have been made the subject of experiments in the province of Sind. The seed of these varieties was distributed among certain growers who agreed to rear crops on a tract of land along the Jamrao canal in the valley of the Indus, the Egyptian methods of cultivation to be followed as closely as possible. Up to the present the experiments have been very successful, no signs of deterioration being evident; on the other hand, the plants showed a distinct immunity from boll-worm attacks. The experiments will have to be continued for a few more seasons before the



THE FLOWERS AND LEAVES.

superiority of Egyptian staple to Indian brands can be definitely proved.

LUXOR
The English Pharmacy.
 BRANCH OF THE
ENGLISH PHARMACY
CAIRO, Opposite Sheppard's Hotel.
 English & American Patent Medicines
 Invalid Requirements, Perfumery, etc.
DAILY PARCEL POST.
Proprietor: J. MACGREGOR

UP THE NILE
TO THE CATARACTS.
First Class and Speedy Passengers Services.
 BY
THE EXPRESS
NILE STEAMER Co.
 Booklet and full information about
"EGYPT - the NILE" gratis
 from the Offices of the Company.
Sharia El-Madabegh, CAIRO.

Israeli Environmental Narratives in Palestine

In Palestine, Israeli policies similarly employ environmental rhetoric to justify territorial control and the marginalization of Palestinian communities. In the *IFLA!* Article, Mahmood critiques how Israel's environmental initiatives, such as afforestation and seemingly sustainable development projects, function as forms of greenwashing to obscure the systemic displacement of Palestinians (20). The Jewish National Fund's (JNF) afforestation projects, which plant forests on land previously occupied by Palestinian villages and uproot native trees, serve to erase Palestinian agricultural heritage while symbolizing Israeli permanence (Mahmood 21). The olive tree, a central symbol of Palestinian identity and resistance, is particularly targeted in these efforts. Over 800,000 olive trees have been uprooted by Israeli authorities since 1967, undermining Palestinian livelihoods and cultural ties to the land (Ismael 2). Hereby, Palestinian agriculture, especially olive farming, has been integral to both the economy and cultural identity of Palestinian communities. To illustrate, Palestine is known for its export of products like dates and olive oil, yet due to the restrictions enforced by the occupation, their success remains limited. Additionally, the olive tree mirrors the deep-rootedness of Palestinians to their land as it is passed on throughout generations. As quoted in the article: "trees 'have been among the most potent weapons of land grabbing and occupation'" (Mahmood 21). The destruction of olive groves is, thus, a strategic act that not only disrupts local economies but also serves to erase historical connections to the land (see fig. 4). The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development reports that olive farming is crucial for over 100,000 Palestinian families, covering nearly half of the cultivated land in the West Bank (UNCTAD 5).

Furthermore, the Israeli state's framing of its environmental policies as technologically advanced, particularly in water management, is juxtaposed with the denial of access to water for Palestinians. The World Bank reports that Israeli settlers consume significantly more water than Palestinians in the occupied territories, exacerbating agricultural difficulties and survival for the latter (World Bank IV). These disparities are also visually noticeable: " ' When we see the map for the apartheid wall and the map for the groundwater [...] we see the route for the apartheid wall it was designed to [...] control the maximum amount of water resources to be inside Israel' " (Mahmood 21). Apartheid, accordingly, extends to Palestinians' access to water as well as their freedom of movement. The concept of green colonialism proves useful for understanding how contemporary Israeli environmental policies reproduce similar patterns in Palestine. Green colonialism refers to the use of environmental discourses and technologies to justify the appropriation of land and displacement of Indigenous peoples, often under the guise of conservation or sustainability (Hamouchene and Sandwell 30). Israel's afforestation projects, particularly those led by the JNF, exemplify this dynamic. Forests are planted over destroyed Palestinian villages, sites of the 1948 Nakba, creating a "green cover" that both obscures history and asserts Israeli claims to the land. As Mahmood notes, this practice represents a form of greenwashing that masks the violence of dispossession under environmentalist language (21). One prominent instance is the export of dates grown on illegal settlements. Their origin is deliberately obscured and misleading to mask the underlying power imbalances and colonial violence that

enable their production. With labels such as “King Solomon” and “Jordan River,” the authenticity of Palestinian products is systematically appropriated and repackaged by their colonizers while not affording Palestinians the same right (Abdeljawad).

This strategy echoes what scholars term “green grabbing”: the appropriation of land and natural resources for ostensibly environmental purposes, such as conservation, biofuel production, or renewable energy projects (Fairhead, Leach & Scoones, pp. 237-61). Nature reserves and solar farms have also been used to prevent Palestinians from accessing their own agricultural lands, often without consultation or consent (Mahmood 20). These restrictions and appropriations mirror how extreme the asymmetry in power is between the Israeli state and Palestinians. Environmental language is overall used to justify land control, masking displacement as sustainability. In reality, these projects continue colonial patterns by removing people from their land while claiming to protect nature and profiting from it.



Fig. 4, Visualization of afforestation in *IFLA!*, issue 6, 2020.

Orientalism & Environmental Narratives

Tourism & the Colonial Imagination: Exoticizing Egypt in *The Sphinx*

The Sphinx often portrayed nature not as a living environment belonging to Indigenous people but as an aestheticized spectacle for European consumption. Articles and advertisements routinely presented Egypt as a land of ancient mystique and fertile bounty, ripe for tourism, economic exploitation, and civilizational improvement. The natural world, whether in the form of irrigated fields, desert landscapes, or ancient sites, was commodified for a British audience, turning Egypt into an exotic yet controllable environment. Such representations serve a dual purpose: they aestheticize Indigenous labor and land while erasing their sovereignty. As Mitchell explains, colonial economies like Egypt's were restructured not only materially but symbolically, with nature transformed into a landscape of productivity and display (pp. 33-35). Tourism was thus a key part of the British colonial economy and ideology. Hereby, Edward Said's *Orientalism* is critical to understanding how Western media constructs the "Orient" as exotic, backward, and in perpetual need of Western intervention. Said asserts, "The Orient was a place of exotic backwardness that required European enlightenment" (3). *The Sphinx* frequently employs such Orientalist tropes through its lavish imagery and language depicting Egypt as a land of ancient splendor yet in need of modern engineering to harness its resources. Examples include numerous advertisements for luxury hotels, Nile cruises, and archeological sites (see figs. 5-6). As one article chronicling the journey from Luxor to Assouan states:

Of all luxurious ways of seeing the world there is none to be compared with lazily drifting through its waterways; and of all the rivers on its surface, which can offer greater charm than the majestic, never-ending Nile? Oh, shades of ancient history, oh ghosts of departed tourist, rise up and tell the tale of anything that is more fair! (vol. 14, no. 205, 1907, p. 26)

The magazine frequently featured such articles and advertisements that depicted the Nile as an unspoiled, exotic wonder, inviting readers to cruise the majestic Nile and experience the splendor of ancient Egypt transformed by modern engineering. Such portrayals, while they may be appealing to a European audience, effectively reduced the landscape to a picturesque backdrop for luxury consumption and indulgence. In doing so, these representations obscured the underlying ecological disruption caused by colonial intervention and masked the displacement of local communities, such as Egyptian Nubians, who had long managed these resources sustainably. This ideology is quite paradoxical as it, on the one hand, romanticizes the fruitful and prosperous land and its laborious people. On the other hand, it effectively reduces the environment and its "uncivilized" inhabitants, deeming them inferior and in need of Western intervention. Additionally, special issues such as the 1935 Alexandria Holiday edition are entirely devoted to promoting the city as a tourist destination (see figs. 6-8). With headlines like "Existing Relics of Ancient Times" and "The Spell is Binding," Alexandria is framed as a mystical, almost fantastical landscape, constructed primarily for European consumption, leisure, and escapist indulgence. Such

rhetoric undermines Egypt's sovereignty, reducing it to a mere subject of foreign control and intervention, and viewing it solely in a European context.

Further Orientalist discourse is exemplified in the article "A Long Trail. East Africa to Jerusalem" (vol. 26, no. 411, 1919, p. 13). It romanticizes the journey across imperial outposts, depicting British officials as "hidden, yet real, heroes" who bring order to "primitive" lands (vol. 26, no. 411, 1919, p. 13). The land is rendered as a "trail of wonders," teeming with "good shooting country" and "human life [...] in its lower animal stages," reinforcing binaries between modern European civilization and native simplicity. The contrast between "white smoke from the village fires" and the "sleeping cars, dining saloons [...] and steamers" underscores this divide (vol. 26, no. 411, 1919, p. 13). The article also contrasts ancient and modern projects, impressed by the Temple of Karnak for its artistic grandeur but positioning the Aswan Dam as a symbol of productive British modernity that "spells food and money" (ibid). This narrative omits the ecological and social disruptions caused by such projects, casting imperial infrastructure as both necessary and benevolent. Finally, by likening the African countryside to Jerusalem, "the centre of the universe," the article frames empire as a redemptive project that links the "barbarous" periphery to sacred history, reinforcing the colonial logic of intervention and domination (ibid).

Such articles represent the norm rather than the exception. Another article, "In the Great Oasis," from 1908, further exemplifies Orientalist narratives by portraying Kharga Oasis as a pristine landscape awaiting European discovery and transformation (vol. 15, no. 225, p. 10). Celebrating the newly built railway as a "miraculous" feat, the author emphasizes British modernity's ability to conquer the desert and bring luxury, "champagne off the ice and quail pie in the heart of the desert," into its barren expanse (vol. 15, no. 225, p. 10). This spectacle of comfort amidst hardship reinforces the imperial narrative of civilizational progress. The Indigenous people are, again, depicted as simple and culturally static: "Their ambitions begin with food and end in sleep [...] Bakshish is unknown! How delightful!" (vol. 15, no. 225, p. 10). Such language frames them as timeless and content, aligning with Said's critique of Orientalist discourse that presents colonized peoples as passive and pre-modern (206). Hence, Kharga is imagined not as a lived space but as a future resort, praised for having "the finest air and climate in the continent of Africa" (vol. 15, no. 225, p. 10). The author goes on to envision sanatoriums and "rest cures," casting the oasis as a therapeutic destination for European bodies (vol. 15, no. 225, p. 10). In this framing, native life is reduced to picturesque simplicity, while British intervention is celebrated as transformative and redemptive, therefore a hallmark of Orientalist ideology. In tandem with this Orientalist lens, the desert is essentially seen as the antithesis of civilization. In all the discussed articles, the aim is always to cultivate and make the desert greener, which is a further justification colonizers employ to subjugate Indigenous peoples and claim the land for themselves.

Moreover, the depiction of Egyptians as a people, especially those of the lower class, is always through an Orientalist lens. In one issue (see fig.10), there is an advertisement for postcards with an extremely exoticized, voyeuristic, and racist portrayal of Egyptians (vol. 15, no. 221, 1907, p. 35). The images titled "A Touch of Nature," "A Son of Ishmael," "Baksheesh," and "An Egyptian Beauty," reinforce stereotypical representations of the Egyptian people as picturesque

objects for Western consumption. The individuals are framed as static symbols of biblical or pre-modern archetypes, such as the nomadic “Son of Ishmael” or the eroticized “Egyptian Beauty.” These images render colonized peoples as passive, exotic, and fixed in time, thus legitimizing Western domination. These portrayals align with what Davis describes as “environmental orientalism,” which analyzes how Western narratives construct the Arab world as “alien, exotic, fantastic or abnormal, and frequently as degraded in some way” (28). This visual commodification transforms colonized people into static symbols of a timeless and inferior Other, justifying their subjugation under imperial rule (Hammdouche and Sandwell 10). By commodifying Egyptian identities for a colonial tourist market, the postcard series reflects a broader pattern of visual appropriation that dehumanized Egyptians while elevating British cultural authority. The caption “Baksheesh,” for example, trivializes poverty into a motif of quaint dependence, reducing the lived realities of colonial exploitation to consumable curiosities. As Mitchell argues, such representations “transformed local people into manageable objects of knowledge and governance” (“Colonising Egypt” 28). In other words, locals are stripped of their identity and individuality to be more controllable by colonial powers.

Lastly, another example of how Egyptians were exoticized is the article “Harem Life in Egypt. Part II,” which continues with its deeply Orientalist portrayal of Egyptian village women and children (vol. 26, no. 411, 1919, p. 13). Here, the author describes visitors to the harem as filthy with children whose “eyes are eaten up with flies,” covered in “festerings sores,” and constantly whining. Such imagery dehumanizes the people and reinforces colonial ideas of native degeneracy and helplessness (vol. 26, no. 411, 1919, p. 13). In this way, *The Sphinx* not only mirrored colonial power relations but actively participated in constructing the ideological rhetoric of the empire that continues to rationalize violence against both marginalized people and their environments (see fig. 9).

-- SPHINX HOTEL LIST --

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SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL
 The Premier Hotel in Egypt.

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The Hotel band plays daily in the afternoon, & during & after dinner.

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HELOUAN (Sulphur Springs.)
GRAND HOTEL HELOUAN.

THE NATIONAL HOTEL
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 AT LUXOR

THE CATARACT HOTEL
 AT ASSUAN

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 THE UPPER EGYPT HOTELS Co.

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ORCHESTRA.

DRAGONMAN IN UNIFORM MEETS ALL TRAI S
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TELEGRAMS: "COMFORT" PORT-SAID.

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Marina Palace Hotel

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 Separate apartments with private bath.

Continental Hotel

Very convenient for commercial
 travellers, because of its central position.

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(G. O. LION, Manager).

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 Standing in two grounds, which are a feature
 of Khartoum, and contain excellent TENNIS
 COURTS. 20 Bedrooms & Suites. Splendid
 Dining & Billiards. -- Spacious Lounge.
 Billiard Room -- Weekly Dances.

MODERATE TARIFF. EXCELLENT CUISINE.

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 around Khartoum, with reliable and competent guide.

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First Class Hotel -- Unrivalled Situation.

Splendid view over the Nile Valley.

Restaurant & Garden, open to
 Non-Residents.

Fig. 5, hotel advertisements in *The Sphinx*, vol. 29, no. 482, 1922, p. 699.

EXISTING RELICS OF ANCIENT TIMES

Historically, and not archaeologically, Alexandria is of main interest as a city of antiquity. Nevertheless, it has its monuments. For instance, and for a start, there is Pompey's Pillar, of which the only connection with Pompey is that it stands on the site of the Serapeum, or Temple of Serapis, built by him, but little of which remains today. The splendid granite monolith that has survived the centuries was erected by Posthumus the Prefect in honour of the Emperor Diocletian somewhere about 300 B.C. It is nearly 27 metres high and 2m. 70 round the base. It stands on a substructure made up of granite and other blocks derived from still more ancient monuments. One of them bears in relief the bust of Seti I.—and



he lived about 1300 B.C. Alongside the column are sphinxes and statuary, while on one side is the entrance to the subterranean chambers which formed part of the Serapeum.

Hard by are the Catacombs of Kom el Shugafa, which, by the curious character of their construction and the strange art of their sculptures and bas-reliefs, have rightly been said to leave a profound impression on the minds of all who visit them. Cut out of the solid rock, and dating from the first years of the Christian era, they are laid on three floors, and are museums in situ of Egyptology and the decorative genius of the period. The "pièce de résistance" is the funerary chapel leading from the rotunda on the top floor—if it is not the so-called Hall of Caracalla, which is particularly dark and gruesome with its human skulls and bones of men and horses lying around. Caracalla ordered a massacre of the young men of the city, and, according to legend, these are the remains of those who sought refuge in the catacombs.

Another engaging place in a mortuarial way is the Necropolis of Anfouhy. Enclosed in a garden between the tram-line and Ras el Tin Palace, it has charm not usually associated with ancient tombs, of which those here seen are among the finest specimens

of Ptolemaic times. They are of added interest in forming the most important monument yet unearthed on Pharos Island, where the famous lighthouse stood.

The site of the lighthouse is marked—more or less—by Kait Bey Fort, built by the Sultan of that name in A.D. 1579. Designed to protect the port, it has served in usefulness up to a few months ago in signalling the midday hour. Its guns have now, alas, been silenced, the time-worn structure having been in danger of caving in, to avoid which the Municipality is at present spending some money on its repair.

Left:
SPHINXES AT
POMPEY'S PILLAR;
Right:
"ALEXANDER'S
SARCOPHAGUS"

Legend attributes this sarcophagus, discovered in Syria, to Alexander. Will the Nebi Daniel diggings prove otherwise?



The Mosque of Nebi Daniel, which we come to next, is not of itself much of an antiquity, but beneath it, or somewhere in the vicinity, is supposed to lie (how many times we have heard it!) the tomb of Alexander the Great. What we are actually shown are tombs of more recent monarchs and princes through a door, obligingly opened on application.

At Aboukir, we—or some of us—swell with national pride in gazing on the scene of Nelson's masterful routing of Napoleon's fleet; and at Canopus, just this side of the Royal Air Force camp, we deplore the fate of what, before the rise of Alexandria, was the most flourishing port of the Delta and later became a mere pleasure haunt of the new city. With the aid of a guide-book, the ruins give us some idea of its presumed magnificence in decay.

Minor monuments are to be seen in the shape of columns, one of which adorns the public garden in front of the British Consulate. In the Græco-Roman Museum, there are others, of much more varied interest, amid which some visitors to Alexandria may forget they came down to the sea to bathe.

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Fig. 6, *The Sphinx Alexandria Holiday Number*, 1935, p. 24.

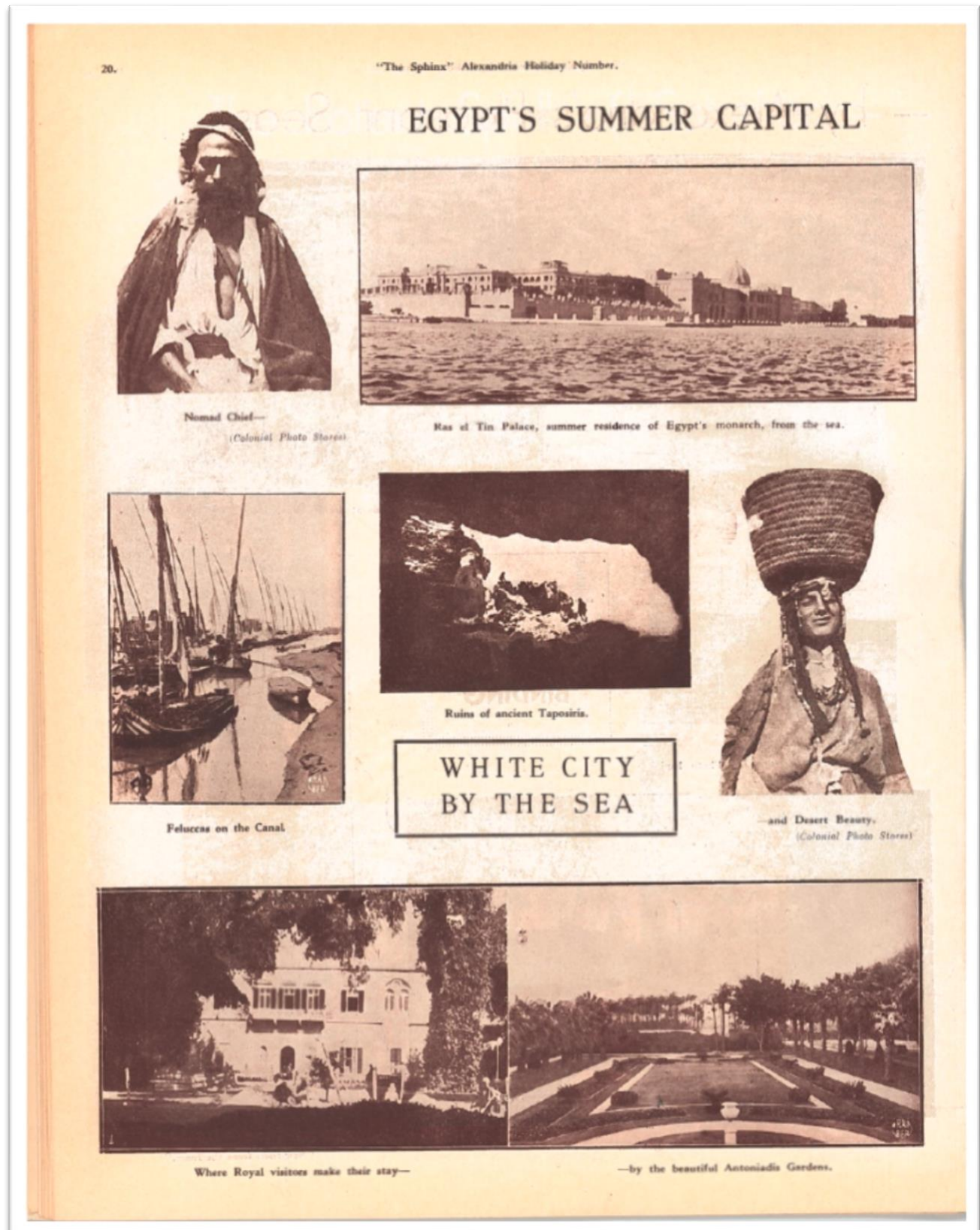


Fig. 7, *The Sphinx Alexandria Holiday Number*, 1935, p. 20.



Fig. 8, *The Sphinx Alexandria Holiday Number*, 1935, p. 19.



Fig. 9, "TUT-ANKH-AMEN AT SHEPHEARD'S," *The Sphinx*, vol. 32, no. 548, 1924, p. 7.

February 23, 1907. THE SPHINX. 33

COLOURED

PICTURE POST CARDS.



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"A SON OF ISHMAEL."

Specimens of "THE EGYPTIAN GAZETTE" Series.

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"BAKSHEESH."



"AN EGYPTIAN BEAUTY."

WHOLESALE ONLY from Mr. W.E. WALTON, The Sphinx Offices, Khedivial Buildings, Boulac Road. CAIRO.

Fig. 10, advertisement for postcards, in *The Sphinx*, vol. 15, no. 221, 1907, p. 35.

Greenwashing & the Exoticization of Palestinian Landscapes in *IFLA!*

Despite differences in context and time, both *The Sphinx* and *IFLA!* reveal how eco-tourism and environmental discourse can be tools of exoticization and erasure. In both cases, the colonizing power, British in Egypt and Israeli in Palestine, frames itself as a civilizing force, one that improves nature, manages land rationally, and offers it as a spectacle for outside audiences. Crucially, both publications illustrate how nature is not neutral, but it can be politicized, commodified, and weaponized. The British in Egypt celebrated dams, canals, and tourism infrastructure as evidence of rational governance, even as they dispossessed farmers and controlled the Nile for export-driven agriculture. Similarly, the Israeli state celebrates water-saving irrigation, tree planting, and eco-trails, even as it limits Palestinian access to water, land, and movement. Thereby, the IFLA article critiques a modern-day version of this colonial spectacle, not through garden exhibitions and imperial tourism, but through greenwashing and settler eco-tourism in Israel-Palestine.

Similar to *The Sphinx*, the Israeli state promotes environmental projects that attract international support and tourism while simultaneously erasing Palestinian presence and environmental stewardship (Mahmood 20). For instance, the article details how national parks and forests in Israel are frequently constructed over the ruins of depopulated Palestinian villages (Mahmood 20). These spaces can be promoted as modern destinations for eco-tourism, hiking, and environmental education, offering international visitors the illusion of a pristine, natural landscape, free of conflict or history. This not only facilitates environmental erasure but also aestheticizes violence through the lens of nature as leisure. Like in *The Sphinx*, land and nature are abstracted from their Indigenous users. These rebranded landscapes perform a political role: they invite international visitors and potential donors to admire Israel's environmental innovations and promote illegal settlements, while implicitly reinforcing narratives of indigeneity, sustainability, and modernity all at the expense of displaced Palestinians. The way the Israeli state markets itself internationally is, therefore, a modern-day equivalent to the colonial and Orientalist rhetoric advertised in *The Sphinx*. These acts of environmental appropriation serve a symbolic function similar to the displays of Egyptian agriculture in *The Sphinx*, offering sanitized, curated versions of Indigenous landscapes, stripped of the people who cultivated them.

Moreover, as the article by Mahmood shows, land in Palestine is not merely territory; it is a living archive of labor, identity, and resistance. This view contrasts strongly with the settler-colonial framing of the land as empty, barren, or mismanaged, in need of Western (or Zionist) improvement. As Israel's first president, Weizmann exclaimed: "It seems as if God had covered the soil of Palestine with rocks and marshes and sand so that its beauty can only be brought out by those who love it and will devote their lives to healing its wounds" (Mahmood 20). This portrayal of the land as desolate and awaiting revival echoes long-standing Orientalist tropes of "making the desert bloom," legitimizing settler colonialism by casting the territory as both empty and in need of external cultivation. Ironically, studies have shown that the majority of Israelis suffer allergic reactions from olive tree pollen, a symbol of Palestinian rootedness and agricultural heritage; therefore, offering a potent metaphor for the land's resistance to the presence of settlers (Geller-Bernstein et al.).

The restructuring of Palestinian land into forests, national parks, or eco-friendly agricultural experimentation zones is, therefore, not benign. It represents a transformation of Indigenous ecologies into commodified landscapes, severed from their historical inhabitants and remade in the image of the settler state. Nevertheless, it is important not to view Palestinians as lacking agency or not resisting colonization. Indigenous communities continue fighting to preserve their environmental knowledge and practices. For example, despite the imposed restrictions, burning and uprooting of crops, Palestinian farmers continue cultivating olive groves using traditional techniques, which form a core part of their cultural identity.

Contemporary Eco-Colonialism

Ultimately, the patterns of ecological exploitation established during colonial times persist in modern environmental policy. Neocolonial practices in the global South, particularly in the MENA region, reflect historical patterns of resource extraction and environmental dispossession. Recent research like Hamouchene and Sandwells' *Dismantling Green Colonialism* argues that "The energy transition in North Africa is not simply about embracing new technology; it is also about replicating colonial modes of resource extraction" (42). These projects frequently prioritize foreign investment and profit over local sustainability and self-determination, reinforcing embedded inequalities masked by ecological progress. This logic is clearly visible in historical serialized media such as *The Sphinx*, which framed British infrastructural expansion in Egypt as a civilizing mission. By glorifying colonial engineering feats and depicting local environments as barren and mismanaged, the magazine justified imperial occupation while marginalizing Indigenous ecological knowledge. Environmental narratives hereby functioned to legitimize colonial power, portraying the British as benevolent stewards of a passive and undeveloped landscape.

In contrast to such dominant frameworks, independent media platforms like *IFLA!* offer an alternative model for environmental storytelling. As a climate-focused magazine rooted in activism, illustration, and independent journalism, *IFLA!* deliberately foregrounds grassroots perspectives, social justice, and intersectional ecological concerns. It resists the apolitical language often used in mainstream environmental discourse by emphasizing the lived experiences of marginalized communities and exposes the challenges posed by the climate crisis and the impacts of colonialism, offering a counter-model grounded in accountability and resistance. Therefore, by rejecting greenwashed narratives and highlighting the socio-political dimensions of environmental crises. While eco-colonial narratives found in *The Sphinx* continue on today, albeit taking on different forms, the magazine exemplifies how independent media, *such as IFLA!*, can challenge these neocolonial narratives and promote decolonial, justice-oriented approaches to climate advocacy.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of *The Sphinx* and *It's Freezing in LA!* reveals that environmental narratives function as powerful instruments of colonial ideology, employed to legitimize control, erase Indigenous agency, and reframe occupation as benevolent guardianship. In colonial Egypt,

The Sphinx celebrated British infrastructural projects as civilizing achievements, sidelining local agricultural knowledge and portraying Egyptians as passive recipients of progress. Similarly, in contemporary Palestine, Israeli greenwashing and environmental conservation efforts obscure settler colonialism by framing Palestinians as impeding ecological restoration rather than rightful owners of their land. In both cases, nature is commodified and aestheticized for colonial consumption, while Indigenous populations are displaced, not only physically, but also politically. These narratives embody the concept of “environmental orientalism,” whereby both people and landscapes are made legible, governable, and exploitable under imperial regimes (Davis 28). *The Sphinx* mirrors this logic by aligning nature with imperial order and rendering Egyptians as picturesque but passive subjects. In contrast, *IFLA!*’s intervention complicates and disrupts these narratives by foregrounding Palestinian voices and exposing the ecological violence embedded in settler colonial regimes.

Recognizing these persistent rhetorical strategies is essential to challenging the structures that perpetuate environmental injustice. Independent magazines like *IFLA!* offer a necessary counterweight to dominant ecological narratives, reclaiming space for decolonial perspectives and Indigenous knowledge. By analyzing historical and contemporary case studies side by side, this paper affirms the need for environmental futures that are not only sustainable but grounded in local sovereignty, ecological integrity, and the dismantling of colonial systems of power.

Appendix

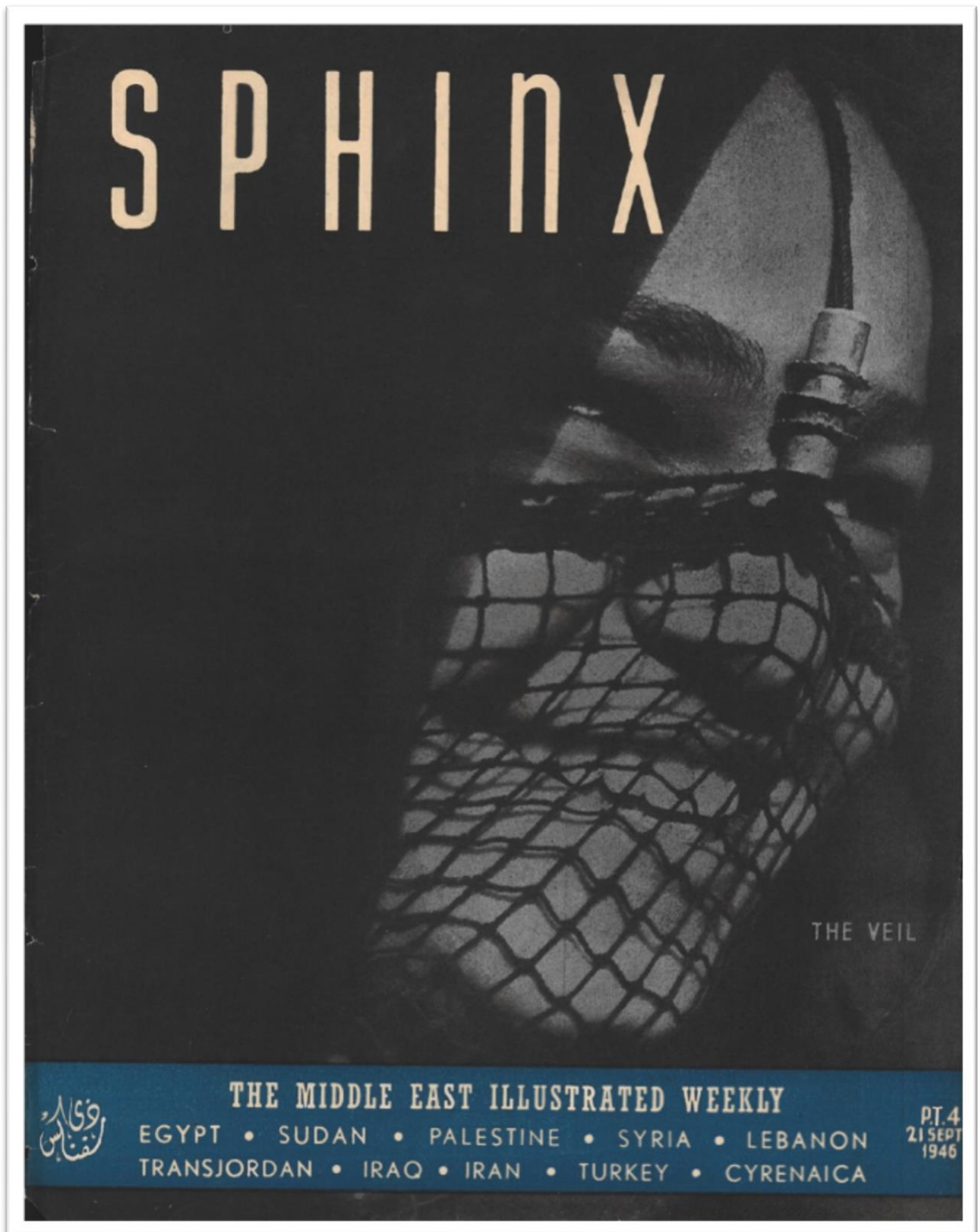


Fig. 11, Cover of *The Sphinx*, vol. 52, no. 1729, 1946.

A Road to the Hills.



EGYPT'S FIRST TUNNELS.

HAVE any of our readers been up to the foot of the Mokattam Hills beyond the Tombs of the Kalifs?

Last week I received an invitation to accompany a party up to the quarries which lie in the hills; the quarries of the present day, for the whole face of the land in that direction has been turned by men in the course of ages in their search for stone. It was one of the most interesting trips which I have made, and resident though I am, I had no idea that such a place existed. There, in the heart of the hill, a newly constructed light railway penetrates, and I remember now having crossed this railway when on a very different occasion I visited the tombs of the Khalifs some time ago with never a thought as to where it led. I will describe the journey as I made it, then if any reader should consider it worth his while he can follow, and I can guarantee that he will not be disappointed either in interest or in scenery. Take a cab or tram and drive to the Bab Hassan Ain, and from there turn sharply to the right and up the hill past the tramway depot, keeping always to the right. A few hundred yards up the hill you come to the end of a light railway: this is to be your path. On the right are smouldering heaps of refuse, on your left, undulating sand ranges with houses in the distance, and straight in front the tops of the Tombs of the Khalifs are just visible. On the day when I had been invited to visit the place the Italian Minister M. de Martino was paying a special visit to the work himself, and we were therefore provided with chairs in an open truck of the railway which I have mentioned.

The moment the train starts the interest of the journey begins, in a very few moments you are passing over a bridge, built especially to avoid mutilating a sheikh's tomb; the railway now runs half over it but it is saved from destruction.

Then for a moment you catch a glimpse of the twin spires of the Citadel ahead above a lowering point of the mountain range, and a moment later you curve away to the left between enormous cuttings. The places where these cuttings are made have been the rubbish heaps of ages, for there is broken pottery everywhere, it is neither solid earth or sand.

And then suddenly you round a corner and on your left lies the great city of the dead, where thousands of tombs are erected together, it looks like a well ordered town, but it is the city of silence, for never a breathing animate life is there; it is given over to the departed inhabitants of Egypt and it is singularly impressive as you pass it on a sultry afternoon. The colours of

the different tombs stand out bravely in the afternoon light, but even at a distance and without previous information you would know that there was something different in this place to others which you have seen, for it bears the repose of a cemetery, notwithstanding its streets and Mosques. It is a place to be visited again and again, there is nothing splendid in its architecture, but it fascinates all the same.

Further again and there is another of these cities, this time of the right of the line, and this time you look across it right to the teeming life of modern Cairo. I have heard it said that if only those tombs were moved that place would be one of the finest residential quarters of Cairo. It is perfectly true, but who, after all would have them removed? Who would change an inch of the older Cairo for the jerry built grandeur of to-day?

On leaving this last cemetery you begin to get into the hills where the difficulties in the construction of the new railway must have been enormous. At one moment you are passing swiftly over a narrow bridge that spans a chasm of a hundred feet or more, and at the next you are running up the incline which leads you to the first tunnel in Egypt. Here, just before the tunnel is reached you have a magnificent sight before your eyes, on either hand stand huge boulders of rock, on the right especially they are extraordinarily fine, and straight ahead you can see the tunnels penetrating the heart of a rocky range.

There are three of these, neither of them very long, but they are the first tunnels which have been constructed in Egypt and will form a landmark in the history of engineering in this country.

A few hundred yards beyond the last tunnel the rail head now stands, right in the heart of the mountains, from whence you look across to Abbassia. At your right, men are busily engaged in their work of quarrying and now and then you catch a glimpse of some poor straggling horse, mounting a heavy slope with exceeding difficulty, dragging his load of stone behind him.

The railway was built with the idea of transporting the stone from these quarries to the proper roads of Cairo, but there are still many small contractors who stick to the original way



Mr. Lucovich.

THE ITALIAN MINISTER'S VISIT.

M. de Martino, M. Dostoyevski, M. Goshan.



Borg el-Arab's embattled gates...



...by which the Beduin pitch their tents...

— WESTERN DESERT

by A.F.C. de Cosson

(Author of "Mareotis")

Although the Light Car Patrols penetrated into all these oases as long ago as 1916-17, they have been visited seldom since. This spring and summer, however, a scientific expedition from the Armstrong College at Newcastle-on-Tyne is spending six months in the neighbourhood.

The road to Salum is more normal going, and tourists are beginning to motor along the North African coast from Alexandria to Tunis, Algeria, and Morocco. Here are the experiences of a party consisting of two ladies, a chauffeur and another servant, which took the road from Alexandria to Morocco this March. Two nights were spent at Mersa Matruh before the journey was continued to Salum, where the third night was passed at the Government rest-house. The Egyptian and Italian frontier officials were most obliging, having been advised beforehand from Cairo of the particulars of the journey. Next morning, having passed through the Italian Customs, they proceeded over a bad and monotonous road to Tobrak, "a nice little white town on a height which forms a bay, full of ships." Here the Military Governor and his wife were extremely kind and gave the party accommodation, and next day they lunched at Derna, and leaving there they climbed all the way up to Cyrene, which is situated on a high plateau "simply carpeted with lovely wild flowers. There Mussolini has built most attractive farm-houses and barns and given them to those who want

to go, and, if they make a success of it, they have home and land as their own after five years; and they looked to be making a tremendous success of it. The celebrated Cyrene Hotel de Luxe proved to be an ugly modern structure in a beautiful situation..."

The museum at Cyrene contains some magnificent statuary, and interesting excavations are going on in the neighbourhood.

Next day the car (a Rolls Royce) did the run to Benghazi, an uninteresting little town with only one indifferent hotel open. The following day, by a bad road, brought them to Agadabia, where the little hotel was specially opened for them. On the eighth day out of Alexandria, they proceeded westwards and spent the night at a fort (Muralia?), where the young lieutenant in command acted as host. Next day brought them to Sirt and a clean little hotel, the Military Governor here being very kind also.

Then followed Misurata, "a lovely oasis and a good hotel," and so to the town of Tripoli—actually 10 days' easy running.

They received kindness and hospitality everywhere. The condition of the roads at present is reported as follows: Alexandria to Salum, "not too good"; Salum to Tobrak, "pretty bad"; the roads beyond in Cyrenaica being generally fair except between Agadabia and Muralia, which "is a really bad road." The road is macadamised between Misurata and Tripoli, and beyond, in Tunis, Algeria, and Morocco, motoring is general and, therefore, easy.

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COMPANY LIMITED

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R. J. MOSS & Co.

{ Established 1861 }

10, Rue Fouad I^{er}

Telegraphic Address: MOSS, Alexandria

ALEXANDRIA

Fig. 13, "Western Desert," *The Sphinx Alexandria Holiday Number*, 1935, p. 23.

December 15th, 1917.

THE SPHINX

25.

IN THE HEART OF PALESTINE.

(British Official Photographs)



JERUSALEM (looking east).

A ROYAL FLYING CORPS PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN ON THE 9th INST. FROM AN AEROPLANE FLYING AT A LOW ALTITUDE.



JAFFA MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS.

NEW ZEALAND MOUNTED TROOPS IN THE FOREGROUND.

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 ○ ○ dissipates giddiness.
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It is also a TOOTH WASH,
 an ANTISEPTIC
 TOILET-WATER.

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HORS CONCOURS, MEMBER OF THE JURY
 Paris 1900—Brussels 1910.

Fig. 14, "In The Heart of Palestine," *The Sphinx*, vol. 25, no. 391, 1917, p. 15.

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