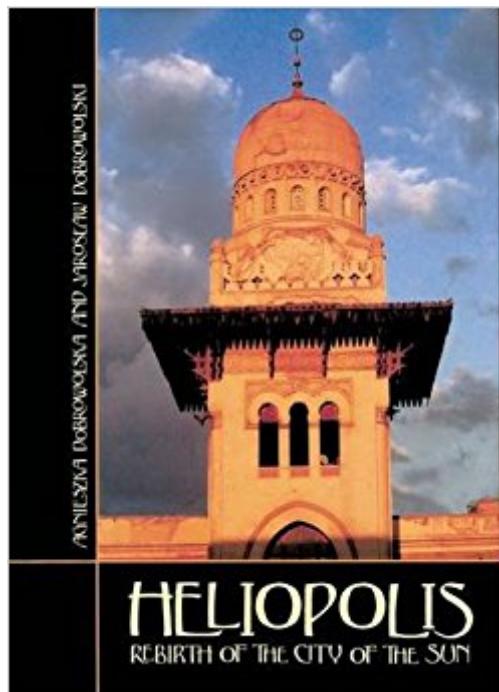


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Heliopolis: Rebirth Of The City Of The Sun



Synopsis

When in the early years of the twentieth century the Belgian businessman Edouard Empain began to turn his dream of building an entirely new satellite city in the desert outside Cairo into a reality, he followed the then novel urban-planning concept of the "garden city." But in naming his creation, he turned back to one of the most ancient sites in Egypt, the solar temple of Heliopolis, the biblical On, and in its architecture he sought inspiration in the heritage of Cairo's Islamic tradition. When the city, known as "New Egypt" in Arabic, was completed, a half-hour tram ride through the desert was needed to reach it. Today, Heliopolis has been enveloped within the huge and ever-growing metropolis of Cairo. However, despite rapid development, overpopulation, and increasing traffic, Heliopolis has retained much of its original character and charm, and the captivating atmosphere of Egypt's Belle Epoque is still tangible. Its houses, mosques, and churches, designed to imitate various styles of the past, have become historic buildings in their own right. This fully illustrated book introduces the reader to the history and development of Heliopolis through its architecture and its inhabitants past and present.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

AGNIESZKA DOBROWOLSKA is a long-term resident of Heliopolis and the author of Muhammad 'Ali Pasha and His Sabil (with Khaled Fahmy, AUC Press, 2004) and The Building Crafts of Cairo (AUC Press, 2005). JAROSLAW DOBROWOLSKI is an architect and the author of The Living Stones of Cairo (AUC Press, 2001).

Service was very quick. Book arrived in excellent condition and was all I had hoped it would be. We lived in Heliopolis for 2 years and knew the Baron. We toured the castle before any restorations were made.

Alexander entered Egypt through Heliopolis. Infact he is the one that named the city after the Sun. The God he worshipped Zeus, Dionysios and he tamed his horse by talking to it of Apollo the God of the Sun. Heliopolis is also the City in which I was born. I am a pure Italian who happened to be born in Egypt, and Egypt will always be in my heart and in my soul. Heliopolis, was a city full of life, mixed with all nationalities, religions, and cultures. Women dressed with the latest fashion and were stunning to look at. Languages from many countries were spoken and children mingled among themselves, playing and catching words from different cultures. I was one of them. My grandfather a Sicilian built a cathedral in Heliopolis and it is still standing. Heliopolis had wonderful and picturesque streets, coffee shops with blends of old and new. Where have all this gone? I am sure that most of it is there with the exception of the people that have moved on. Yet I have not seen this beauty in this book. There are so many places in Heliopolis that could be featured. The writers instead focused on specific streets, showing the pictures in different angles of the same places. Like the ex Boulevard Ismail, now Baghdad street. The pictures show yesterday and today's evolution of Heliopolis, in pictures white and black which I found them great. However this book should have been called Boulevard Ismail and Heliopolis. It seems to me that the writers decided there and then to write a book, collected all the data from different centers and published it. It is very disappointing, because as I keep saying Heliopolis has incredible architectural homes and streets. If you have been to Cairo and leave the Cairo airport on your way to the center of Cairo, you pass through Heliopolis. You can see the wonderful villas which have a story. Nothing was written about these villas in this book. No special stories of who lived where with the exception of the Baron Empain, which is famous. Very very disappointing. For those who have never been to Heliopolis well it may be an interesting book to have. But don't waste your money.

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