



THE  
GEORGIAN  
GROUP

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Mark Crinson, 'Leading into Captivity:  
James Wild and his Work in Egypt',  
*The Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. V, 1995,  
pp. 51-64 + 133-135

# Leading into Captivity: James Wild and his work in Egypt

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Sir John Summerson's first published article in 1929 was on the still unjustly neglected architect James Wild (1814–92), but his essay was no mere exercise in Victorian revivalism.<sup>1</sup> In the nineteenth century, viewed by Summerson as an age first of 'conflicting ideals and stylistic creeds' then as 'picturesque confusion', Wild had stood out as an experimenter, a bold composer of unusual elements whose Christ Church, Streatham (1839–41), was a striking forerunner of modernity. This freedom from the mannerisms of his time, as well as abstract decoration and a simple formal power, led Summerson to call Wild 'a modernist in the truest sense of the word'. What is most interesting here is how Summerson's own early modernist taste recognized the eclectic elements in Wild's architecture but regarded them as inoffensive, if not unimportant, because they derived from non-western cultures. Similarly, Sir Nikolaus Pevsner was to regard Brunel and Godwin as pioneers of modern design despite their use of oriental forms.<sup>2</sup> Summerson and Pevsner thus echo Owen Jones, Wild's great contemporary, who saw oriental styles as ahistorical and who argued that to use them was, somehow, to avoid historicism, to design without dependence on the styles of the past, even to design without style.<sup>3</sup>

Since 1929 Wild has surfaced intermittently in the pages of architectural history, where his church at Streatham and his influential Northern District School, Soho (1849–50), have tended to stand as his major contributions. In 1949 H. S. Goodhart-Rendel, detecting a 'synagogal character' in his architecture, interpreted Wild's nonconformity not as a portent of things to come, but as a sign of an eccentric Victorian individuality lacking in Goodhart-Rendel's contemporaries.<sup>4</sup> In the 1970s, scholarship on Owen Jones and architectural polychromy cast a passing light on Wild, his friend and brother-in-law.<sup>5</sup> In the course of this Wild's interest in Islamic architecture was only incidentally touched on, largely because he neither contributed to rationalist accounts of polychromy nor to the published literature on Islamic architecture. In particular, between 1842 and 1849 when he lived and travelled widely in the Near East, studying Islamic architecture and designing buildings for the British community in Egypt, it might seem as if Wild simply disappeared offstage, vanished from those theatres of power that architectural history has usually seen as its areas of primary interest.

This article will re-examine the Egyptian period of Wild's career, but not to recover it merely as a marginal stylistic contribution to a particular view of history. More importantly Wild, through his articulation of the forms and imagery of British presence in the 'informal' empire, was involved in a dynamic of conflict and assimilation that radically changed the region's character. In this period Wild acquired not only the expertise that enabled him later on to become an accepted gatekeeper of orientalist knowledge at the South Kensington Museum, but also the opportunity to build an orientalizing building within the Orient. In this he was involved in a different process of modernization than the formal abstraction that Summerson had found in his work.

The son of Charles Wild, a painter of architectural scenes and Gothic subjects, Wild was articled to George Basevi and attended lectures at the Royal Academy. By the age of 26 he had built several Norman and Early English Gothic churches and more importantly he had become friends with Owen Jones, the architect, theorist, designer, and most energetic young orientalist of the time. It was almost certainly from Jones that Wild developed an interest in Islamic architecture that was to stay with him throughout his career.

The first building to manifest this interest was Christ Church, Streatham, but the Islamic element in the church was only one amongst the many ingredients of its rich eclecticism. (Fig. 1) It was Early Christian in plan, Italian Romanesque in composition, Ottoman in its bay elevations, and Alhambresque, Mamluk, Sevillian, and ancient Egyptian in its ornament.<sup>6</sup> This synthetic eclecticism may have owed something to Thomas Hope's *An Historical Essay on Architecture* (1835) or the example of German *rundbogenstil* architects, especially in the way that the combination was disciplined by the clear volumes of its Romanesque outline. By the late 1830s there were also several serious and well-detailed sources for the oriental aspects of the design: Lewis Vulliamy's and Owen Jones's drawings of Ottoman architecture, Jones's *Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Details of the Alhambra* (1836–45), Jones's or Robert Hay's publications illustrating Cairene architecture, Pascal Coste's *Architecture arabe* (1839), and Charles Texier's *Description de l'Asie Mineure* (1839), with its copious illustrations of Ottoman buildings. All these eclectic elements were tempered into a 'quiet severity',<sup>7</sup> accomplished partly by the innovatory brick and terracotta polychromy in which all the exterior details were carried out, and partly by the coherent massing of volumes set off by the commanding site on Brixton Hill.



Fig. 1 Christ Church, Streatham, 1839–41, designed by James Wild.

Wild was no theorist, and surviving writings by him are scarce. But there are passages in a letter of 1841, shortly after the completion of the Streatham church, which are worth quoting at length. They clearly show that Wild was immersed in contemporary debates on the nature of historicism and the role of copyism:

I object in the first place to the adopting [of] any style – this word style as the meaning attached to it seems to me to be the chief source of all our architectural failures. It seems that it is supposed in spite of everyday experience that the beauty of antiquity, and the associations connected with the last, can be transferred to new imitations of old buildings. Those who can really appreciate what is beautiful in ancient architecture – apart from the mouldings and decay – know why it is in vain to imitate the more prominent features as a sort of decoration to new buildings without all the circumstances which created the architecture it is wished to imitate. We must study from all sources and adapt and apply our knowledge with invention, as our forefathers did, or we can but produce caricatures of their works.

His attention had been drawn to the claims put forward for the use of Romanesque and Byzantine structure and ornament:

I should recommend the study of Romanesque architecture not the adoption of the style . . . [In Romanesque] there is much that is only half developed, and interesting only as a transition style. For this reason, I prefer the Oriental type to the German – it is more massive in its character, and the grand feature of architecture the dome more especially belongs to it. To know how to use the Byzantine or Romanesque styles requires a considerable knowledge of the principles of other and purer times of architecture, as although these buildings present the most valuable hints and studies, their details are generally to my taste at least, very trifling, being a transition between a barbarous tradition of classic architecture, and the commencement of the pointed styles. These feelings led me to study very carefully the details of the Church at Streatham. I found the greatest difficulty in determining why certain forms were fit and beautiful, apart from illustrations or the associations of style.<sup>8</sup>

Wild was caught in several dilemmas which are manifested in this passage's inconsistent reasoning. He seems to have thought that the adoption of any one historical style would be an inadequate response to a contemporary situation involving different social and technical practices. He wanted to avoid using style for associational purposes (as Chambers and Nash had used Islamic architecture) and yet he was sceptical of a formulated system of aesthetic judgement. Paraphrasing Thomas Hope, he called for an inventive use of eclectic sources. Unlike Hope, however, Wild regarded the various Romanesque styles as transitional, part of the way along a development from Classic to Gothic architecture and therefore impure and unexemplary. And yet of these transitional styles he did advocate 'the Oriental type' (presumably Byzantine and perhaps some Islamic architecture) as the best model. The Byzantine inspiration of the Streatham church could be seen in the form of its arcades, and its Islamicism was mostly to be found in matters of detail such as the 'Cufic' ornament around its western rose window or its cusped entrance arch with patterned voussoirs. But in this letter Wild recommended oriental architecture for its use of domes and its 'massiveness'. Perhaps the latter might be equated with the overall quality of 'quiet severity' ascribed to the Streatham church.

Some of the views expressed in this letter were to point the way for Wild's work in Egypt. One was simply the need for a sustained study of these transitional styles. Another was that Wild seemed to be hinting that the use of elements of Byzantine and Islamic architecture be seen as the dominant part of his aesthetic, around which other eclectic options were grouped.

By the summer of 1842 Wild's new interest in the East had led him and his friend Joseph Bonomi to join Carl Richard Lepsius's great Prussian expedition to Egypt and Nubia. Wild was hired as an architectural draughtsman and a promising orientalist: in Lepsius's words, 'a

young architect, full of genius, [who] seeks with enthusiasm in the East a new field for the exercise of the rich and various gifts with which he is endowed'.<sup>9</sup>

Early in the expedition Wild worked assiduously on Egyptology, but when he reached Cairo in October 1842, he threw himself into studying and sketching Islamic mediaeval architecture. He drew stained-glass, mosaics, tombs, *muqarnas* vaults, and any Cairene domestic buildings to which he could gain access.<sup>10</sup> He also joined the group of orientalists gathered around Edward William Lane, who was then living in Cairo and was already well known as the author of *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1836).<sup>11</sup> It is important to emphasise that this was a network of Europeans with similar interests in a particular mediaeval part of an expanding and modernizing city; not, as is often assumed, individual pioneers isolated in a thoroughly alien and backward society. Their position and objectives within this society suggests echoes, albeit on a smaller scale, of the 'oriental renaissance' driven by scholars like Sir William Jones in Calcutta in the late eighteenth century.

Through this network Wild was able to visit many Islamic residences including those of Dr. Abbott, an English physician, and John Frederick Lewis, the English painter who lived 'like a languid lotus-eater' in a house in the Islamic part of the city.<sup>12</sup> Wild was not so indulgent. Here, following Lane's interests in the patterns and spaces of everyday life to the letter, he drew ground plans, made studies of the *mashrabiyyah* screens and door panelling, and drew measured sections, plans and ceiling studies of the small bath. Lane's influence, and possibly that of French Saint-Simonists via Owen Jones, must be seen as paramount in this pains-

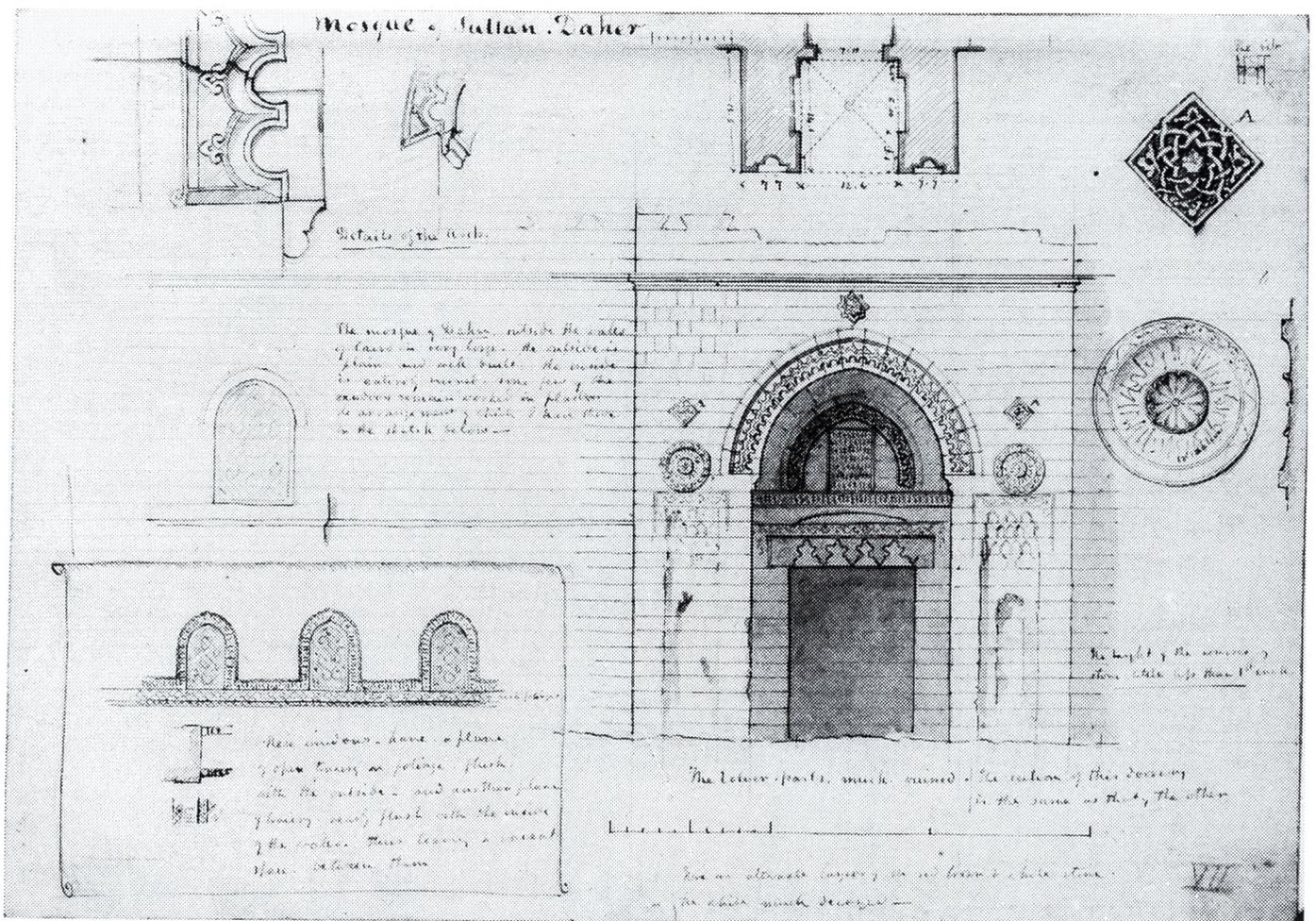


Fig. 2 James Wild, 'Mosque of Sultan Daher', 1844, elevation, details and plan of entrance (Courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the V & A Museum).

taking study of Islamic domestic architecture (which he also drew later in Damascus), and as a result Wild developed an expertise of his own as one of the first western architects to devote himself to this subject.<sup>13</sup>

After a short hiatus, Wild left Lepsius's expedition and returned to Cairo in April 1844. This time, apparently dressing in local costume to gain access to buildings, he was particularly concerned with mosques and baths, vault construction and fountains.<sup>14</sup> (Fig. 2) Although Wild never published the notebooks which he filled during his stays in Cairo, they were to become a reliable source for later writers.<sup>15</sup> These tireless studies, typical of the new breed of orientalist in the circles surrounding Jones and Lane, were the work of an architect committed to an ideal of precise, factual recording in opposition to the picturesque impressions and associational meanings valued by an older generation.

But Wild's early work in Egypt was not limited to recording monuments, indeed his precocious attempt to establish a new theory of pyramid construction (the short-lived 'accretion' theory) indicates that, like Lane and Jones, he also wanted to elaborate new conceptual frameworks.<sup>16</sup> In Wild this was not a written, scholarly exercise, but one based on the making of visual hypotheses. It will be discussed here in three minor projects first before looking at the way it took on built form.

During his second stay in Cairo, Wild was commissioned to design a gate for the English burial ground.<sup>17</sup> (Fig. 3) Wild designed a simple entrance through the wall on the street side,

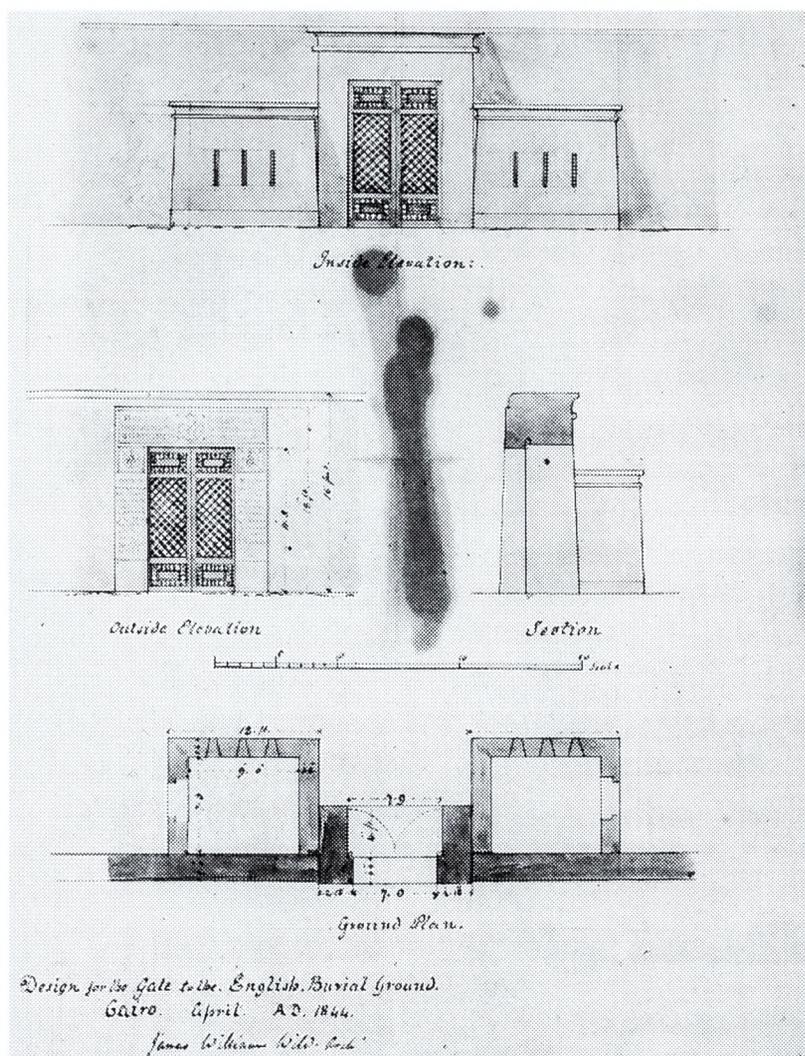


Fig. 3 James Wild, design for a British cemetery gate, Cairo, 1844 (Public Record Office, Kew).

framed it with inscriptions and grilled its double doors with *mashrabiyyah*. On the cemetery side the entrance was crowned by a cavetto cornice and flanked by twin pylon-like lodges, containing rooms for the keeper. The gate thus drew upon both the conventional association of ancient Egyptian architecture with death, on the inside of the cemetery wall, and Wild's new-found interest in the architecture of the streets of mediaeval Cairo on the outside.

If the cemetery gate was perhaps overly simplistic in its two-sided eclecticism, there is another design of Wild's, probably from this period of his stay in Egypt, that can only be described as an eclectic fantasy. (Fig. 4) This was an imaginary restoration or invention of a slightly battered two-storied tower or pylon. It seems improbable that the drawing was related to any commission; at least there is no surviving documentation and the allusions of the fantasy seem unlikely to have been designed for any specific brief. The tower itself was a strictly two-dimensional façade composition, divided into rectangular panels beneath and to either side of a single, *mashrabiyya*-filled window on each storey. Whilst these panels contained animals and figures in a quasi-Egyptian style, the topmost panels had two European-looking seated monarchs, and above these were heraldic devices of shields and crowns. The rest of the façade was filled with inscriptions in an indecipherable, Arabicizing script, and a variety of ornamental courses, the whole crested with crenellations.

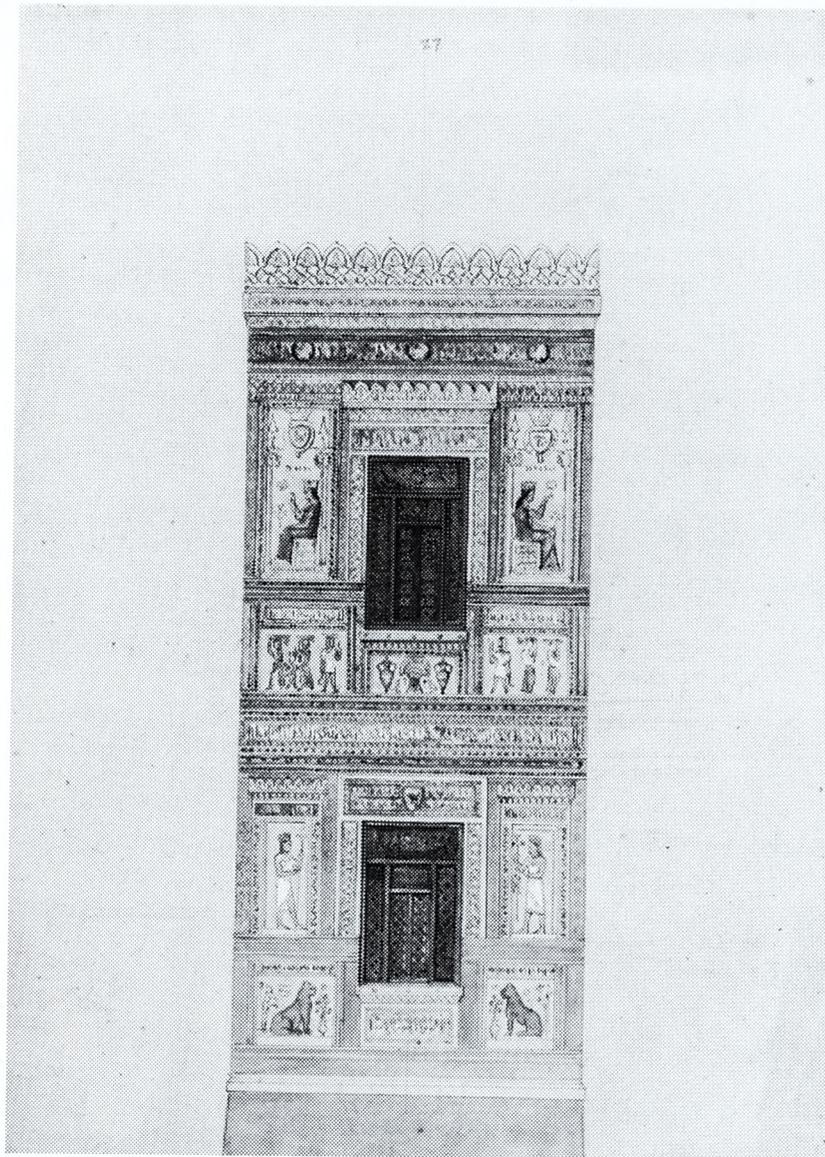


Fig. 4 James Wild, tower design, c. 1844 (Griffith Institute, Oxford).

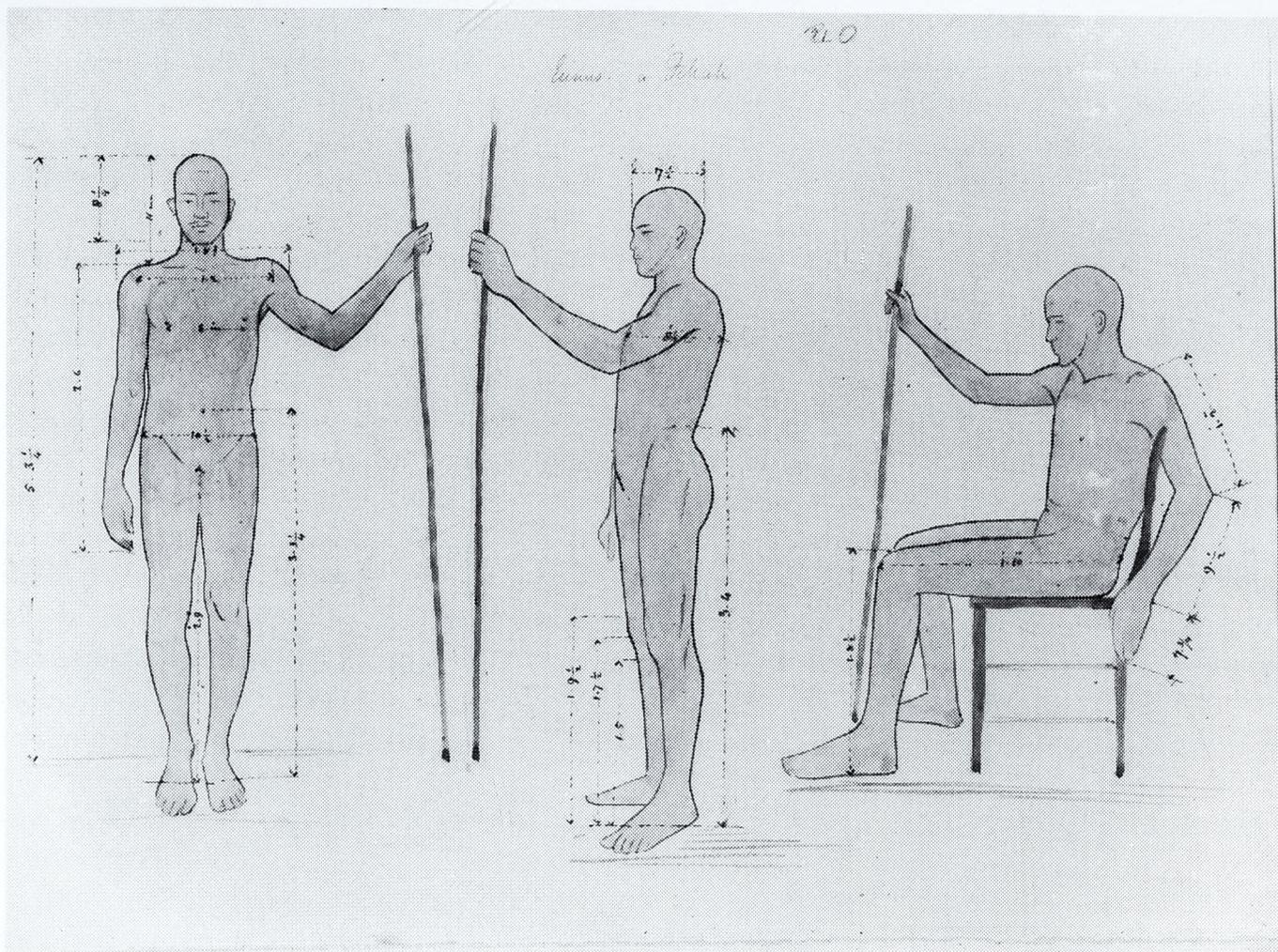


Fig. 5 James Wild, 'Eunus - a Fellah', c. 1844 (Griffith Institute, Oxford).

fantasy was clearly Egyptian history itself, played out on those aspects of its architecture – Ptolomaic, Mamluk, and Ottoman – that Wild had studied during his trip.

The third project was not architectural at all but instead some proportional studies of male nudes in standing and sitting poses. (Fig. 5) Wild identified each of these nudes as a contemporary Egyptian: 'Eunus - a Fellah', 'Mahomet - a Berber, and 'Behal - Mixed Fellah and Berber'.<sup>18</sup> Evidently Wild intended a comparison of Berber and Fellah physiognomy, because in each drawing the models were posed in the same positions and the same parts of their anatomy were carefully measured. Within Wild's own circles the drawings are most closely related to Edward Lane's and J. F. Lewis's attempts to represent Egyptian ethnography. It is also likely that Wild's drawings were an incomplete attempt to compare the proportions of modern and ancient Egyptians, for the figures were posed in an ancient Egyptian manner and the next drawings in the series were of figures in Theban tombs.<sup>19</sup> Here too, Wild's work parallels that of other orientalists, for David Roberts had also used this comparative mode in several paintings at this time.<sup>20</sup>

More generally, Wild's proportional studies are a relatively early manifestation of that characteristic nineteenth-century attempt to identify social and racial difference through measuring the outer features of the body. A close parallel to Wild's approach, for example, is with the work of Alphonse Quételet, the statistician and 'architect of sociology', who sought in the 1830s to define human types through examining physical stature, taking as his comparative types the chest sizes of Greek sculptures and those of Belgian army recruits.<sup>21</sup>

It is now well established that the detection of degeneration and abnormality had an important role both in justifying the imperial birthright of a normative western body and in controlling that body's social pathologies – a moral anatomy. If this seems to inflate the place of a few drawings by Wild, we need only note how his companion Joseph Bonomi later tried to develop a similar anthropometry into an instrument for recording and identifying police suspects.<sup>22</sup>

What these three examples of Wild's early work in Egypt reveal is an architect and scholar who regarded the range of interests that made up the new more rigorous forms of orientalism as the continuation of a scientific materialist tradition – the search for 'man in general'. This tradition, whose fathers were Bentham, Saint-Simon and Fourier, not only aimed at re-examining western institutions under the radically secularized logic of the emerging social sciences, but also saw in the East a field of clarifying examples and the chance for exemplary new projects. Owen Jones found such evidence in the colour and geometry of Islamic design, while Wild was a relatively early experimenter in the Near Eastern projects that, as Edward Said has shown, reached their summation with the Suez Canal.<sup>23</sup> It should be added that something of this vision of an industrially-reformed society was shared by many in Egypt, including its ruler Muhammad Ali, and that such technological triumphs were not necessarily seen as impositions; indeed such conquests of nature might even be regarded as the products of alliance and modern equivalents to the monuments of more ancient cultures.<sup>24</sup>

For most of the next three years, from the spring of 1844 until the spring of 1847, Wild was based at Cairo,<sup>25</sup> although his major work was the Anglican church of St. Mark in Alexandria. The church was built for the British residents on a generous plot given by Muhammad Ali in 1839 and located in the Maydan al-Tahrir (or Place Muhammad Ali), the public focus of European life and the hub of a new Italianate town stretching southwards from Alexandria's eastern harbour.<sup>26</sup> By the early 1840s most of the plots around the square had been filled, mostly by consulates and large European residences. The gift of a site marked the good relations between the Egyptian government and the British in Alexandria, regardless of the state of relations between the two countries.<sup>27</sup> The *hodget*, or title deed, granted by Muhammad Ali contained no conditions about the purpose for which the land should be used. Instead it expressed only rather broad notions of what the Pasha expected: as the *Builder* reported, 'the Pasha . . . expressed a wish that the structure should harmonize with the neighbouring buildings, and be worthy of the English people'.<sup>28</sup> It is likely that this was nothing more than an unenforced suggestion, but sharply differing notions of harmony and worthiness became a feature of the church's critical reception. The building campaign itself was to drag on, with long periods of inactivity, until 1855.<sup>29</sup>

The plan that Wild made after he was appointed in 1845, reproduced later by the *Builder* was a simple Early Christian round-apsed configuration, whose most notable features were a dominating western portal and a campanile (never built) forming part of a precinct wall set off distinctly from the main body of the building.<sup>30</sup> (Fig. 6) Each vessel was well-proportioned and clearly contrasted by framing devices. Greeted by a deep gateway-like vestibule, visitors would pass under another arch into a relatively narrow nave without aisles. This was separated from the apse by a third remarkable arch, again pointed and horseshoe-shaped. The whole building, campanile and all, was lifted onto a walled platform articulated by steps and projecting plinths.

Early in its construction, however, the church's design was changed in several external features. The first scheme was recorded in the engraving published by the *Builder* in 1846, and

SOUTH FRONT OF ST. MARK'S CHURCH, ALEXANDRIA.\*

MR. J. W. WILD, ARCHITECT.

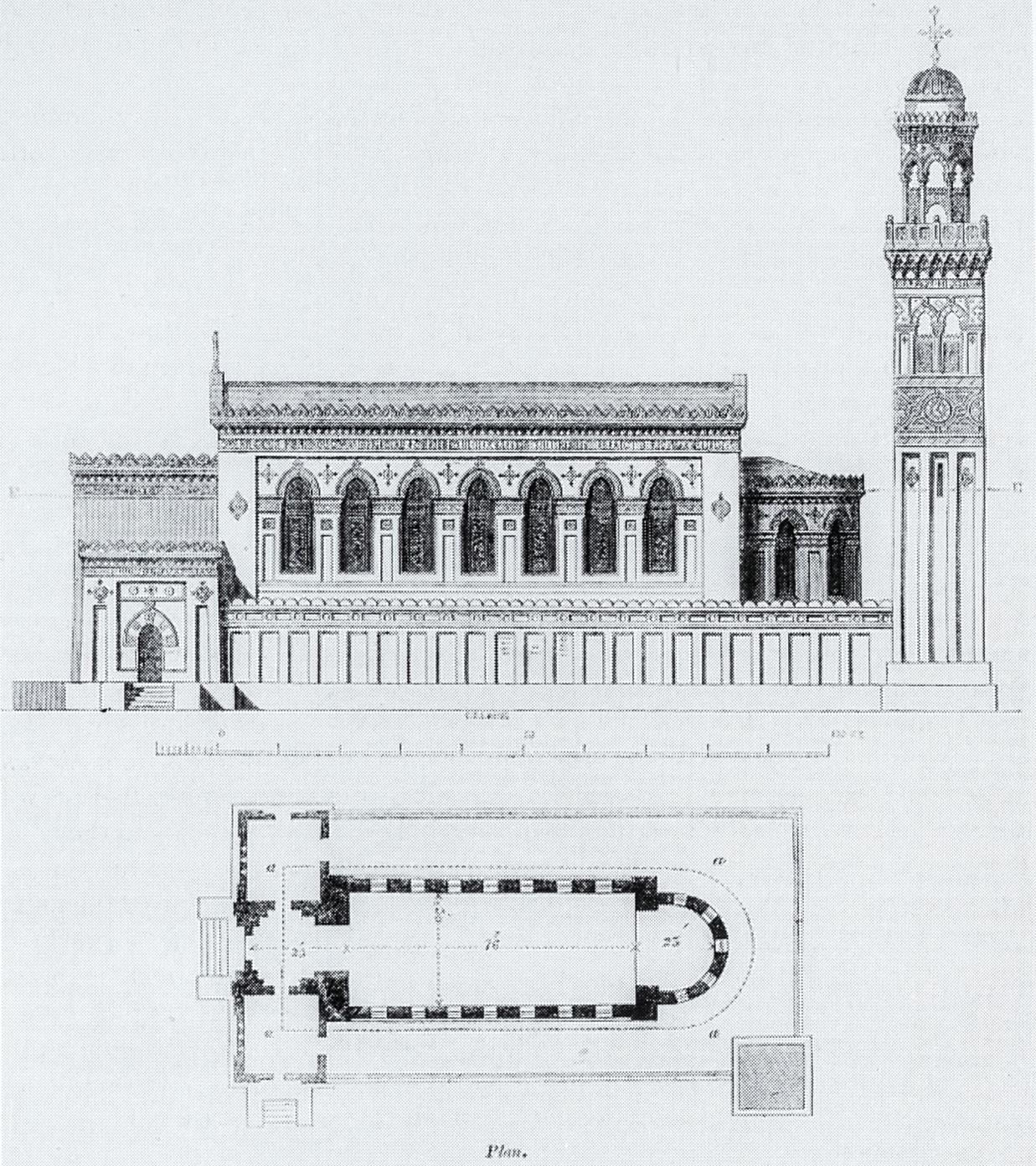


Fig. 6 St. Mark's, Alexandria, 1846, engraving of side elevation and plan (*Builder*, 1846).

the altered scheme in a perspective drawing (Fig. 7) and an engraving (Fig. 8). The most apparent difference between the two versions lies in their free-standing bell-towers, which used Islamic and Italian prototypes. The first showed something more like a minaret than a campanile. It was divided into several levels, one half-screened by *mashrabiyya*, and another with a balcony supported by a *muqarnas* cornice, and topped by a polygonal pavilion or *mabkhara* itself surmounted by a scalloped cupola. By contrast, the second version had a tapering Venetian campanile with a pyramidal spire and exhortatory inscriptions in English. There were other differences in the ornament of the two main elevations. The precinct wall

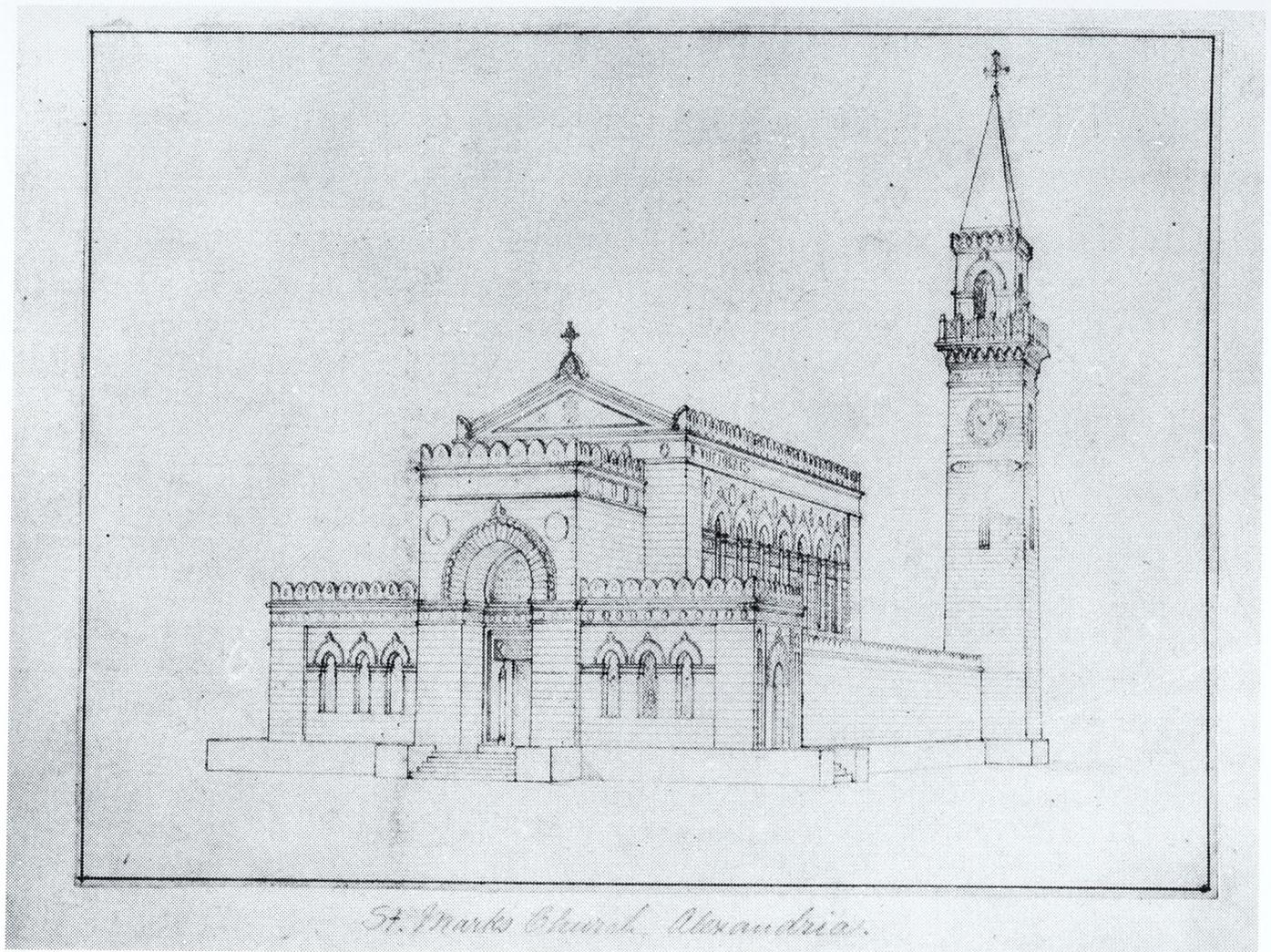


Fig. 7 James Wild, St. Mark's, Alexandria, c. 1846, perspective  
(Courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the V & A Museum).

in the first scheme continued the recessed panel motif of the bell-tower, while that of the second was blank like its campanile. The spandrels of the nave were decorated with inscribed crosses in the first elevation and with medallions in the second. Finally, the nave windows of the later scheme had cusped archivolt, which were absent in the earlier scheme.

Wild had, in effect, shifted the focus for his allusions. The first elevation, published in the *Builder*, showed the design then being built and indicated the height of the construction in September 1846. Before the upper parts of the building were completed, Wild had adopted the decorative scheme indicated in the perspective and the signed engraving. During this process he applied more of the Islamic ornament he was then studying in Cairo, transferring the Islamic aspects of the design from the tower to the church's external ornament. Yet although the design became more Islamic in its details, by losing its minaret-like tower it also lost its major orientalist feature.

Wild's church was provocatively eclectic yet largely non-specific in its references. This was especially true of its many Islamic motifs. The *mabkhara* of the first version and the decoration of the carved crenellation, medallions and archivolt, might all be based on the ornament that Wild had studied in Islamic Cairo.<sup>31</sup> (Fig. 9) Similarly, the *muqarnas*-decorated beams of the wooden roof, visible in the engraved transverse section, were close to those that Wild had drawn in several Cairene houses.<sup>32</sup> However, the large horseshoe-shaped arches of the portal and interior could have come from a multitude of Islamic sources. But there was one specific

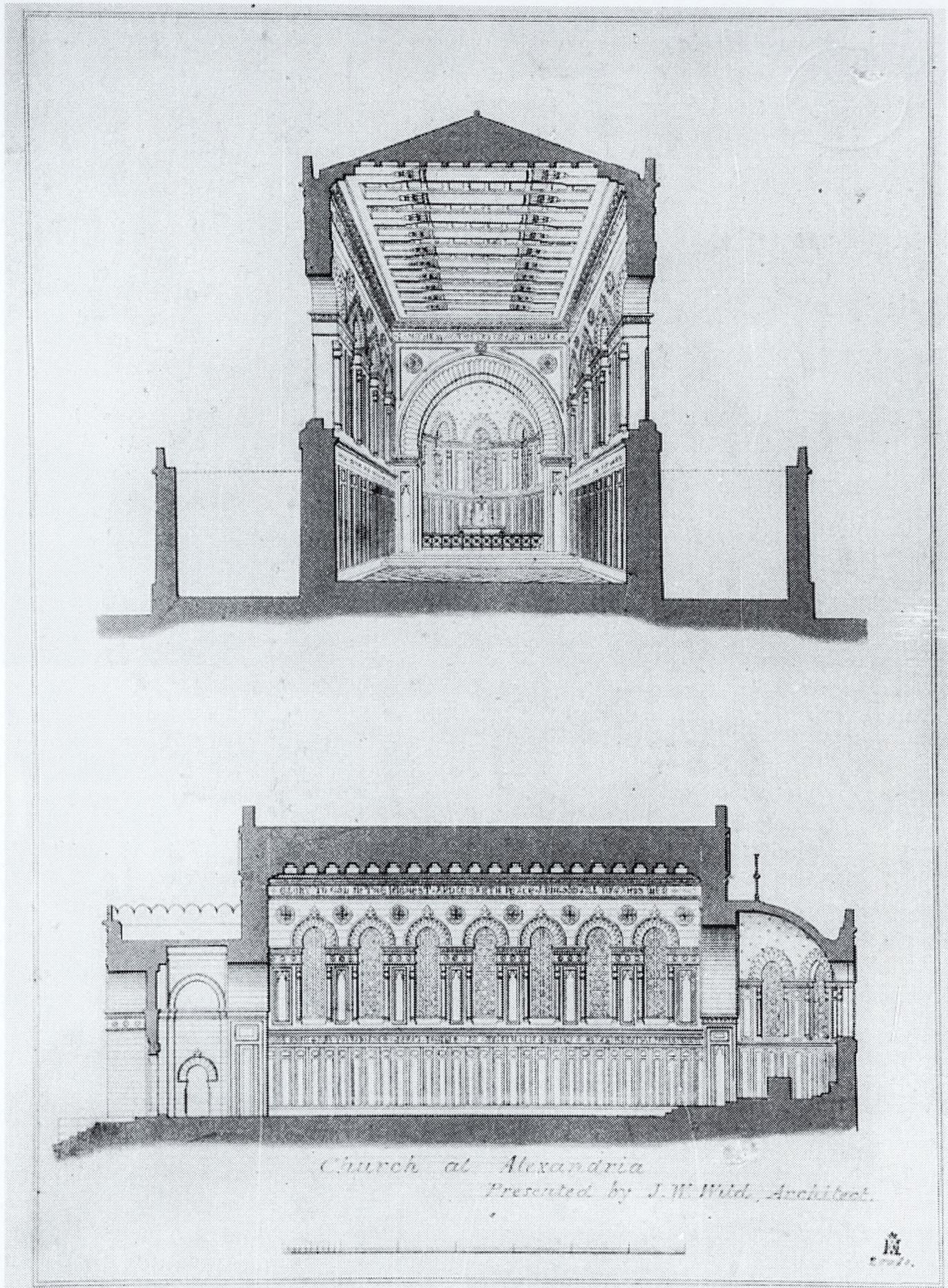
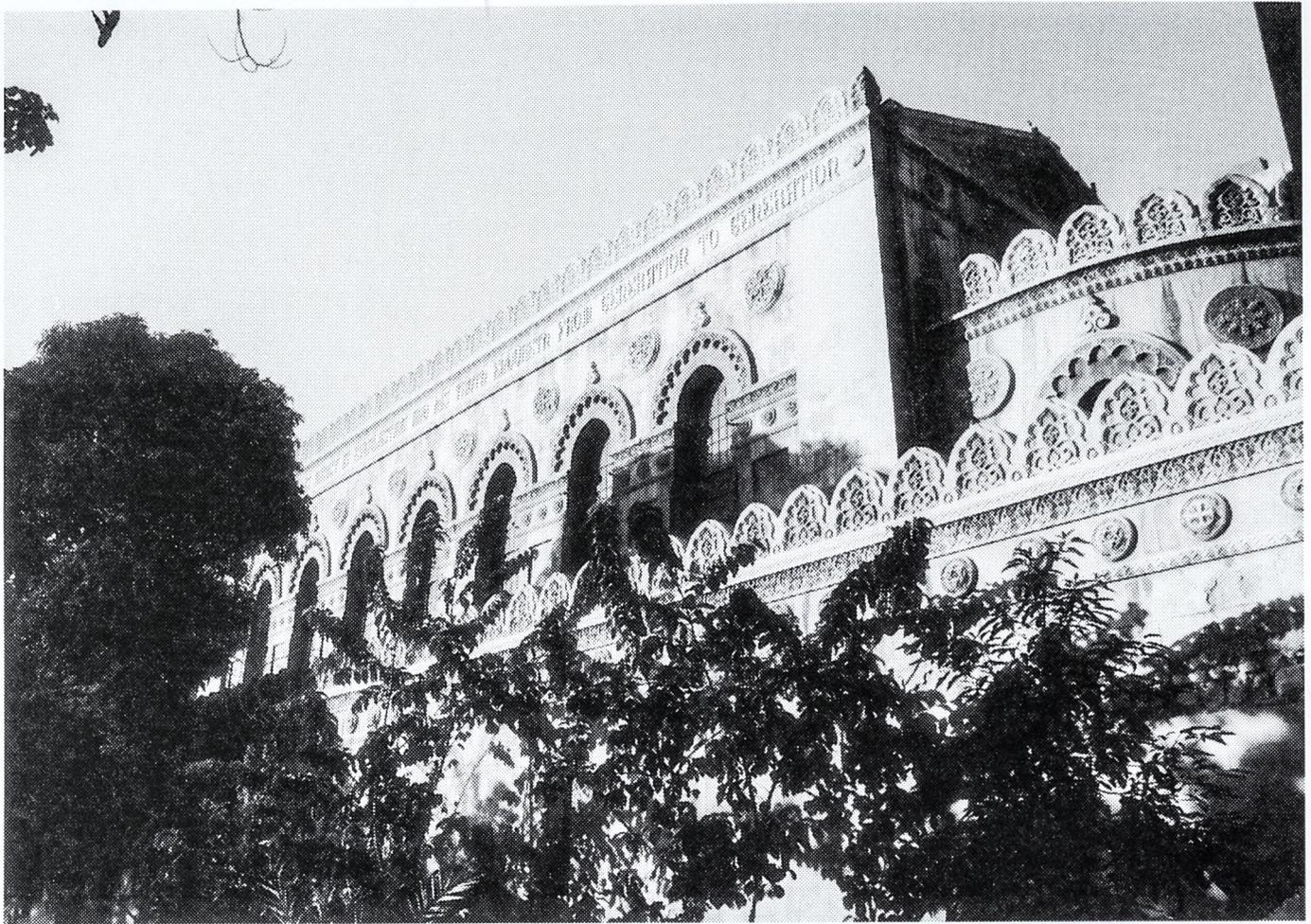


Fig. 8 St. Mark's, Alexandria, c. 1846, engraving of sectional views  
(Courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the V & A Museum).



*Fig. 9* St. Mark's, Alexandria, 1845–54, designed by James Wild.

borrowing, seen in the bulbous capitals of the window surrounds found in the engravings, which are similar to those in the mosque of Ibn Tulun, Cairo.

What was the intention behind this eclecticism and what could it have meant to contemporaries? Wild's design was published with a statement justifying its style as an attempt 'to conciliate the opinion of the Arab inhabitants, and to meet the comprehension of native artificers . . . while [the church] agrees in plan and mass with the style of art used by the early church architects, [it] carries out a general sentiment of Arabian detail'.<sup>33</sup> According to this statement, then, Wild's design successfully referred to the Early Christian history of Alexandria through its use of the earliest Christian architecture, matching the consul-general's invocation of Alexandria as 'the nursery perhaps of our Early Christian discipline'.<sup>34</sup> At the same time its style was also seen as a concession to the presentday inhabitants of the city. Wild had, in effect, added Islamic resonances to Early Christian associations.

An interesting theoretical parallel to Wild's approach was presented by James Millard in a paper read to the Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture, in April 1845. Taking the unsuitability of J. M. Derick's recent design for the Afghan Memorial Church at Colaba, India, as his starting point, Millard proposed that in colonies already possessing a national style British architects should adopt that style rather than import a climatically inappropriate European style. Crucial distinctions of identity would be established through 'symbols of creed in form and ornaments'.<sup>35</sup> For Millard an oriental style was not 'essentially opposed to the main principles of Christian architecture', and a church built in this style would also gain (as St. Mark's would prove) from the skill of local craftsmen.<sup>36</sup>

However, the very uniqueness both of Millard's proposition and of Wild's church, and the

subtlety with which different forms of reference in the church were balanced and articulated, meant that such eclecticism was inevitably open to widely differing interpretations. In one of the longest and most interesting reviews the *Ecclesiologist's* critic recognized that Wild was attempting a new idea of a Christian church, but argued that a simple symbolism was more important than aesthetics or a 'mistaken spirit of eclecticism' in this setting. There could only be two apparent reasons for Wild's transgressive design:

The first is deference to the prejudices of the Pasha, who gave the site, and expressed a wish that the building might be handsome; but this we can hardly admit . . . The other is that it might be deemed the prelude of the future triumph of Christianity. It might be said that the erection of a new and stately Christian church in a Mohammedan city was so striking an event, that it ought to be commemorated in an especial manner, and that the most appropriate manner was the leading as it were into captivity of the architecture of its already humbled and soon to be vanquished foe. We trust that the Christian Church in Egypt will in her good time spoil the enemy; but the time is not yet come; as yet she must wear her own well-known peculiar garb in things external as well as internal.<sup>37</sup>

For the *Ecclesiologist* style was a matter of religious identification and national prestige, and Wild's church was a failure – indeed a betrayal – in these terms. In a place of intense rivalry on these fronts only English Gothic or, at least, some form of northern Gothic would do. Only with dominance attained might concessions be made.

The clearest statement on this issue from the residents and their architect is found in a leaflet advertising for subscriptions published earlier in 1846. The leaflet explained how, due to Muhammad Ali's request for some sense of local style, it had been decided,

To adopt a style of architecture creditable to the national taste and not repugnant to the feelings of the local population . . . The establishment of the Protestant Church at Alexandria may also, by its simplicity and spiritual worship, be the means, under Divine favour, of ELEVATING CHRISTIANITY IN THE EYES OF THE NATIVE POPULATION, who have only known the Christian religion through the medium of the Greek and Roman Churches of the East, in which Images and Pictures form their chief ornament, but to which all Mahomedans have a strong repugnance.<sup>38</sup>

The leaflet argued that a missionary role was part of the function of the church and that this could work best by appealing to the Muslim population. Instead of conciliation, the idea of a persuasive proselytism was advanced as a way, at least, to attract funds. Instead of 'Images and Pictures' the church was to use the same range of resources as Islamic architecture: inscriptions (in English), decoration derived from architectonic forms, geometrical and flattened plant ornament, and elemental symbols of faith (the cross and the six-pointed star).

These texts agreed that the primary issue with Wild's design was about what it stood for rather than purely how it looked. Their divergences centred on how what the church represented would be understood by those meant to receive its meanings. Ostensibly, in both texts, the ideal public was a Muslim Egyptian one: defined as the 'supercilious' followers of a false prophet, with an aversion to figurative forms and a tendency to be impressed by spectacle. But the actual audience to whom these statements were addressed were British architectural groups and potential sponsors of the building. Such audiences might well have been aware of the aggressive competition between France and England in Egypt, but they would have been unused to the employment of an Islamic style for anything but the decoration of ornamental leisure buildings where national prestige was not usually an issue.

Millard's argument for the use of an oriental style and the disagreement over the meaning of Wild's design essayed the terms of a debate that was only fully to be explored 30 years later over the question of a 'Hindu-Saracenic' style for British architecture in India. As Thomas Metcalfe has argued, that style attempted to subsume elements of Hindu and Mughal architecture as a metaphor for the conciliation of those cultures under the benevolence of the

British Raj.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, Wild's church joined Christian and Islamic forms as a way of epitomising the bridging tolerance of British presence. Seen from this perspective, Wild's design was nothing less than a trial run for a new form of imperial architecture. In fact, I would suggest that Wild was not merely aiming at an image of tolerant control, rather that there was a genuine appeal for him in the early, 'primitive', forms of monotheistic religions. Taking this further, Wild seems to have been reaching towards an architectural statement that would say something like this: the culture of Anglicanism is not, or should not be, as distinct from the artistic and religious values that have, seemingly, held sway in the Near East since the first few centuries after Christ; Anglican and British culture can be renewed by taking up those forms and this does not imply an indifference to meanings but the possibility of coexistence. Thus a form of ideology was being cast from the very surfaces and spaces of this building.

Needless to say, building a church in Egypt had been a very different experience from building one in England. It was an unprecedented event: the first public statement of Anglican presence in the Near East that was also recognized, or rather propagandized, as a statement of religious toleration. In Wild's church the question of how to embody the nature of British intentions was acutely problematic. The style of St. Mark's can be seen as another development of that attempt to find a new style which was local to Wild and the circle around Owen Jones and which involved both rationalist ways of viewing the East and also a clinging to standard themes about it, including a Romantic longing for an unspoiled fusion of art, society and religion. The style could thus question associationist, revivalist and ecclesiological orthodoxies while maintaining orientalism's central tenets. If there were problems in understanding the meaning and implications of Wild's design it did at least realize what Islam was popularly meant to be: outwardly showy, non-figurative, intricately decorative, and even ceremonious. It could be accepted that this was no attempt to be Islamic, but to represent Islam.

But the style was local in another way: local to the needs of the British residents, the interests that they shared with Muhammad Ali, and the circumstances of Alexandria in the early 1840s. And it was this aspect of the project, lying between the twin poles of Islam and England, which was ignored in Britain. Simply, the church was built in the midst of a Levantine imitation of a European city; built amongst what many visitors perceived as a familiar yet estranging 'jargon of Lingo Franco'.<sup>40</sup> Around it were neither Islamic mosques nor English town halls, but neoclassical consulates and hotels built by Italian architects.<sup>41</sup> Although largely dependent on outside funds, the church was not supervised at a distance but guided by a building committee who actually lived in the rapidly changing city and who, as diplomats and businessmen, were continuously aware of the rivalry of other European powers.

If I was right in hypothesizing Wild's intentions, they may be seen as different from yet complementary to those of the majority of British residents. For the latter, the mildly transgressive character of the church, the sense that it was vesting itself in the adornments of another culture, could therefore be understood as a deliberate attempt to make it stand out from its immediate European-styled context. While satisfying the religious needs of the Anglican community, it could make affiliations with certain passages in Egypt's history. And by joining Early Christian forms to Islamic details it could be seen to reify a desired harmony between the British community and Egypt's present. It thus attempted to create a myth in which British presence was depoliticized – losing its contingent, fabricated quality – and made to seem a natural result of knowledge and understanding. This message was, of course, more acceptable than the one I have imputed to Wild, but it fits the appearance of the church just as well as his.

- discussed by J. Mordaunt Crook, 'Metropolitan Improvements: John Nash and the Picturesque', in C. Fox (ed.) *London – World City 1800–1840*, Yale, 1992, pp. 77–96.
- 10 S. E. Rasmussen, *London the Unique City*, MIT, 1982, pp. 198–200.
  - 11 Nash drew his inspiration from France especially the façades of the Louvre and Versailles.
  - 12 The Surveyor General's Triennial Report no. 4, 1809.
  - 13 First Report to His Majesties Commissioners of Woods, Forests and Land Revenues, London, 1812.
  - 14 53 Geo. III, c. 121.
  - 15 Fifth Report to His Majesties Commissioners of Woods Forests and Land Revenues, London, 1826.
  - 16 First Report, 1812, as note 16.
  - 17 Report from the Select Committee on the Office of Works, 1828. p. 74.
  - 18 1828 Report, as note 21.
  - 19 First Report, 1812, p. 89.
  - 20 Sylvester Douglas, Lord Glenbervie was a fellow civil servant of John Fordyce. Conflicting accounts of his abilities and commitment to the Metropolitan Improvements appear in Saunders op. cit and Mordaunt Crook loc. cit.
  - 21 PRO Cres 26/17.
  - 22 idem.
  - 23 As a result of complaints from the residents of Piccadilly and St James's that it was a nuisance Haymarket was moved to Cumberland Market, Regent's Park.
  - 24 53 Geo. III, c. 121.
  - 25 Report from the Committee on the Petition of the Tradesmen and Inhabitants of Norris Street and Market Terrace, 1817 (79) iii. 83.
  - 26 PRO Cres 26/188.
  - 27 New royal stables in Pimlico were planned as early as 1820. This prompted George IV to permit the demolition of the east and west parts of the old mews to allow the construction of a road to link Pall Mall to St Martin's which effectively created the area later called Trafalgar Square.
  - 28 PRO Cres 26/178.
  - 29 1796 witnessed great developments in the building of barracks in London. Prompted partly by the 'Gordon Riots' a magazine was built in Hyde Park and a new barracks constructed on Knightsbridge.
  - 30 First Report, 1812. p. 90.
  - 31 The history behind the building of the National Gallery at Trafalgar Square is discussed in R. Liscombe, *William Wilkins 1778–1839*, Cambridge, 1980. ch. XII.
  - 32 see note 18.
  - 33 For a fuller discussion of these see R. Barker and R. Hyde, *London as it might have been*, London 1978.
  - 34 This new iconography is discussed in greater depth in D. Arnold 'Decimus Burton and the Urban Picturesque' in D. Arnold (ed.) *The Picturesque in late Georgian England*, papers given at the 1994 Georgian Group Symposium, London, 1995, pp. 51–6.
  - 35 The reasons behind and the consequences of the decision to do this are discussed in D. Arnold, 'The Arch at Constitution Hill: a new axis for London', *Apollo*, September 1993, pp. 129–33.
  - 36 See J. Mordaunt Crook and M. H. Port, *The History of the King's Works*, Vol. VI pp. 293–7 esp. and D. Arnold, 'Decimus Burton and the Urban Picturesque', loc. cit. and 'The Arch at Constitution Hill', loc. cit. for a discussion of the sculptural decoration of the arches.
  - 37 See D. Arnold, 'Paris Haussman: Le Pari d'Haussman', *The Architects' Journal* 13th November 1991, pp. 58–60.
  - 38 T. Sadler (ed), *Henry Crabb Robinson, Diary*, vol. 1, 1872 p. 310.

#### NOTES TO PAGES 51–64

- 1 J. Summerson, 'An Early Modernist. James Wild and his Work', *Architect's Journal*, 69, 9 January 1929, pp. 57–62.
- 2 N. Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design* (1936), Harmondsworth, 1974, p. 128, p. 151.
- 3 See his 'On the Influence of Religion Upon Art' (1838) in O. Jones, *Lectures on Architecture and the Decorative Arts*, London, 1863; see also O. Jones, *Grammar of Ornament*, London, 1856.
- 4 H.S. Goodhart-Rendel, 'Rogue Architects of the Victorian Era', *RIBA J*, 56, April 1949, pp. 251–9.
- 5 See D. Van Zanten, *The Architectural Polychromy of the 1830s*, New York and London, 1977; M. Darby, 'Owen Jones and the Eastern Ideal', Ph.D. dissertation, University of Reading, 1974.
- 6 Van Zanten, 1977, 347. Jones designed the interior decoration which was completed in 1851, although only his painted capitals and apse mosaic survive.
- 7 Greater London Record Office, P95/CTC1/139–51.
- 8 Borthwick Institute of Historical Research (Hickleton Papers), York, A2.42.5. Wild-Wood, 14 December 1841.
- 9 C.R. Lepsius, *Letters from Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Peninsula of Sinai*, London, 1853, p. 35.
- 10 Prints and Drawings Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), E3705 to E3768. One of these drawings, E3768, is signed and dated 'Cairo Oct. (42)'.  
 11 S. Lane-Pool, *Life of E.W. Lane*, London and Edinburgh, 1877, 114. See also Bonomi Papers in the possession of Mrs de Cosson (BP), file of correspondence for 1843.

- 12 *Athenaeum*, 12 November 1842, 971; W. Thackeray, *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo*, London, 1869, 506. The following drawings were all taken at Lewis's house: V&A, E3764 to E3768. Wild drew extensively at Dr. Abbott's house and at that of Beyt Hassan Pasha: V&A, E3710 to E3718. He also made studies of the ceilings at the house of Beyt Youssof Pasha: V&A, E3778.
- 13 C. Purdon Clark, Obituary, *RIBAJ*, 9, 30 March 1893, p. 276; Darby, 1974, p. 85.
- 14 V&A, E3845 – this is dated May 1844.
- 15 Owen Jones drew upon Wild's studies for his *Grammar of Ornament*, London, 1856. They were also used by E. S. Poole in his appendix on 'Arabian Architecture' published in the fifth edition of E. W. Lane's *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, London, 1871.
- 16 *Athenaeum*, 15 June 1844, 549–50. Wild's measured drawings of the tombs at Giza still exist: Griffith Institute, Oxford, Wild MSS. (GI), IA 20–2 – these are signed and dated November 1842.
- 17 It is not known whether the design was executed: Public Record Office, Kew (PRO), FO 78/583, Barnett-Aberdeen, 23 March 1844. The site was off the Shari al-Dujara, to the south of present-day Garden City.
- 18 GI, IC 13–16.
- 19 GI, IC 17. A notebook, possibly of the same period as it includes studies of Theban decoration, contains notes on human proportion: GI, IIA 49. Another notebook has sketches of male nudes: GI, III.
- 20 See K. Bendiner, 'David Roberts in the Near East: Social and Religious Themes', *Art History*, 6, 1983, p. 69.
- 21 See P. Rabinow, *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment*, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1989, pp. 64–5.
- 22 J. Bonomi, *Project of an Instrument for the Identification of Persons in Military Establishments, Police Offices, etc. . . .*, London, 1872.
- 23 Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York, 1978, 88–91.
- 24 See A. L. A. Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, Cambridge, 1984, 78–79, 171; A. Abdel-Malek, *Idéologie et renaissance nationale: l'Égypte moderne*, Paris, 1969, p. 31.
- 25 In August 1845 he visited Istanbul: BP, Barnett-Bonomi, 29 August 1845. He probably spent some of the summer of 1846 in England, because in August he was reported as being at 25 Mortimer Street: PRO FO 78/663, Barnett-Bicknell, 31 August 1846. Certainly by December 1846 he was back in Egypt: St. Mark's Deed Box, St. Mark's Church, Alexandria (SMDDB), Minute Book I, 14 December 1846. Also there are drawings, dated December 1846, of buildings in Cairo: V&A, E3812 and E3843, 181. In the spring of 1847 Wild was making drawings in Damascus: V&A, E3868 and E3869. On the way back to England he visited Istanbul, Italy and Spain (stopping off at Rome, Pompeii, and Seville): V&A, E3848 to E3964.
- 26 P. M. Fraser, 'Alexandria from Mohammed Ali to Gamal Abdal Nasser', in N. Hinske (ed.), *Alexandrien: Kulturbegegnungen dreier Jahrtausende im Schmelztiegel einer mediterranen Grossstadt*, Mainz, 1981, p. 66; M. Volait, 'La Communauté Italienne et ses édiles', *Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 46, 1987, pp. 137–55.
- 27 See R. R. Madden, *Egypt and Mohammad Ali*, London, 1841, pp. 27–9, p. 50.
- 28 *Builder*, 4, 5 September 1846, p. 421. The *hodget* is in the SMDDB together with a translation.
- 29 Anthony Salvin was initially appointed architect in 1843. But in 1845 his Gothic design was rejected, largely because of its environmental and symbolic ineptness: *Ecclesiologist*, November 1846, 165; PRO FO 78/583, Barnett-Bidwell, 22 March 1844.
- 30 *Builder*, 4, 5 September 1846, p. 426.
- 31 For example V&A, E3840, pp. 21, 26, 27, 32, 33, 36–45; E3800 and E3801.
- 32 V&A, E3759 and E3782.
- 33 *Builder*, 4, 5 September 1846, p. 421. The *Athenaeum*'s reviewer took the same line: *Athenaeum*, 11 April 1846, p. 373.
- 34 PRO FO 78/583, Barnett-Bidwell, 22 March 1844. Similar claims of historical lineage had been made by the residents in 1840 when they regretted that 'British Protestants should be without a Church in the City of Alexandria, the scene of the labours of St. Mark, St. Athanasius, and many other primitive Christians': PRO FO 78/542, Stoddart-Aberdeen, 27 February 1843.
- 35 *Proceedings of the Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture*, Easter and Act terms 1845, 10. Derick's design was originally requested from the O.S.P.G.A.: see *Proceedings of the Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture*, Lent term 1843, pp. 14–16. A church was eventually built to designs by Henry Conybeare.
- 36 *Proceedings of the Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture*, Easter and Act terms 1845, p. 11, p. 13.
- 37 *Ecclesiologist*, November 1846, 166–9.
- 38 PRO FO 78/663, leaflet included in Barnett-Aberdeen, 4 April 1846.
- 39 See T. R. Metcalfe, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj*, London, 1989, 1.
- 40 W. Furniss, *Waraga, or the Charms of the Nile*, New York, 1850, p. 15.
- 41 There was one other neo-Islamic building on the square by 1882, the 'Moorish' Zizinia Palace.

Ruins of this building were photographed in 1882 by L. Fiorillo: photograph in the Royal Commonwealth Society Library, London.

NOTES TO PAGES 65–80

- 1 British Library. MS Kings 282. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Dept. of prints. Harris-Brisbane Dick Fund 25.47.
- 2 BL. MS Kings 282. 'My undertaking to write this treatise is greatly owing to Sir Edward O'Brien Baronet being the chief Person, who gave rise to my ambition and desire for the study of architecture . . . '.
- 3 The Dromoland Album is in a private collection and is now inaccessible to scholars. Photographic copies are available at the National Library of Ireland (MS 2791) and at the Irish Architectural Archive.
- 4 In the Irish context a good example of a fair copy in an architectural genre, is Jacques Wibault's 'Traité de l'Architecture Militaire' executed in 1701 for the Duke of Ormond. Map making offers more numerous examples. Collection of the Irish Architectural Archive.
- 5 *Pues Occurances*, 24 Nov 1753.
- 6 *The Dublin Courant*. 18 May 1745.
- 7 BL. MS Kings 282, book 5, plates 52, 54, 55, 58.
- 8 BL. MS Kings 282, book 5, Plates 12, 43, 53, 58, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67.
- 9 Stradbally was largely rebuilt in the nineteenth century. A painting of c. 1740 depicts a bird's-eye view of the demesne and a house which differs only in detail from Aheron's design.
- 10 *The Dublin Courant*. 18 May 1745.
- 11 RIBA drawings collection. Michael Wills, 'Designs for private buildings of two, three, four five and six rooms on a floor and one of eight rooms. Dublin 9 May 1745.
- 12 *Pues Occurances*, 24 Nov. 1753.
- 13 Eileen Harris & Nicholas Savage. *British architectural books and writers 1556–1785*. Cambridge; New York, 1990. p. 105.
- 14 Courcy-Mont is now gone, Ballyheigue and Rockforrest, though still standing have been greatly altered since the eighteenth century.
- 15 *General Advertiser*, 16 March 1752.
- 16 *Pues Occurances*, 24 Nov. 1753. This refers to the 'plates which were engrav'd in London'.
- 17 *Pues Occurances*, 24 Nov. 1753.
- 18 *Pues Occurances*, 30 April 1754.
- 19 Harris & Savage op. cit. p. 105.
- 20 *The Dublin Journal*, 17 Aug 1754.
- 21 [Brooke (Henry)]. *An essay on the ancient and modern state of Ireland*. Dublin, 1759. 77.
- 22 Trinity College Library. Early Printed Books.
- 23 For the building of the west front of Trinity

College see Edward Mc Parland, 'Trinity College, Dublin – I', in *Country Life*, clix, no. 4114 (6 May 1976) pp. 1166–9.

- 24 *The Dublin Magazine for the year 1762*. Dublin, 1762.
- 25 *Dublin Journal*, 24 Jan. 1761.

NOTES TO PAGES 81–96

- 1 Pierre de la Ruffinière du Prey, *J. Society of Architectural Historians*, March 1989, XLVIII, pp. 38–52.
- 2 Statute at Large, 9 Anne, c. 22.
- 3 e.g. by Howard Colvin in E. G. W. Bill, *The Queen Anne Churches*, 1979, pp. ix–xxi and M. H. Port, *The Commissions for Building Fifty New Churches*, 1986, ix–xxxiii.
- 4 Howard Colvin, *Architectural Review*, March 1950, pp. 189–96.
- 5 Lambeth Palace Library (LPL) MS 2690–2750, catalogued by E. G. W. Bill, 1979.
- 6 John Field, *Architectural Review*, 1962, 131, pp. 315–19; John Wilton Ely, *Apollo*. 1968, lxxxviii, pp. 250–9 and Terry Friedman, *James Gibbs*, 1984, p. 303 etc.
- 7 LPL MS 2690, 16 June 1712.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 18 June and 30 July 1712.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 18 June 1712.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 9 July 1712.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 6 August 1712.
- 12 LPL MS 2724, f. 3 and MS 2708, f. 8.
- 13 LPL MS 2690, 14 January 1713.
- 14 LPL MS 2724, f. 1.
- 15 LPL MS 2690, 14 January 1713.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 4 February 1713.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 14 May 1713.
- 18 LPL MS 2708, f. 7 and 2724, f. 2.
- 19 LPL MS 2690, 17 May 1715.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 6 June 1716.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 9 May 1717.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 31 May 1717.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 18 July 1717.
- 24 LPL MS 2691, 5 May 1727.
- 25 LPL MS 2690, 405, 7 December 1711.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 28 November 1711.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 12 November 1712.
- 28 LPL MS 2693, 17 November 1712.
- 29 LPL MS 2750, Nos. 20 and 21.
- 30 Statute at Large, 12 Anne c. 17.
- 31 The Great Square of Lincoln's Inn Fields had earlier, in the late seventeenth century, been proposed for a church to the design of Sir Christopher Wren (Paul Jeffery, *Architectural History*, 1988, 31, pp. 136–47.) and there is a reference to it 'in building' in 1696 (GL MS 4552/2, 2 June 1696). It is doubtful, however, if construction ever started. Hawksmoor commented 'Lincoln's Inn Fields . . . wants only a Church for its convenience &