



CHAPTER TWO



Tea with The Sphinx



The Sphinx

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Shifting time zones, I was back in my *21st-century Scottsdale smart house*. Sinking into plush velvet sofas, I set a tray of Darjeeling tea on the ottoman in my climate-controlled living space, combating the 105-degree heat. There was research to do; there was much to meditate on. The whisperings of *The Sphinx* echoed in my head: **“Heal his heart, ease his pain,”** and naturally, I needed to know more.

My purchases from AbeBooks and Amazon were made, and on archive.org 19th-century books are open to all. *A Short Memoir of Mohammed Ali, Viceroyalty of Egypt*, by the Hon. Sir Charles Murray, Consul General of Egypt 1846 -1853, ‘on excellent terms with Mehmet Ali Pasha, who transported the first hippopotamus to Europe since Roman times.’ Consul Murray’s friendship with *The Pasha* was during Ali’s final years, which overlapped with the reign of *Abbas I*. *The Pasha’s* grandson. *Abbas I* detested his stern disciplinarian grandfather. ...Just pages into the intro, a scandalously colorful story emerges.



Hon. Sir Charles Murray KCB,
Consul Gen. of Egypt 1846-1853

<https://archive.org/details/ashortmemoirmoh00murrgoog/page/n9/mode/1up>

Abbas credits himself with saving his Aunt Nazle's life, pleading with his grandfather not to murder his beautiful, willful daughter Nazle for her reckless extravagance and sexual profligacy. The rumors reached Ali of her taking foreign lovers and having them disposed of, fed to the crocodiles in the Nile. —*The Pasha was outraged!* (Nazle was so jealous of her husband's attentions that she served the head of her golden-haired servant to him on a silver platter!) Abbas accused his grandfather of having murdered his own father, *Tusun*, who was *The Pasha's* favorite son. He detested not only his grandfather but all foreigners in Egypt. He did not permit shops to close for *The Pasha's* state funeral, that diplomats reported was a '*sad affair*.' Abbas was raised by his grandmother *Emina*; he was spoiled and cruel. He once ordered a hot horseshoe nailed to the foot of a groom for neglecting the hooves of his beloved Arabian... Abbas, a homosexual, was ultimately murdered by his own male servants!

Sir Murray wrote to *Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston*, who hated *The Pasha*, often dismissing consuls who praised Ali's rule. ***'In truth, my Lord, it cannot be denied that notwithstanding his faults, Mohammed Ali was a great man. Without the advantages of birth or fortune, he carved his way to power and fame through his own courage, perseverance, and sagacity. Though capable of acts of cruelty, he was not a cruel man. He loved and sought fame and power but cared nothing for money save as a means to great ends.'*** He heard more than one man say, ***"If Allah permitted me, I would give ten years of my life to add to that of the old Pasha."***

Under the Ottoman Sultan's government, from Damascus to Cairo, no European Christian was safe from insult or injury. *The Pasha* had brought it to pass that Europeans could walk unarmed as safely in Cairo as in London. Sir Murray admitted, ***"I have not been able to resist the influence of the old Pasha's winning manners over all who were in habitual intercourse with him."*** ... Foreign travelers soon flocked to Egypt. Clearly, Egyptology in the *Age of Discovery* could not have progressed without the rule of *Egypt's Pasha, Mohammed Ali*.

In 1811, the famous ***Massacre of the Mamelukes*** introduced Egypt's new Pasha to the world. In *Count de Forbin's* 1817 book *Travels to Egypt and the Holy Land*, he sketched a version of *The Massacre*. Then the famed *Orientalist Horace Vernet* did a full-blown painting that traveled throughout Europe, along with a black-and-white souvenir postcard that was widely published. ... Artists were the TV photojournalists of the day, and naturally everyone was curious to know more about Egypt's Pasha.



March 1, 1811 'Massacre of the Mamelukes' by Horace Vernet

On March 1, 1811, at the time of year when warm winds blow, at 4 pm, all of Cairo was at Friday prayers when the *Mameluke Beys* took their last glittering ride. Dressed in their finest, the Beys came to coffee at Cairo's Citadel to celebrate the investiture of Mohammed Ali's son, *Tusun*, for his Arabian campaign to expel the *Saudi Wahhabi* rebels from the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. ... *As God's representative on Earth for Islam, it was an intolerable insult to the Ottoman Sultan!*

Since the days of Saladin, the Mamelukes were fair-haired slave soldiers. They were *Christians from the Caucasus who fought in the Crusades*. And after defeating the Mongols in 1260, ironically, they became the *Defenders of Islam*, forming a powerful Sultanate in Egypt. By 1517, the Ottoman Turks ruled Egypt. But after decades of Mameluke dereliction of tribute to their *Sultan in the Sublime Porte of Istanbul*, after losing the *Battle of the Pyramids to Napoleon*, the Sultan was done with them! ...Imbibing this volatile cocktail, the Mamelukes formed a treasonous alliance with *The British...*

In the great audience hall, *The Pasha* received the *Mameluke Beys* and their retainers with great pomp, beguiling them with Eastern conversation. When the ceremony was over, a signal was given, and the procession was formed. Led by the famous *Mad Delhis*, then the *Janissaries*, followed by the *Mamelukes*, who were followed by *Ali's Albanian* cavalry and infantry, up the narrow winding pathway flanked by fortifications, the sharp turns made it impossible for two horsemen to ride abreast.



No sooner had the Delhis and Janissaries passed *El Azab Gate* than the order was given to **close the gate**, and *The Pasha's* orders were given to **Massacre the Mamelukes!** The treachery flashed across the Bey's faces, but escape was impossible. The murderous fire from above revealed the horror of their position. Their horses, maddened by the

shouts and firing, became unmanageable, slipping and falling with the bloodied Beys rolling onto the ground. One Bey escaped to the harem begging sanctuary, only to be dragged away and beheaded.

It's been said that when the first shots were fired, *The Pasha* grew pale and trembled; perhaps the bloody struggle would end with his own murder. But the sight of the trunkless heads soon dispelled all apprehension for his own safety. Still; he could not restore his composure. At length, his Italian doctor, Mendrici, entered his apartments with an air of gaiety. ... ***"The affair is over, this is a happy day for Your Highness."*** ... *The Pasha* said nothing, but opening his parched lips, he called out for water.



After much chaos and bloodshed, order was restored, and ***The Pasha Mohammed Ali, was the undisputed ruler of Egypt.*** ... In short order, *Alexandria became the Paris of the East, Egyptomania exploded, and everyone who was anyone flocked to Egypt.*

*(*In 1800 there were 4,000 inhabitants of Alexandria and 250,000 in Cairo, and by 1848 in Ali's resurrected Egypt, the population was at 4,500,000.)*

Sir Murray sums up: *‘Oriental politics are a fearful game. Mohammed Ali was not only struggling for empire, but for life and liberty. He could not eat or sleep without fear of assassination. The destruction of the Mamelukes was necessary to all subsequent reforms. A succession of opium-eating, concubine-fondling sanguines, rousing themselves only to indulge in wholesale murder. Their allegiance could not be secured for all the wealth in Egypt.*

—Where there is no law, there will always be violence.’

‘Most noted in the character of Mohammed Ali was his freedom from Oriental prejudices.’ (‘In Egypt we practice all three religions, just in case two are wrong.’ When a Muslim cleric complained that a Jew was not facing Mecca whilst slaughtering his meat, The Pasha exiled him to Tunis: ‘There is no place in my country for such a man!’)

‘His justice and toleration were equal to Saladin’s; his enlightenment surpassed the most famous caliphs. Though fond of intrigue and prying into the lives of his subjects, he was secretive and crafty enough to baffle the shrewdest. Prompt in speech and action, he was fond of talking of himself and the romantic episodes in his career. He was fond of having the European representatives about him. ... The Pasha’s table could not be distinguished from European sovereigns, except for the serving of jeweled pipes during and after dinner.’



Mohammed Ali Pasha by Count de Forbin

In November 1826, The Pasha received at his palace in Alexandria the newly assigned British consul John Barker, and embarked on a monologue about his childhood ...

‘I was born in a village in Albania, and my father had ten children besides me, who are all dead, but, while living, not one of them ever contradicted me. Although I left my native mountains before I attained manhood, the principal people of the place never took any step without previously inquiring what was my pleasure. I came to this country as an obscure adventurer, not yet a Bimbashi (captain). It happened one day that the commissary had to give each of the Bimbashis a tent. They were all my seniors and naturally pretended to a preference over me, but the officer said: “Stand ye all by, this youth, Mohammed Ali, shall be served first,” and I advanced step by step as it pleased God to ordain, and now here I am, and I’ve never had a master!’

The Pasha told Consul Barker that his predecessor had the wisdom to never contradict his opinions, which was easily done *‘as they were always founded on wisdom and justice.’* — Thus insinuating that he expected the same from him... He held daily meetings in his audience hall, greeting all distinguished foreigners. But few visitors managed to escape the spell that Mohammed Ali’s gaze cast over his audience, often commenting on his beautiful hands and piercing gray eyes, ... *‘like a gazelle in the hour of a storm, as fierce as an eagle’s.’* ... ***‘The only books I ever read are men’s faces—and I’ve seldom read them amiss.’***



All the Pasha’s Men - Khaled Fahmy:

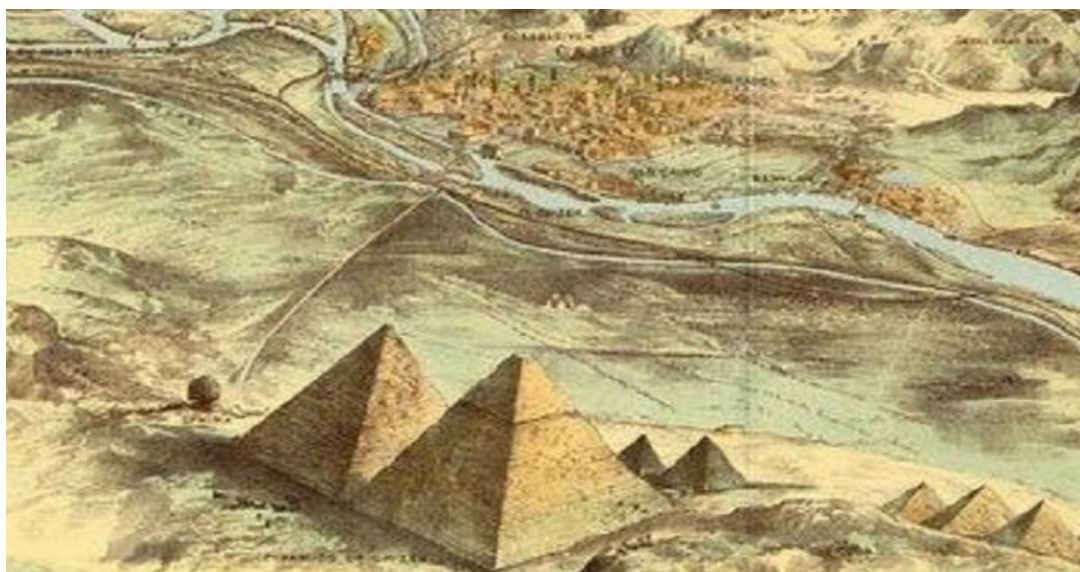
<https://archive.org/details/allpashasmenmehm0000fahm/page/n359/mode/1up>

The Sphinx Letter to Cairo on the Centenary of Mohammed Ali's Death, Translated from hieroglyphs by Egyptian novelist Mahmud Taymur: ... *'I have been harboring overflowing feelings I can no longer contain, passionate feelings that pull me towards you, in spite of being tied here to my place with the Pyramids behind me. The Sphinx today will speak but with no voice to be heard. You might have thought that I am nothing but a piece of stone... But have you ever thought that this solid mass might have a heart like other living hearts? It's time that this heart speaks of its buried love...I have seen days and years pass by, and you have always remained my beloved, and my passion for you has always kept its purity. I can recount how you remained an Arab girl in your Bedouin Fustat until you became indeed the conqueror of hearts ...In this Fatimid Glory, you put on your best garments, and people's hearts came seeking you from all corners of the world. ...The minaret of Al-Azar could be seen proclaiming the Word of God, the multitudes came seeking your knowledge and bounty—Times, however, changed...and after your wealth and glory, you saw misery and weakness... My heart was bleeding for you, and how could I remain still, seeing you suffer under the tutelage of the Mamluk eyeing you as a tiger eyes his prey? Yet in your difficulty you were noble, this tyrant was eclipsed, and you came out victorious.—And how could you not, when God has sent you this genius from Kavala?... I could see him sitting there fixing his gaze on you, he could not but jump to your rescue: Here I come—here I come! His arms wide open, and you threw yourself into his embrace. He disappeared in you, and you in him, and together you became one indivisible person. Can anyone mention Cairo without the phantom of Mehmed Ali leaping to mind? Doesn't he still, to this day, hover high above his Citadel, defending and protecting you?'*



OMG!—it seems I'm not the only one The Sphinx voices her heart-break to, for her beloved Ali! —What a storied life! So many of the descriptions fit perfectly with *The Mexican Healer's* habits and personality. ... But how is it possible that we've never heard about *the first 'Great' Mohammed Ali*? After millennia, he resurrected Egypt. He was her *Founding Father; their Washington, their Gandhi*. How is it possible that we've never heard about this epic period, when the *Great Empires — England, France, Germany, Austria, and Russia —* were vying for control over trade with *India and the East*?... *The 19th-century quagmire the world is still immersed in? —But where was I in the story? I needed to know.*

As a creature of habit, to clear my head, I headed out to the mall. — Set up on a table in front of Barnes & Noble was a \$10 book sale. Like a magnet, I opened a huge 14"x18" volume of lithographs: ***New Worlds: Maps from the Age of Discovery to A Bird's-Eye View of Cairo.*** And there it was! A picture map of Cairo, with a road from the Ezbekieh to the Sphinx at Giza, where the tented compound of my past-life regression came to life! — I could feel the planks creaking beneath, as Ali and I ferried across the Nile from the Ezbekieh and approached Giza.



New Worlds Maps from The Age of Discovery 'A Bird's Eye View of Cairo'

The Ezbekieh Gardens is on the northern tip of Cairo, facing the Nile and the port of Bulaq, with palaces built by the Mameluke Emirs. It's where

Napoleon's government resided. Where General Kléber was assassinated. And where Mohammed Ali was living before taking over Saladin's Citadel. It's been said that ***Synchronicity is The Gods directing Destiny.*** ... I'm a New York fashion designer, not a historian, but as *Synchronicity and the Laws of Attraction were in high gear*, naturally I bought the book!

That night, *The Sphinx* was more talkative than ever. And once 'the throat chakra of the world, the voice of the Earth, the energy site of communication and truth' has your ear, she doesn't stop talking, revealing all we should know. *I was downloading centuries of Who's Who.* I cannot deny it was all truly fascinating! I was screening through stories of people who were not named *Armani* or *Versace* — they were not exactly on my fashion designer radar. ...Some tales were ancient, and some truly weird. *Actually, they were chilling!*

— Was I going mad? "Why are you telling me these things?" I asked her telepathically. "**You are a TOXIN,**" — was what I understood as her reply. "A what?"... "**No—no! Not a TOXIN**"...Then she spelled it out slowly...

"T O C S I N"

OK—now I've got you! From my dream state, I sprang out of bed and flew to my computer:

'TOCSIN: a sign or omen, the ringing of the bell.'