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Various Authors

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9. Anonymous Narratives of a Multicultural city: the Complex cemeteries of Chatby-Case study

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Abstract

It is all about a city that was born cosmopolis, with the will of the Great Alexander, to leave along its ancient to modern history the rise and decline of its distinction identity. The urban planning of Hellenistic Alexandria was designed to combine different communities. After centuries of decline in the Medieval, the city was capable to recuperate its multicultural identity in modern time. Alexandria's monumental tombs are a record of city's life more than any other class of monuments. They document its infancy, maturity and indicate the city's fabric as ethnic and religious diversity, as well as testify dramatic changes in its history as cosmopolis and multicultural.

The Chatby Complex of Cemeteries (150 years) as case study of both tangible and intangible heritage of the city, through an examination of the architectural styles of the monuments and tombs, and the oral narratives and memories of individuals, certain patterns regarding migration, social history, class distinctions, and religious diversity, all these distinguishing features immersed.

Introduction

Alexandria has been one of the most important cities throughout history, being born from the melting of two Antiquity cultures such as the Greek and the Egyptian cultures, allowed its development of human knowledge in early time to become the lighthouse for science and humanities since its birth.

There are cities that turn into significant destinations even before visiting them, just by reading about them, exploring their history, stories and monuments or what is left of them. Alexandria is one of those cities, not only during the ancient history but also in the modern, where much more Mediterranean characters modeled the city with their desire and ambitions, to establish a place that became a shared homeland for knowledge, and welfare life. This paper is trying to follow the rise and fall of a Multicul-

tural city; to discover a part of its anonymous stories, along history through the urban history, social fabric and remaining cemeteries of the city.

Modern Alexandria and the Revival of a Multicultural City

The cosmopolis or the "world-city" is a terminology defined by the Greek philosophers as the city where all individuals are related to one another, regardless of their country, race or religion¹. The cosmopolis took place in the Hellenistic civilization in Alexandria where the idea of a global civilization became a tangible reality, and the ancient city of Alexandria was described with the most significant expression as being the meeting point between East and West, philosophies, religions, and disparate cultures. At

¹ See <http://www.cosmopolisproject.org/what-is-a-cosmopolis/>.

that time Alexandria was first called “Alexandria ad Aegyptum”, but the real meaning of a “Cosmopolis”, as the Greek philosophers defined, was ended by the end of the seventh century.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Alexandria was on a date to revive its Cosmopolis spirit, the city was open again to receive diversity. But this time the concept of Cosmopolis wasn't the same as on the time of the Hellenistic era, perhaps because it was similar that most of historians preferred to use it, also the political conditions have changed not only in Egypt, but in the entire region, as well as in Europe itself. At that time the modern city of Alexandria was not “ad Aegyptum” anymore.

The sociologists used the term “multicultural” to describe an approaching cultural diversity within a society. The contemporary political theorists have defined this phenomenon of the coexistence of different cultures in the same geographical space as multiculturalism. This approach would be more appropriate to describe the revival of coexistence ethnic, religious, and sects diverse in the modern Alexandria.

The Characteristics of Modern Alexandria

The history of modernity in Egypt began with the rise of *Mohammad Ali Pasha* (Egypt's Wali, or Viceroy) to power in 1805, at that time Egypt was under the rule of Ottoman Empire. The historical coincidence was that *Mohammad Ali Pasha* came from the other side of the Mediterranean also, as an Albanian soldier within the Ottoman army.

He was ambitious to establish a royal modern state with autonomous power in the region. He adopted modernization policy in all of Egypt, and certainly Alexandria was an important part of this policy as a marine city.

Between 1810 and 1839 *Mohammed Ali Pasha* saw the fruition of many of his modernization of Alexandria such as the city port got widened and deepened, the shipyard was established, the lighthouse was constructed and finally with the completion of the arsenal, the city emerged as both a military and a naval base. *Mohammed Ali Pasha* pursued his

policy of establishing Egypt as a preeminent trading nation, so the city began to attract foreign merchants and entrepreneurs. All these contributed to modernize Alexandria as Mediterranean city again [1].

The Social Fabric

With the French expedition in Egypt in 1798, the foreigner's residents in Alexandria did not exceed one hundred persons. But after twenty-eight years in *Mohamed Ali Pasha's* reign, the foreigners in Alexandria reached about five thousand residents [1]. Searching for the reasons of this remarkable increase, wouldn't be fair to claim it was due to Privileges law (Capitulations), since this law was existing a century before him without reaching the same results.

Since *Mohamed Ali Pasha's* arrival to power in 1805, till his passing in 1848, Mohammed Ali's policies for Alexandria were referring to establishing an international trading city; as the free zone concept recently. He relied on the strength point of the city as the basic outlet on the Mediterranean to the occident. His ambition to establish a powerful kingdom required European experience to develop the country and such development needs massive investment. Accordingly, he was careful to secure an economic and social hospitable environment to the Europeans.

On the social level, he removed all restrictions on other religions that were existed in the city at that time. And to encourage the foreigners to settle in the city, he adopted the donation policy toward various religions and confessions, by granting free lands to them, to build their own churches and schools and main services.

Many of these churches and schools remains standing till today such as: The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate “Evangelismos”, The Catholic Cathedral of Saint Catherine, The Anglican Cathedral of Saint Mark, The Roman Catholic Patriarch and Saint Andros Protestant Church. Most of these churches built their own schools like St. Catherine, St. Mark and the religious Franciscan, along with many others. Also there are several Jews' synagogues in the city from that time.

These policies succeeded to a great extent in attracting capital and projects and of course immigrants from everywhere to the city. And with the increase of commercial trade between Egypt and Europe, the need for consulates to protect their interests and residents were necessary. By the late 1820s there were about eight European consulates in Alexandria; consulates of Britain, Russia, Austria, Sardinia, Holland, Spain, Sweden, Tuscany, Sicily, Denmark, Prussia, Greece, the United States of America, and France. Most of them were in the square Place Consuls [1].

The Consul's Square, and later Mohamed Ali square, was a testimony of the revival of multiculturalism in modern Alexandria in the 19th century and in the early 20th century, particularly during *Mohamed Ali Pasha's*, and his grandson *Khedive Ismail* reign, both of them were leading an early capitalism movement in all Egypt, especially after El Suez Canal project, which was one of reasons for England's occupation in 1882.

The square was the center of socio-economic relations between Egypt and the world beyond the Mediterranean. It was embellished with fountains and music kiosks, and was surrounded with hotels, café, and restaurants. All this reflected a newly adopted life style similar to those of the European cities. The city received thousands of foreigners, from Greece, Italia, Syria-Laban, Jewish, Armenia, France, Britain, Russia, Malta, among others searching for secure investment or work opportunities. The number of residents arriving to Alexandria from all others ports increased five-fold between 1837–1873, from 10,176 to 51,482 residents. No other city experienced such stupendous growth in this period like Alexandria [2].

No doubt that El Suez Canal was one of the main factors for the expansion of commecial trading in the city. By 1870, Alexandria's port had become the fourth largest shipping port in the mediterranean in terms of tonnage of the visiting ships, up from the eleventh rank in 1850. Early in 1870, about third of Alexandria's population consisted of foreigners, with approximate population of 20,000 Greeks, 14,000 Italians, 10,000 French and 5,000 English accompanied by smaller but still sizable numbers

of Austrians, Germans, Dutch, Spaniards, Russians, Swedes, Danes, Portuguese, Swiss, Americans, and Brazilians [2].

It wasn't only about commercial aspects, but also other faces of civic life that the foreigners' community participated in the developing of the city toward modernization; such as the Ornato Commissione (municipal), the ambulance association, the fire department association, the post, that was founded by Italian resident, the water company, the electric company was by Franch, even the police service used foreigres' soldiers, in addion art activities.

All that and more influenced effectively the cultural life of the Egyptians toward liberal and nationalist thoughts that led to the revolutionary nationalist movement of *Orabi Pasha* in 1881–1882 which was against the French and British political hegemony as *Khedive Tawfik's* authoritarian regime. *Orabi's* movement constituted the first real threat to the foreign communities in Egypt, a threat that was fully realized by the European governments which ended with the British occupation to Egypt.

The year of 1882 was a turning point in the history of Alexandria city, in particular for the foreign communities who left after the English bombardment to the city. Later the center of city was rebuilt by the Egyptian Government to be more fascinating, with more banks, Wekalle, Stock Exchange and hotels. But this time the consulates and the wealthy families moved to the Raml suburb. Consequently, a new part of the city in Raml suburb was constructed, and today most of its quarters are named after the famous foreigners that had a role in developing it; such as Loran, Stanely, Shotes, Smouha, Glimonopolis, Bolkely. In the end of 19th century, Egypt's economic potential increased the migration to back to Egypt, and remained on rise until the early 1930s.

As Alexandria entered the twentieth century, it was a unique melting pot, a city that consisted of numerous autonomous but integrated communities that preserved their ethnic traditions and were allowed to practice their religious rites. These communities enjoyed a sense of solidarity that was founded on a flourishing economy. The largest European communities in modern Alexandria were the Greek and Italian, then the Jews as different religion.

The Greek community was the largest and most influential of the foreign community inhabiting the city. Their influence had been noticeable in a number of spheres, not least in the field of education. In addition to establishing primary and secondary schools, they also founded an evening school specializing in the study of foreign languages. Serving the Greek community was an active publishing industry. Daily and weekly newspapers were produced in Greek, together with less frequent periodicals. Konstantinos Petrou Kavafis is one of distinguish Greek poets in the world, born in Alexandria in 1863, he was inspired by the city history, his poetry is complex intermingling of the modern Alexandria with its ancient past.

If there existed a historical precedent for Greek influence in the city, there was a similar precedent for Italian influence during Roman Empire. By the end of World War 1 the number of Italians in Egypt exceeded fifty thousand, half of whom resided in Alexandria.

Their community was well organized within the civic structures of the city, and, largely because they arrived early in the nineteenth century, the Italians had become extraordinarily well integrated in the city's social and economic fabric. They retained long-established links with the Egyptian community, which facilitated their economic life. The Italians in Alexandria were chiefly trades people, some wealthy, some not so wealthy. They comprised, so to speak, the trading middle classes, technicians and craft workers, as well as the more usual professionals and entrepreneurs. They established a number of schools, the most famous being the Don Bosco Institute; they published the Italian-language newspaper *17 Messaggero Egiziano*; and they founded the Italian Hospital. As well as Kavafis, the Italian community, in 1888 gave birth, to the pioneer of Italian modern poetry Giuseppe Ungaretti.

The foreign communities already mentioned enjoyed a homogenous identity based on national origin. The same cannot be said about the Jewish community in the city, whose identity was based on re-

ligion, though this does not mean that we can disregard their impact and influence on the cultural and socioeconomic life of the city. The number of Jews in Alexandria began to increase during the reign of Mohammed Ali. By 1850 the community was sufficiently strong to warrant a new synagogue; the *Eliahou Hannabi* was established. Many of them work in commercial trading and become very wealthy like Baron Menace.

The Multicultural Cemeteries in modern Alexandria “The Complex Cemeteries of Chatby-Case study”

Alexandria's monumental tombs are always a record of city's life more than any other class of monuments. They document its infancy, maturity and indicate the city's fabric as ethnic and religious diversity, as well as testify dramatic changes in its history as cosmopolis or multicultural.

Modern Alexandria cemeteries are both tangible and intangible heritage of the city, through an examination of the architectural styles of the monuments and tombs, and the oral narratives and memories of individuals, certain patterns regarding migration, social history, class distinctions, and religious diversity, all these distinguishing features immersed.

The remarkable note about the Cemeteries heritage in Alexandria is the recurrence and resumption of location, from the ancient to modern time. For example in Karmouze district today there are catacombs, Pompey's Pillar from antique era as well as Muslim tombs called *El Amoud* that remain from medieval and still in used. The same in Chatby district there are necropolis from antique era, in addition modern complex cemeteries from 19s century.

The complex cemeteries history return to 19s century, when the Ornato has decided to move any new cemetery outside the city². In the early 1840s Mohamed Ali grants a land far from the city to foreigner's residents to use as their cemetery³. Today these cemetery consist of a complex of ceme-

²According to Napoleon declaration in 1804, the cemetery in must be placed outside the city wall. The Imperial Decree on Burials, promulgated on June 12, 1804 by Napoleon Bonaparte in Saint-Cloud.

³The complex was designed by Sir Robert Lorimer in 1919, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shatby>.

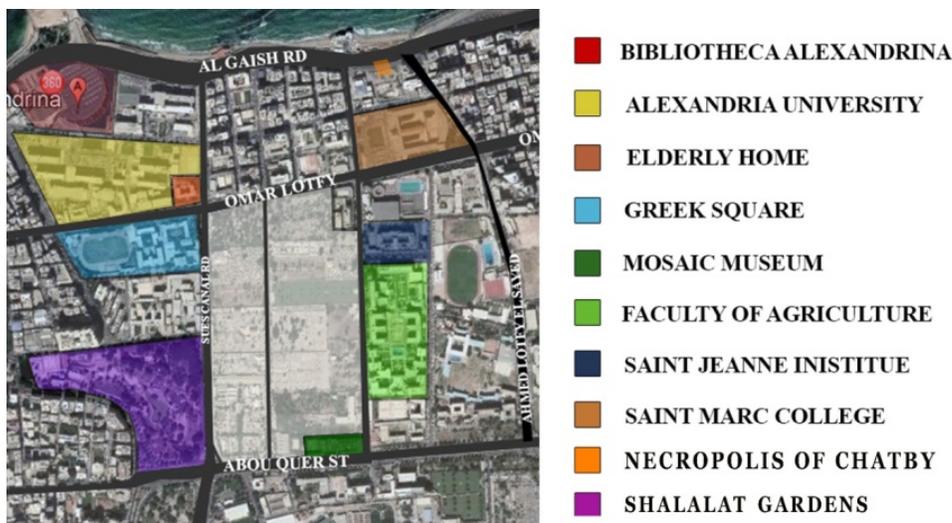


Figure 1: The Complex Cemeteries of Chatby.

teries, located in eastern side of Alexandria city, between the main dual carriageway to Aboukir, and the Corniche, divided across Anobis street, where visitors can reach the entrance of cemeteries, this district called Chatby, is an strategic urban zone near by the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria University, sport club, and many cosmopolis signs remain, like French schools (Saint Mark, Saint Jean Antide School), Casa di Vector Emanwelle (Italian elder house), and the Greek school.

The complex provide an impressive testimony of intellectual and cultural diversity of Alexandria society from the 19s century to mid of 20s century. It is design as rectangle of 58 acres (244452.4 m²), to combine cemeteries from different religions, non-religion, and military.

The Religion Cemeteries

There are two main religions cemeteries in Chatby Complex; the Jewish cemeteries and the Christian of different confessions.

The Jewish Cemeteries

There are two cemeteries in the complex number 2 and 3, wherein buried the rich classes, the rabbis and officials as ordinary peoples⁴. This explains the distinguish tombs characterized by decorations, and built in form of small temples. The cemeteries contain more than 60 famous Jewish families, witness the impressive size and affluence of the community that once existed, such as Menasce and Sawiris family. The official permit to enclose the Alexandrian Jewish cemetery was granted in 1856 through the intervention and recommendation of the Austrian consul [3].

The majority of the tombs are identifiable with names, dates, and symbols engraved on them and some of the dates go back to the 1800s, the most recent dates are in the 1980s. And there is a prayer hall in cemetery number 2. Many tombstones are cracked, but the cemeteries are not entirely neglected. Currently Egyptian Antiquities Ministry working on documented the three Jewish cemeteries.

On the other side there is an anonymous narrative to tell about the reason beyond these two cemeteries in Alexandria that involved the wealthy Jewish Baron de Menasce⁵.

⁴The cemetery number 1, located in Lazarita district mostly for buried public of lower classes, includes 20,000 headstones.

⁵The Menasce Synagogue is located in Mansheya Square in central Alexandria, its simple architectural style and façade being complemented by decorated arcaded widows. The synagogue was built in 1860 by Baron Yacoub de Menasce, a philanthropist and the first of four members of the de Menasce to head Alexandria's Jewish community.

Table 1: Classification of Chatby Complex Cemeteries.

Classification of Cemeteries	Type of cemetery	Cemetery number	Size	%	Cemetery property
Religion	Jewish	2	35715.6 m ² 8.503 acres	15.84	Registered as monumental in Ministry of Antiquities 2017
	Christian	16	171164.2 m ² 40.75 acres	75.92	Controlled by their church
Non-religion	Civil or Freethinker	1	4232.5 m ² 1.00 acres	1.88	Controlled by Alexandria Governorate
Military	Commonwealth	1	13792.1 m ² 3.28 acres	6.12	Controlled by British Embassy
	French	1	563 m ² 0.134 acres	0.25	Controlled by French Embassy

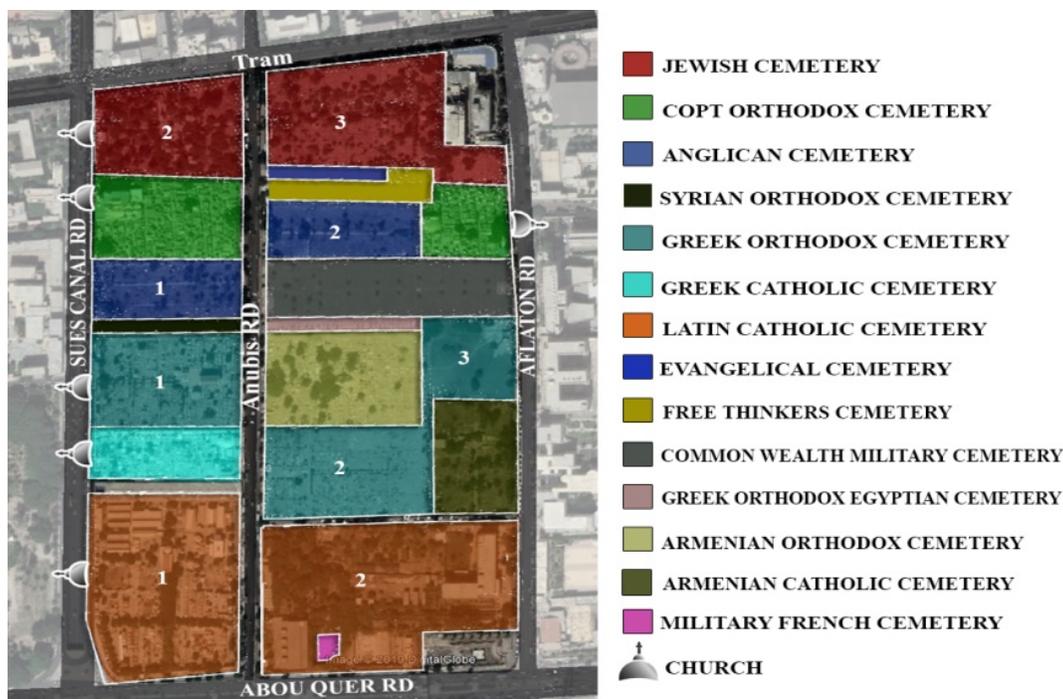


Figure 2: The Complex Cemeteries of Chatby (adapted from <http://www.aaha.ch/photos/cimetiere-1.htm>).

When Baron Jacob de Menasce moved to Alexandria from Cairo, part of the Alexandrian community broke away and elected him as their head. However the breakaway group did not have its own cemetery, and the veteran community refused to allow their dead to be buried in the cemetery. The splinter group broke down the cemetery gate in order to bury Abraham Piha, a relative of de Menasce's, and the matter was taken to the courts. The community applied for permission to open their own cemetery, which the authorities granted. In 1878 two communities reunited and from then on had two cemeteries. Finally, a third cemetery was consecrated in Lazarita in 1908 [3].

The Christian Cemeteries of Different Confessions

The majority of cemeteries are Christian, estimate 40.75 acres belongs to most confessions of Oriental and Occidental churches; Latin, Orthodox, protestant and Copts, as shown in Table 2.

As seen in Table 2 there are ten Christian confessions communities in the complex, their space reflect the size of its community. The Latin Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Copt Orthodox, and Anglican protestant, each one of them have more than one cemetery.

The architectural features of the Christian cemeteries show more design, decoration and Sculpture tombs, in the Greek Orthodox and Latin catholic cemeteries, while the others are more Simple tombs with tombstone of names and dates.

Many of decorating tombs belong to rich families, that were famous in their life, like Zananiri, Bolkly, Shodes, Stanlly, Lauron. Their names still exist because most of the East parts of city called after them. In addition, of persons who participated in the developing of Alexandria like Botti the Italian historian founder of Greco-Roman museum, all deserve the documentation and preservation.

The Greek Orthodox and Latin Catholic Cemeteries

As most distinguish cemeteries in the Complex, both the Greek Orthodox and Latin Catholic are an open

air museum where the Greek marble statues stand, and the Roman architecture style form unique tombs. Certainly there were great artist and architects behind this art are not recorded.

Although both Greek and Orthodox Catholic tombs are the largest in the complex, but lately the Latin has lost its east cemetery no.2, it was transformed to a plantation garden and mosaic museum, and a part of it was closed after discovering Hellenistic monuments underground. There is effort to get it back legally.

Majority tombs of these cemeteries are decorated with marble statues and elaborate sculptures, such as the magnified tomb of George Averof, the rich and famous Alexandrian businessman that donated most of his wealth in charity projects in Greece and Egypt. His remains were transferred to Athens later. Next to him, George Antoniadis unique tombs, like was his villa and garden. Tomb of Korsika, founder of Greek Hospital, is now known as Gamal Abdel Nasser Hospital. Tomb of famous wooden merchant's daughter, Zorvadakki, where stand an angel with his finger on his mouth as sign to visitors to keep silent. As well as tombs of the most prominent characters of the Greek community of Alexandria, such as Dr. Anastasi, Salvagon, Zerfozaki, Kazoli, Rali, Ridoknakki and Kaszali, among others.

Others tombs are important not for their architecture characteristic, but because it concerning an influential character like, the tomb Konstantinos Petrou Kavafis, the pioneer of Greek modern poetry. On other side the Greek communities adopted a restoration plan to maintain their three cemeteries in Alexandria.

One of unique tomb in the Latin Catholic cemetery is Botti tomb. Giuseppe Botti, Italian archeologist who come to Alexandria in 1884 as the head of the Italian School, but he spent years fighting to preserve the Alexandrian antique monuments inside the city, finally he succeed in 1892 to found the Graeco-Roman Museum. He was also founding member of the Archaeological Society of Alexandria, 1893. One of his great monument discovering is the catacomb complexes at Kom el-Shoqafa, He died in Alexandria on October 16, 1903 and buried in an antique roman tomb, one of his discover to honoring



Figure 3: Menasce Tomb – Jewish Cemetery.



Figure 4: Toledano Tomb – Jewish Cemetery.

Table 2: Type of Christian cemetery in Chatby Complex.

Type of Christian cemetery	Cemetery number	Area (acres)	Cemetery property
Latin Catholic	2	13.74	church
Greek Orthodox	3	8.536	church
Copt Orthodox	2	4.487	church
Anglican protestant	2	4.089	church
Armenian Orthodox	1	3.447	church
Armenian Catholic	1	2.082	church
Greek Catholic	1	1.876	church
Greek Orthodox Egyptian	1	0.544	church
Syrian Orthodox	1	0.495	church
Evangelical	1	0.415	church



Figure 5: Anglican Protestant Cemetery.



Figure 6: Evangelical Cemetery.

him. Likewise the Catholic Latin cemetery was restored in 2001, after years of neglected.

The Non-Religion Cemetery

The history of civil cemetery is back to early twenty century. Every time a non-religion person, secular or even from minority community like Baha'i on Indian died, raised the problem of finding him a tomb. In the mid of nineteenth century a mixed committee, composed from various nationalities, provide a request to local authority to grant a civil cemetery for secular. The negotiation continued for years, but the agreement was signed and the cemetery was called "Civil Cemetery". There wasn't any ceremony or religious symbol in this cemetery⁶.

At the entrance were placed two tombstones, one honored to Garibaldi and Mazzini, both were secular. Some Italians objected these tombstones, and the one of Mazzini was stolen then later found and put back.

The civil cemetery experienced years of maintains and others of negation, that in turn reflect intellectual freedom in society. Between the two world wars, a group of Italian free thinkers restored it, and hire a guardian, the number of tombs increased. After the Second World War, and the departure of foreigners from Alexandria, the cemetery closed its

doors. In the end of twenty century, the local authority reopens it to be used by Coptic community. Today on the right gate a marble plaque with the Coptic cross, while on the left there is the old written in Italian: Civil cemetery.

It is the only civil cemetery in Egypt and perhaps the Middle East, that consider a tangible evidence of peaceful coexistence of Alexandria city in the twenty century.

The Military Cemeteries

There are two different cemeteries, the Commonwealth and French Military cemeteries. The foreigners soldiers buried in these cemeteries are victims of several wars that Egypt wasn't part of it, but Alexandria port was somehow a center point of strategic events like war.

The Commonwealth Military Cemetery was used for burials until April 1916, when another Military cemetery was opened at Hadra. Since Alexandria was an important hospital center, during the first and Second World War. There are 2,259 tombs from First World War burials in the cemetery and 503 from the Second World War. The cemetery also contains war tombs date from 1882. While the French military tombs in the Latin Catholic Cemetery contain

⁶See <http://www.aaha.ch/photos/cimetiere-libres-penseurs.htm>.



Figure 7: Greek Orthodox Cemetery.



Figure 8: Latin Catholic Cemetery.

145 tombs; of soldiers who died in the French hospital of Alexandria. After having participate in different wars around Mediterranean, as Dardanelles fight 1916, Cilicia 1921, and Libyan Desert 1942.

The design of these cemeteries has always played an important part to be easily recognizable and distinguishes. The headstones within the cemetery are of a uniform size and design and mark plots of equal size. The grounds are, grass covered with a floral border around the headstones. There is also an absence of any paving between the headstone rows which is intended to make the cemetery feel like a traditional walled garden where visitors could experience a sense of peace.

The research recommendations

In order to preserve the Chatby Complex as tangible and intangible heritage of multicultural city, it is necessary to treat with several challenges that threaten the Complex Identity:

- The direct threat: is always concern the nature factors effect; which requires regular maintenance to the tombs, and professional restoration, that don't erase the artistic and architectural features of tombs.

- The indirect threat: is about the human needing change. When the presence of foreign communities was large there was high need to build these cemeteries, today they are minority in the city, while the Coptic Orthodox and Catholic are the majority, their need for more cemeteries is increasing, for example in the Latin cemetery the new tombs character of Coptic Catholic are not compatible with the European style that dominates the place.

Finally, there must be rules to meet the contemporary needs of the place as cemeteries, without erasing its heritage nature as testimony of glory days of a multicultural city.

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Figure 9: Freethinker Cemetery.



Figure 10: Freethinker Cemetery.



Figure 11: Commonwealth Military Cemetery.



Figure 12: French Military Cemetery.