



## Muhammad Ali Pasha and His Sabil

*Agnieszka Dobrowolska, Khaled Fahmy*

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**Muhammad Ali Pasha and His Sabil** Agnieszka Dobrowolska, Khaled Fahmy

Muhammad Ali Pasha, who ruled Egypt from 1805 to 1848, was a dynamic and far-sighted leader and is credited by many with the modernization of the country. When his son Tusun died of plague in 1816, the grief-stricken father commemorated him with a sabil (a public cistem and water dispenser) of an architectural and decorative style entirely new to Egypt. The sabil fell into disuse and disrepair in the twentieth century, but after a painstaking conservation program lasting six years it is once again an architectural jewel, now open to the public. This guide to the spectacular and important sabil in the heart of historic Cairo explains why and how it was constructed, how it was used, and how it changed over time. It also tells the story of the extraordinary life and fascinating personality of the founder of the building, Muhammad 'Ali Pasha. Written by the architect who directed the long conservation project and by a historian who is a leading authority on Muhammad 'Ali and his times, this account introduces the general reader to a unique building and offers an insight into events in a crucial period in Egypt's history. The book is illustrated with many photographs, diagrams, historical engravings, and reproductions of unpublished documents and letters.

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### About the Author

Agnieszka Dobrowolska is a conservation architect who has worked on many archaeological and conservation sites in Egypt, and directed a number of architectural conservation projects in Historic Cairo for the American Research Center in Egypt. Among these, the conservation of the Sabil of Muhammad 'Ali Pasha kept her busy for six years. Khaled Fahmy is associate professor of modern Middle Eastern history in the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University. He is the author of *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, his army and the making of modern Egypt* (AUC Press, 2002), as well as numerous studies on the social and cultural history of nineteenth-century Egypt.

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