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- <sup>1</sup> In 1893 a world's fair, the World's Columbian Exposition, was organized in Chicago to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. It contained a so-called "Cairo Street" (**fig. 1 and 2**), which had been designed by Max Herz Pasha, chief architect of the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> The present paper proposes a new, fresh reading of Cairo Street by taking into account its context and thereby offering a picture that corresponds to its multifaceted nature, in contradistinction to current views on the subject available in scholarly literature. With this aim in mind, it presents a general sketch of the background, the context of the fair in general, and that of Cairo Street in particular, a subject that should be considered essential to the assessment and interpretation of Cairo Street but which is sadly missing from modern research in this field. Cairo Street in Chicago, like similar projects at other world's fairs, has suffered from something of a bad reputation in recent times. It is hoped that the present approach will redress this by offering a balanced presentation and interpretation that is attentive to its setting in the world of its time and by considering this remarkable project in its proper context.

Figure 1: "View of Cairo Street."



Source: *The Dream City. A portfolio of photographic views of the World's Columbian Exposition with an introduction by Prof. Halsey C. Ives*, St. Louis, MO: N. D. Thompson Publishing Co., 1893.

Figure 2: "View of Cairo Street."



Source: *The Dream City. A portfolio of photographic views of the World's Columbian Exposition with an introduction by Prof. Halsey C. Ives*, St. Louis, MO: N. D. Thompson Publishing Co., 1893.

- 2 Although an exhaustive treatment of the “Cairo Streets” at pre-World War I world expositions is still earnestly to be desired, some important research has been undertaken in recent years, both on world’s fairs in general and on the Oriental displays at world’s fairs in particular, research that has also produced interesting results on certain aspects of Cairo Street in Chicago. Above all, the works of Paul Greenhalgh, Timothy Mitchell, Robert W. Rydell, Zeynep Çelik, and Leila Kinney can be highlighted in this field.<sup>2</sup> Their research has provided unexpected insights and enriched our knowledge of the subject with fundamental new data that have considerably fostered later research. Çelik’s and Kinney’s treatment of the Oriental sections of world’s fairs stands out especially on account of their refined capacity to locate and interpret phenomena in a sophisticated network of highly disparate relationships.
- 3 However—no doubt owing to the great complexity of the fair—research in this field seems to suffer from a certain myopia, a definitive one-sidedness to various degrees, and that in three respects. In the first place, some of the authors mentioned above deal only with the Oriental sections, paying no attention to the expositions as a whole (Çelik and Kinney). In the second place, they treat the Oriental sections mainly within the context of Edward Said’s Orientalism, omitting other aspects. Finally, they pay hardly any attention to contemporary scholarly theories that defined the intellectual framework within which contemporary visitors to the fair moved, thought, and interpreted what they experienced. They all treat the Oriental sections with “political correctness,” which must be considered an ahistorical approach: it is wholly justified as far as our modern world view is concerned, yet not necessarily adequate if we consider that the scholarly theories of the time that constituted the intellectual background of the world’s fairs were not always “politically correct” from our modern point of view. One often has the impression, too, that these authors have preconceived theses and then pick the data that suit them, arriving at their results in a deductive way, instead of looking at data first and then trying to interpret them. Their approach is of limited relevance, failing to make allowance for the multifaceted nature of the subject; world’s fairs are so many-sided that they readily offer themselves to various ways of interpretation, all or most of which may be simultaneously valid. This important characteristic must be taken into proper account if our aim is to adequately comprehend the role and meaning of Cairo Street in Chicago in particular and of Oriental projects at world’s expositions in general.
- 4 The important findings of the authors mentioned above are most valuable and represent remarkable achievements in the progress of scholarship. However, they leave important aspects unconsidered, a serious shortcoming that the present paper seeks to rectify in connection with Cairo Street at the World’s Columbian Exposition, thereby arriving at a novel reading of this intriguing project by putting it in the right context. This shall be undertaken in two of the three fields referred to above: firstly, we shall try to locate Cairo Street within the context of the fair as a whole; secondly, we shall point out some important scientific theories of the period in question, which are of specific relevance to our subject. Constraints on space do not allow us to address problems relating to Edward Said’s Orientalism in the present paper.<sup>3</sup>

## The Role of Context

- 5 In social history and anthropology, the importance of setting works, institutions and phenomena comprehensively within their historical context has been underlined, among others, by David Cannadine, who convincingly applied this approach in his outstanding analysis of the British monarchy.<sup>4</sup> In his considerations he followed such earlier scholars as Clifford Geertz, Quentin Skinner, David M. Schneider, and Marvin Trachtenberg. In connection with any given classic text, Cannadine pointed out: “To study the context... is not merely to gain additional information...; it is also to equip ourselves... with a way of gaining a greater insight into... [the text's] meaning than we can ever hope to achieve simply from reading the text itself.”<sup>5</sup> In a similar way, “in order to rediscover the ‘meaning’ of a... ritual..., it is necessary to relate it to the specific... milieu within which it was actually performed... [T]he very act of locating the occasion or the text in its appropriate context is not merely to provide the historical background, but actually to begin the process of *interpretation*.”<sup>6</sup> The context is so important that “even if the text of a repeated ritual... remains unaltered over time, its ‘meaning’ may change profoundly depending on the nature of the context.”<sup>7</sup>
- 6 In our case, the narrow context is the 1893 Chicago world exposition as a whole, and our contention is that if we consider Cairo Street within the context of the entire fair we arrive at a more accurate and adequate interpretation than that offered by our predecessors. The fair was extremely multifaceted. The most disparate registers were represented, beginning with the elevated, religious-spiritual, even hymnic, realm and descending to the basest range of popular entertainment. At the same time, opinions differed on this question. One contemporary source wrote: “First, it may be said that there are no small things, no unimportant things, nothing cheap in the whole exhibit.”<sup>8</sup> The central part of the fair, the gleaming White City with its Beaux-Arts style buildings radiating dignity and tradition, conjured up in visitors the bliss of the Heavenly Jerusalem of the Revelation of Saint John (**fig. 3 and 4**): a contemporary author described a visit to the fair metaphorically as the path of Christian, the everyman hero of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* of 1678, the full title of which runs: *The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come*. The metaphor hit the mark because many visitors were familiar with this popular book. On another occasion the following hymnic words were addressed to the fair: “City of Love, farewell! Mecca, Jerusalem, Rome, and cities buried beneath the sands of time have welcomed the pilgrimages of men throughout the ages; but to you alone came worshippers of all the world... the one White Shrine of the West.”<sup>9</sup>

Figure 3: "The Administration Building."



Source: [JACKSON William Henry,] *Jackson's famous pictures*, Chicago, IL: The White City Art Company, 1895 (Educational fine art series, vol. IV).

Figure 4: "The Liberal Arts Building from the Colonnade."



Source: C. D. ARNOLD and H. D. HIGINBOTHAM, *Official views of the World's Columbian Exposition issued by the Department of Photography*, Chicago, IL: Press Chicago Photo-Gravure Co., 1893, pl. 21.

- 7 At the world's fair, there were art objects exhibited from all fields and periods of art, as well as scholarly and scientific displays representing up-to-date standards in all possible areas, while the latest inventions in machinery and the most modern methods in agriculture were endlessly displayed. There was a conspicuous educational angle to world's fairs, and on this account they were often dubbed "world's universities"; one of our sources uses the terms "the great College of Democracy" and "University of Democracy" in connection with the Chicago fair.<sup>10</sup> The importance attributed to education and scholarship in general fully illustrates the serious aspect of the world's fair: it was believed that the possession of knowledge made mankind resistant to the influences of evil and that the acquisition of knowledge was therefore bound to lead ultimately to universal world peace. Within this context about two hundred congresses were organized with over 700,000 participants over the course of the World's

Columbian Exposition. The aim was to demonstrate as fully as possible a complete overview of mankind's activities. This is aptly illustrated by a list of the subjects on which individual congresses were held: women, medicine and surgery, temperance, commerce and finance, literature, education, art, philosophy, evolution, labor, photography, anthropology, theosophy, history, librarianship, electricity, philology. In these congresses first-class world luminaries took part, e.g., Hermann Osthoff, a leading German linguist of the Neogrammarian school and professor of comparative linguistics and Sanskrit at the University of Heidelberg; and Wilhelm Streitberg, an Indo-European linguist specializing in Germanic languages, especially Gothic. Papers by Georg Ebers and Gaston Maspero, two outstanding Egyptologists who could not come personally, were read in their absence. The renowned German physician and physicist Hermann von Helmholtz participated in the Electrical Congress, as did Thomas Alva Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, and Elisha Gray. Edison is credited with the statement that no one who made his living by his intellect could afford to stay away from the fair. Nikola Tesla, an American electro-physicist of Serbian extraction generally regarded as perhaps the greatest inventor of all time, was one of the stars of the fair; electricity was the great novelty of the day and played a notable role at the fair. The mammoth World Parliament of Religion, in which scholars, laymen, and clergy of all major religions participated, lasted seventeen days. The noted Indologist and historian of religions Max Müller declared that it was "one of the most important events in the whole history of the world." He commented later that even a year after the event the organizers themselves had not yet fully grasped the importance and true greatness of what they had accomplished.<sup>11</sup> It may be noted that the idea of congresses was further developed in the course of world's fairs. To replace the innumerable congresses of earlier fairs, the 1904 fair in St. Louis featured a single, five-day congress covering the whole range of human knowledge, with six hundred invited participants.<sup>12</sup>

- 8 At the other end of the spectrum of exhibits at the Chicago world's fair we find run-of-the-mill shows of the entertainment industry on Midway Plaisance, where obtaining the highest possible profit was the main objective. Midway Plaisance had originally been conceived as a section of the Department of Anthropology, but in the course of events the anthropological exhibits became amalgamated with representations of the entertainment industry. Thus, aspects characteristic of these two disparate fields were to various degrees present in most exhibits on the Midway, resulting in an elusively ambiguous, "two-faced" quality—both in the positive and negative aspects of the adjective—at times appearing simultaneously, at times oscillating between the two seemingly contradictory, mutually exclusive poles. The mingling of the sublime and the noble with the cheap and the low to a certain extent characterized the Midway as a whole, and thereby, to various extents, most displays there, among them Cairo Street. In our case, the relatively authentic, high-quality reproduction of Arab-Islamic buildings creating an ensemble radiating an authentic Cairene atmosphere, as well as the presence of various genuine Egyptians partaking in folklore presentations, such as weddings (**fig. 5**), *mawlid* celebrations,<sup>13</sup> and the departure and return of the Mecca caravan, stressed the artistic, educational, and scholarly character of the project. At the same time, there was the donkey-ride and the camel-ride—undoubtedly great fun, but contributing mainly to the amusement aspect of the Street (**fig. 6**). Nonetheless, since camels were unknown in America, their presence may also be regarded as part of the educational aspect. The acquaintance with camels was all the more important and interesting for Americans because America was still an agrarian society. Most visitors

to the fair lived in close contact with animals and had a profound knowledge of them; it is therefore wholly understandable that under such circumstances a closer acquaintance with such a strange and unfamiliar species was a positive experience for them because it meant, so to speak, a variation on a familiar theme. For many visitors to Cairo Street, the mean, the lowly, and the vulgar were represented by the belly dance (fig. 7). Yet this show was officially organized as a strictly scholarly presentation from the realm of ethnology featuring a popular tradition, one of the remarkable popular customs of the Egyptians. The fact remains, though, that many spectators saw it as a sort of early sex show. These two aspects were not necessarily mutually exclusive, of course, and the organizers were only too aware of the income-generating potential of this program. The controversy surrounding the belly dance was the result of the interaction between contemporary society's ambivalent attitudes toward women and sex, and the official standpoint that saw in the belly dance an ethnological presentation of a strictly scholarly nature. In the case of contemporary American society, which professed puritan values, the rather negative attitude toward sex was a result of Christianity's general aversion to the human body and sexuality. In a hierarchy oriented toward heaven, the ultimate aim of the soul was to reach the sublime state of closeness to God. However, with its incalculable and uncontrollable passions, sexuality represented a serious obstacle in this process. Divine judgment also played a central role in Christianity. However, it was contingent upon free will, which was again seriously compromised by the incalculable and uncontrollable essence of sexuality.<sup>14</sup>

Figure 5: Marriage procession.



This photograph seems to have been on sale in Cairo in the aftermath of the fair as a typical Egyptian scene without any indication that it had been taken at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

Source: Author's collection.



Figure 6: "Camel-ride."



Source: *Midway types. A book of illustrated lessons about the people of the Midway Plaisance – World's fair 1893*, Chicago, IL: The American Engraving Company, Publishers, 1894.

Figure 7: "Three dancing girls from Egypt."



Source: J. W. BUEL, *The magic city. A massive portfolio of original photographic views of the great World's Fair and its treasures of art, including a vivid representation of the famous Midway Plaisance*, St. Louis, MO and Philadelphia, PA: Historical Publishing Company, 1894 (Historical fine art series).

- 9 The serious aspect of the fair was also highlighted by the close attention paid to architecture in the organization of the fair. The American buildings were designed by the foremost architects of the United States. The foreign sections, both in the White City and in the Midway Plaisance, were also erected according to plans by outstanding representatives of the profession in their respective countries. Among them, two figures deserve special attention. The Swedish Building in the central part of the fair (**fig. 8**), erected by Gustaf Wickman, is now regarded as the first major monument of the Swedish national romantic style that culminated in the Stockholm City Hall of Ragnar Östberg. In the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building, Russia erected a pavilion of her own (**fig. 9**) designed by Ivan Pavlovich Ropet (Ivan Nikolaevich Petrov), the highly influential chief representative of the Russian revival style. As far as the Midway Plaisance was concerned, the Austrian Village (Alt-Wien/Old Vienna) was designed by Emil Bressler (**fig. 10**). It contained an exhibition of 97 extraordinary portraits of Romano-Egyptian mummies from the Fayyum Oasis from the Theodor Graf Collection in Vienna; in the course of the fair the exhibition was transferred to the Ethnological Building. Theodor Graf, the owner of a carpet business in Vienna which had a branch in Cairo, was an outstanding figure in the collection of Egyptian antiquities from all periods (papyri, mummy portraits, textiles). Graf closely cooperated with his school friend Georg Ebers in organizing the Egyptology exhibit in Old Vienna on the Midway. Ebers was one of the world's leading Egyptologists, a former professor of Egyptology at Leipzig University, and the author of an influential work on Egypt in two volumes in German, which had also been translated into English. Inspired by a desire to display the achievements of German industry and art by means of

characteristic house types and folk costumes, Karl Hoffacker, director of the School of Arts and Crafts (Kunst- und Kunstgewerbeschule) and the Museum of Applied Arts, both at Karlsruhe, designed the German Village on the Midway on the basis of an idea by Ulrich Jahn from the Museum of Ethnography in Berlin. Hoffacker also designed the German House, the official German exhibition in the White City.

Figure 8: "The Sweden Building."



Source: *Unsere Weltausstellung. Eine Beschreibung der Columbischen Weltausstellung in Chicago, 1893*, Chicago, IL: Fred. Klein Company, 1894, p. 265.

Figure 9: "The Russian pavilion in the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building."



Source: *Unsere Weltausstellung. Eine Beschreibung der Columbischen Weltausstellung in Chicago, 1893*, Chicago, IL: Fred. Klein Company, 1894, p. 443.

Figure 10: "Old Vienna."



Source: *Unsere Weltausstellung. Eine Beschreibung der Columbischen Weltausstellung in Chicago, 1893*, Chicago, IL: Fred. Klein Company, 1894, p. 338.

- 10 The music bands appearing in the German Village were engaged by Hermann Wolff, the owner of the foremost German concert agency. He was the founder of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and the agent of such eminent musicians as Johannes Brahms, Hans von Bülow, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Josef Joachim, Fritz Kreisler, Yehudi Menuhin, Arthur Nikisch, Anton Rubinstein, Artur Schnabel and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The

German Village on the Midway Plaisance featured a German Ethnographic Exhibition, a fruitful cooperation between Rudolf Virchow, the founder of modern pathology; Albert Voss, director of the Royal Museum of Ethnography in Berlin; and Paul Wallot, the architect of the Reichstag building, also in Berlin. In connection with Cairo Street, it deserves special mention that during one of his stays in Chicago, Georges Pangalo, the manager of Cairo Street, secured the cooperation of Henry Ives Cobb, one of the preeminent architects in the United States at the time. Based in Chicago himself, Cobb was not only an architect of great standing, but also a close associate and friend of David Burnham, the chief architect of the whole fair, and Cobb's person was a guarantee for Burnham and the organizing committee that the project would be of the required quality, and that it would be ready in time. The whole fair was built under heavy time pressure. Cobb's participation in the project was essential from another viewpoint too: foreign architects, who were not licensed in the state of Illinois, were not allowed to practice in Chicago at the time.<sup>15</sup> There can be no doubt that Cobb found Herz's plans convincing and of high quality—otherwise he would have rejected them, especially in view of the fact that there were two other competitors. There can be no doubt, either, that Cobb was generously rewarded for his cooperation.

- 11 Another point worth mentioning in connection with Cairo Street is that, in contradistinction to many displays on the Midway, Egypt was not an unknown entity to visitors; it was a country whose name was familiar to all Americans. Pharaonic Egypt was widely known as the cradle of mankind among both Protestant and Roman Catholic visitors to the fair—it should be recalled that the dominant majority of Americans consisted of White Anglo-Saxon Protestants at the time, who were avid readers of the Bible and were familiar with the Biblical stories (both from the Old and New Testaments) of Joseph, the Egyptian Captivity, Moses, Pharaoh, and the Exodus, as well as the Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt. In fact, the organizers of Cairo Street, in including the Pharaonic Temple, greatly capitalized on this familiarity, making constant references to it in captions and descriptions alike. The striking Arab-Islamic characteristics of Cairo Street evoked both the Western world's admiration for the outstanding role the Arab-Islamic world had played in the development of science in the Middle Ages as well as its fascination with the titillating, sensual world of *One Thousand and One Nights*, which enjoyed great popularity. In addition, this was the era when traveling became fashionable and more and more widespread, although it remained a privilege of the well-to-do. It was often emphasized that the representation of foreign populations at world's fairs was a substitute for journeys to distant countries for those who could not afford them. Thus the display of foreign populations also served an educational purpose, and this must be seen in a positive light: no matter how artificial and rudimentary the display, it nevertheless afforded the opportunity to encounter representatives of populations with whom one normally did not come into contact. This was an era characterized by a great fascination with the "other," which also included the despised "savage" amply represented on the Midway at the Chicago fair. The demarcation of oneself against these peoples was an important constituent of the quest for oneself, for one's own identity, which played a significant role in the self-definition of the various strata of society in a period of ground-breaking social transformation, both in Europe and in America.<sup>16</sup>
- 12 All these positive aspects, which could be multiplied at will, prove that a generally high level of professionalism and serious scholarship characterized the whole fair and

within it the Midway Plaisance and Cairo Street in particular, even if some saw the relationship between the two great constituent parts of the fair, the White City and the Midway, as the antithesis between the Celestial City of the New Jerusalem and a New Babel/Babylon. This latter aspect, best embodied as far as Cairo Street is concerned in certain aspects of the belly dance, was present too, no doubt, yet it was only one side of the coin. The other side represented serious professionalism and a high level of scholarship. It was this duality that significantly contributed to the attraction that the fair, and especially the Midway Plaisance, exercised upon visitors. Most modern scholarship concentrates on the—allegedly—negative aspects only; as a rule, modern descriptions and scholarly analyses contain purely negative associations, paying absolutely no heed to the positive aspects. One cannot deny their relevance: more often than not these facts and associations are valid. However, it is fair to argue that owing to the very complex nature of the world's expositions, they represent only a part of the picture, thus ultimately producing a basically distorted view.

## The Intellectual Background—Some Aspects

- 13 In connection with the anthropological displays, modern scholarship attributes central importance to their connection with social Darwinism and racism, highlighting and stressing the negative aspects of these connections. As one of the influential scholarly theories of the day, social Darwinism occupied an eminent place in the interpretative framework of the fair. On its basis it was postulated that various peoples represented different evolutionary stages in intellectual, cultural, and moral qualities, and it was also sometimes assumed that these were passed on from generation to generation by way of inheritance. It was thought that many of the peoples appearing on the Midway represented a lower level of development and could therefore justly be regarded as primitive. This theory gave a plausible explanation of the cause of cultural differences in the world. It was nothing less than racism according to our modern concepts, and such a view is unacceptable today. However, this was not clear at the time. In addition, owing to the fluidity of concepts and to the ongoing search for explanations in this constantly changing field, notions such as *race*, *nation*, *people*, and *social class* were often conflated, and the situation gradually became even more complicated owing to the elusive interplay of such vaguely defined notions as *social* and *sexual deviance*. It is an accepted fact now that some of these notions are intertwined with power and its exercise. Human knowledge of this area has developed gradually, step by step, owing to the great complexity of the factors involved. It is an ahistorical approach to blame the children of a certain age for following the valid scholarly theories of their day. Statements, ideas and approaches that are nowadays considered offensive, politically incorrect, sinister, or even evil were not necessarily intended as such at the time but corresponded to the standard of contemporary scholarship. This insight is missing from most modern research in our field, which fails to place and evaluate statements, actions, and phenomena within their own context and their own time, in addition to assessing those same statements, actions, and phenomena according to the latest results of modern scholarship. On the basis of the present state of our knowledge we reject and condemn racism, and justly so, with all its corollaries and implications. At the time in question, however, this set of convictions and related theories was widely discussed, and no definite outcome was yet in sight.

- 14 The inequality of mankind seemed to follow from social Darwinism, and this assumption led to an intertwined network of conclusions. In a continual striving to find the exact scientific basis of these assumptions, efforts at quantification were undertaken. They were conspicuously present at the Chicago fair, too. The Department of Ethnology had a special section displaying instruments used in anthropometrical work, while skulls and brains of various peoples, along with skulls and skeletons of some anthropoid apes, were exhibited for comparison.<sup>17</sup> An ascending “civilization scale” among the world’s nations and peoples was posited, with the United States at the summit. Originally this scale was to be the basis of the arrangement on the Midway, but the system later became blurred by the encroachment of various other aspects.
- 15 It was assumed that differences in the size, weight, and shape of the skull implied differences in intellectual capacities and moral qualities, both in individuals and in peoples or nations. In 1900 the German neurologist and psychiatrist Paul Julius Möbius published a scholarly study in the field of medicine under the title *On the Physiological Imbecility of Women*, in which he proved the mental inferiority of women as compared to men, an inferiority that made them incapable of pursuing higher studies, among other things. The “scientific proof” was the difference in size and weight between the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain in the male and the female. How widely this idea was accepted in academia is shown by the fact that, after World War I, the Medical Faculty in Budapest barred women from studying medicine mainly on these very grounds. (It also barred Jews, but for different reasons.) In America, many regarded alcohol, male masturbation and female education as the major dangers threatening American society.<sup>18</sup> The view of women held by a section of the medical profession in America is summed up in the following passage from 1899: “Women beware. You are on the brink of destruction: You have hitherto been engaged in crushing your waists; now you are attempting to cultivate your mind: You have been merely dancing all night in the foul air of the ball-room; now you are beginning to spend all your mornings in study. You have been incessantly stimulating your emotions with concerts... and French novels; now you are exerting your understanding to learn Greek... Beware! science pronounces that the woman who studies is lost.”<sup>19</sup> This quotation was formulated in somewhat extreme terms, yet it represented an important trend in the medical science of the day. Under these circumstances it must be highly appreciated that female participation at the Chicago fair was conspicuous. It was not on an equal footing with men, but it was unprecedentedly high, largely surpassing women’s presence at earlier world’s fairs. The Board of Lady Managers played an important and prominent role under the guidance of Mrs. Potter Palmer (*née* Bertha Honoré), the charming and dynamic *grande dame* of Chicago society. She declared: “Columbus discovered a new world, but the Columbian Exposition has discovered woman.”<sup>20</sup> The Woman’s Building was one of the major attractions of the fair. It was designed by Sophia Hayden Bennett, the first American woman to receive a degree in architecture. A “display of foreign populations” from an anthropological viewpoint, Cairo Street elicited widely differing reactions among its visitors. Many expressed themselves positively about their experience, but there were also negative voices to be heard. Some formulations may strike modern audiences as strange, even unacceptable and repulsive. Since the views referred to above were important elements of the intellectual discourse of the time, they have to be duly acknowledged in order to reach a comprehensive, balanced judgment of American opinions on Cairo Street. The views on women were of special relevance to Cairo Street, where the main show was the belly dance, which was performed by

women. It is still in need of a comprehensive explanation. These views may serve as random “shafts of light”, so to speak, contributing to a better understanding of the ambivalent attitudes and highly-charged conflicting emotions surrounding it.

## Conclusion

- 16 The present paper highlights some important aspects that can help us better understand the broader context of the World's Columbian Exposition in general and of Cairo Street in particular. With the aim of modifying the approach of current scholarly research, which tends to see Cairo Street and similar shows in and of themselves, it underscores the importance of considering Cairo Street within the context of the World's Columbian Exposition and in that of certain relevant contemporary scientific theories in order to arrive at a fresh new reading of this remarkable, many-layered project. In this field, the very serious and solid character of the Chicago fair is emphasized, a seriousness in which Cairo Street also partook to a considerable degree, in addition to being a robust project in its own right.

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## NOTES

1. István ORMOS, “The Cairo Street at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893,” in Mercedes VOLAIT and Nabila OULEBSIR (eds.), *L'Orientalisme architectural entre imaginaires et savoirs, actes du colloque international* (Paris, Institut national d'histoire de l'art, May 4-5, 2006), Paris: Picard/CNRS-InVisu/INHA, 2009, p. 195-214. URL: <http://inha.revues.org/4915> (viewed June 26, 2014).
2. Paul GREENHALGH, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988; ID., *Colonising Egypt*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988; Timothy MITCHELL, “The world as exhibition,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 31, no. 2, April 1989, p. 217-236; Robert W. RYDELL, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916*, Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1984; Zeynep ÇELİK, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992; Zeynep ÇELİK and Leila KINNEY, “Ethnography and exhibitionism at the Expositions Universelles,” *Assemblage*, no. 13, December 1990, p. 35-59; also in Edmund BURKE III and David PROCHASKA (eds.), *Genealogies of Orientalism: History, Theory, Politics*, Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008, p. 286-329.
3. From the vast literature on the afterlife of Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, see, e.g., François POUILLON and Jean-Claude VATIN (eds.), *Après l'Orientalisme : l'Orient créé par l'Orient*, Paris: Karthala, 2011. Now also in English translation: ID. (eds.), *After Orientalism: Critical Perspectives on Western Agency and Eastern Re-appropriations*, Leiden: Brill, 2015 (Leiden Studies in Islam and Society, 2).
4. David CANNADINE, “The context, performance and meaning of ritual: The British monarchy and the ‘invention of tradition’, c. 1820-1977,” in Eric HOBBSBAWM and Terence RANGER (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 101-164, esp. p. 103-106.



5. David CANNADINE, "The context, performance and meaning of ritual: The British monarchy and the 'invention of tradition', c. 1820-1977," *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 105; quoting, slightly modified, Quentin SKINNER, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978, vol. 1, p. xiii.
6. David CANNADINE, "The context, performance and meaning of ritual: The British monarchy and the 'invention of tradition', c. 1820-1977," *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 105 (emphasis added). See David M. SCHNEIDER, "Notes toward a theory of culture," in Keith H. BASSO and Henry A. SELBY (eds.), *Meaning in Anthropology*, Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1976, p. 197-220, esp. p. 214-215.
7. David CANNADINE, "The context, performance and meaning of ritual: The British monarchy and the 'invention of tradition', c. 1820-1977," *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 105. "[A]ll meaning is to some degree context-defined or context-determined..."; David M. SCHNEIDER, "Notes toward a theory of culture," *op. cit.* (note 6).
8. Trumbull WHITE and William IGLEHEART, *The World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893*, Philadelphia, PA/St. Louis, MO: P. W. Ziegler & Co., 1893, p. 562.
9. "Through the Looking-Glass," *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 1, 1893.
10. John Brisben WALKER, "A World's fair. Introductory: The world's College of Democracy," *Cosmopolitan*, vol. 15, no. 5, September 1893, p. 520 and 524.
11. F. MAX MÜLLER, "Das Religions-Parlament in Chicago," *Deutsche Rundschau*, vol. 82, January-March 1895, p. 412.
12. Ignaz Goldziher of Budapest participated in it as the foremost scholarly figure of the age in Islamic studies. He does not seem to have been impressed, though, because he does not refer to the Congress at all in his otherwise rather detailed diary. There is an entry on his trip to America but he does not say a single word about the conference; he does not even mention why he traveled to the United States at all. See Ignaz GOLDZIHHER, *Tagebuch*, Alexander SCHEIBER (ed.), Leiden: Brill, 1978, p. 238-239.
13. *Mawlid* (Arabic "birthday") originally denoted the festival of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, but it is now also used to denote the religious festivals of various Muslim holy men.
14. Peter BROWN, *The Body and Society: Men, women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, twentieth anniversary edition with a new introduction, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2008; Kyle HARPER, *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.
15. Friendly communication by Charles Gregersen, Chicago, April 2007.
16. Pascal BLANCHARD, Gilles BOËTSCH and Nanette JACOMIJN SNOEP, "Exhibitions. L'invention du sauvage," in Pascal BLANCHARD, Gilles BOËTSCH and Nanette JACOMIJN SNOEP (eds.), *Exhibitions: l'invention du sauvage*, Exhibition Catalogue (Paris, Musée du quai Branly, November 29, 2011-June 3, 2012), Arles: Actes Sud; Paris: Musée du quai Branly, 2011, p. 20-53.
17. Rossiter JOHNSON (ed.), *A History of the World's Columbian Exposition Held in Chicago in 1893*, New York, NY: D. Appleton and Company, 1897-1898, vol. 2, p. 356-357, vol. 3, p. 426-428.
18. See, e.g., Carroll SMITH-ROSENBERG and Charles ROSENBERG, "The female animal: Medical and biological views of woman and her role in nineteenth-century America," *Journal of American History*, vol. 60, no. 2, September 1973, p. 332-356; Ronald HAMOWY, "Medicine and the crimination of sin: 'Self-abuse' in 19th century America," *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1977, p. 229-270; Valerie STEELE, *Fashion and Eroticism: Ideals of Feminine Beauty from the Victorian Era to the Jazz Age*, New York, NY/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 5.
19. Ruffin COLEMAN, "Woman's relations to the higher education and professions, as viewed from physiological, and other stand-points. (The annual oration)," *Transactions of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama*, 1889, p. 238. As a matter of fact, Dr. Coleman strongly disapproves of the contents of this passage. See also John S. HALLER and Robin M. HALLER, *The Physician and Sexuality in*

*Victorian America*, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1974, p. 39; Valerie STEELE, *Fashion and Eroticism*, *op. cit.* (note 18), p. 165.

20. Ellen M. HENROTIN, "Woman's Part at the World's Fair," *Review of Reviews*, vol. 7, May 1893, p. 422; quoted in David F. BURG, *Chicago's White City of 1893*, Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1976, p. 319.

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