Julian Barnett | Egypt Part 2: Islamic Cairo

– Thank you very much, Judy, and good afternoon, good morning, good evening, wherever you are. Lovely to see you, and thank you very much for coming again today. This is the second part of four lectures on Cairo, specifically, but also branching out a little bit more to Egypt as well. Last week looked at Pharaonic and Coptic Cairo, and today it's going to be Islamic Cairo. On the 20th of November, it's going to be a lecture on the discovery of Tutankhamun. Lots in the news on that at the moment because it is, to the week, in fact, a hundred years since the discovery of Tutankhamun in November, 1922. So there'll be lots on that. And then on the 12th of January, I'll be looking into the future, where is Cairo going in the future? Where is Egypt going in the future? How will all this shape up? Before I start on the pictures, I'm going to actually just do something slightly unusual today. I do normally get quite a lot of questions at the end of lectures via email, but quite a few questions came in that I thought were so pertinent to do with last week, I wanted to kick off with those questions today and just quickly answer some of those. So I'm just going to read them.

Firstly, somebody asks about Pharaonic Egypt: "Is there any reason why the Egyptians chose to construct pyramids, sculptures of kings, the Sphinx, et cetera, in a manner such as almost over the top?" This writer said, "I can understand monumentality, such as Athena in the Parthenon, but not the Egyptian sense of monumentality."

And I think the answer to that is exactly as you say. One of the answers could be it was designed to be completely over the top, to overwhelm those people in Egypt and in Nubia and the Hittites and the other neighbouring nations at that time so that they would understand the human and God-like power of the ancient Egyptian pharaohs. I think that would be the immediate answer that I would give.

Second question that came through: "Regarding the Copts in Cairo, were there not attacks too long ago by Muslims on the Coptic population in Cairo? I can't recall when and why, especially since the Copts are an important part of the fabric of Egyptian society."

You're quite right. The relationship of Copts to the wider society, the Copts numbering, hmm, 12–20% of the population of Egypt is a difficult one, it's a fraught one. This is a large minority within a 88–92% majority Muslim country. And you are quite right, there was an upsurge in violence against the Copts in the Morsi years, so in the years when Mubarak left power, the Ikhwan, the Muslim Brothers, took control, 2011. And that brief period of 14 months when the Muslim Brothers held control, there was, perhaps not surprisingly, an upsurge in attacks against the Copts, even though the Copts were some of the people right at the forefront of some of the demonstrations that

overthrew the Mubarak government. I will be returning to that in lecture four, about the future of Egypt and where the Copts lie in all of this. But you're quite right, that was occurring.

A third question that came up was, somebody said, "Egypt is a puzzlement to me. "They developed geometry and advanced mathematics. How else could they have been sure to build the king's burial chamber in the Great Pyramid?" Something I showed you all last week. "Yet, as an ancient civilization, I can't think of any time when I was made aware of what the Egyptians contributed to the development of Western culture and civilization. Indeed, the opposite is true for the ancient civilizations of the Greeks and Romans."

And you are right. I think we do hear all about the Greek and the Roman input into society, into today's society. Why less so the Greeks? And I think the answer for that is two words: "The Romans." Because history is written by the victors. And in 30 BC the Romans took Ptolemaic Egypt and took control of Egypt and remained in control of Egypt until the Byzantine period. And then after that, until it turned Islamic in the seventh century. So I think we see ancient Egypt through the eyes of the Romans. And the Romans did not want to play up the power and the achievements of the Egyptians. They wanted to play up the power and achievements of the Romans. Indeed, I would go further, that what do we know about ancient Greece? The vast majority of what we know about ancient Greece is through the Roman lens of ancient Greece. The Romans took from ancient Greece what they considered to be the best in art, in culture, in plays, in drama, in philosophy, and so on. So I think we view the world through ancient Rome. To quote Mary Beard, the Cambridge historian, and if you haven't seen the series, you must, must, must watch her series, five-part series on the Roman Empire. Her entire thesis is that we are all Romans in the Western world, that we see the world through Roman eyes, ideas of democracy, ideas of citizenship, and civics, and so on.

There is a wonderful debate that I would urge you to watch on YouTube. It is between Mary Beard, the Cambridge academic, and Boris Johnson whilst he was mayor of London, because Boris Johnson is, in his own right, quite an interesting academic, he's a Greek scholar, and they debated who gave us more, the Greeks or the Romans? It was debated in front of a very large audience and it's a charming and fascinating and at times very funny debate. It's up on YouTube, just put in, "Boris Johnson, Mary Beard, Romans Greeks debate." And there they address that precise question about why it is that we know so much about the Romans and why, in Mary Beard's opinion, the Romans are THE civilization of the ancients. So I hope that partly answers that question. I'll add one final thing. One of the key dates in human history is 326 AD, the year that Emperor Constantine converted from paganism to Christianity. And I covered that quite a bit when we looked at Byzantine Jerusalem in my series on Jerusalem. So in a way, we today, in 2022, are viewing ancient history through the lens of the

Romans, the Byzantines, who of course were the Christianized Romans, or the Romans who had become Christian, I should say, and forevermore since then. So that key date of 326 AD, I think, is crucial to coming to some understanding about why it is that the preeminent, in a way, ancient civilization of the world is the Romans. It doesn't mean they were necessarily greater, although Mary Beard might disagree with that, but it simply means they got to write the history books, and sometimes it can be as unfair as that. So thank you for those questions, keep them coming, and I love getting the questions and love giving the answers. So now over to Judy, who's going to take us through the pictures. And we're going to start with this one, which is familiar to you from last week, the national flag of Egypt. That flag was created after the revolution in the 1950s. And you'll recall that that central figure within the flag to my mind in some ways completely encapsulates what Egypt is all about. Because here you have the Eagle of Saladin, the great, not mythical, because he did exist, but the man is a myth, in a sense, over what he achieved. But there you have the Eagle of Saladin, who was the first caliph of Cairo, 10th century, 11th century. Yet it is a reference back to Pharaonic times. Look at the design of that eagle. That could be a design from a Pharaonic tomb. Because everything about Egypt, and this is going to come through again and again, last week, this week, next week, or no, 20th of November, 12th of January, you cannot view Egypt just through Egypt today.

Discussions in this country, in the UK, still go on about Brexit and why Brexit happened. Well, of course, part of the reason why Brexit happened was immigration and the big issues of immigration. But to understand why this country voted for Brexit, it's my opinion, as a historian, that you have to understand the history of this country, an island race, viewing things sometimes very differently to continental Europe. Similarly to Egypt, just as Brexit was an enormous ground-shaking event in this country and can be understood through one explanation, but can also, or should also, be understood through being the sum total of many explanations that have occurred over centuries, similarly with Egypt today. We looked at Pharaonic and Coptic Egypt last week. Although we are looking at these things as separate entities, they're not. Every Egyptian today in Egypt is a combination of Coptic Egypt, Pharaonic Egypt, and so on. It often surprises people when one says, and it used to surprise me in the eighties and nineties when I was first going into Egypt, when Egyptians would say, you ask an Egyptian, what are they? They would say, "I'm an Egyptian." They didn't say, "I'm an Arab." They didn't say, "I'm a Muslim." Very, very few Egyptians would say, "I'm an Arab," that would be, they don't see themselves as Arabs, even though, ironically, the Arab League headquarters is in Cairo. The Egyptians see themselves as an ancient, ancient people, Arabized by the Arab invasions that swept over from Saudi Arabia in the 11th century. I'm sorry, in the eighth, ninth century. So it's really important to bear in mind the things I mentioned last week and to put them in a bundle together if we're to

come to some understanding of what Egypt is today, and consequently where Egypt is heading tomorrow, next month, next year. So to the next picture, please. And there, of course, is something we all know, Egypt, where it is located. But again, to emphasise how important it is, it is in Africa and it is in the Middle East, it is on the Mediterranean and it is on the Red Sea. I mentioned Napoleon last week who described Egypt as quote, well, I'm translating from the French, "The most important country in the world," because where it is located is absolutely critical to understanding why it does as it does. And perhaps even more importantly, how it sees itself. If you go down to the south of Egypt, it's firmly Africa. If you go to the north of Egypt, it's firmly Middle Eastern. And to the next picture, please. We looked last week at the pyramids of Giza, that critically important way of identifying ancient Egypt, the Copts being the people that see themselves as the direct descendants of the ancient Egyptians. And to the next picture. And, of course, we looked at the Copts. And there are some Copts there in 2011, I showed you this picture last week, demonstrating in Tahrir Square. But what was interesting about that demonstration was the way that the Copts saw this as an opportunity for them, they saw this as a possibility for them to reassert themselves as an honoured and ancient minority within the country. As mentioned before, it didn't quite work out that way in that 14-month of Muslim Brotherhood rule. And the current president, President Sisi, to whom I'll return later and in future weeks, he has, almost in an exaggerated way, tried to envelop the Copts back into feeling comfortable about staying within the Egypt that they were born in. Next picture, please. Because now we're looking at the Islamic world in green. These artworks, a map of the religions of the world. So you can see where Egypt is in that map of the world. And I said last week, a pretty audacious claim, that in my opinion, the heartthrob, the centre of the Arab world, sorry, the centre of the Muslim world, is Egypt. Even though Mecca and Medina and Jerusalem, in that order, are the three holiest cities of Islam. Even though Shia Islam, it's main holy sites are in Iran and Iraq. In my opinion, the heartbeat of the Muslim world is Egypt. And I'll come onto that in a moment as to why. And the heartbeat of the Arab world is also Egypt, which is rather ironic, because as I said, many Egyptians don't consider themselves Arabs, they consider themselves first and foremost Egyptians.

Next picture, please. So now we see another map of the world and on this map we see the Muslim world once again. But you can see the darker green is the Shia Muslim world. Remember, there are many, many splits and schisms in Islam, but the greatest and the earliest is that split between Shia and Sunni Muslim. What was that split about? Muhammad dies in 632 AD. And then there was a series of four what are called "Rightly Guided Caliphs." The first was Abu Bakr, his friend and his cousin, who took over just for one year. After him, came Umar. Then came Uthman. And after Uthman came Ali. Now, Ali was married to Muhammad's daughter, Fatima. And I'll return to Fatima a little bit later, Fatimid Cairo. But that is where the split, the schism started.

There were two schools of thought. Should the leadership of Islam carry on down through the bloodline of the Prophet? In other words, keep it in the family. Or should it go to who Muslims around the world, well, then, Muslims in the Arabian Peninsula, that's where they were, they hadn't spread any further by then, or should it go to the Muslims to allow any person to emerge? In other words, the most suitable people. That Shia-Sunni split absolutely is driven all the way down through Islamic history. And around about 85% of the Muslims in the world are Sunni, and around 15%, maximum 15, perhaps less, are Shia. As you can see from that dark green, the absolute bedrock Shia areas are Iran and Iraq. Iran is 90% Shia, 10% Sunni. Iraq is something like 60% Shia, 40% Sunni. The rest of the Muslim world is almost a hundred percent Sunni, and therefore the preeminent Sunni establishment in the world, Al-Azhar University, which we'll look at very shortly, one of the oldest universities in the world, established in the 10th century, based in Cairo, that puts Egypt at the centre of the world, of the Islamic and Arab world. Also demographically, think about the figures I mentioned last week. I think the most recent UNESCO figures are 444 million Arabs in the world, of which 90 million approximately, nobody truly knows because of the chaos that is Egypt, approximately 90 million are Egyptians. So about one in five, even more than that, perhaps one in four and a half Arabs are Egyptian. This is a very major part of the Arab world. Okay, if we can move on to the next picture now, we will go to Mecca. And there is the Kaaba in Mecca. The Kaaba, as you will recall, I showed a couple of these pictures when we looked at Jerusalem, but now I'm looking at it in the context of Egypt, the Kaaba was, is built, or was built by Abraham, according to Islamic tradition. It's much older than Islam, but was rededicated by Muhammad. Next picture, please. And a closeup of the Kaaba. But this is with the the side cut away. It's never been cut away, this is an artist's impression. Inside there is this room that held all the idols that Muhammad threw out when he took Mecca and rededicated the Kaaba to monotheistic worship. And the next picture. And a closeup of that famous meteorite in the southeastern corner of the Kaaba that people go by and kiss as they go on pilgrimage in Hajj. And to the next picture. And the Kaaba without its famous cover on, I will come back to Cairo in a minute, 'cause it's all relevant to this, without its famous cover on. The cover is changed once a year, a seminal event in the Muslim world when that cover is changed annually. And the next picture, please. Huge amounts of people hauling this vast new black and gold and white shroud down over the Kaaba, the annual event. It's an enormous, significant event in the Muslim calendar. And to the next picture. And a little close-up of the work that is done, because the moment a new one is hoisted onto the Kaaba, the one for the next year is started. And where is it started? In Cairo, the preeminent Islamic city in the world.

Next picture, please. There you can see the finished product on the side of the Kaaba itself. And to the next one. And now we're zooming to Jerusalem, again, relevant to Cairo in a moment. You'll remember

this picture, the steps that lead up to the Dome of the Rock. And to the next picture, the inside of the Dome of the Rock. Looking down to that stone, the shaved off top of Mount Moriah, on what Jews call the Temple Mount, what Muslims call the Haram al-Sharif, the "noble sanctuary." So it's a shrine built over this rock, by Jewish tradition, where Abraham almost sacrificed Isaac, by Islamic tradition, where Ibrahim almost sacrificed Ishmael. And to the next picture. The rock, again. The traditional site, according to the majority, not everyone, but the majority rabbinic opinion, as to where the Holy of Holies stood, and therefore the Arc of the Covenant in the First Temple, only 'cause in the Second Temple the Holy of Holies was empty. And to the next picture, a wonderful aerial view. Oh sorry, before we go to that, the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the other great institution on the Temple Mount. Al-Aqsa meaning "the furtherest," "the most remote." To the next picture. And it's a wonderful aerial view of that Temple Mount. As you can see, bottom left corner is where the western wall is, the very bottom, southern wall excavations, the Kidron Valley to the east, on the right of the picture, the deep Kidron valley, and as you can see, the silver copper dome of Al-Aqsa, and the golden dome of the Dome of the Rock. Fantastic, how does all this relate to Cairo? If we could go on to the next picture. It relates to Cairo because despite that map, again, despite Mecca and Medina and Jerusalem having the first, second and holiest shrines in the world, the Muslim world in the main looks to Cairo for guidance when it comes to Islamic doctrine. If we go to the next picture, you will see where that doctrine comes from. These are the workshops around Al-Azhar University. And to the next one, please. Where people work tirelessly to produce books, to produce fabrics, to produce all types of the equivalent in the Jewish world of rabbinic responsa, questions and answers, on all aspects of Islam, come to Cairo if you are a Sunni Muslim. Now, 85-88% of the Muslims in the world are Sunni. So the absolute nerve centre, the intellectual centre, the emotional centre, that heartthrob of what keeps Islam going is in Cairo. And it's so emphasised, in all my many trips to Cairo, I never cease to be amazed, walking around Al-Azhar University, next picture please, you would see every conceivable type of Muslim, from Indonesia, from Malaysia, from the Central Asian republics, from Latin America, Muslims from Britain, Muslims from my hometown of Leicester, Muslims from America, from Europe, from Egypt itself, from all over the Arab world. You got a sense that this was one of the nerve centre cities of the world, one of the catalyst cities of the world. Now, most non-Muslims might not be aware of that, but Muslims will be. Cairo in the consciousness of Muslims is absolutely unparalleled when it comes to where they look to for that heartbeat, for that definition, and redefinition, because like all religions, all religions change, and they're moving on and they're evolving, for that evolution of Islam, that's where people are looking to, most Muslims most of the time are looking to Cairo. Wonderful view of some of those, nighttime view, of some of those minarets. Cairo, I believe, has more mosques than any other city in the world. I'm going to say something very controversial here, I think

Cairo knocks spots of Istanbul and Damascus and some of the other great Islamic cities of the world. I love Istanbul, and maybe one day I'll deliver some lectures on Istanbul and Damascus as well. But I think Cairo is so much more powerful. It's a much more visceral city. It's a much more chaotic city. But the sheer weight of architecture, of scholarship, of population, of the fact that it is the centre of the Arab world, and indeed the Arab League is based in Cairo, all those things contrive to make Cairo, I think, on a level altogether different to any other Muslim city in the world. There will be many people that will disagree, I know, but I love Cairo.

Next picture, please. We are looking at Al-Azhar University. Now Al-Azhar University was founded in 970, so this is a pretty old university. Bologna University in Italy was founded, I think, 1068, I believe. University College, Oxford, we're looking at the 1300s, or 1260s or something, something like that. So Azhar is a really ancient university. And it's a university on the old lines. It still runs on the old lines there. So there's not that many lectures. There are some lectures, but mainly, if you are a student coming from anywhere in the Islamic world, all over the globe, to Cairo, you'll arrive in Cairo, you'll find lodgings, then you will just find your personal sheikh or your personal imam. And that person will be your guide to life and your guide to learning and to study and to scholarship. Yes, there are tens and tens of thousands of students mulling around, but it's not a university as we understand most universities in the West, it's the old type of universities where you find, you rock up, and you find yourself a mentor, and you will study under the auspices of that mentor. That's how the system works there. And nobody truly knows how many people actually are at Al-Azhar University, but there are tens and tens of thousands of them. And when, as I say, you see those huge amounts of nationalities there, you then begin to realise the power of Cairo. The words that are now, I suppose, used now more and more are, "soft power." It's not a discernible power that you can say, well, "If Egypt flicks its fingers, "this will happen in the Islamic world" it's much more subtle than that. The consciousness of Cairo, the consciousness of Azhar and other institutions in Egypt are what really make Cairo a key international institution, and make it a key Arab and Islamic institution. Notice I am differentiating between Arab and Islamic, because for example, Turkey and Iran are not Arab, but they're strongly Muslim, of course, although Turkey is secular, but it's a majority Muslim country. Next picture, please. And you'll see a series of pictures of Azhar. These are some of the walkways in Al-Azhar Park, all part of the university. There at the far distance is the citadel. More on than that a little later. And the next one, please. Azhar at night, glorious, glorious buildings, a tremendous concentration of Fatimid period architecture. I'll come on to the Fatimids very, very soon. But we are talking about 10th century, absolutely spectacular. The concentration of buildings in Cairo from the 10th century, I don't, in fact, there's no doubt in my mind, I have never been to any city that has so many well-maintained, well,

maybe not so well-maintained, well used and in full use, 10th, 11th, 12th century buildings. It is phenomenal the amount of 10th, 11th, 12th century buildings. We are talking about thousands of buildings, some huge like this, some tiny, all in full use, Fatimid Cairo. Cairo is a phenomenon, you got to get there. Next picture, please. Here you can see examples of some of the students. Look at the ages, varied ages. And the next picture, please. Male and female students working at Azhar. And the next one, please. Again the idea, I suppose we would call it a tutorial, you know, a small group of students studying with either a sheikh in attendance or the sheikh would join them. Scholarship being the key thing here. Now, of course, in the Western world and in Europe, when we see on news films, things, pictures of madrasas with whole great big sections of these gold-embossed books, people think, "Oh my goodness, extremists, extremists, extremists!" And so on. There are extremists, of course there are. But Azhar is seen internationally as a moderate institution. This is the moderate institution of Islam. Indeed, most of the appointments to Al-Azhar University are political appointments made by the Egyptian government, which is in the main, a secular government, a secular government of Muslims in the main. But Egypt is not an Islamic republic, it is the Arab Republic of Egypt. So there's a big difference there. And Azhar is seen as an organ of that state. It's a way of syphoning the very, very strong Islamic identity with Egypt and putting it through a set of state institutions to moderate it. And it is seen internationally as a force for moderate good and for moderate change. And that has become particularly pertinent under the current President Sisi in Egypt and his quite groundbreaking speeches in Azhar in the last few years. More on that in the fourth lecture of four.

Next picture, please. Here you see a group of Egyptian sheikhs and clerics at Azhar. Now what's interesting is look at the bands, B-A-N-D-S, the bands that they are wearing over their shoulders, because that is the Egyptian flag. This is significant. These people see themselves first and foremost as Egyptian Muslims, not as Muslims who live in Egypt. And that is a big difference because that is where the Muslim Brothers are so different to the vast majority of Egyptians. The vast majority of Egyptians, yes they're Muslim, but they see themselves first and foremost as Egyptian. And the Muslim Brothers are almost seen as usurpers who are trying to turn Egypt into an Islamic republic. And look what happened to that 14-month of Muslim Brother rule. It didn't last long. The Egyptian people, to use an old-fashioned word, got "frit." They really got frightened of what they saw starting to happen to their nation after 14 months of Muslim Brother control. And what you have here is a very interesting thing because here you have clerics at Azhar wearing the Egyptian flag. They don't see themselves as a sort of fifth columnists within Egypt trying to Islamify Egypt. They are part of the body politic of the Egyptian political and social system. It's a very big difference. Next picture, please. And some of the girls in some of the classes, some have their hair covered, some don't. It's a perfect example of this breadth of

people that are going to Azhar. These, some of them, are from India, Indian Muslim girls from the Indian subcontinent. And the next one, please. Look how important Azhar is. So here you have MBS, I believe he's called, Mohammed bin Salman from Saudi Arabia. There he is, this huge figure of a man, with his hands like a bear's hands, and to the left, not his, to his right, but to the left of the picture, is President Sisi. And to the left of President Sisi is the Mufti of Al-Azhar, the head of Al-Azhar. What's significant, what is significant here is that the Wahhabi, de facto head of state in Saudi Arabia, he is only the Crown Prince, but he is in effect running that country, here he is coming to Cairo, where is he coming to? Azhar, that nerve centre of Islam. Remember that Saudi Arabia is a Sunni Muslim country. It's a very unique form of Sunni Islam, perhaps we'll have a lecture on that one day in the future, it's called "Wahhabism," a very different brand of Islam from other forms of Islam around the world, but it is still nevertheless Sunni. And Egypt and Saudi Arabia see themselves as that critical arc standing against what they see as the threat of a perhaps Shia superstate in the form of Iraq and Iran. So this is a very important nexus of power. These two leaders, where do they go? Al-Azhar University, just to stress the point of how important this is in the consciousness of the Islamic world. To the next one, please. And there is Sisi meeting the Mufti of Azhar, strong personal relationship between the head of state, Sisi, and the head of Azhar, very important working relationship. And to the next one, please. And the Mufti on a visit, not a state visit 'cause he's not head of state, but to London. As I keep saying, this is a very important international Islamic figure. There he was taking tea, I think it was in the end, with the Queen, with the late Queen at Buckingham Palace. Such is the importance of this man and his image around the world. Now to the next ones please, because now we're coming on to Fatimid Cairo. And you'll see the dates there for Fatimid Cairo, 909 to 1171. The Fatimid Caliphate, "caliphate" coming from the word, "khalifa," "khalif", which means "rule," "control." The Fatimid Caliphate, as you can see, was spreaded across North Africa, what we now know as Syria, Jerusalem, and it swept across to what's now Tunisia, and a little bit further. And it even touched upon the southern tip of Italy, as you can see. What was it? It was a breakaway from the Abbasid control of Islam in those relatively early years of Islam in the 10th century. It broke away from Abbasid control in Baghdad and set up its own caliphate based in Egypt, once again, the very centre of this remarkable but short-lived empire. Its most famous ruler was Ibn Tulun. And I'll come to him very shortly.

Next picture, please. And here you have an early manuscript of the Fatimids, taking their messages to people all over Africa and giving their orders to rulers in Africa over how they are now under Fatimid control. To the next one, please. And you can see how far it's spread, all the way to what we now know as Morocco. It was a sliver of an empire along the North African, southern Mediterranean coast and down the west side of Saudi Arabia. And to the next one, please. And here

are some of those Fatimid remains in Cairo. These are some of the oldest Islamic structures in Cairo. And to the next one, please. Look at those tremendous structures. And the next one, please. They tend to be these wonderful, wonderful stone sculptures. Remember, the ban in Islam, in most forms of Islam, about human form, or even animal form sometimes, with certain exceptions, the Shia do allow certain types of human and animal form, but in Sunni Islam, in what is considered orthodox traditional Islam, the human form is not permitted, so what you get is this flourishing of all that human creative talent into architecture and stone sculptures, or flower designs, or calligraphy, or pottery, or all types of very, very wonderful decorative designs. And you might recall, for those that were with me in my home when I did a tour of some of the objects in my home, I was able to show you some of those tiles from the Fatimid period. In fact, I do have one piece here, which is a fantastic plate. This is 10th, 11th century. You can see it's pomegranates, it's called lustreware. Look at that fantastic lustre on this plate, from Egypt, from that period, pomegranates being one of the symbols of wealth, and of productivity, and so on. What's fantastic about this is that it has these rivets at the back, it's very old, it's been broken many times over the centuries, but if you see the rivets, and then turn it, there are no rivets on the front. It has been so brilliantly repaired so that the rivets just held it enough so as not to spoil the front by shoving a piece of metal in the front of the plate. That is Fatimid period. So they were tremendous artists and designers. And here's a great example of one of their buildings in Cairo, of which there are many, many, many hundreds. And to the next picture, please. This is one of the early Fatimid mosques, towering, look at the size. The buildings in front with all their satellite dishes on, these are seven, eight storey buildings, typical seven, eight storey buildings in Cairo. So now you can begin to get the idea of the size, the monumentality, of these Fatimid mosques. And to the next one. The walls of Cairo. The walls of ancient Cairo are often missed out by tourists. They're off the beaten track, more often, just deserted. Fatimid period, so we're talking about made between about 980 and 1020, the equivalent here of Norman period here in England. And to the next one, please. This is Bab Zuweila, which is one of the gates of Fatimid Cairo, powerful, powerful structures. And to the next one. This is the Mosque of Ibn Tulun. It is the largest and oldest mosque in Africa. Built by Ahmad Ibn Tulun, a pretty remarkable Fatimid ruler who lived from 835, I think it was 884, I think. Really remarkable and enlightened leader. Paid women equal salaries to men, for those that worked on his projects, as an example. And he followed, I suppose, in the footsteps of Saladin in his social projects. He was a Turkic slave, or he was a slave of Turkic origin. And he set up the Tulunid dynasty, a very brief-lived Fatimid dynasty, which was a breakaway from the main Abbasids. Really remarkable ruler. Couple of closeups of this mosque.

Next picture, please. There it is. Look at to the left is the minaret, modelled on the slightly older minaret of Samarra in Iraq, which has

this spiral staircase around the outside. No fencing, no railing. Health and safety is not such a strong concept in Egypt. If you are scared of heights, do not ascend this. But if there was one thing you were to do in Cairo, and if you wrote to me saying, "Julian, I'm going to Cairo for one day, what shall I do?" I would say, walk to the mosque of Ahmad Ibn Tulun and climb for midday prayers the minaret, and sit at the top of that minaret and listen to thousands, tens of thousands, that's no exaggeration, tens of thousands of mosques calling out to prayer. This will be one of the great memories and experiences of your life. More on that if you ever get to Cairo, I'll happily direct you. To the next picture, please. Now we move on to the Mamluks, who were the Mamluks? They took over Cairo in 1250 and they went all the way through to 1517. Now the Mamluks are fascinating. They were culturally diverse, they were ethnically diverse. The original Mamluks were brought over as fighting slaves. There were thousands and thousands of children who were kidnapped, brought over from Mongolia, mainly, brought to the Arab world as slaves and became fighting slaves. But gradually those slaves became freed, and those freed became middle class, and those middle class became upper class, and in the end they became the rulers. So by the time we get to the 13, 14, 1500s, they are the ruling elite of Cairo, Damascus and Jerusalem. The three great Mamluk cities of the world. In that order, in a sense, simply because of size. Mamluk Cairo is a tremendous phenomenon. And again, one of the great jewels of Cairo. This is a perfect example of Mamluk architecture. If we go onto the next picture. There you can see those men on horseback, and you can see the Mongol image, the Mongol faces there. This is how they were first bought over. But of course, by the time we get to the 13th, 14th, 15th, well, no, the 12th, 13th, 14th century, they had already interbred with the people in Egypt and they didn't look, you know, with those Central Asian features. That said, in my four years living in Jerusalem and in my many dozens of visits to Cairo over the years, it is remarkable how sometimes you'll come across an Arab Jerusalemite, a Palestinian Jerusalemite, or a Cairene, a resident of Cairo, and you look at them, and they have very slightly narrowed eyes, and they have Central Asian features. And that is still the Mamluk gene in those people. It's still there. Similarly, in East Jerusalem, I would quite often come across blonde-haired, blue-eyed Palestinian men and women, the same in Cairo. It's the crusader gene from the Northern Europeans. It's remarkable how those genes stay within those gene pools. And the Mamluk gene is still strongly, particularly within the Egyptians themselves. To the next pictures, please. Let's have a look at some, there's a map of the Mamluk sultanate, as you can see there, from Damascus to the Sinai Peninsula, Israel, Palestine over to Egypt, and a little bit further over to Egypt, what we would now know as Libya, and even Tunisia. And to the next one. The architecture is monumental. Look at the size of the vehicle's, bottom left-hand corner of the picture, that is the Sultan Hassan Mosque on the left and the Rifa'i Mosque to the right, fantastic structures. The reason I love this picture is that you have

everything there really. So you have the Mamluk mosques there, and then you have the highrise of modern day Cairo up there. If it had been a clearer day, you would've actually just seen the top of the pyramids, about 15 kilometres away. It would've had, you know, from Pharaonic to Coptic to Mamluk to modern day. But tremendous builders, the Mamluks. And one of the things they were famed for was this ablaq style of stonework, cross, two-tone stone. For those that have wandered around the Muslim Quarter in Jerusalem, you would've come across some fantastic Mamluk structures. The best collection of Mamluk structures in Jerusalem is around the Chain Gate, one of the gates that leads up to the Haram al-Sharif, the Temple Mount. And to the next picture, please. The inside of the Sultan Hassan Mosque. Look carefully. Bottom left, man sitting on step. Now look at the size of the arch. This building was built roundabout 1280. So it's approximately the age of Westminster Abbey as we know it now, it's around the age of Westminster Abbey in London. Look at the lady in a sort of, to the right of that man sitting. She's moving, she's in sort of a turquoise dress. Look at the size of this structure. This is one of 400 Mamluk mosques in Cairo, thereabouts. This is one of the grandest. But you begin to get an idea of the absolute incredible wealth of architecture in Cairo. Next picture, please. And another picture of a man sitting against one of those vast walls just reading to himself. Mosques are a fantastic thing to go to in the middle of a hot day in Cairo. Temperatures in the summer, 38 degrees, thereabouts. You can just go into a mosque, have something to eat, go to sleep on a carpet. There's always interesting people there. They're fantastic places to just go and relax and get away from the hurly-burly of the streets. Very, very civilised. Okay, moving on to the next picture. And the mihrab, the southern wall of the Sultan Hassan Mosque. Again, look at that use of two-tonal, three or four tone stonework, all interlocking with each other like jigsaw puzzles, a classic Mamluk design. And the next one, please. Mamluk domes in Cairo. Often they have this sort of funnelling effect. These are much smaller structures. The one on the left is a tomb. Then the last four are mosques. And moving on to the next picture. Fantastic, this is classic Cairo, you're just walking along and all of a sudden you come across this. Wonderful, well actually it's a Fatimid bottom and a Mamluk top. The dome is Mamluk, the bottom part is older, Fatimid, restored by the Mamluks. And to the next one. Again, wonderful views. In the middle are the two minarets of Bab Zuweila, one of the great gates of Cairo, and other domes. But look how they're just next to some monstrosity, just put up there doubtless without planning permission, I suspect, just next to it. That is so typical of Cairo, a living, pulsating, dynamic city. The minaret to the left is very old. Look at the simplicity of that minaret. I date that to 980 to 1050, it's Fatimid period, really simple, as opposed to the minarets in the middle of the picture, much, much more sort of refined and fancy. To the next one, please. And there's a perfect example of that ablaq stone. And the next. And the next. Wonderful stonework. The City of the Dead, where 600,000 Cairenes live. This is a vast network of Mamluk cemeteries.

The Mamluks had a tradition that you could never inherit money when you died. So you either had to build fantastic tombs and plunge all your money in your will into your tomb, or you'd leave it to charity. The heirs to dead Mamluks couldn't inherit the wealth of their parents. So therefore what you had was these huge cemeteries all around Cairo.

Now a typical Cairene solution to a problem, people now live there. Hundreds of thousands of them live within the cities of the dead, they've taken up residence. You can spend weeks, over my life I have spent weeks, a few days here, a few days there, walking around and visiting these places. Each of these cemeteries, three vast cemeteries, each of these cemeteries are hundreds of acres. Let's see a few examples of people living in the City of the Dead. A few pictures to come. So there are streets straight down through. These are all tombs that you're looking at now, mausoleums. And to the next one. And there you can see the Mokattam Hills in the background, which we looked at last week, where those rock-hewn churches were that you might recall that I discussed last week. All of these are tombs. If you look at the very bottom of that picture, you can see green gravestones. But then the larger buildings are mausoleums with gravestones within them. To the next picture. And the next. There we go, people living amongst the graveyards. The estimate, as I say, is around about 600,000 people live in the City of the Dead. These people would otherwise be homeless and starving. Here, they squat in the cemeteries. Sometimes families inheriting where they squatted to the next generation of the family. I think I've mentioned to you that I wrote a number of articles in the Jerusalem Report about my meanderings around the sects of the city. Quite a few of you have asked me to send them to you. One of them, I went to Cairo and I talked about my getting to know over the years the Sabry family who lived in one of these tombs. And the next picture, please. People having a little factory within one of the tombs where they make glass and then they sell it. And the next picture. And there's inside a tomb, sunlight coming through, washing hanging up, a little boy playing. There is the grave of the Mamluk in the middle and with chairs around it. This is the living room of this family. And the next one please. And a lady cooking the evening meal on top of a makeshift oven, and there is the tomb. The tomb is no relation of hers. She and her family, this family had been in this tomb for six generations. And she simply went out, got the stuff, and then just cooks, and that's where they live. It's such an Egyptian way of dealing with a problem. And the next picture, please. And another one, another workshop within one of these tombs of the City of the Dead. And the next one. People praying amidst the tombs of the City of the Dead. And the next, please. Look at the satellite dishes, by the way. And there you have tombs there, huge Mamluk tombs, the tomb of Qaytbay. Those who might remember, I showed you the water fountain of Qaytbay that sits on the Temple Mount in the shadow of the Dome of the Rock, and Qaytbay, being a Mamluk sultan, this is his tomb. But his tomb, the water fountain in

Jerusalem, looks just, no, the other way round, the tomb in Cairo looks just like the water fountain that he had built in Jerusalem. I don't believe Qaytbay ever came to Jerusalem, but he donated a lot of money to various things, a school for Koranic readers in Jerusalem, and so on. And to the next picture. Children playing football amongst the graves. This isn't so much a mausoleum, these are open graves. And the next one. And finally, the Ottoman Empire of Egypt. So the Ottoman Empire, well, there are great arguments over how long the Ottoman Empire went on for. But in effect, the real Ottoman Empire as we understand it, went from 1517 to 1922. In 1922 it was more or less dissolved. 36 sultans in the Ottoman Empire. And Egypt became one of the important nerve centres of that Ottoman Empire. And you can see how huge the empire was over time. But look at that chunk of Egypt that was the Ottoman Empire. By the time the Ottomans took over Egypt, they were a weakening force and it was an empire in slow and gradual decline. Next picture, please. Just a few brief pictures. That is a mosque out of Istanbul, but it's in Cairo. It's very un-Egyptian. It looks just like the Blue Mosque or the great mosque at Edirne, all those wonderful mosques built by Sinan the architect. And maybe one day I'll talk about Sinan and his mosques in Istanbul. We could talk for weeks about the mosques of Istanbul. And to the next picture, please. A view of Fatimid Cairo. Look at the Fatimid gates at the bottom left, huge bulky towers, with this sort of usurper of Turkish architecture plonked on the top. Give me Mamluk stuff any day before Ottoman stuff. But there you go, to each their own. And to the next picture, please. Very much more fancy than Mamluk stuff. This is Ottoman again, 19th century. It's a series of water fountains with fruit sellers at the bottom. And I believe, now, just to the final picture. And that final picture is, nope, this is another water fountain, again, Ottoman period. A lovely structure with mashrabiya work on the top. And you have lots of these streets in Cairo that split one way or the other, water fountains always being put in the middle of the street. And the next picture. Modern day mosques in Cairo. Contemporary, but following in traditions. Look at the script above the door. This is called kufic script. It's a very square, almost modernist looking script going back to the 10th century, but now reincarnated in a 21st century mosque. And the next one. Another modern mosques built in New Cairo, that city that's been built in the desert. Saudi-funded. Looks very Saudi, does it not? All the white marble, the glistening things, the fake palm trees that open and close electronically, believe it or not. And the next picture, please. Final slide of Islamic Cairo to emphasise, if I needed to emphasise, I've said it many times, this is the preeminent Islamic city in Cairo. I would recommend it to everybody to get there and enjoy it. It's a fantastic, fantastic experience. But I hope in some small way I've been able to convey the dynamism and the beauty of that city. Thank you. I now see that there are lots of questions pending, and thank you, Judy, for shifting along those questions. I'm now going to read those questions, and so on.

Q & A and Comments

"The Copts were the direct descendants of the pharaohs. That's why they called themselves the real Egyptians."

Absolutely. "And indeed the word "Copt" is the Greek for Egyptian." Absolutely. That said, somebody last week quite rightly said that many Muslims in Egypt say, no, no, no, no, no, they're not the direct descendants. We are the direct descendants of the pharaohs, because many, I'm not saying all Muslims, many Muslims don't like to accept the fact that there were people in Egypt before the Muslims were in Egypt, in other words, we are the inheritors of that great Egyptian culture. This goes back to what I was trying to convey at the start of today's lecture, that, Egyptians, it's a very complex thing. Egyptians are the inheritors of multifaceted and multi-leveled cultures. Every Egyptian is the inheritor of Pharaonic and Coptic and Mamluk and Fatimid and Islamic and Ottoman, and so on. And indeed secular, secular Arab culture as well, which is what the revolution in the fifties was all about, Pan-Arabism, which I will come to in lecture 4 in January. So it's a very, very complex picture, what is Egyptian identity? And I think that is often not appreciated by lots and lots of people outside. Egyptians primarily consider themselves Egyptians. That's what they are first and foremost. And that's why it's important for many people to deny the Copts the power that comes from the Copts to say we are the real Egyptians, because if that's the case, what does that make an Arab in Egypt, a secondary Egyptian? That's why they try to deny the Copts' claim that they are the true descendants of the Pharaonic Egyptians.

"What's the name of the series about Rome?"

Can't remember offhand. If you just put, "Mary Beard," as in a beard, "Mary Beard, five-part series on Rome," it's all on YouTube. It's all for free, it's fantastic. Watch it, strongly recommend it. And Mary Beard is a wonderful lady as well. I strongly recommend her.

"How do you spell the name of the scholar?" Oh, Mary Beard, I've just spelt that, there you go, five-part series, ah, and somebody has answered that. Okay, scrolling down further.

Q: What are the other countries in the Arab world?

A: If you think geographically, so we'd go from Egypt to Libya to Algeria, over to Tunisia, over to Morocco, over to Western Sahara. Then let's go eastward, so we'd go from Egypt, we'd go to Saudi Arabia and Jordan and Iraq and Yemen. And then we go northwards. We'd go to Lebanon and then up to Syria. And then of course there's all the many smaller Gulf states and the caliphates and the sultanates within the Gulf itself. I'm sure I've missed out some, but that gives you an

idea. There's either 21 or 22. I have a mental block, I can never remember if it's 21 or 22 countries in the Arab world. But Egypt is by far and away the most single populous of them. And as I say, more or less, one in every four and a half Arabs are Egyptian. Yes, indeed, South Sudan. Yes, point taken there from Elizabeth.

And Jonathan: "Some historians believe Constantine chose Christianity rather than Christianity on the issue of circumcision." Indeed, and there are many theories as to why Constantine made that conversion. Again, the Mary Beard series will be a very good one because she more than touches upon it, she discusses quite a bit about that. So really quite interesting as to why Constantine did choose it. Was he the arch-cynic, was it a political move? Was it a trade move? Was it a recognition that Christianity was the religion on the rise and paganism the religion on the decline? There's many explanations. Of course, it could be all of them at the same time.

Q: Where did the original ancient Egyptians come from?

A: We don't know the answer for sure. We do know that they were based in what we now call Ethiopia, it was Egypt and Nubia. We know that there were two kingdoms that were forced together by some of those first pharaohs. And I will be looking at this on the 20th of November when we look at Tutankhamun, because my lecture on the 20th November, the opening picture isn't in fact going to be Tutankhamun, it's going to be the father of Tutankhamun, Akhenaten. And that goes into the mists of time of what ancient Egypt was all about. More on that when we come to that.

Q: Does Iran recognise Cairo in the same way or considers the Ayatollah as the definitive?

A: It's a huge question. It recognises Cairo as a key Islamic city in the world. It recognises Cairo as the key Arab city in the world. But there is that Shia-Sunni split. So therefore they have their own path. And their holy sites are Mecca and Medina, of course, and Jerusalem, of course. But then all the rest, most of the rest of their holy sites are in fact in Iraq. The seminal events that really turned Shia Islam into a completely separate schism occurred in what is now called modern day Iraq, rather than Iran. So they recognise Cairo as a great Islamic and Arab city, but they look to their own for guidance. So the ayatollahs are ruling, making Islamic rulings on Islamic questions for the Shia Muslims of the world. The Mufti of Al-Azhar rules for the Sunni Muslims of the world, but that is 85-88% of the Muslims of the world. Okay.

Q: And how did you as a Jewish man navigate your way to Egypt?

A: I just did, I love meeting people. I was fascinated with Pharaonic Egypt. But the more I went to Egypt, I won't say I've become less

fascinated with Pharaonic Egypt, I'm always fascinated with Pharaonic Egypt. But the more I was in Egypt, the more I was hooked on Islamic Egypt. And the more I was hooked on Islamic Egypt, the more fascinated I was with Azhar and with Mamluk Egypt. So it grew, and of course, the more you visit a place, the more you get to know it, and the more you get to know it, the quicker the acceleration of your ability to assimilate things about it. I hope one day to do a series at Lockdown about Rome, which is another city, one of my great loves. And once you've gone past that third visit to Rome, then your fourth, fifth, and sixth visits, you'll be able to pack in five times as much in five days as you would on your first, second, third visit, because you begin to imbibe it, and you understand it, and you don't need to repeat reading everything, and you get a sense of the geography and the history, and so on. So it was hard at first to navigate it, of course. It was exotic and it was a shock to the system. Cairo is a powerful, shocking city in many ways. But then you get to love it, and you get to know it, and you get to breathe it and eat it and sleep it. And then it becomes very easy. And the Egyptians are an exceptionally warm and friendly people, and they will just take you to their bosom and they will take you around and they will show you anything, delightful, delightful. I never ever had any problems in all my years in Egypt.

Q: Do the students at the Muslim university in Cairo sit exams and get a degree? Are there activities that involve all the students at one time?"

A: No, there are no activities that involve all the students at one time. There are degrees from Azhar, yes. And indeed there are secular degrees from Azhar. But the vast majority of students at Azhar go to Azhar from the old-fashioned way of doing scholarship. They go to learn for learning's sake. And they don't necessarily come out with any form of degree or qualification. Some do, some don't. But Azhar is that old-style university, in a sense. It's there to really spread scholarship.

Yes, Fez, you are quite right, Francois Simon there, "University of al-Qarawiyyin in Fez in Morocco is considered "the oldest continuously operating university in the world." I bet you Azhar would dispute that. But that would be an interesting debate between Fez and Azhar. "Could we have some lectures on the Quran, please?" Ooh, I think that should be done. Ooh, that's a great suggestion. Put it to Lockdown.

Q: What makes Iran so powerful?

A: My word, huge question. Oil is part of it. It sits on the Gulf is part of it. The fact that it is the pulsating heart of the Shia Muslim world is part of it. The fact that it is a theocracy, I think that gives it a raison d'etre, which isn't equaled in a lot of other Muslim countries. It is a very ancient culture. Iran and Egypt claim to be

the two longest continued countries with unchanged borders, more or less. So you have the ancient culture of Iran, the Zoroastrians. You have the pre-Islamic pagan cultures of Iran. This is an ancient, ancient people that have been Islamized. And of course many people say they've been hijacked by Islam because the Iranian people are much, much, much older than Islam. And that's come out in quite a few of the demonstrations, by the way. Some of the demonstrators recently have been saying, you know, we want to get our Iran back. That sort of sentiment. So all those things together I think make Iran so powerful.

"Discuss the Fatimids and the crusades."

No time now, but of course one of the main reasons why the Fatimids in the end ended their empire is because Saladin came out victorious in some of the crusades. And that meant that was the beginning of the end for the Fatimids, the Fatimids were Shia. They were descended from Fatima. And they considered themselves, they were Shia. Once Saladin won the crusades, or some of the crusades, he took over Cairo. It was time over for the Fatimids. And Carol who visited Sheikh Zayed's Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi.

Q: "Fantastic building and magnificent inside. How does it compare with the mosque in Cairo?"

A: I don't know because I've never been to the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Abu Dhabi. Let me look it up and then I'll get back to you on that.

Q: "Why did Muslims decide on dome-shaped mosques, and did the Mamluks originate from other parts of the world?"

A: Yes, the Mamluks originated from Central Asia, but the longer they stayed in Cairo, Damascus and Jerusalem, the more they interbred with other peoples. The original Mamluks were from Central Asia, were of Mongol extraction, but then they became much more diverse ethnically. But what they weren't, is that they weren't Arabs. They became Arabized, so to speak. Dome-shaped mosques. Can I come to that when we look at our fourth lecture, because I do deal with that then.

Kirk, thank you for your comments. That's most kind, thank you.

Q: "Is there water in the cities of the dead?"

A: Yes, the Egyptian municipality pump up water, pump up electricity. There's satellite dishes in some of the mausoleums. And I even once checked my emails there. It is truly remarkable.

Somebody said, "Rather macabre to live with a tomb in the centre of your room." Yes and no. Because that also goes back to ancient Egypt, the people that lived in the necropolises of Giza. I take your point, but this is life, and this is Cairene life.

Q: "In the past have there been tourist attacks aimed at tourists in Cairo?"

A: Yes, there have.

Q: "How safe is it to visit there, especially if one is Jewish?"

A: I wouldn't particularly advertise you're Jewish, but neither did I ever hide it, and I never had any problem. And statistically speaking, it's an incredibly safe city. Cairo is a very, very safe city. The reasons for that for another time.

Q: There you go, somebody says, "I visited Cairo in 2013. We had to have plainclothes police with a gun on the coach. Is it still dangerous?"

A: I can't answer those questions, because I don't know how one defines "dangerous." Statistically speaking, there are hundreds of thousands of tourists that go in and out and there's never an incident. It's like when lots of people, mainly from the States would say, "Be careful, Julian, when you go out at night in London because you could get stabbed. There's so many stabbings in London. I go out in London at all hours, day and night. I've never seen an incident. I've never been at risk of stabbing, never seen a stabbing. So often news reports distort the reality. The reality is statistically Cairo's a very, very safe city.

Q: "What was the script in the picture of delivery of messages to the vassal states?"

A: Yes, indeed, it was indeed Greek, you're quite right. Greek was the language used sometimes by the Fatimids.

"Our view of Western civilization's based on Renaissance culture, based in Christian Rome, Italy and Christian Constantinople."

Absolutely right, Ed, which goes back to my point that we see it through Roman eyes, and then of course the Romans became Christian. That's how we view that civilization. I have indeed travelled in North Africa. And the whole system of memorising the Koran, that is quite right, oral traditions.

Q: "Arab nationalism was at its strongest in the times of Nasser, correct? He wanted to be leader of the Arab world."

A: Yes, very much left over from that period, James, and I will be dealing with that at some length on the 12th of January, worry not, when we look at where Egypt is heading.

Q: "Can you recommend a book for prime reading of Egyptian history?"

A: Good question. Could you throw me an email please, John, and I'll come back to you on that. Just throw me an email.

My pleasure, Judith, and thank you for your comments. And thank you, Cyril. And thank you (indistinct). And I really do apologise if I've mispronounced your name. I'm sorry about that, but thank you for your kind comments.

Rosalind, "In the image of dignitaries walking across the patio of the university, they were all wearing plimsolls or socks." Yes. No, it was the fact that they shouldn't be wearing shoes. But there is wonderful marble work there. I don't know why actually. 'Cause I walked across that and I just wore bare feet or socks, so I don't know why they were.

Q: "What happened in 326 AD?"

A: The conversion of Constantine from pagan to Christian. Key event in human history, I would say, in Western world history, certainly.

"Roman engineering was indisputably superior to the Greeks and Egyptians. However, they depended on the knowledge of mathematics."

Absolutely, Alex.

Q: "Do Egyptians in Alexandria feel different about Egypt than those in Cairo?"

A: Great question, fascinating. I will save that for the fourth lecture, 'cause I do touch upon it.

And thank you, Barbara, for your kind comments.

Q: "For all the Islamic scholarship in Egypt, in effect, it has not had much impact on the Western world. Why is that?"

A: Huge question. Can I save that for the fourth lecture as well, where I touch upon Egypt's role in the world. Sorry to keep repeating that line.

Q: "Did the Copts support the Jews in Mandated Palestine when they were trying to form the state of Israel?"

A: I don't know the answer to that question. I've never thought of that question, Robert. And I don't know the answer to that question. I will mull on that and read up on that.

And Barry, thanks. Yes, you're welcome to get my contact information

from Lockdown. And thank you, Sandy. Yes, there are synagogues in Cairo, to Sandra. There are. There is the Ben Ezra synagogue, which is where the Geniza came from. The Geniza is now in Cambridge. And there are a number of other synagogues. There are the Sha'ar HaShamayim synagogue, which is the only continuously working one, there is also the Karaite synagogue in Cairo. So there are a few, but the Jewish community is very, very tiny now. John, you can get my email address from Lockdown.

Miriam, my pleasure. And Sheila FC, I think you need to email Lockdown and they will give you that address.

And Alex: "Roman architecture, "very Greek architecture, not indisputably." You're right, yes. Carla, thank you.

And the final question here. I've got through them all, 40-something, I think. Sara, my pleasure, thank you all. So everybody, thank you so much. See you on the 20th of November on Tutankhamun, the centenary of his discovery. Many thanks, all!