



The Fayoum

History and Guide

New Revised Edition

R. Neil Hewison

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with photographs by the auhor

The American University in Cairo Press

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إلى
الحاج محمد صالح البرعصى وعائلته الكريمة بالأبعدية
الذين استقبلوني بحفاوة بالغة فى بيتهم وفى حياتهم
واعتبروني واحداً منهم

This edition is dedicated to
Hagg Mohamed Saleh el-Barassy and his family
of al-Ab'âdiya, who welcomed me into their house and their lives and
generously counted me as one of their own

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A Note on Pronunciation

The system used in this book for transcribing Arabic names and words is as arbitrary as any other, so requires a little explanation, particularly for those unfamiliar with Arabic.

Consonants

For the four symbols $\$$, \mathcal{D} , \mathcal{T} , \mathcal{Z} (representing ط ض ص and ظ, the so-called emphatics), imagine you are going to say 'oo' (as in 'cool'), then, without moving your tongue, pronounce *s, d, t, z*. Your tongue should be bunched up in the back of your mouth.

ħ represents the sound ح, a kind of *h* pushed very heavily from the back of the mouth, but without any friction. The second kind of *h* (هـ), which is like the English one, is symbolized by *h* with no dot.

kh (خ) is like the *ch* in Scottish *loch*, or in German *Buch*.

gh (غ) is pronounced in the same way as the above, but with voicing, i.e., vibration of the vocal chords.

'(ع) is a sound totally alien to English. It is a forcing of the air through a constriction in the throat, like a kind of backward gulp. If you cannot manage it, substitute *a* as in *cat*.

- (ء) is a glottal stop, a brief catching of the breath in the throat, as the Cockney *t* in *matter*.

q (ق) is properly pronounced as a kind of *k* far back in the mouth, but in the Fayoum, as in Cairo, it is nearly always replaced by a glottal stop. Thus *Qarûn* is usually pronounced 'arûn.

sh (ش) is pronounced as in English *sheep*.

g (ج) is pronounced as in English *go*.

Other consonants are pronounced as in English.

Note that doubling of a consonant letter indicates that a consonant is long, and must be held for twice the normal time, as the *k* sound in English *bookcase*.