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## **The City of a Thousand Minarets / Historic Cairo**

The city of Cairo is situated east of the pyramid area of Giza.

It was founded by Muslims during the mid-10th century and is remarkable for its many mosques and minarets.

Cairo is known as the “The city of a thousand minarets.”

Al-Azhar Mosque was the first mosque built after the city came under Islamic rule.

It was an important part of people’s everyday lives.

A school providing free education was built inside.

Children from poor families and foreign students studied and lived here.

The citadel stands at the top of the highest hill in Cairo.

It was at the centre of Egyptian politics and warfare from the 12th to 19th centuries.

It was built in the 12th century by then ruler Saladin to defend the city from Crusaders.

During that time, the Crusades were fighting against the Muslims over control of Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

In order to counter the strong Crusader army, Saladin took another drastic measure.

He bought 12,000 Mameluke mercenaries, military-trained slaves originating from the equestrian tribes of Central Asia and trained them into a formidable army.

The Mamelukes successfully defeated the Crusaders. However,

After Saladin’s death, Mameluke mercenaries became the rulers of Cairo after seizing power in a coup.

They built one mosque after another to prove their dedication to Islam.

This is the Sultan Hassan Mosque built during the Mameluke Sultanate.

It has the tallest minaret in Cairo and is decorated with stalactite corncicing.

The cornices represent dripping water, a symbol dear to people of the desert.

These are the remains of the mosque hospital.

The Mamelukes rose to power from slavery.

They cared for the disadvantaged and gradually gained the trust of their subjects.

Around 146 mosques were built in Cairo during the 260 years that the Mameluke Sultanate ruled Egypt.

Each mosque has a minaret and each calls out in the name of God to this day.