

## Constantinopolitan masonry; a building technique used in the monuments of Egypt

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Constantinopolitan masonry, a building technique consists of alternating bands of brick and stone, following the example of late Roman opus mixtus. Namely squared stone faced both the inner and outer surfaces of the wall, and mortared rubble filled the space between the facings. The brick would normally form a leveling course, extending through the thickness of the wall and binding the two faces together. This technique acquired its name from the walls "aswar" of Constantinople, as the oldest and the most distinctive example of which.

The walls of the famous Roman Fortress of Babylon in the ancient district of Cairo (Misr Al-Qadima), are built in Constantinopolitan masonry. This paradigm shows the standard practice of this technique, namely, both the inner and the outer surfaces of a wall correspond to each other, namely where a brick course appears on the exterior, the same will appear in the interior. Also the interior and exterior cornices correspond to each other, and arcading on the exterior normally coincides with the springing of arches and vaults in the interior.

Later, this technique is reappeared, after many centuries, partially, in the Mamluk-Ottoman monuments as well as completely in some of the 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries' historical buildings.

This paper aims to investigate the archaeological and historical context of using this technique through its paradigms in Egypt.