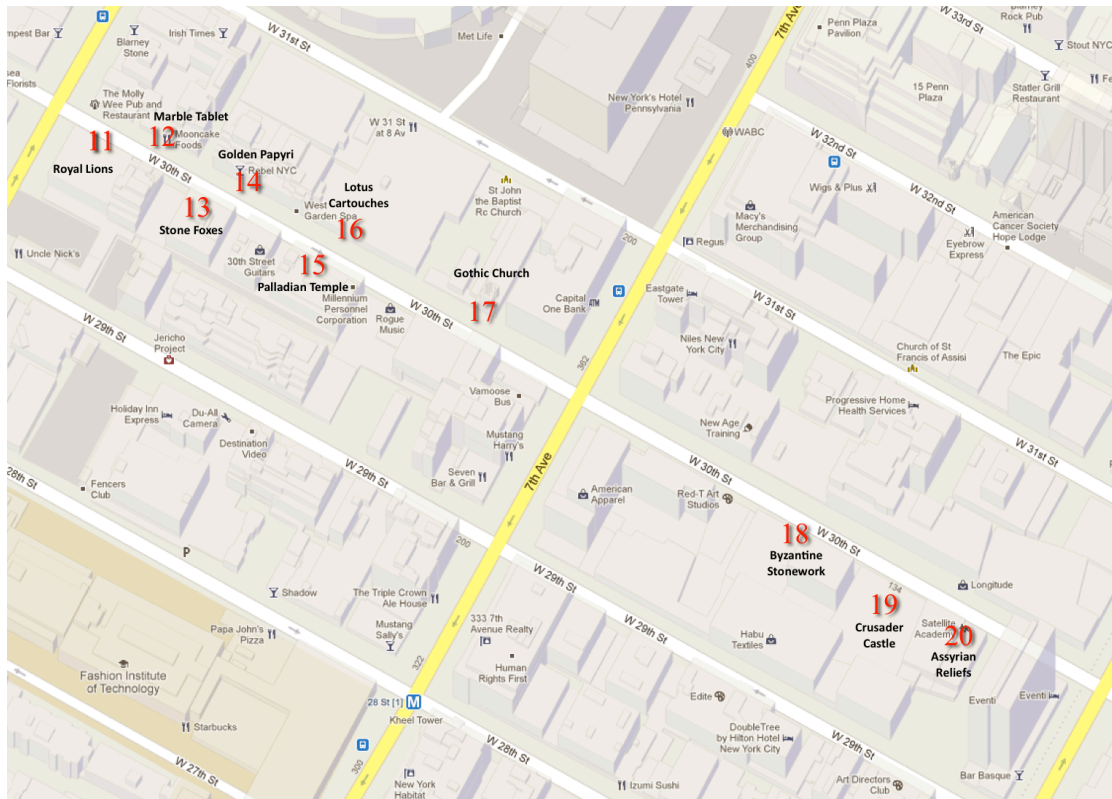


Alexandria, 482 A.D. (8th to 6th Avenues)



Between 8th and 6th Avenues, one steps into a landscape straight out of mediaeval Alexandria, a wealthy and powerful Greco-Byzantine city on the Mediterranean. Here on these two blocks is concentrated some of the most exquisite art deco buildings on the street, their facades adorned by a variety of sacred totems, animal, vegetable and architectural, influenced by Roman and Egyptian tradition.

Noble lions cavort near an outcrop of papyrus plants. A pair of stone foxes solemnly stand guard over an elaborate archway. The Palladian façade of a Roman temple magically appears some ten storeys up, while an army of Assyrian winged guardians, horse-drawn chariots and Persian lions wage war far above a latter-day crusader castle.

Many of the buildings here are also named after the wealthy patricians that erected these buildings, though the association between person and building

has long since faded, and these names are now merely decorative flourishes; metaphorical gates firmly enclosing back-(hi)stories within fortresses of stone and mortar.

Finally, between the two blocks, at the very heart of this world stands a church consecrated to St John the Baptist, who's severed head King Herod's daughter, Salome, famously danced to. The Church, built in 1872, once catered to the German Catholic community, but now serves the spiritual needs of pilgrims who pass through or are employed within this sacred precinct.

* * * * *



11 – No. 260: *New York City Human Resources Building*, adorned with a pair of Royal Lions.



12 – No. 257: Marble tablet bearing the name Joseph P. Cuomo.



13 – No. 242: Stone foxes stand guard over an elaborate ceremonial archway.



14 – No. 251: A sacred grove of old papyri set against a sea-blue background.



15 – No. 224: a high-rise apartment with the Palladian façade of a Roman temple.



16 – No. 243: The doorway to the *Brenley Building*, decorated with sacred cartouches of lotus blossoms.



17 – No. 232: Church of St John the Baptist, in a Gothic Revival style (1872). It's Roman Catholic, rather than Greek Orthodox, but the intent remains the same: to awe.



18 – No. 150: Latched stonework and lamp channel the Byzantine Empire. At top left, the head of another fox peeks out.



19 - Nos. 134 – 138: A latter-day crusader castle housing the Headquarters of NYPD's Traffic Control Division.



20 – No. 130: *The S. J. M. Building* (1927), designed by Cass Gilbert (who also designed the Woolworth Building), adorned with an army of Assyrian winged guardians rendered in gold and terracotta.