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Abd El Megeed Pasha Seif El Nasr Palace, Mallawi, Minia (An Archaeological Study)

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Abstract

Egypt is rich in both archaeological and historical buildings, dating back to different periods of its long history. The so-called historical palaces are among the most important of these buildings. A number of such historical palaces have been built in Egypt during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of our common era. As a matter of fact, this period can be labelled as the renaissance era of palatial architecture, which was not limited to large cities in Egypt, but they also existed in comparatively small cities. Among the latter is the city of Mallawi, which has a large number of historical palaces with many unique architectural and decorative features. One of the most important palaces in Mallawi is the palace of Abd El Megeed pasha, which is datable to the 19th and 20th centuries AD. This palace is the focus of this article. The palace has often been cited as one of the Islamic monuments in the city. It was built in AH 1333 AH/ AD 1912 by Abd El Megeed Pasha, whose family, that is of Seif Al Nasr Pasha, is one of the oldest families in Mallawi. The family still owns a large number of palaces in the city. Perhaps the most famous Pasha of this family was Abd El Megeed Pasha Seif El Nasr. He was the eldest son of Seif Pasha and a mayor of the city of Mallawi from AD 1915 until 1942. This article gives a detailed architectural description of the palace, a description that is enhanced with recent photographs, architectural drawings, and vivid illustrations in an attempt to highlight the unique architectural and artistic value of the palace. The architectural features and artistic style of arts used in the construction and decoration of the palace is unparalleled. The article ends with some results and recommendations for the reuse of the palace as a tourist destination and historic attraction in Mallawi.

Introduction:

Egypt has a large number of historical palaces, a considerable number of which were built during the reign of Mohamed Ali Pasha (1769-1849) and his family, who ruled Egypt from the beginning of the 19th till the mid of the 20th century AD¹. Some of the historical palaces of Egypt have been reused to host cultural events such as Beshtak palace (14th c.) and Amir Taz palace (14th c.) in Cairo. Some others have been reused as presidential palaces, such as Abdeen palace (19th c.) and Koubbeh palace (19th c.) in Cairo and Ras El-Tin palace (19th c.) in Alexandria. Some other palaces have been repurposed as museums like the palace of Prince Mohamed Ali (20th c.) in Cairo. Some palaces have been re-used as governmental administration buildings, such as Princess Fokia palace (20th c.) in Cairo.

Despite of the continuing efforts exerted by the Ministry of Antiquities for preserving the historical palaces of Egypt and repurposing their functions, many palaces still unused and suffer from neglect. Examples of the latter include Al-Gawhara palace (19th c.), Al-Sakakini palace (19th c.), and Said Halim palace (19th c.) in Cairo². It is noteworthy that the renaissance in palace architecture during the 19th and 20th c. was not limited to large Egyptian cities, but it has also spread into many other comparatively smaller cities. Among these cities is Mallawi, which possess a large number of palaces, which were built by members of the upper class families, large landowners, merchants, and senior officials. The historical palaces in Mallawi are characterized by different architectural stylistic features and decorative elements, which are executed with a high degree of noticeable competency. Unfortunately, most of these palaces exist in downtown, where the land price is on the high at present. Consequently, many owners of these palaces decided to demolish their palaces to gain financial benefits of its land. As a result, the city lost many of its historical places. Moreover, the still surviving palaces suffer greatly from negligence and deterioration, which will eventually lead to the destruction and disappearance of such incomparable monumental palaces. Many historical palaces in Mallawi have not yet been announced as monuments by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, and most of them are private possessions and still used for habitation. Moreover, the architectural interiors of many palaces had been dramatically altered. Thus, many of their distinguished architectural and artistic features are unfortunately lost. To be sure, these palaces are in dire need of urgent restoration and repair interventions and works. The palace of Abd El Megeed Pasha has been considered as one of the Islamic monuments in the city.

This article attempts to achieve the following objectives:

- To shed the light on the archaeological uniqueness of the palace.
- To raise the awareness among the citizens of Mallawi, and beyond, of the value of such historical palaces.
- To make suggestions and recommendations with the potential to develop similar palaces and include them as tourist attractions.

Importance of the Research:

¹ Through the article, I will use the abbreviation "c." to stand for the word "century".

²) Elyamani, A. 2018. 'Re-Use Proposals and Structural Analysis of Historical Palaces in Egypt: The Case of Baron Empain Palace, in Cairo', *Scientific Culture* Vol. 4, No.1, 54.

- The importance of preserving historic buildings is not limited to the material aspects of protecting a country's properties against deterioration, or even to keeping them for their architectural value. Yet it extends to include the maintenance of the nation's historical structures, which exemplify historical events and express cultural identity.
- Historical palaces have not received the attention they deserve from specialists and the tourism sector, despite their unique historical significance and artistic value.
- The article deals with an historical palace that was built in modern Egypt. This period was a turning point in the history of Egypt, witnessing its openness to the West. The palaces figure out as one of the most important surviving evidence of this period. Studying the challenges that hinder the preservation and the appropriate exploitation of these palaces, and recognizing their authentic value and historical significance, let alone the political and socio-economic role that the builders of these palaces played in modern Egypt, is an integral part of the documentation work.

The Owner of the Palace:

The family of Seif Al Nasr Pasha is one of the oldest families in Mallawi. This family still owns a large number of palaces in the city. The most famous Pashas of this family was Abd El Megeed Pasha Seif El Nasr. He was the eldest son of Seif Pasha and served as the mayor of Mallawi from AD 1915 until 1942. He was born in 1306 A.H in Dirout Om Nakhla, one of the oldest villages in Mallawi.

He received the title of Pasha in AD 1944. He built two mosques in Mallawi. The first is located on the western side of Mallawi, and was built in his memory and contains his mausoleum. The second is located in El-Megeedy Street. He also built two palaces; one of them is located on the western side of the city, which is now functions as a hospital. The second palace, which is under scrutiny, is located in downtown of Mallawi.

The Construction Date of the Palace:

On 3/7/2002, the palace of Abd El Megeed Pasha has been registered as a heritage site, and has since been supervised by Department of Islamic and Coptic Monuments of the Ministry of Antiquities (now labelled as the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities). The palace was built in 1333 AH/ 1912 AD by Abd El Megeed Pasha. The architectural layout and stylistic decoration of the palace have largely been influenced by the European architectural styles (pl. 1).

• The Location of the Palace (Fig. 1):

The palace is situated in Mallawi, and overlooks four streets (Seif El-Nasr Street on the east, Riad Street on the north, and Mohammed Mahmoud Street on the west). The palace and its garden occupy 2618 square meters. The palace consists of three floors (pl. 59) and has four facades. The palace is a freestanding structure, which is surrounded with a garden, which in turn is surrounded with an outer enclosure wall from the four sides. The main entrance to the palace is located on the eastern side, overlooking Seif Pasha Street.

1- The Interior Description of the Palace:

The palace consists of three floors, which can be described as follows³:

• The First Floor (Fig. 2):

This floor consists of a central hall, which is flanked by small side rooms. It was painted and most of its architectural and decorative elements have been removed. It is now used

³ عبد الاول عبد العزيز عبد اللاه، رصد وتحليل المباني ذات القيمة التاريخية والمعمارية بمدينة ملوي، رسالة ماجستير، كلية الهندسة، جامعة القاهرة، 2009، ص 178.

as a storage for carpets, and is owned by the Sons of Kuraim Company, the current owners of the palace.

2- The Second Floor (Fig. 3):

This floor is reached through an outer double staircase, leading to the main hall of the palace. This floor consists of a rectangular hall, which is flanked by side rooms on the northern and southern sides.

The Main Hall:

It is a rectangular hall, the ceiling of which is decorated with a stucco frieze gilded with floral decorations. In the middle of the ceiling there is a decorative element in the shape of a medallion with floral decoration. The walls of the room are painted in light colors, including light green and white with gilded decoration. The ground is covered with white marble tiles, which are decorated with black frames. In the western side of this hall there are two marble decorative columns with ionic capitals.

The Northern Rooms:

The First Room:

It is located on the north eastern side of the central hall. It has two doors: one opens onto the central hall and the other leads to the terrace on the eastern façade of the palace. There is a window on the eastern wall of the room, overlooking the terrace. This window has two outer wooden leaves and two inner glass leaves. The walls of the room are painted in light colors: light green and white with gilded decorations. The ceiling of this room has a gilded raised frieze, which is decorated with figures of winged and naked children in the upper part. Each two opposite figures are similar, one of them has black hair, and wears a green cloak and a red belt, while the other has yellow hair, and is dressed in blue belt and a violet cloak.

In the western wall, there is a wooden door flanked by two engaged columns with ionic capitals. This door leads to the next room.

The Second Room:

It is rectangular in shape. The ceiling of this room is decorated with a prominent frieze and has the same human figures of the previous room. In the upper part of the wall there is a gilded stucco cornice, which is divided into squares and rectangular shapes. The squares have floral decorations, while the rectangles have natural landscape decorations, including seas, green lands, trees, mountains, and bouquets of flowers. The floor of this room is brightly covered with wood. The walls are painted in light green and white colors. The room has two doors: a wooden one leading to the main hall on the southern side, and another door leading to the next room on the western side.⁴ It has three windows, overlooking the northern garden of the palace. These windows are composed of two outer wooden leaves and two inner glass leaves.

The Third Room:

In the southern wall of this room there is a door, opening onto the main hall. On the western side of this room there is another door, giving access to a small corridor. These two doors have two wooden leaves. It also has three rectangular windows with a balcony overlooking the northern garden of the palace. The lower part of the room is covered with wood, while the upper part is painted in yellow. The upper part and the ceiling of the room are decorated with oil paintings, imitating curtains (Pls. 25 & 26).

The Fourth Room:

It is a small rectangular room, which is approached through a door on eastern side of the previous room. It has another door, leading onto the next room on the western side.

⁴ Palladio, A. 1956. *The Four Books of Architecture*, New York, 14.

The ceiling of this room is decorated with a prominent gilded frieze. The floor is covered with wood in parquet style.

The Fifth Room:

It is one of the most distinguished rooms in the palace. It is square in shape, and its walls are covered with wooden slabs. The ceiling decorations resemble those of the previous room (no. 6). Similarly, the floor is covered with wood in parquet style. It has one door on the eastern wall, leading onto the main hall of the palace⁵.

The Kitchen:

It is rectangular in shape. It has a door with one wooden leaf. The floor and walls are covered with brown ceramics. It has a small circular window opening onto the western garden of the palace.

The Bathroom:

It has a rectangle shape, and its lower part is covered with white mosaics, while the upper part is colored with green mosaics.

The Southern Side Room:

It is the largest room in the palace. It is located on the southern side of the main hall. In its northern wall there are two wooden doors, leading to the main hall of the palace. This room is irregular in shape, and has eight windows preceded by small balconies, which overlook the southern garden of the palace. On the western side of this room, there are two marble columns decorated with ionic capitals. The walls of the room are covered with wood in the lower part, while the upper part is painted in yellow dark color. The ceiling of this room is decorated with a stucco green frieze, which has natural scenes representing plants, flowers, and a cloudy sky. In the south-western side of the ceiling there is a monogram that includes (A&S), a clear reference to the first two letters of the name of Abd El Megeed Sief el-Nasr, which are written in English letters inside an oval shape.

3- The Third Floor (Fig. 4):

This floor is similar to the first floor in both its architectural plan and style of decoration. It consists of a central hall that is surrounded by side rooms on the northern and southern sides.

The Main Hall:

It resembles the central hall of the first floor in the architecture and decoration.

The Northern Rooms:

The First Room:

It is irregular in shape. It has a wooden door in the northern wall, leading to the main hall of the palace. It has two windows in the northern wall, which is preceded by a terrace, overlooking the northern garden of the palace. The ceiling of the room is decorated with oil paintings, representing natural scenes of a grey boat sailing on blue water and cloudy sky.

The Second Room:

It is a large rectangular room. It has one door in the southern wall, leading onto the main hall of the palace, and has three windows opening onto the northern garden of the palace. The walls of the room are painted in green. The ceiling of this room is decorated with oil paintings, representing splendid circular forms, including a two-storey house. On each side of the scene, there are two birds with outstretched wings standing on a circular shape⁶.

⁵ محمد عبد الحميد رشاد، قصري حياة النفوس وسيف النصر بمدينة ملوي (محافظة المنيا)، رسالة ماجستير، كلية الآثار، جامعة القاهرة، 2007، ص 88.

⁶ عبد الحفيظ، دور الجاليات الاجنبية والعربية في الحياة الفنية في مصر في ق 18-19، رسالة دكتوراة، جامعة القاهرة، 2000، ص 306.

The Third Room:

It is a small square room with beveled corners. It has a door in the southern wall, which leads onto the main hall. The room also has two windows that are preceded by small balconies, overlooking the northern garden of the palace.

The Fourth Room:

It is a rectangular room with a door, which connects the main building of the palace and the western attached building⁷.

The Southern Rooms:

The First Room:

It is located on the eastern side of the palace and to the south of the main hall. In the northern wall there is a wooden door, consisting of two wooden leaves and giving access to the main hall. There is also a window opening onto the eastern wall, which overlooks the eastern garden of the palace. This window is preceded by a balcony, which is closed with a wooden balustrade.

The Bathroom:

It is a rectangular space that has one wooden door, opening onto the main hall of the palace.

The Second Room:

It is a square room with beveled corners. It has two wooden doors: one in the northern wall, leading to the main hall, and the other exists in the eastern wall and gives access to the corridor that leads to the southern tower of the palace. In the southern wall of this room, there are three rectangular windows, overlooking the southern garden of the palace.

2- The Architectural Description of the Palace Exterior:

The palace has four facades with architectural and decorative elements as follows:⁸

• **The Eastern Façade (pl. 4, fig. 5)**

It is the main façade of the palace, and is composed of three floors. The facade of the first ground floor consists of a double staircase of twenty marble flights. It has a stone balustrade, which is decorated with geometrical shapes and floral ornaments. The staircase ends with a rectangular basic flight in front of the main entrance, which leads to the first floor. This staircase leads to a covered area, which is supported upon two marble columns with composite capitals. Beneath this staircase there are three windows, each one of these windows has two wooden leaves. These windows overlook an area covered with a wooden ceiling, which is supported on four pillars with no capitals. In the middle of this facade there is a rectangular panel, which bears the foundation text of the palace.

The Main Doorway of the Palace (Pl. 5):

The doorway is situated in the middle part of the eastern façade of the palace. It consists of two wooden leaves, inlaid with iron and glass works and floral ornaments. The doorway is flanked by two semi-circular openings on both sides. Above the doorway there is a carved fronton, which is decorated with floral ornaments and is supported by two corbels. The latter take the shape of two symmetrical stucco statues of topless woman, whose lower part is covered with acanthus leaves⁹.

The façade of the two upper floors is identical. It consists of three parts. The middle part has two symmetrical balconies in each floor. Each of these balconies is supported by two columns with composite capitals. All the balconies have wooden doors of two

⁷ عرفة عبده على، القاهرة في عصر إسماعيل، الدار المصرية اللبنانية، القاهرة، 1998، ص 112.

⁸ The exterior frontage facade of the building is sometimes distinguished from the other facades by the elaboration of its architectural and ornamental details.

⁹ عبد المنصف سالم نجم، قصر السكاكيني دراسة فنية معمارية، رسالة ماجستير، كلية الآثار جامعة القاهرة، 1996م، 1مج، ص 75.

leaves and above the doors there are floral festoons. The right-side part of the main façade in each of the two floors has a terrace, which is supported by columns and has a stone balustrade decorated with oval forms., The left-side part of the main façade has similar rectangular windows. Each window consists of two wooden leaves from the outside and two glass leaves from the inside; some of these windows are preceded with a small balcony, which is enclosed with a stone balustrade and is supported with stone corbels¹⁰.

The Northern Façade (pls. 6-7, fig. 6):

This façade overlooks the garden of the palace on the northern side. It is composed of three floors; each has five windows. These windows are closed with two wooden leaves from the outside and two glass leaves from the inside. Some windows in the second floor are closed with four wooden leaves. The windows of the first floor have metal grills, and are crowned with prominent lintels, which, in their centers, are decorated with human figures. These lintels are supported by small corbels with floral decorations; between each two corbels there are interlacing floral ornaments. The windows of the second and third floors are surmounted with carved frontons, which are decorated with floral ornaments. In the middle of this façade there are two small balconies, which are enclosed with wooden balustrade and rest upon stone corbels.

In the eastern side of the façade there is another tower topped with a wooden dome, which rests upon sixteen small columns with ionic capitals. This wooden dome is covered with fish scales decoration. The most distinctive decoration on the façade of the second floor are the stucco statues of topless women, whose lower parts are covered with acanthus leaves. In the western side of the façade there is a small building attached to the palace. This building consists of two floors; each floor has two windows. These windows are similar to the windows on the northern façade in layout and decoration.

• **The Southern Façade (pl. 7):**

This façade consists of three parts: two symmetrical parts on the sides and a central projecting one. The middle part of the façade has nine rectangular windows, three in each floor, each window has two wooden leaves. Some of these windows have small balconies at their front. These balconies have a stone balustrade, which is decorated with oval forms and is supported by small stone corbels. In the first floor of this part, there is an entrance door with two metal leaves covered with colored glass.

The two other parts of the façade are similar. Each part has six windows; two in each floor. The windows of this façade are similar to the windows of the northern facade. The middle part of the façade has nine rectangular windows, three in each floor. Each window is closed with two wooden leaves. In the first floor of this part, there is an entrance door that is closed with two metal leaves and is covered with colored glass. The entrance door is flanked with two engaged columns with ionic capitals.

In the western side of this façade there is a tower built of bricks and coated with a stucco layer. This tower extends from the ground level to the roof of the palace. It is composed of a cylindrical shaft, which is topped with a dome resting upon six columns with ionic capitals. The tower has a spiral metal staircase, leading to the roof of the palace (pl. 8).

• **The Western Façade (pl. 9):**

This façade overlooks the back garden of the palace. It consists of two floors. The first floor has a doorway, which has two wooden leaves and is accessible through a staircase. The staircase consists of twenty-two stone flights ending with a rectangular flight that leads directly to interior of the palace. This doorway is topped with a balcony that is closed with a wooden balustrade and is supported with two small corbels. The second

¹⁰ Palladio, 1956.) *The Four Books of Architecture*, 14.

floor of this facade has an arched window, which provides both lightening and ventilation for the palace. This window is divided into three sections; the largest one is in the middle section and the other two side sections are smaller. This window is flanked by a raised stucco frieze, which rests upon a wooden corbel.¹¹

- **The Garden of the Palace:**

The palace has a garden that is surrounded with an outer wall on four sides. The southern side of the garden is occupied by modern random buildings (pl. 10). There is a fountain in front of the eastern façade of the palace (pl. 11). The garden contains a stone seat (tea kiosk), which was used as a rest place for the owner of the palace. Now, it is partly demolished (pl. 12). The outer walls of the palace were built out of mud brick and coated with mortar in the lower part and wrought iron in the upper part.

3- The Present Condition of the Palace:

Although the palace was placed under the care of the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), it still faces many challenges:

- The random modern buildings, which were recently built in the garden of the palace.
- Using modern, inappropriate materials in the restoration of the ruined parts of the palace, which partly damaged the architectural and artistic value of the palace.
- The use of modern electric equipment, such as lights and fans, which badly affect the interior decorations of the palace.
- The use of the ground floor of the palace as a store for carpets.
- The carelessness in the cleaning of the palace, because it is now closed and only opened for special visitors.
- The absence of public awareness of the historical and architectural importance of the palace. This appears in the accumulation of rubbish and shops in front of the palace.
- The rising of the underground water level, which badly affects the foundation and decoration of the palace.

4- The Architecture and Decoration of the Palace:

Several European architectural and artistic styles are used in Egypt, including the Gothic, the Neo-classical, the Renaissance, and the Baroque and Rococo styles. These styles appeared as a result of the openness of Egypt to all European countries. There have been several reasons, which facilitated the introduction of these influences to the Egyptian soil. The French campaign on Egypt at the end of the 18th c., the European community who lived in Egypt in the 19th c., the scientific missions sent by Egypt to Europe, and the inclination of Egypt's rulers to the Western culture had the strongest impact on the transmission of European styles to Egypt. In addition, the Turks played an important role in the transmission of the European "Roman" style that was prevalent in Turkey at that time, when they moved it to Egypt in the early nineteenth c. of our common era¹².

- The Most Important Styles that have transferred to Egypt:

A) The Gothic Style:

This artistic style was spread in Europe during the Middle Ages. At first, it was a religious art that is derived from the Romantic style in France, England, Italy, and Spain¹³. The artists of the Renaissance style were the first to call it "Gothic". They thought

¹¹ Zaky 2014. *Abdeen Palace and its Tourist Development*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Minia University, Minia, 74-75.

¹² Zaky 2018. *Abdeen Palace and its Tourist Development*, 74-75.

¹³ Fletcher, B. F. 1905. *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method*, London, 267-268.

that the nations, who invaded Europe and wrecked the Roman values and replaced them by these arts, were barbarian “Gothic”. This style is the first European architectural style, which denounces the domination of the Roman and Byzantine styles.¹⁴

The Gothic features in the palace include:

- 1) Using huge windows.
- 2) Having the circular towers.
- 3) Using the composite columns.
- 4) Covering windows and doors with metal grills.

B) The Renaissance Architecture Style:¹⁵

It is one of the most important architectural and artistic styles that spread across Italy and then throughout Europe. More than one architectural Renaissance style has appeared in Europe. Renaissance means “the rebirth of classicism”. It prevailed in Egypt during the 19th c. The use of architectural elements is the most prominent feature of the Renaissance style, which has been introduced to palatial architecture of Egypt during the 19th c. AD. The use of huge and luxurious façade-entrance is the most distinctive feature of these architectural elements. Most of Renaissance style entrances were usually preceded with verandas. Another prominent feature of the Renaissance style is the presence of a large number of windows in each façade; these windows usually resemble each other and are arranged above each other. The Renaissance style is also distinguished with the use of classical columns, which have also been used in the Neo-classical style. Both styles use similar classical columns in design and decoration. So, there is no difference between the two styles in the use of columns.

C) The Neo-classical Architectural Style:¹⁶

The Neo-classical style refers to the revival of classical art and architecture. The first appearance of this style was in Italy and France and then it spread across all European countries. Neo-classicism is the name given to distinct movements in visual arts, literature, theatre, music, and architecture. It refers to the revival of classical art and architecture beginning in Europe in 1163 A.H. /1750 A.D. and lasts until around 1245 A.H. /1830 A.D.

The Architecture Elements of the Neo-classical Style:¹⁷

Many elements of the Neo-classicism style had spread all over Egypt during the 19th c., when all of the constructions that followed the European styles have included some elements borrowed from the Neo-classical style. These elements include architectural elements such as Ionic, Corinthian, Composite, and Etruscan columns, pediments, and entablatures, the egg-and-dart ornament, the dentil molding, the acanthus leaves, the anthemion ornament, the laurel leaves, the festoons of flowers and fruits, the masks, and the medusa head.¹⁸

In addition, the Neo-classicism style is distinguished with the use of human statues, such as the two life-size statues flanking the windows of the third floor on the southern façade of the palace.

D) The Baroque Style:

¹⁴ Hamlin, A. D. F. 1905. *A Textbook of the History of Architecture*, New York, London and Bombay. 233; Collins, P. 1998. *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture, 1750-1950*, Canada, 01.

¹⁵ Palmer, A. L. 2011. *Historical Dictionary of Neoclassical Art and Architecture*, Scarecrow Press Inc., 11.

¹⁶ Ali, N. W. M. 2013. *El-Minyā City during the Reign of Muḥammad Alī and his Dynasty* vol. 1, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Minia University, Minia, 326.

¹⁷ Palmer 2011, *Historical Dictionary of Neoclassical Art and Architecture*, 192.

¹⁸ Palmer 2011, *Historical Dictionary of Neoclassical Art and Architecture*, 1.

The Baroque is a style of an architectural and decorative art that first appeared in Rome, Italy, and it was then spread to most of Europe between the 17th and the 18th c. AD. The word Baroque means “the irregular pearl”, reflecting its incentive of turning away from coordination and order in architecture and decoration. In Egypt, the Baroque art was widely spread, and was mainly used in the decoration of palaces built on European styles.

The Architectural Elements of the Baroque Style¹⁹:

The most important architectural elements of the Baroque style include:

- 1) The use of huge single and double stairs.
- 2) The decoration of the inner walls with wallpapers and wooden slabs.
- 3) The use of wood in parquet style to cover the floors.

The Decorative Elements of the Baroque Style:

The decorative elements of the Baroque style include:

- 1) The use of symbolic decorations like nobles’ slogans and monograms.
- 2) The abundance of oil paintings and light colors decorations.
- 3) The use of decorative themes like Greek myths.
- 4) The repetition of decorative shapes²⁰.

E) The Rococo Style²¹:

This style of architecture appeared in Europe, and was introduced to Egypt during the 19th c. The term “Rococo” is derived from the French word *rocaille*, which means “rockwork”. Palaces that were influenced with the “Rococo” style usually have the following architectural and decorative elements:

- 1) The use of concrete ceilings.
- 2) The existence of different types of stairs, whether single or double.
- 1) The decorations of both walls and ceilings with floral branches and bird and animal figures.
- 2) The use of light and bright oil colors.

5. Examples of the Rococo Decorative Elements in the Palace:

1- Geometrical Ornaments:

The geometrical ornaments in the palace decoration include the square and rectangular shapes and well-known polygons.

- The Egg-and-Dart Decoration

The egg-and-dart is a decorative motif, consisting of oval egg shapes alternating with thin arrowhead or dart-shaped patterns. It has much been used in the buildings, using the Neo-classical architecture style²². The egg-and-dart has been used to decorate the band beneath the stone cornice of the external facades of the palace. Another good example of the egg-and-dart decoration appears in the upper part of the inner walls (pl. 15).²³

- The Dentil Decoration

The dentil moulding is an ornamental motif, consisting of a row of spaced rectangular recesses or projections. It is often called a dentil frieze, if it is found below a cornice. Rows of dentils are often found under the corona of an Ionic or Corinthian cornice²⁴. It is a common decorative feature in Roman Ionic and Doric buildings. In the Roman

¹⁹ عبد المنصف سالم نجم، قصر السكاكيني دراسة معمارية فنية، رسالة ماجستير، كلية الآثار، جامعة القاهرة، 1996، ص 98، 275.

²⁰ ثروت عكاشة، فنون عصر النهضة الباروك، الجزء التاسع، هيئة الكتاب المصرية، 1988، ص 33.

²¹ عبد المنصف سالم نجم، قصور الأمراء، قصور الأمراء والباشوات في مدينة القاهرة في القرن التاسع عشر دراسة للطراز المعمارية والفنية، ج2، مكتبة زهراء الشرق، الطبعة الأولى، 2002، ص 150.

²² عبد المنصف سالم نجم، قصور الأمراء، ج، ص 29.

²³ Ali 2013, *El-Minyā City during the Reign of Muḥammad Alī and his Dynasty*, 184.

²⁴ Ali 2013, *El-Minyā City during the Reign of Muḥammad Alī and his Dynasty*, 185.

Corinthian, however, one usually finds that there is a row of dentils alternating between two mouldings under the modillions. The proportions of classic dentils vary considerably; in some examples, the width and projection of the dentil is equal to two thirds of the height, while the inter dentil or space is only one third the height, which is approximated to one sixth of the lower diameter of the column. In Byzantine architecture, however, a double alternating dentil is frequently used. During the nineteenth century AD, the decoration of dentils has often been used in palaces, which were influenced with the neo-classical and Renaissance architectural styles.²⁵ The dentil moulding has been much used as a decorative element in the palace of Abd El Megeed Pasha (pl. 16). For instance, on the four facades of the palace, the band of dentils is found on the curved fronton of the northern facade, and the dentil ornament exists above the main entrance of the palace.

- The Prominent Fret

The fret in general is a running band ornament of lines or fillets, which are linked or interlinked to form a continuous motif. It is often called the key pattern, and always has an orthogonal geometry.²⁶ The fret has many forms in Islamic architecture, where it is usually used above doors and windows and as a frame of the geometrical decorations like the star shapes. Frets are essential in determining and decorating different types of ornaments, whether geometrical, vegetal, or writings. There are *de facto* many types of frets, including the *Mīma* fret,²⁷ the circular fret, the pyramidal fret, and the composite *mīma* fret.²⁸ The *mīma* fret has derived its name from the geometric unit that connects the frets, which resembles the head of the Arabic letter "م".²⁹ This kind of decoration is used in the palace, crowning the southern and western façades of the palace (pl. 17).

- The Crestings (Crenellations)

The cresting was often used to crown the facades of Assyrian and Iranian buildings before the advent of Islam. The earliest surviving appeared of this architectural element is in the mosque of Ibn Tulun, where they take the shape of dolls. In the Fatimid period, however, stepped cresting decorations were used in al- Azhar mosque (369-361 A. H. /970-972 A.D). In the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods, the stepped crestings appeared in many Islamic buildings, notably in the mausoleum of al-Salih Nagim al-Din Ayub (647-648 A.H /1249-1250 A.D.). The crenellations also appeared in the palace of Abd El Megeed Pasha, crowning the south façade of the palace (pl. 18).

2- The Floral Ornaments:

The floral decorative motifs like flowers and fruits are often used in the decoration of the external facades, but also on the inner walls of the palace. The floral ornaments encompass the acanthus leaves and the festoons of flowers and fruits.

- The Acanthus Leaves

The acanthus is one of the most common types of plant, which is often used to make foliage ornament and decoration. The leaves of acanthus are usually used in architecture as a decorative motif. It is a typically classical-style ornamental motif of vertical, symmetrical foliage with scalloped edges. It is used as the most distinctive ornament of Corinthian and composite capitals of columns. The palace of Abd el Megeed Pasha has many examples of this decorative element, where it adorns the lower parts of human

²⁵ عبد المنصف سالم نجم، قصور الأمراء، المرجع السابق، ص 29.

²⁶ Ali, *El-Minyā City during the Reign of Muḥammad Alī and his Dynasty*, 168.

²⁷ *Mīma* fret is a style of parallel and interlocking lines. See Abd el Gawad, A. 2012. *Veiling Architecture: Decoration of Domestic Buildings in Upper Egypt 1672-1950*, AUC Press, Cairo, 12.

²⁸ عبد السلام أحمد نظيف، دراسات في العمارة الإسلامية، الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب، 1989، ص 208.

²⁹ المرجع نفسه، ص 208.

figures (pl. 19). The acanthus leaf has been also used in the decoration of the capitals of Corinthian and composite columns, bearing the balconies of the palace (pl. 20).

- **The Festoons of Flowers and Fruits**

This type of decoration is formed of festoons of garlands of flowers and fruits. Festoons of flowers and fruits are one of the most important decorative motifs in the ornamentation of buildings, which followed the Renaissance and Baroque architectural styles. There are many examples of festoons of flowers and fruits in Abd el Megeed Pasha's palace. For instance, festoons are used in crowning the windows of the second floor of the palace (PL. 21).

- **Human and Animal Figurative**³⁰

The humans and animal figures are heavily used as decorative elements in palatial architecture that is influenced by European architectural styles. These types of decorations are often made of stucco, whether in natural or idealized shapes. The palace of Abd el Megeed Pasha has different types of human and animal figurative decorations, which are used in the external facades and the ceilings of certain rooms.

- **Human Statues and Paintings**

The external facades of the palace of Abd el Megeed Pasha are brightly decorated with two stucco human statues, flanking the windows of the second floor. Each statue represents a standing woman, who is shown naked in upper part while the lower part of her body is covered with acanthus leaves (pl. 22). In addition, four similar statues of winged children are painted on the ceiling of certain rooms. Each figure is naked in the upper part of his body, while the lower part of the body is shown wearing a large mantle (pl. 23).

Conclusion

The 19th and 20th centuries of our common era witnessed the political and cultural integration of Egypt into European countries. This openness has been reflected on the architecture of the palaces, which were built during this period. New European architectural and artistic styles of were introduced to Egypt and heavily used in the palatial architecture. Many factors helped to transfer European architectural styles to Egypt, notably scientific missions. European styles include the Gothic, neo-classical, the Baroque, and the Rococo. Distinctive features of all these styles made their appearance in the architecture and the exterior and interior decoration of the palace. The combination of a full detailed architectural description of the palace, recent photographs, architectural drawings and plans, and illustrations has the potential of highlighting the unique architectural and artistic value of the palace. Unfortunately, the palaces face many challenges, and suffer negligence and inappropriate reuse in modern times. Alas, the interior of the palace lost many of its architectural and artistic features. The palace is now in a dire need of restoration and repair works, where. However, the facades of the palace still possess rich distinctive architectural and decorative elements. The palace of Abd el Megeed Pasha in Mallawi is a unique monumental structure that deserves more official and public attention.

³⁰ جمال عبد الرؤف عبد العزيز: العناصر الزخرفية، المرجع السابق، ص 651.

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الملخص العربي
قصر عبد المجيد باشا سيف النصر – مدينة ملوي – المنيا
(دراسة أثرية)

يهدف هذا البحث إلي تقديم الوصف الأثري لقصر عبد المجيد باشا سيف النصر بمدينة ملوي بمحافظة المنيا متضمناً عدد من الصور والخرائط والأشكال التوضيحية الحديثة للقصر. كما يهدف البحث أيضاً إلى دراسة العناصر المعمارية والزخرفية الموجودة بالقصر وتوضيح الطرز المعمارية المختلفة التي تأثر بها في عماره والزخرفه مع وصف دقيق للوضع الحالي للقصر. لقد تأثر القصر بالعديد من الطرز المعمارية والفنية ذات الطابع الأوربي والذي جعل منه ثروة معمارية وفنية وجمالية يجب الحفاظ عليها وقد أوضحت الدراسة أن الطرز التي استخدمت في القصر هي الطراز القوطي، طراز النهضة المستحدثة، طراز الروكوكو والباروك، بالإضافة إلى الطراز الكلاسيكي الجديد. وبالرغم من الأهمية الأثرية والتاريخية لهذا القصر إلا أنه يعاني إهمالاً شديداً يهدد ببقائه وضياعه مثلما حدث مع بعض القصور بمدينة ملوي مثل قصر حياة النفوس وقصر سيف النصر باشا وغيرهم. وتوصي الدراسة ببعض المقترحات التي من شأنها إعادة القصر إلى سيرته الأولى والحفاظ على هذا الإرث المعماري والحضاري مثل الاهتمام بترميم القصر والحفاظ عليه من خلال استخدامه بما يتناسب مع قيمته الفنية والمعمارية بدلاً من استخدامه في أغراض لا تليق بقيمته كما هو الحال الآن حيث يستخدم القصر كمخزن للسجاد.

Figures & Plates

I. Plates



PL. 2

General view from the eastern facade of Abd El Megeed Palace



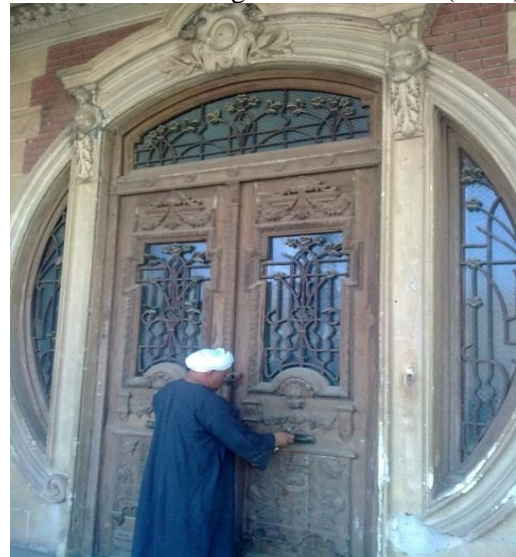
PL. 1

General view of Abd El Megeed Palace
Source: Abd El Megeed Sief El Nasr (1950)



PL. 3

The Eastern facade of Abd El Megeed Palace
(Photographed by the Researcher)



PL. 4

The main doorway of Abd El Megeed Palace
(Photographed by the Researcher)



PL. 5

General view from the northern facade of Abd El Megeed Palace
(Photographed by the Researcher)



PL. 6

The Northern facade of Abd El Megeed Palace
(Photographed by the Researcher)



PL. 7

The first floor of the northern facade of Abd El Megeed Palace
(Photographed by the Researcher)



PL. 8

The two upper floors of the northern facade of Abd El Megeed Palace
(Photographed by the Researcher)



PL. 9

The southern facade of Abd El Megeed Palace
(Photographed by the Researcher)



PL. 10

The tower of Abd El Megeed Palace
(Photographed by the Researcher)



PL. 11

The western facade of Abd El Megeed Palace
(Photographed by the Researcher)



PL. 12

Apart of the garden of Abd El Megeed Palace
(Photographed by the Researcher)



PL. 13

The fountain in front of the eastern façade of Abd El Megeed Palace
(Photographed by the Researcher)



PL. 14

Tea Kiosk is located in the garden of Abd El Megeed Palace
(Photographed by the Researcher)



(PL.15)

A band of egg and dart decoration
(Photographed by the researcher)



(PL.16)

A band of dentils decorations
(Photographed by the researcher)



(PL.17)



(PL.18)

The prominent fret (El gift El lab) that crowning the southern façade of the palace
(Photographed by the researcher)



(PL.19)

Acanthus leaf that decorated the corbels
(Photographed by the researcher)



(PL.21)

Festoon of flowers
(Photographed by the researcher)



(PL.23)

Two stucco statues of topless women, whose lower parts are covered with acanthus leaves and medusa head.
(Photographed by the researcher)

A band of Crestings (Crenellations)
(Photographed by the researcher)



(PL.20)

Acanthus leaf decorated the lower part of human statue

(Photographed by the researcher)



(PL.22)

Figures from mythology, especially nude females, floating on clouds in pale skies.
(Photographed by the researcher)

II. Figures

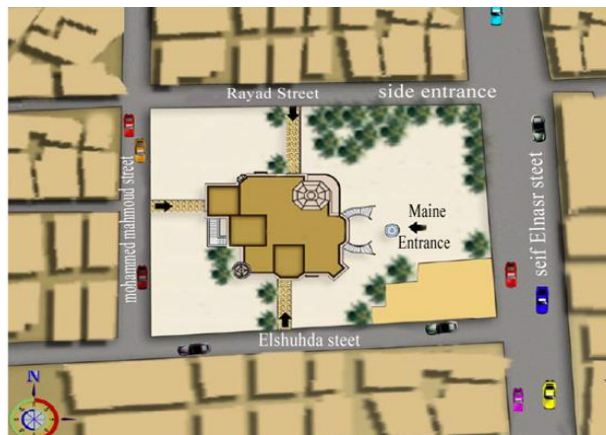


Fig. 1
The Site of Abd El Megeed Palace
Source: (Google earth)

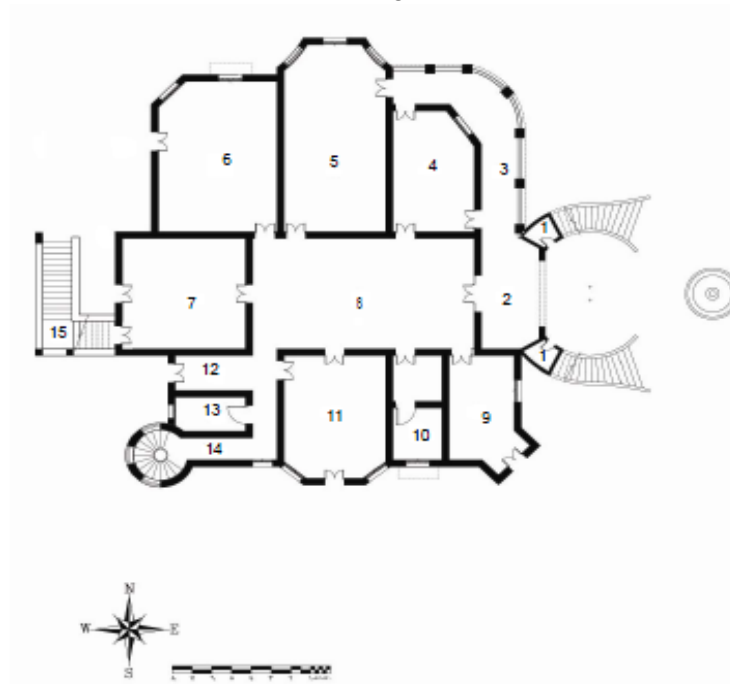


Fig. 2
The horizontal plan of the first floor in Abd El Megeed Palace

1- Double staircase	(9, 10, 11) Southern rooms
2- Vestibule	12- Kitchen
3- Covered area	13- Bathroom
(4, 5, 6) Northern rooms	14- Southern tower
7- Square room	15- Back Staircase
	8- Central hall



Fig. 3

The horizontal plan of the second floor in Abd El Megeed Palace

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1- Main entrance | 10- Central hall |
| 2- Terrace rested on four columns | 11- Southern room |
| (3, 4, 5, 6, 7) Northern rooms | 12- Kitchen |
| 8- Staircase leads to the third floor | 13- Bathroom |
| 9- Square room | 14- Southern tower |

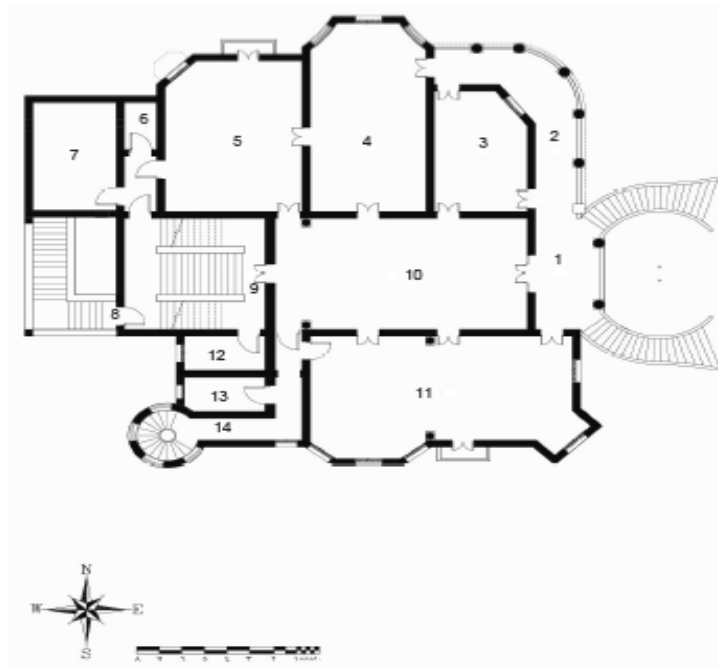


Fig. 4

The Horizontal plan of the third floor in Abd El Megeed Palace

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1- Main entrance | (10, 11, 12) Southern rooms |
| 2- Terrace | 13- Kitchen |
| (3, 4, 5, 6, 7) Northern rooms | 14- Bathroom |
| 8- Square room | 15- Southern tower |
| 9- Central hall | |



Fig. 5
The eastern main façade of Abd El Megeed Palace

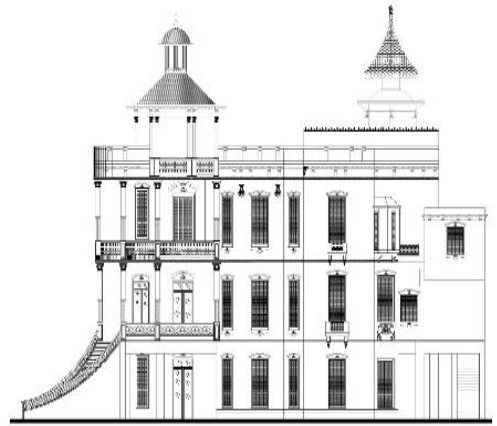


Fig. 6
The northern façade of Abd El Megeed Palace