Rosetta (Rosetta) Mediterranean City Past, Present & Future of a Living Heritage

Rosetta location: When the restored its old khel waterway entrance to the town. Vansleb, who visited Rosetta in May 1672, gives a description of the castles and their garrison (State of Egypt, London, 1678, 105). In 1693 there was a sort of weekly service running between Rosetta and Cairo for travelers proceeding from Alexandria to Cairo was via Rosetta. The Viceroy Ali Pasha (1768-1798) recommended it in his book on the town was situated from the old name Rosetta had in Egypt report. Rosetta is also written in the pact of Rosetta.

### Tāmitt period and ʿAbbāsid period (827 A.D.-984 A.D.):

In 906 A.D. it was mentioned that the city was originally located north of its present location. Two castles guarded the town entrance. The town was located near the site of the ancient Bubastis, a Mediterranean City.

### Fatimid period (905 A.D.-1713 A.D.):

After the Fatimid conquest in 905 A.D., the sailing on the Nile for exterior commerce was through Alexandria and Rosetta.

### Ayyubid period (1171 A.D.-1250 A.D.):

A town mentioned by Ibn al-Muqaffa (809-880 A.D.). It was a religious city having markets, bazaars, caravansaries, and funduks (inns).

### Mamluk Period (1250-1517 A.D.):

In 1284 A.H./879 A.D. Sultan Qalawun enlarged the Rosetta castle in Alexandria. Rosetta was noted in the Rosetta location, that the city was situated from the old name Rosetta had in Egypt report.

### Ottoman Era (1517 - 1848 A.D.):

The city remained as the center of commerce in the trade between North Africa and Europe until the end of the 18th century. In 1811 Napoleon Bonaparte visited Rosetta and the Rosetta Stone was discovered there in 1829. The Rosetta Stone is an extremely important piece of evidence for the study of ancient Egyptian culture. It is a black basalt slab with hieroglyphic, demotic, and Greek inscriptions, dated to the reign of Ramses II, and was inscribed in the late 13th century B.C. The inscriptions on the Rosetta Stone provide a crucial tool for understanding the ancient Egyptian language and its relationship to other ancient languages.
Rosetta at the 17th-Century:

This period was dominated by urban expansion in all directions, the area of the whole town was 23,423 square meters. Rosetta witnessed an increase in the number of inhabitants, and the number of houses increased.

The urban and social conditions included a great advance in the arts, and the sea had become the main resource of the city, tourism, and trade. The city of Rosetta, the home of antique remains, was the center of the city's cultural and artistic life.

The second floor was designed for rooms and social activities, covered and suspended by using the wooden structure. The stairs included a ladder to enter each floor.

Rosetta at the 18th-Century:

Rosetta became prosperous in the 18th century due to the discovery of Rosetta stone in 1799, which was one of the factors that contributed to the city's prosperity.

In 1798, a French troops under the command of the officer Bouchard captured a house of Arab Killi located in Rosetta near the Mamluk Mosque. The mansion was designed by the architect who also designed the Mosque of Muhammad Ali. This house was later renovated during the 18th century under the oversight of the French troops in 1801 (1223 H./1818 A.D.).

The ground floor consists of a large open museum for the unique decorative architectural heritage.

Architectural & technical characteristics:

Rosetta is characterized by its national history and social-dramatic architectural heritage. It is considered a large open museum for the social dramatic architecture and architectural heritage.

The city was reconstructed with brick, the stairs were covered with tiles, the columns were made of granite, and the doors were made of wood.

The atmosphere of Rosetta was created in the 18th century, with its narrow and winding streets, the narrow and deep domes.

Old Houses of Rosetta:

The houses are characterized by multi-story buildings with different roofs for each storey. The landscape of their door was very beautiful, and the windows were decorated with colorful tiles.

The ground floor included:

1- A Caravansary
2- A Stable
3- A Storage

The accolades included:

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2- A Stable
3- A Storage

Arab Killi House (1223 H./1818 A.D.):

It is one of the biggest and most famous houses of Rosetta, and it is located by the name of its founder, Arab Killi, who was the governor of Rosetta. It consists of four floors.

- The ground floor includes a large room, a room for keeping water, a separate room overlooking a side street.
- The second floor includes a room with a marble basin in front of a brass grill
- The third floor includes the owner and his guests provided with a separate door, overlooking the main street.

Rosetta National Museum

The establishment has been completed in the national museum of Rosetta, based on the idea of the city's most popular tourist destination.

The main building of this museum is open to the public, and it includes a collection of Rosetta's historical remains, including the Rosetta stone.

The building of Arab Killi house which is now the Rosetta National Museum

Urban Environment Plan

The layout of the city and the distribution of its houses are all designed to maximize the benefits of the Nile River.
Maizouni House (1153 H./1740 A.D.):

It is one of the most distinctive houses of Rosetta as it was the theatre for historical events covering a historical period. Its history includes the rule of French occupation, usually coming from ‘El Ajayly, who married his wife in Jack Francois Men, one of the French main commanders.

Maizouni House (1153 H./1740 A.D.):

The house consists of four floors; the ground floor includes the storehouse and the cistern; the second floor was for men and the third was for the family with halls overlooking the street with maymun turning wood mashrabiyya. The fourth floor has a bath and an al-Aghānī room (room of songs- entertainment) distinguished by wooden cupboards.

Tuqaytli House:

The mill has been beautifully restored and it is fully functional.

PUBLIC BATH:
1- Architectural style in the 18 & 19th century:
Rosetta had two main architectural styles: local type which reflects the architecture of the 18th and 19th century (Ottoman architecture) and the contemporary type.

In addition, Rosetta had a blend of Renaissance features and local facades, as well as a blend of local style with European architectural influences.

2- Eclectic style beginning of the 20th century:

- The factors affecting the eclectic style:
  1. The strong connections between Alexandria and Rosetta; the two cities extend along the Mediterranean coast and have been in commercial contact for centuries.
  2. The domination of foreigners on the construction industry; at the beginning of Muhammad Ali's reign, the royal family and foreigners owned the Bahriya region, leading to an economic dominance.
  3. The presence of foreign colonies and their residences in the city; this created a cultural channel between several cultures which meet with the customs and traditions.

As an example of the Eclectic style, the 'Arafa House differs from the Islamic type in design; it doesn't concentrate on privacy as the other Islamic houses. The bedrooms open on the living area; there is no separation (Haramlek and Salamlek), there is no courtyard or service courtyard; the facades had curved projections.

The architectural characteristics of the Eclectic Neo Baroque, such as 'Arafa, Al-Kassar and 'Inan House.

Rosetta Houses facades

Façade Articulation:
Mouldings decorate and manifest some of the important elements of the façade over the windows and doors, cantilever, cornice, terraces on cantilevers, and masonry facing at the corners.

Contemporary Architecture:
(2nd half of the 20th century)
The modern buildings had 2 to 6 storeys, but most of them were two and three storeys.

In the 50's and 60's:
The buildings had simple facades, using one material and one colour in the construction, without mouldings or decoration. Façade similarity at the several floors.

In the 70's and 80's:
There were some examples aiming to revive the traditional vocabulary of the old Islamic houses. Decorated colored mouldings were used in terraces parapets, as well as plaster and stained glass.

3- Rosetta Old Mosques:
Rosetta stands as an eloquent testimony to over 12 centuries. It has preserved in its medina many magnificent religious and residential buildings constructed over the centuries, including mosques and homes.

Zaghlul mosque (985 A.H./1577 A.D.)
Domaqsīs (al-Mu'allaq) (1116 A.H./1704 A.D.)
Al-Gundi mosque (1133 H./1720 A.D.)
Al-Mahallī mosque (1134 H./1721 A.D.)
An-Nour Mosque (1177 H./1764 A.D.)
Al-'Abbāsī mosque (1224 H./1809 A.D.)

Domaqsīs (al-Mu'allaq):
Al-Mahallī mosque (1134 H./1721 A.D.)
Al-'Abbāsī mosque (1224 H./1809 A.D.)
Architectural Characteristics of mosques:

Mosques include arches, porticoes supported on marble columns, facades are decorated with floral and geometric decorations, using ceramics for decorating wall and doors.

Zaghlūl Mosque (985 A.H./1577 A.D.)

Problems facing Rosetta:

1. Like other Arab towns characterized by similar historic centers, Rosetta suffers from a lot of problems which are common to numerous other Mediterranean coastal towns.

2. Salt water intrusion, coastal erosion contribute in particular to the degradation of the urban fabric.

3. Lack of maintenance of the historic buildings. The city had lost much of its authenticity.

4. Different other socio-economic factors, we should consider as well as interventions etc., to attract tourists to Rosetta.

5. The historic and the cultural heritage of the town has been impaired.


Conclusion:

At the beginning of the 21st century, we found that Rosetta had been changed during the last 50 years, the flourished city had been transformed to a simple urban one. The historic environment is the starting point for a better future.

This case study reveals a large number of problems which are common to numerous other Mediterranean coastal towns.

REFERENCES:


