

## **TYPES OF THE CEILINGS AND ITS DECORATIONS AT ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ARCHITECTURE**

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### **Introduction**

Two types of the ceiling architecture had been known at the ancient Egyptian architecture, (the domestic one) and (the religious one), the latter also divided into two sections (divine one, which designated to the mansions (temples) of the gods and goddesses & the second one (the funerary architecture) which dedicated to their dead.

It is agreed to call the first one (the residential architecture) as the mud-brick architecture, whereas the second one (the religious architecture) as to be the stone architecture.

Several types of ceilings were found at both architectures.

### **A. Ceilings of the domestic/residential architecture (living houses)**

#### **A.1 Pre-historic periods**

##### **A.1.1 The flat ceiling (fig.1)**

The typical settler at the pre-dynastic periods, lived in a rectangular one-room peasant hut of sun-dried Nile mud, the roof has not survived, but it was (flat) and may originally have consisted of papyrus and plants reeds, as long as covered with the animal's skins.

##### **A.1.2 The vaulted ceiling (fig.2)**

The second type of the roof (ceiling) at the early times, the (vaulted ceiling), A hut with a semicircular roof, above which two corner posts appear to project, must be interpreted as a structure consisting of bundled reeds and matting on the base. A building with a roof vaulted longitudinally, between elevated transverse walls.

#### **A.2 Ceiling types at the historical times**

At the first dynasty establishment (ca. 3300 B.C.), the royal palaces, houses of high elite ones, built of reed matting, but it was now constructed of solid brick and timber, trees trunks (especially palm trunks), after cutting, also used and laid side by side to support the ceiling.

This technique of ceiling architecture type and design became ideal in use through ages at ancient Egypt for all segments of the society (kings, high official "great ones" and public people) (keeping at our minds the social inequality at the operation of building performance) : this type of roof still used (till now) at several villages at Egypt, which suitable for the dry scorching summer heat.

### **A.2.1 Mud-brick ceiling ornament (fig.3)**

Ancient Egyptians covered the internal parts of their houses (walls & ceilings) with plaster material for two reasons, 1st to protect it from corrosion, 2nd to decorate it with the differ natural scenes (land scape, fishes & bird's images, flowers ....)

So we have a lot of examples of different ceiling decorations from ancient Egyptians palaces and houses, which most of it painted with white color as background of the scenes depicted upon it.

## **B. Ceilings of the religious architecture (Divine temples & funerary tombs)**

### **B.1 Ceilings of the Divine temples**

#### **B.1.1 The vaulted awning**

A hut beneath an awning supported on wooden posts. In monumental architecture this form became the prototype of the later "baldachin temple," erected for the celebration of special rites and as a "way station" or resting-place for the images of the gods and their sacred barge during the processions through the precincts of large temple complexes. The "birth houses" of the late temples were also modeled after the hut shaded by an awning.

#### **B.1.2 The flat ceiling (fig.4)**

This is the typical ceiling which formed the temples ceiling, it was made of stone (lime stone-sandstone), or hard stone (like Basalt, Granite and Diorite) at the large temples.

These kinds of ceiling usually decorated with the sky shape, sky stars, or the zodiac, as the temples of the gods considered to be the horizon home of the gods at earth.

### **B.2 Ceiling at the funerary tombs**

#### **B.2.1 Ceiling at the royal tombs (the Pyramids)**

We have several kinds of the royal Ceiling found at their tombs

##### **B.2.1.1 The vaulted ceiling (fig.5)**

At the archaic period (the 1st & 2nd dynasty), the kings buried themselves at a huge rectangular tomb made of mud-brick, called (Mastaba), which contain two parts, super-structure & sub-structure, the latter part contained stretched corridors and large chambers

had the vaulted mud-brick ceilings (usually lack of decorations), these kinds of ceiling used to support the heap of sands (tumuli) above it.

### **B.2.1.2 The flat Ceiling**

Since the ancient Egyptian kings Abandoned the internal mud-brick building to be stone building, the ancient Egyptians designed the ceilings of their chambers inside the pyramids, at (the flat stone ceiling type), but because of cracking (especially inside the pyramids) occurred as a result of hundred thousands of stones tons above it, they abandoned these types of ceilings.

### **B.2.1.3 The corbelled vaulted Ceiling (fig.6)**

This kind of ceilings was the most hard one amongst the ceiling types of ancient Egyptian architecture, which the method of its erecting to avoid any flat space under the hundred thousand of stone tons, by offsetting successive courses of stone (or brick) at the spring line of the walls so that they project towards the archway's center from each supporting side, until the courses meet at the apex of the archway, as inside the burial chambers of Meidum and Dahshour pyramids ( 4th dynasty- old kingdom)

### **B.2.1.4 The gabled Ceiling (fig.7)**

Which the stones (slabs) of the ceiling rest at two sides only of the walls, taking a triangle shape.

## **Conclusion**

Through these last examples of the ancient Egyptian ceilings types, we can say that ancient Egyptian architecture had different types of ceiling; each one had a specific use, which the research will reveal that in detail.

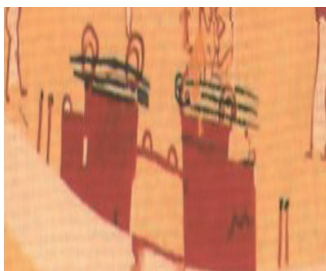


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

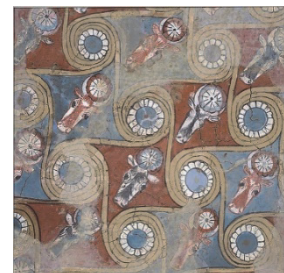


Fig. 3

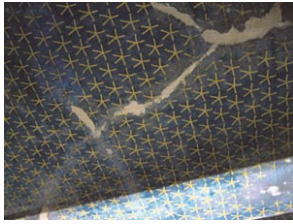


Fig. 4

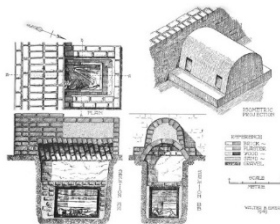


Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

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