

# Restoration of Quseir Fort

Quseir Fort is an impressive monument and an important example of Ottoman military architecture. Preserving and restoring the fort provides a non-marine related attraction for tourists visiting the Red Sea. The fort is on the ancient Hajj route between Upper Egypt and the Hejaz, and together with the monasteries of St. Anthony and St. Paul, represents the major cultural sites on the entire Red Sea coast.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in collaboration with the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) and the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) completed restoration work in 1999. The activity was conducted by a team of Egyptian and international experts at a cost of LE 1.7 million (\$370,000).

Parts of the Fort conserved and restored include:

- Structural reinforcement and general clean-up
- Establishment of a gateway and inner entrance ward
- Renovations, including a Napoleonic viewing platform over the main entrance, three corner towers, the exterior of the south corner bastion, an underground cistern, and the interior of the round tower
- Installation of a spiral staircase to a viewing platform and the northwest curtain wall to support solar panels.

A solar powered electrical system was installed to light interior rooms, including the enclosed corner towers and the underground cistern.

A Visitor's Center was established with exhibits related to the Fort's history and the history and culture of the area. Several areas of the interior of the Fort were consolidated to create spaces for displays on:

- The Hajj
- History of Red Sea trade and of overland trade routes
- Bedouin life in the Eastern Desert
- Quarries and mines in the area
- Map of Egypt carved in stone
- Cannons from Napoleonic defenses
- The phosphate industry
- Pearl diving.

By conducting conservation and presentation work at such cultural locations, USAID, SCA, and ARCE have taken significant steps to ensure their sustainable protection and presentation for present and future generations of Egyptians and for international visitors.

