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The University of
Nottingham

**ARCHITECTURAL AND SOLAR POTENTIAL
OF CURVED AND FLAT ROOFS
IN HOT ARID REGIONS**
(With Reference To Egypt)

By

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BSc., MSc. in Architecture

Thesis Submitted to the University of Nottingham for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

December 2003

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, I would like to gratefully acknowledge the effort of my supervisor Dr. M. Gadi, who has been an endless source of motivation and advice, and from whom I have learnt a great deal of experience throughout the progress of this research. During the crucial period of writing up he whole-heartedly supported me. I wish to thank him not only for reading and correcting errors in earlier drafts, but also for the valuable suggestions on my entire work, and especially for all the efforts he exerted during the submission period of this thesis.

I wish also to thank and express my deep gratitude to *The Arab Academy for Science and Technology (AAST)*, www.aast.edu, for supporting my living expenses during the period of my PhD study in the UK, and also to the School of the Built Environment and the International Office at the University of Nottingham for awarding me a partial tuition fees scholarship.

I am deeply indebted to Amira, my wife and colleague, for her sincere moral support. She constructively supported me throughout my studies and in the editing and sewing of this thesis. Doubtlessly, I could not have survived the period of my study without her patient support. I cannot thank her adequately enough for all her love, help and support; her role throughout this period cannot be expressed in words.

I would like to address my great appreciations to my father for his continuous encouragement, help, advice and financial-support. All thanks and respects go to my mother for her moral support and love; her phone calls from Egypt have relieved hard-times and have produced motivation and enthusiasm. They both have shown great understanding, patience and support during the course of my PhD study, without which I could not have approached my aim. I hope that I would be able to repay them some of their favors and to fulfill my obligations towards them. Special thanks go to Lamyia, my sister, and all my family who gave me every possible support and help.

I have to acknowledge that without the love of my daughter Farida, and her continuous unintentional encouragements for me to finish my PhD in time and have my “big exam” to “be doctor” and “to be good boy” as she says. I hope that my daughter and my wife would forgive that I was not able to fulfill all my obligations towards them during this period.

Thanks are due to Professor J. Chilton, Head of School of Architecture, University of Lincoln, for his continuous encouragement, unlimited support and assistance throughout my stay in the UK. He has always been of great help to my family and me, for which I whole-heartedly appreciate. Finally, I wish to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to Professor S. B. Riffat, Head of School of the Built Environment, University of Nottingham, for his invaluable help, encouragement and guidance.

Ahmed Elseragy.....

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the effect of various vaulted and domed roof geometries on their solar behaviour under given summer and winter conditions. Roof is the building-envelope element that is most exposed to the sun as it receives a high amount of solar radiation, which is the main cause of summer overheating in hot-arid climates. In addition, to other climatic and physical factors, indoor thermal comfort in hot-arid climates is also influenced by the intensity of solar radiation received by roof surfaces. Therefore, roof form and geometry should be designed with careful consideration to insolation parameters. Domed, vaulted, and curved roofs have been used for a long time in hot-arid regions for historical, cultural, climatic, and structural reasons. The review of previous research work showed that different explanations have been given to the climatic effects of their forms and the environmental behaviour of their enclosed spaces.

The research explores the previous attempts that discussed the relevant principles of solar radiation and solar geometry on horizontal and tilted surfaces with different orientations. The previous work that applied these principles and theories to evaluate the solar behaviour of architectural elements with arbitrary forms was also investigated. In order to evaluate the solar performance of flat and curved roofs geometrical configurations, a parametric study testing the received solar radiation intensity (W/m^2) on flat, vaulted, and domed roofs with different span-to-height ratios and orientations was carried out using a published solar computer model. The results of this model were followed by validation tests using other two commercially available computer tools to carry out a brief solar and thermal analysis of selected curved-roof geometries. The evaluated curved-roofs solar performance and main findings of the present research have been compared with recently published independent research.

It is believed that this research establishes a sound theoretical basis for the validity of various claims of the climatic advantages of different curved-roof forms in hot-arid regions. As part of this research outcome, solar and architectural design-guidelines for curved-roofs are introduced. The research concludes with a discussion of the architectural and solar potential of curved-roof forms, which is believed to be novel contribution to the knowledge and the understanding of curved-roofs solar behaviour and architectural applications in hot-arid climates.