Università Iuav di Venezia

AtlasMarrakech

3

planimetria, medina di Marrakech
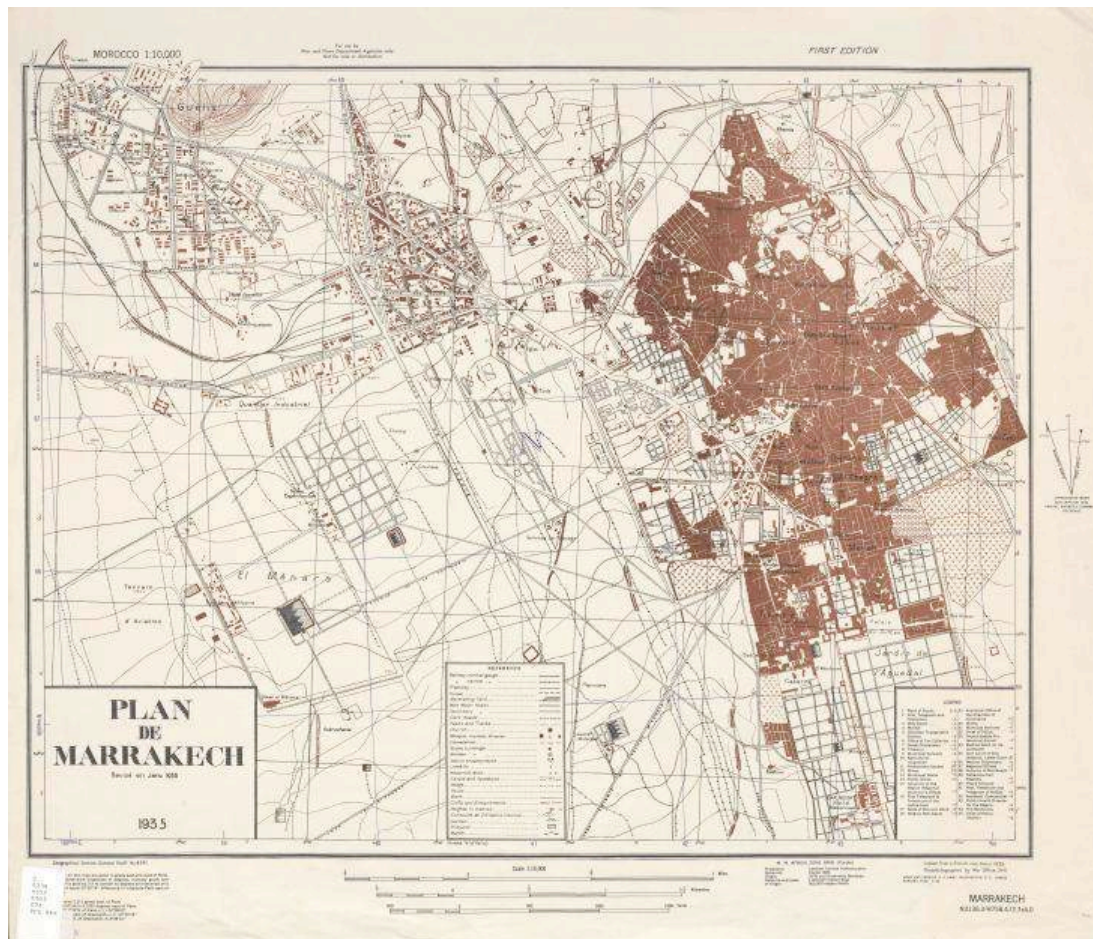
planimetria di Marrakech, 1941 1:2000

AtlasMarrakech

Indice

Programma

The program runs as the interplay between the course *di Laurea Magistrale in Architettura e innovazione Pianificazione e politiche per la città, il territorio e l'ambiente* e *il corso **Progettazione dei paesaggi turistici e culturali***. The programma runs as a seminar within the Studio where notions about the culture and history of Islamic territories are placed within a contemporary interpretative and conceptual frame of work. The goal is the development of an architectural project and at the same time a writing of a theoretical and conceptual manifestation an illustrated document *atlasmarrakech* which depicts the student capacity to understand the methodology of research with an architectural *modus operandis.*

The velocity, with which the Arabs in the seventh and eighth centuries have conquered much of the Mediterranean and Asia, almost to the confines of China, created a great astonishment. Unlike many other ephemeral invasions, the dominion of the caliphs, successors of Mahomet, was built upon their religious belief and culture - *Dar al-Islam* - which naturally also encompasses their architecture legacy. As Nasser Rabbat pointed out in his text "Arab Cities and Identity Crisis", many Muslim cities have lost their Oriental romanticism, colonial periods have changed the Islamic city skyline and recently global phenomena is introducing new urban and architectural challenges to the Muslim society. *Atlas Marrakech* proposes to study this rich heritage and contemporary challenge by the formalization of a new Museum Space for the city of Marrakech.

Marrakech was founded in 1062 at the foothills of the Atlas Mountains, at the Maghreb region of the North-Atlantic of Africa. Its medina occupies almost 25km2 and is enclosed within a city wall. It presents a rich urban and historic fabric with religious, domestic, and palatine buildings coexisting in a delicate balance between modernity and tradition. Elias Canetti's *The Voices of Marrakech* reveals the continuing presence of French colonial structure dominating the "desolate" landscape of houses but at the same time describes the city heritage within its architecture and historical landscape.

Nowadays several cultural manifestations are displayed in museums that constitute a space for critical and creative reflection towards the present. In Marrakech, museums are still mostly confined to ancient buildings and even if refurbished they lack dynamic areas for the meeting point between citizens and fruition of that cultural heritage/artifact/memory/display. Morocco's Tourism Observatory stated that 8.1million tourists have visited Marrakech in the first nine months of 2016 and Marrakech and Agadir accounted for 60 percent of the entire country's overnight stays, which represents a major figure within this context.The *AtlasMarrakech* Design Studio suggests a closer and critical look to the urban morphology of Marrakech and at the same time proposes a new architectural space that could act as the "space of interface", between the city and the monument, between the museum and the citizen.

Recently examples of contemporary architecture built in Muslim countries or in nations with a strong Islamic legacy will be addressed and studied, namely: David Chipperfield´s The Marrakech Museum for Photography (project), Morocco; Álvaro Siza´s project for a new entrance and visitor centre at the historic Granada palace at the Alhambra (project), Spain; Nieto Sobjeano´s Madinat AlZahara Museum, Cordoba, Spain; Nieto Sobejano´s Maaden Art Museum, Marrakech, Morocco (project); João Luis Carrilho da Graça´s Castelo de São Jorge Islamic Archeological site, Lisboa and Antonio Jiménez Torrecillas Muralla Nazarí en el Alto Albaicín, Granada, among others, clearly highlight the universe of contemporary design possibilities.

The *AtlasMarrakech* Design Studio will develop theoretical and architectural answers in order to respond to the project program through a series of specific lectures and case studies. A field trip to Marrakech will take place by the end of the October with support from local authorities and Institutions. The richness and variety of Islamic architecture should constitute also a major asset towards the reflection that will inform the booklet, *AtlasMarrakech*, that each student should prepare during the semester as complementary work to the design project. Two specific assignments for the booklet will be delivered during the semester.

The locations three chosen locations for the architectural interventions are interrelated with the most relevant monuments in the city: i) The Ben Youseff complex, Mosque, baths, Medersa, Museum, (XVI century) and Almoravid Qoubba (XII century); ii) The Badi Palace (XVI century), at the southern part of the Medina, adjacent to the Aguedal gardens and the Saadian Tombs (XVII century), iii) Near to the *Djem-el-Fna* square is located the Koutubia Mosque and its front square. None of these monuments have nowadays an adequate interpretative center/museum.
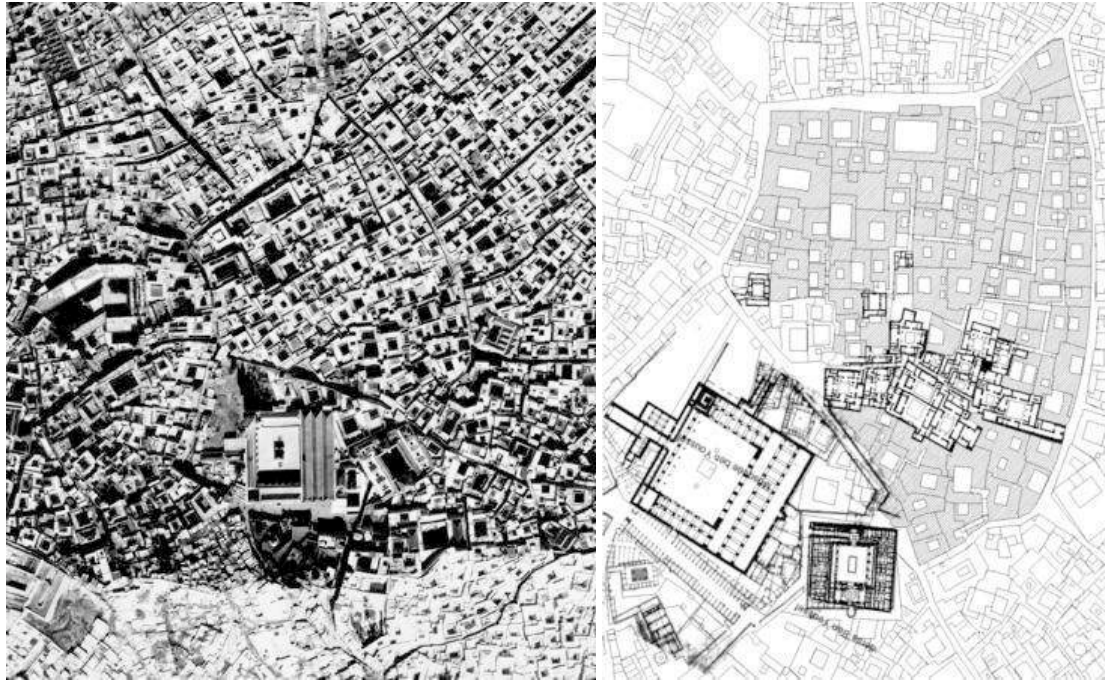

Fig. i. Aerial view of the Ben Youseff complex and related drawing area with architectural plans of the Mosque, Medersa, baths, Qoubba and house derbs of Zouait Lahkdar.(© João Rocha).

Fig. iii. Aerial photo of the Koutubia Mosque (courtesy Maison de La Photogprahie, Marrakech).
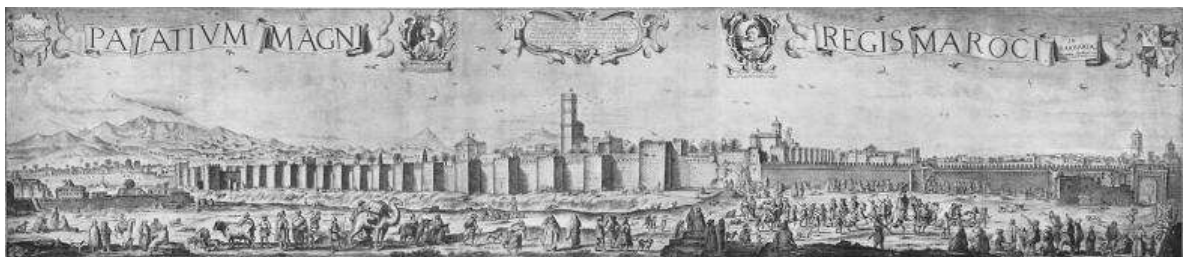

Fig. ii. Aer El Badi Palace by Adriaen_Matham 1640 .

12/13.10.2017 I **L1**

The MuseumSpace(s): Marrakech. Apresentazione dei obiettivi del Laboratorio di Progetto. Individuare un contesto storico, culturale e architettonico. Individuare temi di ricerca in torno al progetto. Problematizzare le condizione del progetto.
Stravinsky e Diaghilev e la memoria poetica di Venezia. Les Ballets Russes a Alhambra. Carlos V e il contesto della Europa e nel Maghreb dei secoli XIV e XV.
Gabriel Veyre (1871-1936) e la fotografie nel contest del protectorate Francese. Spagnolo.
La cartografia storica e le Atlante nautiche come istrumenti di approssimazione al territorio.

Conferenza dell Architetto Gonçalo Byrne. Casa nel Parco, Jesolo, Aula Magna da Universitá IUAV di Venezia.
Palestra di Rettore Alberto Ferlenga su la mostra, Aldo Rossi.

20.10.2017 I **L2**

Breve introduzione al Islam, il profeta, la citta di Mecca e Medina. Il sviluppo delle metropoli nel mondo Islamico e il rapporto con in bacino del mediterraneo.

La cultura, e l architettura del Islam e del Maghreb nelle descrizioni dei viaggiatori, Al-Idrisi (Ceuta, 1110-Castilha, 1165), *The Tabula Rogeriana* I Benjamin Tudela (Navarra, 1130-Castilha, 1173), *Travels* I Ibn Jubayr, (Valencia, 1145-Alexandria, 1217), *Viaggio in Spagnia Syria* I Marco Polo (Veneza, 1254-1324) *Il Milione* I Ibn Batutta (Tanger, 1304-1368) *Rhila* I Thomas Lawrence (Tanger, 1888-1935) *Seven Pillars of Wisdom.*
Breve introduzioni alle dinastie e il suo periodo storico dei Omayyade ai Sadiani. L´ architettura palatina, religiosa, civile, e militare delle citta di Aleppo a Occidente: Cairo, Samarra, Damasco, Cordoba, Sevilla, Alhambra, Lisboa.

Continuazione di lezione con accompagnamento di progettazione e lavoro con i gruppi su la planimetria della citta di Marrakech.

27.10.2017 I **L3**

Revisioni dei primi concetti e lettura della citta.

03.11.2017 I **L4**

Lezioni su la citta di Marrakech, breve descrizione storica e sviluppo architettonico. Le aree di progetto, Ben Youseff, Kasbah e Badi Palace, Koutubiia.
Le Corbusier e il suo viaggio al Oriente.

Continuazione di lezione con accompagnamento di progettazione e lavoro con i gruppi

10.11.2017 I **L5**

Lezioni su presentazione del viaggio di studio a Marrakech. Programma del viaggio, visite a realizzare.
Lo sviluppo urbano della citta di Marrakech, cartografia e disegni (Agencie Urbaine di Marrakech).
Correzioni dei progetti. Discussione su il concetto del progetto. La impiantazione della proposta architettonica alla scala 1:200 e 1:200.
I elementi disegnati, la importanza della planimetria e altimetria. Elevazioni, sezioni e prospetti a scala1:200.

17.11.2017 I L6

Lezioni su casi di studio di architettura contemporanea in citta di trama urbana Islamica nel Al-Andaluz. Inserimenti urbani, inserimenti progettuali, la storia come istrumento operativo, materialità, programma.

Jean **Nouvel**, Institute du Monde Arabe, Paris (1987) I Alvaro **Siza**, Centro Cultural Manza del Revellin (2007-11), Ceuta I **Paredes Pedrosa** Arquitectos, Biblioteca pública (2009-13) Ceuta I Richard **Gluckman,** Museo Picasso (1999-04) Malaga I **Carrilho da Graça,** Castelo de São Jorge, Nucleo Museológico Islamico (2007-10) Lisboa I **Nieto Sobjeano** Madinat Al-Zahra Museum (1999-09) Córdoba I Antonio Jimenez Torrcillas I Alvaro Siza Alhambra I **Studio KO**, Museum Yves Saint Laurent (2010-17), Marrakech I David **Chipperfield**, Photography Museum *(project)* Marrakech.

AtlasMarrakech: *Atlaante* de un progetto. Lezioni su la representatazioni grafica della architettura in particolare su il viaggio di architettura come esperienza empirica e teorica per il sviluppo del progetto. Il concetto del viaggio dal *Grandtour* a Marcel Duchamp, *Museo imaginario*, passando per Wabby Warbug e il suo *«Mnemosyne-Atlas» 1924-1929.*Come viene mappata questa conoscenza? Come è composto? Come si costruisce da solo? Cosa sara il Atlaante del viaggio del architettura? Alcuni esempi: *Atlas de Parede de Souto de Moura*, e il libro *A Visual Inventory* di John Pawson.
Consegna del enunciado per il, *ScrapBook Marrakech: Atlaante de un progetto*.
Correzioni dei progetti alla scala 1:2000 e 1:200

24.11.2017 I L7
Correzioni dei progetti alla scala 1:2000 e 1:200
Correzioni dei plastici
Palestra di Dra Viola Bertini: *Hassan Fathy, Terra e utopia*

29.11 – 03.12.2017 I L /8/9/10/11/12
Viaggio di studio a Marrakech

05.12.2017 L13

"Follow up" del viaggio nel ufficio al IUAV. (11:00-17:00) Compilazione e organizzazione del materiali inviato per i studenti. Inizio di elaborazione di proposta per pubblicazione di ricerca sui temi considerati nel viaggio e nel Laboratorio. Ricerca bibliografia in biblioteca.

07.12.2017 I L14

Lezioni (08.12.2017) festivo.
Apresentazione del *Atlaante* Marrakech per i studenti. Discussione critica e prima valutazione del lavoro.
Lezione sul sviluppo del Turismo in Marocco e in particolare in Marrakech. Il concetto della Riad, comò elemento architettonico teorico e in relazione con il clima locale.
Apresentazione di brevi questionario sul viaggio (aneti). Definizione dei elementi a consegnare nella aula di 15 Dicembre.

12.12.2017 I L15
Revisioni: 11:00-15:00

15.12.2017 I L16

Revisioni dei progetti e disegni
09:00-13:30 / 14:30-20:00

02.03.2018 I
Esami

Esercizio I
26.10.2017 **|** 08.12.2017

AtlasMarrakech: *Atlaante* de un progetto

Tenendo come un riferimento il testo introdutivo di
Eduardo Souto de Moura Atlas de Parede, Imagens de Método,
Come funziona un architetto? Sappiamo che gestisce un numero
complesso di richieste, dalle particolari esigenze del cliente ai limiti
geologici della terra, attraverso l'autoritarismo dei regolamenti e la
soggettività del luogo.
Il progetto è il luogo in cui questa gestione acquista forma
documentaria e l'architettura è la conoscenza che consente di gestire il
progetto.
Ma come viene mappata questa conoscenza?
Come si costruisce da solo? Cosa sara il Atlaante del viaggio del
architettura?
Ogni progetto ha molti inizi, che sono cristalizatti nel momento della sua
rapresentazione. Parlano fra di loro, cercano di trovare la loro forma, la
loro dimensiono spirituale, intelletualle, materica, tecnologica.
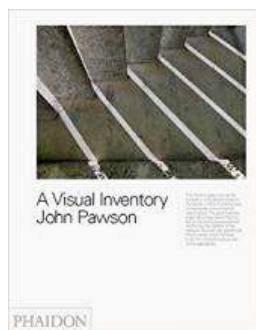
Il AtlasMarrakech, Atlaante del viaggio è un lavoro individuale e devi rispondere in un modo grafico e scritto
A tutte le premesse che sono importante del punto di vista culturale, storico, architecttonio del luogo,
in modo a inferire in progetto.
Como referimento iniziale, il museo imaginario di Andre Malraux o Mnemosyne Atlas di Aby Warburg
ripresentano questo imaginario (im)possibile del re(conoscimento) della arte e della storia, un processo
che se aplica anche alla architettura, como dimonstra il Atlas de Parede de Souto de Moura o il libro A
Visual Inventory di John Pawson.
Il Atlaante di Marrakech, dovra essere graficamente identico (A5) ai quaderni della Fundazione
Quarini Stampalia, con I stessi afastamenti di line, spazi, font e grafica. La valutazione del Atlaante
di Marrakech é basata sul la qualita e profundita della ricercha di campo, la produzone di una
visone critica su glu elementi trovati (luce / colori / religiosita / acqua / materialita / giardini /
ornamento / sociabilita / architettura / gastronomia / disegni /schizi/ et, sull analise storica della
citta e in particulare dell luogo prorio del progetto.

Il scrapbook, Atlaante, sara apresentato in aula per i studenti in versione digitale e stampata il giorno
8.12.2017

Paesaggio d'Italia
Luigi Ghirri e Vinca Friedrichs/
Jean-Baptiste Decavèle

Twenty years later

Alberto Ferlenga

Luigi Ghirri, Modena. 1985

Vent'anni dopo

Alberto Ferlenga

Per vedere una città non basta tenere gli occhi aperti.
Occorre per prima cosa scartare tutto ciò che impedisce di vederla, tutte le idee ricevute
Italo Calvino

AtlasMarrakech, Atlante è un progetto che non desidera essere il puro archivio o l'accumulazione di informazioni, bensì un fenomeno intricato, generato dalla connessione tra vari elementi. È l'impulso espressivo di questa connessione, l'intervallo tra il frammento e il tutto, l'incompletezza dell'azione di collocare elementi apparentemente così diversi l'uno accanto all'altro. Gli studenti sono spinti a trovare la loro vocazione costruendo veri e propri "cataloghi" delle loro scoperte del viaggio. Una ricerca trasversale, interdisciplinare, nella quale andranno raccolte opere diverse tra loro, ordinando scenari e plurime possibilità.

Ogni *Atlas* è doppiamente una sintesi individuale del viaggio e delle culture architettoniche trovate, ma anche dell'organizzazione di questi riferimenti attraverso un lavoro logico, di deduzione, di classificazione di elementi complementari, comparando, considerando il libro come un progetto in se stesso.

Un metodo di lavoro che permette la costruzione di un percorso attraverso la lettura, le immagini, gli archivi e i vari media, approfondito attraverso la ricerca, interpolando allo stesso tempo l'architettura, la pittura, il design, la memoria, la storia, e i sensi. Scegliere, costruire le pagine attraverso una rigorosa composizione grafica e costruire una nuova dialettica tra passato e presente permetteranno all'Atlas, in un secondo momento, di acquisire una più consolidata identità, lontana della iniziale connotazione di un "photo album", costruendo le basi per il momento finale di presentazione che lo mostrerà come un elemento di riferimento di viaggio di architettura e allo stesso tempo come riferimento teorico e concettuale per il progetto.

Walter Benjamin scrittore e un collezionista di libri, nel suo saggio *Unpacking my Library,* prende uno sguardo serio se non umoristico? sull'atto del collezionismo e sul rapporto tra il collezionista e i suoi beni. L'ispirazione per questo saggio è stata l'atto di disimballare la sua biblioteca dopo un deposito di due anni. Benjamin imposta la scena non descrivendo ordinatamente le file di libri solitamente associati alle biblioteche ma parlando del disordine dello *storage*. Le sue immagini aiutano a creare l'atmosfera e possono ispirare un senso di anticipazione nel riscoprire ogni oggetto, ogni libro. Benjamin afferma che esiste una "marea primaverile di ricordi che si insinua nei confronti di ogni collezionista mentre contempla i suoi possedimenti" ed elaborando ulteriormente dice che "ogni passione rasenta il caos,

ma la passione del collezionista rasenta il caos dei ricordi". L'aspettativa di disimballare la sua biblioteca non è solo causata dal ricongiungimento dei libri reali, ma anche dalla possibilità di rivivere le esperienze associate a ciascun libro.

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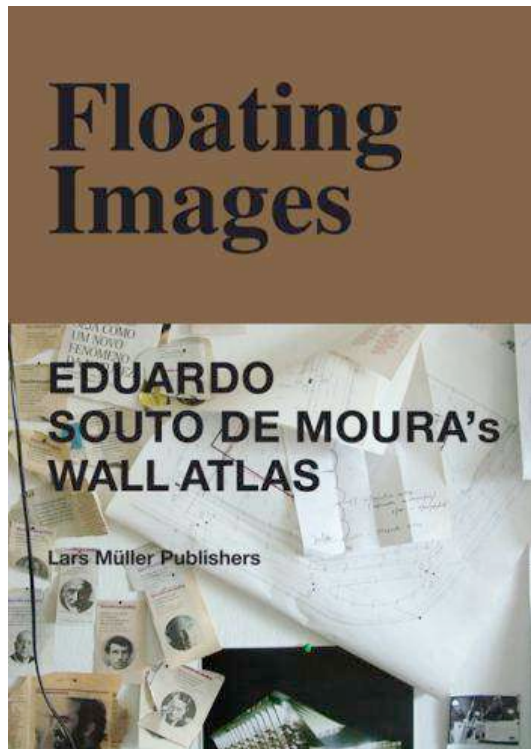
The ancient city of Palmyra was once known as the 'Bride of the Desert'. Under Emperor Tiberius it became part of the Roman province of Syria and ruins dating from this period strew a great swathe of the desert landscape. The columns of sandstone seem to intrude directly from the sand, making the line between raw nature and the formality of architecture difficult to read.

Resonant alongside the photograph of Palmyra, this twenty-first century 'ruin' lies on the way to Aleppo, Syria's largest city. The building site appears to be abandoned, leaving a series of half-finished forms whose simple, uncluttered structural grids are surprisingly pleasing. All that is currently attractive will be lost, if the development is ever completed.

2

3

4

Palermo è una delle mie Città.

Amo questa quadricula - queste strade che finiscono nella montagna o nella intuizione del mare.

Mi piacciono le fontane scolpite nell'incrocio degli assi - come a Roma - le statue dallo sguardo magnetico nella Pianta Pretoria, gli alberi nei boulevards modernisti che quasi occultano le facciate di tante epoche inevitabilmente classiche; le uscite dell'autostrada, tra case spesso abusive disseminate nel paesaggio, che montano disordinatamente per la montagna.

Mi attraggono i moli dove arrivano le navi da Napoli e da Genova all'alba, quando le strade sono deserte e i tassisti dormono; la vista della costa e della montagna attraverso i vetri appannati dell'aeroplano.

Amo queste porte enormi e solide, le mani che le attraversano, di ferro fuso, serrate, annerite dalle nostre quando in gloria annunciamo la nostra presenza; i cortili intravisti e le statue di marmo nelle nicchie, nei canti, fratturate, vestite di rampicanti; le cancellate di ferro ossidate e i rami dei ficus trasformati in radici; gli intonaci disfatti che rivelano frammenti di coccio, cementi diseguali, pietre recuperate, capitelli e pilastri sovrapposti a caso, fusi ad altri materiali.
Mi piace questa persistenza rinnovata, turbata dalle contaminazioni - sicani, fenici, greci, romani, arabi, normanni, francesi e catalani e inglesi.

Amo questa città tra l'azzurro del mare e quello della montagna - e il verde e il dorato - i bordi dei viali, fuori dalle mura, quando scorrono verso la base della montagna mostrando un alzato verde quasi orizzontale; la sorpresa di una torre spagnola sopra la roccia o sopra la spiaggia, dopo uno spostamento di terra selvaggio, o l'improvvisa apparizione di un taglio di austera geometria, o di un magazzino di pesca

Discorso letto Magistrale di Álvaro Siza, Laurea honoris causa all'Università di Palermo, 1995. Traduzione di Roberto Collovà. Pagina precedente, Quaderno 576, luglio 1994, Palermo, Álvaro Siza.

Laurea Honoris Causa Dell'Università Di Palermo | 1995

6

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Edited by André Tavares, Pedro Bandeira
Design: Integral Lars Müller, 2014

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4 Aby Warburg, *Mnemosyne Atlas*

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Programma di viaggio a Marrakech

29.11.17 mercoledi (mercredi)	22:15 Marrakech airport 23:00: hotel
30.11.17 giovedi (jeudi)	**10:00**-11:00 Khat Benahid , Ben Youseff complex **11:00**-12:30 Ben Youseff Medresa (séc XVI) **12:30**-13:15 Qoubba Al-Boudiyyine (séc XII) 13:15-14:00: souks **14:00**-14:30 Pranzo Jem el Fna 15:00-16:00 Yves Saint Laurent Museum, KO Architects 16:00-17:00 Jardin Majorelle 20:00 cena
01.12.17 venerdi (vendredi)	**09:00-10:00** Workshop / revisioni dei progetti **10:30**-12:30 Visita di Koutubia area **13:00**-14:00 pranzo Koutoubia + Yves Saint Laurent Museum **15:00**-16:30 Badi Palace séc XVI 17:00-18:30 Kasbah 20:00 cena
02.11.17 sabato (samedi)	**09:00**-10:00 Workshop / revisioni dei progetti hat Benahid **10:30**-11:30 Menara c Hamid Triki (séc XVI) **12:00**-12:45 Les Tombeaux Saadiens c Hamid Triki (séc XVII) 13:15-14:30 Bahia Palace c Hamid Triki (séc XIX) **15:00**-15:30 Qoubba Al-Boudiyyine (séc XII) 15:30-16:30 Maison de la Photographie c Patrick Manah 16:30-17:30 Museo Douiria de Mouassine c Patrick Manah (sec XVII) 18:00.18:30 Dar Chariffa (séc XVI)
03.12.17 domenica	08:30-11:00 revisita ai site del progetti 11:30 partenza aeroporto

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www.archnet.org

I U A V — Università Iuav di Venezia
DIPARTIMENTO DI PROGETTAZIONE E PIANIFICAZIONE IN AMBIENTI COMPLESSI

PROGETTAZIONE DEI PAESAGGI TURISTICI E CULTURALI

prof. Joao Rocha_Universidade de Evora

The MuseumSpace(s): Marrakech

Le lezioni si svolgeranno:
dal 13 ottobre al 22 dicembre 2017
il venerdì pomeriggio dalle 14.00 alle 18,00
Aula N1_Cotonificio
lezione di apertura: venerdì 13 ottobre, ore 11.30 aula A_Terese

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Responsabili didattici: proff. Piercarlo Romagnoni e Marco Ferrari

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I U A V — Università Iuav di Venezia
DIPARTIMENTO DI PROGETTAZIONE E PIANIFICAZIONE IN AMBIENTI COMPLESSI
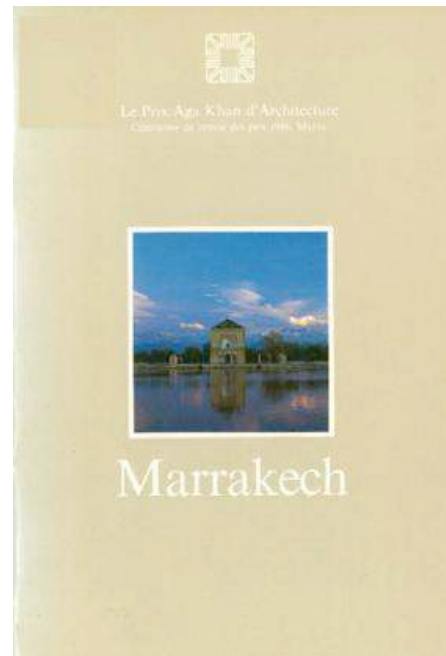CORSO DI LAUREA MAGISTRALE IN ARCHITETTURA E INNOVAZIONE

Corso di progettazione architettonica e urbana - Laboratorio integrato 1B
Corso di Progettazione dei paesaggi turistici e culturali
proff. Marco Ferrari e Altino João Magalhães Rocha con Pietro Ferrara

VIOLA BERTINI
Hassan Fathy, terra e utopia

24.11.2017 Cotonificio   **aula N1**

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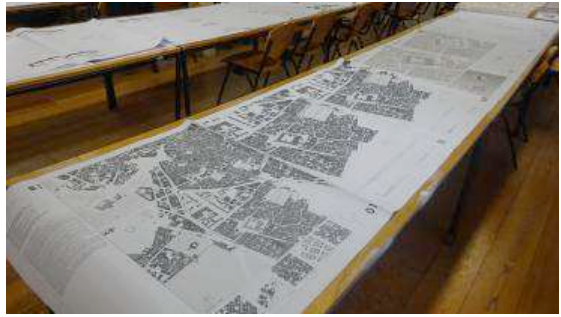
ATLASMARRAKECH
Un viaggio tra due culture
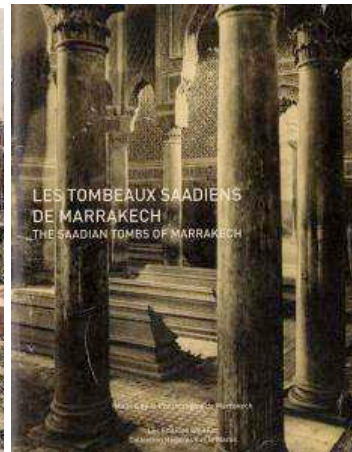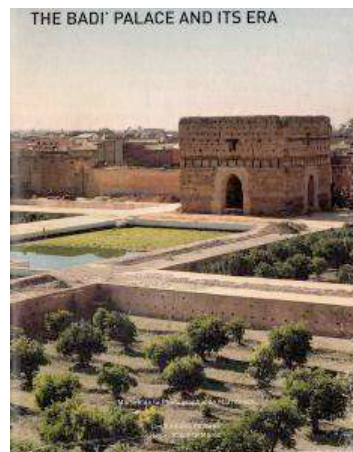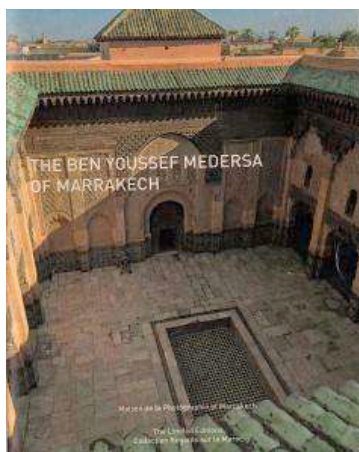
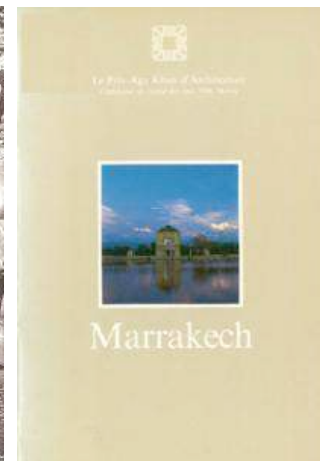**Viaggio studio a Marrakech 29.11 - 03.12.2017**

Le Prix Aga Khan d'Architecture

Marrakech

Jacques Majorelle's Morocco

Jardin Majorelle — FRANÇAIS

Quentin Wilbaux — La médina de Marrakech — Formation des espaces urbains d'une ancienne capitale du Maroc

DAR MOULAY ALI VOYAGE AU CŒUR DE LA MÉMOIRE — LA RÉSIDENCE CONSULAIRE DE FRANCE À MARRAKECH

JEAN GALLOTTI — LE JARDIN ET LA MAISON ARABES AU MAROC

Marrakech

THE BEN YOUSSEF MEDERSA OF MARRAKECH

THE BADI' PALACE AND ITS ERA

LES TOMBEAUX SAADIENS DE MARRAKECH — THE SAADIAN TOMBS OF MARRAKECH
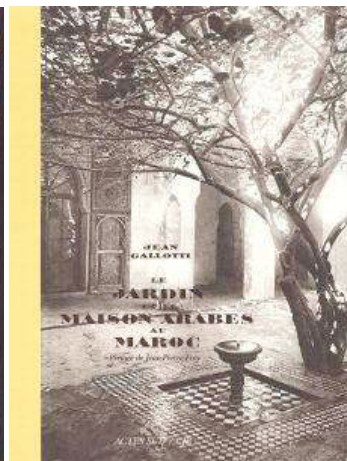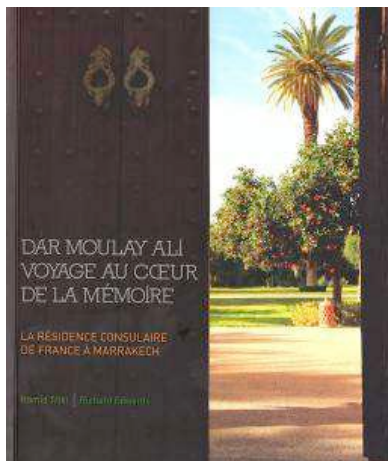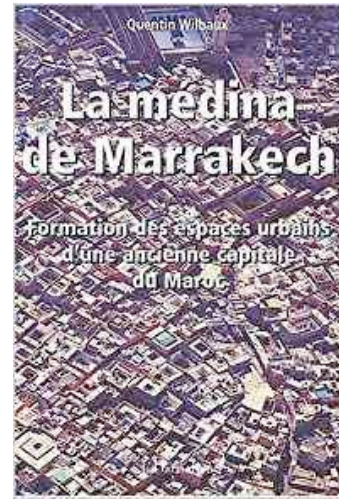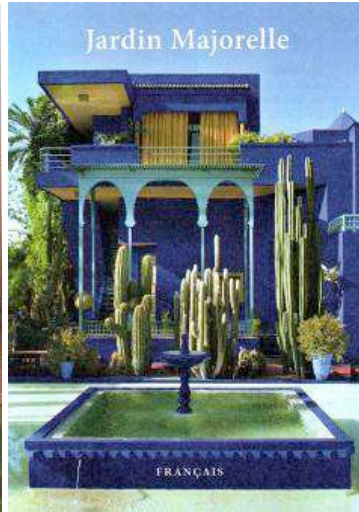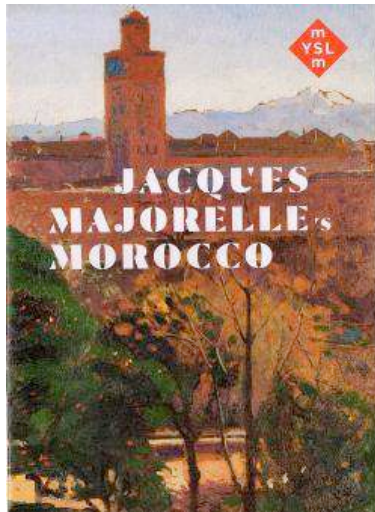
Ringraziamenti

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Prof. Hamid Triki, in Marrakech.
Maison de L´Elu, Marrakech.

Attivita di Ricercha

Continuazioni di lavoro nel ambito della "Designing Heritage Tourism Landscapes" network e inizio d´elaborazione di una proposta per pubblicazione.

AtlasMarrakech

Foreword:

I   Introduzione: João Rocha e Marco Ferrari

II   Marrakech: Hamid Triki

III   Marrakech nella transizione del secolo attraverso la fotografia. Patrick Menah

III   Patrimonio e Museologia: Filipe Themudo Barata /

IV   Marrakech, Museologia Turismo :

V   Architettura delle area storiche della citta: João Rocha

VII   Strategie progettuali: Marco Ferrari, João Rocha, Pietro Ferrara

         Ben Youseff
         Koutubia
         Kashbah

i studenti iscritti

Nasser Rabbat
Arab Cities and Identity Crisis
in The Arab City: Architecture and Representation, Amale Andraos, Nora Akawi, and Caitlin Blanchfield eds. (New York: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2016), 41-49.

Nasser Rabbat
Islamic Architecture as a Field of Historical Enquiry
Journal of Art Historiography, Jun 1, 2012.

Nasser Rabbat
What Is Islamic Architecture Anyway?
Journal of Art Historiography, N° 6 Jun 1, 2012.

Hamid Triki
Marrakech. Aga Kahan Award for Architecture, 1986.

Plan of the nineteenth-century expansion of Cairo.

Arab Cities and Identity Crisis
NASSER RABBAT

Cities in the Arab world went through a series of existential crises in the last two centuries.[1] The romantic Orientalist conception of an Arabo-Islamic city—the medina, with its narrow winding alleyways, semi-isolated and inward-looking neighborhoods, linear and specialized souks, central congregational mosques, courtyard houses with crooked plans where large patrilineal families lived together, preponderance of ruined properties, and relentless obsession with privacy—had, by the late nineteenth century, ceased to exist.[2] In its place rose a dual city, divided between the traditional medina and a *ville nouvelle*.[3] The new cities presented a new façade of the "Orient" and a foothold for Western interests where the two sides met and cohabited despite their differences.

First to go binary, and thus to begin to experience a split personality, was Cairo. Khedive Isma'il, the impatient modernizer who ruled Egypt from 1863 to 1879 and wanted to turn it into a part of Europe despite all adverse circumstances, initiated a grand urban project, al-Isma'iliyya, which extended from old Cairo westward toward the Nile, with tree-lined avenues radiating from central squares modeled after the imperial Paris of Baron Haussmann.[4] The new city was furnished with cafés, public gardens, shopping centers, and even an opera house. Incisions in the dense urban fabric of the old city were made to provide straight vehicular access and infrastructural services and to enact a system of spatial control and surveillance. But old Cairo remained essentially premodern in its spatial and social structure, as masterfully depicted in Naguib Mahfouz's *Cairo Trilogy*, and was fronted by and hidden behind the European section, with its accouterments of modern urban living.[5]

Next came the colonial period, during which the dual city phenomenon intensified. In North Africa, where the governments of France and Italy settled colons as a means to lay perpetual claim to the land, urban strategies were implemented to separate the colonized natives from the European landowners who lived in exclusive *villes nouvelles*.[6] Such for instance was the policy promulgated by General Hubert Lyautey, the first French resident general in Morocco, whose architect, Henri Prost, produced plans for Marrakesh, Fez, Meknes, Rabat, and Casablanca. Prost's schemes mummified the historic medinas and isolated them from the *nouvelles villes*, with their wide, straight boulevards, apartment buildings, and green spaces that sometimes functioned as a *cordon vert* surrounding the old cities.[7] An extreme example of the North African colonial city is Le Corbusier's 1933 Plan Obus for Algiers.[8] It proposed

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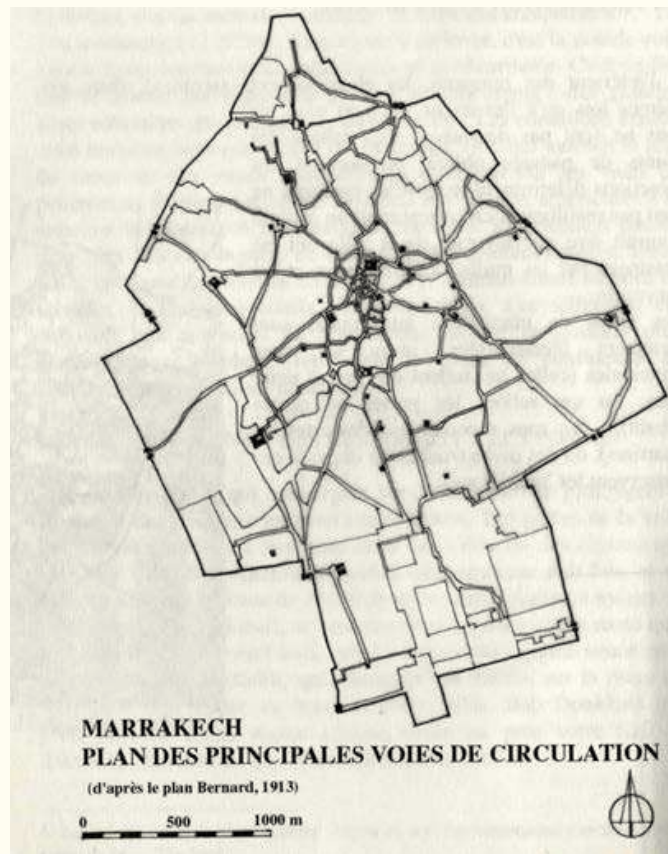
Plan of colonial Marrakesh.
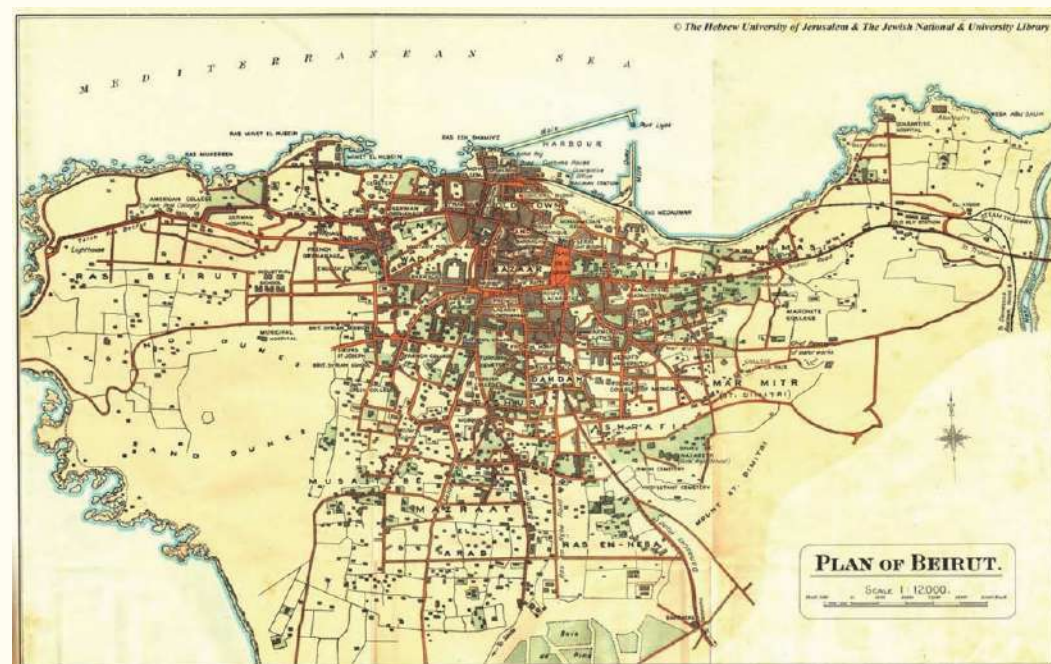
Colonial plan of Beirut, 1923.

a gigantic viaduct connecting a business center on the docks to an undulating, oppressively massive residential zone on the hillside behind the city via a rapid motorway perched above the "Arab City," or the *casbah*.

In Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine—all constructed arbitrarily as colonial territories according to the secret Sykes–Picot Agreement after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and in a softer fashion, with no European settlers (except, of course, for Palestine, but that is a wholly different tragedy)— the colonial authorities intervened directly in the old medinas of existing cities by cutting wide boulevards that connected them to the new, European-style neighborhoods developed outside for the bourgeois classes that were increasingly adopting European customs and lifestyles.[9] This was the case in cities like Damascus, Aleppo, Beirut, Baghdad, Jaffa, and other smaller cities in the region, even though the migration of the bourgeoisie to the new neighborhoods dated back to the end of the Ottoman period, when the reforms (*tanzimat*) adopted European modernization as a way to catch up with the West.[10]

Le Corbusier, Plan Obus.

With independence in the middle of the twentieth century, the Arab colonies transformed into weak nation-states, about which the late Tahsin Bashir, one of Egypt's foremost diplomats, could exclaim with deadpan seriousness: "Egypt

is the only nation-state in the region, the others are tribes with flags."[11] The new bourgeois regimes deployed a blend of political liberalism, social conservatism, modernization, and laissez-faire economics as the framework of their state building.[12] They continued the urban policies of the colonial period in matters of zoning, hygiene, landscape, and traffic but tried to nationalize the cityscape by changing the names of the main streets back to Arabic, removing statues of colonial figures and replacing them with national heroes, and patronizing architectural styles for public buildings that harked back to a glorious Islamic past. But the nationalists' paternalistic form of government was shattered after the shocking defeat of the combined Arab armies in Palestine in 1948 and the *nakba* (catastrophe) of the Palestinians, whose forcibly chased masses moved into makeshift camps around the main cities of the neighboring countries of Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon, in addition to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.[13]

The creation of Israel caused further fissures in the already embattled Arab political culture and sense of self and led to a series of military coups in Syria (1949), Egypt (1952), and Iraq (1957), each of which took the national destiny into the army's hands.[14] But lacking some of the crucial components of legitimate governments, these incompetent military regimes overcompensated by an exaggerated reliance on the politics of class and identity.[15] New powerful concepts, such as historical identity, authenticity, and the recovery of the Arabic cultural roots, rose to the pinnacle of public interests. Cairo, Damascus, and Baghdad, the old capitals of the Arab golden ages, became the new centers of progressive national visions that wavered between a cautious territorial nationalism of the actual states and an expansive pan-nationalist Arabism, a movement that believed that all boundaries between Arabic countries would be subsumed into a mega-nation with shared language and history.[16] In the 1960s and early 1970s, Beirut, with its pro-West system and relative freedoms, became the cultural capital of the Arab world, with dissidents flocking to it from other Arab cities, whereas Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, Tripoli, Khartoum, and San'aa fell to the control of repressive regimes that deployed pan-Arabism as state strategy, with varying interpretations of the path to (forced) Arab unity.[17]

These same regimes adopted ambitious socialist modernization programs, complete with land reforms, nationalization of industries and basic services, and an expanded administrative class.[18] The socialist framework generated new— and hastily conceived and implemented—urban, agricultural, industrial, and infrastructural projects meant to herald the new age of progress.[19] Their formal modernism, sometimes softened by symbolic references to history or formal gestures toward climate and site, was apparently predicated on the assumption that modernist projects can stand for expressions of modernity.[20]

Modernization, alas, remained an incomplete project in the face of inherited or created geopolitical, historical, and social contradictions.[21] The startling

Nasr City, Cairo.

Arab defeat in the war of 1967 with Israel revealed the superficiality of most modernizing projects, such as the training of modern armies and the development of advanced industries, and the bankruptcy of the socialist and pan-Arabist regimes. A mood of melancholy and wounded ego pervaded the culture everywhere in the Arab world, a mood manifested in fiction, poetry, art, and even religious and historical studies.[22] But that did not translate into any serious and critical revisions of the national narrative or the political system. Instead, the regimes refashioned themselves to respond to the post-defeat conditions without loosening their tight grip on power.

Consequently, the 1970s and 1980s saw the dismantling of the faltering socialist experiments and their gradual replacement with a statist form of crony capitalism, initiated in Egypt by Anwar al-Sadat, with the misleadingly liberal name *infitah* ("opening up").[23] Similar, though carefully disguised, economic reorientations followed in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, and Algeria, where the military regimes hardened into tyrannical dictatorships devoid of any political pretensions, whose sole purpose was to stay in power in order to enrich their narrow base of supporters.[24] And despite the semblance of growth that crony capitalism delivered, most of these countries experienced acute problems of urban and rural degradation, infrastructural exhaustion, demographic explosion, and socioeconomic inequality.[25]

Desperate rural migration flooded the cities in the 1980s and 1990s, which swelled uncontrollably and at an unprecedented rate to house the bursting poor population.[26] The old urban cores of the *medina*, long deserted by the bourgeois middle classes, were taken over by the new immigrants, who subdivided the old courtyard houses into multiple residential units lacking basic services. Others moved into minimally planned and badly serviced slums (with the expressive Egyptian name *'ashwa'yat*, or "haphazard areas") that grew up on the periphery, on former agricultural land or in industrial zones.[27]

A small segment of Arab cities, however, began to flourish at that time and continue to prosper today despite the recent global economic blowout. These are the Arabian cities of the Persian Gulf: a narrow necklace of supra-urbanized dots strung together along the vast arid and sandy coast of the Gulf from Kuwait to Oman and passing by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

Having lain on the edge of the desert for so long, these cities kept their modest, tribally structured, and premodern layouts until the late twentieth century. But things changed, first in the wake of oil discovery in the 1940s and then, more spectacularly, after the 1974 oil price surge. The poor countries became super rich. With the massive new wealth came the desire to develop fast and big.[28] Cities had to be modernized to serve their growing populations and to satisfy their sociocultural needs and newly acquired expensive tastes (which Beirut, mired in a nasty civil war between 1975 and the early 1990s, could no longer fulfill).

Dubai, a city-state with little oil income but with an unrestrained economic laissez-faire and aggressive pursuit of investments, led the way.[29] The entire city, its surrounding desert, and even its coastal water became the world's phenomenal real estate laboratory, where the only check on architectural flights of fancy seems to be the ability of the designers to push the limits of size, height, eccentricity, and desire, as well as the willingness of their patrons to bankroll
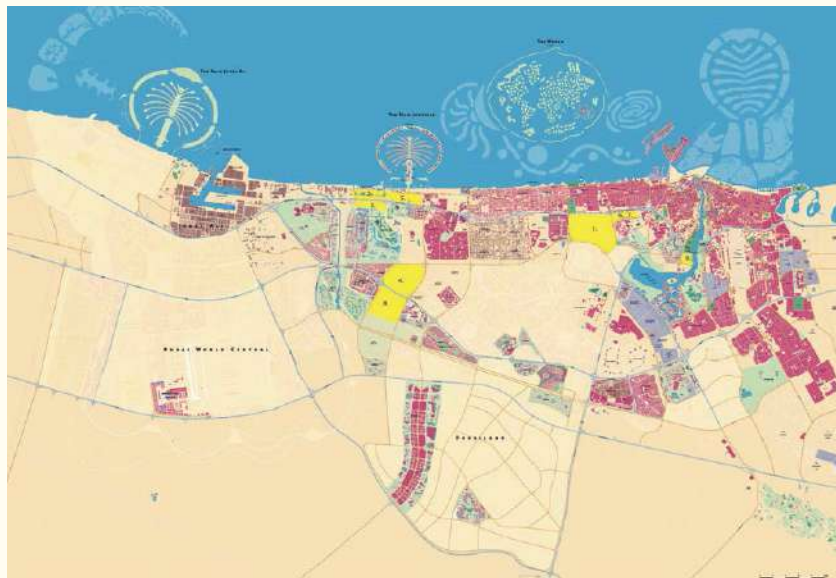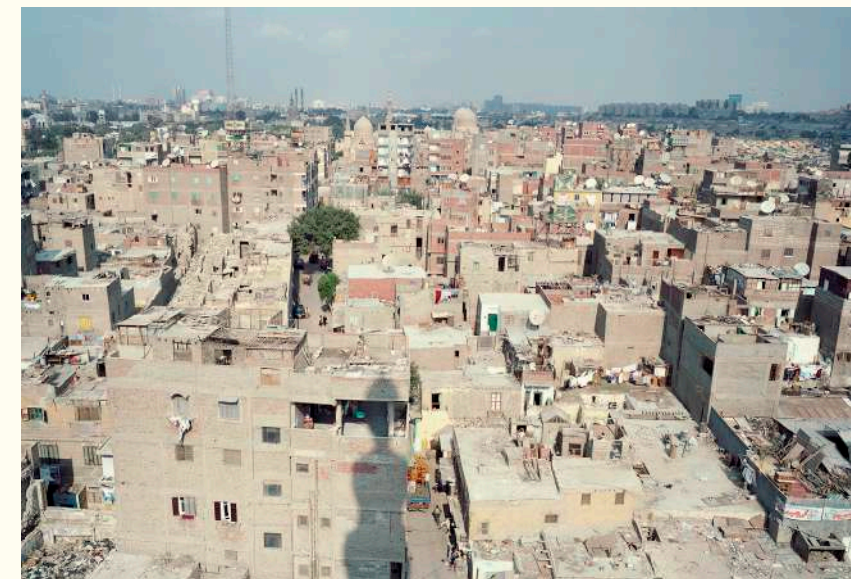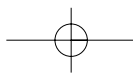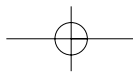

Expansion of Dubai.

those fantasies. In this make-believe setting, the "utopian capitalist city," as Mike Davis called Dubai, seems to have been following a tacit design objective shared by the designers and their patrons to lure in more investors to a financial cyclical scheme that seems to have recovered most of its steam after the crash of 2008.[30]
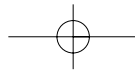
Following the model of Dubai, the Arabian Gulf cities underwent an unprecedented urban boom in the last twenty years. Gargantuan business parks and malls, towering luxury residences and hotels, showy entertainment complexes, and sophisticated museums and university campuses appeared in every Gulf city in an almost predictable and unified pattern of development.[31] In this economic scheme, design seems to function as branding instrument and spectacular wrapping for the new lavish enterprises, which broke all previous norms of size, form, function, fantasy, and, often, urban vision. Many were deliberately commissioned from international starchitects as a way to capture the glamour associated with these world-famous designers in the actual buildings they design. They are also meant to indirectly present the sensational envelope as the aspiration—and potentially the substitute—for the still unresolved tensions embedded in the monumentality, extravagance, and ambiguous social functions of the buildings themselves and the institutions they are supposed to house and serve.

The harsher effects of these extreme conditions of real estate capitalism, however, were felt in the older and poorer Arab cities that could not sustain this kind of financial, urban, or social extravaganza. As a result, they suffered a fading away of the civic qualities they had slowly acquired over the last two centuries, which were replaced by a market-driven system that split them into extremes.[32] On one end, the poor quarters were robbed of the last vestiges of civil life and turned into run-down village-like neighborhoods living by their own informal and traditional codes with no urban vision or authority, as can be observed in the districts of Imbaba, Bulaq al-Dakrur, and the Qarafa in Cairo, for instance, or in the district of Sadr City (formerly known as Ba'th City) in Baghdad, or on the southern and eastern ends of the Dhahiya in

Bulaq al-Dakrur Cairo.

Beirut, now the domain of Hezbollah.[33] On the other end, the rich districts assumed a consumerist and globalized identity that has no local feel or sense of belonging, as in New Cairo and Qatamiyya in Cairo, the new Abdali Development in the heart of Amman, and the new residential areas around the Solidere megaproject in central Beirut.

This messy process fostered acute discrepancies in identity, ideology, social outlook, and wealth that came into the open with the popular upheavals of 2011 in several Arab countries. But the promising beginning of this so-called "Arab Spring" has withered away, and the unresolved problem of nationalism has degenerated into a cacophony of discordant social, sectarian, and ethnic groupings that share the same urban space and fight over the right to define and rule it.

1   William R. Polk, *The Arab World*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 67–92; Tarik Sabry, *Cultural Encounters in the Arab World: On Media, the Modern, and the Everyday* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 1–42, 95–155.

2   Janet Abu-Lughod, "The Islamic City-Historic Myth, Islamic Essence, and Contemporary Relevance," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2 (1987): 155–76; André Raymond, "Islamic City, Arab City: Orientalist Myths and Recent Views," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 21 (1994): 3–18.

3   On all colonial cities, with a focus on Algiers, see Zeynep Çelik, "New Approaches to the 'Non-Western' City," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* vol. 58, no. 3 (1999): 374–81. On Morocco, see Gwendolyn Wright, "Tradition in the Service of Modernity: Architecture and Urbanism in French Colonial Policy, 1900–1930," *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 59, no. 2 (1987): 291–316.

4   Janet Abu-Lughod, "Tale of Two Cities: The Origins of Modern Cairo," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 7, no. 4 (1965): 429–57; Heba Farouk Ahmed, "Nineteenth-Century Cairo: A Dual City?" in *Making Cairo Medieval*, ed. Nezar AlSayyad, Irene A. Bierman, and Nasser Rabbat (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2005), 143–72.

5   The Cairo Trilogy, *Bayn al Qasrayn, Qasr al Shawq*, and *al-Sukkariya*, completed in Arabic in 1957, is available in an English edition as *The Cairo Trilogy: Palace Walk, Palace of Desire, Sugar Street*, trans. William M. Hutchins et al. (New York: Everyman's Library, 2001).

6   On Morocco, see Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 85–160. On Libya, see Vittoria Capresi, "Architectural Transfer, Italian Colonial Architecture in Libya: 'Libyan Rationalism' and the Concept of 'Mediterraneity,' 1926–1942," in *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa: Intertwined and Contested Histories*, ed. Fassil Demissie (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2012), 33–66.

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9   Edmund Burke III, "A Comparative View of French Native Policy in Morocco and Syria, 1912–1925" *Middle Eastern Studies* 9, 2 (1973): 175–186; Vilma Hastaoglou-Martinidis, "Urban Aesthetics and National Identity: The Refashioning of Eastern Mediterranean Cities between 1900 and 1940," *Planning Perspectives* 26, no. 2 (2011): 153–82; Eric Verdeil, "Michel Ecochard in Lebanon and Syria (1956–1968): The Spread of Modernism, the Building of the Independent States, and the Rise of Local Professionals of Planning," *Planning Perspectives* 27, no. 2 (2012): 249–66. On the British social and urban policies in Palestine and the consequent Israeli policies, see Daniel Monk, *An Aesthetic Occupation: The Immediacy of Architecture and the Palestine Conflict* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2002), 99–127, and Sari Hanafi, "Spacio-cide: Colonial Politics, Invisibility and Rezoning in Palestinian Territory," *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 2, no. 1 (2009): 106–21.

10   Christoph K. Neumann, "Ottoman Provincial Towns in the Eighteenth to Nineteenth Centuries," in *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, ed. Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber (Würzburg: Ergon in Kommission, 2002), 131–44.

11   Charles Glass, in *Tribes with Flags: A Dangerous Passage through the Chaos of the Middle East* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1990), 3, explains that he borrowed the title "tribes with flags" from Bashir.

12   Keith D. Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006), 1–31.

13   Arnold Hottinger, "How the Arab Bourgeoisie Lost Power," *Journal of Contemporary History* 3, no. 3 (July 1968): 111–28; Roger Owen, *State Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (London: Routledge, 2002), 1–22.

14   *Owen, State Power and Politics*, 198–221.

15   George Lenczowski, "Radical Regimes in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq: Some Comparative Observations on Ideologies and Practices," *Journal of Politics* 28, no. 1 (Feb. 1966): 29–56.

16   Eugene L. Rogan, *The Arabs: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 277–318; Youssef M. Choueiri, *Arab Nationalism, a History: Nation and State in the Arab World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 65–100.

17   Clement Henry Moore, "Authoritarian Politics in Unincorporated Society: The Case of Nasser's Egypt," *Comparative Politics* 6, no. 2 (January 1974): 193–218.

18   James M. Dickinson, "State and Economy in the Arab Middle East: Some Theoretical and Empirical Observations," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 22–50.

19   James Gelvin, "Modernity and Its Discontents: On the Durability of Nationalism in the Arab Middle East," *Nations and Nationalism* 5, no. 1 (1999): 71–89; Timothy Mitchell, "The Stage of Modernity," in *Questions of Modernity*, ed. Timothy Mitchell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 1–34.

20   Gwendolyn Wright, "Global Ambition and Local Knowledge," in *Modernism and the Middle East: Architecture and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Sandy Isenstadt and Kishwar Rizvi (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2008), 221–54.

21   Gehan Selim, "Instituting Order: The Limitations of Nasser's Post-Colonial Planning Visions for Cairo in the Case of the Indigenous Quarter of Bulaq (1952–1970)," *Planning Perspectives* 29, no. 1 (2014): 67–89.

22   Trevor J. LeGassick, "Some Recent War-Related Arabic Fiction," *Middle East Journal* 25, no. 4 (Autumn 1971): 491–505.

23   Relli Shechter, "From Effendi to Infitāhī? Consumerism and Its Malcontents in the Emergence of Egyptian Market Society," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 1 (2009): 21–35; Clement H. Moore, "Money and Power: The Dilemma of the Egyptian Infitah," *Middle East Journal* 40, no. 4 (1986): 634–50.

24   Owen, *State Power and Politics*, 113–30; Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics* vol. 36, no. 2 (January 2004): 139–57. For an examination of the Syrian case, see Anja Zorob, "Reform without Adjustment: The Syrian Style of Economic Opening," in *The Arab Authoritarian Regime between Reform and Persistence*, ed. Henner Fuertig (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 57–86.

25   Basheer K. Nijim, "Spatial Aspects of Demographic Change in the Arab World," in *The Middle East: From Transition to Development*, ed. Sami G. Hajjar (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 30–53; Valentine M. Moghadam, "Population Growth, Urbanization, and the Challenges of Unemployment," *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*, 4th ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013), 287–314.

26   Janet Abu-Lughod, "Recent Migrations in the Arab World" in *Human Migration: Patterns and Policies*, ed. William H. McNeill and Ruth Adams (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 225–40.

27   Samia Mehrez, "From the *Hara* to the *'Imara*: Emerging Urban Metaphors in the Literary Production of Contemporary Cairo," in *Egypt's Culture Wars* (London: Routledge, 2008), 161–85, republished in *Cairo Contested: Governance, Urban Space, and Global Modernity*, ed. Diane Singerman (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2009), 145–74.

28   The process is traced with ironic flair in Abdelrahman Munif, *Cities of Salt*, trans. Peter Theroux (New York: Vintage, 1987). Only the first three volumes of a quintet gathered together under the Arabic title *Mudun al-Malh (Cities of Salt)* and published in Arabic between 1984 and 1989, are translated to English. The story follows the fate of a fictitious country, clearly modeled on Saudi Arabia, as the consequences of the oil discovery unfold over a half a century affecting everything. See Nelida Fuccaro, "Visions of the City: Urban Studies on the Gulf," *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, vol. 35, no. 2 (Winter 2001): 175–87.

29   Mike Davis, "Fear and Money in Dubai," *New Left Review* 41 (September–October 2006): 46–68.

30   Esra Akcan, "World, Open City?" *Architectural Design* 74, no. 6 (2004): 98–104; Yasser Elsheshtawy, "Redrawing Boundaries: Dubai, the Emergence of a Global City," in *Planning the Middle East City: An Urban Kaleidoscope in a Globalizing World*, ed. Y. Elsheshtawy (New York: Routledge, 2004), 169–99; Samer Bagaeen, "Brand Dubai: The Instant City; or, the Instantly Recognizable City," *International Planning Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2 (2007): 173–97.

31   Khaled Adham, "Rediscovering the Island: Doha's Urbanity from Pearls to Spectacle," in *The Evolving Arab City: Tradition, Modernity, and Urban Development*, ed. Yasser Elsheshtawy (New York: Routledge, 2008), 218–57; Sean Foley, *The Arab Gulf States: Beyond Oil and Islam* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010), 144–52, 273–82; Miriam Cooke, *Tribal Modern: Branding New Nations in the Arab Gulf* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 77–98.

32   Hilary Silver, "Divided Cities in the Middle East," *City & Community* 9, no. 4 (2010): 345–57; Hassan-Uddin Khan, "Identity, Globalization, and the Contemporary Islamic City," in *The City in the Islamic World*, ed. Renata Holod, Attilio Petruccioli, and André Raymond (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 1035–62.

33   For an analysis of the Egyptian case, see Nabil 'Abd al-Fattah, "The Anarchy of Egyptian Legal System: Wearing Away the Legal and Political Modernity," in *Legal Pluralism in the Arab World*, ed. Baudouin Dupret, Maurits Berger, and Laila al-Zwaini (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1999), 159–71.

# Islamic Architecture as a Field of Historical Enquiry

For many years, Islamic architecture, as a field of historical enquiry, was hampered by its Orientalist roots. Architectural forms were classified by types and styles, and perceived as sedate, static and unevolving. **Nasser Rabbat**, Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Architecture at MIT, demonstrates a dynamic way forward for the discipline.

Islamic architecture, long labelled with inaccurate and controversial qualifiers such as 'Saracenic', 'Moorish' or 'Mohammedan' was, until recently, among the least theoretically developed areas of enquiry in the field of architecture.[1] Few studies existed that moved beyond the taxonomic, typological or stylistic framework on the one hand, or the religiously or culturally essentialist or environmentally deterministic on the other. These approaches reflected the enduring influence of the two major and interdependent scholarly traditions that dominated the development of the study of the history of Islamic architecture since its inception until the late 20th century. The first stemmed from the peculiar historiography of the study of Islam in the West that came to be called Orientalism, and its various peregrinations both in the West and in the Islamic world. The second was the authoritative historiography of art and architectural history which, until the 1980s, routinely portrayed the history of Western architecture as history of architecture *par excellence*, while casting the architecture of other cultures in anthropological and ahistorical categories.[2]

The pioneering students of Islamic architecture were almost all European architects, artists and draftspeople who, from as early as the 1820s, travelled to the 'Orient' in the wake of the first European military interventions
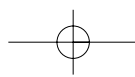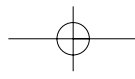
in search of adventure, employment and the fantasy associated with this long mysterious land. Some worked for individual patrons who sponsored expeditions and study tours either as an aristocratic recreation or for profit. Others worked for local or colonial authorities, which were concurrently spreading their dominion in the various regions of the Islamic world and needed the services of all classes of specialists to establish and maintain a new order in their territorial possessions. And still others worked for universities or learned societies in the West that were interested in the architecture of specific areas or periods for scholarly or religious reasons.

Like Orientalists in various other fields of enquiry, the early students of Islamic architecture became engaged in the vast enterprise of collecting, processing and interpreting data on all aspects of culture and society in the Orient. They visited Oriental cities and sites (primarily in Spain, Western Turkey, the Holy Land and Egypt), measured and recorded buildings and ruins, and illustrated these using all sorts of techniques from freehand sketches to exact camera lucida projections. They also ferreted through the limited available written sources to verify the historical details about the structures: date, provenance, patron, cost and the like. They then produced impressive catalogues of series of buildings, singular monuments, and architectural and ornamental details that began to introduce to Europe, and to the dominant classes in the Orient itself, the rich Islamic architectural heritage that was hitherto almost totally unknown.[3]

The trailblazers were followed by several generations of architects, draftspeople and, ultimately, archaeologists, who expanded the scope of the survey to Anatolia, Persia, India, Morocco and Arabia, and eventually penetrated the faraway reaches of the Islamic world, such as Central Asia or sub-Saharan Africa. Although most of the surveyors were still European, natives of the Islamic world began to participate in the process from as early as the first decade of the 20th century. Before the middle of the century, the terrain had been mostly mapped out, and with the nagging exception of Southeast Asia, most major buildings in the Islamic world had been measured, recorded and classified into types and styles following a rather rigid dynastic periodisation, which is still with us today.

But despite their erudite and prodigious output, most early students were neither equipped to, nor interested in, communicating the substantial intracultural variety and purposeful continuity within Islamic architecture, nor its conscious interaction with the architecture of other cultures, past and present. Instead, they set the stage for a self-contained architectural discourse charting the history of Islamic architecture as an endogenous and, seemingly, insular tradition that began with the building of the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina around AD 620, and inexplicably fizzled out with the dawn of the colonial age in the late 18th century.

This trajectory was academically and disciplinarily formalised when Islamic architecture finally became a subject of study of art history. This happened slowly and gradually in the early part of the 20th century with the establishment of the first academic chairs for the study of Islamic art history, which included architectural history, in Western universities and research centres. The hegemonic conceptual framework of Western art history, which had its roots in the late 18th-century German and French theories of art, framed the intricate network of epistemological and cultural conventions that produced and used art historical knowledge. It also constituted the only system via which an area of study could gain legitimacy within art history. Moreover, it controlled the scope and methods of all subdisciplines, including Islamic architecture, and assigned them their slots in a chronologically, geographically and even ideologically prescribed hierarchy.[4]

Accordingly, Islamic architecture was reduced to a set of prevalent characterisations – static, sensual and ornamental being the favourite among them – that stood in stark contrast to the self-conscious and historically evolving attributes frequently portrayed as specific to Western architecture. Instances that did not fit into this division – for example, the shared classical heritage in the medieval Middle East and Europe, the fruitful interaction between them during the Crusades, and their similar historicising stances in the 18th century – were explained away as oddities or aberrations provoked by singular historical circumstances.

The limitations of this burdensome, scholarly lineage were not seriously challenged until the 1980s. Empowered by critical developments in cultural studies after the publication of Edward Saïd's seminal book *Orientalism* in 1978, students of Islamic architecture began to question the validity of using geographic, historical, religious and cultural boundaries as disciplinary frameworks. They also began to hesitantly, yet exuberantly, ease into the liberating space of theory and method, and to extend their domain of enquiry into hitherto neglected periods, areas and points of contact with other cultures. The notions of uniformity, introversion, and cultural and religious determinism that long dominated the study of Islamic architecture

Opposite, top
Figure 1: Book cover of Pascal-Xavier Coste, *Architecture Arabe ou Monuments du Kaire mésurés et dessinés de 1818 à 1826*, Firmin-Didot (Paris), 1839, showing a distant view of Cairo framed within a highly ornamented archway of no discernible style.

Opposite, bottom
The 10th-century Bab al-Wazir at the Mosque of Cordoba (left), an example of the static, sensual and ornamental in Islamic architecture, and a view of one of the interior courts of the 1354 Bimaristan (hospital) of Arghun al-Kamili in Aleppo (right), with its austere surface articulation.

Above
The main *iwan* (archway) in the madrasah of Sultan Qalawun in Cairo (1284), a curious example of a basilical composition inserted inside an *iwan*.
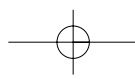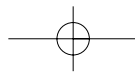
began to lose their grip as more and more scholars turned to the multiculturalist method in their enquiry. Some focused on the intercultural development of Islamic architecture over the last 15 centuries, with its substantial connections to the Late Antique Mediterranean, Iranian and Hindu-Buddhist cultures in the early periods and the European, Asian and African cultures of recent times.[5] Others began to dip into the intracultural spaces – that is, zones within a given society at a given time that are shared by its diverse constituent groups – where people have always met and exchanged ideas, views, beliefs and practices and, in the process, created architecture.

Thus, the contributions of the various Islamic fringe sects and esoteric religious orders, Christian and Jewish denominations, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Hindus and others have started to be analysed as both instrumental components of a shared architectural language and as distinct expressions within its fold. The cumulative effect of these critical and revisionist enquiries has been to set Islamic architecture well on its way to finally devising its own epistemological and methodological contours, which will undoubtedly enrich both the

discipline and practice of architecture in the Islamic world and beyond.

Three main issues can be singled out as promising venues in the field's current quest for critical research programmes. First is a claim for a dynamic historical framework. Piggybacking on other historical frameworks and other periodisations has clearly distorted the understanding of Islamic architecture for far too long. For example, classifying Islamic architecture along the dynastic sequence of Islamic history – that is, to speak of Abbasid or Mamluk architecture – has led to the disregard for the architecture's autonomous evolution, since artistic and architectural movements rarely correspond to political shifts. Dynastic periodisation has also resulted in needlessly privileging the role of the patrons in the conception of architecture and its signification to the detriment of the designers and builders. In the same way, categorising Islamic architecture after the Western stylistic sequence – Classical, Medieval or Baroque – has subjected the development of Islamic architecture to the rhythm of another architectural tradition, though the two have only intermittently shared the same trajectory. This has also meant that some attributes of Islamic architecture have been glossed over when they were named after formally, or conceptually, comparable characteristics of Western architecture, of which Baroque Ottoman is the most conspicuous, even though the similarity was mostly skin deep and historically unsubstantiated.

This terminological confusion has pervaded Islamic architecture to the point that any serious revision of the methods and conceptual frameworks of the field have to begin with a critical analysis of chronological division and historical parallels. Furthermore, as any cursory historical investigation will demonstrate, other decisive forces – such as massive population movements, lingering national and tribal pride, theological and spiritual breakthroughs, not to speak of artistic, structural and technological innovations – had a more profound effect on architecture in Islamic history than mere dynastic change. But this does not mean that dynastic nomenclature has to be totally thrown out. Some terms seem to be reasonably fitting, especially when applied to the specific geographic area where a truly dynastic architecture flourished, for example Umayyad or Seljuk architecture.

In other instances, different designations need to be devised either because several dynasties followed the same artistic paradigm – as in the case of the various splinter dynasties in the early Abbasid period, or the post-Seljukid small princedoms in Anatolia and Syria – or a stylistic or typological rupture occurred in mid-dynastic reign. It is very difficult, for example, to pinpoint the difference in the architecture of the two successive dynasties, Ayyubids and Mamluks, in Cairo,

> Dynastic periodisation has also resulted in needlessly privileging the role of the patrons in the conception of architecture and its signification to the detriment of the designers and builders. In the same way, categorising Islamic architecture after the Western stylistic sequence – Classical, Medieval or Baroque – has subjected the development of Islamic architecture to the rhythm of another architectural tradition, though the two have only intermittently shared the same trajectory.

although, otherwise, they were politically and socially particularly distinct. A flexible and multireferential periodisation, with chronologically open-ended boundaries that account for the stylistic, dynastic and sociocultural overlaps, would provide the most adequate historical setting for the study of Islamic architecture.

A second topic to explore is what can be called the multicultural quality of Islamic architecture, a quality shared by all architectural traditions with a living history. No single model – or unique cultural reference for that matter – can be induced as the sole inspiration behind any of the famous examples of Islamic architecture. Different tensions were at work. The people and groups concerned seem to have adopted, borrowed, resurrected and invented at every stage, and then reapplied the new creative process to the next work. The buildings they constructed reflected these choices in their forms, spaces and techniques, but also exhibited a relative stability of their intentions and goals. They referred to multifarious cultures, traditions, ideals and images which their patrons, designers and builders considered suitable, representative or desirable, for themselves and for their cultures.

The multicultural quality, however, goes beyond colouring our perception of Islamic architecture to conditioning the means by which we can analyse it. Thus, not only were divergences from a putative norm common, but the very idea of an overarching conformism or an underlying essentialism do not seem to provide an adequate explanation for any of the bold and innovative buildings dotting the historical landscape across the Islamic world. Old research models will have to be abandoned and new methods designed to comprehend and structure the diverse alignments that have asserted, and reasserted, themselves in diverse and flexible combinations within the domain of Islamic architecture throughout its long history.

Some experiments seem to have led to nowhere, and were dropped either immediately or after a few trials. Others were felt to be more satisfactory and were adopted for longer stretches of time. And still others became cultural standards, used over and over again, some even surviving the 'pre-Modern' periods to become iconic markers in the revival of 'Islamic architecture' as a design category pursued by many practitioners today. The cases of the arch and dome as carriers of cultural meanings are such examples. Not only did they complete the transition into modern times with

hardly a change in their significance, but their use has expanded to permeate all religious structures where Muslims build monuments to their faith.

A third critical issue, and one concomitant with the second point, is the dialogic dimension discernible in Islamic architecture. In many of its celebrated examples, this architecture appears to have been guided by a purposeful intellectual and aesthetic exchange within its own multicultural environment or with past and contemporary cultures near and far. Thus, Islamic architecture has interlocutors in Late Antique, Persian, South Arabian, Syriac, Coptic, Visigothic, Byzantine, Armenian, Buddhist and Hindu architectural traditions, and recently Modern and Postmodern European ones. But rather than mimetic, the process seems to have been dialogic; that is, it went beyond one-way copying to consciously engage the other architectural traditions in an interchange that resulted in original yet historically and territorially grounded architecture. This is evident in all Umayyad structures known to us today.[6] But it is also apparent in a vast array of other examples where the cultural dialogue has visibly modified the formal outcome. These include medieval Persian and Central Asian tomb towers; Seljukid and pre-Ottoman Anatolian mosques, madrasahs and *tekkes*; Egyptian, Syrian and North African palaces with basilical plans; Ghurid, Mamluk and Tughluqid architecture in India; and some recent modernistically sensible mosques such as the White Mosque of Visoko or the Parliament Mosque in Ankara, to list but a few.

Right
Detail of the cast-iron porticoes of the Gezira Palace in Cairo (1864) designed by the German architect Karl von Diebtisch and presented as evidence of the capacity of Islamic architectural elements to adapt to modern industrial production (top), and the Bhong Mosque near Rahimyar Khan, Pakistan (completed 1983), a colourful, eclectic mix of domes and arches seen by their builders as signifiers of Islamic architecture with a Punjabi twist.
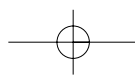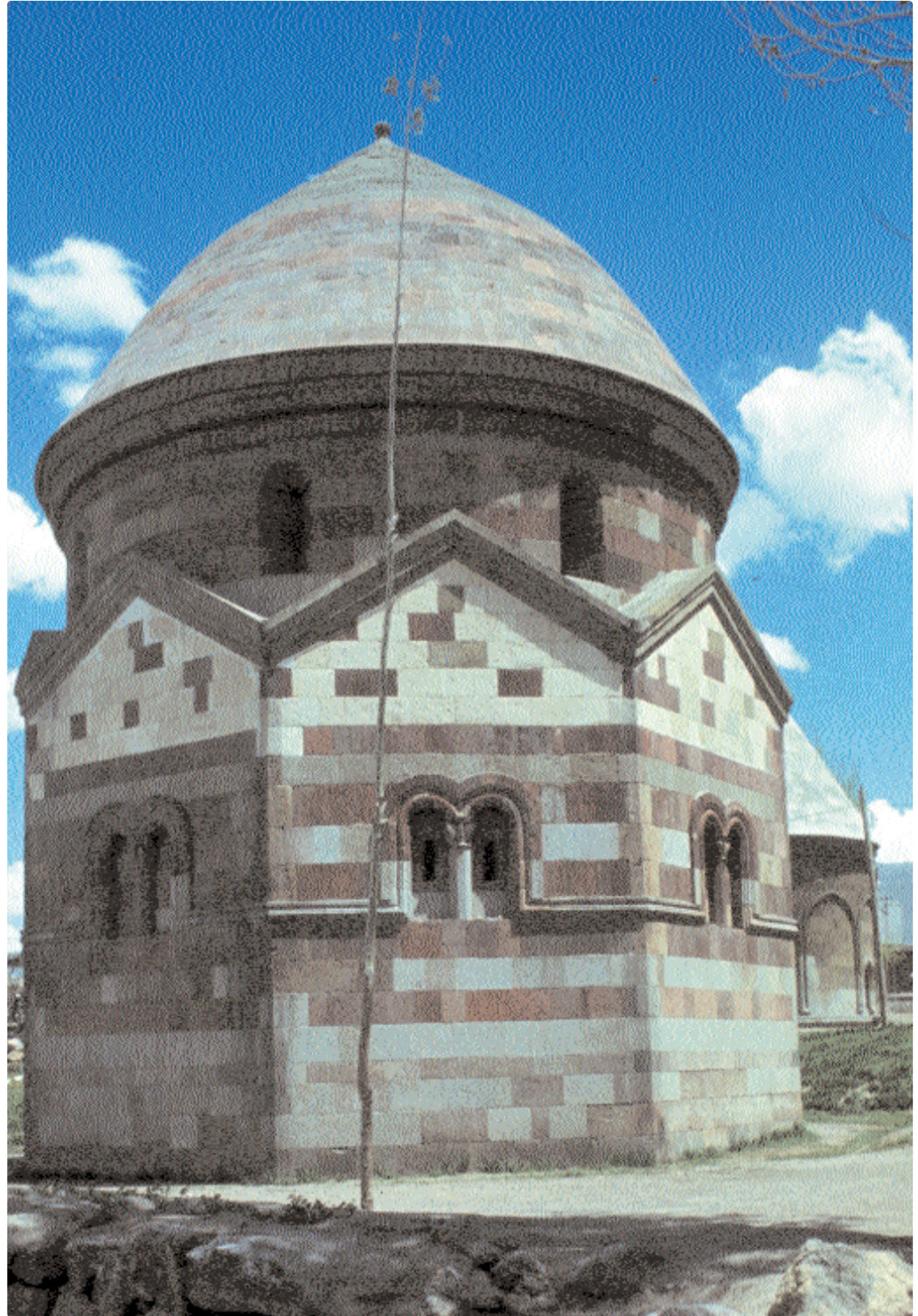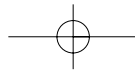
Right and opposite
The so-called Emir Saltuk Tomb
(end of 12th century) in Erzrum,
Turkey (right), a magnificent and
unique example of multilevel
dialogue with several
architectural traditions –
Soghdian Central Asian,
Anatolian Armenian and
Byzantine, and possibly late
Romanesque, and (opposite) the
Grand National Assembly
Mosque in Ankara (1985–9),
designed by the Çiniçi team; a
bold adoption of modernistic
gestures to the construction of
the most traditional of Islamic
architectural types – the
congregational mosque.
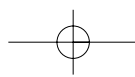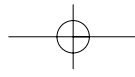
The effects of this dialogic exchange on the other cultural interlocutors were as pervasive as they were on Islamic architecture, despite the dominant art-historical framework that tends to ignore such exchanges and discourage any serious investigation into their scope and significance. Young scholars working on Byzantine, medieval European, Eastern Christian and Hindu architectural traditions are coming up with countless instances of direct and evidently conscious and intentional adaptations from Islamic architectural sources.[7]

Thus, to begin to critically understand the history of Islamic architecture, it is no longer adequate to study only its particular material, conceptual, social or religious contexts. Nor is it sufficient simply to identify its intra- or extra-cultural references and to decipher the various channels of appropriation they have traversed. The enquiry itself must be recast to account for the decisive role of intellectual and disciplinary dialogue in the emergence and evolution of the variegated architectural traditions that we today call Islamic. This interpretation shifts the focus from passive to dynamic exchange, and introduces the notions of reception, translation and representation in reading and explaining the unfolding of Islamic architecture as an active and contributive component of world architecture. It also offers a methodologically solid framework to consider how an open-ended search for expressive forms and designs has endowed Islamic architecture, like other major architectural traditions everywhere, with a vibrant historical self-consciousness.

Obviously, this conclusion stands in stark contrast to the defamed Orientalist view that identifies Islamic architecture with sedate, static and supra-historical forms, which has unfortunately and, possibly unwittingly, been resurrected by some of the contemporary essentialist theoreticians and practitioners looking for easily definable or loudly expressive architecture.[4]

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Notes
1 Two recent surveys of the field make this clear: see Stephen Vernoit, 'Islamic art and architecture: an overview of scholarship and collecting, c 1850–c 1950', in Stephen Vernoit (ed), *Discovering Islamic Art: Scholars, Collectors and Collections 1850–1950*, B Tauris (London), 2000, pp 1–61; Sheila S Blair and Jonathan M Bloom, 'The mirage of Islamic art: reflections on the study of an unwieldy field', *Art Bulletin* 85, 1, March 2003, pp 152–84.
2 The most graphic illustration of this division is Sir Banister Fletcher's 'Tree of Architecture', which clearly assigns to non-Western architectural traditions, called nonhistorical styles, dead-end branches while preserving the trunk and growing branches to Western or historical styles. The tree occupied the frontispiece of the first 16 editions of the book *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method for the Student, Craftsman, and Amateur*, published between 1896 and 1961. For a critical discussion of Fletcher's dichotomous structure, see: Gulsum Baydar Nalbantoglu, 'Toward postcolonial openings: rereading Sir Banister Fletcher's History of Architecture', *Assemblage* 35, 1998, pp 6–17.
3 The most remarkable among these early studies are Pascal-Xavier Coste, *Architecture Arabe ou Monuments du Kaire mésurés et dessinés de 1818 à 1826*, Firmin-Didot (Paris) 1839; Girault de Prangey, *Souvenirs de Grenade et de l'Alhambra: monuments arabes et moresques de Cordoue, Séville et Grenade, dessinés et mesurés en 1832 et 1833*, Veith et Hauser (Paris), 1837; idem, *Essai sur l'architecture des Arabes et des Mores, en Espagne, en Sicile, et en Barbarie*, A Hauser (Paris), 1841; Owen Jones and Jules Goury, *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra from Drawings taken on the Spot in 1834 & 1837*, Owen Jones (London), 1852; Prisse d'Avennes, *L'art arabe d'aprés les monuments du Kaire depuis le VIIe siècle jusqu'á la fin du XVIIIe*, A Morel et cie (Paris), 1877.
4 See Zeynep Celik's discussion, 'Colonialism, Orientalism, and the Canon', *Art Bulletin* 78, 2, June 1996, pp 202–5. For a specific aspect see Nasser Rabbat, 'Writing the history of Islamic architecture of Cairo', *Design Book Review* 31, winter 1994, pp 48–51.
5 The list is becoming quite long. A selection of the variety of approaches and areas includes: RA Jairazbhoy, "The Taj Mahal in the context of East and West: study in the comparative method', *Journal of the Warburg Courtauld Institute* 24, 1961, pp 59–88; Patrick Connor, *Oriental Architecture in the West*, Thames and Hudson (London), 1979; Gulru Necipoglu, 'Suleyman the Magnificent and the representation of power in the context of Ottoman-Hapsburg-papal rivalry', *Art Bulletin* 71, 3, September 1989, pp 401–27; Sibel Bozdogan, 'Journey to the East: Ways of looking at the Orient and the question of representation', *Journal of Architectural Education* 41, 4, summer 1988, pp 38–45; Cynthia Robinson, 'Mudéjar revisitede: A prolegomena to the reconstruction of perception, devotion and experience at the Mudéjar convent of Clarisas, Tordesillas, Spain (14th Century AD)', *RES43*, spring 2003, pp 51–77.
6 See Nasser Rabbat, 'The dialogic dimension in Umayyad art', *RES43*, spring 2003, pp 78–94.
7 See, for instance, Jerrilynn D Dodds, *Architecture and Ideology in Early Medieval Spain*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990; Finbarr B Flood, 'Pillars, palimpsests, and princely practices: Translating the past in Sultanate Delhi', *RES43*, spring 2003, pp 95–116; Michael W Mesiter, 'Crossing lines: architecture in early Islamic South Asia', *RES43*, spring 2003, pp 117–30.
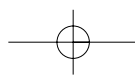
What is Islamic architecture anyway?

Nasser Rabbat

I have been teaching Islamic architecture at MIT for the past twenty-one years. My classes have by and large attracted two types of students. There are those who see Islamic architecture as their heritage: Muslim students from abroad, Muslim-American students, and Arab-American non-Muslims. Then there are the students who imagine Islamic architecture as exotic, mysterious, and aesthetically curious, carrying the whiff of far-distant lands. They have seen it mostly in fiction (*Arabian Nights* for an earlier generation, Disney's *Aladdin* for this one) and they are intrigued and somewhat titillated by that fiction.

These two types of students are but a microcosmic – and perhaps faintly comical – reflection of the status of Islamic architecture within both academia and architectural practice today. The two dominant factions in the field are indeed the aesthetes and the partisans, although neither side would agree to those appellations. Nor would either faction claim total disengagement from each other or exclusive representation of the field. The story of their formation and rise and the trajectories they have followed is another way of presenting the evolution of Islamic architecture as a field of inquiry since the first use of the term 'Islamic architecture' in the early nineteenth century. This is a fascinating story in and of itself. In the present context of a volume dedicated to the historiography of Islamic art and architectural history, tracing the genesis of these two strains in the study and practice of Islamic architecture also allows me to develop my own critical position vis-à-vis the 'unwieldy field' of Islamic art and architecture, to use a recent controversial description.[1]

To begin with, the study of the architecture of the Islamic world was a post-Enlightenment European project. It started with architects, artists, and draughtsmen who travelled to the 'Orient' in the wake of the first European interventions there, in search of adventure, employment, and the thrill of fantasy associated with that mysterious land. They visited cities and sites – primarily in Spain, Turkey, the Holy Land, Egypt, and India – where they measured and illustrated buildings and ruins

[1] Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, 'The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field', *The Art Bulletin*, 85(1), 2003, 152-184. See my critique of the recent tendency to drop the term 'Islamic art' altogether in, 'What's in a Name? The New "Islamic Art" Galleries at the Met,' *Artforum* 50(8), January 2012, 75-78. http://artforum.com/inprint/id=29813.

and published impressive catalogues that began to introduce to Europe that rich architectural heritage which was hitherto almost totally unknown (fig. 1).[2] But having no model with which to understand and situate the architecture they were studying, they toyed with various Eurocentric terms such as 'Saracenic', 'Mohammedan', 'Moorish', and, of course, 'Oriental', before settling on 'Islamic architecture' sometime around the end of the nineteenth century. Thus was the stage set for the development of an architectural historical discipline that cast Islamic architecture as a formal expression of Islam – which was itself not so homogeneously defined. This was to become the first contentious issue in the self-definition of the field of Islamic architecture.[3] It still forms the background of every major debate within the field, or in the larger discipline of art history as it tries to accommodate its structure and epistemological contours to the age of postcolonial criticism and globalisation.[4]

Figure 1. The Minaret of Qawsun, illustration from Pascal-Xavier Coste,
Architecture Arabe ou Monuments du Kaire mésurés et dessinés de 1818 à 1826
(Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1839).

[2] The most remarkable among these early studies are Pascal-Xavier Coste, *Architecture Arabe ou Monuments du Kaire mésurés et dessinés de 1818 à 1826,* Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1839; Girault de Prangey, *Souvenirs de Grenade et de l'Alhambra: monuments arabes et moresques de Cordoue, Séville et Grenade, dessinés et mesurés en 1832 et 1833*, Paris: Veith et Hauser, 1837; Girault de Prangey, *Essai sur l'architecture des Arabes et des Mores, en Espagne, en Sicile, et en Barbarie*, Paris: A. Hauser, 1841; Owen Jones and Jules Goury, *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra from Drawings taken on the Spot in 1834 & 1837*, London: published by Owen Jones, 1852; Prisse d'Avennes, *L'art arabe d'aprés les monuments du Kaire depuis le VIIe siècle jusqu'á la fin du XVIIIe*, Paris: A. Morel, 1877.
[3] A pioneering study to articulate the contours of this thesis is Louis Massignon, 'Les méthodes de réalisation artistique des peuples de l'Islam', *Syria*, 2, 1921, 47-53, 149-160. See also Jean-Charles Depaule, 'Improbables detachements: l'architecture et les arts dans la culture islamique', *Cahiers du Musée National d'Art Moderne*, 39, 1992, 26-41; and Robert Hillenbrand, 'Studying Islamic Architecture: Challenges and Perspectives', *Architectural History*, 46, 2003, 1-18.
[4] See Zeynep Çelik, 'Colonialism, Orientalism, and the Canon', *The Art Bulletin*, 78(2), 1996, 202–205.

The second contentious issue in defining Islamic architecture is its time frame.[5] Two generations ago, scholars viewed Islamic architecture as a tradition of the past that had ceased to be creative with the onset of colonialism and its two concomitant phenomena, Westernisation and modernisation, in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Somehow, a degree of incongruity was accepted between Islamic architecture and modernism, so that when modern architecture (and by this I mean the architecture of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) arrived it immediately eclipsed Islamic architecture and took its place. Consequently, the architecture built under colonialism and after independence was not considered 'Islamic'; it was seen as either modern or culturally hybrid. Studying it was thus the domain of the modernist or the area specialist.[6] The modernist and the area specialist concurred. But neither of them was particularly interested in the contemporary or near contemporary architecture built in the various countries of the Islamic world: the modernist because he, and very rarely she, considered such architecture to be too derivative to warrant scholarly attention; the area specialist because the built environment was only the static background upon which the more important events that were truly worthy of study were played out.

So it was that 'Islamic architecture' became the architecture of a vast territory, today encompassing about fifty countries where a Muslim majority live or once lived, and spanning the periods of Islamic ascendance and dominance – roughly the late seventh to the early eighteenth centuries.

But these were only the geographic and historical contours of Islamic architecture. Scholars still needed to develop a set of intrinsic architectural criteria that distinguished Islamic architecture and made it recognisable as such. Those scholars, by and large, looked for common formal qualities. Some, like Georges Marçais, stayed at the impressionistic level, arguing that Islamic art and architecture ought to be readily identifiable by visual means alone.[7] To prove his point Marçais suggested that an educated person sifting through a large number of photos of buildings from around the world could easily identify the Islamic examples among them. Others, like Ernst Grube in a short but influential essay, aimed at defining Islamic architecture as that which displays a set of architectural and spatial features, such as introspection, that are 'inherent in Islam as a cultural phenomenon'.[8] Still others opted for a definition that can only be termed operational, or, more precisely, statistical. Although he experimented with a culturalist definition of Islamic architecture all his life, Oleg Grabar was perhaps the most eloquent of these pragmatists, for he argued in more than one place that Islamic architecture is the architecture built by Muslims, for Muslims, or in an Islamic country, or in places where Muslims have an opportunity to express their cultural independence in

[5] Nasser Rabbat, 'Islamic Architecture as a Field of Historical Inquiry', *AD Architectural Design* (special issue *Islam+Architecture*), 74(6), 2004, 18-23.

[6] Finbarr Barry Flood, 'From the Prophet to Postmodernism? New World Orders and the end of Islamic Art', in Elizabeth Mansfield, ed., *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions*, London: Routledge, 2007, 31-53.

[7] Georges Marçais, *L'art de l'Islam*, Paris: Larousse, 1946, 5.

[8] Ernest J. Grube, 'What is Islamic Architecture?', in George Michell, ed., *Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1978, 10-14.

architecture.[9] This of course allowed the study of Islamic architecture to claim vast terrains, artistic traditions, styles, and periods, including the modern and contemporary ones, and sometimes to transcend religious and cultural divisions to acquire an ecumenical patina.

But, despite its acceptance of the designation 'Islamic architecture,' this all-inclusive definition was decidedly not religious. It actually shunned religion as an ontological category or a classificatory measure and instead sought unity in culturally shared approaches to aesthetics and spatial sensitivities (which may or may not have their origins in religious injunctions) that crossed all denominational, ethnic, and national boundaries within the greater Islamic world and resulted in similar architectural expressions. This became the dominant understanding of Islamic architecture in Western academia, underscoring the rationalist, secular humanist roots of the two disciplines of Orientalism and art history, from whose margins sprang the field of Islamic art and architecture.[10] It worked well for the students of the history of Islamic architecture whose attraction to the field was fundamentally academic or based on connoisseurship; that is, those for whom Islamic architecture was an object to think with or one to aesthetically appreciate, contemplate, or analyse. But it could not satisfy those for whom Islamic architecture is an object to identify with or to build upon, a living tradition with culturally distinct roots.

> This inability of the definition to really address the 'Islamic' in Islamic architecture did not become an urgent issue until the 1970s, when two interrelated quests arose almost simultaneously in two separate domains. The first was that of the increasing number of students from the Islamic world studying the history of Islamic architecture in Western institutions, who saw Islamic architecture as their living heritage, uninterrupted and continuously operative up to the present day.[11] The second quest was that of architects practising in the Islamic world – many but not all of whom were Muslims – who rediscovered historical and vernacular Islamic architecture

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[9] Grabar refined both culturalist and statistical definitions of Islamic art and architecture for over four decades. See for instance, Oleg Grabar, 'Teaching of Islamic Architecture', *The Yale Architectural Magazine*, 1, 1963, 14-18; Oleg Grabar, 'What Makes Islamic Art Islamic?', *AARP*, 9, 1976, 1-3; Oleg Grabar, 'Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art', *Muqarnas*, 1, 1983, 1-14; Oleg Grabar, 'What Should One Know about Islamic Art?', *RES*, 43, 2003, 5-11.

[10] Two recent surveys of the field make this clear: see Stephen Vernoit, 'Islamic Art and Architecture: An Overview of Scholarship and Collecting, c. 1850-c. 1950', in Stephen Vernoit, ed., *Discovering Islamic art: scholars, collectors and collections 1850–1950,* London: I.B. Tauris, 2000, 1-61; Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, 'The Mirage of Islamic Art'.

[11] The cleansing of national culture of all possible Western, and therefore colonial, contamination, and its paradoxical psychological and epistemological consequences, have been insightfully analysed by Franz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth,* trans. Constance Farrington, New York: Grove Press, 1963, especially 'On National Culture', 167-199. For a discussion of the relationship between culture and ideology see Clifford Geertz, 'Ideology as a Cultural System', *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, 193-229. For a brief analysis of the role of culture in architectural education see Samer Akkach, 'The Burden of Difference: Rethinking the Role of Culture in Architectural Education', *Architectural Theory Review*, 5(1), 2000, 61-64.

and sought to reinsert it into their design repertoire as a foundational body of knowledge, rather than as an occasional formal or decorative reference.[12]

Of course, there were students of Islamic architecture in the Islamic world before 1970. In fact a sizeable number of them flourished in Turkey, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, the Soviet Islamic republics, and, to a lesser degree, India, from as early as the 1940s. Many studied in Western institutions, mostly in the European colonial capitals London and Paris, but also in Berlin, Vienna, and Moscow and Leningrad. Others studied with Western scholars living and working in Islamic countries.[13] Unlike their Western teachers, the local scholars saw Islamic architecture, or regional variations thereof, as their heritage, and felt proud of it. But they tended to concur with the dominant opinion that it was no longer a living heritage. Thus their own work did not differ much from the work of their Western teachers and colleagues in its conceptualisation of its domain as strictly historical. Their main contribution was a closer examination of the primary sources in a search for local flavours in the Islamic architecture of their own country or of their ethnic group, which paved the way for paradoxical definitions of regional and national Islamic architecture. The examples are numerous, but the most unmistakably nationalistic histories are the studies of Iranian or Turkish architecture produced mostly in Iran and Turkey by local historians or by Westerners sponsored by national authorities.[14] The regionalist trend was weak, though, within the overall output of the field, and remained obscured by the preponderance of studies that treated Islamic architecture as a unified domain stretching across the Islamic world irrespective of national boundaries.

[12] Gwendolyn Wright, 'Tradition in the Service of Modernity: Architecture and Urbanism in French Colonial Policy, 1900–1930', *Journal of Modern History*, 59(2), 1987, 291-316; Jane M. Jacobs, 'Tradition is (not) Modern: Deterritorializing Globalization', in Nezar AlSayyad, ed., *The End of Tradition?*, London/New York: Routledge, 2004, 29-44.

[13] Oktay Aslanapa worked with Ernst Diez and translated his book on Turkish architecture before going his own way to become one of the foremost historians of architecture in Turkey: see Oya Pancaroğlu, 'Formalism and the Academic Foundation of Turkish Art in the Early Twentieth Century', *Muqarnas*, 24, 2007, 67-78, esp. 75. Farid Shafi'i worked with Creswell on his *Muslim Architecture of Egypt* and went on to publish several copious books on the Islamic architecture in Egypt, in some of which he challenged the interpretations of his erstwhile teacher: see Farid Shafi'i, 'The Mashhad al-Juyushi (Archeological Notes and Studies)', in C.L. Geddes *et al.*, eds, *Studies in Islamic Art and Architecture in Honour of Professor K.A.C. Creswell*, Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1965, 237-252. Khaled Moaz, who was one of the most accomplished students of the Syrian built environment, worked with Jean Sauvaget but, in the words of André Raymond, remained 'in his shadow': see André Raymond, 'The Traditional Arab City', in Youssef M. Choueiri, ed., *A Companion to the History of the Middle East*, Oxford/Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005, 207-225, esp. 211.

[14] In Iran, the trend started with the ultra-exclusive series by Arthur Upham Pope and Phyllis Ackerman, eds, *A survey of Persian art, from prehistoric times to the present*, 5 vols, 1st ed., London/New York: Oxford University Press, 1938-1939. Other examples include Mohssen Foroughi, *Masterpieces of Iranian Architecture*, Tehran: Society of Iranian Architects, 1980; Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bakhtiar, *The Sense of Unity: the Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture*, Chicago: University Press, 1973; Abbas Daneshvari, *Medieval Tomb Towers of Iran, an Iconographic Study*, Lexington, KY: Mazda, 1986; Donald N. Wilber, *The Architecture of Islamic Iran: The Ilkhanid Period*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1969. Turkish examples include Celâl Esad Arseven, *L'art Turc: Depuis Son Origine Jusqu'à Nos Jours*, Istanbul: Devlet basimevi, 1939; Behçet Ünsal, *Turkish Islamic Architecture in Seljuk and Ottoman Times, 1071–1923*, London: A. Tiranti, 1959; Oktay Aslanapa, *Turkish Art and Architecture*, London: Faber and Faber, 1971; Ekrem Akurgal, ed. *The Art and Architecture of Turkey*, New York: Rizzoli, 1980.

Different worldviews motivated a group of mystically inclined Western and Western-educated Muslim scholars in the 1960s and 1970s who were searching for an understanding of Islamic art and architecture from within the Islamic Sufi tradition. They adopted an all-encompassing, universalistic, and pan-Islamic stance. Foremost among them were the Iranian philosopher Seyyed Hussein Nasr and the Swiss Muslim scholar Titus Burckhardt, who published an assortment of books that introduced Islamic art and architecture as a symbolic manifestation of a transcendental and rather monolithic and suprahistorical Islam.[15] These Universalists, however, did not eschew the particularistic framework that conventional Islamic architectural history inherited from its Western progenitors. On the contrary, they actually reinforced it by essentializing and 'transcendentalizing' it in a way that made it impervious to historical contextualisation or criticism.

Islamic Architecture in Modern Practice

The scene was slightly different in the world of architectural practice. The second half of the nineteenth century brought the first Western architects to various imperial Islamic capitals such as Istanbul, Cairo, Delhi, and Tehran, and a little later to smaller capitals such as Rabat, Damascus, and Bukhara.[16] These architects worked mostly for local rulers or for the rising international mercantile class, which operated under the aegis of colonial powers. Some of them introduced the new styles prevalent in Europe, such as Neoclassical, Neo-Baroque, Art Nouveau, Art Deco, and even Modernist styles, into their designs, probably to assert their own and – more importantly – their patrons' modernity and up-to-dateness (fig. 2). Others tried to reference historical architecture in their designs as a way to relate to the culture and history of the places in which they found themselves working. To that end, they borrowed architectural and decorative elements from a number of historic architectural traditions, some pre-Islamic and some Islamic, and incorporated them in a host of neo-styles: neo-Mamluk, neo-Moorish, and neo-Saracenic (or Indo-Saracenic), but also neo-Pharaonic, neo-Sasanian, and neo-Hittite. But those architects, like the scholars with whom they had some contact, saw these architectural traditions, including Islamic architecture, as traditions of the past which somehow did not make the leap to modern times. They thus had to be documented, dissected, and categorized before any of their formal or spatial elements could be incorporated into new stylistic repertoires. This process of architectural analysis followed established Western norms, primarily those of the Beaux-Arts *envois* from Rome and Greece. The resulting 'revivalist' styles were

[15] Cf. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality*, Albany: SUNY Press, 1987, and Titus Burckhardt, *Art of Islam: language and meaning,* London: World of Islam Festival, 1976.
[16] The Turkish is the best studied case: see Gülsüm Baydar Nalbantoglu, 'The Birth of an Aesthetic Discourse in Ottoman Architecture', *METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture*, 8(2), 1988, 115-122; Ali Uzay Peker, 'Western Influences on the Ottoman Empire and Occidentalism in the Architecture of Istanbul', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 26(3), 2002, 139-163; Sibel Bozdoğan, 'Turkish Architecture between Ottomanism and Modernism, 1873–1931', in Anna Frangoudaki and Çağlar Keyder, eds, *Ways to Modernity in Greece and Turkey: Encounters with Europe, 1850–1950*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2007, 113-132.

practically indistinguishable from the work of revivalist Western architects except in their 'Islamic' references (fig. 3).[17]

Figure 2. Raimondo Tommaso D'Aronco, tomb of Sheikh Zafir, Istanbul, 1905–1906. Photograph by the author.

Figure 3. ʿAbd al-Razzaq Malas, headquarters of the Fijeh water company, Damascus, 1937–1942. Photograph by the author.

Some local architects were dissatisfied with borrowing and imitation. They sought to develop an architecture all their own, an architecture that represented their culture, reinvigorated after decades, and in some cases centuries, of exclusion under colonial rule. Their search came at the height of, and was linked to, their countries' struggles to gain independence from European or indeed Ottoman imperialism and to claim their place among modern nations. The emerging discourse on a living and breathing Islamic architecture, along with concurrent discourses on vernacular and regional architecture, offered these architects both an affirmation of an active, pre-colonial traditional architecture that never really withered away, and a foundation for a postcolonial national architecture that would spring out of its fertile soil.[18] Especially valuable were architectural elements commonly attributed to Islamic architecture, such as the courtyard, the wind-catcher, and the pointed dome, which could embody cultural and social specificity

[17] Mercedes Volait, *Architectes et Architectures de l'Égypte Moderne (1830-1950): Genèse et essor d'une expertise locale,* Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2005, 21-79, for a review of the transformation of architecture in modern Egypt.

[18] Anthony D. King, 'Internationalism, Imperialism, Postcolonialism, Globalization: Frameworks for Vernacular Architecture', *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture,* 13(2), 2006/2007, 64-75; Dennis Alan Mann, 'Between Traditionalism and Modernism: Approaches to a Vernacular Architecture', *Journal of Architectural Education,* 39(2), 1985, 10-16; Panayiota Pyla, 'Hassan Fathy Revisited: Postwar Discourses on Science, Development, and Vernacular Architecture', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 60(3), 2007, 28-39.

and formal continuity. They were recovered from their historical or vernacular retreats in order to be inducted in the service of new architectural expressions of cultural identity and national unity after decolonisation and independence. Perhaps the first to consciously and thoughtfully 'go native' was the Egyptian visionary architect Hassan Fathy (1900–1989).[19] His adoption of the vernacular had its ideological roots in the struggle against British colonial rule in the 1920s and 1930s and the rise of an Egyptian national identity. He presented his first experiments in the 1940s in a few resort houses for members of the Egyptian intelligentsia, and then in his project for the village of New Gourna as the embodiment of an authentic Egyptian architecture, albeit of an unlikely mix of Mamluk Cairene style and Nubian construction techniques that he admired (fig. 4). The design principles he proposed were interpreted as novel expressions of indigenously developed architecture with clear environmental underpinnings and rootedness in place. But the cultural and historical references in Fathy's architecture expanded, and even shifted over time. They went from nationalist to pan-Arabist and finally to Islamic supra-nationalist, following the changing cultural identity of Egypt itself after its independence and espousal of pan-Arabism under Gamal Abdel Nasser, and then the rise of populist Islamism under Anwar al-Sadat.[20]

Figure 4. Hassan Fathy, New Gourna village, Egypt, 1945–1948.
Photograph: Chant Avedissian/Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

[19] For the development of Fathy's ideas, see: Hassan Fathy, *Gourna; a tale of two villages*, Cairo: Ministry of Culture, 1969; Hassan Fathy, *Architecture for the Poor*, Chicago: University Press, 1976; Hassan Fathy, *Qissat mashrabiyah: masrahiyah dhat arbaat fusul*, Beirut: Sharikat al-Matbuat lil-Tawzi wa-al-Nashir, 1991; Hassan Fathy, *Yutubia*, Beirut: Sharikat al-Matbu'at lil-Tawzi wa-al-Nashir, 1991; Hassan Fathy, Walter Shearer and 'Abd al-Rahman Sultan, *Natural energy and vernacular architecture: principles and examples with reference to hot arid climates*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Hasan-Uddin Khan, ed., *Hassan Fathy*, Singapore: Concept Media, 1985; James Steele, *The Hassan Fathy Collection: A Catalogue of Visual Documents at The Aga Khan Award for Architecture*, Geneva: The Aga Khan Trust for Culture, 1989; *idem*, *An Architecture for the People: The Complete Works of Hassan Fathy*, Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1997.

[20] See Nasser Rabbat, 'Hassan Fathy and the Identity Debate', in Gilane Tawadros and Sarah Campbell, eds, *Fault Lines: Contemporary African Art and Shifting Landscapes*, London: Institute of International Visual Art, 2003, 196-203. For a more critical analysis of Fathy's classist politics see Timothy Mitchell, 'Making the Nation: The Politics of Heritage in Egypt', in Nezar AlSayyad, ed., *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism*, New York: Routledge, 2001, 212-239, esp. 213-222.

Fathy himself used several interpretations of his architecture in his writing from a manifestation of a primeval Egyptian model to an essentially Arab and later an Arab-Islamic one with vague universal applicability. He identified the 'ubiquitous' Arab courtyard house with its architectural adaptation to the harsh desert environment as the model for his own architecture. A few years later, the model became the Arab-Islamic house, and ultimately an all-encompassing Islamic conception of domestic space. References to notions of the serene and protected family life as gleaned from the analogy between the terms *sakina* ('serenity') and the triconsonantal root *sakan* ('abode'), and *harim* (womenfolk, or segregated section of the house) and the root *haram* (protected or forbidden), in addition to a more symbolic index dealing with the perception of the unique God and the images of His promised paradise, were subsequently added to the normative paradigms of Fathy's architectural model. Fathy's numerous disciples continued to use the formal language he devised, but did not build on its socioeconomic and environmental underpinnings. Instead they focused on its cultural and pan-Islamic appeal and brandished it as a kind of native response to both the blandness of Modernism and the eurocentrism of the nascent Postmodernism, and in some cases exported it as an expressive and historicizing Islamic style.

Islamic Architecture and Postmodernism

The next significant historical shift in the field of Islamic architecture was the articulation of an ideology that saw 'Islam' as identity. This badly understood and still-evolving process has been promoted by at least two economically, historically, and politically dissimilar, though ultimately mutually reinforcing, phenomena. First was the re-emergence in the 1970s of various Islamic political movements in most Islamic countries, after an apparent dormancy of some thirty years. Coming on the heels of the victorious Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979 and perceived as a response to the failures of the national states to stand up to foreign interference and moral decadence, Islamic political movements sought a return to purportedly more authentic foundations for the governance of the Islamic nation. Yet despite their relentless and violent attacks on what they saw as the depravity of all Western cultural imports, these political movements showed surprisingly little interest in the conceptual contours of architecture, including the religious architecture being built in the name of Islamic architecture.[21]

By contrast, the second group to wield a vision of Islam as a framer of identity, the ruling and religious elite of the Gulf region, has had a tremendous impact on the trajectory of architecture in the Islamic world in recent decades. Having lain impoverished on the edge of the desert for so long, and, with the exception of Saudi Arabia and Oman, not having achieved independence until the 1960s and even 1970s, these countries had no role in the early developments of

[21] Only a few 'Islamicist' historians of Islamic architecture can be identified: Taha al-Wali, *Al-Masajid fi-l Islam,* Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm lil-Malayin, 1988; 'Abd al-Baqi Ibrahim, *Al-Manzur al-Islami lil Nazariyya al-Mi'mariyya,* Cairo: Markaz al-Dirasat al-Tarikhiyya wa-l Mi'mariyya, 1986; 'Abd al-Baqi Ibrahim and Hazim Muhammad Ibrahim, *Al-Manzur al-Tarikhi lil-'Imara fi-l Mashriq al-'Arabi,* Cairo: Markaz al-Dirasat al-Tarikhiyya wa-l Mi'mariyya, 1993; Hayyan Sidawi, *Al-Islam wa Fi'awiyyat Tatawwur al-'Imara al-'Arabiyya,* Paris/Beirut: Dar al-Mutanabbi, 1992.

modern architecture in the Islamic world. But things began to slowly change in the wake of oil discoveries in the 1940s and, more spectacularly, after the 1970s oil price surge. With this massive cash flow, and its concomitant socioeconomic empowerment of the region, came the desire to expand and modernize cities and upgrade their infrastructures to serve the growing population of natives and expatriates, and to satisfy their socio-cultural needs and newly acquired tastes. The new wealth of the Gulf patrons, their deeply religious and conservative outlook, and their fervent quest for a distinct political and cultural identity in the sea of competing ideologies around them combined to create a demand for a contemporary yet visually recognisable Islamic architecture. Sincerely at times, but opportunistically at many others, architects responded by incorporating within their designs various historical elements dubbed 'traditional', 'Arabic' or 'Islamic', which they often used as basic diagrams for their plans or splashed on surfaces as ornament.[22]

Thus, the 1980s became the decade of readily identifiable Islamicized postmodern architecture everywhere in the Islamic world. There were the post-traditionalists who, like Hassan Fathy before them, looked for inspiration in the vernacular architecture of the region, such as the *badgir*, or wind-catcher. There were also the free, and often arbitrary, mélanges of diverse historical forms and patterns drawn from a wide range of Islamic styles. Somewhat more colourful is the work of those architects who dip into the exuberance of Postmodernism to produce loud formalist compositions. This trend culminated with the grand structures produced by large international firms working in the Gulf. These foreign designers re-interpreted visual symbols and historical motifs and used them in otherwise ultra-sleek designs, such as the gigantic Hajj Terminal in Jeddah by SOM (1982), inspired by the Bedouin tent (fig. 5), or the Kuwait National Assembly Complex by Jørn Utzon (1982), which evokes the sail of the traditional *dhow* in a gesture not too dissimilar to Utzon's earlier iconic project in Sydney, Australia. More recently, the Qatar Islamic Museum by I.M. Pei (2009) claims an inspiration from the bold and simple domed fountain of the Mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo as the basis of its cubic design (fig. 6).

[22] Sharon Nagy, 'Dressing Up Downtown: urban development and government public image in Qatar', *City & Society*, 12(1), 2000, 125-147; Khaled Adham, 'Cairo's Urban *déjà-vu*: Globalization and Colonial Fantasies', in Y. Elsheshtawy, ed., *Planning Middle Eastern Cities: An Urban Kaleidoscope*, London: Routledge, 2004, 134-168; Khaled Adham, 'Rediscovering the Island: Doha's Urbanity from Pearls to Spectacle', in Yasser Elsheshtawy, ed., *The evolving Arab city: tradition, modernity, and urban development*, London/New York: Routledge, 2008, 218-257; Hassan-Uddin Khan, 'Identity, Globalization, and the Contemporary Islamic City', in Renata Holod, Attilio Petruccioli and André Raymond, eds, *The City in the Islamic World*, Leiden: Brill, 2008, 1035-1062; Yasser Elsheshtawy, 'Redrawing Boundaries: Dubai, the Emergence of a Global City', in Yasser Elsheshtway, ed., *Planning the Middle East City: An Urban Kaleidoscope in a Globalizing World*, New York: Routledge, 2004, 169-199.

Figure 5. Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM), the Hajj Terminal, Jeddah, 1982. Photograph: Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

Figure 6. I.M. Pei, the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar, 2009. Photograph ©Anne de Henning/Aga Khan

Islamic Architecture and Academia

      The two proponents of Islamic architecture, the academic and the practice-based worlds, though aware of each other, did not come together in an academically articulated way until the founding of the Aga Khan Award for Islamic Architecture (AKAA) in 1977, which was shortly followed by the establishment of the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture (AKPIA) at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1978. AKAA had a straightforward mission: to identify, evaluate, and award outstanding architecture in the Islamic world. But since identifying contemporary 'Islamic' architecture, let alone judging it, was a controversial issue at best, AKAA had to set up and continuously revise and modify the criteria for definition and evaluation in a conciliatory way that accommodated the various trends of thought concerned with Islamic architecture. This has meant that for the last thirty years AKAA has been a key promoter of a syncretic and expansive 'Islamic architecture' that was not limited only to traditionally recognized Islamic building types, but also included urban and landscape design, environmentally and socioeconomically sensitive projects, and conservation and rehabilitation interventions.[23]

      AKPIA, on the other hand, was the first academic programme exclusively devoted to the study of Islamic architecture, situated in two of the most prestigious institutions of architectural education in the world, with all the advantages of established cultures and pedagogical methods that such institutions would bring.[24] The siting of AKPIA itself was implicitly intended to negate the polarizing dichotomy between the discipline of architecture (derived from Western architectural history and praxis) and Islamic architecture, which is routinely relegated to its own special area within art history departments.

      The foremost academic to lead that effort, and ultimately to legitimize Islamic architecture both as a field of historical inquiry and of contemporary

[23] Sibel Bozdoğan, 'The Aga Khan Award for Architecture: A Philosophy of Reconciliation', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 45(3), 1992, 182-188.
[24] Spiro Kostof, Christian Norberg-Schulz and Mohammed Arkoun, 'Approaches to Education', in Ahmet Evin, ed., *Architecture Education in the Islamic World,* Singapore: Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1986, 1-21.

creativity, was Oleg Grabar (1929–2011), the first Aga Khan Professor at Harvard University. His influential book, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (1973, second ed. 1987), was a strongly historicizing study of Islamic art and architecture in the first three centuries Hegira and their relationship to the art of Byzantium and Sasanian Iran.[25] The book investigated the means by which an Islamic tradition acquired and disseminated distinct forms and meanings in conjunction with its cultural, social, and ideological contexts. This conceptual framework had a strong role in setting the tone for a whole generation of historians of Islamic art and architecture, who began to reassess the geographic, historical, religious, and cultural boundaries of their discipline and to develop its methods and theoretical contours. As such, *The Formation of Islamic Art* became the foundation upon which most historical interpretations in the field have depended until now.

But the limitations imposed by the burdensome and politically biased scholarly lineage of Islamic architecture were not seriously challenged until the 1980s. Empowered by developments in critical and postcolonial studies, especially after the publication of Edward Said's seminal book *Orientalism* in 1978, students of Islamic architecture began to question the received methods and conceptual structures of their discipline and to extend their domain of inquiry, reaching back in time to points of convergence between Islamic architecture and the architecture of other cultures, and forward to the modern and contemporary scenes of revivalist efforts and inventive continuities. The notions of uniformity, introversion, and cultural and religious particularism that long dominated the study of Islamic architecture began to be truly challenged as more and more scholars turned to cultural theories in their inquiry.[26] Some began to pry open the intracultural spaces – that is, zones within a given society at a given time that are shared by its diverse constituent cultural groups – to critical inquiry. Thus, the contributions of the various Islamic sects and esoteric religious orders, Christian and Jewish denominations, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Hindus, and others have started to be analysed as both instrumental components of a shared architectural language and as distinct expressions that link Islamic architecture to other traditions. Others focused on the intercultural development of Islamic architecture, with its substantial connections to the Late Antique, South Arabian, Mediterranean, Iranian, and Hindu-Buddhist cultures in the early periods, and the European, Asian, and African cultures in recent times, although the bulk of studies is of course concentrated on links to Western architecture.[27]

The relationship with Western architecture is indeed the main problem that Islamic architecture has still to resolve in order to acquire its rightful place as an active and contributive component of world architecture.[28] Until at least the 1980s,

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[25] Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art,* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973, 2nd ed. 1987.

[26] Cf. the special issue of the journal *RES,* vol. 43, 2003, subtitled *Islamic Arts* (in the plural).

[27] The list is becoming quite long. For a selection of the variety of approaches and areas, see: R.A. Jairazbhoy, 'The Taj Mahal in the Context of East and West: Study in the Comparative Method', *Journal of the Warburg Courtauld Institute*, 24, 1961, 59-88; Patrick Connor, *Oriental Architecture in the West*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1979; Gülru Necipoğlu, 'Suleyman the Magnificent and the representation of power in the context of Ottoman-Hapsburg-papal rivalry', *Art Bulletin*, 71(3), 1989, 401-427; Sibel Bozdoğan, 'Journey to the East: Ways of Looking at the Orient and the Question of Representation', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 41(4), 1988, 38-45.

[28] This was the conceptual framework advocated by Marshall Hodgson, the author of the magisterial *The Venture of Islam,* when he wrote 'We must leave behind the Westward pattern of history and the

the chronology of Western architecture, from its presumed Classical origins to its triumphant culmination in modern times, constituted the living core of architectural discourse and relegated the architecture of other cultures to marginal places in its prescribed hierarchy.[29] Furthermore, because of its venerable legacy and institutional power, the authoritative historiography of Western architecture (usually called Architecture *tout court*) promoted, and even required, the study of other architectural traditions to be confined within clearly proscribed and exclusive times, spaces, and cultures. Islamic architecture, like many other non-Western architectural traditions (and the term itself amply illustrates the classificatory predicament of these traditions)[30] was thus cast as the opposite of Western architecture: conservative where Western architecture is progressive; its formal categories static, as compared to the self-evolving ones of the Western architecture; and reflecting cultural imperatives rather than the creative individual subjectivity ascribed to Western architecture. But, first and foremost, Islamic architecture was seen as a tradition whose agency was collective and in which creativity in design was rarely assigned, except for the few celebrated cases such as the great Ottoman master architect Sinan (1489–1588).[31] It was therefore an architecture that was difficult to study along the conceptual lines of Western architecture; yet no other methodological perspective was developed enough to accommodate its particular trajectory or internal cohesiveness while accounting for its regional, ethnic, or national diversity.[32]

Ubi Sumus?

So where do we stand today? And is there an agreement on what Islamic architecture is? Of course the answer is no. In fact, although the number of students of Islamic architecture has multiplied many times over, and many more universities in the West and the Islamic world have added chairs for the study of Islamic architecture, and although the majority of new major projects in various countries of the Islamic world require their designers to respect or adapt the principles of Islamic architecture, questions still abound in academia and in the world of practice about whether there is an Islamic architecture or not in the first place. Some of those who

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"East and West" dichotomy in studying the development of the oikoumenic configuration; and we must free our theorizing of the turns of thought which arise from assuming the Westward pattern'. See *Rethinking World History: Essays on Europe, Islam, and World History,* Edmund Burke III, ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 292.

[29] Gülsüm Baydar, 'Toward Postcolonial Openings: Rereading Sir Banister Fletcher's "History of Architecture"', *Assemblage*, 35, 1998, 6-17; Erika Naginski, 'Riegl, Archaeology, and the Periodization of Culture', *RES*, 40, 2001, 115-132. For a specific example of how Islamic architecture was confined to a premodern status in Dutch scholarship, see the discussion in Eric Roose, *The Architectural Representation of Islam: Muslim-Commissioned Mosque Design in the* Netherlands, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009, 9-11 and notes.

[30] A recent challenge to this division is Dana Arnold, 'Beyond a Boundary: Towards an Architectural History of the Non-East', in Dana Arnold, Elvan Altan Ergut and Belgin Turan Özkaya, eds, *Rethinking Architectural Historiography*, London: Routledge, 2006, 229-245.

[31] See Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005, 127-152.

[32] See Nasser Rabbat, 'The Pedigreed Domain of Architecture: A View from the Cultural Margin', *Perspecta*, 44, 2011, 6-11, for a critique of the way architecture is classified in both profession and discipline today.

doubt the validity of the term 'Islamic architecture' raise the following rhetorical challenge: what is Christian about European architecture? And the ready – and correct – answer is usually, 'very little, except for the architecture of churches'. The parallel conclusion for Islamic architecture thus becomes, 'Islamic architecture is mosque architecture'.

But if we change the tense in the first question and ask, 'what *was* Christian about European architecture?' the answer is bound to be, 'a lot'. Medieval Christianity indeed heavily contributed in shaping not only faith and rituals but also various patterns of life in Europe: gender relations and family hierarchy, private and public behaviour of individuals and corporate groups, and relationships between religious and profane authorities in ruling country and city. These, and other cultural, social, and political attributes, were predicated on religion, among other factors, just as they were in the Islamic world. They also had architectural manifestations in the forms and functions of church, convent, house, palace, and city; again, like the Islamic world. Things began to change first with the Renaissance but especially with the rise of the Enlightenment values, not because European architecture rejected the burdensome influence of religion, but because European polity and European mores and even European epistemology broke away from Christianity.[33] Architecture predictably absorbed these cultural transformations and began to reflect the new secularism, first in consciously returning to Classical, pre-Christian forms, and later in responding to the aesthetic and civic values of the Enlightenment and then the Industrial Revolution with its accelerated technological progress.

The Islamic world, on the other hand, never experienced a total break with religion, nor did it undergo an Enlightenment or an Industrial Revolution of its own. Its experience of secular modernism was late, imported wholesale from Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, and lacked the local intellectual roots that would have ensured its full and easy adoption. In fact, the majority of thinkers in the Islamic world resisted secular modernism. Some rejected it outright, but many worked hard at adapting it through the prism of religion. And that is how it was absorbed in the local cultures, a moderated modernism stripped of many of its secular underpinnings and endowed with qualities that are acceptable to the religious inclinations of the majority of Muslims.

On the other hand, Islam came out of its encounter with modernism changed but not defeated. It has remained a major force not only in dictating the ethics and beliefs of Muslims today, but also in shaping their social relations, their individual behaviour, and their collective polity and imaginary, even if its adherents had to adapt modern means and methods. Religious motives, interpretations, and inhibitions still transpire in the Islamic world in many aspects of modern life that have gone totally secular in the West, to the point where their enactment often causes puzzlement and misunderstanding among Western observers and commentators.[34] This is not a value judgment; it is simply a historical fact. To

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[33] This epistemological shift affected even the way we study history so that religion role is conceptually diminished even when it was still palpable and effective: see Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of* History, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988, esp. 'Making History: Problems of Method and Meaning', 19-55.

[34] I am reminded here of the confusion caused by the common phrase, *tawakkaltu 'ala allah* ('I put my trust in God') repeated on the recorder that was recovered from the wreckage of EgyptAir's fatal Flight

understand and explain the mixed, and perhaps paradoxical, but definitely dynamic character of the cultures of the Islamic world today, it is thus necessary to take into account the ways in which religion interacts with and modifies the effect of Western, secular modernism on those cultures and vice versa. This is also how we can understand the role of the modifier 'Islamic' in framing the term 'Islamic architecture' at present.[35] It is not necessarily the formal or stylistic attributes that Islam produces, especially not those that cloak themselves in the cover of tradition and grand historical examples; it is rather the persistence of religion in defining many aspects of life in the Islamic world, either in competition or in harmony with modernity and other major socio-cultural contemporary forces.

To me then, Islamic architecture is of course the architecture of those cultures, regions, or societies that have directly or via some intermediary processes accepted Islam as an integral component of their epistemological and socio-cultural makeup.[36] From that perspective, the term 'Islamic architecture' is still a valid designation for architecture being built today because Islam has never ceased being that constitutive component, even though the ways in which it expresses itself have drastically changed over time and space. The actual architectural forms that those expressions take, important as they are in identifying Islamic architecture, are tangential in understanding it. It is the impact – legal, spiritual, symbolic, social, political, functional, behavioural, and yes formal – of Islam on architecture as seen and used by the people that gives that architecture its Islamic designation, even though it has always had to coexist with other powerful and effective universal phenomena, such as competing world religions and more advanced cultures in its formative stages, and modernity, secularism, capitalism, and globally networked tastes and techniques of representation today.

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990. See Christopher S. Wren, 'The Crash of Egyptair: The Statement; Arabic Speakers Dispute Inquiry's Interpretation of Pilot's Words', *The New York Times*, 18 November 1999.

[35] Mohammed Arkoun, 'Muslim Character: The Essential and the Changeable', in *A Rising Edifice: Contributions Towards a Better Understanding of Architectural Excellence in the Muslim World*, Geneva: AKAA, 1989, 208-212.

[36] This is what a historian of religion such as Juan Eduardo Campo, *The Other Sides of Paradise: Explorations into the Religious Meanings of Domestic Space in Islam*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991, tried to do, even though he focused on the religious and did not pay much attention to the syncretic product of the religion's interaction with other cultural forces.

Le Prix Aga Khan d'Architecture

Cérémonie de remise des prix 1986, Maroc

Marrakech

Née du recul du désert
de l'ascension des traces
de l'impact
Née de la blessure de l'errance
des pierres sobres de l'Atlas
de l'émergence ...

— M. Loakira.

Marrakech

par
Hamid Triki
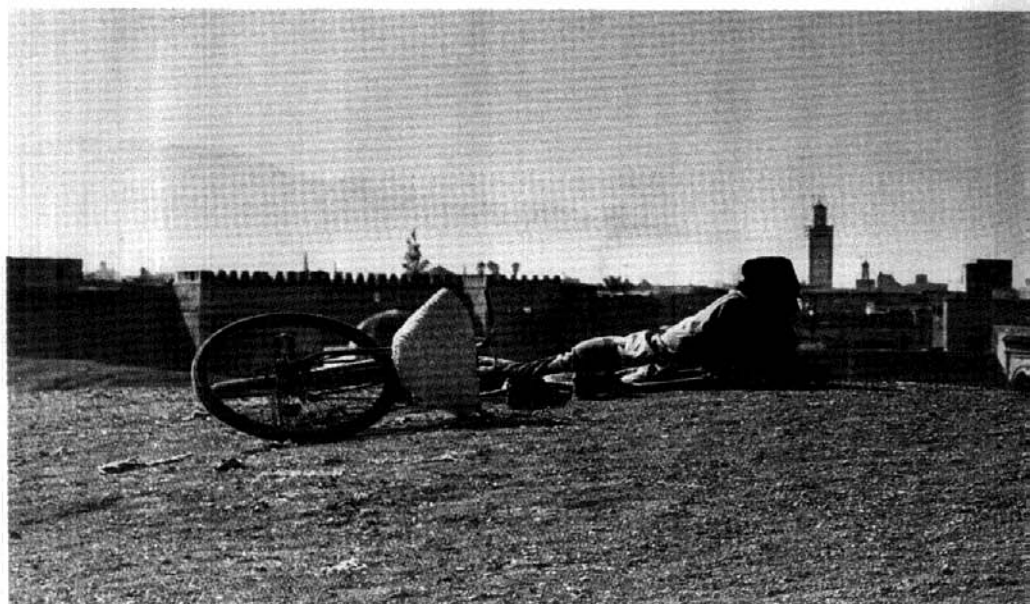
... Si la tristesse te prend
Va contempler la muraille de Marrakech la rouge
Ton coeur s'en réjouira.
Aux saints de la cité, envoie la FATIHA
Il n'est point de porte fermée dont tu ne trouveras
alors la clef.

— Poésie populaire du genre "MALHOUN"

Apercu historique

Marrakech est l'une des plus prestigieuses capitales impériales du Maroc. Son som, dont le sens demeure énigmatique, est utilisé depuis des siècles pour désigner l'ensemble du pays. La maroquinerie, qui dérive de ce nom, rappelle l'importance de cette activité artisanale dans la vie économique de la cité. Ville "sainte" aux innombrables mausolées encore objet d'une fervente foi populaire, Marrakech est aussi désignée sous le nom de "MADINAT SAB'ATOURIJAL", la ville des sept saints protecteurs. Oasis de main d'hommes, crée pour le loisir et la subsistance des hommes, elle a enfin reçu le nom imagé de "AL-BAHJA", la ville qui réjouit le coeur.

Située dans la dépression du HAOUZ, entre les collines des Jbilet au Nord et le Haut-Atlas au Sud, c'est un carrefour au centre d'un large éventail de voies de circulation. Cette situation lui confère le double rôle historique de place d'échanges et de ville-entrepôt. Les pistes caravanières, partant des lointaines rives du Niger, traversent l'Atlas après les relais des oasis pré-sahariennes et convergent à Marrakech d'où elles se déploient en direction des ports atlantiques et méditerranéens. Les fluctuations de ces courants d'échanges ponctuent ses phases d'expansion ou de régression. Sa prospérité dépendait à la fois de sa fonction de capitale et du contrôle qu'elle pouvait exercer historiquement sur ce système commercial à grand rayon. Pour cela, son histoire se présente plutôt en ligne brisée où se distinguent trois périodes d'expansion remarquables: De la fin du XIe au milieu du XIIIe S., avec les Almoravides et les Almohades; le XVIè et le début du XVIIè S. avec les Sa'adiens; enfin, à partir du milieu du XVIIIè S., nouvelle expansion avec les Alaouites. Le XXè S. a bouleversé ces données historiques traditionnelles mais, actuellement, Marrakech tend à redevenir le centre névralgique des relations avec les provinces marocaines du Sahara. Ce n'est donc pas un pur hasard si, au départ, des sahariens, les Almoravides, fondent vers 1070 le premier

noyau de cette cité appelée à devenir en l'espace d'une génération, la métropole d'un empire. Au début du XIIè S., Ali IBN YOUSSOUF urbanise le site par l'adduction d'eau, le pavage des voies et la construction de la mosquée qui porte toujours son nom et qui devient le principal pôle urbain de l'agglomération. En 1127, il entoure sa capitale d'un rempart de 9 Kms qui subsiste encore.

Avec les Almohades, Marrakech, doublée de la Qasba, véritable ville fortifiée, devient la cité la plus importante de l'Occident musulman. Sa population à la fin du XIIè S. a été estimée à une centaine de milliers d'habitants. Capitale d'un Empire englobant tout le Maghreb et l'Espagne musulmane, elle doit sa prospérité notamment au fructueux commerce trans-saharien dont elle domine les axes et redistribue les produits. C'est aussi une capitale intellectuelle qui attire les esprits les plus éminents de l'époque: IBN TOFAYL, IBN ZOHR, IBN ROCHD etc... y diffusent leur savoir.

Après les Almohades, Marrakech, abandonnée comme capitale, entre dans une phase de régression urbaine dont elle ne se relève qu'au milieu du XVIè S.. La reprise du commerce saharien et le développement des relations atlantiques avec l'Europe créent une conjoncture favorable à la ville, redevenue capitale avec les Sa'adiens. Sa renaissance se traduit par la remise en état du réseau d'alimentation en eau, le développement et l'apparition de quartiers nouveaux dotés de l'infrastructure nécessaire, la création du Mellah destiné à l'importante communauté juive, le réaménagement de la Qasba autour du palais AL-BADI'...

A partir de 1669, Marrakech est appelée à assumer, avec Fez, le rôle de capitale et de résidence des Souverains alaouites. Le règne de Sidi Mohamed IBN ABDALLAH (1757–1790) est fondamental pour la réanimation de la ville. L'intérêt particulier

qu'il lui porte et son activité sans relâche, marquent définitivement le sîte urbain d'une empreinte artistique spécifique. Les textes historiques le décrivent, campant au milieu de la Qasba ruinée, et dirigeant personnellement les travaux de restauration. Palais, jardins, méchouars, fortifications, mosquées et madracas y surgissent. Cet effort remarquable intéresse également l'ancienne médina de sorte qu'il n'est point d'édifice public où l'on ne relève l'empreinte de ce grand Souverain bâtisseur. En outre, il trace la voie à ses successeurs. Parmi eux, Sidi Mohamed IBN ABDERRAHMAN mérite une mention particulière. Marrakech lui doit la replantation

des grands jardins de l'Agdal et de la Ménara, la construction des charmants pavillons de plaisance dans ces mêmes jardins, la restau ration des anciens bassins et la création enfin, des premières usines modernes pour affronter l'expansion économique européenne du XIXè S..

Ainsi l'histoire "traditionnelle" de Marrakech s'achève sur cette note moderne qui l'initie aux exigences du XXè S.

Dans les pages qui suivent, nous présentons, classés par aires géographiques, les différents ensembles monumentaux, témoins des grandes phases de l'histoire de la ville jusqu'à l'aube du XXè S.

L'Emergence d'une Cite

En 461 HEG. (1068–1069), les habitants de la ville d'AGHMAT désignent au PRINCE almoravide ABOU BAKR IBN OMAR le site où sera construite la future capitale: "Nous t'avons désigné un lieu désert où seules courent les gazelles et les autruches et où ne pousse que le jujubier; Ils lui désignèrent ce lieu de sorte que l'Oued N'FIS soit son verger, les DOUKKALA son grenier et que les rênes de l'ATLAS se trouvent tenues entre les mains de son PRINCE.

Accompagné de ses armées et des chefs des tribus, le PRINCE se rendit sur le site encore inhabité de Marrakech. Là, ils lui dirent: c'est ici que tu dois construire la ville".

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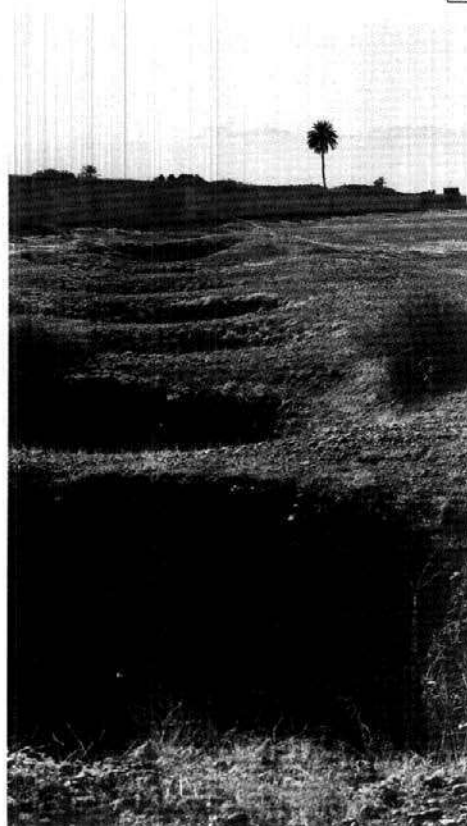
Le site semi-désertique de Marrakech fut transformé à partir de la fin XI° siècle en une métropole d'Empire noyée dans une oasis verdoyante. Le procédé le plus original d'adduction d'eau fut celui des KHETTARAS. Il s'agit de canalisations souterraines creusées en amont de Marrakech et qui permettent d'amener à la surface l'eau de la nappe. Après un parcours souterrain de quelques kilomètres, la Khettara affleure le niveau du sol. Elle est ensuite acheminée dans les divers édifices publics par des conduites étanches. Certaines installations hydrauliques du début du XII° Siècle, comme la citerne et la fontaine de la Qoubba almoravide, ont été dégagées par les fouilles vers 1950. D'autres, comme les grands bassins almohades de l'AGDAL et de la MENARA (Fin du XII° Sièle), restaurés au XIX° Siècle par le Souverain alaouite Sidi Mohamed Ibn Abderrahman, sont encore utilisés pour irriguer les jardins de la banlieue.

Au début du XX° Siècle, les principales Khettaras desservant la Médina (cité intra-muros) fournissaient l'eau à 70 mosquées, 86 fontaines publiques, 61 salles d'ablutions etc ...

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0   1   3   5 m

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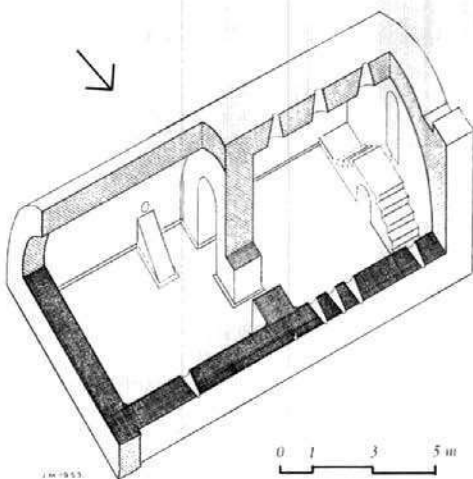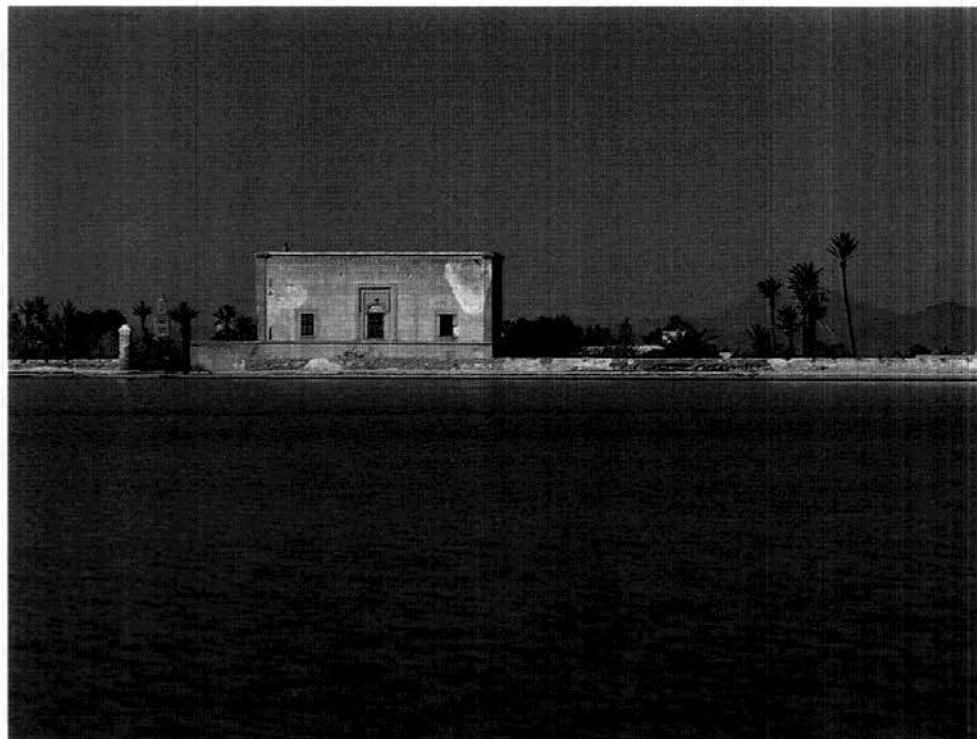
Au milieu du XII° Siècle, le géographe
marocain al IDRISSI décrit ainsi les khettara:
"l'eau dont les habitants ont besoin pour
arroser leurs jardins est amenée au moyen d'un
procédé mécanique ingénieux dont l'invention
est dûe à Obeîdellah Ibn Younes ... Les
habitants de la ville, voyant le procédé réussir,
s'empressèrent de creuser la terre et d'amener
les eaux dans les jardins; dès lors, les habitants
et les jardins commencèrent à se multiplier, et
la ville de Marrakech prit un aspect brillant."

Le Complexe Ibn Youssouf

Mosquee Ben Youssef
Madrasa Ben Youssef
Qoubba "Al-Boúdiyyine"
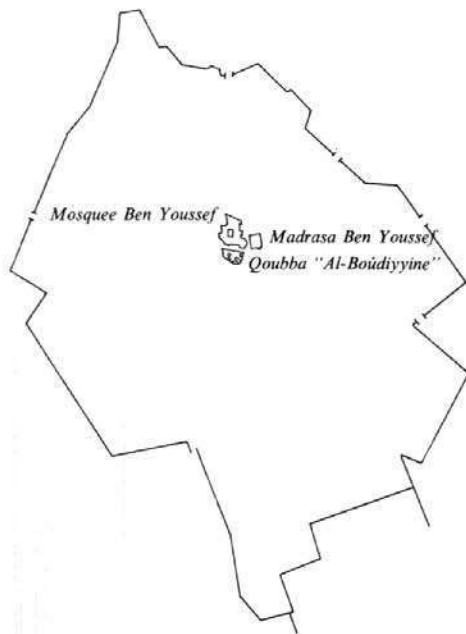
Le Complexe Ibn Youssouf plan de situation

Ce complexe monumental, situé au coeur de la Médina, témoigne de l'importance de cette zône dans le développement de la cité à travers huit siècles.

Le noyau initial est constitué par la mosquée de Ali IBN YOUSSOUF (début du XII° siècle) dont seul subsiste le nom, fatalement collé au lieu, bien que le beau sanctuaire actuel soit l'oeuvre du Souverain Alaouite Moulay SOULAYMAN (début du XIX° Siécle). Par contre, la magnifique coupole, appelée Qoubbat Al-Bou'diyyine, qui fut une annexe de la mosquée almoravide, a été dégagée par les fouilles vers 1950 et entièrement restaurée. L'admirable Madraça sa'adienne (XVI° Siécle), en grande partie intacte, constitue le troisième élèment du complexe. A cause de sa relation fonctionnelle avec la mosquée IBN YOUSSOUF, elle en porte également le nom.

Par de là la beauté de ces édifices et leur importance dans l'histoire de l'art et de l'architecture à Marrakech, leur rôle sur le plan religieux et culturel a été fondamental. Durant des siécles, la mosquée — université et la Madraça Ibn Youssouf ont été les plus importants centres de diffusion de la culture pour tout le Sud Marocain.
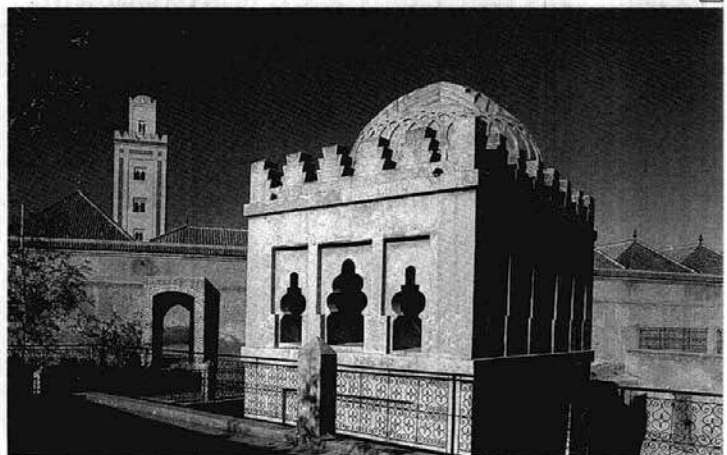
La Qoubba Almoravide

Cette coupole, qualifiée par L. GOLVIN de "chef d'oeuvre de science, de technique et de bon goût" est d'autant plus saisissante qu'elle est l'unique représentant de l'art almoravide dans leur propre capitale.

C'est un kiosque de plan rectangulaire d'environ 7,30 m sur 5,50 m et 12 m de Hauteur, qui abritait un bassin d'ablutions. L'appareil combine lits de pierre et de brique, la brique étant également utilisée en saillie comme support du décor extérieur. Ce décor est fait d'entrecroisements d'arcs brisés au-dessus desquels se déploient des rosaces rayonnantes qui se succèdent en un mouvement optique dynamique pour atteindre le sommêt.
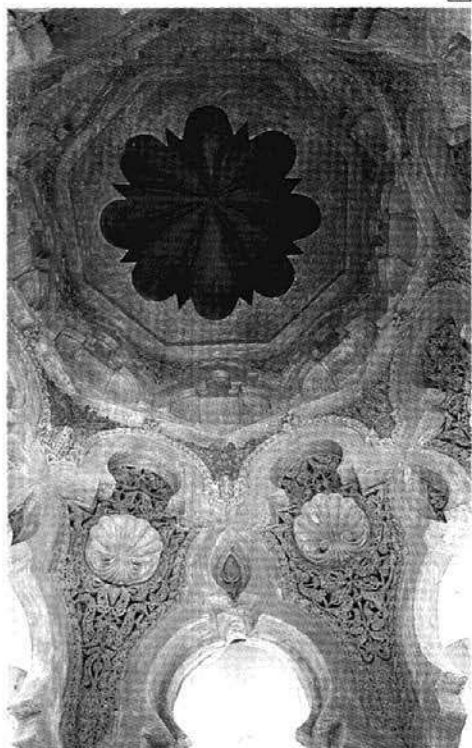
Cette rigueur géométrique à l'extérieur contraste volontairement avec la richesse et le foisonnement de l'ornementation florale sculptée sur le plâtre qui règnent à l'intérieur de la qoubba. Le décor est apparenté ici à celui des coupoles de cordoue et Tlemcen de même époque.

Il est cependant touchant de saisir à travers les deux tendances opposées et pourtant consignées dans la même coupole, les prémices de l'art dit "hispano — mauresque".
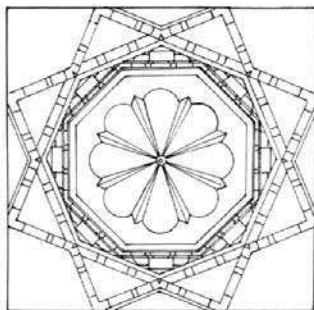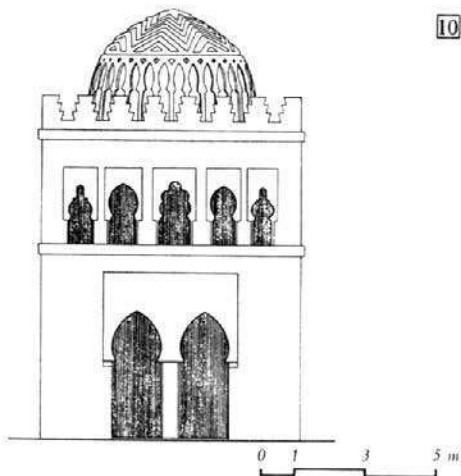
Le Complexe Ibn Youssouf

La Mosquee

La Grande-Mosquée IBN YOUSSOUF doit son nom à l'emir almoravide Ali Ibn Youssouf qui a fondé le premier sanctuaire sur le sîte, au début du XII° Siècle. Abandonnée et partiellement détruite sur l'ordre de Abdelmoumen Ibn Ali au milieu du XII° Siécle, elle fut restaurée par le Calife Almohade Al-MURTADA au XIII° Siècle. La construction au XVI° Siecle de la Madraça voisine lui restitue son rôle culturel. A la fin du XVIII° Siècle, le souverain alaouite Moulay SOULAYMAN la fait reconstruire entièrement dans les limites d'un carré de 65 m de côté. Restaurée par S.M HASSAN II, elle conserve dans son état actuel, le plan, la structure et le décor du XVIII° Siècle. On peut y admirer encore les toitures de bois à double pentes typiques de l'architecture religieuse alaouite. Son beau minaret du XVIII° siècle domine le centre de vieille ville avec ses 40 m de hauteur. Ses façades, très simples, sont égayées par des bandeaux de céramique verte et des petites baies jumelées. L'original parapet à balustres qui borde la baise d'une façade témoigne de l'ouverture du Maroc au XVIII° siècle à certaines formes de l'architecture européenne.

Siège de l'université traditionnelle depuis des siècles, la Mosquée Ibn Youssouf doit également sa renommée à son important fonds de manuscrits légués par des Souverains ou des particuliers. Certains manuscrits, d'une rare valeur scientifique ou artistique, datent du XII° siècle.

Enfin, c'est autour de cette mosquée que s'est constitué le premier noyau de la Medina sur lequel se sont greffés les édifices publics: La Madraça, les Hammams, les citernes et fontaines, la Qaysarya et les Fondouks ...

SAHN (Cour)

Mihrab

Minarét
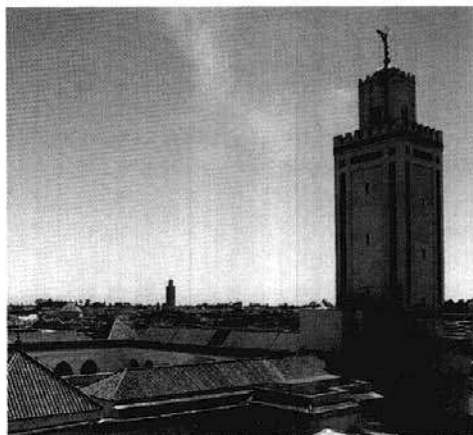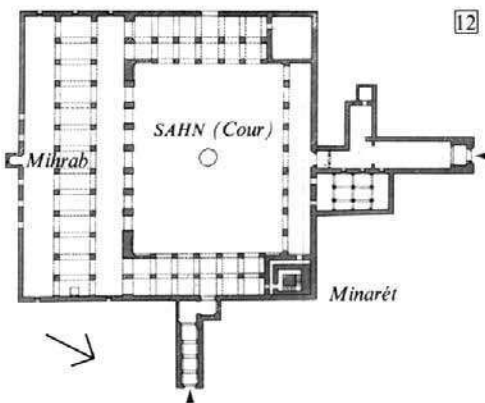
La Madraça

Probablement de fondation mérinide (XIV°
Siècle), la Madraça Ibn Youssouf, dans sa
structure actuelle, est incontestablement
l'oeuvre du Sultan sa'adien Abadallah al-
Ghalib Billah comme l'attestent plusieurs
inscriptions dont une datée de 972 Hég.
(1564–65). Son plan, d'une grande ampleur
(40 m × 43 m) révèle par sa parfaite symétrie,
la marque d'un seul maître d'oeuvre. Avec
environ 140 chambres d'étudiants c'est l'une
des plus grandes "cités universitaires"
traditionnelles du Maroc.

L'ensemble de l'édifice s'ordonne
harmonieusement autour d'une cour qui
baigne dans une lumière qui reflète le rôse
pâle émanant des stucs couvrant les murs.
Encadrée par deux galeries latérales aux piliers
robustes, cette cour est rythmée suivant son axe
par un bassin de marbre blanc et par l'arc de
la salle de prière. Au fond de cette salle se
détachent dans la prénombre l'arc du Mihrab
et son encadrement sculpté dans le plâtre qui
reçoit la lumière discrète de petites claustra.
L'étage est occupé par les chambres
distribuées autour de courettes bordées de
balustrades en bois de cèdre ajouré. Comparée
à la richesse décorative de la cour, les cellules
d'étudiants sont d'une simplicité remarquable;
cependant, d'une manière générale, la
tendance au décor couvrant qui frappe dans
les madraça mérinides duXIV° siècle se trouve
ici atténuée par l'ampleur des proportions qui
a permis de sculptér sur la céramique, le
plâtre, le marbre et le cèdre, des motifs plus
larges, plus aérés.

Avec ces atouts, la Madraça Ibn Youssouf
demeure l'un des principaux chef d'oeuvres
d'art à Matrakech.
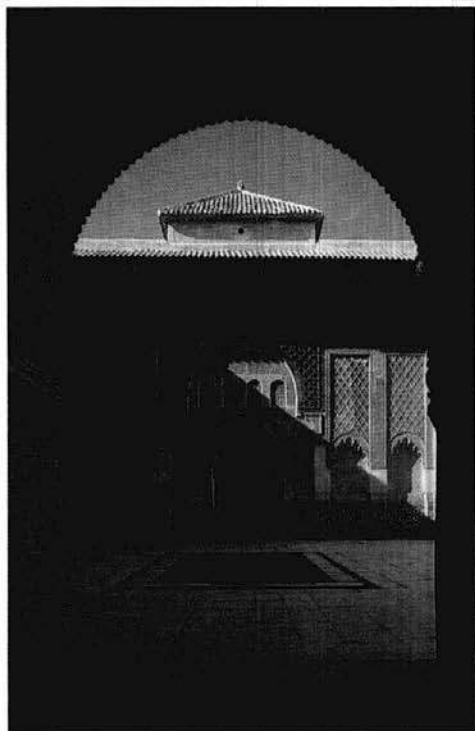
*J'ai été édifiée pour les sciences et la prière par
le Prince des croyants.*

*Le descendant du sceau des prophètes
ABDALLAH, le plus glorieux des créatures.
Prié pour lui, ô toi qui franchit ma porte, afin
que ses espérances les plus hautes soient
réalisées.*

(Vers gravés sur le linteau de la porte principale.)

Le Complexe Ibn Youssouf

L'Alchimie des doigts:
La richesse décorative de la Madraça Ibn
Youssouf a inspiré au peuple la version
anecdotique suivante qui fut rapportée par le
chroniqueur al-IFRANI (XVII° Siècle): Le bruit
courut que le Sultan Al—GHALIB aurait
construit cette Madraça en ayant recours à
l'Alchimie qui lui aurait été enseignée par le
saint Sidi Ahmed ou Moussa, le maître
spirituel du sultan. Ayant été informé de cette
prétention, le saint répondit: sachez que les
lettres de l'Alchimie sont au nombre de 5.
C'est exactement le nombre des doigts de la
main. Si vous voulez trouver l'Alchimie, ô
Frère, il faut cultiver la terre. C'est assurément
cela l'Alchimie des hommes; non celle du
plomb et du cuivre!

Le Complexe Mouassine

Fontaine Bab Doukkala
Mosquee Bab Doukkala
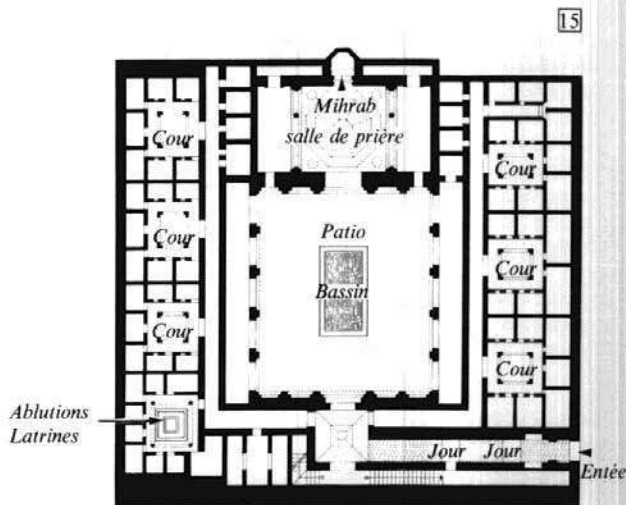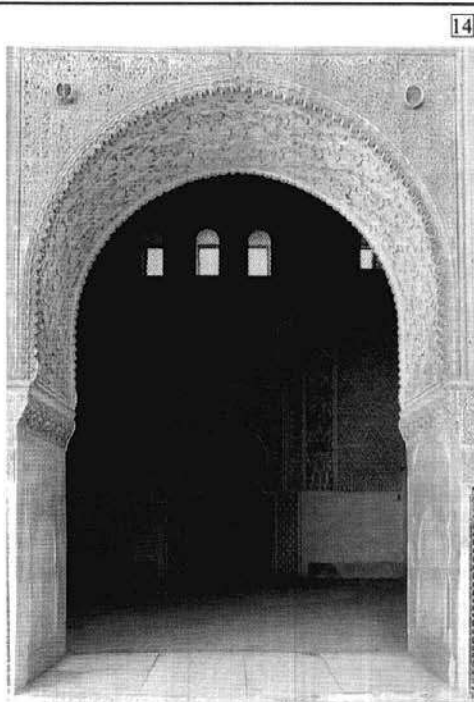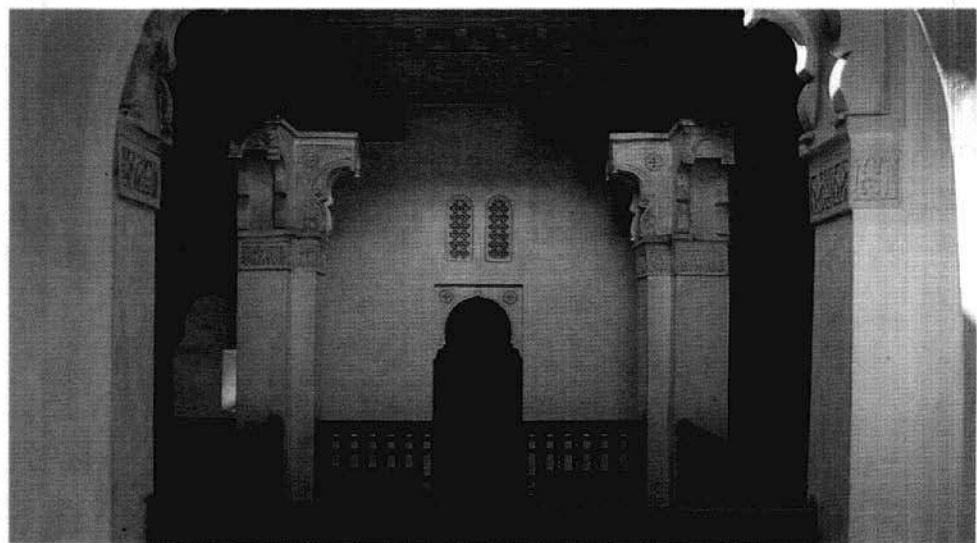
Souk Des Teinturiers
Mosquee Mouassine   Fontaine Mouassine
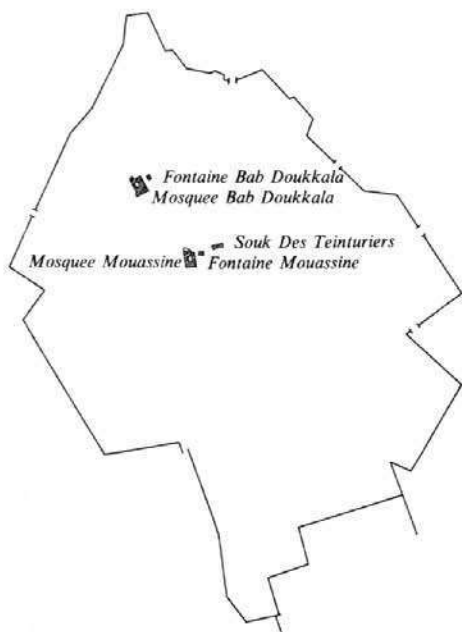
Le Complexe Mouassine plan de situation

Vers le milieu du XVI° Siècle, Marrakech, redevenue capitale du royaume avec les Sa'adiens, connait une expansion remarquable dont témoigne l'espagnol Marmol: "La ville est aujourd'hui fort peuplée, écrit-il, et s'embellit tous les jours par la faveur du Roy (Abdallah al-Ghalib Billah)" Le complexe socio-culturel et religieux de Mouassine, oeuvre d'Al-Ghalib, figure parmi les réalisations les plus significatives du XVI° Siècle. Il s'agit d'un ensemble monumental conçu d'un seul jet comportant une mosquée à prône, une fontaine-abreuvoir, un hammam, des latrines, une madraça etc... Oeuvre de re-structuration de ce quartier anciennement habité par la communauté juive. Mouassine semble avoir atteint son but comme le constate un chroniqueur marocain du XVII° Siècle: "cette mosquée est devenue, dit-il, le centre autour duquel tourne la médina". Oeuvre modèle également dans la mesure ou d'autres souverains créeront par la suite des ensembles comparables dans les quartiers de Bab Doukkala (Fin XVI° Siècle) ou d'Aboul-Abbas as-Sabti (XVIII° et XIX° Siècle) etc...

18

Le minaret

El mihrab

SAHN (Cour)
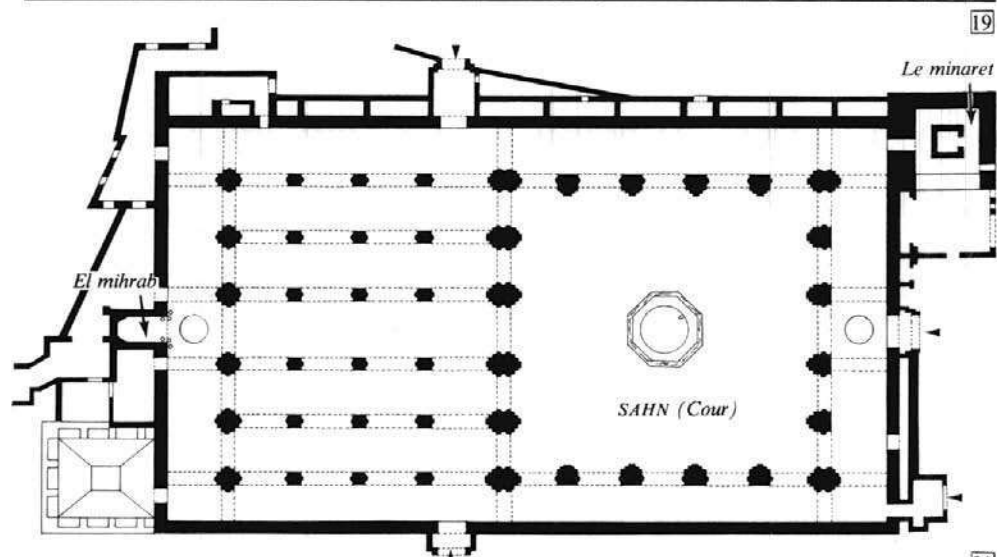
L'une des choses les plus remarquable de la ville, est un superbe édifice pour l'assemblage des eaux ... car il entre dans la ville 400 canaux ou acqueducs qui viennent tous du Midy et qui sont forts profonds dans terre...

La Mosquée de la Koutoubia
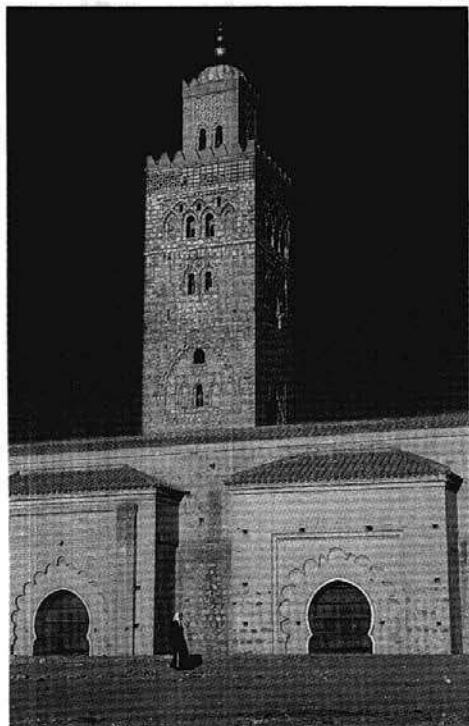
La Grande-Mosquée al-KOUTBIYYINE, couramment appelée KOUTOUBIA, doit son nom à une centaine de boutiques de libraires et calligraphes installées dans ses abords sous les Almohades (XII et XIII° Siècle) et abandonnées par la suite. Le nom désigne à la fois la mosquée et le minaret. Edifiée sur l'emplacement du Palais des Almoravides, elle fut inaugurée par l'Almohade Abdelmoumen Ibn Ali en 1158 et achevée, minaret compris, en 1196 par son petit-fils Ya'qoub al-Mansour. Avec une superficie de 5.300 m², 17 nefs principales et 11 Coupoles, la Koutoubia est l'un des plus importants sanctuaires du Maghreb. Mosquée de prestige, elle ne réussit pas à jouer le rôle de pôle urbanisant comme ce fut le cas de sa rivale Ibn Youssouf. En effet, sa situation est excentrée par rapport aux deux agglomérations principales de la cité: la médina au nord et la qasba au sud. Aucun quartier important ne s'est greffé autour de ce monument; et ce splen dide isolement ne fait qu'accentuer sa beauté.

Les dimensions de son fameux minaret sont peu communes: largeur 12,80 m, hauteur jusqu'au sommet du lanternon 69 m. Dans le lanternon est planté un "Jamour", épi en

PLAN DE LA KOUTOUBIA

Mihrab

Coupole *Coupole* *Coupole* *Coupole* *Coupole*

S A H N (Cour)

Minarèt

0 5 10 15 m
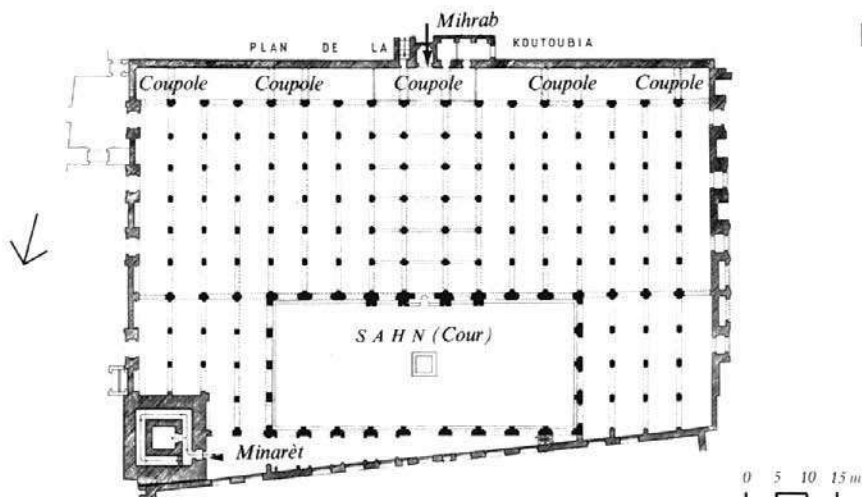
métal où sont enfilées 3 boules en cuivre doré. Le noyau central est constitué par des rampes qui conduisent à des salles superposées coiffées de coupoles dont la sixième, la plus riche, est un dôme à 16 nervures avec trompes et arcatures à stalactites.

Le décor des façades du Minaret, distribué à des nivaux différents sur chaque face, combine arcatures à lambrequins, arcs festonés, réseaux d'entrelacs sculptés et ornements floraux peints sur enduit. Les parties hautes du minaret et du lanternon sont agrémentées d'une marqueterie de céramique émaillée d'un bleu turquoise extrêmement rare.

Plus large que profonde, la salle de prière de la Koutoubia est conçue suivant un plan en T marqué par la largeur plus grande des nefs nobles (nef axiale et travée de la qibla) encadrées par des arcs soigneusement ouvragés et couronnées d'une parure de coupoles à mouqarnas. Si le décor est concentré autour du Mihrab, le recours systematique à l'arc brisé et lisse manifeste de la part du constructeur la volonté de réaliser une oeuvre où prodominent l'ampleur du volume et la pureté des lignes.
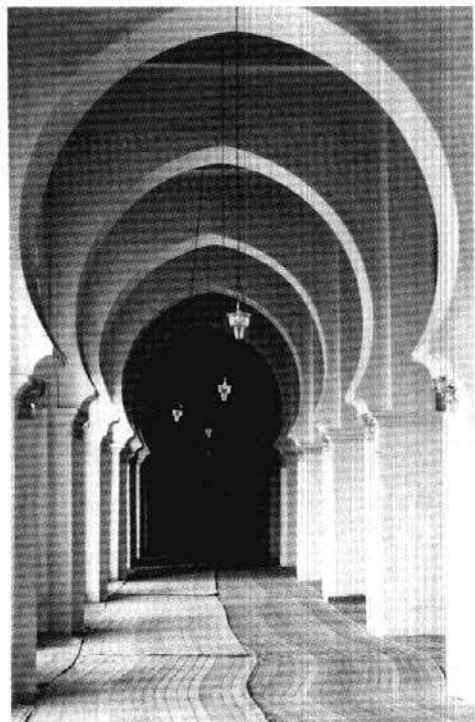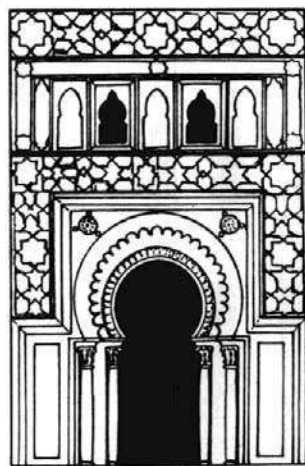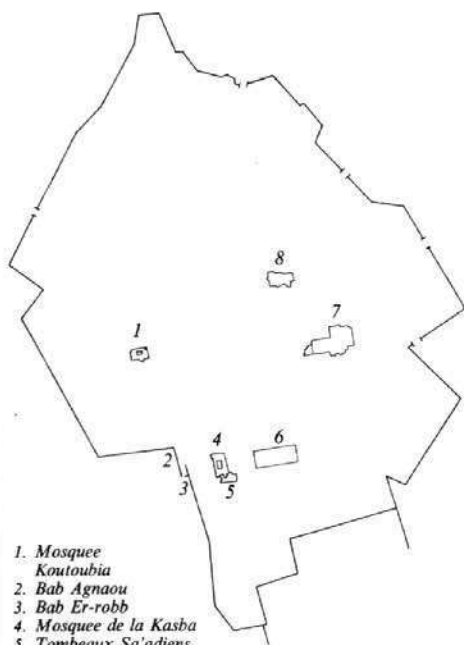
La Qasba

1. Mosquee
   Koutoubia
2. Bab Agnaou
3. Bab Er-robb
4. Mosquee de la Kasba
5. Tombeaux Sa'adiens
6. Palais Badi
7. Palais Bahia
8. Dar Si Said (Musee)

La Qasba et les monuments environnants.
plan de situation

Une cité royale fortifiée

Le Souverain almohade Youssouf fit construire au sud de la ville une forteresse achevée de nos jours par son successeur le Calife (Yacqoub al-Mansour)... Il y avait là d'immenses vergers qui furent transformés en palais, mosquée-cathédrale, souks et caravansérails. Des commerçants furent attirés dans la grande "qaysaria" qui n'a point son pareil dans aucune autre ville du monde musulman. A la fin de l'année 585 Hég. (1190J.C.), le Calife ordonna qu'on la peuplât.

La qasba est une cité impériale fortifiée située au sud de la Médina et dont la fondation remonte à l'époque almohade, à la fin du XII° Siècle. De cette cité grandiose, il ne subsiste aujourd'hui que la mosquée avec son minaret les portes principales de Bab Agnaou et Bab Robb, les grands bassins du jardin Agdal et des éléments de la muraille. Les textes historiques suivants permettent de se représenter cette qasba almohade et le genre de vie de ses résidents aux XII° et XIII° Siècle.

Partiellemnt abandonnée après le XIII° Siècle, la qasba retrouve au XVI° Siècle avec les Sa'adiens sa fonction de résidence royale qu'elle conserve depuis. A partir du milieu du XVIII° Siècle de grands travaux d'aménagement y sont entrepris par le souverain alaouite Sidi Mohamed IBN ABDALLAH et ses successeurs. A la fin du XIX° Siècle s'élèvent de riches demeures privées hors l'enceinte de la qasba, au nord: les palais de la Bahia et Dar Si Said; ce dernier, aménagé en musée, abrite d'importantes collections d'arts traditionnels du sud marocain.

Nous présentons dans les pages qui suivent les principaux monuments, témoins de l'architecture et de l'art des différents époques signalées.

Des résidents autonomes

Je ne trouve point d'expression qui puisee la décrire toute. Il faut me contenter de dire que chacun de ses palais est indépendant, qu'il a ses habitations, ses jardins, son bain, see écuries, ses eaux etc... Les maîtres du logis n'achètent rien de leur nourriture au marché. Les enfants n'étudient point à une école éxtérieure. Le maître sort de sa porte à cheval et nul oeil étranger ne saurait le voir à pied.
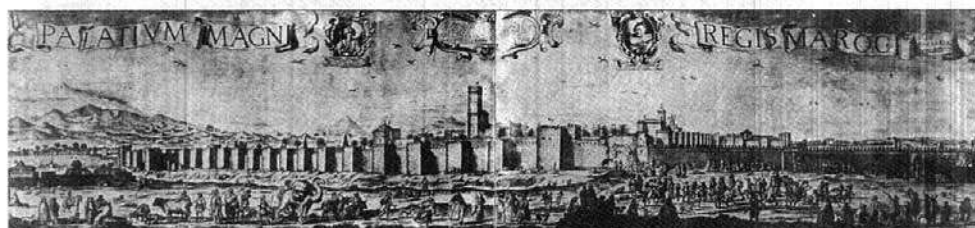
Bab Agnaou

Oeuvre de YA'QOUB AL-MANSOUR (Fin XII°S.), Bab AGNAOU, au nom énigmatique, est la porte intérieure principale de la Qasba almohade. Située dans l'axe de la Grande Mosquée de même époque, cette porte, à l'allure monumentale, était destinée au grand public et avait pour cela une fonction plus décorative que défensive.

L'appareil de pierre et de brique est revêtu d'un décor à la fois rigoureux et recherché, sculpté dans un grès aux rares tons gris bleus: des festons à entrelacs soulignent les arcs successifs; dans le champ des écoinçons se déploie autour de deux coquilles, un ample décor floral encadré par une très belle inscription coranique en caractères Koufiques, qui invite les visiteurs à pénétrer dans ce siège du Pouvoir en toute quiétude: "ENTREZ-Y AVEC LE SALUT, PAISIBLES..."

Motif floral sculpté sur pierre à Bab AGNAOU (XII°S.). Les palmes, élément par excellence du décor almohade, sont ici groupées de part et d'autre d'un axe constitué par la tige. l'ensemble rappelle le vieux thème de l'arbre de vie. (Fig. 28)

La Qasba

La Mosquee

Construite entre 1185 et 1190, la mosquée de la qasba était destinée à devenir le sanctuaire principal de la cité impériale. D'importantes restaurations au XVI° siècle l'ayant transformée, il est difficile de reconstituer les dispositions primitives et de retrouver le décor initial. Ses proportions demeurent cependant relativement importantes: 70,90 m × 77,50 m. Le plan présente des particularités originales que reflète notamment un rapport disproportionné entre une salle de prière peu profonde constituée de trois travées seulement et une cour très vaste subdivisée elle-même en une cour centrale et quatre cours latérales separées par des arcades. Cette disposition particulière de la cour s'explique peut-être par le fait que la mosquée était le siège de cérémonies officielles nécessitant une organisation relevant d'un protocole spécial.
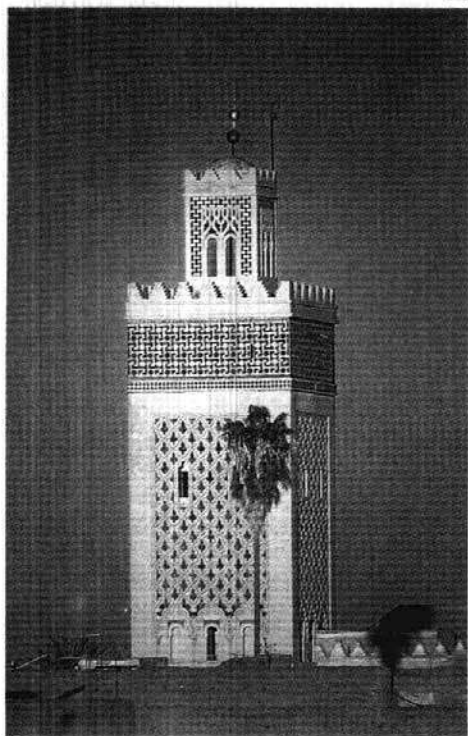
Le Mihrab dont l'encadrement est particlièrement ouvragé comporte en outre des clonnettes de jaspe couronnées de chapitaux omeyyades.

Le minaret dont la structure et le fond du décor remontent au XII° Siècle a été à son tour totalement restauré Son décor de réseaux d'entrelacs en relief ornés de faïence a servi de modèle à bien d'autres minarets tant à Marra kech que dans le reste du pays. Ses proportions équilibrées sont conformes à une très ancienne norme qui établit un rapport de 1 à 4 entre la base et la hauteur.

29

30
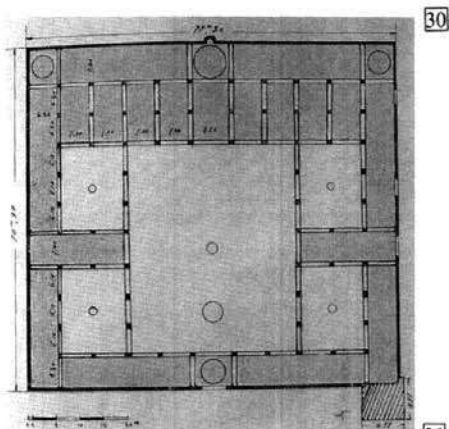
31

Le Mausolee Des Sa'adiens

Ce somptueux monument est un mausolée royal attenant à la mosquée de la qasba et achevé à la fin du XVI° Siècle par le sultan sa'adien Ahmed al -Mansour. La partie principale se compose de trois salles communiquant entre elles: la salle de prière, la salle dite des douze clonnes abritant la tombe du fondateur et ses descendants, une troisième salle dite des douze colonnes abritant la tombe niches finement décorées. Cette partie est dans son intégralité l'oeuvre d'al-Mansour. Dans la cour se dresse, isolée du reste, la coupole de Lallà Mas'ouda, mere de ce souverain et où se trouvent également la tombe du fondateur de la dynastie, Mohamed ech-Cheikh et celle de son fils Abdallah al-Ghalib Billah. C'est la partie la plus ancienne de l'ensemble; elle a été cependant retouchée par al-Mansour qui l'agrandit de deux loggias dont le linteau de cédre ouvragé est porté par deux colonnes de marbre hautes et fines.

La salle de prière où un parti pris de simplicité est manifeste, est recouverte de sept voûtes d'arêtes supportées par quatre colonnes de marbre. Le Mihrab et l'arc se trouvant dans son axe sont par contre remarquablement décorés, mais ce n'est qu'un prélude à l'exhubérante richesse de décor de la salle des

douze colonnes. Cette dernière, bâtie sur plan carré de 10 m de côté, est une coupole de cédre sculpté portée par douze colonnes de mabre blanc italien et dont la répartition par trois à chaque angle engendre des arcs aux fines ciselures en stalactites. Les parties latérales de la salle sont recouvertes de plafonds ouvragés et dorés dont les caissons évoquent le style de la Renaissance italienne. Cette note italianisante ne saurait étonner ici car al-Mansour, avant sa proclamation, avait passé plusieurs années en exil sur les rives méditerranéennes. Par ailleurs, en tant que souverain, il n'hésitait pas à faire appel aux artistes européens. Néanmoins, le Mausolée des Sa'adiens demeure un chef d'oeuvre qui

entrée de la mosquée

grande mosquée de la casbah

salle des trois niches

entrée des Tombeaux Saadiens

salle des 12 colonnes

salle de lalla Masüda et ensemble environnant

cour-jardin

salle du mihrab

rempart
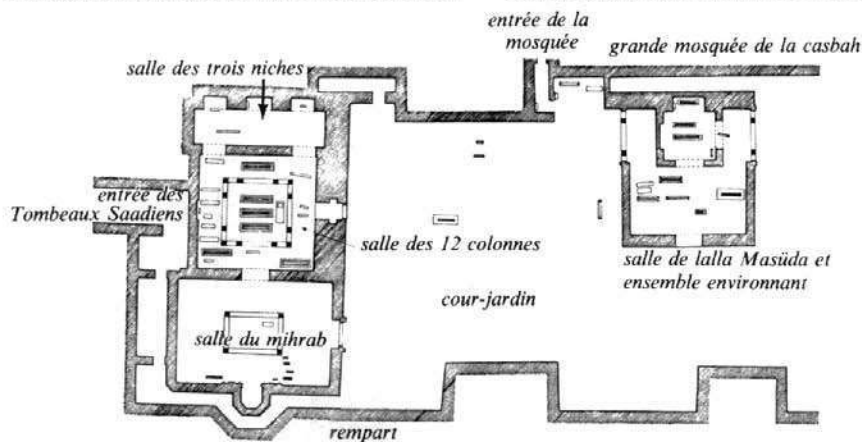
La Qasba

reflète la réalité historique de l'art marocain au XVI° Siécle, réalité ou les traditions nationales se combinent avec l'apport des Morisques qui ont quitté l'Espagne pour la Maroc, celui des Ottomans et enfin l'apport européen.

La Qasba
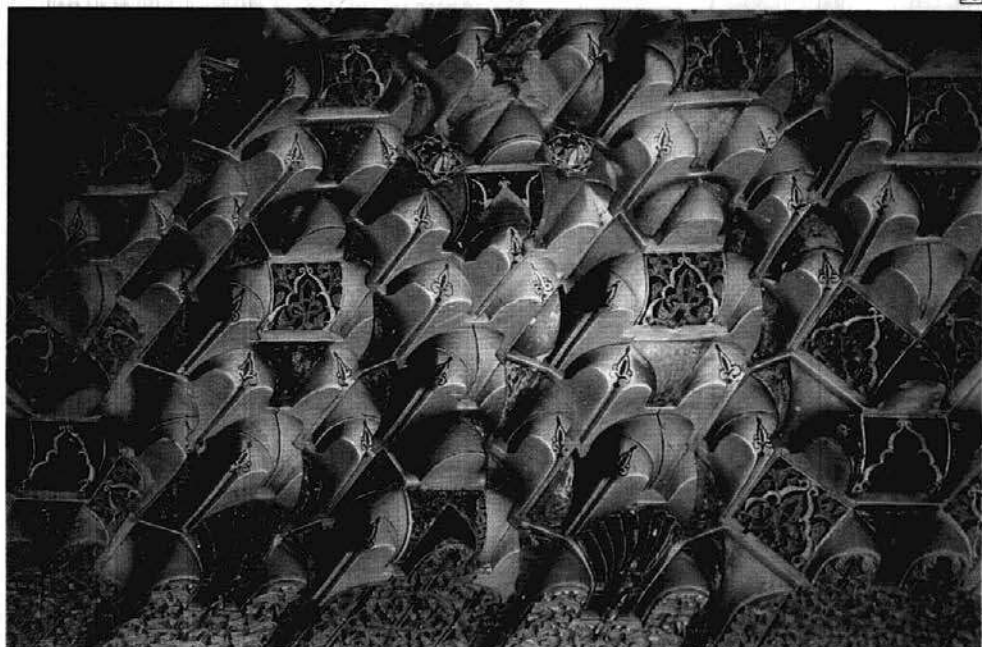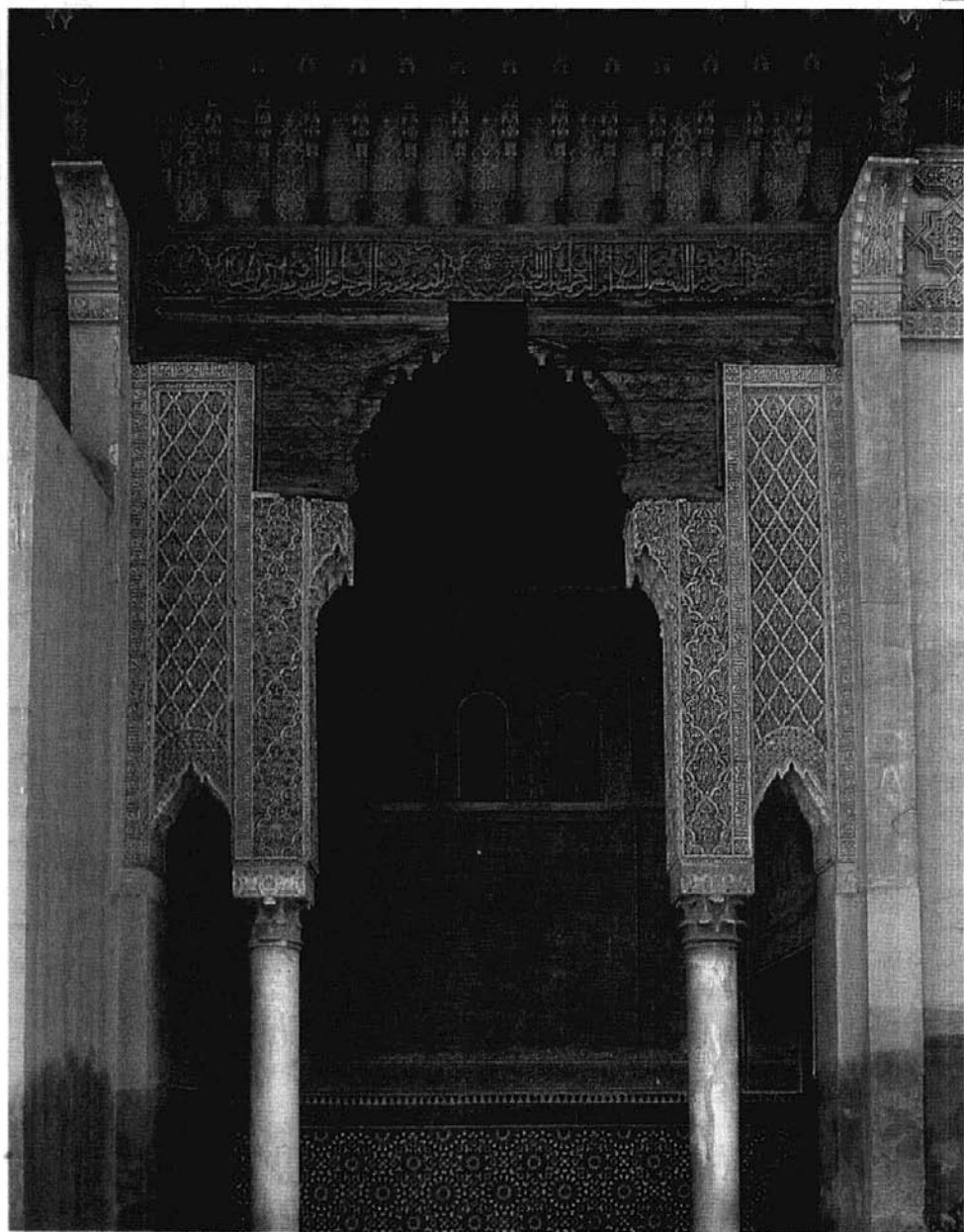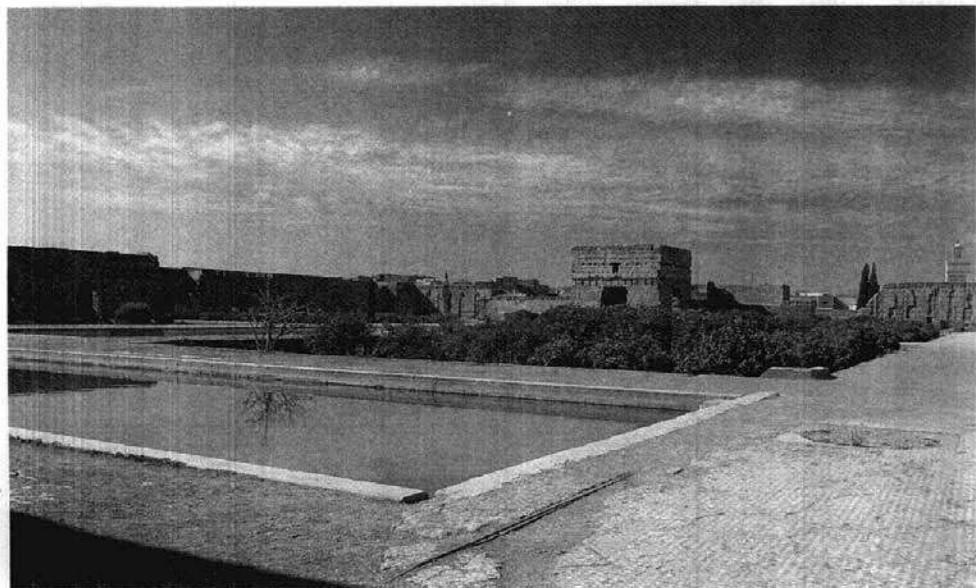
Le Palais Al-Badi

Plus de cinq cent colonnes de marbre de carrare, une vingtaine de coupoles, une multitude de vasques au sol et à l'étage, un pavage en marqueterie de céramique, des broderies et tentures de soie aux franges calligraphiées de fil d'or etc ... Ainsi fut décrit le palais BADI (l'Incomparable) par les chroniqueurs marocains et les diplomates et voyageurs européens qui l'ont visité à la fin du XVI° Siécle.

Ses vestiges représentent seulement la partie de réception d'un ensemble plus vaste édifié entre 1578 et 1594 sur ordre du Sultan sa'adien Ahmed Al-Mansour. Cette partie, entièrement construite sur des galeries sous-terraines apparemment pour des raisons de circulation d'eau, présentait une ordonnance symétrique marquée par quatre pavillons principaux.

Le tout était disposé dans une cour immense

L'eau courante, froide et chaude, est conduite du Hammam... par deux tuyaux principaux (en cuivre rouge), l'un pour l'eau froide, l'autre pour l'eau chaude. Ils sont dotés de "robinets" qui, en un tour, livrent à volonté l'eau froide, chaude ou tiède...

de 135 m × 110 m. Le pavillon le plus haut, dont il reste d'imposants vestiges, attirait l'attention de Fichtali, historiographe d'al-Mansour, du fait qu'il n'était porté par aucune colonne! D'après les descriptions très détaillées du même auteur, on peut imaginer sans peine que l'art déployé au Badi' ne le cédait en rien à celui que l'on peut encore admirer au Mausolée des Sa'adiens, également oeuvre d'al-Mansour. Dans ses lignes générales, le plan semble avoir été une réplique grandiose de la cour des lions à l'Alhambra; mais la disposition des cinq bassins et des parterres fleuris est par contre originale. Originales étaient aussi les dalles portées par des colonnes et qui permettaient d'accéder aux jets d'eau.

38

Bab berima

Casbah

3

2

1

Arsat aj-jaj

Casbah

Palais du sulan actuel

1. Pavillons
2. Bassins
3. Jardins
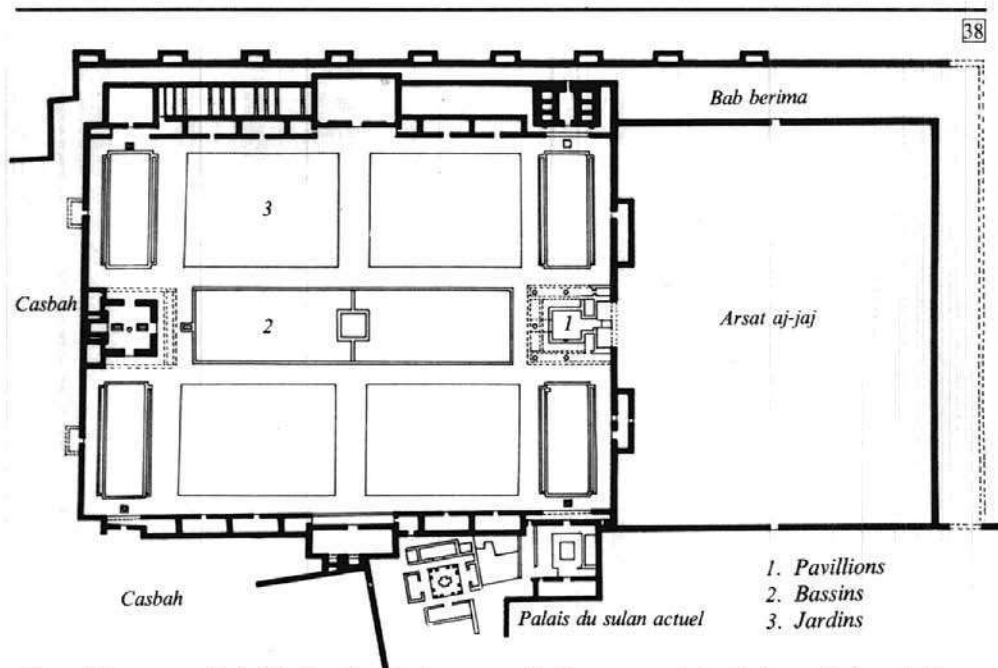
Ce palais... est tapissé d'étoffes de soie de couleurs multiples... Des rideaux, des tentures et des tapisseries brodées d'or pendent... Les parois des qoubbas (Pavillons) reposent sur des colonnes de marbre veiné, dont les chapiteaux sont enduits d'or fondu. Le sol est pavé de dalles de marbre blanc... dont les joints sont artistiquement passés en noir. L'intérieur des qoubba est orné de dessins qui sont le plus souvent rehaussés d'or...

Al Mansour avait invité le peuple à venir dans son palais fortuné... On servit d'abord une première série de mets variés dans des plats de Malaga et de Valence et dans de la vaisselle admirable venant de Turquie et de l'Inde... On apporta des aiguières et des bassins... avec des serviettes de lin brodées... Des coupes d'or et d'argent ètaient remplies d'eau de rose et d'eau de fleurs d'oranger; on y trempait de fraiches branches de myrtes avec lesquelles on aspergeait abondamment les convives.

Monuments d'epoque Alaouite

Sidi Bel Abbas ●
Bab Al Khamis
Oued Issil
Sidi Ben Slimane (Al-Jazouli)
Sidi Ahmad Al-Süsi
B. Debbagh
B. Doukkala   Sidi Abdel Aziz
Sidi Ishak Ben Salah
B. Aylan
My Ali Al-Charif
B. Nkob   Alghazwani
B. Makhzan
B. Aghmat
B. Jdid
Sidi Mimoun
Al-Sahrawi
Dar Elbadi
B. Agnaou
Berrima
B. Er-Rob
B. Ahmar
B. Ksiba   D. Chtouka
B. Irhli Mechaouars   Agdal

● Mosquees
● Mosquees Mausolees
□ Zones construites
▦ Cimetieres
▱ Jardins

Plan Etabli Par H Belarabi

0 240 720 1200 m

Les Mechouars

Durant la seconde moitié du XVIII° Siècle, Marrakech, ruinée, fut entièrement restaurée par le souverain Alaouite Sidi Mohamed Ibn ABDALLAH.

Rares sont les édifices civils, militaires ou religieux qui ne portent de nos jours encore l'empreinte de ce grand souverain bâtisseur. Nous retiendrons ici le Grand Méchouar et la Mosquée de Berrima en tant qu'oeuvres representatives de l'époque.

Le grand Méchouar est une vaste esplanade de 360 m × 180 m qui a été concue pour les cérémonies d'allégeance et la reception solennelle des délégations naionales et étrangéres. Au sud, dans l'axe de l'esplanade, s'élève la "QOUBBAT ESSAOUIRA", pavillon typique de l'architecture du XVIII° Siècle avec sa loggia à balustres encadrée par un arc surbaissé qui rappellent l'ouverture du Maroc à certaines formes de l'art européen du XVIII° Siècle. Le grand Méchouar a été récemment restauré et réaménagé par S.M. HASSAN II.

Le pavillon que le dernier empereur (Sidi Mohamed Ibn ABDALLAH) a nommé Mogadore (ES-SAOUIRA) à cause de la prédilection qu'il avait pour cette ville, a un certain air de grandeur et de magnifcence... On y voit plusieurs beaux appartements. Il y a un fort grand, pavé en tuiles bleues et blanches et arrangées en échiquier. Le plafond qui est de bois peint est très singulièrement sculpté. Les murs de cet appartement sont en stuc; on les a orné de grands miroirs et de pendules placées avec symétrie dans des chassis de glace. Sidi Mahomet manifestait son goût pour ce pavillon, en s'y retirant souvent, soit pour ses plaisirs, soit pour y expédier ses affaires.

La Mosquée Berrima

La Mosquée Berrima, oratoire officiel du Palais royal au XVIII° Siècle, est également l'oeuvre de Sidi Mohamed Ibn ABDALLAH; mais elle semble avoir été construite à l'époque où le futur Souverain était Vice-Roi de Marrakech (1746–1757). Elle est le centre d'un complexe qui comportait en outre deux salles d'attente, une madraça, des latrines etc... L'étonnante disposition de son plan qui, selon G. DEVERDUN "bouleverse toutes les données de la hiérarchie architecturale des mosquées", s'expliquerait par le fait qu'il s'agit d'un sanctuaire initial remanié et agrandi. Cette hypothèse est celle de H. BELARBI auquel nous empruntons la description suivante:
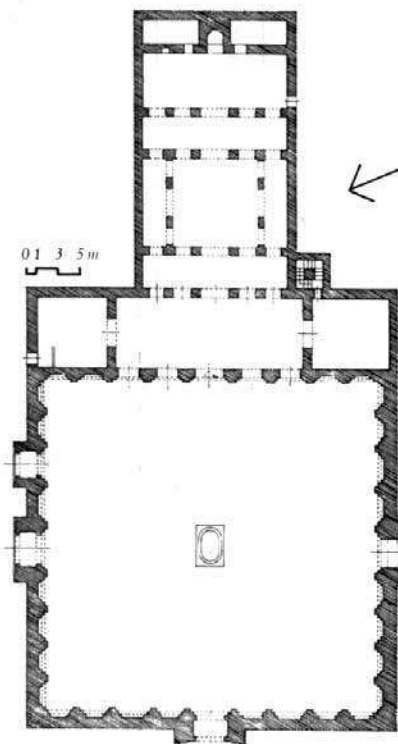
"Il est vrai que cette mosquée revêt une forme particlière du fait de la disposition d'une salle de prière petite par rapport à une cour beaucoup plus vaste. Elle se singularise également par la structure intérieure de sa salle de prière. ce n'est plus en effet, une répartition en un certain nombre de nefs disposées traditionnellement par rapport au mur de la qibla, mais en fait, un espace carré surmonté d'une grande coupole et entouré d'une galerie sur chacun de ses côtés. L'ensemble précède un vaisseau relativement large, parallèle au Mihrab."

La Zaouia de Sidi Bel Abbas

Nous avons signalé à propos du complexe Mouassine les éléments structurants d'un quartier du XVI° Siècle. La Zaouia de Sidi Bel Abbas que nous présentons ici est l'exemple le plus éloquent de la concrétisation par les Alaouites, à une échelle plus large encore, de cette politique d'urbanisation. Une évolution remarquable est à noter cependant: A la différence de Mouassine où le noyau central demeure la mosquée, le quartier de sidi Bel Abbas s'articule plutôt autour du Mausolée d'un saint, la Zaouia. Cela reflète, au niveau de la cité, l'évolution des mentalités religieuses sur lesquelles l'emprise des confréries est devenue plus forte. En outre, l'ensemble de Sidi Bel Abbas comporte des établissements d'assistance publique en rapport avec l'enseignent du saint. En effet Sidi Bel Abbas, saint de la charité, ami des déshérités et des handicapés, n'a cessé depuis sa mort (en 1205) d'être l'objet d'une vénération de la part de toutes les catégories sociales. Son intégration officielle au XVII° Siècle au fameux pélerinage des Sept Patrons protecteurs de la cité consacre un culte déjà fort ancien. Au début du XVII° Siècle un embryon de quartier apparaît autour de sa tombe; mais il faut attendre l'époque de Sidi Mohamed Ibn ABDALLAH (XVIII° Siècle) pour que ce quartier prenne forme en s'ordonnant autour de la magistrale coupole du saint et de la mosquée voisine. A partie du milieu du XIX° Siècle, les souverains alaouites portent un intérêt particulier à l'aménagement de la Zaouia en la dotant d'édifices monumentaux d'une grande richesse décorative: Le souk des passementiers à l'entrée de la Zaouia... (1850) et la magnifique fontaine face au Mausolée (1870) L'étude des éléments constituants l'ensemble n'a pas été systématiquement faite. Elle présenterait un très grand intérêt pour une meilleure connaissance de l'architecture et de l'art alaouites aux XVIII° et XIX° Siècle.
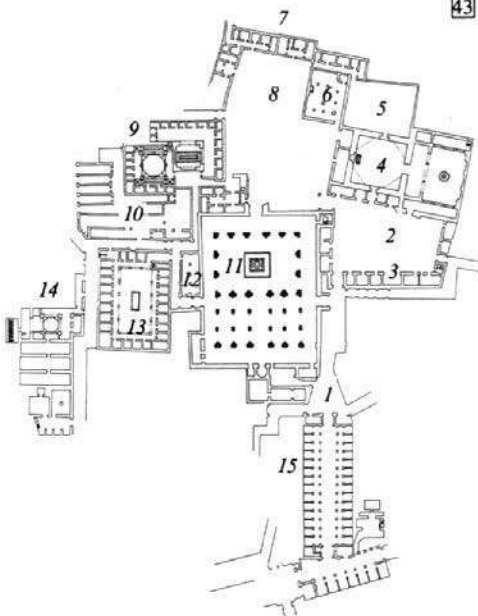
1. Entree de la Zaouia	9. Latrines
2. Cour	10. Asile des Aveugles
3. Fontaine	11. Mosquèe
4. Mausolée	12. Magasins
5. Cimetière	13. Madrasa
6. Abattoir	14. Hammam
7. Habitation	15. Qaysaria
8. Cour	
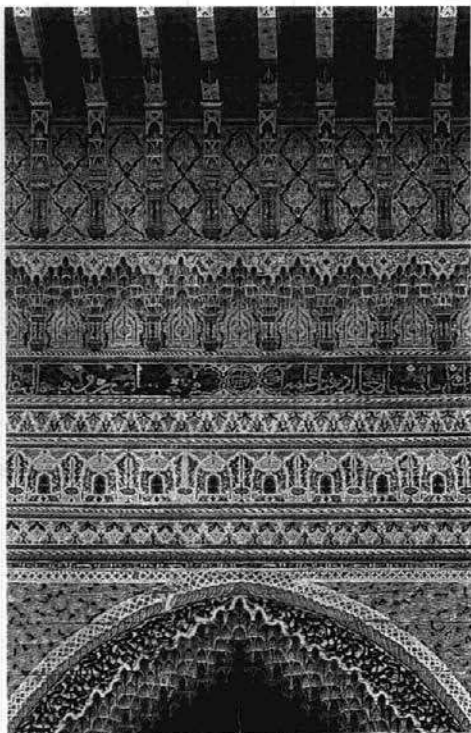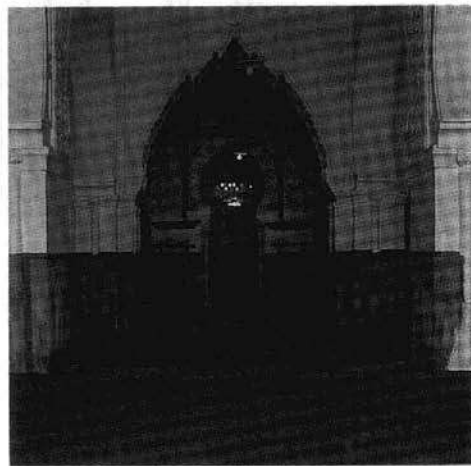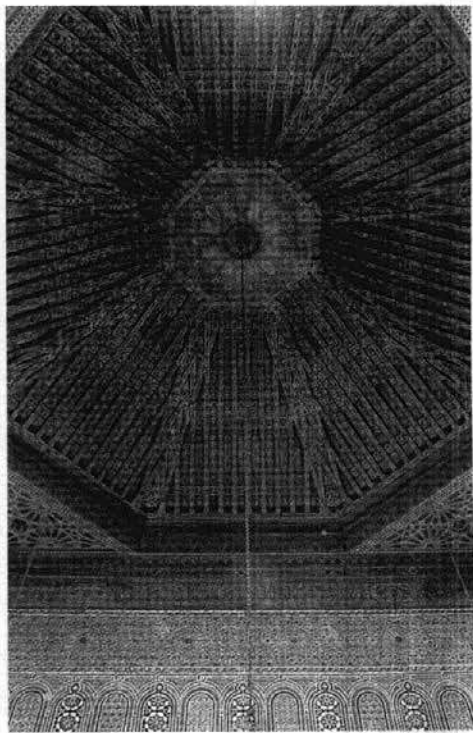
Grâce te soit rendue, ôSeigneur, pour l'esprit que Tu as redressé, l'intelligence que Tu as assistée; pour l'assistance que Tu as prêtée, je te rends grâce encore. Ta Magnanimité chaque jour renouvelée est débordante. Purifiés, Tes dons demeurent intarissables... Etonnantes ces mains fermées sur les biens que Tu leur a octroyés. Que ne se montrent-elles généreuses de Tes bienfaits!

(Extrait de l'oraison de Sidi Bel Abbas.)

Le Menzeh
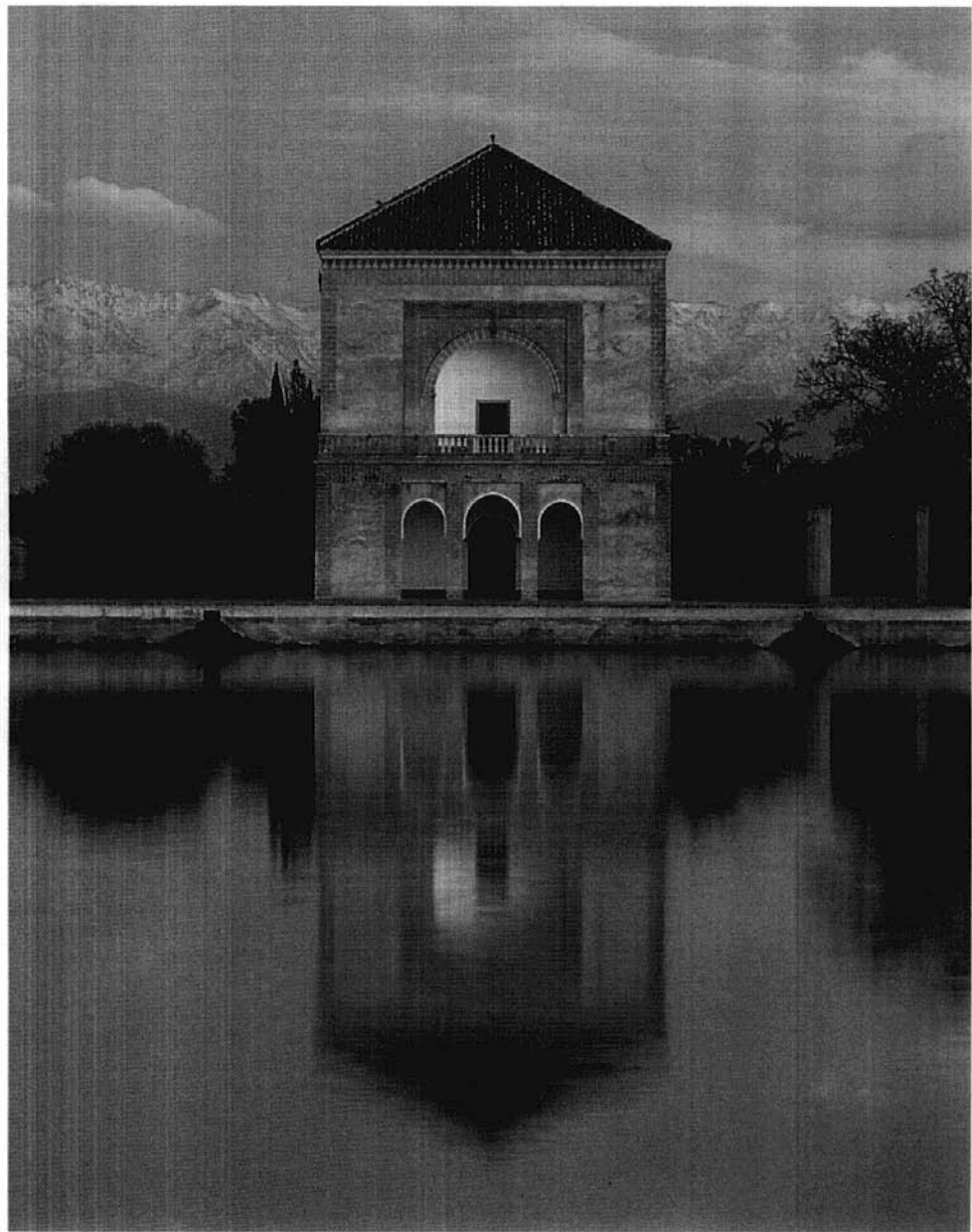
Le Menzeh est un pavillon de plaisance érigé au milieu d'un jardin et comportant souvent un plan d'eau. Il se caractérise par une structure inversée par rapport au Riad ou maison traditionnelle: Le patio intérieur y est remplacé par une salle couverte généralement voutée, les galeries habituelles de l'intérieur se transforment en portiques à l'extérieur, les façades, tout en recevant un décor particulier, sont animées de loggia, de portes, de baies et parfois d'arcature en bois ouvragé ... Historiquement, ce type de Menzeh se dévelope à Marrakech au XVIII° Siècle. Celui de la Ménara, fondé en 1870, par le souverain alaouite sidi Mohamed Ibn Abderrahman, est un exemple caractéristique du genre. Placé au milieu d'une oliveraie, dans un site naturel d'une rare beauté, la Ménara est bordée au nord par le vaste bassin d'époque almohade
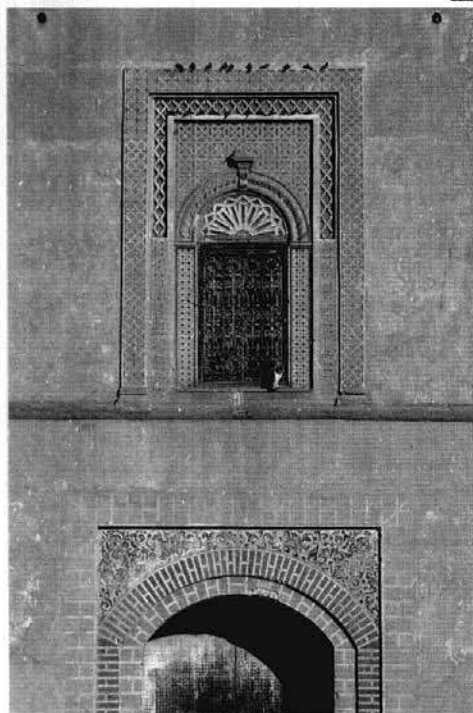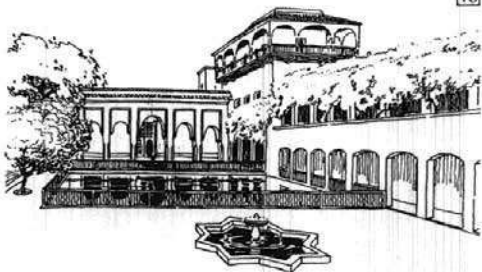
(XII° Siècle) et jouit, côté sud, d'une vue exceptionnelle sur le Haut-Atlas. Ses facades sont ornées de motifs peints en ocre rouge sur enduit jaune suivant une technique et un style caractéristiques de Marrakech depuis sa fondation, mais très utilisés à partir du XVIII° Siècle. Le décor intérieur et le revêtement du sol sont sobres dans ce pavillon plutôt rustique.

L'hôtel de l'EFFENDI, ou premier Ministre, était un des plus beaux de Maroc (Marrakech). Il avait deux étages, contre l'usage du pays, les appartements étaient arrangés avec goût... Les bains chauds et froids de cet hôtel réunissaient tout ce que l'on pouvait souhaiter en commodités et en agréments...

Dans les jardins de l'EFFENDI, il y avait un grand pavillon où l'on allait à couvert... Le fond du pavillon était tout de glaces. Tous les appartements dont je viens de parler avaient des tapis superbes, beaucoup de glaces et des pendules d'un grand prix...

Palais Bahia
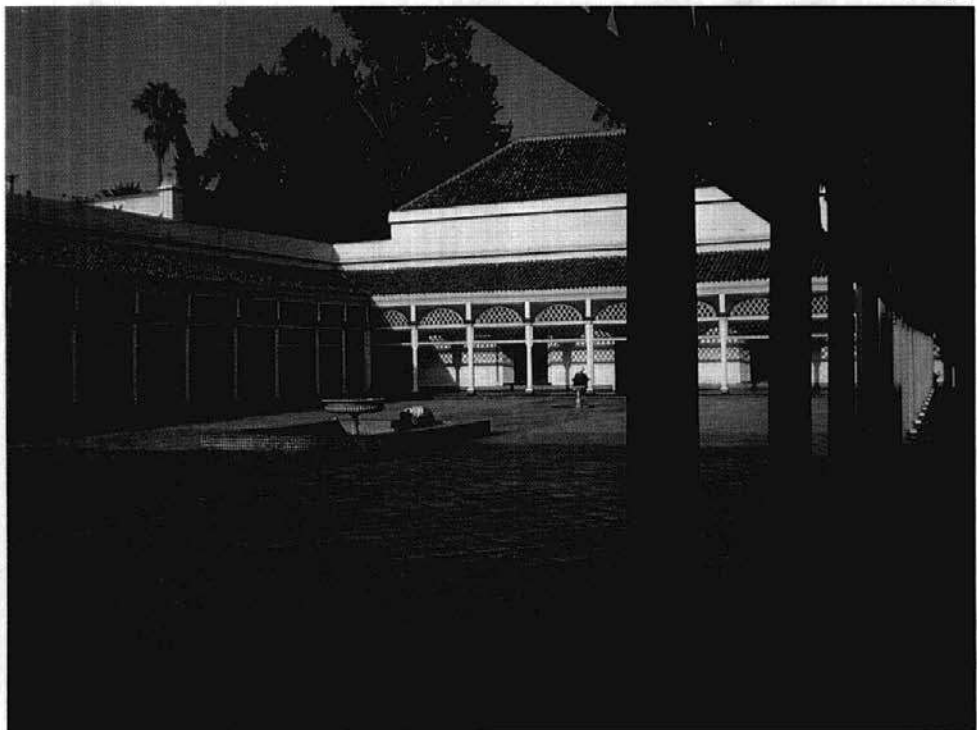
Une soixantaine d'immeubles volontairement groupés, semblet-il, en une éspèce de labyrinthe furent aménagés en palais, à la fin du XIX° Siècle, par le chambellan "BA AHMAD" (Ahmed Ibn Moussa). Sans plan pré-établi, la BAHIA a eu pourtant deux "architectes": son fondateur pour la conception générale et les appartements privés et secrets; les parties de reception ont été confiées à Mohamed al-Mekki surnommé "al-Mouhandis" parce qu'il avait appris à établir des plans auprès d'un officier français. Les parties les plus remarquables sont: le Grand Riad construit en 1878 par le père du Chambellan et remanié par ce dernier. Une très belle alcôve aux tons vieil or se trouve dans le salon principal de ce Riad; la grande cour de marbre, encadrée par une colonnade en bois de style "italianisant" renferme le plus important salon de reception du palais. Le petit Riad dit de la "Favorite" (1898) est un véritable joyau par la finesse de sa décoration. Une ambiance d'intimité y règne, accentuée par une coupole vitrée et des claustras aux verres coloriés. De beaux salons en bois de cèdre peint s'intercalent entre les Riad.

Sur le plan décoratif, les peintures sur bois qui illuminent les portes, les plafonds et les fenêtres occupent une place de choix dans l'art marocain du XIX° Siècle.
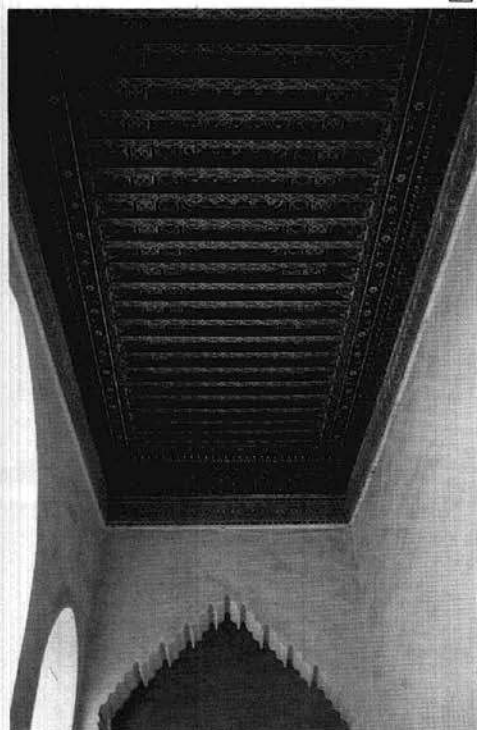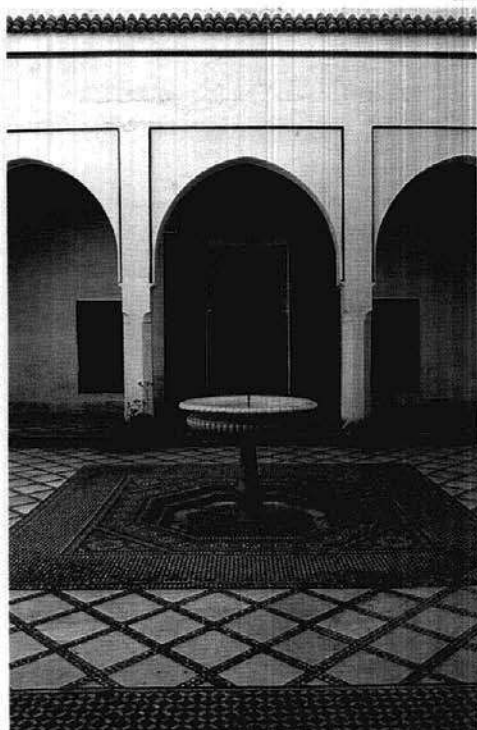
La grâce, la fantaisie, le hasard semblent avoir été les seuls architectes de ce lieu. C'est un dédale, une suite tout à fait désordonnée de cours de marbre et de jardins autour desquelles s'ouvrent des chambres d'un luxe céleste, angélique, avec de hautes portes qui montent jusqu'au toît, toutes peintes de fleurs, d'étoiles, d'arabesques... Des plafonds tantôt arrondis en dôme, tantôt en forme de carène, tantôt creusés de grottes d'où descendent des stalactites d'or, d'azur, de vermillon, tantôt plats, traversés de cent poutrelles menues, toujours juchées de mille fleurs, merveilleux parterres aériens, qui ne connaissent pas de saison, et placés là-haut pour distraire une rêverie sans pensée...

La Place Jama'Elfna

Jam'a el Fna est un "monument" vivant qui n'a jamais eu besoin d'un cadre architectural pour l'animer. Zône-tampon entre la Médina et la Qasba, c'est une place de réjouissances populaires où régne un grand marché ambulant et vers où convergent les voies et les hommes depuis des siècles.

Mentionnée pour la première fois au début du XVIIè S. son nom, dont les explications relèvent toutes de l'hypothèse, semble être davantage lié aux ruines d'une mosquée construite par le Sa'adien Ahmed AL-MANSOUR. Il signifierait alors "la place de la Mosquée anéantie". Les usagers préfèrent la nommer la place de la prospérité". Mais qu'importe le nom par rapport aux hommes qui animent cette place. Ces hommes refluent de tout horizon: des montagnes et des plaines, des oasis du Sud et du Sahara, du Souss et des villes atlantiques... Ils échangent dans la place les produits de leur région et

... oui vraiment, une place étrange, sur laquelle les montagnes, accourues du fond de l'horizon, penchent leurs tête neigeuses pour regarder ce qui se passe. Toute l'âme du sud est là, dans ces cercles de curieux qui, du matin au soir, se font et se defont autour de quelque bateleur, avec la mobilite des fummeies ...

surtout y exhibent leur art. L'art populaire par excellence: celui du conteur, du mîme, du musicien, du danseur, de l'acrobate, du prestidigitateur, du guérisseur...

La scène est une "HALQA", cercle symboliquement tracé par l'acteur, béni par l'eau et par l'invocation d'un saint au nom duquel les aumônes sont offertes. A Jama' el FNA, le spectacle n'est pas le monopole d'un acteur malgré une répartition géographique assez rigoureuse des troupes selon leur région d'origine ou l'art qu'elles exercent. Le spectateur participe à l'action, entrainé souvent par l'acteur lui-même. C'est un spectacle intégré où une relation subtile entre acteurs et spectateurs crée une ambiance de jeu en apparence spontanée. En fait, il y a une mise en scène imperceptible, fruit d'une confrontaion psychologique, et qui est peut-être à la base du maintien du spectacle dans ce milieu actuellement en pleine mutation.
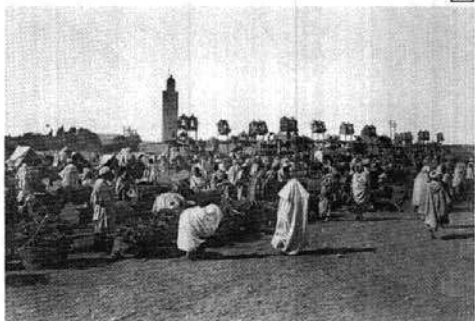
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Fig. 28 Bab AGNAOU; motif floral gravé sur pierre. Dessin d'après H. TERRASSE: l'art hispano-mauresque des origines au XIII° Siècle, T.II, P. 363, Fig. 76.

Fig. 29 Minaret de la mosquée almohade à la qasba.

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Fig. 52 Patio d'un Riad à la BAHIA.

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Fig. 54 La place Jama' el Fna: conteurs, musiciens et baladins.

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