

Amphitheatre of Greenery, Marrakesh

Project Data

Project: Amphitheatre for 11,000 persons (Extension possible by a small amphitheatre for 6,000 persons)

Client: Ministry of Culture, Morocco

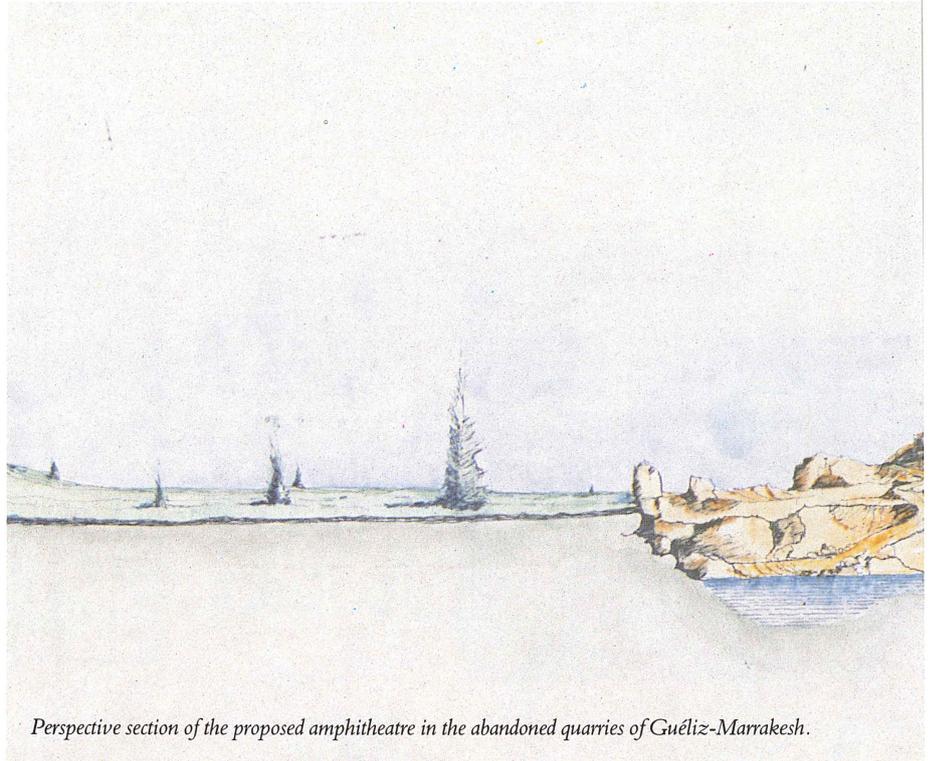
Architect: Charles Boccara

Total Surface: 5 hectares (including the lake)

Surface (constructed): 3,500 square metres

Cost: 9.8 million Dhs. (approximately US\$1.5 million)

Date (projected): 1986



Perspective section of the proposed amphitheatre in the abandoned quarries of Guéliz-Marrakesh.

What to do with those abandoned left-over spaces in the landscape that stone quarries represent is a problem that rarely elicits the interest either of designers or the general public. Having generously contributed their stone to the building of cities and public works, as did the ancient quarries of Guéliz near Marrakesh, the quarry tends to remain an ugly scar on the face of Nature.

Architect Charles Boccara (MIMAR 15) had the remarkable idea to transform a stunning site into a recreational area accessible and captivating for all. The project comprises an open air amphitheatre 93.5 metres in diameter at one end of the existing quarry, capable of seating 11,000 persons; a second, smaller amphitheatre for 6,000 persons could be built later opposite the larger one. Seating is sculpted out of the rock or constructed over infill. The model upon which the idea is based is the classical theatre of antiquity, adapted to the topography of the natural site.

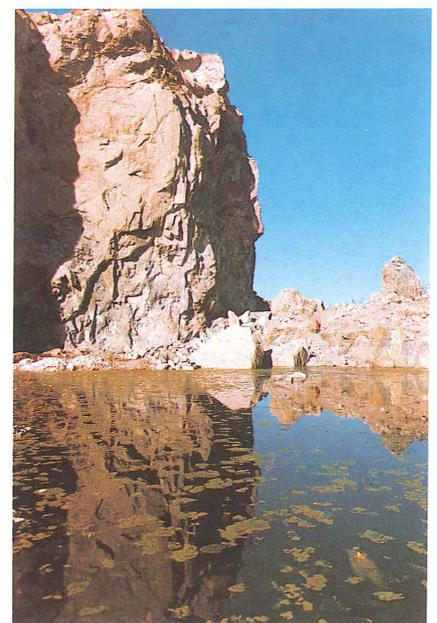
Two alternatives have been put forward for landscaping the floor of the recovered quarry: earth infill with planting, trees and a pond, or the creation of an artificial lake thanks to the clay and rock already present on the site. Performances of all sorts (theatre, dance, music) in this

natural setting would then, in the case of the second alternative, be reflected in the lake.

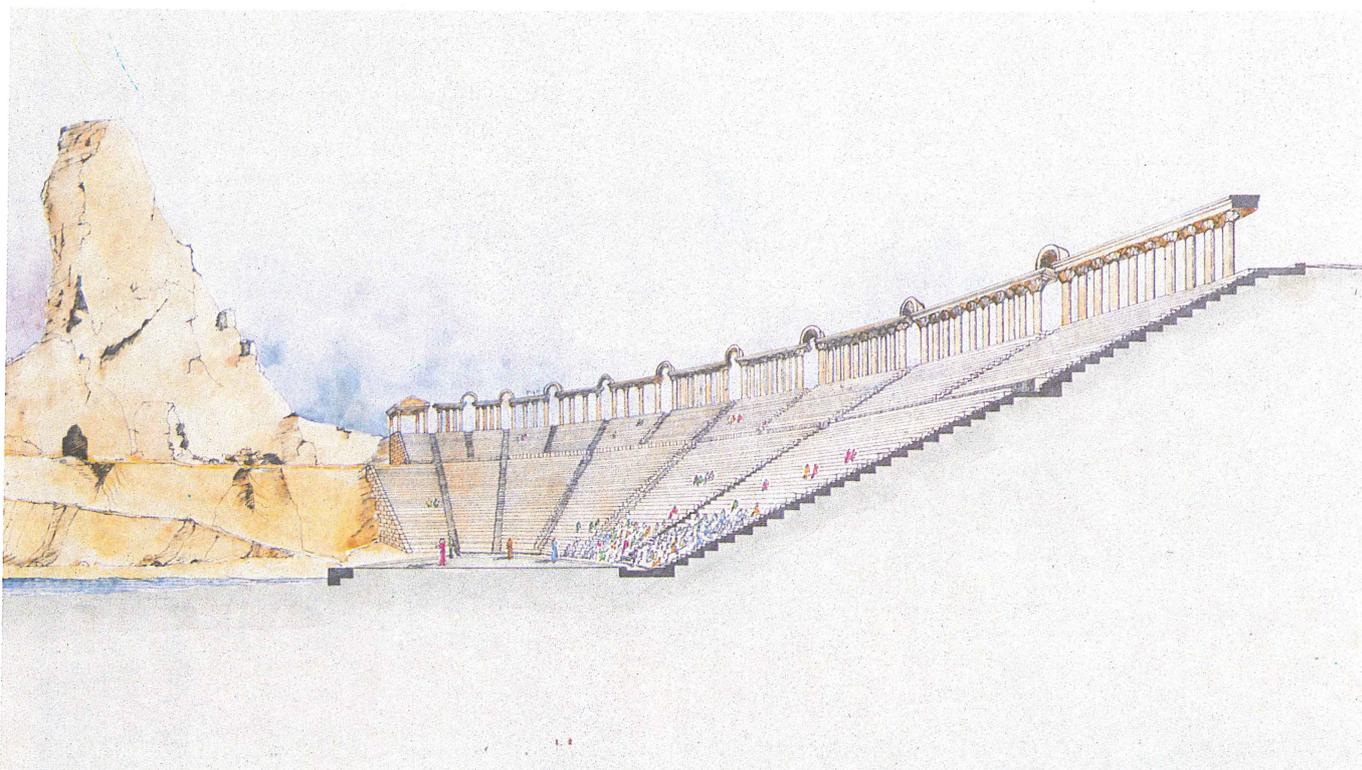
The immediate surroundings of the amphitheatre lend themselves to further development, such as a much-needed stadium or additional tourist facilities, thereby contributing to a more coherent complex of cultural and sports activities.

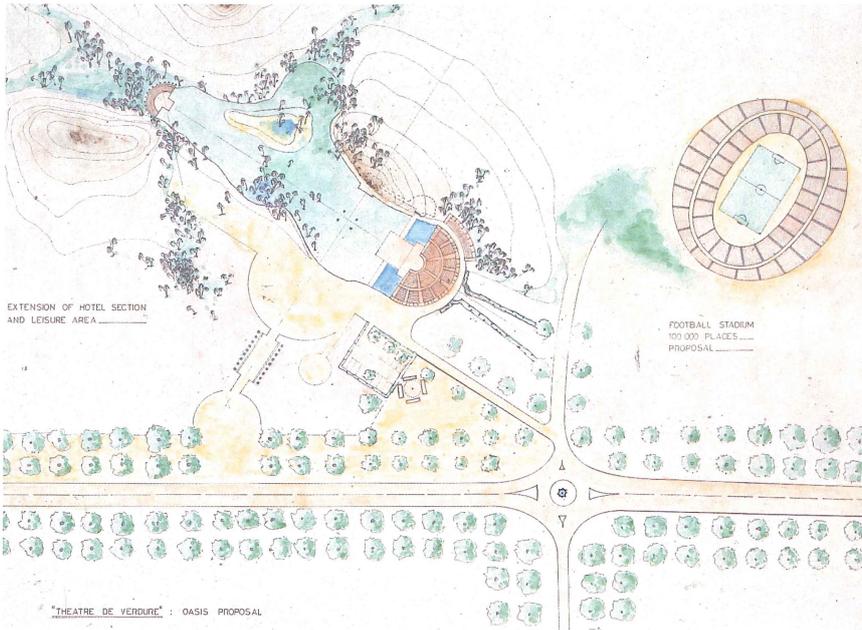
Below: The quarry site.

Right: View into the quarry from the projected site of the amphitheatre.



Text, photographs and drawings courtesy of the architect.





Left: Site plan of the amphitheatre with the backdrop of the quarry at an oasis planted with palm trees and a small pond.

Left, below: Site plan of an alternative proposal where the entire quarry is transformed into a lake between the large and small theatres.

Below: Horizontal section of the large amphitheatre.

Bottom: Section showing transformations of the existing quarry into an amphitheatre.

