

Mausoleum Mohammed V, Rabat

Project Data

Mausoleum for His Majesty Mohammed V, Rabat.

Architect: Vo Toan.

Client: His Majesty Hassan II.

Date: 1963-73.

Text based upon the monograph book in French, English, German and Arabic entitled, *Le Mausolee Mohammed V* by Vo Toan, Casablanca, 1976.

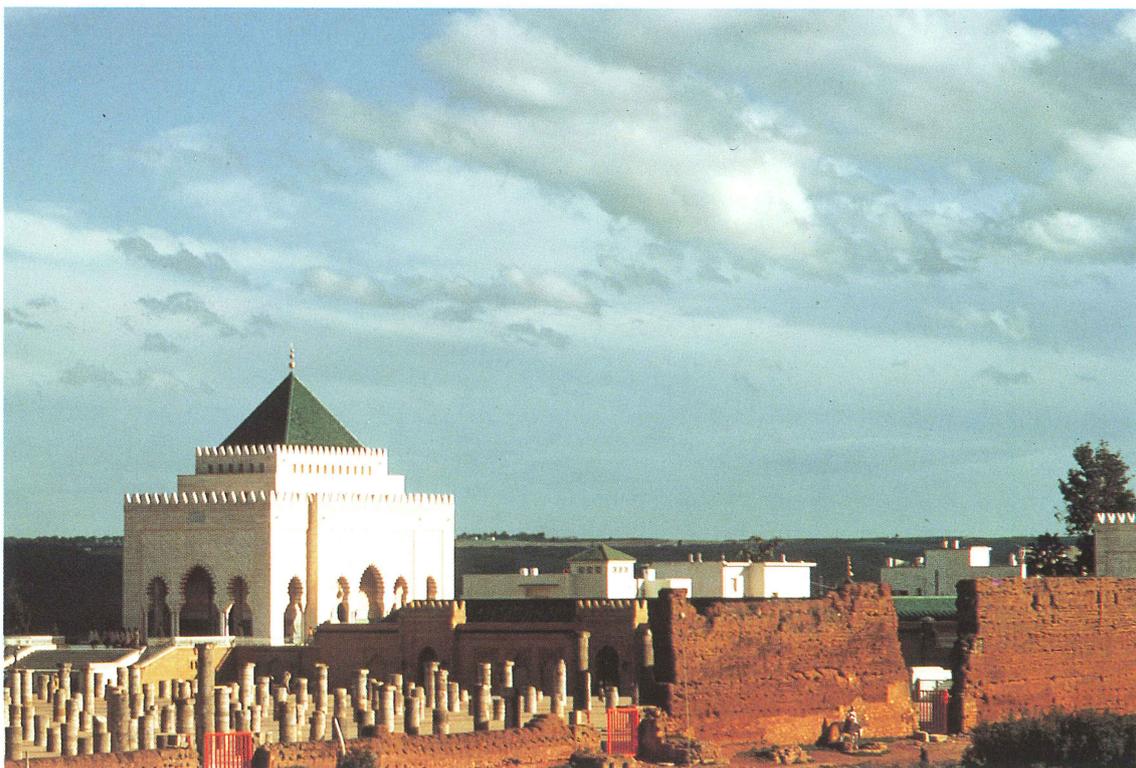
Photographs courtesy of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture Archives unless where otherwise indicated.

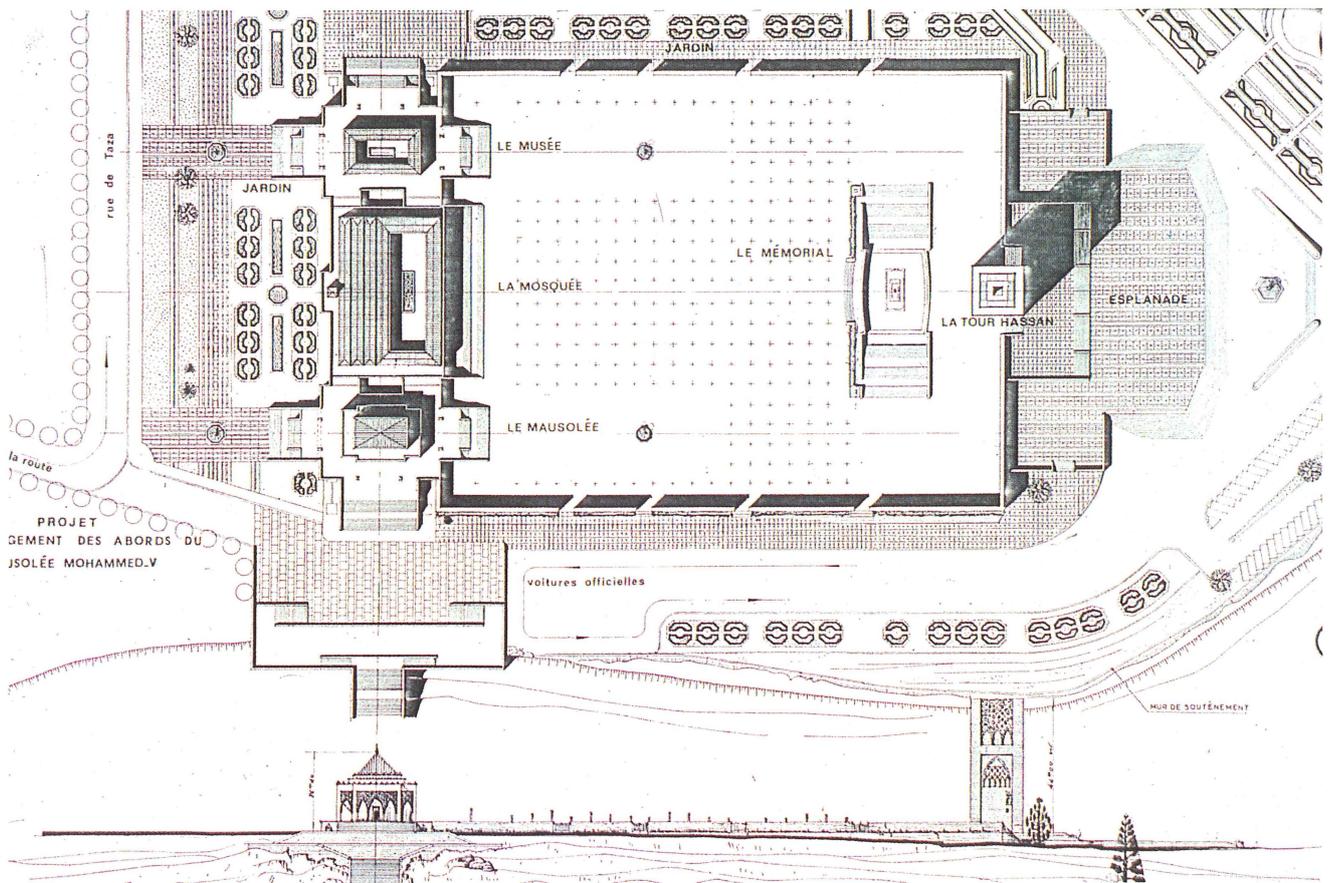
A mausoleum for His Majesty Mohammed V (1909-1961) in Rabat was commissioned by the monarch's son and successor, King Hassan II in 1961. The architect Vo Toan, who was trained both in Vietnam and in France, was selected to design and to execute the complex of mausoleum, mosque and museum on a site adjacent to the 12th-century Almohad mosque of Hassan. The sanctuary, which was never completed, inspired and ordered the composition of the new buildings: these are located on the spot of ancient *qibla* wall (now disappeared) and the new mosque is on the same axis as the old *mihrab*. Although it was the first Islamic monument designed by the architect, it bears all the hallmarks of the Moroccan tradition in architecture whose influence extended at various moments, from Spain to West Africa. Construction began in 1963, and from the outset the most highly skilled Moroccan craftsmen were engaged in embellishing the mausoleum with the finest examples of their rich traditional decoration: *zellige* tiles, carved woodwork, sculpted stuccowork, and various metalwork. King Hassan II himself encouraged at that time, as he has since then, a revitalisation of local arts and crafts by employing talented and respected *maalem* (master craftsmen) for

royal, as well as public, commissions. Maalem Mohamed Ben Adelkrim was principally responsible for the interior decoration of all three buildings, including newly-created motifs and designs which constitute the basic elements of various compositions. Hence, while the structures are all of reinforced concrete, the architectural vocabulary and particularly the decorative systems are Moroccan.

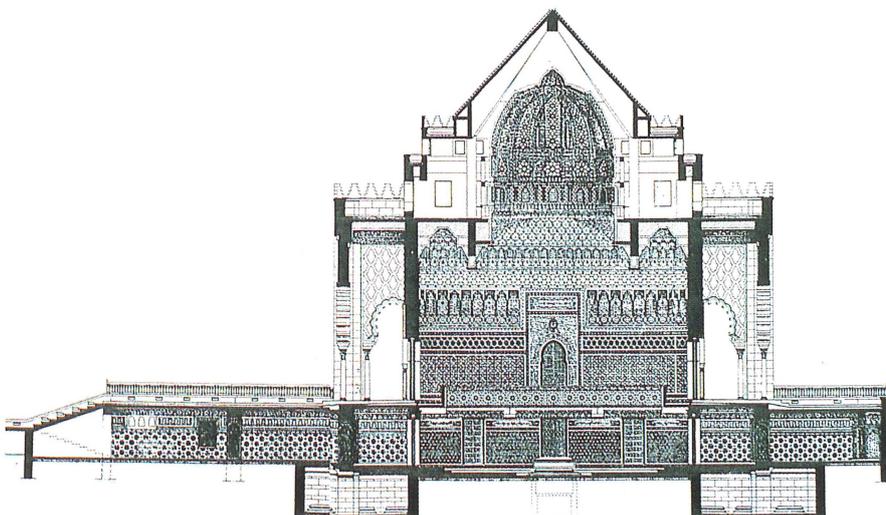
While the formal treatment of each of the buildings, mausoleum, mosque, and museum, is highly conservative — as perhaps befits a monument of this kind — the lavish ornamentation of interior surfaces nevertheless demonstrates the degree of imaginative innovation within each of the crafts present there. Patterns, which have never been used before, were composed with the *zellige* cut-tile mosaicwork that is based upon a fixed number of geometrically-shaped pieces. The carpentrywork found in the cupola of the mausoleum reveals intricately designed, astonishingly beautiful examples of a traditional craft. Similarly, plasterwork and metalwork of the highest quality are integrated with each of the other materials to form probably the very best demonstrations of the present state of Moroccan arts and crafts.

General view of the mausoleum (left) and mosque (right below); in foreground, the archaeological site of the Hassan Mosque.

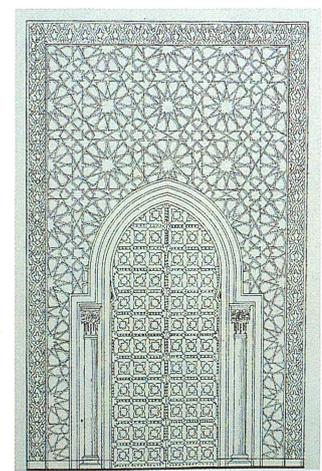




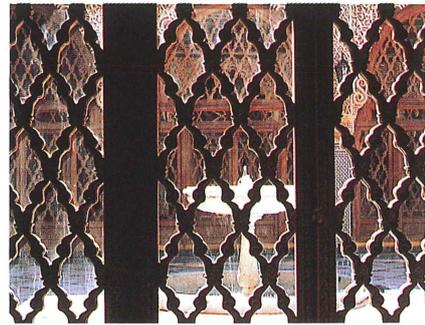
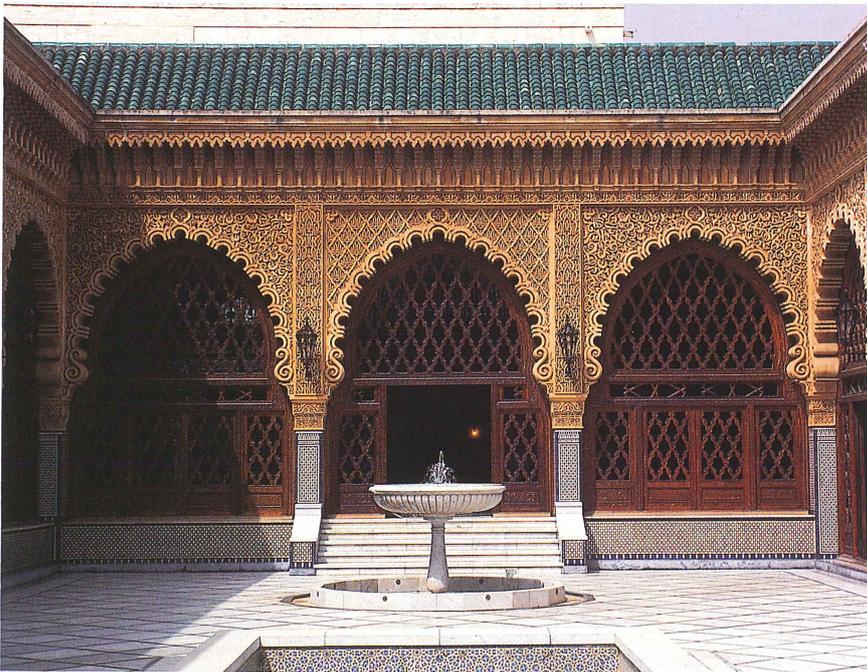
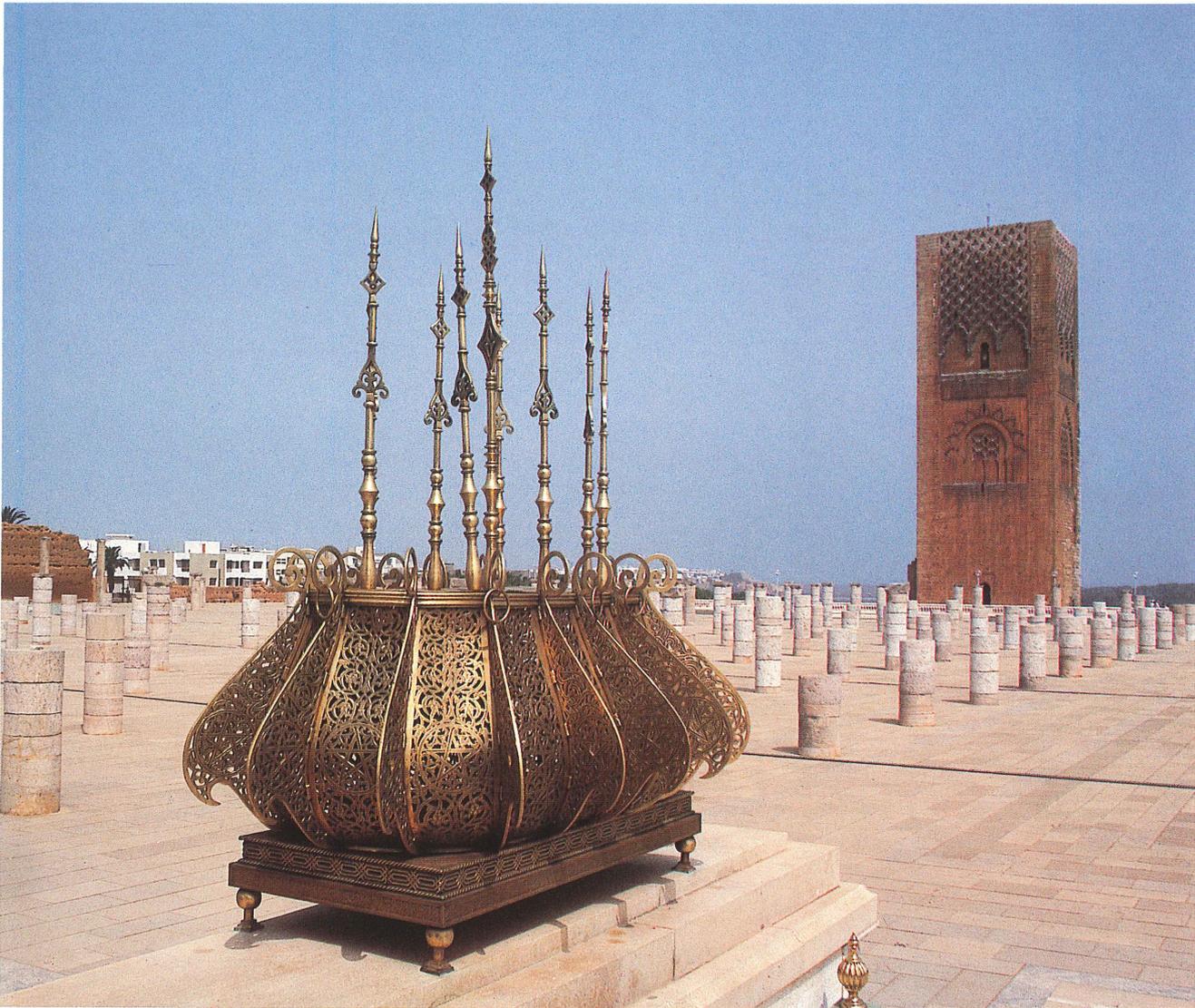
Plan of the mausoleum and mosque complex in Rabat.



Section of the mausoleum of Mohammed V in Rabat.

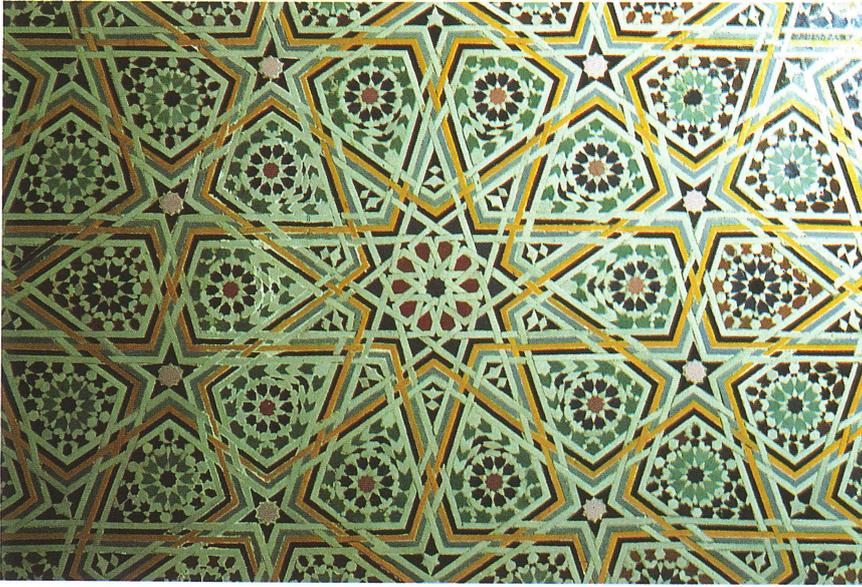


Drawing of decoration on one of the entrance doors to the mausoleum.



*Top: Decorative brasswork at the top of the stairs to the mausoleum.
Left: The courtyard of the mosque.
Photographs: Hasan-Uddin Khan.
Above: Example of decorative woodwork.*





Far left: View of an aisle in the mosque.

Left: Detail of the marvellous zellige tilework found in the complex.

Left, below: Stained glass in the sculpted screens of the qibla wall of the mosque.

Left, bottom: Detail of the minbar in the mosque.

