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The editorial cartoon is by Robert Leonard Miller, an architect who contributes frequently to architectural journals. He currently works in Washington D.C.

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Fascinating things are happening architecturally in Morocco these days, in spite of the gloom in building generally as a result of the international economic situation. There is much activity and discussion surrounding official recognition of the architect's profession. Mr. Mohammed Cheha, for instance, this year, and subsequent negotiations between representatives of the profession and the government on new legislation declaring the role of the architect in Moroccan society.

The personalities and institutions that have become involved in the architectural debate in the country are as intriguing as the quality of what is actually being produced today. His Majesty King Hassane II set the tone in January, 1986 by addressing an assembly of architects invited to the royal palace in Marrakesh — a speech comparable to several previous ones he has made in recent years, the specific content of which spells out the parameters for future architectural development. In addition, architecture and urban planning are now administratively under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior (including the teaching of these subjects), although Habitat has remained a separate ministry. Reorganisation and decentralisation of the existing Order of Moroccan Architects has followed, and architecture has even been featured in front-page articles in national daily newspapers (see L'Opinion, week of 27 June 1986). Finally, it is noteworthy that the new faculty of architecture in Rabat (E.N.A.) created in 1983, graduated its first group of students a few months ago.

Such effectiveness is indeed a significant expression of public interest and concern in a country with some 800 registered architects, the majority in private practice, however, approximately 300 of these have jobs in various public administrations, many as part of their national service obligations. In spite, this latter system is well founded: knowledge and experience gained in the public sector, on the sale of administrations as clients, allows young architects to perceive the country's needs for housing, schools, institutional buildings, and to comprehend the resources, limitations, and procedures of governmental commissions from the inside. On the negative side, as everywhere they may not be given a chance in such a short, and 3-year period to exercise their design capabilities on behalf of the administration, and may even find themselves doing tasks not directly related to their previous training. Yet, this must be said that much of the lively, positive debate in Morocco focussed on architecture and planning is due to high-level policy-makers stimulating, inciting the profession to become maximally, responsibly involved.

Situated on the northwest shores of the African continent, and the western periphery of the Muslim world, Morocco has a long and rich Islamic cultural heritage (see the guide to Rabat in this issue). Within its present borders the country is composed of quite diverse geographical regions, from temperate climate and rich soil along the coastal area, to arid steppes and high mountainous valleys. Benefiting from a wide cross-section of ethnic and tribal groups over the centuries, Arabs, Berbers, Hebrews, who have imposed their cultural environment under these geographical conditions, there has arisen several distinct forms of architecture in different regions.

Apart from these regional vernacular traditions, this country can rightly claim to possess one of the greatest and best-preserved legacies of monumental and palatial Muslim architecture in the world. Much of this legacy has been recorded and published over the years (see Andre Paccard, Le Maroc et l'Artisanat traditionnel Islamique dans l'Architecture reviewed in MIMAR 2) and has, over the last decade, been the source of imitation and, more rarely, inspiration in new designs. Madras, or master-builders, from Morocco have been greatly respected and sought after elsewhere in the world for centuries, particularly in Africa and the Middle East. Above all it is the refined decorative work, whether in mosaic, tile, marquetry, wood or stone, for which these craftsmen are the most renowned.

Attempts are being made to reintegrate traditional materials and methods into modern architectural designs (see article by Mr. Mohammed Cheha in this issue), occasionally with truly debatable results. So unique to Morocco are some of the techniques and decorative patterns, those based upon zellij tiles for example, that it has even been suggested these constitute a basis for a national style of architecture today. This is not the thesis of Mr. Cheha, nor of very many architects, who point out that traditional crafts can only be meaningfully included in a contemporary architectural language when there is understanding and participation between architects and craftsmen right from the outset of design conception. However, a major obstacle to achieving such a collaboration is the limited number of artisans capable of executing the highest quality workmanship, hence, their contribution becomes expensive.

Among the innovative efforts to reintroduce spatial and decorative principles of traditional Moroccan building to contemporary programmes, the work of architect Abdulrahim Sjellma is exemplary. Steeped in the tenets of modern architecture in the West from this training in France, Sjellma's work over the years since his return to practice in Casablanca shows a subtle incorporation of elements from his own culture the central (covered) courtyard garden in the plan of his brother's house for example, and the arrangement of typically Moroccan sitting rooms and sleeping areas around the window, proportions and some of the detailing of the Fez Bus Station recall, but on a relatively secondary level, monumental buildings of the past. his work in Marrakesh represents the aspirations of the former colonial new town, to down to predominant blues, without resorting to superficial 'Moroccanisation' in decor. A studio-house for the Moroccan painter Belkacem, and the construction in mud brick, at the client's request, and reimagined Sjellma's first experimentation with this material — although the architectural vocabulary retains a modern flavour. In such projects, Sjellma's answer is determinedly contemporary, searching for a convincing, restrained balance of modern sensitivity and traditional elements. One of the best synthetic statements of these goals this architect represents is in the competition design he did several years ago with a group of architects (Moumen Braideh, A. Lazzar, and others) calling themselves the Collectif d'Architecture, for the new National School of Architecture located in the city of Meknes. Their project won First Prize and was to be erected on an unique historic site near the old ramparts; unfortunately, no final decision on construction has been forthcoming. Among the most pressing problems in Morocco, as in most rapidly urbanising countries, is that of providing adequate amounts of low-cost housing to meet the demographical growth in the cities. Whereas only 30% of the Moroccan population lived in cities in the 1950s, today more than 45% do so, and nearly one-half of this figure are people crammed into the periphery—undeveloped, loosely conceived shelters around large cities like Casablanca. The government, acting through building societies such as the Credit Universel Immobilier (C.U.I.) and the Financement regional d'Aménagement et de Construction (E.R.A.C.), has endeavoured to meet some of these needs. Dar Lamane neighbourhood (see elsewhere in this issue) with its 4000 new housing units is an incredible cost of US100 per square metre is an impressive example of conceiving, financing and erecting mass housing on a vast scale. Parallel to such examples has been the activities of the E.R.A.C in different localities, of which the branch in Marrakesh has been among the most dynamic. In addition to finding new medium — and low-income housing built with conventional materials, vectors toward research into earth construction, practical in that region of the country, by commissioning several different architects to conceive and then oversee the achievement of experimental prototypes. By seeking to diversify the housing options (for example, stone or even wood in other regions) such public clients hope to develop appropriate alternatives to the purely conventional construction methods — taking into account of course the scale of any given operation. The examples of recent architecture in Morocco presented here constitute only a glimpse into a reality stretching there, but they are nonetheless a reasonably valid barometer of the climate, in terms of attitudes, trends, policies and debates. Few other countries of comparable size and wealth of tradition are doing as much in this realm — perhaps no others.

Editors
Expansion Building, Marrakesh

Project Data

Expansion Building Programme: Bank offices and 10 apartments.
Client: Banque Commerciale du Maroc.
Architect: A. Sijelnossi.
Floor surface: 2,740 square metres.
Cost: 4,726,000 Moroccan Dirhams.

The brief for this building contained two parts: to provide the required office space for the regional headquarters of the Banque Commerciale du Maroc, and to include ten, moderate-income class apartments for sale or rental.

Located in the commercial district of Marrakesh’s new town, dating from the early part of this century, the site has a complex form. It is situated at the point of a block facing an intersection of several streets and is hence rather narrow. Furthermore, the codes require that buildings on one of the streets have arcades, which added to the difficulty of finding a satisfactory geometrical solution.

In order to emphasise the public nature of the bank’s role, any feature which might evoke the notion of private apartment building has been played down or eliminated. Moreover, strong imagery and a sense of movement have been sought and developed. Thus, the end of the sidewalk arcade has been underlined by the round volume at the corner which rises through the whole height of the structure. This angle treatment is further dramatised by a kind of spiral beam that turns the corner of the building. In this way the whole is endowed with some of the quality of signpost or ‘cairn’ that was desired. The small cement brick facing of darkish red and the red-ochre tint given the reinforced concrete as it was treated during construction render it basically compatible with Marrakesh’s dominant colours yet give the building a character of its own.

Below: View of the main facade with arcades and corner column. Bank occupies only the two lower floors.
Right, above: View of the Expansion Building illustrating the volumetric treatment of corner site and the contrasting dark red and red-ochre materials.

Text and plans courtesy of the architect.
Photographs by Christian Lignon.
Upper storey plan showing layouts of some of the residential apartments.

Mezzanine level, overlooking the main lobby of the bank, for offices.

Ground floor plan showing the entrance to the bank (under the arcade) and the main hall. Entry to the apartments is on the opposite facade, next to garage ramp.
Left and above: Views of bank's main lobby and tellers' counters.

Left, below: Portion of the bank's main lobby occupying the cylindrical volume on the corner of the site.

Top: Main hall of the bank.

Right: Bank lobby seen from the entrance with offices for consultation.

Right, below: Waiting area outside mezzanine offices in the bank.
Left: Corridor on mezzanine level overlooking main lobby.
Left, below: Detail of round window in main lobby from mezzanine.
Sijelmassi House, Casablanca

Text and plan courtesy of the architect. Photographs by Brian Brace Taylor unless otherwise indicated.

This dwelling, for a family of four, makes use of a gentle incline on a site located near the sea to organise a series of spaces inspired by traditional plans but avowedly contemporary. It has a central, covered courtyard room garden space which separates reception and living rooms from sleeping quarters. The latter are situated on the higher part of the site to the east, while the living room, study, dining room, etc., are on the lower part, opening onto a small (outdoor) garden facing west.

Restrained, even austere in the architectural vocabulary that is employed, the house is nonetheless striking for the rigour of its proportions, handling of light, and sequence of linkage of spaces to one another.

Executed with conventional modern materials (i.e. reinforced concrete), it does integrate some locally-crafted elements, such as the wooden mashrabiya screens. Other objects of traditional origin testify to the client's reknown as an expert on Moroccan and Arab culture generally, and thus the house is a quite appropriate framework for these books and objects.

View from the seating area towards pool and pergola in the garden. The symmetry here recalls the traditional Moroccan riad.
Garden facade with pool and lattice-covered seating area. Ceramic bricks alternate with rough bricks for paving around pool.
Left, top: Central living room and fireplace/sitting area. To the right is the entrance vestibule, to the left, doorway to the covered courtyard with garden separating public areas from bedrooms. Photograph: M. Sijelnassi.

Left, above: Central living room and view towards the dining area (far distance). Between these are more private sitting rooms behind the mashrabiya.

Left: Private sitting area off the central living room.

Top: Passage way between two private sitting rooms off the living room. Photograph: M. Sijelnassi.

Above: View from corridor between two small sitting rooms across the living room and toward the library.
Left: Traditional divans around one of the small sitting rooms, with windows onto the garden.
Left, below: Corridor leading onto the dining room.
Bus Station, Fez

Project Data
Proposal for Central Bus Station, Fez, Morocco.
Programme: 34 bus platforms capable of handling 7,000 travellers per day, commercial facilities and mosqu.
Client: City Government of Fez.
Architect: A. Sijmenati.
Surface: 3,800 square metres.
Estimated cost: 14 million Moroccan Dirhams.

An abandoned rock quarry located just outside the Bab Mahrouk gateway to old Fez is the site for this project. The uniqueness of the site, which is by nature "disordered" in topographical character and physical morphology, contrasts with the strong architectural volumes placed within it. Conceived as monumental architecture befitting a public edifice such as a transportation centre, the proposed solution adopts an appropriate rhetoric:

- Rigorous geometrical forms which delineate "servant" from "served" spaces;
- Hypostyle main hall with heavy columns, yet with kiosks inside them at ground level;
- Large interior spaces covered with a rhythmic sequence of vaults and cupolas for the roof;
- Two-part rhythm of exterior porticoes;
- A composite order for the exterior porticoes (brick arches and concrete tie-beams).

While the building's morphology contrasts with the quarry, it approaches the surface characteristics of it nonetheless as the walls have an exterior surfacing of roughly-crafted brick whose colour adds in integrating the architecture with the site. This outer treatment also has the advantage of ensuring a satisfactory response to the aging process and it does not need exterior maintenance.

Apart from the four (vertical) exterior facades, we attempt to take into account the visual aspect of the building's terraces as seen from the road that passes above and behind the site. The bulbous form of the cupolas, the rhythms set up by the pyramid-like forms of glass, and the exterior coating of vaults and cupolas with ceramic rubble offers a "fifth" (horizontal) facade as one passes above the building and looks south towards Fez itself. This contrasts with the austere terraces just below, where the buses are stationed.

Location map showing the quarry site, the proposed bus station and its relationship to the city wall and site plan of the proposed terminal, with traffic patterns and parking for cars and buses.

Text and plans courtesy of the architect.
First floor plan. Note planters at this level between groups of columns.

Ground floor plan, showing main entrance (right) hall for passengers, mosque and access to platform. Note kiosks contained inside groupings of four columns.
Plan of roof, showing the form of skylights and open-air belvedere level accessible from the cafes below.
Main entrance facade.

Lateral facade of the terminal.

Rear facade.

Longitudinal sections through the terminal building.
Note skylights at the top of groups of columns.
The following is an article by Mr. Mohammed Cheeba, who is an artist as well as a dedicated public servant with responsibilities in the Moroccan Ministry of Crafts and Social Affairs. It was written for Al Omran, journal of the Moroccan Association of Architects, who generously gave MIMAR permission to publish it.
— Editors.

HOTEL ARCHITECTURE AND CRAFT PRODUCTION

The integration of craft production with new architecture generally, and the design of hotels particularly, for example, began in Morocco just after Independence, along two lines:
- The first attempts only involved selecting a certain number of accessories, either by the architect or builder, and then occasionally the introduction of materials such as zelliges, sculpted wood, or chiselled plasterwork;
- A second endeavour, initiated by a few modern architects, sought to integrate traditional arts, as well as contemporary forms of expression from Morocco, right from the very beginning of an architectural project. In this way there emerged a close collaboration between architects, craftsmen, and contemporary artists working in this country.

Among the earliest examples of this second kind of approach, the hotels by A. Farouq and P. Demazieres (see MIMAR 7, 1983) were, in my opinion, a demonstration of how an architectural design could be conceived in such a way as to incorporate both traditional and contemporary forms of art. In particular one might mention the Almoravides hotel in Marrakesh and the hotels in Alkala, Boulmane de Dades and Taouine.

These undertakings just mentioned did not immediately have any influence upon young Moroccan architects. In fact, the contrary has been the rule, with the "folkloric" trend in decoration being the one that continues to dominate in the majority of hotel designs.

What is missing today is a real understanding on the part of architects and their clients, be they public or private, of the necessity for integrating contemporary Moroccan craft industries with architectural design. Many developers and their architects misguided acquiesce to the often mediocre tastes of the average tourist. Thus, it is rare to see in any hotels crafted objects that truly represent the authenticity and creativity of Moroccan production. These objects are usually deformed, confused and give the impression that they were ordered by foreigners who were totally unfamiliar with the beauty of craftsmanship.

I believe that ultimately the only solution to this state of affairs is a close partnership, informed by sensitive dialogue, between the various parties involved in architectural projects.

The architect ought to have the humility to ask a craftsman his opinion of a given design, form and material in order to define more cogently the craft elements to be included. A similar modesty could guide the dialogue with contemporary artists involved in such projects.

One has an ideal opportunity each time that a tourist complex is begun to create an atmosphere which reflects the sensitivity and culture of Moroccans themselves. This is crucial, it seems to me, since tourist accommodations are places where cultural exchanges with foreigners can and do occur.

In the realm of preservation of historical sites there is still another opportunity to pursue the abovementioned objectives. Some sites undergoing restoration in fact lend themselves to integration with tourist facilities and are of particular interest for attaining our goals. Tourist facilities aid in financing, partially or totally, restoration work while at the same time bringing revitalisation to the rural or urban neighbourhood where the site or monument is located.

Promoters of this type of integrated endeavour are to be found, one hopes, in the appropriate sections of government agencies (cultural affairs, conservation of antiquities, Interior ministry) but also in local communities where they can and must exercise their role.

Every tourist complex integrated into a conservation/renovation project automatically and objectively entails aspects of considerable social significance, and such projects that have been undertaken abroad can inform and encourage the Moroccan efforts in this direction.

We should do everything possible to eliminate the practice of simply going to the bazaar and picking out decorative objects for finished buildings. It is time to find the practical means for establishing contacts between architects and craftsmen, and between these persons and the artists. To this end, the Moroccan Ministry of Crafts and Social Affairs has organised colloquia (most recently in August 1986) where one has sought to find a common language among the various participants. Although difficulties in communication exist, only a collective effort involving all three kinds of creativity can ultimately lead to establishing this common language.

It is obvious that the department of tourism should also set forth policies in a programme which attempts to integrate the necessary "cultural" dimension with an intelligent approach to tourism. Most tourists complain about a lack of activities available to them during their stay; hence, there is a clear need to address intelligently the question of culture, both on a physical level of providing hotel accommodations, and on the human level, i.e. diverse, organised perceptions of a given site which give genuine insights into a culture. By this we mean that exhibition halls, small local museums, and similar buildings might well be encouraged by tourism authorities along with the usual discotheques included by private developers. In sum, what is needed are coordinated policies and a collective dialogue among the interested parties.

Mohammed Cheeba
Hotel Tichka, Marrakesh

Project Data

Hotel Tichka, 146 rooms, 8 suites.
Architect: Charles Boccara
Client: Mr. Mehdi Aimarrah, Société Paradise.
Decoration: William Willis
Total Area: 14,600 square metres
Cost: US$55 million
Contractor: S.M.E.C.C. (Morocco)
Woodwork: Maatallah
Electricity: Bepal
Completion: 1986

The quality and force of an answer to a question very often depends upon the manner in which the question is formulated to begin with. Such was the case with the programme for the Tichka where the client Mehdi Aimarrah, a man of considerable taste, culture and experience, raised the following challenge: create spaces for reception and lodgings for travellers that would evoke qualities of being the guest of a Moroccan prince at the turn of the century.

Essentially, this involved carefully circumscribed or defined spaces of medium scale for the entrance hall, lobbies, Moroccan restaurant, and the bar. Each is rendered important and its character elaborated in a special way. Apart from attempting to create spaces that might be analogous in their atmosphere to late 19th-century Moroccan palaces, a fundamental desire was to avoid the "international hotel syndrome" where spaces have multiple activities crammed into them. They become characterless catchalls. Attention to the specificity of rooms for certain activities was also applied to the galleries and corridors for circulation.

While the scale and quality of the architectural solution was a primordial consideration, the task of rendering the whole "home-like" (in a princely fashion, of course) was greatly facilitated by the expertise and taste in decoration of Mr. Bill Willis. His sense of colours, materials, lighting, etc., contributes to the air of richness and pageantry present in the hotel, achieved quite often with only modest investment.

Below: Entrance esplanade of the hotel.
Bottom: West facade of the hotel.
Bottom, left: Detail of the projecting extension of the salon in the Pasha's suite of the hotel.
Right: View of the garden facade and pool.

Text and plan-section courtesy of the architect.
Photographs by Brian Brace Taylor.
Left and above: Detail of the main sitting room (lobby) looking outwards toward the pool. It is a double-height space with seating alcoves at the mezzanine level.

Right: View of main sitting room and mezzanine-level salons which have greater privacy.
Left: View from the main sitting area through the bar to the dining room.
Above and right: Views of the dining room.
Below, right: Detail view of the bar.
Below, far right: Corridor leading to the restaurant with traditional Moroccan cuisine.
Above and left: Double-height space (lounge) around which rooms are arranged.
Foissac House, Marrakesh

Among the most recent experiments is this house in the Palmeraie, just outside Marrakesh, for a well-to-do French resident. Interestingly, this was not her first house of earth construction: another was designed and built for her some years ago in the same neighbourhood but by someone else. Having seen other structures by Elie Mouyal built over the last two years as part of practical and aesthetic research towards finishing an architectural degree, the client first commissioned construction of a gatehouse in which she now lives — on a new site with principal residence to be located nearby. The gatehouse, which contains a living room with library, bedroom with bath, and kitchen all arranged around a central courtyard (open to the garden on the fourth side), also has a guestroom situated above the entrance passageway to the property.

The simplicity of the plan for the gatehouse does not convey the variety and richness of effect obtained in covering the different volumes: cupola and barrel vaults employing several techniques. Not only do the spaces themselves each have their own physical character (some have surface rendering, others do not), but the quality of light also varies according to type and size of openings through walls that are 50 centimetres thick.

Multiple sources have influenced the conception, the stylistic references, and technical experiments exemplified in this and other recent constructions by Mr. Mouyal. Apart from the excitement elicited by the experiences described by Hassan Fathy in Egypt, there are traces of his appreciation of Hispano-mauresque architecture in Spain and of traditional earth architecture in Morocco itself. He considers his research as operative on two levels, that of evolving an aesthetic vocabulary for contemporary building and, that of evolving the techniques and manpower capable of making earth construction a viable alternative for construction in arid southern Morocco.

Success has been predicated upon several factors, not the least of which has been a client willing to accept a certain measure of experimentation. Also, the quality of lime clay found in the site (and in Marrakesh generally) provided the necessary basic ingredient for trials with adobe bricks for vaulting or pisé techniques for walls. A special press for making bricks by hand was perfected by Mouyal, based upon the CINVA-RAM. Furthermore, a number of local masons who already possessed a limited know-how in earth construction have been trained in a variety of new or improved techniques. In all, the efforts illustrated by this house, workshops, and others have attracted the attention of local authorities for application in low-cost housing, as well as the specialised centre in Grenoble, France, called Craterre, which is particularly interested in the educational dimension for training people elsewhere.

Exterior view of the gatehouse. Photograph: Christian Lignon.
Left, top: Elevation of the west facade (top), sections and elevation of portico (middle) and longitudinal section (bottom).
Left: Ground floor plan. At right, plan of guest room over entrance portico.
Left, below: Exterior of the gatehouse with the entrance in the distance.
Below: Entrance portico to the property with guest room above.
Bottom: Entry to the gatehouse.
Right, above: Patio with living room on the right and bedroom facing.
Right: Niche, covered with a half-cupola, for sitting in the patio. Corridor to kitchen is at left, and stairs to the roof at right.
Top: View of barrel-vaulted living room and entry vestibule (at far end).
Above: Raised sofa in the living room.
Right: Detail of apola over the bathroom.
Far right: Dorned bathroom and shower off the bedroom.
Above: Bedroom.
Left: Bedroom, showing chimney, traditional lamp and mud-brick barrel vaulting.
Mausoleum Mohammed V, Rabat

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 *mihrah*. 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. Maimoun Mohamed Ben Adelkrim was principally responsible for the interior decoration of all these 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 mosaics that is based upon a fixed number of geometrically-shaped pieces. The carpentry work 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.
For 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.
Reflections on the 1986 Aga Khan Awards for Architecture

The 1986 Aga Khan Awards for Architecture mark the end of three full award cycles and nearly ten years of intense, sustained efforts to encourage and to reward excellence in contemporary building in Muslim societies. This year’s results undoubtedly signify a turning point in the award-giving process itself, primarily because of the challenges to the profession raised by the Jury. A star-studded cast of jury-members, most of them professional architects themselves, abdicated their responsibility to deal with the crucial issue of innovative design in a complex 20th century world.

Was it out of tenuity, ideological bias, or lack of consensus that brought them to decisions which, though fascinating in their own for the subjects dealt with, have perturbed more than one critic by what they left out of consideration. And, it took the Jury twenty-five pages of explanatory preamble to attempt to justify why they came (or did not come) to the selections they did. It is this written document that reveals the greatest number of inconsistencies, preconceptions and contradictory points of view on architecture and the profession in the real world today. Before trying to grasp the essence of this document, an understanding of how the 1986 winning projects fit into an overall picture of previous laureates may be gleaned from the schematic chart presented at the beginning of this essay.

An openness and flexibility characterises the procedures established for discovering worthy candidate-buildings, and for the attribution of awards by a different jury every three years. (A permanent staff is charged with information gathering and processing this prior to presentation to the jury). Hence, the 1980 Jury six years ago was not presented with a series of set categories (e.g. housing, public buildings, etc.) to fill; they were allowed - as others have been subsequently - to determine their own criteria for selection, within the framework of the basic aims and goals of the Aga Khan Award. As it was emphasised at the time, the 1980 awards were considered for the most part to exemplify a search in a direction that merited acknowledgment or encouragement. No one project, and there were fifteen, was singled out as representing the highest possible achievement in any one of the seven classifications (see above) they created for their own purposes. These were not, moreover, suggested or imposed as groupings in 1983 or 1986, yet they constitute an initial precedent and are general enough to provide us with an indication of the directions in thinking pursued by successive Aga Khan juries.

A multiplicity of awards then was justified with the following words: “We found our task a difficult one ... Muslim culture is slowly emerging from a long period of subjugation and neglect in which it had virtually lost its identity, its self-confidence, its very language ... The present is a period of transition ...” Of the seven headings, three of them had three winners each: Search for Consistency with Historical Context, Restoration, and Search for Contemporary Use of Traditional Language. Other categories had one or two prize-winners. In all 15 cases in 1980, professionals of one kind or another, architects, planners, or technicians were involved in the projects, and could be identified as having brought recent theory and technology to bear in solving a building task.

While no single theory, of architecture, of planning or of restoration, was given preeminence six years ago, all projects demonstrated the importance which the Jury attached to the role of tradition in formulating new “identity”, “self-confidence” and “language”. If there were no new doctrines premiated, the Jury discerned at least “searches”, which implies critical thinking. However, three of the 15 winning projects, the Halawa house, the Moipti clinic, and the building system applied in Senegal can be related to the theories and architectural production of Egyptian Hassan Fathy. And, the latter received a special award that same year from the Chairman of the Award Steering Committee (Chairman’s Award) for his lifetime contributions to the field. To this extent, a trend towards encouraging indigenous building (types, materials, systems) could be perceived, reinforced by the Indonesian Kampung and pesantren winners which depended heavily on community participation.

It can be said, purely for purposes of the present discussion, that this particular emphasis upon local models and resources, called “Search for Contemporary Use of Traditional Language”, gained further ground in the 1983 Awards when five of eleven projects fell into this grouping.

The most troublesome area for the 1980 Jury was that of a “Search for Innovation”. Watertowers in Kuwait and the hotel/conference centre in Mekkah were seen as representing attempts to assimilate new technology with existing traditions in a creative manner. From a theoretical point of view, one might say that reliance upon strictly indigenous sources had been superseded by efforts to innovate with traditional values and imagery in harmony with modern technical needs and resources. Sheherudin’s White Mosque from the 1983 Awards probably fits most adequately into the line of thinking “Search for Innovation,” and while one is tempted to state the Haj Air Terminal, Jeddah in the same category, it is our feeling that it comes closer to the criteria spelled out previously in “Search for Appropriate Building Systems”. Its at least partial replicability, in technical terms, has already been manifested elsewhere in that country and elsewhere in the region.

Once the relative distribution of winners within the grid formulated by the first Jury has become apparent, the purpose of our exercise should be clearer: to illustrate rather pointedly where the biggest gaps are to be found. Discounting the facile reproach that with only six winners this year it would be impossible to fill seven classifications, it should be noted that the 1986 Jury not only avoided the crucial subject of contemporary professional contributions but created a new “category” with distinctly “populist” overtones. While exercising its legitimate prerogatives, this Jury has confused architectural debate on historical, and above all theoretical levels for some time to come.

An award-taking exercise, like a diploma jury or a written examination in any other field, is an educational enterprise of the highest order, and should be interpreted as making an evaluation at a particular moment in time. The results should not be construed as being final, absolute, complete; but they ought rather to reflect what progress has been made to date. Unfortunately, one of the leitmotifs running through the 1986 Aga Khan Jury’s report is that Islamic societies are going through a “transitional” stage, are in a period of “crisis”, “dilemma” and continuous “transformation”. Such remarks, read in the light of the choice of winners, suggest that they are offered as an excuse for not grappling with the real problems of new architecture in urbanising, industrialising societies. Each award cycle should be an assessment of production at the time.

In addition, the repeated reference in the report to “external”, “Western”,
“foreign aid” elements as threatening cultural continuity in the whole of Asia and Africa seems to be the perennial ‘whipping boy’ trotted out to assuage guilty consciences in some sectors. We don’t live anymore in a world that is made up of isolated, polarised cultures — in spite of extremism in some parts — and the notion of “identity” (especially as relates to architecture) is pretty much of a ‘mixed bag’ of influences.

The personalities, architectural ambitions and ideological biases of individual jury members this year coloured the results in unexpected ways — yet now, with retrospect, not so surprisingly. The non-architects, caught in crossfire, seem to have succumbed to the professional architects’ ideological propensities and persuasive capacities. Similarly, one might surmise that the non-Muslims left it to the Muslim interpreters of the Faith to judge the importance or relevance of a given project to modern Islamic culture. On the other hand, all seemed to have joined hands to settle certain accounts with the “modern movement” (which means the West of course), something which is already “in the past”, not to say out of fashion, in most critical circles today. For example, they state in their report: “At the same time the Award Jury was aware that schemes might justify an award for quite different reasons. For instance, by serving as an example of the evolutionary process, or alternatively by serving as an example of a revolutionary process when appropriate. Throughout, the Jury placed emphasis in making its assessments on basic elemental architectural qualities, versus the oversimplified, bombastic, or ideological qualities that are sometimes lauded in contemporary and vernacular architecture alike. In making its judgement the Jury was concerned to note conflicting philosophies between the approach of the “modern movement”, which is often concerned with the search for a logical language of clarity and unity which might be universally applied, and the results of the continuing evolutionary process, which are frequently more concerned with diversity and vitality, with joy and engagement.”

Indeed, we are brought back again to a veiled excuse for not having picked a truly contemporary building.

It is perfectly logical within this line of reasoning to turn instead to buildings which express “naive vitality” and “truly celebrate devotion, contemplation or commemoration”, as the Jury did. What is ultimately most alarming, particularly in the case of the Bhong Mosque, is the ‘populist’ attitude subscribed to by some, but not all, jury members.

“The Award Jury felt that the quality of the Awards might be enhanced by producing a wide-ranging list of recommendations that takes into account the vitality of the “popular” movement in architecture. There is an architecture which is expressive beyond our rational logical understanding. One of the responsibilities of the Award Jury was not to impose but to be alert and observant to what is there. Given the range of achievements in the world it is important for everyone to learn to adjust his values to be able to experience the full benefits of creative variety in each country and region ... Architecture has a central role in creating and keeping alive a high level of taste. But this “popular” taste which is kept alive by the ingenious craftsman may have equal significance for future vitality in fine creative arts. In other words, there is a dualistic element of creativity in indigenous societies in the Third World that has tended to be eliminated by its Western-oriented component. Diversity is a necessary element for regeneration, reinterpretation and creation.”

‘Populism’ as a term has historically very specific origins and connotations, apart from general association with popular forms of expression born of a political movement in 19th-century America, its use today retains implications of rurality, conservatism and anti-intellectualism. Moreover, the anti-urban connotation of populist sentiments should not be forgotten.

In the 1983, an Aga Khan Award was attributed to a master mason for the construction of a mosque in Niouo, Mali; the 1986 jury has not only made a comparable award to the Niono Mosque (Yaama Mosque) but gone a step further, with the Bhong building: it is not simply traditional, vernacular architecture receiving recognition, it is glorifying a building conceived, and paid for, by a person lacking any pretensions of theoretical background in a society with architects, schools of architecture, and long, distinguished history of great building. That the patron at Bhong employed some of the best local craftsmen to execute parts of the building is beside the point; it is, a project which does little to advance the debate on architectural theory, economic and social dimensions of building in Pakistan, or even in the nebulous realm of popular taste. In the end, one must deduce that partisans on the Jury of certain ‘post-modern’ trends in international architecture combined forces with advocates of indigenous building materials and
A dissenting minority on the 1986 Jury has registered (in a separate report) their objections to the abovementioned trend, reflected in certain of the winning projects, and also expressed regret that some entries, such as the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Bangladesh, by Louis Kahn (see MIMAR 6), were set aside on a technicality. However, there was reportedly unanimity on the Jury for the one building by a contemporary architect that demonstrated excellence in adaptation to an existing historical context: the Social Security complex by Sedad Eldem, which dates from 1970. While it was an incontestably modern solution at the time it was conceived, and one which is highly respectful of the traditional buildings surrounding it, the sense of history and the theoretical tenets embodied in the building have been developed and applied elsewhere since then. The Jury skirted the issue of truly contemporary design innovation by focussing on what they termed a 'contextual' approach to new building but in a previous era.

The other modern complex among the six winners that had involvement by professional designers is the 4000 units of mass housing in Morocco: Dar Lamane, Casablanca. Responding to the Award Steering Committee’s statement that “It follows that the single most important criterion in assessing the viability of a scheme dealing with the problem of mass housing for the poor is its replicability on a sufficiently large scale,” the Jury has cited this project more for the technical, economic and organisational planning of those responsible for achieving Dar Lamane than for the excellence of the design. Again skating close to the edge of populist attitudes, the Jury Citation reads:

“The developing aesthetic of the project can be observed in the vital activity from within, even if the visual aspect which is an outcome of the construction process has not yet found its definitive expression. It will be the product of the people who inhabit it because it has been conceived as an open system.”

In other words, the people’s subsequent treatment of the houses will determine (or not) whether the Jury was right...

For all their individual, and collective, merits, the 1986 winners leave us with a yearning — even more so than in previous years — to know the full range of nominees for this cycle, precisely because of the ‘voids’ in our retrospective chart. As far as building-types are concerned, where are the schools, universities, hospitals, factories, public administrations, or more rarely, the gardens and monuments of our time? Distinguished as this Jury has been in its composition of members, its deliberations and selections will undoubtedly prove to be a watershed: future juries will face the challenge (and meet it) of recovering contact with the mainstream of the profession in countries with significant Muslim populations, and their progressive efforts to forge a superior production based upon theoretical reflection encompassing traditional values and contemporary requirements.

Brian Bruce Taylor

The 1986 Master Jury was composed of the following individuals:

- Dorothea Panzer
- Abdel Wahed El-Wakil
- Suelynnoko
- Zaher-ul-den Khwaja
- Fumihiko Maki
- Hans Hollein
- Robert Venturi
- Mahdi Elmandjar
- Ronald Leacock
A Search for Excellence ...

The following critique on the 1986 Aga Khan Award winners is written by Sri Lankan architect and historian Shanti Jayawardenle who researched the projects, and the process by which winners were chosen, and offers her own appraisal of the results. Having placed the winners into groupings based on issues evolved by the Award Steering Committee in its written charge outlining its criteria to the Master Jury, she has chosen to focus on what she believes to be the main implications of this year’s Jury selection.

— Edsons

Contemporary Architectural Expression

Three of the six projects which received awards in 1986 might well be grouped together in a category tentatively called “a search for excellence in contemporary architectural expression”: the Bhong Mosque, the Yaama Mosque, and the Social Security complex. Essentially, they represent the outcome of a debate that arose during the Jury’s deliberations on this theme. Receiving an Aga Khan Award was not based upon each building’s having excelled in representing its own particular typology, but because each was considered to be a positive indicator in a search for excellence.

Although the debate arose with regard to aesthetics, the projects symbolise a greater depth of meaning than may be gathered simply by examining the images represented here. It is a pity that the Jury citations failed to draw together the threads of an argument that meanders through the Preamble to their selections. The Jury’s unwillingness to relate the citations to the debate in the Preamble, may possibly prove to be of disservice to the Award body and to those of the public who may seek to understand the Awards in greater depth. It seems, therefore, justifiable to try here to extract the main elements of the Jury’s argument for purposes of clarification. The debate is seminal, with wider consequences than may be foreseen at present.

The Jury is to be commended on the ultimately positive, though somewhat inarticulate and ambiguous profile it has chosen adopt on the question of aesthetics. The choices assigned to this category may at first glance appear pompous and euphemistic when judged against the images. Both conclusions would in my opinion be mistaken. The message of the Jury is far more serious than would appear at first reading; we may begin to explore the self-confessed contradictions and dilemmas that confronted this Jury in implicitly assigning projects to this category by examining an excerpt from its long Preamble:

“The Award Jury is aware of the danger of bringing to its task a uniformity of approach and taste. There should be no imposition of middle-class taste and style all over the world, but rather the acknowledgement of divergent tastes and styles, a situation which it feels has existed in all creative periods.”

It is instructive to note that the Jury has linked the question of style to that of social class. They further developed the notion of style related to class by suggesting that “popular” art, which may irritate sophisticated people, “can and often has been a source for high art, in the history of art”. The Jury claims that this “dualistic element of creativity in indigenous societies in the Third World has tended to be eliminated by its Western-orientated component”. These observations are for the best part disconnected, and equivocal, and require further exploration if one is to understand the significance of this cycle of Awards.

“High” art and “popular” art are categories which, at the risk of over-simplification, in historical terms refer principally to the distinction in the art produced for the ruling classes on the one hand, and by and for artisans and peasants on the other, during the long period of historical development which characterised feudalism the world over. “High” art is the product of refinement and distillation of both “popular” art and external influence, undertaken by its practitioners in the service of its patrons. Patrons of “high” art are usually the economically dominant social classes and the intelligentsia.

In pre-colonial societies, “high” art usually maintained a dynamic link with its principal source, “popular” art; further it absorbed and adapted external influence according to the dynamic of its internal needs and the mode of intervention of the external factor. Power relationships between socio-economic formations which exchange cultural information have thus determined the degree by which each formation may, or may not, protect and develop its independent artistic identity. The division of the globe into spheres of development and underdevelopment had its impact on art and architecture as well. The post-16th century, nascent, historical process of becoming underdeveloped meant that the “high” art of these regions was forced into an unsolicited intercourse with the art traditions; rulers arrived
with, or gradually acquired, a conquering conviction in the superiority of their own cultures. The fallacy of this conviction was never seriously challenged due to the power relationships of ruler and ruled, until the growth of the national liberation movements of the 19th century.

While this relationship has many historical antecedents, the critical difference in this instance was its involvement of the entire globe, with the resulting polarisation of developed and underdeveloped regions. The indigenous art of the subjugated area thus experienced varying degrees of mutation. After this time, there has not occurred a balanced exchange of artistic ideas between these two contending forces. The aesthetic bias of alien rulers and economically powerful (Western) nations began to usurp or to replace the traditions of "high" art, evolved over centuries, in those regions which they regarded as backward. Culturally and artistically a superior status was assigned to most things 'Western'. The present Jury believes that today, in the domain of architecture, this status quo is facing serious challenge "because nations in the Third World have begun to feel the need for architectures which express their own goals and identities".

Notwithstanding the previous observations, it is important to remember that, despite foreign occupation, many nations still retain a live tradition of popular indigenous art. Even though examples of a dying, indigenous "high" architecture are the chief targets of current conservation and restoration projects, the Jury has expressed its acute awareness of this wider implication of such work. The Jury has thus raised for debate, two fundamental theoretical issues in the history of architecture in the developing world. Firstly, at the international level, the relationship between art and the status of direct or indirect subjugation, of one nation by another; and secondly, the relationship between art and social class within one nation or socio-economic formation. The Jury has demonstrated its position vis-à-vis both of these theoretical issues, not through any serious research but by its debate, and through the projects it has chosen for awards. This applies, not only to the three projects discussed here but to all the awards made in this cycle.

The most far-reaching and profound impact of this Jury's choice in a national context, perhaps, lies in its implicit censure of those who claim to practise "high" architecture in the developing world. The awards imply the need for a critical reassessment of the practice of "high" architecture, where Western-oriented trends dominate and determine overall architectural character. The Jury has been careful to assert that this criticism does not imply a negation of what is modern, or advanced in terms of production or construction, by its inclusion of the Elders complex, which is architecturally subdued, dated, and yet sensitive to its indigenous urban context. And, is the sole representative of 'modern' aesthetics in this cycle. By omission the Jury has raised for discussion, though not elaborated, the role of foreign influence in the development of artistic identity. History has many examples which demonstrate how the subjugation of one social group by another can vitiate the art of the oppressed group; it has also demonstrated mutual artistic enrichment precipitated upon an exchange of ideas by equals. For these reasons, it is difficult to discern this Jury's attitude to foreign influence exemplified here, from being anything less than a comment, on the political and economic status of underdevelopment itself.

The Jury appears to advocate the earlier relationship between "high" art and "popular" art, but, it omits to discuss the historical reasons behind the dislocation of that relationship in the first place. We cannot simply 'wish away' the extended historical period during which the "high" art of the developing world succumbed most abjectly to external influence; nor can we escape its pressing legacy merely by offering fulsome praise of "popular" art. In order to overcome the cultural subservience of this period, and evolve new ways of going forward, it seems necessary that we should address ourselves first and foremost to understanding the processes that caused it; and moreover, we should try to comprehend why this debate is occurring today, despite the political freedom enjoyed by most of the Third World. The blatant absence of a parallel debate in the 'developed' world is revealing of itself and surely worthy of query.

The Jury continues in the Preamble by outlining its respect for the varying tastes evident in different cultures. It was unprepared to be associated with "sending messages" in any one direction, being keenly aware that the selections might be interpreted as such. This stance perhaps explains why there is no single 'message', no dominant aesthetic bias, to be read from the projects here attributed to the category of "Excellence in Contemporary Architectural Expression". The Jury no doubt is only too well aware that the omissions in this category may be interpreted as prejudice on their part if for no other reason than that the act of omission registers a violent and controversial break with prevailing ideological assumptions of style and taste worldwide. Although one may disagree with its views, the Jury's courage in standing implacably by its convictions and inviting approbation or as controversial an issue as demystifying style in architecture (by attempting moreover to discuss its material content), is indeed noteworthy.

None of this, however, should lead to the conclusion that the Jury abdicated its responsibility, or that the selections in this category are a mere gesture to whimsical folk art. It is certainly not fortuitous that these choices once again draw attention to that formidable patrimony of diversity and innovation which characterises indigenous art. The choices are not a travesty of excellence in architectural expression; they merely force home the truth that there can be no single, universally relevant criterion, or set of criteria, for assessing such excellence. Because the Jury believes that standards of excellence vary according to taste, which is, itself, historically determined and is class, culture and context specific, it has refrained from being associated with the right to champion any one aesthetic as superior to another in the vast area of the globe that came under its survey of Muslim architecture.

What they professed to do instead was to highlight trends and sources which may encourage the development of more relevant and sympathetic, formal architectural languages which might prove to be more meaningful to the populace in general, by relying less on foreign than on indigenous inspiration, and on public rather than private or elite tastes: "... the evolution of taste in societies that are transforming themselves should be a public affair" states the Jury's Preamble.

Since political independence, indigenous cultures have received varying degrees of revival and recognition by patrons of "high" art. It appears that the 1986 Jury has nonetheless an explicit, if multi-layered, message to convey via its choices (or lack of them) which are closely linked to questions of development and cultural renaissance. The Jury, by refusing to
agree upon a set of criteria for assessing excellence in contemporary architectural expression, has, on the one hand, declared the assessment of style in multiple cultures, by a single body, to be an invalid exercise; and, on the other hand, they have focussed on those areas which, it believes obstruct indigenous cultures from producing their own standards of architectural excellence, deriving from their own historical roots. The Jury asks for a redress of the imbalance between "high" art and "popular" art experienced since the 19th century, in those regions of the world which also, not by chance, embarked upon their long and difficult journey to underdevelopment around the same time.

The Jury did not end its commitment to the subject at this point. It expressed considerable concern for the processes governing the "evolution of taste" in specific contexts and made a plea for public awareness and debate of such issues in order to counteract what they believe to be, the present monopoly of taste enjoyed by those in power, be they architect or client. This democratic plea was reinforced by drawing attention to the process of public participation which it felt may prove to be a source from which "a better design culture might begin to crystallise". The provocative absence of any overt "modern movement" aesthetics (excluding the Eldem complex) in the six Awards and five Honourable Mentions in this cycle, is perhaps not unreasonable evidence in this regard.

Of the five Honourable Mentions only one bears inclusion in this category — the Said Naam Mosque, Jakarta, Indonesia. The form of this building only confirms the debate discussed above. The slight difference, if any, being that the modernity of this building is obvious, while the modernity of the Bhong Mosque, for example, cannot be read immediately or simply by examining its form alone. Though both buildings are mosques, the common denominator for purposes of this classification has been the forms adopted for containing similar activities, as confirmed by the Jury citation:

"The design responds to the customs, creeds and climate of the region, drawing on local examples for roof forms and structural components."

Public Housing
It is inspiring and encouraging to note that public housing has finally been deemed worthy of an award for architecture. It registers a widening of the scope of the Award's perspective on architecture and will doubtlessly be welcome by many practitioners the world over. The Jury has selected only one scheme for awards in this category. One of the five Honourable Mentions, the Shushtar New Town, Iran, may also be assigned here. Both projects fall within the Jury's parameters of assessment, for the reasons to be discussed.

The Jury records in the Preamble its reservations with regard to mass housing programmes, initiated by agencies operating from abroad; especially due to their "...misjudgement of the priorities of the local population. In particular, the introduction of alien forms and materials of construction was a major cause of the rejection of the scheme by the people, because of adverse formal associations they felt that the houses produced had nothing to do with their culture".

Dar Lamane was locally inspired, designed, managed and constructed, using local labour and materials. It has been commended on its low cost and sensitive planning, which has affinities to traditional Moroccan patterns of urban design. It is useful to understand how the planning of this scheme varies from, advances or disregards modern Arabising tendencies of urban design, initiated as early as 1917 by Laprade, Cadet and Brion. The most obvious departure of course, is the colonial inspiration of the former, whose response to traditional habitat has been criticised as an attempt to break all the organic links that kept an architectural tradition alive. We hope, that the differences between the two approaches and the lessons to be learned, may be shared with other Third World designers, in a spirit of mutual respect and exchange.

It is strange and inexplicable that the Jury's comments on the aesthetics of this scheme are at best, naive and romantic. "The visual aspect which is an outcome of the construction process has not yet found definitive expression. It will be the product of the people who inhabit it". This observation is rather difficult to digest, especially since, the 4000 units were built and in occupation by 1983. There are several unanswered questions about this project, but undeniably, it is worthy of an award, even if its only merit was that, it reached its targeted low income occupants in the incredibly short time of thirty months. A formidable achievement, with far reaching benefits to very large numbers of people.

Conservation and Restoration
The Jury selected two projects for awards in this third category. The award for the old town of Mostar, Yugoslavia, being made for the remarkably conceived and realised conservation of the entire sixteenth-century centre of this historic town. The Al Aspa award was given for the high quality of the conservation work done on the mosque and the Haram al Sharif area.

It does not consider conservation and restoration as acts of nostalgia or sentiment. The need for such work and presumably, the priority accorded it, is seen as an "intelligent assessment of the state of civilisation". Ignoring the obviously wide generalisation inherent in such a remark, it may be considered the Jury's way of distancing themselves from accusations of over indulgence in history and past glories.

The preoccupation with the need to evolve a better design culture in the Third World is premised upon the belief that this requires a greater understanding and reassessment of tradition than is practised at present. "The reassessment of traditional values in modern contexts and in ways that respond to modern challenges is something that goes beyond questions of architectural aesthetics and functions, and becomes a key role in the professional ethics of the architect." Traditional values and cultural continuity in a contemporary building context can be developed only by examining the history of building in the various regions under consideration. Therefore, every effort of sensitive and dedicated conservation or restoration, is of inestimable value for guiding future trends of architecture in the Third World.

Special to these two projects, is the degree of community control and local, as opposed to foreign, inspiration evidenced, factors which no doubt operated as important indices in the selections. The Jury's consistent emphasis throughout the Preamble, on the need for a dynamic relationship between past and present is fulfilled in these two examples, which are living storehouses of historical data, and are simultaneously a part of the organic fabric of daily life of the communities they serve. They have the potential to inspire and encourage respect for the indigenous and local, and thus have a vital contribution to make towards evolving meaningful directions in contemporary architecture.

Shanti Jayewardene
Bhong Mosque
Pakistan, 1930-1982.

"... the Jury wished to make an acknowledgement of the diversity that enriches society. "Popular" buildings might be a little different from buildings derived from indigenous craftsmanship. The populace might love them, and, therefore, they have an immense significance for ordinary people — in spite of the fact that architects might hate them. Bhong represents a monumental achievement in these terms. It enshrines and epitomises the "popular" taste in Pakistan with all its vigour, pride, tension and sentiments. Its use — and misuse — of signs and symbols express appropriate growing pains in transition, and yet may prove significant for the future." — Master Jury

Top: General view of the large main mosque (background), with the smaller, older (now women’s) mosque and library in foreground.
Above: View of the main mosque and its courtyard from the roof of the small mosque.

Right, above: One of the entrance gates to the Bhong mosque. Note the use of industrially-produced tiles over large surfaces.
For right, above: Main gateway to the mosque compound from the gardens to the north. Main mosque is at the right, smaller mosque and library to the left.
Right: Porch and main entrance to the mosque itself. Literally every centimetre of the facade’s surface has received some form of decorative motif.
For right: Interior of the main mosque, with view of the mihrab, at Bhong.
Above: Site plan of the Bhow mosque complex.
Right: Plan of the large and small mosques library, 
and entrance gate to the Bhow complex.
Below: Section of the mosque.
Left: Detail of one of the minarets of the small women’s mosque. Tiles of every nature have been utilised.
Left below: Principal portico entrance to the mosque compound from the markets of the village.
Above: A local craftsman at Bhong elaborates a decorative motif in wood.
Below: Detail of the wooden door frames inlaid with mother-of-pearl on the entrance to the mosque.
Centre: Hand-painted tiles used as surface decoration. Craftsmen of this region, near Multan, are famous for their tilework.
Bottom: Machine-produced tiles are also widely employed in the Bhong mosque.
Social Security Complex

“A most significant building in terms of its inherent architectural quality and its particular sensitivity to urban context... This building must be one of the earliest and most refined examples of contextual architecture in the international modern movement — its modulated forms, its scale and rhythms and proportions — deriving as much from its exterior setting as from its interior determinants.”
— Master Jury

Project Data
Structural Engineer: Erdal Eksant, Orhan Gunay.
Constructor: Ismet Elbirik.
Site Area: 3,537 square metres.
Built-up Area: 10,163 square metres.
Cost: No accurate cost data appears to exist.
The value of the building at present is estimated at 10 million Turkish lira.
History: The site lies in the heart of an area characterised by buildings from the Byzantine and Ottoman periods, as well as 18th and 19th century wooden houses, amidst 20th century boulevards and commercial complexes. 20th century building by developers was replacing the slum areas of the region, with jerry built tenement blocks. The architect’s objective was to make a profound statement about urban form in the midst of a historic site, succumbing to bulldozers and concrete blocks. The complex consists of a six-storey office block, a four-storey clinic, a three-storey bank and restaurant block and double storey shops and cafes, tied to the surrounding urban fabric by the use of shopping arcades and courtyards.
Construction: The structural system is a reinforced concrete frame with block infill and concrete floor slabs, typifying the building system employed for structures of this height, in the Istanbul of its day. Construction method was labour intensive and finishes were of a high order. The building services were observed as not being particularly innovative, except for the central heating system which was ahead of its time.

Right, above: Overall view of the Social Security complex which, although overly modern, is carefully integrated into the existing urban fabric of ancient Istanbul.
Right: Site plan showing the buildings’ position in the neighborhood, and roof plan revealing the arrangement of different volumes on the site.
Elevation on the large boulevard.

Longitudinal section.

First floor plan.

Left: View from the narrow older street that passes behind the complex of buildings.
Below: Corner detail illustrating the variety of materials employed (reinforced concrete, different colours of brick, etc.) and the articulation of structural and infill elements.
Left: Detail of the main façade of the buildings, or 'pavilions' as they appear in the context of older structures in Istanbul's urban tissue.

Below, left: Detail of the buildings on the site, with the pedestrian passageway (top of the stairs) visible between the different pavilions.

Above: View of the complex from the angle of the site. The passageway located between the pavilions begins with the stairs to the right in the photograph.

Below: Detail of a façade on an upper level. Each floor is cantilevered out slightly above the lower floor.

Bottom: Interior of the cafeteria.
Yaama Mosque
Niger, 1963-1982

"There is a manifest will to use traditional techniques in a creative manner, to experiment with them and to achieve results that induce a new awareness of their possibilities."
— Master Jury

Project Data

Client: The religious community of Yaama.
Master reason: Fadil Ramoun, Yaama.
History: In 1963 the village men decided to build a Friday mosque in Yaama, which until then only had small neighborhood mosques. Having defined the characteristics of the future edifice, the community appointed a local mason/farmer Fadil Ramoun, to erect a mosque on the present site during the next dry season. The original edifice was then expanded and embellished in 1978 with an arch-supported roof and dome. Corner towers, which activate a transept-like gallery were added over the period 1978-80.
Site area: 567 square meters.
Built-up area: 500 square meters.
Cost: The building was financed by the village community in a traditional way, with payments often made in kind so that conventional cash transactions are not possible.
Construction: The structure is primarily of red brick, which was used for exterior walls and the interior columns of this hyperbolic building. Originally, the roof was composed entirely of wood beams and mortaring covered with earth; then, arches made of bundles of sticks, bamboo and straw were covered with mud or cement-admixed mortar, were created as well as a dome over the central section of the mosque. Lime wash is employed in some instances. Decorative mortar and, in some cases, the structural solutions used in the second and third building campaigns are the results of the master's pilgrimage to Mecca (which took place in 1978) and the various styles he observed during.

North-south longitudinal section.

Ground floor plan. Towers and gallery on the north built in 1978-80, on the south in 1980-82.

Site plan of the mosque in the village of Yaama, Niger.

Far left: East facade of the mosque, with the minarets (right) and the two southwest corner towers (left). The differences in surface finish are the result of recent cementing with mud and straw mortar. Left: View of the roof facing east, with the central dome and minarets tower (in right) and northern tower (left). Yaama village can be seen in the distance. Below: View of the minarets during prayers. The effect of the architectural space has been likened to "entering a slightly lit forest of unusually elegant columns from which the arches spread like branches."
Left: View into the dome constructed upon arches of wooden branches bent and covered with mud mortar.
Left, below: Detail of one of the facades and entrances to the mosque. Note the decorative patterns on the wall surface.
Above: Photograph of the kind of straw and mud bricks, dried in the sun, used in constructing the mosque.
Below: Drawing of the Yasama Mosque by the architect-builder himself.
Dar Lamane Housing Complex

“It represents a successful example of housing low-income families with great cohesion and character ... Public space has thus been integrated within the domain of housing in a harmonious manner which respects the cultural needs and aspirations of the population ... It proves that a proper mobilisation of the creative, social, cultural and economic resources can provide a workable answer to the challenge of housing-low income groups in an urban context.”

— Master Jury

Project Data

Client: Compagnie Generale Immobiliere, Rabat.
Architects: Ademoun Chron and Aziz Lazrek, Casablanca.
Consultants: Promocas and Casablanca, commissioned to undertake co-ordination and project management with a decision-making model aided by computer.
Site Area: 37 hectares.
Built-up Area: 285,000 square metres.
Cost: 420,000,000 dirhams (US$100 per square metre). On a comparative basis it is claimed that the cost of 800 dirhams per square metre at Dar Lamane is 5-10 times lower than parallel middle-income housing costs.

History: At the time of construction, Dar Lamane was the largest single public housing project ever attempted in Morocco. The client was a wholly government funded body for whom the project was a learning experience with replication potential. The site was an abandoned stone quarry in the industrial district of Casablanca and was acquired by the client in 1979. It was prepared for construction in late 1980. The proposed objective of constructing 4,000 housing units and ancillary facilities for low-income families, in less than thirty months, was achieved in 1983. All units were sold and are now occupied by low-income families from the population targeted by the project.

Construction: Reinforced concrete is the chief structural material used for foundations, columns, beams and load bearing walls. Infill materials are concrete blocks and bricks. Plaster and paint were used on the exterior. Glazed tiles and terracotta were employed for decorative purposes. Construction technique was in-situ with pre-fabricated walls, beams and staircases.

Right, above: View of the main plaza from the mosque. Casablanca’s industrial area is seen in the distance.
Right: Aerial view of the entire Dar Lamane housing development. (Courtesy of the client.)
Site plan of the 4,000 unit housing complex. Six clusters are located around the main plaza.

Top: Detail of apartment units and ground floor shops on the main plaza, next to the mosque. Above: Arcades surrounding the main plaza with the mosque in the distance.

Below: Festivities in Dar Lamane's streets prior to a wedding ceremony. The bride's gifts are displayed on a horse-drawn cart for the neighbors to admire.

Partial plan at ground level of one sector, showing separation of pedestrian and vehicular movement, a hammam, and various apartment types.
Left: View of the esplanade next to the mosque.
Above: Small 'Festival' Hall for reunions and community activities.
Left, below: A pedestrian way between two rows of dwellings. Note the privatization of garden spaces next to entrances.
Below: Rooms from two different apartments span a roadway in a few instances.
Bottom: Interior of an apartment, showing modifications made by inhabitants who have here added 'traditional' style mouldings in the sitting room.
Conservation of Mostar Old Town

"The award is made for the remarkably conceived and realised conservation of the entire sixteenth-century centre of this town."
— Master Jury
Above: View of the celebrated old bridge in Mostar.
Right: Detail of the porch with the new roof of the
Hadzic Mehmed Karadzic Beg Mosque; in
Mostar.
Below: Major rebuilding of some houses and work-
dshops involved replacing the stone roof tiles with
new ones.
Below, right: Detail view of renovated row of
shops and craft ateliers.
Bottom: Detail of the interior of a restored wooden
ceiling.
Restoration of the Al Aqsa Mosque
Al Haram al-Sharif, Jerusalem, 1983–

Project Data

Client: Al Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock Restoration Committee.
Architect: Ismail Artusi, Jerusalem.
Consultants: ICCROM, International Centre for the study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property.
Site Area: 140,000 square metres (area of Haram is one sixth area of the old city).

History: The current restoration of the Al Aqsa Mosque and the Haram complex in old Jerusalem is the most recent in a series of restorations that date back to the 12th century. The mosque was built in 711 A.D. and suffered from earthquake damage on several occasions. Restoration of the dome and other parts of the mosque is part of a significant, comprehensive programme to renovate and revitalise the entire Al Haram al-Sharif area.

Although 20th-century restorations were made during the British mandate by Turkish architects and then by Egyptian engineers in the 1950’s, much of the work is now believed to have seriously altered the character of the dome and its decoration. The most acute damage, however, occurred during the explosions and fire in 1969. The basic aims of the present restoration programme are technical, aesthetic, cultural and political.

Construction: Work on the dome itself was accomplished in three phases; a) improvement and covering of the outer dome; b) restoration of the timber structure of the inner dome; c) restoration of paintings of the inner dome with other decorative elements of the drum. In the first phase, the outer dome covering of aluminium sheets over reinforced concrete which were damaged by the fire were replaced with the original covering material of lead. Secondly, the timber boards covering the timber ribs were damaged also by the fire and had to be replaced. The gaps between existing boards were caulked with twist made from vegetable fibres soaked in glue. New boards were fixed with brass screws to the ribs and seams were sealed with epoxy glue. In the third phase, conservation and restoration of the decorative features of the mosque was pursued. Consolidation and reattachment of preparatory layers of plaster, where the pictorial surface was missing, by means of a synthetic resin emulsion. Removal of painting and stucco that concealed the original decoration was then done, utilizing special paint-removing compounds. Pictorial reintegration entailed a complete and exact reconstruction using fine vertical lines to demarcate the original. Foreign and local technology and manpower were harmoniously combined in the restoration effort.

“The award is made for the high quality of the conservation work on this mosque and in the Haram al-Sharif generally.”
— Master Jury

Top: General view of the Al Haram al-Sharif area in Jerusalem. Al Aqsa Mosque is on the left, with its dome newly covered in lead, and the Dome of the Rock with its gilt dome on the right.
Above, left: Detail of the restored Al Aqsa dome covered in lead.
Above: Detail of the repair to the inner wooden dome of Al Aqsa. Cedar from Lebanon was employed, as it was originally.
Left: Section drawing of the restored dome on the Al Aqsa Mosque.
Top: Stone decoration being restored on the exterior of Al Aqsa.
Top right: Restoration of decorative panels in marble inside the mosque.
Above: Among the restoration undertaken, the leaded, coloured glass windows of the mosque were redecorated upon patterns by Turkish architect Kenan Uddin, from early in this century.
Right: An example of restored mosaic work in the mosque.
Below: Workshop where mosaicists are reconstituting new mosaic panels as part of the Al Aqsa restoration programme.
Below, right: The “trattreggio” technique employed in reintegrating painted wood decoration. This is used to distinguish the recent repainting from the original that did not need restoring.
Chairman’s Award

A special award known as the Chairman’s Award has been given to Rifat Chadirji. This recognition has been given once previously to Hassan Fathy in 1980. It is different from the rest of the awards in that it is given to an individual (instead of a building) for a lifetime contribution to the built environment. The award is made by the Aga Khan upon the unanimous recommendation of the Award’s Steering Committee. The citation reads:

To Rifat Chadirji, Iraqi architect, critic and teacher, for a lifetime dedicated to the search for an appropriate contemporary architectural expression that synthesizes valuable elements of a rich cultural heritage and key principles of architecture in the twentieth century.

The exemplary dedication and tenacity, the intellectual and personal integrity, and the constant concern for teaching and communicating that have characterised this intellectual and artistic journey of over thirty-five years deserve the world recognition and appreciation.

For the guiding principles of this search to produce an authentic regionalism are an important contribution to the universal cultural achievements of our age. They exemplify an openness to time and its imperatives, along with a deep appreciation of the Ancient, Islamic, and Arab cultural heritage of Iraq, generating a distinctive corpus of work, relevant well beyond the borders of Iraq, relevant wherever thinking architects practice.

Chadirji’s architecture reflects his attempt to reconcile contemporary social needs with new technology. The proposition that has guided his work since 1952 states that trade and international development have the tendency of creating a common base for today’s architecture which serves as a priori knowledge for a universal architecture which shuns local, regional or national architectural styles. On the other hand new building technologies are essential to the socio-economic and cultural evolution of developing countries, and since each era has its own constituents, each must beget its own forms. Chadirji’s perception of the need to use technology to ensure appropriate solutions to specific environmental locations has been to advocate what he has called “regional modernism”.

Besides, his actual works, it is his ideas and writings that convey the breadth of his thinking and contribution to “Architecture in Development”. Very different in nature and intent from the first Chairman’s Award winner, the choice of Rifat Chadirji, as recipient of this award, brings a worthy successor to Hassan Fathy, to international attention and recognition.
Bulletin
Architectural
Information

RABAT
Situated at the mouth of a slowly-flowing African river with traces of foam as it reaches the sea, are two magnificently white cities evoking the Thousand and One Nights: Rabat-el-Fath, or Camp of Victory, and Salé, of Barbary fame. Each reflects from its own side of the river — like two strophes of the same poem — a whiteness of terraces, of minarets, towers, walls, and their vast cemeteries like Brittany moors or carpets of grey stone strung out along the seashore. Farther up the river amid a reddish landscape stands a tall, square tower, also reddish, of a mosque long since disappeared. Still further is another city, or rather the ramparts of a ruined fortress which is now only a dream, a vestige of stone among the orange trees. From white Rabat to white Salé, above the large estuary, the solitary tower and the mysterious Chella, there is the slow flight of storks morning to evening, facing an invisible thread these three cities of Islam, thus entwined in a tight space of whiteness, greenery and water.

Quotation from Rabat ou les Heures Marocaines by Jérôme and Jean Tharaux, Librairie Plon, Paris.

* In the same series:
  - Monographs on Oriental Cities: Algiers, April 1984 (French)
  - Cairo, November, 1984 (English, French)
  - Beijing, October, 1983 (French) and March, 1986 (English)
Rising abruptly to a height of more than 30 metres above sea level, a steep cliff strategically overlooks the Bou-Regreg — just at the point where this river flows into the Atlantic Ocean. Centuries ago, the superior natural protection afforded by the site caught Abū al-Moumen’s eye and the founder of the Almohad dynasty had a fortress built here in 1150. This 12th-century construction, which had much in common with the Oudaia kasbah standing today, included a palace, a mosque and reservoirs filled by aqueducts from Ain Gheboufa. Abū al-Moumen’s settlement went by two names: Mehdya, in memory of Mehdī Ibīn Toumert, founder of the unitarian doctrine; and Ribat el-Fath, meaning Victory Camp, in honour of past military success over the Spaniards.

**RIBAT EL FATH**

Principally a stopover point for travellers between Marrakesh (capital of the empire) and the Straights of Magellan, this city was also a favourite royal residence for Abū al-Moumen where he died in 1163. Warring defenders of the Muslim faith often congregated here before going on to Spain and battle with the Christians. For them, it was a halt in their epic march along the jihād road to the straits, a route that passed through Al Ksar el-Khebīr and Al Ksar es-Séghir. This sacred plot of land neighboured, yet kept distinctly separate from, the city of Salé on the opposite bank of the Regreg River. In addition, it was easily accessible from both the north and south. Yet despite the site’s obvious assets, it wasn’t until the reign of Yacoub el-Mansour (1184–1199) that Ribat started to take on the guise of a supreme city.

**CITY WALLS**

Two long rectilinear walls meeting in an acute angle protected the city to the south and west, while the ocean and river provided natural defence along the northern and eastern boundaries. Within the enclosed 420-hectare area, a high plateau (which today overlooks Chellah) served as an optimum point from which to survey possible attacks on the city below. Cut into the western wall at fairly regular intervals were four gates: Bab al-Alou, Bab el-Had, Bab er-Rouah and a fourth which is today part of the Royal Palace. The southern wall was served by only one gate, Bab Zaer.

Typical of Almohad walls, this was a concrete construction, rich in lime and of exceptional solidity and resistance. Uniformly spaced, square towers were placed along the façade, and a walkway running along the top of the walls is hidden from view by a parapet of pyramid-shaped pinnacles. Bab er-Rouah and the gateway to the Kasbah have decoration of woven courses in a gable around a hipped arch inscribed in a rectangular frame. Like the Bab Aigaou in Marrakesh, large arches repeat and enlarge the arch of the gateway, surrounding it with a sinuous halo of sharp points; it is crowned by a wide frieze with Kufic inscriptions.†

†“In all the world, it is hard to find more beautiful doors than those in Morocco.” Henri Terrasse in “L’art hispano-mauresque des origines du XIIIe siècle.” Publications de l’Institut des Hautes Études marocaines, Tome XXV, Paris, Editions G. Van Oest, 1932, p. 298.

**HAZAN’S MOSQUE**

When Yacoub el-Mansour decided to build a monumentally proportioned mosque within the city walls, he chose as his site a plot of land to the northeast, which faced the sea and was about the same altitude as the kasbah. Although never completed, the mosque was one of the most important structures in the Muslim world. It covered an area of 2.5 hectares and was laid out in rigorous symmetry along a central axis, which lead in one direction to the mihrāb. At the other end of this axis sat the sumptuously decorated Tour Hassan. A minaret of imposing proportions, the Tour formed part of the northern façade and projected out into both the interior and exterior areas of the central courtyard.

Yacoub el-Mansour’s death in 1199 brought construction to a halt, leaving both the mosque and the minaret unfinished. Ribat el-Fath never attracted the numbers it was originally planned to accommodate, and centuries passed before the city of Ribat finally saw the area within its walls fill up with houses.

Though technically-speaking incomplete, certain essential characteristics of the city had been established and are still in evidence today. Throughout its history, Ribat has conveyed an impression of grandeur. The city’s five kilometres of solid wall and its imposing gates are structural elements which date back centuries and have always symbolised the importance of the almohade city. The same sense of majesty is evoked by the minaret and by the vestiges of the Hassān mosque, which today shares its sacred location with the Mohamed V mausoleum, a symbol of filial piety. Built in homage to the king buried within, the mausoleum boasts extraordinary decorative detail, which represented a renaissance in traditional artisanal crafts.

†“There is only one mosque larger within the Muslim world — Iraq’s Samarra mosque.” E. Levi-Provençal in “L’encyclopédie de l’Islam.”
14TH CENTURY VESTIGES

Rabat’s importance waned over the course of three centuries, from the end of the Almohad reign in the mid-13th century to the early 1600s, and only a small number of Mérinid structures from this period have been uncovered.

— The most important was the Chella necropolis, built near the river, on the site of an ancient Roman village beyond the Almohad wall. To reach the necropolis, one must pass through the elaborately decorated gate of a huge wall constructed by Sultan Aboù Hassan in 1339.

— Also originally built in the 14th century, Jamma el Kebir (The Great Mosque) was rebuilt in 1542 and stands today as the medina’s most important sanctuary. Serving as a landmark, its minaret can be seen from all points along the rue Souïfa, a main thoroughfare in the medina. Sultan Aboû Inan’s Hammam el-jid, near rue Sidi Fatih, was built during the same period as houses in the distant neighbourhood of the Great Mosque. The hammam was designed in the manner of Andalusian “Arabic baths (Murcia, Jerez, Grenada, etc.) and consists of a relaxation area and cold, warm and hot rooms, linearly arranged. This was an organisational pattern commonly found in Roman baths.

— There is reason to believe that during the Méridin period city life was not restricted to the area immediately surrounding the casbah, but was carried on in several of the medina’s neighbourhoods which still exist today. Rabat began the most colourful chapter in its history with the influx of Andalusian refugees in the 17th century. At the same time, on an urban-planning level, the city set down the core of a spatial organisation that would last essentially unchanged until the years of the French Protectorate.

SALE-LE-NEUF

An edict pronounced by King Philippe III in December 1609 drove the Spanish Muslims (Moriscos) out of the kingdoms of Grenada, Murcia and Andalusia as well as from the city of Huetah. Early in 1610 the evicted Huetaheros, joined by other Andalusian refugees, arrived on the right bank of the Regrag River. They settled in the casbah and staked out the northwestern corner of Almohade territory, protecting it with a new wall. Over the next few decades, Rabat (known in Europe as Sale-le-neuf) served as the seat of the small maritime republic of Bou Regreg. The Alouite invasion of 1666 brought this era to a close.

Sale-le-neuf’s regularly conducted raids of Christian ships became the city’s primary means of obtaining goods and supplies, and the republic grew to be the most important seaport in Morocco. As a local activity of utmost importance, the raids figured heavily in determining both a new layout of the city and the nature of fortification projects. In fact, the city was turned around so that its main seaport was at the point where the river met the ocean, an area that was extremely well protected by the casbah’s promontory. Other defensive measures taken included the construction of windows in the Almohade towers (to shoot canons through) and the plotting of embarkation/debarcation sites at regular intervals along the river. Finally, a wall built to the south ran from an area near the Bab-el-Had and connected the 12th-century façade with the cliff above the Regrag River. This rectilinear, 1400-metre long Andalusian wall was flanked by irregularly-shaped towers and included three gates — Bab Tben, El Bououbia and Bab Chellah.

1 Remnants of a fountain from méridian times and a hospital or médersa from the same period.

3 Though the legend of ‘Sale privatizers’ has come down through history, the expression is misleading as it suggests that the pirates were from the city that is today called Sale. It must be understood that in the 17th century no one called the city ‘Rabat,’ but rather ‘Sale-le-neuf’ or ‘le-vieux.’ In truth, the pirates were Moriscos from the left bank of the Regrag River, not citizens of Sale-le-veil. J. Caille, op.cit., p. 234.

4 In the 1930s, early years of the French Protectorate, Bab Tben was demolished along with a 100-metre long section of the Andalusian wall in order to construct a municipal market place.
THE MEDINA

The layout of the city’s 91 hectares was identical to the spatial organisation of the medina today. At that time, however, Rabat faced the maritime section of the river, an orientation which was reflected in the layout of the city’s urban fabric. Two main arteries, perpendicular to one another, dictated traffic patterns: starting at the casbah gate and following the river, rue des Consuls represents the economic centre of the city. This street is favoured by international concerns\(^1\) as well as local businesses involved in harbour activity. Three main thoroughfares run parallel to the rue des Consuls, each leading to a different gate in the Andalusian wall.

- Rue Souïqa connects Bab-el-Had with the rue des Consuls before continuing on to Bab-el-Bahr, or the sea gate. As the street’s name implies, the Great Mosque\(^2\) is located here along with linearly grouped boutiques housed by several different types of souks. Parallel to the rue Souïqa and forked at either end,\(^3\) rue Boug Roum cuts across the city from west to east, servicing centrally located residential districts which are organised around derbs (impasses). Although the organisation of the city was indeed determined by this grid, Rabat had nevertheless not developed fully inside of the Andalusian fortifications and, with the exception of the Merinid mosque, no monument had yet been constructed inside the ramparts.

1 Including French, English, Dutch, Swedish and Danish consuls, whose staff took part in negotiations and dealt with the release of prisoners.
2 Souïqa is the diminutive of souk.
3 Whence the name Bougroum, which means “two horns.”

RABAT: IMPERIAL RESIDENCE

In 1666, Alouït Dynasty founder Moulay er-rechid took possession of the Regret River estuary. Between this time and the beginning of the 20th century Rabat underwent radical change. Modifications in the medina’s urban fabric were negligible, but during the 18th and 19th centuries the construction of monuments and building extension brought to light an important aspect of the city — its role as the seat of an empire.

From the days of the first Alouït sovereigns until Moulay Sliman’s reign in the early 19th century, the city’s primary activity continued to be sea raids. Hence, the importance of the casbah, especially in its new role as a makken fortress, and of maritime defence structures dating from this time. It is also important to appreciate the implications of a palace and large mosque built by Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdallah in the late 18th century. The grandiose constructions, located in the southwestern Almohad area, are further proof of the high esteem in which sovereigns held Rabat.

The city’s new “royal face” became even more obvious under Moulay Sliman, who authorised the seaside construction of the Dar El Bhar palace\(^4\) and several sanctuaries, including a mosque bearing his name at the corner of Bousha and Souïqa streets. In addition, Moulay Sliman restored Bab El Had and Bab Chella and ordered the establishment of a melfah. This Jewish quarter at the medina’s far eastern end occupied land that had once been covered by the last orchards found within the Andalusian city limits. In addition, a 4300-metre long wall was built, probably at the beginning of the 19th century, which served to extend the Almohad territory’s southern boundary and followed the Atlantic Ocean to the west. The wall enclosed a total land area of more than 840 hectares.

In the second half of the 19th century, the memory of a small, previous imperial city was resurrected when Sidi Mohammed Ben Abd er-Rahman had a new palace built on the southwestern site of the old one. The sheer number of religious monuments dating from the Alouït dynasty (17th to 20th century) attests to their impressive architectural contribution to Rabat. The “new” Rabat appeared at the beginning of the 20th century, now taking the form of a single agglomeration. Most people still tended to live in the medina within the 17th-century Andalusian wall. But the imperial atmosphere, which would henceforth characterise the city, was created by monuments built in the space delimited by the 12th-century Almohad wall.

\(^1\) No longer extant.
\(^2\) “In 1906 Rabat counted six principal mosques, 33 secondary mosques and 12 zouacs, most of which were constructed in the days of the alaouite sovereigns.” Jacques Caillé, op.cit., p. 457.
ORGANISATIONAL PATTERNS WITHIN NEIGHBOURHOODS

Looking at a map of the medina, one notices a central zone surrounded by peripheral neighbourhoods to the west, north and east. The central zone is characterised by an irregular pattern of streets, lanes and derbs, and by residential blocks clustered around the large homes of local dignitaries. Peripheral neighbourhoods (El Gza, Sidi Fatih, El Aïou and the Mellah) are laid out along a central axis, on either side of which there is a regular pattern of parallel and perpendicular streets. This grid of streets divides the city into blocks with a depth of only two lots. Within city limits, residential areas are made up of variously sized neighbourhoods based on a development housing. In each neighbourhood, the daily life of the residents is facilitated by communally-shared services such as a bread oven, Koranic school, fountains, small businesses and, on a wider scale, a mosque, zooida and hammam. Even though Rabat’s medina isn’t physically separate from the rest of the city, it is marked by a distinct social cohesiveness (homma) that has grown up out of shared interests among the residents.1

Within each homma, derbs act as meeting areas for the medina residents. The derb’s structure evolves from a local dignitary’s home, situated at the extremity of a deadend street. On either side of the derb, often named after this presiding figure, houses are built for his relatives or clients. Fundamental in architectural treatment, such as scale, atmosphere and function, characterise the residential and main commercial districts. The paths of circulation which crisscross the bazaars are lined with structures that open onto the public space. Tiny streets and deadends in residential neighbourhoods, on the other hand, are characterised by blank walls of buildings constructed around inner courtyards. In this kind of organisation, the derb is in effect a kind of first-degree of separation between private residential life and the public thoroughfares. The scale drawing of the Bargach derb illustrates this type of grouping found generally throughout the urban fabric of Muslim Arab cities.2

1 Problems which might arise within the homma were settled by a committee of neighbourhood dignitaries, while issues regarding the city as a whole were the domain of public authorities (Pacha, Khâliifa, mouhtasib, caiff) assisted by “chefs de corps de métier and local dignitaries” … in “Régionisation spatiale et replacemen fonctionnel des médinas de Rabat-Salé” by A. Fadloullian and M. Belqací, published in “La revue de Géographie Marocaine,” n°5, 1981, p. 9.
THE R'BAT HOME

Architecturally speaking, each structure is comprised of residential units arranged around a courtyard, a central area which serves as the focal point of the overall ensemble of buildings. The finest homes are built around spacious central courtyards and often include two or three smaller courtyard areas, private gardens, a hammam, stables, a guest house, or servants' quarters. A good number of terraces in Rabat serve as menzahs.

Courtyards are often built around a central pool or with fountains along the walls, and generally bordered by a gallery whose architectural elements may be repeated, in whole or in part, on floors above. A Moorish influence characteristic of R'batie homes is especially apparent in decorative elements and their arrangement. Spanish motifs often adorn doorways and appear as well in sertwants, arcaded vestibules that lead to the inner courtyard.

The deep perspective generated in these hallways by the paving of marble squares, chiseled plaster and sculpted wood ceiling ends in a central panel of zellij tiles, chouwaf, which is greatly emphasized by the turn of the corridor. Stone benches line either side of the corridor and are separated by columns topped with pointed arches.

Moorish influences show up as well in the treatment of symmetrically-shaped inner courtyards, reflected in the pattern of openings. The superior quality of the marble, cut stone, sculpted plaster, wrought iron, and zellij covering the surfaces of the courtyard leave no question as to the importance of the role of the home. Furniture consists mainly of comfortable, pillow-strewn sofas placed around the circumference of each room. Moorish influence is quite noticeable in the rich silk embroidery work produced exclusively in Rabat. The unique patterns and colours of this embroidery bring the room's cushions, wall hangings and drapes into a wonderful harmony, which one finds as well in the trousseaux of Rabat brides, as seen on the cover.

1 Rabat's riads are much less frequented and less well-developed than those of either Fez or Marrakech.
2 Heads of households often receive late-afternoon guests in the menzah, an open-air area which affords a splendid panoramic view of the city, but also assures privacy from neighbours.
3 There is evidence that chouwaf appeared for the first time in late 18th-century and 19th-century homes. It is often topped by wood splayed in the form of a shell, a decoration which enhances the chouwaf.
With the establishment of the Protectorate in 1912, France’s official presence in Morocco brought about some major decisions and changes in land development and urbanisation.

Hubert Lyautey, resident general and Army chief, had the Moroccan capital transferred from Fez to Rabat. He also created a modern port south of Rabat in Casablanca, and built a city north of Rabat, which was called Port Lyautey (Kénitra) until Moroccan independence. These changes caused the country’s centre of gravity to move abruptly towards the Atlantic coast.¹

Lyautey invited urban specialists to Morocco to help plan new cities for the European population. He also drew up certain regulations to deal with new urban development. These included two priorities:

“the separation of European from indigenous Moroccan settlements”;² and the application of the most modern urban planning principles.

As Director of the Protectorate’s Architectural and Urban Services, Henri Prost³ oversaw the creation of ten new cities. Of these, Rabat is looked upon as his greatest achievement.⁴

Initially, the modern city of Rabat was constructed close to the encircling ramparts of the medina,⁵ and had an area about as large as it. New Rabat occupied gardens and orchards which were located inside the Almohad ramparts between the imperial Alavuit palace and the medina, as well as land inside and outside the Alavuit ramparts to the west — mostly destroyed in order to facilitate construction. In this zone, which is actually an area for normal extension of the medina, are a number of isolated ancient buildings and diverse monuments. Various historical monuments and a few ancient buildings can be found within this zone, which is actually an extension of the medina. Prost⁶ made a point to not only integrate, but to highlight these structural testimonies to the city’s past in his plans for the new downtown area and the major administrative and residential districts.

“First we selected those sites which we felt afforded the most characteristic and most panoramic vistas. Then, gardens were planted in the areas which first entered the viewer’s line of vision. We paid careful attention to visual relationships so as not to detract from magnificent perspectives such as one has when looking from the Tour Hassan out over the Bou

View of the main facade, Bank of Morocco.

View of the Post Office.

Master plan for the European settlement on the left bank of the Bou Regreg river.

Regreg River, from the Residencia over Rabat and Salé; from the municipal centre over the indigenous quarter of the city; and from the Aqueud platform over the city’s old walls.⁷

In general, the structure of the new city is based on east-west and north-south traffic patterns. The north-south axis serves to extend the medina’s main arteries into the European quarter, thus creating a unique harmony between the two urban entities.

As an extension of rue El Gza, avenue Dar El Maghzen (avenue Mohamed V) plays a symbolic role in the composition of the whole. In the first part of the street, near the Andalusian wall, one finds mainly apartment buildings and porticos. Then the street

Group of buildings with arcades along Avenue Mohamed V.
account necessary development of the medina, whose zone for extension was already appropriated, nor that of the city as a whole. “As it entered the decade of the 1930s, Rabat was not prepared for what was to come: industrial development and a mass migratory trend from the countryside.”

Fifty years later, half of the country’s urban dwellers lived in either Casablanca, Rabat or Kenitra. These three cities formed a coastal urban axis whose land area represented less than 1 percent of total Moroccan territory.

“The moral, economic and security factors aside, the Resident General’s motive behind this clear-cut separation was to preserve the rich heritage of Moroccan cities. Conservation of historic and religious monuments and picturesque old walls, it was hoped, would help keep alive a civilization that was 1000 years old. This autonomy would protect the traditional face of Morocco, which would in turn serve as a reference for new city development.” Henri Prost, “Le développement de l’urbanisme dans le Protectorat du Maroc” in “L’Urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays tropicaux. Communications et Rapports du Congrès International de 1931”. Edition Delaunay, Paris, 1932, p. 60. Note also the creation of a Fine Arts and Historic Monuments Service in 1912 whose role was the preservation of ancient architectural complexes.

In 1914, architect/urbanist Henri Prost arrived in Morocco, where he stayed for more than a decade as Lysette’s official urbanist. Prior to this appointment, he had won the Prix de Rome in 1902 and, in 1910, was a prize-winner in an international competition for the master plan of Antwerp, Belgium, a fortified city.


1 Rabat’s population in August 1913 totalled 33,620, of which 32,856 were Muslims. Cf. Maurice Renet Saint, in “En France Africaine” Pion-Nourrit et Cie, Imprimeurs-Éditeurs Paris, 1914, p. 310.

2 Among the architects associated with “L’Agence Prost” were: A. Lefevre, A. Laforge, J. Marrat, Leblanc, Rigollet, etc.


4 The railroad which crosses the city from east to west is almost entirely underground.


View of the garden façade of the Résidence Générale.

View of the Résidence Générale gardens.

Plan of the Résidence Générale and central administrative services.

becomes more visually impressive, widening to include a row of palm trees and lined by exceptionally well-conceived and exquisitely decorated structures. Public buildings for the most part, these include the Banque du Maroc, the main post office, the appellate court, the railroad station, and the Balima group, among others. Once past JAMS-Ex-Soanna, the street ends finally at the Avenue des Touregas, with the Résidence Générale and administrative quarters on one side and the Sultan’s palace on the other.

Although Prost must be admired for all the energy and talent he poured into achieving this urban harmony, the effect is limited nevertheless to the European section of the city. Prost’s plan neither took into...
THE HABOUS QUARTER IN RABAT

The Habous quarter is a neighbourhood which was built starting in 1923 to house Moroccan Muslims. Like the one designed first for Casablanca by the architect A. Laprade, it was conceived and executed by the French architects Cadet and Brion as an autonomous urban entity comprised of housing and public facilities. Located on Avenue Hassan II leading towards Casablanca, the quarter was divided into three sectors, linked together by a curved and landscaped street, rue Ibn Bajah. Houses along this street are set back from it with gardens, whereas houses on other streets or dead-end lanes are constructed up to the property line; these compose the main portion of the urban layout. All dwellings have an interior courtyard and are modelled on traditional homes: long, multifunctional rooms opening directly onto the court, service rooms (kitchen, WC) near the entrance. They have hardly been modified right up to the present, except that perhaps two-thirds of the courtyards have been covered with lightweight structures (glass and steel roofs, corrugated plastic) which allow one to furnish the interior courtyard while maintaining overhead light.

A mosque, a fondouk, and commercial spaces were achieved along the boulevard. The hammam and the local oven were located inside the neighbourhood. The Habous quarter is the only example in Rabat of residences conceived for Arab Muslims by a colonial architect. The houses have not been transformed very much and their architectural attributes have been adapted simply to the population’s way of life in Rabat.

THE MARASSA QUARTER

The Marassa neighbourhood was erected during the period between the two World Wars — at the same time the colonial city was rising — on land outside the medina’s walls, to the west near the Almohad ramparts of the 12th century.

View of a narrow street in the Habous quarter. Photograph: C. Wohlhuter.
Flanked on the north by both a Muslim and an ancient Christian cemetery, formerly opposite Bal el Alou, and on the southwest by the Jewish cemetery, the Marassa covers some 2 hectares. The land was not expropriated yet benefited because of its geographical location from the water mains, sewers, and electricity established by Prost’s master plan.

Thus, the houses that were constructed progressively by the owners of the orchards found there (three families residing in the Medina, including the Marassa family) or by new purchasers of lots sold at the time, began the nucleus of the future quarter. The size and shape of the blocks had already been determined by the street layout of the new colonial city. Whether it is modest houses or vast residences, their size (influenced by the arrangement of the blocks) nevertheless resembles the dimensions of houses in the Medina. The same applies to the disposition of different elements of houses in Marassa; combinations of a main house, with a kitchen and other separate facilities (hamman and storerooms), and interior gardens (riad) each having its own importance and own entry, are to be found. Each of the dwellings is centred around an interior courtyard and rises generally one or two storeys. On the first floor there is often a sala (large room). The arrangement of rooms on the ground floor, their characteristics and decor are also identical to those residences of the Medina.

The special nature of the Marassa quarter lies in the references to communitarian aspects of conception and of space-use at an urban scale (it included 200 households in 1971). Moreover, it is also perceptible in the semi-private collective services, by the presence of a small mosque, a Koranic school, a bread oven, grocery stores, etc. While it has these similarities with the Medina, Marassa is nonetheless different because of the historical dimensions of its creation.

Among these the most striking is the width of the streets and the numerous windows onto this public space, thereby allowing people to see into the houses. Another new quality is the use of reinforced cement for roof terraces. This type of covering is sometimes coupled with a false ceiling and exposed beams, which is normally associated with a reception room (ba el-khir). But the main result of using this technique is apparent in the inner courtyards where there are no longer any pillars or arcades. Such elements, previously employed to carry the weight of upstairs rooms, have disappeared because metal reinforcing has replaced the wood in roofing systems.

The fact that identical architectural principles in both the Medina and Marassa have endured, as well as such things as the integration of the blocks in another type of urban system, or the use of new techniques and materials, allows one to see the evolution of older architectural themes into viable entities, precisely because collective behaviour has adapted them to current needs. It is for this very reason that Marassa neighbourhood illustrates a dynamic social life: clients and builders alike are loyal to the traditions of housing in Rabat and they are willing to integrate and benefit from contemporary technology at the same time.
SPONTANEOUSLY BUILT PERIPHERAL HOUSING

SHANTYTOWNS AND ILLEGAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

By the 1930s the medinas had become so heavily populated that they could no longer accommodate the waves of migrants coming in from the country. Shantytowns, built in response to this rural exodus, can be looked upon as a sort of "underuse" to modern city development. The migratory trend from the country started to gain momentum after World War I and continued to grow following the Second World War. Fast-multiplying shantytowns sprung up in the urban areas, taking either the form of small, spontaneously built clusters of homes or of sizeable developments housing thousands of people. As the city grew steadily more urbanized, administrative action was taken to move more of the makeshift shantytowns to the outskirts of the city. Here, they would be developed into more sophisticated, permanent housing. Just this situation is illustrated by Douar Dom in Rabat which, after trying out scores of locations, finally found a permanent site in 1928 on the southwestern plateau of the Regrag River valley.

In general, shantytowns on the outskirts of cities are vast groups of houses built individually by their inhabitants with whatever means they can find, on unsuitable, unimproved and basically unsafe terrain. As a rule, a shantytown structure has a pitched roof and is based on a 2.5 x 5-metre room arrangement with others around a central courtyard.

Family plots of land average from 50 to 80 square metres, but this is subject to wide variation from town to town.

"Illegal" developments generally refer to insufficiently equipped masonry dwellings which have been contructed without the authorisation to allot property nor to build on it. Suburban landowners who divide up to sell their property do so without registering the transaction with the land office. The families which buy the land then proceed, without a permit, to build on plots not meant for construction. Middle and lower-income classes often become self-help builders or self-help producers and rely on small contractors to help them construct low-cost housing.

There are many reasons for this phenomenon, which is common among developing countries. The pressures caused by urban growth are among the severest causes.

At the outset, rapid urban development resulted in densely populated medinas. Then, between 1950 and 1970, shantytowns represented a major trend in urbanisation. Since that time, illegal housing construction has become a widespread response by a growing urban population. Ministerial departments concerned with the situation are anxious to integrate these illegal structures into the existing urban fabric. After reviewing the problems posed by these neighbourhods, as well as those specific to them, authorities have set out to improve housing conditions in areas of Rabat such as Douar Haja.

HOUSING POLICY SINCE MOROCCAN INDEPENDENCE

Since Morocco's independence, much attention has been focused on halting the spread of poor urban housing. But, in spite of the commendable efforts put forth by local authorities, only a relatively small step has been taken towards controlling the problem.

In 1973, mounting needs and dangerously slow urban and rural development finally forced the implementation of a five-year plan, which took a hard look at potential economic and social repercussions of the existing housing situation.

Henceforth, new measures were taken and plans enacted which took into account the different socio-economic conditions of families in need of housing. Among the most important responses to the problem was the creation of a Ministry of Housing, Urbanisation and Environment, a National Trust for the Purchase and Development of Land, and Regional Housing and Construction Offices. A three-year plan, drawn up in 1978, followed up and improved upon previous action taken to curb poor housing development. Most importantly, this phase introduced new intervention strategies which got to the heart of the shantytown and illegal housing situations. A new plan of action was implemented and carried out with the cooperation of international organisations such as I.B.R.D. and A.I.D.

How then did housing authorities try to discourage the marginalisation process of spontaneously built peripheral urban housing. Keeping relocation to a minimum, it was necessary to help the population legally obtain housing on already-occupied property or to assume that existing neighbourhoods were equipped with at least basic utilities, to make available technical assistance and self-help building loans for masonry construction, to build religious and socio-educational structures and to provide commercial zones as potential sources of employment.

Under the auspices of the World Bank, the first experimental application of this new strategy was carried out in an area south of Rabat, where 66,000 people live in the shantytowns of Douam, Haja and Madaid.

RABAT'S URBAN DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Rabat's Urban Development Plan or P.D.U. (Projet de Développement Urbain) addresses the overall situation created by spontaneously built peripheral urban housing, including that on the hillsides south of Rabat along the Regrag River valley in Douar Dom, Douar Madaid and Douar Haja. In 1978 the area counted nearly 12,000 housing units.

Douar Haja, a result of self-help construction, is a good example of the sort of spontaneously built projects which have arisen over the last few decades. The neighbourhood grew up out of necessity around private property holdings and lots bought by individuals. As the area developed, its residents directed their attention towards establishing mosques, hammams, bakeries, bread ovens, Koranscopes and other communal services for the neighbourhood.

The neighbourhood spreads out over a hillside serviced by an irrigation network which is laid out along the steepest inclines of the slope. Streets run parallel to one another, following the high curves of the hillside, and divide the land into rectangular blocks which accommodate numerous pairs of houses back to back.

One notes a striking homogeneity between the system of streets and the arrangement of land plots. The plots, each about eight to ten metres square, are systematically arranged in a repetitive pattern which gives rise to a manifestly rational urban character. Though constructions may have from three to five storeys, height remains uniform from one house to the next. Facades lined up along the streets achieve a remarkable continuity in the arrangement of their bay windows and first-floor ledges.

A uniform spatial organization within the homes starts with rooms grouped around a 20 to 30-square metre central area and continues this pattern at levels above the courtyard, which is really an open space covered partially by glass bricks which let sunlight through. A ten-by-five storey is common. Rooms out over the street increases their floor area. The vertical arrangement of these houses around an inner courtyard produces a regular pattern of windows in the structure's facade. These windows imply control of the sunlight in the main room, whose back windows and doors are always left open onto the courtyard.

As a rule, interior stairways leading to each floor are found on the street side of the building, the W.C. being located in the courtyard.

The renovations carried out in the neighbourhoods included repairing and improving utilities, increased and better commercial installations, self-renovation of homes by inhabitants with technical assistance, and the assumption of communal facilities. It was necessary to relocate nearly 900 families (mostly from Douar Dom) in neighbouring areas. The new building site, the "Butte," located between Douam and Haja and consists of dwellings which are able to evolve in structure. Each courtyard is separated from the others and consists of a main living room, corner kitchen and toilet, covering a total area of 60, 70 or 80 square metres. Within the project area, more than ten hectares were zoned for independent businesses in order to provide work for interested citizens.

At a cost of nearly 140 million dirhams, this pilot project represented the first involvement of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in Moroccan urban affairs. The project, carried on over the course of five years, met most of its original objectives. Thus, it was instrumental in redefining general policies of urban renewal as well as offering a solution to specific problems of housing in Rabat.

The findings of this experimental project were used as a basis for a large-scale improvement programme for spontaneously built peripheral housing. Major projects are currently underway in four other Moroccan cities.
Overall plan of Douar Hajja.

View of a street in Douar Hajja.

Plans and sections of houses in Douar Hajja. Drawings by ▲
A. Labib, B. Tourret, J. Velchart.

Courtyard of a house, Douar Hajja ▼ ▲ Douar Hajja.

General view of Douar Hajja.
From left to right and from bottom to top.

Bargach Palace: ceiling of the gallery around the courtyard.
House in derb Bargach.
House in derb Souissi: central fountain.
Decoration of entrances to houses.
Bargach Palace: a zellige panel with a geometric composition.
House in derb Pireu: inner courtyard.
Dar Hamidou Bennani: detail of a ceramic mural decoration.
Interior view of a room in the Marrakesh quarter.
Mohammed V's mausoleum: floral motif done with zellige tiles.