

Renata Holod

This volume contains the Proceedings of the second in a series of seminars which will precede the announcement of the first Aga Khan Award for Architecture. The general aim of the seminars is to review aspects of architectural transformations within the Islamic world, highlight specific problems and solutions to them, and develop the bases for criteria for the Award. The aim of the seminar held in the fall of 1978 in Istanbul was to focus on historic environments and to consider strategies which could ensure a future for those environments in the rapidly changing physical and social landscape. The nature of that future would most likely vary according to the initiatives and needs of each particular place. The underlying assumption, however, was that these environments may still play an important role in the life of contemporary Islamic societies. Though the role perhaps differs from that of previous periods, historic environments could not just be swept away in the desire to modernize as rapidly as possible. Some of these environments have remained a focus for the more traditional elements of societies. Others provide valuable housing space for migrants. All possess rich reserves of architectural ideas, and townscapes with a distinct flavour and identity. Finally, many could provide valuable lessons for contemporary designers.

The seminar dealt with aspects of preservation and conservation. However, the papers and discussions also considered such related topics as archeological surveys, architectural history and its present uses and the history of urban patterns. While papers were invited to discuss projects and issues from various regions of the Islamic world, the coverage is by no means complete. The location of the seminar in Istanbul resulted in a concentration on a more regional, Turkish perspective, though the range of problems raised in this more narrow context may be found equally in other regions of the Islamic world. The selected bibliography at the end of this introduction may prove useful for the reader who wishes to investigate specific cases in other regions.

Rather than follow the order of the papers strictly as presented, we have grouped them according to their general intent. The first

group takes up broader questions of attitude and procedure; the second deals with specific cases, implemented or still in study form; and the third considers the uses of an architectural heritage. There is, of course, considerable overlap between the papers and discussions (some may have been better situated in a separate methodological section); and as many, if not more, questions have been raised as solutions given. Yet several themes emerged which would indicate the directions of further investigation and action.

Restoration, recording and preservation of individual buildings has been an activity in which most governments of the Islamic world have invested. Ministries of Culture or affiliated bodies have sponsored laws which would protect the integrity of these registered buildings. National or municipal codes which classify buildings into types which must be preserved intact, or whose façades alone must be preserved, exist in Turkey, Morocco, Iran and other countries. Nonetheless, in many cases the concept of a street façade is an architectural feature quite alien to the necessities of preserving a courtyard-oriented building. Thus, even the codes of preservation which have existed on the national level may not be suited to the nature of many buildings and their townscapes.

Centralized institutions have initiated repair and restoration programmes on varying scales. Some have been carried out by their own personnel, others have called upon outside expertise. While some of these activities have been recorded and published, such as the restoration and research programmes on the Safavid monuments of Isfahan or on the monuments of Istanbul, many interventions remain poorly recorded or published. Clearly, a key building block in whatever wider-reaching programmes of intervention and conservation may be undertaken is parallel recording activity. Large-scale recording efforts have already been initiated through universities and local offices of urban planning; good starts have been made by I.T.U., M.E.T.U. and the State Academy of Fine Arts. With the number of trained students in both these institutions, a concerted programme similar in intent to the

urban archeological survey described in this volume is possible.

Preservation efforts have been challenged on the one hand by a shortage of personnel and budgets and, from a completely different direction, by a phenomenon common throughout the Islamic world: the existence of the institution of the *vakf* and its role in the maintenance of buildings funded by individual *vakf* deeds.

The institution of the *vakf* (pious foundation) was an important characteristic of Islamic social, economic and religious life. Originally, edifices of a religious and social nature were funded (after they were built) through a religious trust; incomes from agricultural and commercial properties provided support for activities housed in them, as well as for maintenance. Each *vakf* was administered by an independent group of trustees. Any major institutions, such as a mosque or madrasa, could also receive additional *vakfs* for specific activities or items. Activities, from support for pilgrims to winter feed for birds, could also be funded independently of buildings. Within the townscape of a traditional Islamic city, most if not all social and religious buildings were under the care of individual *vakfs* and independent trustees. Moreover, many of the residential and commercial buildings were the income-producing components of foundations. Only the larger private residences or palaces remained outside the system, although they could be converted into trust properties. The upkeep of both the institutions and the income-producing buildings was the obligation of the trustees.

The evolution of the *vakf* institution to the present day has varied depending on region and country. In some countries it has disappeared completely, with the institutions and whatever enjoined properties were left to them being nationalized and incorporated into other ministries. In others, the administration of the *vakfs* has been delegated to a separate Ministry of the *Vakf*, with centralized control over incomes and responsibility for maintenance. In still others, control over individual trusts has remained on the local level.

Whether it now exists in localized form or as part of a centralized administration, this

institution has had and still retains important influence over the nature of maintenance and preservation. As an institution, it has great potential as an agent in preservation and perhaps in conservation. It is still a specifically Islamic form of property maintenance; with some internal restructuring, it could be the mainstay of preservation and conservation efforts. As an example, one can point to the history and activities of the Turkish institution which has had some success in these efforts. A government organization (Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü) established as the descendant of old *vakf* institutions (and an intermediate nineteenth century Ministry of Awqaf) has been moderately successful in maintaining the monuments/institutions under its aegis, and has expanded its activities into the fields of restoration, reconstruction and adaptive reuse. Particularly successful has been the reuse of madrasa or caravanserai buildings, which had lost their original functions, into dispensaries, hotels, hostels and the like.

On the other end of the spectrum are the important and still active local trustees in, for instance, Yemen, Iran, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The problem here is not so much that an individual building or monument is not cared for, but that the maintenance or repair often destroys much of the original character of the building. Attempts to control this type of activity have resulted in legally transferring the building to the care of the government departments or ministries; centralized control thereby supplants local control, and the care of a building is taken out of the hands of local trustees. While the idea of providing control and expertise was an attractive and quick solution to the often well-intentioned despoliation, the fact that centralized bureaucracies lack funds and personnel to carry out maintenance and restoration has not brought the desired results, has made local groups suspicious of and uncooperative in government interventions and has, in many cases, taken the monuments completely out of circulation even after they are repaired and restored.

The idea of utilizing already existing institutional frameworks may thus prove to be the only practical one, in the long run—provided that these institutions are given the

necessary incentives and personnel to carry out scientific recording and restoration. Finally, because *vakfs* usually provided for socially beneficial activities, there would seem to be some potential for continuing or re-inserting this practical aspect by encouraging more local activity.

A problem closely connected to the location of the control over historic monuments is the status of monuments which are themselves important religious loci, e.g. Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, Karbala, Najjaf, Mashhad and other smaller shrines. These loci are by no means abandoned; on the contrary, they must withstand the enormous pressures of rising frequentation, no doubt a result of improved communication systems. The administrators of the shrines are forced to cope, and indeed they have. Yet at times, the new additions or reconstructions have largely altered or completely obliterated not only the historic and characteristic features of the monuments, but also much of their setting. Such changes may be understood to be the newest phase of the continual rebuilding of the shrines, which has occurred throughout the centuries of their existence. However, the scale of these changes and the speed with which they are often accomplished has allowed little or no recording of the destroyed parts, little consideration for design and layout continuity and little opportunity for preservation.

Reviewing the realm of preservation, we see that auspicious beginnings have been made in many quarters and that institutions exist within Islamic societies which may be re-oriented to expand their traditional realm of activities. Intensive campaigns are needed to sensitize the owners and administrators of many buildings to the inherent value of historical monuments, as unique products of a cultural past which retains both psychological and aesthetic validity.

Preservation activities have been and will continue to be pursued on a variety of scales, but they have largely focused upon monuments or groups of monuments which have received the approval of history. For the most part these are institutional (religious and social) buildings, rarely the more utilitarian and less public commercial and residential structures. Yet within any

townscape of a madina, it is the harmonious arrangement of the two categories with their systems of communication which resulted in a distinct regional and cultural character. Even cosmetic changes in a particular neighbourhood have an impact on the surrounding physical setting, as well as on its population. Any efforts which deal with the setting of a monument must consider all the approaches associated with conservation programmes, be they social or physical, as have been recently articulated.

The status and condition of the older, historic or traditional city quarter (the madina) is a shared aspect of many Islamic towns. All have been subjected to, or are still undergoing, processes of major demographic change. The groups or classes which originally built, inhabited and maintained most of the housing and institutional stock of the madina have moved to new developments built on foreign models. Their properties in the madina have been abandoned completely or, more usually, have been rented to new urban immigrants. The demographic changes have taken place at different times. In Egypt and Turkey the population shift had been going on for some time, beginning in the last decades of the nineteenth century and fairly well completed by the fifties. In countries which were former colonies, the shift from the old “native” quarters to the new towns began with independence, regardless of whether the old towns were preserved by special decrees of separation, as in the case of Morocco, or had been declared slums, as in India (Shahjahanabad–New Delhi). In other countries, the processes of change have just begun.

Abandoned properties do exist in the old towns, as in some of the old quarters of Isfahan or Tripoli, but in most the vacuum was rapidly filled to overflowing with migrants from rural areas and smaller towns. For these newcomers, the old city is the locus of inexpensive or free housing, provides proximity to even sporadic employment and is a new and exciting place to be. With the doubling and tripling of the original population densities, the physical fabric of these environments and their available services has deteriorated rapidly.

Efforts at structuring conservation programmes are therefore faced with several difficulties. The old environments have lost status; at best they have suffered from benevolent neglect on the part of governing elites. Budgets for maintenance of services, for instance, have been very low; hospitals and schools have been located elsewhere in the city. It is unlikely that spontaneous individualized efforts at restoration (and gentrification) by younger members of the elite will come about soon. Nor, perhaps, is this the most desirable strategy for conservation. Creating the social services necessary for the present population in the old quarters, and simultaneously relieving them of the extremely high densities by providing alternative housing and employment sites, may be a more expedient and more practical alternative. Such alternatives, however, can only be implemented with the active participation of a variety of government agencies. But the impetus to organize and implement such an action lies within the realm of political and ideological decisions.

An external factor has emerged as an important argument for restoration of buildings and perhaps for surface conservation of environments: tourism. The revenues obtained through tourism are undeniably important to the economies of many regions and countries. Judicious staging of facilities and utilization of sites within the neighbourhoods surrounding major tourist attractions or in the rural landscape can yield direct economic and other benefits. Mass tourism, however, tends to generate by-products which may not be desirable or acceptable in such fragile, small-scale environments as the neighbourhoods of the old cities. Tour groups seeking the authentic with their cameras, buses and high-rise hotels all create a life separate from the environment being visited. These in turn become separated from the surrounding neighbourhood by the props generated for the tourists—souvenir shops, demonstrations of crafts, inevitable traffic congestions. Thus, while tourism may be a vehicle for the refurbishing of an environment, its physical and social impact must be carefully weighed, particularly where the tourists are external to the culture and do not share any of its patterns of behaviour.

Visual and aesthetic continuity within an environment is perhaps to be understood as another kind of conservation. It has been achieved in those municipalities where local ordinances have specified particular materials of construction. It can, perhaps, also be achieved through a design dialogue between the architect and the already existing environment.

The Proceedings of the seminar deal in detail with many of the above-mentioned issues. The many different approaches do not invalidate each other. Rather, they can be seen as tactical stages in defining viable strategies for conservation within the Islamic world.

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