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GHADAMES

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OASIS TOWNS IN LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA. A SPECIAL CASE-STUDY: GHADAMES.

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Le riche passé culturel du patrimoine libyen a donné naissance à des formes différentes d'habitat selon les régions de ce pays. Le vaste espace vide du Sahara libyen ne fait généralement pas appel dans nos esprits, à de célèbres réalisations architecturales particulières. Cependant, les habitations vernaculaires du lieu montrent une capacité d'adaptation indigène à l'environnement local, fournissant une inestimable source d'inspiration à l'habitat contemporain et au développement urbain.

Les développements technologiques dans ce pays, au cours des vingt dernières années environ, ont permis une considérable amélioration des conditions de vie au bénéfice de la population défavorisée.

La structure existante n'a jamais été hautement estimée en raison de la qualité généralement faible de l'habitat par rapport aux standards techniques.

Par conséquent, la préservation de vieux quartiers et d'édifices historiques a souvent été synonyme d'état d'esprit arriéré et réticent à l'évolution. Ces habitations traditionnelles ont donc été désertées et exposées au délabrement.

Parmi tous ces lieux, Ghadames revêt un intérêt particulier par sa forme architecturale unique et son paysage urbain. Pour son caractère exceptionnel et le remarquable exemple d'habitat urbain traditionnel qu'elle présente, la vieille ville de Ghadames a été inscrite sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial de l'Unesco en 1986 sur les recommandations du Département des Antiquités et de l'Icomos. Au sein de l'Organisation des travaux publics, le Département de planification de la ville s'est ensuite chargé de définir un plan de conservation avec l'appui du Centre des Nations Unies pour les établissements humains. Cette initiative dépend aujourd'hui largement de l'aide politique qui pourra être obtenue pour la mise en oeuvre de ce plan.

Ce centre d'habitation n'a certes plus aucune importance ni rationnelle ni économique pour la communauté, mais la vieille ville et l'oasis environnante fournissent d'inestimables ressources culturelles et de loisir à la population locale; elles représentent, sans aucun doute, une part vitale pour l'identité nationale et montrent l'exemple, pour l'avenir, du fragile équilibre écologique existant entre environnement et développement technique.

El diverso origen de los elementos integrantes de la herencia cultural de la Jamahiriya Arabe Libia ha suministrado diferentes soluciones a la construcción de viviendas en las distintas regiones del país. El vasto espacio vacío del Sahara libio no es generalmente asociado a ninguna realización arquitectónica particularmente reputada. Sin embargo, los asentamientos vernáculos demuestran una adaptación indígena al ambiente local, aportando de este modo una inestimable inspiración a la vivienda y al desarrollo urbano contemporáneos.

La evolución tecnológica del país durante los últimos 20 años ha significado una gran mejora en las condiciones de vida, para beneficio de los sectores populares. Las estructuras existentes no han sido demasiado estimadas a causa de la calidad de la vivienda que es en general pobre desde el punto de vista técnico. Por consiguiente, la preservación de los barrios y edificios históricos de los viejos sectores urbanos ha sido considerada como sinónimo de atraso y oposición al cambio. De este modo, estos asentamientos tradicionales se encuentran abandonados y expuestos al deterioro.

The fertile coastal belt of Libyan Arab Jamahiriya possesses monuments and sites of great interest originating from a chequered history. To mention only a few, Leptis Magna and Sabrata are internationally well known Roman sites on the Mediterranean coast, and the Old Town of Tripoli can boast a good number of historic monuments of predominantly Ottoman origin in spite of the neglected condition of the old quarters in general.

Throughout the Libyan desert a great number of forts and castles are reminiscent landmarks of the various attempts of colonization; by "Arabs", the Turks and the Italians respectively. It is the neat revenge of time that these historic structures, for many years remaining a symbol of foreign domination and oppression, are now turned to the country's advantage and may remain a vestige to the Libyan people of the struggle for national identity.

The built heritage of truly Libyan origin is known only to few people outside the country, and the vast empty space of the Libyan Sahara is generally not associated with architectural achievements of any particular reputation.

If the local population is enjoying the pleasant and pleasing habitat, it may have no particular importance whether the architectural gems are known to the outside world. On the contrary, international tourism has demonstrated its eminent abilities of impairing subtle environmental qualities and social structures. However, when valuable buildings and townscapes are in danger of disappearing because of the vicissitudes of life, there is reason for a call of warning.

During the last 20-30 years of rapid technological development general housing conditions have been immensely improved. Due to the high revenues accrued from petroleum, the whole of the population of Libyan Arab Jamahiriya previously living in traditional settlements has been provided with new housing and modern facilities at an unprecedented scale. In this process of modernization the existing vernacular habitat has not been highly valued because of the generally poor housing quality in view of technical standards. Consequently, preservation of old town quarters and historic buildings has been considered synonymous with backwardness and opposition to change, and the almost total depopulation of traditional settlements all over Libya puts the continued existence of these towns under severe threat.

Ghadames is one such place of special concern because of its unique architectural form and townscape, which is not comparable to any other site in Libya or the neighbouring countries.

1. Map of Libya showing location of major oasis towns in the western and central parts of the country.

Ghadames es uno de estos lugares, de especial importancia a causa del carácter único de su arquitectura y su paisaje urbano. Reconociendo su carácter excepcional y su ejemplo sobresaliente de asentamiento humano tradicional, la ciudad vieja fue incluida en la Lista de la herencia mundial de la Unesco en 1986 por recomendación del Departamento de Antigüedades y del Icomos. La Organización de Obras Públicas del Departamento de Planeamiento Urbano ha asegurado a partir de entonces la formulación de un plan de conservación bajo la asistencia del Centro de Asentamientos Humanos de las Naciones Unidas.

La preservación depende en gran medida del grado de apoyo político que pueda obtenerse para la implementación del plan. El asentamiento ya no tiene importancia racional o económica para la comunidad, pero la ciudad vieja y el oasis que la rodea aportan beneficios culturales y recreativos a la población local; sin lugar a dudas representa una parte vital de la identidad nacional y constituye una lección para el futuro en lo que se refiere al delicado equilibrio ecológico entre la naturaleza y el desarrollo humano.

Il ricco passato culturale del patrimonio libico ha dato luogo a differenti forme di habitat a seconda delle regioni di questo paese. Il vasto spazio libero del Sahara libico non è generalmente associato a realizzazioni architettoniche particolarmente rilevanti. Tuttavia, le abitazioni vernacolari del luogo dimostrano una capacità d'adattamento indigena all'ambiente locale, fornendo una inestimabile risorsa d'ispirazione all'habitat contemporaneo ed allo sviluppo urbano. Lo sviluppo tecnologico del paese, durante gli ultimi 20 anni, ha permesso un considerevole miglioramento delle condizioni di vita a favore della popolazione meno abbiente. La struttura esistente non è mai stata molto apprezzata, a causa della qualità generalmente bassa

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE.

In recognition of its exceptional character and outstanding examples a traditional human settlement, which has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change, Ghadames was included on the Unesco World Heritage List in 1986. The nomination was proposed by the Libyan Antiquities Department, and inclusion was consequently recommended by Icomos as one of several sites within the greater Maghreb countries.

The importance of Ghadames has likewise been acknowledged within Libya, and the Organisation of Public Works, Department of Town Planning, has subsequently ensured the formulation of an integrated conservation plan under assistance of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Unchs Habitat).

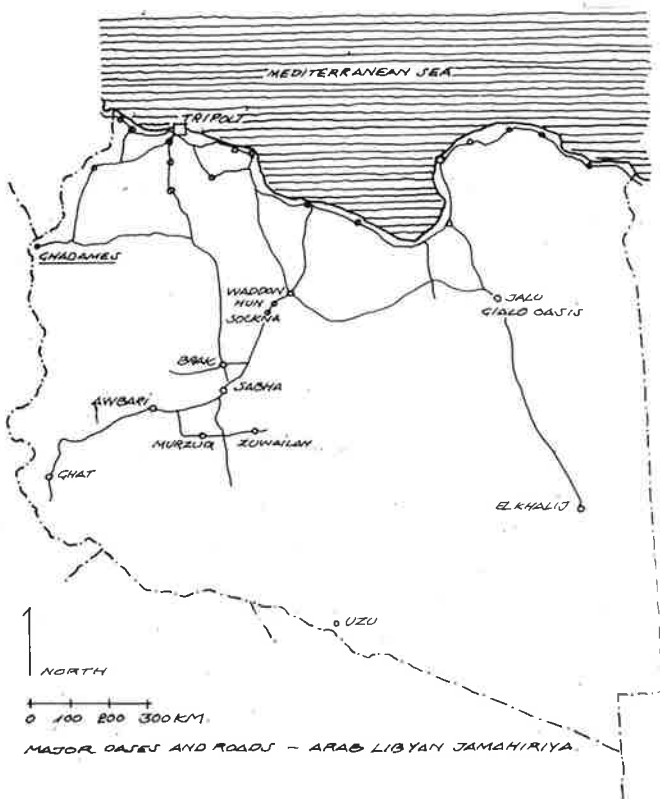
The present article gives an outline description of these efforts of integrating conservation planning into general development. The main emphasis is on a description of the unique townscape of Ghadames and the vernacular settlement so well adapted to the desert environment. Additionally, general reference is made to similar efforts of preserving traditional settlements in Fezzan.

THE SETTING OF THE TOWN AND THE OASIS

The oasis owes its very ancient and continued existence to the artesian spring called Ayn al-Faras, which originally provided water for the irrigation of lands as well as water needed for domestic uses. Its situation almost equidistant from Gabis, Tripoli, Quaila and Ghat further added to its attractions. Far more than the very limited agriculture, the Sahara caravan trade provided the economic basis for the growth and development of the settlement.

Ghadames is referred to during Roman and Byzantine times, but very little is known about its physical appearance. The site was conquered by the Arabs in 47 A.H./667 B.C. and Islam has been the predominant faith ever since. Ibn Khaldun refers in his great work on the history of the Berbers and Arabs to the prosperity and importance of Ghadames as a caravan "port" for travellers and pilgrims.

All the written sources agree that the main activity of Ghadames was the desert trade. The sources describe the coming and going of the caravans and the remarkable aptitude of the merchants who traded as far away as Timbuktu and Khartoum, as well as in Tunis and Tripoli. The safety of the caravans was secured by the Tuareg Ajir who were paid tribute by the merchants of Ghadames. The caravans coming from the south provided above all slaves, as well as gold, leather and



2. Sketch survey of public meeting place in the Tangzin area. Each quarter of the town has its own square with permanent seating intended for communal gatherings well protected against the glare of the sun.

3. The community square of the Mazigh area with adjacent mosque and ablution facilities utilizing the water running to the fields of the oasis.

delle condizioni di vita, in rapporto agli standards tecnici. In conseguenza, la conservazione dei centri antichi e dei monumenti è stata spesso sinonimo di arretratezza ed opposizione al rinnovamento. Le abitazioni tradizionali suddette sono state, dunque, abbandonate ed esposte al degrado.

Tra tutti questi luoghi, Ghadames riveste un interesse particolare per la sua forma architettonica unica ed il suo paesaggio urbano. L'antica città di Ghadames, a causa del suo carattere eccezionale ed il rilevante esempio di habitat urbano tradizionale che essa presenta, è stata iscritta nella Lista del patrimonio mondiale dell'Unesco nel 1986 su segnalazione del Dipartimento di Antichità e dell'Icomos. Il Dipartimento di pianificazione della città, nell'ambito dell'Organizzazione dei lavori pubblici, si è in seguito incaricato di definire un piano di conservazione con l'appoggio del Centro delle Nazioni Unite per gli insediamenti umani. Tale iniziativa dipende oggi largamente dall'aiuto politico che potrà essere ottenuto per la messa in opera del predetto piano. Questo nucleo non ha certo alcuna importanza né razionale né economica per la comunità, ma l'antica città e l'oasi circostante forniscono inestimabili risorse culturali e ricreative alla popolazione locale; esse rappresentano, senza alcun dubbio, una parte vitale per l'identità nazionale e mostrano l'esempio, per il futuro, del fragile equilibrio economico tra l'ambiente e lo sviluppo tecnico.

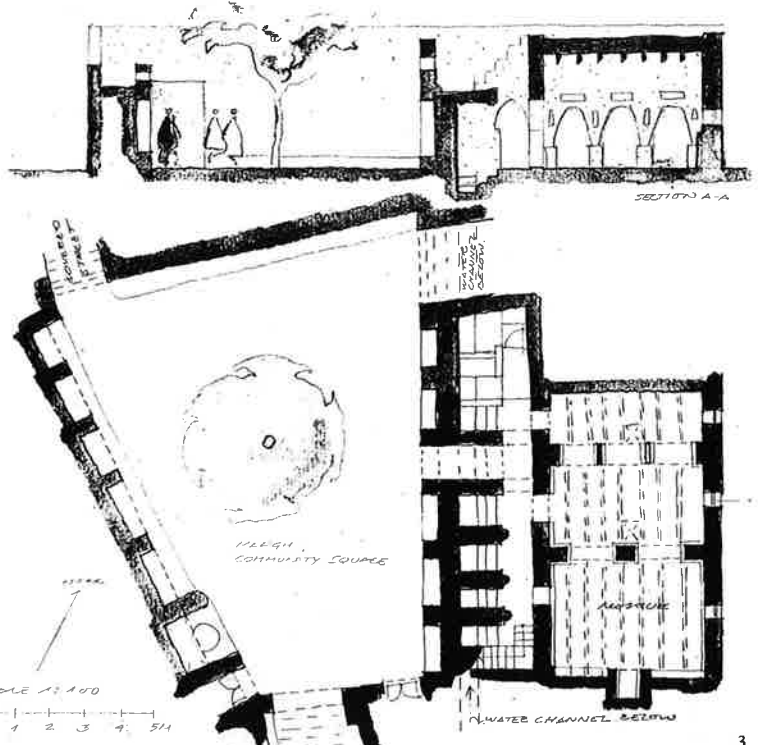
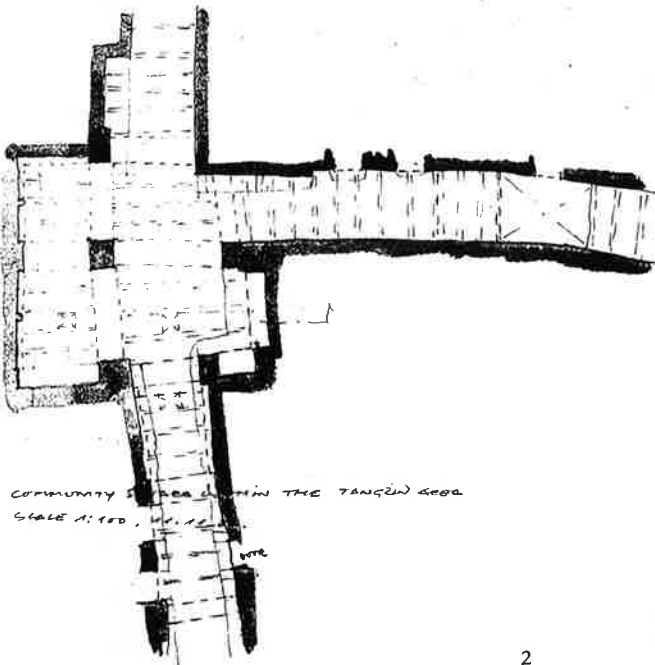
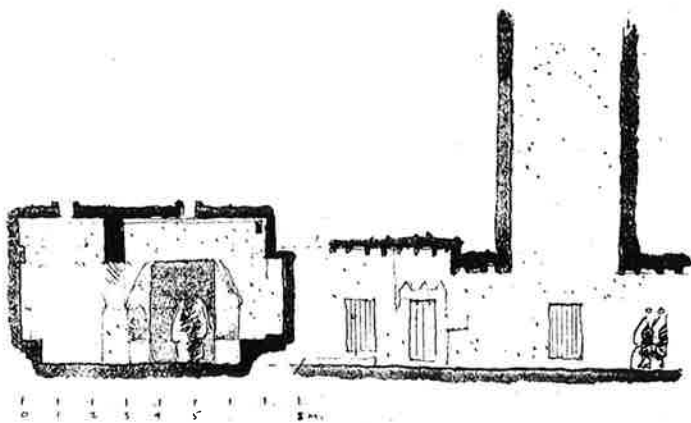
hides, ostrich feathers, ivory and incense. On the return journey they carried cotton cloth, sugar and various products manufactured in Europe. Evidence from French and British records suggests that the caravan trade increased in the mid-nineteenth century, reaching its peak around 1875.

POPULATION GROWTH AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The population of Old Ghadames, estimated at about 7,000 around 1850, had dropped to 1,900 by 1952. By that time most of the inhabitants had emigrated to Tripolitania or Tunisia. There is a correlation between the decrease in the population during this period and the decline in trade following the abolition of slave trade. Around the turn of the century the caravan trade had become stagnant. By the 1950s it had practically ceased, and the inhabitants were almost all reduced to cultivating their small plots, whereas the Tuareg were confined to the raising of camels, sheep and goats.

By 1959 the public service buildings comprised a municipality office building, a small hospital, two elementary schools, a primary school completed the same year, a prison, a custom house, an immigration office and an air strip. The only buildings outside the confines of the old town and the oasis was the former Turkish fortress and a few scattered dwellings used temporarily by the Tuaregs.

During the last three decades substantial investments in infrastructure and housing have been allocated for new town development. The new socialist government policy has put high priority to general improvement of housing standards, and the offer of housing loans on favourable terms has left no choice for the inhabitants. Consequently, the last remaining people abandoned their houses in 1982, leaving the old fabric to its own destiny.



4. (A and B) Survey drawing of Abdul Rahman's house, Tangzin area, showing section and plans of first floor and roof terrace. The drawings are reduced in scale from original sketch survey in scale 1:50.

Likewise the survival of the surrounding oasis has come under severe threat. The employment possibilities created by the municipality and the government since the 1960's have become the most important sector in the economy. The cultivation of the oasis has become of minor importance to the settlement, and presently there is no economic incentive to cultivate the fields. Furthermore the lands are mostly owned

by extended families, and the individuals may have less interest in investing time and energy in cultivation of the fields, which anyhow have become too small for a rational production.

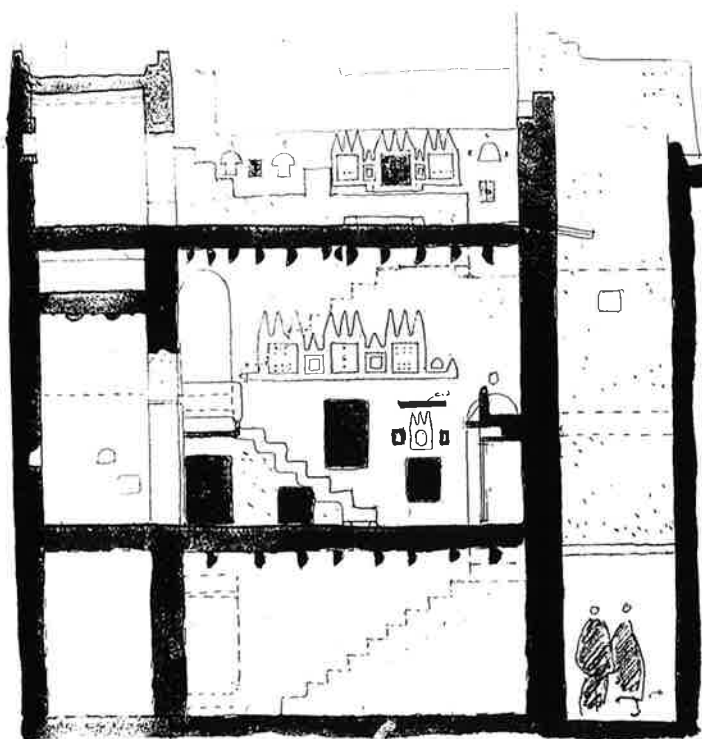
The new deep-water wells drawing water from a depth of about 1,000 metres are being used for supply of the new town only, and the traditional water supply from the artesian well has diminished. This unlucky development has created a vicious circle with the result that large parts of the oasis are being neglected or misused.

TOWNSCAPE FEATURES

The discontinuation of caravan trade around the turn of the century afforded no grounds for further development, and the old town has by and large been left unchanged. The built-up areas are centred to the south-west of the oasis forming one large conglomerate of houses. The grouping of the populace according to descent has resulted in the development of 7 distinct areas of the settlement displaying individual characteristics. Each district has a communal meeting place and one major mosque in addition to local mosques. From the outside they are hardly distinguishable, except for the square minaret towering the ordinary houses, and the low stone benches indicating places for communal gatherings. The Friday mosque and the adjacent open square situated next to an artesian well provided space for the major communal gatherings of the male population of Ghadames. The location forms the very nucleus of the settlement from where the built-up areas disperse. The water distribution was previously controlled from this point, and mail coming and going to Ghadames was delivered here.

The immediate impression of the townscape is produced by the brownish mud-walls of sun-dried bricks, the ochre-coloured sand of the alleys and the almost fortified appearance of the outer facades. The top capping of walls and the stepped finials at the building corners are whitewashed, providing a characteristic feature to the external appearance of the houses. In addition to the spectacular effect, these measures also improve the capacity of the adobe to endure weathering and general deterioration. Doors of bisected palm trunks are likewise characteristic details. The more important alley-ways inside the town are white-washed for reasons of distinction and so are communal meeting places and public squares. Only very few oil-painted carpentry works give a tint of green, turquoise and blue to the natural colour scheme.

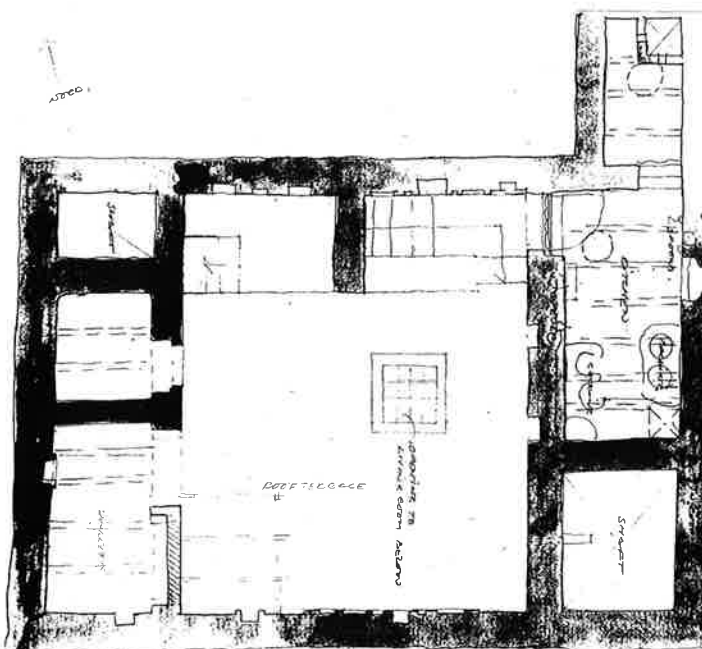
The houses are tightly built together with lanes and alleys passing underneath; thus the alleys are often transformed into dark tunnels and corridors creating a hierarchy of spaces and communication. The main pedestrian through-ways of about 2



منزل عبدالرحمن
TANGZIN AREA, GHADAMES

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50

4A



ABDUL RAHMAN'S HOUSE, PLAN OF FIRST FLOOR

4B

5. The external walls of houses are of an almost fortified character. The sunbaked bricks are exposed without any further treatment apart from the plastering and whitewash of finials and top capping.

6. The roofscape of the vernacular settlement were traditionally the domain of the women, who could

pass freely from the one roof terrace to the other along narrow footpaths on to of walls. This communication system extended to cover the whole settlement.

7. The one entrance gate giving access from the surrounding oasis into the northern quarters of the town. Likewise were the whole oasis previously

fortified and protected by high walls against the drifting sand of the surrounding desert.

8. Covered alley within the cluster of houses. The majority of alleys are passing underneath the houses and receive day-light from regularly spaced light-wells, at the same time providing for natural ventilation to individual houses.

metres width are relatively well lit from regular spaced light wells. Dead-end alleys of lesser width and importance branch out into various directions, giving access to the individual houses or groups of houses. As no natural light is diffused into blind alleys access is discouraged for anyone who may intrude upon the private sphere of the family.

This unique organisation of the habitat is created with a view to avoiding the naked sunlight during summer time and to protecting against sand storms. Furthermore the dense fabric of buildings creates a "time lack" keeping the interior of town and houses relatively cool during day-time and warm during the night.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AND HOUSE FORM

The bulk of houses are of the same basic design with only slight variations in size and decoration. The actual age is difficult to estimate, because the building form has evolved over a considerable period of time. The type may well originate from the 15th century. In the cause of development it is remarkable to note that Turkish and European colonial domination had no influence on the local architecture and its decoration.

The traditional buildings are constructed entirely of local materials, producing an attractive and harmonious architecture. The building form allows only a few external facades, rising in an almost fortified manner to a height of about 10 metres.

The buildings are integrated into one complex fabric like "houses of cards", in which it is hardly possible to distinguish the individual houses.

The ground floor consists of an entrance corridor, a store room and a flight of steps to the upper floors. Additionally there is a room containing the latrine pit, which can be emptied directly from the alley. The first floor comprises one big living room with a double floor-to-ceiling height. The only day-light radiates from an aperture in the ceiling opening to the roof-terrace. Additional rooms are opening directly on to the living room, whereas the mezzanine floor has access from a flight of steps inside the living room giving associations to cave dwellings in other parts of Greater Maghreb.

The flat roof provides for an open terrace surrounded by several adjoining rooms, including a kitchen. Traditionally the roof terrace has been the domain of the women, who could move from one house to another by way of the interconnected footpaths on the top of walls extending to the roofscape of the entire town.

The interior walls are all plastered with gypsum and white-washed. Doorways and rooms are decorated with stucco mouldings, especially the main living room is adorned with pierced stucco screens of intricate patterns, often of a polychrome design. Together with the framed mirrors and various utensils hanging on the walls it all combine to make a delightful interior.



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9. Detail of stucco decoration of wall in living room.

10. Interior of living room with double floor-to-ceiling height. The staircase is leading up to the mezzanine floor and continuing on to the roof terrace.

11. Interior of mosque. The capitals are of a characteristic design found throughout in mosques conserved in their original condition.

12. The external parts of compounded houses facing on to the oasis.

The light and ventilation shafts leading down to the covered lanes and alley-way at ground floor provide a natural ventilation to all rooms. The whole spatial arrangement is a genuine adaption to the conditions of a hostile desert climate. The fact that the former inhabitants of the new town often return to their old homes during the hottest periods in summer testifies to the functional achievements of the traditional architecture.

EFFORTS OF PRESERVATION

The tightly knit social network of friendships and family ties among the former inhabitants of the old town have created a strong attachment to the old quarters. Furthermore, the identity of the Ghadames people is so closely associated with the town itself that a genuine concern for the life and fortune of the old town does exist, including hopes of a possible preservation as a part of contemporary development. However, the individual house owners are rather helpless as long as no official policy of preservation has been adopted.

The society of the Friends of Old Ghadames has for many years been actively involved in the arrangement of cultural feature weeks and similar events aiming at mobilizing public concern and interest in the preservation of the old town. With this end in view the society has also arranged for the set-up of a small community museum, which in a simple way displays

a traditional Ghadames house. Fully equipped with domestic utensils and displaying various crafts practised in the town, it demonstrates in an admirable way how little investment is needed to document and display features of the cultural heritage.

The recreational and cultural attractions of the old town is a great asset to the society as demonstrated on public feasts, when people gather in the mosques and squares. It should not be necessary to argue at length for the need of the preservation required. The delicate threshold of action arises when it comes to discussion about purpose and future use of buildings. For many reasons it is impossible to re-establish the former life of the old town. The inhabitants have all moved to new premises of a technical standard which cannot be introduced into the old houses without destroying their original character; especially because instalment of piped water and sewage is very problematic in combination with sun-dried bricks, and the required access of motor vehicles to the oasis is impossible without destroying the very reason for preserving the old fabric.

Other alternatives have to be sought for. The plan of action provides for a number of recommendations aiming at the preservation of the old town by using the buildings as "second houses", cultural institutions and such other functions which may revive the town without destroying the historic fabric. For example a small hotel was built within the oasis during the Italian occupation; apart from serving national tourists it may



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13. The top capping of walls is often done with tilted bricks creating the characteristic triangular pattern. The whitewashed wall and permanent stone benches surrounds the communal square used for public gatherings and feasts.

appeal to international tourists, and cater to one or more annexes to be set up in traditional houses.

The restrictive conservation approach applies to the core of the old town, where the unity and density of houses does not allow for much change. At the outskirts of the oasis, however, houses of lesser quality and authenticity are ripe for redevelopment, possibly providing a happy conjunction of activities centred between the old and the new town. Such building schemes for redevelopment could advantageously take inspiration from the genuine building tradition of the vernacular architecture, so well adapted to the desert climate, thereby safeguarding the immediate historic environment from the encroaching concrete uniformity. Needless to say, a timely conservation and integrated development requires proper administration and political support.

PRESERVING THE OASIS

Efforts of preserving the old town cannot be isolated from considerations for the surrounding oasis. From a conservation point of view the oasis, the townscape and the traditional housing represent a unique ecological system well adapted to the desert climate. The economical administration of the scarce natural resources that distinguish the life of the past will remain a valuable lesson also in the future.

Continuation of traditional farming of the oasis may not be economical from a rational point of view, but at a domestic level cultivation of the smaller gardens would considerably contribute to the economy of the individual households, -a development comparable to a popular allotment system practised in Denmark, allowing the town-dweller to grow vegetables for home production at the same time as enjoying relaxation away from daily toil.

It only needs very little public action to ensure continued cultivation of the oasis as an amenity to the entire population of Ghadames. It may even be argued that the oasis is a more agreeable park and its preservation more rewarding to the local community than any new public garden, which would anyhow be much more costly to lay out. This again relates to the situation and the real identity of Ghadames. The presence of water is a very essential part of the recreational qualities of the oasis. From a rational point of view it will be more economical to replace the open channels with piped water supplied directly from the bore hole. It would also eliminate all the toilsome work of cleaning and maintaining the open channels, but the delightful experience and the reflections of the oasis as a paradise on earth would for ever be gone.



A LESSON IN ARCHITECTURE

The settlements of the Libyan Sahara are all situated where the water table is sufficiently close to the surface to make a living possible. Depending on the local conditions and the ethnic groupings of the population they display highly different solutions to housing and settlement structure. They have in common that the traditional houses are of the courtyard plan type with the main living room facing on to the open courtyard; the separation of quarters for men and women is reflected in the layout of buildings and the built-up area leaving only narrow alleys between high walls.

The new town development all over Libya has paid little attention to the existing structures and it is a general trend that traditional settlements are being depopulated, in most cases leaving these areas deserted and prone to decay; some houses may be turned into local museums, and it can be hoped that parts of the settlements may be integrated in modern developments, taking inspiration from the existing situation. At best such qualities as pedestrian precincts and shaded walk-ways may again be integrated parts of new housing schemes; not to talk about a possible renaissance of the courtyard house in Libya and elsewhere.

No other settlement can display the same supreme example of vernacular architecture of Ghadames, but in each and every case the local architecture demonstrates an appropriate use of local building materials and shrewd means of improving comfort under harsh climatic conditions. Whatever may be the faith of these old settlements in the cause of development, they will provide a lesson for the future on how to economise scarce natural resources. And they give food for thought on how much modern architecture owes to vernacular architecture as a source of inspiration. It is surprising how many characteristic features of Ghadames architecture correspond to the "pattern language" of Christopher Alexander, a modern classic of architecture; and for example the sketchbooks of Le Corbusier are full of studies from Ghardaia and other traditional towns of M'Zab, just across the border in Algeria, displaying much the same architecture as in Ghadames.

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ICOMOS is an international non-governmental organization bringing together people and institutions actively concerned with the conservation of buildings, groups of buildings and larger units of architectural, archaeological and historical interest. Both nationally and internationally it is directed by its members and its effectiveness and the scope of its influence are dependent on their number, their competence and their dynamism. It is their General Assembly which elects the Executive Committee, the members of which are responsible for the administration of the Council and for the general policy guiding the work of the Secretariat since it is they who are called on to implement the programmes adopted triennially by the General Assembly (Cracow 1965, Oxford 1969, Budapest 1972, Rothenburg 1975, Moscow 1978, Rome 1981, Rostock-Dresden 1984). The aims of Icomos, as set out in its Statutes, are the furthering of the conservation, protection, rehabilitation and enhancement of monuments, groups of buildings and sites. To this end it strives to bring together all individuals or bodies (official or private) taking an active part in conservation. The scope of its membership has broadened as the concept of the architectural heritage itself has developed. At the same time, Icomos is in regular and close contact with numerous international organizations, governmental, professional and private.

When, in 1964, the 2nd International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments decided to set up a permanent association, it was encouraged to do so by Unesco and, as early as 1970, Icomos was included by Unesco among its international non-governmental organizations enjoying consultative and associate status. Besides providing Icomos with regular assistance in the form of a subsidy supplementing its members' subscriptions and the subsidies paid by several governments, Unesco finances specialized assignments under contract. Icomos thus had an important part in the preparation of the World Heritage Convention (1972), in the organization of exchange and training programmes in the field of preservation of historic quarters (1980, 1982, 1984) and in the preparation of various recommendations.

The Assembly at which the Council was founded decided that its headquarters should be in Paris. Since 1971 it has been accommodated in the service wing of the Hôtel Saint-Aignan, a historic building made available to it by the Paris City Council. The Secretariat consists of a salaried staff of four persons, whose work comes under the direct supervision of the Secretary General and the Treasurer General. It carries out the decisions of the General Assembly and the Executive Committee and is in charge of the day-to-day activities of the Council along the general lines laid down by the President. The Unesco/Icomos Documentation Centre, which is responsible for building up and keeping up to date a body of reference material on the conservation, protection, use and rehabilitation of the architectural heritage is financed under a special Unesco contract. It has a staff of two and its material may be consulted either personally or by letter.

Icomos National Committees may be set up in all Unesco Member States and admit all categories of Icomos members (individual, institutional, supporting or honorary). Each Committee has its own international regulations, programme and activities, in accordance with the Council's Statutes and aims. The Committees take an active part in Icomos international activities. At the time of the 1965 Icomos General Assembly there were only a few National Committees, most of them in Europe. Since then, a great effort has been made to increase the number of National Committees, 8 in Africa, 20 in America, 9 in Asia, 1 in Australia and 27 in Europe. Furthermore, Icomos has well as associate members in ten other countries which have not yet their own National Committee.

Icomos has established a network of Specialized International Committees which are bodies of experts concerned with the study of particular problems and which are also a convenient vehicle for regular cooperation with other international bodies. Those established thus far are concerned with rock art, vernacular architecture, wood, mud brick, training, archaeology, historic gardens, stone, photogrammetry, seismology, cultural tourism, historic towns, and stained glass. The Icomos advisory body is the Advisory Committee, the members of which each represent either a National or a Specialized International Committee.

L'ICOMOS est une organisation non-gouvernementale qui regroupe des personnes et des institutions travaillant à la conservation des monuments, ensembles et sites historiques. Ses membres en sont le moteur, au plan national et international. De leur nombre, de leur dynamisme, de leur compétence dépendent l'efficacité et le rayonnement du Conseil. Réunis en Assemblée Générale, ils élisent ceux d'entre eux qui, siégeant au Comité Exécutif, assurent l'administration du Conseil et orientent le travail du Secrétariat. Les membres du Comité Exécutif sont, en effet, responsables de la mise en oeuvre des programmes adoptés tous les trois ans par l'Assemblée Générale (Cracovie 1965, Oxford 1969, Budapest 1972, Rothenburg 1975, Moscou 1978, Rome 1981, Rostock-Dresde 1984).

Les buts de l'Icomos, définis dans ses Statuts, sont de «promouvoir la conservation, la protection, l'utilisation et la mise en valeur des monuments, ensembles et sites». Pour atteindre ces buts, l'Icomos s'est efforcé de regrouper toutes les personnes et tous les organismes (officiels et privés) qui concourent à la conservation. Son domaine de recrutement s'est d'ailleurs élargi en même temps que se développait le concept même de «patrimoine architectural».

L'Icomos entretient, d'autre part, des relations étroites avec de très nombreuses organisations internationales, gouvernementales ou professionnelles.

En 1964, lorsque le II^e Congrès International des Architectes et des Techniciens des Monuments Historiques avait décidé la création d'une association permanente, l'Unesco avait encouragé cette initiative.

Dès 1970, l'Unesco admettait l'Icomos au nombre de ses organisations internationales non-gouvernementales, avec le statut de consultation et d'association. L'Unesco octroie au Conseil une aide régulière (une subvention annuelle, qui s'ajoute aux cotisations des membres et aux subventions de plusieurs gouvernements) et lui confie des tâches spécialisées. L'Icomos a ainsi joué un rôle important dans la préparation de la Convention du Patrimoine Mondial (1972), dans l'organisation de programmes d'échanges et d'information dans le domaine de la préservation des quartiers historiques (1980, 1982, 1984), et dans la préparation de recommandations diverses.

Le siège de l'Icomos a été fixé à Paris par l'Assemblée Constitutive. Il occupe, depuis 1971, une aile de l'Hôtel Saint-Aignan, monument historique mis à sa disposition par la Ville de Paris. Le Secrétariat comprend quatre personnes salariées travaillant sous le contrôle direct du Secrétaire Général et du Délégué Général aux Finances. Il met en oeuvre les décisions de l'Assemblée et du Comité Exécutif et assure la gestion quotidienne du Conseil selon les orientations définies par le Président. Le Centre de Documentation Unesco/Icomos, dont le rôle est de rassembler et de tenir à jour une documentation sur la conservation, la protection, l'utilisation et la mise en valeur des monuments et des sites, bénéficie d'un contrat particulier de l'Unesco. Il emploie deux personnes et peut être consulté sur place ou par correspondance.

Des Comités Nationaux de l'Icomos sont constitués dans les Etats membres de l'Unesco. Ils regroupent tous les membres (individuels, institutionnels, bienfaiteurs, d'honneur) que compte l'Icomos en leur pays. Ils ont leur règlement intérieur, leur programme et leurs activités propres, en accord avec les Statuts et les objectifs de l'Icomos. Ils participent largement à ses activités internationales.

Lors de l'Assemblée Constitutive à Varsovie, en 1965, l'Icomos ne comptait que quelques Comités Nationaux — en majeure partie européens — un grand effort a été accompli depuis pour augmenter leur nombre et implanter l'Icomos dans toutes les régions du monde. En 1985, l'Icomos compte 65 Comités Nationaux ainsi répartis: 8 en Afrique, 20 en Amérique, 9 en Asie, 1 en Australie, 27 en Europe et des membres associés dans une dizaine d'autres pays qui n'ont pas encore constitué un Comité National. L'Icomos a mis en place un réseau de Comités Internationaux spécialisés, organes techniques consacrés à l'étude de problèmes particuliers. Ces Comités offrent aussi l'occasion d'instaurer une collaboration permanente avec d'autres organismes internationaux. Les Comités actuellement constitués sont les suivants: art rupestre, architecture vernaculaire, bois, brique crue, formation, archéologie, jardins et sites historiques, pierre, photogrammétrie, séismologie, tourisme culturel, villes historiques, et vitrail. Les Présidents des Comités Nationaux et des Comités Internationaux spécialisés, réunis au sein du Comité Consultatif, constituent l'organe consultatif de l'Icomos.

