Chapter 2: ARCHITECTURAL SHAPES

The house I long for,
may it stand beheld by the sea
and may it be wooded
by the fruit covered trees

Joan Salvat - Papasseit

CONCEPTS AND CRITERIA

The following two chapters will take us on a voyage through traditional architecture in the Mediterranean area. This voyage requires some explanation, and we would like to briefly clarify some of our choices developed in the study concerning space and temporal or semantic perspective.

Amongst the rich range (1) of terms describing the architecture we explored, the word traditional (2) most often seems to offer a reasonable balance between accuracy and subjectivity. Traditional easily evokes an environment with all of its social, economic or construction practices. The concept of inheritance seems most appropriate to sum up both the essential characteristics of this architecture and the practices of those who establish and perpetuate tradition from generation to generation. This idea of inheritance is implicitly associated with qualities of permanence, respect, heritage, and repetition.

In the Mediterranean, we can speak of the wider family as we speak of the wider house

In the field of architecture, we chose the dwelling or house (3). However, in the study we often refer to the importance and meaning of other types of buildings (4) and constructions that make up (5) the Mediterranean architectural heritage. For example, we must recognise the well (6) as a fundamental element of life, of survival! Thanks to the well, traditional communities of this area are completely preserved. So in the Mediterranean area, as we speak of family in a broad sense, we also consider the wider house area, for wells, furnaces and pigeon lofts are also an extension of the house. We must, however, insist on the importance of these constructions which are often worryingly looked down upon as “auxiliary”, and whose diversity is absolutely fundamental for the survival and fulfilment of traditional societies. This architecture is most generally in danger because it is discrete, sometimes obsolete or given up, or almost absorbed, eroded by the landscape (with irrigation or water control systems, for example). Being almost non-existent, its destruction goes unnoticed.

The extraordinary extent of the territories we covered, and the great number and variety of auxiliary constructions would be a subject for a great study in itself, making our decision to concentrate on the house quite indisputable. In addition, the house remains the essential centre; a core where actions, elements, population, and living conditions are recorded. Beyond the strictly architectural frame, it cumulates a wealth of information allowing us to interpret not only shapes, but impact, beyond its intimate space, on the landscapes and places influenced by its presence.

These places lead us to two different environments, rural and urban, the limits and definitions of which are not always unanimously agreed upon. Theorising this point is neither necessary nor essential for this study, we therefore agreed to define rural - opposed to urban - as all the shapes and actions related to life in the country (7), including all the areas where populations are mainly attached to farming and pastoral activities. The differences between these two environments used to be much clearer in traditional Mediterranean society than nowadays, where urban development and its confused and diffuse spreading through larger territories, makes debating these terms pointless. In addition, we must take into account the fact that the physical environment we call rural, is often no longer limited to housing country populations, but also includes inhabitants working in secondary or tertiary sectors.
whose life and activities are more attached to a production-consumption pole (city/metropolis environment) than to the environment of habitation. Actually, this rural environment is constantly being absorbed by an avid urbanisation of the area.

We preferred to define time according to use rather than historic frame, strict dates seem impertinent considering the multiple range of time in this large area. The houses, dwellings and buildings studied here are thus inhabited constructions, alive and exploited by today's population even when they are sometimes on the verge of abandonment.

The architectural heritage that has reached us was often built between the XVIIIth century and the first third of the XXth although many cases were prior to these periods: Middle Age foundations can often be discovered, and the construction techniques used have persisted since medieval times, sometimes even antiquity. If the image we have of a construction is often less than two or three centuries old, its foundations or other little visible elements are much older. We perceive the strength of inheritance, presence and persistence through time, on this architectural heritage.

We determined the end of the timeline for our project at the emergence of pre-industrial building arts (8). This idea is to be interpreted in two ways: we studied constructions built with local material resources; constructions that didn't benefit from modern heavy material transport, and are thus prior to those times. Choosing ways and means of construction rather than time presumes that we can still find small pockets with traditional, little changed practices and organisations, and that these pockets can be studied and accounted for.

The houses selected in the area did not, at the time of construction, bear any trace of standardised contemporary materials such as cement, breeze blocks, or reinforced concrete. Of course, as old buildings are regularly subject to maintenance or modification operations, these new materials are often mixed with traditional ones, or used in substitution. Since several technical cultures are combined, questions of compatibility were taken into account, from a performance or cost point of view, as well as on an aesthetic level.

The traditional architecture we encountered is not the one generally found in books dealing with the History of Architecture. This is surprising considering it makes us dream today, inspiring and seducing a great number of famous architects (9), providing innovative freshness and ideas, and above all still sheltering hundreds of thousands of families from one end of the Mediterranean to the other. In spite of its historical, geographical, cultural, social and economic importance it too often remains little known, ignored, or looked down upon as inferior (10). Alas, it stands as an architecture "without identification papers". When classified, it is usually tagged as “exotic or minor”.

One can easily understand that the whole architecture of our study combines a very significant segment of time with a vast area, with a strong anthropological melting pot, constituting a quantitatively enormous world; a qualitatively complex and various environment to grasp as a whole.

The purpose of this study is not to present a full range of Mediterranean models. The issue is rather to study architectural heritage and its transformations, and through a thorough analytical approach, to propose strategies and tools that contribute to preservation of traditional architecture, today and for times to come (11). The inventory and analysis are adapted to these objectives, bearing in mind that grouping results in reduction. That means that the architectural subject was tackled from multiple points of view, considered as a living and dynamic material rather than as an inert formal object (12). We tried to avoid the heaviness and complexity of an overly formal and rigid classification, which would be useless here, and would no doubt be more appropriate for an architectural shape research program (13). We grouped all the material in a practical way in order to manage, understand and explain without excluding any prospect a priori.

One must consider this text and the CD-ROM as a whole. Both of these sources (two possibilities to access complex and dense information) allow for a general overview and easy approach. With this
text on the one hand, and the CD-ROM on the other, one can plunge into a vast data bank, every user
can make his own voyage, casting his own nuance and lighting on this rich and various architecture.

Moreover, this frees the text of dogmatism, by proposing extensive material, processed and presented
systematically, allowing for free and open reflection which should stimulate a rich future of research
and interventions, aiming at revitalising the fantastic potential of traditional Mediterranean
architecture.

It is also necessary to note that the survey was always thought about and carried out in a broadminded
way to express all sensitivities, regional and local, to further enrich the study. We wished to let the
richness of the Mediterranean civilisation express its diversity without formal constraints. This
inevitably leads to a rather great flexibility in data processing, and of course requires a certain
complicity and understanding on behalf of the reader. Especially on behalf of the reader’s eye, that
can become a true instrument of knowledge in a deliberately picturesque and colourful book: some of
the qualities of our area can only be truthfully transmitted through images.

Traditional architecture used to be "the architecture" of our area only a few decades ago

One last point concerning a grammatical choice. We preferred to use the singular to express
“architecture” or the “Mediterranean house”. That may seem contradictory given the large cultural
and expressive variety of the area, and may also be perceived as limited. However this use of the
singular does not reduce Mediterranean shapes to a single model, but to a single rich and varied corpus
of architectural expression. Far from theoretical disputes, we feel it necessary to speak of our topic
from a distance, given the size of its corpus, and to make communication simpler.

The use of the present tense should be interpreted in the same spirit. The document traces a perimeter
around traditional architecture and its periods. Therefore, evoking in the present should not lead to
any misunderstanding. Use of the present tense also emphasises that merely 30-50 years ago,
traditional Mediterranean architecture was "the" architecture in the whole area. Presently inhabited by
millions of Mediterranean people, it is a daily reality. We could add that there is a warped perception
of traditional Mediterranean architecture, often represented in its more “exceptional” or "exotic"
models. In spite of some misleading examples, it belongs to a "normal", "daily" world with its humble
and discrete character. These qualities are a great asset for the future, and a source of hope.

Scattered housing represents the vital and vivid network of a territory

To ease reading and provide information in the broadest way possible, we decided to separate
materials and techniques from architectural shapes (typologies). Analysis and presentation of
typologies will only skim over materials and techniques to avoid breaking up the global typological
approach. The following chapter will come back to materials, building arts, and know-how in more
detail.
ONE WAY OF LIFE, MANY WAYS FOR DWELLING

The Mediterranean man likes community life, partnership, and mutual aid as we mentioned in the presentation of the Mediterranean area. This analysis of architectural shapes clearly confirms this characteristic.

Scattered houses, grouped houses, neighbours are always present

Indeed, over 80% of all typologies are organised in groupings (hamlets, villages, urban environments) and less than 20% correspond to scattered housing. Of course this distribution between scattered and grouped housing can vary substantially according to areas. If one could apply a quantitative demographic criterion to this analysis (we did not have these data), the ratio of the population living in grouped systems or scattered systems would be about 9 to 1. We would also have to take into account a certain number of fake scattered houses. This would be the case, for example, in the Middle Ages, when dwellings were in the orbit of a lord's castle, sometimes leading to the emergence of grouped constructions. Today it is still quite common to find this kind of scattered housing in North African hillsides, (scattered according to Western criteria) that don't seem really organised in any coherent way. This is just a mirage; living space and relations are organised with invisible threads, handed down from a long lasting tribal origin.

Mediterranean also means family. It is the broader, wide-scale, clan-family. A family for support and heritage. This extended meaning of family sometimes exceeds family ties to include servants, employees or apprentices. According to studies, these people could be seasonal workers: temporary or permanent, hired for harvest season, or on construction campaigns. This family structure greatly contributes to the shape and appearance of all house volumes. It also determines relations amongst them and relations between these volumes and circulation facilities.

The Mediterranean man generally lives in "his" house. Over three-quarters of the typologies we studied were inhabited by a single family. But this family can be extended to include several married sons living in the same house. In rural environments, and in sharecropping relations, farmers and sharecroppers (tenants) can live respectively on the first floor and the ground floor of the same house. Some typologies group several houses constituting "agglomerates of buildings and dwellings" where abundant family spirit governs everyday life. In urban sites, where condominium type groupings are much more common, a certain immaterial bond links those who share the same house: tenants seldom change, and they usually live in the same place for several generations.

The presence of water, good quality soil and the potential for exchange were the strongest factors in determining the settlement and occupation of the area. Since antiquity, grouping and organisation, where urbanity is the standard and the necessity, generated a flourishing of commercial cities all along the Mediterranean littoral. In addition, a network connected continental towns and cities to the large arteries of caravans, which in turn linked the Mediterranean to the distant civilisations and huge markets of the three surrounding continents. Many large cultural currents came from these continents, and extended throughout the area: the Arab-Moslem or Turkish-Ottoman cultures for example. Thus, for thousands of years, the Mediterranean area was strewn with historical cities and towns, some of which have become large metropolises today. (Istanbul, Cairo, Athens...) Others have but remains and ruins as a testimony to their far gone golden age ( Ephèse, Típasa...).

However, we shouldn't think of scattered housing as either marginal or inappropriate (from 15% to 20% of the typologies presented). It, on the contrary, constitutes a fundamental form of housing in colonising, structuring, exploiting, and domesticating a territory. In certain areas, these scattered constructions form a solid network of narrowly woven units. An "accomplished landscape" where the balance between inhabited - cultivated - construction is specific, complex and intricate. Land property, its inheritance and social organisation are determining factors in a territory-house, and house-house syntax, including the morphology of the latter.
As scattered housing exists in rural environment, it is generally inhabited by the most traditional populations, often remote or even cut off from a certain number of events or currents. These population perpetuate the tradition of the past, beholding customs and practices that often go far back in history, without any major deterioration.

For an introduction to landscapes, a great part (three quarters) of typologies is established in plains, plateaux and hills. It is in these landscapes that one finds the best soils for agriculture, for cattle and breeding, great rivers, large channels of communication and exchange, and also a necessary discretion, an effective protection against dangers coming from the sea. That explains why the coast areas contain a much smaller number of typologies (between 15% and 20%), which is to be related to a rather small fishing activity. Finally, the average / high mountain areas display even fewer significant typologies, and obviously less population (around 5%). It is nevertheless a significant area which would at first seem subordinate to the sea. The Mediterranean mountain plays a determining role: water supplies are a significant source of life and energy. Wood and pastures, often located deeply inland, cattle and animal by-products, labour, are found throughout the area, particularly in vast plains.

Scattered housing is present in all Mediterranean countries. It is associated with the rural environment, whatever the social status, from the poorest to the wealthiest. The size and type of agrarian farms or herds will greatly influence the definition, morphology and syntax of the areas. Frequently, although a varied typological repertory can be made, both modest peasants and wealthy families live in houses of a similar construction and structure. Defensive reasons in certain cases, cultural or historical reasons in other cases, together with materials available, techniques, know how and climate, have all imprinted a strong individual and local touch, a deep architectural stroke on the house.

Three solutions for a style of housing: The basic house, the compact house, the multiple structure house.

Three groups can be inventoried in scattered housing according to the degree of specialisation in each area:

The basic house has very little or no specialisation in the spaces shared by inhabitants, animals, and farm storage. It is single, general-purpose room, used for a limited period; as most activities are outdoors. This naturally brings people to live in close relation with the open. The ground plan is definitely rectangular, and typically the house only has a ground floor. As covering for the house, we find a roof with two slopes, one slope, flat or vault roofing (mainly barrel vaults). The façades generally have few openings. The quintessence of this house implies similar ways of life in different typologies. The basic house is often the core from which the house then evolves. This evolution, partly linked to the morphology and construction system of the initial core, presents various solutions.

Within this group, some houses can be considered as primitive. Although as simple as those we have just described, especially because of their shape (often round) or system, these houses have trouble evolving and developing. They generally represent a static model that lasts through time without any notable change, and because there is no evolution, this model tends to vanish.

The compact house provides housing, specific structures and spaces for production. It undoubtedly represents the largest group. In most cases, it has a ground floor, one or two levels, and a roof area space that is very often lived in or at least used for production activities. It can be found in both scattered or grouped housing environments.

The ground level plan tends to be less rectangular and nearer to a square shape (though this by no means constitutes a rule), although irregular plans are also possible due to topographic constraints. In this type of house, the floor area is definitely larger than for a basic house. Defining specific areas and spaces for certain activities, and a hierarchy of these activities contribute to increasing area and volume. Sloped roofings are very frequent, however, in regions with little rain, flat or weak sloped roofings can be found. The processing of the façades can be quite varied and different, from massive
typologies with no real composition, to carefully adjusted façades with generously numerous openings, mouldings, profiles and cornices.

The multiple structure house is made up of several buildings, each one having a well defined, specific use. Here the house often stands out in a formal hierarchical level from other buildings; this distinction is sometimes accentuated to the point of singularity, though the force of the unit comes from the very grouping of constructions, bringing a little nuance to this view. In the case of the multiple structure house, buildings can be semidetached, terraced or completely separate structures. Constructions can be built on the same alignment or on a roughly radial layout, or even according to a strictly geometrical and practical layout. In the latter case, rigour is imposed by rational productive criteria. The compact house was conceived finished, as a whole, whereas the multiple structure house can easily add buildings, as more space is needed, or volume is imposed by production constraints or by the diversity of activities.

The multiple structure house will meet the requirements of large farms, sometimes quite specialised. The number of specific buildings and names for these types of units is extremely variable, according to the diversity of activities. In this group we find real “production units”, often dedicated to a single specialisation (wine, oil...) and which require a specific architectural solution for each activity and production model.

Topography, farm size, soil production, yield or leading produce will all generate a more or less dense occupation of the territory, increasing or decreasing construction complexity.

Obviously, in the Mediterranean area, this appearance of grouping is subject to many subtle alternatives and nuances on the spot, even on small territories, along the lines of the above parameters. Monographs and local studies are relevant and invaluable here. They allow for a detailed and accurate appreciation, a more extensive understanding and a necessary knowledge to preserve and develop Mediterranean diversity which is undoubtedly the greatest asset of our area, its very essence.

THE MEDITERRANEAN HOUSE, CONSTRUCTION AND DWELLING

Standing alone in the middle of a landscape, always seeking a “watchtower” position, the house tends to materialise an intimate, private area. This private area is sometimes clearly explicit, as in houses with a courtyard or a garden, with or without extensive fencing, or, when the space between various structures expresses a particular area, transforming it into a patio or inner courtyard. It can also be a less determined area, bounded by the various surrounding buildings; it is an articulation, a passageway, a domestic space shared by inhabitants, poultry and smaller livestock. The open spaces of compact houses are often confined areas, with neither fence nor apparent perimeter. Physically less intimate than others, this space is nonetheless always present, although almost immaterial: trees, an improvised bench, a plough, a more hard-packed soil, are a testimony to its presence. The human touch recreates it indefinitely.

Patio, courtyard, garden, trellis; from domestication to an expressed household area.

If we mentioned the patio, courtyard or garden, it is because they are three rich, formal and locally varied expressions of a Mediterranean fact: life is lived as much in the open air as under a roof, an architecture of earth, stone or wood as much as light, shade or aromas. While the house is the area especially for women, the street is the area especially for men. A street imposes a construction or is the result of a construction; the street is always a large area of familiarity, exchanges and relations just as much as it is a place for circulation. In certain areas it becomes a continuity of the house, and frequently is both an extended area for activities, crafts, shops and social relations. The Mediterranean house often flows outwards. Particular elements sometimes being small side constructions. This is the case for kitchens or baking ovens built outside, both connected to the house and separate structures. But this common space is mostly encroached by small businesses, crafts or shops.
Patio, court and garden: three ways of domesticating an external area

Along the same lines, we find another typically Mediterranean area that contributes to defining the subtle boundary between inside and outside. It is what we could call “shade architecture”. This area is generically called a porch or portico. Whether it is a real hard point construction with a portico or arcades or whether it is materialised with plants, often trellised vineyards, jasmine, rose bushes or trees, this area stands as a most meaningful place. It has its own microclimate, but also a capacity to moderate the brutal Mediterranean light contrast between inside and outside; it is an extremely prevalent and cherished area for all the inhabitants of the Mediterranean area. A living space that connects confined areas to open outdoors.

The patio, courtyard and garden are often confused or processed as variations of a similarly defined area. These words are often used without distinction, blended and stripped of their true cultural diversity and expression. Yet these three areas express three ways of thinking, living and inhabiting. Three ways of domesticating the exterior.

We can accept the synthetic requirements and Arab-Moslem roots to define the patio; a word which certainly best defines the qualities of this house space. The patio is a shelter for millions of Mediterranean people dwelling in dozens of urban environments (médinas) and in houses. A living architectural structure, rich with qualities, but alas also threatened.

The patio indicates both the centre and the core of the house, the heart of family life. This word has no synonym: it has become an irreplaceable area on a human scale, generated and conditioned by traditional construction. A dwelling area, a source of life. An active area, a peaceful and intimate place. Inside and outside. Ground and sky blend into an environment, a proportion, an architecture.

The patio can be more or less complex. Not having arcades on a ground floor, walls (or walls and elementary porticos) then define the limits of this central area, or arcades can exist on two, three or four sides. When arcades are present, the richness of the space is increased, creating a transitory place between the inside and the patio.

The quality, density and vital energy of this area are such that a house does not need more than one entrance on the façade. Everything is concentrated and turned towards this central point of the house. This entrance, always shifted with a chicane, spares inside privacy.

Although from a morphological or even functional point of view, the courtyard is sometimes similar to the patio, we find differences which give it a clear and distinct character. From a diagram point of view, the courtyard offers two main solutions: it is a space limited and designed by the various elements of a house, buildings or walls. That is to say an area which is more or less generated by the construction itself, more or less designed with fencing. In both cases, size and scale are conditioned by economic or farm activities. The herd, products, means of production and farm machines are as significant as the human scale in defining the courtyard. This area is less dense than the patio, its density is reduced by animal, agricultural and production constraints. It is more often demarcated by walls rather than buildings. The courtyard therefore remains a rather confined outside area.

The house with a courtyard is everywhere in the Mediterranean. Existing in all possible variants and shapes. In the Arab-Moslem influenced areas, it often resembles the patio, whereas in the northwestern Mediterranean it is more pragmatic and practical. According to the complexity and dimensions of the original construction it extends, this courtyard can be more or less open, repeated in a series, or generate distinctive areas.
If in a patio the area is bounded by construction, and in a courtyard only partly confined, in the garden this is no longer the case. Garden and house are juxtaposed. Each can exist on its own. Both offer an alternative to create and live in a double unit, inside / outside. Whereas the Arab-Moslem house best describes the patio area, for the garden it is the Turkish house which most accurately combines house and garden. The culture, more precisely the religious culture, will determine whether a garden is more or less intimate, a constrained place of shelter, or an area permeable to the outside. According to areas, this garden emphasises a leisure and pleasure spirit, or a more productivity oriented role.

Generally situated directly against the façade of a house, the garden is rather large, because it represents a significant place of household production. Plants of all kinds are cultivated in all seasons, with a large variety of fruit trees amongst which one almost always finds citrus fruits. However, it is also an area of leisure and pleasure: flowers with beautiful colours and delicate scents are fully expressed here.

As we have just mentioned, house and garden are the fruit of an add-on, but become one in time and space. It would be impossible to imagine these houses differently (though transformation processes unfortunately impose a disruption of this harmony). This architectural shape, literally a welded inside and outside, contributes to the production of unique urban landscapes, with a great density of greens which lighten built spaces and structures.

*Defence, culture, history, materials, know-how and climate will constitute the architecture, drawn from local and individual workmanship in a deep, architectural sense*

This act of domestication and outline of a closed and particular area which brings forth a strong feeling of intimacy and safety, is also expressed in the tents and light constructions of nomad populations. In the latter case, this area is created with the taj, a large rectangular piece of fabric used by nomads, or simply with a few thorn bushes.

As always, with great nuances, we must once again insist on the decisive diversity of Mediterranean colours and stokes! We shall echo this again and again. We therefore face two designs. The first is a global inhabited area: a closed area, intimate and private, sheltered from the outside (a patio or inside courtyard defined by buildings and enclosed yards, whose walls protect from outside looks). The second is one that includes external elements on the same basis and level as other inhabited areas, with a more or less materialised or fenced periphery of the courtyard, laying out domestic borders, a design that clearly defines a permeable area, open and exposed to outside looks (here, the area is mostly related to farming production or activities).

In the first case, the non-covered area often becomes the core (14) of the house or at least a significant centre of activity. In the second case, although still important because Mediterranean people live outside, this space no longer plays the same central role, nor is it considered on the same level as the first area.

In all instances, the same need exists: to stay in permanent contact with the outdoors. This is not exclusive to our area, it is a true quest for many people around the world. But in the Mediterranean, this quest is strongly modelled by the history and landscape of so many different cultural temperaments.

*Mediterranean architecture is expressed powerfully through earth, stone or wood, light, shade or scents*
Presence becomes house; nomad dwelling.

Nomad populations are probably those that have most strongly practised this affinity with nature. Historical narration, mainly produced in the north-western world, too often presented southern and eastern nomad populations only emphasising the exotic and indolent cliché of the Mediterranean. Its structures, urban planning – we dare say - its techniques and building materials, were never looked upon seriously. Sometimes nomad was systematically associated to misery, when in reality it is quite often the contrary. Another fantasy tends to identify nomad as Bohemian or adventurous when in reality, migration, bearing, stopovers... everything is precisely determined and considered in a wilderness that allows no error. Under a light and fragile appearance, a tent is the sanctuary of an impenetrable and secular culture for immense territories.

The house of hair (bešt eh' char) for Arab-Moslem populations, or the otag, tent of Turkish tradition, have anticipated ways of life which we find in the architecture of solid sedentary houses. The otag will later become the oda, the bedroom or room. For the Moroccan Berber, the word for tent is tachamt (or takhamt) and the word for house is akham (or axxam). Here are two examples from two extremities of the Mediterranean basin, to illustrate this heritage.

The architecture of nomads is refined: the tent and camp layout are as finely organised as any hamlet or house. Even the colours are strictly determined, as these colours identify the owners and users of a camp from afar.

The tent of the nomads, fewer and fewer in the Mediterranean area today, characterises a type of housing and construction exclusively prepared by women. It is the women who used to prepare the raw material and wool, they who produced the elements, wove the flaj, built, mounted and dismounted the structure at each displacement. They again who were in charge of maintenance, repairs or renovation. This presence became a true dwelling: a sign of higher social class and nobility amongst the Arabs, and a sign of low social status for the Turkish or Berber populations, the nomad dwelling brings us to a dialogue between architecture and landscape. We could actually state that a tent is hosted by the landscape, spreading out gently and clinging solidly to the land.

Less frequent than nomad tents, other dwellings we can call mobiles, which have disappeared today, were formerly found in the Mediterranean area. They were houses made out of plant fibres and wood, easily dismounted and transported by animals, for rather short distances compared to those travelled by nomad caravans.

Despite these mobile dwellings, the desire and need to settle and create a home dominates throughout the area.

The permanent structure. House and roots. Laying the foundation of one’s place.

The permanent Mediterranean structure is an answer to an aspiration for foundation. Almost 40% of inventoried typologies correspond to one level houses, ground floors (GF). At first, we could say it is a modified open air. Almost three-quarters correspond to houses no higher than two levels (GF+1). A fifth only exceed this volume: GF +2 and GF+3 or more. Intermediary levels, though found are rather scarce. This small percentage of GF +3 or more typologies nevertheless cumulates a strong percentage of the population as it represents village typologies. A village or urban environment favours vertical constructions where land is scarcer, and notably in strongly sloped landscapes. In addition, a defensive criteria tends to favour grouped housing with a more or less defined surrounding wall: it is essential to protect oneself against enemies both human (looting, razzias,...) and natural (the desert). However, constructions that spread out on the ground level remain a significant characteristic.

They are found in two thirds of all typologies, on a ground plan with regular shapes, over half of which are rectangular. Only a third of all typologies are irregular in shape. Very often, in rural environments, topographical constraints impose this irregularity. Sometimes they are the result of
added elements after property inheritance or rural land regulations. The rule seems to be regular parcelling. Angled constructions are also the standard; although round shapes are sometimes found, they are an exception. They seem to testify to older more archaic shapes, and are seldom found today.

Interior space distribution solutions are plentiful. This diversity is expressed in both one level houses, elementary or complex, and in houses with several floors. A great quantity of factors combine to generate one solution or another. The diversity of cultures, associated production or farm activities, as well as construction control, privilege certain choices over others. Upstream, we can already distinguish two great groups: typologies whose distribution is outside and those whose is inside the house.

We find a great range in the first group: from the exterior parts, to a more or less immaterial portico. Certain typologies in this group can evolve (but are not "transformed", although this can also be found) by closing this external distribution area, and by making it as an indoor area: new activities are added to the distribution. Certain houses with a courtyard or patio can be considered part of the two groups. Indeed, although the distribution is outside, it remains an intimate and private area, the center of the house – this is indisputably the case for the patio, and more subtle as concerns the courtyard, especially when it is only partly closed.

This leads us to consider two sub-groups for houses with indoor distribution: those that are organized starting from a central area and those with a linear organization. This schematic view implies a certain hesitation in grouping certain typologies with hybrid solutions.

From a central area, we find the house with a patio, and all houses with central sofa, the Lebanese house. Crossings and bays often determine a central point starting from a basilica configuration, insisting on the hierarchy of a central nave – this is the case of the masia in Catalonia, where the sala is a central area.

A linear organization is sometimes carried out from the center, or sometimes from one of the sides. This axis is often used to directly connect two external areas: the street and the garden (or courtyard) up against the back façade.

According to cultures, inside areas tend either towards versatility and constant change, or towards much more explicit specialization. The room of the Arab-Moslem house, or the oda of a Turkish house illustrate the first case; for the second case, we find the village house in Provence, for example.

The Mediterranean, which has colder winters than one often imagines, attaches a great importance to fire. Fire, the fireplace - whether to cook or to heat, sometimes both - often becomes a central living area in winter or when nights are crisp. They sometimes embody the external character of the house, with significant façade or roof chimneys. In more basic houses, a simple hole in the roof ensures the evacuation of smoke.

With the exception of troglodyte housing, on which we will comment later, the Mediterranean house is not characterised by a systematic construction of a basement (levels with non-apparent façades). Only 15% of all typologies have this basement (half buried levels are more frequent, with only one apparent face, the others cling to the ground or slope). This basement is of course sometimes important for production and preservation activities associated with the typology (development and preservation of foodstuffs). We must remember that the need to control and store water carefully generated a trade in the Mediterranean: digging wells, water mines or cisterns. Finally, 5% of all typologies have a mezzanine, an intermediate level between the ground floor and the first floor.

*A presence becomes dwelling area: behind the apparent lightness and frailty of a tent
we find a dense and secular culture that enjoys the flavour of large open spaces*
As far as the floor size and habitable areas are concerned, we find a great range and scale. In scattered housing, a significant proportion, 35% of all typologies, do not exceed 50m², whereas another third is between 150m² and 300m². Wealthier farmhouses can be larger. In grouped housing the distribution is rather more uniform in all environments. Areas are frequently adjusted to the same typology with significant variations, adapting to the demographic, social and activity characteristics of a family. In the Arab-Moslem médinas we find good examples where it is possible to recognise the same model for a modest family house or wealthy, noble residence.

In fact, in traditional Mediterranean architecture, the typologies inventoried corresponding to higher social classes that we could simply call wealthy, only account for about a quarter of the total. The majority, about two thirds, corresponds to the broad range of farmers, stockbreeders, tradesmen and craftsmen, and the remainder to humbler social categories.

The Mediterranean house seeks solidity and permanence. The house means the place; when speaking of a house, don’t we say "the place and the fireplace?"

Mediterranean people are dedicated to the construction of their houses. In great majority, a solid house is an enduring dwelling (9/10th of all inventoried typologies would be in this group). However, a Mediterranean culture associating summer and winter home is also represented. We can evoke the examples found in Algerian M’Zab towns. In these cases, clear differences can be observed between summer and winter typologies, also found throughout the North African Maghreb and elsewhere. These differences go beyond just strictly morphological features, and tend to influence even the rigidity of daily life. It is often the climate that leads to choosing this strategy of seasonal housing. Let’s not forget that in the areas where seasonal climate differences are great, a seasonal organisation transforms a house, through a "domestic transhumance", in a quest for the freshest or warmest rooms and levels, according to the season. In summer, a terrace can become the best possible place to sleep.

This being said, we should remember the Mediterranean landscape is strewn with auxiliary constructions for agriculture and farm activities. We say auxiliary in this case because the large majority of these constructions can be regarded as seasonal constructions, used practically only for the day. In general these constructions are rather small (used as temporary shelter for people or tools or sometimes cattle) and so well blended in with the landscape that they become a reference of this landscape. Another interesting aspect is shape and construction simplification. For example, in areas where the rule is a roof with two slopes, these constructions generally only have one slope, and vaults are often blind arches. These constructions are moreover a model of effectiveness and extreme durability, built mostly with materials that cannot be considered as transported or supplied, but just collected within arm’s reach. Stones for example are often collected in ploughed fields. However some of these temporary shelters are far away from villages, in remote areas, near farming lands, or used at the time of transhumance.

**The light construction or reasserting one’s roots**

If the vocation of the Mediterranean house is to be a permanent foundation and place, this does not automatically imply a solid construction.

In the past, vast littoral areas or even inland plains were marshes. On these water lands as on hard ground, stone was scarce and heavy structures anyhow impossible to implement. In addition, humidity played a strong role against the use of capillary sensitive materials. On the other hand, reed was generally quite abundant.

From one end of the Mediterranean to the other, this very particular environment was an incentive for the conception of lightweight housing, appropriate for these peculiar environmental conditions and available resources. This housing is more or less light, sometimes palafittic usually basic and simple, with only average longevity. This relatively short life span coupled with the progressive draining of
marshy Mediterranean zones slowly erased traces of this type of house. However, light houses are still built and inhabited in a few areas, involving a very limited population.

We could easily think this architecture is the opposite of solid and "imperishable" constructions. It is sometimes classified with tents, but this lightness is only true in terms of materials. Conceptually, it is a house that is just as rooted as a solid one. Actually, in the case of these light houses, bases and rooting are renewed and reassessed regularly. Indeed, the brittleness of the materials used implies rebuilding the house completely every three to five years! This is the case in the delta of the Nile, on the banks of Borolos lake, where fishing communities still live in this type of house.

Evolution and definition

In the Mediterranean, the house is mostly conceived / finished from the start. That means that it adapts to needs and at the same time must foresee use and means. Enlarging a house without the primary idea of evolving from an elementary core is of another nature. We could thus speak of final typologies and evolving typologies. The first group accounts for 85% of all typologies and the second for 15%. We should however mention that evolving models develop according to a generally predictable process. From this point of view, they could be regarded as final, as construction would extend over an open timeframe. The evolution of the house is usually more horizontal than vertical, although this last case is not exceptional.

The “in-construction”, or troglodyte constructions

We can find troglodyte constructions in almost all Mediterranean countries. In some countries, they are still inhabited (Tunisia, Spain) and in some of these countries, preservation programs are carried out to rehabilitate constructions and render suitable living conditions. It represents a peculiar type of architecture for the area and shelters a minority of the population, both throughout the area and in each specific country.

These troglodyte constructions are in three great groups: first typologies using a natural hollowing then closed by a wall, such as a façade, as in Palestine, Tunisia or Spain, secondly typologies in which dwellings are completely dug out horizontally and whose only apparent elements are the front door and the chimney, such as in Guadix, in Spain... and finally a typology where elements are dug horizontally starting from a vertical well, such as a patio, as the examples reported in Matmata, in Tunisia.

This type of housing is like a real gutting construction process, like a film negative in the sculptural meaning of the word. It benefits from a maximum number of qualities, amongst which are constant thermal levels, due to ground thickness. It could be considered in certain cases – especially in Matmata - as evolving. Aside from the dwellings we have just mentioned, other in-constructions of this same type exploit the specific hydrothermic qualities for cellars in the production and preservation of food products.

The troglodyte house, the "in-construction" found in arid areas, benefits from consistent and permanent ground thermal qualities

THE MEDITERRANEAN HOUSE, ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES, AREAS AND CULTURES

Defensive considerations

At all times, defensive concerns shaped architecture in areas subject to war, invasion, plundering. An even more radical architectural form of expression was developed in the most violent areas and during
the most turbulent historical periods. This architecture almost turned to formalism when safety was achieved.

The Mediterranean has a large range of solutions to incorporate the idea of defence in construction. A grouping can be made according to three criteria: the house is itself a defensive element (the tower house), the house incorporates this defensive element (house with a tower), the house incorporates morphological strategies of defence, without their strictly corresponding to elements of defence. Volumes and materials can sometimes provide a perfect camouflage for a house or an entire village.

Here again, this grouping is to be taken in a very synthetic sense, which helps to better understand the great architectural expressions used to fulfil the same need. Thus for the tower house, the shape goes from a very compact, closed house with the fewest openings possible (tall and narrow), rising up to an actual tower. The first case is an adaptation of the standard house to defensive needs, the second case is almost adapting a style of life to a specifically defensive volume. As for the house with tower, the tower will more or less display the defensive character of the house, either characterising the whole structure or just discreetly altering it. Certain Turkish houses are a good illustration of the third group.

Obviously, these precautions are taken in great majority for scattered houses. Grouped housing uses collective defence systems: enclosure walls, natural setting camouflage, or difficult access.

In a less explicit degree, we can also mention defence and protection of household intimacy, and especially in certain cultures, the intimacy of women. Here too, traditional architecture presents a wide range of solutions, from the frach of the nomads, to the blind façades of medinas or the moucharabiehs of the Arab-Moslem or Turkish houses.

**Activities linked to production**

Separating humans and animals is generally the rule. However, in the most primitive types corresponding to the most remote territories and the most traditional societies, we find animals and owners still sharing the same covered living spaces. Animals and inhabitants most often share the same enclosure: animals are in a courtyard while humans are in the surrounding buildings. Third case: the same building accommodates the two, but with a separation, either on the same level or on two different levels. Finally, in a fourth alternative, humans and animals live in separate buildings. The separation of inhabitants and animals can be interpreted as a sign of social development and / or type of production.

Three quarters of the typologies are associated with production activities related to agriculture, one quarter to trade or craft industry, one third to breeding and farm activities and one tenth to fishing. Some quite frequently associate several of the above described activities. 40% do not associate any essential activity to the house other than dwelling.

These activities cover various areas according to typology. A general tendency in the compact house is to use ground floors for production activities. This is obviously rather logical, especially for trade activities and crafts which are directly and easily accessible: workshops or trades are open on the street. Ground floors are also practical for cattle, ploughs or other farm tools. The same situation can be found in typologies associated to fishing activities. In these cases production activities clearly define the perimeter and parameters of an area, but also its connection with the other areas of the house. At another extreme, we find other production activities under the roof or even on the terrace in certain areas and typologies. Indeed, the under-roof area is often used for storage and drying of vegetables or mixtures, and sometimes also used for the breeding of farmyard animals. In a multiple structure house, these activities profit from specifically designated buildings or constructions, adapted to each activity. They are conceived to meet the exact requirements of a corresponding activity, which in certain cases generates a specific architectural expression. As for the terrace, it is a typically Mediterranean place, with a great richness in terms of activities. The Mediterranean terrace is much more than just a roofing of the house: it is a place for drying fruits and linen. It is altogether a summer
room, a private outdoor space and a social place. It is sometimes a passageway, a rainwater collector, a watch-post onto the horizon and dreams, a finite and infinite area, recreated by men and women, elevating life to a unique level. In certain typologies without terraces, in the conventional sense of the term, a flat earth roofing sometimes has the same functions and richness as a conventional terrace.

The terrace, beyond a mere roofing, is a distinctive Mediterranean living area

Before coming to clearer boundaries and differences in the latest stages, a great complicity, we dare say promiscuity, used to exist in rural environments, between landscape, buildings, people and animals. Inside and outside used to be so closely linked with early morning sun pouring into the house through open doors and windows, or with the shadow of the house extending over the ground in the sunset, that they blended as one. The continuous and repeated going to and fro in and out of the house merged inside and outside into a single living area, common throughout the whole Mediterranean. The climate more or less modulated the intensity of this characteristic according to latitude and altitude.

Two cultures, two attitudes, two living areas

Two great cultures generate two different ways of thinking, creating and re-creating a construction, and a different way of life: we could say a standing culture and a sitting culture. (15) We refer to two completely different worlds with two ways of living. First, the southern and eastern areas of the Mediterranean, the Arab-Moslem, Judaic and Turkish influenced zone; and, second, the northern and western area: the Latin world, Balkan countries and Greece.

A way of moving, a position of the body; life is seen from an angle that can change everything: it alters the scale of perception, modifies the specificity or versatility of areas, adjacency or furniture, and determines whether inhabited rooms are full or empty.

In south-eastern lands, living on the floor or on the ground does not require large furniture: space is continually recreated according to needs, at any moment and every day. For example, the "furniture" integrated within the walls of the Algerian houses in M'Zab free the rest of the room. In north-western areas, chairs make it necessary to add a table, which means that rooms include pieces of furniture and objects, hampering and obstructing the visual field. This filling of space with furniture also affects the perception of volumes and light.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF TRADITIONAL MEDITERRANEAN ARCHITECTURE

A balance between capacities, resources, needs, and pleasure

Apart from some exceptions, traditional architecture is constructed using local materials. It is not astonishing that stone, especially limestone, found almost everywhere in the area, is the most commonly used material, the main element for 60% of all our typologies. This percentage increases significantly for auxiliary constructions and reaches nearly 100% for terraces and other elements structuring the agricultural landscape. Combined with the scarcity of other materials in certain areas, stone suffices for walls, crossings, roofs, showing the effectiveness of traditional techniques and know-how. The latter solve a score of problems using a sole material, very often with hands as the only tool. Obviously, stone is mostly used for the construction of walls.

Earth with no other processing than collection (10%), in the form of mud or terracotta brick (20%), is represented in almost 30% of all typologies. Earth is also commonly found in walls, but it is also used in flat roofings and certain crossings. Mixed solutions (stone/earth, stone/brick) are present in 8% of
our typologies. Plant material as main construction material, thatch or straw for example (not including wooden structures), is used in only 5% of all typologies.

From a structural point of view, the most common solution combines load-bearing walls with horizontal crossings. These short span crossings are generally made with wooden beams and a wide range of solutions regarding the processing between the beams and the flooring. Various types of vaults are another common solution, especially for ceilings, cellars and ground floors. Stone, brick and mortar casting with aggregates are used to build them. “Diaphragm” partition arches are found almost everywhere, combining short spans to obtain large areas, while acting as hollowed load-bearing walls. Some arches customarily allow for great spans, generally used for large residences or farm facilities, in areas with substantial forest supplies. In the plains of the Maghreb, for example, we still find “hypostyle” spaces. A wooden post “forest”, associated with a flat compacted earth roofing, frees substantial ground space: the resulting areas seem quite spacious, despite relatively modest inside heights.

With regard to roofs, several solutions are found. Sloped roofing (mostly two-sloped roofings) is used in 56% of inventoried typologies; flat roofing represents 38%, 22% of which are flat earth roofings, 12% use lime rendering, and 4% use tiles: this means that 16% of all roofing typologies are terraces. Sloped earth roofings represent about 4%, 3% of sloped roofs are constructed with straw or thatch. As for cupolas and vaults, they represent only 6%.

Traditional architecture Mediterranean is of exuberant essence, splendour and vitality

For the structures of these roofs, the solution used is the same as in horizontal crossings for flat roofings. For sloped roofings, the most frequent solution uses rafters resting on two load-bearing walls, for roofs with a single slope, or on load-bearing walls and a ridge beam for roofs with two slopes. An imaginative range of alternatives is developed around trusses, blind trusses or mixed solutions. Terracotta tiles are the most commonly used material for these roofs, although stone such as schist is also used, mainly in mountainous areas.

Vaults are present almost everywhere, but in varying frequency. The cupola, on the other hand is less widespread in general, and limited to South-eastern areas. When more present, it combines imaginative alternatives and profiles. These typologies represent one of the most successful, popular and mediated images of the Mediterranean, though only representing a discrete minority.

A large majority (75%) of typologies uses an external coating. The most frequently used is a lime-based mortar (45%), while the remainder are gypsum, plaster or earth based (15% each). Stone or ceramic plating is scarce. The remaining 25% have no or only occasional coating. This external coating might not cover all the walls. In certain cases, only the main façade is covered, while in others only the façade most exposed to rain and wind is covered. In the other extreme, the coating can cover the entire house, roof included. This is the case for light coatings, such as liming. Here we find the stereotyped image of an allegedly typical Mediterranean architecture. Yet at a chromatic level, it is not white which dominates but rather yellow ochre, and the bluish-grey of earth and limestone. This includes a whole range of pastels: reddish and pinkish tones, greens, blues: this array of colours recalls the diversity of the Mediterranean world.

For inside facings, we find the same possibilities as for the outside. It is, however, necessary to note the presence of earthenware on the walls and ceramic tiles on the floors, which in certain areas reach an array of profusion, beauty and great mastery.

We also find a clearly basic Mediterranean house, built very quickly. This surprising quickness (from one week to six or eight weeks for most typologies) is explained by three main points: the simplicity of the building, filled and decorated with light, shade and presence only; constraints linked to the time
of year, harvest seasons and rain seasons; and the preparation of the site and materials in advance, proving the degree of architectural reflection brought into such constructions (thus less spontaneous than usually reported). We can also often note local co-operation and partnership among families, neighbours, and villagers.

A welcoming land, but also one of emigration. Emigrants sometimes accumulated fortunes during their expatriation years, and generated a great quantity of architecture for the rich during the XIXth and the early XXth century. We find these examples in areas with the greatest number of expatriates overseas: Aegean areas, Portugal and Spain. The architecture chosen to express a new statute for these new rich people was neo-classic, with exuberant ornamentation and detail. Often brought back from the Americas or the Indies, in Portuguese architecture it was called brasileiros, while in Spain it was known as indios or americanos.

Throughout an area resembling a mosaic of states, architecture took no account of borders, and it is common to find the same type in two or more countries, neighbouring or not. Thus in Turkey one will call Greek house the same type of house that would be called Turkish house in Greece. At the other end of the Mediterranean, surprisingly similar architectural expressions can be found between the Portuguese Alentejo and the Spanish Extremadura, or between Andalusia in South of Spain and the Maghreb.

It was often said that traditional architecture bears the signs and marks of cultures and populations. Not only traces of the physical signs (activities, demography...) but also traces of cultures and creeds. On two façades (main and secondary) of a house, are two doors of strikingly different sizes and processing. One large and noble for men, the other one small and humble for women, both disclosing a long chapter on culture and society. Drawings in vivid colour on the walls of Moslem houses in Nablus, a statue of a saint on a street in Malta or Andalusia, a small palm tree branch nailed to a front door in a Catalan village, all bring to light a voyage to the Mecca, a catholic faith, or a protection against the bad spirits. It is certainly because a traditional house is the skin of a population and not a monument that it exhales so many of the joys and tribulations of its inhabitants.

But the enormous capital represented by this architecture is not spared from danger, and its condition arises alarming concerns. The results of the investigations and analyses provided data which is far from reassuring. Co-ordinated and effective interventions must be implemented urgently. The results we have gathered, beyond the inaccuracies that must be accepted given the size of the project, show a rather accurate reality of the situation.

We can estimate that 10% of all typologies are seriously threatened, either by abandonment or by forces that are impossible to withstand. 60% are floating between regression and stagnation, therefore losing their living form. Only 30% are not subject to any significant danger, and are on the way towards revitalisation. This means that nearly three quarters of this capital and Mediterranean potential is at a dangerous point from which there is no recovery.

SITES, A TOOL FOR THE STUDY

The Mediterranean is a landscape strewn with hamlets and villages. Village life is an essential element in the area. Average sized urban environments complete this spectrum, keyed like a vault by the larger, often historic urban environments which are becoming enormous metropolises in certain cases but still preserve districts whose architecture is a testimony to history and tradition.

These villages, urban environments and districts represent centres of power and decision at various degrees. They testify to initiatives and sensitivities. We can feel the dreams, frustrations, errors and collective successes through them. It is there that the house, the typology, lives daily life intensely, often dramatically, chock-full with its past and history, and too often emptied of any future. There
only, on the spot, do events reach a true dimension: there only do projects become demanding, difficult and complex.

It is for all these reasons that local teams chose some significant sites for each country, where one could find the indexed and studied typologies in their true to life context, and where one could find politicians, deciders, designers, users, associations, schools, contractors, craftsmen... and assess the achievements, programs and projects. These samples, with a total of seventy one sites, are varied and spread throughout the area, in all landscapes. They represent a wide range of situations that point out all geographical, social, economic and political trends and reactions.

We use the word site here in a broad sense, to simplify denomination, to ease understanding and identification. A site thus includes architectural sets (urban or rural) as well as built areas, well aware that cultural landscapes may overlap. It was necessary for us to make an effort of synthesis, to avoid heaping each line with nuances that would make reading hefty or sometimes impractical. But our prerogative for diversity and rich tonalities remains intact. Along these lines, the high level of detail and geographical, economic or cartographic data contained in the CD-ROM will be of a great use, and we believe essential. Site thus appears to accurately express city, village, as well as rural area with scattered housing without major contradictions.

*Village life is an essential trait of our area*

We chose the expression significant site to highlight those selected by local partners among a greater number of choices: significant sites because of their qualities and capacity to sum up features and characteristics particularly revealing to illustrate the analyses of this project: architectural shape and processes or interventions. Because when we say that traditional architecture represents an enormous capital, this is true from a patrimonial point of view, in the broadest sense of the word, but even more so through the huge stock of constructions it constitutes, with thousands of villages and thousands of scattered houses, landscapes, and million of inhabitants. That is why it is especially necessary to consider the selection as just a modest sample of the richness and density of traditional Mediterranean sites.

The sites selected are dispatched as follows: one quarter on the sea side, two thirds in plain, on plateaux or hills, and a little less than one quarter in high mountain areas. As concerns population, we find two sites chosen among urban environments of over one million inhabitants, up to 25 sites among villages of under 5 000 inhabitants.

If agriculture, cattle and fishing account for three-quarters of main traditional activities for all the sites, these are modified by new ones today. Tourism and industry represent new emerging activities for 58 out of 71 sites.

When observing the health or condition of these sites, it is usually more positive than for typologies alone. A logical point, owing to the fact that a site profits from certain more global dynamism and mechanisms which do not usually favour particular traditional architectural places. Nevertheless, stagnation seems to prevail for 45 % of the selected sites.

With sites, we once again notice great differences between the north western and south eastern banks of the Mediterranean: differences in economic and human resources, experience, advanced training, but also in population awareness and participation; a sensitised population is more able to dedicate time and energy to these questions. Differences also exist as concerns administrative procedures and decentralisation, as well as flexibility and autonomy of local authorities. This does not mean that relevant interventions occur on one bank only: significant projects have been implemented for years on the south and eastern banks. To these structural differences, we must add the morphological differences of each site, their state of preservation, and their potential and ability to react.
We can also note a tendency towards an increased collaboration between the two banks, based on the sites, which should allow for most welcome and invaluable exchanges.

The sites selected provide a broad range of possibilities and especially a true and earnest experience: a real future for the joint partnership which has only just begun.
Notes:

(1) This is not the time and place to discuss the various approaches authors have developed in diverse fields. It is however useful to point out some of these terms: architecture can be popular, vernacular, traditional, primitive, anonymous, without architect, spontaneous... A potentially long list of possibilities, sometimes strewn with relevant terms, and occasionally extremely ambiguous ones. We must comment on the abusive or perverse ways in which the word traditional is often used, systematically giving archaic or obsolete meanings. These misuses are wrong and most of all dangerous, because of the harmful corollaries they can generate in the field of preservation and rehabilitation of traditional architecture.

Beyond these issues, we must quote Jean Cuisenier: “Tradition is not exclusive to the past and long gone times: so many contemporary social practices are an expression of popular tradition!” Jean Cuisenier, La Tradition populaire, PUF, 1995.

(2) Tradition, from the Latin word traditio. The verb tradire means to transmit, to give “...construction tradition is to architecture what oral tradition is to literature...” Ortiz de Ceballos, Le Val d’Aran, Contenido de un pasaje, Cuadernos de Arquitectura, 116.

(3) Traditional knowledge was also invested in public constructions (schools, buildings, hospitals, markets, caravanserais, dams...) and religious constructions (mosques, churches, tombs...) producing a very effective, beautiful, and sensitive architecture.

(4) The Mediterranean area is rich with complementary constructions. We can mention them on a non comprehensive basis: wells, huts, mills, cisterns, dy ing units, pigeon houses...

(5) It goes without saying that units consist of one or more houses; various buildings associated with the productive economy are presented as a whole and indexed.

(6) The well was often the first construction undertaken, since it is a primary condition for a settling, and guarantees the permanence of a given spot or site. Albert Demangeon in the introduction of one of the four determining factors (water, defensive system, production activities, ethnic traditions) which explain grouped or scattered housing. A. Demangeon, Problèmes de géographie humaine, A. Colin, 1947.


(8) According to countries, whether an urban area or rural area is examined, the end of pre-industrial construction can be set at different periods: from the last third of the XIXth century for large European cities, after the second world war in the West zone as a whole, after independence in the South and East Mediterranean, sometimes still preserved today.

(9) Amongst which: Le Corbusier, Wright, Sert, Aalto, Tange, Mies van der Rohe...

(10) "Wrongly regarded as minor structures compared to the architecture of architects, the comparative study of vernacular architecture acknowledges all the aspects of a space more genuinely and less emphatically: this architecture is actually lived in, it is in use, therefore more significant..." Pr. Frédéric Aubry in the introduction of the Architecture Vernaculaire, S. Guindani, U. Dooeper, PPUF, 1990.

(11) We must not confuse total and comprehensive. The vocation of this project was never to replace the accuracy, detail and scale of excellent, existing or future local monographs. This would anyhow be impossible to do. On the other hand, a global solution enlightens these local assets, these diversities, by connecting them to a larger common living space, which is the Mediterranean area.

(12) This relates to the plurality of criteria for the itemisation and understanding of construction. J. Robert. La Maison agricole. Essais de classification et dénominations.

(13) This does not exclude that the proposals undertaken in the field of classification were of great use, and constituted irreparable material, thanks to authors as: A. Demangeon, G Aymonino, A. Rossi, G.C. Argan, R. Grassi, amongst others.

(14) We should rather speak of a matrix, because this is a more feminine space, a life generator in the household.

(15) With richness and simplicity, André Ravereau defines a culture where one sits: sitting is "another perspective of life". A. Ravereau, La Casbah d’Alger, et le site crée la ville, Sindbad, 1989.
Chapter 2 - Typology Charts: LIVING SPACES. SIGNS OF LIFE

In the following pages, we'll try to illustrate all the significant features and characteristics of the Mediterranean way of life and the related living spaces we have evoked so far. There is such a great variety of traits, and so many significant nuances that this chapter would be incomplete without the attached CD-ROM. The following presentation conforms with the same multiple entry chart and multiple conception approach to express traditional Mediterranean architecture. We focused more on explanation and description, privileging facts and workmanship rather than trying to draw up a classification of models and objects. In our selection of examples we sought neither the most original nor the most spectacular or exceptional cases. On the contrary, we were guided by normal, common and daily examples. These qualities are more or less relevant according to the degree of vitality in the various typologies. We also accepted another constraint in our choice: the alternative presence of territories taking part in the CORPUS project, with examples taken here and there. This was necessary to ensure a good geographical distribution of examples, but also to avoid the heavy, overly publicised examples in traditional architecture. The choices were aimed at finding a balance between themes for the reader. The number of examples was determined by a compromise between the number of points that required graphic illustrations and the space available in this chapter, which was limited to preserve the equilibrium of the book.

We invite you on a voyage through plans and illustrations. All were drawn up today as traditional architecture has mostly been an oral tradition, transmitted directly on location. These illustrations also give a flavour and a colouring to our architecture. They will hopefully arise the interest and curiosity of the reader who can then navigate through our data-base. As this is a crucial objective, we hope the peaceful and intellectual thirst of a new Mediterranean navigator will be quenched.

"Through the years, I have become a man of all places. I have travelled the continents and yet have but one deep root: the Mediterranean. I am a Mediterranean man, overwhelmingly."

Le Corbusier

ARCHITECTURAL IMPLANTATION THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY

"The Mediterranean has never been a free paradise offered for the pleasure of humanity. Everything here had to be built, often with more pain and adversity than anywhere else." With these words, Fernand Braudel gives us the true colour of the area. Grouped or scattered housing, rural and urban environments were often considered as adversaries: harmonisation is not yet a fact (Ghardaïa, radial Medieval city in the M'Zab valley, Algeria (1) and scattered housing in the Maestrazgo, Valencia county, Spain (2)). If the work carried out in rural areas enabled and stimulated urban development, it is the vitality, rise and radiation of cities which have always fascinated people since Antiquity. It is the cities that displayed the most characteristic image of the Mediterranean. Let us lend our ears to the reflection of various great Mediterranean men of all ages: they reveal the various perceptions cast on the concept of foundation.

"What we call city is the main community above all others, the community that holds them all, is self-sufficient and contains everything needed for a good life" (Aristotle)

"At the time of city foundation, choosing a healthy place comes first (...) after choosing fertile lands to sustain the city, opening roads, spotting all nearby rivers or harbours opening onto the sea." (Vitruvius)

"Man is naturally made for a society or a Republic, says Aristotle; we can therefore consider it inevitable that man never stops building cities." (St Thomas Aquinas)
"Inhabitants living in the countryside limit themselves to the bare necessities and do not have the means to go beyond. City people, on the other hand, want to satisfy the needs created by luxury and constantly try to improve their living standards, ways of life and culture. Country life must have preceded city life: man first had to think of what was necessary before he could aspire to wellbeing." (Ibn Khaldoun)

"The smallness of this intimate fatherland [the city] does not cut us from the world: it on the contrary mysteriously helps us discern the great horizons of our time, Europe and the world, going beyond historically young national borders." (L. Benevolo)

Landscapes were tumbled in just a few decades. Cities become metropolises. Great readjustments are yet to be carried out: traditional architecture can contribute positively and actively, as an asset, an idea and a spirit, as an invaluable capital.

**ALL HEIGHTS CAN BE FOUND (ELEVATION AT ALL POSSIBLE HEIGHTS)**

"Since the appearance of the first archetypal shapes, human housing has never ceased to develop through a multitude of typologies: each shape is the result of a combination of long and hard processes, cultural improvements and a hearty adaptation to the environment. This abundance of shapes is the most representative spiritual and material production of man (...) each one of these elements has a meaning and a cultural value in itself, beyond a mere aesthetic and constructive fact". If that is the case everywhere, the marks of Giancarlo Cataldi ring to our ears with outstanding and vibrant strength when speaking of the Mediterranean area, which is altogether a rather modest sized area.

This brief set of illustrations is merely a foresight of the CD-ROM. It shows the wide range of answers to how one chooses to lay out his dwelling and the rich diversity of languages and expressions used to assert and materialise housing. This is true whether in rural environment and scattered housing (Alella, Catalonia, Spain (1)) or in grouped housing and cities (Rashid in Egypt (2) or Provence in France (3)). Cultural interbreeding traces are omnipresent in the Mediterranean: the marks and deposits of each period are obvious, as in the Ottoman influence in Rashid, North Africa. Differences are just as clear: if rooms can be used in polyvalent ways in Turkish houses ("one can sit, lay down, wash up, eat, and even cook in each room" reports Reha Ginay) this is not at all the case in the masia, in Catalonia, or in a house in Provence, in France, where rooms are strictly used for an exclusive purpose.

This rich diversity tends to prove that, in our modern society of information and consumption, only a few models are exploited in the media as a Mediterranean synthesis, which is obviously distorted and unfortunate. Many are those who would neither recognise nor acknowledge the Mediterranean typologies we have listed, considering them way too far from the Mediterranean stereotypes they are used to. One common stereotype is the simplistic, elementary, whitewashed cubic house. It casts its shadow on the genuine "historical miracles", according to Henry Glassie, examples of which can be found in Rashid, rich with traditional Turkish Mediterranean architecture.

**THE BASIC HOUSE**

The shelter house, the storage house, a very simple house to accommodate everyone and everything, perfectly adapted to an outdoor life for families with few belongings. The basic module. A single bay. This type of house has existed since the first age of settlers. In Macedonia, remains of over eight thousand years old basic houses were found, built on a square plan with well rounded angles. The clear circular shape of conical plant roofings still exists today. The tendency towards a rectangular plan was, in most case, a stage in its evolution. The small dimensions of the basic house allows for all roofing solutions: flat, conical, sloped on one or more sides, arched. The separation of people and
animals brought about significant changes. The painting by Giovanni Segantini: The Two Mothers (1889), tells of the great promiscuity and complicity of all inhabitants, people or animals, in the exiguity of this tiny area in the basic house. Today, though exceptionally so, a few examples of this style of life can still be found in a few places of the area.

In the examples hereafter, we can see a basic house in the area of Ouarsenis in Algeria. (1) Though it has a single room and therefore a single living space, the house is reorganised according to activity, on a hierarchical basis, contributing to an immaterial interior distribution of the whole space. The second house, in the Balearic Islands, (2) is a more explicit single unit. In this example, “basic” means that no evolution is possible: this type is to be taken as a whole, finished and closed, without any further development.

**THE COMPACT / COMPLEX HOUSE**

Two words moderate the same stage of a dwelling development. Both correspond to a house with specialised areas that clearly separate people and animals, although the same volume is often divided and most of the time used simultaneously for professional activities and residential purposes.

In the compact house, these roles are grouped in a same volume, sometimes on bumpy ground but nonetheless linked in a clearly single unit. The borderline between a building and a "grouped housing," built around a central unit with projecting extensions, is sometimes subtle and difficult to define. This metamorphosis of the original structure, medieval for example, is cleverly explained by J Miguel del Rey: the concept of compact house is well illustrated by the popular expression "under the same roof": all specialised areas, purposes, inhabitants and products have a specific place.

Although complex is often used as following a basic stage, the word is used here as a nuance of compact. When the notions of unit and compactness "blow up", specialisation is enhanced by a broadening of volumes, in multiple stages. These modifications may result in a longer continuous volume, beyond “the scale of a house”, generating a unit for both dwelling and production. It is actually a “grouping”, a "complex". The complex house is an answer to the trend of "large farms and their need for labour" as noted by P. Deffontaines. It can be found in the Andalusian plains and in the vineyards of Languedoc.

Examples of compact houses: Murtoa, Portugal (1); Compact and complex house in Luberon, France (2); “Blown up” complex house in Montoro, Cordoba (3) and complex house in Ain Lakova, Morocco (4).

**HOUSE WITH A PATIO**

The patio has appeared or been transferred on to all great Mediterranean civilisations since antiquity. The west ed-dar (the centre of the house) of Arab-Moslem people already centred houses in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Phoenicia, Etruria, as well as Greek and Roman homes (whose domus was probably already inherited from an Indo-European model, and has influenced the Latin Middle-Ages and the Arab-Moslem world). Besides, the patio was a first rate referential element for great XXth century architects, amongst which Mies van der Rohe, who incorporated the patio with most acute wisdom. The history of each of these houses is different and varies through the ages: probably as far back as Etrurian times for the Anatolian iwan, or in the wake of the multiple thousand-year-old Ur for the Greek house in Perinea. The final household core achieved in each culture was expressed with a wide palette of colours. It respects the same vocation and spirit, the same feeling found in words of George Marçais: "You are at home in your house, at home in your courtyard, with a piece of sky which belongs to you only". The patio hides nothing, it emphasises the intimacy and connects you to the sky, the spiritual world, the cosmos. It guards inside life, in the way, in Antiquity, it helped create a reassuring and domesticated area in an often shaken landscape, stranded amidst miles of unknown horizon.
The two examples hereafter, a house in the Kasbah of Algiers (1) and a house in Chefchaouen (Morocco) (2) bring forth two significant features. In the Kasbah, the force of tradition and local ways dominates: typically local houses soar gracefully towards the sky, although we can spot Turkish traits and craftmanships here and there. In Morocco, we could call this type of architecture a “to and fro” architecture: it travelled from Maghreb to Andalusia and back so often, and is so intimately blended, it became a harmonious, a literally woven testimony of Mediterranean interbreeding.

**HOUSE WITH A COURTYARD**

It is no coincidence French, a most accurate language, integrated the word patio to its terminology to express the subtle difference between courtyard and patio. We find the same attempt in confining an outside area in a particular way, but with a definitely less compact and certainly more indistinct result. Certain elements create and reinforce these differences:

- the size of a courtyard deforms or distorts the scale of both material elements, (body of the construction, relativity between people and building,) and immaterial elements (view and gaze, the sound of voices),

- sometimes the position of a courtyard is off centre, which complicates and may hamper the equilibrium between the various areas and individuals),

- the presence of a fence (i.e. the absence of a continuous surrounding dwelling wall, which is a most outstanding trait of a patio as defined by Hassan Fathy),

- the promiscuity and number of activities (farming, production) and individuals (people and animals) who cohabit and generate a very different pace of life.

- finally the processing of this area, which differs from both a composition and texture point of view.

The courtyard remains a common shape in all areas. In this example of a farm in Cyprus (1), the fence is more decisive to demarcate the courtyard than the building itself, while in this other example in Jordan (2), a house with a quasi patio-type courtyard is another clear attempt to domesticate an outside area and make it into a more specific private area. In light construction, even in nomad camps, this need is expressed and various solutions are implemented. The courtyard certainly evolved from a primitive yearning of all men to create a private space for themselves, using stones, branches, etc.

**HOUSE WITH A GARDEN**

In spite of meagre, irregular rains in many zones of the area strewn with dry, thirsty landscapes, gardens, trees, flowers and exuberant colours and perfumes have always sprout from Mediterranean soils since Antiquity. They have been associated to dwelling and construction in more or less fine and discrete ways: from the gardens of Babylon, that the Greeks considered as one of the Seven Wonders in the world, through the plentiful scented Egyptian gardens and the gardens abutting Roman galleries (peristyle), to the large gardens of the summer villas of Pashas or Raïs of North Africa, Mediterranean houses have always first domesticated the land before pouring in colours and flavours. In this garden, often a larger stretch than the house itself, traditional economy has indeed found pleasure and an effective bio-climatic regulation system, but also a means of survival: vegetables, plants, medicine herbs, and fruits, are plentiful in this private, individual oasis.

The house with a garden in Mugla, Turkey, (1) and the Turkish house in general, embodies this concept of a completely functional, generous, beautiful and exuberant garden. The house opens fully onto the garden through its sofa.
It is surely no coincidence that this house with a garden, whether modest or noble, is expressed with such abundance in Turkey. The influence of civilisations just beyond the Eastern Mediterranean has been of primary importance. The "silk carpet gardens", the beautiful floral motive tiling, or the Persian coloured miniatures in medieval books where houses with gardens symbolise "paradise", are a most relevant source. Soliman the Great, who remarkably blended Turkish, Islamic and European traditions, revealing a fine line of artists and thinkers, wrote "...if you yearn to be allowed in the gardens of Heaven to find the love and grace."

SUMMER AND WINTER HOUSES

"In summer, the tent is too hot, the flīj produces shade but doesn't stop the heat. Therefore, semi-nomads fold it up and prefer to use a light hut made of disu on a carcass of branches, the khoţ. We found 17 khoţ near Bir Amir, of the Trarma population, who settled there in August, while we had found them under a tent, twenty kilometres further East, in late March." These few words by André Louis illustrate this rich and particular ways of Mediterranean people to adapt their house to seasons. Since Antiquity, countless documents have described the summer dwelling, the country house, which is often the counterpoint to rural and city worlds. In his Epistolae, Plinius wrote: "No protocol, nobody nagging at the door, all is quiet and peaceful. The goodness of the climate renders a more serene sky and purer air: I feel my body is healthier and my mind more free...". Although quite far from the luxurious Tusci evoked by the Roman historian, the examples of Ghardaía in Algeria (1, 2) and Sfax in Tunisia (3, 4) also take us into an environment where calm, leisure and casual moral standards and less urban rigidity are predominant, making people yearn for this long desired seasonal transhumance.

In the case of Ghardaía, the layout of the summer house is substantially transformed. The house is built at the heart of the palm plantation, created by the Mozabites from the very first tree to a plantation of over seven hundred thousand palm trees. This house is adapted and profiled in harmony with the palm trees: they are often integrated in the patio itself. Palm trees are cared for and cherished, becoming actual inhabitants.

In Sfax, the summer country house is far from the protective médina with its reassuring ramparts, and takes on a shape of fortress. The Arabic name for this house, bordj, reminds us of this fortification connotation. Its volume is compact, the façades are almost without openings and the crossings are arched: all these aspects clearly underline this fortress idea. In these two examples, although the patio is rather small, it is ever so present.

HOUSE AND DEFENCE

Though we may not have many historical chronicles, traditional Mediterranean architecture testifies to the history of the area: it bears the marks of many invasions and upheavals, in that defensive concerns are obvious and numerous in the very construction of buildings, throughout the area and at all periods.

A large variety of solutions was implemented to try safeguard and defend the house or city. Ramparts have been used since Antiquity: it is the “protecting city”, in all shapes according to civilisations and times. Grouping was already reassuring. When speaking of scattered housing, the tendency was to build a fortress house. In both cases, camouflage and difficult access contributed to efficient defence. Sea side villages were often duplicated, further inland at the time of pirate raids, and on the littoral at quieter times. The watch point has always been present and predominant, a primary condition for many settlements and a decisive factor for a number of typologies.

But if seclusion in resistant, powerful cities or fortress houses was a common streak and the strategy adopted by sedentary societies, they were not the only ones. Traditionally nomad societies have a
completely different view on the issue. In his History of Turks, Jean-Paul Roux describes this other angle: "Fascinated by sedentary life, nomads, on the contrary, have had to resist its appeal, as for them, it was a source of so many dangers. As we could see in the VIIth century, when Bilge Kaghán was so eager to build a city and lock himself up in it, and yet yielded reluctantly to the insistence of his counsellor Tonyukk, who considered cities to be a major threat for the survival of the empire".

Tower-house in Mani, Greece (1) and a fama with a medieval tower in Huerta de Murcia, in Spain. (2)

**THE EVOLUTIONARY OR FINAL HOUSE**

Two ways are sought here in the design and construction of the house: one is “embryonic” and the other “comprehensive”. Indeed, in the Mediterranean area, we find the house which starts from a basic matrix and evolves through a multiplicative process of this base unit, and the house which is “achieved from the start”, a complete house according to the corresponding model (examples in Acre, Israel (3) and Bodrum, in Turkey (4)). In the first case, it tends to extend and complete a certain program towards a final stage, generally never modified afterwards, and differs substantially from a house enlargement. In the second case, the house will seldom tolerate any significant modifications.

The term “evolutionary” can be ambiguous according to the construction. The two following examples hereafter illustrate two radically different ways. In Makrinari, in Cyprus (1), we start off with a basic module with a single bay, a discrete, unspecialised area, to an area which gets increasingly specialised, multiples spans. The floor area increases substantially, the number of bays is extended, following the same module but with diaphragm arches, therefore opening generous spaces to the point of “absorbing” the basic module pattern. What we observe here isn’t a mere unit multiplication, but rather the creation of a new inhabited unit with new areas, new purposes and new techniques: "From an all-purpose area, “the basic type”, where nothing is differentiated and all activities are mixed (...), man gradually separates the activities he considers must be separated, granting a specific area to each activity... “ G. Canigga explains.

As for the house of Sāfasfat in Morocco (2), the basic module is "unfolded" from cultural and traditional heritage, gradually satisfying new needs and possibilities. The bit (room or element) is multiplied, altering neither the original module nor the spans, subtly keeping the same versatility in the process: the fence is gradually replaced by "living walls", which are not made of masonry but of life.

**NOMAD HOUSE OR TROGLODYTE HOUSE**

In Arabic, we can designate nomads with the epithet rahâlā, whose root means: “to move”. This is precisely the idea expressed by A. Louis: "the tent is a most mobile element, a dwelling for lands of travel". Ibn Khaldun wrote: "...he (the nomad) lives under his tent, raises his camels, rides his horse, transports his residence from one place to another, spends summer in the Tell and winter in the desert." For the nomad, this style of life is the only one worth living. For him, village life is imprisonment; a spiritual and material degradation. According to Ahmed Najah, in the eyes of nomads, villagers are perceived as "domesticated mice". The tent is shaped with long bands of fabric that are sewn together by the women, then tied and taught with ropes on wooden stakes that are driven in the sand. The inside area is divided up into two areas, one for men and another for women, using carpets or bags of supplies.

If a tent, here a tent and a camp in Palestine (1), represents lightness and a mark of fugitive seasonal presence, troglodyte housing incarnates the most intimate communion of man and earth; jhar, a "den", is the Arabic word used to designate a house in Matmata. Between these two extremes, we can find a rich array of housing (huts made of branches, semi-trogloodyte housing...), nomad and settling trends, which testifies to the way these men have made shy, reluctant attempts to let go of their cherished mode of life.
The layout plan of a house in Matmata (Tunisia) (2) with three fundamental parts, the entry, the basin and the rooms, illustrates the specialisation and profusion of areas around the mhures (literally translated, the word means mortar, evoking its morphology), where a few rooms can even extend into an alcove or a room for storage and supplies. In areas where these houses are inhabited by completely sedentary populations, the furnishing is clearly careful and comfortable.