NEW “SYSTEM” OF PRESENTATION OF UMAYYAD DESERT CASTLES IN JORDAN. INTEGRAL MUSEUM OF UMAYYAD CIVILIZATION
Jamal ILAYAN*, Jordanie / Jordan

INTRODUCTION

These ancient castles were built as travel stations along the road between the Umayyad capital, Damascus, in Syria and the other district cities in Iraq and Arabia. The interpretation of these castles will be based on understanding the reasons for their foundation, their typology, function, structure and the relationships between them. At present these castles need a new system for their presentation that reflects their present condition while preserving and respecting their values and significance. The new system offers to the public a clear view of the integral aspects of the Umayyad civilization, which will help in the development of the program “Museum with No Frontiers” (MWNF). Each one of these castles will present one part of that civilization museum, in accordance with its architectural characteristics and appropriate development management.

A. Analyses and Interpretations of the ancient system

In the first part of this study we need to analyze and interpret all aspects that are necessary for developing our project proposal. The aspects we need to stabilize the most are the significance and values (tangible and intangible) of the ancient system. The second part of the study consists of the presentation of the new system of Umayyad castles that will be based on the first part of the study.

I. General typology system

Desert castles belong to the typology of suburban ancient structures. There are many correlations between Umayyad castles and the previous suburban ancient structures. We can see Persian and Roman architectural influences, which are the result first of the central location of Syria and second, of Islamic spiritual unity.

Ancient civilizations erected structures outside the cities for different purposes. For example, in Syria Persians, Romans and their Arabic allies built agricultural houses, Khans, castles and control towers. Babylonians built the first Khan in Mesopotamia in the second century, with a square plan and a central portico. This typology influenced the general plan of Umayyad castles. We can identify the Byzantine influence in the technical structure and in the adaptation of the typology (way in which the space was used) of single apartments in the Umayyad castles.

II. Interpretation of the system of ancient Umayyad castles (significance and historical value of the ancient system)

This study focused on the system and its various elements. This complex system was developed over time and for different reasons. The first group of castles was built between 661 and 685 AD by Muawiya I and his son Yazid I for leisure and recreation, with functions similar to those of a Roman villa. The following castles in the Levant are representative of the foregoing group: Anjar, Minyah and Jabal Usays. The second group was built for political reasons, as propaganda for Umayyad policies and for official caravans (between the capital, Damascus, in Syria and other district cities in Arabia and in Iraq, such as Amman, Jerusalem, Kharana and Muaqqar), between 685 and 717 by Abd Al Malik and his two sons, Al Walid and Suliman.

1 “MWNF is a new exhibition concept. The trial exhibit “Museum with No Frontiers” is a program designed to take advantage of the merits of artistic and cultural heritage based on a new concept. Artworks remain in situ and the visitor travels to discover works in their home environment.” From a Jordanian tourist publication.

2 Hellenistic culture, in the past and in the same region in Syria, was the first to make a fusion of the two cultures, oriental and occidental.

3 V. Strica, Origine e primi sviluppi dell’architettura civile musulmana, Istituto Tipografico Editoriale, Vinezia 1967, pp. 87 - 88

4 We have to remember that Ibn Khalidun, in his Muqaddema, considered that all basic structures were built by nomads as single houses scattered in the desert, and that cities developed later. See Ibn Khalidun, Al Muqaddema, Beirut 1995 p. 116.

5 There are different interpretations for these castles. The first one provides a nostalgic reason (Bedouin desert life). This theory was proposed by Musil and Lamens. The second interpretation, by Suvage and Grabar, assumes that Umayyad castles were a sort of Roman villa in a fertile territory. The third one, presented by Gaube and Bisha, gives the ancient system of castles the function of stations for official caravans. The last one, a political and socio-economic interpretation, is proposed by S. Urice. In reality, all of these interpretations are correct for each group of castles (see bibliography).

6 “Roman villas in Syria were richer because of local architectural elements”. V. Strica, op.cit. p. 20
In addition to this system, two baths, Amra and Sarah, were also built for their comfort. The third group appeared in the Late Umayyad period, between 717 and 743, under Hisham and Yazid II, who wished to revitalize the socio-economical situation. They started to use some of the previous castles, like Kharana and Muaqqar, as caravan khans. For the same reason they also began to use once more some Roman castles, like Azraq and Hallabat, and they built new castles, such as Tuba, Mshatta, al Hir al Sharqi, al Hir al Ghari, Jerusalem and Qasr Hisham.

II. Feasibility study for the new system
A feasibility study is a rational method for choosing the correct function for the (monuments) elements of the system. An example of economic cost and benefit analysis has been applied to Qasr Kharana. We considered the comparison between the two project proposals for Kharana. Proposal A is the “MWNF” scheme and proposal B is ours, as part of the “Integral Museum of Umayyad Civilization”. We did not consider the cost of conservation works because it is the same for the two proposed projects. The result of the cost analysis of Proposal A is of 83,000$; the cost of proposal B is 154,000$, while the benefits are 50,000$ and 205,000$, respectively. The relationship between cost and benefit is more favourable in the case of the second proposal.

III. The integral museum idea
This study of the integral museum of Umayyad civilization came as a project proposal to develop the program “Museum With no Frontiers” (MWNF), financed by the European Union’s Meda Programme, Euromed Heritage and with the participation of the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. MWNF organizes “Islamic art in the Mediterranean” as part of the “International Exhibition trials” in different countries in the Mediterranean. The Jordanian exhibition is entitled “The Umayyad, the Commencement of Islamic art”.

They can be prepared for use only with some restoration works.

Four other castles, Amman, Qastal, Azraq and Sarah, are in a partial state of conservation, which has enabled their use as museums. We can increase their capability with restoration works and anastiloses.

The remaining four castles, Hallabat, Tuba, Muaqqar and Mshatta, are in bad condition and in need of more extensive conservation works, such as restoration, anastilosis, construction of shelters, etc. This is the present state of the particular elements of the system of desert castles. We must also analyze the present condition of the overall system and the possibility for its use. We have to examine its accessibility and its collective factors.

All of the castles are linked by state roads, which are highly frequented by tourists and passengers traveling between Amman, Syria, Arabia and Iraq. This fact guarantees the favourable development of our proposal.

B. Projecting the past into the future: presentation of the new system
We study the past in order to understand the present and to plan for the future. In previous studies we defended different aspects, analyses and interpretations of desert castles. In this paragraph we wish to identify their present condition in order to put forward our project proposal for their future.

I. Present condition of the castles and their conservation
The present state of the castles and their conservation are important for making an appropriate proposal for the presentation of the new system. In Jordan we have ten castles, two of which are Amra and Kharana, in an integral original condition, still preserving their volumes.

For the classification values we refer to: A. Regal, Il moderno culto dei monumenti, la sua essenza il suo sviluppo, introduzione alla legge sulla protezione dei monumenti, Der modern de nkmalksus, sien wen, sien endesheung zum denkmal schgeschats. Wien Braunmuller 1903, Traduzione da Maria Annunziata Lima; B. M. Feilden, J. Jokilehto Management Guidelines for World Cultural Heritage Sites ICCROM, Rome, 1998 pp. 11 - 21.

Qasr Amra is listed as World Cultural Heritage Site. It underwent extensive restoration in the 1970’s by the Spanish archaeological mission.

For the classification values we refer to: A. Regal, Il moderno culto dei monumenti, la sua essenza il suo sviluppo, introduzione alla legge sulla protezione dei monumenti, Der modern de nkmalksus, sien wen, sien endesheung zum denkmal schgeschats. Wien Braunmuller 1903, Traduzione da Maria Annunziata Lima; B. M. Feilden, J. Jokilehto Management Guidelines for World Cultural Heritage Sites ICCROM, Rome, 1998 pp. 11 - 21.

Qasr Amra is listed as World Cultural Heritage Site. It underwent extensive restoration in the 1970’s by the Spanish archaeological mission.

Sub-theme C: Conserving and managing intangible heritage - methods
Sous-thème C : Conservation et gestion du patrimoine immatériel - méthodes

Place - memory - meaning: preserving intangible values in monuments and sites
La mémoire des lieux – préserver le sens et les valeurs immatérielles des monuments et des sites
In Jordan, we have five itineraries. Umayyad castles (see fig 2) represent the second one. The MWNF programme uses each castle as a single museum in itself. The new proposal will result in a productive function as a part of the integral museum, which reflects one aspect of the Umayyad civilization, while always respecting values and architectural characteristics.

IV. The new system: integral museum of the Umayyad civilization

The presentation of the new system consists of two dimensions. The first one is in a general level: all castles have one function as part of the integral museum, reflecting the complex relationship of the ancient system. The second level relates to the association of one sub-function of the integral museum to each single castle. In this association we have to respect the guidelines for the use of ancient monuments as stated in the fifth article10 of the Venice Charter. Therefore, we specified four criteria for choosing the function of each castle (see fig 3). They are:

1. Not to change the interior or exterior form of a castle.
2. Not to change the interior distribution or design of a castle.
3. The function must preserve the values of a castle.
4. The function must be compatible with the present condition, significance and historic value of the castle.

Krana constitutes an example of this type of use, with an exhibit of hand-made products on the ground floor, and a museum of original artifacts on the first floor (see fig 4).

Conclusion and recommendations

- The new system will be founded on the cultural supports of the ancient one.
- The function of the system gives more significance to the system.
- The method of presentation used is based on analyses and interpretations of values, significance and present condition of the monuments.

Using a monument helps in its conservation and thus becomes a development aid for society.

10 The fifth article of the Venice Charter (1964) states: “The conservation of monuments is always facilitated by making use of them for some socially useful purpose. Such use is therefore desirable but it must not change the lay-out or decoration of the building. It is within these limits only that modifications demanded by a change of function should be envisaged and may be permitted.” Documentation Center, UNESCO – ICOMOS Paris

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- V. Strica, Origine e primi sviluppi dell’architettura civile musulmana, Istituto Tipografico Editoriale, Venezia 1967
- Ibn Khaldun, Al Magaddema Dar al kitab al lubnani litibah wal nsher Beirut 1959
- H. Lamens, La Badia et la Hira sous les Omeyyades, M.F.O.B., VI, 1910
- U. Grabar, Arte islamica, la formazione di una civiltà”, Milano 1989
- A. Regal Il moderno culto dei monumenti, la sua essenza il suo sviluppo, intraduzione alla legge sulla protezione dei monumenti, Der modern de nkmalkulsus, sien wesen, siene entessehung zum denklmal schroxgesaxt. Wien Braunmuller 1903, Traduzione da Maria Annunziata Lima.
- Giordania, Gli Omayyadi la nascita dell’arte islamica, in Museo senza frontiera Ottobre 1998, Roma

*Jamal Shafiq ILAYAN

- Ph.D. in Architectural Conservation, 1999, Naples Federico II University, Italy
- Ph.D. in Architectural Design, 1996, Rome La Sapienza University, Italy
- M.Sc. in Restoration of Monuments, 2000, Rome La Sapienza University, Italy
- High Diploma Architectural Design by Computer, 1990, Rome La Sapienza University, Italy
- B.Sc. Architecture, 1989, Naples Federico II University, Italy
- Member of International ICOMOS Committee, Paris
- Assistant professor at Yarmouk University, Member of International ICOMOS Committee, Paris
- Participation in different restoration projects in Italy
- Publication of different papers in international reviews
- Participation in different restoration projects in Italy

Place – memory – meaning: preserving intangible values in monuments and sites
La mémoire des lieux – préserver le sens et les valeurs immatérielles des monuments et des sites
**NEW “SYSTEM” OF PRESENTATION OF UMAYYAD DESERT CASTLES IN JORDAN. INTEGRAL MUSEUM OF UMAYYAD CIVILIZATION**

*Jamal ILAYAN*, Jordanie / Jordan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analyses of cultural elements</th>
<th>Amman</th>
<th>Qastal</th>
<th>Mashatta</th>
<th>Kharana</th>
<th>Amra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date of building</strong></td>
<td>685 – 715</td>
<td>661 – 685</td>
<td>717 – 743</td>
<td>685 - 715</td>
<td>685 - 715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Architectural plan</strong></td>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>Square</td>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>Square</td>
<td>Complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dimensions</strong></td>
<td>~160x160 m</td>
<td>68x68</td>
<td>~144x144 m</td>
<td>36x35 m, ~ 70 mq</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parts of monument</strong></td>
<td>Five parts</td>
<td>One part</td>
<td>Five parts</td>
<td>One part</td>
<td>Seven parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proportions of principal façade</strong></td>
<td>Symmetrical</td>
<td>Symmetrical</td>
<td>Symmetrical</td>
<td>Symmetrical</td>
<td>Asymmetrical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Architectural typology</strong></td>
<td>More than one courtyard</td>
<td>One courtyard</td>
<td>More than one courtyard</td>
<td>One courtyard</td>
<td>Organic composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of floors</strong></td>
<td>One</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Construction system</strong></td>
<td>Arches, vaults, dome</td>
<td>Arches and corbel vault</td>
<td>Ogival barrel vaults</td>
<td>Transversal arch and barrel vault</td>
<td>Transversal arch and barrel vault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material</strong></td>
<td>Square stone</td>
<td>Square stone</td>
<td>Square stone</td>
<td>Red brick</td>
<td>Irregular stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Portico</strong></td>
<td>One central road</td>
<td>Two levels in courtyard</td>
<td>One central road</td>
<td>Two levels in courtyard</td>
<td>No portico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Courtyard</strong></td>
<td>More than two courtyards</td>
<td>One courtyard</td>
<td>More than two courtyards</td>
<td>One courtyard</td>
<td>No courtyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principal upstairs</strong></td>
<td>More than two</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staircase position</strong></td>
<td>No staircases</td>
<td>Behind the entrance</td>
<td>No staircase</td>
<td>In the south of courtyard</td>
<td>No staircase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reception room</strong></td>
<td>On ground floor</td>
<td>On second floor</td>
<td>On ground floor</td>
<td>On second floor</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entrance</strong></td>
<td>With portico</td>
<td>With iwan</td>
<td>With portico</td>
<td>With iwan</td>
<td>Simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience room</strong></td>
<td>Ground floor, with iwan</td>
<td>First plan, with two half-domes</td>
<td>Ground floor, with iwan</td>
<td>First plan with two half-domes</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mosque location</strong></td>
<td>On ground floor</td>
<td>On ground floor</td>
<td>On second floor</td>
<td>On second floor</td>
<td>Outside qasr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Towers</strong></td>
<td>No towers</td>
<td>Structure towers</td>
<td>Structure towers</td>
<td>Structure towers</td>
<td>No towers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fortification system</strong></td>
<td>Fortified site</td>
<td>Fortified building</td>
<td>Fortified complex</td>
<td>Fortified building</td>
<td>Not fortified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Construction stratification</strong></td>
<td>More than two phases</td>
<td>Two phases</td>
<td>One phase</td>
<td>Two phases</td>
<td>One phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interior decoration</strong></td>
<td>Stone sculpture</td>
<td>Gypsum roses</td>
<td>Stone capitals</td>
<td>Gypsum roses</td>
<td>Wall frescoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exterior decoration</strong></td>
<td>Stone sculpture</td>
<td>Molding panel over entrance</td>
<td>Stone capitals</td>
<td>Mold brick and moulding panel over entrance</td>
<td>No exterior decoration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CASTLES**

Analysis of the architectural, artistic and technical values of each castle.

N.B. We include the most important castles that display the elements for analysis.
“MWNF general plan of trails” exhibit in Jordan; the second one is of Umayyad castles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Castle</th>
<th>Part of integral museum (singular function exhibit)</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amman</td>
<td>Political</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qastal</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mshatta</td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muaqqar</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kharana</td>
<td>Artifacts</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amra</td>
<td>Architectural and art</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azraq</td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuba</td>
<td>Desert life</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallabat</td>
<td>Relationship with other civilization</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Castles’ function, part of integral museum of Umayyad civilization
We give degrees of satisfaction of function criteria from one to three.
A. Not to change the interior or exterior form of the castle.
B. Not to change the interior distribution or design of the castle.
C. The function must preserve the values of the castle.
D. The function must be compatible with the present condition, significance and historic value of the castle.
N.B. In this figure we include all Umayyad castles in Jordan.
Kharana, proposal project, hand-made products on the ground floor, and museum exhibit of original artifacts on the first floor.

Credits for illustrations
All illustrations by the author. Fig. 2 is taken from Giordania, Gli Omayyadi la nasceta dell’arte islamica, in Museo senza frontiera Ottobre 1998, Roma