

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

N° 499

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Medina of Kairouan

Location : Governorate of Kairouan

State Party : Tunisia

Date : December 30, 1987

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria I, II, III, V and VI.

C) JUSTIFICATION

The establishment of the garrison at al-Kayrawan by Oqba Ibn Nafî in the year 50 of the Hegira (670 A.D.) marked a decisive step in the history of the Islamic conversion of Ifrîqiya. The first Arab incursions, which began in 647, had been more an offensive raiding strategy than attempts at permanent occupation. Replacing a temporary encampment at Al-Karn, Kairouan became an essential element in the conquest because of its key position, midway between the coast threatened by the return of the Byzantine fleets and the mountains controlled by the Berbers.

The city's beginnings were difficult due to Berber irredentism. In the 7th century, it was menaced by Kosaila, then by the Kahina, and was taken in 688. In the 8th century, the Kharidjite Berbers overran it (745). The Arabs, however, never disputed the important status accorded Sidi Oqba's settlement. Kairouan remained the chief city of Ifrîqiya, the seat of the governor representing the authority of the Omeyyad caliphs in Damascus and later the Abbassid caliphs in Baghdad.

When the Aghlabid emirs became nearly fully independent from the Abbassids (800-909), Kairouan became a true capital city. The Great Mosque was rebuilt by the Emir Ziyadat Allah I in 836 and again in 862-863 by the Emir Abou Ibrahim Ahmad, who also had certain spectacular urban projects carried out. These included the Basin of the Aghlabids filled by water brought through a 36 km aqueduct from the Cherichera Djebel. During a period of civil and religious peace, the Aghlabids relinquished the governor's palace and emirs had residences built several kilometers south of Kairouan at Al-Abbassiya and Raqqada (876).

It was at Raqqada that the Fatimid Obaid Allah made a triumphant entry in December 909 after his victory over the Aghlabid forces. Declaring he was the Mahdi, he proclaimed himself imam and caliph. Under the rule of this Shi-ite imam (910-934), Kairouan at first receded somewhat in importance. The new capital Mahdia, founded in 916, was better suited to the imam's expansionist policy directed toward the Orient. But when troubles began, the Fatimids returned to Kairouan. In 947-948, the third caliph, Al-Mansour, founded the new city of Sabra Al-Mansouria. Located 1.5 km south of the former capital, it was a circular walled area of approximately 100 hectares. The transfer of the Fatimid caliphate to Cairo in 972 put an end to the two-capital situation.

After the 10th century, Kairouan no longer directly participated in the major events shaping world history. The city had many religious and political problems and was invaded and sacked by the Hilalians in 1057. Beginning in 1160, and particularly during the Hafside dynasty (1230-1574), Tunis, which up to then had occasionally been a capital city, became a real centre of political power as well as one of the most populated cities in Africa. But it never succeeded in stripping Kairouan of its status as the holy city of the Maghreb, a position it still enjoys throughout the Islamic world.

The considerable weight of history is still palpable in the 54-hectare medina which is surrounded by more than 3 kilometers of walls, and in the neighborhood districts described in the nomination. However, certain remarkable monuments dating from the early centuries of the Hegira (the Great Mosque, the Mosque of the Three Doors, the Basin of the Aghlabids) need to be carefully distinguished from the profusion of more recent or remodeled religious edifices (the mosques of el Bey and el Malek, the Zawiya of Sidi Sahab, the Zawiya of Sidi Amor Abbada, the Zawiya of Sidi Abid el Ghariani). In their present form, these buildings date for the most part from the last three centuries. The immense majority of houses and souks in the ancient honeycomb of passageways, where a number of wells and fountains are still to be found, form a traditional and coherent urban fabric.

ICOMOS recommends the inclusion of Kairouan on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria I, II, III, V and VI.

- **Criterion I.** The Great Mosque, rebuilt in the 9th century, is not only one of the major monuments of Islam but also a universal architectural masterpiece. The many but small changes in it have not altered the layout of this place of prayer, which forms a quadrilateral of 135m by 80m. At its southern end is a hypostyle prayer room with 17 naves supported by a "forest" of columns in marble and porphyry. On the north is a vast flagstone courtyard bordered with porticoes, interrupted in the middle of the smaller northern end by the massive square-shaped three-story minaret.

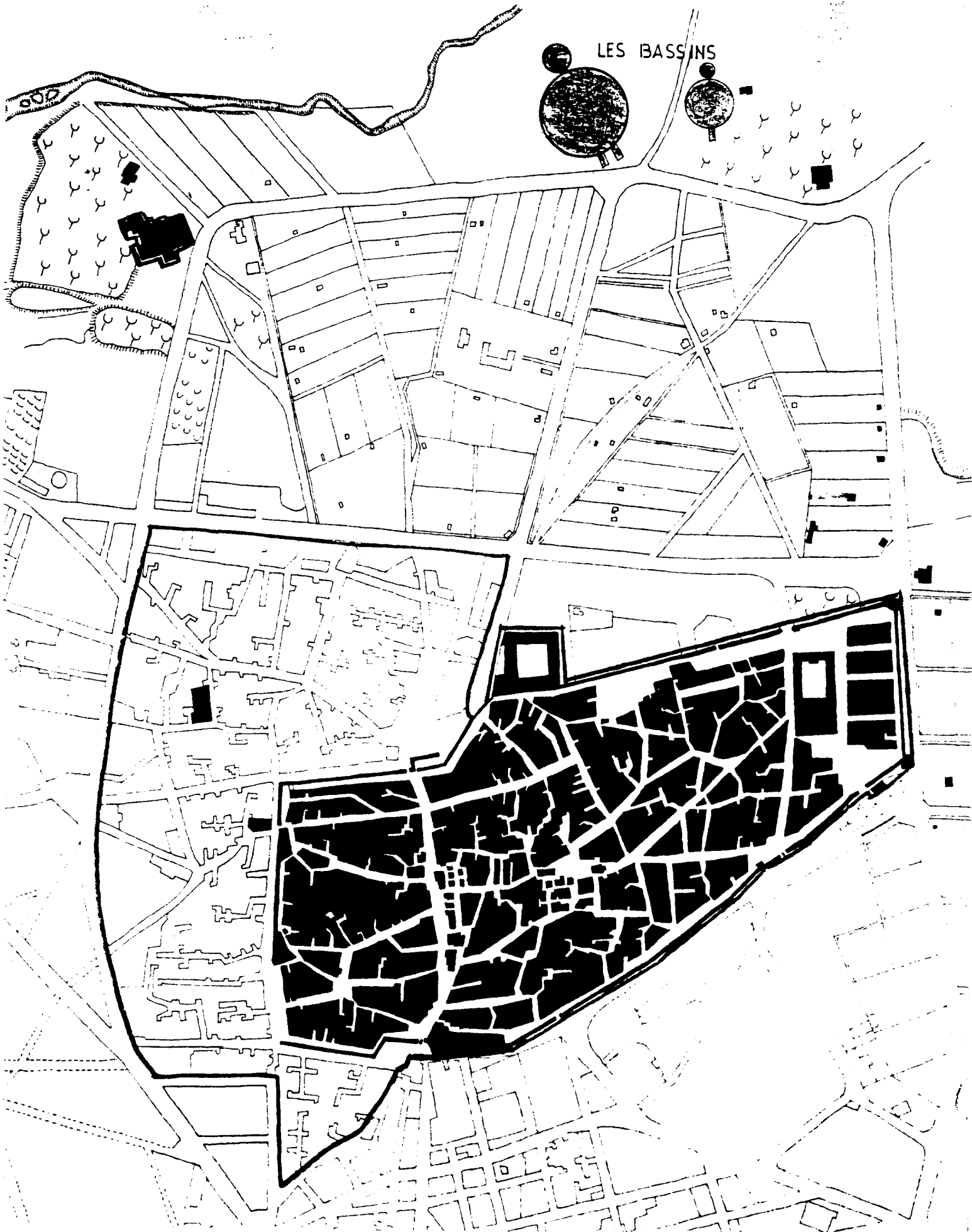
- **Criterion II.** The Great Mosque served as a model for several other Maghreban mosques, particularly for its decorative motifs, which are unique. Moreover, the Mosque of the Three Doors (866) is the oldest known Islamic mosque with a sculpted facade.

- **Criterion III.** With the Great Mosque, the Mosque of the Three Doors, and the Basin of the Aghlabids, not to mention the numerous archaeological vestiges, Kairouan bears exceptional witness to the civilization of the first centuries of the Hegira in Ifriqiya.

- **Criterion V.** Protected by its walls and gates (Bab et Tounes, Bab el Khoukha, Bab ech Chouhada) the medina of Kairouan, whose skyline is punctuated by the minarets and the cupolas of its mosques and zawiya, has preserved its network of winding streets and courtyard houses. Very few small windows or arched doorways are cut in the exterior walls, but inner walls have larger openings that give onto the central courtyard. This traditional architecture, having become vulnerable through the impact of socio-economic changes, constitutes a valuable heritage which must be protected in its entirety.

- **Criterion VI.** Kairouan is one of the holy cities and spiritual capitals of Islam. Next to the Great Mosque, the first place of worship founded in the Maghreb only 38 years after the death of the Prophet, is the Zawiya of Sidi Sahab where the remains of Abu Djama, one of Mahomet's companions, are kept. It is not surprising that in the past seven pilgrimages to Kairouan could take the place of the one pilgrimage to Mecca prescribed for all Muslims.

ICOMOS, May 1988



Plan of the Medina

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LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

N° 499

A) IDENTIFICATION

Bien proposé : Médina de Kairouan

Lieu : Gouvernorat de Kairouan

Etat partie : Tunisie

Date : 30 décembre 1987

B) RECOMMANDATION DE L'ICOMOS

Que le bien culturel proposé soit inscrit sur la Liste du Patrimoine mondial au titre des critères I, II, III, V et VI.

C) JUSTIFICATION

La fondation du camp-garnison d'al-Kayrawan par Oqba Ibn Nafîi, en l'an 50 de l'Hégire (670), marque une étape décisive dans l'histoire de l'islamisation de l'Ifriqiya : les premières incursions arabes, à partir de 647, avaient obéi à une stratégie d'offensive et de mouvement plutôt que d'occupation permanente. Succédant à un campement provisoire, Al-Karn, Kairouan devint un élément essentiel du dispositif de conquête, grâce à sa position-clé, à mi-chemin du littoral menacé par le retour des flottes byzantines et des montagnes contrôlées par les Berbères.

La ville connut des débuts difficiles, du fait de l'irréductibilité berbère : au VIIe siècle, Kosaïla, puis la Kahina menacèrent Kairouan, qui fut prise en 688. Au VIIIe siècle encore, les Berbères Kharidjites s'en emparèrent (745). Mais la primauté de la fondation de Sidi Oqba ne fut jamais remise en cause par les Arabes : Kairouan demeura le chef-lieu de l'Ifriqiya, siège du gouverneur représentant l'autorité des califes omeyyades de Damas puis des califes abbassides de Bagdad.

Lorsque les émirs aghlabides se furent rendus pratiquement indépendants de ces derniers (800-909), Kairouan devint une véritable capitale. La Grande Mosquée fut alors reconstruite sous l'émir Ziyadat Allah Ier en 836 puis, en 862-863, sous l'émir Abou Ibrahim Ahmad à qui sont dus en outre des aménagements urbains spectaculaires, comme le bassin des Aghlabides, où se déversait l'eau du Djebel Cherichera, conduite par un aqueduc de 36 km de long. Délaissant, à la faveur de la paix civile et religieuse, le palais des gouverneurs, les émirs aghlabides firent élever par la suite, à quelques kilomètres au sud de Kairouan, les résidences d'Al-Abbassiya et de Raqqada (876).

C'est précisément à Raqqada que le Fatimide Obaïd Allah, après avoir vaincu les armées aghlabides, entra en triomphateur en décembre 909 et, s'identifiant au Mahdi, se proclama imam et calife. Sous son pouvoir (910-934), Kairouan connut d'abord une relative éclipse : la nouvelle capitale, Mahdia, fondée en 916, répondait mieux à la politique expansionniste, tournée vers l'Orient, de l'imam chiite. Mais, les troubles aidant, les Fatimides revinrent bientôt à Kairouan. En 947-948, le troisième calife, Al-Mansour, fonda, à 1,5 km au sud de la vieille capitale, la ville nouvelle de Sabra Al-Mansouria, qui s'étendait sur une centaine d'hectares à l'abri d'une enceinte circulaire. Le transfert du califat Fatimide au Caire en 972 mit terme rapidement au dualisme des capitales de l'Ifrîqiya.

Après le Xe siècle, Kairouan cessa de participer directement aux grands événements de l'histoire mondiale. La ville connut de nombreux troubles religieux et politiques, fut envahie et saccagée par les Hilaliens en 1057. Jusque là capitale occasionnelle, Tunis devint à partir de 1160, et surtout sous la dynastie Hafside (1230-1574), le centre du pouvoir politique en même temps que l'une des villes les plus peuplées de l'Afrique. Mais elle ne parvint jamais à ravir à Kairouan la fonction de ville sainte du Maghreb qui lui est encore reconnue dans tout l'Islam.

Le poids considérable de l'histoire est toujours sensible dans la médina de 54 hectares, entourée de remparts sur plus de trois kilomètres, et dans les faubourgs décrits dans la proposition d'inscription, même si l'on doit distinguer soigneusement de quelques monuments remarquables des premiers siècles de l'Hégire (Grande Mosquée, Mosquée des Trois Portes, Bassin des Aghlabides) une foule d'édifices religieux plus récents ou du moins remaniés (mosquées el Bey et el Malek, Zaouïa de Sidi Sahab, Zaouïa de Sidi Amor Abbada, Zaouïa de Sidi Abid el Ghariani) qui remontent pour la plupart, sous leur forme actuelle, aux trois derniers siècles, comme l'immense majorité des maisons et des souks qui forment encore, dans un labyrinthe de ruelles ancien conservant nombre de puits et de fontaines, un tissu urbain traditionnel cohérent.

L'ICOMOS recommande l'inscription de Kairouan sur la Liste du Patrimoine mondial au titre des critères I, II, III, V, et VI.

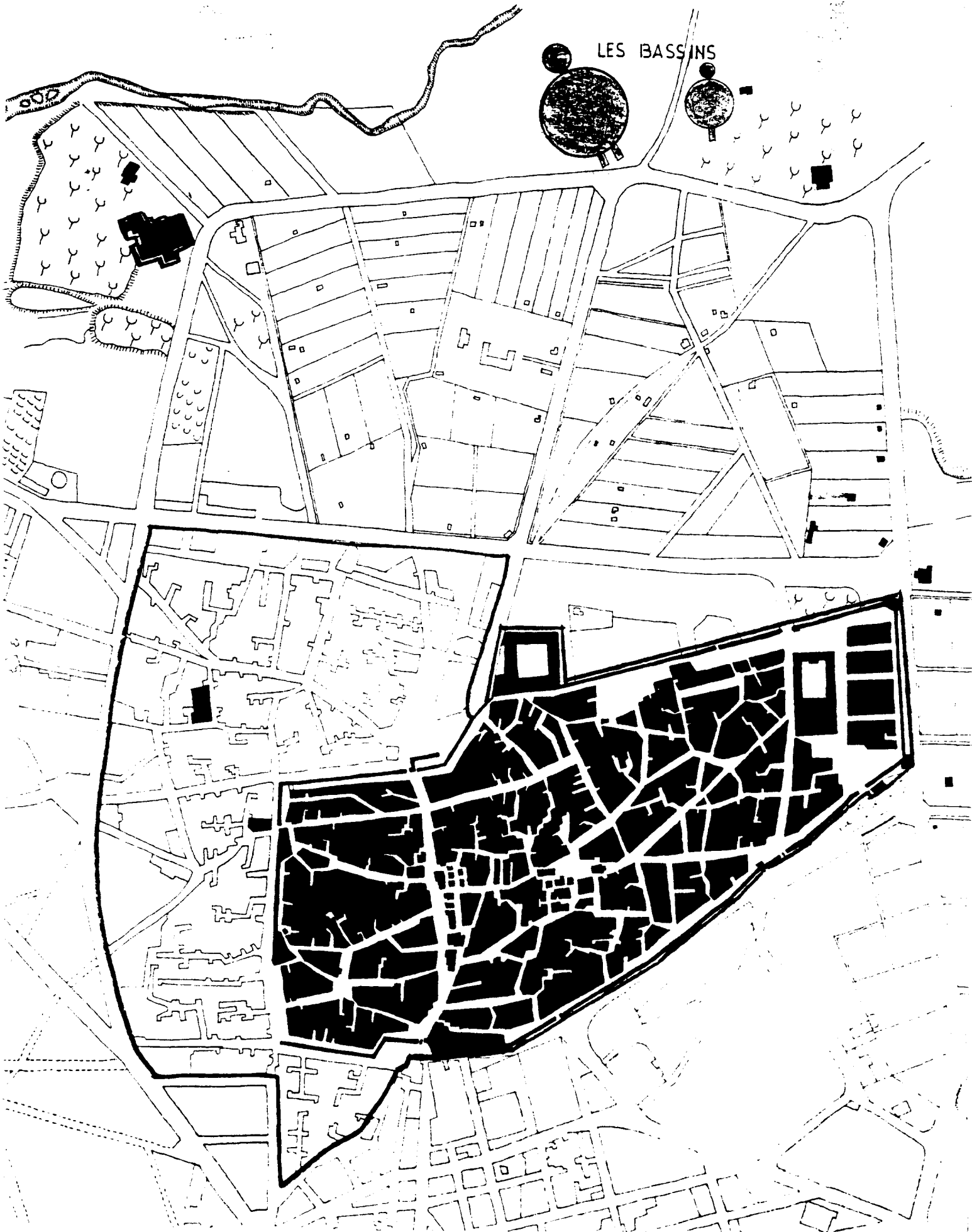
- **Critère I.** La Grande Mosquée, reconstruite au IXe siècle, est l'un des monuments majeurs de l'Islam mais aussi un chef d'oeuvre de l'architecture universelle. Les remaniements, nombreux mais limités, n'ont pas affecté les dispositions de ce lieu de prière formant un quadrilatère de 135m sur 80m et comprenant, au sud, une salle de prière hypostyle de dix-sept nefs soutenue par une forêt de colonnes en marbre et en porphyre, au nord, une vaste cour dallée bordée de portiques interrompus, dans l'axe du petit côté nord, par la forme massive d'un minaret de plan carré à trois étages.

- Critère II. La Grande Mosquée a servi de modèle à plusieurs mosquées maghrébines, particulièrement en ce qui concerne les motifs décoratifs dont elle possède un répertoire unique. D'autre part, la Mosquée des Trois Portes (866) est la plus ancienne des mosquées à façade sculptée de l'Islam connues à ce jour.

- Critère III. Avec la Grande Mosquée, la Mosquée des Trois Portes, le bassin des Aghlabides, sans parler de nombreux vestiges archéologiques, Kairouan offre un témoignage exceptionnel sur la civilisation des premiers siècles de l'Hégire en Ifrîqiya.

- Critère V. A l'abri de ses murs et de ses portes (Bab et Tounes, Bab el Khoukha, Bab ech Chouhada), la médina de Kairouan, dominée par les minarets et les coupoles de ses mosquées et de ses zaouïas, conserve son réseau de rues tortueuses, ses maisons à terrasses aux murs extérieurs chichement percés de petites fenêtres et de portes à arcs outrepassés, aux murs intérieurs plus largement ouverts sur la cour centrale. Cette architecture traditionnelle, devenue vulnérable sous l'effet des mutations socio-économiques, constitue un patrimoine précieux, qui doit être intégralement protégé.

- Critère VI. Kairouan est l'une des villes saintes et des capitales spirituelles de l'Islam. A côté de la Grande Mosquée, le premier lieu de culte fondé au Maghreb, trente-huit ans seulement après la mort du prophète, la Zaouïa de Sidi Sahab abrite les restes d'Abou Djama, un des compagnons de Mahomet. On ne s'étonnera pas que, naguère encore, sept pèlerinages à Kairouan aient pu tenir lieu du pèlerinage à la Mecque prescrit à tous les Musulmans.



Plan of the Medina

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WORLD HERITAGE LIST

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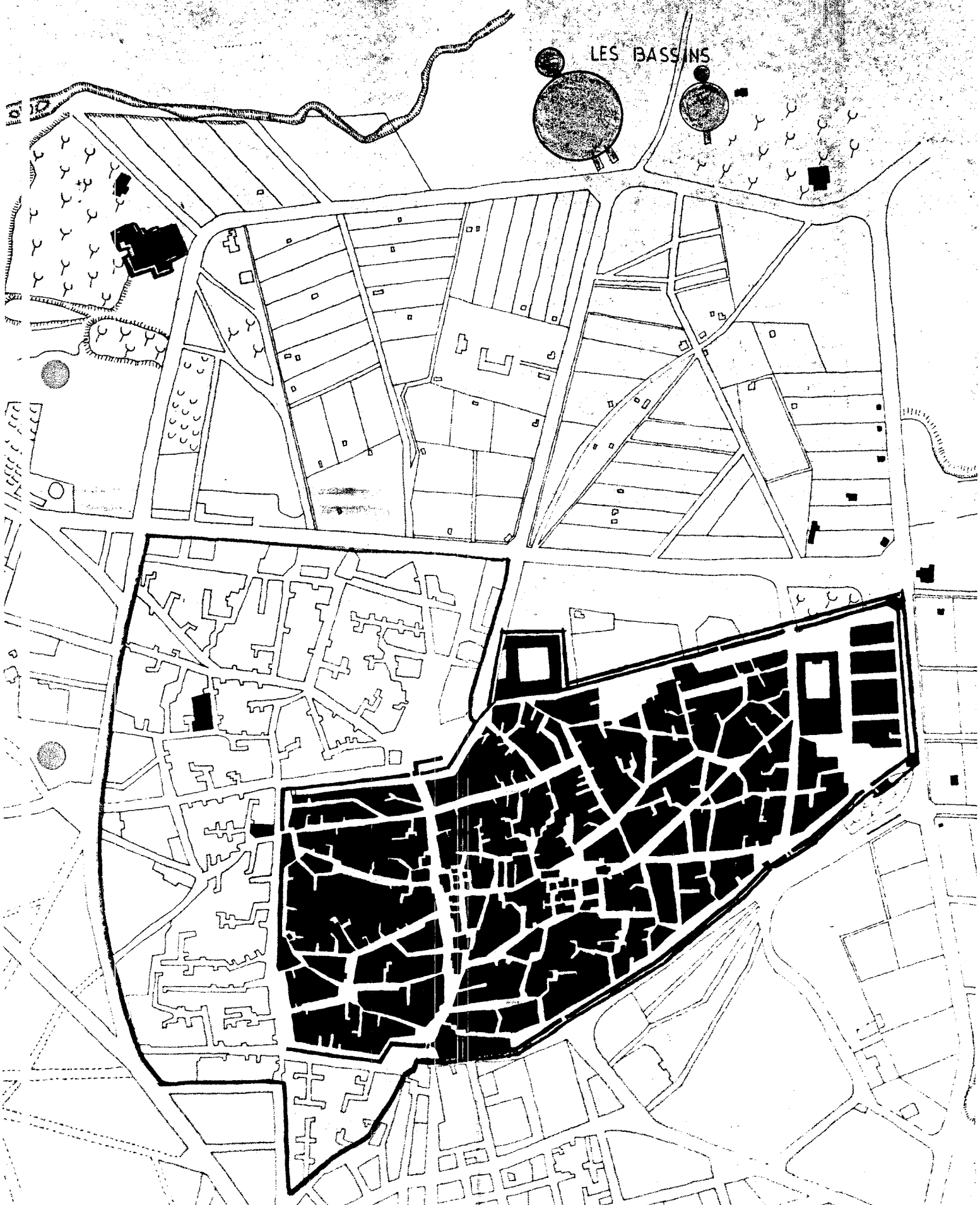
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ICOMOS, July 1988

LES BASSINS



Kairouan (Tunisia) No 499

1. BASIC DATA

State Party: Tunisia

Name of property:

Medina of Kairouan

Location:

Governorate of Kairouan

Inscription: 1988

Brief Description:

Founded in 670, Kairouan flourished under the Aghlabid dynasty in the 9th century. Despite the transfer of the political capital to Tunis in the 12th century, Kairouan remained the Maghreb's principal holy city. Its rich architectural heritage includes the Great Mosque, with its marble and porphyry columns, and the 9th-century Mosque of the Three Gates.

Date of ICOMOS' approval of this report: 17 March 2010

2. ISSUES RAISED

Background:

The nomination file for the property included a map of Kairouan marking the boundaries of the property in a thick pencil line. The site is a serial property that includes the Medina, the Zawiya de Sidi Sahab and the Aghlabid Basins. Although the limits could be identified, a precise delimitation was needed. The retrospective inventory process further underscored the need for updated topographic maps or cadastral maps to clearly show the boundaries of the three inscribed elements that constitute the World Heritage property as well as the delimitation of the buffer zone. Indications on the precise size of the property and the buffer zone were also requested.

ICOMOS has examined a map submitted by the State Party in February 2009, indicating the boundaries of the inscribed zones and of the proposed buffer zones. The total area of the property was 54ha and that of the proposed buffer zones 73.04ha.

At its 33rd session (Seville, 2009), the World Heritage Committee adopted the following recommendation:

Decision: 33 COM 8B.43

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Documents WHC-09/33.COM/8B and WHC-09/33.COM/INF.8B1.Add,*

2. *Decides not to approve the minor modification of the boundaries of Kairouan, Tunisia;*

3. *Refers the examination of the proposed buffer zones for Kairouan, Tunisia, back to the State Party to allow it to:*

- a) *Review the existing proposal to delineate a buffer zone so as to ensure the proper conservation and protection of the Property. The buffer zone should also seek to integrate the three components of the World Heritage property;*
- b) *Provide information on the criteria for defining the buffer zone, existing regulations and measures to secure protection and arrangements for effective management.*

Modification:

The State Party has submitted a map indicating the limits of the property inscribed, whose total area is now 106.2ha, which corresponds to the area of the property inscribed in 1988. The area of the proposed buffer zones is 154.37 ha.

The boundaries proposed correspond to three separate buffer zones which apply respectively to the three components of the property inscribed, that is:

- a) The medina and its outskirts
- b) The mausoleum of Sidi Sahib
- c) The Aghlabid basins

In response to the Committee's recommendation that a single buffer zone should be considered for the three components of the property, the State Party has explained that the intermediate zones between the three components of the property have been developed in the recent past, which is not conducive to their inclusion in a single buffer zone.

ICOMOS considers that the three proposed buffer zones should provide effective protection. The buffer zone for the Medina and the Mausoleum of Sidi Sahib has a radius of around 200 meters; that of the Aghlabid Basins ranges from a few meters to 145 meters, but is the result of the division into parcels of the *Plan d'aménagement* which follows the main thoroughfares around the park.

The *Plan d'aménagement de la ville de Kairouan* (which is currently under review) allows for these buffer zones, prohibiting any building to a height of above 7 meters. The Medina, the Mausoleum of Sidi Sahib and the Aghlabid Basins are listed monuments and are thus protected by the decree of 10 April 1912 and have a

protection zone of 200 meters, doubled by an unbuildable zone (decree of 31 March 1914).

The Medina of Kairouan has an administrative entity inside the Institut National du Patrimoine, staffed by around one hundred people who manage the town's heritage and its conservation. For the last two decades, this team has been carrying out works for the rehabilitation of the urban fabric and the historic monuments. More than 80% of the town's monuments have been surveyed, and technical dossiers are available for them. The Medina of Kairouan preservation project is allocated an annual budget from the entry charges for the town's historic monuments and museums. It ensures the continuity of restoration and rehabilitation works in the Medina and its outskirts.

ICOMOS considers that the existing regulations and arrangements seem to be adequate to ensure effective protection and management of the property.

3. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed boundaries for the Medina of Kairouan, Tunisia, be ***approved***.

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zones for the Medina of Kairouan, Tunisia, be ***approved***.



Map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone

Kairouan (Tunisie)

No 499

1. IDENTIFICATION

État partie : Tunisie

Nom du bien :

Médina de Kairouan

Lieu :

Gouvernorat de Kairouan

Inscription : 1988

Brève description :

Fondée en 670, la ville de Kairouan a prospéré sous la dynastie aghlabide, au IX^e siècle. Malgré le transfert de la capitale politique à Tunis au XII^e siècle, Kairouan est restée la première ville sainte du Maghreb. Son riche patrimoine architectural comprend notamment la Grande Mosquée, avec ses colonnes de marbre et de porphyre, et la mosquée des Trois-Portes qui date du IX^e siècle.

Date d'approbation de l'évaluation par l'ICOMOS :
17 mars 2010

2. PROBLÈMES POSÉS

Antécédents

Le dossier de proposition d'inscription du bien comprenait une carte de Kairouan indiquant les délimitations du bien par un trait de crayon épais. Le site est un bien en série qui comprend la Médina, le Zaouïa de Sidi Sahib et les Bassins des Aghlabides. Bien que les délimitations soient identifiées, une délimitation précise était requise. Le processus d'inventaire rétrospectif a souligné le besoin de cartes topographiques ou cadastrales mises à jour afin de montrer clairement les délimitations des trois éléments qui composent le bien du patrimoine mondial ainsi que les délimitations de la zone tampon. Des indications sur la taille précise du bien et de la zone tampon ont également été demandées.

L'ICOMOS a examiné une carte soumise par l'État partie en février 2009, indiquant les délimitations des zones inscrites et des zones tampons proposées. La superficie totale du bien était de 54 ha et celle des zones tampons proposées de 73,04 ha.

Le Comité du patrimoine mondial lors de sa 33^e session (Séville, 2009) a adopté la recommandation suivante :

Décision : 33 COM 8B.43

Le Comité du patrimoine mondial,

1. *Ayant examiné les documents WHC-09/33.COM/8B et WHC-09/33.COM/INF.8B1.Add,*

2. *Décide de ne pas approuver la modification mineure des limites de Kairouan, Tunisie ;*

3. *Renvoie l'examen des zones tampons proposées de Kairouan, Tunisie, à l'État partie afin de lui permettre de :*

- a) *réviser la proposition existante afin de délimiter une zone tampon qui permette une protection et conservation efficaces du bien. La zone tampon devrait aussi intégrer les trois éléments constitutifs du bien du Patrimoine mondial ;*
- b) *fournir des informations sur les critères utilisés pour définir la zone tampon, sur les réglementations et mesures existantes pour assurer la protection et sur les dispositions prises pour une gestion efficace.*

Modification

L'État partie a soumis un plan de délimitation du bien inscrit dont la superficie totale est maintenant de 106.02 ha, ce qui correspond bien à la superficie du bien inscrit en 1988. La superficie des zones tampons proposées est de 154.37 ha.

La délimitation propose trois zones tampons distinctes qui s'appliquent aux trois éléments du bien inscrit, soit :

- a) La médina et ses faubourgs
- b) Le mausolée de Sidi Sahib
- c) Les bassins des Aghlabides

À la recommandation faite par le Comité d'envisager une seule zone tampon qui intégrerait les trois éléments constitutifs du bien, l'État partie a expliqué que les zones intermédiaires entre les trois éléments du bien ont été urbanisées à une époque récente, ce qui ne plaide pas en faveur de leur intégration dans une seule et même zone tampon.

L'ICOMOS considère que les trois zones tampons proposées devraient assurer une protection efficace. La zone tampon de la Médina et du mausolée de Sidi Sahib s'étend sur un rayon d'environ 200 m ; celle des Bassins des Aghlabides s'étend de quelques mètres à 145 m mais s'explique par la division parcellaire du plan d'aménagement qui épouse les artères principales entourant ce parc.

Le plan d'aménagement de la ville de Kairouan (en cours de révision) prend en considération ces zones tampons en interdisant toute construction dont la hauteur

est supérieure à 7 m. La Médina, le mausolée de Sidi Sahib et les Bassins des Aghlabides sont des monuments classés et de ce fait bénéficient de la protection du décret du 10 avril 1912 et disposent d'une zone de protection de 200 m, doublée d'une zone non aedificandi (décret du 31 mars 1914).

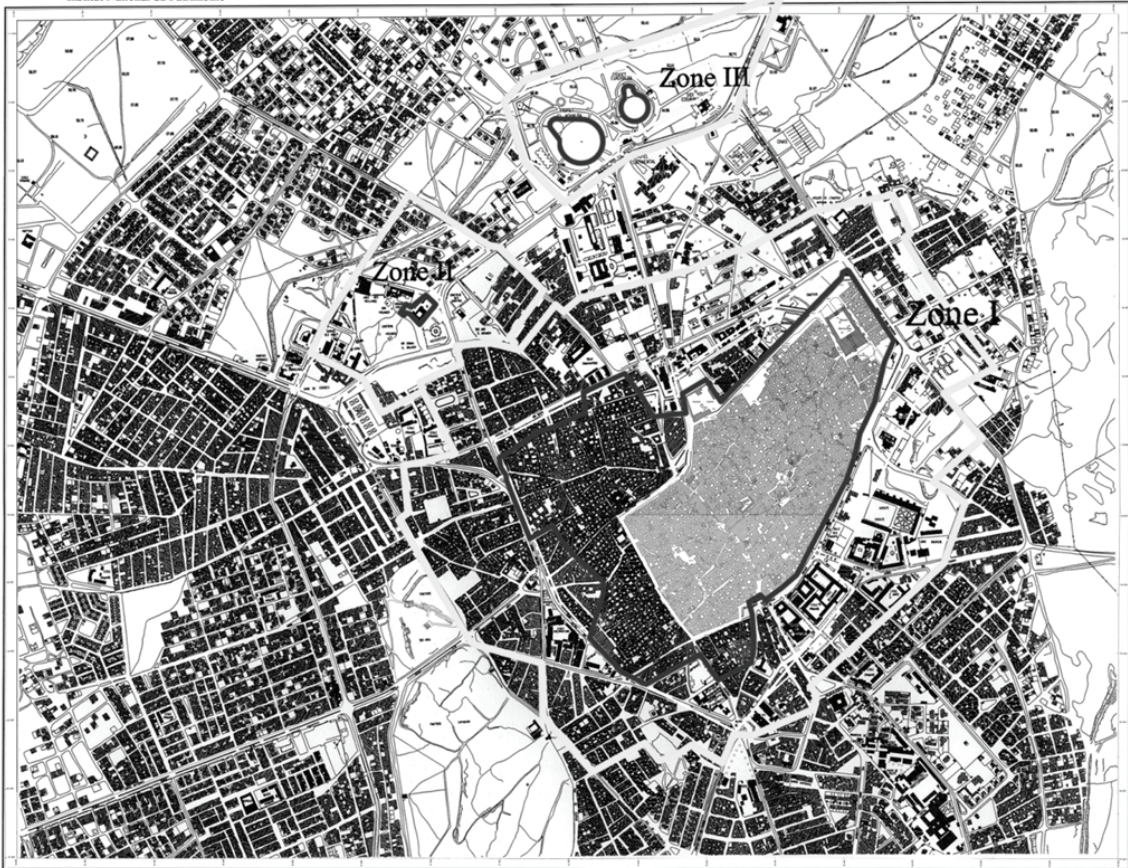
La Médina de Kairouan dispose d'une entité administrative au sein de l'Institut National du Patrimoine constituée d'une centaine de personnes qui assurent la gestion du patrimoine de la ville et sa conservation. Cette équipe mène depuis une vingtaine d'années des travaux de réhabilitation du tissu urbain et des monuments historiques. Plus de 80 % des monuments de la ville ont fait l'objet de relevés et disposent de dossiers techniques. Le projet de sauvegarde de la Médina de Kairouan dispose d'un budget annuel dont le montant alloué provient des droits de visite des monuments historiques et musées de la ville. Il permet d'assurer une continuité des travaux de restauration et de réhabilitation au sein de la Médina et ses faubourgs.

L'ICOMOS considère que les réglementations et mesures existantes semblent appropriées pour assurer une protection et une gestion efficaces du bien.

3. RECOMMANDATIONS DE L'ICOMOS

L'ICOMOS recommande que la proposition de délimitation de la médina de Kairouan, Tunisie, soit ***approuvée.***

L'ICOMOS recommande que la proposition de zones tampons de la médina de Kairouan, Tunisie, soit ***approuvée.***



Plan indiquant les délimitations de la zone tampon proposée