

## WORLD HERITAGE LIST

### Tétouan (Morocco)

No 837

#### Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	The Medina of Tétouan (formerly known as Titawin)
<i>Location</i>	Wilaya of Tétouan, Province of Tétouan, North-West Region
<i>State Party</i>	Kingdom of Morocco
<i>Date</i>	29 August 1996

#### Justification by State Party

The city of Tétouan is one of the "100 Historic Sites of Common Mediterranean Interest" which form part of the 1985 Marseilles Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution.

The historic town of Tétouan was founded at a special period in the history of Morocco when all the towns of the Mediterranean littoral were occupied by either the Spanish or the Portuguese, and so it had to play the role of refuge and advanced guard post of Dar al-Islam.

Because of its strategic position, Tétouan had an important role as the point of contact and of transition between two civilizations and two continents.

Having been built by the heirs of the great civilization of Andalusia, the historic town of Tétouan exhibits urban planning and architectural characteristics that influenced later architectural and artistic development, particularly during the Spanish protectorate.

Tétouan is noted for its school of traditional arts and crafts and its fine-art school, which testify to an ancestral tradition and to very advanced artistic know-how.

**Criteria ii, iii, iv, v, and vi**

#### Category of property

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *group of buildings*.

#### History and Description

##### *History*

The origins of the town of Tétouan are not known, but the discovery of archaeological sites from prehistory and the classical period (Phoenician, Punico-Mauritanian, and Roman) in the immediate surroundings of the town attest the antiquity of the settlement of the Oued Martil valley in general and the site of Tétouan in particular.

In the Islamic period the Tétouan region became very important as the only connection between the Iberian peninsula and the interior of Morocco. As a result, a number of towns grew up, such as Ceuta, Tangier, and Qsar es-Saghir. Tétouan is mentioned by a number of Arab writers of the 10th-12th centuries, but it did not assume an important role until after the fall of Ceuta and other centres on the coast to Spanish and Portuguese troops towards the end of the Middle Ages.

A fortified garrison (*qasba*) had been installed at the site of Tétouan by Sultan Abu Yusuf Yaqub al-Marini in 1286 to block Ceuta. The town grew up in the early 14th century, but was sacked and completely destroyed by Spanish forces a century later. It was rebuilt at the end of the 15th century by a group of refugees from Andalusia during the reign of Sultan Mohammed ach-Cheikh al-Wattassi. The late 15th century town was small, consisting of the present-day al-Balad quarter and a fortified *qasba*, built to the requirements of Abu al-Hassan Ali al-Mandri, military leader of Banu al-Ahmar of Granada.

The second stage in its development came in the mid 16th century when the medina was extended to the south-west, the Rabat al-Asfal quarter. Finally, the arrival of the *Moriscos* (Spanish Muslims forcibly converted to Christianity and later expelled from Spain) from 1609 onwards led to a further expansion of the medina towards the north-west (Rabat al-Aala). This continued until the mid 18th century, when the fortifications were rebuilt, to give the medina its existing configuration.

##### *Description*

Tétouan developed on the steep slopes of the Jabal Dersa. It consists of two quadrilaterals of more or less equal size alongside each other, giving an overall outline of a figure-of-eight.

The defensive walls, 1.20m thick at the base and 0.60m thick at parapet level, are about 5km in length; the height from the base to the battlements varies between 7m and 5m. There is a number of buttresses and defensive works on the exterior of the wall, such as the bastions of Bab al-Oqla and Bab en-Nwader on the north and the star-shaped bastion at the north-east corner. Access is by means of seven historic gates.

Inside, the medina is crossed by main streets linking the gates with one another. These provide means of access to open spaces, to public buildings such as the *funduqs* (inns), mosques, and *zawayas* (religious encintes), and to the artisan and commercial quarters. Lanes lead from the main streets to private residential quarters. In addition, there are many

covered passages (*sbat*), pergolas, and porches which enrich the urban fabric of Tétouan.

The medina descends gently from north-west to south-east, which gives the town its characteristic appearance. None of the buildings is more than three storeys in height, only the minarets rising above them, to give the traditional Islamic flavour to the townscape.

The medina is divided into three quarters: Rabat al-Asfal, Rabat al-Aala, and Harat al-Balad, the last of which is the oldest and best preserved. It also contains most of the craft workshops and the most important monuments in the medina, such as the remains of the Sidi al-Mandri fortress, the first cathedral-mosque, the historic grain stores, and the most sumptuous residences. The plans and character of these houses are inspired by the Moorish architecture developed in medieval Andalusia.

### Management and Protection

#### *Legal status*

The medina of Tétouan is not legally protected by any specific legislative instrument. It does, however, benefit from the general Moroccan legislation relating to the conservation of historic monuments. This consists of Dahir (decree) No 1.80.341 of 25 December 1980 and 2.81.25 of 2 October 1981, which implement Law No 22.80, which modifies and expands the dahir of 21 July 1945. This group of statutes imposes restrictions on constructions and demolitions in historic towns, requiring official authorization.

#### *Management*

Ownership of the individual properties that make up the medina of Tétouan is distributed among official (national and municipal) administrations, religious foundations, and private individuals. Administration of the medina is the responsibility of the Municipality of Tétouan sis al-Mandri, working with the Ministry of Cultural Affairs (Inspection of Historic and Monuments of Tétouan), and the Ministry of Habous and Islamic Affairs (*habous* are movable and immovable property bequeathed by their owners before death to the State in the public interest).

Also associated with the management of the historic heritage of Tétouan in different sectors are the Ministries of the Interior (General Planning Directorate), Housing, and Environment, the Regional Cultural Council, and the private Tétwan-Asmir, Jabal al-Alam, and Environment Associations.

The Management Plan (*Schéma directeur*) for Tétouan, produced by the Ministry of Housing and Planning in 1982, which is currently being updated, lays special emphasis on the conservation of the historic medina.

The Development Plan for the Economic North-West Region (*Schéma de développement d'aménagement régional de la région économique Nord-Ouest*) of February 1996, which covers Tétouan, also stresses an obligation to conserve and rehabilitate the historic

medinas. The Regional Cultural Council includes a strategy for the conservation and rehabilitation of the medina in its future action plan.

The creation of Regional Directorates for the Conservation of Historic Monuments and Sites planned by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs is intended to result in the formulation of a conservation policy integrated into the Regional development policy.

### Conservation and Authenticity

#### *Conservation history*

Action to conserve the medina of Tétouan dates back to the Spanish protectorate. With the creation of the Service of Antiquities and Historic and Artistic Monuments in 1920, work was carried out at Tétouan, largely involving the consolidation and restoration of the walls and bastions. Since independence this work has been carried on by the equivalent Moroccan service, working with other services, so as to control interventions in the historic town. Most attention has been paid to further restoration of the walls, the gates, and the *borjs* (fortified watch-towers).

A pilot project for the rehabilitation of the heart of the al-Balad quarter is being carried out by the Municipality in collaboration with the Government of Andalusia in Spain.

#### *Authenticity*

The internal layout and the fortifications retain their authenticity to the highest degree. Similarly, the internal disposition of different functions to the quarters of the town is still that of the original settlement.

The same high level of authenticity is to be observed in the architectural heritage of the medina - its mosques, fountains, *hammams* (public baths), religious buildings, and grain storage silos.

For the most part the private houses remain unchanged, although some unauthorized additional storeys and internal sub-divisions have been made.

### Evaluation

#### *Action by ICOMOS*

An ICOMOS expert mission visited Tétouan in January 1997.

#### *Qualities*

The Medina of Tétouan has two claims for inscription on the World Heritage List. First, its authentic urban fabric and features make it the best preserved of the medinas in other towns in this part of Morocco, such as Salé, Tangier, Qsar al-Kabir, Larache, or Chefchaouen. Secondly, it admirably illustrates the special character of this group of towns, whose form and style derive directly from the high Moorish culture of Andalusia.

### *Comparative analysis*

Tétouan does not figure on the list prepared at the meeting of experts and representatives of national antiquities services organized by ICOMOS in November 1985 to harmonize the tentative lists of the Maghreb countries. The Moroccan town selected to illustrate "Foreign contact sites" in that list is Chefchaouen. It is interesting to observe, therefore, that this town does not appear on the tentative list submitted by the Kingdom of Morocco to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in July 1995.

### *ICOMOS recommendations for future action*

The report of the ICOMOS mission makes a strong case for the extension of the nominated area to include the extra-mural planned town of the Spanish period, which complements the medina in its form and in its architectural quality. ICOMOS commends this proposal to the State Party for consideration.

### **Recommendation**

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria ii, iv, and v*:

The Medina of Tétouan is an exceptionally well preserved and complete example of this type of historic town, displaying all the features of the high Andalusian culture.

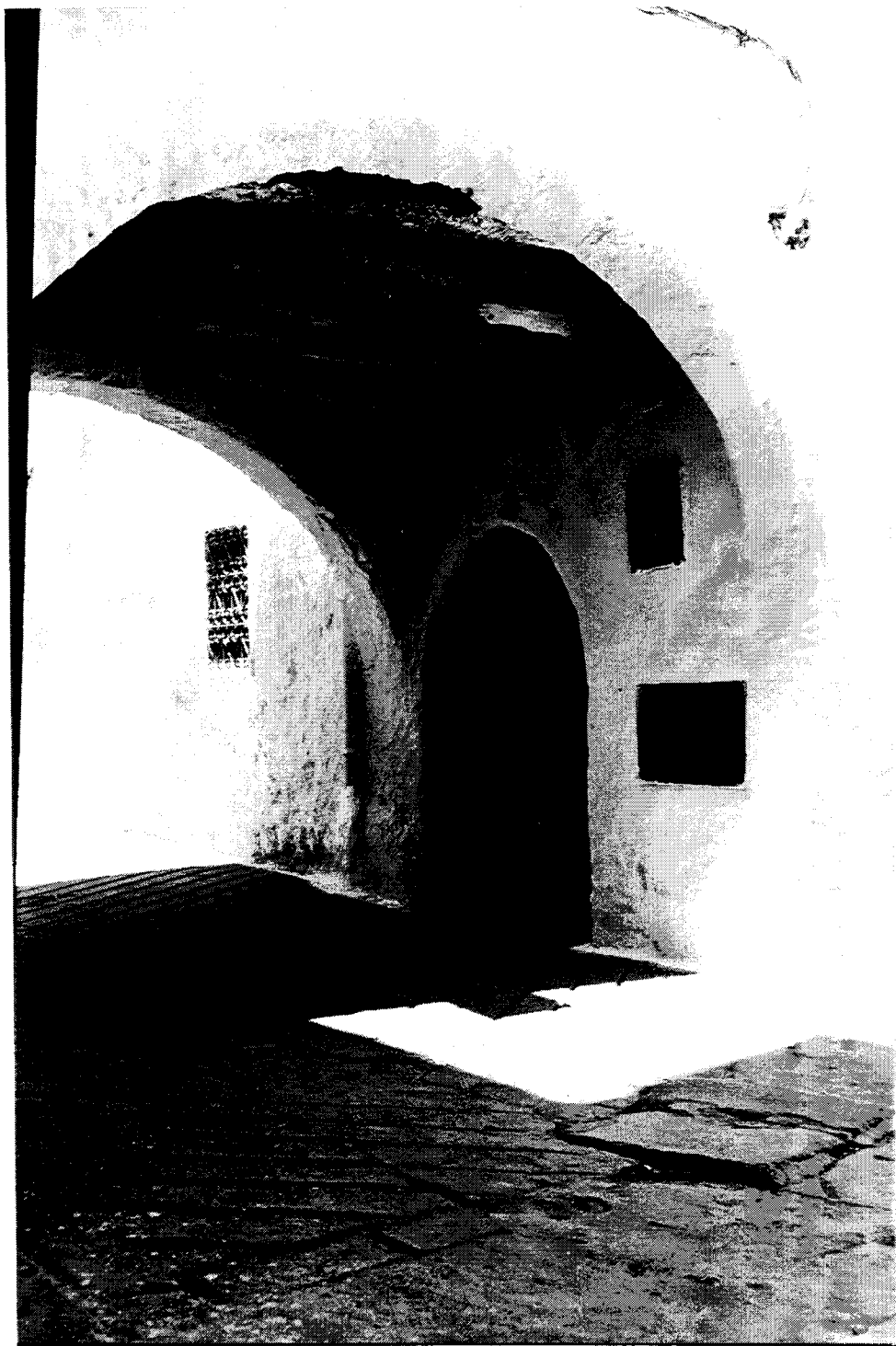
ICOMOS, September 1997



**Tétouan :**  
**Vue panoramique de la ville / Panoramic view of the town**



**Tétouan :**  
**La Casbah, vue du Djébel Dersa / The Qasba, seen from the Jbel Dersa**



**Tétouan :**  
**Passage couvert dans la médina /**  
**Covered alleyway within the medina**