

## Texts in English

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Volume 18, Number 73, Winter 1973–1974

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/57789ac>

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### Publisher(s)

La Société La Vie des Arts

### ISSN

0042-5435 (print)

1923-3183 (digital)

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### Cite this article

(1973). Texts in English. *Vie des Arts*, 18(73), 88–99.

# TEXTS IN ENGLISH

## THE TUNIS-CARTHAGE PROJECT

By Andrée PARADIS

The Tunis-Carthage Project begun in 1970 by the Tunisian government with the financial help of the United Nations Program for Development and the technical assistance of Unesco "for the development of the heritage of Tunis and Carthage with a view to economic development", calls upon international solidarity in order to protect one of the most noble sites in the world.

This project, born under the stimulus of two bodies, the Association for the Protection of the Medina and the Institute of Archeology and Arts, received the support of President Bourguiba, who said in a short speech delivered at a meeting of Unesco in Paris on the twenty-ninth of June, 1972, "that the tremendous efforts undertaken by Tunisia for the expansion of education and the dissemination of culture, without which we consider that any policy of economic development would be illusory, would be liable to stop abruptly if they did not receive the support of Unesco and, in particular, that of its Director General, Monsieur René Maheu, whose wholehearted devotion to the preservation of the world-wide heritage of humanity is well known". And President Bourguiba added: "By joining the Tunisian government in launching an appeal for international cooperation with a view to saving Carthage from a second death and in some way answering Cato across the centuries, you have illustrated this new approach which has as its objective the development of cultural heritage with a view to economic development. This operation for the benefit of Carthage has just been added to those previously contracted for the protection of the monuments of Nubia and the preservation of Venice. It combines with the action of the whole that you are undertaking for the safeguarding of world, cultural and natural heritage. It is the best testimony of your double concern for preserving the past and building the future".

These sites which Unesco, in a spirit of international cooperation, invites us to preserve, have been the witnesses of three thousand years of history. Modern Tunisia, guardian of the treasures of a past which concerns us all, has undertaken to safeguard and develop them with the assistance of international aid, assured by Unesco. Since 1970, at Tunis, a multiple-disciplinary team formed by the aforementioned organizations and by international and Tunisian experts, has had the task of analyzing the problems of an archeological site — Carthage — and of a historic city — the Medina of Tunis —, and of defining the order of safeguarding operations. Their proposals for an integrated arrangement will take shape only to the degree to which an international campaign releases the necessary funds.

So far, a first report has been published, in 1971, on the *Development of the inherited historic buildings of the region of Carthage with a view to economic development*. It presents a study in two parts: 1) The territory, analysis and trends; 2) The development project. This study supplies to the authorities the scientific basis of the plan which must be adopted to assure the salvation of the sites and the monuments at the same time as a logical urban growth.

The preliminary report of the Preservation and Development of the Medina of Tunis was published in October, 1972. It comprises a statement of the heritage of monuments, of the population and of the housing conditions, of the economic functions and public equipment, followed by a policy of protection and development.

The plans for preservation and for development of Carthage and of Tunis answer, we realize very well, different needs. In the first case, it is a matter of excavating, of preserving and of developing an archeological site threatened by the invasion of concrete and by the process of dilapidation which urban growth entails; in the second, of planning the concerted arrangement of a historic city in danger, one of the most beautiful in the world, in order to satisfy the demands of a housing policy allowing the economically disadvantaged to live in a more humane manner and at the same time to preserve certain religious and civil buildings which are part of the cultural heritage.

It was in order to glorify this great work that the day of the fourteenth of May, 1972, was marked in Tunisia by an important cultural demonstration. On the hill of Carthage, the Minister of Cultural Affairs and Information, M. Chedli Klibi, and the Director General of Unesco, M. René Maheu, joined their voices in support of the Tunis-Carthage project and appealed to international solidarity to accomplish it. The Minister, who is also mayor of Carthage, declared that "culture is at the very heart of the battle for development" and he reminded the Director General of the statements which he had made in Venice, concerning the place of culture in society: "You have indeed revealed a profound truth to which we had not paid enough attention, namely, that we have not only to decide in favour of the *introduction of the cultural into development*, but of the *supremacy of the cultural* in this whole undertaking centred on man." Expressing his agreement, he continued: "In our heritage, we include, while assuming it, the contribution of all the civilizations to which our country has belonged and in which it has participated actively during its long history. Our references are certainly to be found in the Islamic era, but also in the Punic, Roman and Byzantine epochs, to cite only the most important ones. We think, moreover, that we are just as much concerned with these monuments or traces as the international community."

In an attitude just as realistic, the Director General stated in his turn what he understood by preservation and safeguarding. "These words, which are used to simplify, badly express the complexity of the tasks. Here, as in Venice, it is not enough to restore buildings planned for a life style which has disappeared; it is necessary to revitalize them by giving them new purposes. It is necessary to facilitate the maintenance or the evolution of the class of craftsmen and commerce, improve antiquated substructures, renew neglected sectors, sometimes even renew and relocate a part of the population. Here as in so many other cities both historic and modern, the double obligation is imposed of binding to existing economic cir-

cuits the ancient city threatened with abandonment or dilapidation and enlightening its inhabitants and its visitors on the cultural values that it embodies, that it expresses in its language of stone and light, and which are more precious than ever."

The case of Carthage and that of the Medina of Tunis are not isolated ones. Much to the contrary, they pose on the whole, with the monuments of Nubia and of Venice, the problem of the conservation of the world heritage of humanity. How many sites and landscapes historic cities, areas, are presently threatened with disappearance for lack of realistic policies with the long view. In several countries, legislative measures watch over the preservation of cultural works, but the demolisher is faster than the legislator, and before the properties are classified, we learn of their disappearance. To oppose the attack made against the heritage of humanity is to express the need of preserving the evidence of a history created by men and which must live in the memory of other men. How to preserve cultural property? By what means? International solidarity is one. At its assembly of October, 1972, the general meeting of Unesco adopted a ruling for the protection of world heritage. The text foresees especially the establishment of an international fund, whose resources will permit financial aid to the states party to the agreement.

In presenting to the readers of *Vie des Arts* a section on the Tunis-Carthage project, we wish first to render homage to the Tunisian government which took the initiative in this matter and to all those who have already been associated with it or who intend to do so. On the other hand, this project deserves to be better known, and it is to be hoped that our own governments will be able to put teams of architects, archeologists, and technicians at its disposal<sup>1</sup>. Economically, Canada is already present in Tunisia and is in the second rank of the countries which contribute to its economic development. In a spirit of international development, an additional effort is imperative. It would be evidence of our cultural and spiritual, as well as economic interest. Further, Canada, strong in its French-speaking population which has affinities with the people of Tunisia, would take great interest in establishing a House of Culture in the heart of the Medina. The work of restoration is taking place at very modest cost and there are still several buildings in the Medina which would lend themselves to this kind of installation. In exchange, a House of Tunisian Culture would be welcome in Old Montreal or Old Quebec<sup>2</sup>.

It remains for me to thank the numerous Tunisian friends who have contributed articles to this section. Their texts call to mind certain historical, cultural and artistic aspects of the Punic, Roman and Moslem eras; a last one relates to the realities of to-day's metropolis, to the problems to be solved. Finally, our heartfelt gratitude is extended to M. Azédine Bachaouch, who was the initiator and coordinator of these pages on Tunis and Carthage.

1. The conditions of cooperation have been established under the form of a special regulation applicable to foreign missions desirous of working within the framework of the international campaign on research, excavation and development of Tunis-Carthage. This magazine will gladly supply photocopies to interested persons.
2. The example that Tunisia sets us should be retained and, for our part, a team from *Vie des Arts* is already at work to prepare an issue on the restoration of the historic monuments of Quebec.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)



Punic Mask.  
Phot. I.N.A.A.)

## CARTHAGE, GREAT POWER OF THE WORLD OF ANTIQUITY

By Hédi SLIM

Left to himself, without the help of history, archeology or literature, the visitor to contemporary Carthage will have trouble seeing in this little residential city, so lovely and so peaceful, the heir to a colossal antique metropolis with a tremendously eventful history.

As opposed to certain of its great rivals of antiquity, such as Rome or Athens, which in our time are still in the forefront of the political scene, Carthage suffered a tragic series of defeats and destructions which almost ended by condemning her to anonymity. Destiny appeared, also, particularly unfair with regard to a city which had experienced several centuries of greatness and glory.

### Illustrious Beginnings

The birth of Carthage belongs to the same time to history, legend and mythology. It was founded, it seems, in 814 B.C. by Elissa, a Tyrennian princess whom the despoiling and the persecuting of her people influenced to seek refuge on African territory. She decided with her companions in exile to found a city on a promontory easy to defend and allowing the control of the passage between the two basins of the Mediterranean. The exceptional importance of the site on the strategic plan could certainly not escape Phoenician sailors whose ancestors had been exploring the North African coasts since the end of the second millennium. The birth of the city was marked by many difficulties with the natives. Local customs forbidding the sale to strangers of a piece of land bigger than a cowhide, the beautiful and crafty Elissa bent the law by cutting the skin in thin strips and succeeded in buying as much land as she wished. But a Berber king, dazzled by the beauty and intelligence of the princess, wanted to marry her at any price, going so far as to threaten the Phoenician colony with extermination if he were rejected. Torn between

loyalty to the memory of her first husband and the concern of assuring a life of safety for her companions, Elissa ended by choosing suicide by fire. This gesture caused her to be honoured as a divinity.

The tragic fate of Elissa inspired poets and writers. Virgil, the great Latin poet, was the first to make use of it. Joining the destiny of the princess to that of Aeneas, he made her the heroine of the Aeneid under the name of Dido. After the destruction of Troy, Aeneas, son of Venus, having escaped from the disaster, gathered around him the remains of his fatherland... Previously, the fates had chosen him to found in Italy an empire which would ruin that of Carthage. His divine mother supported him, but Juno watched over the city of Elissa. The bewildered love of our two heroes could do nothing against fate and the intrigue of the gods. Aeneas abandoned Dido to her despair and Venus triumphed over Juno.

In fact, this episode has value only on the romantic and poetic plan because Virgil took many liberties with history in order to make possible the meeting of two figures involved in the founding of two metropolises destined to vie with each other over the leadership of the world.

### Onward to the Conquest of the Ancient World

The royal origins of Carthage, the circumstances which surround its birth and the very meaning of its name (new city, new capital) are all facts which point to an unusual destiny.

Nonetheless, one must admit that the city went through difficult and rather modest beginnings. Recognizing a prior right at Tyre and at Utica (the first Phoenician settlement in Africa), it had to pay tribute to both and even to the original inhabitants before succeeding in freeing itself from their grip and then in supplanting them. It was fostered in that by its own development as much as by the disasters and disappointments suffered by the others.

Tyre, in particular, was failing: it escaped the Babylonians only to fall more deeply under the blows of the Persians. Carthage then inherited the western possessions of the unfortunate metropolis. It knew how to make this legacy bear fruit. Soon it was at the head of a great empire with numerous colonies and, little by little, it raised itself to the rank of a formidable power capable of playing the foremost rôles on the political chess-board and even of influencing the evolution of the ancient world.

Toward the end of the sixth century B.C., Carthaginian power extended on all shores of North Africa, from Tripoli to the Atlantic coasts of Morocco, and on greater and greater zones of Sicily, Sardinia, Spain and the Balearic Isles.

At that time Carthage was, thanks to this Empire, the richest state of the western Mediterranean. Allied to the Etruscans, another power of the era, it succeeded in halting the Phocaeen expansion after the battle of Alalia (Aleria in Corsica) in 535 B.C. Expelled from Corsica, the Greeks were also eliminated from Spain and confined only to the Gulf of Lyons.

Carthage displayed an unflagging military and diplomatic activity with a view to consolidating its position and enlarging the horizons of its empire. Aware of the irremediable decline of the Etruscans, it sought the alliance of rising new forces. Three treaties, of which the oldest dates from 509 B.C., were to link it to Rome. But it is curious to note that a certain distrust prevailed in the relationships between these two allies, called upon later, it is true, to confront each other in an impact which was perhaps the bloodiest of antiquity: the Romans were able to trade only under certain conditions in Punic country and their navigators could land there

only in the case of circumstances beyond their control.

However, this remarkable Carthaginian rise was to collide with Greek power which, in the fifth century B.C., was at its height. The Punic naval forces were beaten in 480 near Himera, in Sicily. This first defeat constituted a turning in the history of Carthage and brought about many changes in the Punic world. A Draconian austerity characterized the life style of the Carthaginians of the time. Archeologists have been struck by the poverty in imported objects found in the tombs of the fifth century, like Corinthian and Attic ceramic, Egyptian chattels and other objects of luxury. But the isolation of Carthage and the drying up of its trade as a result of the greater and greater seizure by the Greeks on the Mediterranean presented problems of supply in different commodities far more serious than this lack of objects of luxury.

Thus, to resolve these problems and to remake the bases of its power Carthage was led to take certain measures. Confined up to that time to the North African coast, it carved out for itself at the cost of hard battles with the natives a hinterland corresponding roughly to present-day Tunisia. This conquest which, it is said, was fortunate enough to transform the Carthaginians from "the Tyrennians that they were into Africans", would prove very enriching for the Punic economy and army thanks to an abundant agricultural production and to the contribution of numerous military contingents of great warlike value.

In other respects, eliminated from Mediterranean trade by its Greek rivals, Carthage turned its view toward farther horizons. These were the famous long journeys of Hannon and Hamilcar. One, crossing the Strait of Gibraltar or the Pillars of Hercules, followed the west coast of Africa and reached the Gulf of Guinea, the other travelled to the British Isles. These expeditions shrouded in mystery brought Carthage the control of the gold and tin route. Soon, the exploiting of the Tunisian territory, the prospecting of new markets in the African world, the intense commercial relationships linked with the states of the Orient emerging from the conquests of Alexander and the tenacious effort of economic recovery bore fruit and gave Carthage the opportunity of experiencing a new rise, at the very time when the Greek cities were entering a phase of irreversible decline following endless internal strife. Thus, the conflict which soon set Greeks and Carthaginians against each other, and whose stake was the domination of Sicily, turned to the advantage of the latter, who succeeded in assuring for themselves the seizure of the greater part of the island in spite of the audacity that the Syracusan tyrant Agathocles displayed in the defence of his country and the aid of Pyrrhus, king of Epirus and champion of a western Hellenism in full decadence. No power seemed at that time able to bar the advance of the Carthaginians.

However, when Carthage established itself at Messina in 269 B.C., it found itself face to face with Rome, which had just taken its place at Reggio, on the other side of the strait. The conflict which soon placed these two metropolises against each other would be replete with consequences for the history of antiquity and even for all humanity.

### The Punic Wars: World Wars at the Level of Antiquity

By reason of the number of countries and peoples involved in the conflict, the importance of the matters at stake and the changes they brought about in the evolution of the world these wars had the magnitude of world wars.

The first Punic War lasted twenty-three years (264-241). It took place almost entirely at sea and ended in a somewhat paradoxical defeat for Carthage, whose fleet seemed clearly superior. This was a cruel disillusionment for the Carthaginians, who had not hesitated to predict to the Romans that they "would not even be able to wash their hands in the sea".

In fact, the power of Carthage concealed many seeds of weakness: a ruling class blinded by its own egoism, of a morbid distrust with regard to great men and of an unflinching hostility toward any attempt at reform; a mass of original inhabitants exploited and ready to revolt; an army of unruly and unscrupulous mercenaries.

General Hamilcar Barca had the wisdom to detect the causes of the ills from which his country was suffering and to learn a lesson from the misfortunes that it had just gone through. It was he who had the ability to institute again the Carthaginian expansion on the Mediterranean and to set up the basis of a new Carthaginian power. He adopted revolutionary solutions, drawing inspiration, in many areas, from Hellenic examples.

The new Punic adventure developed in Spain. Hamilcar Barca swiftly subdued a large part of the country, organizing his conquests in the manner of great empire builders, exercising a policy of assimilation of the natives by the enlistment of conquered soldiers and mixed marriages and founding his power on the army in the heart of which he fostered the image of the always inspired and invincible leader.

The benefits of the conquest of Spain were so well felt in Carthage that Rome took offence and hastened to provoke the second Punic war (219-201). This was dominated by the extraordinary personality of the Carthaginian general Hannibal, who crushed the Roman legions at Trasimeno (217) and at Cannes (216). This last battle is still considered as "the yet unequalled model of total victory, the one that by the complete encirclement of the enemy not only beats him but also annihilates him". It was on the morrow of this victory that one of the Carthaginian officers suggested the march on Rome and that, in the face of Hannibal's refusal, he was supposed to have told him: "The gods have not bestowed everything on the same man, Hannibal, you know how to conquer but you do not know how to turn victory to account."

His triumphal march on Rome would certainly have changed the face of history, but the defeat of his brother Hasdrubal in Spain, the lack of aid, the rather passive attitude of his own country and, finally, the more and more aggressive tactics of the Romans, forced Hannibal to turn back to Carthage. The legions of Scipio Africanus, reinforced by the troops of the Numidian king Massinissa, succeeded in conquering at Zama (202) the army that he had gathered in haste.

### The Death of Carthage

This defeat of Hannibal on African soil rang the knell for Carthage as a Mediterranean power. Hannibal himself, while wishing to remedy the ills from which his country was suffering, succeeded only in bringing down on himself the anger of an aristocracy in desperate straits. Denounced in Rome, he was obliged to exile himself. That suited the purpose of Massinissa, who reigned over a territory covering approximately present-day Algeria and who, with the benevolent neutrality of Rome, took upon himself the task of conquering the Carthaginian territory, proclaiming that he was going to turn Carthage into the capital of a North Africa unified under his aegis. Rome then became aware of the dawning Berber danger.

She could forestall it only by condemning Carthage to destruction: "Delenda est Karthago." This was the third Punic War, which lasted three years (149-146 B.C.) and was marked by a heroic resistance by the Carthaginians. But, in 146, the city succumbed to the attacks of the Roman general, Scipio Emilius, who systematically destroyed it, ploughed its earth, sowed it with salt, and declared it accursed. Tormented in spite of himself, it seems, he was so upset by the sight of the city in flames that he cried. Then, after bitter thoughts on the uncertainty of things in this world, he recited aloud the famous verses of Homer: "A day will come when Ilium, the sainted city, will perish, when Priam and the nation of Priam, skilful in wielding the lance, will perish." To the historian, Polybius, who questioned him on the meaning of these words, he answered: "I do not know why I am afraid that someone will repeat them some day with regard to my country."

This was, in any case, the most terrible example of the total annihilation of a whole people, "the Hiroshima of Antiquity", as has recently been written.

A great metropolis lasting seven centuries, Punic Carthage disappeared suddenly, leaving few material traces, but it was an important civilizing contribution to antiquity. With its many colonies scattered on the whole western strand of the Mediterranean and as far as the shores of the Atlantic, it exercised an important influence on the evolution of the ancient world. The Punic cities of North Africa and elsewhere were zones of contact and of fruitful exchange among the different ancient civilizations. Misunderstood for a long time, the Carthaginian contribution is beginning to be better appreciated, thanks to the development, a little everywhere, of excavations and of archeological and historical research.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)



Ruins of Carthage.

In the background, Mount Bou Kornine, originally dedicated to Baal Hamon.  
(Phot. Jacques Perez.)

## MUSINGS ON THE RUINS OF CARTHAGE

By Mhamed FANTAR



Tophet of Salammbô.

Steles and Ex-voto. Some of these carry inscriptions to Baal Hamon.  
(Phot. Jacques Perez.)

Shortly after the first Punic War, Hamilcar Barca, not without bitterness, left Sicily with the last contingents of the army: the fatherland had just suffered a serious defeat and the Carthaginians had to abandon the big island to their enemies, the Romans. What was to be the fate of Carthage after this disaster? Diminished, impoverished, out of control, the City was liable to experience a post-war period undoubtedly more trying than the war itself: civil war, perhaps. The Carthaginians were at variance. Political forces were in conflict with one another: conservatives and revolutionaries, partisans, some of an oligarchical elite, others of democracy. Democracy? What was its meaning? That was a word easy to pronounce; but the principle was far more difficult to handle! As the boat cut through the waters of the Mediterranean toward the coast of Africa, Hamilcar Barca was shaken by that irresistible force engendered by ideas and feelings which hastened to be born and to develop in the midst of an infernal din; his head was very heavy with it.

— Bostar, Bostar! Is it dawn already?

— It is the rosy-fingered dawn, Master. May your day be auspicious and blessed!

— Good day, Bostar.

Silence again enveloped Hamilcar Barca's cabin. Weary doubtless from a long and relentless insomnia, the Carthaginian general fell asleep, soothed by a very gentle early morning breeze, the one which, in our regions, heralds the sun. When he awoke, the capital of the Carthaginian world was already to be seen; they made out its beautiful civic and religious buildings, its sumptuous villas, the magical green of its gardens enlivened by birds of multi-coloured plumage and by the murmuring of the waters destined for the irrigation of fruit trees and market-garden crops, essential to the garnishing of the Carthaginian table.

Hamilcar abruptly left his bed and came to take his place on the bridge, on the side of the prow, in a serious posture. He seemed thoughtful. No one dared speak to him; from time to time, he gave his orders; he was very insistent on accuracy; it was distasteful to him to repeat a command. The crew knew him very well. Hamilcar was worshipped by his men.

Slowly and with some elegance the ship neared the approach to the port. There the general was awaited by the members of his family, his wife, his daughters and his son, Hannibal, who was hardly seven years old. Although young, the child was well aware of his father's fame; nor was he unaware of the fact that his country had just suffered a terrible defeat. His mother was not able to restrain his ardour. Hannibal ran everywhere, slipping among the bystanders; now one, now the other of his sisters tried to catch him in order to avoid for him an unlucky fall or useless or annoying movements. The child, always full of ill-controlled energy, raised himself on tiptoe the better to discern the beautiful ship that was bringing his father back from very far away, from the other side of the sea. At last there it was at the circular port; the mooring lines were thrown. Hamilcar Barca, tears in his eyes, went toward the gangway. As soon as he set foot on land, he rushed to his children to embrace them while his wife gazed at him with a look of tender love.

— Welcome, Hamilcar, she said.

— Greetings, wife! Tell me, are you willing to go home with our dear little daughters? I shall go first to the Admiralty and I shall doubtless take a little walk with Hannibal. Hannibal, do you want to walk through Carthage with me? You are seven years old already; you are no longer a baby to be kept at home.

— Yes, father, I would like that. I am happy

to be able to stay with you.

— So, son, let us go for a walk since you want to. As for the Admiralty, I shall get there later.

— Is the Admiralty that immense tower that overlooks the circular port?

— It certainly is. It is here that warships, triremes, quadriremes and quinqueremes drop anchor. Over there are shipyards where the repair of damaged ships takes place; when necessary, they build new units. As it is a matter of a military port, approach is forbidden to foreigners and even to Carthaginians, in certain cases. Behind this enclosure, there is another dock of the harbour which receives merchant ships. The approach to it is free. Have you never walked with one of your sisters or with your mother on the docks of this port? All merchandise is found there; all languages are spoken there. It is picturesque. I'll take you there, another day. Now, if you like, we are going to cross the highway that leads toward the upper city, to that hill on whose summit stands the temple of Eshmun, our god of healing.

— I have often heard my mother speak of Lord Baal Hammon and of Lady Tanit.

— Their temple is not far from the port; it is just behind the copse. As you see, it is a sanctuary not in a building, a sacred area where the faithful come to offer live sacrifices to Baal Hammon and Tanit. Originally, they used to offer human victims, young children; nowadays, a new interpretation of the cult, prepared and recommended by our priests who join piety to learning, authorizes recourse to substitution. For the child doomed to sacrifice, they use a lamb or another animal. This substituted sacrifice has neither less value nor less virtue than the traditional sacrifice, provided that the ritual is scrupulously observed.

— You know, father, the other day our slave was speaking of a sacrifice to Moloch. It was, she said, a serious ceremony; she spoke of tambourine players, of musicians, of dancing, of masks and of many other things, of fire, of spices, etc., etc. The ceremony takes place, she said, at sundown.

— Yes, indeed, a very important religious ceremony is involved here. It refers, as I have just told you, to our two great divinities; the ones who guard our City, our security, our prosperity, the fertility of our land and that of our animals. Baal Hammon and Tanit watch over the greatness of Carthage and over the wealth and welfare of the Carthaginians. In the sanctuary of Baal, social distinctions disappear. The rich like the poor, free men like slaves, citizens of Carthage like resident foreigners are equally welcomed to pray, to make vows and to offer sacrifices.

— Among the things our slave spoke of concerning this ceremony, there were, I believe, urns and steles . . .

— When the victim has been slaughtered according to the ritual and has been cast into the sacred fire, they wait until it has been completely consumed to collect the ashes in an urn. Sometimes, the master of the sacrifice, before burying the vase, adds to it an amulet, a jewel or some other object, a precaution against the forces of evil or an allusion to survival in the afterworld. Over the sacrificial urn, they erect a stele whose form and decoration vary according to the style of the time and the taste of each. Our City welcomes cultural and artistic trends from Canaan, Egypt, Greece, Etruria, Cyprus, indeed from all Mediterranean countries. The commercial port gives the most lively and significant idea of this. There swarm men from different horizons, with their goods, their

ideas, their customs and their beliefs. On the steles of the sanctuary, the engraver or the sculptor represents the diversity of this world of which I have just spoken to you: elements borrowed from Grecian imagery placed beside other elements taken from the Egyptian.

While Hamilcar was conversing with his son, a stranger approached and spoke to him. He was a Greek who had just landed in Carthage.

— Excuse me, citizen of Carthage, for interrupting so sweet a conversation. You were just speaking of buried urns; does the sanctuary of Baal and Tanit therefore resemble a necropolis?

— It is not a question of a necropolis. Over there, on the slopes of those hills that overlook the lower town, are located vast cemeteries.

— Tell me how Carthaginian tombs are planned. They must resemble ours.

— I do not know how yours look . . . But, without having been buried, I believe I can describe a Carthaginian tomb to you. There are actually different categories: tombs with pits, tombs with shafts and tombs with staircases and vestibules which lead to a funeral chamber carved in the rock.

— Are your dead buried or cremated?

— The two ways of interment are practised. Among some people they undertake the stripping of the flesh from the corpses so that, in the funeral chamber, they place completely fleshless bones beside the funeral furnishings which also vary according to family customs: much pottery is found there, local or imported from the other side of the Mediterranean: Etruria, Greece, Cyprus, Phoenicia, etc. There are jewels, amulets, masks of terra cotta or of molten glass.

— Thank you, citizen of Carthage, I leave you with your son. Is it possible to have a good time in Carthage?

— In the harbour district, there are delightful cookshops where one can eat fried fish. As far as wines are concerned, one can find them for all tastes. I gladly recommend the wine of Magon to you. Come, Hannibal, the sun is already at the zenith.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

## ROMAN CARTHAGE

By Abdelmajid ENNABLI

Like the large American cities erected at one stroke, bordering the Atlantic Ocean, facing the Old Continent, Roman Carthage was built at the head of Africa, facing Rome, on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea.

From the outset, its founders, who intended it to be a capital, wished it to be vast and majestic at the same time. Starting from nothing, since the site of the destroyed Carthaginian city had been abandoned for more than a century, the Roman city-planners conceived a cadastral plan which still amazes to-day by its vigour and its scope.

From the summit of the Acropolis of Byrsa, taken as geometric centre, the surveyors established two great perpendicular axes, the *decumanus maximus* and the *cardo maximus*, thus determining the four parts of the large rectangle forming the layout of the city. Spreading out parallel to the shore, this plan measures 888 metres on the *cardo maximus*, north-south, and 828 on the *decumanus maximus*, facing east-west, thus covering about 262 hectares.

Then at the interior of this vast surface, departing from two big perpendicular axes, a whole checker-work of orthogonal *cardo* and *decumanus* is traced, outlining lots of equal area intended for buildings. On both sides, of the *cardo maximus* and parallel to it, twenty spaced secondary *cardos* of 37 metres each extend from north to south, crossed perpendicularly by six *decumanus* distributed on both sides of the large *decumanus* facing east-west. It is in the plan of this network of streets that the *insulae* are distributed. Each *insula* or small block measures a length four times its width, being 35 metres by 142, covering a surface of five thousand square metres.

Thus, almost two thousand years before the American pioneers applied it to the new continent, the Romans imposed on the natural topography of the land a plan of rational conception destined to be the setting of the future capital of Africa.

It was in the squares of this huge chess-board that the varied governmental organs and buildings of the city were distributed and arranged. At first, private dwellings: the first colonists to arrive from Italy and for whom the new city had been founded had to receive lots of sufficiently extensive area to erect spacious homes. A whole district of these beautiful villas existed in the north part of the city. On one of the heights that go slowly down toward the shore and whose slope was arranged in successive levels according to the dimensions of the *insulae*, the villas follow one upon the other.

A whole ensemble of these houses was excavated and is to-day one of the richest and most attractive areas of Carthage. The most remarkable of these aristocratic residences is the one called the *Aviary* on account of a very lovely mosaic showing a multitude of birds hopping in a flowery landscape. Right beside, in the house at the *Cascade*, a series of small cascades feeds a great pool facing a large reception hall.

In these immense dwellings, the master of the house and his family lived with many servants. He welcomed a clientele whose faithfulness necessitated frequent invitations by him which, as archeological evidence proves, took place in surroundings if not ostentatious, at least very pleasant. The lower class — that of the dependents and the artisans — had to live in very

modest and flimsy homes whose remains have seldom been discovered.

On the other hand, public establishments, by reason of their rôle in the city and their prestige in the eyes of the inhabitants, make up entireties whose architecture, mass or failing these, site, are the most visible if not the most recognizable.

A city like Carthage took pride in possessing the biggest and most beautiful public buildings. And, as the builder had foreseen, each of them was situated in its proper place in the general plan. The arrangement of this monumental ensemble, ordered with art and balance, must have formed a magnificent architectural ornament for the city: capitoline temple, in the centre; at the summit of an acropolis overlooking all the urban landscape, gigantic public baths along the shore; theatre and concert hall back to back; circus and amphitheatre, neighbouring each other, without omitting the ports which made its fortune, huge reservoirs of water and a multitude of city squares, porticos, temples and buildings of minor importance. Those were the essential parts of a great capital where the fundamental functions of all kinds, economic, religious or leisure, found ample satisfaction. "Veni Karthaginem et circumstrepebat me flagitiosorum amorum sartago". "I came to Carthage and the frying pan of guilty loves seethed around me", wrote Saint Augustine.

Indeed, it is the public buildings intended for amusement and games which, still to-day, most impress the visitor: at first, the concert hall and the theatre for concerts, tragedies, mimicry, oratory. Better than anyone, Apulius, who appeared there, praised this scene. Having remained unknown for a long time under the earth which buried it, this theatre was revealed by excavation: leaning against the side of the plateau, the hemicycle of its tiers opens on the south in front of a *frons scaenae* destroyed in great part. A goodly number of architectural elements of columns, capitals and architraves has been found lying on the ground, as well as beautiful large statues of gods and emperors which must have decorated the stage. To-day they are displayed in the Bardo Museum.

But more vast, by reason of the essentially popular nature of their entertainment, are the amphitheatre and the circus. To conceive and create these buildings, genuine reservoirs intended to hold an accumulation of several tens of thousands of spectators, the architects and the builders had to show audacity and inventiveness at the same time. According to the nature of the play, the stage is lengthened into a track or else contracts in the form of a foyer to concentrate interest on the action, and the tiers of spectators, encircling the scene, extend in long steps or rise in successive arches.

Of the amphitheatre of Carthage, only too famous for the sacrifices of Christian martyrs, there remains to-day only a big oval form marked out almost at ground level: no other vault of this bastion of violence has endured; only the arena has been uncovered, offering no further echo of all the bloody combats which took place there for the jubilation of a whole assembled people. But we can get an idea of this architecture from the El Jem amphitheatre which remains one of the most extraordinary in the world.

In comparison with that of the amphitheatre, the architecture of the circus appears simpler: the arena, in length possibly more than five hundred metres, is divided longitudinally by a wall ending in two large boundary posts and around which runs the track. Around the arena parallel to the track, stretch the tiers. In the middle, on one of the sides, was the place of the tribune. At one end were the stables, the



Edifice with columns  
(Phot. I.N.A.A.)



Christian Basilica at Damous El Karita.  
(Phot. I.N.A.A.)

sheds and the starting box, while at the opposite end rises the triumphal gate, under which there stood the platform of the presidency of the games.

The chariot races that took place there were the most popular sports show of antiquity, and their competitions were followed with a passion comparable to the one which inspires to-day's crowds for important games. The charioteers, on chariots, defending one of the four traditional colours — blue, red, white and green — had to go around the *spina* seven times. More than the speed of the chariot, drawn by teams from two to twelve horses, it was the incidents which enlivened these contests which were the joy of the spectators. It was especially at the turns that they measured the skill of the driver and looked for the clumsy. The disorganized team, the runaway horses, the overturned chariot, the thrown driver, caused a general collapse, a wreck which set off roars, unleashed the passions of the crowd of spectators. The one who, conquering all these obstacles, managed through all its mishaps to accomplish the seven laps was proclaimed the hero and experienced a glory comparable to that of the great champions of our time.

But of these clamours and of the glories they created, nothing more now remains than the traces of deserted and silent monuments which only archeologists will be able to question.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)



Banquet Scene (fragment).  
(Phot. I.N.A.A.)

## PICTURES IN STONE, IMAGES OF EVERYDAY LIFE

By Mongi ENNAIFER

Here is a large pavement uncovered, a few decades ago, at Carthage. It represents an estate and scenes of life in the country near Carthage. The composition, quite original, lets us live a day among rural aristocracy.

### The Lord Arrives

A horseman rides slowly toward a fortified house. He precedes his faithful servant who keeps him company. The servant, his right arm stretched forward, seems to be speaking to his master. With his left hand, he holds the ropes of a big wicker cone-shaped basket which hangs on his back and contains the baggage. Constructed of building-stone, the edifice shows two corner towers at the ends of its facade, jutting out, joined between on the first storey by a gallery whose archways are supported by little columns. Behind the house rises the main portion of the building with a double roof of tiles on a slant and four round towers topped by cupolas. This is a real seigneurial castle. The horseman is none other than the owner returning to his property.

### The Lord of the Manor Receives Gifts

Having recovered from the strain of his journey, the lord has settled himself in his orchard. In front of him, a messenger already runs up. He carries two long-beaked birds and a letter on which can be read "IV (lio) DOM (ino)", meaning "To the Lord Julius". Behind him, a servant or a peasant, bent under the weight of a basket full of fruit, holds a hare by its paws.

### The Lady of the Castle Finishes Dressing

In front of an armchair placed at the foot of a rose-tree, the master's wife stands with crossed legs, leaning with her elbow on a little column. Clad in a long, transparent embroidered dress, she is adorning herself with her jewels. A woman servant offers her a necklace with her right hand while she holds a jewel-case in her left.

### The Lady of the Castle Relaxes

It is the hot season. She wears a light dress. Seated on a bench in the shade of the cypress trees she waves a fan of woven straw, like the ones we use nowadays.

The tableau whose chief scenes we have described comprises three registers. The composition is planned around a central element: the estate. The reading of it is not rectilinear like some pictures of the hunt where we have a classic diagram: the departure, the hunt itself and, finally, the return with the game. The unity of the theme is nonetheless well respected. It is paced by the four seasons. Autumn, symbolized by the orchard where Julius receives gifts, spring, by the rose-trees in bloom, and summer by the coolness of the wood shaded by cypresses, are used as frame for the lady of the castle. In the season of bad weather, the owners live in town. Thus, the artist has contented himself with representing winter by two peasants beating olive trees<sup>1</sup> and by a hunter clapping two ducks against his chest.

The Four Seasons set the rhythm of the composition of the mosaic; they also have a benefic value, just like the fish and the flowers which are offered to the mistress. The appearance of a hunting scene in the middle register on the right is not by chance. Exploits of the hunt are the sport of virtuous and noble men, in the circumstances of Lord Julius.

By its technique (representation in registers) and by its natural setting this remarkable work that perpetuates the name of this rich citizen is in the tradition of African mosaic.

The mosaic (a panel made by the assembling of cubes of marble, stone, molten glass, . . .) was introduced into Africa at the end of the Punic era. It quickly experienced a great expansion, and the Carthaginians borrowed it from the Greeks. But, if we already find in Olynthus (Greece) in the fourth century B.C. mosaics decorated with figures, in Carthage the floors of pink concrete were simply encrusted with little marble cubes. A *pavimentum punicum*<sup>2</sup> of a Punic house at Kerkouane (Cape Bon, Tunisia) is, however ornamented by a symbol of Tanit<sup>3</sup>, between two fish.

During the Roman era, the use of mosaic spread. Artists from Alexandria and Cyrene settled in Tripoli in the first century A.D. Through their intervention, the oriental influence, expressed by the nilotic style, penetrated into Proconsular<sup>4</sup>. A second wave, originating in Italy, also reached this province.

African mosaic is thus the result of these two foreign currents to which local and specific elements came to be united. At the time of the Severi, a dynasty originating in Tripoli, mosaic studios became numerous and the art of mosaic developed in a parallel direction to the urban rise.

The use of this rich pavement spread everywhere in public buildings and private homes, in the city as in the country. Figurative themes are innumerable, the most frequent, however, arise from mythology and sports. African aristocracy was enthusiastic about hunting, while the common people considered shows in the arena and especially the chariot races a necessity as much as food.

The great ancient cities had their theatre, their amphitheatre and their circus. The last is generally the most poorly preserved. It is fortunate that, in this area as well, the stone panels, pictures of the life of our ancestors, bring us precious information.

One of them, uncovered in a Carthaginian house, shows a lively sports contest. Three quadrigas in full flight are going around the *spina*<sup>5</sup>. Each charioteer urges on his horses by



Carthage.  
Corinthian Capital.  
Roman Era.  
(Phot. Unesco/Dominique Roger.)

waving his whip and, undoubtedly, by shouting. While a fourth contender, headed in the opposite direction to the three others, flourishes the palm of victory he has just won and calmly returns to his stall. Four chariots, that is, the four rival parties of the era: the Whites, the Greens, the Reds and the Blues. But beyond this symbol, the presence of such a work in a private home is justified only by the importance of the proprietor who must have been a patron of the arts or one of the potentates of the circus. In any case, the pavement is the only document remaining to us after the almost complete disappearance of this great public building of Carthage (six hundred metres long by one hundred wide). Bread and circuses: *Panem et circenses*, demanded the mob at Rome, which was much spoiled with spectacles. Indeed, in the middle of the games, huge banquets were served to them.

In Africa, it was the same, if not to a greater degree, because scenes of drinking bouts and banquets are very often shown in the mosaics. The most famous, on this subject, is that of the *Banquet of the Travestites* of El Jem. Actually, gastronomic refinement was the specialty of the upper class. Some great lords sometimes used to banquet the whole day. Lying comfortably on couches, in their enchantingly decorated *triclinia*<sup>5</sup>, they ate, . . . discussed, . . . tasted, . . . ate again. Once gorged, they vomited and began all over again . . ., then they changed *triclinium*, and so on. These unswept rooms with the remains of meals on the floor gave to an artist, Sosos of Pergama, who lived at the end of the second century B.C., the idea of creating a picture of it. The theme received the name *asorotos oikos*. Copies of this motif, dating from the Roman era, are preserved in the Bardo Museum.

Less wealthy persons could not, naturally, afford so much luxury and pleasure. They were satisfied with commoner meals, where good atmosphere was not lacking. On a mosaic at Carthage, we can, in spite of the gaps in the document, count twenty-four guests. The visitors, in groups of three, are seated cross-legged on high-backed bench-tables. Decanters of wine and goblets are placed on the tables. The guests, a little restless, seem already to have gone through the tasting stage, when the servants bring the first well-filled platters. One of the diners tries to grab a loaf that is being offered to him by a waiter who is passing between the tables. His neighbour summons another servant. In a corner, a cook supervises the rest of the dishes that he will serve still hot.

The banquet is enlivened by variety acts. A juggler works with a hoop; two dancers accompanying their steps with types of long-handled castanets and to the sound of a flute, revolve in the middle of the room, in a lively and congenial atmosphere.

In the eyes of the ancient world, the games had a religious meaning and represented for them an almost daily activity. The Africans enjoyed them to their heart's content, without, however, neglecting anything of their different spiritual or cultural concerns.

1. An operation which took place in December.
2. This is how the mosaic floor of the Punic era was named.
3. The symbol of Tanit (a Carthaginian divinity) decorates a mosaic floor at Delos, another at Cagliari and a third at Sabratha.
4. A Roman province which roughly corresponds to modern Tunisia.
5. *Spina*: a platform built in the middle of the track. It was decorated with statues, obelisks, altars and aedicules which held seven eggs. At each completed lap of the race, a servant threw down an egg, in order that the spectators should know at every moment what point the contest had reached.
6. *Triclinium*, *triclinia*: T-shaped dining room.

(Translated by Mildred Grand)



Tunis.  
Hammoûda Pasha Mosque.  
Murad Era.  
(Phot. O.N.T.T.)

## TUNIS, THE CAPITAL OF THE HAFSIDS

By Abdelaziz DAOULATLI

On the eve of the formation of the Hafsîd emirate, Tunis presented the image of a city that geography favoured and history had chosen. Under the dynasty of the Banu Hafs which reigned for three centuries and a half (1228-1574), it experienced an urban expansion and an architectural activity without precedent, which made of Tunis a city among the most important of the Moslem West.

Located in a region of fertile plains like those of Mornaghia, Soukra and Manouba, Tunis benefited besides from favourable climatic, hydraulic and strategic conditions which were at the origin of its birth and development. But if Tunis remained of a completely secondary importance during Antiquity, the same was not true after the settlement of the Arabs. It distinguished itself then by the military rôle it played as a citadel city, a bastion of Islam directed against Byzantine power, and participated due to this fact in the conquest of the big Mediterranean islands such as Malta and Sicily.

In the ninth century, Ifrîqiya took a large urban stride from which Tunis drew great benefit, even becoming for some time the capital of the Aghlabid kingdom. But it was only in the tenth and eleventh centuries that it acquired a great wealth, which did not escape authors Ibn Hawqal (tenth century) and Al-Bakri (eleventh century). At that time Tunis was a city widely open on the exterior thanks to its five gates, Bab Souika, Bab Jasirah, Bab el Bahr, Bab Carthagin and Bab Artah. Then, from the middle of the eleventh century, the Hilalian Nomads (Banu Riyah and Zoghba) arrived from Egypt

in ever-increasing numbers and occupied a large part of Ifrîqiya. Tunis, as well as the other cities, suffered the consequences of this immigration. It retired within itself and no longer communicated with the surrounding country except by three openings. However, the beginnings of suburbs made their appearance, due probably to rural immigration, itself caused by that of the Nomads, and the palace of the governor, formerly located outside (likely at Rabta), took refuge, under the new local dynasty of the Banu Khorassan, within the city walls. A royal palace, the Ksar, a mosque and a cemetery were established in the district which still bears the name of this dynasty. The city, in spite of the destruction caused by the Nomads, experienced a certain degree of prosperity right through the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

When the Almohads settled in Ifrîqiya, from the middle of the twelfth century, they chose Tunis as capital of the province. Before regaining Marrakesh, their chief, Abd-el-Mumin, took care to order the construction of a casbah on the western slope of the Medina. The appearance of this agency, grafted onto the old city, without doubt weakened the political and administrative rôle of the latter but lessened neither its economic activity nor the prestige of its great mosque. The Almohads thus introduced a type of urban organization proper to Moroccan tradition, characterized by the separation between the city-maghzen (administrative city) represented here by the Casbah and the commercial and cultural city: the Medina.

Provided with instruments essential to the life and the government of men, the city, once occupied by the Hafsids, successors to the Almohads of Marrakesh, went through an architectural activity and an urban expansion which made it a real metropolis, worthy of the big cities of the East and the West. In the thirteenth century, its population is estimated at about one hundred thousand inhabitants divided between the central Medina and the two suburbs North and South, of Bab Souika and Bab Jasirah.

The geographical site of the capital predestinated it to an important rôle in the Mediterranean commerce, especially in trade with Europe. With Sicily, from which it was separated by a corridor of one hundred forty kilometres, Tunis controlled the passage between eastern and western Mediterranean. Under the Hafsids, the needs of a court and a privileged minority, who aspired to a more and more sumptuous life, had fostered the development of the arts and crafts and intensified trade within more numerous, more varied and bigger markets and shops than in the preceding centuries. Further, the profits gained by some citizens from the exploitation of the land increased the wealth of the capital and encouraged the consumption of luxury goods, much of which came from abroad, and, especially, from Europe or through the intermediary of Europe. Thus was established a flow of exchanges organized and regulated by the State. Its zone of expansion extended over a great range passing beyond Europe and Africa for some products to reach China, India . . . From Africa came the gold of the Sudan, which was avidly sought, and Tunis was considered a great commercial centre where Saharian caravans came.

By means of urban crafts, by international trade, by the yields of the land of which a good part benefited the townsmen, a considerable mass of wealth was accumulated in the capital, making possible expenditures in matters of town-planning and architecture.

Tunis, political and economic capital of Ifrîqiya, was undeniably a great cultural metropo-



lis. The Great Mosque of Zaytunah or of the *Olive-tree*, the numerous medersas (colleges), of which the first founded in North Africa was Chammaciyya, the Zawiyas (mausoleums), . . . were centres of culture where the rudiments of religious teaching were offered and, for some, where knowledge was expanded. But it was also by travel, as much in the Orient as in the countries of Maghrib and Andalusia, that they were informed about innovations which were created outside Ifriqiya. The Almohad doctrine was disparaged by the triumph of the traditional rite in Ifriqiya: malikism, and by the expansion of soufism in its maraboutique form. Malikism and soufism undoubtedly finally caused a sort of hardening and degeneration of thought and culture. But the controversy continued to be fed by ideas received as much from the Moslem Orient as the Occident and minds as eminent as Ibn Khaldun and Ibn Arafa were certainly the fruit of this confrontation of cultures of which Ifriqiya formed the true crucible. On the route to the Orient, Tunis was a port of call where travellers gladly landed when coming from Andalusia or Maghrib, or when returning to those places.

The arts, particularly architecture, experienced a great surge during the Hafsids reign, marked by a revival of traditional architectural and decorative style, thanks to the contributions of hispano-maghribin art and the mameluke art of Egypt. The occidental trend was strong in the thirteenth century, when it was usually identified with official art, as witnessed by the typically Almohad monuments such as the Casbah and its great mosque, Bab Djedid, as well, if we can judge according to the descriptions of historians, as the gardens of the sultans of Ras-et-Tabia and Abou Fihir. As for the Mameluke trend, it is above all due to the remains of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries like the midha of the sultan (washroom), the El Attarine native market or the Market of the Perfumers, the door of the library of Abu Amr Uthman, some decorations of the mausoleum of Sidi Kacem El Jalizi and late combination mihrab-minbar of the mosque of the Casbah, that we arrive at measuring its importance. But at the interior of this mixing the Ifriqiyian element none the less holds the place of importance, which gives a typical and original aspect, by relationship with all that was being done in the Orient and the Occident, to the architecture of most of the buildings, medersas Chammaciyya and Mountasiriyya, facades of Bab Menara and Bab Djedid as well as those of Sidi Ben Arous, Sidi Kelaï, the window of the Great Mosque of Zaytunah and that of the market al-Qimach or the Cloth Market.

Tunis owes its masterpieces of Ifriqiyian art to the intense architectural activity unfolded by its sultans, their circle and the townsman elite of craftsmen, businessmen and landowners. This activity of the founders expressed their concerns, their needs or their ambitions. It sometimes aimed at the general interest and public welfare, at other times at the personal comfort of the sultan and the privileged class. But whatever may have been the purpose for which the monument was created, profitable or educational, of general or particular interest, its founding marked each time the triumph of the urban fact, which carries within it the seeds of civilization.

The market, the mosque, the medersa, the zawiya, the fountain or the simple dwelling were thus to be found within the framework of works which aimed at the comfort and the physical and moral well-being of the inhabitant. And even the palace, built in the outskirts of the capital, can bear witness to the degree of progress attained by the people of the city.

Thus we discern two great eras where architectural activity appeared the most intense: the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries. These two centuries actually correspond to two epochs of great urban expansion. At a time when, in the first period, the founders aimed especially at the positioning of urban institutions essential to the organization of a capital of a great kingdom, the second is marked by works of benevolence and public utility made necessary by the important development of the city.

The urbanisation of the inner perimeter of the Medina resulted in forcing outside the city walls the cemeteries which had for a long time occupied the west and northeast fringes of the Medina, and, especially the large western cemetery of Silsila, or of the *Chain*, which was only rarely used for burials. As a replacement for this old cemetery, a second row of cemeteries came into being right around the second surrounding wall, including the cemetery of Sidi Ahmed Saqqa, the Raudhat as-Soud, near the gate of Sidi Kassem, the cemeteries of *Charaf*, overlooking Lake Sijumi, the cemetery of El-Gorjani where the great nobles and the officials of the Empire were buried, and finally the big people's cemetery of Djellaz.

The outlying districts of the twelfth century, not much developed and scantily urbanized, became endowed, from the thirteenth century, with urban establishments such as mosques, medersas, fountains, palaces, . . . From the beginning of the fourteenth century, they were given ramparts whose vestiges could be distinguished on the late maps of the nineteenth century as well as beneath a garden bordering Zawiya Boukriyya Street. In the fifteenth century, the suburb of Bab Souika was surrounded by a second wall passing by Bab Bou Saâdun. From whence comes the assumption that the North suburb, under the Hafsids, experienced an evolution in two stages: the first, corresponding to the beginning of the fourteenth century, marked by the first surrounding wall, the second, corresponding to the line passing by Bab Bou Saâdun dating probably from the first half of the fifteenth century. It seems, therefore, that from the time of the Hafsids reign, the suburb of Bab Souika had the greatest part of its expansion orientated in a south-north direction while that of Bab Jasirah (south outskirts) had a much slower expansion, aimed principally from west to east and gaining more and more land on the marshlands bordering the lake.

The peopling of the suburbs, the increase of inner gates in order to facilitate traffic between the Medina and the suburban settlements, the multiplication of mosques at Khotba to make Friday prayers easier for all those who lived outside the Medina, irrigation by the creation of new water installations, all these evidences are so many tokens of the extension of the urban perimeter of Tunis. Thus, toward the middle of the fifteenth century the outskirts presented urban formations structurally interdependent upon each other and situated in relation to the ramparts of the central Medina "not in the manner of wings", explained the author Adorne of Brugge, but rather like the "rosettes of a diadem", according to the expression of an Andalusian writer.

From this fact, the Hafsids era constitutes an important stage in the general evolution of the city of Tunis. It has the not inconsiderable merit of having given to Tunisian architecture the aspect it would keep long after the end of the dynasty and, at Tunis, an urban set-up perfectly adapted to the needs of the city called upon to play the rôle of capital of a great kingdom, after the decline of Kairwan and Mahdia.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)



Before and after.  
Restoration of the Medina.  
(Phot. Jacques Perez.)

## THE MEDINA OF TUNIS TO-DAY

By Georges FRADIER

At the present time, the Medina, an urban entirety consisting of central Medina and its two suburbs north and south, covers two hundred seventy hectares. It includes seven hundred historical monuments of value and constitutes in its whole one of the rare examples of Moslem town-planning existing in our day. On this score, beyond its cultural and historical value, it harbours a potential wealth which could open up the tourist trade. It also comprises a real estate area of fifteen thousand dwellings, housing a population of one hundred forty thousand inhabitants, mostly rural immigrants with very low incomes. Finally it includes a very active commercial centre, since it serves fifty per cent of the Tunisian conglomeration, that is to say the low-income section of this population.

The built-up property is in a state of constant

dilapidation, particularly for the last twenty years, resulting from the loss of function of most of the buildings of cultural and religious character, from the crowding of housing under poor sanitary conditions, aggravated by the lack of maintenance, the inadequacy and the decay of the substructures (water and drainage, in particular), the vast increase of commercial activities, those of the modern centre in expansion as much as those linked to popular consumption and which spoil and degrade a maladjusted structure.

The dilapidation of the buildings, their transformation or demolition, risk causing the progressive disappearance of the old centre not only as a cultural heritage, but also as a heritage of real estate which they cannot hope to replace by a new habitat under the present economic conditions of the country.

The salvation of the historic site cannot be separated from its adaptation, as an urban space, to the functioning of the city and the needs of its inhabitants. It will have to be planned not only in terms of easement but above all in terms of revitalizing the old centre.

The solution of these problems demands threefold action on the heritage of historic buildings, on the residential area and on the economic spaces.

Concerning the heritage of monuments it is suitable to assure first the protection of the character of traditional architecture and town-planning, as well as of the buildings, by different easements. The degradation of the heritage will be checked by a policy of restoration and revival of the historic buildings, at the same time as activities of socio-cultural and touristic nature will foster the rehabilitation of the old centre.

Concerning the habitat, the existing structure should be preserved by repair and maintenance and by the improving of housing conditions. Given the scarcity of dwellings and the poor financial state of the people, it is indeed impossible to lessen the density and renew the built-up area. By way of supporting policy, it is necessary to undertake urgently the thorough restoration of a small part of the realty heritage and the renovation of districts threatening ruin.

Finally, the rebuilding of sanitation and distribution facilities is a condition of immediate action on the housing area.

For economic areas, production activities capable of being revived by touristic demand (warehouses and related workshops for artisans) will be concentrated in the central space. Better organized, the historical commercial areas (the markets) will be accessible to well-to-do customers. But it is important at the same time to lessen the pressure of popular consumption, by restoring the destroyed market axes and by gradually creating new centres in the suburbs, then on the outskirts.

Such are, in their general framework, the measures which are being proposed to the Tunisian authorities by the Association for the Salvation of the Medina, connected with the Development Project (Tunis-Carthage Project) which Unesco supports, with the assistance of the Development Program of the United Nations.

As of now, the town-planners, architects and economists who form the team for this Project are working on the overall program of development operations and, in particular, on drives relating to matters of priority; at the same time, they are setting up, in cooperation with the services of the State and the municipal services involved, plans of financing and the financial mechanisms necessary for the accomplishment of these programs.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)



ANONYMOUS.  
Reliquary of Father de Brébeuf, 1664-1665.  
Silver; 21 in. x 21 (53.3 x 53.3 cm.).  
Quebec, Monastery of the Augustines of the  
Hôtel-Dieu.  
(Phot. Robert Derome.)

## THE OLD SILVER OF NEW FRANCE

By Jean TRUDEL

The exhibition of *Old Silver in New France* which will be presented at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa from the first of February to the seventeenth of March, 1974, offers a first approach to the origins of silver craft in Canada. It is not possible to deal with this subject without studying the work of French silversmiths, in use in the country from the middle of the seventeenth century until the end of the French regime, which marks an intention to transplant European social structures to America, while the silverwork created in New France reveals an adapting of these structures to the new surroundings, notice being taken of its peculiarities. That appears especially when we technically and stylistically compare the French works with those of New France and study the silversmiths of New France as a collectivity facing that of the French silversmiths. It is fascinating to study the works in terms of their owners and of the significance they had for them: the satisfactions of aesthetic order were not the only ones they drew from them.

Religious power played a rôle of first importance in New France: the French colony was Catholic and the representatives of the clergy were everywhere. One of the most powerful religious orders, the Jesuits, had very early been associated with the undertaking of colonization and had not taken long to gather its first martyrs, at the time of the attempts to evangelize the Indians. The Reliquary of Father Brébeuf, preserved to-day in the Monastery of the Augustines of the Hôtel-Dieu in Quebec, must have occupied a place of honour in the Jesuit College in Quebec. Produced in Paris in 1664-1665, the silver bust of Father Jean de Brébeuf, martyred in Huronia on the sixteenth of March, 1649, rests on a pedestal in the form of a coffin which contains the cranium and some bones of the martyr. The fact of possessing such a work, donated by the family of Father de Brébeuf, and of offering the remains of one of their own members for the veneration of the inhabitants of New France could, for the Jesuits, only heighten their prestige in the colony. Father de Brébeuf was not canonized before 1930 and his reliquary, much before official recognition by the Church, had become striking evidence of the short, heroic past of the Canadian church and of the attempts at implanting the Faith, thanks to the blood spilled in this new land. The functions of this work, the material of which it is made, as well as its anthropomorphic form,

tie it to religious traditions of the Middle Ages.

It was by a work less prestigious but just as much loaded with significance that the Ursulines of Quebec wished to mark the hundredth anniversary of their arrival in New France. On this occasion, in 1739, they ordered a sanctuary lamp in silver meant to complete the decoration of the new chapel of their convent. They applied for this to Paul Lambert, called Saint-Paul (Arras, 1691 or 1703 — Quebec, 1749), the best silversmith in Quebec at that time. They supplied him with the raw material in the form of pieces of silverware which they used at the infirmary and which were, in all probability, French and secular. A tradition, also probable, even has it that these pieces of silverware, melted and made into a sanctuary lamp, had been willed to the Ursulines of Quebec by Madame Marie-Madeleine de Chauvigny de La Peltrie (Alençon, 1603 — Quebec, 1671) who had been their lay founder and had arrived in Quebec in 1639 with the first nuns. Paul Lambert's lamp thus perpetuated the memory of the benefactress of the Ursulines of Quebec, while recording their belonging to the new country by one of the most beautiful works of silver created in New France.

The use of French silverware in New France was not limited to the clergy, far from it. Several of the new arrivals brought some in their baggage. Those who held important positions or who had some wealth took pride in displaying French silverware on their tables, a sign of their riches and their rank. The Museum of Fine Arts in Montreal has an ewer, created in Paris in 1754-1755 by the silversmith Jean Fauché, which carries double coats of arms engraved on its side. They are those of the Le Gardeur de Repentigny and Chaussegros de Léry families which became united by the marriage of Louis Le Gardeur de Repentigny to Marie-Madeleine Chaussegros de Léry in 1750 at Quebec. It is significant that they took the trouble to bring this over from France at a moment in the history of the colony when several silversmiths were at work in Quebec as well as in Montreal. A greater prestige was attached to French works than to those of New France.

Many secular pieces of silverware were ordered from silversmiths of New France. To our knowledge, their clientele was in general modest in origin and wealth. A papbowl by Jacques Gadois, called Maugé (about 1686 — Montreal, 1750), preserved at the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame at Montreal, carries the inscription LOUIS\* LEROV\* LACHOSSE\*. Louis Leroux, called Lachaussee, born in Rouen in 1664, married in Montreal in 1704 and died in 1747, was a sergeant in the company of Monsieur de Longueuil. By investing in a piece of silverware, he was following an example from above and could publicly demonstrate being comfortably off. This piece of silverware also constituted for him a financial reserve which he would be able to use when it suited him, and his name engraved on it was a guarantee against theft. Because he had had this article made in Montreal, he had avoided the risks of loss inherent in a double crossing of the ocean, risks which his financial state probably did not allow.

The study of silver objects used in New France offers us a certain access to the community which lived there. There is no doubt that by further pursuing research we shall learn a great deal about this society. For this it would be necessary to draw up a complete and precise inventory of the works which are still preserved, while undertaking systematic research among the resources in the archives.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

Undoubtedly we have previously seen work on aluminum, but never like those. The mastery with which Piché controls both his colours and the great gestures which lash some panels astonishes and thrills. The exuberance of the colours, the superpositions, the transparencies, the firmness of the lines, are not due to the chance of this technique, but to a perfect command of it. It is a dazzling explosion.

Outcome, we were saying, but beginning too . . .

Out of all the already extensive work of Piché emerges a line of conduct, a research more and more advanced, that of light.

From the beginning, at the time of his oils on canvas, we discern this research: to give to the picture a light which shall be particular to it, and more yet, that the picture shall itself give light. The techniques, the colours, the materials will vary. Each exhibition will mark a step toward this approach of *total light*. "The danger in playing with light," according to Piché, "is that one arrives in front of so much light that there remains nothing to put on the picture . . ." That is why the artist feels the need to fall back, to link up with concrete and everyday gestures, as everyday as cooking or crossing the lake in a rowboat to go and see the sun setting *in* the water: and that, to rediscover himself. It is this everyday quality that makes the poetry of his work. Because it is felt, lived, visceral, human.

Here depth is born of light, as transparent clouds would be formed.

In 1968 panels of plexiglass and aluminum followed the works in oil of "sideral spaces peopled by phantom beams and hot atoms", in 1966-1967. This was the grasp of light: surrounding light which plays on the pictures, transforms them in the rhythm of the lighting or the movement of the viewer.

1969 marked one more step in Piché's development. He exhibited, at the Cultural Centre of Vaudreuil, painted automobile hoods and other parts of cars. There he showed an awareness of living in a multidimensional world which overlaps into the universe. The frame bursts. There is, in him, the will to assume the everyday. And the everyday bathes in the spatial science which we are developing more and more each day.

Going from canvas to more rapid materials, such as plexiglass, aluminum and corrugated metal, he integrates into his research materials which are new but which are part of the daily environment of everyone. "These materials", he says, "ask only to be possessed and exploited in order to tender us their light, their textures and their poetry."

"It is necessary to seize light in space . . . The problem is to convey it on a panel which is necessarily a wall." "At the time of *bubbles*", he says, "the background I was preparing was as thrilling for me as what would appear on it . . ."

Of this grasped light, captured and restored to its source, we have a good example in the murals Piché created for the interior of the new Dupuis Frères store. Here it is a matter of several modules of corrugated aluminum, covered with transparent and enamelled acrylic. Piché's, too, are the large *shreds* of fiberglass (like veils of torn crystal) which cover the wells of the staircases.

But the very latest aluchromes of Reynald Piché, (subsequent to the Dupuis Frères murals), attain another height by the perfection of their technique and the refinement of the colours achieved. Subtle tones and colours are superposed on each other, vary infinitely. Sometimes there is a *visual thickness* of five or six colours; but the process of anodizing elimi-

nates all real thickness and makes the surface of the panel as smooth as silk. The *canvas* and the coat (coats) of colour are as one. The amalgam is perfect.

Light is therefore immanent in the panel which, thanks to the surrounding environment, produces its own light by reflection . . . Because the light emerges from under the colour, passes through it and reaches us. The spectator becomes a seer.

Piché has just opened the door to infinite discoveries and possibilities. On the technical side, anodizing gives the panel a permanence which allows the latter exterior as well as interior exhibition. We imagine doors, elevators (usually so depressing), ceilings thus raised . . . Everything is possible. It is necessary to dare.

For the last ten years, Piché has been teaching at the Valleyfield CEGEP. It has never been a matter of dogmatic teaching for him. The contact with his students is much more mutual research than an authoritative contribution of ready-made truth. The exception which proves the rule that teaching kills the creator is encountered here. Adventure is always possible, and it is only beginning.

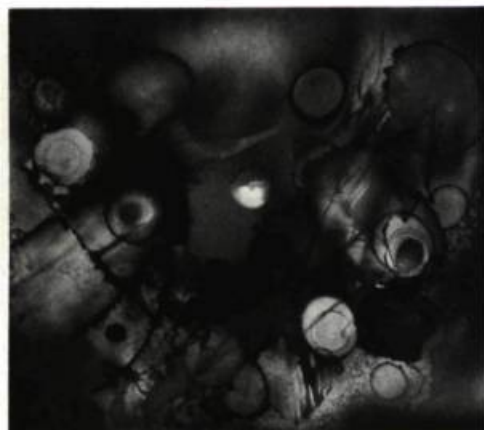
For Reynald Piché, painting is that adventure where one is delivered of an interior universe carried within oneself and from which one must free himself. "Once that is done, the picture no longer belongs to me, it is delivered to itself", he says. If it has the strength to come to life, without gadgets, it *will survive*. Piché's pictures are among these.

1. J.-P. Wallot, *Le Progrès de Valleyfield*, August 2, 1972.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)



*Red Sun, 1973.*  
Aluchrome; 32 in. x 35 (80 x 87.5 cm.).



*Children at Play, 1973.*  
Aluchrome; 32 in. x 35 (80 x 87.5 cm.).

## REYNALD PICHÉ: LIGHT WHICH IS BORN EACH TIME

By Luc BENOIT

Whether through a combination of circumstances or a lack of contacts, the fact remains that Reynald Piché's last Montreal exhibition, in spite of the success obtained among the public and the quality of the works presented, has been somewhat ignored by the critics. But those who are familiar with the work of the artist, and the others who, out of simple curiosity, went to the Stable Gallery, will undoubtedly not have been disappointed.

In his exhibition at the Art Centre in Valleyfield last August, Piché presented about forty aluchromes, the outcome of a research on aluminum which he undertook a good four years ago. An outcome, certainly, on account of the remarkable control at which he arrived: on big panels of aluminum, (some are easily four feet by six), lines, dots, colours of a rare luminous intensity vie with each other.



Untitled, 1972.  
Acrylic on canvas; 30 in. x 24 (76.2 x 60.9 cm.).  
(Phot. Gabor Szilasi.)

## NISKA — A PAINTING TO DEVOUR LIFE

By Jean-Claude LEBLOND

Niska is falsely inscribed in the rule which says that the artist corresponds with the classic images which have been conceived of him, to an aznavourian conception of an idyllic Bohemian and, at the age of thirty-two, he proves the exception. Proud to say to anyone who is willing to hear him that he lives off his painting and lives well; Niska (pseudonym of François Lortie) sees as far and as big as his work can reveal itself, in certain ways, mystical.

An outcome of tachism whose extension, whose evolution it tries in a way to be, the painting of Niska answers an aesthetic concern which respects colours to the point of allowing each to emerge clearly, to stand out well, without upsetting the balance of the whole, the invisible link which ties them one to the other and causes them to be interdependent, while preserving their identity.

By vigilant, perspicacious treatment, the form, almost always ascending, shows cones, lunar landscapes, geological phenomena of Cappadocia, at the same time as the acrylic paint permits him acrobatics of piling up materials here, passionate brushwork there and, here and there a creasing of the thick paint which, as intended, seems no less to yield to a certain point to the force of chance.

In *Visions*, we face, in predominance green then yellow, the same phenomenon of outbursts toward the upper part where each new tower, each mountain, comes like a palpitation of the heart, like so many throbbings of life. On the right, almost at the middle, a white blob is imposed like brain matter which would direct, orchestrate the movement all around it while sending its points in all directions, thus sweeping the horizon like a beacon in the night. Nevertheless, between each of these points, the universe is made up, if we look toward the lower part, of a play of colours which derives from floral design, which would resemble the plumage of a peacock or else the coat of a wolf. The whole comes to an end on coloured projections of dreams which, cast forth, lose themselves in the night.

*Nuit de Noël* succeeds in bringing out a presence in the infinity of the night, in making light dawn in darkness, in a sort of pagan nothingness, the advent of something that goes beyond the ordinary, that goes further than the unusual and that confers on it at the same time an odd strangeness, as if the time had come for the impossible to occur.

Of a spirited, impetuous nature, possessed of an unshakable self-confidence, in the goals and the career he pursues, Niska paints emotion almost in the pure state. Each of his canvases reflects this almost as authentically as a mirror gives back the features of a face. Consequently, we are in the presence of a tangle of emotion and the rational which, however, does not succeed in overlapping adequately, in bringing and sustaining a balance with its opposite.

However, it is this, in my eyes, that forms all the nobility, all the depth of Niska's work: this total authenticity, without pretence, this entity, this force of nature, untamed, inviolate, savage, unreasoned, this virgin forest which would give itself as greedily as a torrent and in which we never cease being astonished by new discoveries.

Niska does not give titles to his pictures. One must not impose on the purchaser a title and all it invokes as allied ideas. It is necessary rather to leave him free to work it out himself, to discern the themes he finds in the picture and, there, to state a title which suits him and will be of special value for him. That is exactly the goal to be attained because, in actual fact, the work of the artist lives daily with the buyer, at a certain moment it forms an integral part of his life. Furthermore, such is one of the great themes which tend to motivate Niska. That facing his painting, man find himself in some way, that it bring at the same time a comfort, an encouragement, a motivation to continue, happiness and enthusiasm. And with all the ascending movement, all these springs upward, he succeeds in making us share his faith, his confidence in life which, like a fruit, asks only to be crunched greedily.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

## NISKA

Born in Montreal in 1940, Niska, well known abroad, won several prizes, among which were the first prize for painting in the International Festival of Auvillar (1971-72) and the international grand prize in contemporary art in the Principality of Monaco (1972). He exhibited at the eighty-third annual Salon of Independent Artists, at the Grand-Palais in the Champs-Élysées (1972). In Canada, he has held many one-man shows since last September, notably at Saint-Hyacinthe, Three Rivers, Chicoutimi and Edmonston. The illustrations in colour were graciously supplied to us by Productions Artistiques Mirabelle.



Utopie XXV-Cristallisation, 1972.  
Collage; 14 in. x 17 (35.5 x 41.3 cm.).  
(Phot. Gabor Szilasi.)

## ROLAND POULIN

By Luce VERMETTE

The notion of ephemeral art is penetrating more and more into the milieu of artists. Some works of art aim at immortality, others desire to enter into time only within the limits of their duration. A very precious moment since it is irremediable. In this contemporary trend, Roland Poulin occupies a choice place and offers new perspectives.

His studies at the School of Fine Arts in Montreal destined him at first to painting. With Mario Merola, he presented in 1969, at a group exhibition, a mural painting in relief. But, from that time, his concerns on the subject of the phenomenon of light directed him toward sculpture. His first attempts in this field won for him a prize for a sculpture in plexiglass, at the Artistic Competition of the Province.

From that time on, his research on light took a decisive stride: in 1970, at the Galerie de La Sauvegarde, he exhibited luminous sculptures in plexiglass. The light, flashing from a source set at the base of the works, remains in all its intensity along the length of the transparent surfaces, and the whole middle is thus transformed by it.

This power of light fascinated Roland Poulin. Now he decided to isolate this element: rather than luminous sculptures, he would carve light itself. Therefore he forsook the material (in this case, the plexiglass), which served only to receive and transmit light, and made the light itself the object of his sculpture. The light then became a material, an object. It was in this way that Roland Poulin propounded an intangible art. And his experiments would rightly be named *immaterial structures*. The artist would set forth four formulas of it according to the way in which each combines with a chosen milieu: *Structure immatérielle I* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, in 1971, *II* at the Galerie de La Sauvegarde, *III* at the Museum of Quebec, and *IV* at the Galerie III, in 1973.

Technically, these structures develop in the following manner: a laser projects a thin luminous ray of high intensity on mirrors facing in different directions. As the case may be, an

## TWO APARTMENTS

By Luc d'IBERVILLE-MOREAU

Besides being located in the same building on Sherbrooke St. West in Montreal, these two apartments we are going to discuss have several points in common. They have the same dimensions, a bedroom, a living room, a kitchen, and the owners are both interested in design. One because he is an architect, the other because he is a furniture importer. Further, they are both collectors of contemporary pictures.

We reach the apartment of architect Gilles Lavigueur by a little hall, a cloakroom that fills the rôle of buffer between the noises of the corridor and the main room. The tone of the apartment is set by a Hamadan carpet, wholly lit up by a spotlight. The floor has been stained dark brown and the walls shaded blue-gray, which gives the room an atmosphere mysterious and dramatic at the same time. One of the walls of the rectangular living room is painted brown, a colour found in the bedroom and on several pieces of furniture. Sliding screens of ivory plexiglass replace the usual curtains. When they are open, they allow the enjoyment of the view on Mount Royal and, when they are closed, the creating of intensities of clarity which vary according to the light outside. Closed, they form a mirror-wall which, at night, lets nothing be guessed of the windows or the plants which are behind it. The dining room table, with four chairs by Marcel Breuer, is a slab of marble resting on four columns of the same material, designed by Mangiarotti. On the walls, a double picture of 1971 painted by Claude Tousignant. An adjustable lamp by Gae Aulenti is useful in reading while one is seated on the chaise longue designed by Afra and Tobia Scarpa. The living room space is created by two armchairs by Joe Colombo, of moulded plastic and with cushions of brown suede, facing a four-seater sofa by Afra and Tobia Scarpa, covered in a brown cloth which picks up the colour of the wall and the floor. Another black and white view shows us the coffee table of mirror and chromed steel by G. Frattini, on which rests a Polynesian sculpture in wood, which was originally the prow of a boat. Behind, another Scarpa sofa, covered in the same fabric and, on the wall a pop work by the American Tom Wesselman. At the right, a canvas by Guido Molinari. The white columns, here and there in the parlour, are the loud-speakers (J.B.L.).

The bedroom is monochromic, painted entirely in brown, except the plexiglass screens that we do not see in the photograph. The different all brown textures of the wall to wall carpeting, the bed covered in suede and the bedspread (same fabric as the Scarpa furniture in the living room) create an atmosphere very conducive to calm and restfulness. The Caori table, of stainless steel and black lacquered wood, was designed by Vico Magistretti and opens on the sides to form drawers. On it, a marble lamp by Tobia Scarpa and a sculpture in whalebone from Cape Dorset. On the walls, a 1965 painting by Claude Tousignant and a triptych of 1972 reflected in the mirrors which cover the closet doors. In the foreground, a Dogon mask.

Francisco Kripacz's apartment is located at the corner of the building, in the upper stories. Upon entering the apartment, we are immediately attracted by the magnificent view on two sides of the city of Montreal. The living room area has been placed on a platform covered with a white carpet made of strips of sheepskin sewn together. Here, again the richness of the

materials forms one of the important elements in the conception of this apartment. To control the light and the force of the sun which, at this height, is still more violent, sliding screens (of wood), which are covered in crushed velvet, have been installed. All the armchairs and the sofa which make up the furnishing of the parlour were designed by Kazuhide Takahama and are covered in white or brown velvet. The diminished illumination arises from the white plexiglass tables which are lit from the inside. The coffee table, stainless steel and white lacquered wood, can open on the sides or on the top and can serve as a bar. The owner, patron and friend of painter Gordon Smith of Vancouver, has several works of this artist, among which are two canvases, one in the dining room, the other on the walls of the living room, a multiple that is seen on the table and a decorative object hanging on the sliding screen. The whole creates a very restful and refreshing effect. The small dining room in an alcove contains a marble and polished steel table by the American Ward Bennett, surrounded by four chairs designed by Robert Haussman for Swiss Design. The Arco lamp of marble and steel is by Castiglioni. The Brazilian carpet is also of strips of sheepskin, brown in this case. The circular picture is by Claude Tousignant. The subtle harmony of the tones chosen for the fabrics, the beauty of the furniture, create an ensemble of great elegance. The bedroom is very sunny, thanks to the choice of colours. The luminous quality of the golden yellow curtains of Thai silk, and the beds covered in the same cloth, make a serene and gracious chamber of the bedroom. Two lamps by Joe Colombo light the beds. The mattresses are placed on moveable boards and can be joined together to form one bed. Of Italian inspiration, they were made by M. Kripacz. A magnificent painting by Claude Tousignant as well as a sculpture by Soto complete the decoration. The concrete pillar was covered with mirror to create more luminosity. The carpeting is beige.

(Translated by Mildred Grand)



Near the kitchen, a marble table by Mangiarotti and four chairs by Breuer. In the background, two swivel-chairs in suede by Joe Colombo.

In the alcove dining-room, a table by the American Ward Bennett and chairs by Robert Haussman. A lamp by Castiglioni. On the walls, paintings by Tousignant and Gordon Smith. (Phot. A. Kilbertus.)

artificial mist or a smoke of incense makes the ray more perceptible. Thus arises a whole luminous environment which truly animates and sensitizes the space.

At each of his exhibitions, Roland Poulin also created an event which takes place outside the museum or the gallery: a structure of ephemeral fire composed of blazing pegs and steel wool with the intervention of elements such as fog or snow.

Through these environments and events, Roland Poulin, according to his own avowal, does not seek to "demonstrate or instigate the anecdotal of disorderly aspects of everyday life, or yet to censure a social or political climate. It is a matter of pure perception". The viewer, who moves there, intervenes actively through his feelings and his psychology, in a structure of a wholly new density to him: the space becomes full, the light, energy, and time becomes a moment in an interaction of an almost magical character.

Roland Poulin has also conceived *Utopias*, unrealizable projects which he hopes to achieve. This time, it is energy and its transformation that he intends to use at the maximum. By way of example, let us name two projects: *Blue Monday* and *Verre et électricité*. The first introduces between two layers of glass or plexiglass a solution meant to crystallize differently according to the reactions of temperatures and the surroundings (rocks, forests, etc.). In this interaction is produced a continual transformation, going so far as degradation and recovery by nature. As for *Verre et électricité*, imagine, right in nature, a glass sphere filled with a gas where a high-voltage electric discharge passes and from which lightning flashes radiate. By thus isolating phenomena, the artist intends to render the existence of energy truly tangible to us.

In this way, therefore, Roland Poulin sculpts with light and energy. And his use of the laser beam constitutes a means of expression really new in our milieu. Open perspectives offer an almost infinite range of possibilities.

It remains to remember that the works of Roland Poulin are registered in the trend of transitory art. At a time when our society, identified or symbolized by the throw-away, relies less and less on permanence, should we be surprised to see an ephemeral art arise which no longer seeks to be immortal, but prefers the authenticity of the moment?

(Translated by Mildred Grand)