

**THE SACREDNESS OF SPACE
AND ITS VALUES IN THE MARONITE CHURCH IN LEBANON
A FUSION BETWEEN LITURGY & PLACE**

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2004

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And its Values in the Maronite Church in Lebanon
A Fusion Between Liturgy & Place**

by Joseph Kiprianos

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Architecture, Faculty of Community and Development Disciplines, University of
KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

2004

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- All italics are translated texts.

- All unreferenced figures are personal photos.

ABSTRACT

There exists only one manuscript about ecclesiastical Maronite ecclesiastical architecture (written in the 17th century by the patriarch Stephen el Dweihi) and there is no revised or subsequent work of reference, which this thesis aims to address. To this end, these were the critical questions investigated:

This thesis begins by taking stock of the extant vestiges which, with a few exceptions, are confined to Mount Lebanon and north-east Lebanon namely in Byblos, Batroun, Bcharri, Koura, Keserwan, Matn. This area is characterized by a series of spurs and mountain tops, wild deep valleys and remoteness, and the architecture is rooted in this landscape. Its resources for construction are the materials at hand, and the buildings are usually located in villages on the spurs, and one finds that the Maronite ecclesiastical architecture is indistinguishable from the general secular and residential architecture. As such it is “grows” out of the land, is modest in size and scale, and is historically without belfry, i.e. a hidden architecture.

While the general disposition of Christian churches is similar, Maronite vernacular houses and churches are block-like with flat roofs, stone walls, and very often with vaulted interiors and minimal of openings. The church is thus another house, rectangular and aligned east-west and is devoid of decoration; the sanctuary is usually apsidal with a minor aperture above the apex of the dome and below the vault of the nave. The particular characteristics of the Maronite church are its east-west orientation - parallel to the spurs which characterize the littoral Lebanon - the presence of a sustainable source of water, and an evergreen tree. The church was conceived for a standing form of worship and without physical barrier between the nave and the sanctuary; and the main and possibly sole source of daylight (but the open door) is the eastern aperture. The *bima* platform is located in the nave to reflect the monotheistic ideology adopted by the Maronites. Over the centuries, and despite the influences from the Roman Catholic Church, with which it is in full communion, the Maronite church has preserved its identity which is austere and, in particular, free of the ‘dramatic mysteries’ associated especially with the Baroque churches.

Having studied Dweihi’s manuscript and his 11 chapters on Maronite ecclesiastical architecture, this thesis asks whether these are still relevant? How can the manuscript be updated for contemporary interpretation towards a rooted modern Maronite ecclesiastical architecture? The architecture of Lebanon has fascinated at least three authors (Ragette, Liger Belair, and Abou Sawan) whose works date from the late 20th century and have become standard references. Others have documented various works on the Maronite people and their religion, but, not since Dweihi’s manuscript of the 17th century has an attempt been made at documenting and extending Maronite concepts for ecclesiastical architecture. Interestingly, Dweihi in his time was reacting to what he saw as a contamination of the Maronite church by Roman Catholic influences; this thesis was prompted by insensitive and ignorance in contemporary Maronite ecclesiastical architecture. The thesis is thus dedicated to proper custodianship of the heritage and the informed and sensitive design of new ‘houses’ for Maronite worship.

Byblos, March 2004.

PREFACE

Then out of the Storm the Lord spoke to Job: Were you there when I made the world? ... Who decided how large it would be? ... Who stretched the measuring line over it? ... What holds up the pillars that support the earth? ... Who laid the cornerstone of the world? ... Who closed the gates to hold back the sea ... Job, have you ever in all your life commanded a day to dawn? Have you ordered the dawn to seize the earth ... Have you any idea how big the world is? Do you know where the light comes from or what the source of darkness is? Have you been to the place where the sun comes up, or the place from which the east wind blows? Who ... cleared the way for the thunderstorm? ... Can you guide the stars season by season ... [Job, 38: 4-38]

This quotation best exemplifies the author's motive to study architecture.

As a matter of fact, the nature of Laklounk –where the rural summerhouse of the author– mountains of Byblos-Lebanon, played a role in shaping the author's personality and spirit. A rock standing from ancient times called the disobedient rock overpowers the house (*fig. 0.0*); it disobeyed a geological evolution and remained upright from ancient times, in the shape of the obelisk of Pharaoh. This house has charged the author of this thesis with the remembrance of its apprehension: what is an obelisk and who is Pharaoh? In addition, his winter house in Byblos has the same ancient building materials and techniques as the historical fortress of Byblos, the windows of which overlook the fortress... and history; hence, what is Phoenicia? Byblos? History?

All of this was not isolated from the general social structure which marked the author's life and planted in his thoughts numerous enquiries to which many questions are to be answered. At the age of ten –when the Lebanese civil war started, also known as religious war– and while learning in Marist-Brother school in Byblos with Mohammed and Ahmad sitting next to him, all believed that human groups are not different in religions, sects, and confessions; rather they are pieces of mosaic full of various colors and sizes within one board. They are threads interconnected in the textile of the various populations in the unity of being. Hence why did Ahmad and Mohammed pray in a mosque while he prayed in a church? Is it not the same Sacred everybody seeks?

In this thesis, the Maronite ecclesiastical architecture is analyzed as a model showing the sacred space delimited in place, time and liturgy. For whoever worshipped the sun, worshipped the sacred in it, then light; whoever worshipped the earth, worshipped the sacred in it, then fertility; whoever worshipped water, worshipped the sacred in it, then purity. All of these are the seeds of one fig covered by the external skin called the "One God". This is how construction is an act of intense devotion, the duty of which is to bring man near the goal of architecture: the Designer of the Universe.



- 0.0** The author's summer residence at Laklouk / Lebanon, underneath the 'Disobedient Rock' was the primary source behind the concept, idea of austerity and pride. It was and still is the reference in complying with the natural law and adhering to the Genius Loci of a site. The resilience and humbleness of this rock implanted a personal vision towards life in general and architecture in particular.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“ ... A people that does not know its past has no future”. Harb, A. The Maronites

Sincere acknowledgments to:

- The Lebanese American University, which encouraged me to seek this achievement.
- Prof. Dennis Radford and Prof. Walter Peters particularly for their guidance, follow up, and adequate spirit, which greatly helped me to professionally accomplish my research.
- Mrs. Estelle Tait for her continuous administrative assistance.
- Father Paul Akl for his continuous encouragement and for the documents he provided.
- My colleague Dr. Ziad Mawlawi for his guidance and effort in editing the whole thesis.
- Ms. Abir Jamal and Mr. Maher Berro for their continuous assistance.
- Mr. Richard Diab and his family, who provided a home feeling throughout my whole stay in Durban, South Africa and their continuous encouragement and support.
- Last but not least, my adorable sister Soumaya whose presence and support was ultimately necessary to achieve this thesis.

*To my adorable family,
Jana, Rouba, my newborn son Joe
&
my lovely wife Salma*

INTRODUCTION

The monastical cultural heritage of the Maronite monks gravitated around three core values: chastity, obedience and poverty. The founders of Maronitism were dedicated to self abnegation, self denial and abstinence from worldly pleasures and curbing of physical temptations for the salve of spiritual enlightenment. This ascetic way of life left its imprints on the architecture of the Maronite church in terms of its austerity, modesty, the genius loci of the space and serenity. St. Maron thrives on frugality, meekness, silence and fuses into the spontaneous simplicity of Mother Nature. After all, St. Maron found warmth in the hearth of nature and adhered to Bios Upaitros considering nature as his habitat and refuge for his ideological aspirations and religious piety.

A plethora of multifaceted ideologies and philosophies considered the human being to be spontaneously and naturally predisposed to embark on a journey of faith. Since the beginning of recorded history and the evolution of the Egyptian, Phoenician, Mesopotamian, Chinese, and Greco Romaine cultural legacies as well as the spiritual density and pantheism of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Daoism ending with Judaism and Christianity, the belief in an all pervading Architect of the Universe created a spiritual point of reference and a common denomination establishing bridges and bonds of spiritual affinity between all these diverse civilizations. St. Maron epitomized this yearning for a strong faith which gives existence its true meaning and on the altar of which conspicuousness, ostentatious exhibitionism and lavish pomposity were sacrificed. Maronite architecture reflected once again the pious simplicity and the detached spirituality of a tradition of hermits whose creed institutionalized rituals symbiotically blurred into nature. This is an architecture based on an imperturbable faith, an architecture emanating from the cultural womb of nature. Nature is the Alpha and the Omega of Maronite architecture. Nature is its *raison d'être*. This is expected from a religious tradition which is inextricably interwoven in abstract spirituality and the belief in the sacredness of time, space and matter. The Maronite believer does not delineate between the secular and the sacred, the matter and the spirit, and material and the metaphysical because his body incarnates the temple of God and sacredness permeates the whole universe. Any authentic architectural structure belonging to the Maronite tradition establishes a dialectical relationship between life on earth and immortality in heaven. The relationship between architectural structures and spiritual values is not by any means dichotomous. It is not separated by an abyss. Architecture in this sense does not build barriers but bridges of encounters and links with spiritual believes, sacred values and ideological standards.

The Maronite sect developed as an autonomous group in the wake of the Christological dispute between the fifth and the seventh centuries. They sprang up as an exception amid a hostile environment subjected to violence and persecutions. Like all tribes and minorities, they switched alliances in order to survive and preserve their creed. They adhered to the monotheistic belief adopted by the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. and the monastery of St. Maron in *Syria Secunda* benefited from the help of the Melkite Byzantine agreement anti Chalcedonian Syrians or Jacobites.

The fundamental pillars of the Maronite cultural legacy and spiritual traditions lie in four conceptual frameworks: a) absolute abstinence from physical and sensual pleasures, b) adoption of silence as a way of life in order to immunize oneself from moral temptations, c) complete fusion with deity, and d) commitment to an architecture of simplicity, creative improvisation, spiritual authenticity, respect for the sacredness of the place, transcending the imperatives of time and fusing into the physical and ideological environment.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The investigation of the sacredness of space and its values in the Maronite church architecture is divided into six chapters.

Chapter 1 argues St. Maron and his people in time and space, and identifies the significance of the genius loci in forming the identity and roots of the Maronite faith. It will also discern the Maronite position vis a vis the Council of Chalcedon and discuss the issue of the manifestation of the Designer of the universe. The issue of Maronite expansion and the formation of Maronite community in Lebanon will also be attempted.

Chapter 2 discusses in detail the Maronite rite which grew from a relentless persecution and will outline the issue of the religious and secular life in the Maronite faith. Maronite liturgy and monastic order will also be investigated as a way to gain an understanding of the character in Maronite religious life.

Chapter 3 focuses on Maronite architecture; its identity, character, and components. At the initial stage, the link between the Maronite dwellings and houses of worship will be established after which a detailed investigation of the development of Maronite church architecture will be attempted. Key churches will be identified and analysed as a way to gain an understanding of the traditional design paradigm in Maronite church architecture. Discussion of the different types of Maronite hermitages and convents, their characteristics and components will also be undertaken to ensure a comprehensive treatment of Maronite architecture.

Chapter 4 investigates Dweihi's '*Manarat Al Aqdass*' (Minaret of Holies), the uncontested reference for any study of the Maronite faith. Specifically, this chapter will focus on the first explanation of the second 'minaret' of the first volume of Dweihi's manuscript which deals with the components of Maronite church architecture. Dweihi identified twelve components of the Maronite church and discussed each in a separate chapter. To preserve the authenticity of the text, this chapter will treat each component separately as a way to arrive at a basic architectural design vocabulary for the Maronite church.

Chapter 5 explores the symbolic content of Maronite architecture as a language of signs. It will argue how this architectural tradition has come to inherit ancient traditions and why it intermingled with the Lebanese genius loci. Moreover, it will delineate how Maronite architecture may clarify the idea of transformation of time as well as the significance of empty space in that architectural tradition.

Chapter six concludes the study by outlining the position of men of science on the significance of the Lebanese heritage and the need to safe keep it for future generations. It will also shed light on the unfortunate repercussion of the last civil war and its devastating effect on the Lebanese architectural heritage in general and the Maronite church architecture in particular. Discussion will end by recommending suggestions that may lead to future solutions and studies.

CHAPTER 1 MARON THE RECLUSE AND HIS PEOPLE

The hermit Maron (350-410 A.D.) lived in the Syrian north on a high mountain top on which a pagan temple had been built in ancient times. This means a person had once existed with a certain character, inclination, style of life, and in a specific place possessing a certain spirit during a certain period of time. Hence, the elements required for any shelter: A human being with a specific quest, space governed by matter, and time.

In this chapter, we will systematically proceed to study the idea of the time and place of St. Maron and discuss the issue of the genius loci of Lebanon and ascertain how it came to be at the root of paganism in the region. As such, it will elaborate on the appearance of St. Maron and examine his preaching of Christianity, his disciples and friends as well as discern the establishments of the Maronite doctrines and its geographical expansion.

1.1 PLACE AND TIME

The Roman Empire, with its wide spread in the Orient, converted to Christian after being pagan. One of the major factors that played a role in making the Lebanese people be among the earliest nations to accept the call of Jesus Christ (who came from neighboring Palestine) was geographical (*map 1.1*); for southern Lebanon lies to the north of Palestine with no natural barrier, and Galilee which includes Nazareth (*map 1.2*).

This geography might show an interrelationship between Jesus Christ, divine and human, and Lebanon's location and people, especially if one notes Jesus Christ's journeys to the two Lebanese cities, Sidon (today Saida) and Tyre (today Sour) and the miracle of changing water into wine in Qana, a city in the Lebanese part of Galilee; this miracle in particular implies that Jesus Christ had shared the wedding ceremony with the people of Qana as part of their popular heritage. In addition, the gospel of Mark (7:31) says that Jesus Christ crossed the borders of Tyre and passed by Sidon, which means again that he went far into the Lebanese land for approximately 70 km northward (*map 1.3*). Given the above-mentioned points, it is appropriate to consider the geography of Lebanon as a whole before going deep into our subject.



Map 1.1 : Lebanon Map [<http://www.mapzones.com/>].



Map 1.2 : The Galileans Homeland [Harb 2001 ed.].



Map 1.3 : Quana [Harb 2001 ed.].



Map 1.4 : The Levant [Denham].

1.1.1 Expansion of the site name

Different peoples have developed the habit of giving names to the different places on the earth's map. Since ancient times, man has been fond of locating places seeing that this activity is closely related to his physical and mental life. The names of places are sometimes linked to a certain geographical content, while they are at other times related to the names of gods, the names of famous personalities, or certain human progenies. Nevertheless, and throughout the course of history, the names of some places have changed due to human and cultural developments such as the appearance of new gods and goddesses and/or new heroes. While certain places retain their original names, some might receive new ones due to the transfer of people from one place to another.

A name might be given to a certain place as a result of commercial or cultural relations among different groups. This point is worth-mentioning because it clarifies what happened between Phoenicians and the different groups around the Mediterranean basin: for about twenty centuries ago, a hybrid occurred among the name, society, and environment of a certain nation or state – in other words, a form of mating occurred between that nation's land and history. The name was the result.

According to the historian Kamal Salibi [b1929], "*the historical connotation of Lebanon refers to a geographical term given since ancient times to a mountainous area parallel to the coast of the Levant*" (map 1.4). Moreover, "*the Levant is the name given*

by the Arabs, at least since the fourth or fifth century A.D., to the entire land extending from the Euphrates eastward to the Mediterranean sea westward; and from the boundary of Anatolia at the point of the Toros mountains northward till Sinai and the border of Yemen southward". Dr. Salibi considers that this territory known as the Levant had no specific name in the beginning. And that continued to be the case till the time of the Greeks, followed by the Romans, who gave it the name of Assyria (map 1.5). The reason was that this land was under the dominion of the Assyrian state whose center was in the north of Iraq. Dr. Salibi also considers that the Romans generalized the name from a certain part of the area to the whole¹.

But according to Metropolitan Joseph Al-Dibs [1833-1907], ancient peoples considered 'Syria' as including all Syria (of today) in addition to Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, and Antioch². He adds that they named it 'Assyria', thus attenuating the term and exchanging the 'Ch' sound by the 'S' sound with reference to 'Ashur'. The historian Jawad Boulos [1900-1982] makes it clear that the word 'Syria' has a wide meaning which includes the countries of Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine – i.e. what is known as 'Greater Syria'.

Nevertheless, some scholars believe that the political and religious circumstances of the area from Anatolia to Sinai were behind the generalization of the name; but must probably, and always according to this view, 'Syria' is today's Syria, Lebanon is the same as the Lebanon of today, and Palestine is still the same again and again³.

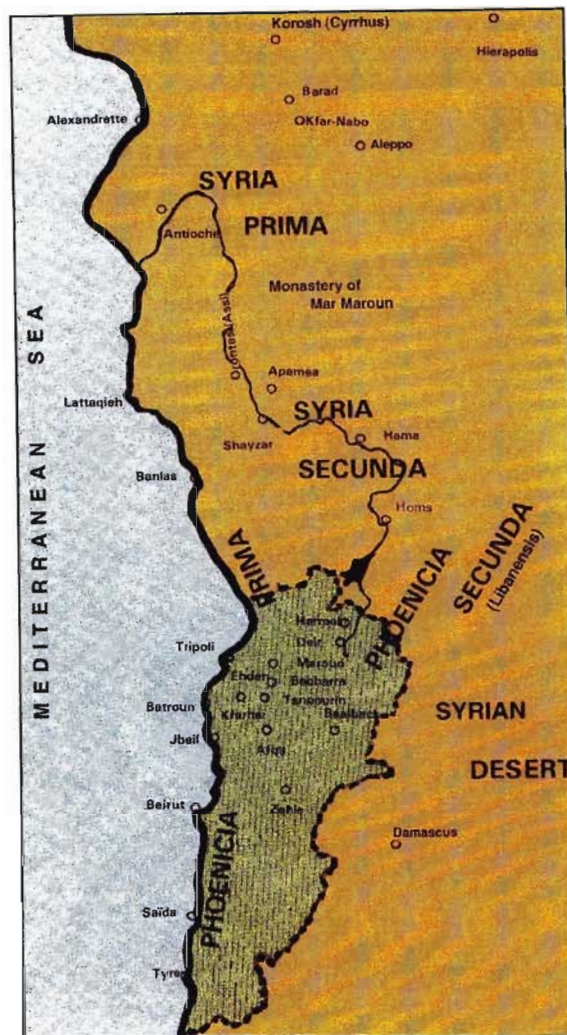


Map 1.5 : Assyria [Duby].

¹ Salibi, K. 1979, *Mountalaq Tarikh Loubnan* (Origin of the History of Lebanon) [Beirut: Caravan], 27

² (Al) Dibs, Y. 1893, *Min Tarikh Souriya Al Douniawi Wal Deini* (The Secular and Religious History of Syria) [-], vol 1, 3-4.

³ Khalife, N. 1997, *Al Madkhal Ila Al Khousousiya Al Loubnaniya* (Introduction to the Lebanese Particularity) [Byblos: Daccache], 75-85.



Map 1.6 : Syria [Harb 2001 ed.].

In spite of all the controversy, it remains certain that the Romans, and during St. Maron's time, had administratively divided the Syrian part of their empire into three parts: 'First Syria' or 'the hollow' area, with Antioch as capital; and this part includes Cyr; 'Second Syria' with Apamea as capital; and 'Third Syria' with Hyrapolis as capital (*map 1.6*). As for the regions to the south of Apamea in 'Second Syria' till the end of the Lebanese borders, these were divided into two parts: the Lebanese Phoenicia with Homs as its capital (in the beginning and Damascus as capital later), and Maritime Phoenicia with Tyre as its capital. In all cases, even if Lebanon had not existed, in terms of its nation, one state with the Levant (including Antioch), it is doubtless that the neighbourly relationship among these countries created a kind of union which had always influenced their common course.

1.1.2 Genius Loci of Lebanon

- Lebanon's geographical location: according to geographical references, Lebanon lies between latitude 33° and 34° northward and between meridian 35° and 36° eastward, which implies its intermediary location; this in turn explains its moderate climate with its influence on man and nature at the same time⁴.

⁴ [Khalife, 1997: 241]

- Lebanon's location on the atlas: Lebanon's location with respect to land and water shows the following: Palestine borders it from the south; the Syrian Desert from the east; Syria from the north; and the Mediterranean Sea from the west. Thus Lebanon lies on a water plane that has made its people experts in maritime navigation, especially its coastline which is jagged with innumerable bays and coves suitable for natural harbors. As a result, the Phoenicians played a central role in building centers of different kinds along the Mediterranean. This in turn helped its people intellectually and culturally⁵. Moreover, the oldest and most important city in Lebanon, Byblos (today's Jbeil) lent its name which means 'book' to the holy bible (from 'Biblia')⁶.

- Lebanon's strategic location: according to Dr. Philip Hitti [1886-1978], the jam of historical events dominating Lebanon as a country very small in area ascertains the latter's historical importance to the extent that the history of the area itself has always accompanied Lebanon. This is due to its mountainous nature, proximity to the sea, its central location among the countries that were the cradle of culture and civilization, and its place as the crossroads of the international routes linking the three continents. Hitti says further that the peoples that built the first civilization in the valley between the two rivers in Mesopotamia and the Nile valley found and used Lebanon as an intermediary and as a strategic outlet from ancient Egypt to Ashur, then to Babylon, Greece, reaching as far as India⁷. Besides that, anyone visiting Lebanon will find 19 inscriptions made on rock in the area of Nahr-Al-Kalb as evidence for the above-mentioned points. Therefore, Lebanon's distinctive geographical location prompted Jesus Christ to start his ministry there⁸.

- Lebanon's cultural location: any scholar of religious heritage encounters upon considering the ancient Canaanite people of Lebanon and later the Phoenicians some theories used by that people which approach Christianity in many ways at the level of both dogma and rites⁹: 1) 'El': an absolute and universal god, creator of the earth and the eternal sun and all of the gods' sons (i.e. creator of all the animated powers of nature). 2) the belief in a holy trinity made of a feminine and a masculine element whose marriage generated a third element: life. 3) blending gods with humans i.e. anthropomorphing the god(s) (e.g. Adonis). 4) the death of the humanized god and his resurrection (e.g. Adonisian rituals). 5) devoutness to (the idea) of the 'woman-lady', the chaste and the virgin, the queen of heavens, Ishtar¹⁰.

In conclusion, the cultural and religious milieu in Lebanon-Phoenicia has provided Christianity with the appropriate atmosphere it needed in order to spread, thus making Lebanon among the first to receive Christianity after its origin in its motherland, Palestine.

⁵ (Al) Deib, M. 1972, *Al Joghraphiya Al Siyasiya* (Political Geography) [Cairo: Sayyed Ra'fat], 48.

⁶ Hitti, P. 1972, 2nd ed., *Tarikh Loubnan – Mounzou Aqdam Al Ousour Al Tarikhiya Ila Asrina Al Hader* (History of Lebanon – Since Ancient Historic Times till our Recent Period), translated by Fraiha, A [Beirut: Dar Al Saqafa], 3,5,6,8.

⁷ *ibid*, 8.

⁸ [Harb, 1998ed: 20]

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ (Al) Hourany, Y. 1972, *Loubnan Fi Qiam Tarikhihi* (Lebanon in the Value of its History) [Beirut: Dar Al Mashreq], 223.

1.2 PAGANISM IN LEBANON AND LEBANON'S GENIUS LOCI

1.2.1 Paganism prior to the appearance of St. Maron

When Roman emperor, Theodosius [346-395] issued the edict in 381A.D. ordering the destruction of all pagan temples and banning all symbols of paganism, thus making Christianity the official state religion, what remained of that paganism resorted to mountains and villages¹¹. The word 'pagans', which is Latin, means 'villager' or 'peasant'; from that word 'pagan', was derived¹². So 'paganism' came from a synonym to 'peasant' or 'rural'.

The question of concern here is the following: what is this religion that persisted in the Lebanese mountain (as part of its persistence in all the Roman-controlled regions)? What's this religion that passed along with Christianity and continued for about 400 years after it? In other words, what's this religion that went together with the ministry of Jesus Christ till its termination by Theodosius' verdict and the supporting councils?

The ancient Lebanese creed, referred to as 'pagan', had no preaching personality, resembling Judaism in this – hence, it had no messengers, prophets, or saints; what backed it up, according to the Lebanese historian Antoine Khoury Harb [b1944], is the nature of Lebanon¹³; metropolitan Joseph Al-Dibs also says: "*The Phoenician based his polytheism on the place*"¹⁴. Therefore, it's the 'spirit' of Lebanon's location. For paganism has derived its elements from "*what is inspired by the Lebanese mountains, valleys, and plains; and from Lebanon's ever-changing and well-balanced seasons; and from its flowing rivers and springs even when they become dry; from Lebanon's awesome forests and highly varied plant-life and colors.... For Lebanon's natural environment, rich in inspiration and excitement, determined the Lebanese way of thinking and molded the Lebanese feelings and passions...*"¹⁵.

The Maronite Encyclopedia mentioned the following: "*The site is in all cases the supplementary component of architecture which recuperates it with mysterious dimensions and expresses the Mount Lebanese suggestive nature. It is in this way that personalized constructions are put in various frameworks to express the genius of the place, the genius loci*"¹⁶. Religious thought for the ancient Lebanese is revealed in their attempt to explain 'life' in being; for life cannot be without 'fertility', which in turn requires two basic factors: masculinity and femininity. When the former and the latter mate, life arises. Masculinity is the father, whom Dr. Harb calls 'the fertilizer'; and the female is the mother – 'the fertilizer' also; for the male cannot become a father nor the female a mother unless a third being is present who is the son, who has derived life from them both e.g. the father, El; the mother, Ishtar; and the son, Adonis¹⁷(fig. 1.1).

¹¹ [Harb, 1998ed: 36].

¹² Larousse - Dictionnaire en 1 volume. 1991ed. [Paris: Larousse], 1031.

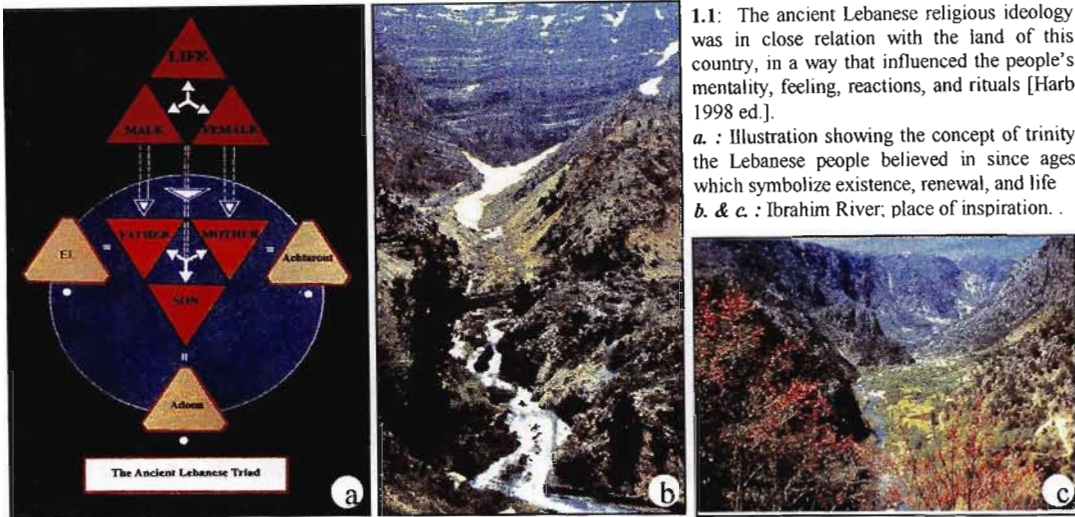
¹³ [Harb, 1998ed: 36].

¹⁴ [Dibs, 1893: vol.1, 361].

¹⁵ [Harb, 1998ed: 36].

¹⁶ Moukarzel, A. 1992, "L'Architecture Maronite", *Encyclopédie Maronite*. [Kaslik: Université Saint Esprit Kaslik], 377.

¹⁷ [Harb, 1998ed: 36].



1.1: The ancient Lebanese religious ideology was in close relation with the land of this country, in a way that influenced the people's mentality, feeling, reactions, and rituals [Harb 1998 ed.].

a. : Illustration showing the concept of trinity the Lebanese people believed in since ages which symbolize existence, renewal, and life
b. & c. : Ibrahim River; place of inspiration. .

This is their expression for the principle of being. This trinity or triadic pattern is "weird" according to metropolitan Joseph Al-Dibs¹⁸. One can say that it is a philosophical notion which seems necessary for the appearance of life. The anthropomorphism of ancient Lebanese mythology appears as follows: Adonis is killed by a wild pig, which symbolizes the god of death; Ishtar mourns and carries him to the Aphqa mountain in the high part of Jbeil and buries him there; the burial place is named Aphqa from which the river Adonis falls strongly as if it were a stepped playground. From that spot, one can see the most beautiful scenery in Lebanon¹⁹. In the myth, the color of the water changes to red to symbolize the death of Adonis; but he rises the next day, and the water becomes clear again. Here the mythological anthropomorphism symbolizes the changes of nature: for the master of fertility dies annually and is buried like plant seeds... but the deity is resurrected again²⁰. So this ritual used to imply the fusion between man and nature to give birth to life. For the deity here is neither an idol nor a mythical creature but is a symbol and a wish²¹.

One cannot find a single mountain top in Lebanon, which had not been crowned by a pagan temple; this has made Ernest Renan [1823-1892] say in this respect: "*There is no country in the whole world like this country where successive peoples had from the beginning prayed in the very same places*"²²(figs. 1.2-1.3). In a country like that, with the appropriate genius loci, openness unto others, and strategy, the mission of spreading the new Christian religion necessarily found appropriate persons to undertake it; one example on this case was the group of monks that followed the hermit with the name of Maron.

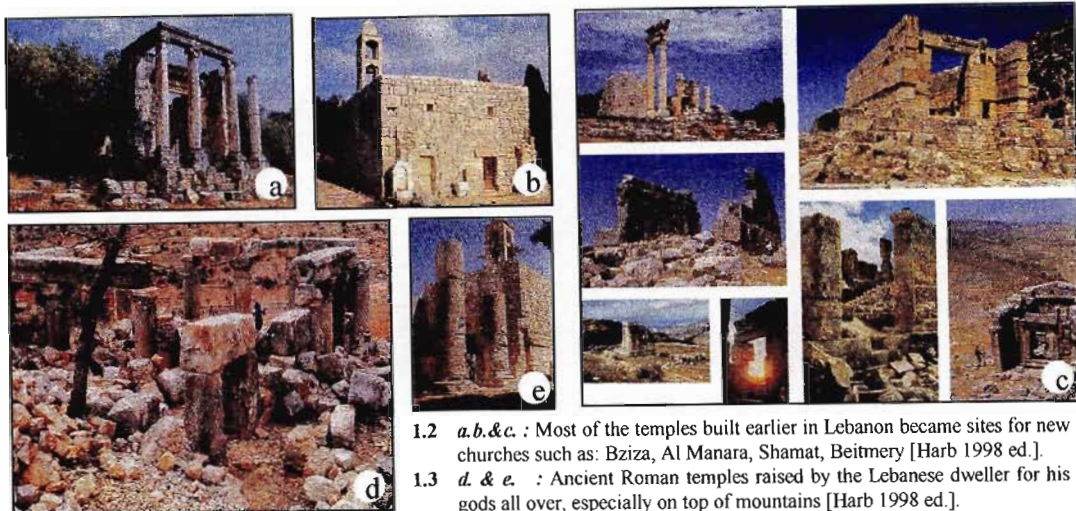
¹⁸ [Dibs, 1893: vol.1, 363].

¹⁹ [Hitti, 1972ed: 18].

²⁰ [Harb, 1998ed: 36].

²¹ [Hourany, 1972: 90].

²² Renan, E. 1864, *Mission de Phénicie*. [Paris: Impériale imp.], 221.



1.2 a,b.&c. : Most of the temples built earlier in Lebanon became sites for new churches such as: Bziza, Al Manara, Shamat, Beitmery [Harb 1998 ed.].
 1.3 d. & e. : Ancient Roman temples raised by the Lebanese dweller for his gods all over, especially on top of mountains [Harb 1998 ed.].

1.2.2 The appearance of St. Maron

Only one bishop from Antioch and the neighboring town of Cyr, Theodoretus [393-460] had written about the biography of the Syrian hermits including Maron; this writer had specified chapter 16 of his book about monastic history for Maron's life, hermitage, and influence²³. According to father Lammens [1862-1937] in his geography of St. Maron's biography: "*The spread of religion in the area of Cyr can be inferred from the considerable number of hermitages in it, which were among the best for the life of contemplation and worship, being mountainous, away from large centers, and providing those who are satisfied with the minimum of things with what they needed... to the extent that the area was called 'the paradise of recluses' "*. The father adds that Theodoretus's book on the history of monks does not mention monasteries but a number of solitaries with disciples around them following their way of life without the existence of a monastery per se²⁴. Theodoretus used to pay repeated visits to "...those saintly monks who 'perfumed' his diocese with the 'odor' of their virtues"²⁵.

According to Theodoretus, when St. Maron decided to live in solitude away from the affairs of ordinary life and in the wilderness, he settled on a rocky mountain top near Antioch about the midpoint between Cyr and Aleppo²⁶; on that mountain there had been a deserted pagan temple named after the god Nabu (*map 1.7, 1.8*). [The mountain had been, for that reason, called Mt. Nabu and the neighbouring village Kfarnabu]²⁷. So Maron used to spend his days and nights in, so to speak, direct contact with the earth and the sky (i.e. in the open air '*Bios Upaitros*')²⁸ praying and worshiping in nature and not inside a place with a roof or an ordinary house²⁹. But the recluse hadn't himself invented that style of living – it had been there long before his time. But at certain times, he used to shelter in a special 'tent' that he'd made from goat skin³⁰.

²³ Theodoret de Cyr. 1979, *Histoire des Moines de Syrie*. [Paris: Du Cerf], ch. 2, 29-33.

²⁴ Lammens, H. 1913; 1982, *Tasrih Al Absar Fima Yahtawi Loubnan Mi Al Asar* (General Overview Regarding the Monument Relics of Lebanon) [Lebanon: Dar Dar Al Ra'ed], vol.2, 74-75.

²⁵ Harb, K. A. 2001, *The Maronites – History and Constants* [Beirut: The Maronite Heritage], 42.

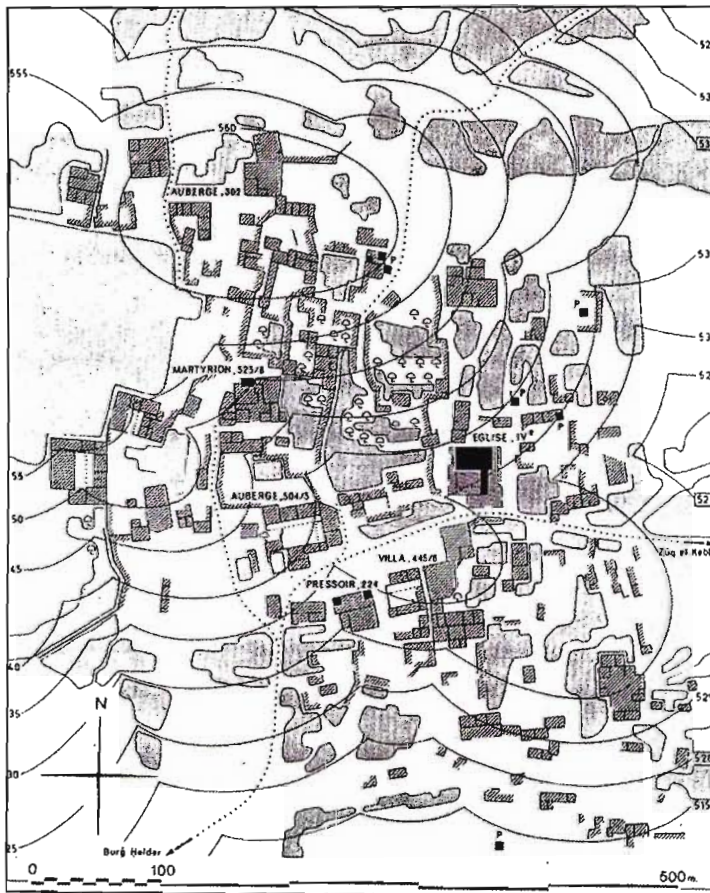
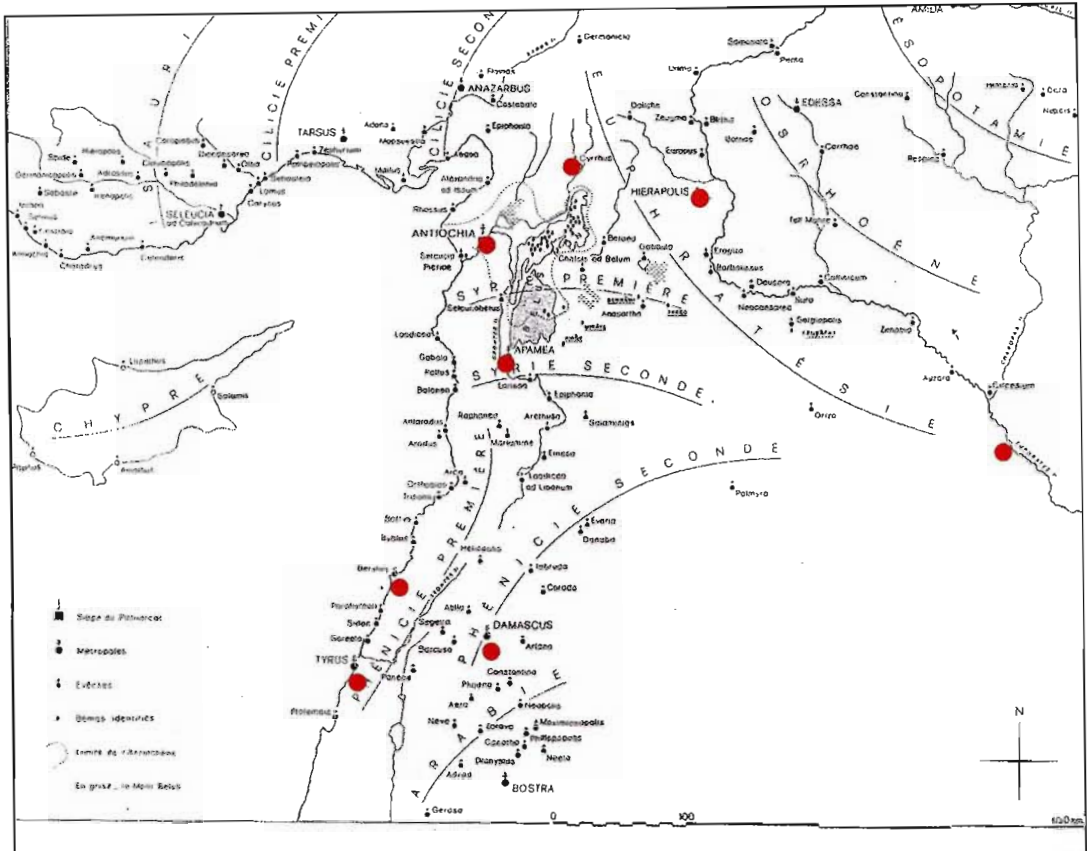
²⁶ Awit, M. 1996, *The Maronite Patriarchate – History & Missions* [Lebanon: Arab Printing Press], 14.

²⁷ [Harb, 1998ed: 43-44].

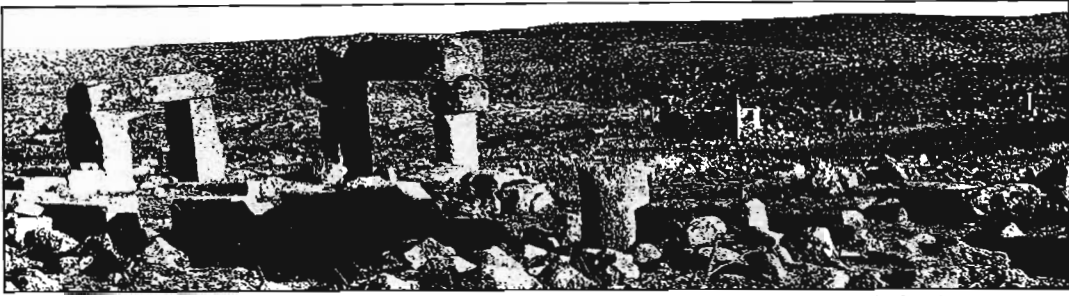
²⁸ (Al) Boustani, F. E. 1999, *Mar Maroun* (St. Maron) [Beirut: Dar Al Mashreq], 30-31.

²⁹ Daou, B. 1977 (2nd ed.). I. *Tarikh Al Mawarina – Al Deini Wa Siyasi Wal Hadari, Min Mar Maroun Ila Mar Youhanna Maroun: 325-700* (Maronite History – Religious, Political and Cultural from Saint Maron till Saint John Maron) [Lebanon: Dar Al Nahar], 75.

³⁰ [Boustany, 1999: 31].



Map 1.7 : Kfarfamu, geographical and archaeological plans [Tchalenko].



Map 1.8 : View of Kfarnabu [Tchalenko].

In his *Historia Religiosa* written around 440 A.D. Theodoretus says that St. Maron did not limit himself to fasting, praying and wearing sackcloth nor to sleeping little and performing hard gardening tasks. *"He did greater acts in order to reach perfect wisdom, for the militant soldier weighs between virtue and acts... And since God is very generous with his saints, he bestowed upon him the gift of healing the sick. His fame spread to all the surroundings districts, so people flocked to him and witnessed the veracity of his virtues and miracles. He could heal the sick and exorcise the devil by mere prayer. Physicians prescribe for each disease a special medicine, but the prayer of the righteous is the remedy for all diseases. St. Maron did not only heal the ailments of the body but also those of the soul by curing the avarice of the covetous, the anger of the passionate, teaching some wisdom of temperance, others the principles of justice, others the happiness of chastity, and others the love of labor"*³¹.

St. Maron passed away around 410 A.D. after a short-lived sickness. According to Theodoretus: "He willed to be buried in St. Zabina's tomb in the region of Cyrrhus³² (or Cyr), for he glorified St. Zabina's virtues and adopted some of his ascetic ways. Moreover, he had called him father of mentor, and had sent him members of his faithful to receive his blessings"³³. But since people from various villages wanted to bury him in their places, being their spiritual guide to Christianity, St. Maron was not granted his wish and was buried in Barad, a town near Kfarnabo. Later, and according to Maronite tradition, followers of St. Maron carried his relics, especially the skull to St. Maron's monastery or "*Beit Maron*" in Syria around 452 A.D. and later to St. Maron's monastery in Kfarhay-Lebanon around the eighth century³⁴. In 1194, a Benedictine monk put the skull in a silver statue resembling St. Maron and placed it in the church built after his name in Foligno, Italy. In 1887, some relics of St. Maron's skull were returned to bishop Joseph El-Dibs on his visit to Italy³⁵.

³¹ As mentioned in [Khoury, 44] and considered the only reference regarding St. Maron deeds.

³² "The diocese of Cyrrhus is in northern Syria. In those days, the Romans had divided Syria into three administrative regions: Syria Prima (Coele-Syria) with Antioch as its capital, the Amanus mountains in the north, Lataqieh and Jebelah to the south, and the Euphrates to the east; Syria Secunda (Salutaris) with Apamea as its capital and Homs to the south; and Syria Tertia (Euphratia), with Hierapolis (or Membej) as its capital. The regions between the south of Apamea and the southern Lebanese borders were divided into two parts: Lebanese Phoenicia (Phoenicie Libanensis) with Homs, and then Damascus, as the metropolis, and Phoenicia Maritima or coastal Phoenicia with Tyre as th metropolis". In reference to [Harb, 2001ed:42].

³³ [Harb, 1998ed: 46]

³⁴ Despite the immense significance of St. Maron and the central role that he played and continues to play in the Christian sect that bears his name, there is an acute dearth of factual information concerning the life of this most celebrated monk. Our knowledge of St. Maron remains confined to the information provided by Theodoretus which we have mentioned earlier. This explains why there is hardly any binding information concerning his relics, burial place, remains etc. to the extent that even his date of demise is open to dispute.

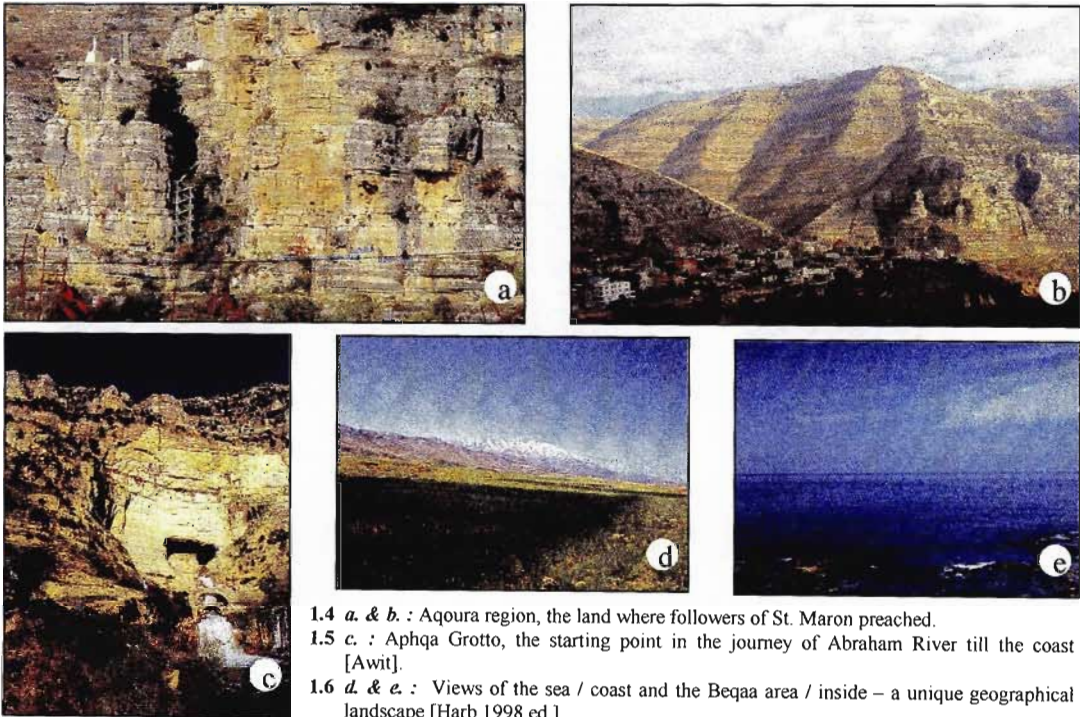
³⁵ [Harb, 1998ed: 46]

1.2.3 Friends and disciples of St. Maron

St. Maron had been an intimate friend of John Chrysostom [347-407]³⁶, who used to despise Roman prestige and luxury, and who used to win over many converts to Christianity³⁷. One of Maron's disciples had been the hermit Abraham who had spent his life feeding only on fruits in the fall and on mint and parsley during the other seasons³⁸; this hermit disciple preached in the area of the mountains above Byblos, especially Al-Aqoura, Tannourine, Qartaba, and Yanouh, in addition to Aphqa, which became famous due to the presence of the temple of Venus and the river of Adonis in it (fig. 1.4-1.5); in his preaching mission he went through the route that linked Bekaa (fig. 1.6) and Yammouné to that village in Mt. Lebanon, Aphqa³⁹. He preached the Jesus Christ there and consequently, the Adonis River had the other name still in use today, the river of Abraham⁴⁰.

Another disciple of Maron's had been St. Eushebe of Cyr [~265~340], who had lived in complete solitude (alone in the hermitage) in a mountain, where he had only built a barrier made of stone without clay; he used the latter very little, for he spent most of his time in the open air feeding on chick-peas, fig, and water. Note that he was St. Maron's contemporary⁴¹.

Likewise, Jacob of Cyr was another disciple of St. Maron. According to Theodoretus, this hermit exceeded his master Maron in solitary discipline and self-mortification to the extent that he had even refused the 'tent': no house, no roof, and no cottage; his only shelter had been the sky; he'd even rejected a roofed tomb⁴².



1.4 a. & b. : Aqoura region, the land where followers of St. Maron preached.

1.5 c. : Aphqa Grotto, the starting point in the journey of Abraham River till the coast [Awit].

1.6 d. & e. : Views of the sea / coast and the Beqaa area / inside – a unique geographical landscape [Harb 1998 ed.].

³⁶ [Harb, 1998ed: 35]

³⁷ Samirnof, A. 1911(ed); 1964, *Tarikh Al Kanisa Al Masihiya* (History of the Christian Church), translation by Jeha [A. Syria: _], 118-119, 306.

³⁸ [Daou, 1977ed: vol. 1, 87].

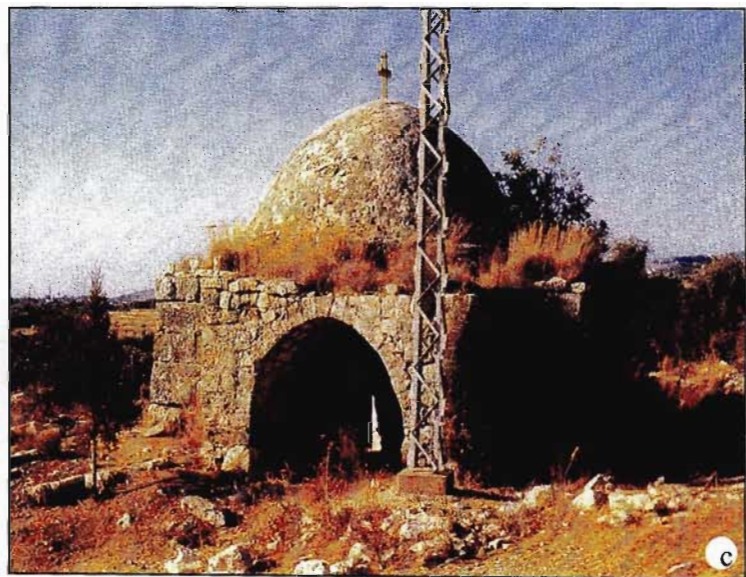
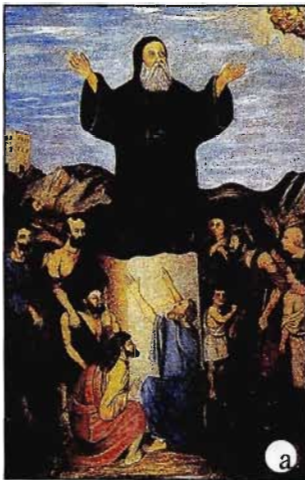
³⁹ [Harb, 1998ed: 78-50].

⁴⁰ [Daou, 1977ed: vol. 1, 89].

⁴¹ *ibid.*, 90-92.

⁴² *ibid.*, 93.

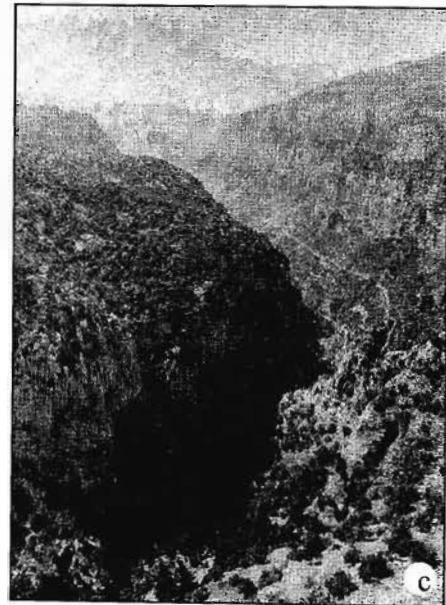
Another follower worth-mentioning is Simon (the Stylite), also known as Simon, who had spent most of his life on a column; this one contributed a lot to spreading Christianity in north Lebanon. He'd chosen to live on a pole in order to be liberated from the earth and be separated from it with his strong yearning for the other world (*fig. 1.7*). He'd done that following the example of Jesus Christ who was tied to the cross in the open air between the earth and the sky in order to save man. This bond between the Stylite open-air Maronite hermits and the cross is what justified the construction of St. Simon's church, in the second half of the fifth century, to the west of Aleppo, to have the shape of a cross with Simon's pillar in its middle. Many churches and shrines have been built in Lebanon under St. Simon's name, the majority of which were built on the ruins of ancient temples. The Stylite used to utilize those frontal poles of the ancient temple which supported the roofs of the exterior corridors of the latter structures. Some of these pillars exceeded 16 meters in height and 2 meters in diameter; and most of the time, the column used to be carved from one rock. The most important temple here is a church one kilometer east of Byblos built on the ruins of a huge ancient temple, the greatest part of which is still underground. A pole from this temple had been used by a Stylite; and a church was built around the column so that the top of the church's cupola almost touched the tip of the pillar; and this church is known as St. Simon.



1.7 *a. & b.* : St. Simon the Stylite, and the pillar the Stylite lived on found in St. Simon church/ Lebanon [Harb 1998 ed.].
c. : St. Simon church, Byblos, a cube surmounted by a cupola enclosing the column from which the name of name of St. Simon derives [Harb 1998 ed.].

Following the spread of Christianity as a result of the work of St. Maron's monks in the mountain areas of Byblos and northern Lebanon (especially the region of Al-Jibbet), many monasteries, churches, and hermitages were built in those regions, especially in the valley of Qannoubine, also known as the Qadisha valley. The name derives from 'Kanobion' which means 'society'- this indicates the group of monks living in the monastery. Similarly, in the Syriac language, Qadisha can signify holiness or *Qadassa* in Arabic (figs. 1.8-1.9-1.10), in order to imply the holiness of those who had dwelt in the natural caves of the valley and in its distant hermitages (fig. 1.11).

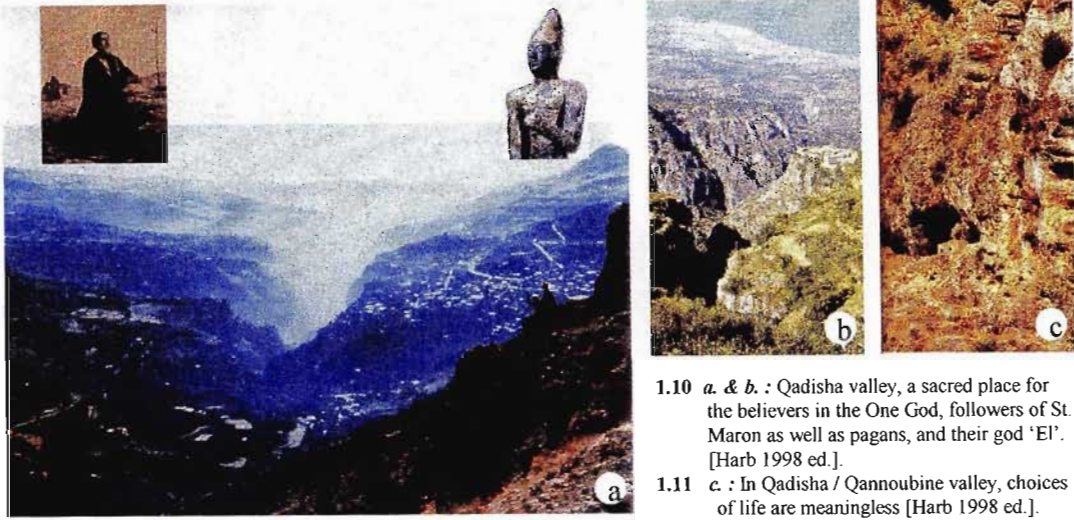
Hence, the first Maronite Christians in Lebanon were the original inhabitants of the Lebanese mountain and not foreigners as proclaimed by some⁴³. Dr. Harb says that: "... it is evident that the Lebanese mountain was populous, and that Christianity spread at the end of the 4th century and the beginning of the 5th century as a result of the preaching missions of St. Maron's disciples... Those inhabitants were later joined by groups of Maronites who had left northern Syria after religious conflicts arose between the Maronites and the Jacobites following the Council of Chalcedon (451)"⁴⁴. Nowadays, Maronite Lebanese citizens spread all over Lebanon, living peacefully and interacting positively with inhabitants from other religions and ethnic backgrounds.



- 1.8 a : The Holy Valley / Qadisha Valley, east-west oriented.
1.9 b. & c: Qadisha Valley, a place inspiring sacredness and sanctification [Awit].

⁴³ By the beginning of the fifth century A.D., a number of followers had embraced this new Christian preaching as to be distinctly recognized as Maronites, disciples and followers of St. Maron who upheld his beliefs and spread his teachings throughout the land.

⁴⁴ [Harb, 2001ed:50].



1.10 a. & b. : Qadisha valley, a sacred place for the believers in the One God, followers of St. Maron as well as pagans, and their god 'El'. [Harb 1998 ed.].
 1.11 c. : In Qadisha / Qannoubine valley, choices of life are meaningless [Harb 1998 ed.].

In conclusion one can say that Lebanon has moved from the 'Adon's' (Adonis) spiritual sovereignty to Maron's; and both names mean 'master' or 'lord'⁴⁵. But Philip Hitti asserts that the word 'Maron' is Syriac term standing for the diminutive of 'master' or 'lord'; and it might be the case here that the diminutive form is used to show endearment⁴⁶.

1.3 THE INCARNATION OF JESUS CHRIST IN TIME⁴⁷: THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON AND MARON'S HOUSE

The theologian and philosopher, St. Augustine [354-430], who attempted to reconcile Platonic thought with Christian dogma, implied that he was St. Maron's contemporary. In his Confessions, he wrote on time: "...Creative maker... time derive its existence from Thee...Remaining as Thou art, and Thine years do not end... I contemplate the morning... and I preach the coming sunrise; what I contemplate is present and what I preach is future... The sun is not the future because it exists, but it is its rising which is future because it's not yet come... We measure time because we can only measure what exists... In the history of populations, the life of the individual is part of the whole... The son of man is the mediator between thy oneness and our plurality... I unify myself liberated from the old days... and I cling to Thy unity, and I meditate in Thee, Thou who does not perish... When we sing a known melody... we await the ensuing musical notes and remember the ones that passed... That creates in us various passions... and captures all our senses. However, nothing of all that reaches Thine eternity that never changes..."⁴⁸.

This quotation from St. Augustine's text 'on time' is to shed some light on his concept of time as a Christian philosopher in the epoch of St. Maron, especially for the impact that this concept had on the issue of Jesus Christ' incarnation in time, which was the reason behind the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., and after which the church was

⁴⁵ [Harb, 1998ed: 52-54].

⁴⁶ [Hitti, 1972ed: 242].

⁴⁷ This refers to a specific moment in time in which God the Father had taken on a human form.

⁴⁸ (St.) Augustine. 2000, *I'tirafat Al Qiddis Augustinos* (Confessions of St. Augustine), translation by Helou, Y. [Beirut: Dar Al Mashreq], 248-265.

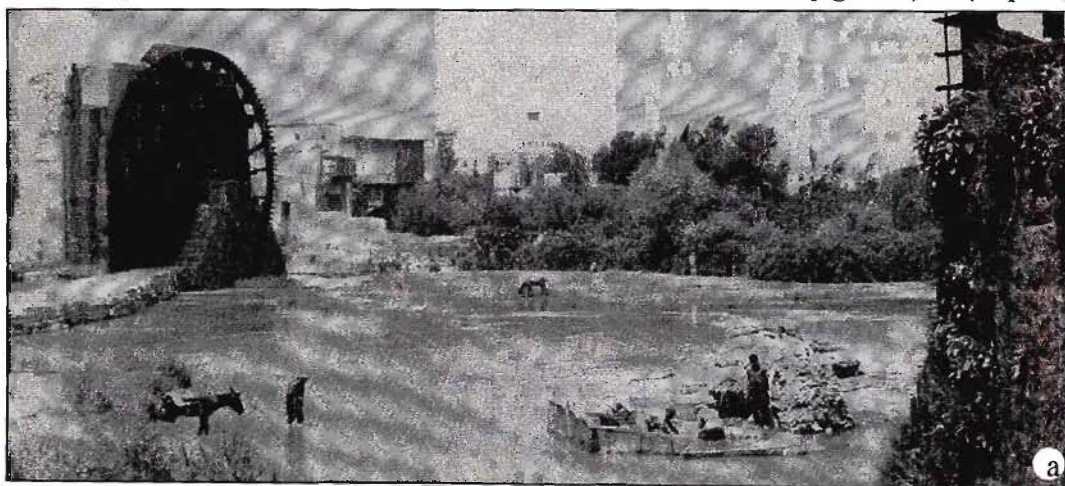
divided into Chalcedonians and non- Chalcedonians⁴⁹; note that the Maronites defended the decrees of the council.

Abbot Boulos Naaman [b1932] says: “*The incarnation practically means the entrance of God in history, in space and time, as an ordinary man so as to create an existential relationship with every man in order to enable him to create a divine relationship with Him in return*”. According to Naaman, “*divine partaking in human nature enables man of effective partaking in divine nature*”⁵⁰.

Maronites were considered Chalcedonians who believed that Jesus Christ has both a Divine and a human nature. According to these groups, the divinity of Jesus Christ began on earth and moved to heaven, whereas the other group, the non-Chalcedonians, (some times called the Monophysites- a theory held by the philosophers of the school of Alexandria) believed only in the Divine nature of Jesus Christ. Which of the two theories is valid? According to Naaman, “*both are valid provided that one does not exclude the validity of the other*”⁵¹.

Moreover, the political conflict between Alexandria on one side and Antioch and Constantinople on the other side increased the schism. For when the political competition intensified, it turned into a conflict that occupied the fifth century. This event induced the emperor to bring the church together into three ecumenical councils, the last of which was Chalcedon in 451 A.D.: The school of Alexandria was presided by Kyrillos [~376-444] and Antioch’s by Theodoretus (the author of St. Maron’s biography); thus, the monks, being the learned elite, had a great influence in ending the dogmatic conflict⁵².

When Kyrillos won the battle, Theodoretus, head of the school of Antioch, gathered around himself Maron’s monks. With the help of the Pope Leon of Rome, he endeavored to build a monastery in which he assembled the ascetics and recluses of Maron in order to spread the Chalcedonian dogma. Hence, he ordered to build a huge monastery on the Orontes River to the north of Hama in 452 A.D (fig. 1.12) & (map1.9).



1.12 a. : Old picture of Orontes River area north of Hama [Denham].

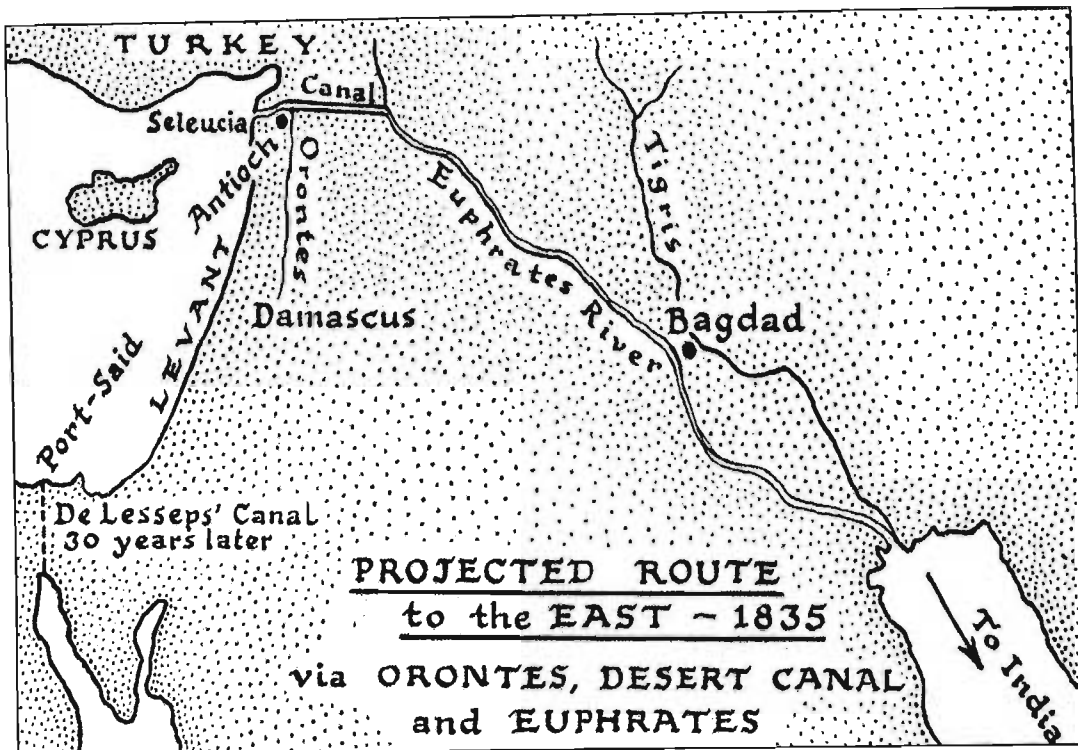
⁴⁹ Naaman, B. 1980a, *La Maronite – Constantes et Variables de Vie* [New York: II Congres Maronite Mondial.], 18.

In his book, it is said that Chalcedonians consider Jesus to possess a godly and a human nature at the same time whereas the non-Chalcedonians visualize him as a god in the form of a human being.

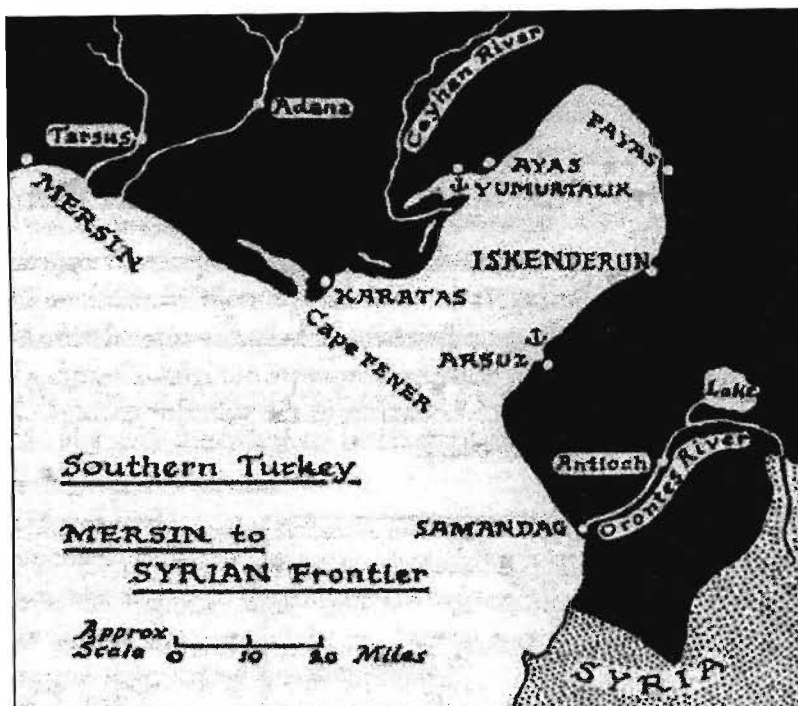
⁵⁰ Naaman, B. 1980 b, “*Al Marouniya Fi Risalat Tahreer Mashreqiya*” (Maronitism – an Eastern Editorial Letter), *Al Fousoul* (Seasons), no. 3, [Lebanon: Catholic Press], 40.

⁵¹ [Naaman, 1980 a:18].

⁵² *ibid.*, 58.



Map 1.9 : Orontes River [Denham].



Map 1.10 : Orontes River and its surrounding area. [Denham].

It was called St. Maron's monastery and was a vast monastic city as well as a highly influential spiritual and religious center where archbishops and metropolitans were elected. The monks of this monastery were known by the 'assembly of Maron's house'; the name equally included monks, believers, and followers⁵³.

⁵³ [Naaman, 1980 a: 19-20, 58].

The question that keeps posing itself till our day is whether the term 'Maronites' pertains to St. Maron or to the monks of 'the Assembly of Maron's House' in Second-Syria? Here different references give different answers. However, in 512 A.D., Archbishop Servius [nd -538] acceded to the Antiochian patriarchal seat and fought the Chalcedonian resolutions as well as the monks of Maron's House. The result was that the latter were not exempted from heavy persecution⁵⁴. When patriarch of Antioch (Theophanus) died in 685, according to Dr. Harb: "...the chalcedonian party of the Antiochean Church elected Youhanna (John) Maron, one of the monks of St. Maron's Monastery, as the patriarch of Antioch. The Chalcedonians did not consult the Byzantine court because of its former abuses of authority in nominating patriarchs who, because of the Persian and Arab invasions, could not reside in Antioch. Thus, the disciple of St. Maron, Youhanna Maron [nd -707], bishop of Batroun and Mount Lebanon in 676, became the first Maronite patriarch and the sixty-third patriarch of Antioch since Peter"⁵⁵.

1.4 THE MANIFESTATION OF THE DESIGNER OF THE UNIVERSE ACCORDING TO MARONITES

One of the basic assumptions made in the introductory part of this research is that the Designer of the Universe unfolds in creation through natural laws. This is an essential belief in Christianity also; hence, the assumption does not contradict the Maronite rite. Patriarch Stephen Al-Dweihi [1630-1704] confirms this point in his book *Manarat Al-Aqdass* (Minaret of Holies), where he says under the title "*God, unexamined and undescribed within Himself, made His knowledge manifest in creatures*": "*By His word, He absolved creation from non-existence to existence, by His order they grow and multiply, and perfect essences from imperfect matter are reproduced. By His power He regulates things in being; even when disintegrated. He blows life in them again. This power... is clear in creatures as well as their nature, characteristics and systems; all things are from Him and exist in Him; the one who excels in pondering upon changes of times and their accompanying of the cycle of planets besides the synchronization and opposition of elements. Will certainly admit that has an intelligent cause, capable of handling it. Those who have life in them are in constant dynamism and change. Plants are from seeds, seeds are from plants; birds are from eggs, eggs from birds. Likewise, human beings reproduce from each other with no one being eternal. Consequently, it is certain for this series of reproduction to have a primordial beginning that moves it without Him being moved. By tracing creatures, philosophers derived the knowledge of God and realized that He is one eternal mind, immutable and intangible. Nothing on earth is without a head because the beginning of all is God. The rivers are from fountains and laws are from divine wisdom. The earth gives fruit only when rain falls. Thus, nothing can possibly come into being out of itself; everything depends on everything else*"⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ Mahfouz, J. 1985, *Précis d'Histoire de l'Eglise Maronite* [Lebanon: Kaslik], 65.

⁵⁵ [Harb, 2001ed:72].

⁵⁶ (Al) Dweihi, S. 1895, *Manarat Al Aqdass* (Minaret of Holies), translation by Al Shartouni, R. [Beirut: Catholic Press], 29.

1.5 GEOGRAPHICAL EXPANSION OF THE MARONITES

1.5.1 The expansion of the Maronites

The Maronite people followed a recluse who gave them his name and a geographical expansion starting from Cyr and Aleppo in northern Syria throughout the whole area and its surroundings during the first half of the fifth century. At that time, "Antioch has always been a city of openness, dialogue, and bold initiative. It was converted to Jesus Christ by the preaching of the apostles Paul and Barnabas, and for the first time the disciples were called 'Christians' was at Antioch" [Bible, *Acts*, 11:26]. Finally, Antioch became one of the five great original patriarchates, namely Rome, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Constantinople in the third century A.D (*map 1.10*).

The early church was subject to divisions: with Servius' deposition in 518 A.D. for rejecting the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon and denying the two natures of Jesus Christ, Christians split between eastern and western churches. Consequently, each group had its own patriarch⁵⁷. A century later, another division occurred resulting in three groups: the Syriacs, the Maronites, and the Melkites. In the seventh century, each of the Christian communities, the Melkites, the Maronites, the Syriacs, the Assyrians, and the Armenians had their own patriarch. After being one 'Church of Antioch' encompassing the whole of Asia and the Orient, the latter split into several churches having several patriarchs⁵⁸.

The Maronite monastic centers along with their followers can be considered as the first Maronite centers in the first half of the fifth century. However, this does not mean that the Maronite sect was widely spread in Lebanon during that epoch. For the sect expanded through preaching and not through immigration. Some people assume that the Maronites in Lebanon were originally Syrian immigrants; but as a matter of fact, most of the original Lebanese inhabitants are Maronites, who were joined by groups of Syrian Maronites at later stages⁵⁹.

As shown, Maron's disciples preached in Lebanon especially in Mount Lebanon and north Lebanon. Northern Syria as well as the mountains of Jbeil and northern Lebanon were the cradles of the first Maronite rite.

The first patriarch in Antioch was St. John Maron (Youhanna Maron) who lived in Kfarhay, Amioun/Lebanon. But Byzantium was enraged when a Maronite patriarch was appointed; so it attacked the Maronites in Amioun but to no avail. A Maronite patriarchal seat was established in Lebanon replacing the Archbishopry. The seat was then moved from Kfarhay to Byblos / Lebanon (*fig. 1.13*). The Maronite community was on a constant move among different areas Yanouh, Mayfouk, Lihfid, Kfifane (*fig. 1.14*). They used to leave their fertile lands in Syria and the Bekaa and spread in rocky and inaccessible woodlands that sheltered the fugitives from the Byzantine anger: "*They transformed the stone into a rich land in which they grew wheat and other grains and planted olive trees, grapevines and mulberry trees...*"⁶⁰.

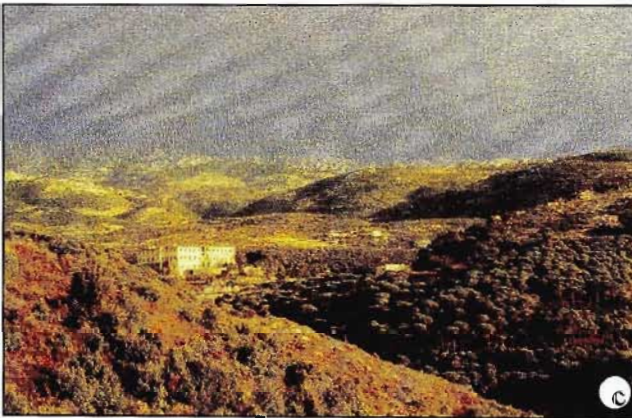
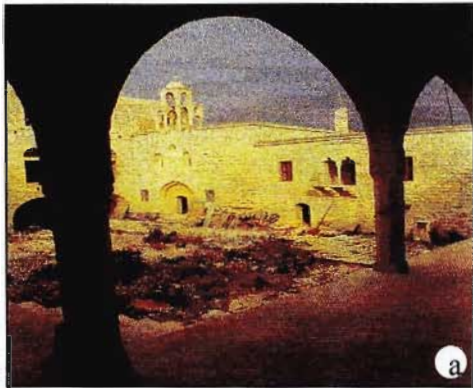
Wherever they settled in Lebanon, simplicity and poverty characterized their churches. Their sole concern was to spread God's name and establish love.

⁵⁷ Prior to the middle of the fifth century A.D., a great deal of confusion surrounded the true nature of Jesus Christ; on one level it was argued that Jesus Christ was divine while the other mentioned a human attribute to him. In 451 A.D., the Council of Chalcedon confirmed that Jesus Christ exhibits a dual nature: divine and human. This stance was upheld by the Maronites

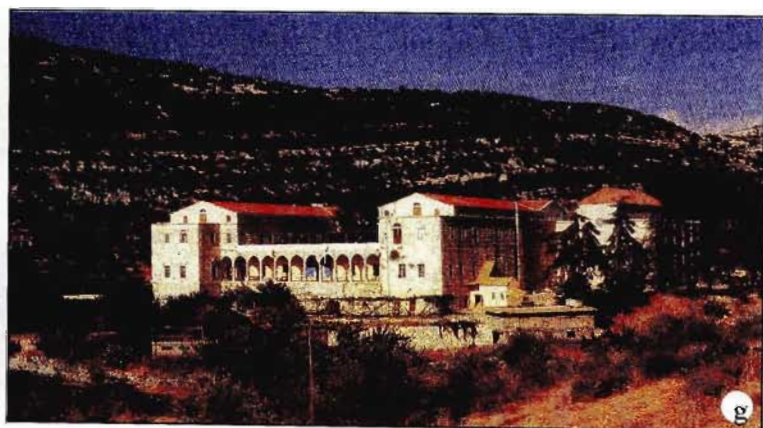
⁵⁸ [Awit, 1996: 12].

⁵⁹ [Daou, 1977ed: vol.1, 215].

⁶⁰ *ibid.*



1.13 *a. b. c. & d.* : View of the Patriarchal See in Kfarhay, the place from where the Maronite patriarchs watched over their people [Awit]



1.14 Different places of adoration for the Maronites [Awit].
e. : Yanouh
f. : Lihfid
g. : Mayfouk (convent)
h. : Mayfouk (hermitage)
i. : Mayfouk – Ilige Church.

Regarding the geographical territorial expansion of the Maronites in Lebanon, Al Dweihy says: "*Their dwellings were extremely humble and deprived of all show of riches and pomp, but magnificent in their simplicity and detachment from the world... and so (they) wanted their places of residence to be in the first place retreats for prayer...*"⁶¹. According to the Lebanese Maronite historian father Awit [b1930], they did not leave behind great works such as fine churches, castles, or universities⁶². According to Dr. Elias Al-Qattar [b1948], the Maronite is a simple, peaceful, rural person kneaded with reclusive spirituality⁶³.

According to father Boutros Daou [b1915], "*What catches our attention in the spread of the Maronites from Syria along the shores of the Orontes River, Al-Raha and Aintab is that many towns share the same name in both Syria and Lebanon:*

Syria

*Kfarty in Mount Simon,
Bnabil in Antioch & Aleppo
Ainab in Bridge of Shaghour
Al-Ghineh in Edleb*

*Bchalli in Maarat Al-Noueman
Kfarshally in Mount-Riha
Shartoun in Mount-Simon
Ortoz
Mishmesh in Mount-Simon
M'ad in Mount-Barisha
Arsous in Antioch
Blat in the Highest-Mountain*

Lebanon

*Kfarty in Keserwan
Bnabil in Baabdat
Ainab in Shouf
Al-Ghineh in Ftouh, and in it the same
square church in the same area in Syria
Bchalli in Jbeil
Kfarshally in Mount-Lebanon
Shartoun in Shouf
Ortoz in Batroun
Mishmish in the barren mountains in Jbeil
Maad in Jbeil
Gharzouz in Jbeil
Blat in Jbeil"*⁶⁴.

The above mentioned names are examples among many others that the author has stated.

1.5.2 The Maronite community

With St. John Maron, the first Maronite patriarch, the Maronite community began to take shape having its homeland on the sides of Qannoubine valley where the characteristics of the Maronites began to be manifested. Thus, Maronites became a sovereign population with independent rural features isolated from all other sects which lived in that area⁶⁵.

At this point, it is worthy mentioning the significance of the Cedar tree of Lebanon, called '*Cedrus Libani*'. This tree has had a sacred position since ancient times, for much was said about it in the holy bible:

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it..."⁶⁶;

⁶¹ [Awit, 1996: 14-32].

⁶² *ibid.*

⁶³ (Al) Qattar, E. 1996; 1997, "*Al Mawarina Fi Al Qouroun Al Wosta*" (Maronites in the Middle Ages), *Al Marouniya Fi Amsiha Wa Ghadiha* (Maronitism in its Past and Present) [Lebanon: Louizeh Convent], 39-57.

⁶⁴ [Daou, 1977ed: vol.1, 248-250].

⁶⁵ [Hitti, 1972ed: 303-304].

⁶⁶ Isaiah, 35:1-2

The cedar tree, considered a national symbol in the design of the Lebanese national flag, is well known for its name as 'the trees of the Lord' in reference to: "The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted"⁶⁷.

In addition, it seems that the cedar tree was the one used in the religious rite of circumcision: "Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop"⁶⁸. The attentive reader of the Old Testament recognizes many chapters referring to this sacred Cedar tree. Hence one can draw a correlation between the sanctity of this tree and the Maronite building of houses near it.

Edward Gibbon, the English historian says: "This small chaste nation lived longer than the Constantinian empire, which persecuted it..."⁶⁹. According to Lammens: "*in the structure of the Maronite Nation we find all the elements necessary to compose nations... After a while, they mixed and became a great nation with one language, one shape and one goal. No one with good sight, no matter how much they try to scrutinize, can detect their original nationalities... We also find before that period, a Maronite community that lived in Mesopotamia...*"⁷⁰.

Abbot Boulos Naaman believes that the Maronite rite is a spiritual and intellectual rite that was transformed into a quasi-national sect connected to a specific country, the rocks of Lebanon. This sect established connections with Rome without merging with it in spite of all attempts of Latinization⁷¹. These connections of the Maronite patriarchs with the apostolic seat and their loyalty to the Roman Church had caused them much trouble. Yet despite their submission to Rome and their respect to its missionaries, Maronites were keen on preserving the features of the Maronite rite and its eastern-Antiochian tradition. This was basically achieved through their ritualistic practices in confronting the trend of Latinization, which was growing gradually due to the increasing activity of the Latin Catholic missionaries in Lebanon. Moreover, the intervention of these missionaries in the private Maronite affairs had once reached a dangerous limit: a missionary visited Lebanon in 1596⁷² and burnt Maronite books and scripts under the pretense that they contained ideologies and rituals which do not conform to the teachings of the Church of Rome.

According to Father Louis Sheikho [1859-1927], the Maronites thus lost an irreplaceable cultural heritage in addition to the fact that such practices made them have many reservations concerning both Latins and Latinization. Since the name of the Maronites is connected with that of Lebanon, and since the latter is an Arab country by virtue of its constitution, one finds the motive to study the Maronite human geography in Lebanon from an anthropological viewpoint based on Lebanese ethnicity and blood types: "*Arabs do not form a race i.e. a defined anthropological unit with distinctive quasi-fixed physical characteristics*"⁷³. Indeed the idea of the relationship between blood type and race makes a very interesting area of research for anthropologists, but it remains beyond the immediate concern of this research.

⁶⁷ Psalms, 104:16.

⁶⁸ Leviticus, 14:4-6.

⁶⁹ Gibbon, E. 1898, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* [London: Burry J. B.], vol.5, 156-157.

⁷⁰ [Lammens, 1913; 1982: 52-54].

⁷¹ [Naama, 1980b: 24-26].

⁷² Shiekho, L. 1923, *Al Ta'ifa Al Marouniya Wal Rouhbaniya Al Yaso'iya* (Maronite Sect and Jesuit Monasticism) [Beirut: Catholic Press], 6-69.

⁷³ *Encyclopedia Universalis*, 1968-1975; 1980(ed). 20 Vols. [Paris: Encyclopedia Universalis], vol. 2, 194.

There is enough historical evidence to suggest that prehistoric immigrations took place which formed the ethnic base of the Lebanese population. Subsequently, this base 'exploded' and scattered into ethnic units under specific historic conditions; these units formed to a great extent united social communities. Then each community began to develop within its special conditions withdrawing from the original inhabitants by reason of three factors: environment, genetic deviation and mixing with other ethnic groups⁷⁴. The Syrian Maronites who resorted to Lebanon and mixed with the Christian inhabitants in the late seventh century were the reason behind the change in ethnic structure in Lebanon⁷⁵.

Jawad Boulos [1900-1982], a Lebanese historian who studied the history of the Lebanese nation, says that as a result of the intermixing of the Maronites with the original Christians and the Maradites⁷⁶ around the year 700, the Maronite community appeared and had a historical role in Lebanon. The Syriac language (a Christian Aramaic language) became the religious literacy and the public language of this Maronite community⁷⁷.

Philip Hitti [1886-1978] states that this language is also that of the churches in Syria and Lebanon; the word 'Syriacs' replaced 'Aramaic', and it means 'The people of Syria'⁷⁸. *"The hardships that the Maronites confronted developed in them a sense of private society distinguished from that of the Byzantine. Thus, the Maronites belong to an Aramaic-Syriac civilization. They were tutored by the monks of St. Maron, unlike the Christians of the big cities of the Byzantine and Greek civilizations preached by the apostles...The Maronites were keen on complying with the heritage of the Antioch Church"*⁷⁹. Philip Hitti goes on to say that the Maronites are a branch of the church speaking the Syriac language and that the mass serving in the Syriac church is older than the Greek or Latin one.

On the other hand, father Boutros Daou believes that the Maronite community achieved its national elements in the second half of the seventh century, thereby acquiring a land, a population and a civilization: *"the land being the final abode of the Maronite nation is Lebanon, the Maronite population is composed, ethnically speaking, mainly of: the Phoenician Lebanese population, the Syrian Aramaic population along with the populations of the Mediterranean Sea, all leading to the interaction and mingling of single principles, faiths and rules"*⁸⁰. He also considers that the ancestors of Maronites are Aramaics, Canaanites, Phoenicians and Amoritians who were Semitic and lived in Syria and Lebanon in ancient times.

⁷⁴ *Encyclopedia Universalis*, 1968-1975; 1980(ed). 20 Vols. [Paris: Encyclopedia Universalis], vol. 2, 155.

⁷⁵ [Khalife, 1997: 111-112].

⁷⁶ As mentioned in [Harb, 2001:42]: "Between the 660-690, a militant movement appeared in the mountainous region extending from Amanus and northern Syria to mountains of Galilee, with Lebanon as its stronghold. The Byzantines organized this movement to fight the Umayyads. It was formed of groups of warriors known as the 'Jarajima' (named after the city of 'Jarjouma' near Antioch. The Jarajima, also known as 'Marada' ('Maradites', strong men) were 'a ruthless Persian generation, called after by kings to defend their property because they were well trained for wars'".

⁷⁷ Boulos, J. 1973, *Loubnan Wal Bouldan Al Moujawira* (Lebanon and Neighboring Countries) [Beirut: Badran], 248.

⁷⁸ [Hitti, 1972ed: 250-251].

⁷⁹ [Harb, 1998ed: 64].

⁸⁰ [Daou, 1977ed: 389].

According to Hitti⁸¹, the Maronite is known for his open-mindedness and for possessing a special blend between Eastern spirituality and Western materialism. Hitti further talks about the Maronites living with other communities on the same land; it is said that the Moslems, the Christians, and the Druze⁸² live together in harmony and peace to the extent that they all come to church, believe in the holy water, especially the baptism sacrament.

What about classes in the Maronite community? Although the Maronite rite is modest and simple, it recognizes a hierarchy which parallels the feudalist social system prevalent in Mount Lebanon. For example, there were certain feudal lords of Al-Dahdah family, Al-Khazen, etc. who used to rule the farmers and laborers. However, the latter were free to move from one feudal system to another. But feudalism played a role in domestic architecture especially with regard to the fine dwellings of the feudal lords', while farmers and workers had their stereotypical huts within the feudal lands.

1.6 Conclusion

It has been made clear in this chapter the existence of a Maronite identity with its own unique character and distinguishing qualities. The next chapter will investigate the various stages that the Maronite faith has undergone in its staunch effort to overcome relentless persecution and affirm its individuality and distinctiveness.

⁸¹ [Harb, 1998ed: 140].

⁸² Druze are one of the sects in Islamic religion. [Hitti, 1972ed: 488-195].

Chapter 2

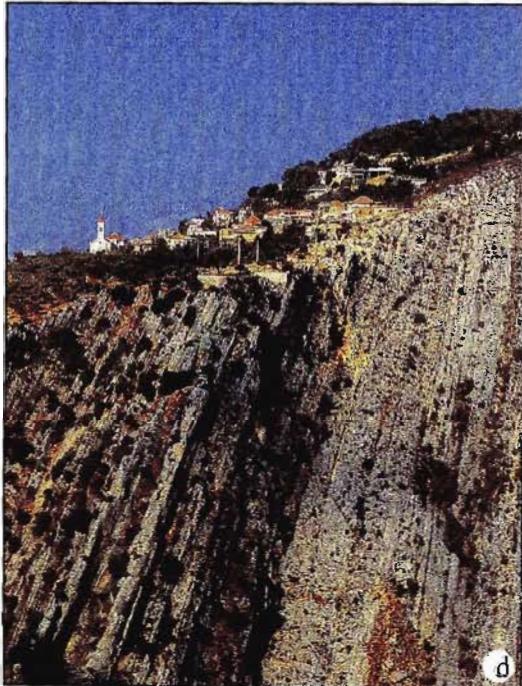
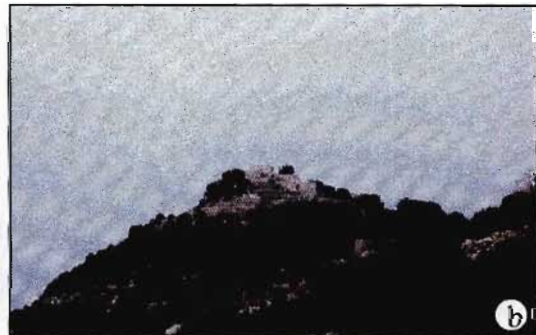
MARONITE RITE AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

This chapter will elaborate how and why the Maronite faith had undergone relentless persecution throughout his history, a reality which shaped its own character. Furthermore, it will argue the inextricable link that ties the religious and secular life in the Maronite faith as a way to understand the Maronite doctrine and various practices namely monasticism, property ownership and liturgy.

2.1 PERSECUTION OF THE MARONITES

2.1.1 Maronites till the thirteenth century

If one looks at the different periods of persecution the Maronites have experienced through in their history, it becomes quite evident why they opted to locate their buildings atop sites that enjoyed commanding views of the neighboring fields and plains. For the Maronite (when persecuted) needed to be able to watch without being seen. Thus the Maronite dwelling place was built in complete harmony with the surrounding natural environment so as to bind with it, as if nature itself had built it. To achieve that goal, the type and color of the stone and soil found on site were used in building the house with no change or damage done to nearby trees thus creating a perfect blend between the site and the built structure (*figs. 2.1-2.2-2.3*).



- 2.1 *a. & b.* : Anaya hermitage, on top of the mountain, integrated within the trees and overlooking the whole region till the coast.
- 2.2 *c.* : St. John church, perched on the hill, dominates the area of Amyoun in north Lebanon.
- 2.3 *d.* : Raskifa village / Zgharta, the vertical strata of natural rocks culminate at the top with the village, embedded within the natural context of the land [Nordiguian and Voisin].

Ever since Maronites appeared in history, persecution has been part of their fate. With the first incident of persecution [517 A.D.]⁸³, Maronites resorted to caves and grottos in the high Lebanese mountains that also sheltered the Maronites escaping from Syria for the same reason⁸⁴. Throughout all this, the Maronites used to fight with nothing on their side but poverty and simplicity⁸⁵. They had good relations with the Maradites [660-690]⁸⁶ so much that it was said: the Maronites were themselves the Maradites⁸⁷. Metropolitan Joseph Al-Dibs⁸⁸, father Boutros Daou⁸⁹ [b1915], and the orientalist Lammens [1862-1937]⁹⁰, all among others, believed so. Lammens reached the conclusion that in case the Maradites and Maronites were not one population, at least strong relations bound them⁹¹.

As the Arabs invaded Inner Syria and the coasts, and as Islam gradually replaced Christianity, Lebanon looked like a small Christian island in a sea of Islam. As a result and because of the restrictions and discrimination imposed on them, especially by the Umayyad Caliph [661-740], Omar Bin Abdel Aziz, Christians migrated to northern areas in Lebanon. [They were prohibited from employment in the civil service, had to wear belts of identity, ride bare-backed, pray in very low voice; building of churches was not tolerated]. All these Christians merged within the Maronite rite⁹².

However, the Maronites who were closely attached to the rituals of Antioch and its language and civilization, refused to give up their language and culture or to replace them by any Arabic or Islamic alternative. After that, the Romans invaded Antioch in 969 A.D., and again the Maronites suffered various hardships, which obliged them to move their See to the inaccessible and trackless mountains overlooking Jbeil.

After the Byzantine raids, the Maronites welcomed the crusaders in 1099 A.D. and their patriarch tried to establish good relations with the Roman church⁹³. The Apostolic See was surprised to find out that the Maronites still existed, supposing their disappearance a definite fact. It was in this epoch that the Maronites came to build churches and know church bells, to give the impression that all hardships they underwent had been to no effect⁹⁴. Nevertheless, a further split occurred between the Maronites of the mountains and those of the coast, whereby the former were cautious in their interaction with the crusaders and didn't yield to them⁹⁵, moving their patriarchate

⁸³ As mentioned in Naaman, B. 1980a, *La Maronite – Constantes et Variables de Vie* [New York: II Congres Maronite Mondial], 20.

⁸⁴ (Al) Dibs, Y. 1893, *Min Tarikh Souriya Al Douniawi Wal Deini* (The Secular and Religious History of Syria) [-], vol. 9, 20.

⁸⁵ Awit, M. 1996, *The Maronite Patriarchate – History & Missions* [Lebanon: Arab Printing Press], 17.

⁸⁶ In reference to Harb, A. 2001. *The Maronites, History and Constants*. [Lebanon: Beirut], 66.

⁸⁷ The militant movement which appeared in the mountainous region mentioned in chapter one.

⁸⁸ [Dibs, 1893: vol. 9, 41-46].

⁸⁹ Daou, B. 1977 (2nd ed.). I. *Tarikh Al Mawarina – Al Deini Wa Siyasi Wal Hadari, Min Mar Maroun Ila Mar Youhanna Maroun: 325-700* (Maronite History – Religious, Political and Cultural from Saint Maron till Saint John Maron) [Lebanon: Dar Al Nahar], 389.

⁹⁰ Lammens, H. 1913; 1982, *Tasrih Al Absar Fima Yahtawi Loubnan Mi Al Asar* (General Overview Regarding the Monument Relics of Lebanon) [Lebanon: Dar Dar Al Ra'ed], vol.2, 4.

⁹¹ (Al) Qattar, E. 1996; 1997, "*Al Mawarina Fi Al Qouroun Al Wosta*" (Maronites in the Middle Ages), *Al Marouniya Fi Amsiha Wa Ghadiha* (Maronitism in its Past and Present) [Lebanon: Louizeh Convent], 44-45.

⁹² Hitti, P. 1972, 2nd ed., *Tarikh Loubnan – Mounzou Aqdam Al Ousour Al Tarikhiya Ila Asrina Al Hader* (History of Lebanon – Since Ancient Historic Times till our Recent Period), translated by Fraiha, A [Beirut: Dar Al Saqafa], 311-312.

⁹³ [Qattar, 1996; 1997: 48-50].

⁹⁴ [Awit, 1996: 34-35].

⁹⁵ Salibi, K. 1979, *Mountalaq Tarikh Loubnan* (Origin of the History of Lebanon) [Beirut: Caravan], 91.

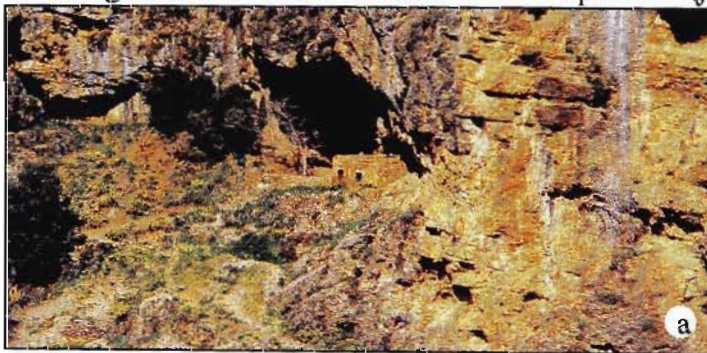
from Yanouh to Mayfouk due to riots among Maronites themselves⁹⁶. They were forced to move their See many times (to Kfifane, to Kfarhay, Al-Kafr etc.) because of the riots; in the year 1282 A.D., Maronites had two patriarchs: one yielding to Rome, the other not. The split came to an end with the Mamluks [1262-1516] whose influence on the Maronites shall be explicated now.

2.1.2 The Mamluks era

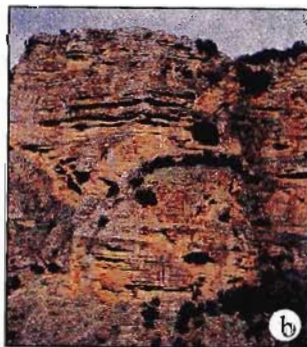
The word 'Mamluk' means 'a slave owned by his/her master'. These were a military group of unknown ancestry, for they were bought in slave markets in Russia and Caucasus. King Ayoub was the first to regulate their affairs.

As Aibak and Biberes [1260-1277] later acceded to the rule, they attacked the crusaders' cities⁹⁷. Thus the Mamluks directly attacked the Maronites, twice in Jibbet Bcharry, in 1268 and 1283 – destroying their villages including the churches of El-Jibbet, Hairouna, Ihden, Bkoufa, Hasroun, Kfarsaroun, and Al-Hadath⁹⁸. They also assaulted Keserwan and destroyed it in 1305, especially Jbeil and Batroun. In 1365, the Mamluks raged against the Maronites because of the raids of the Franks on Alexandria, thus burning their patriarch alive in Tripoli. The Mamluks drove away the Franks completely from the Orient in 1291 and divided Syria, Lebanon and Palestine into six administrative kingdoms: Damascus, Aleppo, Tripoli, Hama, Safad, and Al-Karak, appointing a sultanate delegate on each of them.

These attacks exhausted the Maronites to the extent that they were almost exterminated, while poverty and misery befell them⁹⁹. Despite utter humiliation, they resisted, believing in the eternal life of those who are baptized¹⁰⁰ (fig. 2.4).



2.4 a. b. & c. : Escaping persecution, Maronites sought the hermitages at Qannoubine – hiding within the encompassing womb of nature [Harb 1998 ed.].



⁹⁶ (Al) Dweihi, S. 1983, *Tarikh Al Azmina* (History of Times). [Lebanon: Fahed], 205-206.

⁹⁷ [Hitti, 1972ed: 372-374].

⁹⁸ [Qattar, 1996; 1997: 51-52].

⁹⁹ Rizk, K. 1996; 1997. "Al Marouniya Fi Al 'Ousour Al Hadiesa Wal Mo'asera" (Maronitism in the Modern and Contemporary Eras), *Al Marouniya Fi Amsiha Wa Ghadiha* (Maronitism in its Past and present) [Lebanon: Louizeh Convent], 61-64.

After this period, the Ottomans [1516-1918] ruled the whole Middle East, ending the Mamluks' rule in 1517. The Ottomans divided the captured areas into states, making Egypt one of these and dividing the Levant into three: Damascus, Aleppo and Tripoli. While the Maronites followed Tripoli, Mount Lebanon from Maameltein to Al-Shouf joined Damascus¹⁰¹. During that period, Islam was the religion of the Ottomans originally known as Turks (who used to be animists¹⁰² like all those peoples preceding them)¹⁰³. It is noteworthy that what is called Turkish civilization is a rich amalgam of cultural elements drawn from the regions of Mongolia, Persia, Arabia and Byzantium. The Turks adopted architecture and artistic drawing from the Persians.

By virtue of religious and racial bonds, the Ottomans entrusted Moslems with the areas stretching from Keserwan to Jibbet Al-Mnaitra where the Maronites settled; this policy resulted in internal chaos and in a new series of troubles for the Maronites¹⁰⁴. The crises for the Maronites did not end till the year 1584 with Prince Fakhreddine El-Maani [1572-1635], who appointed administrators and advisors from among Maronites. He also supported the Maronite church and people. Dr. Karam Rizk [b1951] reports from Al-Dweihî that during that prince's rule, churches were built in Bikfaya, Arbania, Bsheleh, Kfarzina, and Kfarhelta¹⁰⁵.

Moreover, this period witnessed the foundation of the Maronite College in Rome in 1584 by Pope Gregory XIII, thus giving the Maronite community access to the world. From that point and on, the Maronites assumed the role of intermediary between East and West¹⁰⁶. Patriarch Stephen Al-Dweihî (the Maronite community historian who examined the books of the church, restored its rules, and wrote many books, for example his manuscript on the original architecture of the Maronite church) had graduated from the Maronite college. Besides, a school adjoined every church (like Ain Warqa, Mar Abda, and Houqa which flourished and gained much reputation).

With the onset of the eighteenth century, the Maronites broke up into two groups: one holding to its old Oriental traditions and the other abiding by the rituals of the western church. The Lebanese synod held in Louaizeh 1736 came to make a constitution for Maronites and support the Latin trend¹⁰⁷. Nevertheless, according to Rizk¹⁰⁸, the latter split had no effect on the Maronite cultural role which had a direct impact on the Arab renaissance and the flourishing of national thought. The Qannoubine valley was the patriarchate headquarters in times of turmoil for almost 400 years [1440-1823]. But when security was established, a Maronite Patriarch moved to Diman, an area overlooking the Qadisha holy valley, thus transforming it into the Patriarchate headquarters. Nowadays, Diman is the summer headquarters, while Bkerki is for wintertime.

During the French Mandate and world wars I and II, the Maronites, like the entire Lebanese population, suffered famine and persecution. Repeatedly, the recent Lebanese [1975-1989] war confirmed the prolonged persecution of the Maronites (*fig.* 2.5).

¹⁰⁰ [Awit, 1996: 32-42].

¹⁰¹ [Rizk, 1996; 1997: 65].

¹⁰² Animists believe in a supernatural power that regulates and animates the material universe.

¹⁰³ [Hitti, 1972: 427-428].

¹⁰⁴ [Rizk, 1996; 1997: 67].

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, 69.

¹⁰⁶ [Awit, 1996: 58].

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, 68.

¹⁰⁸ Rizk, K. 1988-1989. "Une Vie Spirituelle et Culturelle au Liban de 1645 à 1870" *Parole de L'Orient* [Lebanon: _], 277-364.



2.5 a. : Our Lady church, built by patriarch Dweih. nothing more than ruins due to persecution [Awit].

2.6 b. : St. Charbel c. : St. Rafqa d. : St. Hardini [Harb 2001 ed.].

But despite all that, the Maronite church continued to practice its role, and its recluses continued to be canonized e.g. Charbel, Rafqa, and Hardini (fig. 2.6).

2.2 RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR LIFE IN THE MARONITE RITE

2.2.1 Interrelationship between religious and secular life in the Maronite rite

In the Maronite architecture, there's no need to differentiate the sanctity of the house, an office, or a store from that of a church since the religious and the secular are completely intertwined; for according to the Maronite, everything in being is somehow related to the holy. In conforming to this, the Lebanese house did not contain a bathroom within it because the latter was considered impure (since all what comes out from man's outlets is impure). In other words, since the Lebanese house had been considered sanctified in all its corners¹⁰⁹, no indoor bathroom was constructed. It is on this basis that one can see the impact that religious and secular life in the Maronite rite bears on architecture.

As previously mentioned, the name 'Maron's house' designated monks as well as believers; also, Maronites used to gather around their patriarch with a high degree of organization to the extent that the Qannoubine valley was viewed as every Maronite's school of life. For in his house and school, the Maronite gained education and sanctity simultaneously, and this is in particular what distinguishes the Lebanese Maronites geographically and spiritually: "*A land entirely consecrated for religious life*"¹¹⁰. This citation is supported by the presence of '*Al-Raff*', the shelf (figs. 2.7-2.8), in old Lebanese Maronite houses, where an elevated place on a wall was chosen to exhibit the consecrated pictures of saints and around which family members gathered for prayer¹¹¹. The writer Maron Abboud [1885-1962] describes a Maronite house as follows: "*The most wonderful thing in the center of the house is a wooden shelf upon which candle holders for white and yellow candles are placed, as well as lanterns lit in front of pictures, icons, crosses, and rosaries on an area of 4×4 yards, so that the visitor would think himself before a church altar which only lacks the tabernacles – a small place in the church where the blessed sacrament is kept...*"¹¹².

¹⁰⁹ Ragette, F. 1974ed; 1993, 4th ed., *Architecture in Lebanon – The Lebanese House During the 18th and 19th Centuries* [Delmar: Caravan Books], 19.

¹¹⁰ [Khalife, 1997: 3].

¹¹¹ Despite the importance that is enjoyed by the shelf in traditional Maronite houses, no specific pronouncements are to be found regarding its exact location. This explains the different location of the shelf, a reality which was at times dictated by architecture namely within a niche or wall cavity.

¹¹² Maroun Abboud is a renowned Lebanese writer, respected for his Maronitism and openness; he died in 1962.



2.7 a & 2.8 b. : Always present in the Lebanese dwelling, *Al-Raff* occupy has a major impact in the interior living space.

In his book, *The Prophet*, Gibran K. Gibran [1883-1931]¹¹³ wrote on houses: “For even as you have home – comings in your twilight, so has the wanderer in you, the ever distant and alone. Your house is your larger body... That you might seek one another through vineyards, and come with the fragrance of the earth in your garments... ..have you beauty, that leads the heart from things fashioned of wood and stone to the holy mountain? tell me; have you these in your house? ...for that which is boundless in you abides in the mansion of the sky”¹¹⁴.

On religion he says:

“Is not religion all deeds and all reflection?
...who can separate his faith from his actions, or his belief from his occupations?
...who can spread his hours before him, saying, ‘this for God and this for myself; this for my soul, and this other for my body’?
...And he to whom worshipping is a window, to open but also to shut, has not yet visited the house of his soul whose windows are from dawn to dawn
Your daily life is your temple and your religion
...And if you would know God... rather look about you and you shall see Him playing with your children...
And look into space, you shall see Him walking in the cloud, outstretching His arms in the lightening and descending in rain.
You shall see Him smiling in flowers, then rising and moving His hands in trees...”¹¹⁵.
This is how Gibran expressed the blend of religions with the secular.

Furthermore, since religion and secular life are interconnected in Lebanon, the noted Lebanese historian Michel Chiha [1891-1954] considers that a socio-political formula should be reached whereby a collective leadership is established starting from the legislative authority, which rightfully represents the viewpoints and desires of all ‘spiritual’ families because “*if communities are not represented through their politicians, they’ll be through their religious figures*”¹¹⁶. For this reason, one can understand the reason behind the national tradition in Lebanon which has awarded the presidency of the republic to Maronites¹¹⁷.

¹¹³ Khalil Gibran G. is a Lebanese Maronite philosopher from Bcharri known as the fortress of the Maronites in the North, respected for his openness to the West, compromising between the eastern spiritualism and the western materialism.

¹¹⁴ Khalil Gibran, G. 1926ed; 1969, *The Prophet* [London: Heineman], 38-41.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, 117-120.

¹¹⁶ Chiha, M. 1964. *Politique Intérieur du Liban* [Beirut: _], 56

¹¹⁷ [Hitti, 1972: 599].

To continue in the same line, Said Akl [b1912]¹¹⁸ believes that it is impossible to separate theology and Lebanon, for there exists a line connecting the concept of God with this country as a nation and as an essence. This testifies to Lebanon's sanctity and how it was given corporeal form in its architecture.

In his turn, Charles Malek [1906-1987]¹¹⁹, the Lebanese philosopher and theologian who played a significant role in formulating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, considers that God is active in Lebanon through the latter's servants and hermits. Every meaning for Lebanon is a meaning of God's heritage in Lebanon. In one of his books, he says: "*The moment Lebanon drifts from God and from what God meant in the Lebanese tradition, the Lebanese self ceases to be distinguished*"¹²⁰. Thus, the attributes of holiness can easily be detected in every spot in Lebanon together with their impact on Maronite architecture.

2.2.2 The order of property in Lebanese Maronite monasteries

The first thing to capture one's attention in Maronite architecture is the gathering of the faithful Maronite community around monasteries. For the way of living, the means of production, practicing faith, and raising families all required architectural structures (e.g. bedrooms, kitchens churches, hermitages etc). Besides this, the civil Maronite community that lived around the monastery had to build houses, and as they cultivated the land and used it, they had to have workshops. And as they planted mulberries, they built a workshop for spinning silk (fig. 2.9). Planting olive trees meant making olive grinders, and planting vines meant cellars to store wine etc. As for their families, the Maronites needed schools for educating their children. They also needed a church to practice their faith, thus, architecture was primordially needed to cover all the aspects of the community's religious and secular lives (figs 2.10-2.11).



- 2.9 a. : Views of old Lebanese dwellings integrated with the natural surrounding. The most significant aspect in this neighborhood are the mulberry trees – around which the life of the peasant revolved – planted for the production of silk.
- 2.10 b. : Except for the red brick tiles crowning the house top, and the bell tower of the church, no distinction can be drawn between secular and religious construction in Al Safra region (half way between Byblos and Jounieh in the coast).
- 2.11 c. : The church in Benta'el, north-east of Byblos, is the center of a community, with its architecture resembling that of the rest of the houses.

¹¹⁸ Said Akl is a contemporary Lebanese poet, well known for his spirituality and the pioneering literary trend in composing.

¹¹⁹ The Lebanese man of philosophy and theology who played a great role in the composition of the 'International Proclamation for the Human Rights' and head of the General Assembly of the United Nations [1958-1959], who is very committed to his Maronite and Lebanese origins.

Moreover, the Lebanese synod held in the year 1736 had assigned the duty of promoting manual work inside the monastery in order to avoid idleness, mother of all vices. Consequently, monks used to prepare their own food daily together with their visitors'. Some used to cultivate the land; others would collect crops or cultivate silk, while some used to copy, records and teach. According to Joseph Mahfouz [b1931], the Maronite monastery had to be self-sufficient¹²¹.

The best way to see how the monks proceeded is to read in father Maron Karam's [1839-1909] book that they used to expand in ownership for the sake of the Maronite community, either by purchase, barter, endowment, or partnership in lands they wished to occupy¹²². As a result, the community would eventually surround the monastery in exchange for crop shares, or industrial products. And they would live with their families as if they were one family with the monastery¹²³ (figs 2.12-2.13-2.14-2.15). The Maronites were known by 'the sharecropper of the monasteries' i.e. the monastery's partners.



- 2.12 a. : The community in Kfar Kawas (eastwards of Byblos) adapted to the site configuration, the church being its center.
 2.13 b. : In Fdar community (eastwards of Byblos) church and residences, all form a coherent combination with nature.
 2.14 c. : The only construction emerging significantly above ground level, is Jonjol church (eastwards of Byblos); a symbol of sacredness among the civil context.
 2.15 d. : Fusion between the community and the church can not be better exemplified than in this village in Sibrine region (eastwards of Byblos), where the community takes part in a fine tune of communicating with the church as the axis of secular and religious life.

¹²⁰ Malek, C. 1973, *Loubnan Fi Zateh* (Lebanon in its Being) [Beirut: Badran], 46.

¹²¹ Mahfouz, J. 1970, *Al Tanzim Al Rouhbani Fi Al Kanisa Al Marouniya* (Monastic Order in the Maronite Church), translation by Khalife, Y. [Beirut: Holy Spirit University], 288-289.

¹²² Karam, M. 1972, *Koussat Al Moulkiya Fi Al Rouhbaniya Al Loubnaniya Al Marouniya* (The Tale of Ownership in the Lebanese Maronite Monasticism) [: Dar Al Tiba'a Al Loubnaniya], 74.

¹²³ Touma, T. 1971, *Al Rifayoun Wa Mo'assasat Al Iqta'iyah Ind Al Dourouz Wal Mawarina Fi Loubnan Min XVII Ila 1914* (Villagers and Feudalism for Druze and Maronites in Lebanon from XVII century till 1914) [Lebanon: Lebanese University – Al Maktaba Al Sharqiya], vol.2, 584-587.

Father Karam relates a story which accurately shows how Maronites used to accept endowments even from non-Maronites indicating their open-mindedness in this, and their preference of poverty to richness in pursuing their spiritual practices: it's said that the Maronite farmer learned skill in work from the monks. Besides, the Maronites, giving their religion the utmost significance, preferred to leave the lands they managed for the Druze Abi-Lamaa princes because there were no priests there, leaving for the mountains where they could practice their religious duties. But the princes, being attached to their loyal partners, facilitated the latter's religious affairs by bringing priests and providing for a prayer place in their own lands. Thus, they offered the Maronite monastery a piece of land for building a church and for the monks to live in¹²⁴.

2.3 THE MARONITE LITURGY

2.3.1 Characteristics of the Maronite liturgy

In '*Manaer Al-Taksyat*' (Minarets of the Rituals)¹²⁵, it is said that time has erased the beauty of the Maronite religious ceremonies due to the absence of books documenting their organization and exact gestures. As shown earlier, the Maronite rite has Syriac Antiochian rituals besides being in contact with Rome without merging with it; the Maronite church, which Philippe Hitti calls the National Lebanese Church has preserved its Syriac language in the service - especially that the Syriac service is the oldest one in the Christian church- older than that of Rome or Greece; for it dates back to the Lord's supper and the meeting of the apostles in the attic [Bible, *Acts*, 1:13]. The Maronite church preserved its Syriac features even though it acknowledged the Pope's sovereignty¹²⁶.

By virtue of the Lebanese Synod held in Louaizeh in 1736, which was the general constitution of the Maronites and their reference in spiritual and ecclesiastical affairs, the Maronites preserved the Syriac rituals of the mass service, their saints, and their holidays. Nevertheless, the synod included the name of the Pope in the mass, confined wedlock to the lowest priestly ranks, and banned the cohabitation of monks and nuns in monasteries¹²⁷.

And because of the connection with Rome, it was recently mentioned in the laws of the eastern churches issued from Rome in 1990: "*The ritual is the liturgical, theological, spiritual, theological, and organizational tradition completed by the peoples' culture and their historical circumstances... and it's expressed in the particular way that each church enjoying self-government lives its faith... The ritual of this group has its origin in the Antiochian tradition...*"¹²⁸.

Consequently, Rome allowed the adoption of the traditional Maronite rite; yet the attempts of Latinization obliterated the Maronite liturgy, especially the burning of the Maronite manuscripts in 1596 (mentioned previously), and which caused the Maronites a great cultural loss. Moreover, this does not mean that there was no attempt to retain this heritage. *Manarat Al Aqdass* (Minaret of Holies) by Al-Dweihi is

¹²⁴ [Karam, 1972: 73].

¹²⁵ *Ba'd Aba' Al Risala Al Loubnaniya Al Marouniya* (Some Fathers of the Lebanese Maronite Mission), 1959, *Manaer Al Taqsyat* (Minarets of the Rituals) [Beirut: Catholic Press], 3.

¹²⁶ [Hitti, 1972ed: 307-308].

¹²⁷ [Dibs, 1893: 496].

¹²⁸ -, 1995, *Majmou'at Qawanin Al Kana'is Al Sharqiya* (Set of Laws Governing Eastern Churches), [Cairo: Al Markaz Al Franciscani Lil Dirasat Al Sharqiya Al Masihiya], canon 28, art. 1&2.

considered the most important Maronite theological work aiming at preserving the authenticity of the Maronite liturgy.

The aim of liturgy in the Maronite rite, as it is in other religions and confessions, is to commemorate the event of salvation that has occurred once in history. Thus, we remember this event and try to relive it in every place and time¹²⁹ as the believer enters the secret of God going from the visible to the invisible, and from the indicator to the indicated through the seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, penance, anointing of the sick, priesthood, and marriage. Hence, there is more than one single liturgy; there exists a liturgical variety pertaining to each one of the sacraments; but this is unified when it comes to the required result i.e. the union with God or in other words, the union of the human with the sacred¹³⁰.

With this liturgical variety, one is confronted with an architectural one regarding everything in the church, where the Maronite community celebrates. For example, and according to *Manaer Al Taksyat*¹³¹, before the entrance of the 'head' (who's the highest in rank) into the church and his initiation of the mass, the sacristan should prepare the following:

- two thrones for the head i.e. the patriarch, archbishop, or bishop; one throne is located to the left of the altar southward above the rails and facing west, while the other is put to the right of the altar also above the rails but facing southward i.e. in the direction of the sacraments. The head sits on the latter throne at the end of the mass, provided there's no big throne behind the big altar, as is the case in the church of Aleppo, following an ancient tradition in the community
- a table to be put in the choir to the left side of the altar, adhering to the southern wall upon which the 'Mezka' vessel is located; i.e. the wine and water vessel, a jug, a washbowl, a towel, a small bell, and the book of St. Paul's epistles in Arabic and Syriac¹³²
- one or two candle extinguishers to be situated behind the altar on the two sides, and two or more fans; the Syriac bible put to the right of the main altar¹³³
- the consecration vestments are hung parallel to the northern side of the altar
- the uniforms of the choir members put in the closet

The above-mentioned text points out the various architectural matters that need to be taken into consideration when one wishes to examine authentic Maronite architecture: a throne, a rail, a table, a small altar, a closet etc. all of which we will be considered in detail in Al-Dweihi's manuscript. In summary, the Maronite liturgy has an architectural frame¹³⁴ which matches every single liturgical form. The latter designates:

- liturgy pertaining to ecclesiastical ranks; the liturgy changing from patriarchal to ordinary priestly ranks
- liturgy pertaining to event: Christmas, crucifixion, resurrection, funerals, weekdays, Sundays, etc.¹³⁵
- liturgy pertaining to song or hymns

¹²⁹ Khalife, E. 2000. "Allah Al Ab Wa Daourouhou Fi Al Liturgia" (God the Father and His Role in Liturgy), *Dieu le Père dans la Liturgie* [Liban: Institut de Liturgie à l'Université St. Esprit Kaslik], 1-13.

¹³⁰ -, 1999, *Catechismus Catholicae Ecclesiae*, translation by Bacha, H., Boustrous, K., Fakhouri, H., Mansour, Y. [Jounieh: Apostles – Al Maktaba Al Boulosiya], 331-371.

¹³¹ Ba'd Aba' Al Risala Al Loubnaniya Al Marouniya (Some Fathers of the Lebanese Maronite Mission), 1959. *Manaer Al Taqsyat* (Minarets of the Rituals). [Beirut: Catholic Press], 8.

¹³² [The Lebanese Synod, art. 211].

¹³³ [The Lebanese Synod, art. 215].

¹³⁴ Hayek, M. 1964. *Liturgie Maronite - Histoire et Textes Eucharistiques* [Paris: Maison Mame], 141.

¹³⁵ *ibid.*, 111-128.

When the mass was translated into Arabic, the Maronite language, being originally Syriac, preserved some of its special linguistic liturgy. Hence, when the Maronites spoke in Arabic, they inserted their original Syriac. Many Syriac terms spontaneously survived in the life of the Maronites at first and later in the life of the Lebanese¹³⁶. The Syriac influence spread out to neighboring Arab countries. Concerning the Lebanese language, it retained two Syriac vowels 'É' and 'O', not found in Arabic, at least in some regions like Jibbet Bcharre e.g. 'Adam' is pronounced 'Odom' and 'Achaia' 'Sheyé'.

Ancient Maronites clung to their nationalism and religion, adopting the Syriac rhythm and melody together with Arabic pronouncing. However, with Arabic and Latin interventions, much of the nationalism was lost because Arabic started to be adopted in the mass which resulted in adding new musical phrases defined by arbitrary notes to the swift and strict Syriac rhythm '*Shibho El Morio*'. Random translation into Arabic, with the aim of achieving assonance, made the Maronite service drift away from its original melody as well as from the spiritual and dogmatic advantages, causing this assonance to bestow an empty superficial form¹³⁷.

Compared to Arabic, the intervention of Latin was more dangerous; for liturgy here became attracted to the West which is foreign to the Maronite rite, and it was deprived of both its artistic and spiritual nationalism, at a time when ancient linguistic Syriac tradition should be revitalized because it matches this nationalism thereby best representing the Natural Law of the location and adding variety to cosmic unity.

Deans of university faculties nowadays have recognized the importance of going back to the Syriac civilization and have started to offer higher degrees/post-graduate courses in Syriac language and tradition¹³⁸.

Let's here enumerate a number of the Maronite liturgy characteristics.

- it is 'popular' or 'public' in kind
- worshipers actively participate in the celebration, especially the server¹³⁹
- the music and chants are basically uncomplicated in structure
- the prayers and hymns expressing the feelings and needs of the people reflect at the same time the image of the Maronite community itself
- the Maronite liturgy is very rich, for it contains more than twenty two 'anaphoras'¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Some of these terms are: *Bahch, Fatel, Maftoul, Harbouq, Harkach, Zaghal, Mazghoul, Zoum, Sikra, Saykouneh, Chabbouk, Mchabchal, Charchouh, Chammout, Chelf, Chala, Chakouf, Tarabin, Tarboun, Tartach, Matrouch, Tartak, Mtartak, Mafrkach, Fachkal, Mfackkal, Karki, Makour, Lakah, Maadour, Habli...*

¹³⁷ For example, it is known that the Arabic note follows a horizontal line in either a straightforward direction, upward downward or even in the form of a vibration; hence, the note proceeds in all directions in its march. Whereas, the note in the Maronite Syriac division does not occupy a spatial field. Each chant does not exceed three dimensions – according to Al Khoury, Y., 1965, *Kitab Wa Taqir Liri'asat Al Kanisa Al Intakiya Al Marouniya* (Letter and Report to the Presidency of the Antioch-Maronite Church).

¹³⁸ The reason behind the inclusion of such musical and linguistic issue here is to draw the parallel with the writings of Vitruvius, the father of Classical Roman architecture, which are essential to any investigation of an architectural heritage based upon a Roman architectural tradition namely the Maronite architecture which grew from the transformation of ancient Roman ruins. Vitruvius said: "Hence the ancient architects, following in the footsteps of nature, perfected the ascending rows of seats in theatres from their investigations of the ascending voice, and, by means of the canonical theory of the mathematicians and that of the musicians, endeavored to make every voice uttered on the stage come with greater clearness and sweetness to the ears of the audience".

One can say that the Syriac-Maronite melody has its counterpart in architecture.

¹³⁹ The server is a Christian believer assisting the celebrant at an ecclesiastical service such as the Eucharist.

¹⁴⁰ In reference to the pamphlet *The Maronite Rite*, 1978 [Australia: Diocese of Saint Maron's of Sydney], 22-26.

2.3.2 Similarities with the Latin liturgy

- vestments (almost the same)
- church furniture (almost the same)
- the sacred vessels (almost the same)

It is noteworthy to quote father Joseph Mahfouz in this regard:

*“ The liturgy is an expression of the soul following which the faithful tries to mark his devotion to God and to bear witness to the relation that exists between him and his Creator... Either Oriental, Occidental, African etc., the liturgy is an expression of the human soul in a specific and determined region of the world”*¹⁴¹.

The above cited excerpt complies with the author's beliefs and corresponds to the diversity drawn by the Natural Law, which in its wholeness, forms beauty in the unity of the universe. Like the various red, yellow, and green flowers in a garden that render it so beautiful.

2.4 THE MARONITE MONASTIC ORDER

The Maronite monastery is originally the hermitage¹⁴², its food supply the crops of the wilderness, and its life communion with God. One hermitage was built next to the other till the cluster of hermitages or cells eventually formed a monastery in one location. In other words, one can say that the monastery originated from the individual ascetic life that led gradually to monastic groups living collectively. This lifestyle didn't need a written text, for the monks lived it spontaneously.

So, Maronite monasticism had no written code because it used to follow the tradition of the preceding masters; this tradition dominated Christianity in its early centuries. A person acquainted with ancient Syriac traditions wouldn't be surprised by the absence of a written code. For whether in the Orontes valley in the second Syria (the fort of the Maronite monks) or in Qadisha valley in north Lebanon, the code was oral: a master-disciple relationship e.g. that between the hermit Maron, Abraham, Jacob of Cyr, and Simon the Stylite on the one hand and their disciples on the other hand; for there was no need to write since the example and ideal to follow existed¹⁴³.

2.4.1 Monks

Initially the Maronite monk was the solitary hermit; but this does not mean that there were no monastic groups living collectively.¹⁴⁴ Monasteries were limited in space, so although every monk had his own room, all monks submitted to one chief (*fig. 2.16*). Despite living together under one roof, each monk practiced the spiritual exercise that suited him; furthermore, each would prepare his own meal to suit his own taste¹⁴⁵.

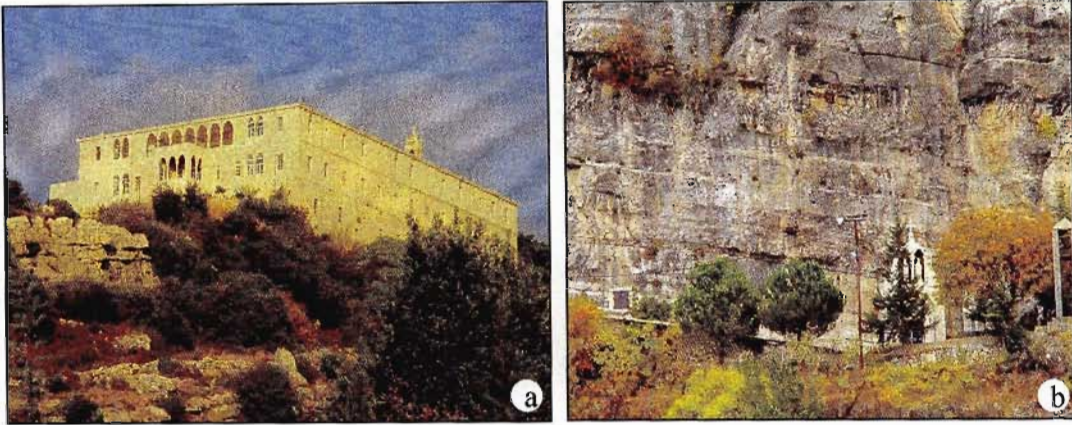
¹⁴¹ [Mahfouz, 1970: 27]

¹⁴² Jemayel, B. 1966, *Al Hayat Al Rouhbaniya Fi Loubnan Wal Toubawi Charbel* (Monastic Life in Lebanon and the Beatified Charbel) [Lebanon: Al Wihda Fi Al Iman], 6-7.

¹⁴³ Dandini, G. 1656; 1985. *Voyage Du Mont-Liban*, translation by Sinon, R. [Paris: _], 96 .

¹⁴⁴ [Mahfouz, 1970: 84-90].

¹⁴⁵ Dandini, G. 1656; 1985. *Voyage Du Mont-Liban*. Translation by Sinon, R. [Paris: _], 114.



2.16 a. : 'Notre Dame des Secours' monastery, in Byblos, overlooking the whole coast from the cliff and among the trees.
 2.17 b. : A prototypical Maronite hermitage is that of Saint Peter in the rocky mountain of Aqoura village (in mountains eastwards Byblos).

In the first era, the monks used to elect their chief and get the patriarch's approval. But later and once again indicating the intermixing of religion with secular life, the family that had established the monastery assigned its chief¹⁴⁶.

Among the fundamentals of monasticism are: Permanent chastity; abstinence from meat; priests' marriage allowed only prior to ordination; married priests not admitted to monastic life. The reformation of 1695¹⁴⁷ imposed the following rules, some of which greatly affected monastic architecture:

"...to be deprived of the right to possess

...to be obliged to obey their chiefs

... to eat together at the same dining table and listen to ordinary recitations

*... to give each monk a private cell separate from the secular..."*¹⁴⁸.

As for the cohabitation monasteries, where monks and nuns live together, it should be noted that this type existed in the Maronite rite until banned by the Lebanese synod [1596]¹⁴⁹. From that point onwards, nuns could only participate in the holy Mass, but mass celebration was confined only to priests (males); this right was reconfirmed by canon # 698 in 1990¹⁵⁰.

2.4.2 Hermits

According to canon # 15 of *Qawanin Al Rouhbaniya Al Loubnaniya Al Maroniya* (The Maronite Lebanese Monastic Laws) issued in 1974, the practice of asceticism is the love of God made perfect (fig 2.17). Thus, the hermitage in the Maronite Lebanese monasticism is considered an essential feature and a natural expansion of the monastery; *"the hermitage is the fertile soil for the monk' meditations..."*¹⁵¹. Also, Libaous Dagher [1870-1926] says:

¹⁴⁶ [Mahfouz, 1970: 124].

¹⁴⁷ Prior to the reformation of 1695, Maronite monks did not possess a written text for they only governed their affairs relying on strict rules handed down through an oral tradition.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 142.

¹⁴⁹ [Dibs, 1893: vol.7, 351].

¹⁵⁰ [Majmou'at Qawanin Al Kana'is Al Sharqiya, 1995: 698].

¹⁵¹ Kazzi, Y., Akiki, E. 1995, *Al Hayat Al Rohbaniya – Tarikhiha, Torokiha, Kiyaniha* (Monastic Life – History, Methods and Values) [Ghousta: Nisbei Convent], 13.

*"Solitude is natural for creative people at the peak of their creativity... and for the scientists as they make their great discoveries...In the hermitage, everything invites one to contemplate the 'Absolute'... The purity of the hermit's face embarrasses the beholder; therefore, do not stare at it to avoid being shocked... this person has got used to conversing with the 'Absolute'... Beware if you visit a hermitage: do not come close unless you take off your shoes... for inside, there is a silent lover in dialogue with the great Lord of the universe... totally forgotten and concealed...For it's the hidden underground roots that resist and persevere saving the lofty branches... The hermit should write, on the entrance of his hermitage, on the pillars of its outer fences, and on the roads leading to his place of worship, the following statement: Visitors! I've loved you to the extent that I have abandoned superficial meetings and empty talks with you... Let me answer you in silence; silence protects our meetings. Silence is the efficient trap to capture the word of God. Silence is the secret of time, whereas speech the tool of the world"*¹⁵².

With respect to the subsistence of those recluses, they used to earn it with their own hands. After prayer and spiritual meditation, they used to cultivate the ground and copy books; they ate once a day, at 9:00 in the morning, having nothing except grains and vegetables with no meat at all. In the early ages, they had no law to follow, each one adopting from the ways of the ancient hermits something which suited his circumstances¹⁵³.

The decrees of the Lebanese synod of 1736 dealt with the hermits' affairs bidding them from that point on with a law consisting of eleven articles:

- 1- *Whoever wishes to live in solitude should be healthy and should have completed five years in the monastic order, with his determination already tested.*
- 2- *The hermit should submit to the chief of the monastery to which the hermitage belongs, there being no less than two hermits in one hermitage and no more than three.*
- 3- *The holy offerings should be kept in the hermitage...*
- 4- *The hermits should constantly engage in manual work in order to avoid idleness, the mother of all vices. In the absence of manual work, they should spend their time in prayer and meditation.*
- 5- *If they choose to, hermits may visit the monastery on holidays and have their meals in the common hall.*
- 6- *Hermits should absolutely forbid women to get inside the hermitage fence.*
- 7- *The spirit of absolute poverty should prevail on whatever they use, whether food, clothing, bed material, or drink; they should leave their hair uncut all the time as a pledge with God.*
- 8- *Hermits should totally abstain from meat and should maintain fasting obligations.*
- 9- *They should always keep silent; If need be, let their speech be brief and with a low voice.*
- 10- *Hermits should sleep only at night and no more than five hours, spending any remaining time in prayer and meditation.*
- 11- *They should never leave their hermitages unless they have the authorization of the chief of the monastery*¹⁵⁴.

Thus, according to the new system, the hermit has friends and submits to the chief of the monastery, whereas in the beginning, he could only live alone and had to submit to the patriarch.

¹⁵² Dagher, L. 1988, *Kashef Al Khafa' An Mahabis Loubnan Wal Houbasa'* (Unveiling the Mysteries Pertaining to Lebanese Hermitages and Hermits) [Lebanon: Holy Spirit University], 5.

¹⁵³ *ibid*, 36.

¹⁵⁴ [Mahfouz, 1970: 306-607].

In 1810, more laws were added to this list by father Aghnatiou Blaybel among which are: *“the hermit should imprison himself in his cell, control his senses and thoughts, and abstain from living in a room from which he can hear his neighbor; he should not eat in his room and should not criticize the servant for not cooking well or for bringing food he does not like... because it is the hermit’s duty to be detached from sensual pleasure; he should only eat one kind of food with vegetables and olives once a day at 9:00; the hermit should not put any food or drink in his room except for drinking water; he should eat no meat at all, even if he is ill, unless the authorization of the chief of the monastery is given”*¹⁵⁵.

Concerning female hermits, one can assert that they did exist in the Maronite rite from its very beginning, among whom were: Marana, Kora, and Dominina, who were the disciples of the hermit Maron. Moreover, since its establishment, the Maronite church allowed nuns to live the life of hermits on condition that they spend three years in the monastery before secluding themselves¹⁵⁶.

2.5 Conclusion

In elucidating the severe persecution experienced by the Maronites throughout their history and how they came to establish their own doctrines, liturgy, monastic belief and practices and rules of conduct, the remaining challenge lies in shedding light on how these distinctive principles have governed the formation and development of a unique Maronite language of architecture.

¹⁵⁵ [Dagher, 1988: 53-55].

¹⁵⁶ [Dibs, 1893: vol. 6, 201].

CHAPTER 3

MARONITE ARCHITECTURE

Slogans such as 'the land of freedom', 'the land of tradition' etc. have always echoed throughout Lebanon's different eras until they became part of the country's constitution of which the ninth amendment states: "*Freedom of conscience is absolute, and the state praising the Lord respects all religions and religious sects and guarantees the freedom of worship under its protection*". In the east, which is the northland of the three Abrahamic religions, Lebanon may be considered as one of the cores of religious practice. Asians, Africans, Indians, or Chinese, and Jews, Christians, or Muslims all are protected by Lebanon's constitution, which maintains such multiplicity and watches over coexistence. The Maronite sect, a branch of Catholicism is equally at the core of the religious practices in Lebanon. The Lebanese constitution stipulates the protection and safekeeping of the Maronite heritage including both civic and religious architecture.

This chapter will be concerned with the discernment of the vernacular character and identity of the secular and religious Maronite architecture. It will discuss the development of Maronite dwellings across time and space and highlight the tie which links the civic architecture with the religious one. As such, the characteristics of the Maronite church will be delineated and investigated from the time of St. Maron up till the early part of the nineteenth century as a way to define the unique character and spirit of Maronite architecture.

3.1 IDENTITY AND CHARACTER OF MARONITE ARCHITECTURE

3.1.1 Characteristics of Maronite architecture

Whenever the title 'Maronite Architecture' is mentioned, one immediately thinks of 'rural architecture', known as 'vernacular' in architectural language. The latter term derives from the Latin '*vernaculus*'¹⁵⁷ meaning 'indigenous', that is that which pertains to a specific place or ethnicity, or to some extent: 'an architecture devoid of architecture', or 'spontaneous architecture', or 'primitive architecture', all of which can be referred to as 'vernacular architecture'¹⁵⁸.

Maronite rural architecture encompasses all the above-mentioned definitions; it is closely linked to the Lebanese genius loci, and it is spontaneous in its conformation to the Maronite requirement of simplicity and harmony with the existing rural fabric. Besides, since man, in Christianity, is created by God in His own image and likeness, and since his body is the 'temple of God', the Maronite believer receives the spirit of the place and expresses it in his daily life, thus becoming a mediator between man and the earth and consequently between God and the earth. Hence, the character of Maronite architecture, constituting a modest style of life, consists of: simple function, elementary techniques, abstinence from ornamentative decorations and display of conspicuous architectural elements.

The simple cannot be labeled as poor, unimaginative, unstylized, or unsophisticated; it is an existentialist choice which has given Maronite architecture a vernacular character. The construction is modest, functional, and perfectly integrated within the physical site to the extent that it constitutes a homogeneous entity that defies

¹⁵⁷ Larousse - Dictionnaire en I volume. 1991ed. [Paris: Larousse], 1464.

¹⁵⁸ Aubry, F., 1990. Introduction, in Guindani, S., Doepper, U., *Architecture Vernaculaire* [Suisse: Presses Polytechniques et Universitaires Romandes], v.

change and movement. Monasteries, churches, and houses fall under the same description and have the same philosophy: perfect harmony between the physical structure and the geographical location and an unpretentious choice to live in harmony with nature.

Vernacular architecture, like every other language in architecture, attempts to give answers to the following questions: what, to whom, why, where, and how? Yet, this does not prevent it from being subject to foreign intervention. Western architecture, with its entire splendor, has tried to invade Maronite architecture and to infuse its structure and liturgy but to no avail, since the latter retained its rural Lebanese heritage despite accepting some influence from the Latins and the Crusades. Nonetheless, one cannot affirm that Maronite architecture has remained intact throughout its history.

3.1.2 The influence of productive activity on Maronite vernacular architecture

Just like the Maronite spent a good part of his day in worship, he devoted the remaining part to insuring his existence. With the harsh environmental conditions of the Lebanese mountain, the act of ensuring winter provisions was essential to the subsistence of the Maronite individual.

The activity of ensuring winter provisions therefore, has exercised great influence on architecture, thus giving this architecture special trait which characterized almost every Lebanese house. Architecture has responded to these needs as:

- i- design concerned with preserving products and provisions: spaces were specifically designed to safe-keep the provisions against dampness, rot, exposure to light etc¹⁵⁹
- ii- design concerned with cattle: cattle that need warmth in wintertime are kept in the house basement; in summer, the outdoor barn replaces the basement [also for chickens]
- iii- design concerned with indoor work, especially crafts: Maronites used to do most, if not all, of their work inside the house or monastery or in adjacent place nearby; examples are:
 - the 'bread oven' (or *Saj*) is located either in the basement or near the house
 - carpet weaving, raising silkworms, making butter, making dairy products, olive oil pressing, working at the windmill... etc. all are instances of productive activity requiring specific architectural spaces

¹⁵⁹ The word 'provision' is a very common word in Maronite community; despite its four seasons, Lebanon experiences abundance in certain productions during one particular season without the others, during which every Lebanese house or monastery is engaged in provision preparation of some kind or other. Note that the persecution the Maronites were subject to has formerly trained them in this direction. But this provision needs special steps for its proper preservation, which in turn require a particular architectural organization:

- fortified storehouses: Sharing the production of crops between the landlord and the partner presupposes the existence of special storehouses for keeping the grains; whether placed inside the house or outside, these storehouses should be fire resistant as well as being well-protected from insects and animals
- subterranean Silos for conserving goods are kept in underground crypts; examples of these storage places are the old Maronite convents where grapes used to be buried within the sand inside the basements of convents or houses. Storage of oil, wheat and vinegar used to be done inside of such crypts as well as for keeping the wine
- refrigerators: which are places for preserving dairy products and meat were located along the northern direction and projecting them to cold air drafts or cold-water currents; they were kept in small apertures on the northern entrance
- dry spaces particular to conserving onions, garlic, tobacco, barely, citrus, figs... where these produce should be constantly subject to air drafts, or to the sun

In Maronite civic architecture, place occupancy usually entails the whole property as if one is confronted with a chain of specialized places which give the vernacular character its typicality. A definitive relation exists between that which is imposed by the 'Natural Law' (as it applies to a particular location) and the architectural genius loci in Maronite vernacular architecture. As such, the vernacular house fulfills the architectural need, since an architectural relation exists between production and spatial occupancy. One can say that the characteristic of 'Métayers' (partners in the convent), which has generally distinguished the Maronite residence (with the exception of the feudal house), has made the houses prototypical¹⁶⁰. One may claim that in this respect that this stereo typicality is one of the properties of vernacular architecture; for when the conditions of a group of people dictate similar architecture in a spontaneous manner, a sort of 'organization within a system' follows, and this is nothing save 'vernacular stereotyping'. According to Amos Rapoport [b1929]: "*indigenous (local) construction... each member of the society knows the building types and knows even how to build them, the dexterity of the worker being nothing else than a matter of level. The proprietor also participates in the conceptions of plans to a large extent ...*"¹⁶¹. In this sense, the genius loci, being an expression of the human being himself, testifies that the Maronite vernacular house possesses some sort of 'spirit'. "*It is the spirit, before the letter, that must be sought*"¹⁶².

With respect to architectural style, it presupposes a principle of composition which regulates the totality of the architectural operation with monumental design. For this reason, the vernacular Maronite architecture does not conform to this definition of style and is usually called a 'character'.

3.2 RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE OF MARONITES IN LEBANON

The house, is the most basic response to man's urgent need to contain his existence. It is a unit for sheltering, a statement to demark space, and a space to focus divinity. In this sense, Maronite residences are no exception.

Tackling briefly Maronite civic architecture and its evolution since earlier times is therefore indispensable to this study of the Maronite architecture due to the plain fact that the Maronite citizen forged throughout his existence, a strong relation between his secular and religious lives. This reflects his belief that the aim of both lives is but to express and experience the essence of the sacred in all its forms, whether at home or in a church. Hence, one must begin by tracing the development of civic monuments especially residential architecture and then draw a correlation between elements of earlier residences with those of Maronite house, church and other religious places.

3.2.1 From the Neolithic residence to the Lebanese house: a case study from Byblos

- The Neolithic age [6000-3000 B.C.]: Excavations in the ancient city of Byblos have shown that residences during the Neolithic Age used to be mono-cellular stone huts with either clay covering their grounds or a coat of calcareous finish instead. A sort of low wall used to surround the hut, supporting curved wooden posts used to fix

¹⁶⁰ Moukarzel, A., 1992, "L'Architecture Maronite", *Encyclopédie Maronite* [Kaslik: Université Saint Esprit Kaslik], 376.

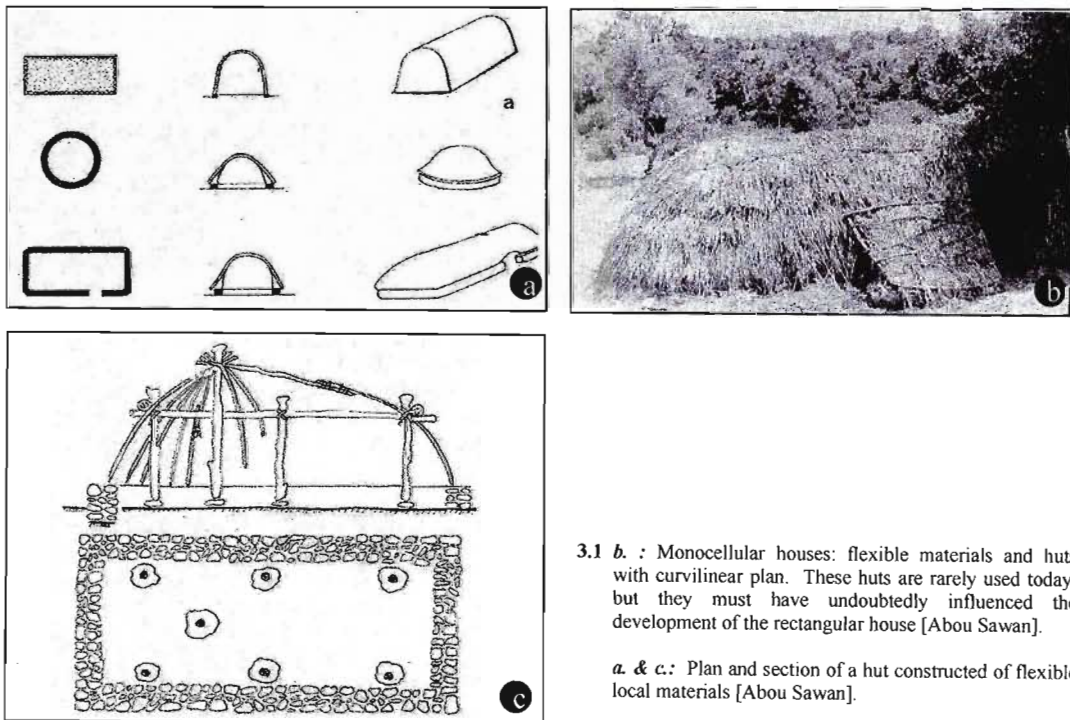
¹⁶¹ Rapoport, A., 1972, *Pour une Anthropologie de la Maison*, translation by Meistersheim, A. and Schlumberger, M. [Paris: Bordas], 82.

¹⁶² As Mentioned by Aubry F. in *Architecture Vernaculaire* [Aubury, 1990: v].

transverse beams; these latter were used to support the ceiling, which was made either of woven bamboo branches and stems, or branches of solid plants and trees, or animal leather (*fig. 3.1*). People used to plant cereals and breed chicken¹⁶³. This phase of construction lasted for about one thousand years; in the beginning, the village was small, yet it expanded through the accumulation of houses, with new ones built on the ruins of old ones. The old village grew also due to the building of houses adjacent to each other, which extended the residential area at the same time paralleling the construction of religious shrines.

- The Aneolithic age [3500-3200 B.C.]: This is an extension of the previous age witnessing the appearance of simple huts which were rectangular, circular, or possessing an orientation. As for the big houses, these were divided into rooms and roofed in the style of the previous age¹⁶⁴.

- The Age of residential stability [3200-3000 B.C.] (i.e. the era prior to the appearance of the city-state): In this period, the independent mono cellular house was subjected to change giving rise to solid rectangular houses divided by the placement of a central pillar at the first third of the space. The latter type of construction derives from what used to be, previously called 'house with orientation'. Sizeable fences were built around these houses, and by that time, people had started using flat stones excavated from underground rocky layers. On the other hand, the houses or temples of the gods and goddesses were built according to the same architectural plan used for civic residential houses, thus asserting the close connection between the religious and the secular. Because all, houses reflect their builders in the sense that "*The house is the image of the man who conceived it and built it*"¹⁶⁵; temples in turn resemble the builder.



3.1 b. : Monocellular houses: flexible materials and huts with curvilinear plan. These huts are rarely used today, but they must have undoubtedly influenced the development of the rectangular house [Abou Sawan].

a. & c.: Plan and section of a hut constructed of flexible local materials [Abou Sawan].

¹⁶³ Lauffray, J., 1985a, "De l'Habitat Cananéen a la Maison Phenicienne et a la Maison Libanaise d'Après les Fouilles de Byblos", in Abou-Sawan, C., *L'Architecture Libanaise du XV au XIX Siècle – Ouvrage Commun* [Beirut: Cahiers de l'Est], 63-64.

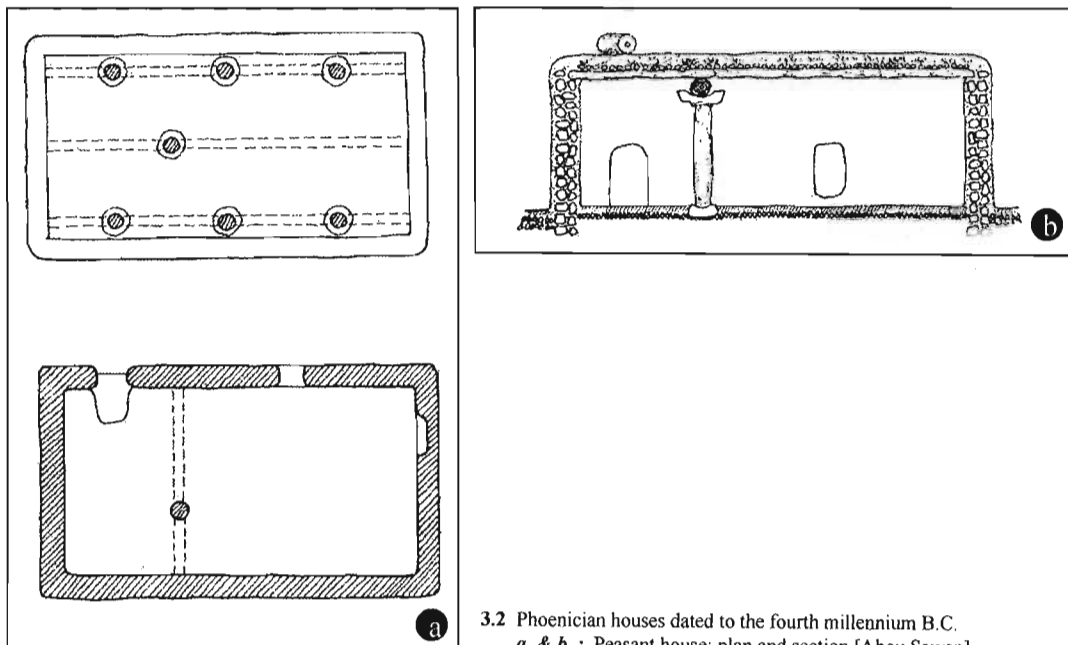
¹⁶⁴ Dunand, M., 1968; 1973, *Byblos – Ses Histoires, Ses Ruines, Ses Légendes* [Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique], 15.

¹⁶⁵ Abou Sawan, C., 1985, "L'Histoire Peut Mourir sur un Balcon à Fleur", *L'Architecture Libanaise du XV au XIX Siècle – Ouvrage Commun* [Beirut: Cahiers de l'Est], 63.

- The Urbanization period [3000-2800 B.C.]: In this era, houses began to increase in number and started to extend beyond the limits of the surrounding fence used in previous periods. This caused a decrease in the area of free passage ways between the houses, thus eliminating the possibility of moving around except along very narrow paths. Houses were arranged within neighborhoods connected by several streets. As for the temple, it was distinguished from the house by preserving its spacious courtyard (with the construction at its center)¹⁶⁶.

Throughout the centuries, Maronite architecture has been influenced by many ideas, from different cultures (Egyptian, Mesopotamian...), among which was the 'rectangular plan' according to which the Phoenician house¹⁶⁷ was made of seven wooden pillars supporting the roof (*fig. 3.2*).

One can notice that the rectangular house has always been the dominant form applied in architecture since it symbolizes man in form and proportion. The idea of sacred in residential architecture was adopted and elaborated upon to the extent that some people pictured the house as an image of the divine perfection symbolized by the form of the human body.



3.2 Phoenician houses dated to the fourth millennium B.C.
a. & b. : Peasant house: plan and section [Abou Sawan].

3.2.2 The general character of the Maronite house

In this section, the author will attempt to trace the architectural development of the Lebanese house and to identify its unique form in order to shed light on the common factors with Maronite church architecture. Lebanese Maronite houses have always been simple and modest with no form of fortification or defense despite the religious persecutions that Maronites were subjected to throughout the centuries; this can be attributed to the following:

¹⁶⁶ [Dunand, 1998: 18-22]

¹⁶⁷ The rectangular plan Maronite residences can be traced back as early as the fourth millennium to the Phoenician rectangular dwellings. The Phoenicians, the territorial ancestors of the Maronites, championed the idea of the rectangular house with seven pillars which influenced many future generations.

- the peaceful character of the Maronites (New Testament ground for that: The one who strikes you on the right cheek, turn the left one to him).
- the topography of Mount Lebanon with its inhospitable terrain making military conquests of Maronite territory difficult (nature replacing military fortifications as guardian).

Moreover, the house of the Maronite peasant has always maintained the typical characteristics of Mount Lebanon:

- complete integration with nature.
- rectangular shapes dominating architecture.

[Peasants were regular workers in agriculture besides serving and living in houses owned by feudal lords].

i- The closed rectangular house

This is the simplest type of flat-roofed house consisting of a simple square or rectangular space (*bayt*) roughly 3m in height with a low door (*bab*), fenestration openings below the roof (*taqat*), and one or two small windows (*shubbak*). Devoid of openings to the outside, we call such a rectangular house closed. The interior space was limited to the span size of the timber beams supporting the ceiling and reaching a maximum dimension of 4.5m. The space was divided into two areas: a soiled service space (*maduara*) and a living area (*mastabah*). Enlargement of the space depended on an internal system of pillars dividing it into squares or rectangular units called bays (*ayn*)¹⁶⁸ (Figs.3.3- - 3.4).



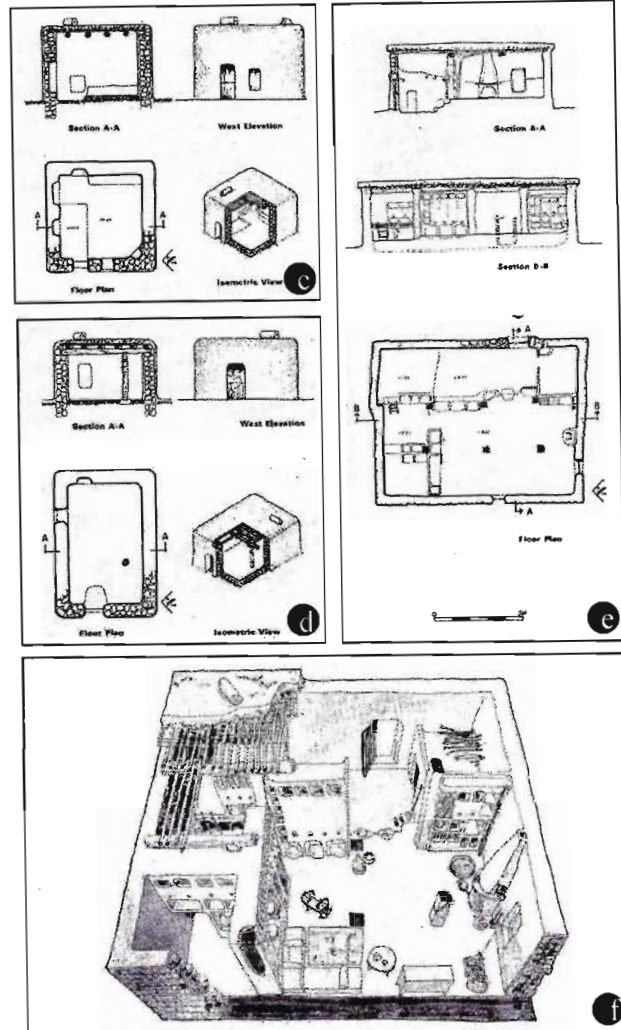
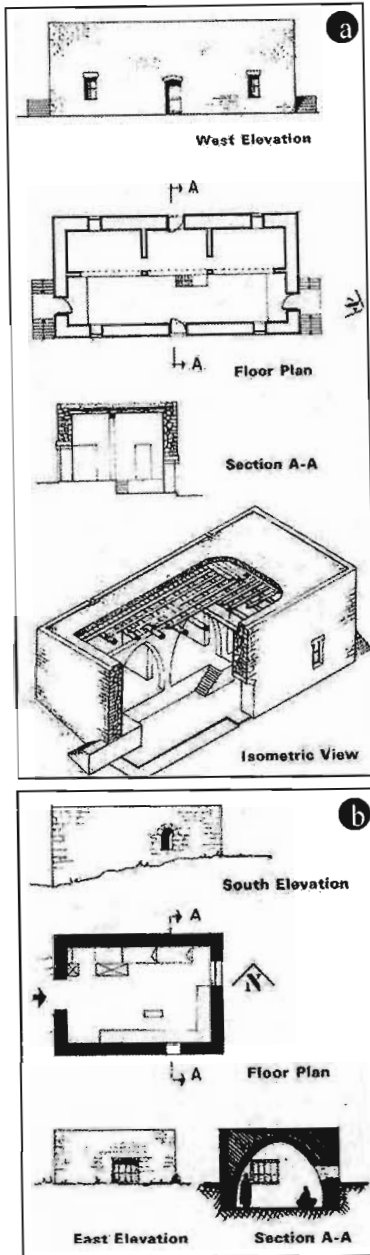
3.3 a.: Sample of a closed rectangular house in Ehmej, showing the fusion of this type of vernacular houses within the natural context of the site.

b: The first and main act upon arrival from the agricultural field, is to communicate with God, symbolized by the pictures, icons, rosaries, incense, put on Al Raff towards the east. The old women in a simple normal talk with the Creator.

c: This picture shows clearly the AL Raff, as a major space / function / location, and symbolic element in the interior of the vernacular dwelling.

¹⁶⁸ Hence, one third of the area served as a stable (*istabl*) and fodder storage (*matban*); whereas the two thirds were raised on three steps and served as family room (*maskan*) – satisfying in this planning the need for security and maintaining internal temperature by utilizing the animal warmth in winter. “Usually on the shady north side a small open construction serves as kitchen (*daykhuneh*). Most of the cooking was done on a stove (*mawkadeh*) and the baking of the bread in an earthen oven (*tannur*).” – Frederick Ragette in *Architecture in Lebanon – The Lebanese House During the 18th and 19th Centuries* [1974; 1993ed: 19]

Outside the house was the water reservoir (*bir*), well (*nab'*), as well as the toilet (*mirhad*).



- 3.4 c, d, & e.: Plans clarifying the evolutive expansion and enlargement of the closed rectangular house [Ragette 1974 ed.].
 f.: Perspective view of a typical closed rectangular house [Ragette 1974 ed.].
- 3.5 Two examples of Lebanese houses.
 a.: Sample house from Amchit showing the space layout and the construction technique used [Ragette 1974 ed.].
 b.: Sample house from Ain Ouzain showing the introduction of the vault into the construction of closed rectangular houses [Ragette 1974 ed.].

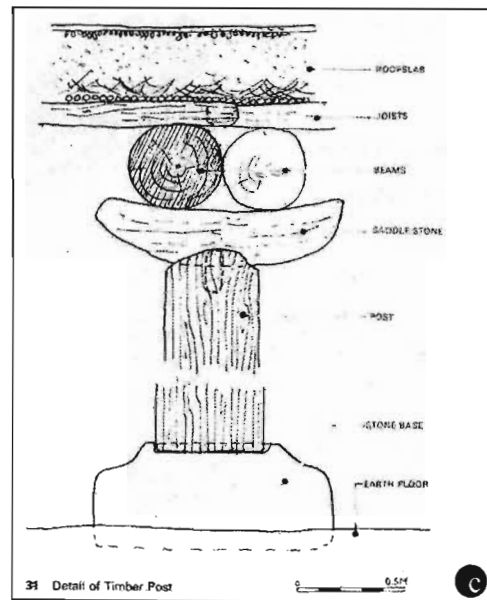
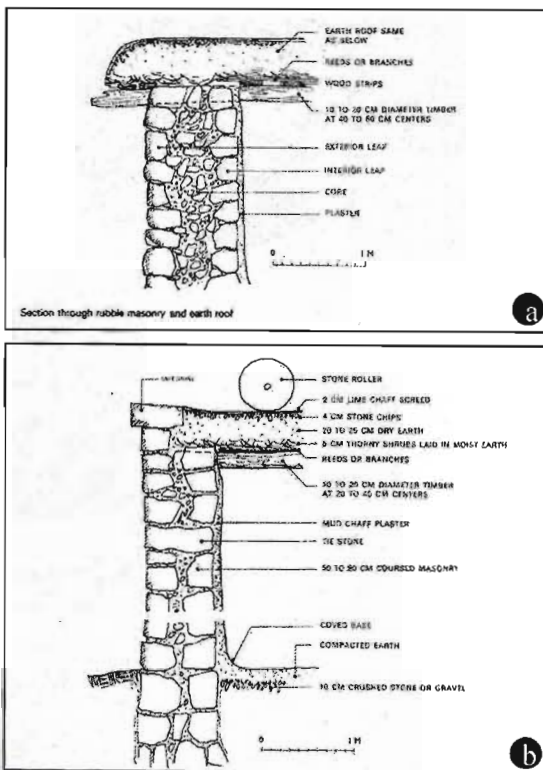
This simple and practical planning of this sort of house maintained its general characteristics despite its evolution from mud (fig. 3.5) and rubble to worked stone, which added rigidity to the plan whether in form (sharp angles and straight walls) or internal partitioning (through the use of arches - *Habl Al Knater*). The vault was introduced into the construction facilitating the development of a second floor for increased privacy and security¹⁶⁹.

¹⁶⁹ Later, the vaulted construction, provided the solution for the house to fit in the site where the vaulted ground floor served as a basement for storing agricultural products and for keeping animals; the roof was used as a working area in summer time, approached by the use of a stairway that commences at a distance from the ground keeping the gap to be bridged by ladders (*Sellom*) for making the roof inaccessible to animals as well as passers-by.

The construction technique of these houses combined bearing walls as the enclosing element and skeleton construction for supporting the roof. Walls are made of stones piled up without mortar as dry masonry allowing the wall to reach 100cm in width and approximately 3m in height. It consists of three parts:

- exterior leaf (*hayt-l-barraneh*): made of rough by cut stones arranged in horizontal ranges (*madamik*) and secured in place by wedge-like stone chips at the inner joints
- interior leaf (*hayt-l-juwani*): made of stones cut less carefully since the inside would be covered by plaster
- the core (*rakkeh*): in between which is filled with rubble

This type of wall is called dry masonry (*kallin*); an improved version is called bonded (*musaffat*) and is made of ranged masonry laid in mortar made of loam and enriched with lime (fig.3.6). This technique is certainly influenced by the Roman construction technique known as *opus incertum*.



3.6 Construction techniques of different type of walls.

a. : section through rubble masonry and earth roof.
b. : section through squared masonry wall and earth roof [Ragette 1974 ed.].

3.7 c & g : detail of timber post technique [Ragette 1974 ed.]

3.8 d. e. f. & h. : details of construction showing columns, walls and ceilings [Ragette 1974 ed.].



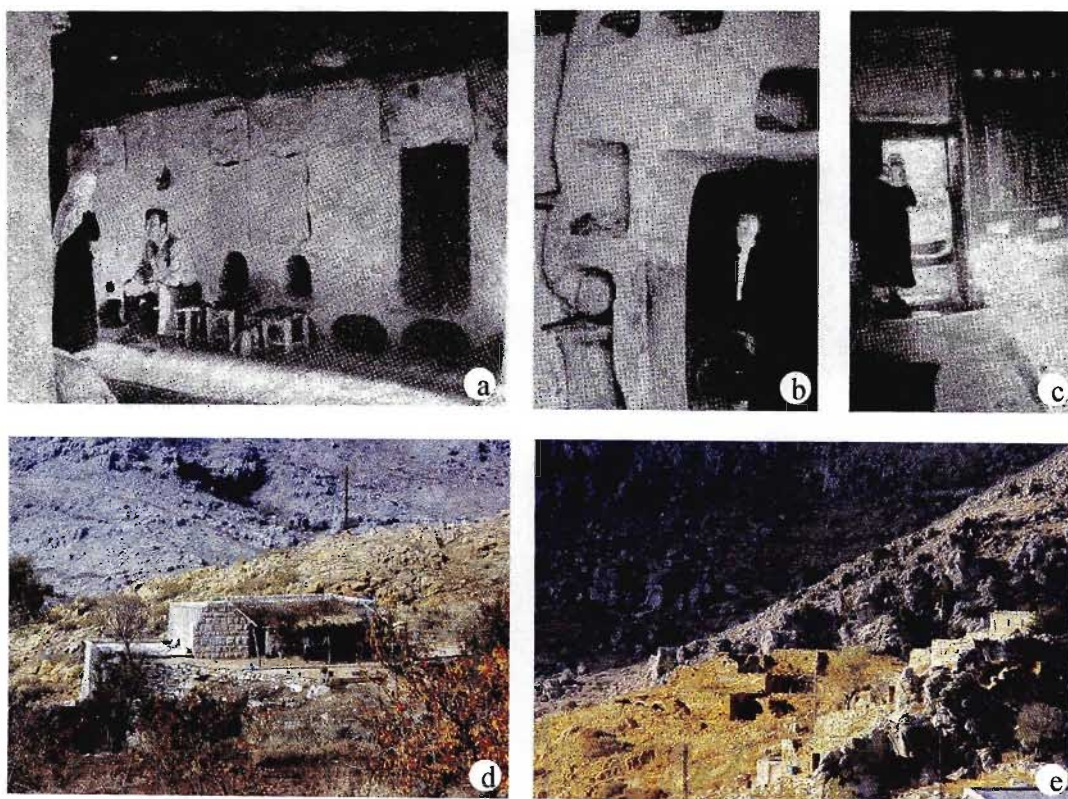
The supporting systems were made of wooden posts, resting on stone bases and surmounted by saddle pieces that carry the main beams.

Being close to nature and faithful to it, the Maronite peasant used every part of the tree as building material in the construction of the house (fig. 3.7). From the tree trunk, to the branches, to the twigs, every part of the tree served a sacred role in construction.

Stone pillars and refined columns appeared in the construction in order to support the roof (fig. 3.8). Another step forward was replacing beams and columns by arches of stone, which marked the transition (in the process of using non-perishable material) into more permanent building construction i.e. the vault.

Concerning interior space, the closed rectangular house was dealt with as one whole including clay or stone mangers, silos (*kuwarat*) for barley etc. The living space usually included the *Yuk* (a large niche in the wall serving as a sleeping place at night and as a storage space for mattresses in daytime (fig. 3.9) and a shelf where images, rosaries and statuary of saints are situated¹⁷⁰. Incidentally, this interior space did not have one specific use but was intended as an open space for a multiplicity of purposes.

One may note the absence of ornamentation and artistic play within the design of the residential unit, so that one may easily notice the existence of a *genius loci* of the space (fig. 3.10).



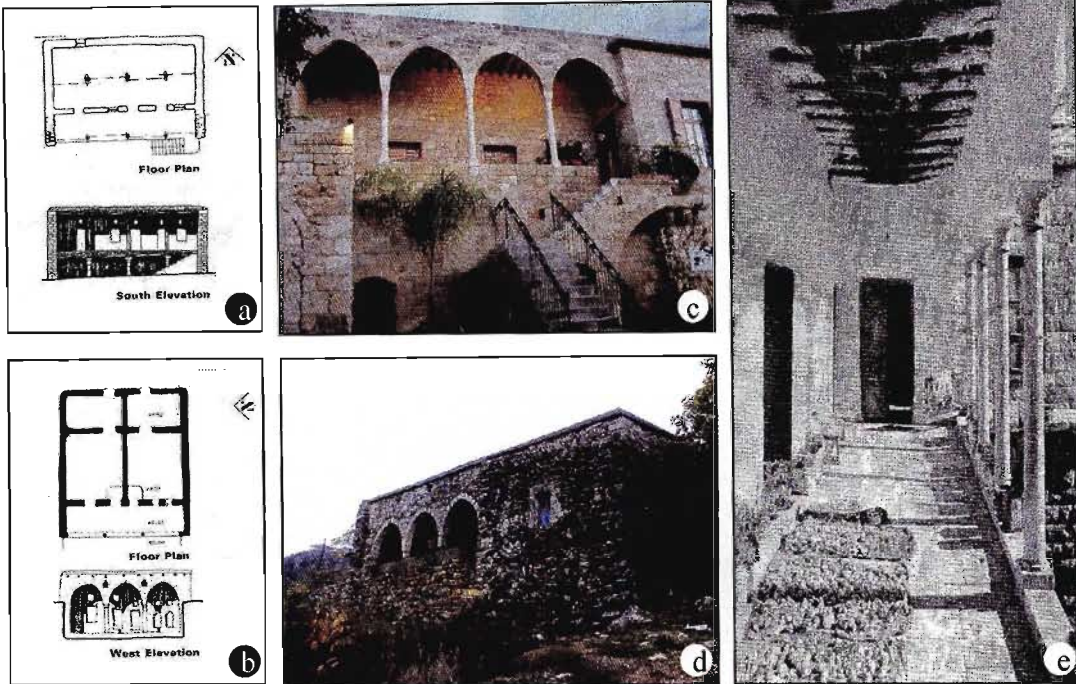
3.9 a, b, & c : Samples from houses in Kfar Nabrakh, Ebl el-Saki and Aarbaniye. Implementation of 'yuk' in the interior design of residential houses [Ragette 1974 ed.].

3.10 d & e : Sample houses in Laklouk area testifying that Lebanese vernacular houses are well integrated with their respective sites by adapting the local materials of construction. White or yellow stone houses matching with the rocks underneath. Stepped levels such as the roof and terraces are used for functional aspects (cooking, baking bread, keeping animals, drying provisions).

¹⁷⁰ The shelf is intended for displaying and safekeeping icons, relics, images of saints, candle holders and other religious paraphernalia.

ii- The gallery house

“The term ‘gallery’ (*riwaq*), denotes a covered space which opens to the outside through a series of supports”¹⁷¹. There are two types of galleries (*figs 3.11-3.12*): passive, which form an addition of a covered open space to a closed mass; and active, which can be easily distinguished from the passive type by the fact that they serve as a distribution space or traffic area linking different places with each other¹⁷².



- 3.11 *a. & b.*: Two plans of houses with galleries. Sample house – gallery [Ragette 1974 ed.].
 3.12 *c.*: An inviting stair-case leads to a welcoming gallery in an old residential house in Byblos overlooking the ruins of Byblos castle, currently occupied by a UNESCO department
 3.13 *d.*: A very old Lebanese peasant house in Mayfouk where the gallery is directly at the entrance rendering it decentralized and oriented towards the east.
 3.14 *e.*: Gallery joining different rooms and opening up to the landscape [Ragette 1974 ed.].

The house is either accessed through a frontal courtyard or directly from the open surroundings, since the sloping nature of the land does not usually permit the creation of a yard. The gallery may open to a single space through many doors or to several areas of different functions (*figs. 3.13-3.14*). There are also cases in which the position of the gallery is solely determined by its traffic function. Galleries may be on ground level or on upper levels, and they may be open from one side to give to a transitional zone leading to the interior spaces of the house. With respect to houses built on hillsides, the rooms can be reached from beneath, while the gallery serves as a porch facing the valley or acting as both a porch on the side facing the view and a distributor to the rooms from the other side¹⁷³.

¹⁷¹ Ragette, F., 1974ed; 1993, 4thed, *Architecture in Lebanon – The Lebanese House During the 18th and 19th Centuries* [Delmar: Caravan Book], 38.

¹⁷² In Lebanese architecture, we should note that if a porch only serves as the extension of one interior space, it should not be called a gallery. Hence, a gallery should be greater in length than in width and will serve several rooms and be connected to the entrance of the house

¹⁷³ Most of the gallery houses are composed of two floors, the lower of which is vaulted and the upper one flat-roofed. There are cases where the gallery is constructed as a projecting balcony, although it generally continues in the plane of the façade below.

Despite the architectural evolution of the Lebanese Maronite house, kitchens and latrines are very rarely found within a dwelling unit. Traditionally, these functions were accommodated in spaces outside the dwelling itself.

As to the construction of the gallery house, it appeared as a continuation of the earthen roof on a timber ceiling, supported at the end by a row of wooden beams. Later, stone pillars were introduced and after that, a system of arcades composed of pointed arches fashioned from smoothly faced masonry which was inspired from Marseilles. The use of the pointed arch in Lebanese architecture is certainly inspired by Gothic and Islamic architecture alike. What is noticeable is the seemingly slight preference of odd numbers of arches (either three, five, or seven), though there are houses with even numbers. Some gallery houses have tiled roofs, especially after the introduction of the pitched roof in the nineteenth century when red machine-made roof tiles were first imported.

The interior wall of the gallery contains the windows and doors of adjoining rooms; these may be quite irregularly arranged and are augmented by ventilation holes and niches for lamps. Later, elaborate glazed patterns were introduced.

With regard to the appearance of the gallery in Lebanese architecture and its effect on the quality of interior space, Ragette says: "with increasing emphasis on the external appearance of the building and the multiplication of internal subdivisions, the continuity and articulation of internal spaces is reduced. This development stems from economic improvement, along with the desire for greater privacy. Its disadvantage lies in the loss of a clearly defined central living area for the whole family, a feature essential to traditional life pattern"¹⁷⁴.

iii- The *Liwan* house and related 'Court Houses'

The *Liwan* house is intimately related to the courthouse and is infrequently found among other building types. A *Liwan* is a central space totally open from its front, connected to two closed rooms to the right and left. This whole module of two rooms and the *Liwan* is called a *Liwan* unit. The *Liwan* is never closed to the outside and is a covered terrace most efficiently utilized during warm climate.

What is indispensable in making *Liwan* houses is the use of rusticated masonry with mortar joints for the bottom floors, while the upper floors are smoothly finished. *Liwan* windows and doors are of bush-hammered stone with hair joints.

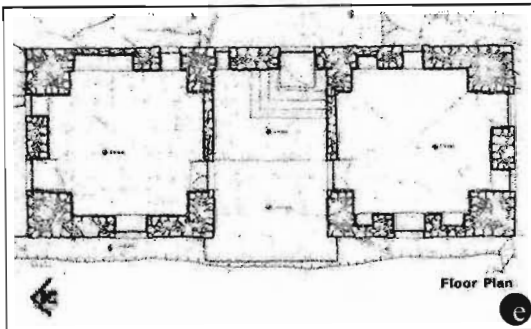
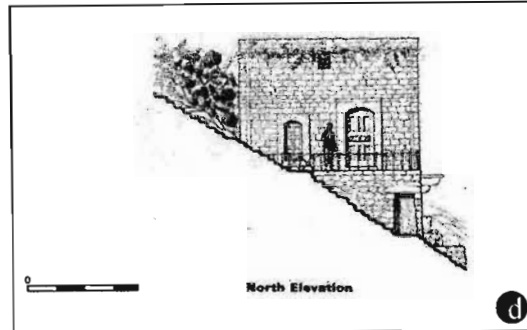
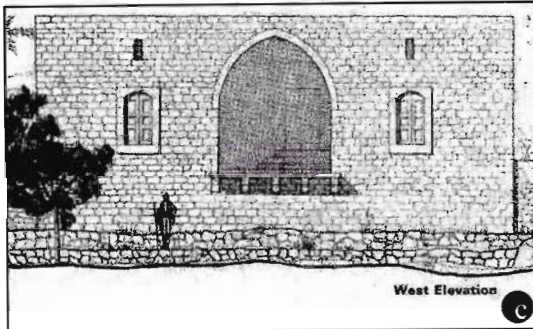
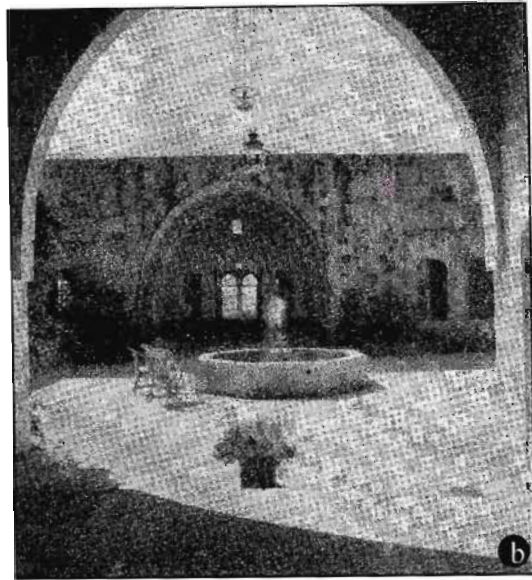
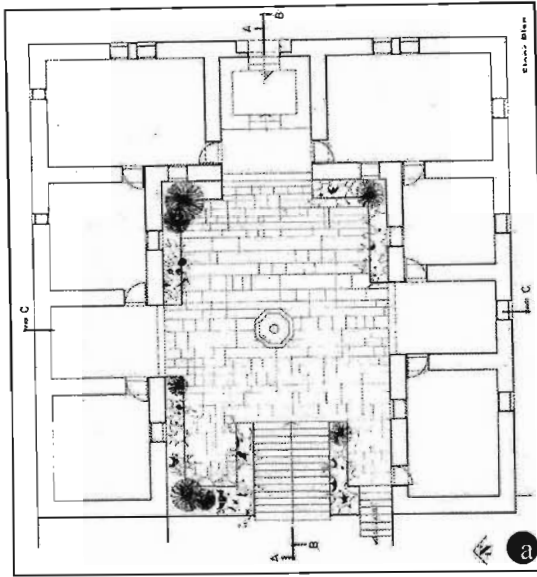
The *Liwan* can be part of a ground floor plan or an upper one; in the latter case, it is turned towards the hill and opens on a terrace. In this case, a window to allow a view of the valley pierces the rear wall (*fig. 3.15*).

Many *Liwan* units may be used in combination where the entrance *Liwan* features an entry area with benches, opening directly to the court with a central fountain (*fig. 3.16*).

With respect to their construction, the *Liwan* house has bearing walls composed of a rubble core sandwiched between two stone surfaces measuring a total of sixty to one hundred centimeters in thickness. Stone lintels are applied to provide openings about eighty centimeters wide; for larger spans, segmental, pointed or decorative arches are used¹⁷⁵.

¹⁷⁴ [Ragette, 1974ed; 1993ed.: 60]

¹⁷⁵ Yet, we ought to note that the *Liwan* identifies itself by means of a typical design reflected by the use of pointed arches with a slight horseshoe extension and by the springing of the arch that is always flush with the lateral walls of the *Liwan*, eliminating any lateral projecting element connecting the arch with the ground. Simple houses employ roofs of flat timber and earth construction; but since the *Liwan* is more narrow than deep, the beams run parallel to the arch. Several arches are planned to the depth for wider spaces. If stone ceilings were to be used they were either barrel vaulted or groin vaulted.



3.15 *a. & b.* : House in Aabey with central *Liwan* and three secondary '*Liwan* Units'. The main *Liwan* is distinguished by a fountain and benches [Ragette 1974 ed.].

3.16 *c. d. & e.* : Plan and elevations of a house at Gazir clarifying the concept of '*Liwan* Unit'. '*Liwan*' being an intermediary area between others rooms; usually opening towards the back by a window [Ragette 1974 ed.].

Various types of openings (with different dimensions) may be applied to the facades of a *Liwan* house ranging from: "... the small ventilation hole to single secondary apertures, through the arrangement of windows in rows to coupled windows, with or without high vents, and on to the embellishment with planters. In addition to these, there are French windows... balconies and galleries"¹⁷⁶.

It is worth-mentioning that the *Liwan* serves as a reception area and as a common living room for the family; it neither belongs to the residence '*Maskan*' nor to the reception '*Madafa*', and it is usually furnished with benches running around the walls (*Diwan*) and a central fountain.

¹⁷⁶ [Ragette, 1974ed; 1993ed.: 85]

Many changes have been made concerning the *Liwan* house, where several *Liwan* units could be arranged in a U or even square shape, resulting in a closed courtyard distinguished from the classical atrium (a hall illuminated through an open space in the middle and surrounded by a covered passage, usually a peristyle).

iv- Central 'Hall House'

This is the most prevalent form in the Lebanese countryside, representing the Lebanese style 'par excellence'. It can be distinguished and categorized according to its plan:

- single access to main floor, having either an axial or a cross axial position with respect to the hall, either directly from the rear or indirectly from the side. This kind falls into three categories: Full depth central hall, subdivided central hall, and central hall surrounded by rooms
- multiple accesses to main floor with one entrance from each side or with: Two central halls at right angles to each other, a central hall with five arches, or side by side combination of two central hall units

Moreover, central hall houses may be arranged according to the number of floors:

- single-floor houses with a central hall and a side entrance
- two-story houses with central hall: Either on a flat side, while the upper floor is reached by an external stairway or through an annex; or on a sloping site, while the upper floor is directly reached from the hill-side

With the central hall as nucleus, one to seven rooms can be added to it, in which case additional wings may be attached by means of intermediary corridors (figs. 3.17-3.18-3.19). Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the central hall house was widely adopted; although latrines were still placed in the garden in rural areas, in cities, each floor was an independent apartment.

Construction of central hall houses adopted the use of a vaulted lower floor, whether barrel or groin vault, and an upper floor having a roof frame of timber with red tiles (used as a status symbol for those who can afford it). The top floor with the central hall is never vaulted because it would render the construction heavy and expensive. The Central Hall house is identified by its simple cubic form and its triple arched motif.

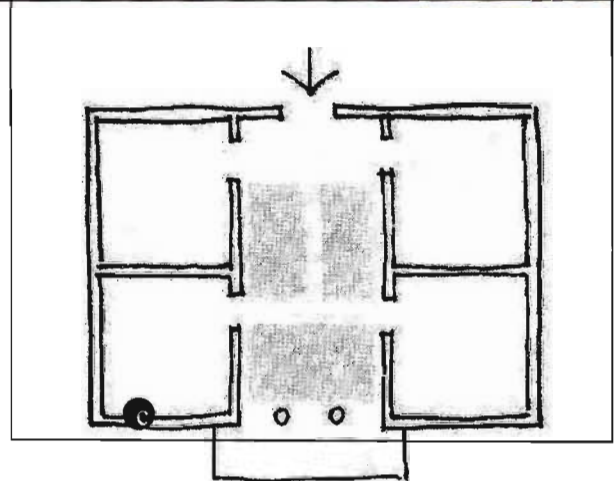
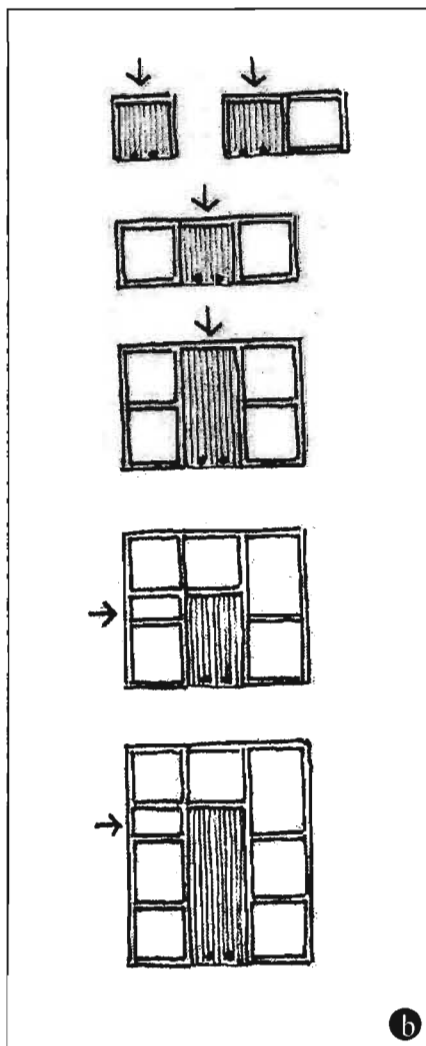
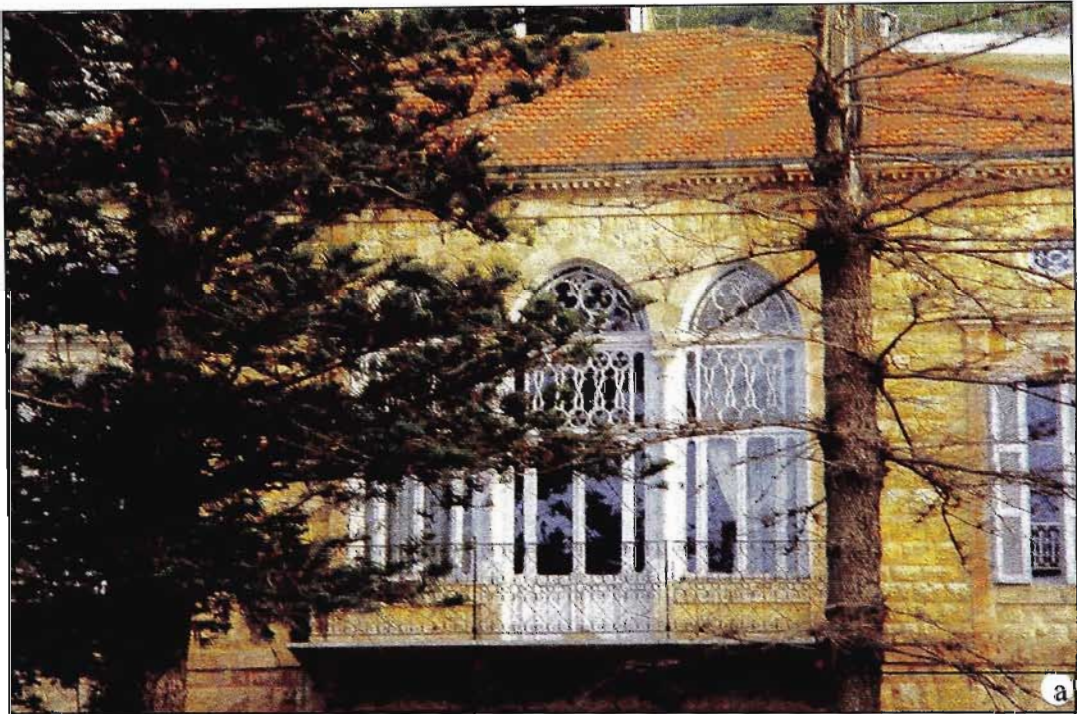
Concerning the interior design of space, the two-floor design of the house insures the separation of service and living floors (in the countryside). The vaulted ground floor serves as a cool storage area or a working space. It used to accommodate cooking and to be an area suitable for servants.

The central hall, called '*Dar*' (meaning home), is the most important room in the house, which with its triple arch, adjusts the environment to the inhabitant as such:

- climate: open towards the valley; breeze entering the hall from the west.
- topography: open to the view, with the hall rendering the exterior environment a natural extension of the interior.
- sociology: based on clan-structure, the Lebanese society is centered on family life, furnishing the central hall as a main space for family and kinship.

One more aspect of Lebanese architecture, and in particular the central hall house is that it satisfies the needs of its inhabitant.

It is worth mentioning that the design of the central hall house have been greatly influenced by the Palladian approach to villa designs in aggregarian settings. These designs were governed by a strictly symmetrical arrangement of residential rooms around a central reception hall.



3.17 *a* : Central hall house in Jounieh ; the main area where the family meet is closed by French windows, overlooking the landscape.

3.18 *b* : Evolution of the central hall house in plan [Ragette 1974 ed.].

3.19 *c* : Sample plans of central halls with entrance from the back, overlooking to the landscape by a balcony or terrace [Ragette 1974 ed.].

3.3 RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE

This section will be concerned with tracing the development of the Maronite religious architecture from its inception in Syria in the fourth century to its ultimate maturity in Mount Lebanon in the eighteenth century. The discussion will first begin with Maronite church architecture and proceed to the discernment of monastic architecture and terminates in an explication of hermitages. To insure a comprehensive treatment of the subject matter, some twelve Maronite churches and six hermitages will be discussed to illustrate the development of Maronite architecture in time and space.

The choice of these edifices is a particularly selective one based on the significance of these monuments in the development of Maronite architecture. Hence, the sample of presented edifices is to be regarded as sufficient and representative of Maronite architecture.

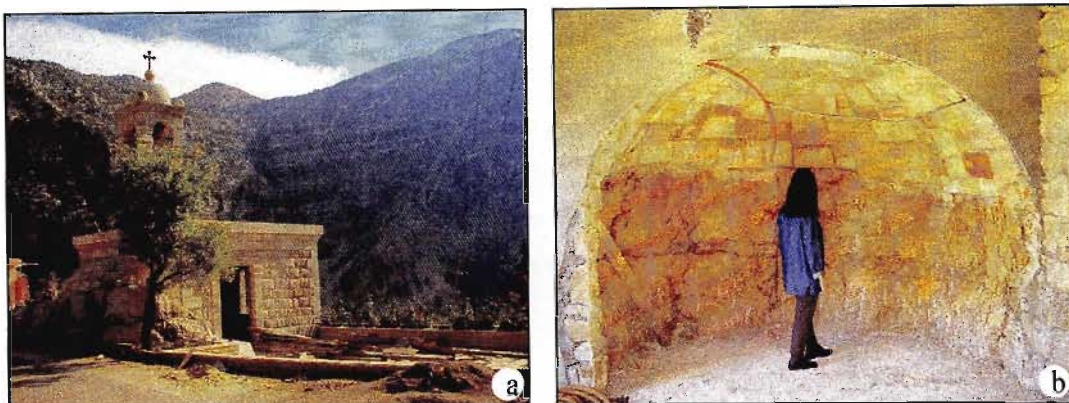
3.3.1 Churches in history

3.3.1.1 General view

According to father Lammens [1862-1937], Maronite religious architecture has something in common with other Christian churches. Architectural specialists and researchers, in Lammens' opinion, have agreed that the Maronite church is characterized and distinguished by three elements: portico, nave, and apse (*figs. 3.20-3.21*). He considers the apse to be inspired by the Greek prototype i.e. semi circular on the inside and polygonal from the outside as in the case of Behdidat church in northeast Byblos. This apse was later represented by the Maronites by a niche behind the grand altar. Father Lammens goes on to say that Maronites have neglected the construction of apses in their churches as soon as they began to be influenced by the Catholic Church. He also expresses his deep regret for the destruction of old apses in the renovated churches and the deformation of their original form.



3.20 a. : Saint Daniel church in Hadas El Jibbet showing the portico with its inviting design, leading people to enter the church.
 3.20 b. : The Nave of Mar Elias, Bziza [Nordiguian and Voisin].



3.21 a. & b. : Saint Takla church in Mnaytra, with the apse harmonious with the scale of the human being.

With regard to the portico, Lammens defined it as a vaulted gallery, as in the church in Behdidat, asserting that it is not common to all Maronite churches¹⁷⁷. In turn, father Boutros Daou [b1915] distinguished between the portico and the gallery considering that the latter takes the form of an interior courtyard in houses or, in other words, the passage between the outer wall (the one that opens to the outside) and the interior courtyard; whereas the former (the portico) is the roofed passage in front of the church, which he called narthex¹⁷⁸.

Maronite architecture was affected by the architecture of the simple peasant house, and the church was directly related to the architectural tradition of the era or century to which it belonged. The great resemblance between the Lebanese rectangular house and the church renders them almost the same; for both are influenced by the site and built in the same language, thus sharing the quality of being 'vernacular'.

The fact that the rectangular form has been the dominant geometric form in the Lebanese house is clearly a sign of simplicity and calmness with no useless accessories. Despite the clear-cut distinctions that characterize the Maronite church from other Christian churches, the Maronite church did not remain the same throughout history. As such, some architectural historians prefer to study and classify Maronite church using a chronological methodology:

- the early medieval church prior to the Crusaders: variable morphology
- the church during the period of crusaders: unique nave, two or three at times; constant forms and a shape derived from an ancient prototype
- Middle Ages and the seventeenth century: an age marked by persecution of Maronites, churches exhibited very little influences to western medieval church architecture
- the seventeenth and eighteenth century: a period of expansion and openness which revealed an increased interaction with the western Christian church
- the nineteenth century: major western influences upon the Maronite church which led to the loss of identity and medieval character
- the twentieth century: complete loss of identity with the superficial application of alien international forms¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Lammens, H., 1913; 1982, *Tasrih Al Absar Fima Yahtawi Loubnan Mi Al Asar* (General Overview Regarding the Monument Relics of Lebanon) [Lebanon: Dar Dar Al Ra'ed], vol. 1, 83.

¹⁷⁸ *ibid*: vol.2, 15

¹⁷⁹ [Moukarzel, 1992: 379]

The only ancient Maronite churches which continue to survive to this present day are those converted to pagan temples as in the case of Bziza, Yanouh, and St. Elias in Blat.

Despite the general identification of Maronite architecture and association with medieval heritage, the church has maintained the organization of the paleochristian church: narthex–nave–apse, naturally paving the road towards the symbolic interpretation and procession that is going to be examined later in this chapter.

Characteristics of the church with the single nave

- the narthex: a clear-cut square, an intermediary stage between the profanity of the exterior and the sacredness of the interior
- the unidirectional nave: determined by a single barrel vault, two meters in height from the springing point with its axis in the direction of the vault. The nave dimensions are modest, the length being double the width, allowing participants access to a multitude of religious ceremonies
- the altar: a rectangular monolith situated in the center of the apse, symbolizing the arch of triumph which is a paleochristian symbol. The altar is separated from the nave symbolizing a demarcation line between profane and sacred space (as, for example, by a veil to magnify its symbolic value)
- absence of pews: believers used to stand up in the church at all times commemorating the hermetic standing of St. Maron. Benches were introduced later
- the apse: a small opening is located at its summit serving as the only source of light (from the outside). Windows within walls were later introduced weakening the authenticity of light. This is a symbolic reference to God, a practice observed by all Christian churches
- the church tower: originally, no church towers existed; this was introduced into Maronite liturgy as part of the Latin influence. Church towers caused a problem for the well-established architectural entity because they were new elements paving the way for a new approach to the design of the Maronite church tower. This newly added church tower, made of sculptured stone, was never an integral part of the cubic-shaped church before the nineteenth century

Characteristics of the basilical church

The Basilica church (basilical plan with three naves) has three naves with equal height ending with three apses without the interruption of the transept (transversal space dividing the heart of the nave):

- the three naves are barrel vaults.
- the central nave is larger than the two lateral ones.
- the center apse is larger than the two lateral ones. The totality of the architectural structures focuses on the central apse.
- the construction is based on pillars and columns for support.
- the position of the narthex is perpendicular to the church entrance.
- the placement of the narthex is determined by convenience rather than by symbolic meaning.

Characteristics of double-naved churches'

- two twin churches incorporated within the same cube
- their functions are unknown till the present time
- these churches give rise to problems rather than offering solutions because the two naves are contradictory to the altar focus demanded by liturgy (examples of such

churches can be found at Bziza, Aqoura, Sghar, and Tannourine) (refer to illustrations 3.36-3.37)

- in these churches, one finds rosette windows deeply sculptured in stone

One hypothesis about the nature of twin churches attributes their structure to their being dedicated to two saints or to their possession by two families in the same village.

3.3.1.2 Churches in the days of St. Maron the recluse

To affirm the uniqueness of the aforementioned characteristics of the Maronite church architecture, one must begin by tracing the beginning of this church architecture from its cradle in Syria, the land of St. Maron, and discern its various development stages in Lebanon. The oldest (and perhaps the only) study conducted on churches in the days of St. Maron is the one by the architect Tchalenko¹⁸⁰, in which he includes an exposition of churches with their plans.

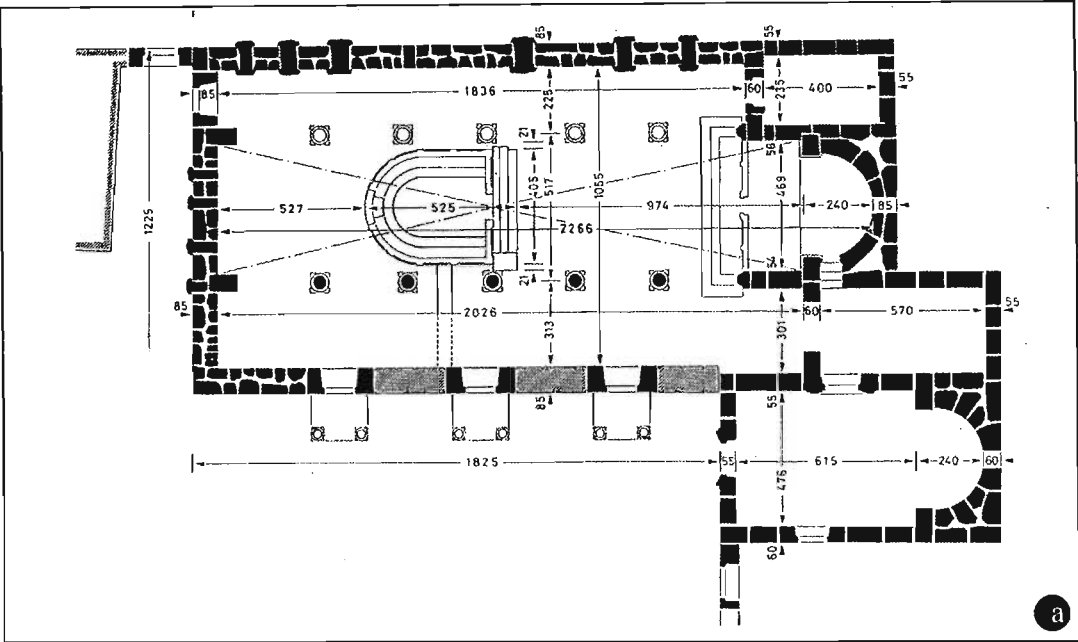
i- Church of Simkhar (figs. 3.22-3.23)

This fourth century church is chosen in the area of Mount Simon since it is the oldest one described in Tchalenko's study. It is located in the heart of Mount Simon, six kilometers to the south of Kfarnabu, the area where Maron had lived. It is built on a relatively shallow inclination, thus staying out of sight till the visitor reaches it. [it follows that the town of Kfarnabu with its houses were built between the second and the sixth century A.D.¹⁸¹.

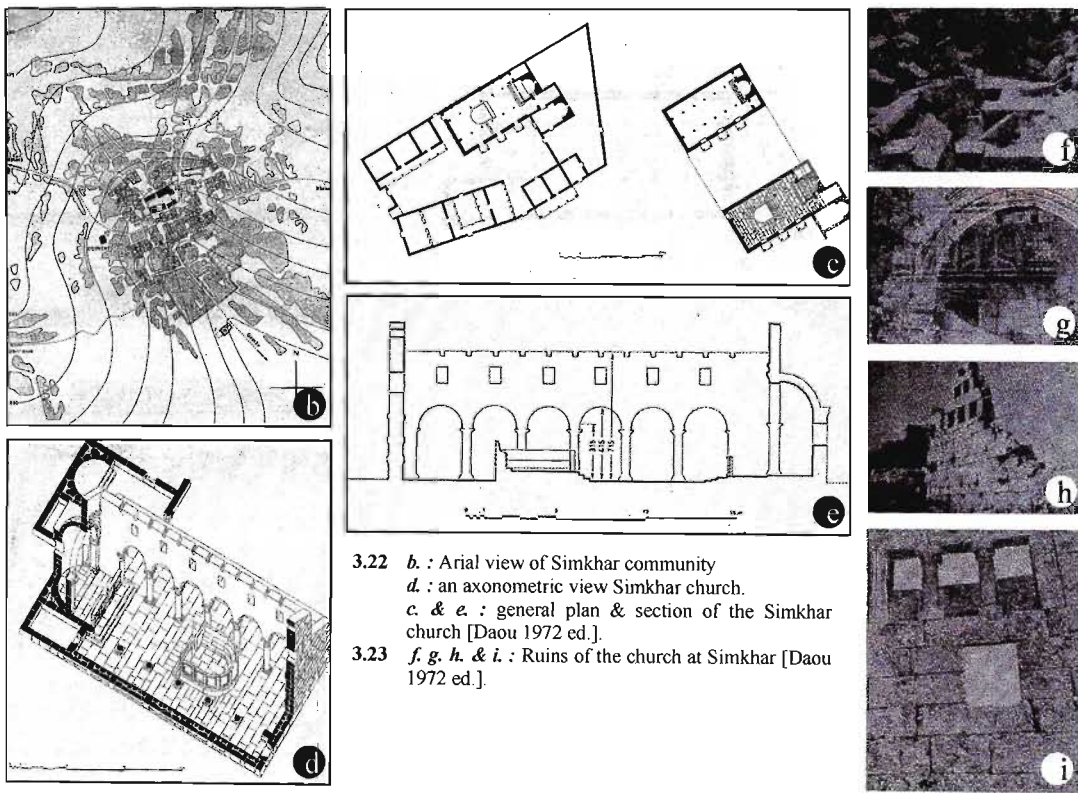
Father Boutros Daou describes this church as a basilical church having a nave and two aisles, with the southern aisle slightly wider than the northern. The nave is separated from the aisles by two arcades, each composed of seven arches on top of six pillars. The length of the church from the door to the apse reaches 22.5m, and 10.5m wide. The apse dome is semi-circular and small in size; the altar zone is similar. To the north of the apse, the deaconian, small and square-shaped, is located. To its south, the martyrion (the place of martyrs) is located and is two times the length of the deaconian projecting beyond the apse towards the east. The martyrion opens up to the southern nave by one arch and to the apse by an ordinary door, whereas the deaconian doesn't. A wall closes the space between the last pillar in the nave and the center of the apse from the southern side; The space between the last pillar in the nave and the center of the apse from the southern side is closed by a wall; the same is done with the space on the opposing side (to the north) where this frontal part of the central nave is allocated to the clergy in some parts of the liturgy. A series of steps separate the nave from the altar, whereas a metal fence (centered by a door) divides the remaining part of the central nave.

¹⁸⁰ Tchalenko, G., _ . *Églises Syrienne à Bêma* [Zouk Mosbeh : _], vol 1, 50.
(Original text. Unpublished due to a conflict with IFAPO).

¹⁸¹ *ibid*



3.22 a : Plan of Simkhar church, which shows its architectural aspect [Tchalenko].



3.22 b : Aerial view of Simkhar community
d : an axonometric view Simkhar church.
c. & e : general plan & section of the Simkhar church [Daou 1972 ed.].
3.23 f. g. h. & i. : Ruins of the church at Simkhar [Daou 1972 ed.].

The church has three south facing doors that are of simple construction. The 'Bima'¹⁸² lies in the center of the central nave, with its eastern door facing that which leads to the prayer area in the frontal part of the nave. The Bima is semi-circular from the west side and can be reached by three steps¹⁸³. The credit in discovering this 'Bima' is given to Tchalenko. Father Daou considers the 'Bima' an exclusively Maronite characteristic¹⁸⁴, but Tchalenko never asserts that¹⁸⁵; (a more detailed discussion of the 'Bima' and its symbolic and special significance in Maronite church architecture will be attempted in the next chapter on Dweih's manuscript).

The southern wall is double layered, that is 'Kallin' in colloquial language; it is made of small stones that are irregularly carved and squared. The northern wall is made of relatively big stones without altering their nature (i.e. just as they were brought from quarries) with clay in between.

In this church, there is no real decoration except for the frames carved on the apse dome, the capitals to the pillars, and the hexagonal cross (which is carved above the last western door in the southern wall). The apertures of the central nave, which are higher than the side aisles, are all square-shaped. The pillars tend to appear grand, one of which surmounted by a Doric capital, whereas the others are surmounted by Ionic capitals dating to the beginning of the fourth century; on top of the capital is a base made of a single stone, which serves as a springing point for each one of the two arches springing from each side; each arch is made of seven 'lines' or 'feathers', which are called the 'Akd' stones in colloquial spoken language. According to Tchalenko, the total height of the nave is about 7.15m and that of the lateral naves about 3.15m¹⁸⁶.

From the six century and on, this church has known many modifications or additions. Next to the southeastern corner of the church is a small temple which was most probably used as a baptistery in the sixth century, i.e. 200 years after the church was built. Moreover, there is a big difference between the simplicity of the church (built in the fourth century) and the ornamentation of the temple (built in the sixth century)¹⁸⁷.

Tchalenko has compared 'Simkhar' to the 'Borj Haidar' (Tower of Haidar) church, also dating back to the fourth century and built in the same location (i.e. mount Simon where Maron has lived), for both churches have almost the same style of building with only very slight differences (figs. 3.24-3.25). "*The two churches have identical composition and structure. Yet, there is a difference to be noted. The apse... appears like a simple niche at the end of the long corridor of the nave...*"¹⁸⁸. Tchalenko considers this church as "*Oeuvre d'une équipe villageois*". In its interior architecture, it conforms to the early Maronite churches in Lebanon such as the church of the patriarchal see in Yanouh, that of Mar Gerges (St. Georges)¹⁸⁹.

¹⁸² 'Bima' is Greek word that refers to the bow of the court i.e. the judicial pulpit and seat. This pulpit is a big *mastaba* in the church nave.

Daou, B., 1972, II. *Tarikh Al Mawarina – Al Deini Wal Siyasi Wal Hadari, Al Kana'es Al Marouniya Al Qadima Fi Souriya Min Mar Maroun Ila Al Karn Al Sabe* (Maronite History – Religious, Political and Cultural – Ancient Maronite Churches in Syria from Saint Maroun till the Seventh Century) [Beirut: Dar Al Nahar], 42-43.

¹⁸³ *ibid*, 126-127.

¹⁸⁴ *ibid*, 71.

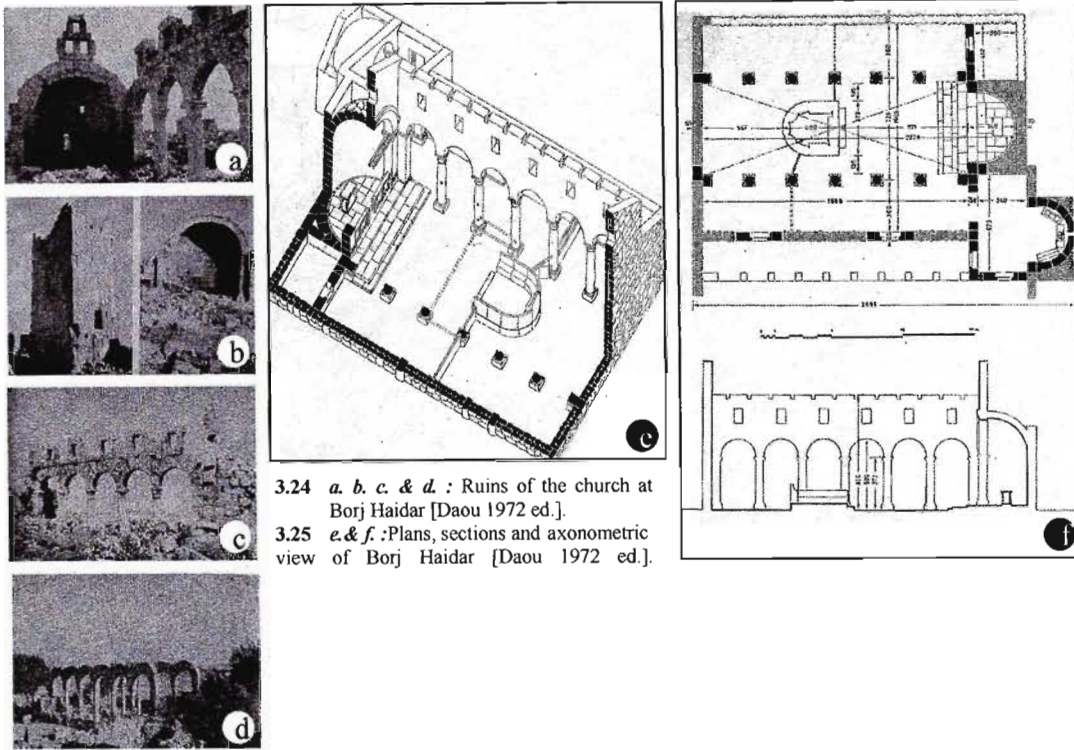
¹⁸⁵ [Tchalenko, -: 11]

¹⁸⁶ *ibid*, 53

¹⁸⁷ [Daou, 1972: vol.2, 128]

¹⁸⁸ [Tchalenko, -: 12]

¹⁸⁹ [Daou, 1972: vol.2: 127]



3.24 a. b. c. & d. : Ruins of the church at Borj Haidar [Daou 1972 ed.].

3.25 e. & f. : Plans, sections and axonometric view of Borj Haidar [Daou 1972 ed.].

ii- The Church of Mar Gerges El Azrak (the blue one), Yanouh, Byblos hills, Lebanon

This church is located in Yanouh, a village in the rural hills, 37km of Byblos and 1100m above sea level. The geographical location of this village is important since it connects the valley of Adonis river [Ibrahim] with the Bekaa, thus forming a strategic point between Byblos on the of Phoenician coast and the Roman city of Baalbek (the city of the Sun God Baal) in the inside¹⁹⁰. “...and this region played the role of a real pious land where people came from all over in pilgrimage...”¹⁹¹. Yanouh has known several peoples throughout its history: in the Phoenician era, a Phoenician temple was built there, which was transformed into a pagan temple for the Roman gods and goddesses during the Roman era. This, in turn, was changed to a church with the appearance of the early Christians¹⁹² (figs. 3.26-3.27). According to Renan [1823-1892], this temple has been a Phoenician one dedicated to the goddess ‘Ishtar’ (Venus)¹⁹³. It is eight meters long and four meters wide with two doors crowned by two very richly decorated triangles¹⁹⁴.

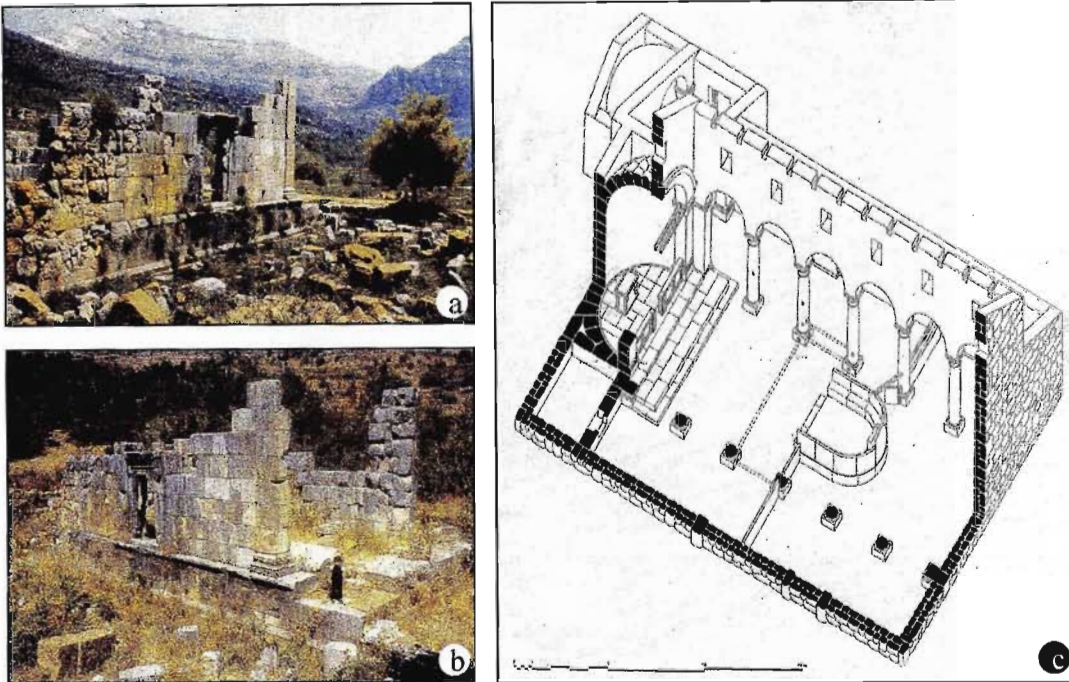
¹⁹⁰ (Al) Dibs, Y., 1893, *Min Tarikh Souriya Al Douniawi Wal Deini* (The Secular and Religious History of Syria), 9 Vols. [_ : _], vol. 6, 172.

¹⁹¹ Renan, E., 1864, *Mission de Phénicien* [Paris: Impériale imp], vol.1, 219.

¹⁹² *ibid*

¹⁹³ *ibid*, 301

¹⁹⁴ Lortet, L., 1884, *La Syrie d'Aujourd'hui* [Paris: _], 333.



3.26 a. & b. : Ruins of the church of Mar Gerges El Azrak in Yanouh [Harb 1998 ed.].
 3.27 c. : Axonometric view of the church [Asaker].

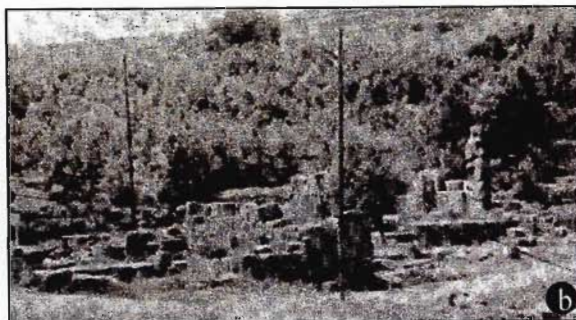
The temple has been described by the mission of the German Raikh Academy as follows: *“The temple stands on a simple platform whose head and base are fixed in quarried stones. In its longitudinal eastern wall (which resembles the longitudinal walls of ancient Greek temples), nine high layers are still preserved. The lateral walls are relatively short, whereas the longitudinal ones are shorter than the walls of the main room and are all built on one straight line; there two pillars in this space. In front of the well-preserved façade, a kind of staircase exists. What is still preserved of the pillars includes a two disc-shaped non-fluted parts, one at the apse entrance and the other at the main room in the temple. It’s noteworthy that the façade of the apse still exists inside the main chamber. A big window in the center of the longitudinal wall of the main room is still intact. The paint coat of these windows forms a frame with fluted protrusions resembling sea-waves. As for the windows belonging to the temple interior, they are noticeably simple with no architectural decoration...”*¹⁹⁵ This description by the mission of the German Raikh Academy was followed by the publication of two pictures of the temple of Yanouh.

iii- The church of St. Mary of Yanouh (Our Lady of Yanouh) (fig. 3.28)

In Yanouh, several Maronite churches have the same layout and method of construction. The church of St. Mary, the one to be considered in some detail, was the see of Maronite patriarchs and bishops; it dates back to the sixth or seventh century A.D. and has the architecture of the ancient Maronite churches in Syria, but with an even more simple and modest character¹⁹⁶.

¹⁹⁵ Asaker, G., 1990ed., *Yanouh Maqar Al Batarika Al Mawarina* (Yanouh – The See of Maronite Patriarchs) [Byblos: _], 124-126.

¹⁹⁶ [Asaker, 1990ed: 130].



3.28 a. b. & c. : Ruins and plan of the church of Saint Mary of Yanouh (Our Lady of Yanouh) [Asaker].

The length of this church, from east to west, is thirty meters; its width thirteen meters. The northern wall still stands today, containing a conspicuous door opening in its center forming the northern entrance of the church. The stones of the latter are of the big type (150cm×200cm), yellow in color (like the soil in Yanouh), and are without any ornamentation or sculpture except for the crosses which exceeded seven in number. One of these crosses has a number of arms with double-pointed edges, dating back to the Stylites and to hermits in general¹⁹⁷. According to father Sader [b1932], this kind of crosses appeared in Syria some time between the fifth and the seventh century A.D., and they used to belong to hermits, recluses, and Stylite. The reason behind their appearance in places away from hermits, hermitages, and the like is that believers who used to visit the recluses' hermitages as pilgrims, used to carve these crosses on the columns and facades of their hermitages as tokens or as solemn pledge to those saints, their heroic lives, and their miracles.

In the church of St. Mary of Yanouh, there is Maltese cross carved on the outer northern part of the eastern wall corner stone in the third 'medmak' (i.e. stone course or layer). It is 35cm long and 35cm wide, with a 16cm opening in its head from each direction¹⁹⁸. According to father Sader, this Maltese cross designated the Stylites in particular¹⁹⁹.

According to the Lebanese Directorate of Antiquity, the interior architecture of the church is as follows:

The apse(s): one is central, concave, and semi-circular and another similar one is located on the southern side of the altar in front of the central apse. The author G. Asaker [b1951] considers, in relation to the apse, the Holy of Holies (i.e. Holiest of all) as including the sanctuary, which in turn includes the altar (that is in the form of a concave semi-circular apse). He also considers that the Holy of Holies contains the martyrion to the southern side of the sanctuary, and which is also a small semi-circular concave apse; the Sanctum Sanctorum also encloses the sacristy devoid of any apse.

¹⁹⁷ Sader, Y., 1989, *Croix et Symboles dans l'Art Maronite Antique* [Beirut: Dar Sader], 233-234, 275-279.

¹⁹⁸ [Asaker, 1990ed: 130].

¹⁹⁹ *ibid*

Yet, despite the accuracy of the plan published by the Lebanese Directorate of Antiquity, the author does not distinguish between the sanctuary and the Holy of Holies, and this is a common mistake among many ecclesiastical researchers. Moreover, Dweihi is the only one who has described the Holy of Holies as distinct from the sanctuary both literally and symbolically (as we'll see in his manuscript later).

The nave: it is made of three parts with the central one wider than the two lateral ones; it encloses the baptistery.

The baptistery: it is 96cm long, 85cm wide and 40cm deep, placed in front of the northern door from the inside and at the bottom of the first base of the northern nave. It is built from the yellowish stones of Yanouh. According to Dweihi, the baptistery used to be placed outside the church (or in its portico²⁰⁰) so that only the 'son of light' would become member of the church. But Dweihi later says that the fathers of the church relocated the baptistery inside the vestry with the tabernacles, with a dove hanging above the baptism basin as a symbol for the settlement of the Holy Spirit there.

The aperture: in the church nave, along the southern wall from the inside towards the sacristy, there is a small opening 50cm long, 50cm wide, and 40cm deep.

The two pillars: According to father Sader, there are two pillars inside this church, the fact that made this author exclaim "*Stylite pillars in Yanouh?*" For he considers this very daring as a hypothesis, yet it is a fact²⁰¹! On the other hand, the people of the area consider the church as dating back to the days of Simon the Stylite in the fifth century A.D.²⁰² fifth century.

The '*Bima*': in the church of Yanouh there is a Bima which is the most significant element in the whole church, exceeding 1m in height and is adjacent to the western door of the church (3m wide and 4m long). The church has two doors, one facing north (180cm high and 110cm wide) and topped by several stone courses, and the other facing west and adjacent to the southern wall in front of the narthex.

The narthex: this is a covered pathway in front of the church. The person entering the church from the south descends eight steps in order to reach this narthex²⁰³.

3.3.1.3 A sample of the Lebanese Maronite churches that shed light on Maronite architectural heritage

As early as the tenth century, Maronite churches in Lebanon began to exhibit architectural features that diverge from the established canons of the initial Maronite church architecture. This section is mainly concerned with the discussion of the slow but steady evolution of this architecture in Lebanon.

The evolution of the Maronite church architecture from the tenth century onward which continued to be built upon ancient pagan temples is a further affirmation of the continuity of the Maronites sublime integration with the genius loci of Mount Lebanon. Hence, it is necessary to shed some light on some Maronite churches other than that of Yanouh in order to point out clearly how the Maronite heritage continued to be based on an ancient architectural legacy.

²⁰⁰ Portico is a passage between the door open to outside and the interior open courtyard. [Daou, 1972: vol. 2, 15].

²⁰¹ [Sader, 1989: 109-110]

²⁰² [Asaker, 1990: 143]

²⁰³ *ibid*

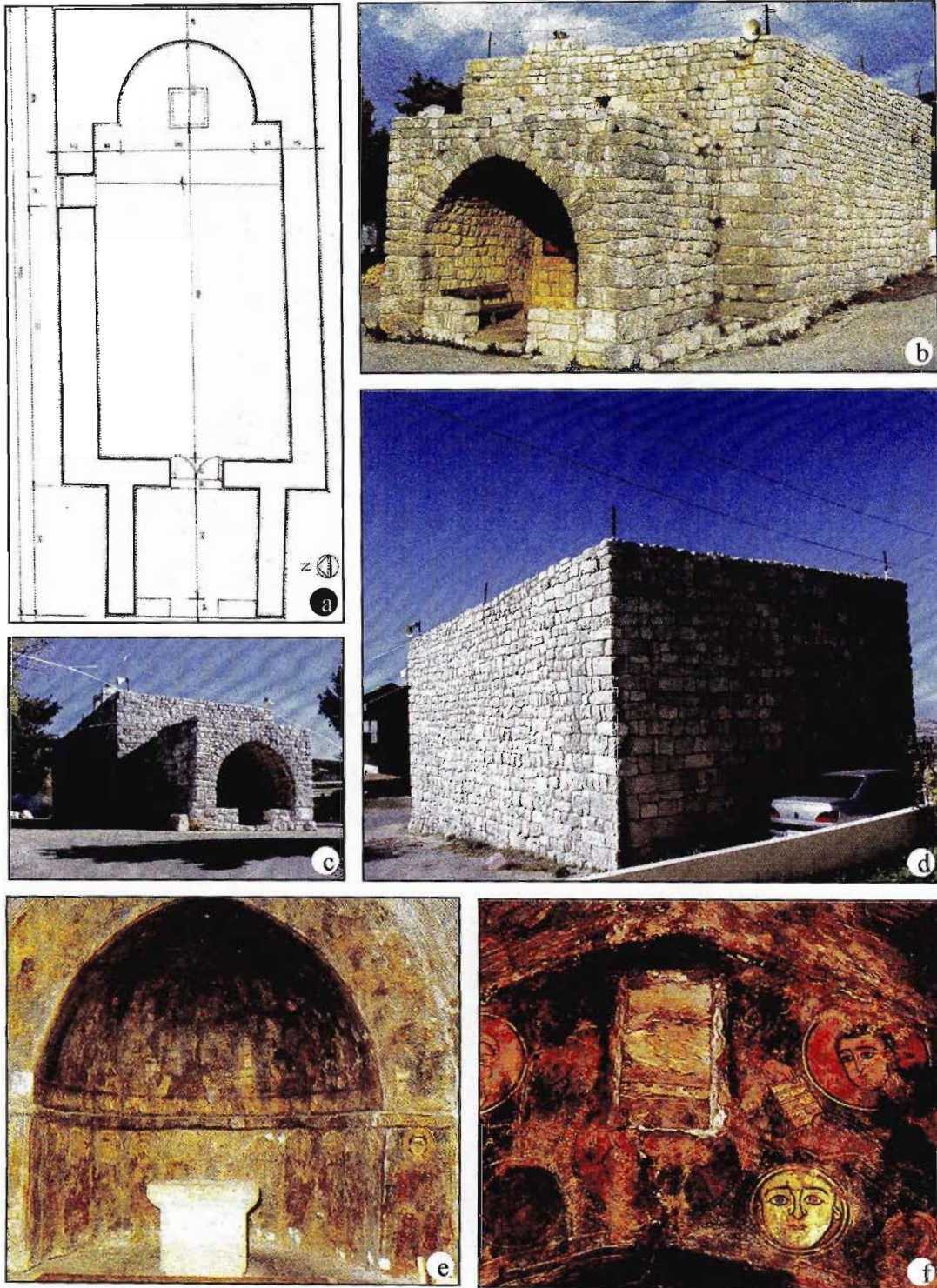
i- Behdidat church (9th-10th centuries A.D.) (figs. 3.29-3.30-3.31-3.32)

Behdidat is a Lebanese Maronite village to the northeast of Byblos, 550m above sea level. The old Maronite church of Behdidat is rectangular in shape, 17m long and 7m wide, built out of the stone excavated from the site itself²⁰⁴. Its design shows no special precision or ornamentation; it is vaulted from its inside, where the apse has the shape of a half dome and is centered by an eastern rectangular aperture. The stone altar is square in shape and rests on a stone base. The church contains many frescos (or paintings) which tell the story of salvation; [Frescos in the Maronite church will be dealt with later on in connection with Dweihi's manuscript]. According to father Lammens²⁰⁵, the church of Behdidat has several ancient relics of local saints, and its current altar is the same ancient one on which the pagans used to give their offerings.



3.29 a. : The interior of the church & the sole aperture above the altar.

²⁰⁴ Sader, Y., 1987, *Peintures Murales dans des Églises Maronites Médiévale* [Beirut: Dar Sader], 11.
²⁰⁵ [Lammens, 1913; 1982 : 70]



3.30 *a.* : Behdidat church plan [Sader 1997 ed.].

e. & f. : The apse of the church with the central altar and frescos [Sader 1997 ed.].

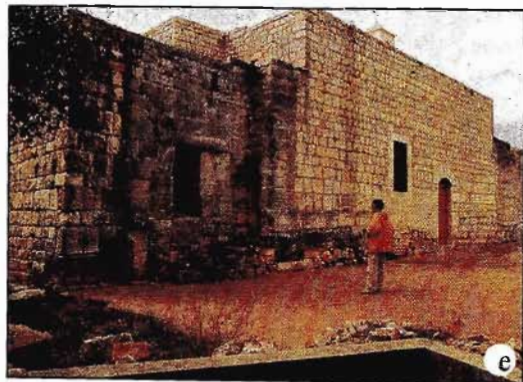
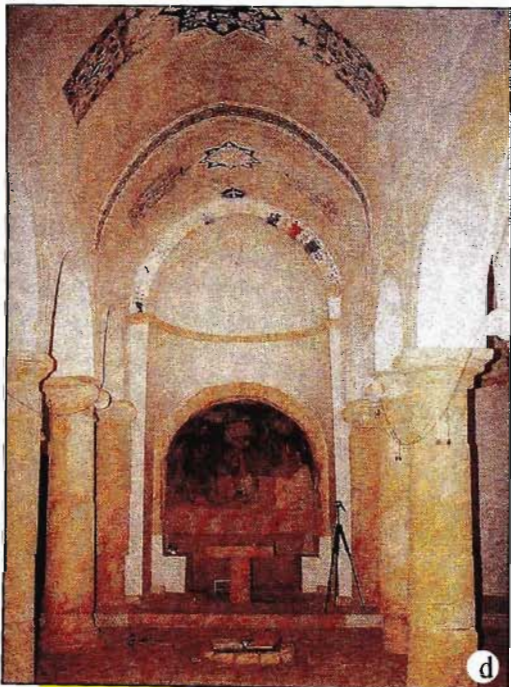
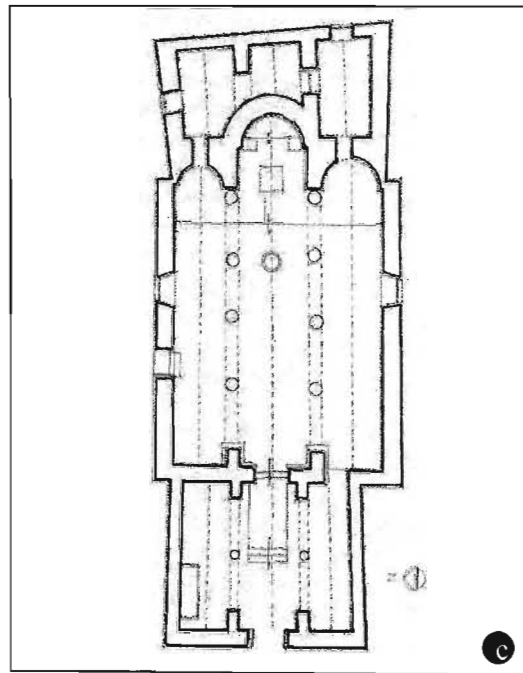
3.31 *b.* : Behdidat church, with the narthex and stone benches, an inviting humble composition [Nordiguian and Voisin].

3.32 *c. & d.* : Exterior view showing the rectangular shape of the church and the small aperture in the midst of the eastern wall .

ii- The church of Maad (12th century A.D.) (figs. 3.33-3.34)

The village of Maad, is about 525m above sea level, to the east of Byblos. Father Lammens describes the village's church which originated from the remnants of an ancient temple²⁰⁶ as one of the most beautiful churches in Lebanon, both in construction and in architecture design; unfortunately, restoration work done on the church was unprofessional to the extreme and resulting the damage to its apse.

The church of Maad, which has three naves, was dedicated to St. Charbel; it used to be a Phoenician temple in the very beginning which was transformed first to a Byzantine church, then to a Maronite one. In the beginning, it was small, but with the crusaders, it was changed to a basilica. It is interesting to note the presence of an external staircase usually that does not connect to the ground floor level that leads to the roof for maintenance purposes. The stairs were intentionally raised above ground level to restrict the access by layman to the church roof which is regarded as sacred space.

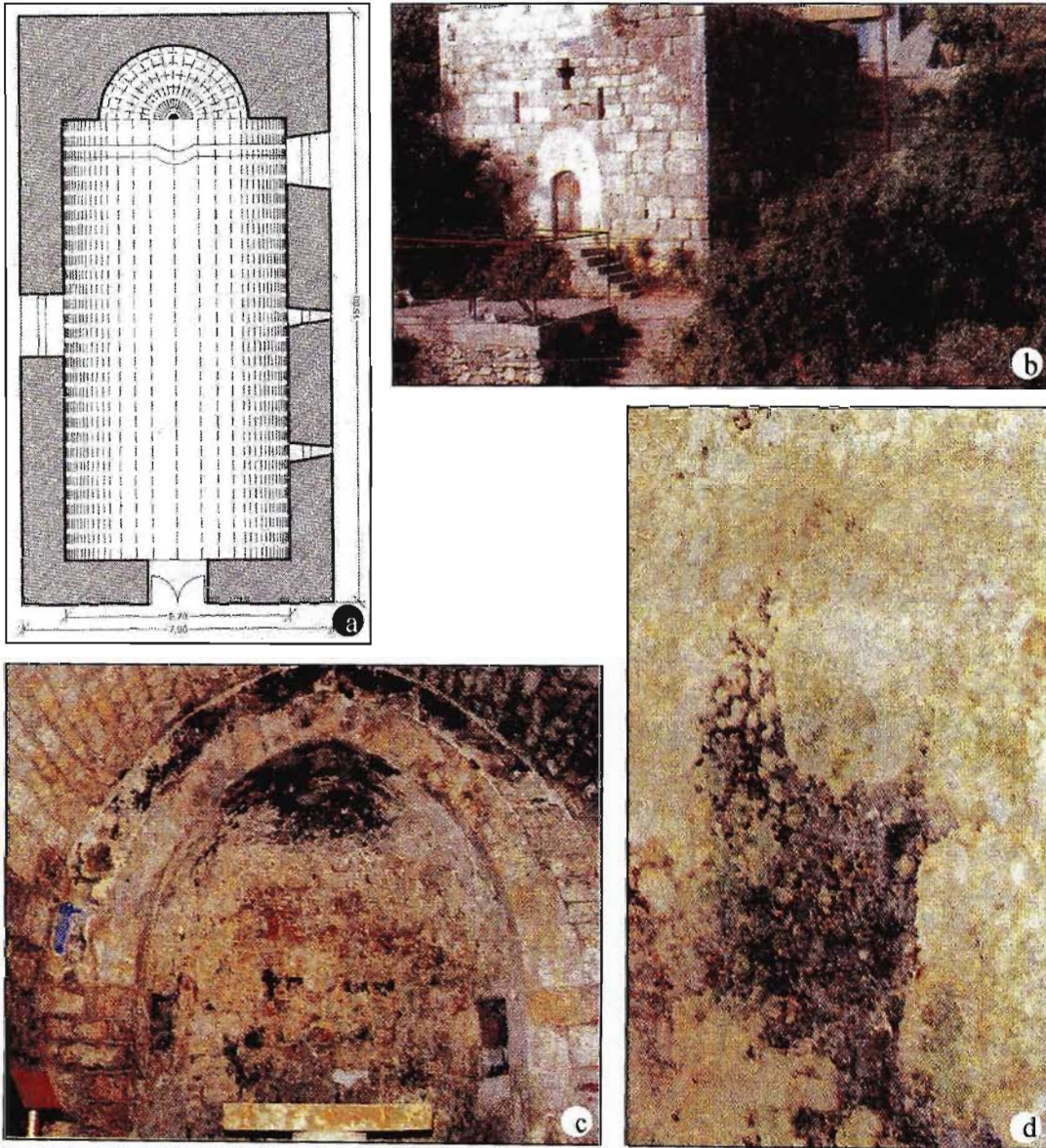


3.33 a. & b. : The church at Maad, integrated with the terraced site; constructed of local materials; hidden by the trees. It bespeaks of an architecture respecting the genius loci of the land.

3.34 c. d. & e. : Saint Charbel church in Maad; plan, exterior and interior view [Nordiguan and Voisin].

iii- The church of Holy Mary of Qassouba (12th century A.D.) (*fig 3.35*)

The church is located on a small hill overlooking the city of Byblos. The structure began as a Phoenician temple before it was transformed into a Maronite church²⁰⁷ in the twelfth century A.D. The church is rectangular in shape, with a barrel vaulted nave terminating at the eastern end in a semi-circular apse and a raised vault. It has one door at the western end topped by an aperture in the form of a cross flanked by two windows. Several other upper windows exist in the north, southern and eastern ends. Moreover, catchpit used to collect rainwater in the center of the apse.

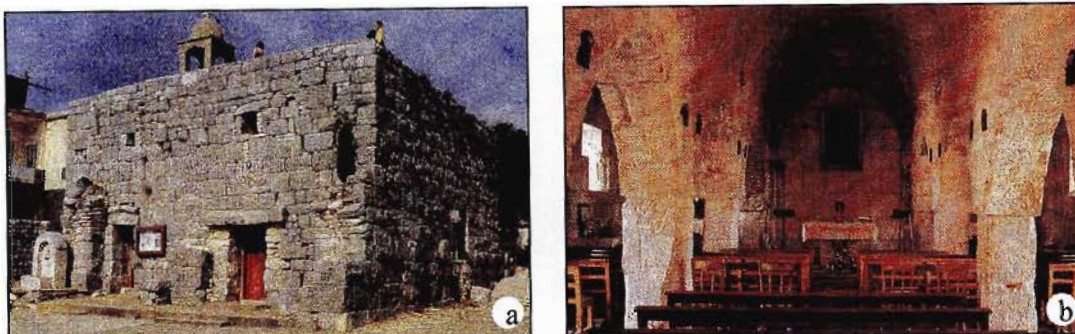


3.35 a. : plan Saidat Qassouba (Our Lady of Qassouba) church [Sader 1997 ed.].
 b. : Exterior view [Sader 1997 ed.].
 c. & d. : Interior view of the altar and frescos [Sader 1997 ed.].

²⁰⁷ Nordiguian, L., Voisin, J-C., 1999, *Châteaux et Églises du Moyen Âge au Liban*. [Beirut: Terre du Liban], 404-405.

iv- St. Elias church in Blat (12th century A.D.) (fig. 3.36)

This church is in the village of Blat near Byblos; it is built using the stones of an ancient temple²⁰⁸. Some pieces of destroyed Roman statues can still be discerned in its walls together with the four Greek inscriptions saying that the old temple was named after the great head of all Phoenician gods, Baal (*Suneyiot*)²⁰⁹. The church is rectangular in form with three rounded naves terminating in three eastern apses. Three doors that gain access into the church from the northern, southern and eastern direction; it also has a southern window and another northern one, both exhibiting frescos depicting saints²¹⁰.



3.36 a. & b. : Exterior and interior views of the church of Saint Elias at Blat [Nordiguian and Voisin].

v- The church St. Takla and St. Stephen in Shamat (fig.3.37)

These two churches, like the preceding ones are located in the proximity of the city of Byblos. According to Nordiguian and Voisin: “*at least three layers of time can be discerned in this church; the romaine period being the most clear due to the presence of two tops of sarcophagus which serve as lintels for the doors of the two nave church*”²¹¹. Father John Sader states that the southern apse is dedicated to St. Taqla, whereas the northern one to St. Stephen. The church can be entered via two doors, each opening up to a nave; whereas Father Youwakim Moubarac [1924-1995] states that the church used to be a temple of a Phoenician god, Xemios²¹². In his turn, Ernest Renan exclaims that he had never witnessed anywhere in the whole world a place where people had prayed continuously and in the same place as in Lebanon²¹³.

Of particular interest is the double nave, a feature referred to as ‘double chapel’ in architecture. The architectural categorization for this church is certainly a vernacular one, for it follows a certain local tradition. Usually, each one of the two naves is named after one saint and ends by an apse mostly covered by two barrel vaults (and rarely covered by cross ones). The church of Tannourine Al-Fawqa and that of Dmalsa (of St. Nohra and St. Sophia) are other examples of churches with a double-nave covered by two cross vaults (figs 3.38-3.39-3.40).

It seems that this kind of churches existed only in Lebanon despite the mystery surrounding the function of the second nave. However, it can be argued that the second apse may be meant as a baptistery, a martyrion, or a funerary chapel! No decisive answer can be reached here because no single function for these seems to fit better than

²⁰⁸ [Lammens, 1913; 1982: 373]

²⁰⁹ *ibid*, 68.

²¹⁰ [Nordiguian and Vision, 1999: 373]

²¹¹ *ibid*, 373

²¹² Moubarac, Y., 1984, *Pentalogie – Antiochienne – Domaine Maronite*. 5 Tomes / 7 Volumes, [Beyrouth: Cenacle Libanais], vol. 2, 733.

²¹³ As mentioned in [Nordiguian and Vision, 1999: 373]

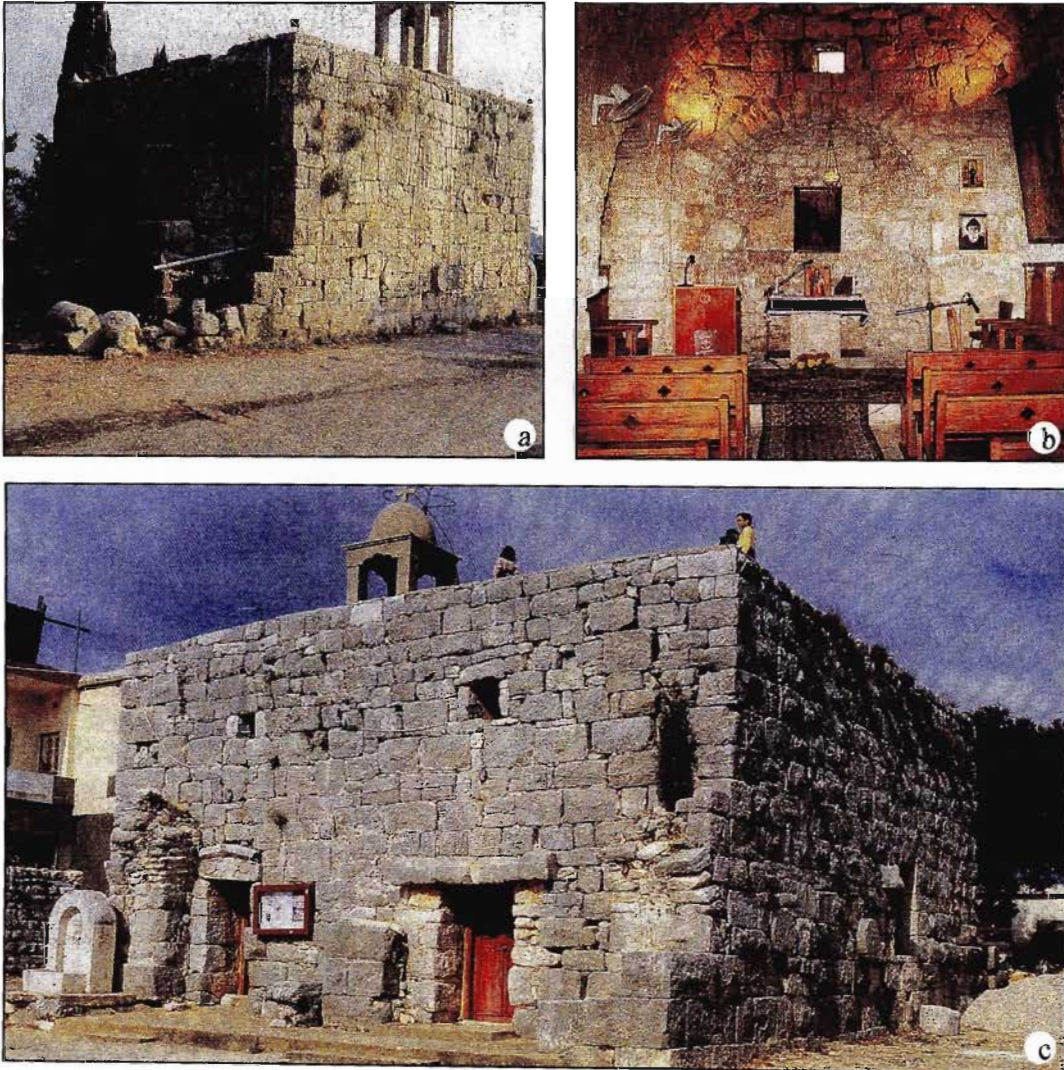
the others. It is noteworthy to mention that according to the Maronite Encyclopedia of 1992 ed., this type of churches used to be dedicated to two saints at the same time (or as an endowment of two families)²¹⁴. This explication was refuted by Nordiguian and Voisin²¹⁵ when they discussed the possibility of this double-naved church being an architectural solution to accommodate the maximum number of believers or to receive women at one side and men at the other.

Whatever may be the case, this duality continues to pose a liturgical problem as believers didn't know to which altar they should orient themselves.

In this church, many Roman features can be discerned:

- the columns shafts are embedded in the northern wall
- the decorative motif of the sarcophagus located at the northern door shows two garlands that represent the Phoenician 'vegetation cult'²¹⁶

On the other hand, a Byzantine influence is also apparent in the church through the fragments of mosaics at the end of the southern nave.

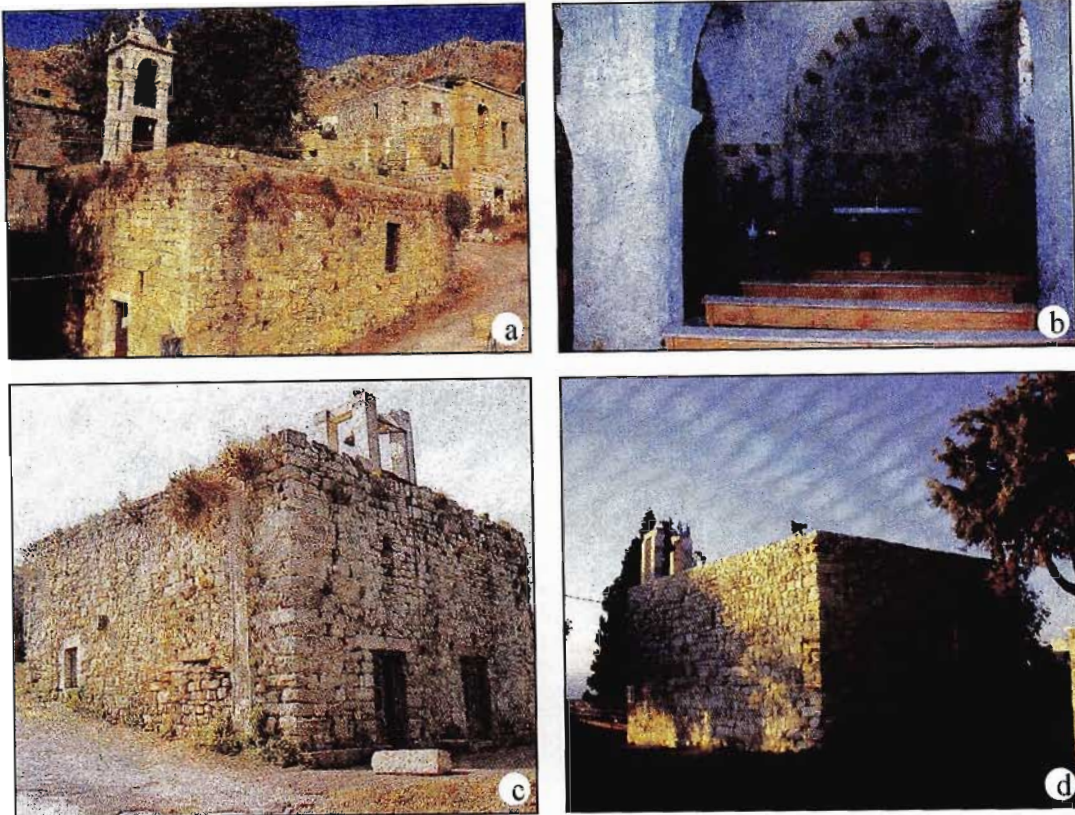


3.37 a. & c. : Exterior view of the church of Saint Takla and Stephen at Shamat; Romaine sarcophagus tops used as lintels [Nordiguian and Voisin].

²¹⁴ [Moukarzel, 1992: 381]

²¹⁵ [Nordiguian and Vision, 1999: 179]

²¹⁶ [Sader, 1989: 66]



3.38 a. & b. : Church of St. Chalita in Tannourine Al-Fawqa; exterior and interior views [Nordiguian and Voisin].

3.39 c. : Dmalsa church (St. Nohra & St. Sophia); exterior views. Comparing this church at Dmalsa with most, if not all, of the preceding ones, we notice the great resemblance amongst their architecture, design, scale. Similar in expressing the sacred through minimalism, simplicity and humbleness [Sader 1989 ed.]. 3.40 d. : Eastern & western façade of Dmalsa Church.

3.3.1.4 Latinization

As an institution, the Maronite church is steeped in the rich Maronite heritage, but architecturally speaking, its organization of functions and its interpretation of space closely follows the Latin model. This Latin influence dictated that the closed space in the Maronite church be opened up to the exterior through the use of windows.

3.3.1.5 The church of the nineteenth and twentieth century and its characteristics

In 1736 the synod of Louaizeh put an end to the relation which tied Rome to Mount Lebanon and thereby, putting an end to the papacy's interference in the affairs of the Maronite church. At the architectural level, while recommending the retention of certain Latin elements, this synod recommended the use of the semi-circular apse with the altar in the center. As a result, the redesigned Maronite church came to possess the following characteristics:

- the rectangular form remained the dominant architectural feature with vast dimensions and a unique nave
- the apse is situated towards the east and is semi-circular
- the position of the altar played a decorative functions, and the altar itself was sculptured in white marble bearing low relief carvings
- the influence of the West and the contribution of Italian artists gave the church decorative aspects with the architectural space

- the narthex was completely dropped and replaced by galleries on the façade serving as intermediary spaces between the profanity of the exterior world and the sacredness of the interior world
- introduction of the Baghdadi, a system of false ceilings fashioned entirely of wood beams and covered by stucco

3.3.2 Hermitages

3.3.2.1 Hermitage architecture

The architecture of hermitages can be divided into the following categories:

i- Cosmic architecture (*Bios Upaitros*) (fig.3.41):

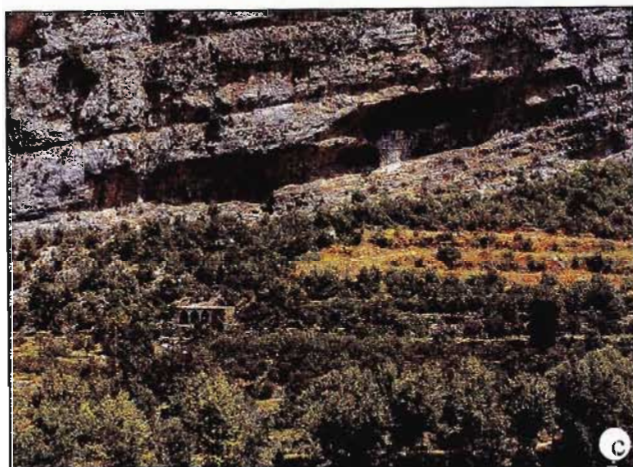
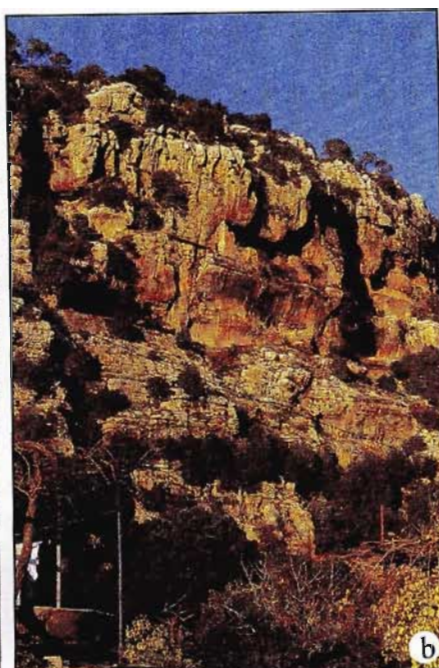
This type or category of architecture may be best described by Khalil Gibran's words when he wrote that: "Ever bedded in the herbage, quilted by a heavenly vast, unconcerned about the future, And forgetful of your past"²¹⁷. This parallels the life-style of Maron the recluse. It is living within the scheme of the 'Designer of the Universe': no man-made roof and no artificial bed. This is the best way to understand God and to live in Him and with Him, according to the Maronite hermit. To the one who seeks God, the sky should be his shelter and the earth his bed. This form of living is the ultimate sense of architectural dwelling, living in the 'architecture' or house of the Designer (of the universe).

The ascetic style of the Maronite hermit went in parallel with inhabiting the very architecture of the designer of the universe; i.e. living in the heart of time with all what it imprints in the ambience of the place plus receiving that place together with its transformation by time and accepting it with its available materials. All this being utilized in one sublime function whose aim is to be united with god. It is worth-noting here how one of St. Maron's pupils had persistently refused to be buried in a roofed tomb – seeking by that to make clear the point that he had fully grasped the language of the natural law, i.e. how all visible perish in order to have life again.



3.41 a : 'No man made ceiling, and no fabricated bed' [Awit].

²¹⁷ Khalil Gibran, G., 1958; 1986, *The Procession*. Translation by Keirallah, G. [New York: Philosophical Library], 71.



3.42 a. : St. Simon the Stylite church at Byblos view of the pillar St. Simon lived on [Sader 1996 ed.].

3.43 b. : Another hermitage embed in the nature Zaherieh hermitage in Baabdat.
c. : Tannourine Tahta hermitage; a desired seclusion in the womb of nature, in the rocky cliff [Nordiguian and Voisin].

ii- Cosmic architecture and the Stylite (fig. 3.42):

Along with the former style of living, there exists yet another form of living in the open air, but without bedding the ground and taking the sky as cover or shelter: that of the Stylites. The Stylites who took their name from St. Simon the Stylite used to live while standing on top of a column or post or pillar in the open air! It is obvious here that the entire 'architecture' is confined to a pillar in the open.

iii- The natural local architecture (fig. 3.43):

The rural nature of many Lebanese sites with their rugged quality provided an atmosphere most appropriate for Maronites to achieve solitude and seclusion. The Maronite monk used to hasten to reside in caves as soon as he recognized his call to ascetic life. The residences in these areas were described by Dandini [1554-1634]: *"Their residences do not resemble ... cities overcrowded with people nor places intended for the public; on the contrary, they would rather gather in the most secluded of all places in these Lebanese mountains, detached from any contact with people and live underneath magnificent and grand rocky formations that resemble animal dens more than human dwelling places"*²¹⁸.

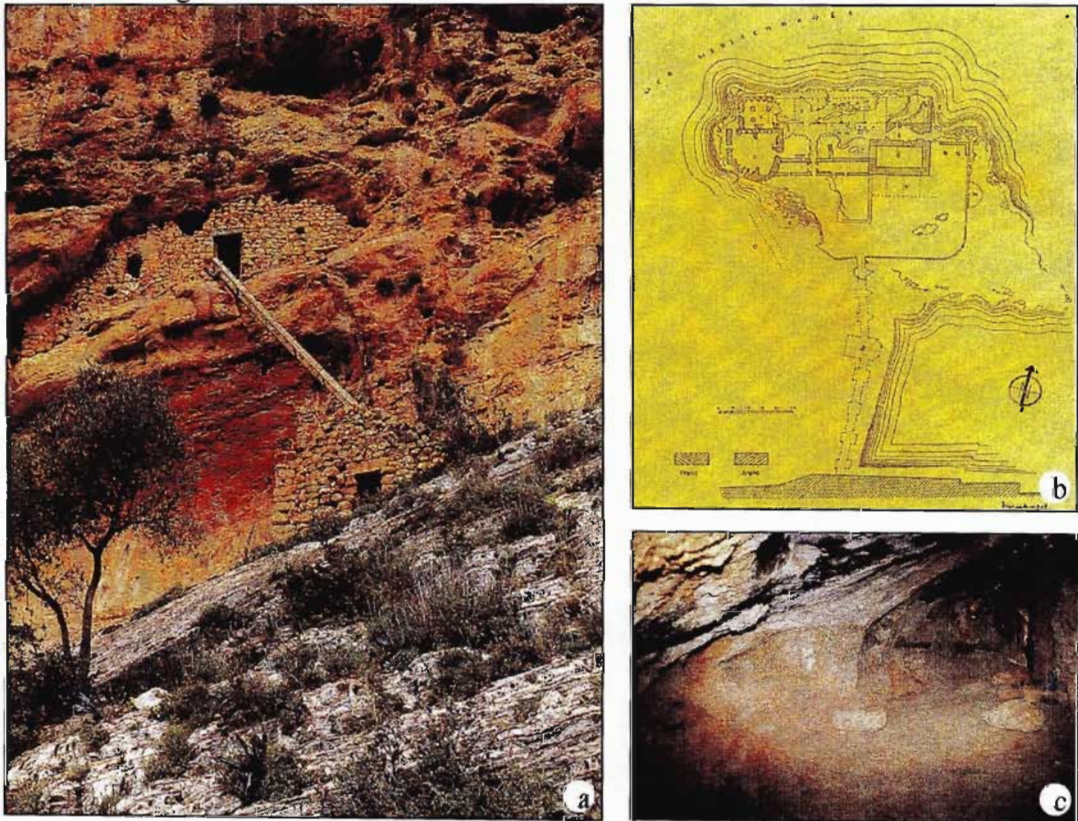
²¹⁸ Jemayel, B. 1966, *Al Hayat Al Rouhbaniya Fi Loubnan Wal Toubawi Charbel* (Monastic Life in Lebanon and the Beatified Charbel) [Lebanon: Al Wihda Fi Al Iman], 24.

Moreover, on his journey in 1688, De La Roque has described the hermitage by arguing that: “Some of them are carved in majestic rocks in distant mountainous areas giving the illusion that they are farfetched, as if suspended between the earth and the sky”²¹⁹. In such hermitages, the hermit had nothing to do with any kind of construction material, for the natural local architecture alone could provide sufficient natural shelters that could be used for seclusion and protection from snow, rain and sun heat. Good examples of such hermitic dwelling places are the hermitages at Lower Tannourine and Al-Zaherieh.

iv- The introduction of material to the local natural architecture

In this type of hermitages, some local material has been simply added to the nature of the place as a further evidence of the Maronites respect to the genius loci of Mount Lebanon. Examples:

- the Hermitage of St. Simon at Sakiat Al-Khayt (fig. 3.44): This hermitage is situated in a village in the neighborhood of Byblos, 20 km northeast of Byblos, on a vertical huge rocky formation about 20m in height. It cannot be reached without the use of a ladder. In his trip to Mount Lebanon and Valley of Saints in 1666, D’arvieux found innumerable hermit cells. He maintains that it is astonishing and strange how the hermits managed to reach those cells with such rough tracks accessible only to birds! He wondered how they could reach their hermitages without possessing wings! According to this author, those monks might have used ladders or ropes to climb up the rocks to their grottos²²⁰.



3.44 a. b. & c. : Saint Simon hermitage at Sakiat Al Khayt (Mar Semaan); naturally carved rocks forming the interior of the hermitage. Exterior view shows the stone wall added to enclose the hermitage [Nordiguian and Voisin].

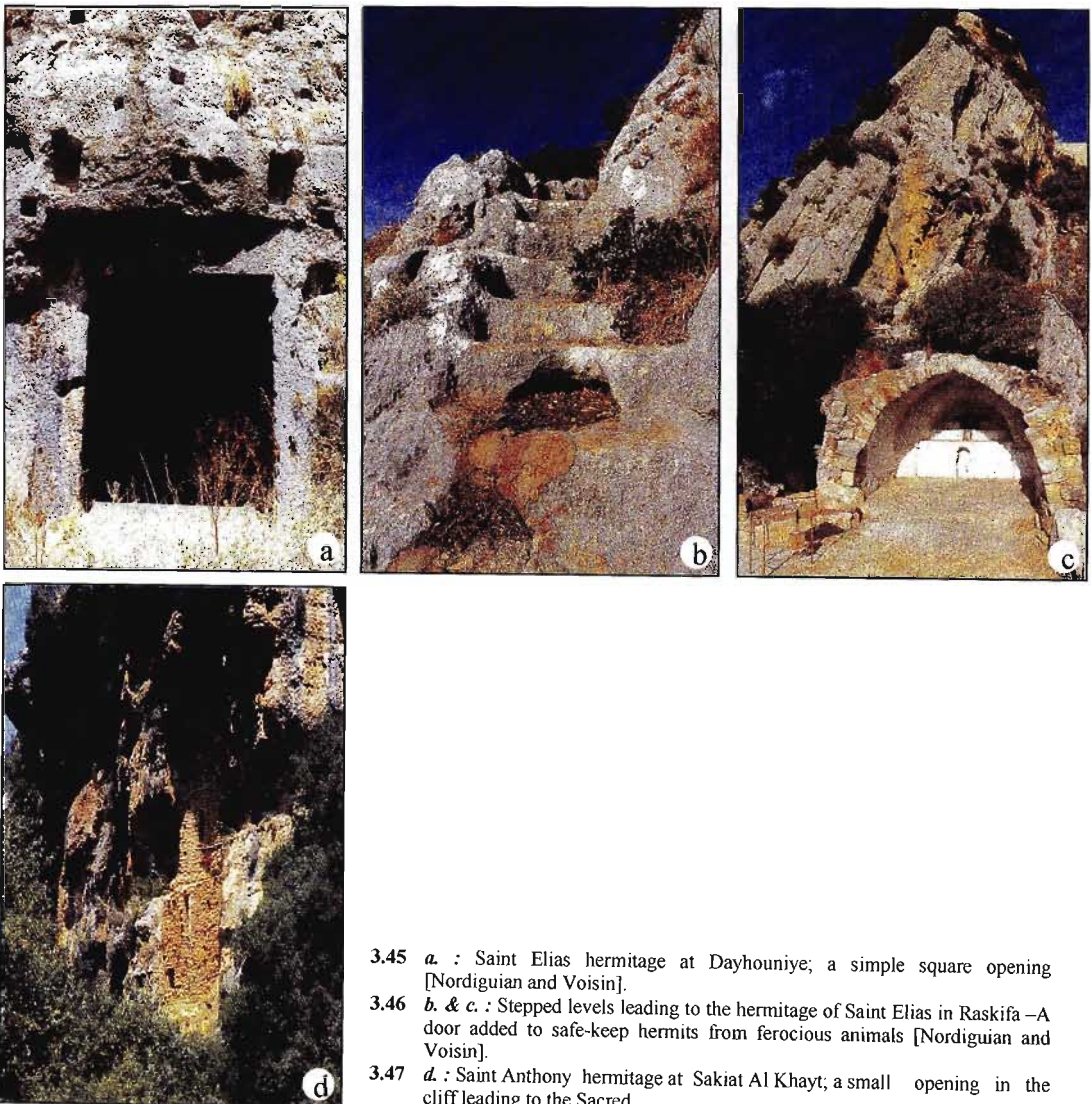
²¹⁹ Mahfouz, J. 1970, *Al Tanzim Al Rouhbani Fi Al Kanisa Al Marouniya* (Monastic Order in the Maronite Church), translation by Khalife, Y. [Beirut: Holy Spirit University], 13.

²²⁰ Dagher, L., 1988, *Kashef Al Khafa' An Mahabis Loubnan Wal Houbasa'* (Unveiling the Mysteries Pertaining to Lebanese Hermitages and Hermits) [Lebanon: Holy Spirit University], 35.

The hermitage of St. Simon at Sakiat Al-Khayt is a natural cave that is completely closed by a wall at the entrance. It has two doors, one window, and four rectangular apertures. From the inside, it takes a longitudinal form running in an east-west direction, with a rectangular altar situated at the eastern end of the cave. The inside is adorned with drawings and paintings that date back to the eighth century A.D., executed in the Syrian-Lebanese style²²¹. Likewise the churches of St. Anthony Hermitage / Mar Mtanios at Sakiat Al-Khayt (*fig. 3.47*) and St. Elias hermitage at Raskifa/ Zgharta (*fig. 3.46*), exhibit the same sensitivity to the genius loci.

v- Manual modification of the local natural architecture (*fig. 3.47*)

This type of hermitages exhibits no introduction intrusive material into the site but some manual modifications to the local natural structure. A good example is St. Elias hermitage in Dayhouniye.

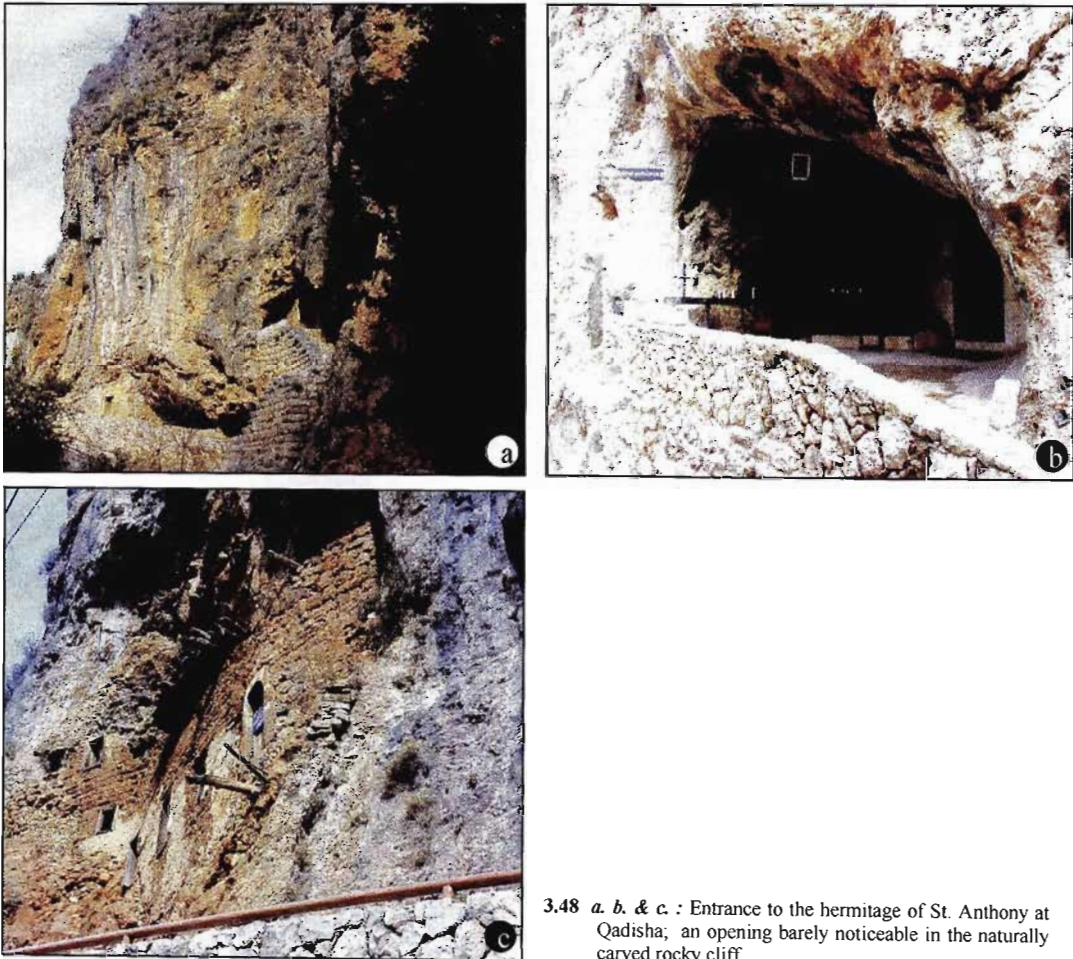


- 3.45 *a* : Saint Elias hermitage at Dayhouniye; a simple square opening [Nordiguian and Voisin].
 3.46 *b. & c.* : Stepped levels leading to the hermitage of Saint Elias in Raskifa –A door added to safe-keep hermits from ferocious animals [Nordiguian and Voisin].
 3.47 *d.* : Saint Anthony hermitage at Sakiat Al Khayt; a small opening in the cliff leading to the Sacred.

²²¹ [Nordiguian and Vision, 1999: 411]

As far as the hermitage architecture is concerned, Father Libaous Dagher [1870-1926]²²² mentions that hermitages not hewn in the living rock were usually square-shaped with altars to the east. Some of these are built out of stone, while others out of daub²²³. Those built on the earth's surface are constructed of dry solid stone. According to Dagher, some of these hermitages were composed of a single chamber (or space), while others comprised a number of chambers such as the hermitages at Koshaya, Houqa, and Lower-Tannourine²²⁴. Some researchers speculate that this is an evidence of the presence of some ascetic followers who used to live and dwell with the hermit²²⁵.

Regarding the hermitages at Houqa in Qadisha Valley, Nordiguian asserts that devoutness in the Valley (*fig. 3.48*) seems to have its origin in a significant spiritual movement of unknown source²²⁶.



3.48 a. b. & c. : Entrance to the hermitage of St. Anthony at Qadisha; an opening barely noticeable in the naturally carved rocky cliff.

²²² [Dagher, 1988: 35].

²²³ Note that no published record of the architectural documentation of such hermitages exists.

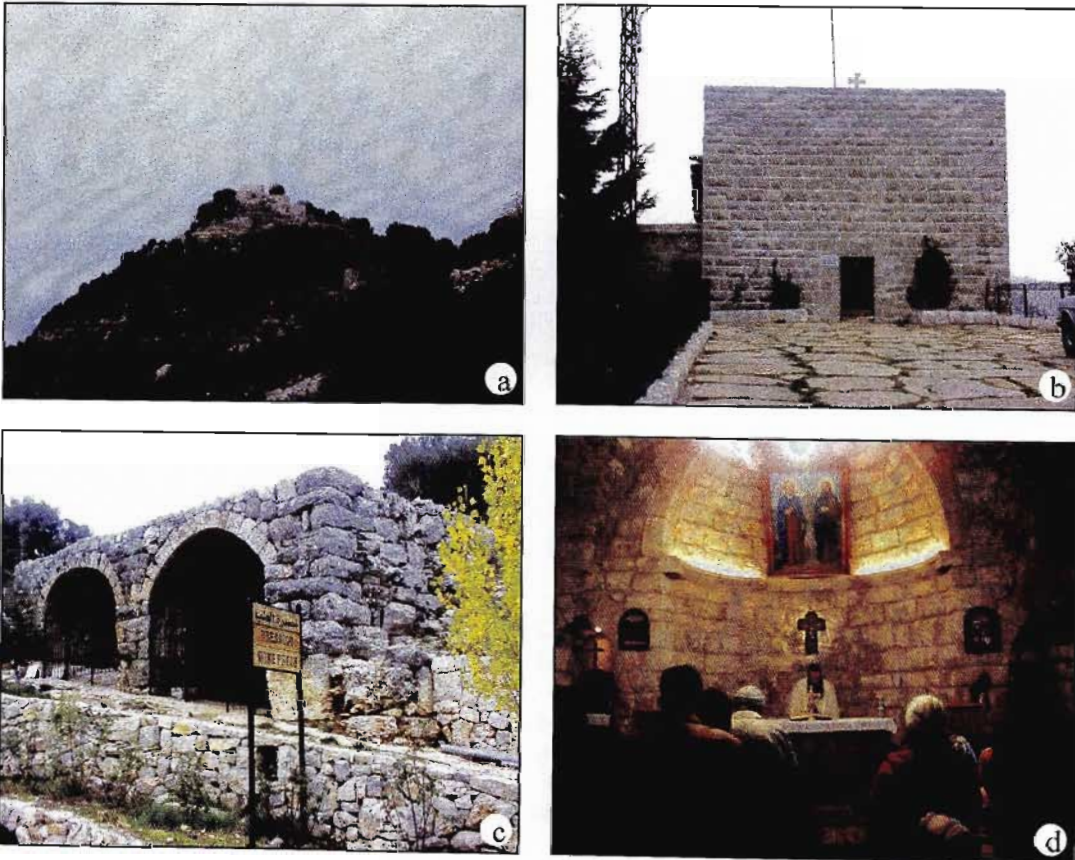
²²⁴ [Dagher, 1988: 35].

²²⁵ [Mahfouz, 1970: 136]

²²⁶ [Nordiguian and Vision, 1999: 184]

On his journey in 1688, De La Roque's wrote that the number of the caves around the convent was around 800. This further testifies in favor of the affirmation made by Nordiguian for the existence of 800 cells' which implies that some 800 hermits coexisted simultaneously. This, no doubt, implies a strange hermitical movement!

Another example to be considered in the study of hermitage architecture in Lebanon is the hermitage of St. Peter and St. Paul in Anaya, in which the Maronite hermit and Saint, Charbel Makhoul had lived (*fig. 3.49*). The architecture of this hermitage which was built on ancient ruins and is connected to St. Peter's and St. Paul's church, shows six square cells, each separated from the other by a wall built out of local stone and adobe. In his illustration of the architectural simplicity of the hermitage, Father Libaous Dagher elaborates saying that true happiness is very far from ostentatiousness and luxury; for on a high hill in Anaya, to the south east of the convent there, one finds a hermitage in which one practices a total abstinence from earthly delights and exercises the vows of poverty and austerity. The hermitage is secluded by virtue of a thick belt of trees, its only form of natural ornament. To the west, there is the astounding blueness of the Mediterranean, and to the south, there is the green village of Almat and the Torzaya river (which springs from the same mountain on which the hermitage was built). To the north, the hermitage enjoys the unbounded hills and valleys and to the east lays the vast natural reserve of Ehmej known for its ancient high trees²²⁷.



3.49 *a.* : St. Charbel convent at Anaya; a silent dialogue with God.
b. : terraced land-directing believers to the entrance of the church.
d. : view of the apse and altar inside the church.
c. : Wine-press for the convent; auto-sufficiency attributed to the monks of the convent.

²²⁷ [Dagher, 1988: 97-99]

3.3.3 Convents

3.3.3.1 Introduction

Maronite convents originally started out as hermitages located in secluded places (*fig. 3.50*). These architectural structures grew in response to the Maronite's need to congregate around hermitages which only housed one hermit at a time. In time, convents came to be regulated by the Lebanese council of the Maronite church. Thus, the convent became:

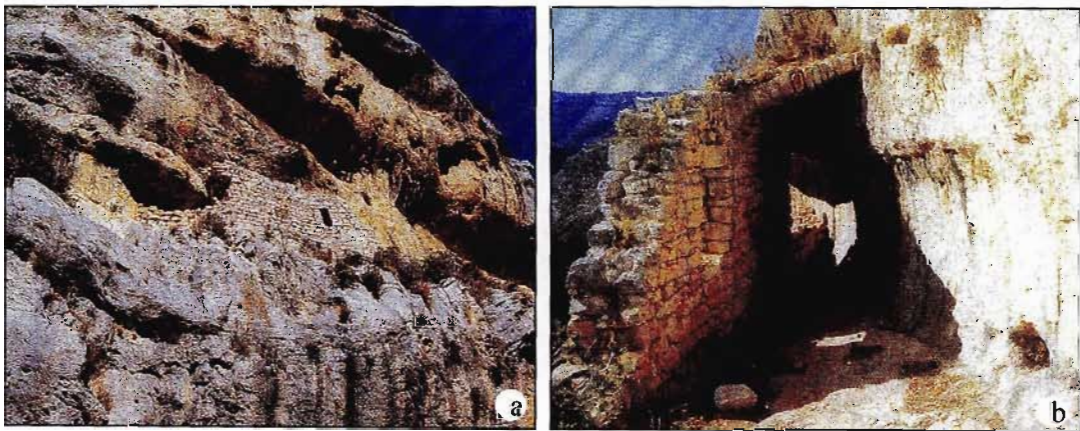
- a place for meditation.
- linked to the Maronite community, hence making it open to the outside through agricultural work and production as well as education and teaching.

All this necessitated the following particularities

- seclusion and solitude for the sake of meditation.
- connection with the outside.
- separation of the outside from the inside with regard to certain monastic requirements.

With the congregation of the Maronites around the convent, civil architecture was intermingled with religious architecture in all respects [residences, hermitages, churches, farms and factories]. Indeed, the intermixing of religion with secular life has rendered the Maronite convent an image of the city of God where there is a place for everything: the family, prayer, works, etc. This in fact explains the relationship between religion and labor often explicit in Maronitism.

As stated earlier, the Lebanese Council of the Maronite church had the tendency to fuse the Maronite rite with the Latin, thus giving the Maronite convent characteristics similar to those of the western church. Consequently, the Maronite convent became a construction of grand scale following the Benedictine plan; [this which is basically a group of monks leading a communal life in one place, and these monks are called cenobites; note that this practice originated in Italy]²²⁸.



3.50 a. & b. : Saidat Qattine monastery in Sghar valley; rocks added to the natural site serving as a shelter for the ascetic hermits [Nordiguian and Voisin].

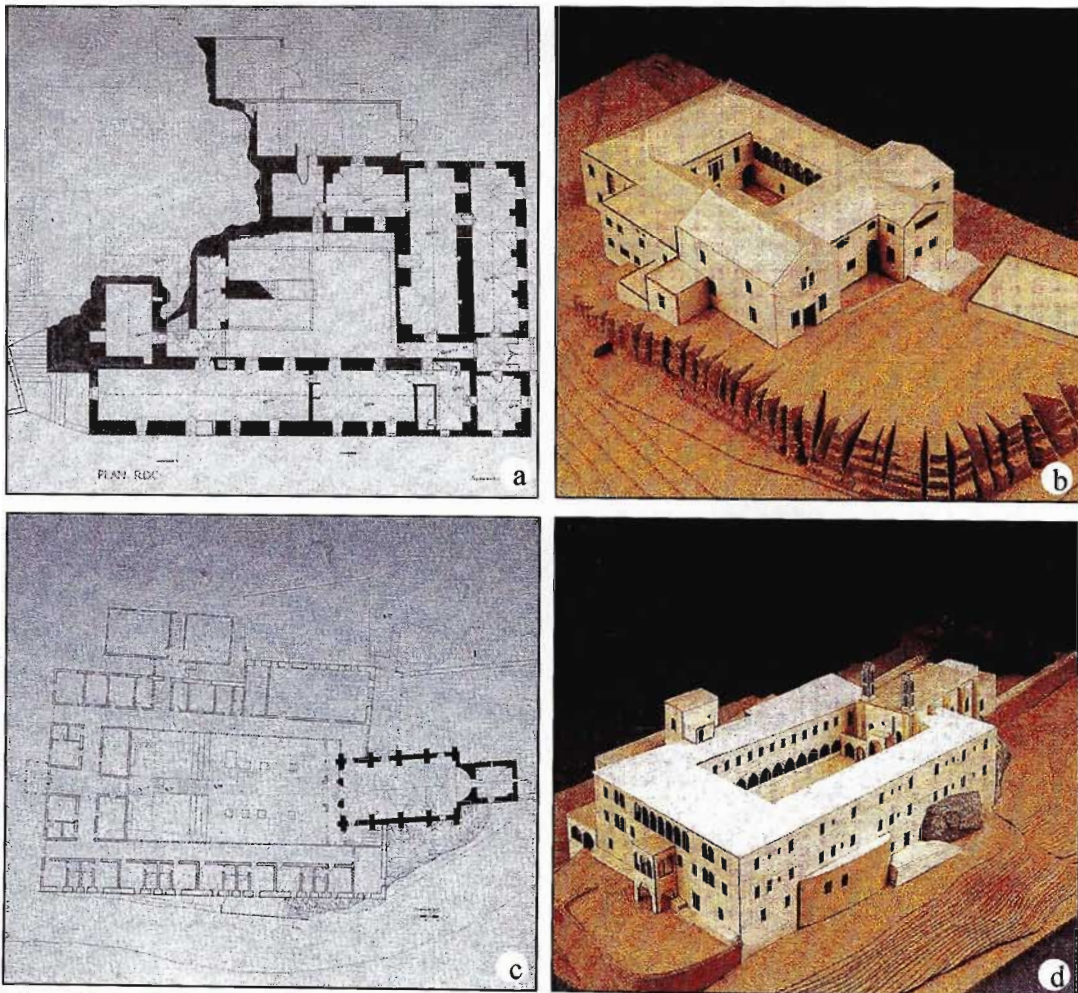
²²⁸ *Le Nouveau Dictionnaire Encyclopedique*, 15 Vols, 1992ed. [Suisse: N.D.E], 181.

Significant examples on such convents are: Ain Warka, Nesbieh, and Tamish.

Convents are often constructed to serve specific purpose:

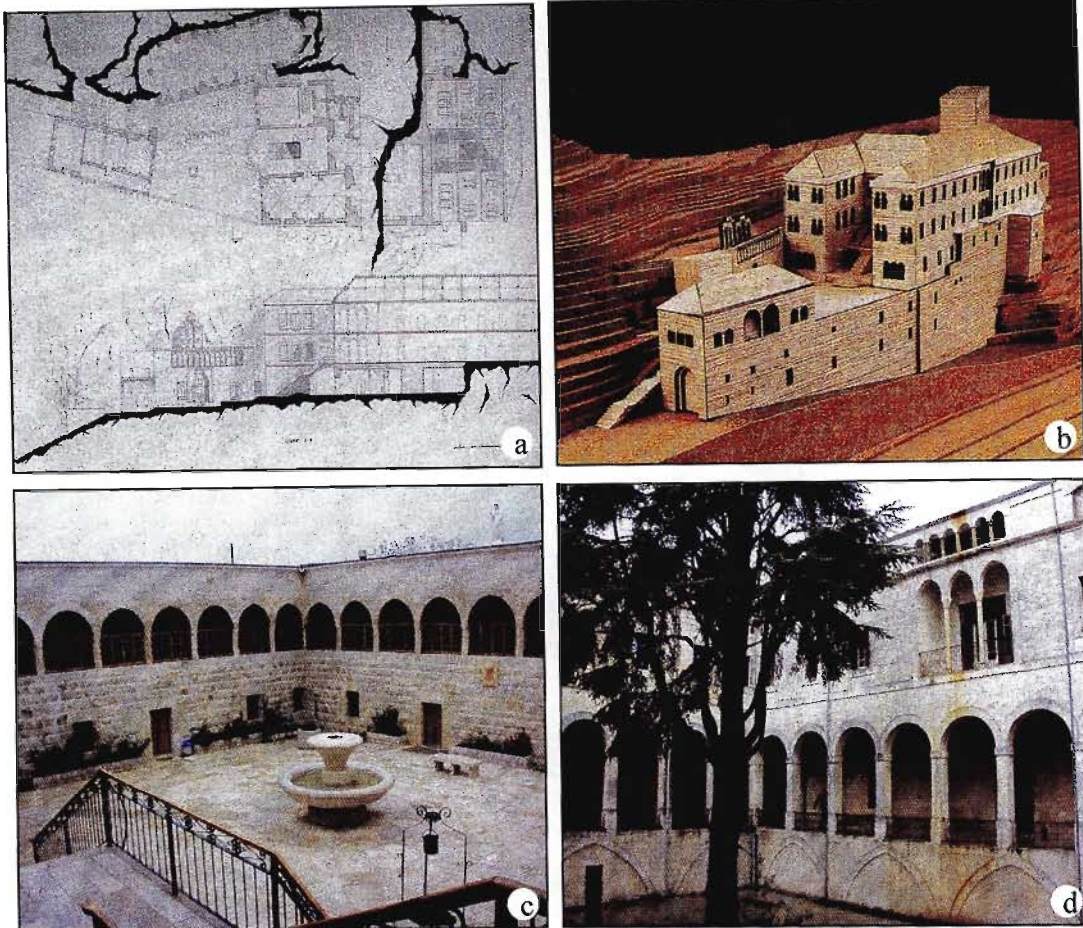
- a patriarchal center like that of Yanouh
- a pilgrimage center like that at Mar Abda
- an agricultural center like that at Houb (*fig. 3.51*)
- an educational center like that at Mayfouk (*fig. 3.52*)
- some convents were specifically designed for adepts who are being trained for an ecclesiastical monastic life, such as the convent of Kfifane. The oldest convent in Lebanon is that of Mar Mtanios Koshaya at Qannoubine (St. Anthony the Great) [1708]²²⁹ (*fig. 3.53*).

Prior to 1695, architecture was a mirror reflecting the Maronite people in their daily interaction with nature, which itself is an expression of the vernacular character. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and due to religious persecution, convents were constructed in accordance with defensive necessities such as massive ground walls and apertures for military use.



3.51 a. & b. : Model and maps of Saint Anthony the Great monastery, Houb [1749]; [El Daccache].
 3.52 c. & d. : Our Lady monastery and college at Mayfouk [1766]; [El Daccache].

²²⁹ [Mahfouz, 1970: 88]



3.53 a. & b. : St. Anthony the great Monastery at Qadisha valley [1708]; [El Daccache].

3.54 c. : View of the cloister of Saint Maron convent at Anaya.

3.55 d. : The tree in the cloister of Mayfouk convent; a vertical ascent as a symbol of the Divine.

3.3.3.2 Components of the convent

i- The Cloister (figs 3.54-3.55)

Open to the sky, which is the image of God, the cloister is a place for meditation as well as a kind of special regulator for the composition inside the convent. It's the identity card of the convent – a sort of open space linked to the interior of the convent and playing the role of intermediary to various functions. The cloister is basically a place for meditation where the transcendental relationship is hidden from the agitation of the external world. Only monks can have access to it.

It is generally at the ground level, but is sometimes situated at a lower level in case the site is along a slope. It may be surrounded by successive porticos of crossing vaults playing various interior functions and shielding the sun. Trees are usually planted within the cloister to provide shade and to symbolize nature as the center of the whole structure.

ii- Porticos and Galleries (figs 3.56-3.57)

These play a major role in the composition of the façade, in the center of which is the *Liwan*, both forming a combination of harmonious and well-integrated composition. On the other hand, porticos and galleries open up to the end of the corridors or passages surrounding the cloister, whereto a *Mandalun* is situated

overlooking the captivating openness of the site. Hence this passage results in an open transparent skin exhibiting the outside and allowing a relation among the adjacent rooms, it also allow for good ventilation both longitudinally as well as transversally.

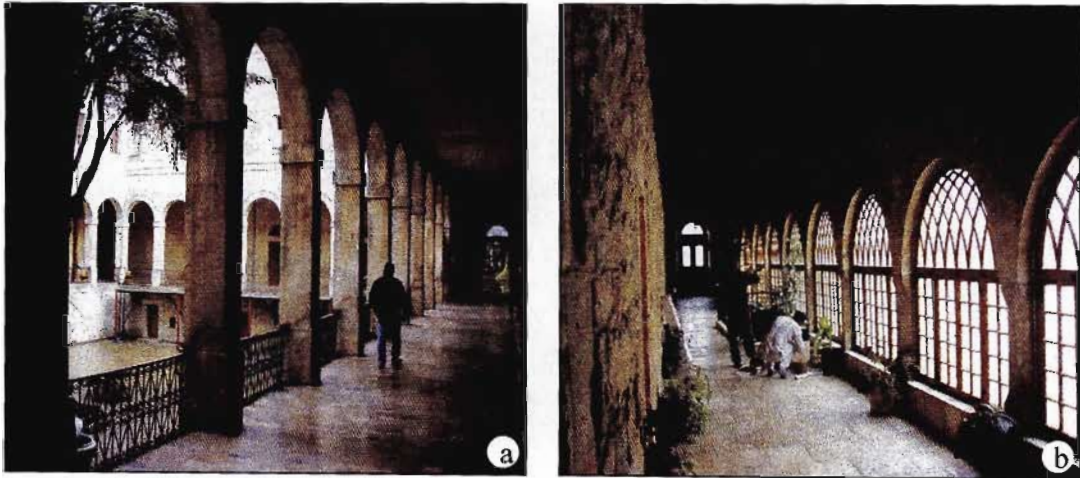
The northern and southern *Liwans* are used alternatively during different parts of the day and in accordance with the position of the sun during various seasons which affects the amount of light and shade. This is a further evidence of the Maronite desire to seek a harmonious and rhythmical interaction between architecture and the 'Natural Law' that governs site and climate.

The general form of the convent usually assumes the basic model of a rectangle that can be adapted to the nature of the site; this form is mostly directed eastwards, on condition that is facilitated by the site morphology. Yet, in rare cases, when the site is along a slope, the architectural design assumes the form of a rectangle with the cloister in its center. When the convent is to be constructed along the slope of a hill, the topography results in the creation of a basement that is cross vaulted and that opens up to the slope; this basement can serve as an agricultural deposit for grains, a stable for domestic animals, a cave for wine, or an atelier for craft work.

iii- The church

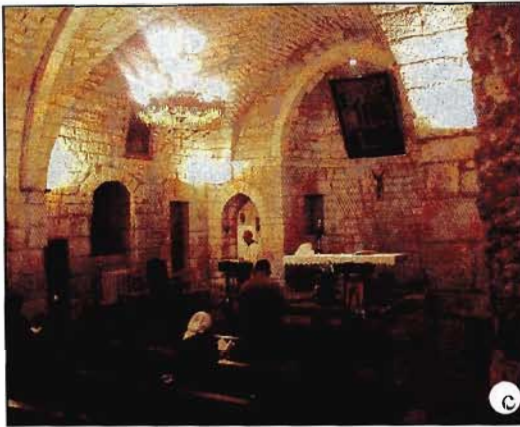
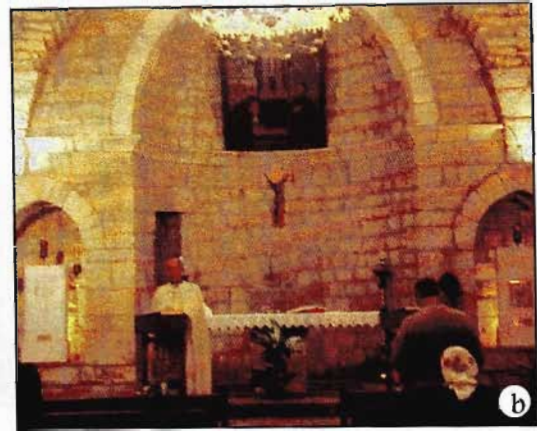
The church is the common element in all convents, with a rectangular basilican form and an apse pointed to the east. The church can be attended either by monks or by the public at large. Monks enter it through a door directly leading to the inside of the convent, while Maronite believers enter through another door that opens to the outside. (fig.3.58). The church, though grand, is very simple and modest in its architectural language (fig. 3.59-3.60). It exhibits clarity and openness with no ornamentation. Yet, it is usually the most visually imposing structure in the entire convent, possessing dominant volumetric quality reflecting its sacredness (fig. 3.61).

By the eighteenth century, a bell-tower had been built on top of the highest point in the church, mostly above the main entrance, thus adding to its severity and grandness.



3.56 a. : Gallery opening to the rooms of monks and cloister in the convent at Mayfouk with a 'mashreqiyeh' at the farther end.

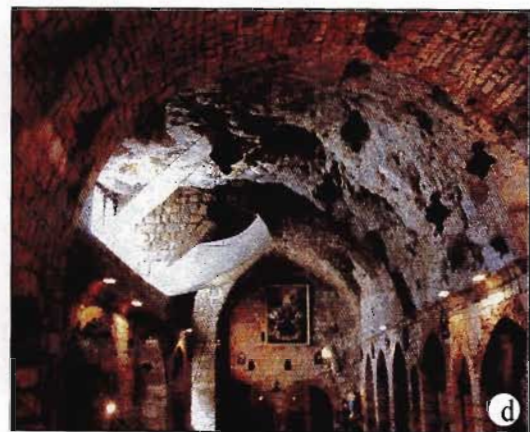
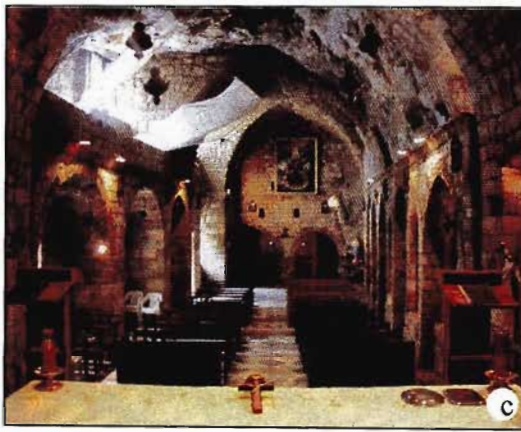
3.57 b. : Anaya convent, passage leading to a 'maghrebiyeh' at the end.



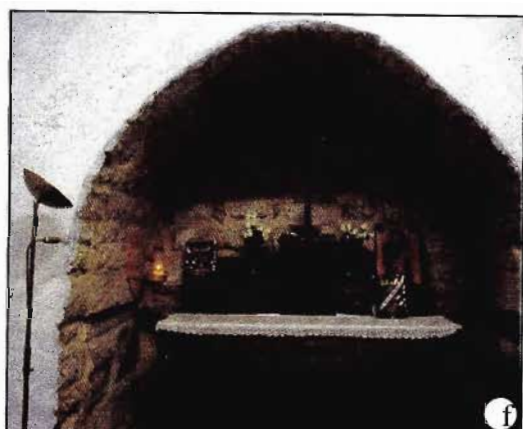
3.58 St. Maron church, Anaya;
a. : A view showing two doors – the father one for the monks, leading to the convent, and the closer for the masses.
b. & c. : Interior view of the altar and cross vault.



3.59 Mar Mtanios (St. Anthony) Koshaya church at Qannoubine.
d. : Entrance
e & f. : View of the interior of the church, altar and baptistery.



3.60 St. Anthony Koshaya church at Qannoubine.
a. b. c. & d. : Views of the ceiling: naturally carved rocks fusing with a man-made stone vault.



3.61 e. : As in the case of most Maronite monasteries, the volume of the church of Anaya convent dominates the surrounding structures.
3.62 f. : St. Anthony Koshaya convent at Qannoubine, 'mashreqiyeh' space at the end of the corridor.
3.63 g. : St. Anthony Koshaya convent at Qannoubine; sample room of a monk in a convent with a small apse towards the east.

iv- Cells

Rooms for the monks have been mostly built along the sides of the cloister and connected by a gallery that overlooks the cloister. In the case of large convents, the four sides are utilized as rooms for the monks, whereas only one or two sides are used in smaller convents. The rooms at the intersection of the four sides, i.e. the four rooms at the corners called 'Mashreqiyeh' and 'Maghrebiyeh' (eastern and western) (*fig. 3.62*) are usually designated as rooms for gathering as well as meditation depending on the time of the day. Benches are placed in these corners, which open up to the pleasant view of the surrounding areas.

As for the private chambers of the monks, they are simple from the inside devoid of ornamentation or decorative treatment, with a small latrine²³⁰, a shelf, and an altar for praying oriented towards the east (*fig. 3.63*). The rooms are designed as symmetrically as possible and constructed of the locally available materials such as red bricks and carved stones resembling Lebanese vernacular house.

3.4 CONCLUSION: ESSENCE OF MARONITE ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURE

In reflecting upon the inextricable link between religious and secular Maronite architecture, one can affirm that this architecture reflects the Maronite's desire to seek an honest and sincere relationship with the Natural Law – which itself has been the prevalent regulator of his life and his architecture. In this sense, Maronite architecture is nothing but a simple tool through which man has tried to live in harmony with nature – it is nothing but the 'house of God' exhibiting the holy in its modesty and simplicity.

Lebanese Maronite houses evolved from the closed rectangular to the gallery house and from the 'Liwan' to the central hall house. Yet, throughout this process of evolution, residential architecture never ceased to influence Maronite religious architecture whether in form of construction, materials used, functional aim of architectural elements as well as the general quality of space.

Indeed, the Maronite built his churches and convents applying the same construction techniques and materials he used to erect his house, materials that are indigenous to Mount Lebanon. The Maronite church is rectangular in form with dimensions proportional to the human body; some churches do not exceed the 2.5 m in height, 5m in width and 8m in length, creating a cozy and humane atmosphere for prayer among community members similar to the welcoming feeling experienced at home with family members. Most Maronite churches are devoid of openings except for a small window (that opens towards the east) allowing light to bathe the space as a symbolism of the divine. A small door barely exceeding 2m in height is the only way for worshippers to enter the space, besides a secondary door placed laterally for the priests.

In the ensuing centuries, this closely knit relationship between religious and domestic architecture was only further connected, first through the 'Gallery House', then the 'Liwan House' and finally the 'Central Hall House'. The 'Gallery House' is reflected in religious architecture as the 'Riwaq' (narthex) inside the church, which acts as a transitional space between the outside and inside; i.e. between the profane and the sacred. In some cases, where the width of the church exceeds the length of the timber beam used to support the ceiling, two galleries are added along the lateral sides of the

²³⁰ For functional purposes and to lend the cell an autonomous independent quality, latrines are included in the design of cells.

church dividing it into three parts that open up to each other by stone arcades. The gallery is also clear in architecture of Maronite convents where a covered corridor opens to the cloister with a series of pillars or archades wraps around the central courtyard inside the convent; thus, it connects the spaces and areas on the ground floor behind the gallery wall to the cloister as well as creating a passage way connecting rooms of monks on the upper floor with each other and providing them a view to the cloister. Some galleries may be found on upper floors of Maronite convents opening up to the outer landscape allowing adjacent room a clear view of nature as well as connecting area between these chambers.

The liwan plan is equally implemented in Maronite convents as a gathering area for the monks on upper floors where benches are placed all around the space. Liwan units may also be placed on ground floors of Maronite convents opening up to the cloister, which plays a role similar to the courtyard in residential architecture. These Liwan units open up to the outside through the use of various apertures and mostly arcaded windows. Likewise the 'Central Hall' design made its way to the Maronite religious architecture as a reception hall for guest visiting the convents and patriarchal sees, besides being the main space in the convent where monks gather, reminding us of family members in Maronite residences. This central hall often opened up to the outside through a triple arcaded French window leading to a balcony; and opening up to the surrounding lands and fields of the convent or nature of Mount Lebanon. In fact, it is rare to find a convent without a central hall and many big convents have more than one central hall located on different floors.

In clarifying the secular and religious dimensions of Maronite architecture and the strong bond that ties one to the other, it is critical at this point to delve into an in-depth study of Dweihi's manuscript, perhaps the only recognized document to deal in detail with the architectural constituencies of the Maronite church.

CHAPTER 4 THE MARONITE HOUSES OF WORSHIP In reference to Dweihi's manuscript

4.1 INTRODUCTION

It is important to study the work of patriarch Stephen Dweihi [1630-1704] on Maronite church architecture. This work forms a link among different ages, and discusses issues pertaining to history, architecture, symbolism, and theology of the Maronites. In this chapter, the architecture of the Maronite church will be studied in reference to Dweihi's '*Manarat Al Aqdass*' (Minaret of Holies), specifically chapter two entitled the 'second minaret'.

4.1.1 Rationale behind studying Dweihi's manuscript

On December 2, 1998, UNESCO classified Qadisha valley – the cradle of Maronitism – as a world heritage site²³¹. It is in this valley that patriarch Dweihi wrote his book, '*Manarat Al Aqdass*', whose study is considered worthy, at least to this research, for the following reasons: first the work does not rely on a scholastic theological methodology, for it is the result of reflections on the secret of God as experienced by a community of believers; second it is faithful to the Antiochian Syriac Maronite heritage; third it is the first and only reference explaining how Maronite churches were built. The uniqueness of this manuscript is further established with the disclosure of information that Dweihi gathered while living in Aleppo/Syria, where he compiled precious and rare manuscripts related to Maronite history²³².

The uniqueness of this manuscript lies in the fact that it is the earliest and perhaps the only historic document to comprehensively explore the architectural elements of the Maronite church; its significance, meaning, and symbolic content. This manuscript which is officially recognized by the Maronite church is unequivocally acknowledged as a foundation for any scholarly investigation of Maronite church architecture.

Dweihi's manuscript sheds light on the architecture of the Maronite church during the seventeenth century all the while linking it to the basic constituent of the early Catholic Christian church as prescribed in the Holy Books from the Old to the New Testament.

By exploring the characteristics of the Maronite church as elaborated upon in Dweihi's manuscript, it is hoped to affirm the link which ties this church to the initial mother church and more importantly to discern the qualities that set the Maronite church architecture as distinct and of their own. This approach will, therefore, pave the way for establishing a comparison between the various seminal Maronite church architecture, from its initial stage in the fifth century up until the present as a way to discern the common denominator between these various stages, a denominator that puts the particularities of that architecture into proper focus.

²³¹ Al Hakim, M., 1999. *Les Annales de Dweihi* [Kaslik: Université Saint Esprit Kaslik], 15.

²³² Biography of the author: Patriarch Dweihi was born in Ihden, 1630 AD. In 1641AD, he moved to Rome and learned philosophy and theology in addition to the old and current languages. In the year 1655, he was anointed priest. In 1663, he established a school in Aleppo known as the 'Maronite School'. In 1668, he became the bishop of Cyprus. Between 1670 & 1703, he was elected patriarch for the Maronite church. He died in May 3, 1703. He had around 30 publications on theology, preaching, creed, history, guidance, rituals, ecclesiastical order, Chirotonia (book of Sacerdotal Ordination) explanation, and others, all written in Syriac characters which is the Syriac alphabet with Arabic pronunciations.

4.1.2 Introducing ‘*Manarat Al Aqdass*’

In the book ‘*Manarat Al Aqdass*’ Dweihi explicitly explains the Eucharist and all issues related to the holy mass, reflecting the lifestyle of Maronites at that time. The writer explains the procedure which takes place in celebrating the holy mass, i.e. the liturgical function itself, the meanings of the celebration, i.e. the liturgical theology, and the place set to practice this liturgical function. In the first explanation of the second minaret of the first volume, and in particular between page 93 and 136, Dweihi describes and elaborates on the parts, content, and symbolism of the Maronite church in twelve chapters (appendix I)²³³. This chapter will attempt to deduce Dweihi’s main ideas on the Maronite church architecture with the purpose of reaching a basic architectural design for the Maronite church; thereby, the best way is to follow the same pattern found in his manuscript in order to preserve the text authenticity, while giving our interpretation and comments.

4.2 ON THE AIM OF BUILDING CHURCHES

4.2.1 The church’s definition and goal

According to Dweihi, the church is “a *public place set for the gathering of believers with the aim of serving God and dispersing of faith*”. He continues, “*Just as earthly kings build courts of law to judge and issue laws, it was equally just to build places in which believers could gather... these places being the holy churches*”²³⁴. Hence, the very existence of a certain place where believers could assemble in order to listen to the word of God and receive the sacraments is inevitable, for being together ‘in one place’ and adhering to ‘one faith’ insure spiritual coherence.

The act of worship, during the time of the apostles, used to take place in private houses – as in the temple of Jerusalem – and especially in houses and residences designated for the observing of the Christian rites. Christian houses used to have a separate room set for the holy service, in addition to specific houses to receive the believers.

4.2.2 The role of commonness, sanctification, and repetition

According to Dweihi, the Maronite church exhibits the following unique characteristics:

- Commonness: according to the apostle Paul, “you are one body and one spirit”²³⁵. The church is a place where all the faithful assemble, men and women, young and elderly. Yet, the quality of being public is inadequate without sanctification, hence the need for a ‘sacred place’.
- Sanctification: the church is made to serve God, to pray, to administer the sacraments, and to sanctify the Lord’s body²³⁶. He points to these sacred duties when he mentions the words of the apostle Paul on how he had forbidden women from

²³³ Chapter 1- On the Aim of Building Churches; Chapter 2- On the Names of the Church; Chapter 3- On the Mode of Building Churches; Chapter 4- On ‘*Kods Al Aqdass*’ [Holy of Holies/Holy of Holies/Holiest of All]; Chapter 5- On the Episcopal Seat Known as ‘*Cathedra*’; Chapter 6- On ‘*Beit Al Kods*’ [sanctuary] and its content; Chapter 7- On ‘*Al-Dar*’ [nave] and the mode of its interpretation; Chapter 8- On the lectern, baptistery, hand-bell and the contents of ‘*Al-Dar*’ (nave); Chapter 9- On the railing and the reason behind it; Chapter 10- On the church doors.

²³⁴ Al Dweihi, S., 1895, *Manarat Al Aqdass (Minaret of Holies)* [Beirut: Catholic Press], 93.

²³⁵ Ephesians, 4:4

²³⁶ [Dweihi, 1895: 93]

talking in the church and prohibited people from bringing food and drink into the sanctuary since it was regarded as a holy place and not one for enjoyment²³⁷.

- Repetition: The recurring assembly of believers in the same place makes it a 'center' specified for religious duties – the center being a symbol of God²³⁸.

It is noticeable that most of the churches have been built near water springs, in village centers, or on top of hills overlooking the neighborhood; these churches are governed by daily rituals which convey on them the properties of commonness, sanctification, and repetition, thus matching with patriarch Dweihi's aim.

4.3 ON THE NAMES OF THE CHURCH

In Christianity, the church has various names with one meaning; among these names are: the 'church of God' since it is the place where believers gather to pray and give offerings, 'the House of God', 'the Umbrella of God', 'the Dome of God', and 'the Place of God's Glory'²³⁹. The church has also been called: 'Feast' since believers congregate there in order to participate in the saints' feasts, also because the Lord has given His precious blood in exchange for our freedom, 'temple' in order to accommodate enough believers for the glorification of God, 'fold' since all people are God's sheep, and 'city of God'²⁴⁰.

4.4 ON THE CHURCHES' DESIGN

From the point of view of Christian theology, God has wished all living things to be subordinate to Him²⁴¹. He has wished everything to be related to Him: water, fire, air, earth, plants, animals, and man. Just as it was the aim of life in Christianity is to reunite the soul with its Creator, the One Eternal God, from whom all beings emanated. This reality dwells in the essence of all creation despite all its diversification and ramification. Moreover, in Christianity, man is regarded as a microcosm and is created, in the image of likeness of God; and man's body was the first temple Jesus Christ referred to when he said: "The kingdom of God is within you"²⁴².

Dweihi proceeds to discuss 'the beginning of the temple' saying that the building of churches is not a coincidence nor a matter related to man's will, for God, prior to ordering Moses to build the sanctuary, ordered him to go up to the mountain where He showed him a likeness²⁴³. Likewise, Revelation tells us how John was

²³⁷ I Corintheans 14:34

²³⁸ Eliade, M., 1975, *Traité d'Histoires des Religions* [Paris, Payot], 312

²³⁹ [Dweihi, 1895: 96]

²⁴⁰ The word *Kanisa* (church) is an Arabic translation of a Hebrew meaning a 'call to assemble'; it is a structure pointing to the spiritual sanctity and holiness in man. As for the specific meaning, the church is an institution held to serve groups of believers, guide them to spirituality. This is according to Sobhi Hamawi Al Yassou'I, in *Mo'jam Al Iman Al Masihi* (Dictionary of Christian Faith) [1994: 402-403].

²⁴¹ [Dweihi, 1895: 98]

²⁴² Genesis 1:27

²⁴³ Exodus 25:1-9

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, And blue purple, and scarlet and fine linen, and goats hair, And rams skins dyed red, and badgers skins, and shittim wood, Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it".

abducted in 'spirit' and taken to the holy City of Jerusalem (the city of the firstborn) where he didn't behold any temple because "*God the almighty and the lamb are its temple... and the crystal-clear river of life, which springs from God's throne and the lamb...*"²⁴⁴. This means that the father, son, and holy spirit are the 'temple of the holy city', and the example God had shown to Moses as mentioned by Dweihi²⁴⁵. Therefore, Dweihi elaborates by saying that the sanctuary has been made of two domes and a nave.

i- The first dome:

This dome is hidden, invisible, and cannot be seen by anyone; the pontiff enters it once annually²⁴⁶. It is worth mentioning God's words to Moses when He sent him up the mountain with Aron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel and ordered them to bow at a distance while allowing Moses to come closer. Later, Moses sent some Jewish youths to offer burnt sacrifices of lambs to God. Following the lambs' slaughter, Moses took half the blood, and put it in pots, and he sprinkled the other half on the altar and the masses saying: "Behold the blood of the new covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning..."²⁴⁷. Hence, this dome symbolizes the father, who is the first hypostasis – the Holiest of all [Holy of Holies] – from whom everything begins. This dome is invisible just as God has always been.

ii- The second dome:

This is the exterior dome, called '*Beit Al Kodss*' (sanctuary), in which offerings are presented, for the sake of forgiveness of sins. It is called 'external' because it symbolizes the Son who came out of the father's lap, descended to earth, and dressed our body²⁴⁸. Dweihi supports this saying by quoting the words of the apostle John: "For the Father Himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I come from God. I have come from the Father into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father"²⁴⁹.

iii- The nave:

This space is reserved as a locale for the masses; it symbolizes the holy spirit depicted by the apostle John as the 'sea of the water of life', since its actions are distributed among believers. According to John, all this is done by the one and only spirit distributing to everyone as He wishes. John likens the spirit to 'clear crystal' in order to emphasize the lights of purity and holiness by which it enlightens believers and gives joy to their souls. Moreover, John had seen the holy spirit come out of the throne of God and the lamb because it emanated from the Father and the son.

Dweihi concludes this chapter by considering that the construction was no coincidence – from the 'Sanctuary' God has shown to Moses to 'Solomon's temple' God has shown to David. This is further affirmed in the New Testament whereby churches have only been built in accordance with what has been prescribed by God:

²⁴⁴ As mentioned in *Revelation* 22:1-5:

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruits every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord god giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

²⁴⁵ [Dweihi, 1895: 101]

²⁴⁶ Exodus 29: 10-20

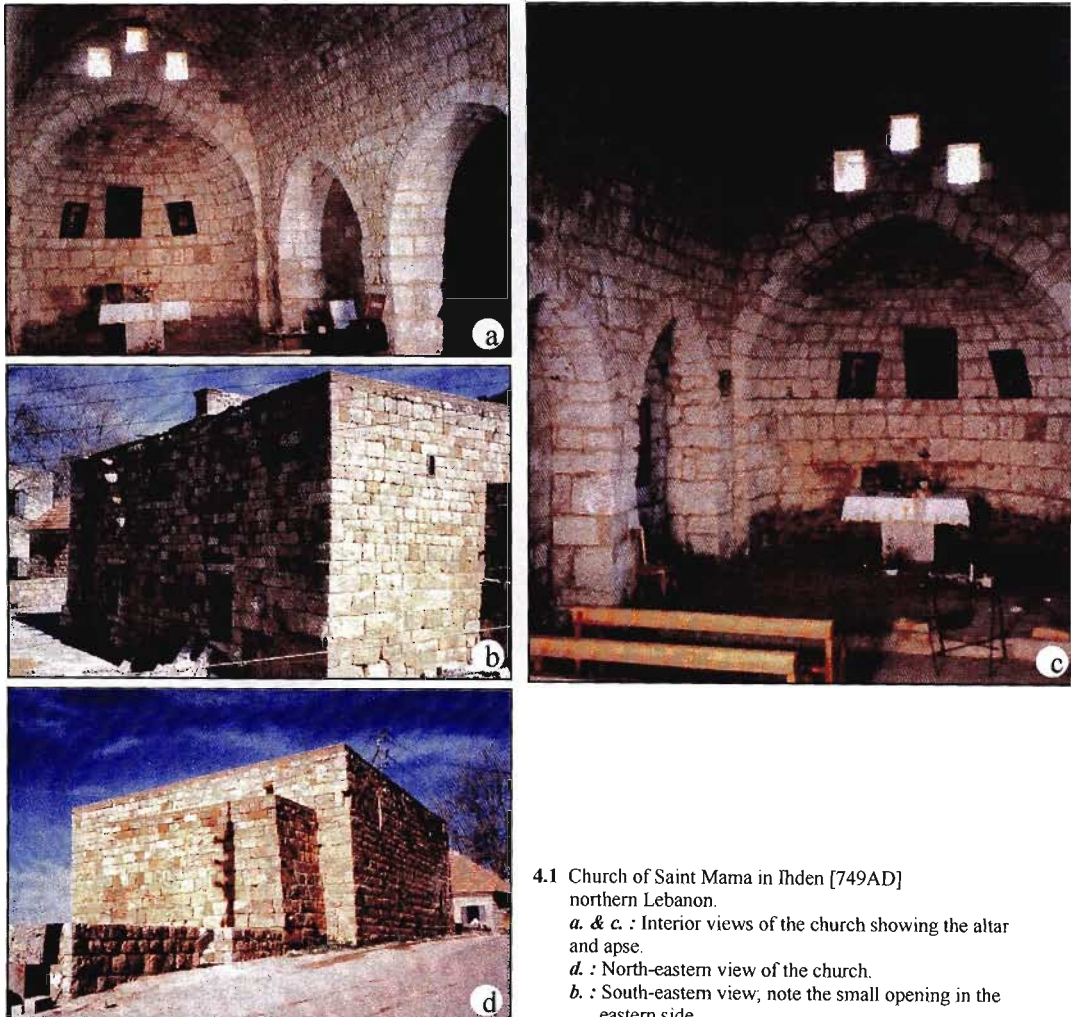
²⁴⁷ Exodus 24:8

²⁴⁸ [Dweihi, 1895: 102-103]

²⁴⁹ John 16:26-28

“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying: Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people...”²⁵⁰

It is for these reasons that the holy fathers have divided the big temples into three parts: ‘*Kods –Al Aqdass*’ – Holy of Holies/Holiest of all, ‘*Beit Al-Kodss*’ – the sanctuary, and ‘*Al-Dar*’ – the nave, all symbolizing the three hypostases. Dweihi maintains that the churches of St. Mama in Ihden [749 A.D.] (fig. 4.1), St. Saba in Bcharri [1112 A.D.] (fig. 4.2), St. Doumit in Toula/Batroun (fig. 4.3), and St. Charbel in Maad / Byblos (fig. 4.4), are good examples that illustrate this tripartite divisions in Maronite church architecture. The simple and plane appearance of these churches with their rough stone construction, an the affirmation of the Maronites yearning to meld their houses of worship with the sacred land . A more detailed discussion of similar churches will be attempted in the next chapter²⁵¹.



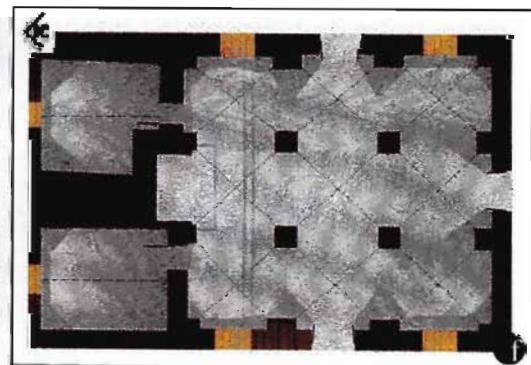
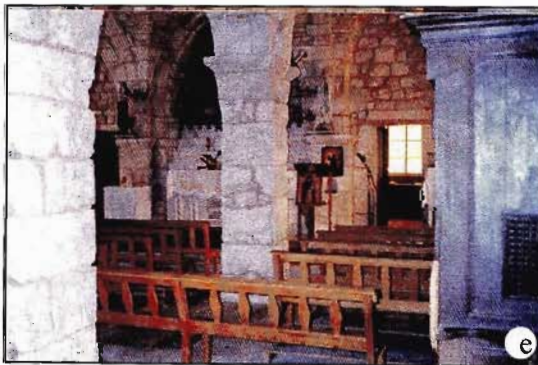
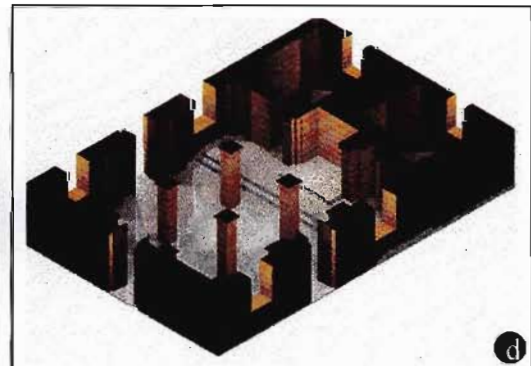
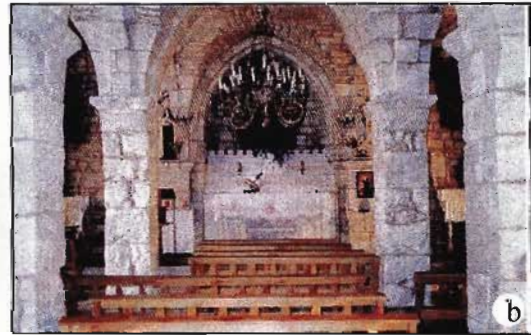
4.1 Church of Saint Mama in Ihden [749AD]
northern Lebanon.
a. & c. : Interior views of the church showing the altar and apse.
d. : North-eastern view of the church.
b. : South-eastern view; note the small opening in the eastern side.

²⁵⁰ Revelation 21:2-3

²⁵¹ This chapter is primarily concerned with the evolution of Maronite Houses of Worship according to Dweihi's manuscript. The next chapter will deal with the characteristics of the Maronite material heritage, its essence, meaning and design vocabulary.



4.2 *a. & b.* : Church of Saint Saba in Bcharri [1112AD]: near the water well was constructed the old church which is now demolished and replaced by this new one.
The only element besoeaking of a past heritage being this sole water well.



4.3 Church of Saint Doumit in Toula / Batroun.
a. & c. : Exterior views showing the entrance (westward) and the external stair (south-east).
e. & b. : Interior views showing the apse, altar and vaulted ceiling.
d. & f. : The author's own measure drawings (plan & axonometric) of the existing structure.



4.4 Church of Saint Charbel in Maad / Byblos.

a. & b. : Exterior view showing the bell-tower and simple entrance.

c. : A sensitive integration with the site, a quality still preserved in this church.

In reflecting on the previous section, it can be deduced that the church of the New Testament may be considered as a reflection of the church of the Old Testament as attested by the New Testament. The reason for this similarity is as follows: first the temple of Moses was built in the wilderness in a manner similar to 'the dome of righteousness' which was built in the sky'. Second the temple of Solomon built based on an image sent to his father David. Third, the holy Apostles ordered the construction of churches based upon what they had learned from God Himself.

One can equally deduce that the tripartite division of the church reflects the secret of the holy trinity which Dweihi mentioned as being "...revealed to us through the incarnation of the Savior"²⁵².

In this sense, it is logical to assume that Dweihi has meant to designate the secret of the holy trinity by the symbol of the two domes and the nave. Indeed, the holy fathers have divided the big temples into three parts: 'Kods Al-Aqdass' (Holy of Holies), 'Beit Al Kods' (Sanctuary), and 'Al Dar' (nave), signifying the three hypostases".

4.5 ON THE HOLY OF HOLIES AND ITS INTERPRETATION

4.5.1 Significance of the name

The Holy of Holies is the most sacred location within the church; it was called 'the internal dome', 'the dome of righteousness' 'the great dome', 'the perfect dome', 'God's home', 'the temple of God's holiness', 'the residence of comfort', 'the third sky'; St. Clement invokes God by saying: "you who reside in the Holy of Holies".

²⁵² [Dweihi, 1895: 102-103]

4.5.2 Components of the 'Holy of Holies'

The 'epistle of the Hebrews' points out that the 'Holy of Holies' is composed of the following: "... the golden censer, the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenants; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat"²⁵³. The following is a discussion of these elements.

i- '*Al-Arch*' (the throne) and its surroundings (the four animals):

John, in his revelation, describes the components of the Holy of Holies²⁵⁴. The holy fathers used to depict God seated in the apses of churches on the throne of grandeur and around Him the four animal faces with angels serving the incense, while lanterns shine around the throne. The aim behind this image is to enable the priest – when presenting the offerings in the holy mass – to direct his vision towards the throne (the frescos of the apse of St. Tadros in Behdidat are perfect example).

With regard to their symbolism, Dweihi explains the four animals and their number saying that this issue has been highly controversial among scholars. Some claim that the four animals designated God's virtues, while others claim that they designate the four evangelists. As for Dweihi, they stand for the four churches designating the four ages²⁵⁵.

ii- The golden censer:

At the functional level, the golden censer is intended for the burning of incense during the rituals. Opinions differ as to the actual location of the golden censer in Maronite churches. Dweihi supports his argument regarding the placement of the golden censer within the Holy of Holies by referring to the 'epistle of the Hebrews' on the subject. On the other hand, certain fathers of the church consider that the golden censer used to be placed outside the Holy of Holies and is in reality the altar of incense mentioned in the Exodus which was made of shittim wood and overlaid with pure gold²⁵⁶. Patriarch Dweihi further supports his belief by referring to St. Ephraim [nd - 373 A.D.] and St. Augustine [354-430 A.D.] both of whom considered the golden censer inside the Holy of Holies²⁵⁷. Thus, Dweihi concludes that there existed an Altar made of shittim wood in the Sanctuary for the burning of incense, and a golden censer placed in the Holy of Holies. This altar of incense represents the 'natural law era', which itself is representative of 'the first church'.

iii- The ark of the covenant:

The ark of the covenant contains the two tablets of the commandments, Aron's rod, and the Manna which have been mentioned in the Old Testament. It is made of

²⁵³ Hebrews 9:3-5

²⁵⁴ "And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne... and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle" [Revelation 4: 3-7].

²⁵⁵ The first church: was in the 'Era of Nature', from Adam to handing the nomos; it was similar to a lion since our early forefathers were able to subjugate the ferocious and beasts before the sin.

The second church: was in the 'Nomos Era', from Moses to the advent of Christ; it looked like a bull. Dweihi gave the reasoning behind its form is that the nomos is 'heavy' on people or because bulls are usually carried to the sanctuary as offering to the gods.

The third church: it was in the 'Era of Grace', from the times of Christ till eternity and that is why it resembles the human being.

The fourth church: it is the Eucharistic church – resembling an eagle and signifying the deliverance from experiences and ascending towards righteousness like an eagle rises up high.

²⁵⁶ Exodus, 30:5

²⁵⁷ [Dweihi, 1895: 106]

shittim wood covered with gold²⁵⁸. One can say that the Manna, which is considered the heavenly food of the soul, is nothing but the bread of the Eucharist in the New Church, for the latter bread is 'the bread of life' according to the Evangelist John.

iv- The place of forgiveness:

The issue of the place of forgiveness as presented by patriarch Dweihi is rather ambiguous due to the vagueness of the text itself. In this study, the place of forgiveness is assumed to be "a pot made of gold containing Manna", a conclusion that has been reached on the basis of supporting textual evidence in the epistle to the Hebrews: "And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had the manna"²⁵⁹. Moreover, in the 'Dictionnaire des Symboles' states the contents of the ark of the covenant as: "... vase fully of manna, Aron's rod..."²⁶⁰. The place of forgiveness is made of molded gold, signifying the 'Third Church', i.e. the 'Age of Grace' with the coming of Jesus Christ.

v- The cherubims:

Cherubims refer to an angelic being equipped with wings that occupy the second order in the celestial hierarchy. As status of angels made of pure gold, they are symbolically meant to shade the place of forgiveness; this is in accordance with what God had ordered Moses when He addressed him from between the cherubims saying: "And there I will meet thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony..."²⁶¹. Furthermore, the cherubims symbolize the 'fourth church' - the 'church of the firstborn'.

Dweihi mentions that the presence of the two cherubims above the forgiveness place might also show that God has sent His angels to guard humans and to give the law to the forefathers through them.

4.5.3 The eastern wall of the 'Holy of Holies'

According to Dweihi, the holy fathers have ordered that the eastern wall be curved in form just like the apse, with an opening towards the east above it. Below the opening -right inside the apse- a high chair is to be set in the churches of bishops. In the middle of the apse, the Lord is depicted surrounded by angels, lit lamps, and the fine smell of burning incense, while the holy spirits encompass Him.

The following points are worth- mentioning:

- the eastern curved wall signifies the embrace of God in His sacred temple
- the opening towards the east above the apse signifies light as God's essence, for He is the father of light
- the chair below the opening inside the apse signifies the throne of God's glory
- God's depiction in the center of the apse symbolizes Him as the source of wisdom.

The holy fathers have required that in the Holy of Holies, the ark of the secrets should exist and should contain the following four entities: 'the body of the Lord', 'the holy chrism', 'the baptism oil', and 'the epiphany water'. For these are superior to those entities placed in the ark of the covenant because it is through these elements that God has bestowed His grace on man.

²⁵⁸ Exodus 25

²⁵⁹ Hebrews 4:9

²⁶⁰ Chevalier, J., Gheerbrant, A., 1969; 1982, *Dictionnaire des Symboles*. [Paris: Laffont & Jupiter], 73.

²⁶¹ Exodus 25:22

It may be concluded here that the Holy of Holies has been and still is the holiest place in the church; its symbol is the father; for through the ark of the covenant (with the entities related to it) had been inside the Holy of holies in the past, in today's church, the latter includes the ark of the secrets through which God has fulfilled His grace on human. Indeed, from the temple of Moses till the church of the New Testament, all the things that were found in the Holy of Holies have been symbols of the father's grandeur and of the ways leading to Him.

4.6 ON THE EPISCOPAL SEAT (CATHEDRA)

4.6.1 Definition of episcopal seat

Patriarch Dweihi begins this chapter with the remark uttered by the apostle Peter when he asked his pupil Clement to sit at a high place to observe the people²⁶². Dweihi considers that the episcopal seats are not realized except in episcopal churches, which he considers perfectly right since bishops are the successors of the apostles and should consequently be seated on chairs of glory. This issue is significant to the extent that it was mentioned both in Samuel I²⁶³ and in Matthew²⁶⁴.

However, in some churches, there exists a high platform-sometimes likened to a throne-yet, it is not the seat Dweihi meant in this chapter but the 'Bima' which is widespread in Maronite churches, such as the one in the church of St. Ilige in Mayfouk (fig.4.5). When the church was inspired by the architecture of the Basilica (Roman court of law) in building the Basilican churches, the word 'Bima' was no longer used in its civil sense and began to be used in the ecclesiastical sense meaning three things:

- the throne of the bishop in the center of the sanctuary containing the altar
- the preaching pulpit in the nave of the church
- in some parts of Syria and Iraq, the platform or tribune in the nave of the church above which is the stone throne, surrounded by six chairs to the right and six chairs to the left for the high-priest of the ceremony and his deputies-members of the priesthood²⁶⁵

It can be deduced that the seat Dweihi referred to is the bishop's seat and not the Bima, since the latter is known in the Maronite church to be used not by the bishop, but for the periodical celebration of rituals as well as for reading the bible²⁶⁶. Dweihi's identification of the seat as the bishop's removes all doubt concerning the seat and the Bima; moreover, the latter is in fact found in non-episcopal churches, which clearly shows that the throne referred to by Dweihi is not the Bima known in Maronite churches. A few further remarks may be added here: In ancient times, the episcopal seat used to be set to the east of the altar, and it used to be made of stone. In Roman churches, the 'Cathedra' is set at a high point and is made to seat the high priests; and the 'Cathedra' which seated the apostle Peter in Rome was made of wood²⁶⁷.

²⁶² [Dweihi, 1895: 108]

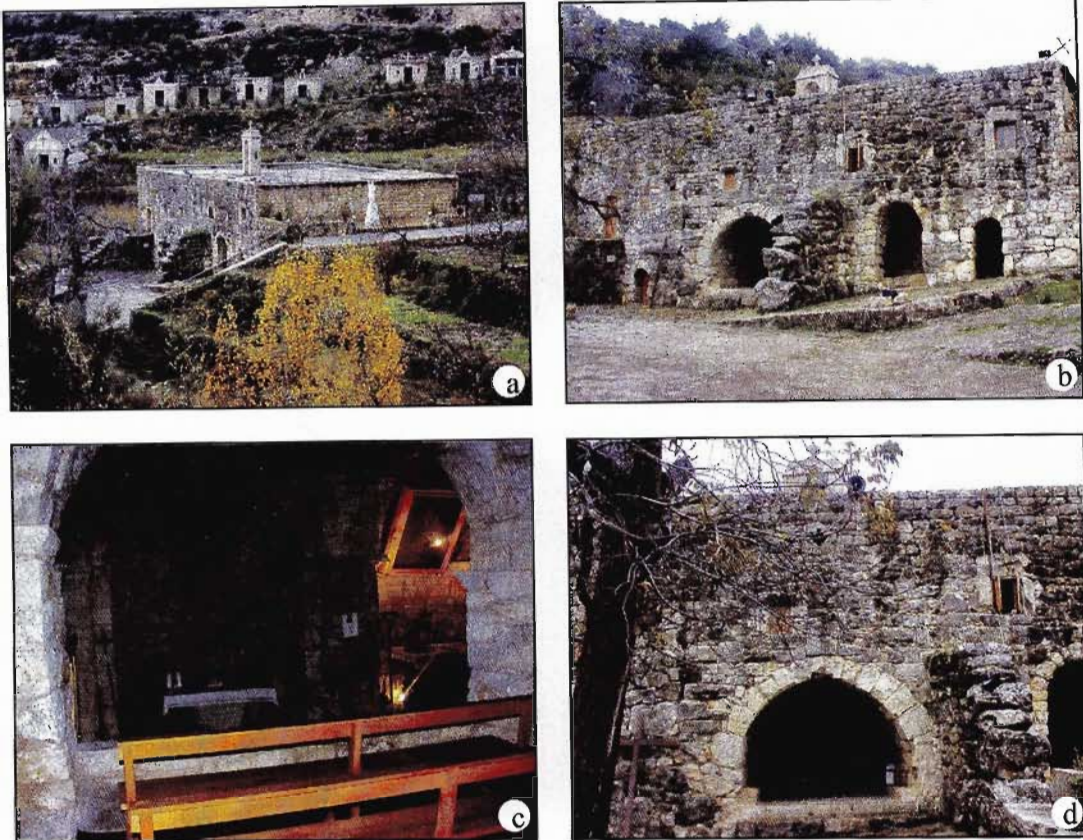
²⁶³ *I Samuel* 4:4: "...So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord the hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims..."

²⁶⁴ *Matthew* 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel".

²⁶⁵ Daou, B., 1972. II., *Tarikh Al Mawarina – Al Deini Wal Siyasi Wal Hadari, Al Kana'es Al Marouniya Al Qadima Fi Souriya Min Mar Maroun Ila Al Karn Al Sabe'* (Maronite History – Religious, Political and Cultural – Ancient Maronite Churches in Syria from Saint Maroun till the Seventh Century) [Beirut: Dar Al Nahar], vol 2, 42.

²⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 116

²⁶⁷ [Dweihi, 1895: 109]



4.5 Our Lady of Ilige church [1121], Mayfouk.

a. & b. : Exterior views of the church expressing total harmony with the genius loci of the site. Even the burial tombs seen in the background honor the morphology of the site.

d. : The inviting Narthex of the church.

c. : Interior view showing the Bima that is higher in level, over looking the altar.

4.6.2 Location and materials of building

The 'Cathedra' is set on a high place for two reasons: Out of respect for priesthood which embodies divine power and for the sake of teaching. There should be built a stair below the episcopal seat, to symbolically signify that the one seated on that staircase cannot ascend and improve except by ascending the stair of virtues. Around the episcopal seat, various seats and platforms are set in order to seat the deacons. In the patriarchal church, seats must be placed for the bishops, with the chair of the high priest located at a level higher than others, thereby, enabling him to view all the faithful.

Stone is used to build the seats because it signifies the sturdiness of faith. According to the Bible:

- "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock"²⁶⁸.
- "For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy"²⁶⁹.
- "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings"²⁷⁰.

²⁶⁸ Psalms 27:5

²⁶⁹ *ibid*, 61:3

²⁷⁰ *ibid*, 40:2

- "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"²⁷¹.

On the basis of what has been explained, it can be argued that the episcopal seat may be in the middle of the apse-the Holy of Holies-below the opening and raised by a number of steps.

4.7 ON THE SANCTUARY AND ITS CONTENTS

In describing the contents of the Maronite Houses of Worship, Dweihi maintains that the sanctuary is regarded as the sacred dome symbolizing the son²⁷²; whereby God has ordered for three things to be put in the sanctuary: the altar of incense, the 'table of the shewbread', and a 'candlestick with seven lamps'. These points are mentioned in Exodus²⁷³ and the 'letter to the Hebrews'²⁷⁴.

4.7.1 The altar

The altar which signifies the shedding of the Lord's blood is made of shittim wood overlaid with brass, with four brazen rings on both sides used for carrying it. What is said here on this issue matches well with that which is found in Exodus and the 'Letter to the Hebrews'²⁷⁵.

Patriarch Dweihi infers that the holy fathers have commanded that the episcopal seat be set in the apse to represent the throne of the Father in the temple of His holiness. At the same time, those fathers have ordered that the altar should be placed in the

²⁷¹ Matthew 16:18

²⁷² [Dweihi, 1895: 112]

²⁷³ Exodus 27

"And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the high thereof shall be three cubits. And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass. And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his basons, and his fleshhooks, and his firepans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass. And thou shalt make for it a grate of network of brass; and upon the net shalt thou make four brazen rings in the four corners thereof. And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midst of the altar. And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with brass. And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, to bear it. Hollow with boards shalt thou make it: as it was shewed thee in the mount..."

²⁷⁴ Hebrews 9

"Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; which had the olden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant. And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly".

²⁷⁵ Exodus 27: 1-8

"And thou shalt make the altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be four-square: and the height thereof shall be three cubits. And thou shalt make the horns of it upon four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass. And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his bassoons, and his fleshhooks, and his firepans: all thereof thou shalt make of brass. And thou shalt make for it a grate of network of brass; and upon the net shalt thou make four brazen rings in the four corners thereof. And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midst of the altar. And thou shalt make staves for the compass of the altar, staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with brass. And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the shall be put upon the two sides of the altar, to bear it. Hollow with boards shalt thou make it: as it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make it."

sanctuary in order to signify the son's seat in the dome of His glory. Thus, the seat used to be placed in the apse with the altar in front of it in ancient churches.

What seems to be a problem is that some churches put the seat beyond the railing (symbolizing a veil between the nave and the apse) and towards the southern end, as the case is in the orthodox churches; and at other times, it is set at the northern side as the case in the Roman churches; and this contradicts the placement in the ancient churches. The difficulty here lies in specifying the position of the altar with respect to the seat. Patriarch Dweihi has clarified that the altar is set in front of the seat and to its right, but he hasn't specified the role or nature of the altar, which has a lot of meanings such as 'table of offerings', 'table of shewbreads', etc. [as previously mentioned]. On the other hand, it can be surmised that the altar mentioned by Dweihi is the table of offerings because this matches with what was mentioned in Exodus²⁷⁶ and fits with the internal order of the Holy of Holies as in kings I²⁷⁷.

Dweihi argues that the Holy Books affirm that the son sits to the right of the Father, as it is expressed by the prophet David: "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand..."²⁷⁸. He continues arguing and referring to what St. Stephan declared: "*Hereby, I see the open skies and the son of man brought to God's right*". This is equally evidenced in the New Testament when the Lord tells his apostles: "...*from now you see the son of man sitting to the right of divine power*..."²⁷⁹.

The holy books say that the altar was set up in front of the throne, for John declares: I heard a voice from the four horns of the gold altar which is in front of God's throne. In this context Dweihi wonders why, if the son sits to the right of the Father, does John the apostle say that the altar is set in Front of God's throne? Moreover, according to the teachings of the church the savior has a dual nature: divine and human. Thus, when Moses made the table of shewbread and the offerings altar, God ordered him to make them from shittim wood which cannot be infested by weevils and to cover the altar with copper and the table with pure gold; shittim wood signifies the human nature in the Lord which hasn't known corruption, while gold and copper signify the divine nature. For just as poor wood is beautified by gold, and the latter assembles well with the former, so human nature is beautified by godliness, and both have united together.

The Divine nature of Jesus Christ has two characteristics: being the son of God and being equal to the Father in essence and power. As to His human nature, the son also has two characteristics: A pontiff who ransomed us with his blood and a king sitting to the right of God.

Patriarch Dweihi reminds how God, in the Old Testament, has ordered that no one enters the Holy of Holies except the highest ranking pontiff and only once a year for the purpose of presenting calf blood and sprinkling it on the people to purify the

²⁷⁶ Exodus 40:22-29

"And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the veil. And he set the bread in order upon it before the Lord; as the Lord had commanded Moses. And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward. And he lighted the lamps before the Lord; as the Lord commanded Moses. And he set up the hanging at the door of the tabernacle. And he put the altar of burnt offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meat offering; as the Lord commanded Moses".

²⁷⁷ Kings I 6:20-21

"And the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold; and so covered the altar which was of cedar."

²⁷⁸ Psalms 110:1

²⁷⁹ [Dweihi, 1895: 115]

bodies. This sole entrance here symbolizes the sole entrance of the Savior, with his blood, into the 'dome of righteousness' and into the embrace of the Father without any allowance made for the angels or human ideas to enter with him, for only the son can enter into the embrace of the Father. It is relevant here to make reference to what is mentioned in the 'Letter to the Hebrews'²⁸⁰ that Jesus Christ did not enter the Holy of Holies with goats or calves but with his own blood, and that was done only once to find, as a consequence, eternal redemption.

For all these reasons, it can be affirmed that the altar is set to the right of the seat for people to know that the son, as divine, is equal to the Father in essence and worth, and as human, He eternally rules with Him. Moreover, it is evident that it is the 'high priest' who sits on the seat behind the altar, especially in serving the holy sacraments during the following rituals:

- when he wears the service garments;
- in the part begun by preaching, where he recites the prayer in front of the altar and then goes to the seat and stays there till the beginning of the anaphora;
- after calling the holy spirit, where he takes his seat and remains there till the end;
- and when sermons and the like are recited;

Thus, it can be safely concluded that the altar is set up in front of the seat and to its right side and is reserved for the holy offerings.

The mode of building the altar

i- a dome on top of the altar to embrace the Lord's body:

The forefathers of the church had commended the setting of a well proportioned dome above the altar in big temples, held up on four pillars with four drapes and four statues on top of the four corners representing the angels or the four animals previously mentioned. They had also ordered that an apple be placed on top of the dome, surmounted by a cross. Good examples to illustrate this point in Maronite churches are the two examples to be given here on this issue are the church of 'Mar Saba' in Bshari and that of Our Lady in Aleppo²⁸¹.

The symbolism of the dome, it signifies the following:

- the glory of the son in the church;
- the four pillars symbolize the four ecumenical councils (Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D., Council of Constantinople I in 381 A.D., Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., and Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D.);
- the four statues represent the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, who spread the gospel to the four corners of the earth.
- the four drapes represent the shroud that was wrapped around the body of Jesus Christ.
- The apple and the cross are a symbol of the holy kingdom that believers are promised to reach with the help of the sacred cross.
- under this dome, the 'holy body of the Lord' is placed.

ii- The raised and stepped area under the altar:

This area is actually set under the altar and is surrounded by lamps, images of saints, and lit candles when celebrating holy offerings; deacons usually stand around this raised and stepped area holding thuribles and fans²⁸². This place symbolizes the angels' orders and the ranks of the holy persons.

²⁸⁰ Hebrews 9: 11-14

²⁸¹ [Dweihi, 1895: 114]

²⁸² *ibid*

iii- The holy garments:

The altar is covered with holy garments from its top downwards representing the garments of the heavenly bridegroom.

4.7.2 The table of shewbread

This table which symbolizes the bread of life is situated to the north of the dome. It is made of shittim wood, overlaid with gold and crowned with a golden garland; four rings are set on its four sides to facilitate carrying²⁸³. Moreover, the expression 'table of shewbread' used by the author is the literal interpretation of the expression 'table of the Holy Bread' found in the Exodus²⁸⁴. Besides, the holy bread is the one mentioned by the Lord in the two biblical books, Chronicles and Samuel I²⁸⁵; and the expression 'table of shewbread', 'table of the holy bread', or 'table of gold' carries the name of 'table of the bread of offering' according to Exodus.

Concerning its symbolism, bread is the basic spiritual food as Jesus Christ said: "I am the bread of life: He that cometh to me shall never thirst"²⁸⁶. As for the architectural location of the table, it might be at the northern side of the sanctuary facing the candlesticks at the southern side. Note that it is possible to find a well-documented and accurate description that matches this view²⁸⁷.

4.7.3 The candlestick with seven lamps

The candlestick with seven lamps is located at the other end of the dome, next to the southern windward; it is made of pure gold with seven gold candlesticks on it representing "*the seven secrets of the church or the seven books of the New Testament since in as much as it sends rays of grace to souls, it tears the veils of sin from hearts*"²⁸⁸.

It is noticeable that in his revelation, John has dealt with this issue when he talked about the temple in the sky: "And I beheld and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and the midst of the elders, stood a lamp as if it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth"²⁸⁹.

²⁸³ *ibid.*, 112

²⁸⁴ Exodus 25:23

"Thou shalt also make a table of shittim wood: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt make unto it a border of an hand breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them. And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me always."

²⁸⁵ Samuel I 21:4-5

"Now thereof what is under thine hand? Give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present. And the priest answered David, and said, there is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread..."

²⁸⁶ John 6:35

²⁸⁷ We mention here a symbolic explanation matching with what has been said in the *Dictionnaire des Symboles* [1982: 722]

²⁸⁸ [Dweihi, 1895: 113]

²⁸⁹ Revelation 5:6

4.8 ON AL-DAR (NAVE) AND ITS INTERPRETATION

4.8.1 Introduction of the nave

The nave (Al-Dar) is defined as the place where believers meet to pray, attend the mass, listen to Holy Scripture, and observe other practices related to serving God. Thus, it is quite clear that the nave is the space that should be given proper architectural attention, since it is the setting where believers gather to fulfill their religious duties.

It is certain, from the Christian point of view, that the lay man entering the church (or the nave, more specifically) is someone who indulged his desires; and, according to Dweihi, he is "*the one who is still susceptible to the enticements mentioned in the scripture*"²⁹⁰. Thus, contrary to the sanctuary and the Holy of Holies, which require that any one entering them has already passed the test and won in the experience (hoping to abide by the grace to reach eternal glory), the nave is meant to make the person entering it understand the rank he/she is at and compare it to what is nobler and to what is less noble. Here, it is relevant to cite the following from the 'Maronite Encyclopedia': "*the demarcation between the sacred and the profane is an expression of deference to the sacred which has conditioned the religious architecture in Orient since the third millennium before our era. The temple of Jerusalem, which had its Holy of Holies enclosed by a veil, gave a symbolic value for this separation. Thus, the Maronite church has maintained the old oriental reminiscences, which will disappear with the Latinization*"²⁹¹.

4.8.2 The nave subdivisions

The nave is divided into three parts. The prayer place, the temple, and the external-nave (narthex).

i- The prayer place:

This is the most sacred place in the nave, being the closest to the sanctuary. High priests, priests, and deacons assemble here for prayer and praise of God. It is also the place where the chorus is received and where the matrimonial ceremony and most other ecclesiastical affairs are held.

For an architectural point of view, placing, the chorus (the orthodox name of the prayer place) in the holiest place of the nave corresponds to Chevalier's assertions that correspond to the 'breath' of the Creator and that of the created. The question raised is what is set in the prayer place? According to patriarch Dweihi, in Orthodox churches rows of chairs are placed for the sacristans of the altar, depending on rank²⁹². In addition, the episcopal seat is placed beside the prayer place "... *near the railing facing the southern windward, making the seat squarish in shape-like the fold- between the railing and the two corners in the center of the nave*..."²⁹³. But how can distinctions be made between the episcopal seat in the Orthodox church and other seats. The corner is equally enigmatic! In other words, what are those two corners in the center of the nave mentioned by Dweihi? In Orthodox churches three doors are located in the chorus: western, for the entry of the clergy, eastern, to allow entry to the sanctuary (this is called the Royal Entrance), and northern, for the procession of the gospel and the sacraments.

²⁹⁰ [Dweihi, 1895: 124]

²⁹¹ Moukarzel, A., 1992, "L'Architecture Maronite", *Encyclopédie Maronite*. [Kaslik: Université Saint Esprit Kaslik], 380.

²⁹² [Dweihi, 1895: 121]

²⁹³ *ibid*

Dweihi goes on to say: “As for our fathers, owners of the Antiochian seats, they have overlooked the seats and forced themselves to pray while standing... the ancient history of the Forefathers-especially pupils of our father Maron- says they have spent all their lives standing on their feet day and night and have split into two groups or choirs in front of the Royal Entrance...”²⁹⁴. In the same vein, the Maronite Encyclopedia says: “... Another mark of deference is that the faithful remained standing all the ceremony, most probably in the memory of their hermit Maron. Benches were introduced later on with the Latin influence”²⁹⁵.

It becomes clear that apart from the episcopal seat located in the nave; there is no place to seat the Maronite priests and the other clergy participating in prayers behind the railing. In other words, the clergy are seated to the outside of the railing.

ii- The temple:

This is the place specified for the believers who are baptized by water and in ‘spirit’. It is located right behind the prayer place (or the chorus). Concerning Dweihi’s manuscript only refers to the temple as the ‘second locality for prayer’ after the Chorus. In large churches, the temple is divided into three parts: the middle part, for married couples and their children; the southern part, for young men; and the northern part for virgins²⁹⁶.

iii-The external nave (narthex):

This is the place which God has specified for the penitents, listeners, and those to whom the sermon or the preaching is given-those who are on the way of becoming disciples. Those were not allowed to attend the offering of the holy sacraments but were sent out, by the sub-deacon after reading the Bible when the head deacon would say: ‘Go with peace thou listener...’.

The external nave is made sacred with the holy chrism like the sanctuary and the Holy of Holies; thus it is similarly worthy of veneration and respect.

Researchers differ in terms of location of the external nave; According to *Tarikh Al Kanisa Al Masihiya* (History of the Christian Church)²⁹⁷, the church interior used to be built in accordance with those of the third century, and the temple was divided into three parts. With time, it became separated the gallery (narthex). It seems that in the beginning, there was a wall separating the middle part of the temple from the narthex. The reason was that the penitents and listeners, for whom the narthex has been made, were gradually decreasing in number. The narthex is the place specified for penitents and for those being preached to.

One can argue that the external nave is linked to the last part of the church and is separated from it by a wall. Nonetheless, the narthex is part of the church for the following reasons: first, it is called ‘the external nave’ by patriarch Dweihi; second, it is specified for penitents and listeners to the sermon (this confirms the presence of the

²⁹⁴ [Dweihi, 1895: 122]

²⁹⁵ Moukarzel, A., 1992, “L’Architecture Maronite”, *Encyclopédie Maronite* .[Kaslik: Université Saint Esprit Kaslik], 380.

²⁹⁶ According to Dweihi [122], the place for men was set to the south since the hot southern wind could be handled by men are more resistant to hardships than women. As for the women their place was set to the north as the northern wind is regarded as gentle and in keeping with their gentle temperament. Hence, we notice the ‘God does not burden people more than they can handle’.

²⁹⁷ Samirnof, A., 1911(ed); 1964, *Tarikh Al Kanisa Al Masihiya* (History of the Christian Church). Translation by Jeha, A. [Syria: _], 355.

latter not inside or among the believers and not totally outside the church); and third, the architectural rationale agrees with such an idea.

4.8.3 Symbolism of the nave

The nave is the abode of the holy spirit, where He spreads His gifts on the believers²⁹⁸. In the Book of Revelation, John defines the nave as a river as pure as crystal issuing out of 'God's throne and His Lamb'. Moreover, the nave indicates that the life of the believers is 'made chaste' by the holy spirit both bodily and spiritually; for ordination, baptism and wedlock all rendered chaste by the holy spirit till humans reach perfection (all the time from the Christian point of view).

According to Dweihi, the nave embodies an indication of the life of the fathers, their assembly, and their glory in God's kingdom. He considers that from the beginning, God has created some things as hidden and concealed, while others as apparent and announced so as to recognize the hidden through the obvious. He elaborates further by arguing that God wanted us to be composed of body and soul, the soul invisible and the body apparent²⁹⁹; and from the movements of the body, one recognizes the soul. In this sense, God concealed His divine nature for miracles to appear. It, therefore, follows that the lamp and incense, the altar and the Holy Bible, are all 'insinuations' needed by the believer in order to transcend the physical world and enter heavenly grace. As such, the architect needs to take these 'insinuations' into consideration when designing the church because these are essential to architecture.

Apart from the aforementioned elements, the nave contains chandeliers suspended from the ceiling and pictures set on the walls. In addition, there are places for educating people and others to glorify the Creator and the saints and to serve the sacraments³⁰⁰.

4.9 ON THE PULPIT, BAPTISTERY, HAND-BELL, AND OTHER CONTENTS OF THE NAVE

4.9.1 A brief historical view

According to the Old Testament, God has ordered that pulpits, tables, and copper pillars should be set up in the nave³⁰¹. Moreover, in accordance with the New Testament, the holy fathers have ordered that lecterns, pulpits, baptisteries, holy water pots, mirrors, Ostrich eggs, and hand-bells should be placed in the nave.

4.9.2 The lectern

Two reading stands are set in front flanking the two sides of the railing. The question here is that Dweihi has pointed out that the lecterns are placed 'in front of the railing', but the word 'in front' may have two different interpretations: either 'in front' with the priest is in the sanctuary looking at the people; or that 'in front' (i.e. the frontal position) is in the nave! In this study, the lecterns are considered to be in front of the railing, without being in the sanctuary. What supports this viewpoint is that Dweihi has

²⁹⁸ The nave shows that the life of God fearing people is followed by the holy spirit, physically and spiritually. The baptism, marriage... all point to the soul accompanying us, till we reach perfection.

²⁹⁹ [Dweihi, 1895: 124]

³⁰⁰ *ibid.*, 123

³⁰¹ *ibid.*, 124

pointed out these lecterns in the paragraph dealing with the items found in the nave. As to their use, the lecterns are used for reciting the communal prayer (day and night), reciting from the holy books, and saying the hymns of the fathers and the martyrs' synaxorium.

The elevated position of the lectern symbolizes the following:

- the sacraments, being holy, should be called for from an elevated position and not from a low one.
- the lord had given the commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai.
- John the disciple had been taken to a high mountain when the Lord wanted to show him the heavenly Jerusalem.
- Jesus Christ had taught on top of the mountain and had transfigured there; at the end, he had ascended to heaven³⁰².

4.9.3 The pulpit

Set in the nave, the pulpit is used for reading the epistles and the gospels, for giving sermons, and for realizing the processions of chrism and martyrs. With regard to symbolism, the pulpit has two significances: it signifies Zion's stage where God had taught the apostles to persist in their love for Him, and the tombstone where the angel had stood preaching the women about the Lord's resurrection.

4.9.4 The baptistery

The baptistery used to be set outside the church or in its narthex so that only the 'son of light' might enter the church. Later on, the holy fathers ordered that it should be set in the northern side of the nave. A dove is placed over the baptistery as evidence for the settlement of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, it is made of stone to indicate the solidity and strength of the faith.

4.9.5 The epiphany pot

This pot is located in the nave for the purpose of containing the holy water. Patriarch Dweihl explains the benefits of holy water in cleansing the impurities of the body, disgracing demons, and curing penitents.

4.9.6 The round mirrors

These mirrors symbolize cleanliness; for just as the human being looks at his face in the mirror in order to remove the impurities associated with being human, so does the human soul that attempts to cleanse itself from the evils that have desecrated the face of God. The story of the 'magic mirror' is as old as the age of Pythagoras [~B.C.540-~475], who used to look at a 'magic mirror' in order to read the future (according to legend). Plato also spent his life drawing resemblance between the soul and mirrors. Many scholars have dealt with mirror symbolism³⁰³. Finally, it should be noted that these mirrors are supposed to be placed in the nave.

³⁰² *ibid*, 125

³⁰³ In reference to *Dictionnaire des Symboles* [Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1969 ;1982 : 638]

4.9.7 Ostrich Eggs

Patriarch Dweihi considers that the Ostrich does not stand on its eggs and does not incubate them till they hatch, but it observes them from a distance, and when ever the female is tired, the male takes its place because the eggs may rot if they are not watched³⁰⁴. Similarly, when people enter the church, they must have all their senses directed towards God only without allowing any earthly matter to distract them from their ultimate aim.

4.9.8 The hand-bell

Referring to the Old Testament, Noah used to beat the hand-bell three times a day to gather the workers or to announce the at meal time. It also mentions that God once ordered the people of Israel to use the hand-bell as horn used by the priest to call on the people.

4.10 ON THE RAILING AND THE REASONS FOR ITS USE

As Moses was fashioning the 'holy place', he was ordered by God to build two veils, one separating the nave from the sanctuary, and the second separating the sanctuary from the Holy of Holies³⁰⁵. Consequently, the fathers have at all times separated the Holy of Holies from the sanctuary by a stone wall and have always screened the sanctuary from the nave by a railing.

In the church of Haghia Sophia, the emperor Constantine has made the door of the railing in two parts and placed a curtain covering it all from the inside, this was meant conceal from view the things that the believers should not see such as the ordination of priests³⁰⁶. Most Roman Catholic churches have kept the railing, making its height half a yard and raising the altar three steps to enable the faithful to easily observe all the issues related to the mass.

With regard to symbolism, the railing is set at the center of the nave in order to point out that the knowledge of God by the layman is not as complete as that of the blessed. As such, the place designed for the people is architecturally separated from that of the deacons, which is in turn separated from the places of the priests and the high priests, each place being given according to status and rank. Moreover, the railing is set between the nave and the sanctuary to make the point that not all creation can attain the divine nature; the railing is symbolically between the inhabitants of heaven and those of the earthly world.

³⁰⁴ [Dweihi, 1895: 127]

³⁰⁵ Exodus 26: 13-37

³⁰⁶ Exodus 26: 31-37

"And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made: And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold, upon the four sockets of silver.

And thou shalt hang up the veil under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy.

And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place.

And thou shalt set the table without the vail, and the candlestick over against the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south: and thou shalt put the table on the north side.

And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework.

And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, and their hooks shall be of gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them."

4.11 ON CHURCH DOORS

The design of doors in Maronite church architecture places a significant role both at the functional and symbolic levels. As openings in the walls meant to provide a link and an access between various functional spaces of the church, doors equally play a symbolic role in that they act a transitional layer between what lies within, meaning sacred and what lies beyond, meaning secular.

According to patriarch Dweihi, church doors are open day and night to show God's abundant grace, for the Lord rejoices when people come to him. It is said in Isaiah: "Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day or night; that man may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought...The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary..."³⁰⁷.

Dweihi continues by saying that in the New Testament, God has magnified His grace by allowing all the believers to enter His heavenly kingdom, whereas in the Old Testament, god had allowed people only to build a single temple exclusively for Abraham's progeny. Moreover, after the Lord's incarnation and redemption of mankind in the New Testament, churches were built throughout Christendom and were open for every race and tongue, for God in Christianity does not distinguish between a Jew, a gentile, a Greek, a slave, or a free man-He is the whole for the whole.

In the New Testament, John speaks of the New Jerusalem which was shown to him by the holy spirit: "... and (it) had a wall and high, and had twelve doors , and at the doors twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel... And the wall of the city had twelve foundations"³⁰⁸.

The new city, Jerusalem, is the holy church, and Jesus Christ is her fiancé who had pledged to be with her till eternity. Dweihi also says that John has excelled when he mentioned his vision of the twelve doors saying: "on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates"³⁰⁹. The three doors at each side symbolize the three hypostases in whose name are baptized those who believe in and love God.

4.12 CONCLUSION: DWEIHI'S DESIGN PRINCIPLES

In the first part of this chapter, it was argued that there should be a place for believers to gather in, characterized by holiness, and that this public place is the institution that is in the service of man intended to guide him to the ways of the soul and managing his affairs. This institution is the church. Furthermore, a description has been provided for the church that was shown by God to Moses which was composed of two apses and a nave. The first apse is the Holy of Holies symbolizing God, the first hypostasis; the second apse is the sanctuary symbolizing the son; and the nave symbolizes the holy spirit. The three together stands for the secret of the holy trinity. In dealing with the internal details of the two domes and the nave, it was made evident that in the first dome, the following items were place: the throne surrounded by the four animals, the golden censer, the ark of the covenant, the place of forgiveness, and the cherubim.

³⁰⁷ Isaiah 60: 11-13

³⁰⁸ Revelation 21: 12-14

³⁰⁹ *ibid*

It was also demonstrated how the Holy fathers had ordered that the ark of the covenant be placed in the Holy of Holies all the while containing the following elements which symbolize God in His glory: the body of the Lord, the holy chrism, the baptism oil, the epiphany water. The episcopal seat (cathedra) has also been considered with regard to its location and meaning, together with the second dome, its symbolism, and its content.

In second part of the chapter, the nave was considered with its symbolism of the holy ghost and its three parts (the prayer place, the temple, and the external nave). It has also been clarified the detailed contents of the nave from the reading stands to the hand-bell.

In the last section of the chapter, church doors were considered with their symbolism.

On the basis of the discussion forwarded in this chapter, there can be no doubt to the supremacy of the Dweihi manuscript as an essential document to any scholarly study of the Maronites both liturgically and architecturally, from its inception in the fifth century up until the seventeenth century. In this manuscript, the author detailed the various constituents of the Maronite church and linked them by substantiating their presence and significance through citations drawn from the Old and New Testaments. It was the main challenge of this chapter to sift through the archaic and often vague language of this manuscript to affirm a link between the components of the initial Maronite church of the fifth century with that of successive ages.

The next chapter will be devoted to the evaluation of Maronite art; character, identity and meaning.

CHAPTER 5 THE SYMBOLIC CONTENT OF MARONITE ARCHITECTURE

This chapter will be mainly concerned with the overriding characteristic of Maronite ecclesiastical architecture; its symbolic content namely, its sign, variation of the symbol with the identity that it represents, and the significance of signs in the Maronite rite. As such, it will argue the meaning and value of this symbolism by analyzing the notion of the sign namely the variation of the symbol with identity it represents, the understanding of the celestial sphere, the content of the dome in the apse, the notion of the hidden and invisible God as well as the seen and the unseen symbol of the absolute God. It will elaborate how Maronite ecclesiastical architecture inherited the building tradition of previous civilizations, and the compliance with natural law as well as its fusion with the Lebanese *genius loci*. In addition, the chapter will discuss how Maronite ecclesiastical architecture highlights the change of time, sanctifies the meaning of the void and addresses the faithful each at his/her level of consciousness. It will conclude by arguing that it is symbolism that distinguishes the church from the house thereby providing the proper setting for meditation between man and God, between the mortal and the eternal.

5.1 ICONOCLASTIC PRINCIPLES

Maronite iconoclasm is at the heart of the Maronite faith. In architecture, it plays the defining role between man and the *genius loci* of the site, and between man and natural laws. Maronite church architecture embodies a rich symbolism as exhibited in its most essential physical reality: its form. Pure, simple, and modest in the outside, symbolically complex in the inside.

5.1.1 The sign

The focal point of Maronite architecture is the inseparability of 'structure' and 'meaning'; these two elements together constitute the essence of the ecclesiastical space, for wherever there is a structure, there is significance with it.

Man co-exists with all that exists, whether that is air, water, fire, a certain site, a tree, or rocks etc. He gets to know the laws of nature by living with them. In other words, there's almost always a bond between man and nature in general and between man and the local geography in which he lives in particular. For man usually becomes the moving geography of the place he comes from – he receives the place and expresses it. It is in this manner that the Maronite, having lived among rocks and trees, near fountains and under the sky, has absorbed all these aspects of nature. In other words, the Maronite, by getting acquainted with the natural laws, the directions, the solar path etc. has embraced the '*genius loci*' of the Lebanese place and expressed it; this expression carries 'significance'.

In the consciousness of the Maronite, structure and significance coexist because the significance is derived from the natural components of the place – which components include time. The latter components of the location combine to form a sort of microcosm, which eventually and in turn begins to indicate the macrocosm. It is in the world of symbolism that the Maronite has traditionally lived, remembering or 'seeing' God continuously whether in the house, church, monastery, farm, or factory.

The *Larousse* Dictionary defines the word 'symbol' to mean 'significance', i.e. a "figurative sign, an animated being or an object that represents an abstract thing, an image of something"³¹⁰.

5.1.2 Variation of the symbol with the identity it represents

The personal experience of design in the world and its creation varies from one person to another because a man's individuality and maturity determine the nature of such an experience. For instance, the hermit who is secluded in his distant hermitage develops and evolves in a manner different from that of a professional; the former is content with the cosmic design as it is, whereas the latter needs a temple and a spiritual place to focus divinity. Here lies a great architectural value showing the reason why one person prefers the sphere of the sky to the ceiling of his house, while another demands the confinement of the sacred in a certain place. Hence, the issue is relative and depends on the individual experience. Moreover, once the sacred is confined in a certain location, a series of symbols become inescapable, thus rendering the role of the architect equal in importance to that of the clergy who tries to lead the way to God.

At this point, it is relevant to emphasize the personality of an architect, making it clear that it is not sufficient for him to know the theory only; he should be able to put it into practice. According to Vitruvius, the Roman architect of the 1st century B.C. says: "This knowledge is the child of practice and theory. Practice is the continuous and regular exercise of employment where manual work is done with any necessary material according to the design of a drawing... In all matters, but particularly in architecture, there are two points: - the thing signified, and that which gives it its significance. That which is signified is the subject of which we may be speaking; and that which gives significance is a demonstration on scientific principles. It appears then, that one who professes himself an architect should be well versed in both directions. He ought, therefore, to be both naturally gifted and amenable to instruction. Neither natural ability without instruction nor instruction without natural ability can make the perfect artist. Let him be educated, skillful with the pencil, instructed in geometry, know much history, have followed the philosophers with attention, understand music, have some knowledge of medicine, know the opinions of the jurists, and be acquainted with astronomy and the theory of the heavens"³¹¹.

One observes Vitruvius' advice to the architect to "...follow(ed) the philosophers with attention..."³¹² because philosophy is the rational attempt to uncover as much as possible the mysteries and secrets of the universe; and when the architect is acquainted with the philosophical enterprise, he is likely to reflect it in his work. Vitruvius also urges the architect to be acquainted with religious insights, on issues of the other immaterial world -the absolute that transcends the physical universe- for architectural creation is not confined to sheer manual labor; as a matter of fact, the most important aspect of architectural creation is its symbolism. Here, one is reminded of Plato's idea that architecture should increase man's awareness of the designer of the universe instead of concentrating on meaningless ornamentation which might distract one's attention from the real aim of the architectural project³¹³.

³¹⁰ *Larousse - Dictionnaire en 1 volume*. 1991ed. [Paris: Larousse], 1357.

³¹¹ Vitruvius, 1914ed; 1960, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, translation by Morgan, M. [New York: Dover], Book I, ch.1, 5-6.

³¹² *ibid*

³¹³ (Al) Hakim, N., Sa'eid, M. 1963. *Joumhouriyat Aflaton* (Plato's Republic), [Egypt: Dar Al Ma'aref], 122.

The crucial point here is that one does not formulate a truly original concept there only be a metamorphosis set by the greatest architect in history; for when authenticity is lost, art is also lost by distancing itself from the laws of nature. Moreover, it is remarkable how tradition had ruled history when great civilizations dominated the earth. But as people started to lose originality, written laws and codes came to record the course of history so that knowledge is preserved. It is for that reason that Vitruvius recommended reviewing the jurists' opinions and reading history³¹⁴. To assert the importance of seeking the meaning of symbols in association with the identity of that it represents, one needs to examine the role of signs in the Maronite rite.

5.1.3 The significance of signs in the Maronite rite

The Maronite rite enjoys a confluence of signs which qualifies its unique identity. Notable among these signs are the: celestial sphere (the orb), eastern light, hidden and invisible God, seen and unseen, nave symbolizing the holy spirit, and Maronite architecture reflecting man.

- The celestial sphere (the orb)

A look at the celestial sphere and the human head suggests a kind of similarity between the two, for the curvature of the upper part of the human head is similar to that of the celestial sphere. Divine orders, government, and administration originate from above.

It is no coincidence that in the ancient Christian places of worship as well as in churches later on, the 'Holy of Holies' is considered the most honorable location in the temple, 'the dome of truth', taken as a place where God is symbolically present, yet concealed from human eyes³¹⁵. For that reason, the 'fathers'³¹⁶ had ordered that the eastern wall be in the form of an apse as can be found in the early Roman Christian Basilica and to be called 'the perfect dome' to indicate the perfect Creator³¹⁷. The apse was originally designed for the judges to sit in the Roman basilica.

One should notice in this context that in the Maronite rite, some, like Maron the hermit and his followers, have symbolically dwelled in the dome of the sky without detaining the spiritualness of one place, whereas others have required portraying the sphere of the sky in the shape of an apse on the eastern wall in the place of prayer.

- On the content of the dome in the apse: eastern light

It has already been shown in this study that the 'fathers' had instructed that a window be put to the east above the apse since light originates from the rising sun in the east³¹⁸. Just as the celestial sphere contains the sun which is the source of light, the human head contains the eyes which are responsible for vision, hence receiving light which symbolically denotes enlightenment. The dome (or sphere) on the eastern wall of the church came to provide light from a window above it; thus the source of light is set in the most important location in the east³¹⁹.

³¹⁴ [Vitruvius, 1914ed; 1960: ch.1, 6]

³¹⁵ Mouanes, Y., 2000, "Al Handasa Wal Founoun Al Kanasyia" (Ecclesiastical Architecture and Arts). Conference [Lebanon: Holy Spirit University].

³¹⁶ The term 'fathers' is in reference to the phrase 'fathers' of the church frequently used by Dweih.

³¹⁷ (Al) Dweih, S., 1895, *Manarat Al Aqdass (Minaret of Holies)* translation by Al Shartouni, R. [Beirut: Catholic Press], vol. 1, 104.

³¹⁸ *ibid*, 106

³¹⁹ Moubarac, Y., 1984, *Pentalogie – Antiochienne – Domaine Maronit*. [Beyrouth: Cenacle Libanais], 13.

The concept of light and the light of the rising sun in the east stand for the same thing. According to St. Ephrem the Syriac, "...Our holy land is Paradise, our ancient abode; and since it was in the east, we were instructed to make east the direction to turn to when we pray"³²⁰. It is worth mentioning that when Jesus was on the cross, he was facing the west, whereas the people looking at him were facing the east. Light rises from the east; hence, the east is called '*Sharq*' in Arabic, meaning the rising of light.

For all these reasons, the Maronite ecclesiastical traditions have stipulated that the apses, altars, and apertures should be built on the eastern wall. As a result, the seats assigned to religious leaders' are located eastward so that they face the people to the west³²¹. It is noticeable that the east has been the source of a considerable number of mythologies and religions: Faiths of the ancient Orient, beliefs of Mesopotamia, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, and Christianity.

Vitruvius, in discussing the orientation of the temple, expressed his concern regarding light and the east considering the latter not only as a symbol of light but also as a source of life: "The quarter toward which temples of the immortal gods ought to face is to be determined on the principle that, if there is no reason to hinder and the choice is free, the temple and the statue placed in the hermitage should face the western quarter of the sky. This will enable those who approach the altar with offerings or sacrifices to face the direction of the sunrise in facing the statue in the temple, and thus shows who are undertaking vows look toward the quarter from which the sun comes forth, and likewise the statues themselves appear to be coming forth out of the east to look upon them as they pray and sacrifice"³²².

It is for these reasons that Maronites locate the entrance to their houses facing the east, with this feature becoming special to the rectangular Lebanese house. This reality is in sharp contrast to Maronite church design whereby the entrance is located on the west and the altar, the place of light, is located in the apse in the east.

- The hidden and invisible God: His architectural manifestation in the Holy of Holies

The gospel of John reads: "No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is ...at the Father's side, he has made him known"³²³. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians reads: "Christ is the visible likeness of the invisible God"³²⁴. This forms an incentive to refer to the opening books of the Old Testament which make it clear that when God created Adam and placed him in paradise –there is no indication that Adam couldn't or didn't see God; on the contrary, the opening part of the Torah reads: "So God created human beings, making them to be like Himself. He created them male and female and blessed them"³²⁵. In the book of Genesis, it is also said: "Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth"³²⁶. In the same book, it is said: "Then the Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden...So he took some soil from the ground and formed all the animals and all the birds. Then he brought to the man to see what he would name them..."³²⁷.

³²⁰ *ibid*

³²¹ [Dweibi, 1895: vol.1, 195]

³²² [Vitruvius, 1914ed; 1960: ch.5, 116]

³²³ John 1:18

³²⁴ Colossians 1:15

³²⁵ Genesis 1: 27-28

³²⁶ *ibid*, 2: 15 & 19

³²⁷ *ibid*

These quotations show that there was a relationship between God and Adam resembling that existing between the copy and the original. The matter even exceeds that, for God gave Adam the right to name His creatures, and He used to come to him implying that seeing God in paradise before the descent was possible. But when Adam transgressed, he could see God no more and hid from Him: "I heard you in the garden; I was afraid and hid from you, because I was naked"³²⁸. But God remained merciful with Adam: "And the Lord God made clothes out of animal skins for Adam and his wife, and he clothed them"³²⁹.

With Eve giving birth to Cain and Abel, procreation continued, and God told Cain: "...sin is crouching at your door. It wants to rule you, but you must overcome it"³³⁰. And when Cain killed his brother, God told him: "...you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth"³³¹. And Cain answered the Lord: "this punishment is too hard for me to bear. You are driving me off the land and away from your presence..."³³². With Noah, God prepared a new order for the world whereby He started to appear instead of being seen³³³. With Moses, the reality of the transfiguration of God became clearer, for he said: "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the Lord said, behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen"³³⁴. And the Lord said to him, "Go down and warn the people not to cross the boundary to come and look at me; if they do many of them will die."³³⁵ As a result, God gave His commandments and instructed: "Do not make for yourselves images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the water under the earth..."³³⁶.

Father John Corbon [b 1924], the secretary of the commission for ecumenical relations of the Assembly of the Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops of Lebanon, comments on this matter by saying: "*God the Father can not be represented by a drawn icon, and despite all the condemnations of various councils, some inappropriate iconographical arts still represent the unseen Father in the picture of a venerable elder sitting above the clouds*". He goes on to say that God's icon is Jesus, a personal icon and the only one³³⁷. Moreover, God is concealed and not manifest, and He is not 'number one' in the numerical sense for there is no number in God³³⁸.

The Maronite abbot Youhanna Tabet [b1934] mentions that, in the Maronite rite, the hidden and invisible God is the apparent basis in the Maronite ordinance³³⁹. The question here is the following: what is the parallel to all this divine concealment and

³²⁸ *ibid*, 3:10

³²⁹ *ibid*, 3:21

³³⁰ *ibid*, 4:7

³³¹ *ibid*, 4:12

³³² *ibid*, 4:14

³³³ *ibid.*, 15:1 & 18:1

³³⁴ Exodus 33:18-23

³³⁵ *ibid.*, 19:21

³³⁶ *ibid.*, 20:4

³³⁷ Corbon, J., 2000, "Allah al'Ab Fi Al Liturgia Al Bizantiya" (God the Father in the Byzantine Liturgy), *Dieu le Père dans la Liturgie* [Liban: Institut de Liturgie à l'Université Saint Esprit Kaslik, 125-126].

³³⁸ *ibid*

³³⁹ *ibid*, 143-154

lack of the manifestation in the Maronite architecture? The answer is the hidden first sphere or dome, called the 'Holy of Holies', which cannot be viewed by anyone and is not entered except once a year and only by the Highest Priest³⁴⁰. This sphere was also called by St. Clement [nd] 'the sphere that is not handmade'. According to Dweihi, St. Clement states that "*God who is neither seen nor reached, nor described, unbounded, Thou who reside in the Holy of Holies in the unmanifest sphere unmade by man's hands, above all the heavens and the heaven of heavens...*"³⁴¹.

According to patriarch Dweihi [1630-1704], the 'fathers' used to depict the almighty God in the apses of churches sitting on the throne of greatness. One might wonder here about the apparent contradiction between the concealed and the manifest in the picture and the violation of this issue to what is written in the books of Genesis and Exodus³⁴².

- The seen and the unseen: symbol of the unmanifest (the absolute God) manifested in the relative in the Maronite rite

The unbounded domain of God derives from His eternity which begins with the absolute and the Invisible and later appears in the total, the relative, and the ever changing state in life, as if there exists a link beginning with the silent unchanging eternity and ending with ever-changing activity. God is always present in the ever-changing phases of phenomenal existence. The entire field of the individual's life including the cosmos is nothing but the expression of the eternal God, omnipresent and immutable throughout all the relative phases:

It is worth mentioning again the emergence of the sanctuary from the Holy of Holies, i.e. the emergence of the second dome/sphere symbolizing the son from the first dome symbolizing the Father³⁴³. The second dome is manifest and visible and emerges from the first dome which is concealed³⁴⁴. The first has no image only the second does, i.e. it appears with the appearance of the second dome signifying Jesus Christ, who lived in the relative world and was both man and God. Thus, it's clear that Maronite architecture appears to be a sign or symbol of the absolute and the relative at the same time. Moreover, this sign in Maronite architecture also symbolizes the compassion of the Father as if He is embracing the Son. For the apse of the first sphere embraces the second –the sanctuary- where the altar is placed; the latter is like the heart in the body³⁴⁵.

Relativity is revealed in Maronite architecture through nature, which is an inherent distinctive feature; for nature in Maronite architecture is another sign of the designer of the universe in the relative world. In addition, place, 'genius loci', and time as being and becoming all point out to both the absolute and the relative. According to the researcher of 'Lebanese Architecture' Dr. Camille Abou Sawan [b1927], Maronite architecture in all its aspects is that of dialogue with God, i.e. the dialogue between the absolute and the relative³⁴⁶.

³⁴⁰ [Dweihi, 1895: vol.1, 101]

³⁴¹ As mentioned by [Dweihi, 1895: vol.1, 104]

³⁴² Exodus 20:4-5

³⁴³ [Mouanes, 2000: 3]

³⁴⁴ [Dweihi, 1895: vol1, 112]

³⁴⁵ *ibid*, 4

³⁴⁶ Mayla, P., 1985, "L'Église de Village est ses Rapports avec la Maison à Plan Rectangulaire", in Abou Sawan, C., *L'Architecture Libanaise du XV au XIX Siècle – Ouvrage Commun* [Beirut: Cahiers de l'Est], 329.

One example of natural elements inherent in Maronite architecture is the cypress tree. Father Youhanna (John) Sader [b1932], the researcher in Maronite symbolism considers this tree as sacred throughout all the ages, religions, and mythologies³⁴⁷. It was dedicated to the God of fertility and engraved on the ancient Syrian currency. And the Maronite considers it sacred because it is ever-green- a symbol for resurrection. This explains why one finds this tree around Maronite cemeteries and churches in abundance. The same goes for the palm tree; the day Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem, the masses welcomed him with palm branches and leaves³⁴⁸. The Palm tree has always been the symbol of victory in Phoenician art, in Egypt, Babylon, and Greece³⁴⁹. Moreover, in Judaism, one of the 'Psalms'³⁵⁰ says: "The righteous will flourish like the palm tree...". All trees in Lebanon carry sacred meanings. In the Old Testament and the book of Ezekiel, trees are described as if they were all from the Heaven of God³⁵¹.

Nature, as it appears in Maronite architecture, is not restricted to trees but extends to the sky through the sun, moon, and stars, which are employed in the design of churches or in pictures and icons. The star points to 'Ba'alat Jubail' (meaning the Jbeil Gods) of the Phoenicians³⁵². Moreover, the picture of the star that accompanies the sun during its rise and setting is the symbol of resurrection³⁵³.

Further father Sader believes that the stars in the hermitage of Anaya where the Maronite hermit St. Charbel Makhoul had lived symbolize resurrection, and they are of oriental origin³⁵⁴. When sculpting the star, a point is first established which would then be extended to a line, a line towards a circle and a circle is made to rotate around a point – all being a testimony of the fully organized cosmic order with its inevitable laws in the field of architecture; it is this order that testifies to the absolute and the relative emerging out of it.

Another sign of the absolute is the holy water used in the Maronite rite. The water which comes out of the fountain is ruled by an unseen order which leads it in a cycle from the fountain to the river, to the sea, then back to the clouds, the earth, and back again to the fountain. This is an architecture of testimony, for the Maronite rite simply symbolizes the absolute and testifies to it. To this effect, a noted theologian on Maronite liturgy Dr. Mouanes [b1938] elaborates: "*A religious issue is not purely that but is also geographical, historical, sociological, and cultural; and at the same time, it is dogmatic, psychological, and pertaining to life. Hence, we cannot take one aspect only or else we stumble into confusion. And confusion is but taking into account only one aspect of life, while considering the other aspects as secondary...it is the dependence of the limited on the unlimited, nothingness on the absolute, and the creature on the creator... This absolute is in nothingness... It is once here in forests and trees and once in rivers and rain... and at another time in the wind, fire, air, water, and earth... It is ultimately the face of God in man and creation...*"³⁵⁵.

³⁴⁷ Sader, Y., 1989, *Croix et Symboles dans l'Art Maronite Antique* [Beirut: Dar Sader], 280-281.

³⁴⁸ John 12:12-13

³⁴⁹ [Sader, 1989: 283]

³⁵⁰ Psalms 92: 13

³⁵¹ Ezekiel 31:1-9

³⁵² As mentioned by Dussaud, R., 1923, "Byblos et la Mention des Gibrilites dans l'Ancient Testament", *Syria*, no. 4: 312.

³⁵³ As mentioned by Du Buisson, 1941, "Note relative à un symbole du ciel inférieur", *Bulletin de la société Nationale des Antiquaires de France*. [France: _], 240.

³⁵⁴ [Sader, 1989: 284]

³⁵⁵ [Mouanes, 2000: 34]

- The nave as the third element and the symbol of the holy spirit

The third element in the design of the Maronite church is the nave, considered by Dweihi as the symbol of the holy spirit³⁵⁶ especially dedicated to the faithful³⁵⁷. Hence, the holy spirit is architecturally symbolized by the place dedicated to the faithful. One here is incited to tackle the issue of the 'spirit' and the ancient architects' choice of this place as a sign for it.

In most ancient languages, the word 'spirit' has various meanings; yet, it is asserted that spirit closely indicates the essential unperceivable element in a particular being which gives it life. A believer in the holy spirit does not dispense with his identity, for according to St. Paul, man is made of spirit, self, and body. He says: "Do not restrain the holy spirit... may God who gives us peace... Keep your whole being-spirit, and body..."³⁵⁸. This spirit is a power inseparable from life³⁵⁹, and whenever the former separates from the latter, the body dies³⁶⁰. The spirit feels all the reaction³⁶¹. Yet the essential experience is that, God's Spirit resides in man's spirit, for it is said: "I'll ask the Father, and He will give you another helper... He is the Spirit who reveals the truth because He remains with you and is in you"³⁶². Another verse reads: "God's Spirit lives in you...; it will also give life to your mortal bodies by the presence of His Spirit in you"³⁶³; this will be the case until the human spirit becomes one with God, for it is said: "But he who joins himself to the Lord becomes spiritually one with Him"³⁶⁴.

Architecturally speaking, the place called 'nave' is consecrated for the faithful awaiting advent of the Spirit. So, the architectural aim of the nave is to awaken the faithful to the belief that God's Spirit is in him and is functioning to unite him with God. In this way, architecture assumes the role of the human invocation.

It remains to show how iconography views the spirit since the latter has special symbols in the former. Father Abdo Badwi [b1948]³⁶⁵ believes that the holy spirit is symbolized by the dove and the wind, while father Hani Mattar [b1955] says that the spirit is "*the being in God's absolute secret*"; Maronites, like other Christian denominations, viewed the spirit as being symbolized by the invisible and shapeless wind³⁶⁶.

Icons have given a human picture to the holy spirit whereby the trinity is pictured as three persons resembling each other but not in age. The holy spirit is sometimes pictured in iconography as a baby flickering over the surface of water as an indication to what was written in Genesis: "... and the Spirit of God was moving over the water"³⁶⁷. Moreover, St. Gregoire De Tor [nd] considers that the pillar of fire that led the people of God after crossing the Red Sea is a depiction of the holy spirit who led them to the Promised Land. Yet, the Pentecost scene remains the clearest picture of the holy spirit in the form of fire. Luke describes the scene by talking about the blowing of

³⁵⁶ [Al Dweihi, 1895: vol.1, 121]

³⁵⁷ [Mouanes, 2000: 6]

³⁵⁸ Thessalonians 5:19-23

³⁵⁹ Luke 8:46

³⁶⁰ *ibid*, 23: 46

³⁶¹ John 11:33 & 21:2

³⁶² *ibid*, 14:16-17

³⁶³ Romans 8:9-11

³⁶⁴ Corinthians 6:17

³⁶⁵ Father Abdo Badawi became the head of Maronite Patriarchal Committee for Liturgic Art in 1995, licensed in theology, and recipient of a diploma in drawing from the University of Rome for Fine Arts.

³⁶⁶ Badwi, A., 1998, "Al Rouh Al Kodos Fi Al Iconographiya" (The Holy Spirit in Iconography) [Kaslik: Holy Spirit University], 161.

³⁶⁷ Genesis 1:2

a strong wind and the settling of the Spirit on the apostles' heads in the form of tongues of fire. Father Badwi asserts that all the pictures of the holy spirit are inspired not only by the Old and New Testaments but also by the Apocrypha³⁶⁸.

Furthermore, considering the issue of the spirit's symbolism, one should again shed some light on the appearance of the designer of the Universe in creation through the holy spirit, where the latter moves from His unseen world to the seen, from the absolute to the relative. This explains why Maronites have always taken interest in the Pentecost symbolizing the holy spirit through wind and fire indicating theophany. Furthermore, father Abdo Badwi asserts that theophany in creation is God's manifestation in nature and the natural laws: "*In attempting to explain, one might go back to the Hebrew meaning of the word 'Ansara', the Arabic word for Pentecost, which is 'the group'.*"

God appears in the elements that make up the universe through His holy spirit; this is expressed differently as the manifestation on the Designer of the Universe through Natural Laws. This author agrees with the personal opinion of father Badwi and refers to the Dictionary of Theology which considers that Pentecost used to be an agricultural feast before becoming the gift of the spirit³⁶⁹.

- Maronite architecture reflects man

The Holy of Holies is symbolized by the apse in the Maronite church; the Sanctuary reflects Jesus Christ emerging from the 'Father's lap' just as the heart is the center of the human body. The nave is the place where the faithful congregate and is divided into two sides: left for the virgins, as an indication that women are ruled by emotion and the 'heart' (located to the left part of the human body) and right for man. Moreover, the outer nave was set apart by the 'fathers' for the penitents and catechumens. This incites one to have the following picture in mind: If the human head is in the 'Holy of Holies', this means that man's feet are in the outer nave; the feet are the lowest part in the human body³⁷⁰. Moreover, if one imagines a man stretching his hands, the latter symbolize the northern and southern doors of the church; these represent the idea that God is desired by all. It has also been indicated that the aperture on the eastern wall symbolizes human vision, as is the sun in the celestial sphere.

The primary and distinctive feature in the Maronite architecture is the rectangle³⁷¹, which is a common feature in the church, the house, and the hermitage. It has been demonstrated in this study that the rectangle has been the basis of all edifices since they first appeared in Egypt and the Ancient Orient and onwards. This architectural shape is not the outcome of chance. '*Dictionnaire des Symboles*' includes a compilation of drawings and gave the 'ad quadratum' design to the church: "*the church offers analogies to the measures of the microcosm... Man with joined feet and stretched arms, has five equal measures in length and width; the precise dimensions in length and width are present in squares. Such a church, 'ad quadratum', is in the rectangle. Its length includes three equal squares...*"³⁷². In the book 'Guide des

³⁶⁸ [Badwi, 1998: 163-165]

³⁶⁹ As mentioned in Antonios, N., 1999, 4th ed. *Mo'jam Al Lahout Al Kitabi* (Vocabulary of Biblical Theology) [Beirut: Dar Al Mashreq], 568.

³⁷⁰ [Dweihi, 1895: vol.1, 123]

³⁷¹ Moukarzel, A., 1992, "L'Architecture Maronite", *Encyclopédie Maronite* [Kaslik: Université Saint Esprit Kaslik], 377.

³⁷² French architect from the XIII century. [*Larousse – Dictionnaire en 1 volume*, 1991: 1474]

Pèlerins', the author likens the measurements of the church to the measurements of man showing that the human measurements were adopted to calculate those of the church. Vitruvius adopted the same method in calculating the dimensions of temples, where he divided the human body into twelve measures³⁷³.

According to Dweihi, everything has a goal, and man's goal is God, for God created man in His image to take him to His kingdom³⁷⁴. This resemblance between God and man mentioned by Dweihi summarizes the following point which is part of the Christian faith: Man's body is the temple of God; it is His successor on earth; hence, it is man's duty to be perfect like his heavenly Father in order to be one soul with Him. In other words, architecture attempts to achieve its goal by trying to help man go back to the land he was separated from, that is his self being one with God³⁷⁵.

In conclusion, man himself is the symbol of God. For that reason one can say that man is the symbolic metaphysical being: Everything is a symbol, every gesture of life, every ritual of cult, every monolith, every monument, every figurative art, the form of every useful object, everything obeys to the law of nature which is the law of wisdom that places everything in the harmonious place pertaining to its cosmic nature.

5.2 MARONITE ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURE INHERITS THE BUILDING TRADITIONS OF PREVIOUS CIVILIZATIONS

It has been seen in this research that the roots of Maronite architecture reverts to what is called 'Paleochristian Reminiscence'³⁷⁶; it has also been seen that art used to proceed spontaneously from one generation to another. In this respect it has been mentioned: "*From Solomon to Renan, human wisdom sat in the shadows of the ancient cedars*"³⁷⁷. Moreover, the contemporary architect Amine Iskandar explained the situation in terms of the temple of Aphqa: "*Constantine put down the temple of Aphqa as well as all the altars that surrounded it. Julian raised it again, yet his successor overturned it. The podium subsisted from the temple till our days and became a sanctuary. Neither Constantine nor Arcadius could eliminate the innate cult in a race fashioned by the terrible and tough nature of Lebanon. Today ... nearby villagers come to put images of the Virgin Mary not as a Virgin but as a goddess, for since the beginning this temple was dedicated to the fecund woman that gives birth; Mary gave a god to the world. She is represented by the same symbol of Astarté*"³⁷⁸.

In a similar mood, father Yuakim Moubarac [1924-1995] says: "*Do you know why this town is called 'Dair El Qamar' (Convent of the Moon)? Look at this stone; when a group of Maronites came from Bcharri to the Druze area, it so happened that the Maronite father Abdullah M'aarbes dug to build the convent and saw a stone on which a cross was drawn. He became elated because in his opinion, this shows that Christians existed there before; and as he looked at the stone he found a star in a crescent under the cross and got even happier saying: 'the moon is the image of our Lady. He continued to see the sun covering the star and said that this drawing is of Divine Mother'*". He continued saying that St Ephraim declared in that respect: "*Maria in sinu solem portat*"³⁷⁹ (fig. 5.1).

³⁷³ [Vitruvius, 1914ed; 1960: Book III, ch.1, 56-58]

³⁷⁴ [Dweihi, 1895: vol.1, 137]

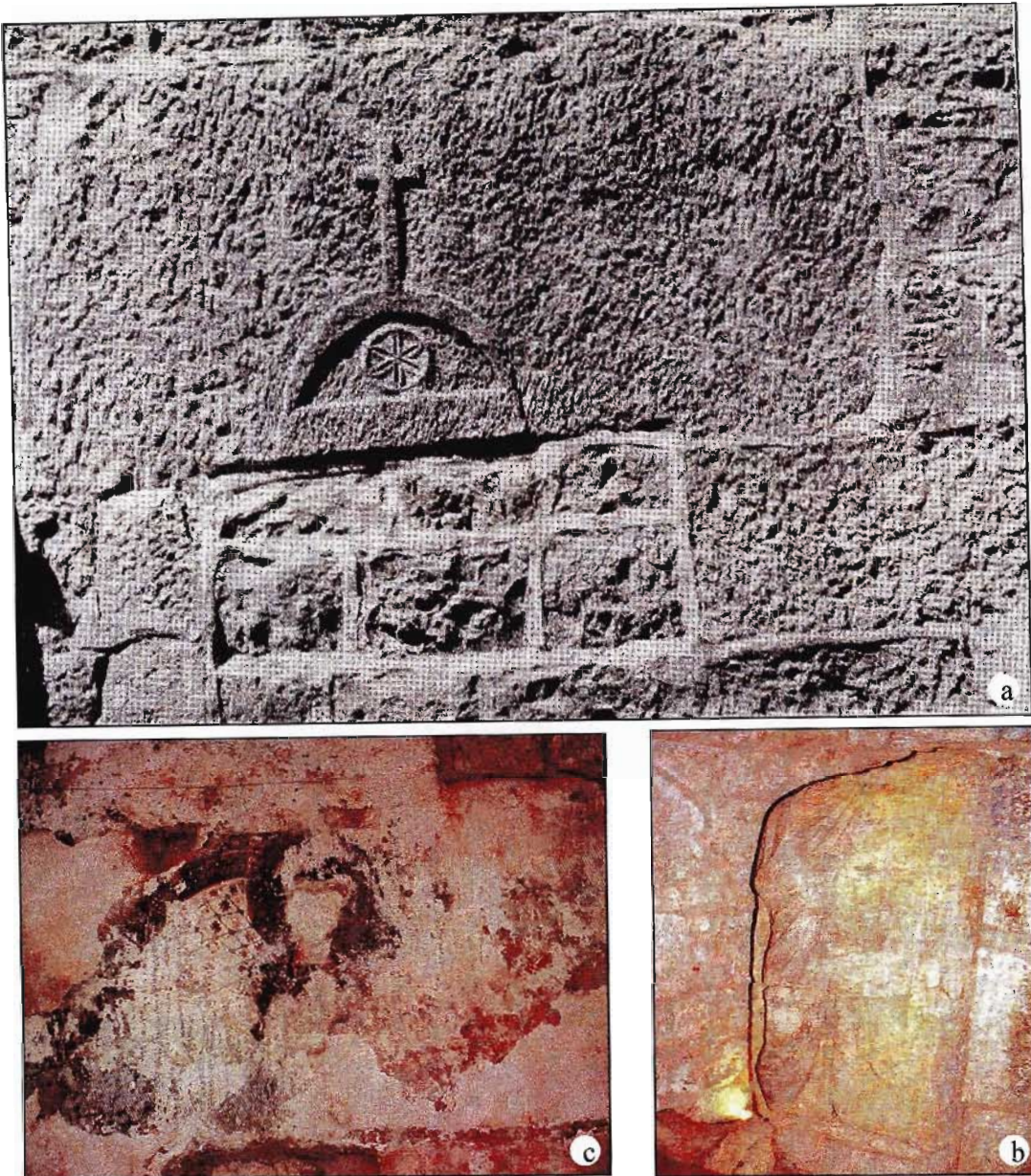
³⁷⁵ Genesis 3: 19

³⁷⁶ The term refers to the period where early Christianity was still influenced by the Pagan tradition.

³⁷⁷ Ristel, Hueber, R., 1918, *tradition Française au Liban* [Paris: Felix Alean], 5.

³⁷⁸ Iskandar, A., 1999, *temples en Blanc* [Jounieh: St. Paul], 13.

³⁷⁹ [Moubarac, 1984: vol.5, 346]



5.1 *a.* : The lintel located over the door of then Dair El Qamar (Convent of the Moon), in the shape of a crescent explains the name of the village [Moubarac].
 5.2 Church of Saint Elijah, Blat. *b.* : Decapitated statue from the ancient temple of the 1st century BC
c. : Remains of fresco of Saint George; 12th century BC [Sader 1989 ed.].

The Phoenicians and later on the Romans who occupied the Lebanese mountains converted to Christianity and took over the Pagan temples and set them up for Christian worship as early as the 6th century A.D.³⁸⁰. These churches were consecrated to ancient local divinities-‘Tel-Dair El Quala, Beitmery, Bziza, Mashnaqa, Yanouh, Niha, Aphqa, etc. In Byblos, where several temples were dedicated to Isis, Adonis, and Baal, Christianity resulted in the conversion of the temples into churches consecrated to Peter, Paul, and others (*fig. 5.2*).

³⁸⁰ The Maronite faith was the first Christian practice to take root in Lebanon. Prior to the schism which occurred in the Christian church in the 11th century which established a distinction between orthodoxy and catholicism, all Lebanese Christians were essentially Maronites. As such, it was the early Christian Maronites who first converted the Pagan temples into Christian houses of worship.

On the basis of what has been elaborated on so far, Maronite architecture appears as an artistic heritage that should be considered as a cultural legacy inherited from the past. The most important thing in this heritage is its continuity. For one sees new architecture replacing the old by in a meaningful manner. The orientalist Ernest Renan [1823-1892] said regarding this change that he has never observed in the world a group of people who prayed in the same locations as is the case in Lebanon³⁸¹.

Father Youhanna Sader wrote the following: *"It is definitely proved that these same Phoenicians of the Lebanese mountain transformed the symbols of their pagan cult into Christian symbols ... the imaginary Christian does not start in Moissac (a city) ... for since a long time this population possessed a more profound means of communion ... the Phoenician myth about the resurrection of Adonis and the pagan eschatological hopes that he expressed found a sublime development on the Lebanese grounds like nowhere else..."*³⁸².

In view of this reality, there is a certain architectural reality testifying that Maronite architecture is a sustainable one³⁸³. This is confirmed by the continuity of temples throughout the ages.

5.3 COMPLIANCE OF ANCIENT TRADITIONS WITH THE LAWS OF NATURE IN LEBANON

It is true that the Maronite vernacular architecture inherited an ancient Roman tradition, yet the latter used to interact with the reality of the Lebanese site. It is this nature that made all successive cultures yield to it –this yielding or acceptance to the Lebanese nature played the essential role in conserving architecture and making it permanent so that the Maronites could adhere to it.

In Lebanon, it is known that rocks in situ were used, in addition to caves and grottos as places of human gathering. According to Ernest Renan: *"The cult in the open air is a trait of this country"*³⁸⁴. Along the same line, Amine Iskandar says: *"The rocks of the site were cut, dimensioned, laid out. No foreign items were introduced and not one rock supplied from another quarry"*³⁸⁵.

This architectural type is characterized by its attachment to the troglodyte spirit born out of the genius loci. A good example illustrating the assumption is the house called 'Beit El-Moutran' in Laklouk (fig. 5.3) and Our Lady of Habil church (fig. 5.4), where one can see the continuity of nature in such an architectural type, conforming to troglodyte habitation. In any case, it is very rare to find in rural areas a dwelling that does not use troglodyte system of construction with vaulted ceilings or roofs to rectangular plans. Temples as well as houses were partially carved in rocks without any attempt for aesthetic carving, but with structural observations (axial and vaulted).

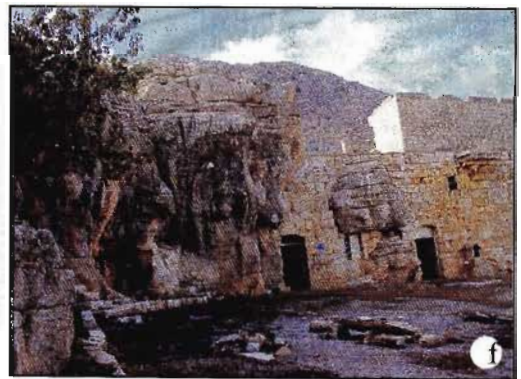
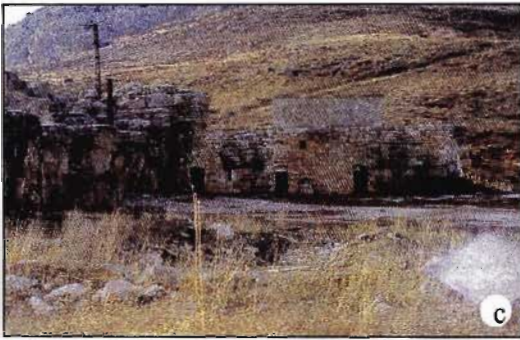
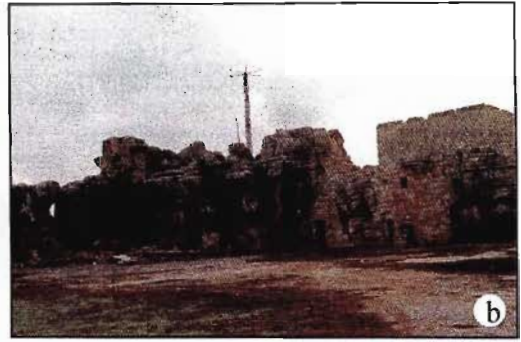
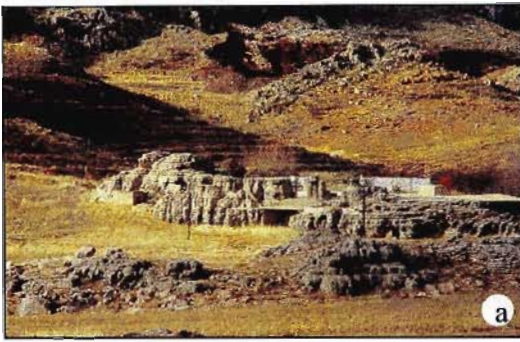
³⁸¹ Nordiguan, L., Voisin, J.-C., 1999, *Châteaux et Églises du Moyen Âge au Liban* [Beirut: Terre du Liban], 180.

³⁸² [Sader, 1989: 295-296]

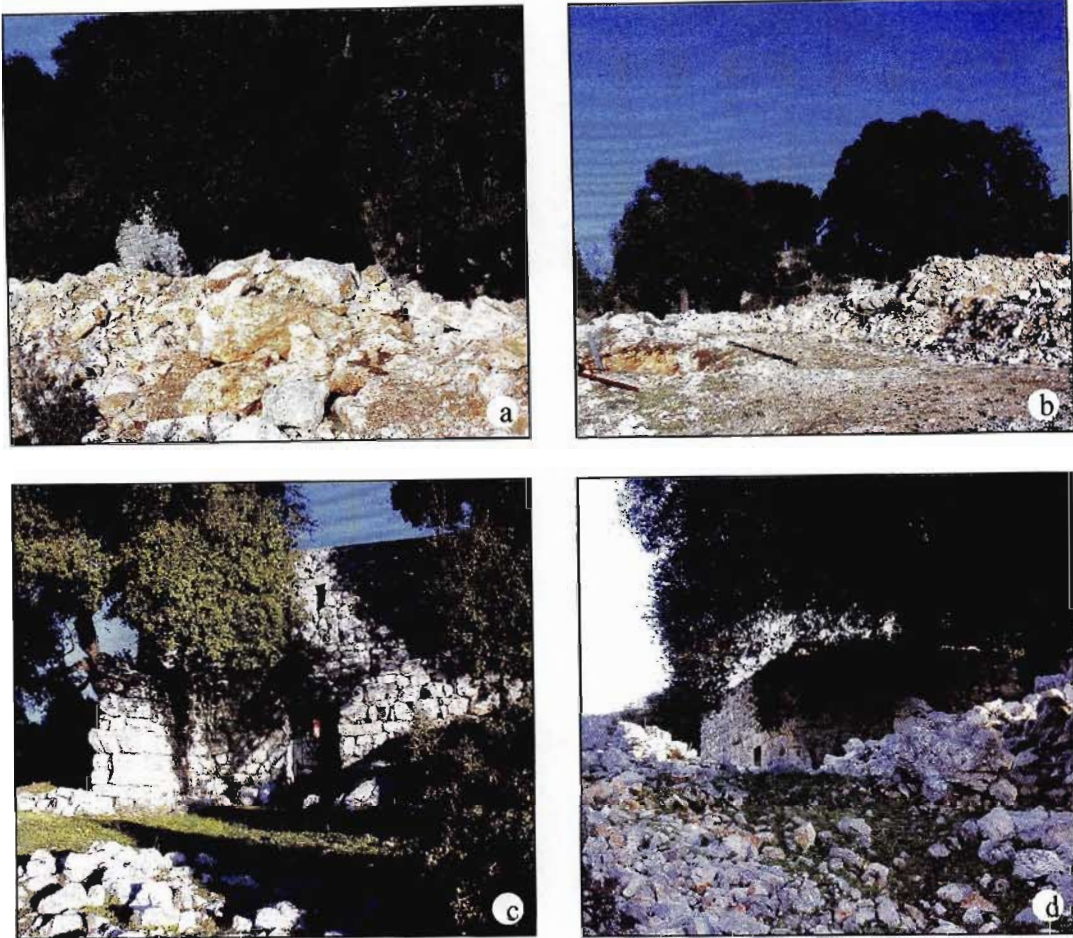
³⁸³ [Nordiguan, 1999: 172]

³⁸⁴ Renan, E., 1864, *Mission de Phénicien* [Paris: Impériale imp], 687.

³⁸⁵ [Iskandar, 1999 : 16]



5.3 *a. b. c. d. e. f. & g. : Beit El Moutran, Lakkouk / Lebanon –inspired by the genius loci of the site, the Maronite applied the troglodyte system in carving out these cave like dwellings from the heart of the earth. Total fusion; absolute harmony; complete integration; apparent in the ceiling inside.*



5.4 a. b. c. & d. : Nothing is apparent from behind this huge tree; nothing could be distinguished other than the rocks; but getting closer one will find a construction; integrated with the site; church of Our Lady of Habil, Habil / Lebanon.

The relationship that existed between Lebanon and Egypt made the Lebanese and the Phoenician-Lebanese acquainted with Egypt's architecture. According to Ernest Renan: the impact of Egypt is: *"The Greek and Roman art had totally accustomed its habits to the spirit of the country – Lebanon- and to the needs of the local cults..."*³⁸⁶.

*"Its temples are Greek in style but their configuration is totally indigenous..."*³⁸⁷.

*"Yet it is also from here that streams precise architectural poetry... through which architecture is susceptible to transmit its messages; it is also undoubtedly here that resides all the richness of the Lebanese church ..., this church whose absolute charm transcends its ornamental dryness and volumetric ruggedness..."*³⁸⁸.

The fusion of the various civilizations constituting the Lebanese genius loci as formulated by the natural law is what gave the attributes of 'conservatism' and 'permanence' to universal architecture. Maronite architecture honored and observed these attributes.

³⁸⁶ *ibid*, 23

³⁸⁷ [Renan, 1864 : 339]

³⁸⁸ [Iskandar, 1999 : 27]

5.4 MARONITE ARCHITECTURE IS INTERMINGLED WITH THE LEBANESE GENIUS LOCI

In general, the nature and /or identity of an artistic work offers a clue as to the nature and/or identity of the country or origin of that work or to the identity of the epoch to which that work belongs. However, in Lebanon, strong interrelations exist between nature and arts where arts are defined and reflected by nature. This is part of the uniqueness of this country, for even its name is a description of its nature with regard to its topographical reliefs dominated by littoral Mediterranean mountains³⁸⁹. Moreover, Lebanon is the only country among the Afro-Asian countries between the Atlantic and India without any desert. Just as the Arab Peninsula is characterized by its desert, Egypt by its Nile and Mesopotamia by its Tigris and Euphrates, Lebanon is characterized by its uneven mountains³⁹⁰, sculptured by time into caves and grottos³⁹¹.

According to Iskandar, a contemporary Lebanese architect and the writer of *Temples en Blanc* (White Temples): *"The Lebanese nature and scenery are undoubtedly at the origin of this religious profusion that characterizes the country. The grandiose beauty, sometimes outstanding, of certain Lebanese sites is suitable for meditation. In this ambiance propitious to spiritual development every phenomenon of nature becomes subject to most supernatural interpretations ... A religion linked to the cycle of nature can not but adopt nature itself as the worship place, especially in a nature such as Lebanon"*³⁹².

5.4.1 Openness, intermediacy, and strategic location

The components of the Lebanese genius loci appear in architecture as follows:

i) Openness: As an inviting space, it is symbolically represented by the 'Mak'ad (seat/bench) and by water. The former is found in front of a house, convent, churchyard, a villa (referred to as *seigneurial* houses in French), or under a very old trunk of a tree and it represents openness (figs. 5.5-5.6). Openness is also represented by water through what is called a drinking fountain to quench the thirst of passerby (fig. 5.7). This openness is not only directed at humans but also at birds; this is symbolized by what's called pigeonholes where the entrance of the Maronite house is full of '*lucarnes*' (niches) to shelter birds. Another sort of openness is aimed at nature; this is represented by open stairs made of wood or rocks (fig. 5.8).

All of the above have incited architects to say that Maronite architecture is a dialogue between man and nature.

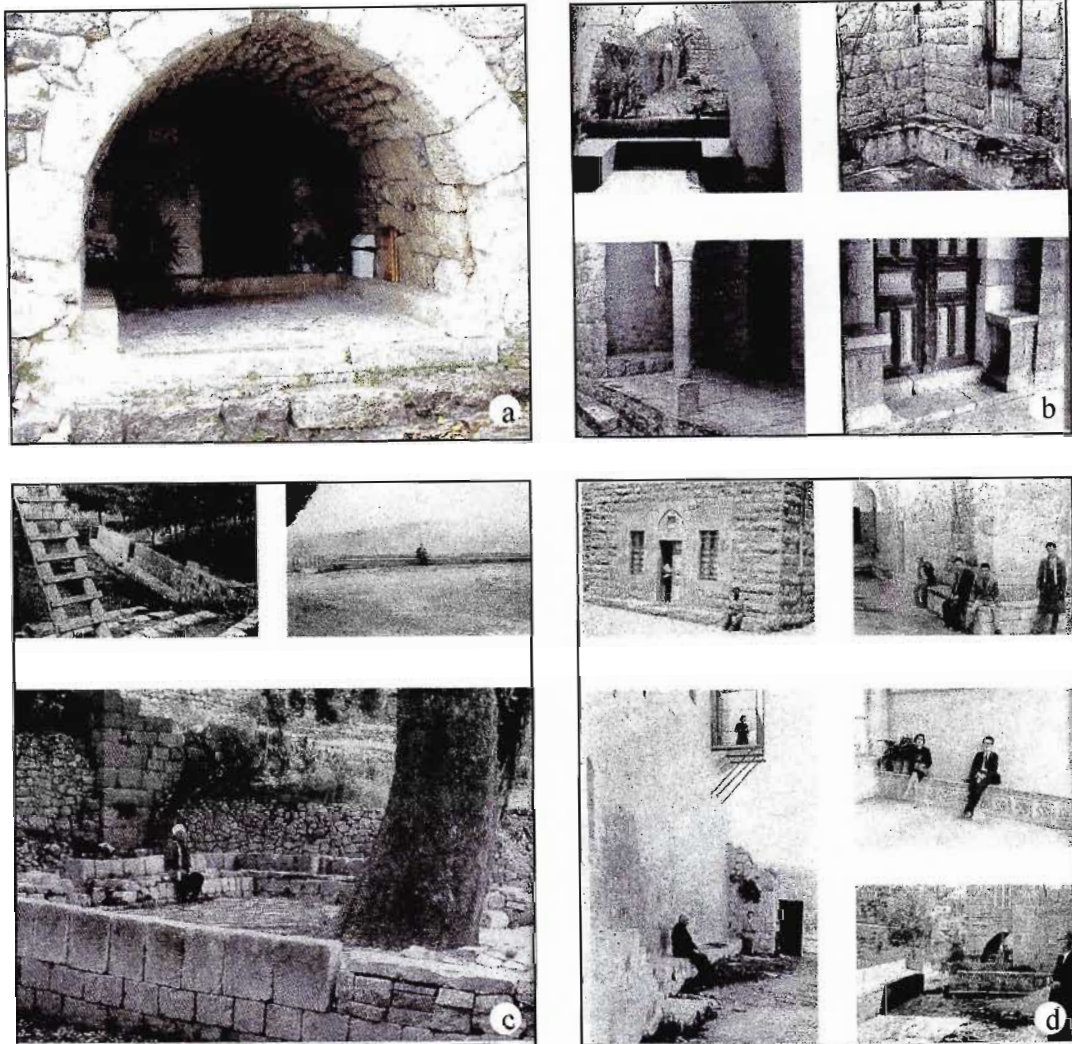
ii) Intermediacy: Being a country of valleys and mountains, Lebanon is also the country of intermediacy between these two natural aspects; it also stands as an intermediary among the various national clans who inhabited this region (fig. 5.9).

³⁸⁹ Khalife, N., 1997, *Al Madkhal Ila Al Khoussouiya Al Loubnaniya* (Introduction to the Lebanese Particularity). [Byblos: Daccache], 61. One of the meanings of 'Lebanon' is the 'white mountain'.

³⁹⁰ Faour, A. 1993. *Al Jouzour Al Tarikhiya Wal Hadariya Li Loubnan – Al Takwin Fi Al Itar Al Joghraphy* (Historic and Cultural Roots of Lebanon – Formation within the Geographical Boundaries) [Beirut: Alumni of Graduates form Al Maqased Al Islamiya]

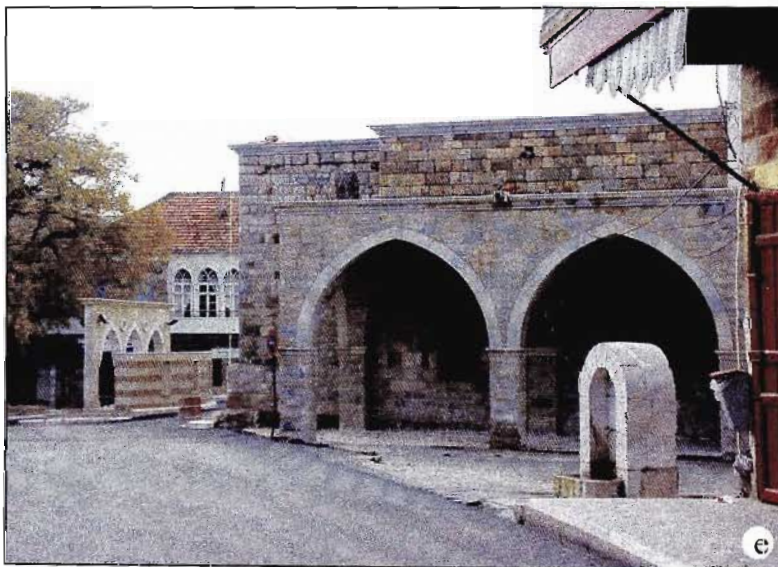
³⁹¹ Comeir, Y., 1988, *Al Zaman Zalika Al Nahhat* (Time – That Chiseler) [Beirut: Dar Al Mashreq], 807.

³⁹² [Iskandar, 1999 : 14]

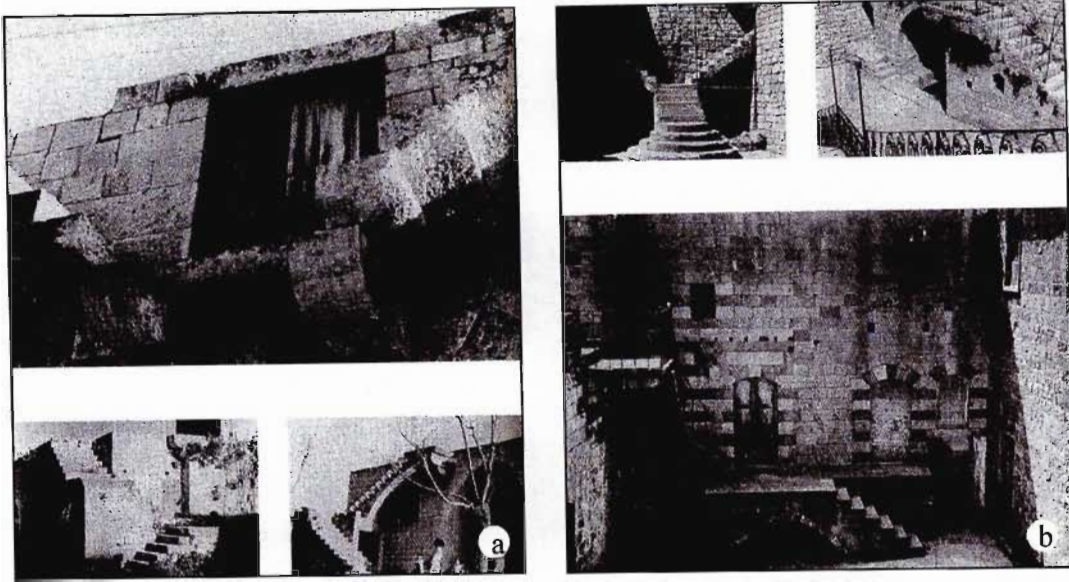


5.5 *a* : Saint Ilige church, Mayfouk – stone benches present the believers with an honest and simple invitation to enter the sacred space.

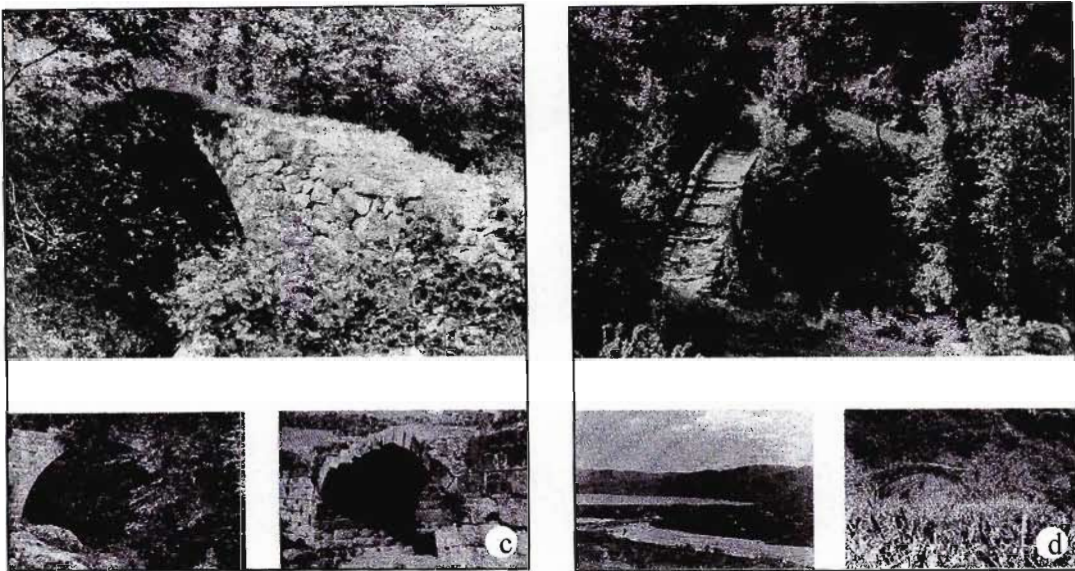
5.6 *b. c. & d.* : Samples of benches – Mak'ad; the same for secular and religious places buildings [Abou Sawan].



5.7 *e* : Saint Daniel church, Hadas Al Jibbet – typical elements such as the water fountain, narthex, oak tree, openness... all creating a character of humbleness and sincerity.

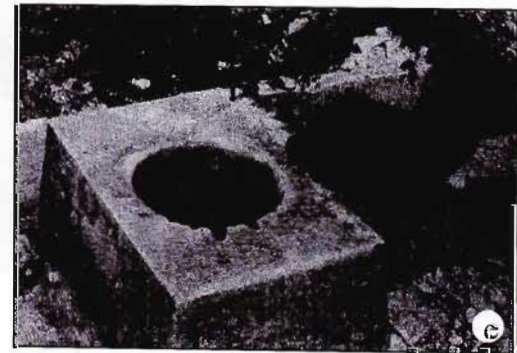
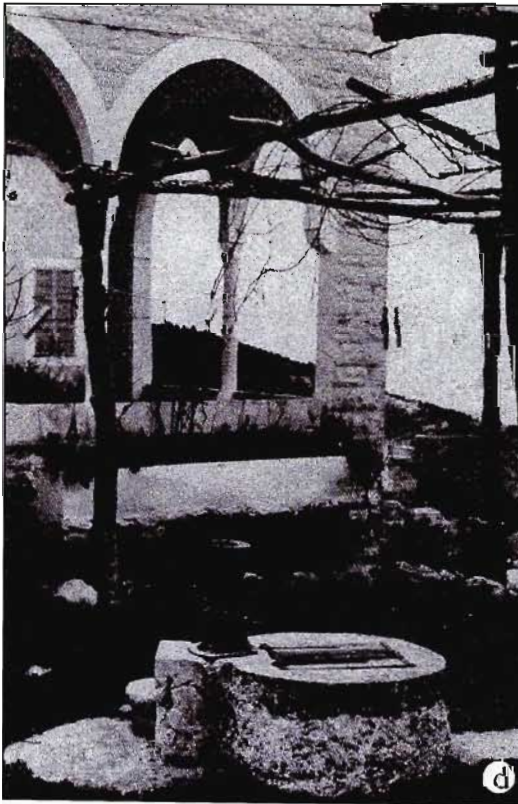


5.8 *a. & b.* : Stairs whether in stone or wood, form one of the most significant vernacular elements in Lebanese architecture [Abou Sawan].



5.9 *c. & d.* : Bridges; another aspect of intermediacy and openness. Qualities well preserved by the conscientious Lebanese peasant [Abou Sawan].

iii) Strategic location: This is represented by architectural structures either overlooking the ground or integrated in it, or even structures hidden in trees (*figs 5.10-5.11-5.12*). Strategy is also found in grottos, caves and the troglodyte system in general. In addition, the Maronite dweller used to dig wells in order to assure his existence in such locations (*fig 5.13*).



- 5.10 *a.* : Saint Sarkis and Bakhos, Mayfouk; hidden within the trees. Nothing is more safe, or more peaceful, or bespeaking of sanctity.
- 5.11 *b.* : Peasant house in Moukhada, Lakkouk — a successful integration within the rocks.
- 5.12 *c.* : Community: house and church; tranquility and silence; harmony with nature.
- 5.13 *d. & e.* : Water wells which were once used by people have now fallen into oblivion [Abou Sawan].

5.4.2 Lebanon as mentioned in the Old Testament

The Roman Christian Catholic church unequivocally recognizes and validates the binding doctrines of both the Old and New Testaments. However, Lebanon has been more favored in the Old Testament and its name appears in some 75 distinct instances which is a clear expression of the idea that the Lebanese genius loci is saturated with the spirituality. The prominence of Lebanon in the Old Testament must not undermine the importance of other holy regions such as Galilee and Qana. Here are some of the verses showing the connection between Lebanon's nature and the sacred:

- "The cedars of Lebanon get plenty of rain- the Lord's own trees, which he planted"³⁹³.
 - "The wood of the pine, the juniper, and the cypress, the finest wood from the forests of Lebanon will be brought to rebuild you Jerusalem"³⁹⁴.
 - "Solomon also built a palace for himself, and it took him thirteen years. The Hall of the Forest of Lebanon..."³⁹⁵.
 - "All of Solomon's drinking cups were made of gold, and all the utensils in the Hall of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold"³⁹⁶. The hall of the Forest of Lebanon is the most elegant suite in king Solomon's castle and was so called because pillars, walls and roofs were built with the cedars of Lebanon.
- In Ezekiel [27:3,4,5] a verse is written that shows the greatness of the builders of Tyre (today Sour) and the spirit of this place: "...that city which stands at the edge of the sea... tell her...Tyre, you boasted of your perfect beauty. Your home is the sea. Your builders made you like a beautiful ship. They used fir trees ...and a cedar from Lebanon for mast..."
- as for the local inspiration, the Song of Songs [4: 8] reads: "Come with me from the Lebanon Mountains, my bride; Come with me from Lebanon. Come down from the top of Mount Amana, from Mount Senir and Mount Hermon..."
 - the bride describing her groom says: "He is majestic, like the Lebanon Mountains..."³⁹⁷. The groom describing his bride says: "Your neck is like a tower of ivory... your nose is as lovely as the tower of Lebanon that stands guard at Damascus..."³⁹⁸.

5.4.3 Essence and value of the name

'Name' is a term which distinguishes and means a human being, an animal, or an object. It derives from the Latin word '*Nomen*'³⁹⁹. The name is the distinguishing feature that aims to invoke, yet "the invocation of a name invokes the being"⁴⁰⁰.

In his Confessions, St. Augustine says: "I say Thy name Lord and Thou comest unto me"⁴⁰¹. The concept of divinity in the oriental mind is closely linked with the power of the word and the power of creating through naming; John the evangelist starts his gospel with: "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word

³⁹³ Psalms, 104:16

³⁹⁴ Isaiah, 60:13

³⁹⁵ I King, 7:1-2

³⁹⁶ I King, 10:21

³⁹⁷ Song of Songs, 5: 15

³⁹⁸ *ibid*, 7: 5

³⁹⁹ [Larousse – Dictionnaire en 1 volume, 1991:984]

⁴⁰⁰ [Honnecourt, 1969; 1982: 675]

⁴⁰¹ (St) Augustine, 1944-1964; 1961, *Saint Augustine Confessions*, translated by Pine – Coffin, R.S. [London: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review], 8.

was God”⁴⁰². He goes on to say: “The Word became a human being and...lived among us”⁴⁰³.

It is generally acknowledged that the name of Lebanon means ‘*lubn*’, a Syrian word meaning white. This name has persisted throughout the ages and is derived from the whiteness of Lebanon’s snow covering its high mountains almost year round as well as the aroma spreading from trees⁴⁰⁴. This in turn has given Lebanon its distinctive features. Some nations carry the name of the populations who settled in the land such as France, the country of the ‘*frenje*’ and Germany, that of the Germans. Other nations bear the name of the historic personalities that ruled them such as China for the lineage of the ‘*Ching*’s and Saudi for ‘*Al-Saud*’; several other nations have the name of their geographical location such as Japan (the ‘*rising sun*’) and Ecuador (the equator). One also finds nations carrying the name of rivers crossing them such as Jordan (due to the Jordan River)⁴⁰⁵, and so on. According to Philip Hitti, this made Lebanon the land of ascetics and hermits, for he considers that this land is called ‘the sacred land’ since its high summits form a spiritual meaning for hermits and ascetics.

The theologian father John Comeir [b1910] views the nature of Lebanon’s rocks through the eyes of a Maronite; this experience made him write a book entitled ‘*Al Zaman Zalika Al Nahhat*’ (Time, that Sculptor)⁴⁰⁶. In this book, he wonders about the value of natural architecture if its forms do not make one surpass them to what lies beyond. He goes further to say that the most unique feature in Lebanon is nature referred to as ‘the chiseling of time’ rather than ‘chiseling’ of man.

“Man is a chiseler and Time is a chiseler”.

“Man leaves traces, for he chisels a rock on the rocks; and in the hands of Time, all the rocks are alike”.

“Man chisels with a chisel and a hammer...

and Time chisels with dew and warmth ...”.

*“Man chisels the rock in a month or a year,
and Time slows down and chisels in eras...”.*

*“Man explains what he chisels and Time does not care
whether we understand its traces or not”.*

*“And my concern is ...that you do not... pause at the vision of forms
and surpass it to the vision beyond the form...”⁴⁰⁷.*

The Lebanese genius loci gives its art an identity by characterizing it. In the field of architecture, when an intruding material is put in the natural site, the idea of ‘disposition’ comes to the architect’s mind. On this notion, Vitruvius says: “Arrangement includes the putting of things in their proper place and the elegance of effect which is due to adjustments appropriate to the character of the work”⁴⁰⁸.

It becomes evident that in Lebanon, nature calls man to settle. Norberg-Schulz maintains that: “From a spatial point of view, man needs borders, thus, he tries to settle where nature offers him a well defined area. The invitation must become concrete through a natural place that contains different things...rocks, trees and water”⁴⁰⁹.

⁴⁰² John 1:1

⁴⁰³ *ibid*, 1:14

⁴⁰⁴ Abel, P.F.M, 1933, *Geographie de la Palestine* [Paris : Gabalda], 340.

⁴⁰⁵ [Harb, 2000ed: 24]

⁴⁰⁶ Comeir, Y., 1988, *Al Zaman Zalika Al Nahhat* (Time – That Chiseler) [Beirut: Dar Al Mashreq], 7.

⁴⁰⁷ *ibid*

⁴⁰⁸ [Vitruvius, 1914ed; 1960: Book1, ch.2, 13]

⁴⁰⁹ Norberg-Schulz, C., 1981; 1997 (3 ed), *Genius Loci – Paysage, Ambiance, Architecture*, translation by Seyler, O. [Liege: Mardaga], 171.

Furthermore, the Maronite Encyclopedia reads: “*the site is a supplementary component for architecture that transforms it to mysterious dimensions that express the suggestive nature of Mount Lebanon. Like that in each construction the genius loci expresses itself*”⁴¹⁰.

5.5 MARONITE ARCHITECTURE HIGHLIGHTING THE CHANGE OF TIME

Time in its short term

Since Maronite architecture is highly affected by the nature of the site, the change of times is remarkable in the Maronite rite. In winter, the Lebanese Maronite rectangular dwelling has a stone roller on its roof for the purpose of compacting dry earth as a preventive measure against the damaging effect of water infiltration; whereas in summer, chamomile grows there. One can rarely encounter a Maronite residence without a vineyard –a parasol- on its roof providing coolness in hot climates (fig.5.13). The entrance of the Maronite house contains basil flowers, while the roof is covered with tree leaves throughout the seasons (fig. 5.14). In a subsequent period and with the change of seasons, time started to be symbolized by flowerbeds on balconies, especially in the case of the Villa (referred to as *seigneurial* houses in French).

Moreover, the Maronite follows seasons as they change; for one finds the wheat seed planted near his house, then ground and baked inside the house; and one sees grapes moving from the vineyard to the wine cellar. Simultaneously, the cloister in convents symbolizes time with its changing seasons by the presence of the monks – while praying – in different location relatively to the position of the sun.

Time in its long term

Time cycles indicate the order that God has put in His creation⁴¹¹. The architecture of the Maronite church indicates the idea of the change of times. Patriarch Dweihi maintained that the ‘Holy of Holies’ contains the unseen hidden throne of God around which there are four animals. Subsequently, the ‘forefathers’ instructed that God be depicted in the apse surrounded by the animals. Scholars have different explanations and interpretations of these animals, yet Dweihi asserts that these animals do indicate the change of times and epochs. This assertion is entirely a rational one, for such periodical cycles also exist in other civilizations. In ancient times, many peoples believed in such an order, for example, the Law of Manu in the Vedic tradition cites four epochs⁴¹², which is equal to the number of epochs in the Maronite rite⁴¹³.

The Maronite symbolizes time by the rosette window, taken as an architectural element, with its pierced circular shape. The center of the circle is then considered the immovable aspect of man, the pivot that renders possible the movement of being while remaining opposed to the former as the eternity of time; “*The moving picture of immovable eternity*”⁴¹⁴.

⁴¹⁰ [Moukarzel, 1992: 377]

⁴¹¹ [Antonios, 1999ed: 396]

⁴¹² *Manu Samiriti – Charea’ Manu* (The Law of Manu), 1988ed., translation by Hakki, I. [Beirut: Mo’assasat Al Risala], art.69-70.

⁴¹³ [Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1969; 1982.: 75,149,434]

⁴¹⁴ (St) Augustine, 1944-1964; 1961, *Saint Augustine Confessions*, translated by Pine – Coffin, R.S. [London: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review], 260.

5.6 THE SPATIAL VOID IN MARONITE ARCHITECTURE

In his interpretation of the book of Genesis, St. Augustine says: "Where is that sky which we do not see? That sky, under which all is earth; our material world is built on this earth of ours..."⁴¹⁵.

In Genesis [1:2] it is written: "...the earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness..."

"Where is that other heaven which we cannot see and compared with which all that we see is merely earth?

Beauty has been added to the whole of this material creation, even in its lower parts, though not uniformly throughout, since it is not itself one whole throughout...

Undoubtedly the reason why we are told that this earth was 'invisible and without form'... 'Darkness reigned over the deep'... yet there was no light, what else was the presence of darkness but the absence of light? Darkness, then, reigned over all, because there was no light above, just as silence reigned over where there is no sound. For what else is the presence of silence but the absence of sound?

Was it not you, O Lord, who taught me that before you fashioned that formless matter into various forms, there was nothing- no color, no shape, no body, no spirit? Yet there was not complete and utter nothingness: there was this formless matter entirely without feature...

Yet reason told me that if I wished to conceive of something that was formless in the true sense of the word, I should have to picture something deprived of any trace of form whatsoever, and this I was unable to do. For I could sooner believe that what had no form at all simply did not exist than imagine matter in an intermediate stage between form and non-existence, some formless thing that was next to being nothing at all..."⁴¹⁶.

The Lebanese philosopher Gibran Khalil Gibran [1883-1931] presents another opinion saying: "But let there be spaces in your togetherness, and let the winds of the heavens dance between you"⁴¹⁷.

Both St. Augustine and Gibran agree on the issue of the void the center from which the heavens appear. This insight is also to be found in ancient cultures, for in the Upanishads, there exists a conversation between a master and a seeker reading as such: "Go and pick a fig from that banyan tree.

Here you are, sir.

Split it open and tell me what you see inside.

Many tiny seeds, sir.

Take one of them and split it open and tell me what you see inside.

Nothing at all, sir.

The subtlest essence of the Fig appears to you as nothing, but believe me my son, from that very nothing this mighty banyan tree has arisen"⁴¹⁸.

In Maronite architecture, the void may indicate the concealment of the invisible God. There is nothing between the apse and the 'Holy of Holies'. The Christian concept of God is that of a transcendent immaterial intangible spirit -this concept is not very far, philosophically, from the idea of empty space or emptiness (or of what remains after the extremely tiny fig seed is split further apart!). The center of the rosette windows is empty. Moreover, in architecture, empty space has a valuable function: One for creating depth and one for creating dimension.

⁴¹⁵ *ibid*

⁴¹⁶ [St. Augustine, 1944-1946; 1961: 267-274]

⁴¹⁷ Khalil Gibran, J., 1926ed; 1969, *The Prophet* [London: Heinemann], 16.

⁴¹⁸ *The Upanishads*, 1978ed, translated by Shearer, A. & Russel, P. [London: Wildwood House], 66.

5.7 MARONITE ARCHITECTURE HONORS DIFFERENCES AMONG THE BELIEVERS' LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The preferential treatment in Maronite ecclesiastical architecture does not mean that God favours one person over the other, but that a person may have a higher level of consciousness than the other. In this respect, father Joseph Mouanes says in his explanation of religious thought of author Rudolph Otto [1819-1937] that there is personal experience that one lives in the depth of oneself and in isolation of the experiences of others. Thus, experience is a personal and subjective matter which starts from the idea that God welcomes everybody. Religion is transmitted to and among believers by conveying experiences, leading to common languages, languages, symbols, rituals, and orders; hence, people in community start to resemble each other.

It is the personal experience that incites one to spirituality. This is seen in the architectural difference between the one who saw his cover in the celestial sphere and his mattress in earth and another whose level of consciousness provokes to delineate the spiritual emitted in the universe in a space called the church in which everything should point to sanctity: "How do I invite my Lord? Invite Him and ask Him to come to me? ...and if I could descend to hell I would find You there...there is no existence for me except in You! Or rather there is no existence for me had I not been in You, in whom all exists... To where do I invite You and I am in You? ...You contain all! You fill the creatures by containing them... everything contains a suitable part, for the large there is a large part, for the small, a small part... You are everywhere..."⁴¹⁹. This excerpt shows that everything grows in God; yet everybody's 'rank' in God depends on one's ability⁴²⁰.

This form of differentiation is found in the New Testament where Jesus speaks in one parable of sowing different sorts of seeds, symbolizing different 'ranks' of people⁴²¹. However, such a 'ranking' is favorable because the 'spiritual' spreads everywhere and in everything, even in hell. Everybody is in the spiritual, according to St. Augustine, in a place in God that suits his evolution.

How is this evolution viewed in architecture? It is embodied in the division of the church from its 'head' on the altar to the penitents in the external nave, i.e. to its 'feet' (for it has been seen that the external nave stands for God's 'feet'). Hence wherever one is, one is bound with the Designer of the Universe, in His head, His heart, or His feet; for it is a mercy to be in the body of the Designer of the Universe from a Christian point of view.

From the relative narrowness of the church, one moves in thought to the hermitages where one finds a hermit in the open, another on a pillar, in a cave, and another sitting in a square room with the unshakable belief that he is in God.

Another form of differentiation appears in the pictures and icons. Patriarch Dweihl considers various sorts of images which start with the believer's perception that he is created in God's likeness. Given this condition, the believer is in no need for any analogy. Nonetheless, there is a certain naïve class of people that is in need of images and icons whose purpose is delineating the spirituality; only then can these people become inspired. This, in fact, is an instance of what has been called the different levels of consciousness regarding believers.

On the other hand, some people find the 'spiritual' emitted in being from the unseen dimension of material reality, from the metaphysical realm underlying the world

⁴¹⁹ [St. Augustine, 1944-1946; 1961: 8-9]

⁴²⁰ Matthew 13:1-8 & 18-23

⁴²¹ *ibid*

of appearances in which humans live, while another group needs an architect's intervention to depict God for it in the form of a venerable elderly sage, the son as a young man, and the holy spirit in the form of a dove.

This seemingly artistic issue has turned into an enormous upheaval in history which is called 'iconoclasm' or war on icons, lasting for about one hundred thirty years⁴²² and coming to an end with the following resolution reached by the Seventh Ecumenical Council in Nice: "*We impose the honoring of the sacred icon of Jesus Christ and grant it the same honoring through which we venerate the holy gospels...Also, everybody, scholars and ignorant, get the same spiritual benefit through the pictures by means of colors*"⁴²³. This took place in 869A.D. despite the fundamental text in the 'Ten Commandments' which instructed, 'Do not make for yourselves images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the water under the earth'⁴²⁴.

Yet, the Maronite church has seen an advantage in iconography and representational art, especially for certain groups of believers. It stands to reason that this art wouldn't have been necessary for the oriental Maronite had he not culturally opened himself to western civilizations. This being as it is, one may take it as a kind of getting cultural inspiration from the arts of other cultures⁴²⁵.



5.14: *The Hermit*, painting by father Youhanna Sader in his attempt to represent primitive art. This shows the subjectivity of an artist subduing the objective conception of the 'designer of the universe' [Sader 1989 ed.].

5.8 CONCLUSION

We have seen in this chapter that Maronite ecclesiastical architecture is essentially a symbolic language. It possesses its unique expressions as reflected by its components namely the visible and invisible God, the celestial sphere, the notion of eastern light, the genius loci and the nature of Lebanon, the void, and the symbolic dialogue between the nave, altar and the Holy of Holies.

In addition, it has been demonstrated that this ecclesiastical architecture inherited the traditions of previous civilizations all the while being sustainable since it was in tandem with the natural law of Lebanon and its genius loci. Furthermore, this chapter has made it clear that Maronite ecclesiastical architecture while highlighting the change of time, has expressed the immutable truth of the faith itself.

⁴²² (Al) Sayegh, S. 1988. *Al Fan Al Islami* (Islamic Art) [Beirut / Lebanon : Dar Al Ma'ref, 136].

⁴²³ *ibid*

⁴²⁴ Exodus 20:4-5

⁴²⁵ Even the abstract paintings of the nineteenth century (which still continue today) have begun to find their way to the modern style of painting. For example, the abstract painting of the recluse painted by father Sader was excluded from the Maronite church because the motive behind Maronite art is to depict the Designer of the Universe instead of the artist's subjectivity –the latter should disappear in order to show God; whereas abstract art, with all the respect there is for artists, shows the subjectivity of the artist (fig. 5.14).

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While the 1st and 2nd world wars did affect Lebanon politically, it was not a battle field and buildings were not destroyed as a result. But in 1975, the Civil War engulfed the country for 15 years until 1990, leaving much destruction in the cities particularly Beirut, but also villages of the Maronites in Mount Lebanon and the north. Within this context, the concluding chapter will begin with views of eminent persons regarding the state of construction before and after 1975, and then the reconstruction and modernization of the country.

This chapter will espouse international criteria for conservation of cultural objects and sites and conclude with a redefinition for contemporary Maronite ecclesiastical architecture.

6.1 VIEWS OF EMINENT PERSONS BEFORE AND AFTER THE CIVIL WAR- 1975-1990

According to the orientalist Ernest Renan [1823-1892]: *“Architecture is the surest criteria for honesty, the seriousness of a nation. An ancient wall and a historical witness without parallel... To endure, it has to be true”*⁴²⁶.

To appreciate the significance of architecture as a yardstick to measure the cultural standing of a particular nation, this section will provide the opinion of some leading scholars and practitioners regarding current Lebanese architecture. To ensure a well-rounded treatment, the views of a historian, an orientalist, a public servant and a practising architect are provided whereby each is regarded as an authority in his field.

6.1.1 The view of Philip Hitti

The Lebanese historian Philip Hitti [1886-1978] says: *“If we exclude water, timber and the sun’s rays, we do not find any natural resources in Lebanon that make it a rich country. It is limestone and sandstone, those two basic elements, which make the crust of the earth and which are cut and carved into excellent stones for building houses. In addition, Lebanon’s limestone provides the necessary lime for clay, by burning it in furnaces near mountains rich in timber. In ancient times, the people of Lebanon used to employ these sources to make buildings in stone and lime. However, in our present day, stone is being exploited in stone quarries for commercial ends”*⁴²⁷.

Today, one finds much of Lebanon’s nature desecrated with few surviving indigenous trees and vergin territory. The trees of Lebanon were devastated by the Civil War [1975-1990] on the hands of the irresponsible militias on the one hand and due to absence of control and lack of cultural education. The trees that were once praised by Solomon and the Egyptian pharaohs felled for fire-wood and char-coal; Lebanon ceased to be the country of the Cedars except for a very limited number of this species. As for stones, the situation is worse, for there are few mountains or hills that have been

⁴²⁶ Renan, E., 1864, *Mission de Phénicie*. [Paris: Impériale imp], introduction.

⁴²⁷ Hitti, P., 1972, 2nd ed., *Tarikh Loubnan – Mounzou Aqdam Al Ousour Al Tarikhiya Ila Asrina Al Hader* (History of Lebanon – Since Ancient Historic Times till our Recent Period), translated by Fraiha, A. [Beirut: Dar Al Saqafa], 49.

exempted from the exploitation and abuse of quarries and cement industry for the sake of commercial interests –all this at the expense of Lebanon’s natural, wealth, especially its volcanic red stones.

6.1.2 The view of Henry Lammens

Lebanon’s ancient ruins have led the orientalist Henry Lammens [1862-1937] to state strongly in *Tasrih Al Absar Fima Yahtawi Loubnan Mi Al Asar* (General Overview Regarding the Monument Relics of Lebanon): “*We imagine our readers have missed reading about the description of our ancient churches in Lebanon...for unfortunately... lots of our churches have been damaged where their ancient beauty has been lost because the Lebanese people renewed or restored them. Hence “they deprived us” – he says- of some sublime ruins and accordingly we rushed to write this article before the damage reaches other churches...*”⁴²⁸.

Thus, Henry Lammens asserts that Lebanon’s architectural landmarks have begun an insidious process due to random restoration and destruction; to this assertion he adds another precise opinion on the impact of encroaching civilizations that eradicated the original rural characteristics of Maronite architecture. He says: “*Almost all these churches are designed like village houses...in the form of stone structures, rectangular or square in plan...on top of which there is a roof where you can see on one of its edges a dome that does not seem to fit in its architectural design with the church. This roof has been recently replaced with a roof covered with red brick, a fact that alienated churches from the form of religious temples. If you ask whether these buildings follow an architectural model, we tell you: we do not know about that, and most probably their designers themselves did not know which model they followed in these buildings. Yet in ancient times things were different...Lebanese people had an architectural trend in building their churches that we wish modern architects had revived in their church designs...*”⁴²⁹.

Lammens goes on to say that Greek and Roman ruins are obvious in Lebanon, whereas if one wishes to track down Maronite architecture, one will have to visit Jbeil (Byblos) since it is the only place which has a conserved architectural heritage. Lammens went further to say: “*Maronites have neglected building apses in their churches as soon as they started getting close in their rituals to the Roman Catholic Church*”⁴³⁰. Indeed, the Maronite church has not only lost its ancient heritage but has also abandoned the apse which is the basis and the symbol in the church –the symbol of the unmanifest hidden God. Today, anyone asked about the apse or its location, he/she would say, with much astonishment that belonged to antiquity, and modernism tends towards more simplicity⁴³¹. Here, one is tempted to ask if the loss of the celestial dome means simplicity! Doesn’t the role of architecture consist of reminding man that he is symbolically from above; and that this is his land, and that unless he returns to his roots, he will remain lost and homeless? “*...until he goes back to the soil from which he was formed...*”⁴³²?

⁴²⁸ Lammens, H., 1913; 1982, *Tasrih Al Absar Fima Yahtawi Loubnan Mi Al Asar* (General Overview Regarding the Monument Relics of Lebanon). [Lebanon: Dar Dar Al Ra’ed], 81-82.

⁴²⁹ *ibid*

⁴³⁰ *ibid*, 84

⁴³¹ Mouanes, Y., 2000, “*Al Handasa Wal Founoun Al Kanasyia*” (Ecclesiastical Architecture and Arts). Conference [Lebanon: Holy Spirit University], 3.

⁴³² Genesis 3: 19

6.1.3 The view of Jack Lang

The following has been written by Jack Lang [b1939]- the Minister of Culture in France 1990-1993 and who was involved in the 'promotion de la culture de l'UNESCO attentive a l'Heritage culturel Arab & Oriental'- on Lebanese architecture: *"It is through the architectural patrimony of a nation that its history and cultural ingenuity are best deciphered. Houses, churches, convents, witness a welcoming art of living, open to the world... In order to defend the living presence of the past and to transmit the spirit of a nation from one generation to the other, a battle should be launched against indifference and against the spirit of uniformity that laminates identities everywhere in the name of applicable modernism to all places"*.⁴³³ Here, Lang tries to show how this country is gradually losing its distinctive cultural elements in the name of modernism. This is indeed a sad reality since a country that does not uphold its past cannot honor the present and project the future.

6.1.4 The view of Camille Abou Sawan

While discussing the status of the Lebanese architecture, the Founder of the Lebanese Association for the Protection of Sites and Ancient Houses Camille Abou Sawan says: *"Spread with lecterns, convents, old and beautiful houses, Lebanon has almost no villages. Everywhere the beautiful golden Rock is perishing under the magpie and the Metropolis or Los Angeles threatens to replace it totally over the hills. The village churches with rugged rocks... no longer exist. Cathedrals are built with tons of cement... The convent of Koshaya is rebuilt; the church of the seventeenth century that was a real jewel in Rayfoun disappeared like the one of Hadas. Many other lost relics witness a lack of rigorousness and loyalty ... they are pierced daily by the style of the period"*.⁴³⁴

6.1.5 The view of Jacques Liger-Belair

Liger-Belair, a contemporary architect practicing in Lebanon and author of *The Dwelling in Lebanon* [2002 ed.] says: "Today, there seems to be a complete break between tradition and the architecture of the Lebanese dwelling. This break is nowhere more apparent than in relinquishment of architectural forms that pertain to a centuries-old "multiple tradition": Loss of traditional techniques of cutting and stacking stone...; this break is just as evident in the foreignness and inadequacy of present day so-called "modern" architecture with its jarring impositions on the architectural fabric of Lebanese cities and villages. The tradition is in decline; there are those few who have tried to prolong it, to be inspired by it. This is not the same, however, as reflecting on its true content, on its meaning on a contemporary stage. The dwelling we call 'traditional' today was compatible with its historical, geographical and cultural context and was congruous with the largely rural, and on occasion urban, local economy. The materials, the forms and the architectural character were a consistent expression of context.

⁴³³ Abou-Sawan, C., *L'Architecture Libanaise du XV au XIX Siècle – Ouvrage Commun* [Beirut: Cahiers de l'Est], 13.

⁴³⁴ Abou Sawan, C., 1985, "L'Histoire Peut Mourir sur un Balcon à Fleur", *L'Architecture Libanaise du XV au XIX Siècle – Ouvrage Commun*. [Beirut: Cahiers de l'Est], 385-386.

Whereas Lebanon's geographical conditions have remained essentially unchanged, the foreign influences introduced; far more powerful and discordant than anything to date brought with them a new...confusion...to the dwelling in particular"⁴³⁵.

It is interesting to note in this context that these five scholars, who came from different professional fields, all lament the present devastation of the natural and built environment and urge to safe keep what has been spared. The statements that have been made by these individuals should give the incentive to the Lebanese government and all decision-makers to put an end to the reckless urban practices and to initiate well balanced developmental programs.

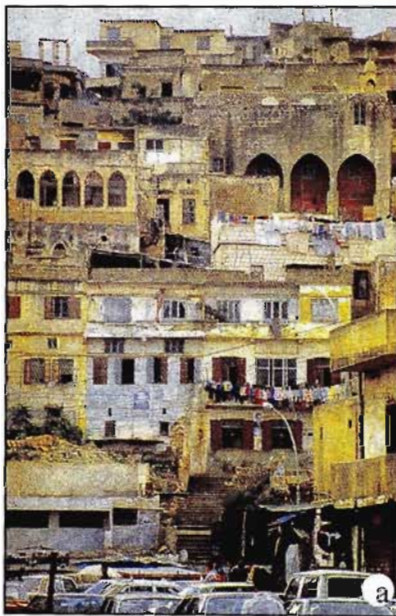
6.2 REPERCUSSIONS OF THE CIVIL WAR ON BUILDING PRACTICES

The Lebanese Civil War severely affected the country's demography as seen in the migration of people to neighboring countries in hope of securing gainful employment as well as the dislocation of many groups seeking shelter from the heat of the over shifting battle field. This gave rise to quick and arbitrary building that had no harmony with traditional building (*figs 6.1-6.2*). This occurred both in urban and rural areas during the war.

Reconstruction of damaged building

The near state of anarchy under which the country labored under during the war, further led to complete suspension of building codes, zoning, and urban planning. What resulted was a largely ignorant architectural practice that is insensitive to the traditional design paradigms.

Another complication resulted from the migration of the Lebanese youth during the civil war. Part of this youth studied architecture in the United States, Belgium, France, Australia, etc. with the result of the new architects absorbing the architectural principles pertaining to these countries and trying to apply them in Lebanon. What is even more critical is that these architects' use of some Lebanese architectural elements in buildings which are foreign to their civilization. As a consequence, the true original identity was lost resulting in an absurd mix of eastern and western design influences.



6.1 a. & 6.2 b. :
Lebanese residential
areas due to the
repercussions of the last
Lebanese War
[Liger-Belair].

⁴³⁵ Liger-Belair, J., 2000, *The Lebanese Dwelling* [Paris: Geuthner], 171-172.

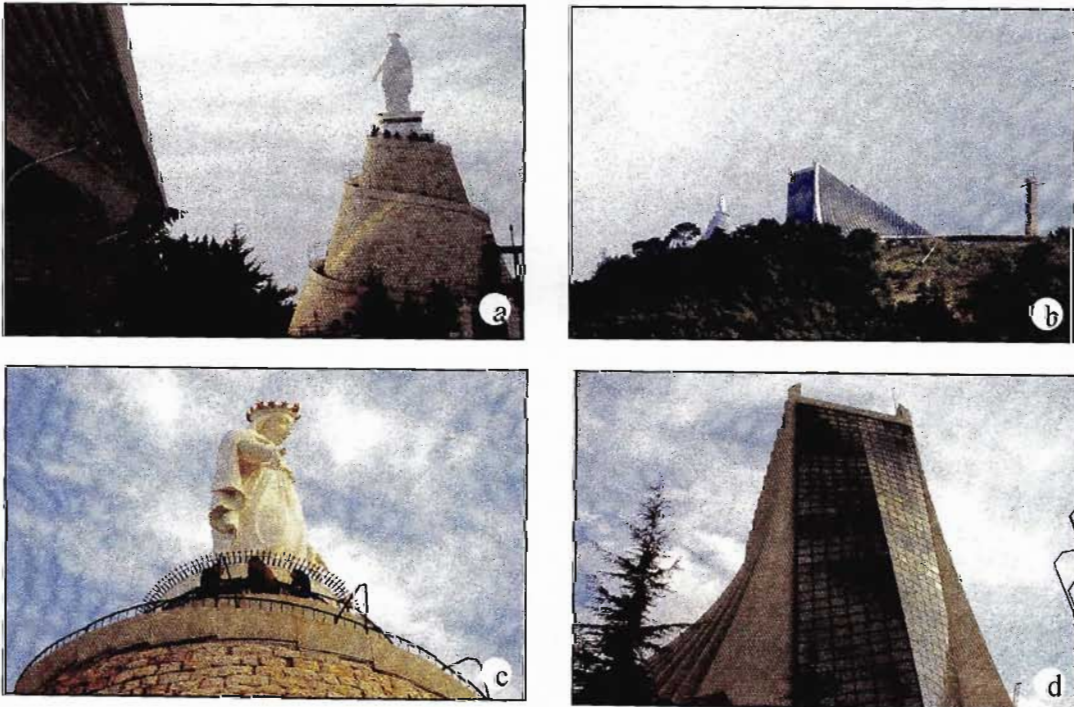
Lebanese domestic architecture recalls the central hall, the vault, the 'Diwan', the arch, the sandstone, and the rocks of Lebanon. Yet all these elements have lost their identity because they were placed on the top of skyscrapers or in prefabricated buildings.

Modern intervention

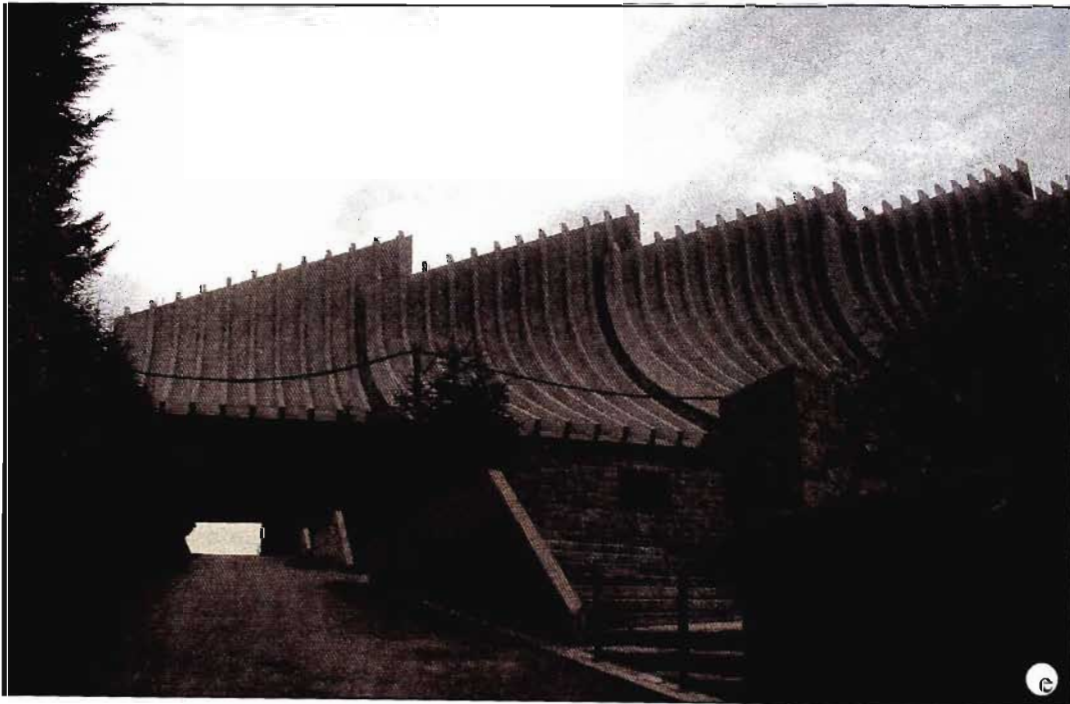
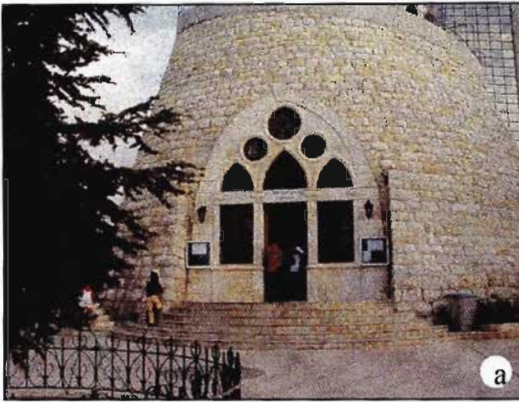
The need to honor the past and preserve historic monuments should not stand to negate the need to construct modern houses of worship that are in-tune with the needs of the modern Maronite believer. Unfortunately, modern Maronite churches fell woefully short of expressing the symbolic essence of the faith itself and have little if any connection to all with the established canons of the Maronite church architecture. The truth remains that there is hardly a Maronite village whether by the seashore on the mountain heights that does not boast an old parish church in various degrees of preservation. With the advent of modernism, and as the Maronite parishes grew in number, new edifices had to be constructed as a sign of the time while attempting to accommodate-tough marginally, the basic architectural and symbolic requirements of maronite churches.

A comparative analysis of the historic edifices and their corresponding new additions will further illustrate the discrepancy between the two and highlight the major violations of the essence of the Maronite church architecture.

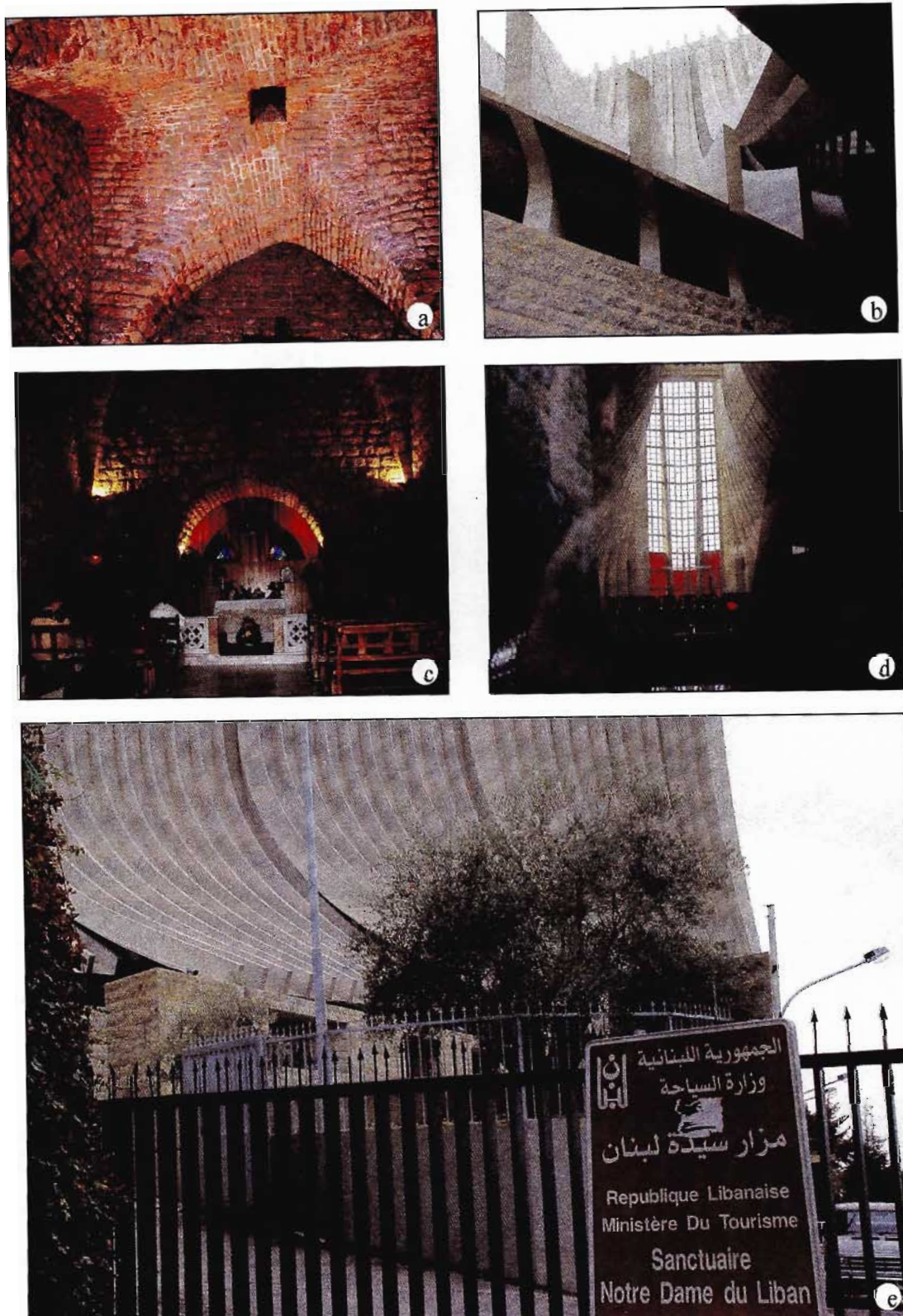
1) Basilica of Harissa: Harissa is a place of pilgrimage; the walls of its small narrow church nave been carved by the touch of the pilgrims' hands asking to be blessed. The way extends from Jounieh upwards – as if the sky is being pierced, symbolically, by this ascension. Upon reaching the top, one sees the statue of the virgin overshadowing the plains and hills, high like a rainbow above the valleys and plains. One wonders what happened with the new basilica? This question is asked with all due respect given to its designer and its new design (figs. 6.3-6.4-6.5).



- 6.3 a. & b. : Basilica Our Lady of Harissa, stands free; in solemnity and reverence protecting the whole region all the way to the sea. Our Lady overburdened; with the architectural expression of ostentatiousness and pretentiousness.
 c. : Our Lady invites the believers to her love and care.
 d. : Yet, her silence is disturbed by the speechless uproar of the new basilica.



- 6.4
- a. : Even the old door bespeaks of modest sacredness.
 - b. : Unlike the grandeur of the new sophisticated gate.
 - c. : A gate large enough for the passage of a car incorporated in the design of the church from within the sacred space!
 - d. : Unlike the soft hazy light bathing the old basilica; from the single source, the colored-glass door.
 - e. : Light in the new church lost its significance with the complex ceiling of concrete and glass.

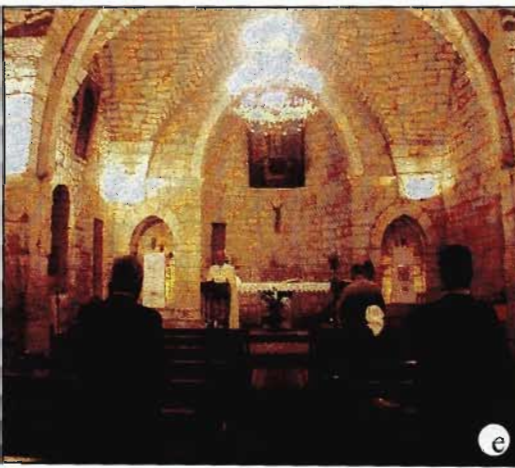
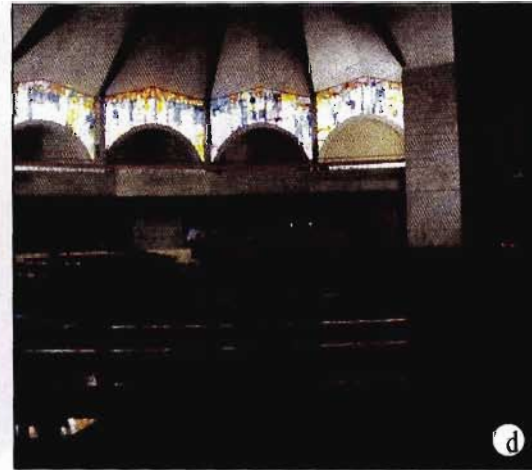
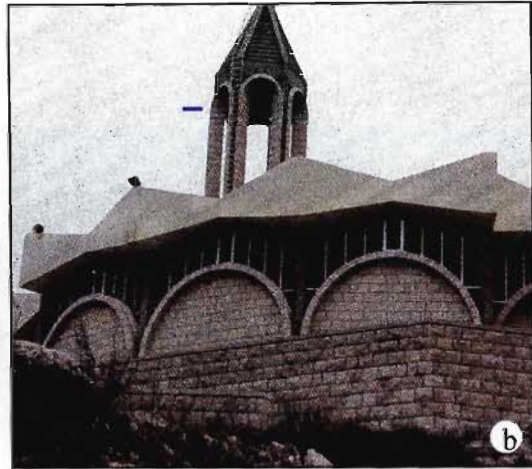
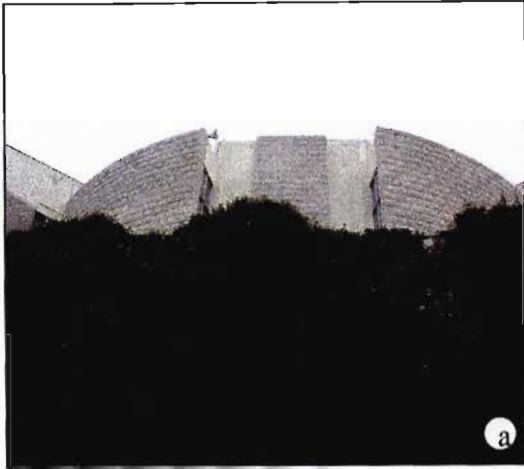


- 6.5 *a* : A cross vault ceiling reminding us of the vernacular life style and traditions.
b : A complex design reminding of everything except the sacredness.
c & *d* : Even the small altar continuously receiving large numbers of believers is now replaced by a grand altar preserved behind a glass door, opened for the masses on some occasions and festivities.
e : Finally, what words could describe such a venerated sacred space more than the plaque designating the church as a: *touristic site* instead of a *sacred one*

2) St. Charbel of Anaya: The old temple stands in the midst of nature with all its humility like a worshiper standing in the presence of God. There is also the saint's hermitage, where silence is enclosed by the mountain. One wonders whatever happened to the original longitudinal Maronite church plan, with its apse towards the east which has now been replaced with the circular church, a design without any precedence in the Maronite tradition. The traditional longitudinal plan has been largely adopted by Maronite architects to honor the eastern direction at which Maron the monk used to stand at in prayer and of which Dweihl elaborated at length. Unfortunately, the value of the longitudinal plan and the significance of the eastern altar is totally lost in a centralized church. This reality is further affirmed by the fact that greater numbers of people visit the old church as opposed to the very few who visit the new circular one (figs. 6.6-6.7).

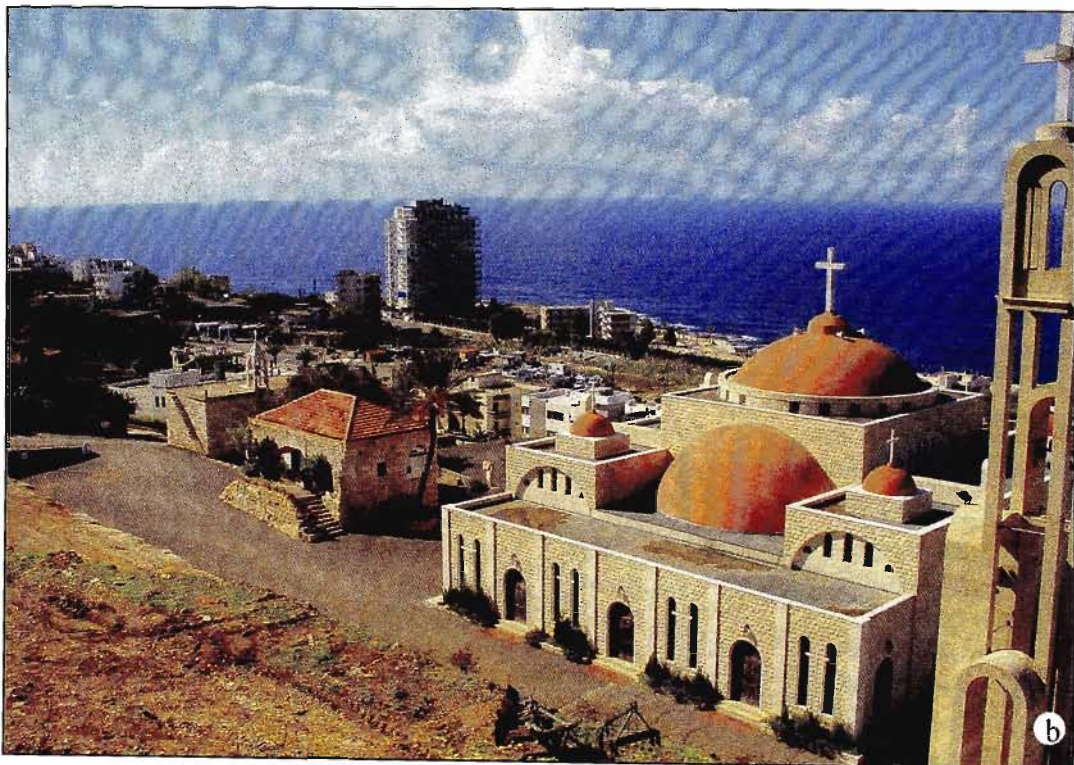


6.6 a. & b. : Both constructions are dedicated to Saint Charbel of Anaya; one old and the other modern; one totally integrated in the site, and one violently protruding beyond the general quality of the place.



6.7 *a. b. c. d. e. & f.* : One directing the masses from a single modest gate towards the east, the source of the sacred light; whereas the other confuses the believers entering from the many doors. The circular quality of the space replaces the orientation towards the sacred by meaningless central space.

3) The Cathedral of Safra: As the picture shows, this new cathedral has overpowered the ancient rectangular church that lies north to it. Having no clear Maronite identity, this cathedral has covered a large area of the hill overlooking the sea to the extent that the Maronite is confronted with an utterly new concept (*figs 6.8-6.9*).



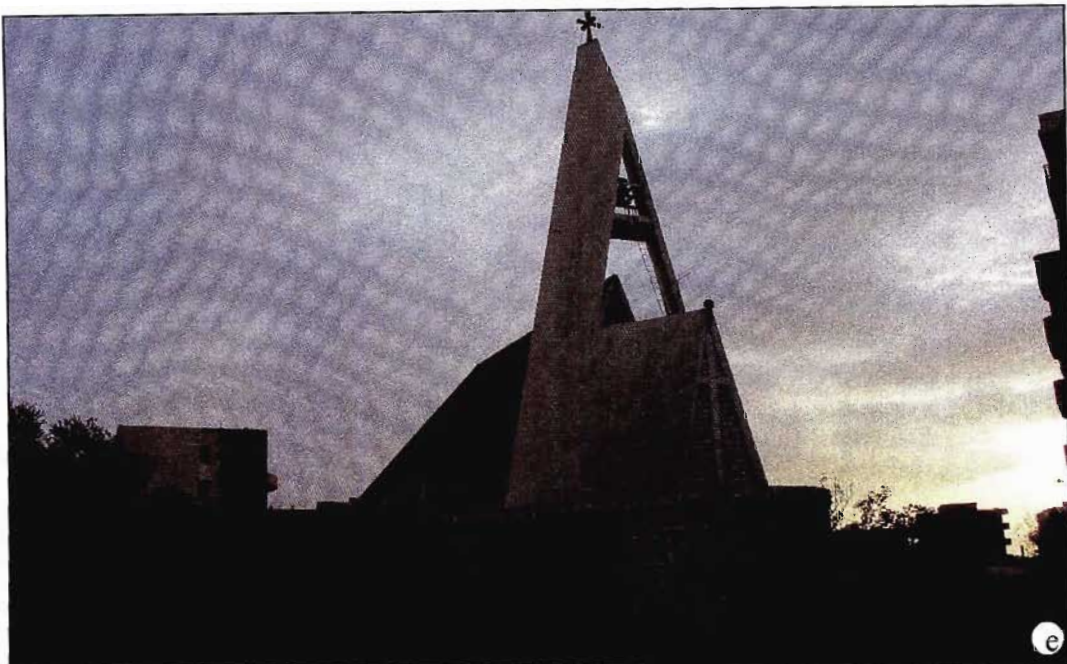
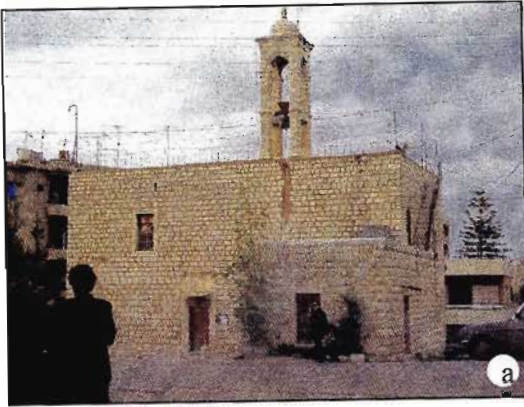
- 6.8 *a.* : Wondering if this is the church of Hagia Sophia; with its magnificence, extravagance and sumptuousness! although similar in form, this is not Hagia Sophia; It is just the new cathedral at Safra.
b. : Different scale, form, style, architecture; rendered the spirit of the place different from that of the simple small church, hidden amongst the trees and merging harmoniously with the genius loci of the site.



6.9 a : Huge in volume and space; an ideal example showing a difference between a parish church versus the cathedral.

Very few people visit the huge Harissa basilica which looks like an exhibition hall that towers over the surrounding hills and valleys. The same applies to the new church of St. Charbel; for believers flock to the traditional rectangular church which looks like their houses –i.e. familiar- with the feeling that this is the concept of the real house of God. For the human scale is enough to remind man that he is in the image of God, whereas in an exhibition hall like space, no matter how dazzling the architecture may be, one still experiences a sense of alarm and overpowerment, a sentiment which can not be entertained in a Maronite church in which believer is sheltered by the serene presence of God.

Such edifices are innumerable in Lebanon; so it may be more comprehensible to witness these facts by oneself especially that words fall short of truly describing these particular sites (*figs. 6.10-6.11-6.12-6.13-6.14-6.15-6.16-6.17-6.18*).



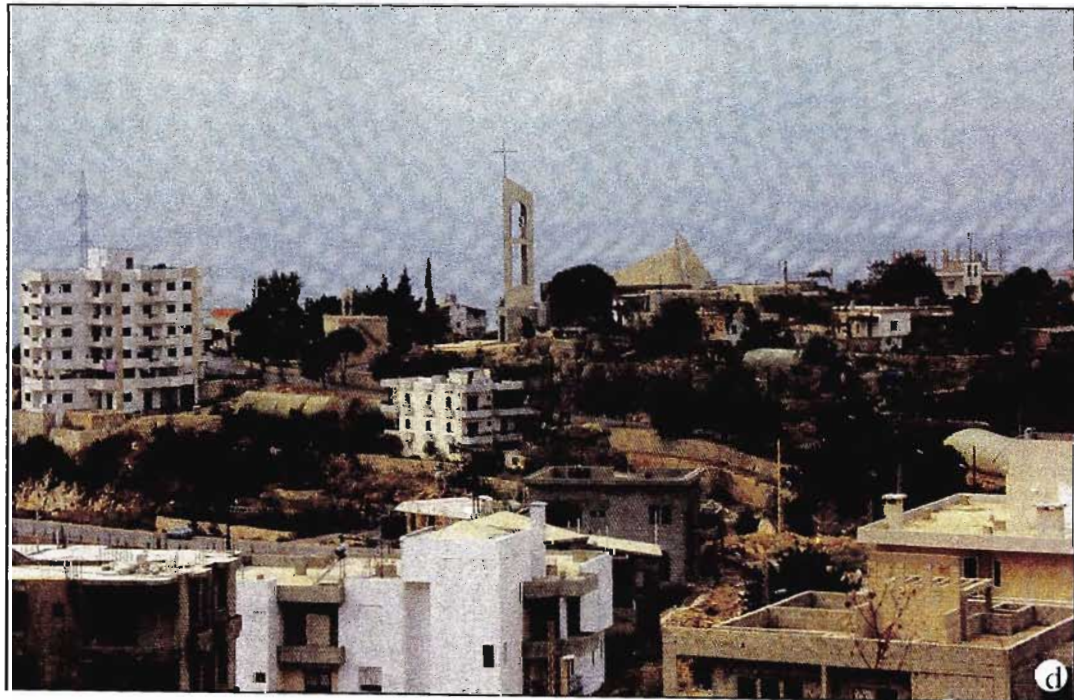
- 6.10 *a. & b.* : The old Zouk church, similar in its architecture to the Lebanese vernacular architecture. Simple, functional, coherent with the genius loci of the place and its local materials.
- c.* : It is now facing, just across the street, the new church, dedicated to the same saint, a pilgrim to the same people; a place designed for the adoration of the same God as the old one.
- d.* : Yet, it is totally opposite in form to the old one; differing in its slanted roofed top, and pointed triangular shape; use of materials, scale.
- e.* : Mostly differing in the feeling of sacredness inspired by the simple old one, in comparison with the complexity of the new, rendering the path of God complex as well.



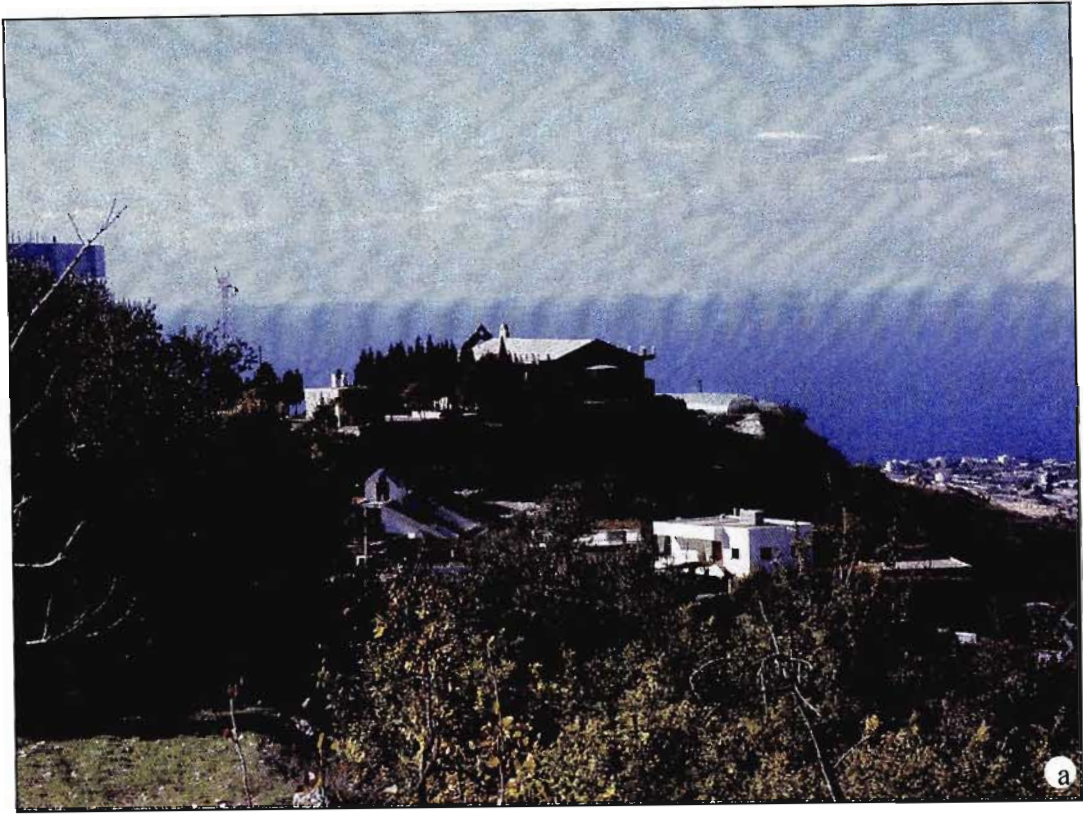
- 6.11 *a.* : Nahr Ibrahim church – old and new in the same area; yet innumerable far in the quality space between the small church almost flush with the site configuration and the huge scale of the modern one.
- 6.12 *b. & c.* : Saint Elias church at Byblos; simple in form - grand in the sacredness it inspires.
- d. & e.* : Saint Elias , Al 'Oqaybi (near Byblos), grand in form, yet intruder to Maronite church architecture.



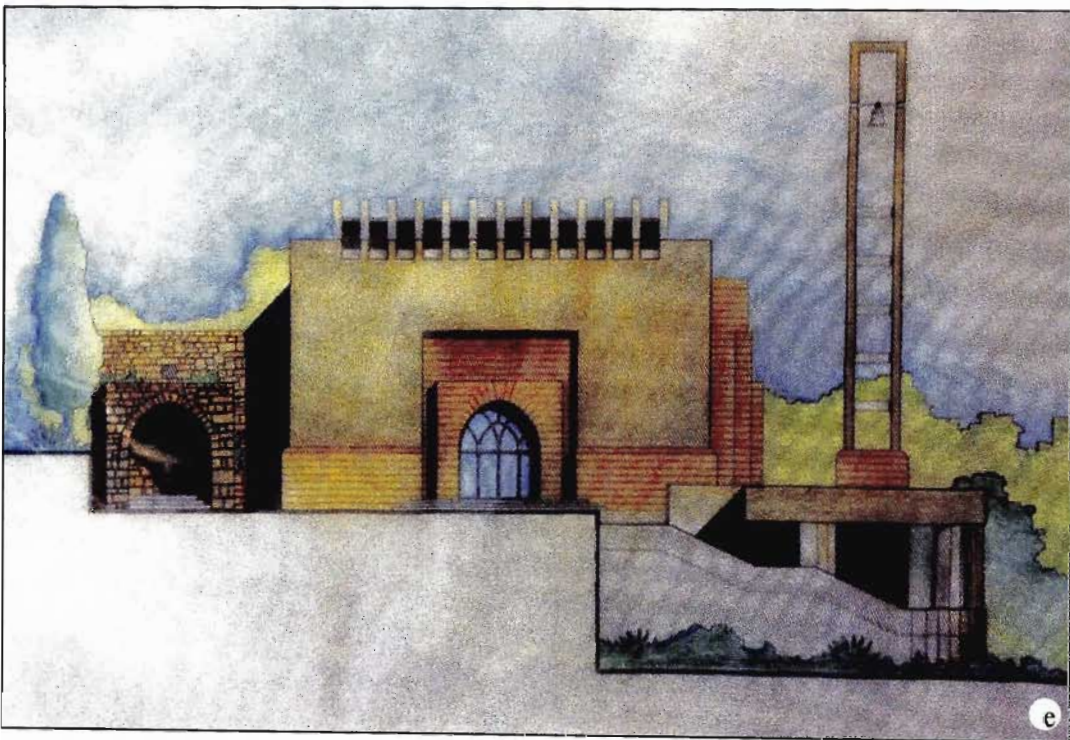
6.13 a : Halat church. complete disregard of the history; total neglect of rules; absolute diverse of the meaning, of sacredness; devoid of any trace of the local indigenous character pertaining to Lebanese vernacular architecture. Huge in relation to the hidden and integrated old one (far left).



6.14 b, c. & d : Church at Hboub presents no different case; new style in attaining the omnipotent from within a space. Modern abstract forms, huge scale, imported use of materials; a foreign statement incomprehensible to local people!



- 6.15 *a.* : Benta'el church. On the left side, the old one disappears amongst the trees, emitting sanctity into the whole atmosphere; whereas, to the right, the huge structure under construction is germinating, absorbing the calmness and sanctity of the hill.
- 6.16 *b.* : Moghr Al Ahwaj church. A big construction in the back overpowering the old in the front.



- 6.17 *a. b. c. & d.* : Ruins of Behdidat church; reminders of the sacredness of old churches.
sample case of an architectural statement expressing the spirit of the space.
bespeaking of sanctity and harmony with the natural law.
- 6.18 *e.* : A new proposal for restoring the same church.

In addition to all this, one should consider the current condition of the Lebanese ecology. 'Ecology' is a Greek word which means 'science of the abode' ('eco' means abode and 'logia' means science)⁴³⁶. From the standpoint of ecology, the notion of abode is not the one made of an artificial ceiling – it is the abode of nature. Now the soil of this abode is polluted and the soil is the place where innumerable microscopic creatures live and play an important role in transforming organic matter buried in it). The air of the abode is also polluted because of the increasing number of factories. As a result, polluted dusty fog has enveloped cities, hiding the sun, the primary source of life. It is unfortunate that one can see the hermitages of Qadisha and Qannoubine and the Cedars of Lebanon have been enveloped by the polluted dust of the cement factories in Shekka and the hermitages of 'Dair Tamish' polluted by the smoke of the electrical plant of Zouk.

Similarly, there is much evidence for serious water pollution – this water which was once praised in the Old Testament has been polluted due to technological advancement. For example, the sacred 'Nahr Al Kalb' (Dog's River) is now surrounded by the pollutants of the nearby factories in addition to the contaminates that pollute the artesian wells.

The primary cause of all forms of pollution is in fact man, and man's exploitation and his indifferent insensitive behavior towards the spirituality of the sites. And in the absence of environmental laws, the situation is aggravated.

6.3 THE REALITY OF CONSERVATION OF THE HERITAGE

The unfortunate state of architectural conservation of the historical monuments during and after the Civil War [1975-1990] in Lebanon can be read at two levels: National and International.

At the national level, there is a critical absence of governmental policies that guide or co-ordinate conservation efforts, what to be conserved, the basis for conservation, the methodology to be adopted and the technology to be employed by the Lebanese government. Despite the continued resurgence of talk on the part of the government about its so-called 'conservation practices' the government only pays lip service to this critical issue. As a result, unscientific conservation efforts of monuments are being undertaken under an umbrella of governmental support which is actually destructive to historical artifacts.

At the ecclesiastical level, the Lebanese Maronite church is equally cognizant of the significance of conservation of its built heritage, yet continues to uphold immature practices towards this end. Despite the creation of a number of steering boards within the Maronite church to implement and oversee conservation efforts, the outcome is invariably amateurish as the committee members mostly lack the formal and the professional expertise to offer valid advice. The result is that a number of Maronite churches have been insensitively restored.

Even the reliable and authoritative contribution that can be garnered from academic institutions which offer Conservation programs is largely lacking. At the time when three leading universities in Lebanon offer specialized programs in conservation, their knowledge base and professional expertise remains restricted to the academic

⁴³⁶ Tohme, G. & Tohme, H., 1985, *Écologie du Liban – Faits et Exemples* [Beirut:Lebanese University], 13.

circles and thereby, falling short of taking the lead in assisting the Lebanese government in formulating conservation laws and practices.

This predicament is further aggravated by ignorance on the part of the government and the Maronite church of the conservation practices upheld in the International Council on Monuments and Sites, ICOMOS, and the significance of the Burra Charter (adopted by Australia ICOMOS on 1979 at Burra; revisions were adopted on 1981 and on 1988). Ever since its inception in Venice in 1966, the Burra Charter quickly became the international standard to be upheld by any conservation effort (appendix II). Ignorance of the Charter's guidelines only explains the haphazard and unprofessional conservation efforts that have been practiced in Lebanon.

6.4 DESIGN OF NEW MARONITE HOUSES OF WORSHIP

In view of the simplicity of historical Maronite architecture, the aim at this point is to try to give a simple definition of this architecture. The expression Maronite architecture implies, through its aesthetic qualities accumulated over time, some questions on its meaning, goal, and function, a fact equally shared by other cultures and religions. By that, it complies with the international definition of architecture with all its comprehensive attributes. Over the course of this past century, many studies have been conducted on architecture arguing that it is the most self sufficient field of artistic creativity that express man and his existence. Indeed, architecture is unique amongst all the arts in that it demarks space, establishes boundaries and focuses divinity. Nevertheless, its components such as colors, spaces, etc. and their relationships are all self-sufficient languages used to form a certain structure of spaces, sizes, and boundaries –these forming the entire artistic work⁴³⁷.

Re-defining Maronite church/ the modern solution:

Irrespective of the common practices and observations with the Roman Catholic Church, the Maronite church still maintains a uniqueness of mission and vision of the world as expressed in its traditional architecture. For a modern Maronite church architecture to exist and for an architectural language that respects the past, acknowledges the present, and anticipates the future to be defined, it must:

Maronite architecture is essentially an architectural tradition that is inextricably linked to its environment, a rugged landscape that shaped its forms and qualified its symbolism. New Maronite churches should honor the sanctity of the site and respect its morphology. It should be located on spurs leading to mountain tops or even on virgin terrain stretching along an east west direction (this condition may not always be practical as in the case of a large congregation). Because Maronite churches clearly reflect domestic structures, they should be modest in scope, small in size, and built out of the indigenous materials found on site (in the absence of suitable indigenous material for construction, indigenous building material should be integrated with the chosen building solution). As rectangular stone structures with vaults under flat roofs, they should possess a supreme sense of containment, and ensure a feeling of seclusion which is to be expressed through minimal openings and an aversion to superficial decoration.

⁴³⁷ Chadirji, R., 1995, *Dialogues on the Structure of Art and Architecture*, [London: Riad El-Rayyes Books Ltd.], 78.

Given the spiritual and liturgical considerations that need to be accommodated, Maronite church architecture must possess functional and spatial qualities that set them apart without severing their intimate connectedness to the supremacy of the context.

Foremost, is the notion of a hidden architecture executed in a language that is austere, plain, without belfry. While it may be argued that the original Maronite houses of worship were in a sense hidden with the landscape as a way to protect the believers from persecution, the notion of the 'hidden' is more at the heart of the spiritual essence of the Maronite faith more than it is a prerequisite for the tangible realization of a house of worship for that faith. Hence, the similarity between the Maronite ecclesiastical church and the house is one of spiritual dimension not of an architectonic nature.

The church parvis should be situated along the source of water and sheltered by the shade of an evergreen tree. Lying in an east/west direction, the church must be entered from the west and the nave should flow unhindered to the apse, the seat of the sacred altar. In keeping with Maronite liturgy, the altar while situated at the heart of the inner Holy of Holies, must not be regarded as a separate entity. Effectively, the Holy of Holies must act as a vessel that protects the altar all the while open to the nave in order to embrace the worshipers. The church should possess a single source of light which is located above the apse along the eastern wall. Furthermore, the interior of the church should be free of dramatic mysteries and devoid of decoration which may distract the believers who stand up while engaged in worship, a most unique characteristic of the Maronite liturgy.

Finally, one should encourage the reinstatement of the Bima – the platform located in the nave – due to its supreme importance and uniqueness in Maronite houses of worship as a symbolic manifestation of the dual nature of Jesus Christ.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of recommendations may be outlined that can potentially raise the awareness of the Lebanese citizen regarding the significance of the Maronite ecclesiastical heritage and that can incite them to take action towards protecting and safe keep it. The first step in the right direction is documentation which calls for the establishment of a comprehensive inventory of historic Maronite ecclesiastical structures by means of photography, measured drawings and building survey in order to record and assess the existing condition of the various structures including finishes and details. However, the primacy of education is unequivocally recognized as the primary source for initiating constructive change. Education must be pursued at three levels: 1) High school curricula should adopt strategies that emphasize cultural differences and honor heritages both local and international; specifically the Maronite heritage should be recognized for the international role it played in shaping the religious and cultural identity of Lebanon. 2) Given the wealth of universities operating in Lebanon along with Maronite institutions of higher learning, there is a critical need to develop course offerings which will be integrated within the cultural studies program which explore the uniqueness of the Maronite cultural heritage and its contribution to world heritage as a whole. 3) Likewise, specialized programs within the schools of architecture and urban planning must be initiated to teach the basic tools of restoration and conservation of Maronite sites.

Beyond the civil level, the ecclesiastical sphere is another interested party in the process of change. The Maronite ecclesiastical institution should integrate a cultural component in its ordinance programs to ensure the foundation of a well educated priest who appreciates the material heritage as much as the spiritual. The church should always refer to Dweihi's manuscript for guidelines concerning the Maronite liturgy and its manifestation in the church architecture. Equally important is the establishment of community centers under the auspices of the Maronite church that promote the awareness of and pride in Maronite heritage in general and the built tradition in particular. Activities can include the organization of sites visits, awareness campaigns, media campaigns (such as the 'Catholic Center of Information', *Tele Lumiere* television etc.).

In setting this platform of change, the Maronite church should also seek to redirect its architectural vision from one that is centered on the notion of a 'basilica' in favor of 'parish' church which keeps with age old Maronite practices. In so doing, the Maronite church should then focus its attention on conservation practices and urge the adoption of the 'Burra Charter' as well as the establishment of governmental laws and guidelines which safe keep the Maronite heritage. Finally, the Maronite church as well as the federal government should be held accountable for their action at all times so as to ensure the enforcement of the laws and guidelines that are set by an international charters and standards. In following this path toward constructive change, Dweihi's manuscript should remain the incontestable reference to be consulted in all matters that pertain to Maronite architecture especially the liturgical and symbolic content within houses of worship.

GLOSSARY

Antiochian Rite

It pertains to the city of Cyr in Syria. It left a great impact in all the oriental rituals.

Apocrypha

From Greek Apokryphos meaning the hidden and the obscure, of which the church did not acknowledge neither authenticity nor legacy. Some of them were written for the elite due to their total plunging into the divine secret while others for the public in order to increase their belief and their worship.

Apse

It is a semicircular projection in the church facing east, behind the altar and chorus.

Ark of the Covenant

It is a precious coffer in which the two plates of commandments that the Lord gave to Moses.

Baptism

The first sacrament in Christian churches, which constitutes the juridical and sacral sign of belonging to the church.

Bima

An elevated part in the church.

Causality

It is the principle, which decides that every craft has a maker, every event has a generator, every motion has a motivator, and every system has an organizer behind it.

Central Hall House

House with a central space (family space) overlooking the view, around which all rooms are located.

Cloister

A secluded area for monks in a convent and a link space for different functions.

Council

An extraordinary assembly of archbishops and theologians who decide on the questions of the ecclesiastical doctrine. The council is more global than the synod.

Designer of the Universe

It is the essential constituent of creation; it permeates everything and is present in all levels of creation: tastes, forms, smells, ...directions ... times.... it is at the same time the pure existence and the essential constituent of every relative life. We frequently call it: God, Brahman, ALLAH, Being, Cause of all causes, Maker of the universe, Architect of the universe, Designer of the universe, the Primary incentive. All of these terms carry the same content.

Eucharist

The bread and wine that are consecrated to be used in the Holy Communion.

Gallery

An open space, which opens to the outside via a series of supports.

Genius Loci

It is the divined personality of a place.

Gnosticism

A salvation system based on the rejection of matter viewed as evil and on the knowledge of superior divine realities.

Hadith

A traditional recitation bringing back an act or a saying of Prophet Mohammad. The Hadith have authority next to the Qor'an in terms of Islamic faith.

Henotheism

The belief in or worship of one god without denying the existence of others.

Holy of Holies / Sanctum Sanctorum / The Holiest

It is in the Temple of Jerusalem, where the Ark of the Covenant was kept and the place that nobody was allowed to enter except the Chief priest, once per year

Icon

Originally a Greek term meaning picture.

Intuitionist

It is to say that thoughts and principles exist and are naturally disposed for in the spirit prior to experience and teaching.

Liturgy

A group of rules that fix the sequence of acts in a cult.

Liwan

A central space, totally open in front connecting to two closed rooms right and left.

Mandalun

A combination of a low window with a sitting platform. They used to sit in the window.

Mar

It is a Syriac word which means master ; an honorary title used before the names of Saints and Archbishops.

Mass

The Eucharistic rite in Christian churches.

Medieval Philosophy

A European philosophy of the Middle Ages starting in the 9th century and ending in the 15th century.

Meditation

A monastic tradition for spiritual training leading to witnessing and unification with God. It is a sort of prayer based on reflection.

Monotheism

The doctrine or belief that there is only one God.

Ontosh

Arabic word meaning parish church.

Paganism

A name given by Christians from the 4th century or Henotheism, a name to which rural people remained faithful for a long time.

Philosophy

It is the study that makes Man realize the reality of life and uncover its mystery in order to satisfy the quest of the human spirit.

Quanta

Indivisible units.

Recluse

A person who lives a secluded life shut away from the world.

Rig Veda

The Rig Veda existed some 1500 years B.C. and contains 1107 hymns divided into 10 books, which talk about the multiplicity of gods and unity at the same time. For multiplicity implicitly represents the attributes of God, such as the gods of fire, air, earth, and water and then the one God Who protects everything and is at the basis of everything.

Sacred Vessels

It is a precious vessel used in the Eucharist Sacrament and to keep the Blessed Sacrament.

Saint Maron

A hermit who lived in the Mount of Cyr under the sky without any ceiling. This way was known by Bios Upaitros i.e. taking the earth for mattress and the sky for cover.

Sanctuary

It is part of the church containing the altar, where the Eucharist Sacrament is accomplished.

Simon the Stylite

A Saint who did many miracles and spent his life on a 36 cubit high Stylite to confirm his longing to launch towards the sky and leave the world.

Stoicism

Founded by the Greek philosopher Zeno in the 4th century B.C.. His disciples were called stoics from stoic i.e. colonnade, a ceiling for studying in a mosque or temple etc. because Zeno taught under a colonnade at Athens. Their philosophy aims to show that Man and the world are integrated with each other; science for them is that which allows Man to join the structure of the world. Their essential principle is to accept nature as it is for the good is that the living being lives in accordance with personal nature. The stoic is satisfied, reasonable, unemotional, and aims at the word through sciences.

Synod

In the catholic church, it is an ecclesiastical council in charge of the affairs of the diocesan of the universal church: hence we say the Lebanese Synod.

Upanishads

The word Upanishad is taken from "Upa" meaning near, "ni" meaning lower, and "shad" meaning sitting. Groups of adepts used to sit near their Master to learn from him about the Truth. There are around 200 Upanishads but the legendary number is 108. The Upanishads go back to approximately the 7th and 8th centuries B.C. and aim at the absolute bliss of Man.

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M E D I T E R R A N E E

S Y R I E

D A M A S

P A L E S T I N E

CARTE TOURISTIQUE DU LIBAN

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LEGENDE

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- Rivière, Source
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- Aéroport
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- Ruines Phéniciennes
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- Ruines Croisées
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- Ruines Arabes
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- Site Naturel
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APPENDIX I

**Translation from Arabic to English
Of
The first explanation of the second *minaret*¹ of the first volume of the book
'*Manarat Al Aqdass*' by the patriarch Stephen Dweihi (pages 93-136)**

The original manuscript of Stephen Dweihi [1630-1704] was written in the 17th century in *Karshouni*², an ancient and obscure language now almost extinct. The original manuscript which was kept in Rome was first printed in Arabic in two volumes (vol. I 563 p., vol. II 694 p.) by Rashid Al Shartouni at the Catholic Press in Beirut in 1895. Owing to the significance of the manuscript for the study of Maronite church architecture especially the second chapter of the first volume which is totally devoted to the elaboration of the parts, content, and symbolism of Maronite ecclesiastical architecture. The author of this thesis has attempted the first English translation³ of this valuable text⁴.

¹ *Minaret* is an Arabic term meaning chapter.

² A Christian Arabic language written in a Syriac characters

³ Reference: **The Holy Bible-Old and New Testaments.** _ . Translated out of the original tongues: and with the former translations diligently compared and revised, by his majesty's special command. London: Cambridge University Press.

⁴ The author would like to acknowledge the assistance of a number of colleagues from the English department at the Holy Spirit University (USEK) as well as the Sacred Art Institute at USEK who contributed in the translation, comments and amendments of the manuscript.

The first explanation
 The church and its related issues

Chapter one	On the aim of building churches
Chapter two	On the names of the church
Chapter three	On the mode of building churches
Chapter four	On ‘ <i>Kods Al Aqdass</i> ’ [Holy of Holies/Holiest of All]
Chapter five	On the Episcopal seat known as ‘ <i>Cathedra</i> ’
Chapter six	On ‘ <i>Beit Al Kods</i> ’ [sanctuary] and its content
Chapter seven	On the reason behind putting the altar before and on the right of the seat and its explanation
Chapter eight	On ‘ <i>Al-Dar</i> ’ [nave] and the mode of its interpretation
Chapter nine	On the lectern, baptismery, hand-bell and the contents of ‘ <i>Al-Dar</i> ’(nave)
Chapter ten	On the balustrade and the reason behind it
Chapter eleven	On the church doors

Chapter one
On the aim of building churches

The church is a public place designed for believers to meet in order to serve God and transmit the issues of faith. Just as kings on earth build centers for verdicts, hearing lawsuits and making laws, it was only fair that locations be built for believers to meet, hear divine issues, evangelical regulations, teach people orthodox creed, to console them in times of strife, and to distribute the sacraments through which they can be born in the spirit and grow according to the power of binding and loosing that Christ gave to his church. These places are the sacred churches in which we gather everyday to hear the word of God and receive the sacraments. From the beginning God has ordained through his messenger to be diligent in maintaining the unity of spirit in ties of peace: “There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling”⁵. For how can those whose opinions are divided and characters different be keen on maintaining agreement in spirit if they don’t meet in one place and hold on to one faith, one hope, one love, and one adornment.

History has shown that all populations although having erred from knowing the truth, used to appoint priests and public places to worship their false idols. As for the Israeli people, they changed the schools and locations for praying and reading the Torah set from before the Law and were ordained by God to erect the Dome of Time from wood to carry it on their way. When they reached the Promised Land and rested, King Solomon built for them the temple in order to gather in it to hear the word of God and offer their oblations. God ordained that no oblation be offered to Him outside this place, to where all the people would go and agree in one rite and one partnership as mentioned by David: “I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord...”⁶. For what would be the joy of a pious spirit other than seeing the whole population coming from all sides to one place and gather in the partnership of spirit and agreement of the body to serve the Creator. For that reason, the early Christians, though little in number and under the yoke of slavery, used to give out their houses and farms to serve God.

⁵ Ephesians 4:4

⁶ Psalms 122:1

III

Moreover, the holy books tell us that the disciples used to roam the globe, teach the tribes, build churches for prayer in all countries as well as basins for dying, altars to offer the body of the Lord, and appoint priests and laws to make sure to offer the sacraments of the church, in front of the people's eyes, to God who offered Himself for their salvation and to the graces and blessings He bestowed on them. In addition, the church informs us about the sanctification '*Al-Tablit*' as it is mentioned 'when those who, from the beginning, saw and served the Word through various deeds were filled with the Holy Spirit, they built churches and altars and assigned the baptism that comprises provisions for the sons, made the laws and defined the rules of priesthood'. St Paul wrote to the Corinthians scolding them for different issues first of which is that when they used to read the Holy Scriptures, they were not following the proper order that would enable everybody to learn and be lectured about what was happening: "... as in all churches of the saints"⁷. Second, their women used to speak loudly in the churches. So, he advised them saying: "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church"⁸. Third, they did not differentiate between the church of God and their houses as they used to bring their food and drinks whereby some would get drunk and others hungry; for that he said "What? Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?"⁹. Fourth, they would not differentiate between the bread of God and the normal bread; for that he said "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are week and sickly among you, and many sleep"¹⁰. Finally, he recommended, "If one of you got hungry, let him eat at home, so that your meeting would not be for judgment."

In all the aforementioned, it clearly shows that the early believers in the days of the pure disciples used to differentiate between houses and churches, for as they used to take houses for rest, they took churches for the service of God and instructing His people i.e. praying, teaching, distributing the sacraments, sanctifying the flesh of the Lord and giving it to the people in Communion. Consequently, the fathers decreed that this sacrament be sanctified only in places where the leaders would do it, as we shall see later in this book.

Chapter two **On the names of the church**

The Holy Fathers called the church different names such as church, synagogue, a prayer house, the house of God, place to bear witness, temple and so on. So, they called it "church" meaning a gathering place, as believers would gather in it to pray and offer the Holy Sacrament, for it was written "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"¹¹. Since the Corinthians underestimated the church by gathering in it not to offer the flesh of the Lord but rather to eat and drink, the messenger scolded them by saying "When ye come together

⁷ I. Corinthians 14:33

⁸ I. Corinthians 14:34-35

⁹ I. Corinthians 11:22

¹⁰ I. Corinthians 11:29-30

¹¹ Matthew 18:20

IV

therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken"¹².

The church is also called the House of God, the Habitat of God, the Dome of God, the Umbrella of God, and the Dwelling of God's Glory because God chose these places for Himself to dwell among His people. It is mentioned in the Genesis that when Jacob talked to God in the desert, he set a pillar of stone, poured out fat on it and called that place where God revealed Himself to him, the House of Eel i.e. House of God. If this place has been called the House of God after the presence of His Glory in it for one time only, then this name should better be given to the place where He is present in His divinity and human nature every day.

Moreover, the church is called the House of Prayer because the sons of faith gather in it to ask and pray, as it was written "my house is called a House of Prayer and you made it a cave for thieves." The church is also called the House of the Martyrs as the Fathers used to say in the synagogues. For in the Caledonian Assembly it was held that the clergy who are responsible for the houses of the martyrs, the monasteries, and the houses of the poor should submit to the power of the bishop because he celebrates the martyrs' holy days and their souvenirs; for since the beginning the fathers ordained that the churches be built over the bones of the martyrs and their relics.

They were called feasts because through them believers participated in feasts and offered oblations, just as when we come closer to the altar we ask "... bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar"¹³. There is no church without an altar, as there is no feast without an oblation; and the joy of the feast would not be complete without offering the sacrifice. As mentioned, the church is a place designed for offering the oblations. For that, David used to ask saying "... strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us. Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee"¹⁴. The Fathers called the attic of Zion ... because in it the disciples prepared first the Easter and offered oblation to the lord. John said about the sacred church "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, behold, the tabernacle of God is with men..."¹⁵. As for the Arabs, they call the church *Al-Biaa* (transliteration of Arabic word) either from *Mubayaa* (pledge of allegiance) because through it we elect the sons of faith to ranks of priesthood, or from *Bay* (homage) because the Lord bought us with His generous blood from the slavery of devil. The messenger wrote "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, in Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men"¹⁶. In the Acts of the Apostles he wrote drawing the attention of priests "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood"¹⁷. We can also say that *Bi'aa* comes from Syrian meaning egg and churches are built with domes in the form of eggs as their length is greater than their width. The church is also called a "temple" and in books we read that temple designates every wide building as mentioned in the prophecy of Daniel, i.e. to reside in the palace of the king and to serve him. This name later on was to call the temple of Solomon and the houses of the idols. For that reason, some fathers banned

¹² I. Corinthians 11:20-21

¹³ Psalms 118:27

¹⁴ Psalms 68: 28-29

¹⁵ Revelation 21:2-3

¹⁶ I. Corinthians 7:22-23

¹⁷ The Acts 20:28

calling churches with this name; however, when Christianity spread, churches were given that name, hence were called temples just as the Fathers said in Nicea Council "it is not permissible that congregations and gatherings for eating be held in the temples of God." Moreover, Jacob ... recommended that the relics of martyrs be moved from vacant temples to churches filled with people. This and churches are also called the City of God, the Hotel of Life, the Prairie of Blessings, the Net of Faith, the Mount of the Sanctuary, the Tower of Salvation, an Ornamented Wagon, a Revered Ship, a Stable Village, the Quay of Rescue, the Lighthouse of Sanctuary and so on.

Chapter three

On the mode of building churches

Just as from the beginning, God created through His Son all the *Bararia* (good things) and in His incarnation He renewed them throughout the ages, He wanted also that everything be subordinate Him going back to Him. As for priesthood, oblations and laws, we saw in the *First Manarat* that they were established in both the old and the new laws for His name and for the secret of His incarnation. With regards to churches, Srouji says in the 78 article of the Episcopal Council that God did not order to build the Habitat of Time except for the sacrament of the lord. As that period was temporal, it is imperative that it should fade with the incarnation of the Son of God. God also wanted that it be called temporal and that it falls in the hands of the Philistines in the village of Shiloh so that He makes them know its futility and voidness. As for the sacred church He got it engaged with His blood and founded it with His hand and promised it to be to His right so that it remains for ever. When Solomon was inspired and built himself a temple from hard rock aiming dignity, they were under the illusion that it would last for ever. False Prophets used to reinforce this illusion saying "the temple of God, the temple of God, the temple of God", meaning that it does not get extinguished nor changed. For that, they used to ignore God's commandments and follow foreign gods. Thus, He sent Prophet Jeremy saying "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the lord, the temple of the Lord, are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between man and his neighbour; If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever. Behold, ye trust in lying words that cannot profit... And now, because ye have done all these works... Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim"¹⁸. As if God wanted to tell them "I did not choose you to leave you nor did I build this temple to destroy it. But your doings do not please me because you make lies of my words and you follow liar prophets. Just as I left all the descendents of Ephraim when they stepped on my commandment, I will leave you and move you away from my face. Furthermore, just as I did in Shiloh I do with the house that was called in my name and with this city, which I gave to your fathers." All that truly happened because God sent ... the sword of his anger and burnt the temple, destroyed the city, took the people to Iraq and when they repented, God ordained that the temple be renovated. Then in the period of Darius, king of the Persians, they wallowed in their wrongdoings, so He sent them His only Son to encourage them to

¹⁸ Jeremiah 7:4-15

repent; yet instead of hearing His voice and following His words to be blessed with life, they provoked Pilate against Him to crucify Him saying “we don’t want Him to be our king, we want Caesar, the King of Rome.” So He sent them Titus the King of Rome in the year 43 after His crucifixion. When they were gathered from all countries to celebrate Easter, he besieged them strongly and annoyed them till they consumed one another. Then the Romans came and raided the city, put it down, burnt the temple and did not leave a stone standing. Youssifus the Hebrew reminds that the number of dead reached 11 ... and the prisoners 9... and 7000. They will remain till the end of time exiled and their temple wrecked. Consequently, He chose foreign populations to serve Him and allowed them to build churches everywhere instead of the temple and offer Him the flesh of His Son till the end of the epoch. As He spoke through His prophet Malachi saying “... I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts”¹⁹. In order that no one thinks that building churches is inessential or depends on a man’s will, we will talk about the beginning of the temple as we talked about its end, so we say: The Exodus tells us that before God ordered Moses to build the sanctuary, He took him up to the mountain and showed him a likeness; then He ordered him to build the sanctuary and its tools similar to that likeness he saw on the mountain. The book does not mention what was that likeness that Moses saw, but the messenger said “Who serve unto the example and shadow the heavenly things, as Moses was astonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle...”²⁰.

As for John, he narrates that he was taken in the spirit to Heaven and entered the city of the firstborns. He saw what was in it and meant to see its temple; he says “And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as a crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the lamb”²¹. He means to say that he did not see in heaven a temple, in order to prove that God does not reside in a temple built by man as it is said in the Acts of the Apostles. Moreover, He cannot be restricted to heaven and does not need the service of humans because heaven and earth are filled with Him and in Himself He is unchangeable and needs nothing. But that God the Lord and the Lamb are the temple and the ocean of the water of life comes out of the throne of God and the Lamb, meaning that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are the dome of righteousness as well as the temple of the city of firstborns and They are the likeness that He revealed to Moses saying “See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount”²². So he built the sanctuary in two domes and a nave as John said “The Lord and the Lamb are its temple”. Moses ordered that the first dome be called the Holy of the Holies and that it be hidden, seen by nobody. Only the pontiff may enter it once per year with blood. He called the outer dome the Sanctuary and designed it to offer the sacrifices in demand of forgiveness for people’s offences. The first dome indicates the first Hypostasis that is the Father, the Holy of Holies, the beginning of all and the stream of all sanctity. Moses ordered that this dome be hidden and only the pontiff may enter it because God the Father is hidden as John the beloved said at the

¹⁹ Malachi 1:10

²⁰ Hebrews 8:5

²¹ Revelation 22:1

²² Hebrews 8:5

beginning of his herald "No man hath seen God at any time; the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him"²³.

The second dome was called the Exterior because the Son came out of the lap of the Father like a child. He came down to earth and put on our body. With it He went back to the Father in one time with the blood of his flesh better than the pontiff with the blood of calves to the Holy of Holies as He said to His disciples "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father"²⁴. With His blood He overturned the sacrifices and expiated us from our sins. As for the Holy Spirit, Moses represented it with the nave, which was the place where the people could sit. John pictured it like the ocean of the water of life because the deeds of the Spirit are pure and distributed onto the sons of faith as said by the messenger "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will"²⁵. For that reason he likened it to pure crystal due to the lights of purity and sanctity with which He enlightens the pure and exhilarates them in spirit. Furthermore, John said that it comes out of the throne of God and the Lamb since it emanates from the Father and the Son as the Lord said "But when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto from the Father, even the spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning"²⁶. From there the reader understands that the sanctuary that Moses built in the wilderness was only similar to the Dome of Righteousness in Heaven. Likewise, the temple of Solomon was only built according to the drawing God sent to his father David. On the other hand, in the New Testament, the sanctified disciples ordered that churches be built as they learned directly from God. As we read in the ...the disciples built the churches and erect the baptism, the altar and the cross and chose priests, guides, and overseers for the sheep of Christ and handed them the laws that they received from our Lord. John said about the sacred church "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people"²⁷. Whereby the likeness in heaven is one and accordingly the two churches were built, for that reason the holy fathers divided big temples into three parts i.e. the Holy of Holies, the Sanctuary, and the Nave after the three hypostases. This model is revealed in our old churches: the church of St. Mama in Ihden [749 A.D.], St. Saba in Bcharri [1112 A.D.], St. Doumit in Toula/Batroun, and St. Charbel in Maad / Byblos.

However, as the New Testament favors the Old Testament just as the truth is far better than the drawing and the spirit than the body, the messenger proved that the old things were only a shadow and a symbol of the new ones. As for the church, it was written in the order of sanctifying the altar "God showed Moses the Chosen, His Prophet and guardian of His chest, the elevation of His fiancée the church from the top of the mountain; so he came down and erected the temporal habitat similar to the likeness he saw" because the Trinity sacrament was only publicly revealed by our Savior through His incarnation and He ordered us to proclaim it to the whole world and to baptize everybody in His name.

²³ John 1:18

²⁴ John 16:28

²⁵ I. Corinthians 12:11

²⁶ John 15:26-27

²⁷ Revelation 21:2-3

Chapter four

On the Holy of Holies and its interpretation

The Holy of Holies is the most honorable place in temples. The Fathers called it the Internal Dome, the Dome of Righteousness, the Great and Perfect Dome that no hands built, the House of God, the Temple of His Sanctity, the Residence of Comfort and the third Heaven. These names indicate that God is hidden in the best spot as the faithful Clement said at the beginning of his Anaphora "God, who is unseen, unperceived, non described, unlimited, residing in the Holy of Holies. In the hidden dome which no hands made above all heavens and heaven of heavens." John mentions what the Holy of Holies comprises "And immediately I was in the spirit; and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one set on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone... and round about the throne were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face like a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle"²⁸. The pious fathers used to picture God in the apses of churches sitting on the throne of glory; they represented the faces of four animals around the throne with angels standing offering incense to Him and lamps sparkling around Him, to enable the priest to raise his eyes to Him exalted as He is, when he offers demands in the Eucharist.

Scholars had different interpretations about these animals. Some said they indicate the four evangelists while others said they indicate God's virtues among other interpretations.

However, as the one sitting on the throne is God the Father from whom we have all good fortune, perfect talent and from whom we won the capacity of existence, grace, speaking of wonders like the messenger said "I knew such a man in Christ above the fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven."²⁹ For this we say that the four mentioned animals designate the pure churches that accepted the grace from God and served Him in all purity.

The first church was in the age of nature from Adam to the bestowal of laws; it resembles the lion, as animals and beasts used to submit to our first forefathers before the latter sinned. Having sinned, their lives resembled that of animals. David the Prophet said "Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish"³⁰.

The second church was in the age of law, i.e. from Abraham and Moses till the advent of Christ and it resembles the bull either because the law was heavy on the neck of people or because bulls were carried to the sanctuary and offered to God in sacrifice.

The third church was in the age of grace from Christ till the end of time resembling the human picture; as the Son of God came down from the height of his Heaven taking the human picture which was spoiled by the filth of sin - having been in the age of nature like the predatory animals and in the age of law like bulls until the Son of God reconditioned them with His herald and revitalizing sufferings and gave them His flesh to unite with it and offer it on their behalf.

²⁸ Revelation 4:2-7

²⁹ II. Corinthians 12:2

³⁰ Psalms 49: 20

The fourth church is the church of the pure in heaven. For that reason, it was likened to the eagle who flies, as the angels and spirits of the pure were saved from tests and raised to watch righteousness, same like the eagle who is the lightest of all birds in flying and sharpest in sight.

In ancient times, God revealed these likenesses to Ezekiel the prophet as mentioned "And when I looked, behold the four wheels by the cherubims, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub... they four had one likeness, as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel... And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about... for the spirit of the living creature was in them"³¹. This means that the four churches had different ranks, yet God's spirit was arranging for it and guiding its conduct to be satisfactory for Him. Saint Paul said about the Holy of Holies "And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat"³², meaning to say that the Holy of Holies contained four things: the golden censer, the ark of the covenant, the tables of the covenant, and the cherubims. As far as the golden censer is concerned, some 'Fathers' said that it is the altar of incense mentioned in Exodus which was outside the Holiest of all and was made out of shittim wood overlaid round about by gold³³. Others like Saint Ephraim and Augustine said that He was inside the Holy of Holies as Saint Paul related. The belief is that in the sanctuary the altar was erected from shittim wood to burn incense and a golden censer placed in the Holy of Holies. The first church is represented with the altar of incense as God used to accept their oblations with fire and sense their sacrifices like a sweet fragrance. The Ark of the Convent containing the two tablets of commandments, the rod of Aaron, and the manna that God sent to the people of Israel, is an indication to the old convent. Its shittim wood is covered with gold, as the age of law is better than the age of nature. As for the 'Place of Forgiveness', it was all of gold in designation of the age of grace because God sent us His Son to forgive sins "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past..."³⁴. Just as gold is much better than wood, the age of grace is much better than the age of the law. Finally, God ordered Moses to put cherubim from pure gold to shadow the place of forgiveness and from between the mentioned cherubim God used to talk to him. This is an indication that this church is that of the pure, and he erected the cherubim above the 'place of forgiveness' because this church is better than the other one and because pure angels won with experience, got established in grace and reached permanent glory. As for those who remained in this life, they are still exposed to dangers along the traveling path. It was said that the two cherubim used to shadow the 'place of forgiveness' and from between them God used to talk to His people. From the beginning God sent angels to guard human beings and on their hands gave the laws to advanced Fathers like Saint Stephen mentioned in the news of the disciples and Saint Paul in his letter to the Galatians. This is how He overflows their hands with the bounty of His grace on the church in the age of grace especially in the Eucharist Sacrament as

³¹ Ezekiel 10:9-17

³² Hebrews 9:3-5

³³ Exodus 30

³⁴ Romans 3:23-25

the Lord said "... Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man"³⁵.

From all the above explanation it becomes clear that the likenesses Ezekiel saw spiritually in the interior hall and the one that John saw in the celestial City of Jerusalem apply to what God ordered Moses to make in the Holy of Holies. Having seen that the Holy of Holies points to God the Father, similarly these likenesses He Himself revealed to us in the Holy of Holies, point to perfect talents dispensed by the Father of Lights to all those who became pious in the age of nature, the age of law, the age of grace, and the age of the pure via their merit of the flesh of the Lord who was sacrificed right from the foundation of the world.

The sanctified fathers commanded that the eastern wall be on the form of an apse indicating the lap of God the Father in His sacred temple. In addition, above the apse a window to the east to be cut because He is the Father of Light. Below the window inside the apse, a high seat to be placed in the churches of bishops pointing out to the throne of His greatness. As for Him, He is pictured in the middle of the apse surrounded with lit lamps and angels glorifying, incenses spreading sweet fragrances and pure spirits surrounding Him all this so that we raise our sight to Him and take from Him the wisdom and good gifts that He gives to every man especially those who are better in devotion, purity and knowledge.

Then the holy fathers commanded that the convent of the sacraments be put in the Holy of Holies containing the four items i.e. the flesh of the Lord, the Holy Chrism, the Baptism Oil, and the Epiphany Water, for these are superior to the ones placed in the Ark of Covenant. Through these elements God completed His grace with us: with the water we become the sons of God, with the oil we beget His mercy, with the chrism there is easiness, and in the Sacrament of His flesh we unite with him.

Chapter five

On the Episcopal seat (cathedra)

Among the commandments that Peter the apostle gave to his disciple Clement is to sit on a high place so that he supervises everybody, looking at them; for that reason the head priest is called bishop i.e. supervisor. As a matter of fact, he rightfully ordered this since kings sit on their seats to inspire awe and enhance physical presence, likewise the successors of the disciples sit on the seats of glory for dignity and the guidance of souls. Episcopal seats are only set in Episcopal churches. In the old days, they used to set them up to the east of the altar, made of stone so that it be a drawing of the Throne of Greatness in the temple of His Holiness, as prophet David said "The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven"³⁶. As for the Orthodox churches, at the time of serving the sacraments, the deacon says loudly, "Lord, bless this high Cathedra" and the priest burns incense saying "Blessed are Thou on the seat of the glory of Your reign, You sitting on the cherubim." The head priests sit on that seat because God gave them the power and made them custodians of the vault of His blessings saying to them "... Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven"³⁷.

Osapius the historian mentioned that a seat was placed for Jacob the disciple, head bishop of Jerusalem, in the city of Jerusalem and remained till the days of Jalinus the King. Mark the evangelist did the same thing in the city of Alexandria and when

³⁵ John 1:51

³⁶ Psalms 11:4

³⁷ Matthew 18:18

Peter the Patriarch succeeded him in leadership, he did not dare sitting on the seat that his master placed in respect for his master's position. Peter the preeminent of disciples did the same in the city of Antioch and greater Rome. Today, the Roman Catholic Church celebrates its seat every 22nd of February in Antioch and every 18th of January the Seat in Rome.

Stephen, holder of the seat of Rome, was quoted to have accepted martyrdom when he was sitting on that seat. As for Peter's Seat, it was made of wood and kept from that time in his church in a small praying place. Yet, in our days it was moved to the main apse upon Pope Alexander the Seventh order and was raised on four hands of statues made of yellow copper representing four scholars of the sacred church: Ethnadius the Great, Patriarch of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople, Emprosios, metropolitan of Medulan, and Augustine bishop of Hibona, as these four enhanced the church of God with their sacredness, their elevated writings about the Holiness of the Holy Trinity and the leadership of the church.

The Seat is set up in a high place to teach the issues of faith and in respect for priesthood that comprises the divine power, as the messenger says "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you"³⁸. The Savior says "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house"³⁹. According to the 62nd law, three hundred and eighteen fathers said, "during prayer, the bishop is in the forefront of the temple like the shepherd and the guide to supervise all the people." David the prophet said "The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men"⁴⁰. Below the Episcopal Seat a staircase is set so that the one sitting on the Seat knows that he does not reach it without having ascended the ladder of virtues and from it he should bestow blessings and deliver the teachings of salvation onto his people. Around the Episcopal Seat other differentiated seats and mastabas are set for priests and ministers, as David the prophet said "Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders"⁴¹.

Also, in the church of the Patriarch there are seats for bishops. Yet, the seat of the leader is higher than the rest so that he can see everybody. Osapius the historian narrates that King Constantine set up in the city of Constantine high seats and chairs under which there are mastabas in proper order in respect for the power of priesthood, teaching the people and offering the flesh of the Lord; it is also for the deacons to be in service like the disciples before their teacher.

Just as John the Baptist used to stand before the Lord and joyfully listen to his words, this is how all the population should be standing listening to the words of the bishop. Since some of the priests and deacons were stimulated by their lower self to go beyond their ranks the fathers who gathered in Latiakia put law 56 ordering "no priest is allowed to sit in this position before the bishop sits. In other words no deacon sits on it even if they are leading deacons, only leaders and priests may sit due to the honor of power they were granted to offer the body of the Lord."

All these things are only a symbol of what John saw in heaven "And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about

³⁸ I. Thessalonians 5:12

³⁹ Matthew 5:15

⁴⁰ Psalms 11:4

⁴¹ Psalms 107:32

the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne there was proceeded lightings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God"⁴². Accordingly, the high seat indicates the throne of the Father in the temple of His sanctuary and the seats of the bishops and ranks of priests indicate the ranks of the perfect in the kingdom, those whose weight won ten weights and came with a hundred fold instead of one. John described them dressed in white as they washed in the blood of the lamb. He said also that he saw golden crowns on their heads because they reign with God. They are 24 in number because they are more favorable than others, 12 of them are the fathers of the tribes and the other 12 are the disciples of the Lord, about who was said "... in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"⁴³.

The lightening and thunders point to the ray of blessings and the matters of justice issued from them. Just as the angels stand in front of the Seat to glorify and exalt, deacons stand in front of the bishop. Similarly, as the fathers decreed the building of altars from stone to show the continuity of the sacrifice and its permanence, they also required to build the seats of stone in the apse indicating the stability of faith, as David the prophet said "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock"⁴⁴. He also said "...and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings"⁴⁵. When the Savior gave the keys of leadership to Peter He told him "... That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church"⁴⁶. Just as in hard times David used to go back to the Lord so that he be soothed as he said "From the end of earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy"⁴⁷, God asks us that when the enemy gets tough on us with his tests, to go back to priests and to seek the help of holders of the Seats, as He said "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely"⁴⁸.

Chapter six

On the sanctuary and its contents

The second Dome in the temple is the Sanctuary. We mentioned earlier that it indicates the seat of the Son in the dome of His Glory. God ordered that three items be placed in the Sanctuary, the candlestick, the table, and the shewbread, as mentioned in Exodus and the Epistle to the Hebrews⁴⁹.

The altar is made of shittim wood overlaid with brass and has a grate of network of brass; upon the net four brazen rings are designed in the four corners to carry the altar with. The 'Table of the Shewbread' upon which the shewbread used to be put, is placed in the northern side of the dome. It is made of shittim wood overlaid with pure gold and crowned with a golden garland; four rings are set on its four sides to facilitate carrying

⁴² Revelation 4:2-5

⁴³ Matthew 19:28

⁴⁴ Psalms 27:5

⁴⁵ Psalms 40:2

⁴⁶ Matthew 16:18

⁴⁷ Psalms 61:2-3

⁴⁸ Solomon's Song 2:14

⁴⁹ Exodus 30 & Hebrews 9

it. It is placed on the other side, the southern side. Seven candlesticks of gold are set on it. All these were according to the likeness that Moses saw on the mountain and all were completed with the sacraments, which we daily sanctify on the altar. The shewbread symbolizes the Bread of the Lord and the sacrifices symbolize the shedding of His blood from the cup.

The candlestick of seven lamps represents the sacraments of the church or the seven books of the New Testament because with the power of what it transmits to the spirits from the light of grace, it rips the shroud of sin from the hearts.

John narrated about the temple in the sky "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth"⁵⁰.

As noticed in the church of Mar Saba in the city of Bcharri and the Lady's Church in Aleppo among other churches, the Fathers ordained that in vast temples an impressive looking dome be built above the altar upon four columns with four curtains. Moreover, above the four corners, to put four idols personifying the angels or the four animals mentioned and to place an apple above the dome and above the apple a cross.

The dome is meant to indicate the dome of the Son's glory in the church. The columns on which it rests represent the four ecumenical assemblies with the four chairs upon which the Christian law is established. The four statues stand for the four preachers who instructed the four corners of the world with their teachings. The two handles with which the altar is carried correspond to the great apostles Peter and Paul; God wanted that the four Patriarchs imitate the former two in their pure love of the Savior and their watching over His sheep. As for the four curtains they indicate the shroud with which the body of the Lord was covered or to the garment of Glory as it is written "The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved"⁵¹. The high apple and the cross above it point to the kingdom of Heaven, which we got acquainted to and won by reaching it through the Sacred Cross.

In this dome, the body of the Lord is placed to fulfill the saying of David that God "... working salvation in the midst of the earth"⁵² and that God the Father gave Him sovereignty over the nations as per the saying of David "God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness"⁵³.

When Gabriel the angel brought the goods news to the Virgin Mary, he told her "He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end"⁵⁴ and said He will give Him the throne of David His father to fulfill his era for which he entered a covenant saying "... I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations"⁵⁵. He also said He will rule over the house of Jacob for ever, the house of Jacob meaning the group of the elevated as it was from the nucleus of Jacob that the twelve fathers, heads of the tribes came out from and he was the first one to pour the oil on the stone and made it the house of God. He said that His rule would have no end indicating the continuity of His rule in the spirit forever in the heavenly

⁵⁰ Revelation 5:6

⁵¹ Psalms 93:1

⁵² psalms 74:12

⁵³ Psalms 47:8

⁵⁴ Luke 1:32-33

⁵⁵ Psalms 89:3-4

glory, as David said "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever"⁵⁶. John remembers that he heard great voices from heaven saying "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever"⁵⁷.

The fathers recommended that a staircase be set under the altar and that the altar to be surrounded with lights and pictures of the saints; the priests are also meant to encircle it with lit candles when celebrating the Holy Eucharist and the deacons encircle it censers and fans. Through all that they wanted to indicate the ranks of angels and the positions of the sanctified who carried the testimony of the Lamb in the world in front of the judges and the kings of earth and won five times their weights and were given sixty instead of one grace. For that they sit on the seat of light and enjoy the rest of bliss around the chair of the Lamb and are happy with the company of the angels who were glorified with the sight of the Lamb in the second rank, as John said "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years"⁵⁸.

The altar is covered from its top with sacred costumes like holy garments venerated to indicate the clothes of the celestial bride as John mentioned he heard the soldiers of Heaven glorifying "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints"⁵⁹.

In the Roman liturgy, when the bishop is ordaining the sub-deacons he incites him to maintain the appropriate dignity of the altar's clothes saying "Now make the effort to fulfill this pure service with much power, care and purity in order to complete through it that which we do not see" because the altar of the church is Christ Himself as John witnessed "And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets"⁶⁰. The liturgical vestments are but the parts of the Christ, i.e. the believers in God and as mentioned by David "The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty"⁶¹. Also John said "I saw... one like unto the son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle"⁶². This area represents the companionship of the elevated and the priests who encircle the altar and sit with Christ and rule with Him, as the Flesh of the Lord in the Eucharist is the Sacrament of Union for it was said "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us"⁶³. Just as the Lord accepted to sit with His disciples at the feast of His flesh, He also accepts to sit with the sanctified in His kingdom next to His throne and at His table as He said through John "And he that overcometh... to him I will give power over the nations"⁶⁴ and "...will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God"⁶⁵.

⁵⁶ Psalms 45:6

⁵⁷ Revelation 11:15

⁵⁸ Revelation 20:4

⁵⁹ Revelation 19:7-8

⁶⁰ Revelation 8:2

⁶¹ Psalms 93:1

⁶² Revelation 1:12-13

⁶³ John 17:19-21

⁶⁴ Revelation 2:26

⁶⁵ Revelation 2:7

Chapter seven

On the reason of setting the altar in front of the seat and on its right

On the basis of what has been mentioned, it became clear that the 'Holy Fathers', filled with all wisdom, commanded that the Episcopal Seat be set in the apse to represent the throne of the Father in the temple of His holiness. Fathers have also recommended that the altar be placed in the sanctuary in order to signify the son's seat in the dome his glory. There seems to be a difficulty or contradiction here in the fact that in our old churches, the seat used to be set up in the apse with the altar in front of it as it has been said while in some churches the seat is put above the balustrade at the southern side as it is the case in the Orthodox churches. At some other times it is set at the northern side as is the case in Roman churches. The holy books, however, testify that the Son sits to the right of the Father as it is expressed by Prophet David "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand"⁶⁶.

Saint Stephen said "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God"⁶⁷. And the Lord told his apostles "Hereafter, shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven"⁶⁸.

The holy books said in other places that the altar was set up in front of the throne; for John declares "... and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God"⁶⁹. He also states "And another angel came and stood at the altar,... before the throne"⁷⁰.

If the place of the son is on the right of the Father, why then does John say that the golden altar is in front of God's throne. Realize then that the Master, the Savior is a God as well as a human; this is the reason why when Moses intended to manufacture the Table of Shewbread and the altar of sacrifices -both of which resemble the Savior-God ordered him to make them from shittim wood which cannot be infested by weevils and to coat the altar with copper and the table with pure gold and to wreath it with golden garlands. Shittim wood signifies the human nature, though weak, hasn't known corruption while solid gold and copper symbolize the divine nature.

For just as the fragile wooden stick is beautified by gold and well assembled with it without losing its own nature, in the same way, human nature has been consecrated and beautified by the divine nature till both have united together in a holy union without the former being affected by the intensity of the latter. In accordance with these two natures, the altar should be in front of the Father's seat and to his right.

To understand this, concerning his divine nature, know that the son has two characteristics, the first of which is being the son of God while the second is being equal to Him in essence and power. As the prophecy imparts He is both in his Father's lap and sitting in front of Him as the Father says "Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee"⁷¹. As John, in the beginning of his bible, says "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father"⁷².

As for the evenness with the Father, the son is the Father's power and is sitting at his right as David said "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I

⁶⁶ Psalm 110:1

⁶⁷ The Acts 7:56

⁶⁸ Matthew 26:64

⁶⁹ Revelation 9:13

⁷⁰ Revelation 8:3

⁷¹ Psalms 2:7

⁷² John 1:18

make thine enemies thy footstool”⁷³. Paul also wrote that the son is “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high”⁷⁴.

With regard to the body which he has taken from us, it also embodies two things; the first is that he is a pontiff and the second is that he is a king. He, like a pontiff or the supreme pontiff appears in front of the son to plead for us and like a king sits at his right. So the Savior has not put on the body of our humanity except to bear crucifixion and death on our behalf to free us from the bondage of sin and the slavery of the devil and bring us back to the obedience and love of his father. It is for this reason that God has chosen him in the word of oath to be the eternally permanent pontiff on the rank of Melchisedek. If pontiffs mediate on earth between God and the people and present offerings for him for their sins, the savior ascended to heaven by the body which he had offered to us and appeared on our behalf in front of the Father. In the Old Testament, God has ordered that no one enters the Holy of Holies except the highest pontiff and only once a year taking with him calf blood as an offering then he comes out and sprinkle it on the people to purify their bodies.

All this has been a symbol to what is in heaven. The Savior, on his ascendance to the sky, entered once, with his blood, into the dome of righteousness and into the lap of his father. He didn't allow angels to enter with him nor human ideas or perceptions to follow him.

For this reason the Lord wanted that the altar of the lamb, in heaven, be set up in front of God. The same case is in churches, the altar of oblations is set up in front of the Episcopal seat so that we understand that the Savior is a mediator between God and the people and he and for once appeared in front of God for us and won eternal salvation.

With respect to the altar's being put to the right of the seat it is by reason that God the Father when, pleased by His son's offering, and testified by his birth He seated him on his right and gave him sovereignty upon all what is in heaven and on earth as the apostle says “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool”⁷⁵. He also wrote to the people of Ephesians saying “Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. For above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church”⁷⁶.

It's inferred from all what we have mentioned that the altar has been set in front of God's throne for us to comprehend that the Master, the Savior in His divine nature is the son of God and is sitting in His lap, while in his human nature He is the highest bishop and the servant of the dome of righteousness which God has set up in heaven. It is, yet, set to the right side of the Father's seat so that we realize that the son, in divinity, is equal to the Father in self dignity and in humanity eternally rules with Him.

As for the high priest, he sits on the seat behind the altar especially in serving the holy sacraments during the following rituals:

First, when he wears the service garments;

⁷³ Psalms 110:1

⁷⁴ Hebrews 1:3

⁷⁵ Hebrews 10:12

⁷⁶ Ephesians 1:20

second, in the part where he watches the preaching and recites the prayer in front of the altar then, goes to the seat and stays there till the beginning of the Anaphora prayer; third, after calling the holy spirit, the high priest takes his seat so that if the deacon reads *Chamlayat Al Rouasa'a* (the fathers prayer), he takes charge of his authority, observes his congregation and remains there till the end of *Chamlayat Al Mout* (deceased prayer). fourth, when sermons and like are delivered; with respect to the Orthodox church and since the balustrade is blocked, the heads of the church wear their service garments in the *Inbilin* (sacristy) which lies inside the church. They mostly sit on the seat set to the southern side of the balustrade because it overlooks the chorus and the place of prayer. While in the Roman Catholic Church, it had been managed that the seat be set up to the northern windward since it lies to the right of the altar and which is the best location in the church after the altar. There is seated the high priest at the times of prayer and the mass in addition to the rest of the priesthood servants.

What has been said about the immovable seats is quite enough, however, and when necessary, movable seats are used for distributing the sacraments of the church and for other purposes with the difference that the seat, before the consecration of sacraments is set to the southern side and after consecration to the northern side for the pre-mentioned reasons.

Chapter eight

On the nave and its interpretations

The third place in churches is *Al Dar* (the nave) where believers assemble to pray, to perform the mass, and listen to the Holy Scriptures and the service of God and the commanding of souls. The nave is divided into three parts, the prayer place, which the Orthodox call chorus, the temple, and the external nave. The chorus is the most sacred place in the nave and the closest to the sanctuary. It was in it that Zakariya (Ezekiel) the son of Brakhia was killed between the altar and the temple. High priests, priests, and deacons assemble here for prayer and praise God. It is also the place where people offer and chanters accept the laying of the hand and where matrimonial ceremonies and most other ecclesiastical affairs are held.

For this reason in the Orthodox churches many rows of chairs are placed in the chorus for the sacristans of the altar, each in the seat of his rank. The Episcopal seat is placed in the balustrade next to its southern end. This seat has a square shape and is placed between the balustrade and the two corners which lie in the center of the nave. The chorus has three doors, the western, for the entry of the clergy, the eastern to allow entry to the sanctuary (this is called the royal entrance) and the northern, for the procession of the gospel and the sacraments and for other uses. As for our fathers, owners of the Antiochian seats, they have overlooked the seats and forced themselves to pray while standing as the Lord says "if you stand up for praying say Our Father who is in heaven".

Histories have informed us about too many elevated fathers especially the students of our dignified father Maron that they had spent all their lives standing on their feet day and night and split for prayer into two choirs in front of the royal portal. St Egnatious Al Hourani has testified that he had heard the angels singing praises to God in this manner.

As per the priests and deacons, they lean on sticks to help their weak bodies except the superior who sit on chairs out of respect for the rank they have ascended to. In that place, the fathers who met in Leticia commanded that the sub-deacon be seated with the rest of the small deacons who were prohibited from sitting the balustrade.

The second place in the nave is the temple. It is specified for believers who are baptized by water and in 'spirit'. In big churches it was divided into three parts, the middle part for married couples and their small children, the southern part for young men; and the northern part for virgins.

Josephus has mentioned that in Salomon's temple a wall was built to separate men and women and that the men's place used to be to the southern side while women's place was to the northern windward side. That was because the heat of the southern wind is stronger than the northern and by nature, men have more patience than women and God doesn't afflict upon anyone more than his strength could bear.

The third part of the nave is the external nave. Fathers have specified it for penitents, the chastised, the disciples known as the listeners and the preached. For those were not allowed to attend the offering of holy sacraments but were sent out by the sub-deacon after reading the bible when the head deacon would say 'Go with peace thou listener'.

The exterior nave is made sacred by the holy chrism like the sanctuary and Holy of Holies. Thus, it is similarly worthy of veneration and respect. It is by reason that the priests of Israel disregarded the external nave and permitted the common people to buy and sell in it; God raided a holy raid, entwined a rod from the bulls' leashes and drove them out of it after turning the tables of money-exchangers and the chairs of pigeon sellers upside down saying "My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves"⁷⁷.

The nave symbolizes first the abode of the Holy Spirit and the place where He spreads these gifts on the people assembled there. John has viewed it as "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as a crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb"⁷⁸. He compared it to the water as an indication of cheerfulness and solace as it came "... I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy"⁷⁹.

It also came "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses"⁸⁰.

The savior has also spoken through the Holy Spirit saying "... I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst"⁸¹. Hence, John has not perceived it in the church of the first born but as a river because the power of the spirit flows upon on the pious in this life as a small stream due to weak readiness. However, when they return to God and their happiness is complete and God becomes all in all, then He floods upon them as a river from which they draw inspiration from the abundance of His light until they become more pure than crystal.

Secondly, we denote by the nave the life of the pure in this life and the abundance of God's grace and blessings upon them in relation to body and soul. This is the reason why chandeliers are suspended in the ceiling of the church; pictures are drawn on its walls and from its floor spread the pleasant scent of incense. Besides, it is in its space that hymns and melodies are chanted, children are baptized, believers are ordained, brides and grooms are wedded and the reserves of the holy are kept so that we realize their elevation in their physical as well as their spiritual life till they attain perfection.

⁷⁷ Matthew 21:13

⁷⁸ Revelation 22:1

⁷⁹ Joel 2:1

⁸⁰ Isaiah 44:3

⁸¹ John 6:35

symbolizes the gravestone where the angel preached to the women about the Lord's resurrection. The pulpit is constructed outside the sanctuary due to the fact that in the kingdom of God, the teaching of faith becomes invalid. It's constructed in a high place since the sacraments we are proclaiming from above are not coming from below but from high. It's for this reason that He ordered us to announce it not in secret but from roof tops, in front of the judges and the rulers of the world to hear them, hold on to them as if sent down from God. Isaiah said "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up my voice with strength"⁸².

It is for the same reason that God almighty sent down his revelation upon Samuel on the Rama and gave the law to Moses, His epithet, above Sinai's mountain. He also abducted John to a high mountain to make him behold the heavenly Jerusalem. Added to this, the Savior would teach at the deck of the ship, the top of the mountain and on the mount He manifested and from the mountain He ascended to the heavens. And He would also raise us from this earth to the heights provided that we memorize and abide by His commandments.

Third: the baptistery is set in the nave for nonbelievers to wash with its water. In the past, it used to be set outside the church or in its narthex so that no one would enter the church except who was 'the son of light'. Later, they put it in the closet because there is kept *Al Razat* (the coffin) as we see in the temple of St. Saba in the city of Bcharri. Afterwards, the fathers ordered that it be set up at the northern side of the nave for the reason that, during baptistery, we dress up Christ and move from among sinners to the rows of the righteous that are to the right.

A statue of a dove is placed over the baptistery to indicate the reception of the spirit. Moreover, the baptistery is made of stone to indicate the continuity of faith till the end of time. Moses has compared it with the stone he had hit in the wilderness and from which he discharged twelve springs for the people of Israel. Salomon, on the other hand, symbolized it by the sea of copper which was set in the nave on twelve bulls in order that we understand that the water which came out of the Lord's body by the stab of the spear was used by the apostles to baptize the whole world.

Fourth: certain vessels are located in the nave to contain the water which we employ in the Epiphany and in the consecration of the church, as well as other practices similar to what is mentioned about Salomon's temple. For holy water is beneficial for cleansing the impurities of the body, discharging demons, curing patients as well as for saving from a lot of faults. It has been mentioned about father Makarius that he had saved a woman by sprinkling consecrated water on her and released her of the *Sourat Al Faras* (a legend talking about the horse picture) which had seen transformed to her by the power of magic. It is by this water that the Markulos the bishop of Hama, and John the 'Golden Mouth' have cured a woman of the intestinal ulcer which had frustrated doctors. It has also cured many people from fever and other diseases. Through it, a blind man regained sight on the hand of St. Anselmo and many fathers have dismissed the attacks of locusts and rats from lands. It was also used to save women from labor pains and to undo magic spells and to ward off evil spirits from bodies. They used it to perform many other wonders.

Just as the Israelis defeated the pharaohs by crossing the sea and entering the promise land, are the believers when entering into the house of God they defeat the enemy when they sprinkle that holy water on him.

⁸² Isaiah 40:9

Ospaius, the historian, told that Constantine had used the same style in building the church he set in Constantinople. He, thus, made the door of the balustrade in two shutters and threw a veil covering it all from the inside. This was meant to conceal from view things that the believers should not see in the mass such as the ordination of the priests and other practices. This had continued in the church till the time of iconoclastic revolution especially in Orthodox countries.

As for the Roman churches, they have kept the balustrade making its height half a fathom and raising the altar many steps so that people would easily observe all the issues related to the mass.

Concerning the Holy of Holies which was first concealed, the fathers have ordered that two doors be opened in it, from the side of the sanctuary and from the side of the nave through which people could enter. They have also rendered in it a closet and set a small altar in its center with the dome of baptistery at its right. Besides, they assigned another place in it for *Al Razat* (the coffin), the liturgical garments, the sanctuary instruments as well as the church books, the Saints' relics and the like. Their head priests are selected and the ordination of the evangelists, the *Bardout* deacon, and the priests begins. It is also there that the sacrament's reserves are transported and in there children are cleaned and courses of instruction are held.

As for the Episcopal seat and the things related to the Holy of Holies, it has been set in the apse of the big altar in a high place so that all the affairs of the church are apparent and clear not hidden as the originators of heresies claim.

What is meant by raising of the veil is that God almighty has shown the path of the holy which had been concealed in the old church as the apostles said. As for the reason of setting the veil in the old one and the balustrade in the new, it is because that was God's order to Moses and that was what he showed to him in the mountain. This makes us realize the undivided distinction between the three trinities to be glorified, as it has been written "... and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him"⁸⁴.

Beside, for the distinction between people and the servants of the altar, God has ordered Moses that no one enters the sanctuary except the priests and that no one enters the Holy of Holies except the head of bishops alone. In the New Testament, the fathers of the Tronician council commanded that people should stand outside the altar on which the sacraments are offered and that no one should dare to stand among the deacons in the risings and during the mass.

On the other hand, the council of Latiakia had prevented women from entering into the altar saying that it is unlawful for anyone to approach it except for service only. As for the council of Barraka, it has prohibited common people from entering the sanctuary while Terlos council forbade any of the people neither to approach it nor to present an offering inside the balustrade except the faithful kings who had been permitted to do that since very ancient times. Yet, God in the Old Testament ordered the setting up of the veil because the common people were not qualified to see the secrets of God.

What supports this statement is that when God gave the law to Moses and dictated that he proclaims publicly, the public asked him to put a veil upon his face due to the weakness of their vision as God told Isaiah "... go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed cross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their

⁸⁴ Luke 10:22

one had four wings... I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty"⁹¹.

At last, the nave is compared to the paradise into which God has let our forefathers enter after they had maintained their purity. For that place was the medium between heaven and earth as is the balustrade a medium between the people of heaven and the people of the earth.

Chapter eleven **On church doors**

The day and night opening of the church doors symbolizes the abundance of God's mercy and compassion towards mankind. For this reason, we say, whenever we enter the home of God 'the door of mercy and compassion open our master as you did open for Maria Magdalena Simon the Pharisee home'. In addition, the opening of doors represents God's satisfaction with our salvation and His longing for the attendance of all people to His knowledge. This is why the church's doors are open while reading the holy books so that people could hear God's speech and as Isaiah says "Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. The Glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious"⁹².

Besides, the opening of church doors expresses God's gratification that all will be revived and will enter His heavenly kingdom. From this we infer God's magnified grace which He entrusted to us in the New Testament. Over that He has entrusted to the holders of the Old Testament. For He hadn't permitted those believers to build except one temple in Jerusalem and He had favored it for Abraham's progeny exclusively. However, in the New Testament, and after His Son's incarnation, God commanded that churches be built everywhere and doors be open for every tongue and every race. This to underscore that He, through his son, has given us everything. This also shows that He does not distinguish between a Jew, an illiterate, a Greek, a Persian, a slave, or freeman. He is the whole for the whole. He has also poured forth His mercy on every body and ordered his students to come out to the world and bring over all people His knowledge. Hence, they will unite with Him in body and rejoice in His company in His heavenly kingdom as it is written in the morning prayer to sanctify the church 'the church has opened its doors for all people and called upon nations by saying come foreigners and be let us be familiar. Come O sinners and repent since God has prepared me a feast as well as the bread of life'.

Moreover, John has told us about the New Jerusalem which had been shown to him by the Holy Spirit, he said "... and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel... And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb"⁹³.

God had meant by the new city which John had seen coming down from the sky to the earth, the holy church which he engaged with his blood and pledged to stay with

⁹¹ Ezekiel 1:4

⁹² Isaiah 60:11-13

⁹³ Revelation 21:12

This is the reason why, after reading the bible, the deacon orders that listeners dismiss and doors be closed. God has ordered that two veils should exist in the sanctuary so that one of them separate between the nave and the sanctuary while the other separates the sanctuary from the Holy of Holies. This aims at separating the priesthood from all others.

It is inferred from this that the secret of the trinity was concealed from the people of that age and God hadn't inspired it except for few of the virtuous fathers. That was contrary to the new age for since the incarnation of God's son, these secrets have been revealed to baptized children by a specialized word from the side of righteousness by his saying "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for thou it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him"¹⁰⁰.

When the son wore our body, he disclosed this knowledge to us and ordered us to preach it for all people in the world and baptize them by the name of 'the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'. It is for this reason that our holy fathers made it obligatory that the doors of the balustrade be open and its walls be unblocked but made with holes on the shape of a net, thus allowing all believers to participate to the mass. Nevertheless, they ordered the deacons to drop the veils at noted times out of respect for the sacraments; and this is done first when we recite the creed since faith is the secret of the invisible things but we aspire for; second, when we draw the sign of cross above the chalice because then we make the memory of God's pains; third, in the Eucharist while priest perform the communion symbolizing the death of the Lord and the distribution of his holy body in the attic was hidden and unrecognized; fourth, the veil is dropped when the priest descends to distribute the Consecrated wafer to the congregation, this is to make us realize that the one who settles in the Father's lap, in the temple of His holiness, descends to earth to distribute His Self on humankind.

¹⁰⁰ Matthew 11:25

APPENDIX II

The Burra Charter (The Australia ICOMOS charter for places of cultural significance)

Australia ICOMOS
The Burra Charter (The
Australia ICOMOS charter
for places of cultural
significance)

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Preamble

Explanatory
notes

Considering the [International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites](#) (Venice 1964), and the Resolutions of the 5th General Assembly of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) (Moscow 1978), the Burra Charter was adopted by Australia ICOMOS (the Australian National Committee of ICOMOS) on 19 August 1979 at Burra, South Australia. Revisions were adopted on 23 February 1981, 23 April 1988 and 26 November 1999.

The Burra Charter provides guidance for the conservation and management of places of

cultural significance (cultural heritage places), and is based on the knowledge and experience of Australia ICOMOS members.

Conservation is an integral part of the management of places of cultural significance and is an ongoing responsibility.

Who is the Charter for?

The Charter sets a standard of practice for those who provide advice, make decisions about, or undertake works to places of cultural significance, including owners, managers and custodians.



Using the Charter

The Charter should be read as a whole. Many articles are interdependent. Articles in the Conservation Principles section are often further developed in the Conservation Processes and Conservation Practice sections. Headings have been included for ease of reading but do not form part of the Charter.

The Charter is self-contained, but aspects of its use and application are further explained in the following Australia ICOMOS documents:

[Guidelines to the Burra Charter: Cultural Significance](#)

[Guidelines to the Burra Charter: Conservation Policy](#)

[Guidelines to the Burra Charter: Procedures](#)

for Undertaking Studies and Reports

Code on the Ethics of Coexistence in
Conserving Significant Places

**What places
does the
Charter apply
to?**

The Charter can be applied to all types of places of cultural significance including natural, indigenous and historic places with cultural values.

The standards of other organisations may also be relevant. These include the Australian Natural Heritage Charter and the Draft Guidelines for the Protection, Management and Use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Places.

Why conserve? Places of cultural significance enrich people's lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection to community and landscape, to the past and to lived experiences. They are historical records, that are important as tangible expressions of Australian identity and experience. Places of cultural significance reflect the diversity of our communities, telling us about who we are and the past that has formed us and the Australian landscape. They are irreplaceable and precious.

These places of cultural significance must be conserved for present and future generations.

The Burra Charter advocates a cautious approach to change: do as much as necessary to care for the place and to make it useable, but otherwise change it as little as possible so that its cultural significance is retained.

Articles

Article 1 Definitions

For the purposes of this Charter:

- 1.1** *Place* means site, area, land, landscape, building or other work, group of buildings or other works, and may include components, contents, spaces and views.

The concept of place should be broadly interpreted. The elements described in Article 1.1 may include memorials, trees, gardens, parks, places of historical events,

urban areas, towns, industrial places, archaeological sites and spiritual and religious places.

- 1.2** *Cultural significance* means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.

Cultural significance is embodied in the *place* itself, its *fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places* and *related objects*.

Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.

The term cultural significance is synonymous with heritage significance and cultural heritage value.

Cultural significance may change as a result of the continuing history of the place.

Understanding of cultural significance may change as a result of new information.

- 1.3** *Fabric* means all the physical material of the *place* including components, fixtures, contents, and objects.

Fabric includes building interiors and sub-surface remains, as well as excavated material.

Fabric may define spaces and these may be important elements of the significance of the place.

- 1.4 *Conservation* means all the processes of looking after a *place* so as to retain its *cultural significance*.
- 1.5 *Maintenance* means the continuous protective care of the *fabric* and *setting* of a *place*, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves *restoration* or *reconstruction*.
- 1.6 *Preservation* means maintaining the *fabric* of a *place* in its existing state and retarding deterioration.
- 1.7 *Restoration* means returning the existing *fabric* of a *place* to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.
- 1.8 *Reconstruction* means returning a *place* to a known earlier state and is distinguished from *restoration* by the introduction of new material into the *fabric*.
- The distinctions referred to, for example in relation to roof gutters, are:
- maintenance — regular inspection and cleaning of gutters;
- repair involving restoration — returning of dislodged gutters;
- repair involving reconstruction — replacing decayed gutters.
- It is recognised that all places and their components change over time at varying rates.
- New material may include recycled material salvaged from other places. This should not be to the detriment of any place of

cultural
significance.

- 1.9** *Adaptation* means modifying a *place* to suit the existing *use* or a proposed use.
- 1.10** *Use* means the functions of a *place*, as well as the activities and practices that may occur at the place.
- 1.11** *Compatible use* means a *use* which respects the *cultural significance* of a *place*. Such a use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.
- 1.12** *Setting* means the area around a *place*, which may include the visual catchment.
- 1.13** *Related place* means a *place* that contributes to the *cultural significance* of another place.
- 1.14** *Related object* means an object that contributes to the *cultural significance* of a *place* but is not at the place.
- 1.15** *Associations* mean the special connections that exist between people and a *place*.
- 1.16** *Meanings* denote what a *place* signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses.

Associations may include social or spiritual values and cultural responsibilities for a place.

Meanings generally relate to intangible aspects such as symbolic qualities and memories.

- 1.17 *Interpretation* means all the ways of presenting the *cultural significance* of a *place*.

Interpretation may be a combination of the treatment of the fabric (e.g. maintenance, restoration, reconstruction); the use of and activities at the place; and the use of introduced explanatory material.

Conservation Principles

Article 2 Conservation and management

- 2.1 *Places of cultural significance* should be conserved.
- 2.2 The aim of *conservation* is to retain the *cultural significance* of a *place*.
- 2.3 *Conservation* is an integral part of good management of *places of cultural significance*.
- 2.4 *Places of cultural significance* should be safeguarded and not put at risk or left in a vulnerable state.

Article 3 Cautious approach

- 3.1** *Conservation* is based on a respect for the existing *fabric, use, associations* and *meanings*. It requires a cautious approach of changing as much as necessary but as little as possible.
- The traces of additions, alterations and earlier treatments to the fabric of a place are evidence of its history and uses which may be part of its significance. Conservation action should assist and not impede their understanding.
- 3.2** Changes to a *place* should not distort the physical or other evidence it provides, nor be based on conjecture.

Article 4 Knowledge, skills and techniques

- 4.1** *Conservation* should make use of all the knowledge, skills and disciplines which can contribute to the study and care of the *place*.
- 4.2** Traditional techniques and materials are preferred for the *conservation* of significant *fabric*. In some circumstances modern techniques and materials which offer substantial conservation benefits may be appropriate.
- The use of modern materials and techniques must be supported by firm scientific evidence or by a body of experience.

Article 5 Values

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| <p>5.1 <i>Conservation</i> of a <i>place</i> should identify and take into consideration all aspects of cultural and natural significance without unwarranted emphasis on any one value at the expense of others.</p> | <p>Conservation of places with natural significance is explained in the Australian Natural Heritage Charter. This Charter defines natural significance to mean the importance of ecosystems, biological diversity and geodiversity for their existence value, or for present or future generations in terms of their scientific, social, aesthetic and life-support value.</p> |
| <p>5.2 Relative degrees of <i>cultural significance</i> may lead to different <i>conservation</i> actions at a place.</p> | <p>A cautious approach is needed, as understanding of cultural significance may change. This article should not be used to justify actions which do not retain cultural significance.</p> |

Article 6 **Burra Charter Process**

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|---|--|
| <p>6.1 The <i>cultural significance</i> of a <i>place</i> and other issues affecting its future are best understood by a sequence of collecting and analysing information before making decisions. Understanding cultural significance comes</p> | <p>The Burra Charter process, or sequence of investigations, decisions and actions, is</p> |
|---|--|

first, then development of policy and finally management of the place in accordance with the policy.

illustrated in the accompanying flowchart.

- 6.2 The policy for managing a *place* must be based on an understanding of its *cultural significance*.
- 6.3 Policy development should also include consideration of other factors affecting the future of a *place* such as the owner's needs, resources, external constraints and its physical condition.

Article 7 Use

- 7.1 Where the *use* of a *place* is of *cultural significance* it should be retained.
- 7.2 A *place* should have a *compatible use*.

The policy should identify a use or combination of uses or constraints on uses that retain the cultural significance of the place. New use of a place should involve minimal change, to significant fabric and use; should respect associations and meanings; and where appropriate should provide for continuation of

practices which contribute to the cultural significance of the place.

Article 8 Setting

Conservation requires the retention of an appropriate visual *setting* and other relationships that contribute to the *cultural significance* of the *place*.

New construction, demolition, intrusions or other changes which would adversely affect the setting or relationships are not appropriate.

Aspects of the visual setting may include use, siting, bulk, form, scale, character, colour, texture and materials.

Other relationships, such as historical connections, may contribute to interpretation, appreciation, enjoyment or experience of the place.

Article 9 Location

- 9.1 The physical location of a *place* is part of its *cultural significance*. A building, work or other component of a place should remain in its historical location. Relocation is generally

unacceptable unless this is the sole practical means of ensuring its survival.

- 9.2 Some buildings, works or other components of *places* were designed to be readily removable or already have a history of relocation. Provided such buildings, works or other components do not have significant links with their present location, removal may be appropriate.
- 9.3 If any building, work or other component is moved, it should be moved to an appropriate location and given an appropriate *use*. Such action should not be to the detriment of any *place of cultural significance*.

Article 10 **Contents**

Contents, fixtures and objects which contribute to the *cultural significance* of a *place* should be retained at that place. Their removal is unacceptable unless it is: the sole means of ensuring their security and *preservation*; on a temporary basis for treatment or exhibition; for cultural reasons; for health and safety; or to protect the place. Such contents, fixtures and objects should be returned where circumstances permit and it is culturally appropriate.

Article 11 **Related places and objects**

The contribution which *related places* and *related objects* make to the *cultural significance* of the *place* should be retained.

Article 12 **Participation**

Conservation, interpretation and management of a *place* should provide for the participation of people for whom the place has special *associations* and *meanings*, or who have social, spiritual or other cultural responsibilities for the place.

Article 13 **Co-existence of cultural values**

Co-existence of cultural values should be recognised, respected and encouraged, especially in cases where they conflict.

For some places, conflicting cultural values may affect policy development and management decisions. In this article, the term cultural values refers to those beliefs which are important to a cultural group, including but not limited to political, religious, spiritual and moral beliefs. This is broader than values associated with cultural significance.

Conservation Processes

Article 14 **Conservation processes**

Conservation may, according to circumstance, include the processes of: retention or reintroduction of a *use*; retention of *associations* and *meanings*; *maintenance*, *preservation*, *restoration*, *reconstruction*, *adaptation* and *interpretation*; and will commonly include a combination of more than one of these.

There may be circumstances where no action is required to achieve conservation.

Article 15 **Change**

15.1 Change may be necessary to retain *cultural significance*, but is undesirable where it reduces cultural significance. The amount of change to a *place* should be guided by the cultural significance of the place and its appropriate *interpretation*.

When change is being considered, a range of options should be explored to seek the option which minimises the reduction of cultural significance.

15.2 Changes which reduce *cultural significance* should be reversible, and be reversed when circumstances permit.

Reversible changes should be considered temporary. Non-reversible change should only be used as a last resort and should not prevent future conservation action.

15.3 Demolition of significant *fabric* of a *place* is generally not acceptable. However, in some cases minor demolition may be appropriate as part of *conservation*. Removed significant fabric should be reinstated when

circumstances permit.

- 15.4 The contributions of all aspects of *cultural significance* of a *place* should be respected. If a place includes *fabric*, *uses*, *associations* or *meanings* of different periods, or different aspects of cultural significance, emphasising or interpreting one period or aspect at the expense of another can only be justified when what is left out, removed or diminished is of slight cultural significance and that which is emphasised or interpreted is of much greater cultural significance.

Article 16 Maintenance

Maintenance is fundamental to *conservation* and should be undertaken where *fabric* is of *cultural significance* and its maintenance is necessary to retain that cultural significance.

Article 17 Preservation

Preservation is appropriate where the existing *fabric* or its condition constitutes evidence of *cultural significance*, or where insufficient evidence is available to allow other *conservation* processes to be carried out.

Preservation protects fabric without obscuring the evidence of its construction and use. The process should always be applied:

where the evidence of the fabric is of such significance that it should not be altered;

where insufficient investigation has been carried out to permit policy decisions to be taken in accord with Articles 26 to 28.

New work (e.g. stabilisation) may be carried out in association with preservation when its purpose is the physical protection of the fabric and when it is consistent with Article 22.

Article 18 **Restoration and reconstruction**

Restoration and *reconstruction* should reveal culturally significant aspects of the *place*.

Article 19 **Restoration**

Restoration is appropriate only if there is sufficient evidence of an earlier state of the *fabric*.

Article 20 **Reconstruction**

20.1 *Reconstruction* is appropriate only where a *place* is incomplete through damage or alteration, and only where there is sufficient evidence to reproduce an earlier state of the

fabric. In rare cases, reconstruction may also be appropriate as part of a *use* or practice that retains the *cultural significance* of the place.

- 20.2** *Reconstruction* should be identifiable on close inspection or through additional *interpretation*.

Article 21 **Adaptation**

- 21.1** *Adaptation* is acceptable only where the adaptation has minimal impact on the *cultural significance* of the *place*.

Adaptation may involve the introduction of new services, or a new use, or changes to safeguard the place.

- 21.2** *Adaptation* should involve minimal change to significant fabric, achieved only after considering alternatives.

Article 22 **New work**

- 22.1** New work such as additions to the *place* may be acceptable where it does not distort or obscure the *cultural significance* of the place, or detract from its *interpretation* and appreciation.

New work may be sympathetic if its siting, bulk, form, scale, character, colour, texture and material are similar to the existing fabric, but imitation should be avoided.

- 22.2** New work should be readily identifiable as

such.

Article 23 Conserving use

Continuing, modifying or reinstating a significant *use* may be appropriate and preferred forms of *conservation*.

These may require changes to significant *fabric* but they should be minimised. In some cases, continuing a significant use or practice may involve substantial new work.

Article 24 Retaining associations and meanings

24.1 Significant *associations* between people and a *place* should be respected, retained and not obscured. Opportunities for the *interpretation*, commemoration and celebration of these associations should be investigated and implemented.

For many places associations will be linked to use.

24.2 Significant *meanings*, including spiritual values, of a *place* should be respected. Opportunities for the continuation or revival of these meanings should be investigated and implemented.

Article 25 Interpretation

The *cultural significance* of many *places* is not readily apparent, and should be explained by *interpretation*. Interpretation should enhance understanding and enjoyment, and

be culturally appropriate.

Conservation Practice

Article 26 Applying the Burra Charter process

26.1 Work on a *place* should be preceded by studies to understand the place which should include analysis of physical, documentary, oral and other evidence, drawing on appropriate knowledge, skills and disciplines.

The results of studies should be up to date, regularly reviewed and revised as necessary.

26.2 Written statements of *cultural significance* and policy for the *place* should be prepared, justified and accompanied by supporting evidence. The statements of significance and policy should be incorporated into a management plan for the place.

Statements of significance and policy should be kept up to date by regular review and revision as necessary. The management plan may deal with other matters related to the management of the place.

26.3 Groups and individuals with *associations* with a *place* as well as those involved in its management should be provided with opportunities to contribute to and participate in understanding the *cultural significance* of the place. Where appropriate they should also have opportunities to participate in its *conservation* and management.

Article 27 Managing change

- 27.1** The impact of proposed changes on the *cultural significance* of a *place* should be analysed with reference to the statement of significance and the policy for managing the place. It may be necessary to modify proposed changes following analysis to better retain cultural significance.
- 27.2** Existing *fabric, use, associations* and *meanings* should be adequately recorded before any changes are made to the *place*.

Article 28 Disturbance of fabric

- 28.1** Disturbance of significant *fabric* for study, or to obtain evidence, should be minimised. Study of a *place* by any disturbance of the fabric, including archaeological excavation, should only be undertaken to provide data essential for decisions on the *conservation* of the place, or to obtain important evidence about to be lost or made inaccessible.
- 28.2** Investigation of a *place* which requires disturbance of the *fabric*, apart from that necessary to make decisions, may be appropriate provided that it is consistent with the policy for the place. Such investigation should be based on important research questions which have potential to substantially add to knowledge, which cannot be answered in other ways and which minimises disturbance of significant fabric.

Article 29 Responsibility for decisions

The organisations and individuals responsible for management decisions should be named and specific responsibility taken for each such decision.

Article 30 Direction, supervision and implementation

Competent direction and supervision should be maintained at all stages, and any changes should be implemented by people with appropriate knowledge and skills.

Article 31 Documenting evidence and decisions

A log of new evidence and additional decisions should be kept.

Article 32 Records

- 32.1** The records associated with the *conservation* of a *place* should be placed in a permanent archive and made publicly available, subject to requirements of security and privacy, and where this is culturally appropriate.
- 32.2** Records about the history of a *place* should be protected and made publicly available, subject to requirements of security and privacy, and where this is culturally appropriate.

Article 33 Removed fabric

Significant *fabric* which has been removed from a *place* including contents, fixtures and objects, should be catalogued, and protected in accordance with its *cultural significance*.

Where possible and culturally appropriate, removed significant fabric including contents, fixtures and objects, should be kept at the place.

Article 34 Resources

Adequate resources should be provided for *conservation*.

The best conservation often involves the least work and can be inexpensive.