

## Henri Prost's Plan (1914–1917): A Flexible Approach

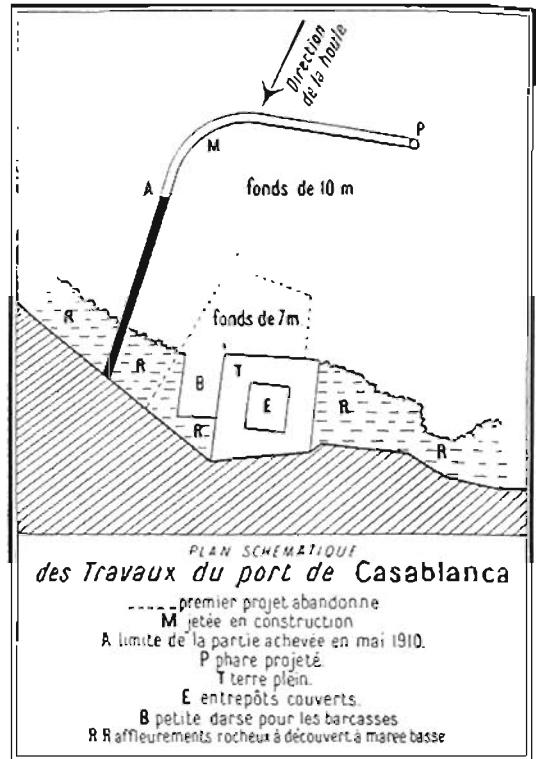
### Morocco's Natural Haven

*There is no reason why Casablanca cannot be dealt with in the same way as other ports, such as Saint-Jean de Luz and Leixões, whose seas are just as problematic... To abandon the port project would signal Casablanca's immediate and unequivocal downfall. A detailed analysis is thus urgently required, for although it has been deemed difficult to upkeep large breakwaters, it would be even more complicated to maintain a small, unprotected inner harbor. Should the latter course be adopted, then Casablanca would have no port, either large or small.*

Gaston Delure, letter to General Lyautey, February 8, 1913<sup>1</sup>

I was by no means certain at the outset that Casablanca would be cast in the role of French Morocco's main port. The navy was particularly hostile to such a scheme, having set its heart on Mazagan, or even Fédala. Georges and Jean Hersistent, two brothers active in technology and finance, had even purchased one thousand hectares of land in Fédala, expecting this town to win the selection process.<sup>2</sup> In 1907, though, an ambitious project had been launched for developing the port of Casablanca, and work was in progress to build a new breakwater near the town's northernmost bastion. In 1910, when exploring the various options for Casablanca's growth, Lacharrière had thought of creating a "fast motorized wagon service" that would enable warehouses to be set up on the outskirts of Casablanca, one of the ideas behind this project being to rid the town of its *fonduks*. Yet the most pressing concern was the increasingly congested port: for instance, in 1912 it apparently took almost six months to load up grain. A large portion of the funds raised by Lyautey's Protectorate lobbying campaign therefore went toward developing new facilities for the port.

In 1913, Paul Tirard, Protectorate secretary general, spoke out against those officers who "taking a sailor's standpoint, i.e., disregarding economic interests, consider Casablanca to be one of the most unfavorable sites for a major seaport."<sup>3</sup> Thus the determining factor in the selection of Casablanca as the country's "economic hub" over other older ports, notably Rabat, lay not in its sea access, but in its land links with the rest of "usable" Morocco, where there were already numerous European settlements. As the capital of Chaouia, Casablanca was a "natural storage



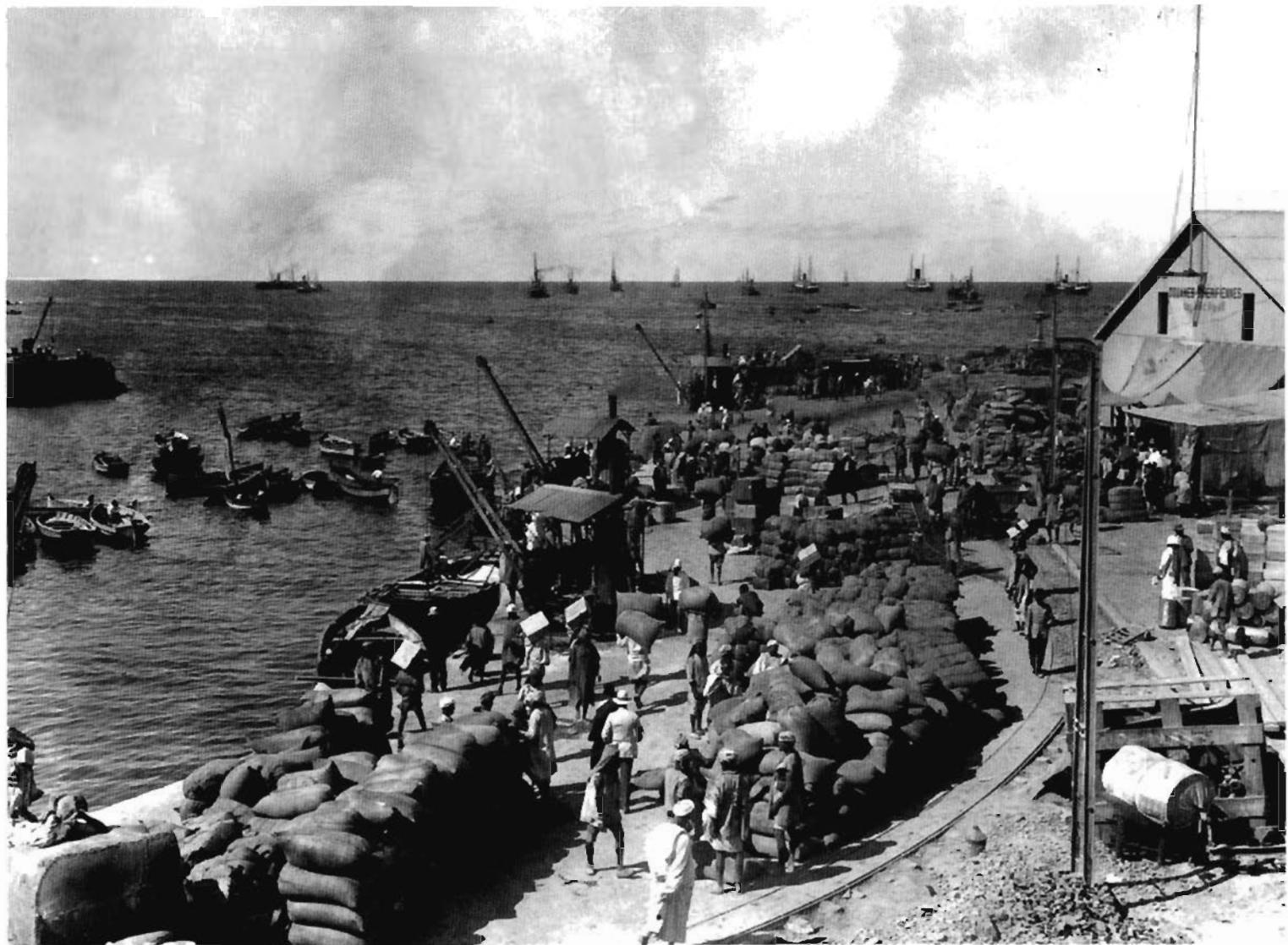
Schematic plan drafted in 1910 for the port development, in *Renseignements coloniaux et documents publiés par le comité de l'Afrique française et le comité du Maroc*, 1910.

<sup>1</sup> Gaston Delure to General Lyautey, February 8, 1913, AN, 475 AP/52.

<sup>2</sup> Dyé had challenged this alternative as early as 1908, believing that "Fédala will one day be a small port worthwhile for fishing and for exporting the agricultural products of Zénata," but that "Casablanca will remain the outlet of the greater Chaouia region, like Alexandria, Tunis, and Bordeaux were in no way dethroned by Port Said, Bizerte, and La Pallice." A. Henri Dyé, "Les ports du

Maroc," 199. In 1914, the Hersistent brothers managed to convince the Protectorate to open Fédala to maritime traffic, in the guise of a backup to Casablanca. The pressure of German firms, which had various installations nearby, strengthened their point. Memo from the Inspecteur général des Ponts-et-Cheussées, technical adviser of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 31, 1913, SHAT, box 3H 114.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Tirard to General Lyautey, February 5, 1913, AN, 475 AP/52.



General view of  
the wharves, 1913.  
Right: new customs  
warehouses; ships  
moored in the harbor  
waiting to be unloaded  
by small craft.

The port lashed by  
a storm, 1913.



<sup>4</sup> Berthe Georges-Gaulis, *La France au Maroc (l'œuvre du général Lyautey)* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1919), 284.

<sup>5</sup> André Colliez, *Notre protectorat marocain: la première étape 1912-1930* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1930), 369, 208. Also in 1930, Colliez would advocate the establishment of the capital at Casablanca, deploreding the fact that a "brain city" had been created alongside the business city—something like establishing "Washington alongside Chicago," *ibid.*, 209.

<sup>6</sup> General Lyautey to Gaston Delure, February 5, 1913, AN, 475 AP/52. Regarding this issue, see Daniel Rivet, *Lyautey et l'institution du Protectorat français au Maroc 1912-1925* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1988), 1,247. Coming at the end of a period of difficult weather, the winter 1913 tidal wave provided added justification for Casablanca's detractors. As for Delure, he noted that these storms "caused only slight harm to the built works, comparable to that suffered by any maritime construction," and stood by his argument in favor of Casablanca. Delure to General Lyautey, February 8, 1913.

<sup>7</sup> In French public administration, a *directeur général*, or director general, heads a wide spectrum of different services put under the authority of their respective *directeurs*. The career of Gaston Delure (1877-1926) had taken him, most notably, to Argentina and Bayonne. It culminated, after 1918, in the directorship of the "Commerce and Mines of Alsace-Lorraine," Galatoire-Malégarie, "Note sur l'œuvre marocaine de M. Gaston Delure, inspecteur général, ancien directeur général des Travaux publics du Maroc," *Annales des Ponts et Chaussées* 97, no. 4 (July-August 1927): 7-12.



"The breakwater assailed by waves on a stormy day in Casablanca" in *L'Illustration*, 1913.

site for the surrounding regions."<sup>4</sup> As the journalist André Colliez pointed out, "Casablanca possesses such a panoply of advantages that it is unthinkable for it not to be the capital." Its jewel in the crown, though, was its geographical position, which meant that it could easily develop into a "gigantic, sprawling, spidery city," ready to "lay its web at the crossroads of land and sea routes."<sup>5</sup> After arriving in Casablanca on May 13, 1912, Lyautey informed a French gathering of businessmen that he intended "to be able to enter his house," that is, "to open up the ports." When he learned of the navy's reticence early the following year, he expressed concern over the "outcry that would ensue in Casablanca" should another port be chosen.<sup>6</sup>

The port expansion project was drafted by the civil engineer A. François and was overseen by Gaston Delure, Protectorate director general for the Department of Public Works.<sup>7</sup> The works contract was awarded in Tangiers on March 25, 1913, to a group composed of the French industrial firm Schneider, the Compagnie Marocaine, and the Hesent brothers, who were called in at the last minute. The group immediately got down to the task at hand, under the watchful eye of Paul

<sup>8</sup> The cost of construction was 46 million francs. Gaston de Caqueray, "Pourquoi et comment Casablanca eut son port," in Paul Bory (ed.), *Le port de Casablanca et la naissance d'une grande ville, Notre Maroc 10* (June 1952): 5–12.

<sup>9</sup> Sheltered by this jetty, the construction of seven hundred meters of docks and sixteen hectares of platforms was planned. Furthermore, jetties to the east and west of the small port were yet to be completed. A. C., "Les travaux du port de Casablanca (Maroc) et l'emprunt marocain," *Le Génie civil* 44, no. 23 (April 4, 1914): 458–60. It is important to remember that the port had barely fifty meters of docks in 1913.

<sup>10</sup> Georges Toutlemonde, "Le port de Casablanca," *Le Génie civil* 105, no. 8 (August 25, 1934): 162–63.

<sup>11</sup> Account of "the eminent hydrographic engineer, director of the navy hydrographic service, who wrote in the *Revue générale des sciences*, in 1912," reported by M. Normandin in, "Les ports marocains," *Annales des Ponts et Chaussées* 104, no. 3 (May–June 1934): 305.

<sup>12</sup> "Le port de Casablanca," *Revue générale des sciences pures et appliquées* (April 15, 1914): 332–36.

<sup>13</sup> E. L. Guernier, "Casablanca, grand port de la côte occidentale d'Afrique," *France-Maroc*, no. 8 (August 15, 1917): 12–18.

<sup>14</sup> Victor Cambon, "L'aménagement et l'extension des villes," in *Conférences franco-marocaines* (Paris: Plon, 1917), 2:203.

<sup>15</sup> See Jean-Pierre Gaudin, *L'avenir en plan: technique et politique dans la prévision urbaine, 1900–1930* (Seyssel, Champ Vallon, 1985).

<sup>16</sup> Edmond Joyant, "Casablanca," in *Traité d'urbanisme*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Eyrolles, 1928), 2:95. See also idem, "Le plan d'aménagement de Casablanca (Maroc)," *Le Génie Civil* no. 2036 (August 20, 1922): 161–67; and idem, "L'Urbanisme au Maroc," *La Technique sanitaire et municipale* (April 1922): 88–103. The Prost plan is also one of the fundamental examples evoked by René Danger in his *Cours d'urbanisme* (Paris: Eyrolles, 1933), figs. 232–34. The centrality of the Moroccan experience for the French developments is discussed by Hélène Vacher in *Projection coloniale et ville rationalisée: le rôle de l'espace colonial dans la constitution de l'urbanisme en France, 1900–1931* (Aalborg: Aalborg University Press, 1997).

<sup>17</sup> Regarding the marshal's action, see General Hubert Lyautey, *Paroles d'action—Madagascar, Sud-Oranais, Oran, Maroc (1900–1926)* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1927); and Max Leclerc, *Au Maroc avec Lyautey* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1921).

Chaix, an engineer who had trained at the École Centrale in Paris. The brief was to develop a 160-hectare area, and this was to include a 1,900-meter breakwater, some 300 meters of which had already been built as part of the earlier project. It was to be extended northeast before curving around to run parallel to the shore. Another 1,400-meter-long horizontal jetty was designed to section off a harbor able to hold ships with a ten-meter draft.<sup>10</sup>

The reasons for selecting Casablanca were well founded and were henceforth generally accepted, even though the damage caused by the Atlantic swell continued to incite "empty and negative criticism" on the part of "pessimists, detractors, and gloomy souls."<sup>11</sup> Observers strongly berated the analysis published in 1912 by the head of the navy's hydrographic department who had asserted that it was "impossible to build a port on the west coast of Morocco that will be accessible under all weather conditions," since "incredibly long jetties would be required to get past the breakers that build up during storms."<sup>12</sup> As it was, these marine difficulties would be heralded as an example of Lyautey's "daring," Delure's "perseverance," and the project's "grand scale."<sup>13</sup> Work on the main breakwater got under way swiftly, due to a 50-million-franc advance out of an overall 170-million-franc loan granted to Lyautey on March 16, 1914, by the Chamber of Deputies. The outbreak of World War I slowed construction, but it did not by any means bring it to a standstill, although the project was threatened on a number of occasions by hikes in building material prices.<sup>14</sup>

Land use and layout in the *ville nouvelle* were affected by the designs of the port drafted by Delure's department. The main breakwater had no real impact in this respect, but the secondary, orthogonal breakwater ran almost parallel to the medina. It was this segment of the seafront, which was previously a beach, that was to handle all trade between Morocco's chief port and the rest of the world. The Muslim cemetery still ran along roughly half the waterfront of the town, opposite the Bab sidi Belyout marabout, and blocked practically all access to the town from the port. As early as 1913, it thus became clear that a road system would have to be laid to join together the still sparsely populated areas that immediately surrounded the medina.

### Incisive Urbanity

*To speak of rational development and analytical organization in a town like Casablanca is tantamount to holding forth on the wealth and opulence of a naïve's cottage . . . Casablanca bears the burden of being the offspring of chance spawned in mediocrity. Appallingly neglected at an early age, its excessively rapid growth has resulted in physiological flaws which must be removed at all costs if we wish to see it develop into a robust adult capable of fruitful labor.*

Victor Cambon, 1917<sup>14</sup>

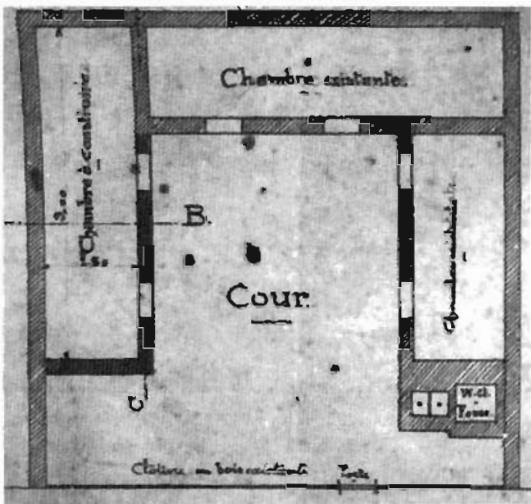
Following the 1919 Cornudet Law, development, extension, and redevelopment plans began to be drawn up for a large number of French towns and cities.<sup>15</sup> Some of these urban experiments served as a point of reference for planners; this was true for Morocco, which, in terms of urbanization, was often compared with Germany and America. In his *Urbanism Handbook*, published in 1924, Edmond Joyant, a civil engineer and deputy director of the Protectorate Department of Public Works, demonstrates the process whereby "a small, sleepy Moorish town evolved into a major modern commercial city" by virtue of strict zoning and modern land ownership policy.<sup>16</sup>

It would therefore seem that the urban development policy advocated under Lyautey clearly responded to one of the Protectorate's main objectives, which was to "regenerate" France by pulling her out of slippery decline.<sup>17</sup> In attempting to



A row of houses and depots in the city center, c. 1911.

House in Rue 15 (Bousbir quarter), 1918. Extract from the building permit.



recharge the batteries of a war-ravaged nation, the resident-general could not fail to draw on the newly emerging discipline of urban planning.<sup>18</sup> The Moroccan example was to play a considerable role in French postwar reconstruction efforts as well as in the heated debate preceding ratification of the Cornudet Law. When Victor Cambon put forward his postwar program for France in 1916, he adopted Lyautey's viewpoint, asserting that Casablanca, the "offspring of chance" that had "started out so badly," was truly developing into a "well laid out French city with decent standards of health and hygiene."<sup>19</sup>

### Casablanca's First Layer of Buildings

According to Joseph Goulen, the different ethnic groups living in Casablanca in 1912 were clearly divided by geographic zone: "Bousbir was inhabited by Arabs, the Route de Médiouna by Jews [and] the Liberté quarter by Europeans."<sup>20</sup> Some Muslims built very basic dwellings on narrow plots running parallel to Bousbir. These traditional abodes contained long rooms set in L and U shapes around a courtyard and they had a 3.5-meter ceiling height. This housing type was characteristic of the working class quarters, until inhabitants began to systematically add on parts, causing the demise of the courtyard. Meanwhile, rapid trade expansion resulted in fonduks mushrooming around Casablanca's new "life force," namely the Route de Médiouna: "The fonduks are being ousted from the flourishing center . . . they have been taken over by cafés, banks, and shops that have been built by the Europeans along the old road formerly used by caravans for transporting grain from fertile Chaouia to Dar el-Beida."<sup>21</sup>

Tardif's extension plan targeted the area known as Mers-Sultan, along the Route de Médiouna. It was here that caravanserai owners settled in villas, having been driven out of their more central abodes.<sup>22</sup> This site was close to the city

<sup>18</sup> As in Tunisia and every French protectorate, France's highest representative in the country held the title of *Résident général*. For more on Lyautey's enterprises, see the short work by Alfred de Tardé, *Le Maroc école d'énergie* (Paris: Plon, 1923). Regarding the administrative mechanism of the Protectorate, see Alan Scham, *Lyautey in Morocco, Protectorate Administration, 1912–1925* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1970); and Abdellah Ben Milihi, *Structures politiques du Maroc colonial* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1990).

<sup>19</sup> Victor Cambon, "Au Maroc," in *Note avenir* (Paris: Payot, 1916), 242; Son of Ambassador Jules Cambon, the author was an engineer and graduate of the *École centrale*. He was an attentive observer, prior to 1914, of the progress of "modern countries." His publications include *L'Allemagne au travail* (Paris: Pierre Roger, 1910); *Les derniers progrès de l'Allemagne* (Paris: Pierre Roger, 1914); and *États-Unis-France* (Paris: Pierre Roger, 1917).

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Goulen, "L'histoire d'une ville; chapitre 2." *Le Maroc catholique*, no. 12 (December 1924): 598–607.

<sup>21</sup> Goulen, "Villes d'Afrique," 77. In Fès, the fonduks "are used . . . to house animals and travelers," as in the caravanserais of the East, or "for storing merchandise and for various industrial and commercial uses." *Le Tourneau, Fès avant le Protectorat*, 190–91.

<sup>22</sup> The architect Pierre Jabin explains that "the rampant speculation" forced "many people of modest means to move away from centers that were too expensive for them and to create on more calm and outlying sites neighborhoods that, given their distance from the center, could not expect to accommodate rental properties, and thus became villa districts." Pierre Jabin, "Villas modernes à Casablanca," *Chantiers nord-africains* (January 1929): 85–86. The subdivisions were the work of the Nathan brothers' Comptoir lorrain (to the north), of the German Frédéric Brandt, and of Haim Cohen.



Banon house and Ifergan house on Avenue Général Moinier and Boulevard de Paris, built c. 1910.  
Photograph taken in 1994.

**23** Joseph Goulen, "Les biens austro-allemands à Casablanca," *Le Maroc catholique*, no. 6 (June 1924): 319–24.

**24** Particularly Rue Chevandier de Valdrome, Boulevard d'Anfa, and Avenue du Général Moinier.

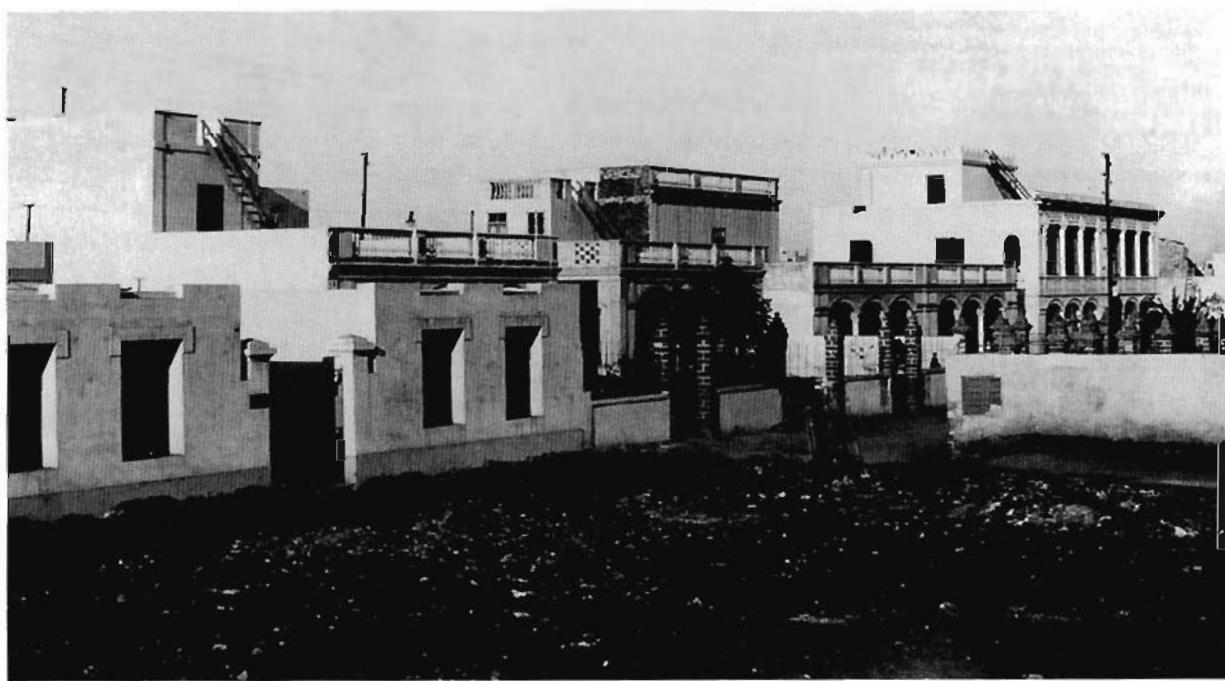
center. "on the airy plain of Mers-Sultan with commanding views of the city, sea, and countryside" and was said to be steeped in "charm and beauty."<sup>21</sup> It adjoined the Liberté quarter and was divided into plots to the southeast of the army camps, as defined in a plan drawn up by Comptoir lorrain. Its ethnic zoning was not as contained as Goulen makes out, notably with respect to the area neighboring the old town: far from confining themselves to the Route de Médiouna, where a number of their shops were located, the Jews settled along the roads of the new town leading to the mellah.<sup>22</sup> For instance, in 1910, the Banon and Ifergan Jewish families built a group of five houses arranged around a garden overlooking the entrance to one of the aforementioned roads: even in the late 1990s these dwellings still provide insight into the scale and texture of the initial urban fabric.

Small box-shaped houses with ground-floor terraces lined with balusters constituted a "preliminary layer" of sorts for the *ville nouvelle*. These are encircled by small gardens and open onto the street by means of verandahs whose friezes and columns display a variety of vocabularies. This diverse repertoire is, in fact, the sole means of distinguishing the dwellings from one another. The early central buildings are fairly stark in design. Apt examples include the Central Hotel, built in 1912, and



"The French town under construction," c. 1914, in *Villes et tribus du Maroc* (Paris, 1915).

Row of houses in the new town, c. 1913.

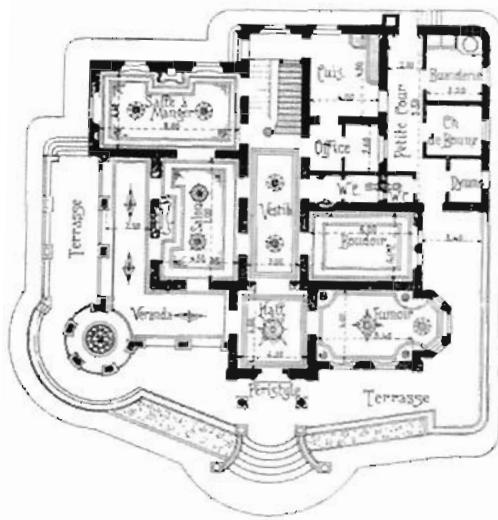




Ansado house, Avenue du Général Drude, 1912. Main room. Photographed in 1998.

Ulysse Tonci, "Grand colonial villa," c. 1913. Ground-floor plan. In *L'Architecture usuelle*, 1913–14.

Ulysse Tonci, "Grand colonial villa," c. 1913. General view. In *L'Architecture usuelle*, 1913–14.





Karl Ficke's house, corner of Avenue de Londres and Traverse de Médouina, 1913. Photographed in 1996.

the Ansado-Gautier-Lapeen house, constructed around the same period at the intersection of Rue Roget and Avenue du Général Drude, and whose facade is stamped by only the occasional *azulejo*.

One of the earliest building types in Mers-Sultan was the "grand colonial villa," designed by the architect-contractor Ulysse Tonci in 1913. This type was the first in Casablanca to receive Parisian press coverage, and its design was praised by the otherwise harsh critic Émile Rivoalen: "There is no artificial luxury in these constructions, just vibrant life both inside and out, with verandahs and terraces bedecking the ground floor and upper stories. They are roomy and opulent, and the servants' quarters have been clearly separated by grouping the ancillary areas to the rear and to the left of the ground floor."<sup>25</sup> Certain traits of contemporary Parisian mansions and French Riviera villas can be detected in Tonci's plan. Yet it was not the originality of these dwellings that Rivoalen was applauding as much as the architect's highly commendable skill in managing to "produce buildings in a country where construction materials are scarce, given that demand outstrips supply and that the port is still badly equipped." Karl Ficke's "grand" house was built in a similar style and dominated the city from the Mers-Sultan hill.<sup>26</sup> Goulven speaks highly of its outbuildings, which included "a garage with a bedroom, a stable, stalls," and other premises.<sup>27</sup>

Construction materials were indeed in short supply. Bricks, which had initially been imported from Malaga or Marseilles, were replaced by artificial stone produced

25 "Grande villa coloniale à Casablanca: Ulysse Tonci," *L'Architecture usuelle* (ca. 1913–14), 223–24. On Rivoalen, see Monique Eleb and Anne Debarre, *L'invention de l'habitation moderne: Paris, 1880–1914* (Brussels: Archives d'Architecture Moderne, Paris: Hazan, 1995).

26 Below the hill, alongside the Circular Boulevard, the contractor Pappalardo would build, in 1930, a villa in the same vein.

27 Joseph Goulven, "Les biens austro-allemands à Casablanca," 318–24.

**F. M. Barzon apartment,  
Rue de l'Amiral Courbet,  
c. 1911. Photographed in  
1996.**

The structure of the building is of reinforced concrete. The semicircular arcade pattern was hardly ever used again.



<sup>28</sup> Georges Gillet, "La construction au Maroc au début du Protectorat," *Notre Maroc* 10 (December 1950): 27–40. Dyé evokes the use of iron. A. Henri Dyé, "Les ports du Maroc," 194–95.

<sup>29</sup> C. Dantin, "La centrale à ciment de Casablanca," *Le Génie civil* 68, no. 18 (April 29, 1916): 273–77. Construction had begun in 1913.

<sup>30</sup> In 1901, the city had three hotels. In 1911 Dessigny noted "six to seven hotels and four or five European restaurants." This seemed "sufficient" to him. To the houses that had been transformed since 1907 was added the Hôtel de Cuba, built near the TSF on the coast. Dessigny affirmed, though, that "a hotel equipped with modern comforts is desirable and would be assured of a good clientele." Commandant Dessigny, "Casablanca, notice économique et administrative," 321.

in the Magnier factory that had been set up in El Hank in 1912. The early houses contained limestone rubble walls, wooden beams, and floors covered with cement tiles from Marseilles and Spain. Iron girders imported from Belgium were used for a while, but were eschewed in favor of reinforced concrete due to Casablanca's high level of humidity.<sup>28</sup> Binder would be imported up until the opening of the Roches Noires lime and cement factories in 1915.<sup>29</sup>

### The Magasins Paris-Maroc and the Excelsior Hotel

The first two buildings constructed by the architect Hippolyte Delaporte were located in the vicinity of the medina and can be read as a response to new priorities. Design work on the Magasins Paris-Maroc (a department store demolished in the 1970s) began in March 1912, and its completion symbolized how Morocco had opened up to French trade. The Excelsior Hotel was built on the site of the slaughterhouse and fit well with Commandant Dessigny's action plan in that it marked the arrival of a new category of traveler to Casablanca. Both buildings were conceived as six-story structures, signaling a turnaround in scale with respect to the nearby medina. The department store was slotted in between wings accommodating deluxe apartments, and its main nave was topped by a glazed roof.

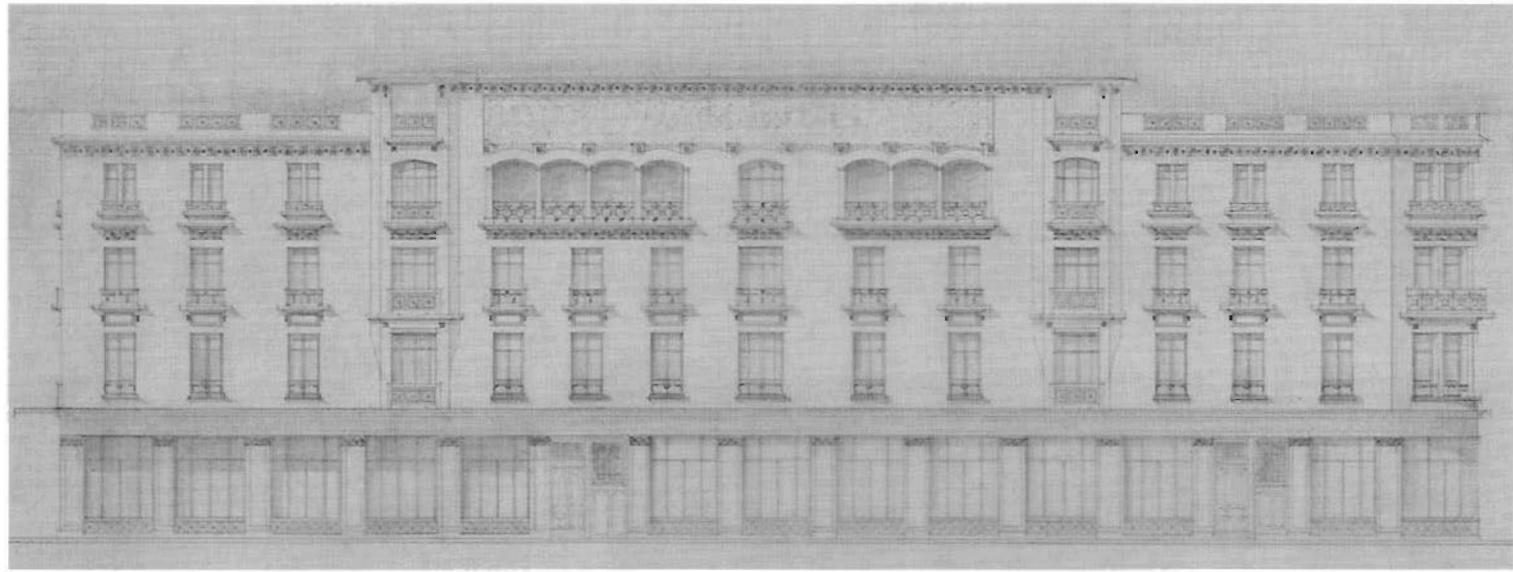
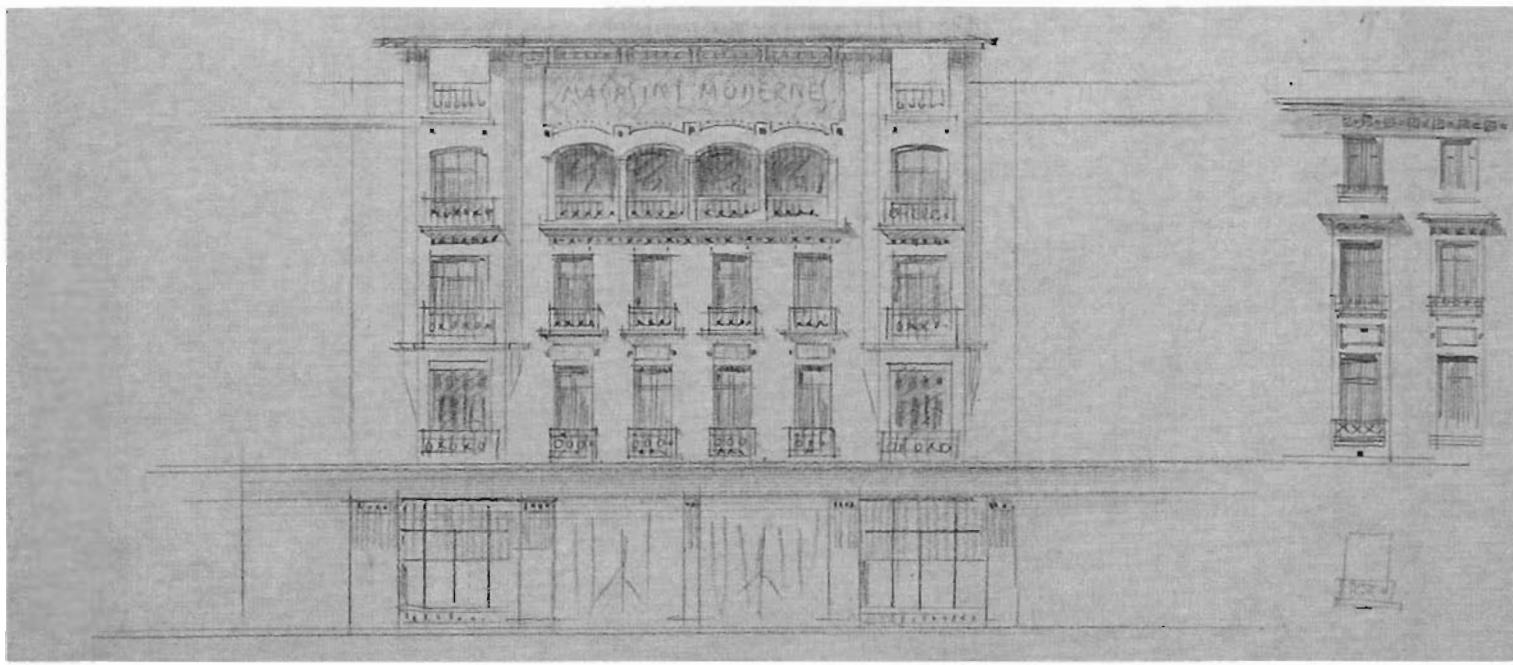
The Excelsior marked an important step forward in terms of modern comfort and elegance.<sup>30</sup> According to Henry Dugard, it embodied the metamorphosis of "a



Place de France, c. 1918.  
Left in photo: Excelsior  
hotel. The Magasins  
Paris-Maroc is in the  
background, and the  
clock tower is at right.

Hippolyte Delaporte,  
Excelsior hotel, Place  
de France, 1914–16.  
Construction work, look-  
ing from the clock tower  
about 1915.  
Note the Banque d'État  
du Maroc on the left of  
Rue de l'Horloge.





Hippolyte Delaporte in association with the Perret brothers, Magasins Paris-Maroc, Place de France, (1913–14). Sketch of facade overlooking the square, 1913.

Hippolyte Delaporte in association with the Perret brothers, Magasins Paris-Maroc, Place de France, (1913–14). Façade elevation on Avenue du Général d'Amade, 1913.

31 Henry Dugard, *Le Maroc au lendemain de la guerre* (Paris: Payot, 1920): 155–56.

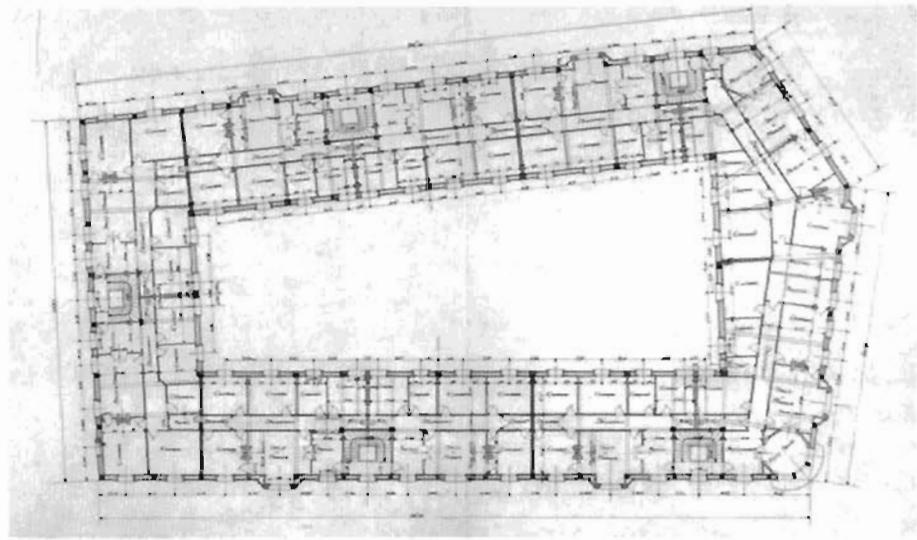
32 Farrère, *Les hommes nouveaux*, 121–25.

rough and unrefined monster" into a civilized city.<sup>31</sup> The building had a concrete frame, but Delaporte nonetheless drew discreetly on neo-Moorish decorative themes that were popular in Algeria and Tunisia at the time, notably in his treatment of the friezes and balconies. The Excelsior swiftly replaced the Café du Commerce as the hub of speculation, and its brasserie became a new meeting place where Bourron and his cronies carried out their wheelings and dealings.<sup>32</sup> These two milestones in the *ville nouvelle* not only broke new ground in terms of their height, but also triggered a long string of architectural innovations due to early use of reinforced concrete.

Meanwhile, construction on the Magasins Paris-Maroc got under way in 1913 and the building was inaugurated on November 17 the following year. From a struc-



Hippolyte Delaporte  
in association with the  
Perret brothers, Magasins  
Paris-Maroc, Place de  
France, (1913–14). Main  
staircase. Photographed  
c. 1914.



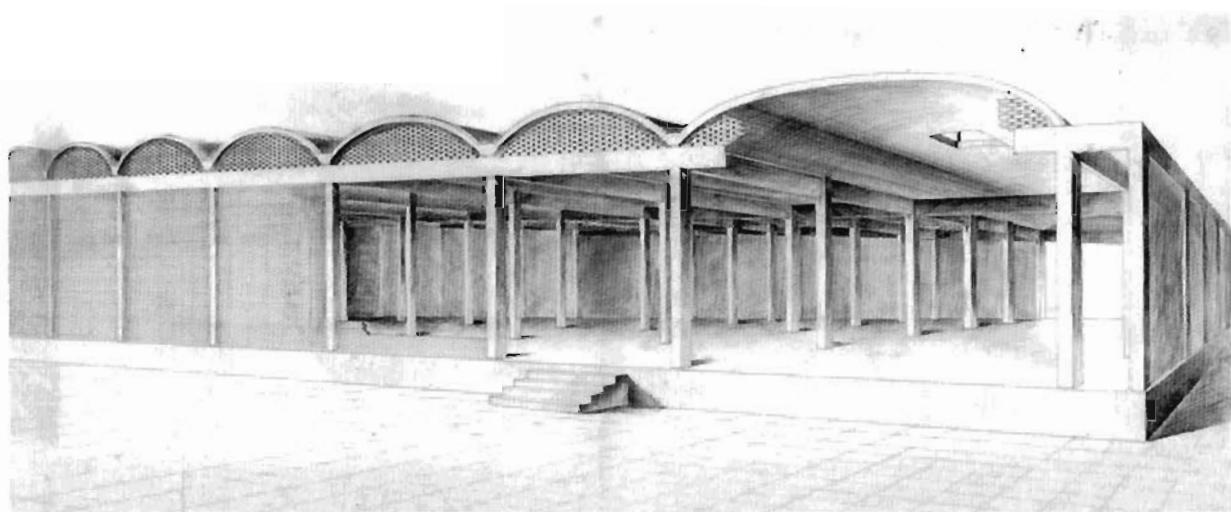
Hippolyte Delaporte  
In association with the  
Perret brothers, Magasins  
Paris-Maroc, Place de  
France, (1913–14). Plan  
of the first and second  
floors, 1913.

tural perspective, it was designed along stricter lines than the hotel, and its detailing was more deeply rooted in geometric abstraction, since it contained Arabic-Andalusian features.<sup>33</sup> The architectural components were designed by Delaporte, but the structural elements were assigned to the Perret brothers, who had already worked on projects in Oran. It is noteworthy that the start of Casablanca's construction phase coincided with the completion of the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, which won Auguste Perret much acclaim in the Parisian architectural scene. Rather than remaining in a purely consulting role, Perret took an extremely active interest in Casablanca up until 1920, to the point of designing housing for his own workers, which will be dealt with in a later chapter. He constructed the Wallui warehouse between 1914 and 1916, echoing the duality between the facade mask and the

<sup>33</sup> See the dossier des dessins d'exécution, fonds Perret, IFA. Perret also produced studies for a branch of the store in Tangiers. The Tardif plan that he owned is dated June 16, 1913, and no doubt corresponds to his first visit to Morocco. The Magasins Paris-Maroc later became the Magasins Modernes, and ultimately, Galeries Lafayette. It was razed in the 1970s. The hold of the Moroccan experience is perceptible even in the title of Auguste Perret's article: "Ce que j'ai appris à propos des villes de demain: c'est qu'il faudrait les construire dans des pays neufs" (What I have learned about the cities of tomorrow: that they must be built in new countries), *L'Intransigeant* (November 25, 1920).

**Perret brothers, Wallut warehouses, Circular Boulevard and Route de Médouina, 1914-16.**  
Perspective cross section of the storage buildings.

**Perret brothers, Wallut warehouses. General view, c. 1920.**



**Perret brothers, Wallut warehouses. Angle photo by the U.S. Army, April 1943.**



interior structural clarity that characterizes the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées. The store camouflaged the warehouse behind, whose roof contained highly innovative lightweight concrete shell vaults.<sup>34</sup> This warehouse facility, along with several others based on the same design principle, was widely applauded in the 1920s, especially by the historian Sigfried Giedion, who praised its "extreme lightness" and its "membrane-like thinness."<sup>35</sup> As of 1919, Le Corbusier would in turn draw on these "vast eggshell naves" when designing his Monol houses.<sup>36</sup>

### Public Health Crisis

Public hygiene had been one of the administration's central preoccupations since the 1907 hostilities.<sup>37</sup> Outbreaks of plague had been a cause for concern right from the outset of the occupation, and had led to the creation of a Public Health Commission in November 1913. Headed by Laronce, the consul at the time, its members included a number of French doctors and "native Moroccan dignitaries."<sup>38</sup> The administration introduced health centers and kept a close eye on the livestock market and slaughterhouse "from where blood ran right down to the beach"<sup>39</sup>; in addition, the Public Health Commission set up a quarantine center on the windswept tip of El Hank to the west of the city.<sup>40</sup> An increasing number of studies were conducted in response to the spread of typhoid, smallpox, and, above all, malaria. According to a Doctor Bienvenu, very few cases of malaria had been reported prior to the city's "huge development," since it had formerly "benefited from extremely favorable conditions of health and hygiene."<sup>41</sup> The new districts of Fernau and Ferrieu, together with the area beside the medina, were described as infested slums with open cisterns placed adjacent to cesspools, and garbage stagnating in the street gutters. The way in which the outlying districts were constructed also came under fire as malaria took a heavy toll on workers' lives.<sup>42</sup>

Providing a fresh water supply and, more notably, improving health and hygiene in the lanes of the medina and in the *ville nouvelle* were absolute priorities. "Foul" smells resulting from a lack of public lavatories, combined with putrifying animal corpses and dust blown into the city, complete the overall apocalyptic picture. Bienvenu stressed the urgent need for running water, a sewage system, and a highway maintenance service to "transform one of the unhealthiest places in western Morocco into a clean and healthy city." However, as the Jewish representative on the Public Health Commission pointed out, "The mellah lanes are too narrow for street cleaning carts and, in any case, it would be impossible to find workers willing to carry out such a task." While remaining vague as to how a project of this type would be financed, the French did not beat around the bush when it came to the educative aspects of the scheme, bluntly requesting that "the Muslim gentlemen of the Commission kindly encourage the fellow members of their religious community to promote the most basic principles of public health and cleanliness."<sup>43</sup>

Bienvenu's analyses were confirmed by several epidemics, including an outbreak of smallpox in November 1913 that once again turned "some parts of Casablanca into mass graves" and revealed the "useful role" that a housing authority could play. The French greatly feared that the contagion would spread to the European community,<sup>44</sup> though it was not until March 1914, when a typhus epidemic claimed 4,000 lives out of a total 45,000 inhabitants, that the Protectorate finally took action.

### In Search of a City Center

Dessigny worked up plans for the rather nebulous space that had been formerly taken up by the souk and which had been renamed the Place du Grand Socco. Dessigny's intention was to create a proper square lined with shops backing onto the wall of the mellah.<sup>45</sup> The plot had been cleared during the typhus epidemic, and

<sup>34</sup> An importer of McCormick agricultural machines, Wallut would be among Perret's French clients. Perret would also build the Rabat road warehouse of the wholesaler Hamelle, whose president, Pierre Grand, was to play a critical role in the city's industrial development. In 1920, for the Paris-Maroc company, Perret would design a small annex on the circular boulevard, adorned with neo-Moorish details. He would build their warehouse on Rue de Libourne in the same year. Regarding Perret's oeuvre, see the analyses of Joseph Abram, *Perret et l'école du classicisme structural (1910–1960)* (Villers-les-Nancy: École d'Architecture de Nancy, 1985). See also the material gathered in Roberto Gargiani, *Auguste Perret, la théorie et l'œuvre* (Paris: Gallimard-Electra, 1994).

<sup>35</sup> Sigfried Giedion, *Building in France, Building in Iran, Building in Ferro-Concrete*, trans. J. Duncan Berry (Santa Monica, Calif.: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1995), 157, 159. First published as *Bauen in Frankreich, bauen in Eisen, bauen in Eisenbeton* (Leipzig and Berlin: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1928).

<sup>36</sup> Le Corbusier pointed out the impact of "architectural reserves," or stocks of ideas, developed by Perret in Casablanca on the church at Raincy. Le Corbusier, *Une maison—un palais* (Paris: G. Crès & Cie, 1928), 44.

<sup>37</sup> The rapid development of the urbanism movement in France was inseparable from the consolidation of public health policies, confirmed by the adoption of the public health law of 1902.

<sup>38</sup> The Public Health Office was backed up by a Public Health Commission or Council. MAE, series A Tanger, box 775. In October 1910, all doctors, both civil and military, as well as the entire consular corps, were mobilized due to a suspicious death in the mellah.

<sup>39</sup> French Consul to Director of the Municipal Services, January 5, 1913, MAE, series A Tanger, box 667.

<sup>40</sup> Regarding this point, the Public Health Office noted, "Until now, Casablanca has been dependent on the Tangiers Public Health Council. We will be able to gain our independence only when we have obtained the means to execute primary prophylactic measures locally, namely isolation and disinfection." Public Health Office, minutes of the November 16, 1912, meeting, MAE, series A Tanger, box 775.

<sup>41</sup> Doctor Bienvenu, report on "l'hygiène de la ville de Casablanca et de sa banlieue," July 5, 1913, MAE, series A Tanger, box 775.

<sup>42</sup> Public Health Council, minutes of the July 26, 1913, meeting, MAE, series A Tanger, box 775. Émile Klein notes, "The native left to his own devices is dirty." Émile Klein, untitled article in *La Presse médicale*, quoted in *La Nature* supplement to no. 30 (March 1912): 141.

<sup>43</sup> "Everywhere the ground is prepared for sowing, germinating, and growing the seed." Doctor Azémard (chief physician of the Casablanca region), to the French consul, November 11, 1913, MAE, series A Tanger, box 775.

<sup>44</sup> The defense perimeter, still defined by the ramparts, was moved back toward the exterior strategic points, and the construction was thus authorized. Telegram of the resident-general, December 7, 1912, MAE, series A Tanger, box 666.



Aerial view of the  
medina, c. 1914.  
Note the port develop-  
ment and extension of  
the city in the south-  
west.



Aerial view of Place de France, 1919.  
In the foreground: the market and start of Boulevard de la Gare.

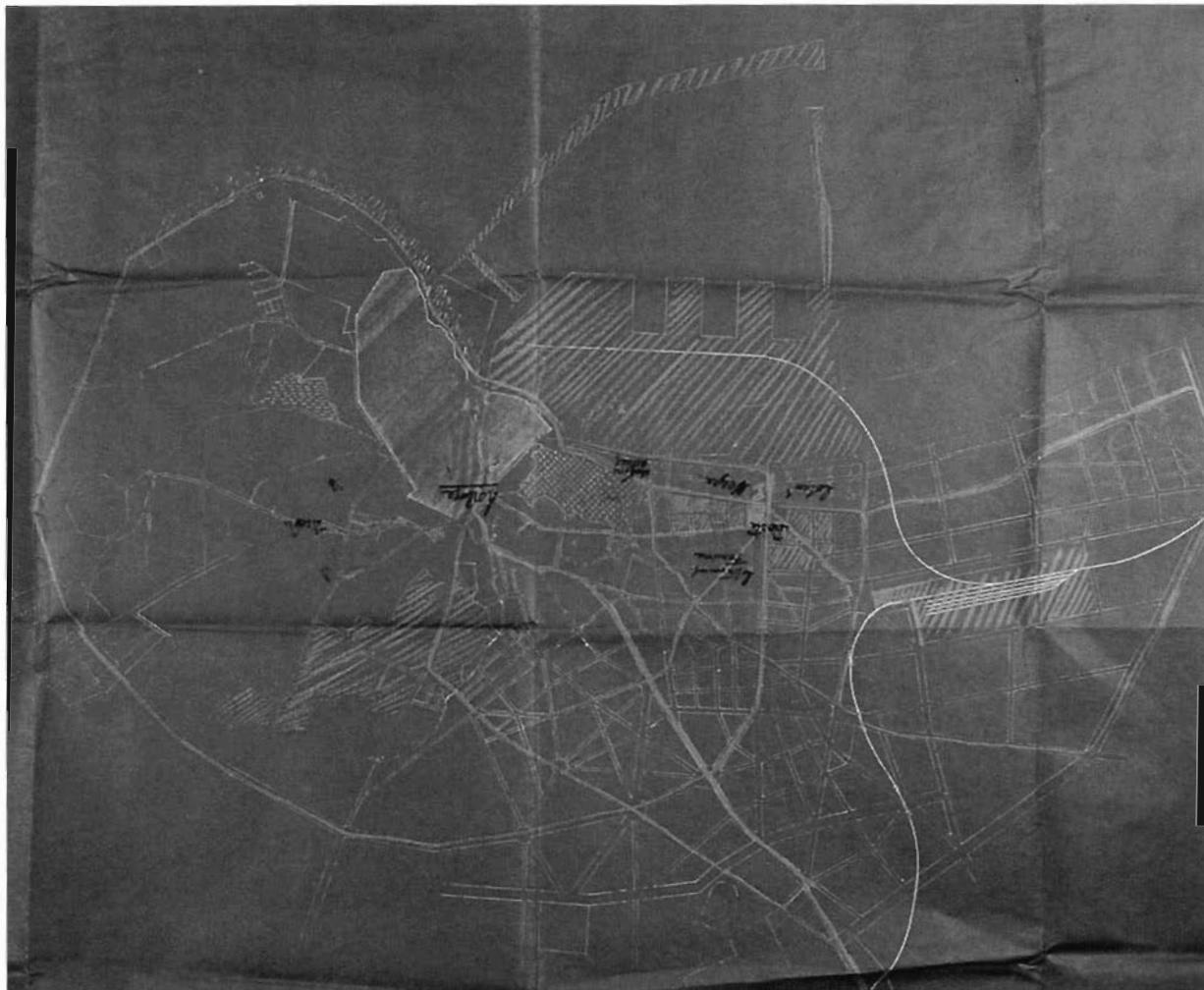
the facade of the Magasins Paris-Maroc provided an axis of symmetry for the entire scheme:

This square . . . occupies a central site in relation to the old town and the eastern and southern extensions. It is thus essential that it be accorded the greatest possible ground area . . . The shops and indoor market that run on either side of it, along with the Magasins Paris-Maroc currently under construction on its south side, will result in a decent and attractive arrangement. In any event, it will be infinitely preferable to the city wall that currently stands there and whose dilapidated poster-clad surface offers nothing in the way of aesthetic quality.<sup>45</sup>

Another major challenge was the extension of Rue de l'Horloge. This project had been initially proposed in early 1914 by De Cazanove, the newly appointed head of municipal services. De Cazanove severely criticized the narrowness of the "arterial road" that was "meant to act as the main thoroughfare connecting the town with the railway station and which was supposed to serve as an overflow for the Rabat road so that the latter might be used solely for heavy traffic." It was in the context of this scheme that concerns about the "town's aesthetic nature" were expressed for the first time.<sup>46</sup> Despite opposition from owner-occupiers, Edmond Joyant, then assistant director of the Public Works Department, managed to persuade the Municipal Council to exchange a tract of land (the future Place de France) for a plot near Rue de l'Horloge. This parcel of land would be earmarked

45 Commandant Désigny, memorandum, March 8, 1913, MAE, series A Tanger, box 666. A livestock market had been created in September–October 1912. In 1914 the Municipal Council removed the last obstacle to the envisioned improvements by requiring the relocation of the railroad tracks bisecting the Place du Grand Socco. Municipal Council, resolution, March 7, 1914, MAE, series A, Tangier, box 667.

46 C. de Cazanove to the resident-general, Casablanca, January 23, 1914, BGA, SSP, Bureau des municipalités, Casablanca, 1913–26. De Cazanove was to be discharged after the typhus epidemic.



**47** Claude Favrot, sketch for an administrative center along Route de Rabat, 1913.

**47** Permission was granted on July 29, 1914. A. Tarriot, *Monographie de Casablanca*, 54.

**48** Memorandum (with sketch), November 15, 1912, MAE, series A Tanger, box 666. These lots belonged to a consortium of the land-owners Fernau, Lamb, and Braunschvig, as well as to Bendahan. The tax administrator Martin approved this solution.

**49** Claude Favrot, on behalf of the Syndicat français des intérêts de Casablanca, to the French consul, November 26, 1912, MAE, series A Tanger, box 668. Favrot evokes the idea of an architectural competition and draws a network of new roads, in particular new radial roads, in support of a later whose ideas will be taken up again in Prost's project.

**50** Commandant Dessimy, "Programme de travaux municipaux à exécuter dans la ville." Certain schools were commissioned from the architect-contractor Barbedor.

for the Franco-Moroccan exhibition of 1915, before becoming the permanent site for the central market.<sup>47</sup>

Trade, however, formed but one area of policy within the wider quest for an urban core. For instance, property developers and the administration clashed over the site for the post office, which was the first major civic building to be erected. The official story is that the final site (the Place Administrative) was the only plot selected, but the ins and outs of the whole project were in fact far more complex. In late 1912, the municipal authority suggested slotting the building into the triangle formed by D'Amade and Moinier avenues,<sup>48</sup> while the lawyer Claude Favrot, acting on behalf of the Syndicat Français des Intérêts de Casablanca, proposed that it be located at the junction of the Circular Boulevard and the Route de Rabat. He put forward the idea of creating a main public square, claiming that "a well-turned-out city is one that is judiciously arranged," and that "since we are making a city from scratch, it will cost no more to come up with something artistic than it will to create something trite and ugly."<sup>49</sup>

In March 1913, Dessimy suggested building a girls' secondary school as well as two junior high schools and three district schools.<sup>50</sup> This civic program was rather more complex than anything that had come before and corresponded to a new step in Casablanca's urban development, being underpinned by semipublic, semiprivate investment. Meanwhile, the official inauguration of the Municipal Council on

September 25, 1913, marked the end of military control.<sup>51</sup> The council began to tackle central issues relating to urban planning and housing, and intervened in questions of "public morality," such as setting up a "vice squad" to clamp down on "registered prostitutes."<sup>52</sup> Casablanca's shady character is conveyed through legislation drawn up at the time pertaining to surveillance of alcohol sales and nightlife premises, as well as countless orders issued against a number of bars and the granting of rights to certain individuals to bear weapons. All of this gives substance to the image of an African Far West as peddled by journalists at the time.

Although the council played an active role in instituting building legislation, it was merely one of many channels used by businessmen to get their ventures off the ground.<sup>53</sup> This was largely due to the fact that the council was primarily concerned with the city's daily operations, whereas organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture were involved in broader programs. For instance in 1914, it pushed to have Casablanca designated as capital:

There are many reasons why the country's administrative services should be grouped in Casablanca, making it the very nerve center of the entire colony. First, its rapid pace of development . . . Second, its central geographic position within Morocco. Third, the fact that it is to be the future terminus of the Moroccan railroad network . . . And lastly, its seaport, currently under construction, which is expected to boost Casablanca's prosperity to such an extent that the city will very likely rival even the largest cities in France.<sup>54</sup>

It was around this time that the close working relationship struck up between contractors and the military was interrupted by the arrival of several urban planners—a recently founded professional body whose ambitions were all the stronger given their newly acquired status. A number of these planners turned their attention to Casablanca's future—that "ugly, intelligent creature so adept at stirring up fiery feelings" to quote Long, who was a reporter for the Chamber of Commerce's foreign affairs commission.<sup>55</sup>

**51** The council included Prosper Ferrieu, Antoine Philip, and Gabriel Veyre, among others. The former city administration's lack of popular support is highlighted by its fiscal difficulties: In May 1912 Tardif resigned from his post of administrator responsible for urban taxation because 50 percent of the French did not pay their municipal taxes. Regarding relations with the Moroccan administration see William A. Hoisington, *Lyautey and the French Conquest of Morocco* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 135–62.

**52** Decree no. 13 of October 19, 1913, regulated camel traffic (forbidden except between 4:00 and 9:00 A.M. and 12:00 and 2:00 P.M.); decree no. 92/4 of July 29, 1914, prohibited stationing herds of livestock within the limits of the Circular Boulevard; decree no. 14 of October 19, 1913, organized car traffic. MAE, series A Tanger, box 667.

**53** A decree of March 4, 1914, created a commission for "identifying and visiting insalubrious lodgings," "evaluating their hygienic condition," and proposing "measures that would be appropriate to impose, in both the general and specific interest, on the owners or tenants of these establishments." The municipality established the regulation regarding the naming of streets and the numbering of houses on June 25, 1914.

**54** Resolution of the Casablanca Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture, n.d. [early 1914], MAE, series A Tanger, 668.

**55** *L'essor industriel de Casablanca*, 33–35.

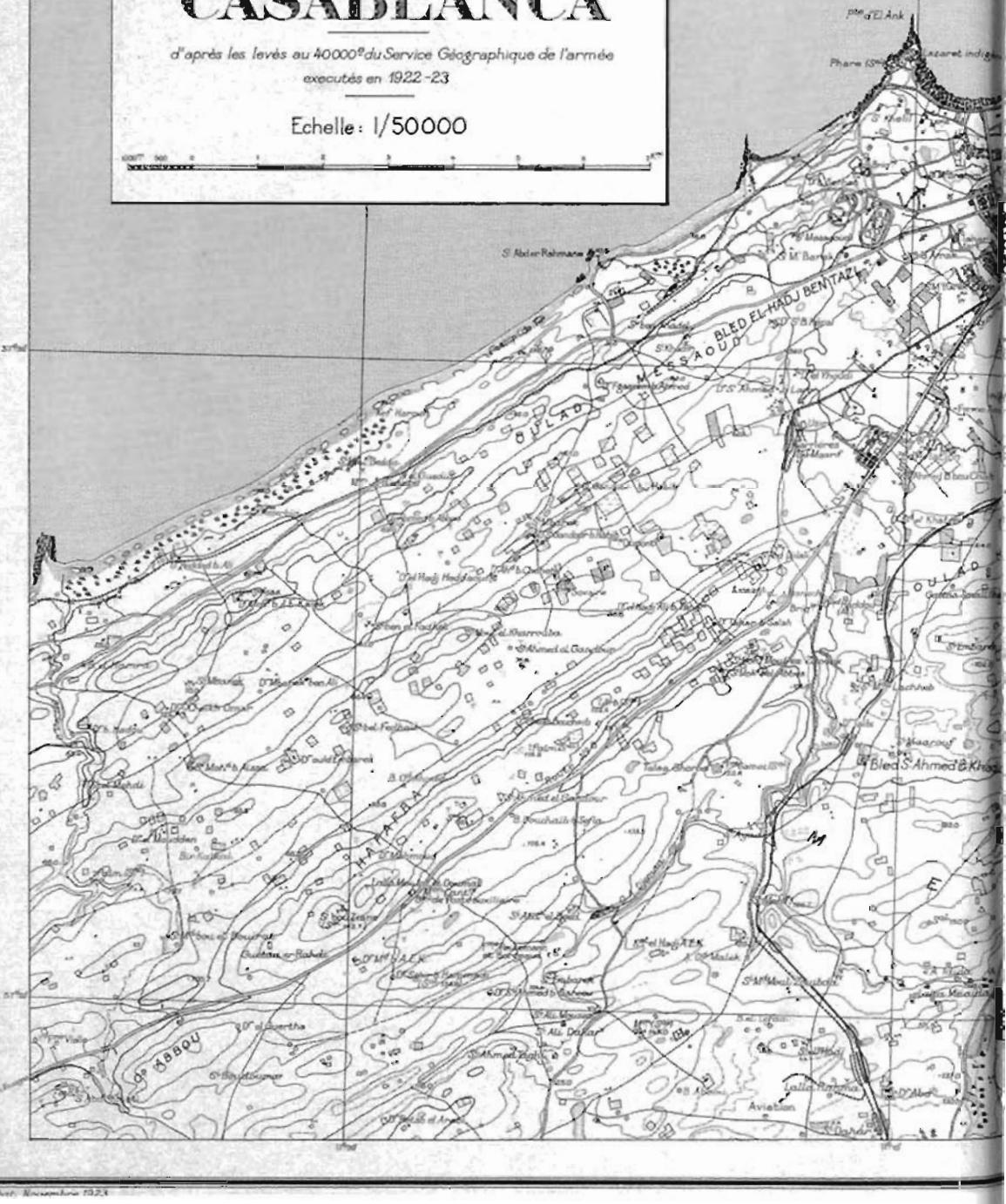


Early omnibus service, 1913.

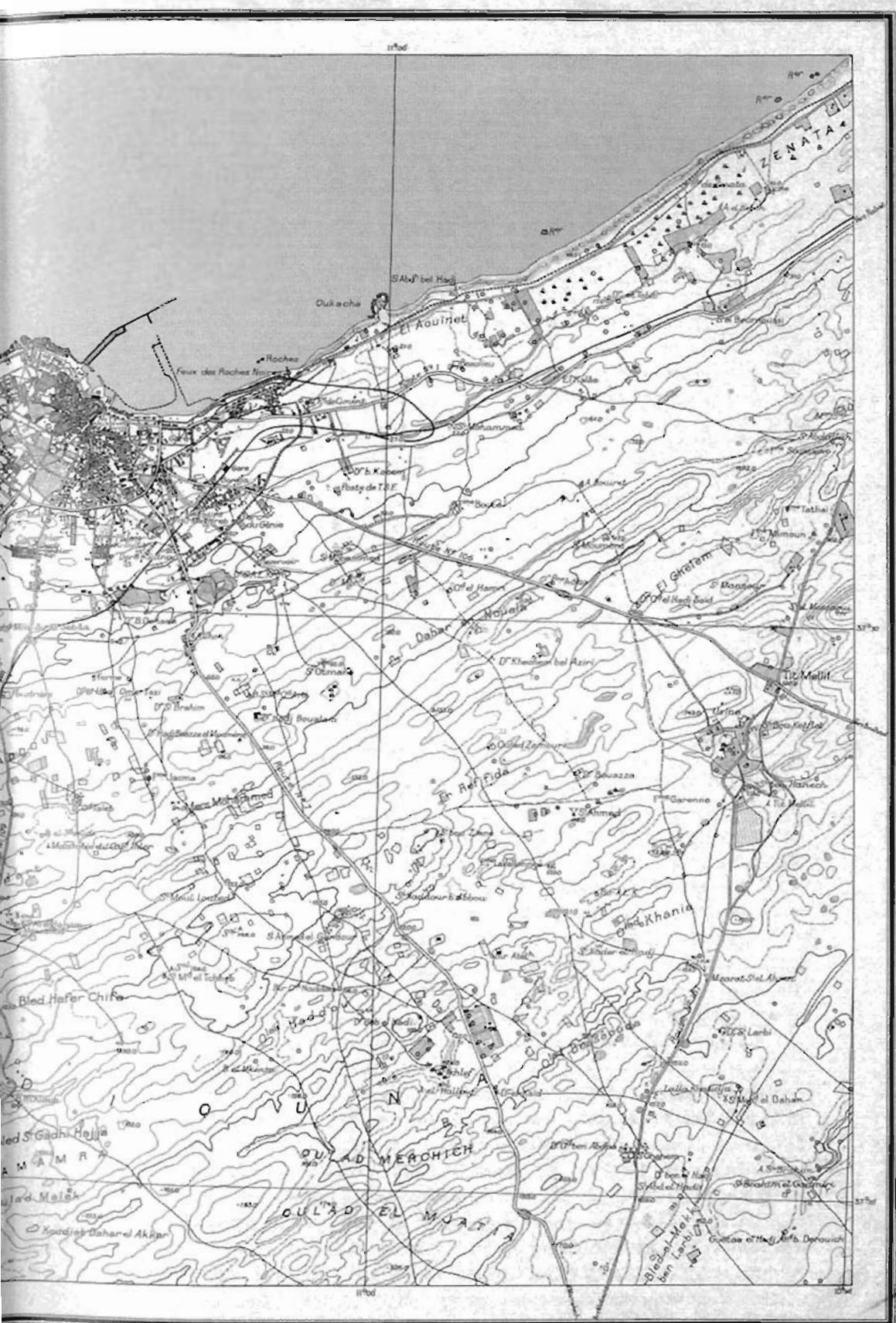
# ENVIRONS DE CASABLANCA

*d'après les levés au 40000<sup>e</sup> du Service Géographique de l'armée  
exécutés en 1922-23*

Echelle : 1/50000



Blondel La Rougerie, map of Casablanca and vicinity, 1923, based on surveys by the geographic division of the French army. Scale: 1/50000.



Henri Prost's Plan (1914-1917) 71

## The Musée Social Enters the Fray: Forestier and Agache in Casablanca

*Casablanca had reached fever pitch. It was a city that had shot up out of the ground. Far West style. Plots of land changed hands three or four times a day, between five and seven in the evening, on café terraces. Star-shaped subdivisions sprang up everywhere, each owner intent on making his small web of streets the hub of the future city. Naturally, everyone looked after his own interests without thinking of his neighbors. There was no cohesion linking the flights of fancy of the so-called property developers, only bustle, exchange premiums, and chaos. With just a scrap of paper from their respective consuls, Englishmen, Spaniards, Germans, or native Moroccans under German protection could, if they so wished, build right in the middle of an avenue that the French had tugged for development. A handful of roads had begun to be laid out, but these tended to follow a zigzag path before finally running into a dead end. Such was the case for "Rue de l'Horloge," the pride and joy of Casablancans in 1914. In short, then, anarchy prevailed, but it was superbly organized, as was only fitting, since it was high-ranking diplomats who had seen to the making of this city.*

Albert Laprade, 1928<sup>56</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Albert Laprade, "Lyautey urbaniste," *Revue hebdomadaire* 37, no. 9 (September 1928): 220.

<sup>57</sup> This was particularly true of the Société foncière marocaine, the Société pour le développement de Casablanca, and the Société Agricole.

<sup>58</sup> Claude Favrot, for the Parisian *Syndicat des intérêts français de Casablanca*, "Pétition à Monsieur le Résident Général pour l'exécution d'urgence d'un plan d'extension de la ville de Casablanca," n.d. [September 1912], 1-2, AN, 475 AP/52. Composed of representatives of numerous companies active in Morocco and directed by André Colliez, this organization was created on September 27, 1912. Favrot emphasized that the engineer corps had sabotaged the Public Works Department project for a thirty-meter-wide circular boulevard.

<sup>59</sup> Claude Favrot, memorandum to General Lyautey, Casablanca, 15 October 1912, 1-2, AN, 475 AP/52.

<sup>60</sup> Claude Favrot, memorandum to General Lyautey, 13.

<sup>61</sup> See the petition and the police report, AN, 475 AP/52. See also Christian Houel, *Mes aventures marocaines*, 239.

<sup>62</sup> The Musée social, created in 1894, joined reform-minded politicians and professionals in the fight for affordable housing and social modernization. Its Urban and Rural Hygiene Section, established on January 14, 1908, united urban specialists, Parisian civil servants, physicians, politicians, businessmen, and figures committed to the progress of urbanism, around its founder, the parliamentary representative and mayor of Le Havre, Jules Siegfried. See Anne Cormier, "Extensions-limites-espaces libres, les travaux de la section d'Hygiène urbaine et rurale du Musée social" (postgraduate thesis, École d'Architecture Paris-Villemin, Paris, 1987); Giovanna Osti, "Il Musée social di Parigi e gli inizi dell'urbanistica francese (1894-1914)" (master's thesis, Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia, 1983); and Janet R. Horne, "Republican Social Reform in France: The Case of the Musée Social, 1894-1914" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1992).

Laprade, a young architect recently arrived from France, did not mince words when describing Casablanca as he perceived it in 1915. He employed the same type of self-justifying terms as Lyautey's eulogists, and at the same time was clearly directing a slight dig at Tardif.

French investors were buying up more and more of the city, making merchants and industrialists much less powerful than they had been prior to 1907.<sup>57</sup> The proponents of "French interests," headed by André Colliez and Claude Favrot, who had criticized the decision to set up the capital of the Protectorate in Rabat, urged Lyautey to "rapidly put in place an extension plan for Casablanca." They felt the city "was going up too haphazardly . . . meticulously respecting all the twists and turns of the former caravan tracks," despite various measures adopted by the engineer corps.<sup>58</sup> Tardif's plan, which could be "tailored to suit needs," was thus deemed "an incontestable mark of progress."<sup>59</sup> It was, however, major property developers and investors who called for a long-term plan, intent as they were on obtaining Moroccan-owned land under the best conditions and on edging out smaller developers to capitalize on the added value created by new roads:

Anarchy, disorder, and indifference are the elements that currently govern Casablanca, and if we are not careful they will be carved in stone, for a city is made but once . . . Let order therefore be established in Casablanca: in other words, let the administration draw up a cohesive city plan. All is not lost: the city's future can still be salvaged. Let us capitalize on the lay of the land, which is highly favorable to building a great city. And let us make it great. Let there be squares, civic buildings, and broad avenues to meet the needs of modern traffic.<sup>60</sup>

On March 1, 1914, a meeting was held at the Eldorado music hall and measures of health and hygiene were called for in view of the typhus epidemic. This at last forced Lyautey to urge the municipality to come up with a viable project.<sup>61</sup> Meanwhile, in 1913 in Paris, the Musée Social addressed the wider issue of extension plans for Moroccan towns, with Casablanca at the top of the list. The Musée's Committee for Urban and Rural Hygiene, set up in 1908, was campaigning for the city walls of Paris to be replaced by a belt of parks, and for legislation to be enacted promoting compulsory urban development plans.<sup>62</sup> This generated a significant volume of correspondence between Georges Risler, Lyautey, and André Colliez. On his return from Morocco, Colliez informed the committee of the resident-



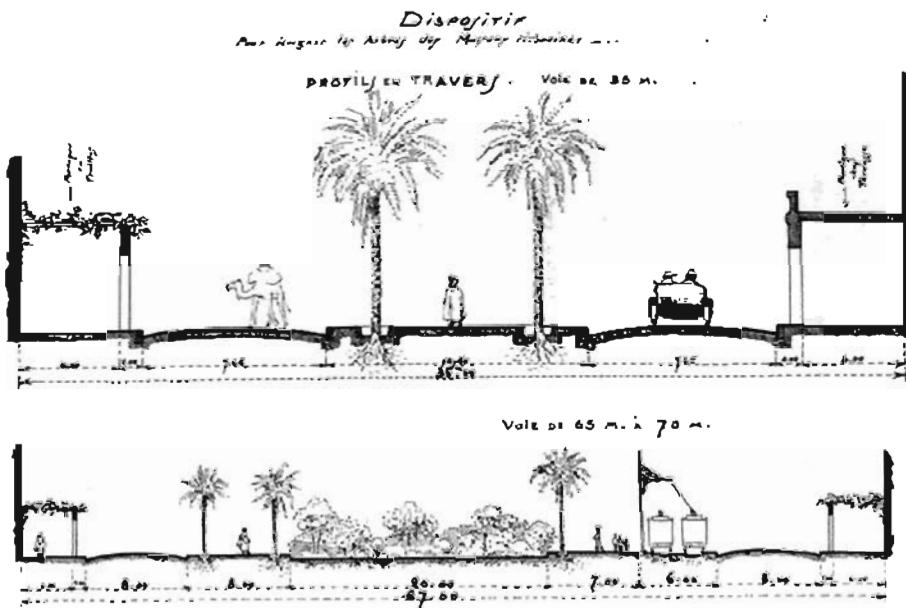
Property owned by the  
Comptoir lorrain du  
Maroc, c. 1920.

general's intention to set up a project dealing with the land ownership situation in Casablanca. Risler suggested that a competition be held, or that the authorities consider "calling on the services of Henri Prost, the recent competition winner of the Antwerp extension plan." Risler argued, "Not only has Prost drawn up a remarkable reconstruction plan for Constantinople, but he is also very much au fait with matters relating to the Orient and to Islam."<sup>63</sup> On February 13, 1913, Delure gave a presentation on the construction work that had already been carried out, making Tardif's extension plan his own:

The French authorities arrived too late to be able to inject any kind of aesthetic quality into the town, and it is now difficult to rectify the construction plans of certain individuals who have built haphazardly without any agreements being established in advance. What we can do, however, is create a 30-meter-wide Circular Boulevard one kilometer outside the walled town running along the station facade. This road would also border the seafront. We could thus preserve the old town and in the surrounding area (the *ville nouvelle*) we would mark out arterial roads leading to an exterior thoroughfare. We could set up a pleasant residential neighborhood for Casablanca in the vicinity of the station and build villas on the flanks of the port's hillocks.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Georges Risler, memorandum on a meeting of the Rural and Urban Hygiene Section of the Musée social, *Revue mensuelle du Musée social* (1913): 114.

<sup>64</sup> Delure, comments to the Urban and Rural Hygiene Section of the Musée social (presented at the February 13, 1913, meeting), *ibid.*, 115–16. Risler had asked Lyautey to "come to one of the meetings" and "to bring along maps of Casablanca and Rabat upon which we could trace an urban renewal and extension plan."



Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier, streets designed for towns in Morocco. Illustration in *Des réserves à constituer au dedans et aux abords des villes capitales du Maroc* (Paris, 1914).

65 Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier, "Des réserves à constituer au dedans et aux abords des villes capitales du Maroc; remarques sur les jardins arabes et de l'utilité qu'il y aura à en conserver les principaux caractères" (December 1913), in Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier, *Grandes villes et systèmes de parcs: suivi de deux mémoires sur les villes impériales du Maroc et sur Buenos Aires* (Paris: Norma, 1997): 159–219.

66 Albert Laprade, "L'urbanisme en Afrique du Nord," *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, no. 3 (March 1939): 67.

67 Lyautey's social views are the result of his contacts with Albert de Mun as well as with Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé, a member of the Société d'économie sociale founded by the sociologist Frédéric Le Play, whose ideas also permeated the Musée social. Regarding the colonial activity of the "leplaisiens," see Catherine Bruant, "L'Orient de la science sociale," *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée* 73–74, no. 3–4 (1994): 296–310.

68 Lyautey invokes his "gratitude" toward Risler for "having given Morocco the invaluable gift" of having summoned Prost. General Lyautey to Henri Prost, Vichy, January 17, 1916, quoted in Jean Royer, "Henri Prost, urbaniste," *Urbanisme* 34, no. 88 (1965): 12. See also the opinion of one of the advocates of Prost's recruitment, Georges Risler, "Les villes d'aujourd'hui et de demain (notes sur l'urbanisme)," *France-Maroc*,

no. 3 (March 1930): 62–65. Prost was notified of his new assignment by Tirard, secretary general of the Protectorate, on February 21, 1914. Paul Tirard, memorandum to Henri Prost defining his mission in Morocco, Rabat, February 21, 1914, AA, Henri Prost estate. He arrived on April 13, 1914.

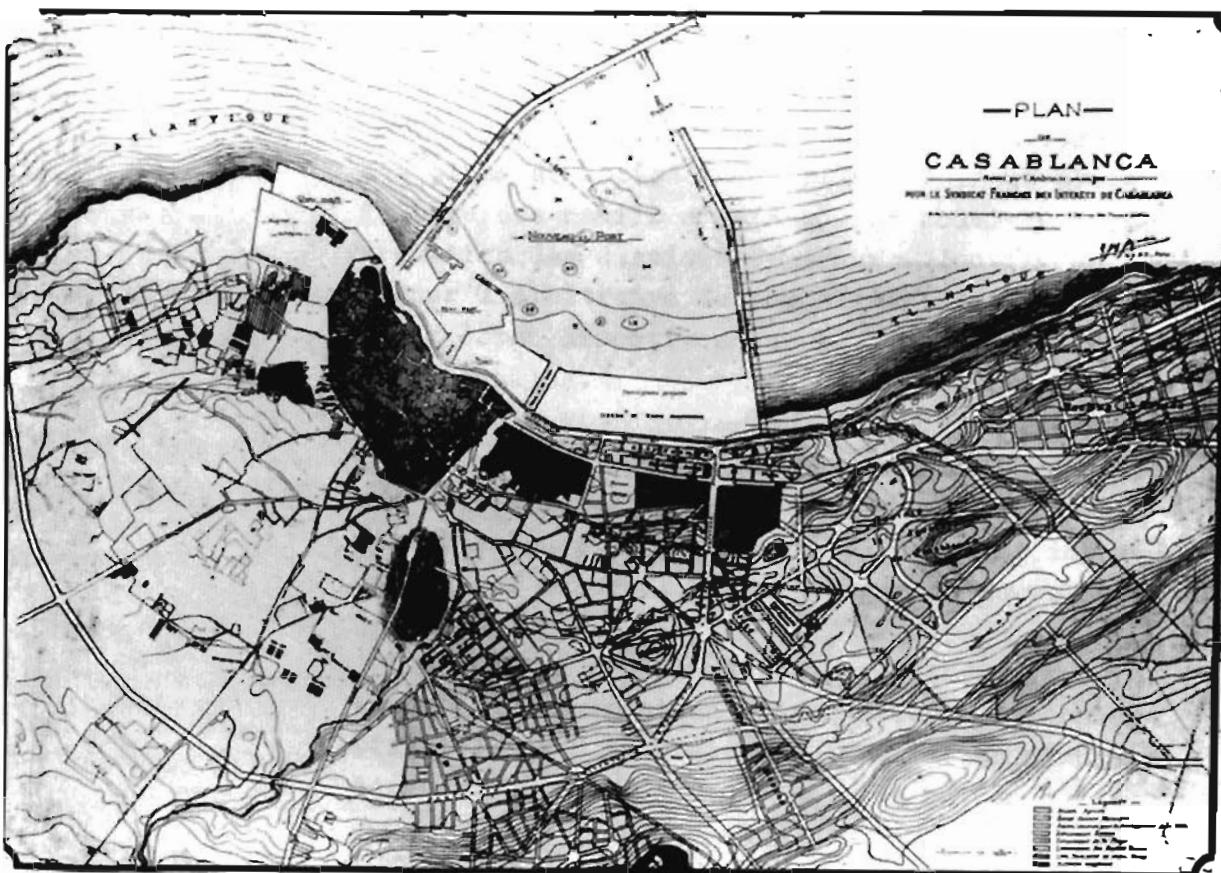
69 Winner of the second prize in the competition for a plan for Canberra (1911), Agache designed an extension plan for Dunkirk (1912). Catherine Bruant, "Donat-Alfred Agache (1875–1959), l'architecte et le sociologue," *Les Études sociales*, no. 122 (1994): 23–61; and idem, "Un architecte à l'école d'énergie," Donat-Alfred Agache, *du voyage à l'engagement social*, *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 73–74, no. 3–4 (1994): 100–17. Colliez, who met Agache through the Musée social, would continue to use his theories as a reference point fifteen years later. Colliez, *Notre protectorat marocain*, 195–96.

70 The dissension among Agache's clients—the Société foncière marocaine and the Société agricole du Maroc, both founding members of the Syndicat des Intérêts français de Casablanca and the Société pour le développement de Casablanca (owner of land abutting the projected train station)—would prevent him from pursuing this project any further.

71 General Hubert Lyautey, manuscript note, n.d., AN, 475 AP/52.

In 1913, Secretary General Tirard invited Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier to manage the issue of "open spaces" in Morocco. Forestier was a major theorist of urban planning as well as a landscape architect managing the western gardens and promenades of Paris. After attending Delure's presentation in February 1913, he began to map out roads and gardens for the existing towns of Fès, Marrakech, and Rabat. Some of his suggestions for the road system and the new neighborhoods would later be adopted by the Protectorate, which also put him in charge of designing the garden for the sultan's residence in Casablanca.<sup>65</sup> Laprade would later pay lukewarm tribute to Forestier's "somewhat odd report, filled with landscaping recommendations but insufficiently precise to serve as a true basis for future urban development."<sup>66</sup> On his return from Morocco, Forestier communicated his findings to the Committee for Urban and Rural Hygiene and, like Risler, suggested that Lyautey call on Prost.<sup>67</sup>

Hence, 1914 saw Prost appointed to the Service spécial d'architecture et des plans de villes (Department of Architecture and City Planning)—the first department set up by French institutions to be specifically devoted to urban planning issues. He began by tackling the problem of Casablanca.<sup>68</sup> Meanwhile, the Syndicat Français des Intérêts de Casablanca requested a plan from Donat-Alfred Agache, who was also a member of the Committee for Urban and Rural Hygiene.<sup>69</sup> Agache does not seem to have been given the right resources for such a task though, since the only extant documentation of his work is an inventory of the land he "surveyed."<sup>70</sup> This inventory is largely dedicated to the major properties owned both by the Makhzen and by French companies. It is therefore difficult to ascertain whether Agache was seeking simply to improve the road system or whether he had more far-reaching objectives.<sup>71</sup> What is clear from his assignment, though, is that developers were serious about getting their private schemes off the ground. Prost's commission went further than this in that it covered the whole of Morocco, though Casablanca in particular. Lyautey recommended that "before establishing a final plan, Prost should reach an agreement with the parties concerned." This can be interpreted as an acknowledgment of the pressure that real-estate developers had brought to bear on him over the previous months.<sup>72</sup>



Donat-Alfred Agache,  
land survey for the  
Syndicat français des  
Intérêts de Casablanca,  
1914.

Note the growth of the  
city eastward and the fact  
that encampments still  
existed in the south.



Georges Buau, plan  
showing the subdivisions  
of Casablanca, in Léon  
Guigues, *Guide de  
l'Exposition Franco-  
Marocaine (Casablanca,  
1915).*

## Henri Prost Sets the City in Order

72 Henri Prost, "Le plan de Casablanca," *France-Maroc* (August 15, 1917): 5.

73 Cambon, "L'aménagement et l'extension des villes," 203.

74 Prost's "envoi" from Rome is a reconstruction of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, elaborated through careful drawings in which a clear interest in structure, as well as a concern for situating the edifice in its urban context, are evident. Joseph Marrast, ed., *L'œuvre de Henri Prost architecture et urbanisme* (Paris: Académie d'Architecture, 1960), 13–27.

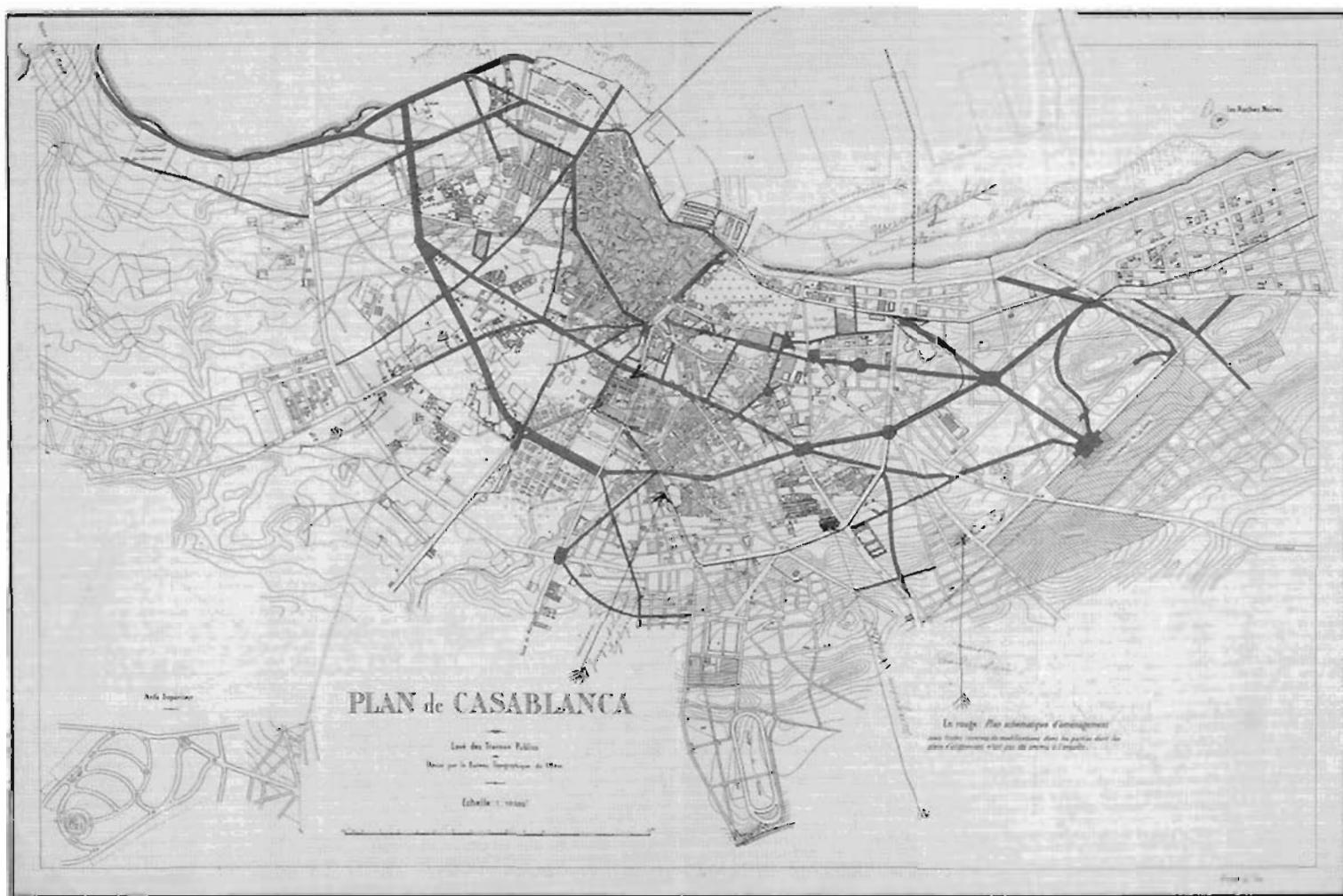
Henri Prost, preliminary layout of roads, as featured in the development and extension plan of 1917.

75 Joining, via Eugène Hénard, the study of an extension plan for Paris undertaken by the Musée social in 1910, Prost won the competition for an improvement plan for Antwerp's fortifications in the same year.

By early 1914, the small native Moroccan town was drowned amid an extraordinary mix of *souduks* and dwellings of all shapes and sizes—basic wooden shacks, villas, and six-story apartment buildings, all scattered several kilometers away from the city walls. At first sight, it represented a picture of incredible chaos, curtailing all hope of establishing any kind of road system, so rapidly had development sprung up in all directions. Vast housing subdivisions had sprouted on all sides, all vying with one another to become the vital center of the ville nouvelle . . . In the face of these well-meaning yet disorganized efforts, it was a difficult task indeed to define an urban shape capable of responding to so many diverging interests.

Henri Prost, 1917

Choosing Prost to mastermind the reshaping of a town that Cambon termed a "lost cause," "a bad start,"<sup>73</sup> was to prove a wise move. Awarded the Grand Prix de Rome in 1902, Prost had made his debut under the dual banner of the East (having spent several years in Constantinople)<sup>74</sup> and urban planning. Like Tony Garnier and Léon Jaussely, he was a staunch supporter of the new discipline of urban planning that offered so much more than the narrow boundaries laid down by Beaux-Arts large-scale composition.<sup>75</sup> In Morocco, his task was made slightly easier by the guidelines



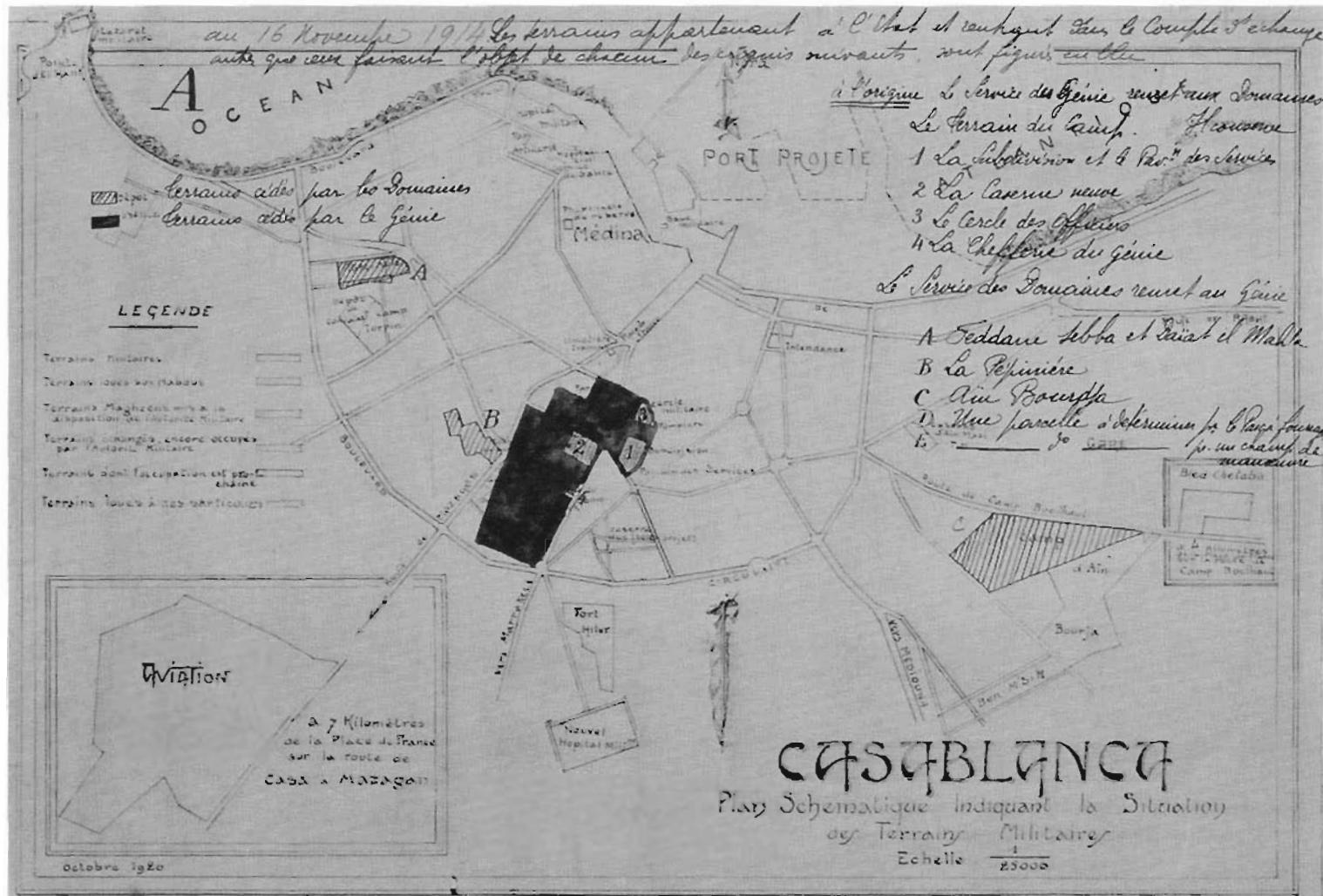


that had already been drawn up by Forestier and, more important, by the legal system that had been put in place by Paul Tirard and Guillaume de Tardé.<sup>76</sup> The *dahir\** of August 12, 1913, governing land ownership registration had a significant impact on planning insofar as it regulated the real-estate market, though it left the door open to brutal confiscation of Moroccan-owned land. Nonetheless, it did enable an extremely precise land survey to be implemented and it also instigated the creation of a Land Conservation Department.

Within the sphere of urban planning itself, the *dahir\** of April 16, 1914, pertaining to "alignments, road maintenance, road taxes, and development and extension plans," can be deemed a milestone. It stipulated that plans should henceforth indicate not only the layout of roads and parks (in accordance with Forestier's report), but that they should also show neighborhood boundaries, as well as sewage networks and leisure facilities. This law, which also stipulated that building permits were compulsory, was in many ways much more advanced than the French one passed on March 14, 1919. It was complemented by the *dahir* of August 31, 1914, which authorized expropriation by zone and enabled the municipalities to levy a certain amount of taxes on speculative gains, causing a general outcry among colonial

Henri Prost, Development and extension plan of 1917 for Casablanca, in *France-Maroc*, 1917.

<sup>76</sup> Frost met this lawyer and junior civil servant with the French consul on the ship carrying him to Morocco.



French army's Engineer Corps, plan drafted in 1921 showing exchange of land as part of the Place Administrative development scheme—a pivotal element in Prost's plan. Situation as

of November 1914. The French army exchanged central tracts of land for lots owned by the Colonial administration on the outskirts of the town.

77 Rivet, *Lyautey et l'institution*, 1:235.

78 Defined for the first time in the law of January 21, 1865, real-estate owners' associations in France were only admitted within the urban perimeter in 1938, under the law-decree of June 14 regarding the hygienic clearance of insalubrious areas, and with the laws of October 11, 1940, and July 12, 1941, which governed in the context of wartime reconstruction.

79 Regarding Lyautey's urban policy, see Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Rabat, Urban Apartheid in Morocco* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); Paul Rabinow, "Techno-

settlers." Another *dahir* was passed on November 10, 1917, ruling that landowner associations could be set up and land redevelopment schemes put in place, provided consensus was reached between the various parties concerned.<sup>79</sup>

Based in Rabat from April 1914 onward, Prost encountered a totally different scenario in Casablanca than he had in cities such as Fès, Rabat, Marrakech, and Meknes, where he could readily apply Lyautey's principle of dividing the ethnic communities.<sup>80</sup> As Casablanca was "already extremely built up and subdivided, but devoid of any kind of master plan," Prost's self-declared aim was merely to arrange the town "as best he could."<sup>81</sup> Fifteen years down the line, Laprade, who sided with Prost throughout the project, related the conditions they had faced initially:

The task was horrendously difficult. There was no legislation, no land surveys, nor any information on existing constructions . . . The only step we could take to establish some sort of a plan was to halt construction in order to harness the town's feverish chaotic growth, albeit at the risk of rioting. Gradually, with the aid of volunteers wounded soldiers from the French front, and the most basic resources, we were able to set up workers' brigades and an embryonic planning office. The air force supplied us from the outset with invaluable aerial views, allowing us to see how things looked in the gaps between the streets. And Prost achieved the impossible in creating huge

80 Henri Prost, "L'urbanisme au Maroc," unpublished handbook, n.d. [ca. 1920], AA, Henri Prost estate, E6 15.

arterial roads that are crucial to modern circulation, while barely touching any of the major housing blocks which would have been far too costly to pull down.<sup>81</sup>

Prost's plan of 1915 can be read less as a full-scale urban creation than as a *restructuring process* modeled on prototypes of circulation flows such as those advocated at the time in Paris by Eugène Hénard. The first course of action was to deal with the typhus threat by marking out a course for the major roads<sup>82</sup>; this was carried out by the spring of 1914. These roads were laid and imposed on the developers even before the master plan for Casablanca was finalized. There were three major objectives underpinning this master plan. First, to develop a structured road network so as to create some order out of the random subdivisions. Second, to institute zoning regulations with respect to height restrictions and public health and hygiene. Lastly, to set out the boundaries of major functional zones, in line with practices initiated by German planners.<sup>83</sup> Prost concentrated less on formulating a theoretical urban model than on laying down rules and regulations, as is signaled by Françoise Choay.<sup>84</sup>

A unifying scheme was drafted to "steer" the growth of what was from the beginning a multipolar city.<sup>85</sup> The road system project jeopardized schemes drawn up by the army and implied quashing certain housing developments. Prost's first battle was to prevent the engineer corps from constructing permanent garrisons, which would have blocked off the city in the southeast. He was, however, powerless to prevent a number of subdivisions from being built, since they fell under Tardif's extension plan, and he had to "abdicate his rights" over the Liberté quarter, which had gone up "so quickly yet so badly."<sup>86</sup> Prost's road system for Casablanca was without a doubt one of the first to fully take into account infrastructural and industrial concerns, which at the time had still not been properly addressed in metropolitan France. Furthermore, it responded to the needs created by early use of cars in Morocco: by 1914, some five hundred cars were registered in Casablanca, i.e., one for every ninety inhabitants.<sup>87</sup> The city's major roads were designed on a scale appropriate to the size of the cars and provided rapid links between the fairly remote luxury residential districts, the commercial quarter, and the factories. Meanwhile, garages took on the status of major urban monuments.<sup>88</sup>

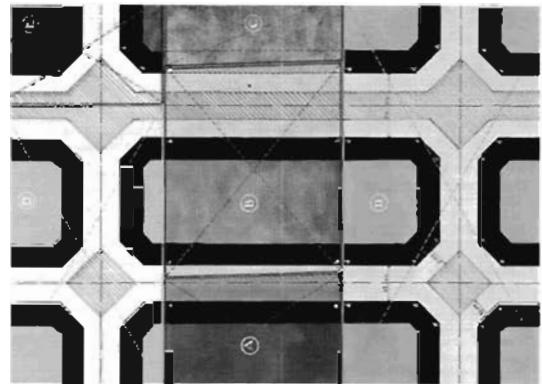
## Functional Zoning Upstages Aesthetic Improvements

*Shaping a new city does not involve simply laying out roads, neighborhoods, parks, and public gardens. Nor is it a matter of merely preserving historical sites and monuments or designating sites for administrative buildings such as schools, post offices, public health facilities and so forth. It is also a question of rationally shaping the urban block in a way that is appropriate to its end use.*

Henri Prost, ca. 1920<sup>89</sup>

Prost's methodological perspectives can be clearly detected in his planning handbook for Moroccan towns and cities, which he drew up while he was working on the master plan for Casablanca.<sup>90</sup> This work criticizes French practices and sets out construction principles based primarily on German experience:

Everything produced in France is invariably centered around an aesthetic goal dictated by existing or planned buildings that serve to bound squares and crossroads, or which act as a backdrop to rectilinear perspectives, as is finely illustrated by our capital itself. Indeed, Paris has hypnotized our entire generation. In the suburbs, however, there are no existing or planned major monuments that can frame squares or crossroads or act as a backdrop for sweeping perspectives. And yet no one has



Drawing by Henri Prost of a theoretical layout for urban blocks, preparatory study for a handbook on urbanism, c. 1912.

<sup>81</sup> Albert Laprade, "L'urbanisme," *La Revue hebdomadaire* 27 (September 1928): 224.

<sup>82</sup> Goulven, "L'histoire d'une ville: chapitre 2," 601.

<sup>83</sup> Whereas Agache was capable neither of resolving contradictions between major developers nor of contesting military implantations, the insertion of Prost into the administration and the *dahir* on landownership associations made the essential choices of his plan possible. The precision and the fervor with which, beginning in 1915, Favrot reports on the Prost project clearly indicate that the defenders of Casablanca's "interests" had been closely linked to its development. Claude Favrot, "Une villa française moderne," in *Conférences francoph-maro-caines* (Paris: Plon, 1917): 224–225.

<sup>84</sup> Françoise Choay, *The Rule and the Model: On the Theory of Architecture and Urbanism* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1996).

<sup>85</sup> Its development was to begin concurrently from the medina's eastern and southern boundaries, the Roches Noires industrial sector to the north, and the Anfa villa district to the west. Anfa district developers spared no effort in trying to have it linked to the urban perimeter. As early as 1914, Julien successfully lobbied to have his property included. See the relevant correspondence in MAE, Casablanca, box 856, études en sciences sociales, 1983; and idem, "Henri Prost, du projet au zonage 1902–1912," in *L'usine et la ville: 150 ans d'urbanisme 1936–1986*, ed. Jean-Pierre Épron (Paris: Institut Français d'Architecture/Culture technique, 1986), 51–55.

<sup>91</sup> Prost, "L'urbanisme au Maroc," AA, fonds Henri Prost, dossier E6 31-32 (minutes, partly typescript, partly manuscript).

<sup>92</sup> Prost, "L'urbanisme au Maroc," AA, Henri Prost estate, dossier E6 36-37.

<sup>93</sup> The Swiss source is explicitly mentioned in M. de Montauzan, "L'organisation des villes nouvelles au Maroc," *La Construction moderne* 24 (December 30, 1923): 148.

<sup>94</sup> Regarding German zoning procedures, see Franco Mancuso, *Le vicende della zoning* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1978).

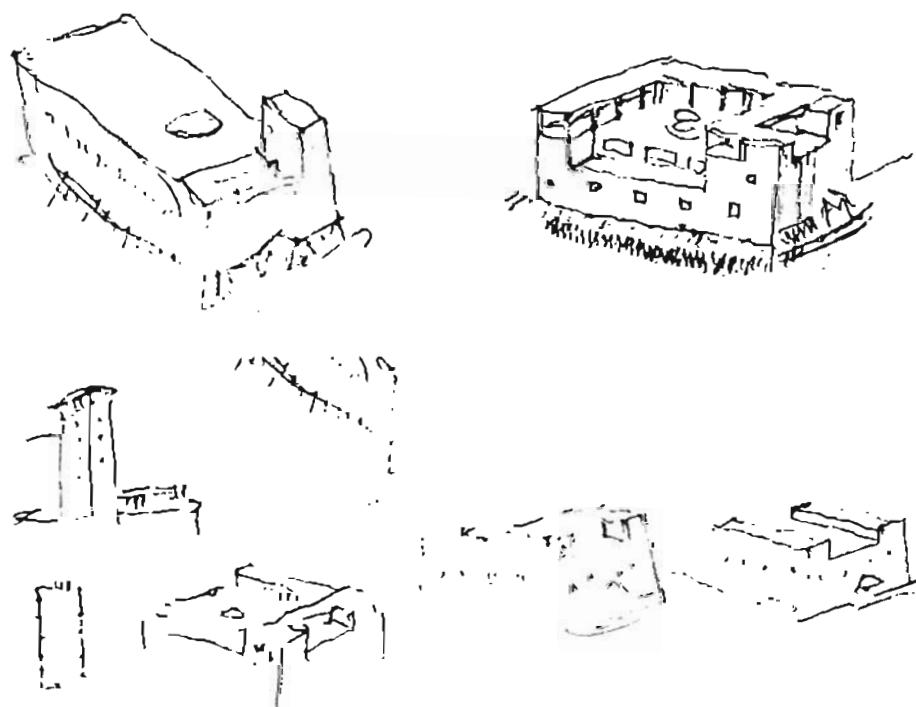
<sup>95</sup> The zoning developed with finesse by Jaussey is sustained all the way down to his color coding. Manuel Torres-Capell, *Incis de la urbanística municipal de Barcelona 1750-1930* (Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona, Corporació metropolitana de Barcelona, 1985), 2140.

thought of establishing a plan to bring together these plots of land containing housing blocks that are chiefly occupied by the poorer strata of society. When building cities, the French have always focused on monumental avenues rather than housing, despite the scope of creation offered by the latter.

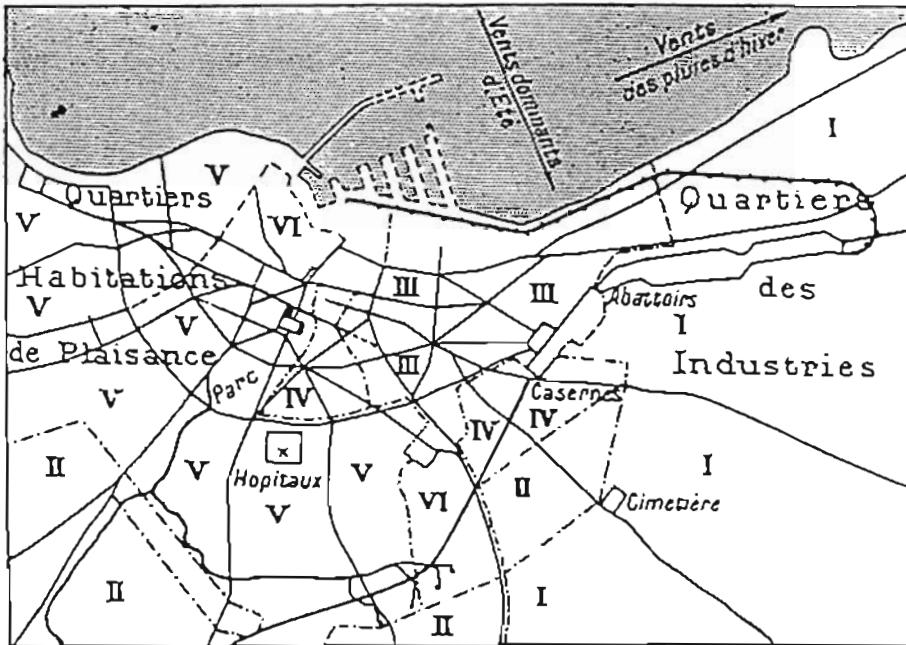
The land ownership policies pursued by German municipalities also inspired legislation on urban redistribution and were to form an integral part of Casablanca's road system. Yet as illustrated in the above quote, Prost's view was that creating a modern city required more than just road layout. Above all, it called for the construction of "housing and other functional buildings, as well as parks and gardens":<sup>42</sup>

Streets are for circulating and buildings are for working and living in. Furthermore, the landform accommodating these constructions constitutes a crucial component of any new city, for it is on these sites that apartment buildings, factories, shops and villas will be built, spawning the urban core. The proportions and dimensions of these tracts of land have a profound impact on public health, optimal land use, and district boundaries.<sup>43</sup>

The majority of Prost's manual was based on building codes drawn up for the Lausanne region and is dedicated to defining "urban blocks."<sup>44</sup> Prost identified a range of block types of varying density and eaves height yet geared to overall morphological homogeneity. He succeeded in putting these concepts into practice in Casablanca both in the city's road system (by defining the typical section profile of buildings) and in the depth of construction plots. However, his most innovative step, at least in pragmatic terms, was to introduce zoning practices already employed in Germany and the United States, which had resulted in heated debate at the Musée social.<sup>45</sup> Prost's work here was in fact in a continuum with the Barcelona master plan drawn up in 1905 by his friend Léon Jaussey.<sup>46</sup> Two patterns



Henri Prost, sketches of the "blocks to be constructed." Design study for a treaty on Moroccan urbanism, c. 1918.



Henri Prost, zoning plan for Casablanca, in Edmond Joyant, *Le Génie civil*, 1922.

I. Any type of industrial firm allowed

II. All offensive odors and smoke prohibited

III. As in Zone II, plus prohibition of fire hazards

IV. All kinds of smoke prohibited (including machines run on steam)

V. All kinds of smoke and noisy industry prohibited

VI. Indigenous quarters (as in Zone IV plus specific building code)

of zoning were devised for Casablanca. First, three zones were defined for the European section: these comprised "central," "industrial," and "residential" areas (the last composed of villas and single-family dwellings) and had to comply with "requirements related to public health, circulation, and aesthetic features." Second, six zones were created to improve levels of hygiene and to contain the environmental risks connected with industry.<sup>96</sup>

Prost considered the medina to be "devoid of artistic interest" and "ill-suited to the requirements of European trade." He therefore sought to demolish this "indigenous area" altogether, especially as his long-term aim was for the *ville nouvelle* to "connect directly with the port on all sides." Two types of new districts based on studies of European and American cities were selected to make Casablanca "a healthy and practical city." The first was a "business center," a concept that had yet to reach metropolitan France. The second was residential neighborhoods composed of individual dwellings—"the sole form of housing that provides a sound basis for healthy living conditions":<sup>97</sup>

As a reaction to the development of rapid transport links, modern cities in America, England, Belgium, and Germany tend to have a sparsely populated business center, containing practically nothing but offices, shops, and banks. Rather than enclosing themselves in abominable modern "caravanserai" with sparse amounts of space, air, and light, inhabitants instead seek accommodations in greener surroundings where land prices are low. In Casablanca, too, we shall perhaps witness a similar growth in single-family houses, sited either on individual plots or grouped together amid the greenery outside the city center.<sup>98</sup>

The partial freeze on real estate occasioned by the war proved to be an auspicious context in which to implement the Prost plan.<sup>99</sup> Widespread expropriation rights authorized by Protectorate legislation enabled work on the new road system to get under way rapidly, and although speculation was not brought to an end altogether, it was at least considerably reduced thanks to the project's focus on communal interests which in effect *equalized* profit opportunities.

<sup>96</sup> City of Casablanca, "Ville de Casablanca, règlement de voirie du 26 mai 1920," quoted in Joyant, *Traité d'urbanisme*, 1:201.

<sup>97</sup> Prost, "Le plan de Casablanca," 11.

<sup>98</sup> Joseph Gouvern, "Casablanca pendant un an de guerre," *Renseignements coloniaux et documents publiés par le comité de l'Afrique française et le comité du Maroc*, no. 8 (August 1915): 133.



The sultan of Morocco visits the Franco-Moroccan exhibition of 1915.

**99** Guigues, *Guide de l'Exposition Franco-Marocaine*, 75.

**100** Maurice Tranchant de Lunel, director of the Beaux-Arts, coordinated the exhibition, whose general curator was Victor Berti. The latter had been inspector of the Moroccan debt in 1904.

**101** The technical services were directed by Captain Louis Brau, chief civil engineer of the Casablanca region, assisted by Mantoux, Vimont, Beaunet, and Prévot. *Exposition franco-marocaine de Casablanca, rapport général et rapport des sections* (Paris: Pion, 1918); and Charles Mourey, "Le Maroc pendant la guerre et l'exposition de Casablanca," *Annales de Géographie* 23–24, no. 132 (November 15, 1915): 427–42. Under the aegis of Louis Bonnier, the city of Paris exhibited the 1913 low-rent

housing competition, schools, and metro stations, as well as plans for the center of the capital. The exhibitors were chosen by a committee including Edmond Coignat, Jean and Georges Hersent, Charles Letrosne, and Édouard Redon, among others.

*Exposition franco-marocaine de Casablanca 1915: Catalogue général officiel et liste des récompenses* (Paris: Pion, 1919), 45–51.

**102** The municipal architect Bousquet produced the Casablanca and Chaouïa pavilions. Brûlé built the pavilions for the Compagnie Transatlantique, Tabacs, and Société d'Études. Gourdin was responsible for the pavilions for the Paquet company and for Algeria. Naturally, Delaporte built the Magasins Modernes pavilion. Guigues, *Guide de l'Exposition*, 127. Projects by Fougère, Noblet, Oustry, and Wolf were also presented.

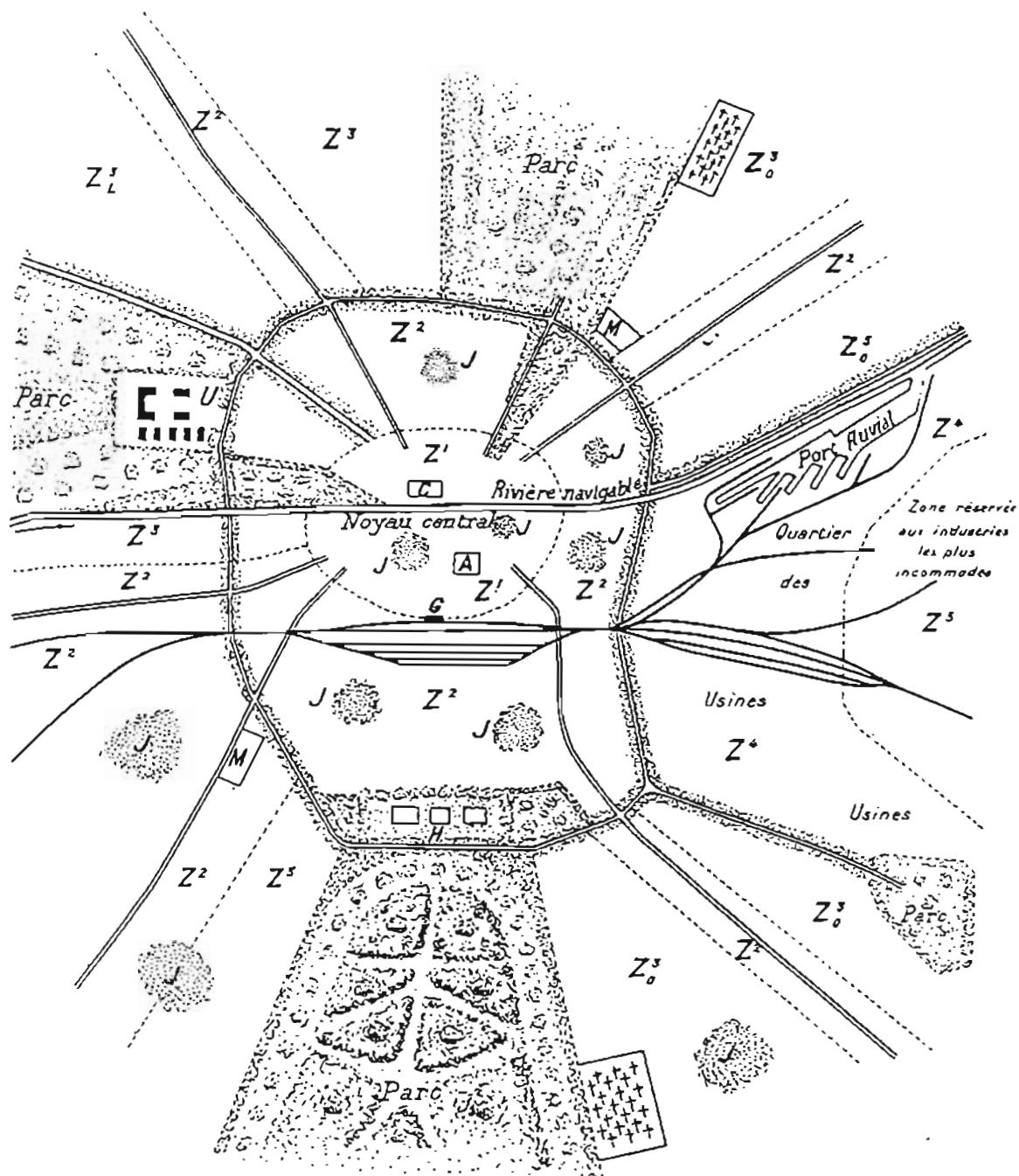
## The Franco-Moroccan Exhibition of 1915

*All the architects have managed to retain the local flavor of the Exhibition by respecting the Moorish style, expressed through white facades and terraces, high cupolas, vast arches, and minarets jutting out against the sky. In the evening, everything takes on a magical air in this Oriental setting where all races rub shoulders and where artificial sunlight picks out the pavilion profiles and illuminates the flora.*

Léon Guigues<sup>w</sup>

The Franco-Moroccan Exhibition was staged by Lyautey in the war-torn year of 1915. The underlying objective was to convince French colonial settlers and Moroccans alike that, despite its sufferings at home, France was determined to see through the venture it had embarked on in 1912. Around one hundred temporary structures were displayed on sites between Rue de l'Horloge and the Route de Médiouna; the fact that they were temporary reflected the urban fabric of the city itself, which at the time resembled little more than a huge encampment.<sup>101</sup> In addition, the exhibition provided a showcase in which the municipal authority and French and Moroccan industrialists could present their different ventures.<sup>102</sup> Rapidly assembled using the forced labor of German prisoners, the exhibited structures served as a metaphor of the orderly development that might one day characterize Casablanca.

The French pavilion was built to a design by Jean de Montarnal, architect for the French exhibitions commission, who oversaw the whole event.<sup>103</sup> A model of the wharf was made to illustrate the port development project, and a number of draw-



Edmond Joyant,  
"Schematic drawing of  
a city and its diverse  
areas," in *Traité d'urbanisme*, 1923.

This theoretical diagram would seem to be a symmetrical copy of Prost's plan for Casablanca. The axis of symmetry is the railroad, which follows the same type of course as in Casablanca. The seaport has been replaced by a river port.

<b>Grandes routes.</b>	<b>Z'1 Zone centrale - Quartiers d'affaires et d'administration. Construction haute densité</b>	<b>Gare principale.</b>
<b>Avenues - Promenades.</b>	<b>Z'2 Zone des habitations collectives. Construction bloquées, densité moyenne</b>	<b>A Centre des affaires (Place du Marché, de la Bourse...)</b>
<b>Chemins de fer.</b>	<b>Z'3 Zone des habitations individuelles.</b>	<b>C Centre civique (Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, de la Préfecture...)</b>
<b>Limites de zones.</b>	<b>Z'4 Zone des Usines.</b>	<b>J Jardins de quartiers. Squares.</b>
<b>Cimetières.</b>	<b>Z'5 Zone réservée aux usines les plus incommodes.</b>	<b>M Casernes et Etablissements militaires.</b>
	<b>Z'6 Quartiers de population ouvrière.</b>	<b>H Hôpitaux.</b>
	<b>Z'7 Quartiers des villes de luxe.</b>	<b>U Universités.</b>



Town plans for Morocco, displayed at the Colonial Exposition in Marseilles, 1922.

The Casablanca plan is hung in the center.

**103** The damage was to earn Laprade, barely off the boat, a memorable dressing-down by Lyautey. Albert Laprade, "Souvenirs du temps de la guerre: contribution à la future histoire de Casablanca et de Rabat," *Le Maroc catholique* (September 1928): 500.

**104** Cambon, "L'aménagement et l'extension des villes," 214–15.

**105** It would be accompanied in this migration by a small building occupied by the Horticultural Society. Gillet, "La construction au Maroc au début du Protectorat," 34.

**106** See the numerous documents attesting to the remuneration, by the residency, of journalists and chroniclers who reported on the French "effort" in Morocco. BGA, bureau de la Presse de la Résidence générale, uncatalogued.

ings and photos showing construction of the port were presented in several pavilions. Prost's urban plans were exhibited in a temporary structure which unfortunately flooded.<sup>103</sup> Casablanca's city councilors saw to it that the works of local architects were suitably displayed, while the veteran Tonci presented a three-dimensional model of the city. Not surprisingly, the exhibition's industrial section was dedicated to the building trade and construction materials. In total, some 120,000 visitors attended this sixty-two-day architectural event that was advertised as an extension of local tradition. Victor Cambon, a journalist and a member of the exhibition jury, recalled how the structures of the Paris exhibitions of 1878, 1889, and 1900 had later been rendered permanent, and went on to suggest that Prost's plan for Casablanca include "a tree-lined square, a public garden filled with flowers, a museum, and an assembly room . . . in tribute to this magnificent exhibition and the great Frenchman behind it."<sup>104</sup> As it was, the exhibition structures were to be replaced by the central market, and the metal-frame pavilion that had been designed by P. Gosset for the city of Rabat would be transported to the Parc Lyautey to serve as a meeting hall.<sup>105</sup>

The 1915 exhibition was not the only indicator of Lyautey's desire to promulgate his ideas. He also sent countless invitations to journalists and writers urging them to visit Morocco, occasionally offering to cover all their expenses.<sup>106</sup> The Prost

plan provided an expedient propaganda vehicle in this respect. For instance, even as early as 1913, Lyautey used the plan in the presentation on Casablanca's development that Auguste Terrier and Jacques Ladreit de Lacharrière gave, at Lyautey's initiative, during a town planning exhibition in Ghent.<sup>107</sup> Reports were written praising the "greatness" of the undertaking,<sup>108</sup> and outspoken proponents of the Protectorate's urban policy, such as Edmond Joyant and H. de la Casinière, took advantage of the congress held by the Société française des urbanistes in Strasbourg in 1923 and the Colonial Urban Planning Congress in 1931 to detail the scope of work being carried out in Casablanca.<sup>109</sup>

### Urbanists Respond to Prost's Plan

*When establishing a plan for a new town, to be set up on virgin land, it is a gross mistake to seek to hinge this plan on the geometric outline formed by a network of public roads designed a priori. Before marking out this network, it is important to draw up some sort of site plan for the future town, characterized by specific quarters. It is only once these quarters have been established in the plan and the ensuing circulation requirements defined that the road network intended to access them can be mapped. Furthermore, these quarters must not be spread out in arbitrary fashion, for even if the town is to be built from scratch, the land is never bare and flat like a sheet of drawing paper.*

Edmond Joyant<sup>110</sup>

Prost's work in Casablanca coincided with reconstruction programs launched for France's war-ravaged regions. However, due to the wartime suspension of French architectural reviews, it was not until 1919 that precise information regarding Prost's urban achievements actually reached professional circles. Yet this lapse of time in fact proved useful in that the complex process could be described as a whole, revealing how the previously disparate land subdivisions had been brought together in one orchestrated stroke. In this respect, Prost's influence was far-reaching, notably following the Cornudet Law passed in France in 1919. For instance, in Edmond Joyant's *Urbanism Handbook*, which focused chiefly on recommending "different building codes" for each neighborhood, the author provided "a zoning layout for a city" that closely resembled Prost's zoning plan for Casablanca.<sup>111</sup>

Prost's Moroccan solutions were likewise studied by French and Italian planners in Syria and Libya, respectively, thereby confirming the experimental nature of the exercise undertaken by the Protectorate.<sup>112</sup> In fact, the presentation of Casablanca's master plan in 1923 at the Musée social seemed to resemble a group study of a successful protocol.<sup>113</sup> Prost pursued the research he had undertaken in Morocco in his urban design for greater Paris, which he completed in 1934 and in which he attempted to "create a backbone" for the city in the same way as for Casablanca. At the request of Mustapha Kemal Atatürk, then president of Turkey, Prost went on to work on a city plan for Istanbul between 1936 and 1954, bringing together the main design principles that had developed since the latter half of the nineteenth century. He ruthlessly modernized Istanbul's existing urban fabric to a degree far beyond that in Casablanca, which goes to show how much he had been held back by Lyautey in Morocco. In the end, his master plan for Casablanca was viewed as a benchmark by both journalists and specialists right up until the Vichy period<sup>114</sup> and served to put the city on the urban design map. Prost became a well-known individual in Casablanca (though not necessarily always a hero) and would be remembered by the public for his founding layout of the city in much the same way as Haussmann's name is connected with Paris.

<sup>107</sup> Terrier, *Monographie de Casablanca*, 62. Documents destined for the *Exposition comparée des villes* were delivered by Désigny.

<sup>108</sup> M. Bousquet, "Le Port et la Ville de Casablanca," *La Construction moderne* 20 (December 7, 1919): 76–78, pl. 39 and 40. This refers to the first publication of the Prost project in France, following its presentation in *France-Moroc* in 1915.

<sup>109</sup> H. de la Casinière, "Les plans d'extension des villes et l'urbanisme au Maroc," in Société française des urbanistes, *Où en est l'urbanisme en France et à l'étranger?* (Paris: Eyrolles, 1923), 202–11; idem, "La législation de l'Urbanisme au Maroc," in Jean Royer, ed., *L'urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays tropicaux* (Paris: Éditions d'Urbanisme, 1935), 2:103–8.

<sup>110</sup> Joyant, *Traité d'urbanisme*, 1:58

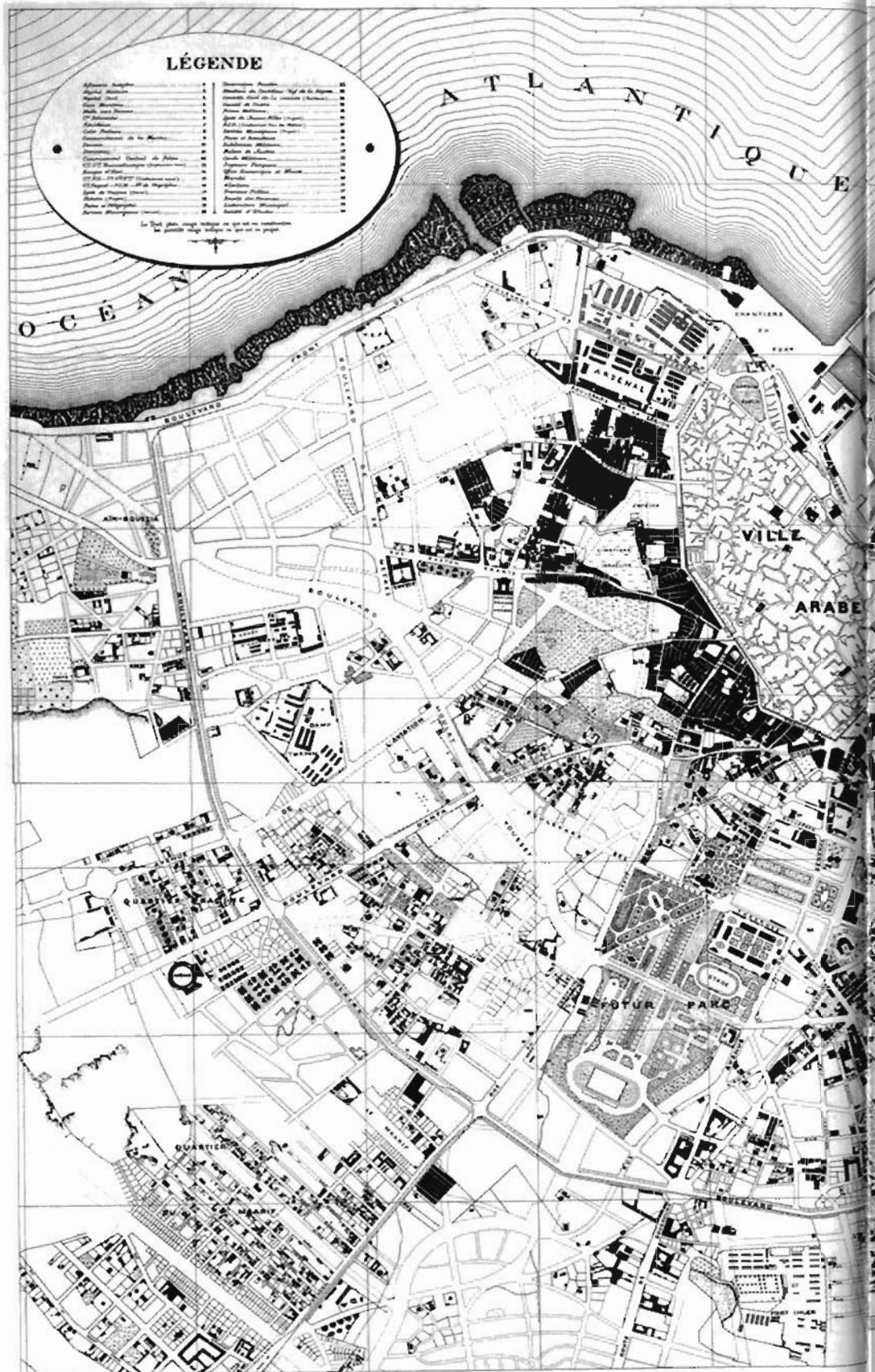
<sup>111</sup> Joyant, *Traité d'urbanisme*, 1:pl. 253.

<sup>112</sup> Frank Fries, "Les plans d'Alep et de Damas: un banc d'essai pour l'urbanisme des frères Dangier," *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée* 73–74, no. 3–4, (1994): 311–25; Maria Guslana Fuller, *Colonizing Constructions: Italian Architecture, Urban Planning, and the Creation of Modern Society in the Colonies, 1869–1943* (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1994).

<sup>113</sup> Edmond Joyant and Henri Prost, "Communication sur les plans d'aménagement et d'extension des villes au Maroc," report presented to the Urban and Rural Hygiene Section of the Musée social, June 23, 1922 (Prescript), Musée Social Archives, Paris.

<sup>114</sup> The Moroccan press is sensitive to the echo that Prost's urbanism encounters in France. See "Comment on nous juge à Paris," *Travaux publics et bâtiments* (Paris, July 20, 1931). Under Vichy, Jacques Gréber would recall Lyautey's actions in order to demand an urbanism program. Jacques Gréber, "Urbanisme," in André Bellessort et al., *France 1941: la Révolution nationale constructive, un bilan et un programme* (Paris: Alsatia, 1941), 490. At the same moment, Laprade would invoke Casablanca's zoning as a model for reconstruction.

Albert Laprade, "De la discipline de tous naît la prospérité de chacun," *L'illustration* (May 22, 1941); n.p. In 1942, discussing Vichy's plan for Paris, Édouard Crevel, head of the architecture department of the Paris region, expressed hope that "the team for the plan of the Paris région will based on the one that existed for Morocco, in better times," Comité d'aménagement de la région parisienne, February 17, 1942, AN, 820774/19 (information provided by Tamí Hausman). Finally, Prost's work is elevated to the status of a paragon by Pierre Lavedan in *Histoire de l'urbanisme: Époque contemporaine* (Paris: Henri Laurens, 1952), 261–62.



**Geographic division of  
the French army, plan  
of the road system and  
buildings, c. 1922. Scale:  
1/5000.**

PLAN  
DE  
CASABLANCA.

ECHÉLLE : 1:5000

