"Some day, the traffic of ideas between North Africa and Le Corbusier should form the subject of a separate study". Quote from "Le Corbusier - Elemente einer Synthese" by Stanislaus von Moos. Frauenfeld. Verlag Huber, 1968.

Chapter 1 The motivations behind a young man's overwhelming desire to visit the Orient are presented. In Le Corbusier's case, it was the idea of the "Grand Tour" which at that time was a normal way of completing one's education, and this long journey brought him to a fundamental conclusion: In Architecture, everything has continually to be started afresh. And this belief opened a door which led Le Corbusier to become "The Architect of the Century" (title of an exhibition of his work in London 1987).

Chapter 2 The demonstrable empathy between Le Corbusier and the Orient was already apparent in the early years at La Chaux-de-Fonds. This was later to be of great influence on the part taken by his education and development. The most important facts of his voyages of discovery of the Orient are as follows: 1911 : Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece 1931 : Morocco and above all Algeria 1951 : India, in particular the Punjab

Chapter 3 and 4 Le Corbusier's first journeys to North Africa left the strongest impressions. In spring 1931, he visited Algiers, both the modern city and the old part of the town, the famous Casbah. He gave two lectures. In the following summer, he visited the oasis in the valley of M'Zab. For the already famous architect, the meeting with a 1000 year old civilisation became the highlight of the so called "Second Journey to the Orient" (Francesco Tentori). Both these chapters describe historical events. The problem with this is summed up by David Lowenthal's metaphor "The past is a foreign Country". Thus the author's task is doubly difficult, since the past, already a foreign country metaphorically speaking, is to be described in one that is so literally as well. However, the French Louis Miquel, Edmond Charlot and Jean de Maisonseul, who have lived in Algeria, were friends of Le Corbusier and thus able to provide useful insights, for which the author is grateful. Le Corbusier's view of Algeria from the inside with – his "Eyes that see", – was greatly helped by his knowledge of Islamic culture. If one overlays the impressions of earlier travelers with those of Le Corbusier and also of his successors, a rough outline of contours emerges, which can provide a fairly accurate picture of his true relationship with that country. This country, for which he elaborated many major projects – unfortunately never built, – yet gave him much. Chapter 5 The main subject in the last part of the thesis is Le Corbusier's admiration of traditional architecture. The construction plans of the Casbah surveyed by students from the school of Architecture in Algiers reveal the historic area of the city on the edge of ruin. The houses are quite unknown. Grateful thanks are due to Professor Delhoum for his cooperation.

Concerning the M'Zab, his architecture is well known. Our thesis refers to books giving an excellent documentation; one of them had been studied by Le Corbusier with great attention ("La Civilisation urbaine au M'Zab" by Marcel Mercier. Algiers, 1922). 5.1 and 5.2 Le Corbusier's relations to the Casbah of Algiers and the valley of M'Zab are analysed. They create the basis of a discussion: To what extent was this architecture a stimulation reflected in the buildings and the projects? Did he ever quote the architecture or even copy it? However, to have done this would have been incompatible with the idea of architecture. Le Corbusier would never be interested in such or similar accusations. He wrote over and over again of the importance of restoring the timeless and eternal architecture of the Mediterranean with modern tools. This task
Charles-Édouard Jeanneret (6 October 1887 – 27 August 1965), known as Le Corbusier (French: [lə kɔʁbje]), was a Swiss-French architect, designer, painter, urban planner, writer, and one of the pioneers of what is now called modern architecture. He was born in Switzerland and became a French citizen in 1930. His career spanned five decades, and he designed buildings in Europe, Japan, India, and North and South America. www.sites-le-corbusier.org/fr/cabanon-de-le-corbusier. Prof. Cherubino Gambardella, Le Cabanon, SECONDA UNIVERSITA DEGLI STUDI DI NAPOLI DIPARTIMENTO DI ARCHITETTURA E DISEGNO INDUSTRIALE CORSO DI LAUREA IN ARCHITETTURA (2013-2014). Links:

took place in his subconscious, since he recognized himself as a human being from the Mediterranean area, an area with an endless horizon. 5.3 Le Corbusier left Algeria in 1942 for good and he never explicitly referred this country again ("Poésie sur Alger", published in 1951, had been written at this moment). His reason for this silence may be explained by himself: "The true world is unveiled to those who are committed to it, to those who serve it". His frustrations relating to his unbuilt projects were probably increased during the 50’s and the construction boom surrounding them. According to Le Corbusier, the Mozabites, those Puritans of the desert, were the "Islamic Huguenots"; their intelligence, their diligence, their frugal way of life within a political system based on social justice due to stringent religious roles made it possible. Le Corbusier designated the "Holy City" of M’Zab, Beni-Isguen, as "Ville Radieuse", as "Sparkling City". All his life, this name signified the city which he had dreamt of building. However, for many architects, the valley of M’Zab with its five towns was and still is an "inexhaustible source" (Jean Bossu) or even a "Lesson" (Pierre-André Emery and André Ravéreau). Conclusion Jean de Maisonneul, Le Corbusier's guide during his visits to the Casbah, has attempted to distill the essence of the experience of Algeria upon his friend: "It seems to me that Le Corbusier found the expression of the "World of Design" which belonged to the Mediterranean, parallel to those he had discovered as a young man in his travels to the Orient: A soft architecture without ornaments, a white architecture on the human scale... harmony. Drawing nude women in the same Casbah which he had surveyed in every detail, liberated him from Purism. During the course of a long period of maturation, Le Corbusier liberated Modern Architecture of the 30's from its transparent structures as he chose more to use full volumes as classical architecture had done".

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The 1933 rendering of Plan Obus for Algiers demonstrates Le Corbusier's superimposition of modern forms: the long arching roadway that includes housing — his viaduct city — connecting central Algiers to its suburbs and the curvilinear complex of housing in the heights that accesses the waterfront business district via an elevated highway bypassing the Casbah. By the time Le Corbusier trained his sights on the development of Algiers, he had already begun to turn away from his machine-age ideology, in part due to a general disillusionment with technology in the face of the market crash of 1929 and...