

## WORKING THE FUTURE IN THE HISTORICAL CITY OF SAFI, MOROCCO

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### Abstract

In the core of the *mdina* of Safi, an important archaeological heritage is now under particular attention, being part of a project for the regeneration of the historical city.

From the present level of the narrow street until the layer of the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century there is 1.80 meters of vertical relevant stratigraphy, showing the changes that occurred.

Safi was, at the old times, the sea-trade port of the kingdom of Marrakech. At the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century also Portuguese had a shared sovereignty of the complex net of regional interests, and a true capital of the Southern parts of the Lusitanian *Al-Gharb* took form in Safi.

The impact of the arrival of the Portuguese in the configuration of the city was enormous, although there was an agreement and acceptance of the new rule, which included (at least in theory) the liberty of religion.

The Portuguese left the city in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, after the construction of the vanguards' stronghold of Mazagão.

The project now in progress in Safi intends to regenerate the urban conditions for the inhabitants' life in the Kasbah. My intervention is related to the most important piece of the Manueline architecture (except forts) subsisting outside Portugal, the ruins of the Portuguese Cathedral, from the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

In this process, the conscience of multicultural value of the heritage in presence can help all the people to grow in the awareness of its own citizenship. Historical cities only will survive if they can evolve with the respect and comprehensive use of the marks of their multilayered composition putted to the service of the communities - Past must be present in the Future.

10.04.2012