

Cross-Cultural Contact

A lesson examining influences on architecture in Morocco

- Students will examine examples of how architecture has been impacted as a result of cultural interactions in Morocco.

Colorado History Standards

5th and 6th grades

- **3.1 Students know how various societies were affected by contacts and exchanges among diverse peoples.**
- **6.3 Students know how various forms of expression reflect religious beliefs and philosophical ideas.**



Anasazi Cliff Palace, Mesa Verde



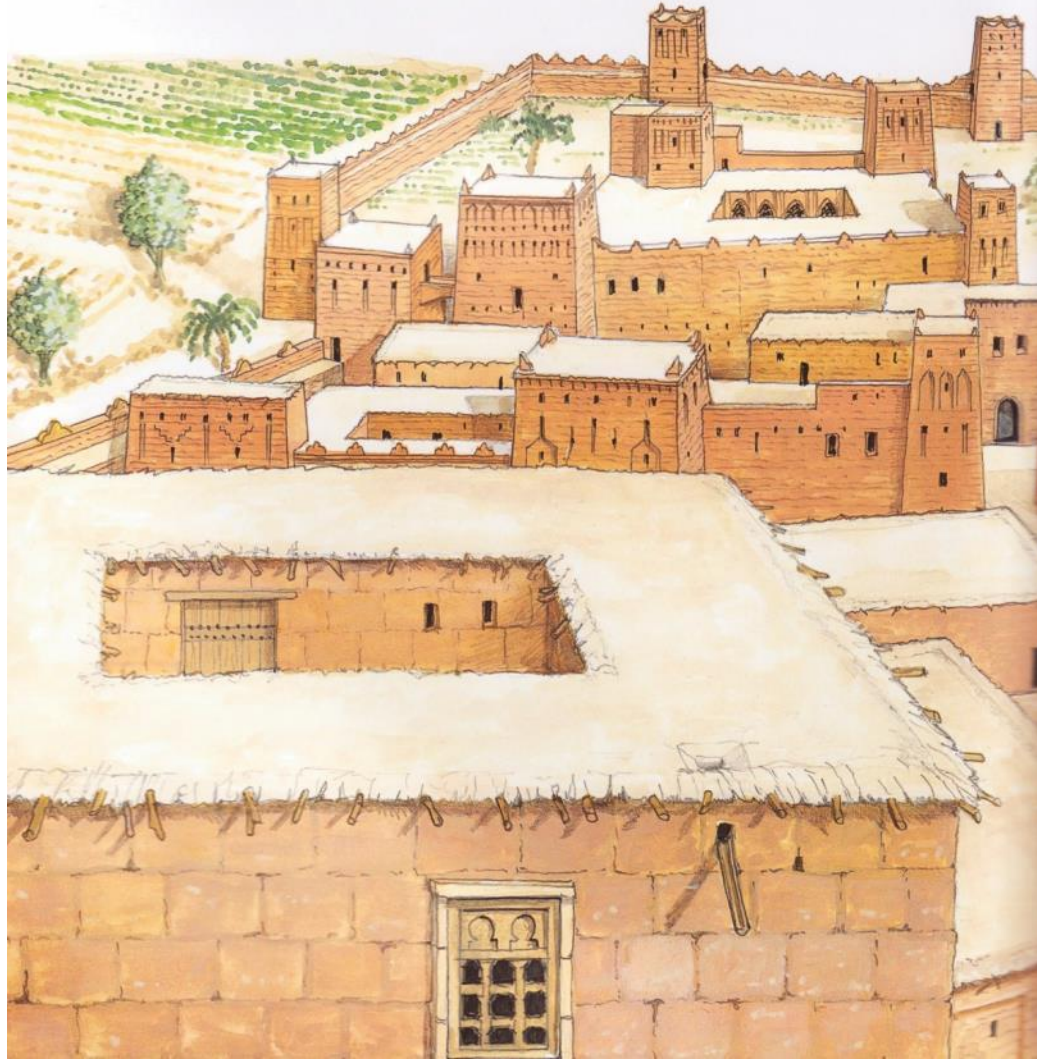
Anasazi cliff dwelling

DESERT ARCHITECTURE: THE CASBAH AND THE KSOUR

Perfectly in harmony with the natural surroundings, Berber architecture is quite unusual. The casbah and the ksour (plural of ksar) form part of this architecture. The casbah is the ancient residence of the owners who controlled access to the oases, and was built to defend local populations against incursions by raiders. Scattered throughout this region, the casbahs are the equivalent of medieval fortresses in Europe. They have thick walls with corner towers that are castellated. The ground level was used for stabling and grain was stored on the next floor; above this were the living quarters and, at the top, the roof terrace.

The reddish or ochre-coloured towers of the ksour soar above the green expanse of the palm groves, their thick walls pierced by small windows framed with white. These are the fortified villages of the oases, used as communal store-houses and, in times of war, serving as defensive posts. Inside the walls are the *tighermatine*, the fortified houses of wealthier farmers, and the *agadir*, the grainstores.

The materials used are entirely local and all the structures are built with the technique known as 'pisé' – clay pressed together with pebbles and straw – and roofs made of reed matting inserted into wooden frames.

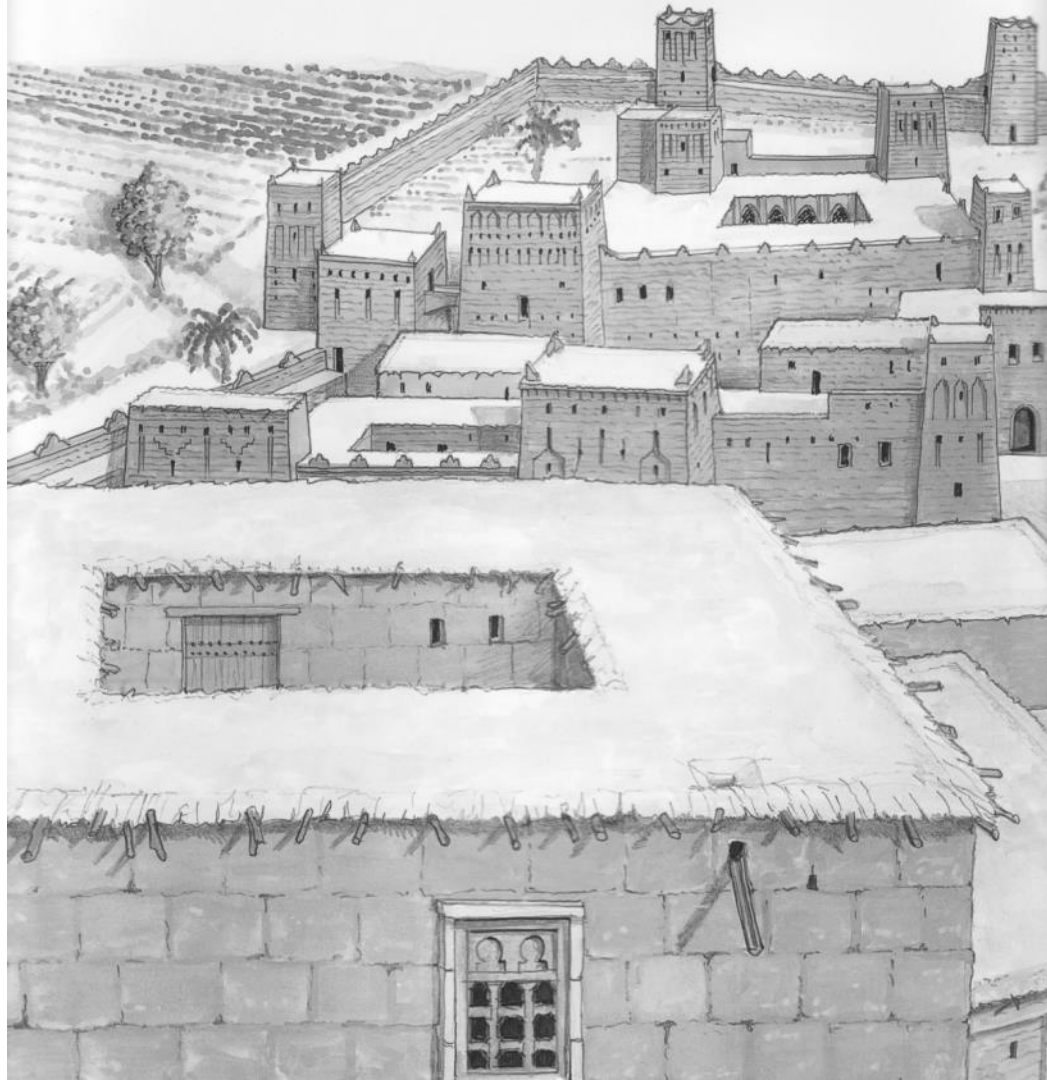


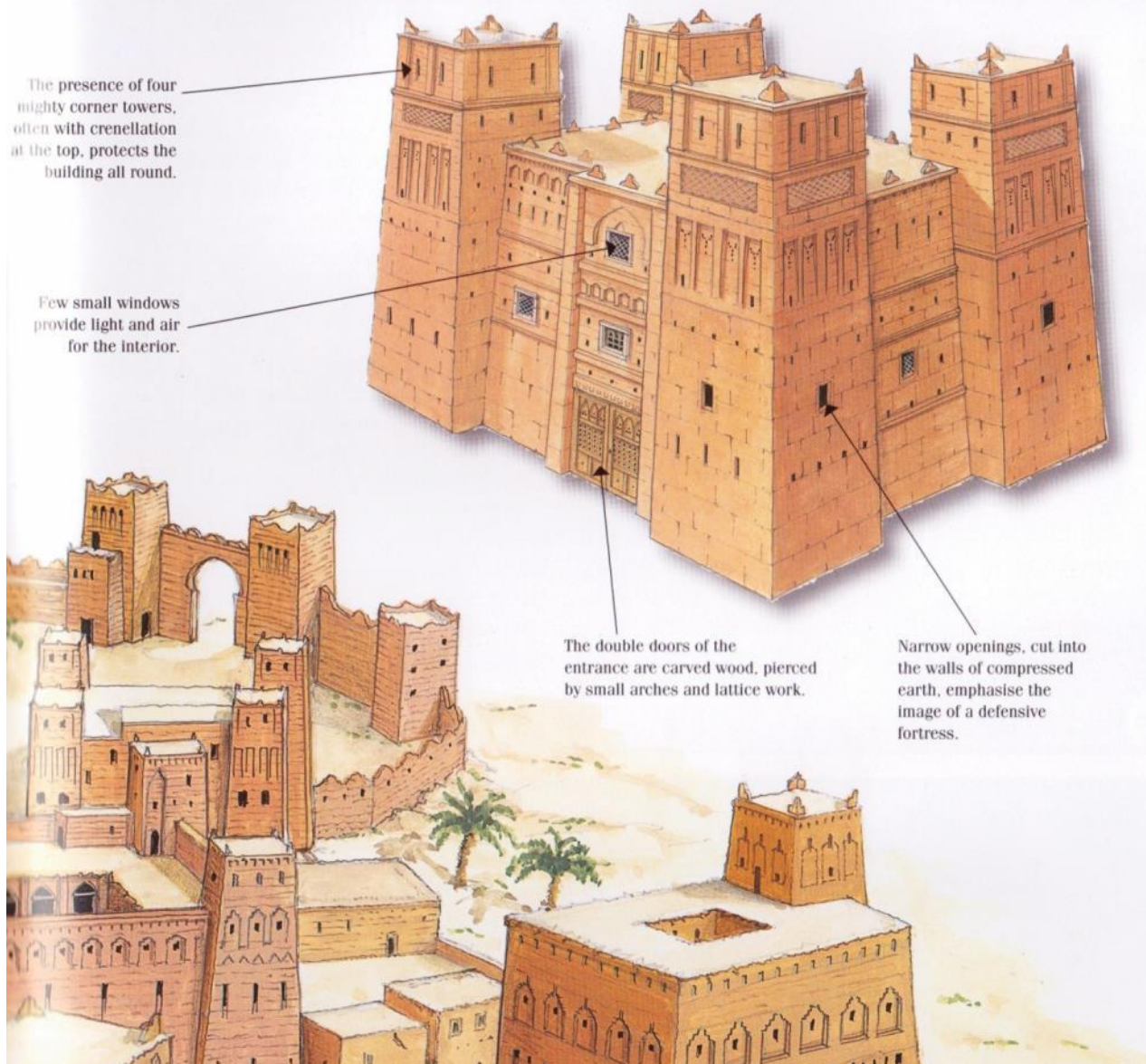
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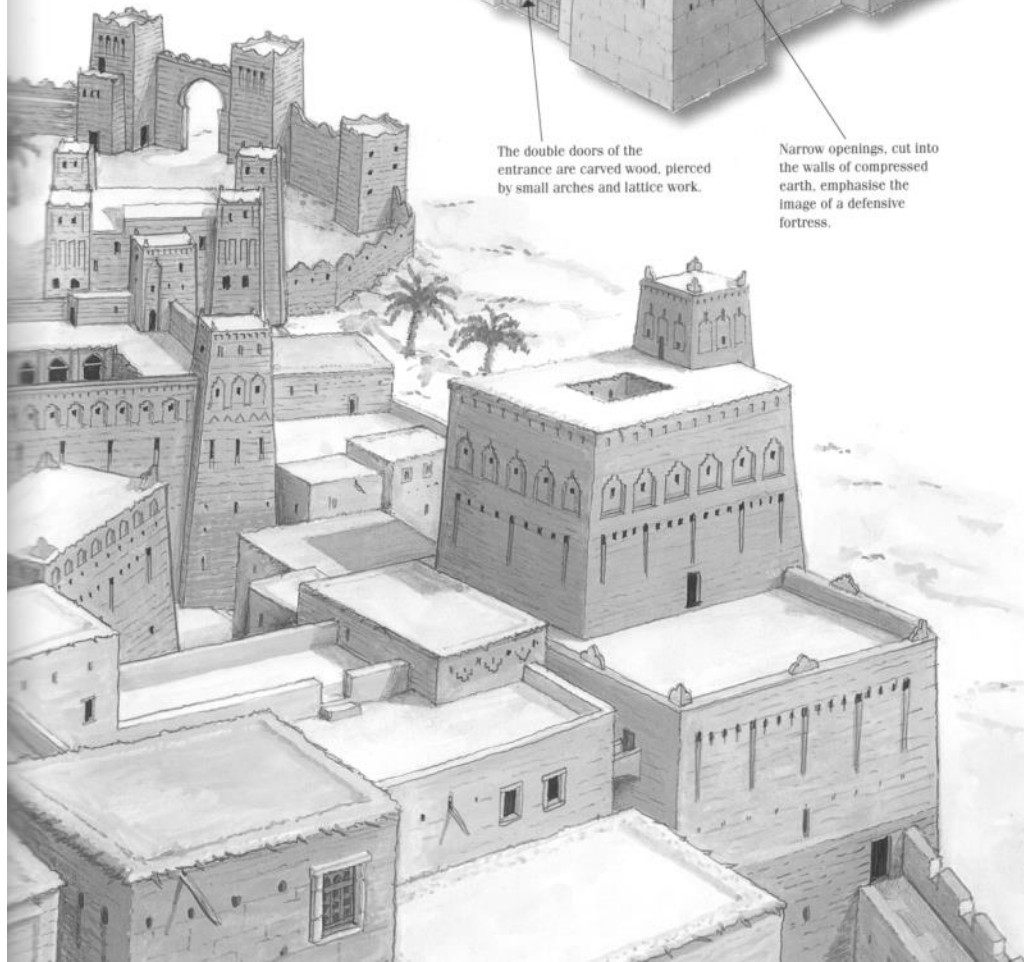


The presence of four mighty corner towers, often with crenellation at the top, protects the building all round.

Few small windows provide light and air for the interior.

The double doors of the entrance are carved wood, pierced by small arches and lattice work.

Narrow openings, cut into the walls of compressed earth, emphasise the image of a defensive fortress.





Morocco









Morocco



Morocco (Modern with traditional design elements)

The Dome of the Rock was completed in 692 in Jerusalem. It is the world's oldest Islamic shrine/landmark.



Kairouan Mosque, Tunisia 7th Century





Morocco





Hassan II Mosque, 1993 Casablanca



Photo: Michelle Molnar





Merrakesh