

Travels of the Carpet Myth: Retracing Owen Jones, Ibn Khaldun, and Gottfried Semper

By Anneka Lenssen

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In the mid-19th century, there was a moment when major thinkers argued for the textile's centrality in the theoretical origins of architecture. They assigned "ornament" a central place in global architectural development, and constructed a "carpet myth" that saw every building as the culmination of the primeval nomadic tent made from patterned fabrics. Passing into an ahistorical nomadism where "Bedouin" signifies the eternal pre-modernity of Western Arabia, a version of the carpet myth persists even today. In the historiography of Islamic art, scholars who search for the essence of Islamic art continue to advance surface over structure, describing transferable surface designs as the distinctive cultural product of Islamic civilization.¹ Witness historian Lisa Golombek's stunning assertion in her 1988 paper, "The Draped Universe of Islam," that Islamic art in all media including book bindings, wood carving, architectural faience, and Qur'an pages, "look like carpets."² Golombek describes the entire Islamic world as "awash with textiles," seeing "drapery" on everything from everyday art objects to the tiled interior of the Friday Mosque at Yazd in Iran, to the animals in 9th-century fresco paintings at Samarra in Iraq. Golombek is not alone in transmuting geometric and arabesque patterning into textiles, despite the claim's unabashed ahistoricism.³

The scope of the carpet myth in 19th-century European architectural theory can best be seen in the work of its two canonic authors, English architect Owen Jones and German architect Gottfried Semper. In Jones' 1842 magisterial dissection of the Alhambra palace complex, he located the origin of its architecture in the textiles of the nomadic tent.⁴ In the 1860 *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts*, Semper developed the "carpet wall" as a universal motive of architectural creation that is expressed through pliable materials like woven reeds, textiles, and (in his final analysis) all divisions of space.⁵ These theories can be understood as an attempt to sublimate the intellectual anxiety of industrial modernization; by mid-century, culture watchers were all claiming that

mechanized imitation in the applied arts and architecture plagued the aesthetics of England's manufactured objects. London's *Great Exhibition of Products of Industry of All Nations* of 1851 famously showcased the pallid quality of English goods in comparison to those made by its colonies. Jones oversaw the exhibition as Superintendent of Works, while Semper styled merchandise displays for Turkey, Canada, Sweden, and Denmark.⁶ In such a milieu, the two architects' writings are notable for their protean form of Orientalism, minting an ideology where nothing demonstrably natural nor pleasing is foreign to the designer. Working before Adolf Loos made ornament into a modern crime, they displaced notions of "authentic experience" into an aesthetic register of monumental ornament that is predicated on access to common origins.⁷ The carpet emblemized a socially contingent, nomadic model for ideal design.

To accept this trajectory for ornament and culture, one must first remember that Semper and Jones derived their "carpet" conclusions from a shared starting point: the revelation of polychromy in the first half of the 19th century.⁸ Polychromy is a primal scene for the idealization of portable textile design. The slowly dawning revelation that the monuments of ancient Greece had not been conceived as elegant white marbles, but rather brilliantly painted and only later stripped by the weather, lured the cultured class with the promise of discovering the residue of ancient polychromatic paints. Thus Jones and the French architect Jules Goussier traveled to Al-Andalus in 1834, where they romped around its languishing buildings collecting evidence. Their detailed drawings and plans become the 1842 *Alhambra* volume. Two years earlier, Semper had taken his own trip south with Goussier to Greece in 1831-32, and from those findings, published a commentary on ancient architectural polychromy in 1834.⁹ In these expeditions, fact-finding operated at the empirical level of toting away paper impressions, casts, and paint scrapings.¹⁰ However, the material



nature of their souvenirs of kaleidoscopic color did not make for a runaway materialism. Rather, they signaled the newly dislocatable extra-materiality that historian Mark Wigley has proposed as Semper's textile essence: the material is a sign because it does not "play" as a solid.¹¹

Jones' *Alhambra* volume, published with new chromolithographic technology in full awareness of its commercial potential, is a triumph of this portable polychromatic vision.¹² The volume's plans and sections primarily articulate an armature for imagining the restoration of spectacular surfaces. For example, describing the brilliantly colored illustrations of the capitals of the columns in the Hall of the Ambassadors, Jones writes that no one who "mentally restores the coloring of the parts above" can suppose that they were ever originally left white.¹³ The publishing format ensures that the reader sees this; by a turn of the page, color is indeed restored and the preceding line drawings of columns (fig. 2) are given an authoritative full-color dress (fig. 3). Jones' 1854 pamphlet, *An Apology for the Colouring of the Greek Court in the Crystal Palace*, extended the logic of polychromatic surface ornament, this time to the most classic of buildings.¹⁴ Running through the evidence for the presence of paint on ancient Greek structures, Jones concluded that the molded "mark of the pattern" on the walls was merely an aid for repainting the brilliant colors of the design when they fade.¹⁵ Thus, architectural forms were assigned a subordinate position as mere supports for skeins of painted decoration. In line with the project of formalizing the significance of polychromatic surface over architectural form, Semper's eventual theory of *Bekleidung*, or *dressing*, revolved around the notion of the "true and legitimate representatives of the wall, the colorful woven carpets."¹⁶

Of course, the appeal of the detachable surface was sustained by more than the easy drama of polychromy. The *Alhambra* volume makes a claim for a universal impulse to textile-like pat-

terns but it also purports to describe a racial Other, the "peculiar sentiment that pervades the works of the Arabs."¹⁷ Jones' key introductory passage declares:

The prohibition to represent animal life, caused them to seek for other means of decoration, —inscriptions from the Koran, interwoven with geometrical ornaments and flowers, not drawn decidedly from nature, but translated through the loom; for it would seem that the Arabs, in changing their wandering for a settled life, —in striking the tent to plant it in a form more solid, had transferred the luxurious shawls and hangings of Cachmere, which had adorned their former dwellings, to their new, —changing the tent-pole for a marble column, and the silken tissue for gilded plaster.¹⁸

Here deriving the Alhambra's marble geometries from Arab woven hangings, the textiles are the saleable products of the negotiation between desert and sedentary life. They figure not just in Jones' understanding of the marketplace, but also in the ethnography and historiography of his text. The volume in its entirety takes these silken "hangings" into the realm of the monumental, and allegorical.

Significant to the grander implications of the carpet myth, the passage's specific rhetorical phrasing likely came to Jones by way of a Spanish Arabist named Pascual de Gayangos. He is the relatively obscure author of the "historical prologue" at the start of the *Alhambra* volume, a dynastic history of Al-Andalus and North Africa.¹⁹ His role as transmitter is evidenced by the striking similarity between the Jones passage and that of the 12th-century Nasrid author whom de Gayangos excerpts in his prologue.²⁰ The Nasrid text describes a mosque addition in the Alhambra complex decorated with "exquisite tracery" supported by "innumerable" pillars of "polished marble."²¹ Jones' account that the tent pole was replaced "for the marble column" simply works the idea of luxury

and origins more assiduously, converting the Nasrid tracery into a Kashmiri shawl.²²

By recognizing de Gayangos' role in transmitting Jones' model of Arab expression, we begin to find, throughout the space of European design, signs of a 14th-century Arab theorist: Ibn Khaldun.²³ De Gayangos dealt extensively with the *Muqaddima*, Ibn Khaldun's introduction to history, most notably its version of the formation of the political corpus by a series of tribal incursions into sedentary civilizations. For example, calling Ibn Khaldun "celebrated and most accurate," de Gayangos translated Ibn Khaldun's account of the 12th-century onslaught of the Almohads in Al-Andalus, and the dynasty's inveterate nomadic life and failure to establish proper social structures, for the appendix to his annotated edition of a 17th-century history of "Mohammedan dynasties" by al-Maqqari.²⁴ The Khaldunian history of the fleetingness of sovereign states prescribes a continual process of converting the nomadic spirit into institutions of central government. As an authoritative "authentic" Arab text in fresh circulation, the *Muqaddima* offered a model for a good society that satisfied the moral and aesthetic desires of 19th-century designers. Because legitimate cultural expressions reflected the perceived equality and allegiance of desert life, virtue could be assayed by creative production. The Khaldunian spirit of "group feeling" cultivated by Bedouin leaders, *'asabiyah*, even offered prescriptions for building within a shifting, proto-urbanist environment.²⁵ Ibn Khaldun argues that property is the goal (or result) of the *'asabiyah* and that the nation will maintain its sovereign property only as long as it preserves that collective coherence.²⁶

An example of the *Muqaddima* as a quiet confirmation of Jones' design theories is the following series of exchanges between tents, towns, cities, and palaces, identical to Jones' much later passage. Ibn Khaldun writes:

*People settled in towns and cities. They were transformed from tent dwellers into palace dwellers. They exchanged the camel for the horse and the donkey as riding animals. Now, they used linen fabrics for their dwellings on their journeys, fashioning them into houses (tents) of various shapes and sizes, round, oblong, or square.*²⁷

With this passage, we realize that Jones takes its sequential ebb and flow of civilization building and makes another trade: this fabric for "gilded plaster." By these allusive histories, a high-mindedness is lent to the descriptions of various "dressings" at the 1851

Great Exhibition, as in the description of one manufacturer's paper hangings: "the style of the decoration adopted in that far-famed building—the Alhambra—has been chosen, and re-produce with great success, and at a cost which enables the moderately-wealthy to rival the dearly-purchased luxuries of the East."²⁸ The Khaldunian link is particularly significant because he described a model of an "original" man whose craft is not a function of innocence, but rather a reflection of man's relationship to each other, as in the basic bonds that determine the nomad's life, death and, and aesthetic desire. By reading a socially contingent legitimacy onto structures of nomadic civilization, the carpet myth renders those original aesthetics perennially available—to the vested interests of later writers, or to manifest as Asiatic products that fulfill the newly salient allegories for authentic objecthood.²⁹

Here, Gottfried Semper's theory of *Bekleidung* is especially instructive if we see it as a demonstration of the perceived global relevance of the carpet wall. Semper arrived in London at the height of Jones' influence as a prophet of design for the industrial age.³⁰ In the crucible of metropolitan hand wringing and in a kind of post-polychromy flush, he looked to the accomplishment of the non-Western objects in *The Great Exhibition* as models for improved design. They became his source material for his 1860 *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts*.³¹ Semper's theories of portable origins also put the eventual reversal of our interpretive logic for non-Western forms into relief. In the 20th century, renewed commitment to the singular nature of the peripheral Arab stripped mainstream narratives away from "ethnic" figures like Ibn Khaldun.

In *Style*, Semper replaced all previous architectural origin myths with his carpet myth. His theory of the origins of architecture is based on the act of enclosing space with a woven surface:

*There are writers who devote much time to searching for the origin of art...Yet while with great acumen they detect in the catenary curve of the tent the norm of the Tartar-Chinese way of building (although the same shapes occur in the caps and shoes of these people), they overlook the more general and less dubious influence that the carpet in its capacity as a wall, as a vertical means of protection, had on the evolution of certain architectural forms. Thus I seem to stand without the support of a single authority when I assert that the carpet wall plays a most important role in the general history of art.*³²

From here, Semper derived his theory of *Bekleidung* from nearly

every imaginable source of human activity, from chisel marks on stonework, to the basket-weave pattern of a column capital, to the alabaster wall panels employed by the ancient Assyrians.³³ In fact, for Semper *Bekleidung* is so basic a human expression that, in his timeline of human activity, encampments *pre-date* clothing.³⁴ Yet as this quote suggests, Semper's theory of the "primitive hut" is predicated neither on the hut's utility, nor on its simplicity. The nomadic tent is merely an example of the most original articulation of space because the carpet wall is the significant principle in any built form. By this hierarchy, the scaffolds that support enclosures are irrelevant to the origin of architecture because they do not divide three-dimensional space. His reasoning makes it a "natural" act to veil the structural components of architectural monuments with festive surface pattern.

Semper's theory of legitimacy in architecture is a fascinating manifestation of post-Industrial Revolution morality of the universalist sort I have outlined, for each "carpet" holds the potential for its mass production *if* civilizational merit is maintained. For the realization of the ultimate form of the carpet wall, Semper still requires a deserving society. Assessing architecture in modern-day Mesopotamia, he employs what we can now recognize as remarkably Khaldunian criteria to dismiss the validity of its apparent naturalness:

*The tribes that now graze their flocks among the desolate ruins of the Mesopotamian hills are, like Abraham, no longer aware of the times when their fathers united to form large and powerful social bands. It is more correct to see the provisional tents and smalahs they use today as symbols of their current lack of peace and homeland than it is to call them prototypes for Oriental architecture.*³⁵

We see that for Semper, because these tents are wrought in the tumultuous present, they are merely "provisional," not fully realized reflections of an authentically cohesive group.³⁶ His argument is also a modular one. Objects must always be dressed with the powerful patterned bands that represent natural polity. If Ibn Khaldun's writings prescribed a spirit of desert chivalry for the Andalusian dynasties (no matter the absence of desert conditions in the region), Semper's model is the 19th-century teleology where "industry" is the definition of sedentary, and the "nomadic" is a romantic wistfulness for a self-determined life. Here, any tapestry-like surface of buildings becomes a record of trading a nomadic life for a sedentary one.

Tracing the travels of the carpet myth in architectural theory reveals a prickly type of modernist discourse that critiqued both classicism (by arguing for its polychromy) and modernization (by its nomadic negotiation), all the while leveraging the rhetoric of cultural specificity to ramify its global significance. We see that claims for the portability of authentic Islamic art—demonstrated by the claim that all Islamic forms "look the same"—are not explained by the autonomy of ornament that is usually supposed. Nostalgia for authenticity and its mythic textiles, still operative today, bestows the category of "Islamic art" with its veneer of timelessness. Epitomized by the "draped world" of the specter of original Arabs, we see Arab expression typecast as a heroic negotiation with desert conditions, buoyed by complex national and religious currents. In this diminished space, Ibn Khaldun, Jones, and Semper arbitrate the reading of Islamic art as a perennial reproduction of nomadism.



11. Ibid, p. 28.
 12. Peter Mandler. *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1997).
 13. Rudolf Arnheim, "The Imagery of the Ear," in *Radio* (Salem: Ayer Co., 1936), 21-26.
 14. These are the opening words of Adorno's collected essays *Aesthetic Theory* where he considers the loss of art's self evidence due to a very different reason, namely, its misappropriation and misuse by Nazis, not the interface of competing notions of culture as happens with radio. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (London, Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1984), 1.
 15. Eric Newton (host), "The Artist in the Witness Box," in *Listener* 22:567 (1939:Nov. 23), 1004; *Listener* 23:576 (1940:Jan. 25), 163; *Listener* 23:578 (1940:Feb. 8), 263; *Listener* 23:582 (1940:Mar. 7), 480. *The Listener* was a BBC's weekly publication that featured abridged versions of select broadcasts.
 16. Geoffrey Bouchphey, Edward Halliday & John Gloag, "What's Wrong with Design Today?" BBC WAC Transcripts, broadcast the week of April 19 1933. Also published in *Listener* 9:223 (1933:Apr. 19), 610.
 17. John Summerson, "Famous Midland Houses (I-VII)," BAL Archive John Summerson Papers, SuJ/10/1, Broadcast Talks, Famous Midland Houses 1937, broadcast between mid-May 1937 and 4 August 1935.
 18. John Gloag. *Design in Modern Life* (London: Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1934) was based on the BBC series hosted by Gloag a year before
 19. The correspondence between the BBC staff and speakers reveal these to be the primary concerns of the staff.
 20. Herbert Read, "An Enquiry into Public Taste," in *Listener* 18:443 (1937:July 7), 31.
 21. Eric Newton, "The Artist and his Public," in *Listener* 13:313 (1935:Jan. 9), 63.
 22. Casson advice came in response to a question "How are we to tell whether a work is sincere or not?" in "Why Bother About Art? (A Discussion between Stanley Casson and a Philistine)." The role of the skeptic philistine in the conversation was played by a friend of Casson in *Listener* 7:170 (1932:Apr. 13), 533.
 23. Anthony Bertram, "Design Everywhere," in *Design* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1938), 99, based on a series entitled "Design in Modern Life," also in BBC WAC Transcripts, broadcasted on December 20, 1937.
 24. Frank Pick "The Meaning and Purpose of Design," in *Design for Modern Life* (George Allen & Unwin Limited, 1934), 134. Also in BBC WAC Transcripts, broadcasted on June 6, 1933.
 25. Hon. Humphrey Pakington, "To-day and To-morrow in Architecture I: Tradition and Experiment," in *Listener* 3:68 (1930:Apr. 30), 769, broadcast on April 29, 1930.
 26. John Summerson, "An Archive for Architecture," in BBC WAC Transcripts, broadcast on September 25, 1944, p. 1.
 27. A. E. Richardson, "The Railway Station of Tomorrow" in *Listener* 15:377 (1936:Apr. 1), 619.
 28. Listener letters responding to architectural programs published in *Listener* are awash with enthusiasm for purposeful design.
 29. Geoffrey Bouchphey, "Revolution in the Home: New Order of Simplicity and Common Sense" BBC WAC Transcripts, broadcast on July 14, 1931 and Stanley Casson, "On Using Our Eyes," in *Listener* 6:146 (1931:Oct. 28), 720-722, broadcast the week of Oct 28, 1931.
 30. Geoffrey Bouchphey, "Your Home and Mine: Leaders and Followers," in *Your Home and Mine* (London and Hertford: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1938), pp. 175-178, broadcast in September 24, 1935 and December 10, 1935 and Stanley Casson, "Artists at Work-I. Why Bother About Art? (A Discussion between Stanley Casson and a Philistine)" in *Listener* 7:170 (1932:Apr. 13) p.531-533.
 31. John Gloag, "Design in Industry (I)" in BBC WAC Transcripts, broadcast on September 7, 1932.
 32. John C. W. Reith. *Broadcast Over Britain* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1924), 17.
- Image:** Radio Times, 1939.

Travels of the Carpet Myth, 70-73

I am grateful to Professor Nasser Rabbat, Deniz Turker, Michael Osman, Razan Francis, Winnie Wong, Elisa Lemssen, and my anonymous reviewers for their comments.

1. Use of the term "Islamic" in art history almost always means art made in some notion of the Arab tradition. Although the Arab-centric approach is problematic, it is so prevalent in writing on the origins of Islamic art (see Oleg Grabar's *The Formation of Islamic Art*, 1973), that here I will leave the terms engaged.
2. Lisa Golombek, "The Draped Universe of Islam," in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World: Papers from a Colloquium in Memory of Richard Ettinghausen*, ed. Priscilla P. Soucek (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 36.
3. Richard Ettinghausen. *Islamic Art and Architecture 650-1250*, rev. Oleg Grabar and Marilyn Jenkins-Madina (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 275, describes the "tapestry-like" effect given by the "infinitely repeating geometric designs" of the stucco ornamentation of the buildings at Qal'at Bani Hammad in eleventh-century Al-Andalus.
4. Jules Goury and Owen Jones, *Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Details of the Alhambra* (London: Vizetelly Brothers and Co., printers, 1842-1845).
5. Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten oder praktische Ästhetik: Ein Handbuch für Techniker, Künstler und Kunstfreunde*. (Frankfurt: Verlage für Kunst und Wissenschaft, 1860-63). All quotes and terms from Semper's *Style* are taken from Gottfried Semper. *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts; or, Practical Aesthetics*. trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute: 2004).
6. For a full study of the period surrounding the *Great Exhibition*, see Debra Schafer, *The Order of Ornament, the Structure of Style: Theoretical Foundations of Modern Art and Architecture* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
7. Loos' notorious comment appeared in the Austrian *Neue Freie Presse* in 1898.
8. David Van Zanten, "The Architectural Polychromy of the 1830's" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1970). Mallgrave discusses polychromy as well, 21-32 in *Style*. Furthermore, the two did know each other; in a letter to English design patron Henry Cole, dated 1852, Semper says he has shown a draft of a manuscript illustration to Jones. See Wolfgang Herrman, *Gottfried Semper in Exil: Paris, London 1849-1855* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1978), appendix, Letter 4.
9. Gottfried Semper, *Preliminary Remarks on Polychrome Architecture and Sculpture in Antiquity (Vorläufige Bemerkungen über bemalte Architektur und Plastik bei den Alten)* (Altona: Johann Friedrich Hammerich, 1834). Jones reproduces portions of this text in an 1854 pamphlet.
10. John Sweetman, introduction, Girault de Prangey, *Impressions of Granada and the Alhambra* (Paris: Veith and Hauser, Boulevard des Italiens, 1837; facsimile ed. Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing, 1996).
11. Mark Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995), 12. Wigley makes this point partly to counter Semper's (unearned) reputation as a strict materialist, a charge leveled by Alois Riegl in 1901.
12. In the commentary for Plate XXXIX's large-scale mosaic reproductions, there appears a notice that "a method of producing these mosaics by machinery has recently been invented in this country, by Mr. Henry Pether," noting that it can produce considerable quantities at once.

13. Jones, *Alhambra*, commentary to Plate XXXV.
14. Owen Jones, *An Apology for the Colouring of the Greek Court in the Crystal Palace* (London: Crystal Palace Library and Bradbury & Evans, 1854).
15. *Ibid.*, 16.
16. Gottfried Semper, from Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann, *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*, 104.
17. Jones' description of the project in the "Dedication to Jules Goury" at the start of the volume.
18. Owen Jones, *Alhambra*, commentary to Plate I. The quote is highlighted in Gülru Necipoglu, *The Topkapi Scroll: Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture* (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1995), 63.
19. Pascual de Gayangos (1809-1897) lived in London from 1836-1843 preparing an English-language annotated translation of *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain* by al-Maqqari, for the Oriental Translation Fund.
20. The Nasrids were the rulers of Islamic Spain from 1230-1492 and are the patrons of the most elaborate elements of the Alhambra complex.
21. Although "tracery" seems to connote the stonework of the Gothic window, de Gayangos indicates in his translation note that he has used "tracery" for the Arabic *tarqees*, meaning – he says – "any pattern of embroidery."
22. English factory imitations are popular at this time. See "Shawl [Kashmir, India] (1998.217)" in *Timeline of Art History*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/intx/hod_1998.217.htm (accessed October 2006).
23. Ibn Khaldun al-Hadrami of Tunis (1332-1406 AD) was a traveling polymath and is frequently hailed as a singular genius in his treatment of history and sociology.
24. Ahmed ibn Mohammed al-Maqqari, *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain* I, ed., trans., and annot. Pascual de Gayangos (London: Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland, 1840-1843): xxvii-xxxix. These dates suggest Semper had recently translated Ibn Khaldun when he composed the *Alhambra* prologue.
25. Pushing the social context for the writing of these histories, it is easy to draw an analogy between the disorganized landscape of Muslim Spain and North Africa during the long dissolution of the Almohad Empire from the middle of the thirteenth century onward (with rampant wars and rebellions) and the convulsions of post-Enlightenment, not-yet-fully-nationalized Europe. Each produced similar assessments of society.
26. See *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldun*, ed. Radwan Ibrahim (Cairo: Dar Ihya al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, 1960), 107 and 110. Translations and interpretation generously provided by Razan Francis.
27. See 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), 68, from a section on "large tents and tent walls."
28. *The Crystal Palace Exhibition Illustrated Catalog*, London 1851 (reprinted New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1970), 129.
29. Arindam Dutta has highlighted a comment by Gottfried Semper on the ideal marketability of Oriental products. Semper says the objects are not designed for a particular place, but rather are most at home in a bazaar. See Dutta, *The Bureaucracy of Beauty, Design in the Age of its Global Reproducibility* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), 113-117.
30. Semper lived in London from 1850-1853, in exile from Dresden after his role in the 1849 May Uprising.
31. Mallgrave discusses the influence of the *Great Exhibition* in Semper's writings in, "The Idea of Style: Gottfried Semper in London" (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1983).
32. Semper, *Style*, 103. Semper made this argument persistently, including in an earlier 1851 version of *The Four Elements of Architecture*.
33. Mallgrave's examples of the types of cases where Semper uses the term *Bekleidung* are taken from the translation note to *Style*.
34. Semper, *Style*, 247.
35. *Ibid.*, 104.
36. We might substitute that it lacks 'asabiyyah.

Images: Fig. 1 Owen Jones. *The Grammar of Ornament* (London: Day and Son, 1856) XLI. Figs. 2 and 3 Jules Goury and Owen Jones. *Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Details of the Alhambra* (London: Vizetelly Brothers and Co., printers, 1842-1845) XXXIV, XXXV.

Mobile Foundations, 74–77

A previous version of this article was presented at the ACSA 2001 meetings and published as "Global Constructions, or Why Guadalajara Wants a Home Depot While Los Angeles Wants Construction Workers," in Kim Tanzer and Rafael Longoria [eds], *The Green Braid: Towards an Architecture of Ecology, Economy and Equity* (London: Routledge, 2007).

1. Kenneth Frampton, "Introduction" in Frampton [ed.], *Technology, Place, & Architecture: The Jerusalem Seminar in Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1998), 14.
2. For historical readings of the Mexican design and construction industry, see Dimitrios A. Germidis *The Construction Industry in Mexico* (Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1972) and *Labour Conditions and Industrial Relations in the Building Industry in Mexico* (Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1974).
3. Raúl Salinas de Gortari. *Tecnología, Empleo, y Construcción en el Desarrollo de México, Segunda Edición* (Mexico City: Editorial Diana, 1993), 126. Note that this book's author is ex-President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's brother and is currently serving a prison sentence in Mexico for embezzling and murder. I rely on this text both because of its relation to design and construction services and, particularly, because of this telling connection. All translations were performed by the paper's author.
4. *Ibid.*, 34.
5. *Ibid.*, 36.
6. *Ibid.*, 38.
7. *Ibid.*, 118 and 144. Design (*diseño*) and engineering (*ingeniería*) are terms with almost identical meaning in Spanish, and the architectural and civil engineering professions are closely aligned in Mexico.
8. *Ibid.*, 141-3.
9. See, for example, Gary Tulacz and Debra Rubin, "Mexico blooms as NAFTA looms" (November 1, 1993) or "Booming Mexican market may flourish with free trade" (September 27, 199) *Engineering News-Record*. In the former, one contractor is quoted as saying "Mexico is going to happen with or without NAFTA."
10. Richard Korman and Steven Setzer, "Engineers seeking licenses," (November 1, 1993).
11. See Tim Grogan and Tom Ichniowski, "Mexico: Still Recovering from Crisis," (December 22, 1997) or Michael A. Moore, "Mexican firms are coping," *Engineering News-Record* (March 6, 1995).
12. Michael Flagg, "Southland is Hooked in Cheap Immigrant Labor...", *Los Angeles Times* (September 7, 1992).
13. Leonel Sanchez, "Drywallers' strike: confrontations multiply; 500 workers, mostly Latino," *San Diego Union-Tribune* (August 23,