



they commissioned the California Polytechnic University 606 Studio to shape a plan to accomplish this.

Like most desert rivers, the Santa Clara is relatively shallow and its water levels vary greatly through the course of a year as well as from year to year. Often it spills over its banks in the spring and dries up entirely in the late summer. Since this erratic behaviour is the main reason for channelisation, it is essential that any plan to avoid channelisation recognises the process and the pattern it produces, which can be characterised in terms of floodway (frequently flooded) and floodplain (infrequently flooded). The floodplains form a sequence of spaces through the city, which can easily be developed into a linear park system. The floodways are hazardous places for developed parks but are suitable for some recreational use through most of the year and also provide rich wildlife habitat and corridors. By acquiring floodway and floodplain as parkland, the city can avoid concrete channels and provide a beautifully cohesive park system serving every neighbourhood in Santa Clarita. The cost is only a little more and for its money, the city gets both parks and a living river instead of an ugly, inert band of concrete.

DRYLAND RIVERS LIKE THE NILE,
HERE AT ASWAN, MOVING WATER FROM
MOUNTAIN WATERSHEDS TO THE SEA,
COLLECT LITTLE WATER FROM THE
LANDS THROUGH WHICH THEY
FLOW, HAVE BEEN IMPORTANT IN
THE DEVELOPMENT OF CIVILISATIONS.



OASES WERE USUALLY CREATED BY WELLS OR NATURAL SPRINGS, AS HERE IN LIBYA, BUT IN MODERN TIMES, OASES ARE MORE OFTEN CITIES WHERE WATER HAS BEEN BROUGHT BY ARTIFICIAL MEANS.

The dynamic, adaptive forms of the river also help to shape the forms of the parks. When the water is flowing, the river is an ever-changing, ever-moving pattern of braiding, interlacing movement that produces sandbars with characteristic narrow, pointed forms. This pattern is the basis of the design for the first parks in the system, over-lapping floodway and floodplain to give expression to the dynamics of the river. The trees planted in the park will be the species that once inhabited each zone: cottonwoods in the floodway and coast; live oaks in the floodplain.

The last dryland archetype that I want to discuss is the one that has made human habitation possible through history even in the driest deserts, and frequently the subject of fable, legend, and dream. This