Preface 7

I The technology of earth building

1 Introduction 11

History 11
Earth as a building material: the essentials 13
Improving indoor climate 15
Prejudices against earth as a building material 18

2 The properties of earth as a building material 19

Composition 19
Tests used to analyse the composition of loam 21
Effects of water 24
Effects of vapour 29
Influence of heat 31
Strength 32
pH-value 35
Radioactivity 35
Shelter against high-frequency electromagnetic radiation 35

3 Preparing of loam 36

Soaking, crushing and mixing 36 Sieving 38 Mechanical slurrying 38 Water curing 38 Thinning 38

4 Improving the earth's characteristics by special treatment or additives 39

Reduction of shrinkage cracks 39
Stabilisation against water erosion 40
Enhancement of binding force 42
Increasing compressive strength 43
Strength against abrasion 47
Increasing thermal insulation 47

5 Rammed earthworks 52

Formwork 53
Tools 54
Method of construction 55
Shaping of openings 55
New wall construction techniques 56
Rammed earth domes 59
Drying 59
Labour input 60
Thermal insulation 60
Surface treatment 60

6 Working with earth blocks 61

History 61
Production of earth blocks 62
Material composition 65
Laying earth blocks 65
Surface treatment 66
Fixing fasteners to walls 67
Lightweight loam blocks 67
Special acoustic green bricks 68

7 Large blocks and prefabricated panels 69

Large blocks 69
Prefabricated wall panels 70
Floor slabs 70
Floor tiles 71
Extruded loam slabs 71

8 Direct forming with wet loam 72

Traditional wet loam techniques 72 The "Dünne loam loaf" technique 74 The *stranglehm* technique 75

9 Wet loam infill in skeleton structures 80

Thrown loam 80
Sprayed loam 80
Rolls and bottles of straw loam 81
Lightweight loam infill 82
Infill with stranglehm and earth-filled hoses 82

10 Tamped, poured or pumped lightweight loam 83

Formwork 83

Tamped lightweight straw loam walls 83

Tamped lightweight wood loam walls 84

Tamped, poured or pumped lightweight mineral loam walls 85

Pumped lightweight mineral loam floors 88

Loam-filled hollow blocks 89

Loam-filled hoses 90

11 Loam plasters 92

Preparation of ground 92
Composition of loam plaster 92
Guidelines for plastering earth walls 94
Sprayed plaster 95
Lightweight mineral loam plaster 95
Thrown plaster 95
Plastered straw bale houses 95
Wet formed plaster 96
Protection of corners 96

12 Weather protection of loam surfaces 98

Consolidating the surface 98
Paints 98
Making surfaces water-repellent 101
Lime plasters 101
Shingles, planks and other covers 103
Structural methods 103

13 Repair of loam components 104

The occurrence of damage in loam components 104
Repair of cracks and joints with loam fillers 104
Repair of cracks and joints with other fillers 105
Repairing larger areas of damage 105
Retrofitting thermal insulation with lightweight loam 106

14 Designs of particular building elements 107

Joints 107
Particular wall designs 108
Intermediate floors 110
Rammed earth floorings 112
Inclined roofs filled with lightweight loam 115
Earth-covered roofs 115
Earth block vaults and domes 117
Earthen storage wall in winter gardens 131
Loam in bathrooms 132
Built-in furniture and sanitary objects from loam 133
Wall heating systems 134
Passive solar wall heating system 134

15 Earthquake-resistant building 135

Structural measures 136
Openings for doors and windows 140
Bamboo-reinforced rammed earth walls 141
Domes 144
Vaults 145
Textile walls with loam infill 147

II Built examples

Residences

Two semi-deatched houses, Kassel, Germany 150
Residence cum office, Kassel, Germany 152
Residence at Phoenix, Arizona, USA 154
Farmhouse, Wazirpur, India 156
Honey house at Moab, Utah, USA 157
Residence, La Paz, Bolivia 158
Residence, Turku, Finland 159

Residence and studio at Gallina Canyon,
New Mexico, USA 160

Residence at Villa de Leyva, Colombia 162
Low Compound at Scottsdale, Arizona, USA 164
Residence at Des Montes, near Taos,
New Mexico, USA 166
Casita Nuaanarpoq at Taos, New Mexico, USA 168
Residence and office at Bowen Mountain,
New South Wales, Australia 169
Vineyard residence at Mornington Peninsula,
Victoria, Australia 170
Residence, Helensville, New Zealand 172
Residence, São Francisco Xavier, Brazil 174
Three-family house, Stein on the Rhine,
Switzerland 176

Cultural, Educational and Sacral Buildings

School at Solvig, Järna, Sweden 177 Kindergarten, Sorsum, Germany 178 School in Rudrapur, Bangladesh 180 Kindergarten and nursery of Druk White Lotus School, Ladakh, India 182 Panafrican Institute for Development, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso 184 Youth centre at Spandau, Berlin, Germany 186 Printing plant in Pielach, Austria 188 Office building, New Delhi, India 190 Mii amo spa at Sedona, Arizona, USA 192 Tourist resort at Baird Bay, Eyre Peninsula, South Australia 194 Charles Sturt University at Thurgoona, New South Wales, Australia 195 Chapel of the central clinic in Suhl, Germany 196 Cultural centre, La Paz, Bolivia 198 Mosque, Wabern, Germany 199 Chapel of Reconciliation, Berlin, Germany 200 Center of Gravity Foundation Hall at Jemez Springs, New Mexico, USA 202

Future prospects 204
Measures 205
Bibliographical references 206
Acknowledgements 207
Illustration credits 207