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**Under the Scales of Law and Cooperation:
An Evaluative Analysis of Algerian
Archaeological Heritage Legislation and
International Partnerships (1962-1990)**

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ABSTRACT

Algeria possesses one of the most archaeologically dense landscapes in the Mediterranean and Saharan worlds, encompassing Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, Ottoman, and prehistoric sites of global significance. Yet the legislative framework governing their protection and valorization has historically been reactive, fragmented, and insufficiently aligned with contemporary international standards. This paper undertakes a historical, comparative, and evaluative-analytic examination of Algerian archaeological heritage legislation from independence in 1962 through 1990, with particular attention to the foundational Order 67-281 and the role of international technical partnerships in shaping institutional capacity during this formative period. Drawing on colonial legislative instruments, post-independence transitional decrees, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) mission documentation—specifically Alexandre Lézin's 1964 advisory field mission—and comparative analysis with French preventive archaeology developments, the paper identifies three structural deficits that persisted throughout this period: the absence of preventive archaeology in the national legal code, chronic institutional fragmentation between heritage bodies, and insufficient protection of urban historic ensembles against development pressure. Policy recommendations targeting legislative reform of Order 67-281, the institutionalization of preventive archaeology funding mechanisms, and the expansion of co-custodianship frameworks are advanced as pathways toward a more resilient heritage governance system.

Keywords: Algerian heritage legislation; Order 67-281; UNESCO technical cooperation; archaeological cultural resource management; post-independence heritage governance governance.

** Author Corrsponding*

INTRODUCTION

Few territories on the African continent—or indeed anywhere in the Mediterranean basin—concentrate such a layered and chronologically expansive archaeological wealth as Algeria. From the remarkably preserved Roman colonial urbanism of Timgad and Djemila, both inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1982, to the labyrinthine Ottoman-era Casbah of Algiers (listed 1992) and the earthen Saharan *ksour* of the M'Zab Valley (listed 1982), the country constitutes an archive of human civilization spanning at least two million years of continuous occupation. The megalithic funerary monuments of the Aurès, the Phoenician harbor foundations of Tipasa, the Numidian royal necropolises of the Medracen and Tombeau de la Chrétienne, and the Tassili n'Ajjer rock art corpus—designated both a World Heritage Site and a Biosphere Reserve in 1982—collectively represent a heritage resource of incalculable scientific, cultural, and symbolic value.

Yet this extraordinary patrimony exists under a legal and institutional canopy that, despite decades of post-independence reform efforts, remained structurally inadequate to the pressures of accelerating urbanization, large-scale national infrastructure projects, and the epistemological challenge of defining heritage in a newly sovereign, culturally plural state. The central analytical problem animating this paper is therefore double-pronged: first, to what extent did the national legislative framework—culminating in Order 67-281 of December 20, 1967, relative to archaeological excavations and the protection of historic sites and monuments—succeed in constructing a coherent, enforceable, and internationally aligned system for the valorization and safeguarding of archaeological heritage during the critical period between 1962 and 1990? Second, what catalytic, corrective, or compensatory role did international technical partnerships—from the immediate post-independence decade through the late 1980s—play in attempting to bridge the chronic technical, administrative, and financial gaps that national legislation alone was unable to close?

The scholarly literature on Algerian heritage governance, while generating important contributions across French and Arabic academic publishing, remains notably thin in English-language Scopus-indexed journals (Benabbas, 2016; Guendouz & Maachi, 2020; Jokilehto, 1999). Studies that do exist frequently focus on individual site conservation challenges or World Heritage nomination processes without situating those challenges within the broader trajectory of legislative evolution and the institutional archaeology of the state itself. This paper argues that such a comprehensive legislative-institutional lens is not merely useful but necessary: the observable deficiencies at individual sites—the encroachment of informal construction on the buffer zones of heritage areas, the undocumented destruction of subsurface stratigraphy during development—are not accidents of implementation but structural symptoms of a legislative architecture that was never designed to accommodate the full complexity of modern archaeological resource management.

The paper proceeds through five substantive sections. Following a theoretical and conceptual framework, it traces the historical trajectory of heritage legislation from French colonial instruments through the post-independence transitional phase and the foundational Order 67-281. It then provides a detailed analysis of early international cooperation, centered on the 1964 UNESCO mission of Alexandre Lézin, before engaging in a critical institutional assessment of the governance bodies that emerged during the 1962-1990 period. The paper concludes with a set of targeted, evidence-grounded policy recommendations addressed to Algerian legislators and planning authorities.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Valorization of Archaeological Heritage: A Multidimensional Construct

The concept of *valorization* (*mise en valeur*) of archaeological heritage, as it has been elaborated in both francophone legal doctrine and international conservation science, cannot be reduced to the simple act of making a site accessible to visitors. Within the analytic framework adopted in this paper—and broadly consistent with Jokilehto's (1999) canonical account of conservation history—valorization encompasses at minimum four interdependent operational dimensions: legal protection (the establishment of juridically enforceable boundaries, status classifications, and sanctions); scientific research (systematic excavation, documentation, and publication according to current disciplinary standards); material conservation (physical stabilization, restoration guided by the principle of reversibility, and preventive maintenance); and functional rehabilitation (the adaptive integration of heritage sites into living social and economic contexts, without compromising their integrity).

This four-part framework has its roots in the *Charte de Venise* of 1964, which established that monuments "cannot be separated from the history to which they bear witness" and must be transmitted "in the full richness of their authenticity" (International Council on Monuments and Sites [ICOMOS], 1964, preamble). The Washington Charter of 1987, which extended conservation principles from individual monuments to entire historic urban areas (*historic towns and urban areas*), added a fifth functional dimension: the management of social continuity, recognizing that inhabited historic quarters cannot be managed as open-air museums but must be governed through planning instruments that balance resident needs with heritage imperatives (ICOMOS, 1987).

2.2 The Evolution of Urban Heritage Governance Concepts (1962-1990)

During the period under examination, international conservation doctrine underwent a significant conceptual evolution that would later influence Algerian approaches. The 1964 Venice Charter remained the dominant framework throughout the 1960s and 1970s, emphasizing monument-centered conservation. However, by the late 1980s, the Washington Charter introduced the concept of integrated urban heritage management, recognizing that

historic towns and urban areas—those dense, inhabited, multi-layered environments where heritage value resides not in any single building but in the accumulated spatial logic of streets, courtyards, skylines, and social practices—required governance instruments distinct from those applicable to individual monuments.

Algeria's Order 67-281 incorporated elements of the monument-centered approach characteristic of its era but lacked the comprehensive urban heritage instruments that would later be developed internationally. The concept of *Secteurs Sauvegardés* (Protected Sectors or Saved Sectors), which would later become central to Algerian heritage governance, had not yet been fully integrated into the legislative framework by 1990. This conceptual gap represented a significant limitation in addressing the distinctive challenges of inhabited historic urban ensembles.

3. The Historical-Legislative Trajectory: From Colonization to Sovereignty

3.1 The Colonial Legislative Apparatus and Its Geopolitical Logic

To understand the structural inheritances—both material and administrative—that shaped post-independence Algerian heritage governance, one must first situate colonial heritage legislation within its explicitly political economy. The French colonial administration did not create heritage law in Algeria out of purely scientific or humanist motivations. The progressive elaboration of a legal apparatus for monument protection—culminating in the *Décret du 7 mars 1913*, the *Loi du 31 décembre 1913* (extended to Algeria through subsequent instruments), the *Décret du 27 mai 1925* organizing archaeological surveys, the *Loi du 2 mai 1930* on natural monuments and sites, and Jerome Carcopino's wartime *Loi du 27 septembre 1941* providing a consolidated national framework—served a specific ideological function that Lorcin (1995) has termed the narrative of "Latin Continuity".

This narrative posited that Roman civilization represented the legitimate historical antecedent of French colonial rule: by excavating, cataloguing, displaying, and legally protecting Roman-era monuments, the colonial administration simultaneously constructed a genealogy of European presence that pre-dated and superseded the Islamic and Berber cultural landscapes of the Maghreb. The *Service des Antiquités de l'Algérie*, established formally in 1880 and reorganized repeatedly through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, operated according to this logic—privileging classical Mediterranean archaeology over prehistoric, Islamic, or Ottoman-era sites, and concentrating excavation activity in the fertile northern zones where Roman urbanism was densest, while leaving Saharan and pre-Islamic sites largely undocumented (Fentress, 1987; Mattingly, 1996).

Carcopino's 1941 law, though technically a Vichy-era instrument shaped by the specific politics of metropolitan France, represented the most technically sophisticated colonial heritage legislation: it introduced the concept of *classement* (classification) with associated

protective perimeters, *inscription* on a supplementary inventory for less significant sites, and regulatory restrictions on construction in proximity to protected monuments. Crucially, it also established administrative mechanisms for expropriation in the public interest and sanctions for unauthorized excavation. These instruments were formally retained in Algeria after independence through the provisional legal continuity established by *Ordonnance 62-157 du 31 décembre 1962*, which maintained French legislation in force insofar as it did not contradict Algerian sovereignty—a pragmatic but profoundly ambiguous act of legal inheritance that would shape heritage governance for the next three decades.

3.2 The Transitional Decade and the Drafting of Order 67-281

The period between 1962 and 1967 represents one of the most consequential and least studied phases of Algerian heritage policy. The young Algerian state faced the simultaneous demands of establishing sovereign administrative institutions, managing the mass departure of European-origin professionals who had staffed colonial technical services, and asserting a national cultural identity that was both distinct from French colonial framing and internally coherent in the face of complex Arabophone, Amazigh, and Islamic cultural currents. Heritage policy was thus never purely a technical domain but a deeply political one, bound up with questions of national narrative construction and decolonial cultural sovereignty (McDougall, 2006).

The promulgation of *Ordonnance 67-281 du 20 décembre 1967* relative to archaeological excavations and the protection of historic sites and monuments represented the first genuinely sovereign Algerian heritage legislation. The drafting process, which drew on contributions from both Algerian jurists and foreign technical advisors—notably from the UNESCO advisory network that will be discussed in Section 4—marked a significant conceptual advance over the colonial instruments in several respects. First, it articulated an explicit national ownership doctrine: all archaeological objects found on Algerian territory were declared state property, regardless of the legal status of the land on which they were found. Second, it extended nominal protection to categories of sites—Islamic monuments, vernacular architecture, ethnographic collections—that colonial legislation had systematically marginalized. Third, it created the legal basis for the regulation of international research missions, requiring foreign teams to obtain authorization from the Algerian state and to share excavation results and material finds according to conditions established by the Ministry of Culture.

3.3 Order 67-281: Architecture, Ambitions, and Structural Gaps

Order 67-281 established the foundational framework for Algerian heritage governance during the 1967-1990 period and merits detailed structural analysis. The order articulated a comprehensive vision of cultural heritage that, while necessarily reflecting the conceptual

limitations of its era, represented a significant advance over colonial instruments in several respects.

The order's classification system established the fundamental distinction between *biens culturels classés* (classified cultural properties, subject to the highest level of protection) and *biens culturels inscrits* (listed cultural properties, subject to intermediate regulatory protection), replicating elements of the French *classement/inscription* binary while extending it to new categories of heritage. Articles governing excavation authorization, the reporting of chance discoveries, and the conditions of scientific research substantially strengthened the framework inherited from colonial legislation.

However, Order 67-281 retained significant structural limitations that reflected both the pragmatic constraints of the period and the inherited conceptual vocabulary of French colonial law. Its protective framework remained monument-centric rather than landscape- or ensemble-oriented, focusing on the individual classified structure rather than the fabric of spatial relationships in which monuments were embedded. Its enforcement mechanisms were underdeveloped relative to the scale of the enforcement challenge. Its provisions for scientific research were more regulatory than enabling: they established who could excavate and under what conditions but provided no corresponding framework of state investment in systematic research programs. Most critically for the period under examination, the order contained no provisions for preventive archaeology, leaving subsurface archaeological deposits unprotected against the accelerating infrastructure development of the 1970s and 1980s.

3.4 Institutional Developments During the 1967-1990 Period

The period between 1967 and 1990 was not one of legislative stasis but of progressive institutional development within the framework established by Order 67-281. A series of regulatory instruments and institutional creations progressively refined the administrative framework for heritage governance.

The 1988 decree establishing the National Centre for Prehistoric, Anthropological and Historical Research (CNRPAH) represented a significant institutional development, creating a dedicated research body to coordinate and conduct archaeological research across the Algerian territory. This was followed by the establishment of the *Agence Nationale d'Archéologie et de Protection des Sites et Monuments Historiques* (National Agency for Archaeology), which underwent several reorganizations before its eventual restructuring. These institutional creations reflect an ongoing—if uneven—process of institutional construction within the legislative framework provided by Order 67-281.

The 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which Algeria ratified, introduced new international obligations and opportunities. The World Heritage nominations of Timgad, Djemila, and Tipasa in 1982,

followed by the M'Zab Valley in 1982, the Casbah of Algiers in 1992, and Tassili n'Ajjer in 1982, reflected the growing integration of Algerian heritage into international conservation frameworks. However, the nomination processes also revealed persistent tensions between international conservation standards and local conditions of heritage management.

4. Post-Independence International Partnerships as Institutional Catalyst

4.1 The 1964 UNESCO Mission of Alexandre Lézin: Methodology and Context

Among the many technical cooperation initiatives that marked the early post-independence decade, Alexandre Lézin's UNESCO expert mission of 1964 deserves particular scholarly attention not merely as a historical curiosity but as a formative episode whose recommendations directly shaped the institutional architecture of Algerian heritage management for subsequent decades. Lézin, a French architect with extensive experience in North African built heritage—having produced scholarly documentation of traditional Algerian architecture (Lézin, 1966)—was deployed by UNESCO in response to an Algerian government request for technical assistance in developing a national monument conservation program appropriate to the conditions of the newly independent state.

Lézin's methodology was systematic and empirically grounded: rather than offering abstract recommendations from a desk review, he undertook an extensive field campaign covering the full geographic arc of Algeria's principal heritage zones. His itinerary encompassed Algiers, where he examined the conditions of the Casbah and individual Ottoman-era monuments; Tipasa, where Roman and early Christian remains were already experiencing deterioration from the combined effects of deferred maintenance and inadequate site management; Cherchell (ancient *Caesarea*), with its exceptional collection of Hellenistic and Roman sculpture; Sétif, whose museum and adjacent archaeological zone presented specific problems of urban encroachment; M'sila and Batna, representing the challenges of heritage management in interior zones distant from the administrative center; Ténès, with its Phoenician harbor archaeology; Mascara; and Tlemcen, whose outstanding corpus of medieval Islamic architecture—the Great Mosque, the Mansourah ruins, the Agadir complex—presented conservation challenges of a fundamentally different character from the classical Mediterranean sites that had dominated colonial-era attention.

This geographic comprehensiveness was itself analytically significant: by insisting on personal field visits across climatic zones, architectural traditions, and administrative contexts, Lézin implicitly rejected the colonial-era hierarchy that had privileged northern Roman sites over all other categories of heritage. His assessment framework treated Tlemcen's Islamic monuments and the Casbah's Ottoman urban fabric as objects of equivalent scientific and cultural significance to the amphitheaters and forums of Timgad and Djemila—

a normative reorientation that anticipated the formal inclusive definition of cultural heritage that would eventually be encoded in subsequent legislative developments.

4.2 Lézin's Recommendations and Their Institutional Legacy

Lézin's principal recommendations addressed three interrelated domains: professional capacity, institutional structure, and legislative reform. In the domain of professional capacity, he identified the critical shortage of trained conservation specialists as the most urgent obstacle to effective heritage management. His recommendations specifically called for the development of two distinct but complementary professional tracks: the *Architecte des Monuments Historiques*, a specialized architectural professional with expertise in the structural analysis, material conservation, and heritage-compliant restoration of historic buildings; and the *Archéologue*, a research professional trained in excavation methodology, material culture analysis, and the stratigraphic documentation of buried archaeological deposits. Lézin recognized that these two professional profiles, while requiring different technical training, needed to operate in close coordination—a principle of interdisciplinarity that remains relevant to contemporary cultural resource management practice (Sullivan & Mackay, 2012).

In the domain of institutional structure, Lézin recommended the creation of a specialized public conservation body with permanent technical staff, a dedicated operating budget independent of annual ministerial allocation uncertainty, and a mandate covering both research and practical conservation work. This recommendation provided the conceptual template for the successive institutional bodies that the Algerian state would create over the following decades: the National Agency for Archaeology established in the 1980s, and the subsequently reorganized bodies that would emerge in the 1990s. While none of these contemporary bodies fully realized Lézin's vision of an adequately resourced, technically autonomous heritage institution, their structural lineage to his 1964 recommendations is traceable and analytically important.

In the domain of legislative reform, Lézin advised the Algerian authorities that the inherited colonial framework—even as revised through Order 67-281, which was under concurrent preparation—would require supplementary regulatory instruments to address the specific conditions of sites in active urban contexts, where the boundary between conservation and urban planning was necessarily blurred. This recommendation proved to be remarkably prescient: the subsequent decades repeatedly demonstrated that the primary threat to heritage in Algerian cities was not dramatic, singular acts of destruction but the slow, cumulative erosion produced by inadequate maintenance, unauthorized modification, and the absence of integrated urban planning frameworks capable of mediating between housing pressures and heritage values.

4.3 Later International Partnerships and Their Evolving Character (1964-1990)

Beyond the Lézin mission, Algeria's heritage management during the 1962-1990 period was shaped by a series of bilateral and multilateral technical cooperation frameworks whose evolution reflects both changing international conservation science and shifting Algerian national priorities. UNESCO cooperation frameworks continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in relation to World Heritage nomination processes and the development of site management plans for Timgad, Djemila, Tipasa, the M'Zab Valley, and Tassili n'Ajjer. These processes, while often technically productive, also revealed a persistent tension: the international conservation community's normative frameworks—grounded in documents like the Venice Charter and the Nara Document on Authenticity (ICOMOS, 1994)—were not always easily reconcilable with local practices of inhabitation, maintenance, and social use that possessed their own forms of cultural legitimacy.

Bilateral technical cooperation with Italy, Spain, and Germany—particularly through German Archaeological Institute (DAI) research programs—introduced international excavation methodologies and post-excavation analysis practices that influenced the standards adopted by Algerian research institutions. These partnerships, while valuable in building technical capacity, also reproduced certain patterns of dependence: Algerian institutions often lacked the resources to sustain research programs once international partners withdrew, leading to a pattern of project-based engagement rather than sustained institutional development.

The 1982 World Heritage inscriptions of Timgad, Djemila, Tipasa, the M'Zab Valley, and Tassili n'Ajjer represented a significant milestone in Algeria's integration into international heritage frameworks. These nominations, prepared with UNESCO technical assistance, required the development of management plans and conservation strategies that introduced new standards of heritage governance. However, the gap between the management frameworks established for World Heritage Sites and the resources available for their implementation became increasingly apparent throughout the 1980s.

5. Critical Discussion: Institutional Fragmentation, Funding Deficits, and Development Pressure

5.1 The Structural Performance of Heritage Institutions (1967-1990)

A candid institutional assessment of the bodies established under Order 67-281 and its subsequent implementing regulations reveals a pattern that is consistent with comparative findings from heritage governance literature across the Global South: institutional mandates that were ambitious in their legislative articulation but systematically under-resourced in their operational realization. The National Agency for Archaeology, established in the 1980s, faced the fundamental contradiction of being simultaneously responsible for site conservation,

research coordination, and regulatory enforcement with a permanent staff that remained dramatically insufficient relative to the scale of its mandate.

The CNRPAH, established by the 1988 decree as the state's principal archaeological research body, operated with a permanent scientific staff that was insufficient relative to the scale of the research agenda its mandate implied. Published annual excavation programs from this period reveal a consistent pattern of prioritization toward sites with existing international research partnerships—where foreign team resources supplemented national capacity—and relative neglect of sites where purely national research programs would be required. This pattern reproduced, in a post-colonial register, the structural inequalities of colonial research infrastructure: the most archaeologically significant but institutionally marginalized sites were those that lacked the international visibility to attract cooperative research investment (Labadi, 2013).

5.2 Development Infrastructure and the Archaeology of Destruction (1970-1990)

The most acute and structurally underaddressed challenge confronting Algerian archaeological heritage governance during the 1962-1990 period was the collision between national development ambitions and the subsurface archaeological record. The major infrastructure projects of the 1970s and 1980s—the highway networks, the industrial zones, the urban expansion programs funded by hydrocarbon revenues—proceeded with minimal systematic archaeological assessment of their corridors and footprints. The absence of any legislative requirement for pre-construction archaeological survey or salvage excavation meant that an unknown but certainly substantial volume of subsurface archaeological deposits was mechanically removed and disposed of without documentation.

This problem was particularly acute in the context of Algeria's rural land reform programs and the associated infrastructure development in archaeologically sensitive zones. The absence of preventive archaeology provisions in Order 67-281 meant that heritage authorities had no legal basis to require archaeological assessment as a condition of development authorization, nor any funding mechanism to conduct such assessment independently.

5.3 The Preventive Archaeology Deficit: A Comparative Diagnosis

The absence of preventive archaeology from the Algerian legislative framework by 1990 was not a peripheral technical detail but a structural deficiency that made the destruction of archaeological resources during development not merely foreseeable but legally inevitable. The comparative case of French developments in this area provides an instructive contrast. While the French Law 2001-44 came much later, the conceptual development of preventive archaeology in French administrative practice during the 1970s and 1980s provided a model that Algerian legislators could have adapted.

Algeria's Order 67-281 contained no provisions analogous to the French approach. The order's Article provisions regarding development projects established that heritage impact assessment requirements were permissive rather than mandatory, provided no corresponding funding mechanism, designated no institutional authority for executing such assessments, and established no timeline requirements that would integrate archaeological review into standard development authorization processes. The absence of these provisions represented a critical gap in the legislative framework that persisted throughout the 1962-1990 period.

5.4 Urban Heritage Under Structural Stress: The Casbah as Paradigm

No examination of Algerian heritage governance during the 1962-1990 period would be analytically complete without sustained engagement with the case of the Casbah of Algiers, which encapsulates with unusual clarity the systemic character of the challenges this paper has been diagnosing. Designated for UNESCO World Heritage listing in 1992 (the nomination process having begun in the late 1980s), the Casbah is simultaneously one of Algeria's most internationally recognized heritage assets and one of its most severely degraded.

Throughout the 1962-1990 period, the Casbah faced profound structural pressures: extreme housing density, a predominantly low-income resident population with limited resources for maintenance, a building stock characterized by construction systems—Ottoman timber-frame infill, traditional rammed earth *pisé*, historic lime mortars—that required specialist repair skills and materials that were no longer commercially available, a pattern of informal densification that modified historic spatial structures beyond ready reversal, and persistent seismic risk. The absence of comprehensive urban heritage instruments during this period left the Casbah's extraordinary urban fabric exposed to incremental degradation under the combined pressures of housing stress, seismic risk, and institutional fragmentation.

The 1980s saw the initiation of international technical cooperation focused on the Casbah, including UNESCO-supported studies and conservation proposals. However, these initiatives faced the fundamental limitation of operating within the legislative framework established by Order 67-281, which provided no comprehensive instruments for the governance of inhabited historic urban ensembles. The planning instruments that would later be developed for saved sectors were not available during this period, leaving the Casbah without the integrated conservation planning that its significance demanded.

6. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The legislative and institutional history of Algerian archaeological heritage governance from 1962 to 1990 traced in this paper reveals a trajectory characterized by genuine intellectual ambition—in the conceptual scope of Order 67-281, in the early vision of Lézin's 1964 recommendations, in the progressive broadening of the heritage concept to include Islamic, Amazigh, and intangible dimensions—alongside structural deficits that consistently

prevented that ambition from being realized in conservation outcomes commensurate with the scale of Algeria's heritage resource. Four structural deficits merit particular emphasis: the absence of preventive archaeology from the legislative framework; the chronic under-resourcing of heritage institutions relative to their mandates; the absence of comprehensive urban heritage instruments for inhabited historic ensembles; and the insufficient integration of heritage assessment into national territorial planning processes.

These deficits are not independent failures but manifestations of a single underlying condition: heritage governance in Algeria during this period operated as a specialist technical domain disconnected from the mainstream of national development planning. Monuments and sites were legally protected within a dedicated legislative silo, while the planning and development processes that constituted the primary drivers of heritage destruction operated in an adjacent domain that the heritage legislative framework reached only weakly and intermittently. Bridging this structural disconnect requires not merely technical legislative amendments but a renegotiation of the conceptual status of heritage within the state's development model.

6.1 Policy Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Mandatory Preventive Archaeology through Revision of Order 67-281. The Algerian legislature should amend Order 67-281 to establish a mandatory preventive archaeology regime. This revision should: designate a competent authority for archaeological diagnostics; establish a national *carte archéologique* (archaeological map) with legally binding spatial resolution sufficient for development planning purposes; introduce a developer-funded diagnostic obligation for all projects above a specified ground disturbance threshold in archaeologically sensitive zones; and establish a proportional excavation obligation where diagnostics reveal significant deposits. Funding mechanisms should combine developer levies with a dedicated national heritage fund.

Recommendation 2: Urban Heritage Instruments for Historic Ensembles. The Algerian government should develop comprehensive urban heritage instruments for inhabited historic ensembles, drawing on international best practice as articulated in the 1987 Washington Charter and the French *secteurs sauvegardés* model. These instruments should establish planning frameworks that balance heritage protection with resident needs, recognizing that inhabited historic quarters cannot be managed as open-air museums but must be governed through planning instruments that address housing, infrastructure, and social continuity alongside conservation imperatives.

Recommendation 3: Heritage Data Integration with National Territorial Planning Systems. Algeria's national heritage inventory—currently maintained in administrative registers that have limited operational connectivity with urban planning GIS platforms—

should be digitized, georeferenced, and formally integrated into territorial planning systems. This integration would ensure that heritage constraints are automatically flagged in development authorization workflows rather than requiring separate case-by-case consultation with heritage authorities—a procedural reform that reduces both administrative friction and the risk of unauthorized development proceeding without heritage review.

Recommendation 4: Scientific Co-Custodianship Frameworks. Algeria should develop a standardized legislative framework for scientific co-custodianship agreements—formal long-term partnerships between Algerian heritage institutions and foreign research institutions that establish joint research programs, shared data management protocols, and reciprocal capacity development obligations, within a clear framework of Algerian sovereign authority over heritage decisions. Such frameworks, designed to avoid both the extractive dynamics of colonial-era research relationships and the isolation dynamics of pure state monopoly, could substantially expand Algeria's effective research capacity while supporting the development of a generation of Algerian archaeological scientists trained to international standards.

Recommendation 5: Institutional Consolidation and Specialized Training. The institutional fragmentation between various heritage bodies should be addressed through a strategic consolidation review, with the goal of reducing administrative duplication and concentrating resources in institutions with clearly delimited and non-overlapping mandates. Simultaneously, Algeria should establish or expand postgraduate training programs in heritage conservation, archaeological science, and heritage management—ideally through dedicated chairs or research centers at national universities with formal links to international institutions—to address the persistent professional capacity shortage that Lézin identified in 1964 and that remains a fundamental constraint on heritage governance quality.

Recommendation 6: Retrospective Documentation of Development Impacts.

Recognizing that an unknown volume of archaeological material was destroyed during development activities between 1962 and 1990 without documentation, Algeria should establish a program of retrospective documentary research, compiling archival records, construction documentation, and any available site records to reconstruct, insofar as possible, the archaeological knowledge lost during this period. This program would not recover the destroyed deposits but would establish a baseline for understanding the scale of loss and preventing its recurrence.

The stakes of these reforms extend well beyond the professional domain of cultural resource management. Algeria's archaeological heritage, correctly managed, constitutes a resource of significant economic, diplomatic, scientific, and cultural value—a basis for sustainable cultural tourism development, a foundation for international scholarly cooperation, a source of national identity narratives that are inclusive of Algeria's full

civilizational depth, and a contribution to humanity's collective understanding of the past. Under the scales of law and cooperation, the heritage of Algeria awaits the governance system its significance demands.

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