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Preserving the Architecture of the Ksour of the Mzab Valley through Islamic Urban Jurisprudence(fikh el-imran) and Its Sustainability

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Abstract:
Enter Preserving historic cities remains a significant challenge for specialists, particularly when it comes to classified cities that are still inhabited. Among these, the ksour of the Mzab Valley stand out as a remarkable model for studying the urban development of Islamic cities in desert environments. These settlements provide valuable insight into the influence of Islamic urban jurisprudence (fiqh al-imran) on the life of such cities from their origins up to the present day highlighting how this body of knowledge can be utilized to preserve the ksour and maintain their local identity.
This is evident in the role played by the Office for the Protection and Promotion of the Mzab Valley, its dedicated preservation plan, and the recommendations and objectives it has set forth to safeguard the tangible architectural heritage with its authentic, locally rooted Islamic character.
Keywords: preserved sector ;Wadi Mzb ;Urban jurisprudence ;Architectural ;Heritage Protection.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The architectural and urban development of the Maghreb region has produced a rich variety of architectural styles, both indigenous and influenced by external sources. Despite this diversity, these styles share a common foundation in the principles and rulings of Fiqh al-Imran (Islamic urban jurisprudence), which governed the planning and construction of cities in accordance with Islamic culture and religious requirements, while also taking into account the geographical context. In essence, this reflects the core of Islamic teachings and the objectives of Sharia (Maqasid al-Shariah).

The central Maghreb (Algeria) was significantly shaped by these principles, which contributed to the formation, preservation, and management of the Islamic city in the region. To this day, there remain standing examples that serve as living testimonies to this architectural philosophy examples that prioritize the relationship between humans and the built environment, rather than construction for its own sake. This philosophy organizes the relationship between all components of society (the individual, the community, and the governing authority) (Mustapha, 1999) through their shared space: the urban fabric.

A striking example of this legacy can be found in the ksour (fortified towns) of the Mzab Valley, which represent a historical continuity of Islamic architectural thought in the desert context, dating back to the 5th century AH (11th century CE) and enduring to the present day. This enduring model is rooted in the legal and architectural principles outlined in the Kitab al-Qisma wa Usul al-Araḍin (The Book of Division and Principles of Land Ownership) by Sheikh al-Farstai, a foundational source for construction-related fatwas and urban regulations. These principles have allowed the built environment of the M zab ksour to persist in its authentic form prompting a scholarly study of this ancient-modern mode.

This research addresses a fundamental question: how can we reveal the spiritual dimension and doctrinal essence of Islamic architecture, and to what extent does this essence shape Islamic urbanism from the founding of cities and their initial planning to their expansion and development? The ksour (fortified towns) of the M zab Valley present a compelling case study for such an inquiry.

2. The Importance of Fiqh al-Imran and Its Relationship to Architecture in the Central Maghreb

2.1 Definition of Fiqh al-Imran "**Urban jurisprudence " The term fiqh** in Arabic refers to deep knowledge, understanding, and insight. While it originally denoted comprehension in a general sense, over time it became closely associated with the knowledge of religion due to the elevated status of religious sciences in Islamic thought (Al-Fayruzabadi, 2009, p. 60). Linguistically, the verb faqaha (to understand) means "to grasp" or "to be perceptive," and from this comes the usage faqiha al-shaya (he understood something), which represents its root meaning (alsaadi, 2006, p. 458).

Definition of Imran (Urbanism) Linguistically, the term Imran is derived from the root amara–yamuru, which refers to construction, development, and the improvement of a place through activities such as agriculture, population growth, successful economic endeavors, and urbanization (al-Arabiyyah, 2004, p. 627). In its broader usage, Imran is a comprehensive term that encompasses all forms of human activity within a city, village, or any form of settlement (hamou, 2011, p. 04).

Urban development is not a modern phenomenon. Muslim scholars recognized its significance early on, although they referred to it using different terminologies that varied in form but were similar in meaning.

Among these scholars, Ibn Khaldun states:

"Philosophers express this by saying that man is social by nature that is, he must live in a community, which they term the city (madina) in their language. This is the essence of Imran." (IbnKhaldoun, 1858, p. 137)

2.2 *Sources of Fiqh al-Imran and Its Most Important Works*

For researchers in the field of urbanism, the primary sources of Fiqh al-Imran are the classical and modern texts that contain legal rulings related to construction, spatial organization, and urban ethics. Initially, these rulings were not compiled separately, but rather dispersed across various chapters within general jurisprudential works. It was only in later periods that they were gathered and systematized into dedicated treatises. These sources can be categorized as follows:

Specialized Treatises : These are works exclusively devoted to the legal rulings concerning construction and urban matters, which were originally scattered across traditional legal texts. Such treatises present Fiqh al-Imran as an independent discipline distinct from mainstream jurisprudence. A prominent example is the "Kitab al-Qisma wa Usul al-Araḍin" (The Book of Division and Principles of Land Ownership) by Abu al-Abbas Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Bakr al-Farstai, a scholar from the town of Farsta (in present-day Tunisia), who lived between 420 AH and 504 AH (c. 1029–1110 CE).

Hadith Literature :The books of prophetic tradition (Hadith) contain numerous narrations addressing construction-related rulings and ethical urban conduct. These traditions have profoundly influenced Islamic cities by regulating construction practices and offering normative guidance. One of the most foundational prophetic sayings in this regard is:“There shall be no harm and no reciprocation of harm” (la ḍarar wa la ḍirar)This hadith forms a legal maxim that underpins much of Islamic urban regulation (al-Banna, Al-Ilan bi-aḥkam al-bunyan [Declaration on the Rules of Construction], 1999, p. 58).

Classical Jurisprudential Works : Most classical jurists addressed urban matters such as construction, property rights, leasing, endowments (waqf), land grants (iqta), and related issues within broader chapters of legal rulings. Though often fragmented, these rulings collectively offer a substantial legal framework for urban life. Additionally, books of fatawa (legal opinions) serve as a valuable supplement to these jurisprudential texts.

Hisba Literature : The Hisba manuals dedicated significant attention to regulating the built environment within Islamic cities. These texts provide detailed guidelines for urban planning, building façades, residential privacy, and public order. They also outline the qualifications of the muḥtasib (market inspector) and his responsibilities within urban governance.

Modern Specialized Studies : In the modern period, several scholars have focused their research on recovering the urban heritage of the Islamic world and challenging orientalist interpretations that have long dominated the field. One notable figure is Muḥammad Abd al-Sattar Uthman, who conducted a detailed architectural and archaeological study of Ibn al-Ramis work, and authored another book titled “The Islamic City”, in which he explores

Fiqh al-Imran, the institution of hisba, and their relationship with Islamic architecture and the evolution of the Islamic city (Djoudi, 2013/2014, p. 34).

2.*3* Characteristics and Features of Fiqh al-Imran Islamic urban jurisprudence

Fiqh al-Imran (Islamic urban jurisprudence) shares many of the features that distinguish Islamic jurisprudence in general. Among the most important characteristics are:

Comprehensiveness and Universality Fiqh al-Imran governs all aspects of human relationships: mans relationship with God, with others, and with himself. Its rulings are all-encompassing, addressing the individual, society, and the environment in a way that leaves no dimension of life outside its scope (DJoudi, 2007).

Firm Foundations with Flexible Application Islamic urban jurisprudence is based on fixed and immutable foundations the Quran and the Sunnah. However, its application allows for flexibility through the use of maqasid al-shariah (higher objectives of Islamic law), enabling jurists to adapt rulings to context and necessity through the process of ijtihad (independent reasoning). This balance between constancy and adaptability ensures the dynamic relevance of Islamic law across time and space.

Richness and Diversity A close examination of Islamic jurisprudence reveals its richness and multiplicity of interpretations and schools of thought, all within the framework of the Sharia. This diversity is a testament to the ability of Islamic law to engage with the complexities of civilization and social development. The shortcomings observed today are not due to a failure of the Sharia to keep pace with modernity, but rather due to a distancing from its principles (Akber, 1992, p. 09).

3. Architecture of the Mzab Valley Through the Book Kitab al-Qisma wa Usul al-Araḍin

3.1 The Author and the Book: A Historical Overview

There is no precise or fully verified information regarding the exact birth date and place of Abu al-Abbas Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Bakr al-Farstai. However, he is generally classified among the tenth generation of scholars and is believed to have lived between 420 AH and 504 AH (1029–1111 CE), based on the events he witnessed and documented (Sayed Aachour and Salah Ben gerba, 2017, p. 702).

Al-Farstaiis associated with Jabal Nafusa and the village of Farsta also spelled Farsta or Farstaʾa which is located in present-day Libya. This village is known for producing several notable scholars. He was born into a family deeply rooted in religious scholarship and piety. Among the most distinguished members of his family was his father, Abu Abd Allah Muḥammad ibn Bakr, credited with establishing the Azzaba system initially an educational and ethical framework that held no political authority (Bekir, 2006, p. 25).

Abu al-Abbas and his brother Abu Yaqub Yusuf were both recognized for their knowledge, moral excellence, and asceticism. The Ibaḍihistorian al-Darjinidescribed them as:“Abu al-Abbas Aḥmad and Abu Yaqub Yusuf, the sons of Shaykh Abu Abd Allah Muḥammad ibn Bakr may God be pleased with them were both noble competitors in seeking virtue, sharing every noble trait (Alderjini, n d, p. 442). One may have surpassed the other in knowledge, the other in renunciation of worldly affairs.”

Abu al-Abbas was also known for his spiritual insight and righteous character (Al-Shammakhi, 1992, p. 89).

He passed away on Thursday, the 9th of Dhu al-Ḥijjah, 504 AH (1111 CE), in the village of Ajlu al-Gharbi, located in WadiArigh.

About the Book :This work belongs to the intellectual heritage of the Ibaḍitradition, a school of thought with a rich legacy of scholarship and legal literature. Kitab al-Qisma wa Usul al-Araḍin (The Book of Division and Principles of Land Ownership), authored by al-Farstai, is among the most important classical texts dedicated to Fiqh al-Imran (Islamic urban jurisprudence), particularly in the southern regions of the Maghreb, where environmental and sectarian specificities required tailored legal rulings.

The book presents a comprehensive legal framework for regulating urban life, land rights, and construction in desert contexts. It is structured around eight major legal themes (BakrAl-Farastai, 1997, p. 08):

- Partnership and Property Division
- Rights of Roads and Pathways

- Rights of Establishing and Constructing the Qasr (fortified settlement)
- Rainwater Irrigation Rights
- Ploughing and Cultivating Land
- Removal and Prevention of Harm
- Rights of Boundaries and Tree Planting
- Shared and Common Property Rights

This detailed legal codification reflects a profound understanding of how Islamic legal principles could be applied to specific socio-environmental contexts. It also demonstrates how architecture, land use, and social relations were shaped by a consistent ethical and legal worldview one that continues to influence settlement patterns in regions like the Mzab Valley to this day.

3.2 Study Area Description

The region under study lies within what is known as the "Shabaka" zone, which is centrally located in the northern part of the Algerian Sahara (see Figure 01). It is situated approximately 600 km south of Algiers, the capital city. Geographically, the area is bounded longitudinally between 0° 04′ and 2° 30′ East, and latitudinally between 32° and 33° 20′ North. It covers an estimated surface area of 8,000 km², stretching from the northwest to the southwest, and ranging in elevation from 300 meters to 780 meters above sea level, with the Mzab Valley itself located at an average elevation of approximately 500 meters (Zaaba, 2015/2016, p. 64).

The Mzab Valley was last classified as a "Protected Sector" in 2005 under Executive Decree No. 05-209, issued on June 4, 2005, which delineated the geographical boundaries of the protected zone of the Mzab Valley plain (see Figure 02).

Administratively, the region falls under the jurisdiction of Ghardaia Province, which shares boundaries with several neighboring provinces. The broader provincial territory is characterized by a diversity of geographic sub-regions, including plains, sandy zones, the

Shabaka plateau, and central transitional areas. The province itself extends approximately 450 kilometers from north to south, and 200 kilometers from east to west, with a total surface area of 86,560 km² (Mzab, 2025).

This environmental and spatial diversity plays a significant role in shaping settlement patterns, land use systems, and the architectural character of the region particularly within the context of traditional urban models such as those found in the Mzab Valley.

3.3 The Influence of Scriptural Provisions on Architecture in the Mzab Valley

The influence of religious thought, climate, and the regions geographical nature is clearly reflected in the urbanism of the Mzab Valley. The traditional cities are characterized by their unity: they are built on elevated plateaus, with the mosques minaret dominating the summit. Around it, narrow winding alleys spiral in concentric circles. At the base of the hill lies the marketplace, and the city is enclosed by a defensive wall interspersed with watchtowers. The location selection ensures protection against floods and water runoff. Additionally, a system of customs and norms deeply rooted in Ibadi jurisprudence derived from Islamic law governs the built environment(see Fig 1).

The founding group, known as the Circle of Azzaba, begins by choosing the location of the mosque and initiating its construction. They then delineate the citys boundaries and construct the wall and towers. Residential buildings are erected around the mosque, and the street layout is planned, including designated areas for markets and cemeteries, which are placed outside the city wall. This entire urban planning process is guided by four principles: Islamic teachings, social dynamics, economic functions, and environmental constraints.

3.3.1 Religious Architecture

Mosques are a manifestation of Ibadi religious thought. Ibadis, known for their strict adherence to religious principles, construct mosques at the heart of the city, typically atop a hill, featuring a pyramid-shaped minaret (DJoudi, 2007, p. 20). Adjacent to the mosque are ablution areas and spaces for childrens education. Above the mosque are storage areas, rooftops, and the council (halkat) of Azzaba (Tamenayt) (Bekir, 2006, p. 113). The layout follows the architectural typology of mosques with columns and supports, with prayer halls

expanded as needed. The open courtyard is essential due to climatic conditions. Multiple mihrabs may be found in some mosques. Typically, there is a central congregational mosque and smaller prayer spaces for neighborhood units (see Fig. 2).

The Ancient Mosque of Ghardaia (see Fig. 4) is located at the summit of the hill over which the citys buildings cascade. It dates back to the founding of Ghardaia in 447 AH / 1053 CE and holds great historical and architectural value. Though it has undergone several transformations, documents indicate land donations and property transfers related to its expansion (Tarchaoui, 2006/2007, p. 92).

Sheikh Abu al-Abbas Ahmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Bakr al-Farstayioutlined several legal rulings regarding mosques, including the prohibition of demolition if the mosque is within the sacred boundary (ḥarim) and at risk from enemies. He also discussed issues like mosque endowments and construction on private property. Despite these legal concerns, the mosques sanctity among Mzabi society means that disputes are rare. In expansions, older mihrabs are preserved, as in the cases of the ancient mosques of Ghardaia and Beni Isguen.

3.3.2 Civil Architecture

Housing is the fundamental component of the ksour (fortified villages), designed with respect to privacy, family cohesion, Islamic legal objectives, and adaptation to the harsh Saharan environment. Dwellings include horizontal openings to maximize light and warmth in winter and maintain coolness in summer (see Fig. 3).

Homes in Ghardaia and Beni Isguen share common architectural elements: entrance vestibules (teskift), central courtyards (amas n tedart), rooms, rooftop corridors (ikomar) (Djoudi, 2013/2014, p. 110), and façades. The main façade includes a door, threshold, and small openings, usually limited to a single window above the entrance. The threshold, elevated by 10 cm, blocks reptiles and insects. Drainpipes (soufir) made of palm wood or clay were traditionally used to collect rainwater. While modern use is limited to rainwater disposal, the principle of not harming neighbors or passersby remains (standard size: 50 cm long, 10 cm diameter).

Al-Farstayiaddressed numerous rulings concerning housing in his chapter on the ksour. These rulings remain largely applicable today. He stressed the importance of not obstructing

sunlight from sunrise to sunset, not overlooking neighbors privacy, and requiring permission to open windows. Any structure causing harm must be removed (see Fig. 4).

All Mzab Valley towns feature three types of roads: main streets, open alleys, and dead-end alleys. Roads are often roofed or curved, following the topography of the hill. For instance, Beni Isguen contains ascending stair-like streets and flat, semi-circular streets connecting east and west around the mosque (see Fig. 5). Narrow streets provide shade throughout the day, while covered, winding streets shield from winds and sandstorms.

Al-Farstayi also discussed road-related jurisprudence, including public right-of-way. Streets are kept clean and unobstructed. Social changes have altered traditional uses such as wood carriers and water suppliers though the principles remain. He also examined issues related to drainpipes, particularly their potential to cause harm.

3.3.3Defensive Architecture

A defining feature of the ksour is their strategic defensive location, essential from the outset of urban planning. Defensive elements include walls, gates, and towers.

There are two types of walls: independent outer walls, as seen in Beni Isguen and Ghardaia, and walls formed by the solid rear façades of houses, as in El-Atteuf (Bouras, 2001/2002, p. 35). Al-Farstayidiscussed walls in his rulings on new ksour, stating their size depends on the settlements area and communal agreement. This is evident in city expansions, such as Beni Isguen, which now has more than one wall e.g., the middle wall.

City gates are critical for connecting the city to the outside world, facilitating trade and movement. However, they also represent vulnerabilities, which necessitated fortification. In Beni Isguen, there are five gates two main ones and three smaller exits (kharrajat), each leading to specific areas (see Fig. 3).

These examples represent only a small sample of the architectural wealth of the Mzab Valley, in the broader context of Saharan architecture.

3. Preserving Architectural Heritage through the Jurisprudential Rulings of Urbanism

Although these rulings emerged as early as the 5th century AH (11th century CE), many of them remain relevant for managing and preserving architectural heritage. Sheikh Abu al-Abbas Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Bakr al-Farsatimentioned several general rulings regarding doors and entrances. For instance, he stipulated that the maintenance of doors, locks, and entryways is the collective responsibility of the qasr (fortified town) inhabitants. He even dedicated a legal case (masala) to the matter of the town gate, explaining what is permissible regarding its use and what is required from the community to preserve their security. According to these rulings, no door should be relocated or opened without the unanimous agreement of the towns residents.

This practice is still evident in Beni Isguen (Beni Yezguen), a densely populated communal qasr, which to this day contains only five gates three of which are secondary and maintains its original enclosing wall. This clearly indicates that the residents continue to observe the architectural jurisprudence (fiqh al-imara) and customary rulings specific to the region.

The surrounding wall of Beni Isguen stands as a prime example of defensive architecture, now largely lost in the Mzab Valley due to urban sprawl and the absence of the ḥalqat al-azzaba a religious council that once acted as a supervisory authority akin to the ḥisba. If the sanctity (ḥarim) of the walls in these towns had been preserved, many of them might still be intact today. Al-Farsatiexplicitly addresses cases involving houses adjacent to or abutting the town wall. In cases where part of the wall collapses, it becomes the duty of the adjacent homeowner to restore it to its original condition. Likewise, it is incumbent upon the majority to remove any harmful elements such as dirt or waste that may compromise the walls stability. Interestingly, the author makes no mention of towers, which implies their absence in his era.

Construction Materials Al-Farsatimakes only passing references to building materials in his work, without devoting dedicated chapters to them. These mentions occur within rulings related to the reconstruction of walls, houses, and roofs. For instance, regarding roofing, he rules that if the parties agree on specific materials, they may use them; otherwise, they must adhere to the local custom (urf) and materials traditionally used in the area such as stone, lime, or timber. If no agreement is reached, a decision is to be made by trusted and righteous members of the community.

He also mentions materials used during his time, such as palm fronds, wood, clay, and gypsum. In one case, he describes a scenario in which two individuals share a building one occupying the ground floor and the other the upper level. In such a situation, the lower resident owns the internal components (palm fronds, beams), while the upper resident owns the exterior materials (clay, plaster). If the ceiling collapses and the upper resident repairs it, the lower resident must reimburse the cost and vice versa.

Contemporary Implementation and Challenges Many rulings derived from this foundational work continue to influence building practices. However, several others are no longer implemented. For example, rulings prohibiting the random opening of shops and commercial spaces have been replaced by administrative directives from the Office for the Protection and Promotion of the Mzab Valley and local government authorities in Ghardaia Province.

Some rules remain partially applied, such as those concerning the repair of leaning or deteriorating walls, where the responsible party should be charged with the cost of restoration. Unfortunately, this is not always enforced, as evidenced by deteriorating homes that pose a danger to pedestrians (see Figure 04).

Nonetheless, the Office for the Protection and Promotion of the Mzab Valley has initiated several conservation efforts, including the Protected Sector Project for the Mzab Plain, various restoration initiatives, and the Permanent Preservation Plan, all based on Executive Decree No. 03-324 (dated 05 October 2003) and Law No. 98-04 on Heritage Protection.

One core aim of the Permanent Preservation Plan is to codify and enforce customary rules (urf) (Zaaba, 2015/2016, p. 198) and jurisprudential principles that were previously overseen by the azzaba council, before the authority was dismantled during the French colonial era. Notable examples from the plan include (Zaaba, 2015/2016, p. 199):

Window dimensions must not exceed 0.45–0.55 meters, must have a single shutter, and should be made from palmwood.

- Windows overlooking neighboring properties are strictly prohibited.

- Plastic curtains or blinds are to be removed.
- Door height must not exceed 1.7 meters.
- All doors must be wooden, preferably made from palmwood.
- Iron grilles (shabbakat) must be relocated to the interior side of the window.
- Each house must include a traditional ventilation system (ikomar).
- Buildings exceeding the permitted height of 7.5 to 8.5 meters must be reduced in height.
- Balconies are prohibited; only small balconies not exceeding 0.5 meters are allowed, or they must be converted into covered corridors.

These examples are drawn directly from the Preservation Plan and reflect the essence of fiqh al-imara (jurisprudence of architecture) and traditional building customs.

Furthermore, the following have been strictly prohibited:

All forms of decorative embellishments on façades, rooftops, and windows. /Use of construction materials alien to the local architectural identity.

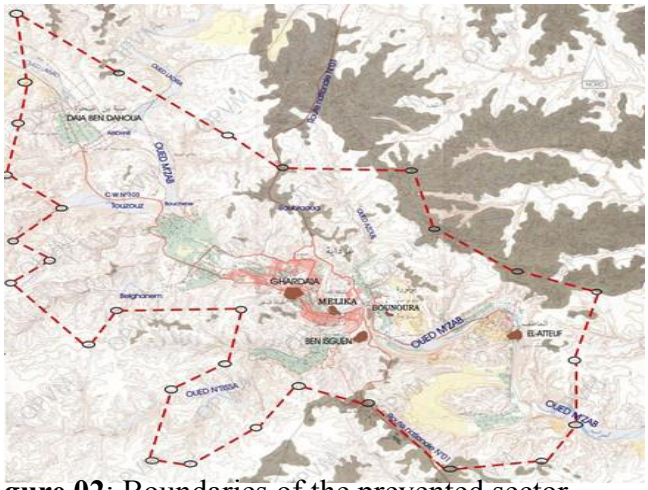
Beyond its application within preservation plans and heritage protection laws, the principles of Fiqh al-Imran (Jurisprudence of Urbanism) can be effectively integrated into contemporary urban development. This integration allows for a synthesis between tradition and modernity. A compelling example of such application is the Qasr Tafilelt (Tafilelt Housing Complex), which serves as a successful model of local architectural identity. Located less than 2 kilometers from the historic Qasr Beni Izguen (see Figure 5), this project was designed to accommodate 1,000 housing units. It stands as a deliberate response to the chaotic urban expansion witnessed in recent years and is grounded in the philosophy of "manageable spatial units."

The Tafilelt complex has achieved several key objectives, including (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 203):

- Mitigating the housing crisis.

- Alleviating urban pressure on the historic Qasr Beni Izguen.
- Preventing urban encroachment on the oasis ecosystem.

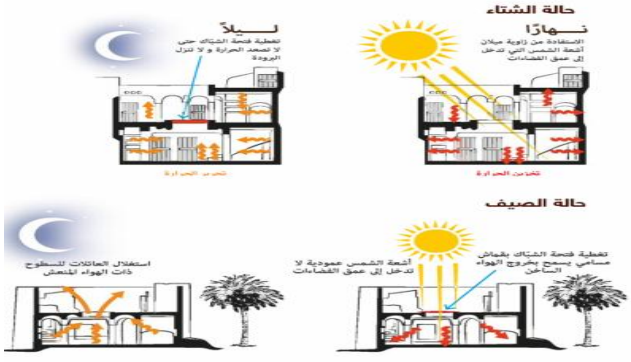
Respecting the foundational principles and customary norms of Imran in the Mzab region. By aligning with the ethical and spatial guidelines established in traditional Ibadi urbanism, particularly those codified in classical works such as Kitab al-Qisma wa Usul al-Araḍin, this project demonstrates how inherited knowledge can contribute meaningfully to sustainable urban planning today.



gure 02: Boundaries of the prevented sector of the Mzab Valley plain, as defined by Executive Decree No. 05-209 – Source: *OPVM*.



Figure 01: Geographical location of the Wilaya of Ghardaia within Algeria – Source: *OPVM*



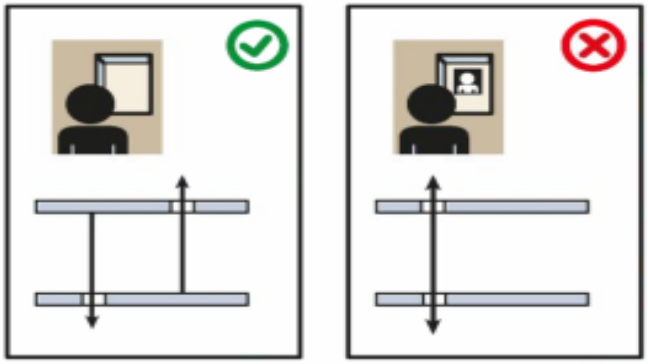


Figure 03: Illustrative diagram showing the functional role of openings between night-time and daytime spaces – Source: *OPVM*.

Figure 04: Diagram illustrating the principle of non-facing windows in the urban fabric – Source: *OPVM*.



Figure 05: Plan illustrating the pathways Ksar and marketplaces in the old city of Beni Isguen – Source: *OPVM*.



Image 01: Satellite view of the Bounoura – Source: Mohamed Djoudi.

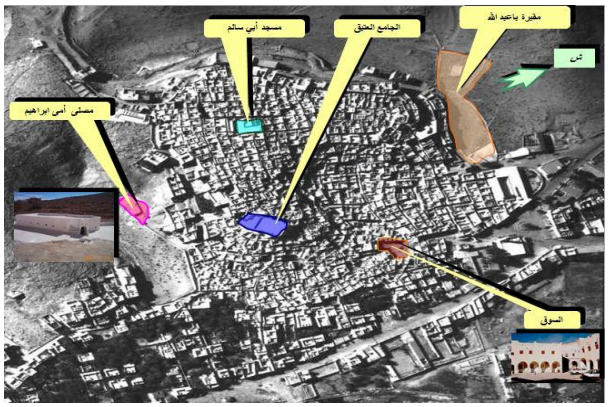


Image 02: Satellite view of the Bounoura Ksar – Source: Omar Zaâba.

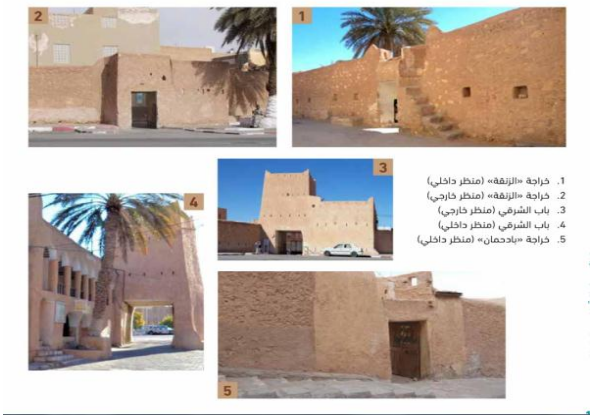


Image 03: Main gateways of the Beni Isguen Ksar – Source: *OPVM*.





Image 04: The deteriorating and endangered state of place of worship in the Ksar of Ghardaia.

Image 05: View of the Tafilalt Ksar – Ghardaia.

4. CONCLUSION

Research in this field has demonstrated the profound influence of Islamic spirit and teachings on the structure and development of the Islamic city, whether in the desert regions or in the northern areas. Islam reshaped the urban form, endowing the city with a unique identity never before seen in human civilization. This transformation manifested not only in its physical appearance but also in the values and objectives embedded within it. The Islamic city came to embody religious, social, and environmental dimensions.

This is clearly evident in the study of Islamic jurisprudence of urbanism (Fiqh al-Imran), which served as the foundation for the construction, governance, and spatial organization of the ksour (fortified cities) in the Mzab Valley. Contemporary efforts, such as those led by the Office for the Protection and Promotion of the Mzab Valley (OPVM) and its conservation plans, rely significantly on reviving traditional architectural regulations and customary building practices to address modern needs. A prime example of this can be found in the planning and development of Tafilalt Ksar.

Studying Islamic architectural heritage while disregarding its spiritual dimension leads to a perspective aligned with that of many Orientalists, who failed to grasp the essence of the Islamic city. These scholars reduced Islamic urbanism to mere geometric patterns, overlooking the deeply rooted principles of cohesion and communal harmony reflected both in the built environment and in social organization. Some, such as Bernard Lewis, even went so far as to claim that the Islamic city lacked any civic institutions. This view was echoed by Blanc-Hall and Cardet, who asserted that Islamic cities were devoid of administrative structures (Othman, 1988, p. 269).

However, these misconceptions have been challenged by numerous academic works. Noteworthy among them is Architecture and Urbanism in the Light of the Quran by Ismail

Tomi, and The Jurisprudence of Islamic Architecture by Khaled Azab, a concise yet powerful text that explores the role of Islamic legal thought in shaping urban organization.

Interestingly, some modern urban planning theories bear striking resemblance to traditional Islamic urban models. One such example is the Goodman brothers urban cluster concept (1948), which envisions a radiocentric urban layout with a core service zone, surrounded by residential areas and then green spaces. This layout mirrors the radial plan of the Islamic city, which integrates functionality, social harmony, and environmental sensitivity.

Hence, it can be concluded that urbanism in the Islamic city represents a built environment and socio-spatial fabric that align with the higher objectives (maqasid) of Islamic law, without conflicting with its rulings. This model not only preserves the legacy of historic cities but also offers a framework for sustainable and value-driven development in contemporary urban settings (Mustapha, 1999, p. 19).

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