



Tafilelt, the Neo Traditional Model of Ksour in Algeria: Assessment of the Multi-functionality of Urban Spaces

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ABSTRACT

The new ksar of Tafilelt situated in Ghardaia in southern Algeria has attracted a lot of interest in scientific work, being a « neo traditional » urban model that reproduces the principles of composition and spatial organization of the ksour in the pentapolis of Ghardaia. This ksar embodies the adaptation between tradition and modernity: it refers to the local setting of the ksourien space production, contribute to the valorization of these ancient centers that date back to the XIth century.

In parallel to the work of thesis undertaken on « the neo traditional models of reference in Algeria for the new cities », we ask the following questions according to the case of Tafilelt: Is this ksar really a model? Does it take the traditional model fully? Is this indeed a new city? In addition, speaking about the concept of multi-functionality. How to detect this integral reproduction in the urban spaces between the old and the new ksar?

This work will be an analytical reading of the spaces of this ksar according to the four concepts above, namely: the urban model of reference, the criteria of the new city, the criteria of the former ksour and the multi-use character of their spaces. We will try to apply the concept of multi-functionality on urban spaces in different scales to assess the multi-functionality of the ksar's spaces in a comparative approach between the old and the new ksour.

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1. Introduction

The M'zab Valley in Algeria contains the most ancient urban centers in the world. The Ibadite Muslims have built these fortified cities in the XI the century after running of the Rostumids from their original settlement in western Algeria ([Marçais, 2004](#)). They tried to get along with the hard climate in the Sahara and kept the ksar's houses for winter and the palm grove's houses for summer ([Addad, 2012](#)). The Mozabite built the ksour in the slope of the M'zab River to protect them from the floods. Each ksar has several entrances and surveillance towers, a

mosque in the top and a marketplace (Souk). The UNESCO listed them in the world heritage since 1982 ([Bouali-Messahel, 2011](#)).

Since the 1990s, the Algerian government constructed new ksour beyond the old cores for many reasons ([Gueliane, 2014](#)):

- Treat the crisis of housing due to the

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