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Identifying, inventorying, and documenting the Tlemcen region rural built heritage; Traras Mountains case

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M. HAMMA Walid	MCA	Univ. Tlemcen	President
M.OUSSI Mohammed Nabil	Professor	Univ. Tlemcen	Supervisor
M. AICHE Messaoud	Professor	Univ. Canstantine 3	Reviewer 1
M. HAMOUINE Abdelmadjid	Professor	univ. Bechar	Reviewer2

IDENTIFYING, INVENTORYING, AND DOCUMENTING THE TLEMCEN REGION RURAL BUILT HERITAGE; TRARAS MOUNTAINS CASE

ABSTRACT:

The Traras Mountains built vernacular heritage in the northwest region of Tlemcen district is facing natural and human threats. The loss of this kind of modest traditional construction that reflects the traditional rural culture is imminent.

Such an example of rural built heritage is made up of details and peculiarities and must be subjected to deep research to ensure its conservation or valorization. Thus, understanding and identifying resources are essential steps to understand rural heritage characteristics and potentialities.

Therefore, the thesis focuses on identifying, inventorying, and documenting the vernacular buildings' architectural characteristics to prevent the traditional knowledge from disappearing. It should also promote community awareness about these cultural resources and provide a context for their future conservation operations.

Within a conservation and valorization approach framework, it is essential to identify, inventory and document the Traras Mountains built heritage that tells rural traditional communities' history. In this regard, this study focuses on establishing a reconnaissance inquiry to identify, document, and inventory the built vernacular heritage of the Traras Mountains' region.

Our research strategy is based on a pragmatic qualitative approach developed from an exploratory perspective. This research' methodology is based on documentary research, which consisted of literature studies and readings concerning the research's key concepts. Then, thanks to the reconnaissance inquiry, the

researcher collected historical and geographical information, examined vernacular buildings, and collected qualitative data through informal talks and interviews. He has documented valuable data about spatial and functional organization, construction methods, and materials. This study's final product is conservation supporting materials such as plans, photographs, and descriptions of the Traras Mountains' rural vernacular constructions.

Keywords: Traras Mountains, rural built heritage; Vernacular architecture; Rural culture; Heritage identification and documentation; Reconnaissance inquiry.

IDENTIFICATION, INVENTAIRE ET DOCUMENTATION DU PATRIMOINE BATI RURAL DE LA REGION DE TLEMCEN; CAS DE MONTS DE TRARAS

RESUME :

Le patrimoine bâti vernaculaire des Monts de Traras, dans la région nord-ouest de la wilaya de Tlemcen, est confronté à des menaces naturelles et humaines. La perte de ce type de constructions traditionnelles modestes qui reflètent la culture rurale traditionnelle est imminente.

Un tel exemple de patrimoine bâti rural est constitué de détails et de particularités et doit faire l'objet d'une recherche approfondie pour assurer sa conservation ou sa valorisation. Ainsi, la compréhension et l'identification des ressources sont des étapes essentielles pour comprendre les caractéristiques et les potentialités de ce patrimoine.

De ce fait, l'objectif de cette thèse porte sur l'identification, l'inventaire et la documentation des caractéristiques architecturales des bâtiments vernaculaires afin d'empêcher la disparition des connaissances traditionnelles. Elle devrait également promouvoir la sensibilisation de la communauté à ces ressources culturelles et fournir un contexte pour leurs futures opérations de conservation.

Dans le cadre d'une approche de conservation et de valorisation, il est essentiel d'identifier, d'inventorier et de documenter le patrimoine bâti des Monts Traras qui raconte l'histoire des communautés rurales traditionnelles. A cet égard, cette étude se concentre sur l'établissement d'une enquête de reconnaissance pour identifier, documenter et inventorier le patrimoine bâti vernaculaire de la région des Monts Traras.

Notre stratégie de recherche est basée sur une approche qualitative pragmatique développée dans une perspective exploratoire. Elle consiste d'abord d'une recherche documentaire, qui porte sur des études et des lectures de la littérature concernant les concepts clés de la recherche. Ensuite, grâce à l'enquête de reconnaissance, le chercheur a collecté des informations historiques et géographiques, examiné des bâtiments vernaculaires et recueilli des données qualitatives par le biais de discussions et d'entretiens informels. Il a documenté des données utiles sur l'organisation spatiale et fonctionnelle, les méthodes de construction et les matériaux. Le produit final de cette étude est constitué de supports de conservation tels que des plans, des photographies et des descriptions des constructions vernaculaires rurales des Monts Traras.

Mots clés : Monts des Traras ; Patrimoine bâti rural ; Architecture vernaculaire ; Culture rurale ; identification et documentation du patrimoine ; Enquête architecturale.

كشف، حصر وتوثيق التراث المبني الريفي لمنطقة تلمسان: حـــالة منطقة جبـــال ترارة

ملخص :

التراث المبني الريفي في منطقة جبال ترارة في الشمال الغربي لولاية تلمسان يواجه تهديدات طبيعية وإنسانية والواقع أن فقدان مثل هذا النوع من المباني التقليدية المتواضعة التي تعكس الثقافة الريفية التقليدية بات وشيكا. بالتالي فإن هذه المذكرة تركز على تحديد الخصائص المعمارية للمباني الترابية وتوثيقها لتجنب اندثار هذه المعارف التقليدية. ينتظر منها أيضا أن تعزز وعي المجتمع المحلي بهذه الموارد الثقافية وأن توفر سياقا لعمليات الحفظ الممكنة مستقبلا. التراث المبني الريفي لمنطقة جبال ترارة مكون من تفاصيل وخصوصيات، ويجب إخضاعه إلى بحوث عميقة لضمان الحفاظ عليه أو تثمينه على نحو فعال، فمن الممكن فقط حماية ما يعتبر قيماً حقاً.

في سياق تعزيز التراث الثقافي الريفي بالمنطقة، يشكل تعريف وتحديد الموارد خطوات أساسية لفهم خصائص التراث وإمكاناته ومشاكله في إطار نهج فعال للحفظ والتثمين. أيضا، من الضروري جردها وتوثيق الميزات المعمارية لهذا التراث والتي تعكس بصفة ما تاريخ وثقافة المجتمعات الريفية التقليدية.

وبهذا الخصوص ركزت المذكرة على إنجاز دراسة ميدانية معمارية لتحديد، جرد وتوثيق الميزات المعمارية للتراث المبني لمنطقة جبال ترارة. في هذا الإطار، جمعت معلومات تاريخية وجغرافية، اجريت دراسات معمارية للمباني الترابية التقليدية، ووثقت البيانات المتعلقة بالتنظيم المكاني والوظيفي، وأساليب ومواد البناء. الناتج النهائي لهذه الدراسة هو مواد داعمة لعمليات الحفظ والتثمين المستقبلية مثل المخططات، الصور الفوتوغرافية وتوصيفات للعديد من المباني الريفية بجبال ترارة.

كلمات مفتاحية:

جبال ترارة، تراث مبني ريفي، هندسة معمارية ترابية، ثقافة ريفية، ميزات معمارية، دراسة معماري.

DEDICATION

To

My mother and My father

My brothers and sister

Wissem

My close friends

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I should first address praise to Allah the Almighty, who helped me and granted me the opportunity to accomplish this work.

Special thanks go to my Supervisor, *Pr. OUISSI Mohammed Nabil*, who has provided me with helpful support, guidance, and constructive feedback.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

I. INTRODUCTION:

The built heritage of Algeria is wealthy and culturally diverse. It has expressed itself in all the areas of the largest country in Africa. Whereas the Romans and Phoenicians' cities remain, Arab-Muslim cities and traditional buildings have been identified and well documented and preserved, very little attention is given to the vernacular architecture in Algeria's rural regions. Despite being humble, the Algerian rural vernacular architecture is one of the most critical components of the national built heritage, which is ignored and threatened by the development effects on the rural regions.

The "Humble heritage," mentioned here, is characterized by a modest set of ancient vernacular houses, clustered or dispersed, that were once common elements of the urban built environment[1]. The study of rural built heritage has emerged from the need for the rural community self-identification with the origins. Thus, it is seen as a resource, a source of pride and self-esteem[2]. It should encourage the inhabitant and their children to stay linked to their land.

Thus, the rural built heritage is a local identity source that should encourage the local community's participation in their region's development[3]. The international community has acknowledged the built vernacular for its high cultural values.

Amongst others, the ICOMOS charter of the built vernacular heritage (1999) has recognized this kind of architecture; it opens with the following: "The built vernacular heritage occupies a central place in the affection and pride of people. It

[1]Garcia, E. J., & Vale, B. (2017). Unraveling sustainability and resilience in the built environment. Routledge.
[2]Sandström, C. (1987) Cultural heritage as part of development strategies in rural areas, available at: http://openarchive.icomos.org/810/.
[3]Paasi, A. (2003). Region and place: regional identity in question. Progress in human geography, 27(4), 475-485.

has been accepted as a characteristic and attractive product of society. It appears informal but nevertheless orderly. It is utilitarian and, at the same time, possesses interest and beauty. It is a focus of contemporary life and, at the same time, a record of the history of society. Although it is the work of man, it is also the creation of time. It would be unworthy of the heritage of man if care were not taken to conserve these traditional harmonies, which constitute the core of man's own identity."

Also, the vernacular-built heritage is considered a resource for economic growth; Preserving and rehabilitating the rural vernacular houses can help develop regions or territories through multiple financial functions or only through tourism. It can help in the creation of jobs and other economic benefits.[4]

In Algeria, the scope of the cultural heritage conservation and valorization programs must be thus widened to include not only the heritage forms in the urban areas but also the rural regions that reflect the culture and the social values of the ancient rural communities.

So, besides Kabilya, Aurès, Dahra, and Beni-Snous regions, the Traras Mountains' region is one of the important historical and cultural areas of the Algerian territory in terms of built vernacular heritage. This region shares the vernacular architecture features with all the other societies in the world.

However, many vernacular sites and buildings were disappeared in the Traras Mountains due to the rural exodus and the replacement with modern housing types. Historical events have also played a significant role. Many old settlements and ancient houses were destroyed or abandoned during the French occupation (1830-

[4]Rypkema, D., & Cheong, C. (2011).Measuring the economics of preservation: Recent findings. A report for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation by PlaceEconomics.

1962) and the Algerian civil war (1991-2002). Despite that, many settlements and vernacular buildings still bear witness to the traditional rural way of life and how it was shaped to meet their inhabitants' needs following their local culture, knowledge, climate, and natural resources. These architectural traditions in the Traras Mountains region have been shaped by various factors, such as climate, local materials, and the specific culture and mentality. This kind of architecture can be identified with the use of the stone material and the location and position of settlements and houses that are the most in hilly terrain.

The literature review about the Traras Mountains region's vernacular-built heritage is still considered very scarce. In this context, this doctoral thesis discusses the importance of such an endangered form of built heritage and the need for practical solutions and valuable data to ensure its preservation and valorization.

To preserve this legacy, the community needs to be aware of the importance of the Traras Mountains' rural built heritage and appreciate it and collaborate to improve their local development.

Otherwise, the preservation and the valorization of these vernacular buildings, to avoid its loss and to ensure its transfer to the future generation, requires studies regarding its identification and documentation to obtain detailed information and technical materials useful during the potential future operations.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM:

The preservation of the Traras mountains' rural areas' built vernacular heritage is not within the authority's priorities. They have not created any appropriate mechanism to assist the local people in their heritage creation and valuation and

enhance their preservation knowledge. However, urban areas are a priority in terms of investment and spatial planning.

On another note, the development of the mass tourism sector continues to grow in urban areas while alternative tourism based on rural heritage items valorization is not promising. In that way, the image of the Traras Mountains provided in terms of tourism development is not attractive at present.

The general requirements in terms of valuation and heritage classification based on heritage identification work enable the rural community to develop its cultural heritage items without significant financial investment. Therefore, the Traras Mountains' built heritage must be considered by all the key actors in a local development context.

The Traras Mountains built heritage are priceless assets that bear witness of the past rural life in this cultural and historical region. However, the abandonment of rural vernacular buildings has become a common aspect all around the region. This situation has resulted from various factors; the Traras Mountains built heritage has been threatened for a long period either because of the rural exodus, agricultural industrialization, or the Algerian civil war. All of that has led to neglect, gradual deterioration, and even more seriously, destruction.

The situation of abandonment in which the Traras Mountains built heritage is currently found resulted from human and natural threats (see table1).

Table 1 : Human and natural threats influencing the Traras Mountains' Built heritage state of abandonment.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Human threats</th><th>Natural threats</th></tr>
<tr><th>Economic</th><th colspan="2">Socio cultural</th><th>Politic</th><td rowspan="5">Region's common natural threats such as Forest fires, Earthquakes, winter precipitation...etc</td></tr>
<tr><td>Long-term unemployment due to the region's economic decline.</td><td rowspan="4">Rural exodus</td><td>Dissatisfaction with the rural life; The search for a higher quality of life</td><td>French colonialization (Scorched earth policy)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lack of investment in infrastructure creation and improvement and facilities</td><td>Limited access to public services</td><td>Inappropriate development strategies</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Issues regarding agricultural land access and ownership</td><td rowspan="2">Rural regions negative image</td><td>Terrorism and security issues</td></tr>
<tr><td>The permanence of legal barriers</td></tr>
</table>

Source: Authors

The treats summarized in the table above have negatively impacted the traditional rural settlements and have caused the loss of rural built heritage that bears witness to the traditional community's traditions and cultural activities. The abandonment of rural built heritage and built traditions also impacted the natural environment, agriculture, cultural landscape, and bio-diversity[5]

Within this framework, the thesis has been undertaken to identify and document the Traras Mountains built vernacular forms and preserve them to raise the community's awareness and ensure their needs regarding technical solutions and

[5] MacDonald, D., Crabtree, J. R., Wiesinger, G., Dax, T., Stamou, N., Fleury, P., Gutierrez Lazpita, J. & Gibon, A. (2000). Agricultural abandonment in mountain areas of Europe: Environmental consequences and policy response, Journal of Environmental Management, 59/1, 47-69.

materials if conservation or valorization operations were programmed. Some questions about the Traras built vernacular heritage preservation have to be asked in the context of this thesis:

- **How can the rural built heritage, one of the major forms of heritage, contribute to the Traras Mountains region's local development?**
- **How to make the community aware of the rural built heritage as a cultural resource in the Traras mountains region?**

The questions seen above can be summed up in this central question:

- **How will it be possible for the abandoned built heritage in the Traras Mountains region to be identified and documented to be preserved and valorized within a pragmatic approach to local development?**

This thesis emphasizes identifying, inventorying, and documenting the rural built heritage to enhance the Traras Mountains' rural community living conditions. Although it is a vulnerable and poorly exploited territorial resource, rural heritage may constitute a source of wealth and funding that enables the Traras Mountains rural areas to develop and preserve their identity.

III. RESEARCH PROPOSITION:

According to the pragmatic approach: "any hypothesis may be admissible, in the absence of any special reasons to the contrary, provided it be capable of experimental verification and only in so far as it is capable of such verification"[6], and taking into account that the impossibility of such a rigorous verification in the case of our research question, the research is led to be more focus on obtaining the

[6] Campbell, P. L. Op. cit., p.52

necessary information to answer the research questions and to orient our methodology toward the identification of what may be seen as practical and valuable over time. The formulation of the research proposal Is, therefore, done to ensure helpful answers.

So, it is convinced that it is necessary for the Traras Mountains built heritage preservation and valorization approach to local development to identify the potential resources and their cultural significance. The inventorying and documenting of the built heritage may significantly enhance the local communities and the decision-makers understanding of their heritage. Hence, it is vital to examine, study, and document the rural architecture of the Traras Mountains to develop a database used in the preservation operations.

Based on the identification, inventorying, and documenting of the rural built heritage of the Traras Mountains region and taking advantage of the declining situation led by the current context of economic globalization, preservation, and valorization approach is crucial to call on the region's cultural resources (built heritage) and to cope with the economic globalization effect within a framework of a bottom-up local development approach. Such an approach should be based on creating public awareness about the Traras Mountains' built heritage cultural significance and integrating the different stakeholders' groups in decision making.

IV. THE RELATION WITH THE MAGISTER DISSERTATION:

It is essential to mention that this doctoral thesis results from a doctoral formation that proceeded in the university Abou Bekr Belkaid of Tlemcen. The purpose is to provide training in teaching and higher education, research, expertise, and higher-level supervision in various economic and social lifesectors. The cycle of this doctoral

formation is organized in two stages, including studies for the Magister diploma, which focuses on the researcher's introduction to the scientific research domain, followed by preparing a doctoral thesis in the same field of research7 with more firmness in terms of research objectives.

According to these directives, this doctoral thesis followed the Magister dissertation on the Traras Mountains' rural heritage. However, the doctoral dissertation is designed to be original and contribute, in a significant way, to resolving socio-economic problems[8].

As stressed by the curret regulations concerning the doctoral formation, the doctoral thesis must necessarily contribute to knowledge or lead to new applications9. The researcher covers the same topic as the Magister dissertation but with a pragmatic objective and with more appropriate methodological tools to be in line with these directives. It focuses on developing the methodological aspect and producing more practical and helpful information to provide urgent solutions regarding the Traras Mountains' rural heritage conservation and valorization problems.

This doctoral thesis's originality is ensured by the proposition of a new research question, more attached to the pragmatic approach to research. It is also ensured by the methodological proposed tools to guarantee more firmness in this new application. More information about the difference between the two works is presented in the table above (table 2).

[7]Ibid.,

[8]Op. cite., Art. 52

[9]Ibid.,

Table 2 : Comparaison between the Magister dissertation and the current Doctoral thesis.

	Magister dissertation		Doctoat thesis
Thesis title	The Tlemcen rural heritage; the lost dimension, Traras mountains house case		Identifying, inventorying and documenting the Tlemcen region rural built heritage; Traras mountains case.
Search problem	With the objective aiming at the valorization of the traditional rural built environment, can we consider, the traditional rural house of the Traras Mountains region, main component of the built environment, as heritage? Does it have heritage values?		How can the rural built heritage, one of the major forms of heritage, contribute in the local development of the Traras Mountains region? How to make the community aware about the rural built heritage as cultural resource in the case of the Traras Mountains region? How it will be possible for the rural built heritage in the Traras mountains region to be identified and documented in order to be preserved and valorized within the framework of a local development approach?
Research paradigm	Logical positivism; based on the formulation of a research hypothesis and its verification. (Very important problems were later noted in term of research paradigm)		Pragmatic paradigm
Research methodology	A very poor methodology; mainly based on observations and informal interviews.		Documentary research Identifying, inventorying inquiry Informal talks.
Number and component chapters	01	The heritage concept, historic development and importance	Cultural heritage identification as a major step towards local and territorial development.
	02	Rural heritage and the traditional house	Rural heritage identification, conservation and valorization challenges within a local and territorial development approach
	03	Rural traditional house in Algeria	Identifying the Traras Mountains region and its potentialities in terms

			of vernacular built heritage
	04	Heritage and rural traditional house in the case of the Traras mountains region	Identifying, inventorying and documenting the Traras mountains region's rural built heritage within a preservation and valorization approach to local and territorial development.
Research findings		**3 traditional houses** were the only studied case. The houses were described in terms of their functional components and construction materials. A values typology of the Heritage and rural traditional house of the Traras mountains region	**Documentary research** findings, which consisted on the identification of the research region historic, natural and sociocultural potentialities. **Windshield survey** and web mapping survey findings, which lead to the elaboration of the inventory of villages, hamlets and isolated houses. More than 1600 locations were identified. Deep survey findings, **32 samples** were surveyed and documented through drawings and photos. A preservation and valorization approach proposal.

V. STUDY SIGNIFICANCE:

The significance of this study is expressed in two points, which can be theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this research work's importance is attached to the information provided about the study topic and particularly about the rural built heritage and the studied region. Practically, this thesis significance is associated with the collection of outcomes beneficial for the readers in the first place and then for all those who are related to rural heritage preservation and valorization. The practical significance of this study can be summarized as follows:

- It produces relevant outcomes that consist of helpful and valuable information and practical actions to preserve and valorize the rural built heritage in the Traras mountains region.
- This research thesis is also important because it contributes to changing the present situation by raising awareness and the community's appreciation about their rich heritage and providing necessary technical information about the buildings' architecture if any conservation or valorization program is scheduled.

VI. OBJECTIVES:

Within the pragmatic research approach, the objectives of this thesis are, therefore:

- Raise the community awareness and appreciation of the Traras mountains-built heritage through the identification, inventorying inquiry, and information documentation.
- Creating a vernacular architecture database of the Traras mountains region is useful during potential rehabilitation operations.
- To propose a rural heritage conservation and valorization approach that can promote local development and suggest practical requirements in the Traras Mountains region.

VII. METHODOLOGY:

As mentioned above, this research's pragmatic philosophy was selected because it reflects the peculiar nature of our research question. The former revolved around the importance of identification, documentation, and inventory of vernacular heritage

features in the Traras Mountains region as practical and valuable steps from a local development perspective. Hence, to find evidence-based results, the pragmatic mixed method was used.

Therefore, this research' methodology is based on documentary research, which consisted of literature studies and readings concerning basic concepts such as cultural heritage, rural heritage, and vernacular architecture and their potential role in the enhancement of local development, as well as readings on rural sociology and anthropology of both, national or elsewhere in the world. The documentary research is conducted to take advantage of the information readily available to address some of the research's question aspects.

To produce practical and valuable data, the author used a method that consists only of documentary research but also of identification, inventory, and documenting inquiry, and informal talks with people met at the studied sites to know and understand more about the studied objects. The identification, inventory, and documentation inquiry consisted of the following:

- The windshield inquiry: this preliminary step is conducted to overview the entire study areas using a car and research and record preliminary information about the vernacular settlements and the vernacular houses' general nature and locations.
- The in-depth inquiry, Which is the major component of the inquiry work, is carried out in the most relevant sites and allowing gathering more accurate information about the vernacular buildings' architectural features, which is presented as building descriptions according to their type, functional component, and material and construction techniques. The information was

revealed when inquiring vernacular houses were noted and photographed then sketched.

- Web mapping: For more details about the study area, satellite photos were also used to study the Traras Mountains region regarding settlements and vernacular house location, distribution, natural and topographical features. In the course of the research, documents, plans, maps of existing and non-existing buildings were used to provide a relevant aspect of the inquiry.

The identification, inventory, and documenting inquiry, conducted between August 2017 and June 2019, has covered all the rural areas of the Traras Mountains region to identify and document all the built vernacular features.

VIII. THESIS STRUCTURE:

To produce practical and valuable results, to contribute to the enhancement of the research region's local development based on rural built heritage, the thesis tries to combine the finding of the documentary search and the identification, inventorying, and documenting inquiry results.

The thesis shows how the built heritage in the Traras Mountains region be identified and documented to constitute and produce a practical and valuable finding that can help preserve and valorize this kind of heritage within the framework of a local development approach.

Therefore, the thesis is composed of Five (5) steps. The three first chapters result from the documentary research and present, in certain parts, some of the theoretical concepts characterizing our subject and determining the nature of the relationships

between them. That orientates our thesis theoretically and elucidate the purpose of the research. It should also provide initial answers to our research questions.

The practical section of this thesis consisted of the identification and documentation work of the Traras Mountains heritage, elaborated to ensure the preservation and the valorization of this heritage, which is proceeded in the last step of this thesis.

The first chapter of this thesis is entitled: **rural heritage as a major form of cultural heritage: theoretical framework** consisted of the first part of the documentary research results. It enables the researcher to answer the primary questions and provide necessary elements for the understanding and identifying the cultural heritage concept, its significance in terms of values, and the identification of its potentialities in terms of local and territorial development. This first chapter also emphasizes the rural heritage concept and its importance as a significant cultural heritage concept.

The second chapter, entitled: **identification and documentation of cultural heritage resources as necessary steps for a local development strategy,** also makes part of the documentary research results and contributes to the research questions answering. It contributes to identifying the rural culture, the rural heritage, and the main challenges of rural heritage conservation and valorization within a local and territorial development approach. This second chapter is developed to raise rural community awareness by identifying and presenting rural heritage preservation and valorization challenges.

The third chapter entitled: **Identifying the Traras Mountains region (Northwest of Algeria) and its potentialities in terms of vernacular built heritage,** also makes

part of the documentary research results. It contributes to answering the research question and identifying and understanding the research region's potentialities in terms of culture, nature, urban and rural heritage.

The fourth chapter, entitled: **Traras Mountains rural built heritage features identification, documentation, and inventory: Paradigmatic positioning and methodological tools,** aims at the presentation and the discussion of the paradigmatic positioning and the methodological tools.

The fifth chapter, entitled: **Traras Mountains rural built heritage features identification, documentation, and inventory: findings, analysis, and interpretations,** consisted of the most crucial part of the research work, which can be comparable to the three (3) first chapters in terms of their elaboration efforts. It presents the practical results of identifying, inventorying, and documenting inquiry and preserving and valorizing approach proposals.

CHAPTER 01: RURAL HERITAGE AS A MAJOR FORM OF CULTURAL HERITAGE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction:

In this first chapter, we deal with the great interest of the cultural heritage notion, traditionally presented as a reference tool to the past. The heritage interest has been developed in reaction to its depreciation and destruction risk, from vandalism to the period during which monuments were more often reused to build other kinds of construction projects rather than protected.

This first chapter also focuses on the historical development of the cultural heritage notion. To ensure better preservation of the cultural heritage, charters and laws have been created and developed to identify, inventory and documents to protect the national or international cultural attributes. Heritage became, therefore, a cultural and social richness expressed in various forms through a given country and associated with its specific identity.

Cultural heritage refers to the collections of works and traditions derived from a historical heritage that involves heritage values. This concept has evolved significantly from its first definition to the present day. At first, it was built in a very progressive way. With time, it was enriched with new aspects, going from the only monument approaches to monuments surroundings consideration then to sites, territories, landscapes, and finally to a modest heritage valorization.

Therefore, this chapter present the evolution of cultural heritage notion, which has gone beyond the cultural definition to embrace new fields, includes new areas, new categories, and gives us a new way of perceiving these goods, valuing them, and integrating them into our daily lives.

In this regard, the chapter stresses the rural heritage notion, which is one of the major components of the cultural heritage notion that has been progressively enriched over the last two centuries. The rural heritage began to attract attention in reaction to the disappearance of traditional lifestyles. It began to be assessed with

more openness and extended to include all forms and uses that testify to rural communities' traditional lifestyle and the relationship with the rural space.

Thus, this first chapter is composed of two main headings; cultural heritage and rural heritage concepts. The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the notion of cultural heritage and to define its perimeter. It also study the rural heritage notion, its different dimensions, and its potential contributions.

1. Cultural heritage.

The heritage as understood here has little to do with isolated historical monuments as objects for contemplation, to which he referred to the last few decades. Today it refers to a cultural space full of historic meanings appropriated and transformed by a given community to shape their living environment. It is in a specific territory that the local or regional development stakes are played out. While we try to ensure community revitalization depending on its strengths and innovation capacity, heritage emerges as a valuable resource. It is at the same time a living framework, benchmark of identity, and economic deposit.

Thus, as a lever for local development, cultural heritage must be first defined and considered in its entirety. Although heritage issues may be perceived as restricted to a specific field, they are increasingly being interpreted by people from all walks of life. This situation is closely linked to the very notion of heritage evolving for the last decades. The heritage notion refers today to a much more complex reality and reflects societal issues.

1.1. Heritage definition:

Some important researches that have studied the heritage notion have fixed the last two decades as the period in which heritage has taken the meaning that we know today. It is, more than whenever, at the heart of the current events. It raises many questions and passions, which is not surprising for a sector playing on the sensitive cord of community belonging, identity, and memory. They can be considered stakeholders when standing up for cultural diversity on the same scales, local and global. In this context, it is necessary to question the actual place of heritage in modern society.

Similarly, it can be seen in all the industrialized countries in which heritage constitutes a veritable social phenomenon. Before this period, the heritage was

reduced to historical monuments with extraordinary features, and its protection was ensured only by the state institutions. The protection attempts are made to preserve the nation's cultural treasures with the commemorative value that evokes its greatness.

Many dictionaries state that the noun heritage comes from the French language and which it comes from ecclesiastical Latin "Hereditare," from Latin "Heris," "Hered," which means inherit. On an individual level, the heritage term refers thus to the inheritance concept and the economic valuation of assets. It is defined as the history, traditions, and buildings that a country or society has had for many years. It is considered an essential part of its identity.

UNESCO defines the heritage notion as practices, representation, expressions, knowledge, skills, instruments, objects, artifacts, and associated cultural spaces related to them- that communities, groups, or individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage[10]. This definition, presented by the most important heritage preservation organization, goes beyond materiality to present the heritage's abstract and invisible aspects. Indeed, heritage cannot be limited to its material dimension because, furthermore, it represents an intangible and observable entity, transmissible by ideas, history of places, people life stories, and local population traditional rituals and habits.

In simple language, the heritage terms refer to the common goods of a social group that has been transmitted from one generation to another. Different language dictionaries consecrate the term's cultural meaning alongside its juridical meaning, including the totality of the person's economic rights and obligation.

[10]UNESCO, (2003), Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, Ar. 2.

Consequently, heritage can refer to all the tangible and the intangible elements that contribute to maintaining the identity and the person's time and space autonomy and that through adaptation in the evolving environment.[11]

The heritage crystallizes cultural values, identifies anthropological origins, and provides identity refuges hidden in territories[12]. The consideration of such a resource means the renewal of the place's memory and local culture recognition. However, its negligence is a loss of identity. Without heritage, it is difficult to identify and to be attached to a place.

Also, heritage is a matter of transmission. It is one of the practices and habits that must be protected over time by its population. Likewise, heritage transmission is reinforced in an institutional and national framework to maintain and reinforce the loop ensured between the past, present, and future generations. The loop can be ensured through habits and customs, traditional local events, the protection and maintenance of the monument, and architectural style. Etc. Therefore, the heritage can be seen as a collection of the community symbolic elements intended to be transmitted to the future generation.

1.2. Cultural heritage definition:

Cultural heritage is an expression used, for the first time, in the second half of the 20th century in international heritage conventions. This expression shows the evolution of a born concept following the enlightenment period linked to the great interest of objects in terms of their historical and artistic value.

Dictionaries do not explain cultural heritage. However, it is possible to deduce the expression's meaning: transmitting the memory through objects. This transmission is done between generations in the same family or country and refers to the community

[11]Ollagnon, H. (1989). Une approche patrimoniale de la qualité du milieu naturel. *Du rural à l'environnement, la question de la nature aujourd'hui*, p.266, pp.258-268.
[12]Di Méo, G. (1994). Patrimoine et territoire, une parenté conceptuelle. *Espaces et sociétés,* (4), 15-34.

identity. Inheritance and identity are, therefore, two essential concepts linked the cultural heritage meaning. Most of the cultural heritage definitions underpin the idea of a community cultural identity that produced objects, habits, and traditions and spoke languages or developed rites.

The concept of cultural heritage results from a two-term association, heritage, and culture, whose meaning has evolved in line with societal changes. To define this binomial, it is necessary to delimit the meaning of each one of the two terms. Heritage has been defined in the first section of this chapter. The second part of the expression that we try to define is the term culture which is complex and continuously evolving. Historically, the term culture has been applied almost exclusively to arts, literature, philosophy, and science during the age of enlightenment (17th to 19th century). Since then, the concept of culture has been developed to be opened up to different ways of life and thoughts. The term has social, economic, psychological, anthropologic, and religious aspects evolving during different historical periods.

The UNESCO established, in 1982, a definition of culture that expresses not only the scope of the term but also its relationship with the essence of the human being. This cultural organization defines the culture as the complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes the arts and letters and modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions, and beliefs; that it is a culture that gives man the ability to reflect upon himself. It is a culture that makes us specifically rational human beings endowed with critical judgment and a sense of moral commitment. It is through the culture that we discern values and make choices. Through a culture in that man expresses himself, he becomes aware of himself, recognizes his

incompleteness, questions his accomplishments, seeks untiringly for new meanings and creates works through which he transcends his limitations[13].

The UNESCO organization's culture definition has established a broad framework that encompasses artistic and literature production and the lifestyles, customs, values, and beliefs that characterize a community.

Within this framework, the cultural heritage concept includes the tangible realization that results from arts, painting, sculpture, decorative arts, architecture, etc. and the so-called intangible heritage that reflects the community's values beliefs.

Therefore, the concept of cultural heritage includes movable and immovable objects with artistic and historical values and ethnographic heritage, which reveals a community's way of life in the past. The cultural heritage can also include, among other, industrial heritage that has preserved, through history, the forms of mass production during the Industrial Revolution.

It is essential to consider that the concept of cultural heritage has not also been so broad and what it represents today has been the result of a long period of evolution following the culture notion meaning development.

1.3. Cultural heritage significance:

Usually, people do not engage in an object's conservation operation without presenting significant aspects and values (Fig.1). Because of its high values, human encourages safeguarding and preserve the cultural heritage that expresses the historical importance and the identity features of a given community. Cultural heritage can also have aesthetic, symbolic, spiritual, or historical meanings. It is thus crucial for the community to identify all the values of their cultural objects.

[13] Mexico City declaration on cultural policies.

Usually, it is not easy to assess a given cultural heritage object's significance without knowledge and experience in heritage valuing and in many fields like archaeology, architecture, urban planning, anthropology, and other relevant sciences. However, specific criteria must be determined to decide about the significance of cultural objects and if they can be called “heritage” and preserved after that.

In this context, cultural significance means the importance of a site or a potential heritage object as determined by heritage experts and following a set of values assigned to it. However, conservation operation was always being initiated because of the significance based on the existence of specific values. No person or community accepts to grant money and makes efforts to conserve something that do not present values.

However, cultural heritage identification and assessment is not an easy task. It presents many difficulties, such as the diverse nature of heritage values and the fact that those values change over time and depend on social and economic factors (subjectivity). In the cultural heritage values identification and assessment, a potential heritage object or site can simultaneously have multiple and different values. It can be historical and, at the same time, beautiful and spiritual.

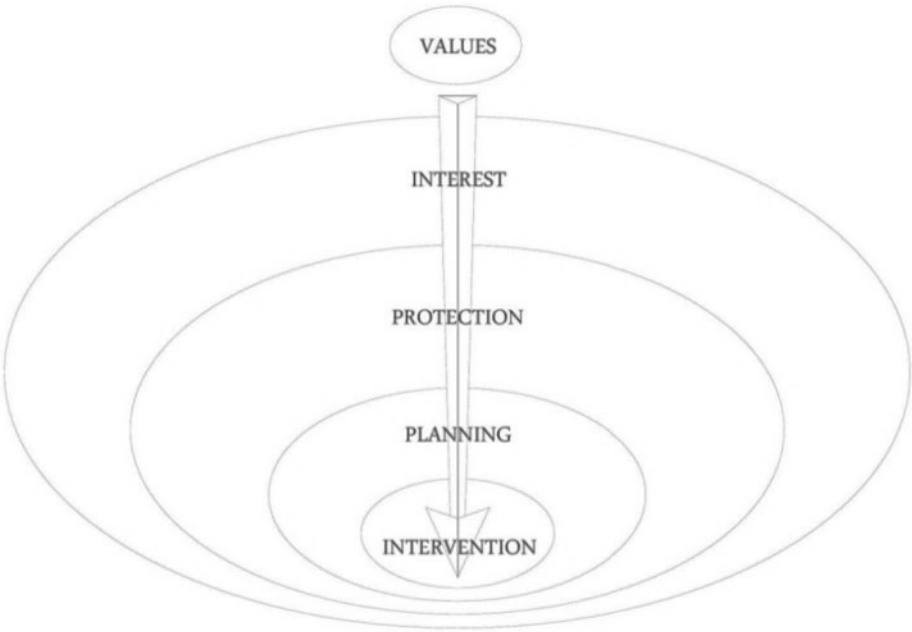

Figure 1: different practices of the conservation concluded by the operations and initialized by the cultural significance and the heritage values. Source: Erica Avrami, Randall Mason, Marta De La Torre, Values and heritage conservation, Research report, the Getty publications, Los Angeles, 2000

The assessment of cultural heritage significance is, therefore, an essential step in any heritage conservation operation. Heritage valuing started to make sense over a century ago thanks to Alois Riegl (1958-1905) and his book published in 1903 and titled “the modern cult of monuments.” It presented the result of his experience regarding Autrichien cultural heritage conservation and still provides a valid framework for studying the cultural significance of potential heritage objects. For this author, the monument concept involves a set of values. Riegl has distinguished the two most evident values first in the past, particularly from the 15th century in Italy and today in the cultural heritage significance assessment. Historical and artistic values: “Historical value is apparently the broader issue, and therefore we will give it a priority. Everything that has been and is no longer what we call historical, following the modern notion that what has been can never be again and that everything that has been constituted an irreplaceable and irremovable link in a chain of development…There is also a purely artistic value independent of the particular place

a work occupies in the chain of historical development in all prior art. It is "art value" just as present as the historical value in the past…[14]

The author of "The modern cult of monuments" shows that those two traditional values can be included in two primary and big categories: memory values that form the historical value and the artistic value that make part of the present-day values (Tab.1). The memory values are attached to the past and are about psychological and intellectual needs. The present-day values are related to artistic and use needs[15]. Riegl has presented three memory values that have appeared successively, and each one has introduced the other:

- ***Age value:***

It is one of the author's most essential and original contributions which expresses the value that an object can take on overtime: "The category of monuments of age-value embraces every artifact without regard to its original significance and purpose, as long as it reveals the passing of a considerable period."[16] It can be summed up in all kinds of alterations that bear witness to the passing and the action of time. The age value can even be detected on unalterable objects, such as gold and glass objects or precious stones by their antique style.

- ***Historic value:***

The historic value views the monument as a representative of a particular historical period or a precise moment in history: "The class of historical monuments is enlarged to include those, which still refer to a particular moment, but the choice of that moment is left to our subjective preference."[17] All objects or monuments having this value and be also considered to have an age value.

[14]Riegl, A. (1982). The modern cult of monuments: its character and its origin. *Oppositions*, (25), 20-51. p. 37, 39.
[15]Barassi, B., 'The Modern Cult of Replicas: A Rieglian Analysis of Values in Replication', in Tate Papers, No. 8, Autumn 2007, Retrieved from: https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/08/the-modern-cult-of-replicas-a-rieglian-analysis-of-values-in-replication, accessed 5 June 2020.
[16]Reigl, A., *op., cit.*, p. 66.
[17]*Ibid.*, p. 73.

- ***Intentional commemorative value:***

It is the value initially allocated to the monument by its creator to commemorate an event, passing it to future generations and keeping it perpetually alive. According to Alois Riegl, and unlike the memory value, the present-day values did not wait for modern time to be developed and considered; they have always been the reason for almost all the human achievements' existence. Therefore, the present-day value can be incompatible and opposed to the age value but closely linked to the intentional commemorative value. It has been the expression of a present eternal ambition.

It seems clear that the heritage objects acquire a deep existential legitimacy at the time of their creation. They will be loaded with interest that current events have renewed over centuries and divert from their initial function to new social roles. For this point, Alois Riegl has established the second group of values (present-day values, which resulted from the satisfaction of practical and aesthetic needs.

- ***Use value:***

This value is attached to the functionality of the monument, and its potential everyday uses. It can be assigned to a monument that can be accommodated with a new function and be useful to the community. This is usually possible in architectural creations, unlike archaeological remains that cannot be invested. The use-value is generally incompatible with the age value.

- ***Art value:***

It may be objected that the art addresses the senses, or the mind, but still through senses. The distinction between material and spiritual values remains relevant. Art value is attached to old artistic works of art that have remarkable aesthetic qualities. According to Alois Riegl, Art-value can be subdivided into:

  - ***Newness value:***

Most people can appreciate this value. It is the characteristic of a complete and new artwork that tends to be seen as beautiful by the masses. The newness value is often incompatible with the age value and the time marks that affect the work's integrity. The more the monument is intact, the more is precious.

- ***Relative art value:***

The aesthetic professionals can only appreciate this value and in contrast with the newness value. It results from the contemplation and appreciation of the former people's creations, which requires preserving those works in their original state. The cultural heritage values, which are the same as the Alois Riegl monument values by extending their sense, can be resumed in the next table (Tab.1).

Table 3: all the Alois Riegl values summed up.

Memory values	Present-day values
• **Age value** • **Historic value** • **Intentional commemorative value:**	• Use value • Art value ▪ Newness value ▪ Relative art value

Source: De La Torre, Marta, Mason, Randall, 2002, assessing the values of the cultural Heritage, Research report, Los Angeles: the Getty publications, p. 09.

Riegl's contribution and even though it dated a century ago, is among the most comprehensive in assessing cultural heritage. Since and with the multiplication of the heritage forms, other authors have taken new values into account. William Lipe (1984) has contributed to the refinement of the cultural heritage value typology. In his work, this author titled: Value and meaning in cultural resources tries to explore how antique cultural objects can be valuable and beneficial for society and can therefore be considered a resource and saved after that. In this context, Lipe has introduced

four (4) values; if found in cultural material, it should be considered as a resource and preserved as cultural heritage.

- **Associational/symbolic value:**

Accordingly, it expresses the possibility that cultural material ensures tangible links with the past so that oral or written histories cannot. As stated by the author, the past connections supplied by cultural material cannot be provided by another means. This quality of cultural resources makes them potent as symbols of the past[18]

- **Informational value:**

This value results from the cultural material significance in terms of information content. It can provide valuable information and permit various formal studies to produce knowledge about the cultural material creation process and use and other potential information.

- **Aesthetic value:**

The author highlighted this value and described it as being subjective: it emerges from the human psyche. It can differ from one specific culture to another and influenced by some traditional style and beauty standards.

- **Economic value:**

Cultural material can have economic value and exist as part of the current cultural and human environment. They have to follow the modern world's tendency and enter the marketplace. Information and aesthetic values can be translated into economic value.

Another critical stage in the development of heritage valuing came in 1998 when the ICOMOS issued the Burra Charter (Australia), which indented cultural and social values to elaborate a methodical procedure for cultural significance assessment. In

[18]Lipe, W. 1984. Value and meaning in cultural resources. In Approches to the archeological Heritage, ed. H. Cleere. New York: Cambridge UniversityPress.p. 7

the Burra Charter, cultural significance means aesthetic, historical, scientific, or social values[19].

Table 4: Typology of heritage values.

Socio-cultural values	Economic values
Historical	Use (market) values
Cultural / symbolic	Non-use (non-market) values
Social	Existence
Spiritual/religious	Option
Aesthetic	Bequest

Source: Randall Mason.

However, economic values are considered secondary compared with social and cultural values: economic values are minimized because they are derived from cultural and historical values[20]. This charter promoted a place's importance based on all the stakeholders' values and not just experts.

- **Aesthetic value:**

As the other precedents value typologies, the Burra charter has considered that this value is attached to the human senses and depends on its psyche. However, for this charter, all aesthetic interpretation needs to be framed by a set of criteria that should be stated. It can include consideration for color, scale, or form.

- **Historic value:**

The Burra charter outlined the cultural significance of a place that a historical figure or an event has influenced. It can be more critical in value if the historic event's certainty still survives in the place. For the Burra charter and in some critical cases, the historical value can stay a significant event with subsequent treatment.

[19]Burra charter, article 2.1
[20]Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage, Research Report, The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, edited by Marta de la Torre

- **Scientific value:**

This value has been outlined by Lipe(informational value) and recognized by the Burra charter as the capacity of a given place to contribute and enrich scientific research. This value also depends on the significance of information, its quality, and originality.

- **Social value:**

This value, introduced by the Burracharter, outlined the spiritual, political, national, or other cultural aspects expressed in a place. The social value facilitates social connections, not related to historical significance.

The cultural significance assessment has known another stage beginning from 2000 thanks to many economic works, particularly the Bruno Frey. The economic value has been recognized as a fundamental part of the conservation programs. Indeed, governments and public authorities required an effective and contingent method for cultural heritage evaluation to decide if and which cultural objects are worth preserving. Therefore, the author applied economic evaluation approaches and techniques in the cultural heritage field to measure its potential monetary revenue. In this context, the study has led the author to ask about values, describe and present another typology of non-use values to the public. They are existence value, option value, education value, prestige value, and bequest value.

- **Existence value:**

This value results from the mere existence of a cultural product that constitutes an integral part of community identity and expresses the bride and the satisfactory feeling that comes from it as a resource. This value can be allocated to heritage elements that, once destroyed, could never be built again; therefore, such a resource's attractiveness is valuable.

- **Option value:**

The option value is another element of Frey's typology, which refers to the possibility of consuming cultural heritage resources at some point in the future. This value reflects the worthiness of a cultural product when its owner desires to preserve the choice (option)to profit from it as a resource at a later date. The preservation of the possibility of experiencing cultural heritage in the future can be included as a value.

- **Education value:**

The educational value refers to the academic potential of cultural material. It is attached to the informational potential that can be gained about the past.

- **Prestige value:**

This value results when people know that they are the owner of a masterpiece of world heritage that foreigners highly value: the high status of this cultural object can be considered valuable and have economic benefits, particularly in tourism.

- **Bequest value:**

This value is attached to the profit and the satisfaction felt by ensuring the preservation of events related to traditions or peculiar cultural values for future generations' enjoyment.

There is a variety of heritage value categories that can have several differences. Values typologies can give a little attention to values and rise others as in the Riegl's (art history) and the Frey's (Economics). In this context, according to Randall Mason, it is possible to distinguish two main categories of cultural heritage values: socio-cultural and economic matters (Tab.2). These two categories can be seen as two overlapping ways to understand the same range of heritage[21].

- **<u>Socio-cultural values:</u>**

[21]Mason, R. (2006). Theoretical and practical arguments for values-centered preservation. *CRM: the journal of heritage stewardship*, 3(2), 21-48.

This group of values is the trigger of the conservation process and can encompass all the values allocated to a cultural object because of its social and cultural importance for individuals or social groups. These values can include historical value, artistic value, spiritual/religious value, or social value.

- **Historic value:**

They can be defined as the possibility of a cultural object to reflect the reaction to the past. It can be more or less critical, which depends on its association with the materials 'age or with a historical event. This value can also be accrued if the cultural object is unique or if it presents technological potentialities. The education value can be linked to the historical value because it is attached to the cultural heritage potential to gain educational materials about the past.

- **Cultural/symbolic value:**

The cultural value resulted from the historical significance of heritage and is an essential part of it. They can be invested in the creation of cultural affiliation.

- **Political value:**

In this typology, there is no mention of the political value and because it makes part of all the values that can be allocated to heritage. The political value expresses the heritage's potential to create civil relations, governmental legitimacy, or protesting ideological causes. It can also be used in the enforcement of a given national culture.

- **Social value:**

This value is expressed in the use of cultural heritage to permit and facilitate social connections. It encompasses the use of a cultural site for social events such as celebrations and markets.

- **Spiritual/religious value:**

Cultural heritage can have religious or spiritual values that resulted from some places' beliefs or religion.

- **Aesthetic value:**

The aesthetic value is attached to the heritage visual potentialities that can have their source in the design of buildings or objects. The aesthetic consideration can encompass all the senses and judge the value of a site for the sensory experience that it offers.

- **Economic values:**

They are a set of economic values expressed in terms of market price and measured by economic analysis. They are primarily in contradiction with socio-cultural values, which are intangible, associated with human feelings. Moreover, in the modern system, economic values contrast with sociocultural values and because people naturally prefer what is tangible. That does not prevent the economic value from remaining the most effective tool for preserving heritage goods. The economic values, according to Randal mason, can be divided into two categories;

- **Use value:**

The use-value of cultural heritage is the goods and services that can be easily expressed in price.

- **Non-use value:**

Non-use values are economic values that cannot be expressed in price. They can also be classed as socio-cultural values. This ink is because people could spend money to acquire them. They encompass existence value, bequest value, and option value.

1.3. Cultural heritage historical development:

Until a very advanced stage of our civilization, earlier societies' goods had been considered only for their use-value. Their monuments had no cultural value, and they have been chiefly demolished or reused in other more beneficial projects. The lack of awareness about such productions from the significant part of the ancient times' people did not prevent the appearance and the development of cultural interest and

the recognition of monuments as historic and aesthetic resources. That was initially during the Greco-Roman period[22].

As some historians suggest, the heritage notion's genesis can be traced far back in time to the 3rd century B.C. A cultivated elite collected antique masterpieces that the Greek territory has revealed to the country's new conquerors. The Attalids began numerous quests to collect sculptures and decorative art objects of ancient Greece. They were sought because of their exceptional qualities. It is in this context that Attalus1st has done the first known undertaken excavations in 210 B. C.[23]

However, several Greek scholars, for their part, gave importance to some monuments and have created heritage inventories. The list of the seven wonders of the ancient world, granted to Philo of Byzantium, is probably the most important[24].

During 44 B.C., the interest in heritage and artistic objects has taken a legislative form. Several senate' decrees (*SenatusConsulta*) appeared, such as those of 44 B.C., which prohibited the deposit and the sale of some decorations and ornaments.

During the Middle Ages, monuments have undergone massive destruction. The great artworks of antiquity were severely distorted[25]. Later, but still, during Middle Ages, Pope Gregory 1 start to pay attention, for economic reasons, to the monuments of Rome. Under his care, he began to maintain buildings that have been reused after: "do not destroy the pagan temples, only housed idols. For buildings, sprinkle them with holy water and place in your altars and relics."[26]

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[22]Leniaud, J-M., (2002), Les archipels du passé, le patrimoine et son histoire, Paris, Édition Fayard,p.360.
[23]Kuttner, A. (2014). Hellenistic Court Collecting from Alexandros to the Attalids.In Museum Archetypes and Collecting in the Ancient World, pp. 45-53.
[24]Philo of Byzantium; an engineer of the 2nd century B.C. described the seven wonders of the world in a manuscript entitled "Peritônheptatheamatôn", which are : The Pyramid of Cheops, The Hanging Gardens of Babylon, The Statue of Zeus, The Temple of Artemis, The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, The Colossus of Rhodes, The Lighthouse of Alexandria.
[25]Choay, F., (1992), l'allégorie du patrimoine, *Le seuil*, Paris, p.28.
[26]Grégoire le Grand d'après J.Adhemar, cité par Françoise Choay dans l'allégorie du patrimoine, page 29.

Until the renaissance period (age of rediscoveries), the historic heritage value has been firmly asserted. That was because of the people's desire to rediscover Greece's ancient culture. Under the aegis of religion, numerous papal bulls have been created to preserve the ancient monuments, such as the one of the 28th of April 1462, in which Pius II called to respect and protect ancient monuments and to forbid their deterioration. Since that, historical monuments started to be considered and renovated. The antiquity masterpieces that remained buried for a long time were finally unearthed, such as the three graces and the Apollo Belvedere discovered at the end of the 15th century, the Laocoon in 1506, the Hermes, the Farnese Hercules in 1540. The interest in the past productions, initiated during the renaissance period, will increase in the times to come.

Between the 17th and the 18th centuries, Europe has known remarkable mobility of scholars and especially archaeologists and art collectors exploring new places looking for antique Greco-Roman vestiges. However, the curiosity offices(Wunderkammer) multiplied during the same period, containing a significant quantity of Naturalia and Articialia that bear witness to the curiosity and exploration culture's dominance.

The art collections were exclusive. Until the 18th century, the Naturalia and Articialia collections were open to the public. They created the first museums: Capitoline Museum in 1734, British Museum in 1759, Uffizi Gallery in Florence in 1765, and the Pio-Clementino Museum in Rome in 1771. Since that, interest in cultural heritage has been continuously evolving.

France has played an essential part in the development of heritage awareness. 1789 was a crucial moment in heritage history, thanks to the French Revolution. Since this moment, a critical heritage appropriation process was undertaken: monarchic cultural collections were therefore considered national and common

goods. Since that, all conservation, destruction, valorization operations began to be under the aegis of government[27].

Fueled by the desire to erase the past, several destructions have marked the period. Voices and efforts against the destruction were constantly reacting. The most influential are AbbéGrégoire, who was condemning the desecration and the destruction of the heritage riches. In reaction, he writes his famous report on the destruction carried out during the French Revolution, which ends with: "let us, therefore, if it is possible, on all monuments, and let us engrave in all hearts this sentence: barbarians and slaves hate science and destroy monuments of art, free men love and keep them…."[28]

Several heritage governmental commissions were institutionalized and began to function to study the monument's situation on all countrysides[29]. Following these intentions, many museums started to open their door to the public.

In England, heritage conservation was ensured mainly by the private associations standing up for monuments beginning from 1877[30]. Those societies have played an essential role in preventing the disappearance of monuments and traditional quarters and contributed to rising consciousness about their historical importance; several historic buildings have lost their original vocations after the Industrial Revolution. The effort of those associations gave these buildings a new life and an influential role in contemporary life.

[27]Décret des biens de clergé mis à la disposition de la nation de 2 novembre 1789, Clément Benelbaz, Le principe de laïcité en Droit public français, Éditions Le Harmattan, coll. « Logiques juridiques », 2011, p. 59.
[28]Traduction of : « « Inscrivons donc, s'il est possible, sur tous les monuments, et gravons dans tous les cœurs cette sentence : les barbares et les esclaves détestent les sciences, et détruisent les monuments des arts, les hommes libres les aimes et les conservent...». TakenfromL'Abbé Grégoire, rapport sur les destructions opérées par le vandalisme, et sur les moyens de le réprimer (1794)
[29]Souchal, F., (1993), le Vandalisme de la révolution, édition nouvelles éditions latines, Paris, p. 103
[30]Donovan, A.E., (2007). William Morris and the society for the protection of ancient buildings. Pp.1-170.

Later, during the world war, monuments were the object of extensive and widespread destruction that caused more material damages than any previous conflicts. Some cities were wholly erased. In reaction to this situation, the principle that cultural heritage has to be protected was first codified in the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 concerning the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict.

Since the start of the 20th century, cultural heritage has focused on several international actors, motivated by conservation and protection concerns regarding cultural heritage. This notion's accelerated evolution has been encouraged and sanctioned by several charters and declarations at the international level. However, the need to restore what remains of the historic monuments became imposed. For this purpose, the first meeting was held in 1931, known as the Athens Conference. Experts of archaeology, architecture, and art history were all brought together to discuss the world cultural heritage situation. The Athens Conference has promoted cultural heritage awareness and defined heritage preservation's main principles. Thirty-three years later, the Venice charter resulted from an international congress of architects and technicians of historic monuments covering conservation and restoration of monuments and sites. This charter's main contributions were recognizing a modest heritage and the obligation of the documentation of all work stages with precise illustrated reports[31].

It was not until November 16th of the year 1972 that the heritage issue had finally it worldwide resonance at the 17th session of the general conference of the United Nations Educational, scientific and cultural organization (UNESCO) and in which the convention for the protection of cultural and natural heritage was adopted. After

[31]Venice Charter. Art.1

defining the cultural and natural heritage classification criteria, the convention has encouraged identifying all countries' cultural and natural heritage properties[32].

Heritage concept has known its genesis and development in the European countries[33] under several historical conditions. It has gradually gained the rest of the world thanks to the development of the international consciousness. Otherwise, in several cases, this concept's geographical expansion is also attached to scientific explorations that started in the 18th century in Europe and expanded to embrace several parts of the world.

Exploratory journeys were also undertaken in North Africa and particularly in Algeria. The Algerian territory, which has been, for long times ago, marked by the passing of different important civilizations, especially the Roman one, will know these expeditions beginning from the 17th century. For the first time, the explorations were done by individuals such as Thomas d'Arcos, René Louis Desfontaines, and Jacques Bruse, but more efficiently after the Algerian territory conquest by the French armies and more precisely after the creation of the commission of scientific exploration of Algeria on 24 August 1839[34].

Six years after creating the French commission of historical monuments, the Algerian scientific commission is created to symbolize the direct transfer of the French approach in the Algerian territory[35], after noting the Algerian territory's cultural richness, Amable Ravoisié, an architect from the Paris School of fine arts and Ad.H.AL. Delamare, military, draftsmen, and archaeologists began inventorying and inquiring about the Algerian cultural sites and monuments beginning from 1840. This work has contributed to the conservation of the Algerian cultural heritage.

[32]The convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage (UNESCO).
[33]Choay, F., *op., cit.,* p.28.
[34]Ad.H.AL. DELAMARE, Explorations Scientifiques de l'Algérie pendant les années 1840, 1841, 1842, 1843, 1844 et 1845, published by the order of the French government and with the assistant of the academic commission, imprimerienationale, Paris.
[35]Nabila Oulebsir, la découverte des monuments de l'Algérie, les missions d'AmableRavoisié et d'Edmond Duthoit (1840-1880), revue du monde musulman et de la méditerranée, 1994, volume 73, pag
e 57-76

2. Rural heritage :

The rural heritage is one of the essential parts of the heritage notion that has been gradually built and enriched over the last two centuries. The rural heritage began to attract attention from the 1970s, a period characterized by peculiar social and economic mutations. In reaction to the disappearance of traditional lifestyles, heritage began to be assessed with more openness and extended to include all forms and uses that testify to societies' relationship with a given space.

The rural heritage term has not been defined in dictionaries. However, it is possible to deduce the expression's meaning, resulting from the two-term association, heritage and rural. To explain these terms, it is necessary to delimit the meaning of each one of the two terms. Heritage has been defined in the first section of the first chapter. The second part of the expression, which is the most important, is "rural," explained by the Oxford dictionary as something connected to the countryside[36].

2.1. The Rural concept:

The term rural comes from the Latin one Ruralis, which concerns the peasants, the rural people, and the countryside's inhabitants. In other words, the rural is defined as everything that is not urban and thus, systematically attached to nature. Moreover, the "rural" term refers to the countryside as space, traditionally associated with a unique form of social life. In contrast with the urban lifestyle identified by the intensity of communication and social relations, the rural side is more closed and private[37]. Hence, the rural can be associated with the low density of buildings and the predominance of agriculture.

[36]Oxford learner'sDictionaries
[37]Mormont, M. (1989). Vers une redéfinition du rural. Recherches Sociologiques, 20(3), 331-350.

Otherwise, rural is a dynamic concept that varies from one place to another. The perception of this concept is not the same, whether the socio-economic context is urban or not. However, in urban areas, the rural environment is considered more as a necessary supply of natural and human sources and a place for recreation, but, in rural areas, the rural is often the basis of an agricultural economy aiming at the community's self-sufficiency. In the same way, time is also at the heart of the rural concept since the historical process that has taken place in this specific space is the cause and the consequence of the different components' structuration and their interrelationships.

Some sources defined the rural as a spatial category dominated by open spaces, extensive land uses, and low population density[38]. Some other conceptions represented it with negative aspects such as backwardness, poverty, ignorance, hardship, morbidity…etc. In contrast with the cities relatively developed context. This is not always the case; these conceptions must be revised since the rural has been changing and becomes more heterogeneous regarding spaces, uses, and functions. This situation can be assimilated through the reading of the rural concept of historical development, which can be divided into three periods (Tab.3):

a- Until the beginning of the 19th century, the rural is closely attached to the agricultural community and its way of life. It is the place where food supply, human and natural resources are found. The primary sector and handicrafts are strongly developed during this period.

b- During this period, the rural environment is widely influenced by the Industrial Revolution's effects. Technological innovations and urbanization processes have reached the rural spaces and changed their traditional socio-economic structure enormously. The rural areas lose their traditional role, like food, human and natural

[38] JOHNSON ET AL 1987

supply resources, and their hegemony and become more like space, in which cities can expand their new activities (industry, tourism, leisure…etc.).

c- From the end of the 20th century to the early 21st century, the rural environment is characterized by urbanization, consisting of urban activities in the rural environment and the shift of population and economic activities from urban to rural areas. The rural becomes then a space supply resource for the development of non-agricultural activities.

Table 5: historical evolution of the rural concept.

Period	Characteristics
Until the beginning of the 19th	Traditional agricultural communities Self-sufficiency Limited regional exchanges (closed communities)
From the beginning of the 19th to the end of the 20th	Introduction of the industrialization Commercial agriculture The rural spaces are touched by urbanization and the transfer of urban activities.
From the 20th till now	Reurbanization phenomena. Increase in non-agricultural activities and the multifunctionality of the rural spaces.

Source :IranzoGarcía, E. (2009)[39].

The rural environment can be defined using statistics, which is the most used technique by public administrations; By using the size and the density of the population as a criterion of classification, the agglomeration is considered whether to be rural or urban. In Algeria, for example, all human groups of 2500 people or less are deemed rural; more than that number, the group becomes urban. This definition

[39]Iranzo García, E. (2009). El paisajecomopatrimonio rural. Propuesta de unasistemáticaintegrada para el análisis de los paisajesvalencianos. Universitat de València.

based on numerical limitations and quantitative techniques instead of qualitative features has been rejected by several experts[40].

Thus, the rural can occupy a particular position because it can designate populations, spaces or functions, socio-economic contexts, or value systems[41]. However, the rural can be differently defined according to several disciplines. For an economist, the rural concept refers to the primary sector of the economy, which is no longer the case, especially our days. This sector is now globalized and threatened by economic, cultural, and architectural homogenization. It is then easier to describe it as a landscape according to the geographical vision rather than other visions[42]. The rural has also been defined by other applied disciplines that can determine, more precisely, each of the divisions of rural spaces and give specific attributes. The rural is seen then as an interdisciplinary field where different disciplines and approaches can meet and overlap.

As seen before, the rural has been defined by its backwardness in terms of the dominance of the primary sector of the economy, the form of sociability, and the persistence of specific values considered traditional. This situation is seen as a positive effect in maintaining material historical elements such as traditional architecture, craftsmanship, different techniques, and even folklore, representing the essential part of the rural people's living environment. All this can be seen as heritage that witnesses to rural cultural creativity. Today, those traditions, customs, ways of life, value, and forms of social relations are seen as markers for local identity and perceived as collective heritage.

2.2. Traditional rural lifestyle:

[40] Nelson, L., (1969). Rural sociology-its origins and growth in the United States. p.235.
[41]Mormont, M., (1989). Vers une redéfinition du rural. Recherches Sociologiques, 20(3), 331-350.
[42]Sabattini, B., (2008). Patrimoine rural vernaculaire et société en France.

The primary characteristics of rural communities had drawn the former social thinkers' attention and induced them to develop sociological reflections.

Ibn-Khaldun, who lived during the 14th century, is seen as the rural sociology discipline's indisputable founding father[43]. In the “Muqaddimah,” he studied the various types of social life; he outlines with precision the psychological and social characteristics of the rural people in the Maghreb region, who are described as frugal, virtuous, brave, and robust beings and closely related[44]. In contrast with the urban region’s people, who are busy satisfying their luxurious needs and the perfection of their habits and way of life, rural people restrict themselves to the necessary food, clothing, and mode of dwellings the other necessary conditions and customs. They do not possess conveniences and luxuries beyond (these bare necessities). They use tents of hair and wool or houses of wood, or clay and stone, which are not furnished (elaborately). The purpose is to have shade and shelter, and nothing beyond that”[45].

Ibn Khaldun “, depending on how each of them provides for their subsistence. For the rural people, who rely on agriculture and animal raising, it is necessary to call for large fields that cities do not offer. Hence, those who make their living from animal husbandry usually travel around to find pasturage and water sources necessary for their sheep and cattle's lives. For the people whose subsistence is ensured by agriculture, it is better to stay in a given region than to continue traveling, the small communities living in villages and mountain areas in the Maghreb[46].

Following logical reasoning, Ibn Khaldun tells us that life in the countryside has preceded cities. For him, there is no doubt that people have thought about what is necessary to their life before dealing with factitious needs and seeking comfort.

[43]Duncan, O. D. (1954). Rural Sociology Coming of Age. Rural Sociology, 19(1), 1.
[44]Khaldun, I. (2015). The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History-Abridged Edition. Princeton University Press.
[45]Rosenthal, F. (1958). The Muqaddimah. An Introduction to History, 3.
[46]Khaldun, I. *op., cit.*

Necessities are, thus, in the source of comfort, and the country's life has, therefore, preceded the life in cities: people think first of what is necessary and produce it before they aspire to ease[47].

Long after ibn Khaldun prolegomena to history, there was hardly any specialized work on rural issues, and that until the beginning of the 20th century, a moment during which rural sociology has been reborn thanks to several thinkers in America and then all around the world[48]. This new perception of the traditional rural lifestyle was essentially based on an open rural/urban dichotomy. This dominant ideology has considered the countryside, assimilated to a natural environment where agriculture activity is predominant, as the opposite of the city, that is seen more as a technical environment in which industrial and tertiary activities develop. Each part of this dichotomy has its characteristics in terms of lifestyles. The rural community is assimilated to a peasant society, with traditional functioning based on mutual aid.

Among others, the principal characteristics of the traditional rural lifestyle have been resumed and detailed in the work of Thomas Lynn Smith entitled “the sociology of rural life,” in which the author has noted eight (8) characteristic elements (Tab.4) of the rural life[49].

Table 6: Rural lifeway characterization according to the literature.

	Rural community characteristics	
01	Profession	Rural regions are mainly dependent on the agricultural economy: peasant families are virtually occupied with the work of their lands.
02	Size of	The peculiar condition of the agricultural economy in rural

[47] Khaldun, I. (2015). *Op., cit.*
[48]MENDIETA y NUNEZ, L. (1956). Qu'est-ce que la sociologie rurale ? /WHAT IS RURAL SOCIOLOGY ? Civilizations, 179-192.
[49]Smith, T. Lynn (Thomas Lynn). (1940). The sociology of rural life. By T. Lynn Smith. New York and London: Harper & brothers. pp. 16-38.

	community	areas has generated small communities. It is also due to the low density of the population.
03	**Density of population**	This is one of the traditional factors used to define and distinguish the rural communities; Its density is much lower than the urban and the settled regions.
04	**Environment**	The rural geography is seen as more natural than the urban regions. Rural areas are dominated by open spaces made up of fields rather than constructed landscapes.
05	**Social Stratification**	The social classes in the rural community are less critical in number than in cities. Hence, the distance between the top of the social pyramid and its base is more reduced than in urban areas. Moreover, rural classes are searching more to be part of the middle classes than to be rich;
06	**Social differentiation and homogeneity**	The rural community is characterized by little social differentiation between its members, who can be considered homogeneous in education values, religion, language, and more.
07	**Social and territorial mobility**	Given that rural communities' stratification is less important, people's opportunities to move between social classes and changing social status are not highly provided. In the rural context, the community is more characterized by spatial stagnation. Rural people are less mobile, either within their organization or between one community and another.
08	**Social interactions**	Due to their isolation in transportation, rural people relations and movements are less intense and sometimes lacking.

Source: T. L., Smith (1947).

2.3. Rural resources and potentialities: capitals

Rural areas are often a significant part of countries' territory. They represent real wealth in terms of the variety in social, economic, cultural, and environmental capitals that forge rural identities. The rural potentialities are seen, within a valorization approach, to be resources that can be used to ensure the rural areas' endogenous development in different rural activities such as agriculture and forestry and tourism (Fig.5).

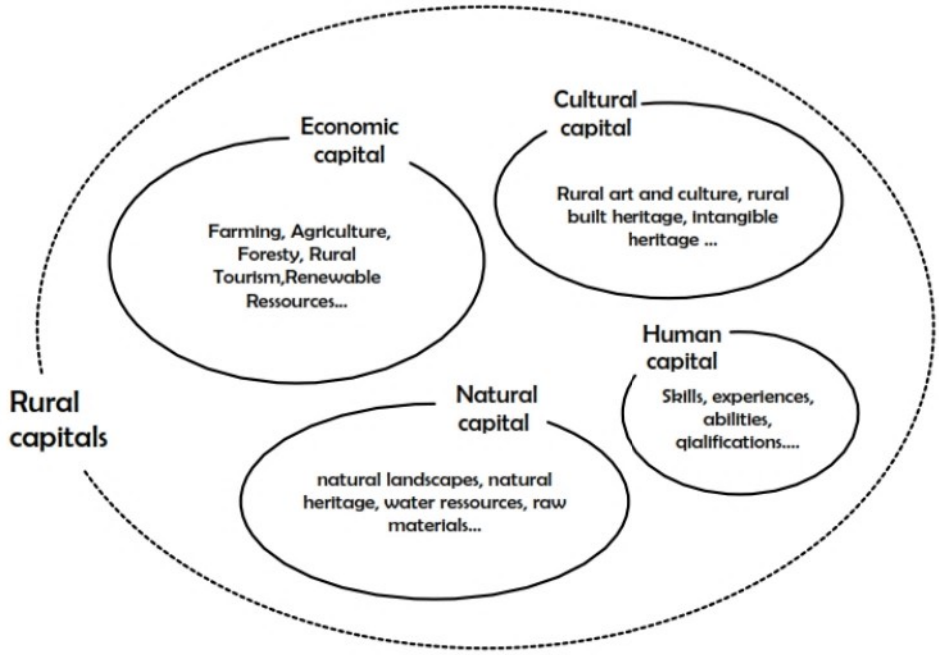

Figure 2: rural capitals.
Source: Authors.

2.4. Rural areas' heritage:

For a long time, no one was aware that in an ample space such as rural areas, have existed events and relics that bear witness to the traditional rural communities that have lived there. The cultural and natural elements coexisted in this immense geographical space and have given birth to a new term: rural heritage, which expresses the uniqueness of the rural environment and the community's specific way of life and culture, fruit of the daily relationship man with nature. Thus, it is essential to understand the unique features of the space. They form part of a correct definition and understanding of the rural heritage concept. Hence, the rural environment

characteristics and its geographical variety have manifested in the heritage features specific to each area.

Historically, it was from the 1960s that the rural began to gain attention and to be appreciated by the heritage discipline that starts to include modest and non-monumental rural elements: vernacular houses, roads, cattle routes, irrigation systems…etc., but also to understand its intangible dimensions: construction techniques, agriculture techniques, gastronomic uses, tales, and legends… all these elements that express the culture of the rural areas are different to the other kinds and are intrinsically linked the natural environment that has been completely transformed through centuries of agriculture and has become an element of rural heritage in its own right. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that this rural heritage is complemented by industry in rural areas, which is also a heritage part[50].

The rural heritage is often identified and characterized as harmonious, coherent, respectful, original, natural, threatened, a setting in which people, space, and time are organically connected[51]. It concerns all goods, tangible and intangible, outside the traditional criteria of heritage protection. One of the characteristics of rural heritage is that most of its elements have not been created to remain or to be monumental, artistic landmarks. They are essential elements that have been created to fulfill a practical function.

Instead of having elements and characteristics common to other areas, the rural heritage has distinctive features that make its particularity in a unique context. The evolution of the heritage concept has allowed those typical rural culture elements, far from being valued as cultural and natural goods, to acquire a social value and be considered superior to what they physically are.

[50]Rouvellac, É. (Ed.). (2005). Patrimoine rural et valorisation territoriale en moyenne montagne : actes du colloque d'Ahun, 20 novembre 2002. Presses Univ. Limoges.
[51]Filippucci, P. (2004). A French place without a cheese: problems with heritage and identity in northeastern France. Focaal, 2004(44), 72-86. Page 79.

Thus, the rural heritage becomes valuable from a social and historical point of view, but which is subjected to the loss of functionality and future development perspective. In this context, the understanding and interpretation of rural heritage become essential for its cultural value and as an essential socio-economic and territorial resource for local development.

The rural heritage, scattered over territories, expresses the local identity and can be identified as common property often managed by the ministry of agriculture and private interests. However, the ministry of agriculture is the only government organization that can take charge of rural areas' cultural issues. The ministry of culture has little presence in rural areas, except through some actions supporting significant events.

2.4.1. Rural heritage forms:

The rural heritage field encompasses all the intangible and tangible elements (agriculture landscapes, rural festivals and traditions, rural constructions, activities, and rural knowledge…etc.) that constitute the cultural legacy and which has been developed and transmitted through centuries in rural areas. The natural heritage includes the set of elements that resulted from the human-nature interactions through time. However, all the rural heritage products, which resulted from the culture and man's intervention in nature, can be grouped into three main sections; natural, built, and ethnological heritage (Tab.5). The three categories pointed out here are very interdependent and challenging to study separately, given that they are attached to human activity.

2.4.1.1. Natural heritage:

Natural heritage is considered, in addition to being the space that is out of the population centers, the spaces that resulted from combining natural conditions and human actions on the environment (cultural landscape). This category can also include spaces resulting from the rural community's coexistence and environment,

which expresses the compatibility between natural resources and their protection and is associated with the community identity and culture.

Table 7: Rural heritage three main components

Natural heritage	Built heritage	Ethnological heritage
• Farming landscapes. • Pasturages. • Forsty landscape. • Flora and fauna.	• Traditional houses and villages. • Religious buildings. • Farms buildings. • Street furniture • Traditional water supply systems. • Eclosures.	• Work culture • Traditional knowledge • Traditional trades. • Art and crafts • Traitional cooking • Traditional events and festivals.

Source: Authors

2.4.1.2. Built heritage:

The rural built heritage concerns the material component of the heritage and includes all the buildings defined as the primary containers of the fundamental human activities, working and socializing. Therefore, the immovable elements represent the rural communities 'cultural productions and are culturally significant from a historical, artistic environmental of an anthropological perspective.

2.4.1.3. Ethnological heritage:

Ethnological heritage is a rich and varied field of the heritage concept. It encompasses places, goods, and activities constituting relevant form that expresses the rural communities' culture and life. In this context, ethnological heritage is composed of events with intangible nature, which are activities, procedures, customs, uses, beliefs, and reflections on the material context, such as built spaces and movable goods.

Conclusion:

This first chapter dealt with the Cultural heritage notion, defined as the product created by the hands of ancient traditional societies in the past and has been transferred through ages to the present generations. Cultural heritage can be considered a loop that ensures a tangible connection between the past, the present, and future generations. The notion, as currently assessed, has emerged in the European countries (Italy, France, England) and has, since then, gradually developed in other continents, at first slowly, then spread expeditiously both in speeches and in deeds by embracing several fields.

As seen in this first chapter, the cultural heritage notion has been exclusively seen as monumental, historical, and aesthetic conceptions. The meaning of cultural heritage shifted from the humanist to social and anthropological conceptions thanks to the voices raised in favor of cultural heritage; It integrates intangible and oral heritage and considers it to be also and more importantly as a driving strength of identity process based on the perpetuation of the memory of the past generations.

The cultural heritage notion has simultaneously escaped from the museumization yoke while exploring new ways to contribute to the development and give reasonability to all the actors motivated to protect and valorize actions.

Therefore, the first chapter also focused on rural heritage, which may be currently seen as a fundamental and essential element of a given country's wealth and a crucial component of its culture that identifies places. It can be thus seen as a potential territorial resource within the framework of a local development policy.

Rural heritage protection and valorization are seen as the central axis of the rural region’s local development and constructing a precise image. In this view, it is indispensable to highlight the cultural assets and heritage richness that enhance rural regions and build their identity.

The Traras Mountains rural region and many other territories in Algeria contain heritage and territorial resources that are likely to ensure their development. Promoting the cultural heritage assets in such rural areas motivates the initiatives to serve and contribute to their region's economic development. Rural cultural heritage, created over hundreds of years by indigenous communities, may play a significant role in such declining areas.

CHAPTER 02: IDENTIFICATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE RICHNESS AS NECESSARY STEPS FOR A LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Introduction:

Conceived as an entity anchored to the local population's specificities and transmitting tangible and intangible assets in the form of institutions and social relationships, rural Heritage became a scientific field twinned with the territory. A heritage that was one of the bases of nation construction is more involved in constructing territories. In other words, heritage is now considered a resource and has become essential in creating and developing rural regions.

Rural environment, beyond the difficulties known in the delimitation of its scope concerning the urban regions, continues to figure as a notion that refers us to that social space attached to the agriculture activities, structured in small and medium population centers and with a model of relations based on personal knowledge and confidence. However, political and social changes have radically affected the prospects of rural territories development in Algeria and many other similar developing countries due to the deterioration of the economic and social system. The geographical sensitivity of rural areas has led to their isolation and has increased their precariousness. The rural population has then turned to exodus by leaving their lands, which become hostile spaces.

Subsequently, the local development topic integrates our research field, linking the rural heritage to its geographic areas. The concept of local development represents an institution aiming to promote the local community's living conditions. This concept is based on the exploitation of rural territorial resources and the improvement of the local production capacities.

Therefore, to ensure the Traras Mountains region's local development, the community needs to guarantee economic, social, and cultural development through openness towards the outside world. The places should be more attractive and welcoming. It contributes to the local economy by deploying rural tourism, with which cultural heritage can serve as a factor for local development.

In this context, the local development based on heritage preservation and valorization is highlighted by this chapter. It aims to clarify and define the cultural heritage and rural heritage and determine their scope that focuses on studying cultural heritage's different dimensions, its potentiality in the creation, and the development of territorial attractiveness. This chapter also helps us underlying the rural heritage significance and the main approaches to its protection.

1. Cultural heritage protection:

As seen before, attacks on cultural heritage were considered very significant beginning from the world wars periods. They affected movable and immovable ownership and intangible cultural heritage due to armed conflicts and natural or human-made disasters. In the first situation, the destruction of cultural heritage may not just be collateral damage; in some cases, historic buildings and sites are deliberately targeted. These operations aimed to eliminate the identities diversification and the destruction of the targeted population's social fabric.

Initially, it was in this context and in front of all those concerns that have emerged the necessity of cultural heritage protection policies; Faced with the increase in cultural heritage threats, the international community was mobilized.

Cultural heritage protection has been and is still at the heart of debates, whether in the human rights council, UNESCO, ICCROM, or even within the international criminal court. The importance of culture for the resilience of populations is increasingly recognized. Thus, the protection and rehabilitation of sites in a respectful manner can contribute to social reconciliation in addition to collective memory safeguarding.

In recent decades, three approaches to cultural heritage protection have been developed: the so-called conventional approach or material-based approach, value-based approach, and people-centered approach. Despite being appeared in different periods, they are not incompatible and have certain aspects in common.

- Material-based approach:

The conventional approach refers to the methodology adopted by conservation professionals of the modern conservation movement at the nineteenth and largest parts of the twentieth century. This approach has been initially developed by the west European countries and has contributed widely to preserving monuments during

armed conflicts and periods of political instability[52]. The material-based approach focused on the "conservation of the materials or the fabric of the past, which was identified as monuments and sites to be preserved for the sake of future generations."[53] It is, thus, led by experts and professionals[54]and exclusively dependent on their knowledge and powers, which focused on physical and careful preservations or restorations (Fig.2).

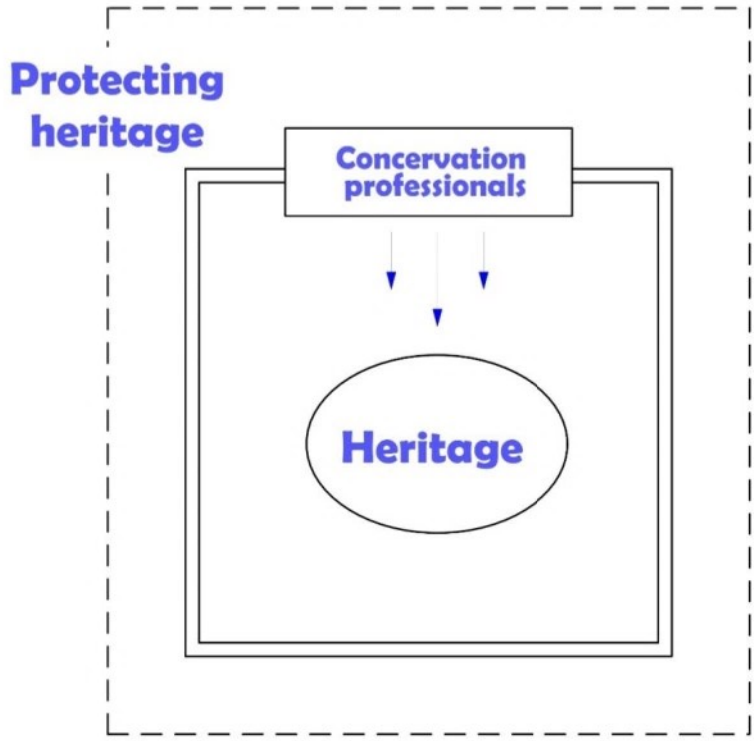

Figure 3: Material-based approach
Source:(Poulios, 2014), modified by authors.

However, the adoption of this approach has allowed minimal interventions into the heritage's structure and materials which are seen to be belonging to the past and considered, therefore, nonrenewable resources[55]

According to this methodology, conservation professionals disregard the possible socio-economic benefits that the cultural property may have. They considered the

[52]Poulios, I., (2014). Discussing strategy in heritage conservation. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*. P.17
[53] UNESCO, world heritage center, managing cultural world heritage manual, 16/11/2013.
[54]Poulios, I. (2014). *op., cit.*
[55]*Ibid*., p.18

monuments just as objects without considering their potential values and their significance in the eyes of the community. Instead, the integrity of the cultural heritage objects and the information provided are considered the highest priority[56].

- Value-based approach:

This approach's introduction responds to the growing complexity of the cultural heritage notion and cultural heritage assessment. The attribution of values to the cultural and historic product existed well before the value-based approach's first appearance, thanks to Riegl's first heritage value typology. Therefore, value typologies are considered to be the trigger for applying this approach (Fig.3).

In furtherance, the international council's Australian committee on monument and sites' charter has emerged the value-based approach published in 1979. It has become better known thanks to the Burra Charter, which adopted a methodology that consisted of assessing cultural objects and sites' significance based on a set of values assigned by all the stakeholders and not only experts.

[56] Frank Fechner, Prinzipien des Kulturguterschutzes. EineEinfuhrung, in Prinzipien des Kulturguterschutzes. AnsŠtzeimdeutschen, europŠischen und internationalenRecht 11, 20 (Frank Fechner, Thomas Oppermann, and Lyndel V. Prott eds., Duncker and Humblot, Berlin 1996) from: Müller, M. M. (1998). Cultural heritage protection: Legitimacy, property, and functionalism. *International Journal of Cultural Property*, 7(2), 395-409.

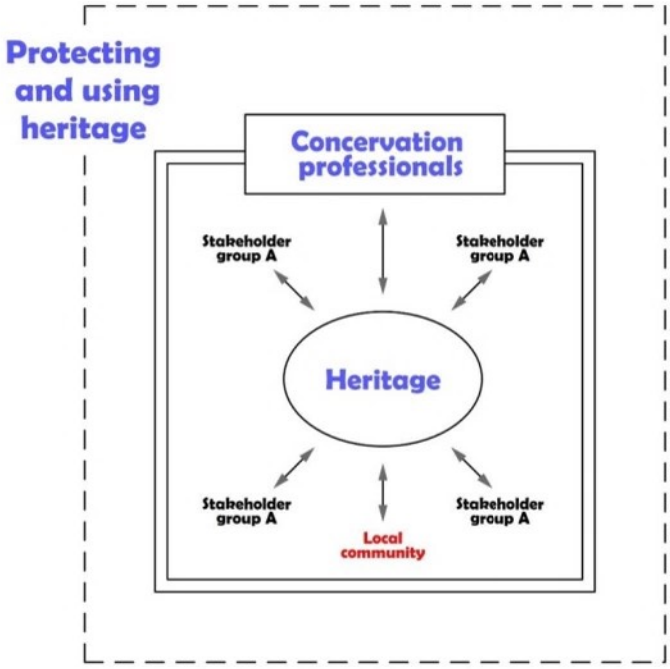

Figure 4: Value-based approach.
Source: (Poulios, 2014), modified by authors.

In contrast with the material-based approach applied only in monumental western buildings and important sites, the value-based approach has concerned chiefly the aboriginal communities and has contributed to enhancing their cultural ties to heritage places[57]. This approach's creation is widely influenced by the inadequacy of the material-based approach, illustrated in the Venice charter, in managing non-western contexts. Despite that, the value-based approach aligns with the conventional strategy to allow minimal interventions concerning the materials and the heritage structure and recognize them as non-renewable resources.

After decades of closed practices in heritage conservation, the new conditions have required the conservation discipline to be open to other knowledge fields. This approach's success is also, and above all, resulting from all stakeholder group's introduction in the conservation process. However, all the stakeholder groups, having

[57]Poulios, I. (2014). *Op. cit.*, p.19

an interest in cultural heritage, can be associated and allowed to be part of the conservation process but always under experts' supervision[58].

The value-based approach has been more flexible. It has tolerated the heritage use by the communities provided that it does not undermine the conservation operations. It was allowed to serve the various stakeholder groups' interests. In this perspective, communities must take responsibility for their cultural heritage and be fully invested in it. Through this investment, cultural heritage gains new values and continues to express the identity of its creators[59]. From this perspective, the value-based approach is arguably one of the best- if not the best-conservation approach.

- Living heritage approach:

The heritage concept development has always influenced the international organization in the development of new conservation approaches. ICCROM and after adopting material-based and value-based approaches, has, beginning from the 1990s, been interested in the issue of cultural heritage's continuity (living heritage) in terms of its original function maintaining and its conservation by the community itself (Fig.4). This has been favored to enhance the connections between the communities and their cultural heritage, which is considered part of their current life and identity[60].

Heritage conservation has become, for many decades, resumed in practices in which professionals made the major decisions instead of the concerned community. It has been then introduced that maintaining the original use and the community's connection with their cultural heritage is vital to understand and protect its own[61]. This has been underlined by the UNESCO former director-general, who stated: "Without the understanding and support of the public at large, without the respect and daily

[58] Mason, R.; Avrami, E., (2002). Heritage values and challenges of conservation planning. *Management planning for archeological sites*, 13-26. p.16.
[59]Avrami, E.; Randall, M.; De la Torre, M., (2000). Values and Heritage Conservation (Los Angeles, Getty Conservation Institute).
[60]Poulios, I. *op. cit*., p.20
[61]Wijesuriya, G., (2007). Conserving living Taonga: the concept of continuity. In Decolonizing Conservation: Caring for Maori Meeting Houses outside New Zealand (pp. 59-70). Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast.

care of local communities, which are the true custodians of world heritage, no amount of funds or army of experts will suffice in protecting the sites."[62]

Therefore, the application of the living heritage approach has known a remarkable success in the case of the aboriginal communities that are still connected with their cultural heritage and consider it as a part of their contemporary life and still uses it the satisfaction sociocultural needs. Within this approach's framework, such a community is considered an inseparable part of the cultural heritage, and it is up to it to decide and approve the conservation directives.

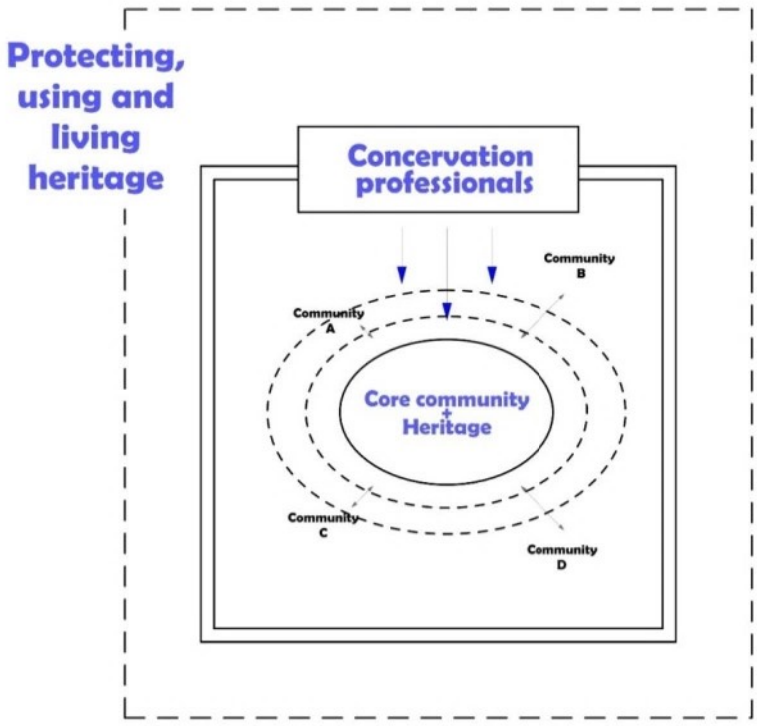

Figure 5: Community-based approach.
Source:(Poulios, 2014), modified by authors.

In contrast with the two precedent approaches, the living heritage approach priority is set to maintain the intangible connection between the cultural heritage and the community, even if this goes to the expense of the heritage's tangible fabric.[63]

[62]Koichiro Matsuura, Former Director-General of UNESCO, UNESCO world heritage center, 1999.
[63]Wijesuriya, G., (2005). The Past is in the Present. In Conservation of living religious heritage, p. 30.

The living heritage approach has redefined the existing cultural heritage conservation rules and the fact that the conservation reasonability passes from the experts to communities' hands. This approach's importance is attached to its interest in the tangible connection between heritage and community rather than tangible material. The living heritage approach has marked the transition in the heritage conservation methodology, which passes from monuments to the community, from material to intangible connections with cultural heritage, and finally from discontinuity to continuity[64].

2. Cultural heritage and local development:

Heritage issues are increasingly gaining importance for people in all spheres of life. This situation is closely linked to the very notion of heritage continuously evolving over the last decades. The development of the heritage concept and its relation with individuals' daily lives has considerably changed the way of its interpretation. Formerly associated with exceptional monuments, cultural heritage refers to a much more complex reality that places it in the heart of social issues as the collective identity anchor. Cultural Heritage is a bearer of identity values for local communities and constitutes a real challenge for their cultural, social, and economic development.

Otherwise, it has become practically impossible for the central government to protect all the properties and territories that conceal a heritage interest. Individuals, local associations, and municipalities became interested in these cultural components for their historical, architectural, or symbolic values.

2.1. Local development as an alternative for heritage development:

All around the world, heritage issues are no longer the sole responsibility of central governments but involve several local stakeholders incorporating this new field associated with the living environment. The public desires have been therefore

[64]Poulios, op., cit.,p.28

oriented towards a local vision of their territories' development and valorization. Their current interest is focused on the implementation of new territorial strategies aiming at advocating practical local actions. Local development is a development strategy oriented towards the actions that value local potential, focusing on local actors and dynamics that animate, interpret, and takes advantage of government policies and external assistance[65]. In this context, municipalities are seen as the most appropriate body to effectively consider this local dimension of the environment, which contributes to maintaining the living quality and opposes the trivialization of the physical and social space.

The local development approach emerged within the framework of a complete reexamination of the centralized development, which has become a strict mode favoring top decisions and excluding consultations with local stakeholders. This non-participatory model has failed due to misunderstanding the local level role as a territorial entity with economic, social, political, and cultural characteristics.

Encouraged by the current economic globalization context that has favored local authorities' empowerment, local communities with a declining economy have had to call on their resources to cope with globalization's effects. This endogenous local development aims to satisfy the local population’s real needs and aspirations, especially those neglected and preserve the cultural identity and other specificities[66]. Using a bottom-up development approach at the local level will lead to all the local concerned agents.

Several communities have therefore chosen to empower themselves through cultural heritage. According to UNESCO, such an approach of development that respects culture and its specific context enables communities to participate in

[65] Report n°1, local development: Concepts, Strategies and Benchmarking, Ministry of Industry, Small and Medium Enterprises and Investment Promotion of Algeria, 2011
[66]Ray, C., (1999). Endogenous development in the era of reflexive modernity. *Journal of rural studies*, 15(3), 257-267.

globalization as they want. Moreover, culture is precisely how human beings express their achievement ability and is an integral part of development. Culture in its multiple forms is therefore essential as a factor of human development and economic growth.

2.2. The Territory as a base for local development based on cultural heritage preservation and valorization:

As seen before, globalization has produced governments that had become less effective in terms of development. The decision-making centers have therefore moved closer to communities. Thus, territories have become essential in local development strategies. However, local development is centered on people who belong to a territory and share values that lead them to be mobilized for their development project.

As described by Freud, people need to belong and be culturally identified. Their territory expresses their rootedness and attachment to the place. This territorial approach is not just a matter of material constructions, but also a matter of values and myths that it contains[67]; "A territorial view of the world arguably valorizes minority languages and cultures, distinctive gastronomy and artistic and musical practices, and a nurturing and ecologically sensitive approach to the land and its products[68]. In other terms, people built their environment for material purposes and gave themselves an image. Beyond its utilitarian values, the territory is thus a matter of representation and cultural identity. It is considered the founding place of local identities and the secrets for their survival. The territory is, first and foremost, a value[69].

Within the territorial approach to local development, the concept of cultural heritage represents the most crucial component. The interpretation of the heritage concept through territory is interesting to understand its quality as the producer of

[67]Bonerandi, E., (2005). Le recours au patrimoine, modèle culturel pour le territoire. *Géocarrefour*, 80(2), 91-100.
[68]Painter, J., (2010). Rethinkingterritory. *Antipode*, 42(5), 1090-1118.
[69]Berque, A. (1996). Êtres humains sur la terre: principes d'éthique de l'écoumène. París: Gallimard.

territorial identity sense; “Heritage is almost always related to the concept of territory as both geographical and cultural entity”[70]. The use of territory in the local development based on heritage allows the actors to claim, or even legitimize, quite easily their territory, especially in terms of identity and delimitation. Otherwise, cultural heritage is seen as a territorial strength, a strong vector of development that can generate territorial attractiveness.

Cultural heritage in a local development strategy can be presented as a crucial development issue that can raise the awareness of the territorial identity and improve the territory's economic and social development[71]. In this context, cultural heritage involvement if a territorial approach to local development means improving the locals' living quality and general cultural level.

Within a territorial approach to local development, culture and cultural heritage investment can generate a recurring circle of new skills acquisition[72] , which can tolerate creativity and economic development. Such a cultural resource in a particular geographic area is highly attached to the sense of the community identity and cultural tourism's potential, which can be an alternative way of improving local well-being.

So, using cultural heritage potential in a specific territory to sustain the local development should be directed towards quantitative activities to attract investors and visitors and be qualitatively significant in the local community’s eyes.

2.3. Identification and documentation of cultural heritage :

Identification and documentation strategies have played a primary role in the management of cultural heritage. They are essential for protecting, interpreting, and preserving historic buildings, archaeological sites, cultural and natural landscapes.

[70]UNESCO, cultural heritage and local development, a guide for African local governments.
[71] Ashworth, G. J.; Tunbridge, J. E., (1999). Old cities, new pasts: Heritage planning in selected cities of Central Europe. *GeoJournal*, 49(1), 105-116.
[72] Sacco, P. L.; Segre, G., (2006). Creativity and new patterns of consumption in the experience economy. *EBLA Center WP*, p.02.

They have an increasingly important place in the cultural heritage's international conventions.

The UNESCO convention of 1972 concerning the protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage stipulated an international heritage committee's establishment. Each member would submit an inventory to ensure the proper identification of its national heritage. In the same context, the council of Granada (1985) concerning the protection the European architectural heritage states: "to identify precisely the monuments, architectural ensembles, and sites which may be protected, each party undertakes to continues the inventory and, in case of threatens, to establish appropriate documentation as soon as possible[73].

Similarly, the convention on the protection of the archaeological heritage of Europe stipulates that each member should ensure the management of an inventory of its archaeological heritage and the classification of the protected monuments or areas[74].

The identification step is integral to preserving cultural heritage and to local development because it can develop the community's awareness about their cultural richness and its significance for individual or collective identity (Fig. 5). Ensuring the identification and the appropriate documentation of cultural heritage can also make possible concrete conservation programs.

[73]Convention for the protection of the architectural heritage of Europe, Granada, 1985, Article 2.
[74] Convention for the protection of the archeological heritage of Europe, Valetta, Malta, 1992, Article2.

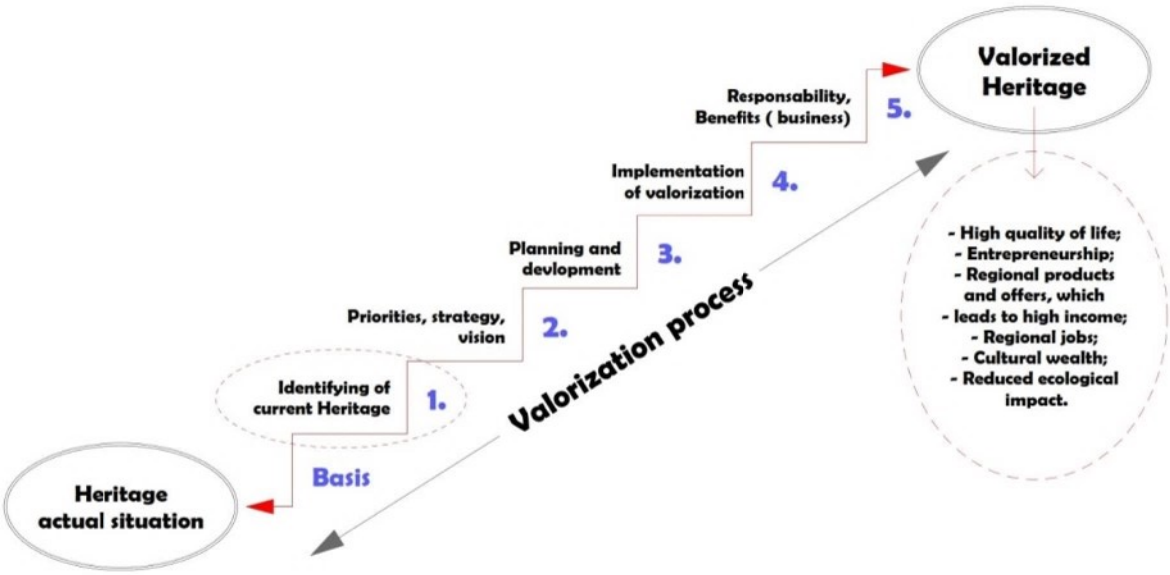

Figure 6: The heritage valorization five (5) steps and the identification step as the basis of this process. Source : Christian Krotscheck, Michael Fend

Among cultural heritage preservation, identification and documentation steps are likely to be among the first steps that government or local municipalities will proceed to understand the cultural heritage and to make effective decisions: "the identification process will give the people in charge the necessary information that will allow them to start making decisions and adopt strategies."[75]

Therefore, identification and documentation steps should be established by local governments to ensure effective local development. They are the most effective way to draw up the territory's cultural particularities. They are always in close touch with the local population, who are the first recipients of the development activities profit. In this context, international conventions have given the governments the freedom to choose whether to create one general inventory or establish several ones with the communities' participation[76]. Since they are the first responsible for the cultural heritage creation and keeping alive, local people and different stakeholders should have a privileged place in the safeguarding strategies: "The communities that practice intangible cultural heritage are better placed than anyone else to identify and

[75] UNESCO, cultural heritage and local development, a guide for African local governments.
[76] UNESCO, Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, 2003, article 11 and 12.

safeguard it, and therefore they should be involved when their intangible cultural heritage is to be identified[77]."

2.4. Rural heritage and territory concept:

It is known that a given geographical space usually has a set of components that model and structure it. This formation process has gradually resulted from natural and historic conditions melted with the inhabitant's aspirations to ensure a habitable environment. People configure natural spaces and build to inhabit the territory. Thus, sociability is configured as a result of the interaction between the construction and their natural site. Due to this process, places began to have a high content of meanings and generate feelings for the local community. The built becomes then valuable and can therefore be considered as heritage.

Within this framework, it is noted that territory can have three inherent components: physical environment, which is the most visual element, composed of natural and human-made objects, activities and functions of places, and above all, its meaning among the local population, which results from the experiences that humans have had within a place, and that consolidates its specific identity. However, considering that the physical environment can be modified, the activities can be changed over time; this can only strengthen the identity of the territory and make it endure as a space with high cultural significance.

3. The rural heritage conservation and valorization challenges within a local development policy:

As previously mentioned, the rural areas' social and physical particularities were widely transformed due to industrialization. It has affected the rural communities' traditional lifestyle and led them to shift from the traditional way of life to the one that depends more on modern technologies. This change has been radical and has pushed a significant part of the rural population to abandon their lands and

[77] UNESCO, identifying and inventorying intangible cultural heritage,

accumulate in cities. This change was aggravated by the globalization and the urbanization process that have erased space's peculiar identities and cultures and have worsened by the lack of conservation and valorization of practices concerning rural heritage that have led to the abandonment and the disappearance of the rural traditional culture and environment.

3.1. Rural heritage as an identity matter:

In the context of the profound economic and social mutations, the conservation and valorization of tangible and intangible rural heritages are taking an increasingly important memory and identity challenge. The rural heritage constitutes the preferred medium for constructing rural communities' collective memories: it makes possible the inscription of identity references in space and, therefore, in time, despite ruptures, crises, and mutations. Rural area's cultural heritage is seen as the base for cultural identity. In the eyes of local communities, it is considered a source of knowledge, pride, and self-esteem that can enhance their life and future. Rural heritage can play an essential role in this enlargement, given the significant number of peasant origin people living in cities and searching for their identities. It constitutes the basis of their current well-being and the foundation on which future generations will be based.

Displacement of rural communities from rural areas to cities in economic and political changes has changed the historic rural landscape. Many traditional houses and villages are nowadays abandoned and threatened by natural and human factors. These changes have negatively affected the communities' traditional way of life and induced their local identity transformation. The conservation and valorization of rural built heritage can contribute to the recovery of the rural community's memory, strengthen their identity, and increase their quality of life and socio-economic and territorial development.

3.2. Rural heritage as an economic matter:

In addition to the desire to transmit the identity, the economic potentialities represent one of the main challenges of the rural heritage valorization process. In other words: “The extension of the heritage field to include local products, agrarian landscapes or traditional rural buildings reflects not only their cultural values but also a merchandising, an economic recovery of their symbolic value”[78].

All the rural heritage elements can be considered as an economic resource that the local community can mobilize for its development. Today, heritage products are the subject of major economic challenges and are established as a real lever for social and local economic development.

However, the rural heritage is seen as an economic resource when it can attract tourists and strengthen the local economy. Thus, the valorization of the rural heritage process is justified by its imperative missions (access to knowledge) and the need to encourage the development of tourism in connection with the rural territory's attractiveness. Therefore, cultural product in rural areas becomes a tool at the service of tourists and territorial promotion.

The image of rural heritage is exploited for economic purposes. This economic use of heritage should not be seen as antagonistic with its socio-cultural values: the actors of culture must be aware of the weight of the rural heritage's economic potential as a constraint, but more importantly, as a strength. However, tourism must contribute to the maintenance and development of the site; it should not only profit from the advantages of the use of heritage at the expense of the site’s state of conservation.

[78]Perrin, C. (2009), Construire les campagnes méditerranéennes. Usages, aménagements et valorisation du foncier agricole périurbain en Provence et en Toscane (1950-2010), Thèse de doctorat en géographie, Université Aix-Marseille, UniversitàdegliStudi di Firenze, 743p. p. 518 …..Traduction of : « l’extension du champ du patrimoine aux produits du terroir, aux paysages agraires ou au bâti rural traditionnel traduit non seulement une revalorisation culturelle de ces objets mais aussi une marchandisation, une récupération économique de leur valeur symbolique »

3.3. Rural heritage as a territorial matter:

As seen before in the first chapter, the territorial approach to local development is one of the principal objectives and alternatives of nations in our present days. However, within the framework of a top-bottom approach, the real constraints and potentialities of the rural territories were totally or partially ignored. The existing operations were often inappropriate in the particular context of rural areas. Since the top-bottom management system was contributing to creating a gap in terms of territory development, great awareness from civil society was developed and has led to the promotion of bottom-up approaches based on endogenous human and specific material resources. Within this framework, the notion of territorial resources allows us to name what can strengthen territories. Moreover, the territorial approach identified and considered heritage as the driving strength behind territorial construction and development, especially as a tourism attraction.

Rural heritage can be mobilized in the construction of territorial policies. In other words, the rural estate can acquire the specific resource's status. Otherwise, "Rural cultural heritage has become a current asset. Far from being a nostalgic trip back in time, it is a springboard for development projects and can mobilize a region's business community."[79] The heritage that was one of the bases of the construction of nations is now more involved in constructing territories.

Beyond its economic interest, the mobilization of rural heritage as a resource of territories interacts with its socio-cultural dimension, which should not be ignored. Thus, rural heritage, and because it represents the culture and the identity, creates the territory's personality.

4. The development of rural heritage conservation approaches:

[79] European rural heritage observation guide – CEMAT, Council of Europe, 2003, p.37, pp.99

As seen in the first chapter, the catastrophic situation that cultural heritage has endured during and after world times have played a significant part in raising awareness about the conservation and the safeguarding of all kinds of cultural objects and has led to their reconsideration. However, the conservation and rebuilding strategies were concerning monumental buildings and traditional urban fabrics. It was not until 1962 that rural heritage began to be included and considered in conservation initiatives. The general conference of UNESCO, which was held in Paris from November 9 to December 12, can be considered the first step in rural heritage consideration. The objective of the 1962 recommendation was the safeguarding of the exceptional qualities of urban and rural areas in terms of beauty and character of landscapes and sites: "For this recommendation, the safeguarding of the beauty and character of landscapes and sites is taken to mean the preservation and, where possible, the restoration of the aspect of natural, rural and urban landscapes and sites, whether natural or man-made, which have a cultural or aesthetic interest or form typical natural surroundings."[80]

The rural heritage began then to develop and to attract more interest. It has been included as an important part, side to side with the urban settings in the Venice charter issued in 1964, which has defined the cultural heritage as architectural productions and urban or rural settings. Moreover, the Venice charter has expressed interest in modest works, which have acquired cultural significance, as making part of the cultural heritage[81].

Since then and starting from 1977, studies concerning rural heritage conservation began to be more important thanks to several symposia issued by the council of Europe, which focused on protecting and safeguarding rural heritage.

[80] Recommendation concerning the safeguarding of beauty and character of landscapes and sites, UNESCO, Paris, 1962.
[81] Venice charter, 1964, article1.

The 5th symposium in Granada occurred in 1977concerning the rural architecture in regional planning has raised awareness on the rural heritage issues and study them accurately. This symposium focused on rural heritage as an important part of the cultural heritage notion and which is threatened with abandonment, deterioration, and even extinction due to the rural exodus and the prevailing culture of urban industrial society[82].

During this symposium, potential ways of reviving rural communities were studied to reduce the demographic imbalance. With this objective, the craftsmanship problem, rural monuments, and site conservation have been deeply examined. Moreover, The Granada Symposium has drawn the intention to the significance of the rural heritage and the specific issues of craftsmanship in rural areas. However, the symposium reveals that the solution for the rural communities' regeneration and revival depends on the conservation of the rural architectural heritage. According to the Granada Symposium, governments were asked to ensure integrated conservation of rural areas and provide the necessary to ensure the rural community development basing on the rural architectural heritage asset.

The 16th sitting occurred on 8 October 1979 in Strasbourg has also paid attention to the rural heritage that is consistently threatened by the modernization process and focused on its conservation problems. The "recommendation 881" on the rural architectural heritage has highlighted the importance of creating a listing and protective legislation and providing financial support. This recommendation has also pointed out the necessity of developing studies about rural architectural heritage and the importance of the rural architectural heritage in enhancing the socio-cultural, ecological, and economic context of local communities[83]. It has attested that the

[82] The Granada Symposium, 1977, Council of Europe
[83]Recommendation 881 on the rural architectural heritage, 31st ordinary session of the Parliamentary assembly of the council of Europe, texts adopted by the assembly, Strasbourg, 1979. p.423.

conservation of the rural areas' cultural and historical items is essential in promoting rural communities' socio-cultural values and economic well-being.

The interest in rural heritage is continuously developing. In 1989, the recommendation on the protection and enhancement of the rural architectural heritage (recommendation No. R (89) 6) had taken into account that the sociocultural transformation in rural areas and the profound mutations in the system of agricultural production have negatively affected the rural heritage and even its existence[84]. In this context, the recommendation has pointed out that rural heritage is considered for its cultural significance and its great potential in terms of local development. However, this document recommends the formulation of policies concerning the protection and the enhancement of the rural heritage basing on three primary purposes; Firstly, the safeguarding of the collective memory of rural areas by creating and developing appropriate mechanisms for the identification of rural heritage's features; Secondly, making the protection of rural built heritage a part of the regional planning and the environmental protection process; Thirdly, the consideration of rural heritage as an essential element and vital factor of the local development; Fourthly; promoting respect and knowledge of rural heritage.

In 1996, the cork conference concerning rural development was organized in cork, Ireland. It assembled several experts and stakeholders from the European Union that aimed to improve the living quality in rural areas. The conference was concluded with the publication of the cork declaration, which focuses on unifying all the existing European programs and policies and creating a "one objective, one legal framework, one coherent policy, one program… that is simple, transparent, and efficient."[85]The coherent policy focuses on ensuring sustainable development in rural areas through

[84] Recommendation No. R (89) 6 of the committee of ministers to member states on the protection and enhancement of the rural architectural heritage, Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 April 1989 at the 425th meeting of the ministers' Deputies.

[85] Franz Fischer, a former EU Commissioner for Agriculture, rural development, and Fisheries, from: Lamie, R. D., &Kovalyova, A. (2002). Rural development, Euro-style? Choices, 17(316-2016-7271). P.23

more subsidiarity, simplification, and integration in rural development policies. For the subsidiarity principle, the cork convention pointed out that the policy should favor the bottom-up approach that encourages local energy in terms of entrepreneurial business rather than top-down directives. The declaration has also underlined the necessity of more flexibility and simplification in legal regulations and has offered more transparency in sustainable rural development programs. The declaration aims to create an integrated approach that focuses on the development of sustainable rural development based on a multi-sectorial vision based on the diversification of economic resources.

Otherwise, sustainable rural development, as seen by the cork declaration, should be based on ten (10) points[86]:

- The necessity to preserve the rural environment and improve living quality in rural areas must be priorities.
- Rural development must be based on an integrated approach to encourage collaboration between several stakeholder groups.
- The diversification of economic and social activities that sustains the local initiatives must be tolerated.
- Rural development policies should ensure the sustainability of the rural areas today's resources and ensure their passing to future generations.
- The rural development policy must be based on the principle of bottom-up approach rather than top-down directives.
- Sustainable rural development must create more flexible and straightforward legislation, especially in agriculture.
- The rural development program must be applicants with coherence and transparency.

[86] Cork declaration, 1996, retrieved from: http://www.terport.hu/webfm_send/545

- Local resources for the finding must be encouraged to promote local rural development.
- Local and regional governments' capacity in managing their resources and in the creation and development of productive investment must be enhanced.
- In the framework of a rural development policy, the use of public resources must be monitored and assessed to ensure the transparency of the procedure.

Three years after the cork declaration, the charter on built vernacular heritage, issued by ICOMOS, directly concerns the built vernacular heritage, which is seen to be more specific to rural areas and their built heritage. The charter pointed out the importance of rural vernacular heritage as the testimony to a traditional community culture's history and expression and its relation with a territory[87]. For this charter, this kind of heritage that is usually seen as informal and unworthy, and which is threatened by the cultural homogenization and globalization, constitute, in reality, the core of man's existence and for which it is necessary to establish effective principles and practical guidelines for its proper conservation.

Following the cork charter, the built vernacular heritage charter emphasizes the importance of involving local stakeholder groups and all the concerned sectors in conservation. It stresses the necessity to maintain this heritage's use and its continuing maintenance for its cultural value and traditional character. The charter also insisted that vernacular heritage is more considered a group of constructions with representative character rather than single isolated buildings.

According to those principles, conservation guidelines[88] were drawn up, and concern seven (7) important points; the charter highlighted the importance of acquiring all the necessary information about the vernacular buildings before starting any operation and stressed the documentation of all the conservation work to make it

[87] Charter on built vernacular heritage, ICOMOS, Mexico, 1999. P.1.
[88] Charter on built vernacular heritage, ICOMOS, Mexico, 1999. P.3.

accessible to the public. Within this charter framework, all the operations in built vernacular heritage should be done to follow the physical and cultural context. The traditional construction techniques and skills should also be respected, retained, and documented to ensure their continuity between generations.

The charter on built vernacular heritage has tolerated the vernacular structure's adaptation to be compatible with new activities, the use of new materials, and the add of new parts if necessary. However, in this context, all the operations should be done concerning traditional aspects and integrity construction. The charter has also pointed out the importance of the vernacular buildings' time effect and states that all the building parts, from different historical periods, should be conserved without favoring one over another.

The charter emphasizes the stakeholder's role in the organization of educational and informational programs to contribute to the conservation of cultural values and raise awareness about vernacular heritage.

The rural heritage, as seen before, is a necessary driver for local and regional development. Within this framework, the Paris declaration, issued in 2011 by ICOMOS, has pointed out the positive effect of conserving rural heritage on regional development and has defined certain principles for that purpose. However, to ensure sustainable development based on rural heritage resources. The charter has encouraged reusing rural built heritage and maintaining the traditional activities and skills that express the traditional way of life, which is also necessary to undertake restoration works.

The preservation of crafts and traditional agriculture ensure socio-economic regeneration by employing the local communities[89]. The charter has also highlighted

[89]ICOMOS. (2011). The Paris Declaration on Heritage as a Driver of Development. retrieved from: https://www.icomos.org/Paris2011/GA2011_Declaration_de_Paris_EN_20120109.pdf

the necessity of conserving local traditions regarding energy production to ensure new sustainable energy sources and enable economic subsidiaries.

In more detail, the charter has privileged the maintain of the rural building's original functions, materials, and design and its integration with the context of contemporary life. However, it is more interesting to safeguard traditional buildings' spatial structure with the adaptation of the new activities to the existing design rather than do the inverse. In this context, the charter pointed out the necessity of developing specific and appropriate approaches to ensure flexibility in applying architectural standards and regulations.

Another stage in rural heritage protection was marked by the Florence Declaration's production on heritage and landscape as human values issued by ICOMOS in Florence (2014). This declaration pointed out the importance of considering culture as a trigger and driver of sustainable development and elaborated a set of principles that figure rural areas like a living laboratory[90] of sustainable development. According to the declaration, safeguarding intangible rural heritage leads to sustainable development that leads to community growth with minimum effect on the environment. The protection of rural heritage melted with sustainable rural planning led to more secure, smart, and productive spaces.

The second European Conference on rural development (2016) in cork was another critical stage in rural heritage conservation development. The conference has produced the cork 2.0 declaration, better life in rural areas[91]. In line with the 1996 declaration, cork 2.0 emphasis the value of rural resources, which can provide an effective solution to reach sustainable development of rural areas. However, the declaration has pointed out the importance of rural regions in the preservation of a nation's natural and cultural heritage. It has emphasized the need to straighten the

[90] Florence declaration on heritage and landscape as human values, ICOMOS, 2014. Retrieved from https://fr.unesco.org.
[91] Cork 2.0 declaration, a better life in rural areas, 2016, retrieved from: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu.

local initiatives and the improvement of local potentialities within a sustainable rural development policy. Furthermore, the declaration has shown concern about the rural exodus and has pointed out the necessity of maintaining the rural areas' attractiveness in terms of living quality and work opportunities, particularly in the agriculture and the forestry sectors, and in new sectors of the economy.

The assessment of rural heritage in its natural context has, for a long time, gained the attention of the specialists, which have begun to consider the whole system as rural landscape heritage that encompasses both human and natural creations. Recently, in 2017, this vision has been reinforced by the introduction of a set of principles concerning rural landscapes by the International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes which states that "rural landscapes are a vital component of the heritage of humanity. They are also one of the most common types of continuing cultural landscapes."[92]The ISCCL has produced a set of principles regarding rural landscape heritage. It is stated that all the rural areas can be seen and valued as heritage and can encompass not only the environment's physical components but also the cultural knowledge of the local communities and expresses their identity. They pointed out the need to consider all rural landscapes as heritage without any exception in value assessment. The committee recommends the identification, understanding, inventorying, and documenting of rural landscape heritage. Furthermore, it promotes the implementation of comprehensive protection policies and strategies to raise awareness about the rural landscape heritage and assess their economic, social, environmental, spiritual, and spatial values.

The committee has also supported the sustainable management of rural landscapes heritages by encouraging local initiatives, and sustainable resources use.

[92] ICOMOS-IFLA principles concerning rural landscapes as heritage, final draft for distribution to the ICOMOC membership in view of submission to the 19th ICOMOS General assembly,2017. Retrieved from : http://www.icomos.org.

It has finally emphasized the necessity of increasing and communicating awareness of the landscape heritage values.

5. Rural heritage valorization approach:

It is important to note that protecting rural heritage cannot be limited to a purely passive and conservative approach; it must be conceived and carried out in a dynamic approach that allows both the valorization and the sustainable use of its cultural resources. Within this framework, rural heritage valorization involves valuing and enhancing rural areas to promote their attractiveness. Thus, the aim is to increase the tourist flows and ensure that rural heritage plays the role of a lever for sustainable development.

The uses of heritage reflect the different ways in which people access and relate to heritage as an identity reference, as well as for their enjoyment, while at the same time, for developing effective and appropriation practices. If the community does not use its heritage, appropriate it, and insert it into its daily life, heritage will be manipulated and disappeared.

As conservation and safeguarding, the valorization of rural heritage is also a significant asset for strengthening the identity and the social cohesion as well as for economic balance; when rural heritage is only conserved, they may not be adequately valorized: the valorization approach encompasses the protecting and the safeguarding as well as valorizing schemes. Within a local development approach based on local resources, the necessity of valorizing rural heritage items is crucial. This process is aiming at the creation of cultural and economic profits from rural heritage items.

5.1. Economic valorization of rural heritage: rural heritage as a resource for tourism development:

Nowadays, heritage is the subject of several approaches in which the economic dimension is emphasized. Economics plays an essential role in the domain of culture and arts and widely influences the heritage conservation field[93]. This vision makes it possible to generate the resources necessary for the heritage conservation process and gives the possibility of drawing the know-how and the references necessary for innovation.

Within this framework, and in line with the Paris declaration's principles[94], several countries have understood and become aware that the rural built, landscape, and natural heritages are not only wealth to be passively preserved, but also an economic potential on which the development of these rural territories can be based.

The valorization of rural heritage should participate in the economic development based on heritage tourism[95] as an alternative source of profit which provides employment and contribute to the improvement of the communities' well-being: "Tourism should bring benefits to host communities and provide an important means and motivation for them to care for and maintain their heritage and cultural practices"[96]. Thus, rural heritage is of vital importance because of its role in establishing tourism destinations[97]. It has been promoted as a tourism product that is a profitable business based on the dissemination and commercialization of unique and distinct cultural experiences to attract and maintain visitors. These cultural experiences can be lived through the visit of natural landscapes and sites, town or rural buildings, and the organization of events and traditional festivals aiming at the

[93] Economics and heritage conservation, a meeting organized by the Getty conservation institute, December 1998.
[94]"… It will then identify the actions needed not only to protect heritage, but also to ensure that its use, its promotion and enhancement, and its economic, social and cultural value are harnessed to the benefit of local communities and visitors."
[95] Heritage tourism is more attached to rural areas, from: Timothy, Cultural heritage and tourism: an introduction
[96] International cultural tourism charter managing tourism at places of heritage significance, adopted by ICOMOS at the 12th general assembly in Mexico, October 1999.
[97] An attractive geographical area for tourists.

visitors' involvement to make them feel like part of the visited community and its environment.

In this sense, the local community's involvement and all the stakeholder groups are necessary to achieve sustainable tourism and lead to the protection of the heritage resources for future generations.

5.1.1. Rural tourism as an activity for rural development:

As seen in the section below, the rural world has known severe problems that have caused a social and economic decline. In recent years, several cases of rural areas all around the world have known more or less effective interventions to address the decline issues. The rural world has known the new challenges concerning its natural and cultural resources conservation and valorization and has begun to receive more attention from this perspective. In contrast with the rural areas' declined situation, tourism, as a popular development strategy, has confirmed its role as a driver for economic growth. According to GANNON Agnes[98], rural tourism can contribute to providing additional incomes through the creation of jobs. Therefore, it helps stabilize the existing businesses and services and their diversification as well as in providing new possibilities for other businesses and small industries. It promotes innovation and creativity, and especially when it comes to local craft and trade.

At the same time, rural tourism expresses the exchange between the city and the countryside and the return of a considerable part of people that are dissatisfied with the city's life to the strong values that the countryside represents: its authenticity and

[98]Gannon, A. (1994). Rural tourism as a factor in rural community economic development for economies in transition. Journal of sustainabletourism, 2(1-2), 51-60. P.56

conviviality, as well as the search for a living environment that harmoniously combines natural environment, comfort, and entertainment[99].

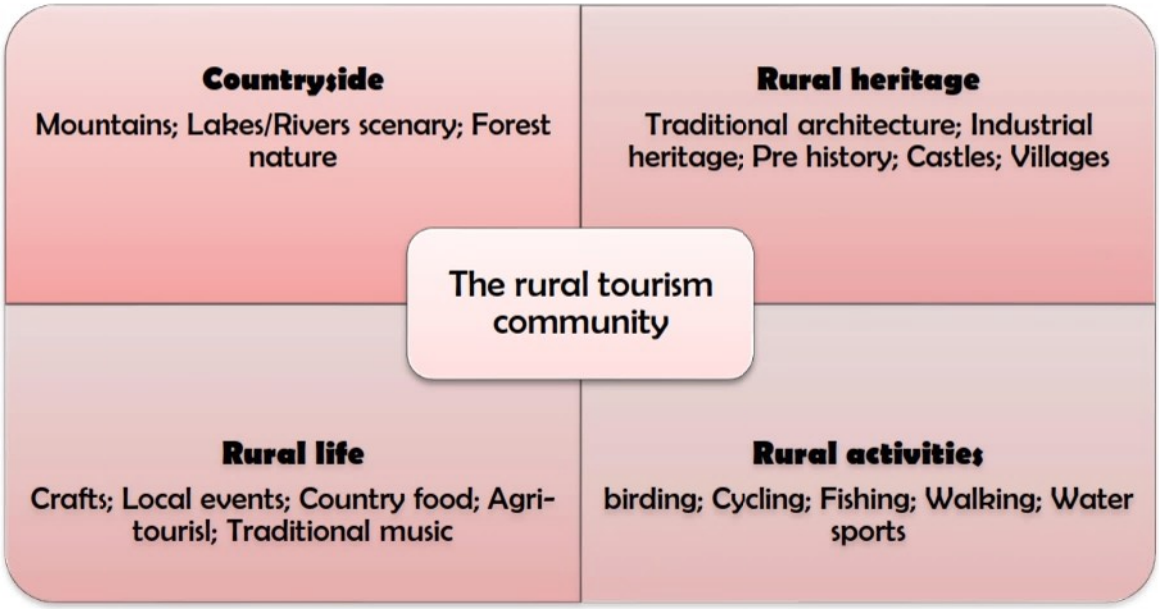

Figure 7: The rural tourism concept's main features.
Source:Nulty, P. M. (2004)[100].

Rural tourism is primarily defined as the form of tourism in rural areas, in the countryside, or isolated areas out of cities and motivated by the rural world potentialities. According to LANE Bernard[101] , rural tourism can be identified with the following set of characteristics; Firstly, and simply, rural tourism is located in rural areas. Secondly, it should be based upon the rural world-specific features (Fig.6), such as the traditional way of life and the strong interactions with the open natural spaces. Thirdly, rural tourism is small in scale, demonstrated in the modest rural buildings and settlements in terms of their size. Fourthly, it is also traditional and expresses the local community's way of life, which is organic and develops slowly. Finally, rural tourism represents the variety in rural environment patterns and its economy, history, and location.

[99]Borgeat, V. (2000). LE TOURISME RURAL : Les problèmes de l'hébergement en Valais, institut de Géographie, université de Lausanne, mémoire de licence en géographie, Directrice, Micheline Cosinschi,
[100]Nulty, P. M. (2004). Rural tourism in Europe: experiences, development and perspectives. P.13.
[101]Lane, B. (1994). What is rural tourism? Journal of sustainable tourism, 2(1-2), 7-21. p.11

Rural tourism is a particular form of tourism that has been, in the beginning, limited to the experiences lived with the local community, through farming activities, either by renting a guest room or a furnished accommodation created using the available buildings or premises of an existing farm[102]. However, rural tourism is no longer limited by the farm's limits but has extended to concern all the rural inhabitants, agricultural or not. It has taken a particular form that expresses its identity and is the key element for its success: the lodging with the local people[103].

According to Nair *et al.*[104], the attractions that can be offered by rural tourism can be categorized as cultural, natural, and historic(Fig.7).

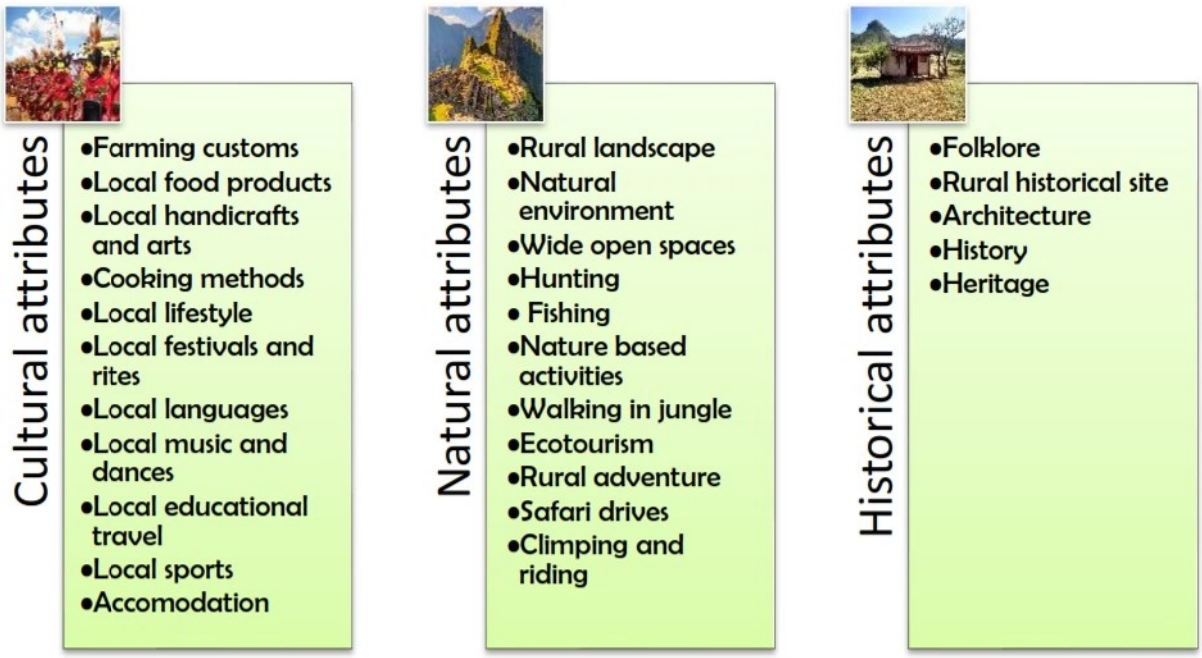

Figure 8: Rural tourism attractions.
Source: Nair *et al.*

5.1.2. Farm-based tourism:

[102] Meyer-Santschi, G. (1986). Le tourisme rural en Suisse Romande. Université de Neuchâtel, Institut de géographie.
[103] Lane, B. *op., cit.*, p.12
[104]Nair, V., Munikrishnan, U. T., Rajaratnam, S. D., & King, N. (2015). Redefining rural tourism in Malaysia: A conceptual perspective. Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 20(3), 314-337.

Farm tourism or Agrotourism is a form of rural tourism that takes place on a farm. It refers to all the activities carried out for social, educational, and economic purposes and are attached to the valorization of the agricultural resources aimed at local development. It concerns the accommodation and the catering, recreation, discovering farming techniques and the agricultural heritage as well as selling product[105]. In other terms, it consists of any activities ensured by a farmer for a received public with recreational and educational purposes to create additional incomes,[106] while the principal source of income is agriculture. Thus, agro-tourism allows the farmer to valorize a wide range of farm products and take advantage of the unoccupied spaces that are no longer needed for agricultural activity. According to Sznajer*et al.* (2009), farm-based tourism can be identified from the general field of rural tourism, firstly by the participation they received people in the process of food creation; Secondly, by the opportunity given to the public for learning about the rural way of life; thirdly, by the chance of having direct contact with farm animals[107].

Farm-based tourism contributes largely to the process of rural development by providing economic benefits for rural communities. It impacts their economy positively by increasing and diversifying incomes and creating jobs that help improve the unemployment issue and contribute to long-term development.

5.1.2.1. Ecotourism:

Ecotourism, one of the significant segments of rural tourism, is considered the fastest-growing sector in the tourism industry[108]. It is increasingly considered as an

[105] Lane, B. *op., cit.*
[106]Che, D., Veeck, A., &Veeck, G. (2005). Sustaining production and strengthening the agritourism product: Linkages among Michigan agritourism destinations. Agriculture and Human values, 22(2), 225-234.
[107]Sznajder, M., Przezbórska, L., &Scrimgeour, F. (2009). Agritourism. Cabi.p.301
[108] The international Ecotourism society , the state of Ecotourism, July 15, 2009, retrieved from : https://ecotourism.org/news/the-state-of-ecotourism/

alternative source of economic growth and for sustainable development in rural areas[109].

According to the world tourism organization, ecotourism encompasses all forms of tourism with the following characteristics; Firstly, it is nature-based tourism; Tourists' primary motivation is to observe and appreciate nature and its biodiversity as its interaction with traditional cultures. Secondly, this form of tourism is based on integrating educational and interpretative features of the natural environment, respecting its preservation and valorization. Thirdly, it is often organized for small groups of people by specialized tour operators sensitive to environmental issues. Fourthly, ecotourism aims to valorize tourism with a local development approach with minimal negative impacts on the natural and the socio-cultural environment. Fifthly, ecotourism supports the local economy by generating profits and providing employment. It raises awareness about the conservation of natural and cultural assets[110].

Ecotourism is in line with the environmental values and their respect since it insists on the preservation of natural sites as well as their valorization for the equitable development of the local economy; This form of tourism contributes to the protection of natural areas considered to be a key element in the ecotourism development. It is seen as a social and economic development source that benefits the local rural communities in increasing awareness about the importance of protecting natural and cultural heritage sites and intensifying income opportunities.

5.1.2.2. Community-based tourism:

[109] Vogt, H. 1997. The economic benefits of tourism in the marine reserve of Apo Island, Philippines. H.A. Lessios, I.G. Macintyre (Eds.), Proceedings of the Eighth International Coral Reef Symposium, vol. 2Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Panama, p. 2102– 2104.
[110] The British ecotourism market, UNWTO, 2002. Retrieved from:https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/ecotourism-and-protected-areas

Rural community-based tourism has been proposed[111] to develop community-appropriate[112] tourism, and to consider the sensitive rural context, and to avoid the negative impacts from a socio-cultural and ecological point of view,

Rural community-based tourism is “an associative management method led by peasant and indigenous communities who decide to open up their territories to provide tourism services consciously” [113]. However, the context of its emerging was marked by the failure of the top-down approaches to rural development and the rise of the local community awareness about the necessity to take a direct role in implementing and controlling their tourism strategy.

This oriented community-oriented approach was offered to encourage the local communities' empowerment at four levels: economic, psychological, social, and political[114]. In this context, both sociocultural and natural particularities expressing the local communities’ way of life are deemed in the community-based tourism policy. They are identified, conserved, and commercialized to “ enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local way of life”[115]and integrated the tourism market, which is more searching for authentic experiences.

Community-based tourism is implemented and managed by the local community. It provides collective benefits. It can be thus concerning all forms of tourism activities that involve genuine community participation and benefits.[116]

[111] Murphy, P. E. (1985). Tourism: A community approach. ROUTLEDGE: London. Pp.200.
[112] Johnson, P. A. (2010). Realizing rural community-based tourism development: Prospects for social economy enterprises. Journal of rural and community development, 5(1).
[113] A catalog for experiencing Latin America alongside organized rural communities, part of the “community-based tourism capacity building” project managed by Alba Sud with the support of the Barcelona Provincial Council 2014 Convocation of technical Assistance in the field of Development Cooperation. Barcelona, September 2015. P.5. Retrieved from : http://pachamamaturismo.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/CATALOGO-TRC-ENGLISH.pdf
[114]Scheyvens, R. (1999). Ecotourism and the empowerment of local communities. Tourism management, 20(2), 245-249.
[115] The thailand community-based tourism institute ; retreived from : https://cbt-i.org/; accessed : 03/08/2020.
[116]Concern, T., & Mann, M. (2000). The Community Tourism Guide. Earthscan ;18

Thus, rural community-based tourism development can be beneficial for the community when it works effectively and can; supports the local economy by diversifying the sources of income; fosters collective and broader participation; be sustainable and have less impact on the ecological environment; ensure the conservation and the proper valorization of the cultural heritage; plays an essential role in the education of visitors about the cultural and natural resources; reflects the appropriate application of management practices; ensures the quality and the safe conditions.[117]

[117] Asker, S et al. (2010). Effective community-based tourism : a best practice manual, Institue for sustainable futures ; university of technology sydney, published by sustainable tourism cooperative research centre.

Conclusion:

The rural heritage is a significant part of humanity's heritage, ignored for long centuries. It bears witness to the traditional way of life of the rural communities and testifies to their harmonious relationship with nature. In the last decades, in a particular context characterized by social and economic mutations that have led to the transformation and the disappearance of the traditional rural lifestyle, rural heritage began to be appreciated and considered with more openness.

Thus, the rural began to be assessed and gained attention by the heritage discipline that includes modest and non-monumental tangible elements such as vernacular architecture, roads, irrigation systems, and intangible factors such as skills, tales, and legends…etc.

The study of the rural heritage has emerged from the need of the rural community's self-identification with their origins. From this perspective, the rural heritage is considered a source of the bride and self-esteem that should encourage the rural people to stay linked to their lands. The rural heritage can also contribute to improving the rural community's well-being through multiple economic functions. It helps in the creation of jobs and other economic benefits.

The rural region’s heritage is considered a vital resource for developing rural communities and improving their living quality. The rural world’s cultural resource is considered a fundamental and essential element of a given country's wealth. It is seen as a potential resource within the framework of a rural local development policy. However, the conservation and the valorization of such a cultural wealth are seen as the central axis of sustainable development and constructing a particular image.

It is also important to note that protecting rural heritage cannot be limited to a purely passive conservative approach but must be carried out in a dynamic way that allows both valorizing and maintaining the rural heritage integrity. With this objective,

the rural heritage valorization must involve the valuing and enhancing of the rural area's cultural resources and promoting their attractiveness to create or develop the tourist flows and ensure that the rural heritage plays a role in the local development.

However, the valorization of rural heritage also plays a significant role in strengthening identity, social cohesion, and economic conditions. It is mainly through heritage tourism as an alternative source of benefit that provides employment and the rural communities' well-being improvement.

Within this framework, the identification and documentation of rural heritage productions become essential for their cultural value and as a vital social and economic resource for local development.

CHAPTER 03: IDENTIFYING THE TRARAS MOUNTAINS REGION (NorthWest OF ALGERIA) AND ITS POTENTIALITIES IN TERMS OF VERNACULAR BUILT HERITAGE.

Introduction:

After the conceptual framework's steps included in the previous chapters, aiming at a general understanding of the rural heritage and its significant challenges regarding the sustainable territorial development of rural regions, this next chapter defines the Traras Mountains region's overall characteristics as a case study. The Traras Mountain region forms a relatively homogeneous space from a geographic and historical perspective, encouraging community consciousness about the regional identity and the re-emergence of the region's culture.

The importance of the cultural heritage of rural areas in Algeria and the necessity of its conservation and valorization have been stressed in the relatively new national strategy concerning sustainable rural development, which defines the main orientations of the public authorities regarding rural areas. The S.R.D.S. aimed to improve the rural populations' social and economic context by strengthening social and territorial cohesion and creating and economic diversification activities and protecting and valorizing the rural cultural heritage.

The Traras Mountains region, located in the extreme north of the Algerian territory, ensures a smooth transition between the Moroccan mountainous chain of Beni Snassen and the northwest Algerian plains considered as one of the Algerian distinct cultural areas with a well-established history. It has a significant cultural heritage that can be used in sustainable development plans.

Among other elements of the heritage of the Traras Mountains, the traditional buildings are considered very important in the region's cultural heritage. Just as other monumental traditional buildings, the humble vernacular houses constructed over centuries in this rural region, are now testifying to a traditional way of life in an ancestral community and remind us about their rich history and simple know-how.

The vernacular-built heritage in this region is considered one of the significant parts of the Traras Mountains environment and the basic social unit in which most of the social and cultural values were translated into architectural spaces. Indeed, the traditional rural buildings in the Traras mountains region are considered a social and economic unit where they interact with each other and livestock.

Hence, the rural built heritage is made up of details and peculiarities. It must be subjected to in-depth research to ensure effective conservation or valorization: It is only possible to protect what it identified as valuable. In the context of promoting the rural cultural heritage, the understanding and the identification of the resources are essential steps to understand the characteristics of the heritage, its potential, and problems. Within the framework of an effective conservation and valorization program, it is essential to identify, study, and document the heritage-built features that tell the history of the traditional rural communities.

1. Traras Mountains region:

The “Traras” term is and has been used to call the mountainous region that ensures the geographical transition between Morocco and Algeria. The landscape is essentially composed of rugged and mountainous terrains oscillating from 500 m to 1000 m of altitude and culminating in the Fellaouçen Mount (1136 m), the highest point in the region (Fig.8).

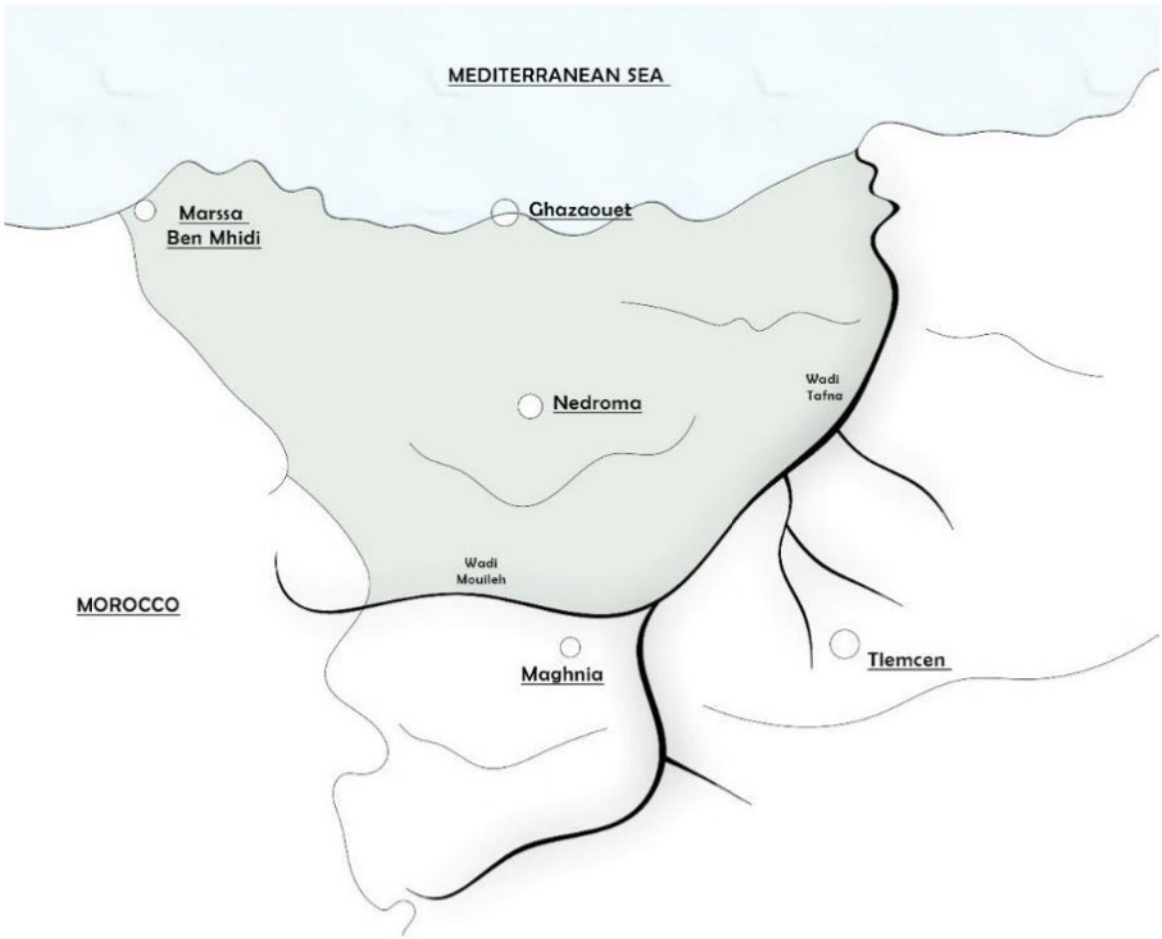

Figure 9: Traras mountains geographic limits.

Source: Authors

According to Mac Carthy[118], one of the first geographers that explored Algeria, Traras appeared in the middle of the 16th century, precisely in 1548. From the 12th

[118] Mac-Carthey, M. O. (1854). Revue de l'orient et de l'Algérie, recueil consacre à la discussion des interets de tous les etats orientaux et des colonies françaises de l'Afrique, de l'Inde et de l'Occanie. Redakteurenchef: MO Mac Carthy (Vol. 16). Just Rouvier.

century, this region was populated by Berber tribes[119] such as Beni Mes'hel, Beni Menir, and Beni Warsous tribes.The name of the region appears in a document belonging to the wise man El-Yagoubi who, in reaction to the Spanish massacres against Muslims in Andalusia, has formed an association of the region's Berbers and Arabs Tribes to create an army to fight against the Spanish population living in the city Tlemcen.[120]

During the 19th century, the Traras term was resumed in maps by many geographers, as Elysee Reclus represents Berbers and Arabs' distribution in the Algerian territory and describes the Traras region as an area in which lived white Berbers and spoke a former language.

1.1. Traras Mountains population:

In this territory survived a sedentary people of Berber origins[121], from two large Berber tribes since the 12th century, Matghara and Koumia. Until the 19th century, the local Arabic dialect included several words of Berber origin[122].

Since the early times, the Traras Mountains people lived in a stable environment where all the Berber tribes were coexisting in peace. They have practiced Judaism and Christianism and have known Islam's arrival, which has been accepted and spread widely throughout the region.[123] The Berber tribes of Traras become thus Muslims and belonged to the Arabs, just like other Berber tribes in the actual Algerian territory

[119] BERQUE J. (1974) Qu'est-ce qu'une tribu nord-africaine, In Maghreb, histoire et société, Paris, Duculot-alger, S.N.E.D. pp.22-34
[120] Boyer P. 1966 "Contribution to the study of the Turks religious policy in the Regency of Algiers (16th-19th)", Revue des MondesMusulmans et de la Méditerranée, 1(1): 11-49.
[121]Madani, B. (2003). Arabization of the Amazigh lands. International journal of francophone studies, 6(3), 211-213.
[122] M. Djellab, A. Amrouche, A. Bouridane, N. Mehallegue, Algerian Modern Colloquial Arabic Speech Corpus (AMCASC): regional accents recognition within complex socio-linguistic environments, Language Resources and Evaluation (2016) 1–29
[123]J. Canal, "monographie de l'arrondissement de Tlemcen" in B. S.G.A.O, tome 7, 1887, p.80.

Figure 10: Traras Mountains region tribes and their territories.
Source: Authors

On behalf of the intermix with the Arab tribes, the Koumia tribe, the most critical one of the Traras tribes, were able to gain a political foothold and to contribute to the foundation of Almohad Berber state as stated by ibn Khaldun: "…and the homeland of Kumiawas the central Maghreb between Arrechgoul (actual Rechgoun) and Tlemcen, and they had a great abundance and a fearful thorn, and they became one of the greatest tribes of Almohads."[124]

Despite the difficulty of reliefs, The Traras Mountains, which were composed of mountains, plains, and wadis, have been populated and used by the Traras population to construct their vernacular houses and settlements to meet their basic needs in terms of agriculture and livestock productions. They are distinguished by their muscular build and occupied with the work of their lands, which do not accept to sell except in extreme cases.[125]The population of Traras, mainly occupied with agricultural works, was also herding sheep. They had knowledge and skills related to water resources and the fabrication of tools necessary to daily life.[126]

1.2. Traras Mountains history:

As seen before, the Traras were not mentioned in the historical sources of geographers and explorers and began to be used starting from the 16th century to name a geographic region with a unique identity and geographical features.

Despite being without a name till the first half of the 16th century, the Traras Mountains, as a region, seems to be very well known for long centuries ago and that thanks to its natural features and geographical position that make it well fitted to be the home of Berber people for centuries. As was the case of all the north African

[124]Translatedfrom the arabic : كثرة " كان موطن كومية بالمغرب الاوسط لسيف البحر من ناحية أرشكول وتلمسان، وكانت لهم موفورة و شوكة مرهوبة وصاروا من أعظم قبائل الموحدينFrom : Ibn Khaldoun, Kitab el Ibar

[125]J. Canal, "monographie de l'arrondissement de Tlemcen" in B. S.G.A.O, tome 7, 1887, p.83.

[126]Robert Tinthoin, (1961), les Traras, étude d'une région musulmane d'Algérie, bulletin de la section de géographie, imprimerie national, paris, pp. 217-315, p. 280.

mountainous areas, the Traras Mountains region was a place of refuge, while plains all around were passing roads for many conquerors.

However, several Traras region places were well known by the Phoenicians as one of their commercial coastal waystations: there are remains that bear witness to this period, mainly present in the RechgounIsland and Honaine.

Later on, and thanks to previous studies on the Romansrelics in the north of Africa, the Traras Mountains' plains were a traffic area crossed by several Romans roads created both for a military role and commercial purposes.[127] The region has made part of the line that linked the East and *MauretaniaTingitana* and have hosted a part of the road that has allowed serving the forts created along the length of this defensive line and another secondary road that linked the several ports in the region with the interior of the country (Pomaria-Tlemcen, Numerus Syrorum- Maghnia).[128]

After the arrival of Islam, which was accepted and supported by the Traras Mountains Berber tribes, they contributed largely to its expansion, particularly with the conquest of Hispania in 711[129]. During the Middle Ages and according to the ancient Arab explorers[130], the region was considered as a traffic area that ensures the relation between Fez and Kairouan in the East, the South, and the Mediterranean sea and ensures appropriate conditions for the transport of goods coming from the Sahara Desert to the region's coast to be then shipped to Andalusia.

Since the arrival of Islam, the Traras Mountains region has known the passing of different Muslim states and dynasties contributing to the areas' development. However, the region was always attached to Tlemcen, which was of capital importance in the whole region. In this context, the Traras Mountains and their

[127]Salama, P. (1951). Les voies romaines de l'Afrique du Nord (Vol. 4). Impr. officielle.
[128]Charpentier, A. (2013). Villes et campagnes du pays tlemcénienislamisé: permanences et évolutions. Topoi. Orient-Occident, 12(1), 471-485. P. 473
[129]Collins, Roger (1994). Arab Conquest of Spain, 710–797 (Paperback ed.). Blackwell. p. 97.
[130] Such as Al Bakri and Al Idrissi.

principal cities have been invaded and controlled by Almoravids. The latter have taken advantage of the region's potentialities and contributed to its fulfillment.

Later on, the region has known the arrival, from El Maghreb El Aqsa, of the Almohads dynasty under the rule of one of the Traras Mountains'greatchildren: Abd El Mu'min Ben Ali (1092-1165). The region has thus welcomed the arrival of the new conquerors. It has provided faithful assistance for their leader, who has then mainly expanded in the area and conquered the city of Tlemcen[131]. During this period, life in the Traras Mountains region has flourished. The Almohads have contributed most to the development of the Traras Mountains region; they have developed the city of Nedromaand contributed to their cultural fulfillment[132]; they founded the port of Honaineand protected it with walls and forts.

The Traras Mountains region fell under the control of the Zayyanid dynasty, Starting from the 13th century. It has ruled the city of Tlemcen and has contributed to its fulfillment. During this period, the region of the Traras Mountains was an area of tension between the Zayyanid and the Marinids, who have succeeded in extending their influence to include the principal cities of the Traras Mountains, such as Nedroma and Honaine. The situation in the Traras Mountains has been locked in a tug of war between the two states until the middle of the 16th century.

Between the first half of the sixteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, the Traras Mountains region has become directly attached to the Turks' administration. At the beginning of this period, the Traras term began to be known thanks to the text written by El-Yagoubi, who immortalized the event. The Traras Mountains' tribes were mobilized to fight against the Spanish presence in the region of Tlemcen.

[131] Ibn Khaldoun, Kitab al ibar. PART 6, p. 141.
[132]Canal, J. (1887). Monographie de l'arrondissement de Tlemcen, première partie, ch. III. Nedroma et les pays des Traras,p. 261.

Later and during the first years of the French occupation, the tribes were wholly independent and recognized only their own and local leaders. It was not until 1839 that the Traras tribes were unified and began to be under Emir Abd-El-Kader's control, supported by the region's people, and provided with good and faithful assistance.[133] He has formed the Traras District, including several tribes such as BeniWarsous, BeniMes'hel, and BeniMenir[134].Under the leadership of Emir Abd-El-Kader, the region has known some of the great battles in which the Traras Mountains people have fiercely resisted the French Army, and that was until the year 1845[135].

During the French colonization period, the Traras Mountains region was first divided into sixteen (16) territorial divisions and then to (25) divisions, starting from 1959[136]. Since the arrival of the French and till 1962, the Traras Mountains region was fighting and resisting for its liberation and has contributed significantly to Algeria's independence. However, and as part of a scorched earth policy, hundreds of villages have been destroyed, and thousands of hectares of forest and natural areas were burned.

Due to the deterioration of the living quality in rural areas, the Traras Mountains region was widely affected by the rural exodus, which was first at a local scale and oriented towards the cities such as Maghnia and the Moroccan border cities[137]. Starting from 1962 and just after Algeria's independence, the rural population of the Traras Mountains starts to immigrate towards the big national cities massively[138]. The rural exodus has negatively affected the Traras Mountains and has led to the traditional rural lifestyles loss.

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[133] Tableau de la situation des établissements Français dans l'Algerie : précédé de l'éxposé des motifs et du projet de loi portant deande de crédits extraordinaires au titre de l'exercice 1830, Volume 2 ; Impr. Royale, 1839.
[134] Robert Tinthoin, *op., cit.*, p. 218.
[135] Camille Rousset, La conquête de l'Algérie, Revue des deux mondes, tome 88, 1888.p. 791
[136]Robert Tinthoin, *op., cit.*
[137]*Ibid.*
[138]Ferhi, S., (1992) Les Trara (ouest algérien), espace d'émigration, Méditerranée, v76, p. 63, pp. 63-66.

The Traras Mountains heritage is now testifying to all these historical events. It has to be identified, documented to take advantage of its cultural significance in a sustainable development policy of this historical and cultural area.

1.3. Writers historical observations about the Traras Mountains region:

Since the beginning of the French colonization, the Traras Mountains region has drawn the French authorities' attention and several academics, who have studied the region from different perspectives and particularly from the ethnological one.

One of the most ancient documents that have mentioned and dealt with the Traras region and have shown its importance from a geopolitical perspective is a work elaborated by the French minister of war, which focuses on the French's establishment in Algeria during the year 1839.

In this document's appendices, the Traras has been mentioned as a part of the west region Aghaliks (division in the time of Turks) and formed by Berber Tribes. This study has focused on the region's military situation and its part in the Emir Abd-El-Kader's resistance wars. The document has also highlighted some of the anthropological features of the Traras people and states that they are brave men. On other days, the Traras people were engaged in the mountain's livestock, which was more appropriate for them than agriculture. They are known for their skills and skills in producing wove mats and baskets woven using dwarf palms, straw hats, and black burnooses. All these products were of a high reputation in the region and were well commercialized.

The document has also described the Traras tribes as sedentary people concentrated in constructed houses instead of tents. Their villages are composed of a set of stone cabins leaning against the mountain. In each of the towns existed a more

spacious mosque than the other places and more worked and maintained[139]. The study has given one of the eldest inventories of the Traras villages that existed at that time and were classified according to their tribal belonging.

Another one of the works that have focused on the Traras Mountains is the study of Joseph CANAL appeared in 1887 and entitled: Monograph of the Tlemcen Borough; Nedroma and the Traras region[140], which has dealt with the region's anthropological features and has focused on the description of the traditional way of life. The author has highlighted the region's mountainous configuration and has hosted a sedentary Berber population for long centuries and effectively protected against attacks. The Traras population has thus known some form of social stability and has succeeded in adapting to the natural environment. Unlike other tribes in the region, Traras tribes were sedentary and constructed their own earth houses and villages.

The author has discussed the Traras tribes' race and religious affiliation, which was deduced thanks to some of the region's wise men names such Sidi Noun, SidiYouchaa, SidiBrahim, SidiAissa…etc. That has led the author to state that the region's population was first Jewish and later adopted Christianism in the Roman era[141]. The author has then concluded that Islam has finally succeeded in the unification of the Traras tribes.

According to Canal, the Traras people were very attached to the fertile lands they were cultivating for their living, and it was unacceptable for them to sell. They also had some skills to create some necessary daily objects using only available natural materials such as mod and wood. The author has highlighted women's role in the

[139] French Ministry of war, (1840) , Table of the situation of the French establishments in Algeria during 1839, imprimerie Royale, paris, pp.385, p. 297
[140] Traduction from the French : « Monographie de la région de Tlemcen ; Nedroma et le pays des Traras »
[141] J. Canal, *op., cit.*, p80

Traras communities: cultivating lands, breeding animals, and crossing the long distance to get water or wood.

Another work made in the French colonization period is that of Charles De Mauprix appeared in 1888. The work entitled "Six months in the Traras region, Berber tribes of Oran province[142]" was a description of a part of the Traras region (Beni Warsous and Beni Mes'hel) and the people who have been met and their habits during the author's six months of stay.

Impressed by the visited region's physiognomy, De Mauprix described the region's natural features, such as the main crossed Wadis and Mountains, and draw sketches (Fig.9). Other elements have attracted the author's attention and have been documented, such as the region's architecture and its main features.

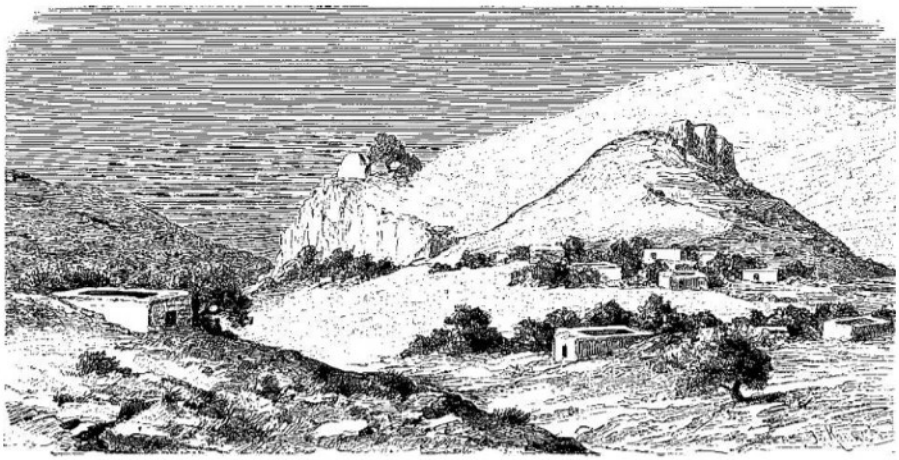

Figure 11: A part of the Traras region parts sketched by De Mauprix.
Source: Drawn by Eugène Girardet based on De Mauprix sketches

Although that the big part of the work was a description of the people that the author has met and the nature of the relationship built with them, technical observations about the Traras region architecture have taken place in the author's work, which has been described through a brief description and many sketches concerning the house design and their components. According to DeMauprix, the house position reflects the social position of the owner: the rich people construct their

[142] Traduction of « six mois chez les Traras, Tribus berbères de la province d'Oran »

houses in the summit, to dominate the region visually; the poor people build their homes in steep-sided terrains[143].

The author has noticed the lack of villages in this first region(Beni Warsous) and the predominance of isolated houses and has understood that the Traras people are very concerned about their independence and are content to stay at home with their family far from the community. However and even in the case of grouped habitations, generally around a water source, the houses are still isolated one from the other and surrounded by vegetation to ensure their intimacy[144].

De Mauprix and after a period spent with the Beni Warsoushas gone towards Beni Mes'heltribe region, which has again impressed him by its picturesque setting and its richness in terms of garden and orchards. He has discovered the city of Nedroma, which has been described as a white city and of which he couldn't hide his great esteem of its architecture. The author's tour has finally led him to the town of Nemours (current Ghazaouet) after the visit of Zawyet El-Yakoubi that has attracted its attention with its houses and white domes[145].

The Traras region has attracted the attention of the French authorities for another time in the year 1900. During this year, René Basset, director of the school of letters in Algiers, was commissioned by the general government to provide details about the Nedroma's population and the Traras Mountains' important Berber tribes [146]who were not enough studied. To ensure that, the author started his scientific exploration with the collections of existing local manuscripts and the necessary information in archaeology, history, and hagiography. In this work, René basset was also interested in the Berber dialect still used in some areas.

[143] De Mauprix, C., (1888) , p.369
[144] *Ibid.,* p.370.
[145] *Ibid.*,p.384.
[146] Barbier de Meynard, Charles, 1900, Mission de M. René Basset dans la province d'Oran, étude de la tribu berbère des Traras, compte rendus des séances de l'académie des inscriptions et belles lettres, 44-3, pp.327-329, p.327.

The study has concerned the Berber tribes of the Traras regions and their genealogy, which was resumed from the ancient texts of the Arab explorers such as El-Bekri, Ibn Khaldoun, and Ibn Abi-Zar. However, the author has divided his work into two parts according to a historic criterion: the first part encompassed the Koumia tribe and the non-Traras tribes in the former Nedroma District; the second part included the Traras Tribes confederation established during the 15th century. Hence, Basset's work studied the tribes of Swahlia, ZawyetEl-Mira, and Jebala. The second part dealt with the Traras tribes confederation included Beni Mes'hel of Nedroma, Beni Warsous, Beni Abed, Beni Khellad, Beni Menir, and Oulhasa Gheraba. Basset has collected information in the domain of history. He addresses the region's history, especially the city of Nedroma and its mains historical periods and events. The authors have also dealt with the archaeology of religion. They have focused more on the saints' cult, which was important in this region.

In the context of this study, René Basset has inventoried all the region villages and their religious structures such as mosques, Qubbas, and Haouitas (Hawitas: circular sacred site surrounded by a short dry stone wall and accessible from one place). He has concluded his work with a profound study of Berber dialects. With some discrepancies, he found similar the Traras region dialect similar to the Ouarsounis region and made part of the Zenatia dialect in the central Maghreb.

Alfred Bel, a former director of the Tlemcen Medersa, is one of the French academics that has also contributed to the enrichment of the Traras mountains region's documentation. In 1933 he published a work entitled: Nedroma, the metropolis of Traras[147] in which he focuses on the Nedroma City's cultural, religious, and economic importance and its significant role regarding the whole region of Traras.

[147] Alfred bel, 1933, Nedroma, métropole musulmane des Trara , Bulletin de la societé de geographied'alger et de l'afrique de nord, V 34 , N 133-136, Imprimerie Baconnier, Alger , pp. 503-525, p. 522

Although the study is more focusing on Nedroma City, the author has, in some places, talked about the Traras region and described it as a region where several villages were existing. Each of the settlements is composed of many houses and a mosque that reflected the city of Nedroma. The author continued in the villages' analysis and states that, despite being very fractioned, the villages' people still remember the strong relation that tied their community, especially in the cultural and religious events. During such a ceremony, all the village's men are gathered around the mosque and formed a solid mass[148].

The Traras villages, according to Alfred Bel, are populated with peasants who take care of their lands and cultivate them with cereals. Each family also possessed some livestock animals that spent the day out in the pasturage. However, the daily charges of land cultivation and livestock are completed with women and children's help. The authors remarked that the people were usually, instead of doing main tasks, occupied with the fabrication, using available natural materials, necessary furniture, and tools using their skills and know-how.

In 1944, Emile Janier published in the African revue an interesting study about the local industries in the Traras region. The work entitled "Indigenous industries of the Traras region" has exposed the local primary industries that have existed in the area and which were attested, by the author, that was of high value. They were sold in the region's big cities markets such as Tlemcen, Beni-Saf, Ain-Tmouchent, and Remchi. The author has divided the indigenous industries into two categories; the first is urban industries of which the products are mainly manufactured in the city of Nedroma; the second category included all the rural region products that were manufactured by the rural tribes such as Zaouyat el-Mira, Beni Mes'hal, and Beni Warsous.

[148] Alfred bel, *op., cit.*, p. 523

Nedroma City was the home of the region's main crafts. It hosted several cottage families of weavers, potters, and many workshops specialized in leather embroiderers and local slippers. As for the rural region, each of the tribes was specialized in a kind of industry using Alfa; Zawyet el-Mira and Beni Mes'hel were producing grain bags for pack animals; Beni Ouarsous were manufacturing feed bags and grain baskets; other tribes were using Dwarf palm fibers in the fabrication of baskets and sieves with different sizes and tints. Honaine peoples were more specialized in the manufacture of hats, locally named Mdell. The other industries' practice was notified by the other in specified regions such as Ain Kebira and Msirda, which were specialized in pottery; fabrication of wooden tools which most popular in Beni Menir and Beni Mes'hal regions.

The authors attested that the products of the indigenous industries of Traras were made with a particular car. In some products, they could contribute to European needs' satisfaction if they were well managed.[149]

In 1950, another work about the Traras Mountains had appeared thanks to Robert Tinthoin. He has studied the region from different sides and produced a relatively complete text entitled "The Traras, a study of a Muslim region of Algeria", which appeared in 1961. Robert Tinthoin has contributed to giving information about the Traras region administrative system and its development. The physical environment has been detailed and has included the region's topography, hydrography, vegetation, and climate.

The author has devoted a part of his work to the anthropological characteristics of the Traras region people. He has mainly resumed aspects that have been treated by precedent researchers such as Joseph Canal, René Basset, and Charles De Mauprix. He considers the region as a place of refuge where people have a certain

[149] Emile Janier, (1944), Industries indigènes de la région des Trara, Revue africaine, V. 88, pp. 43-66, p.44

degree of stability and continues by saying that the Traras people resulted from merging several and different ethnic elements and still presented certain homogeneity in their way of living. The population is mainly rural, from which the third is farmworkers; the other two-thirds are peasants occupied with the cultivation of their small lands. Tinthoin confirmed that the Traras man is intelligent, brave, tenacious, and very attached to its land, which is ploughed even if it was steep-sided. However, the population of Traras has increased from 15000 in 1843 to 125 000 in 1954 and presented the most densely populated region in the Oranie[150].

One of the study's originalities is that Robert Tinthoin has studied the region in detail and even focused on rural settlements and houses. He has stated that the form of settlements is one of the elements that made the Traras Mountains region's particularity. According to him, this region's villages are reminiscent of these of Kabylia of Djurdjura, The Atlas of Blida, Dahra, and Beni Snous regions with just some modifications in the roofs of the houses[151]. The author has then made a detailed study of the settlements and house form and configuration. The author has continued in the region's analysis and has raised the Traras Mountains economy's issues, which was qualified as closed since it was continuously influenced by the lack of security and its mountainous physiognomy. This situation has always forced the population of Traras to be folded in on itself and to ensure their self-sufficiency. They provided themselves with necessary tools, clothes, furniture and construct their houses with their own hands[152].

The studies mentioned above have contributed to identifying and understanding the Traras mountains' particularities, especially from the anthropological point of view. They were of great importance in elaborating our actual work, which focuses on identifying and documenting the region's heritage and its architectural features.

[150] Robert Tinthoin, *op., cit.,* p. 238.
[151] *Ibid.*, p. 241.
[152] *Ibid.*, p. 267.

1.4. Natural characteristics:

1.4.1. Climate:

The Traras Mountains region is exposed to the Mediterranean climate effects, warm and dry for six months, from March to August, and mild, wet during the rest of the year in this region; the mean temperature during the summer is 27°C and 12°C degrees in the winter. The average annual temperature in this region is 18.5 °C. The region is exposed to the prevailing winds coming from the west and northwest loaded with moisture and exposed to the hot upward winds coming up from the plain of Maghnia.The precipitation in the Traras mountains region is much more important in winter than in summer. The average annual rainfall varies between 300 mm and 500 mm. The snowfall in this region is too rare.

1.4.2. Vegetation:

The rainfall poverty has made life and development of the forest species only possible for Xerophilous that can adapt to the dry character of the Traras region. It is mainly covered by Barbary Thuya and other species, such as Aleppo pines, Juniper and Dwarf palms, and other rare species. This mountainous region is characterized by its altitudes varying between 500 and 1000 and culminates in the Fellaoussen Mountain with a summit elevation of 1136 meters. It's a steep-sided massif formed by more than 60% of slopes, which influenced natural vegetation's repartition by promoting specific slopes over others.

1.4.3. Topography:

The Traras Mountains' topography (Fig.10) is generally formed by a series of ridges, ravines, and coastal cliffs. Its twisted form is characterized by ridges and very sharp escarpments that make it very hard to penetrate from locations other than routes.

Far from the region, the Fellaoussen Mountain (1136m) is the principal and the first element that can be seen as a vast dome that dominates a long crenelated South-North mountainous line. From the south, the region is more seen as a mountainous massif with continuous razor-edge ridges. From the north, the Traras Mountains are partitioned into two parts with the north mountainous south line. All while the coastline, the topography is formed of valleys, canyons, coves, and cliffs. They can decrease suddenly to 500 m of altitude, such as in Tadjra, close to the city of Honaine, and Zendal, in the region of Souk-Tlata. In the Traras Mountains region, it is possible to distinguish several topographical features that have made the region's particularity for long centuries. The main components are the mountain ranges that make the specificity of the region and are:

- The mountains range links Toumai mountain (850 m) to Fellaoussen mount (1136). This line of mountains is the Most Important in altitude and links several: DjebelBouAbbou, NadorToumai (1020 m), Sokhret El Ma, Djebel El Goulia, and ends in the Fellaoussen Mountain. This part of the Traras region is tough to cross apart from some places, such as Bab Taza, situated in the center of this mountain range. This chain of mountains included metal mines operated in the past, such as in the region of Maaziz, Masser, and Fellaoussen. The agricultural activities in these lands are limited because of the terrains that are not sown except in wadi banks.
- The Beni Mengouch massif. It is located in the extreme west of the region, can be described as a massive dome of 300 m of altitude fractioned by several high valleys and ringed by northeast ridges.
- Msirda region. It continues from the Beni Mengouch to Wadi Tlata. This part's topography is uneven and disturbed in the north, formed by a series of valleys that resulted from the torrential rainfall, which makes it very inaccessible. The Msirda massif is fragmented by several cols that make it possible to cross and go towards the southern regions that are relatively less disturbed and accessible. The DjebelMendel is the highest point in this massif (613 m).

- SidiTahar-Bab El Assa massif. It is located in the south of the Traras mountains region. It is formed by a series of mountains where the altitude varies from 463m to 611 m.
- The internal massif of Souhlia. It is located in the heart of the Traras Mountains region and links Nedroma to Ghazaouet. The topography of this zone is characterized by the plateau's dominance, with a relatively low altitude. This massif is unique by its volcanic activity contributing to creating its peculiar physiognomy that presents large superimposed coulees interspersed with slag banks.
- BeniWarsousmassif. It goes from the Fellaoussen mountain to the coast and covers an area of approximately 200 km². It can be decomposed into two components; the first, which is the most rugged, is south of this region. It can be described as a maze crossed from all directions by several steep ridges and ravines. The second part of this mountainous range is in the form of two parallel lines of ridges framed by the longitudinal valley of WadiHonaine and in which stands several high points such as Tadjra(795 m) and DjebelSidiSoufiane(834 m).
- The BeniMenir plateau. It is delimited by WadiTlata in the west and SidiYouchaa beach and presents a bank of around 300 m.
- Mezaourou plain. It covers a surface of around 20 km² surrounded by Wadi Tlata and its tributary Wadi Sbair.

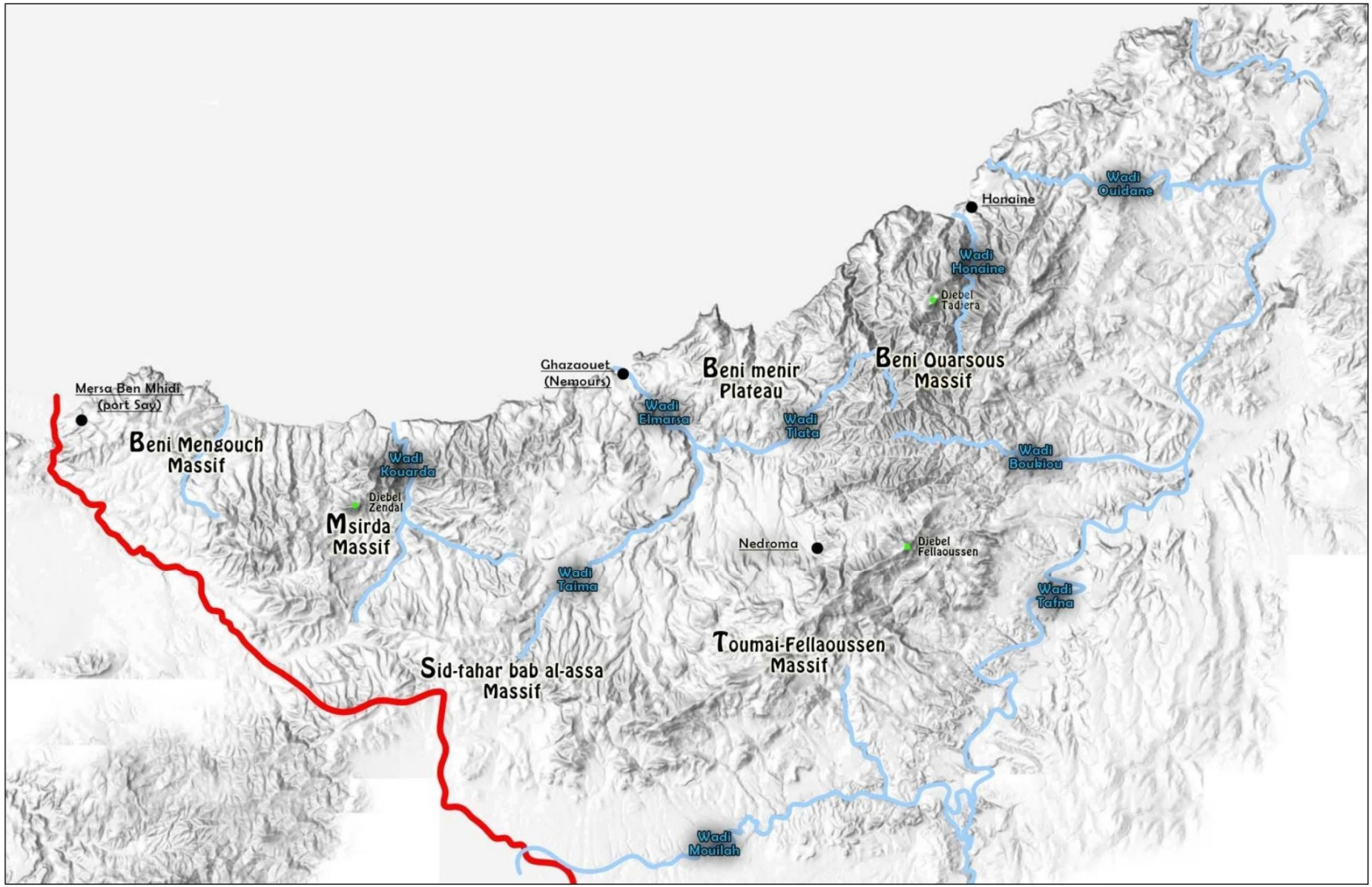

Figure 12: The Traras Mountains region topographic configuration
Source: extracted from www. Arcgis.com, modified by authors, accessed Jully, 2019.

1.4.4. Hydrography:

The Traras Mountains region depended for the satisfaction of its needs in terms of water on precipitations, several sources interspersed on its territory, and the network of watercourses sourced from the Traras principal mountains.

The hydrography network of the Traras mountains region can be divided into two categories; primary and secondary. The main type is a set of wadis that cross the South's region to the North and collect the rain off and sources water from the region's mountains and areas. In the first category, there are four mains watercourses; wadiKouardaresourced in the massif of Bab El Assa and crossed 12 km to get to the Mediterranean sea; Wadi El Marsa that crosses the city of Ghazaouet, fed by Wadi Tlata and Wadi Taima; Wadi Honaine and Wadi Ouidane that crosses the Beni Warsous massif to reach to the region of Honaine; Wadi Tafna which is the main Wadi that flows uniformly thanks to a significant amount of water collected from the Tlemcen Mounts and its tributary Wadi Mouilah.

The second part of the Hydrographic network concerns the tributaries of the above-cited Wadis and includes Wadi Taima and Wadi Tlata that supplies Wadi El Marsa; The tributaries of Wadi Kouarda in the SouthWest of the region; wadi Tafna effluents: Wadi Boukiou, Wadi Al Hammam, and Wadi Mouilah.

The Traras Mountains populations have always known how to use their region's water resources correctly. They captured abundant water sources, created ponds to hold rainfall water, and implemented irrigation canals to conduct the water to their lands[153]. However, mountainous regions are the richest of water sources, such as Ain Kebira and Ain Tolba in the Toumai Fellaoussen massif. Several other sources are present all around the region and make it water-rich.

1.5. Urban life:

[153]Tinthoin, R.,*op., cit.,* p. 253.

Although rural, the Traras Mountains region has always offered some examples of historic urban life centers: Nedroma, Honaine, and Nemours (Ghazaouet). However, until the 70th, the Traras Mountains region was still loosely urbanized, as in the case of all the mountainous Algerian regions [154]. That was initially due to the marginalization of these spaces and the profound effect of regional disparities during the colonization period[155] and then for many decades before the independence.

In this context, it is essential to remember that, during the 19th and the 20th, the French authorities' juridical arsenal has focused on the destruction of the indigenous collective ownership and the tribal system. Thus, it has encouraged the nomad tribes to be sedentarised and grouped and own their own and private lands.[156]

This rapid process of sedentarization compelled by the French authorities resulted from the logic of the Algerian rural resource exploitation that has later given rise to a rural enhancement policy aiming at the development of the countryside and the implementation of soil restoration programs, and the creation of farming areas, including the opening of roads and the creation of rural residential areas[157].

In the Traras Mountains region, several locations were chosen by the French authorities to be planned as future residential areas. From the 60s, as was the case of Tounane (actual Swahlia) village, the terrain was seized from four indigenous owners to construct the future village of Tounane[158]. However, Algeria's independence war has contributed widely to the region's urbanization by the multiplication of new settlement centers that constitute the heard of the actual mainTraras region's villages and cities.

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[154]Prenant, A. (1980). La mutation en cours des modes de croissance urbaine en Algérie in Villes éclatées. Hérodote Paris, (17), 119-159.
[155]Ferhi, S. *op., cit.,* p. 64.
[156]Bessaoud, O. (1999). Agricultural Algeria : From territorial build-up to impossible peasant emergence. Insaniyat/إنسانيات. Revue algérienned'anthropologie et de sciences sociales, (7), 5-32.
[157]Cherrad, S. E. (1994). L'aménagement de l'espace rural enAlgérie: Essai de bilan. Travaux de l'Institut de Géographie de Reims, 85(1), 39-48. p. 41
[158] Prefectural decree of February 13th, 1960, Retrieved from: Collection of administrative acts of the general delegation of the government in Algeria 1958-1962.

2. Traras Mountains Built heritage:

The Traras Mountains built heritage has been shaped by the physical, social, and political factors through history. The traditional constructions of the region can be divided into two groups: rural and urban.

The urban category is mainly the set of traditional buildings and monuments situated within the limits of the pre-colonial cities of Nedroma and Honaine and the colonial city of Nemours (Ghazaouet), and which bear witness to the traditional colonial architecture in the region. On the other side, the rural category is considered the central part of the region's built heritage and includes rural settlements and houses, religion, and military constructions. The second category also includes colonial farms interspersed in the region's territory.

2.1. Traras Mountains' urban built heritage:

The Traras Mountains region has offered some centers of urban life, such as the pre-colonial cities of Nedroma and Honaine and the colonial city of Nemours. Each of these centers has its particularity in its planning logic and the architecture of its buildings and monuments.

2.1.2. The old city of Nedroma:

The city of Nedroma (Fig.11) has been raised for the first time by El Bekri in the 11th century as a city surrounded by fertile and cultivated plains and encircled by high walls. In the 12th century, El Idrissi described Nedroma as a big city, well-populated, protected by big walls and a tower that dominates the city. In the 13th century, Ibn Khaldoun noted that the city, which was under the control of Almohads, was protected by high walls flanked with several tours.

Figure 13: Nedroma, the white city drawn sketched by De Mauprix during 1888.
Source: Drawn by Eugène Girardet based on De Mauprix sketches

The city of Nedroma offers an example of the traditional Berber-Muslim cities in the region. The city's center was occupied by the main functions: the Grand mosque, the Terbiaa place, and finally its historic market visited by all the Traras region people. Nedroma was initially and manly a city of crafts where several traditional industries were widely accepted. They were managed by families who have owned their traditional Know-How for centuries.

In 1869, the city of Nedroma contained 13 mosques; a public place; grain, meat, and wool markets; grain silos of Gnaoua; a Muslim, and a Jewish cemetery and two fountains. The city fabric is composed of traditional stone and wood patio houses with no external openings.

2.1.3. The city of Honaine:

The ancient city of Honaine was mentioned, for the first time, by El Bekri in the 11th century, who described it as a fortress implemented for the protection of the coastal line of Tlemcen[159]. It was later described by El Idrissi in its Tabula Rogeriana in the 12th century as a flourishing city surrounded by a high wall protecting their

[159]El-Bekri, A. O., (1859). Description de l'Afrique septentrionale.Translatedinto French by Mac Guckin de Slane. Imprimerie impériale, Paris, p. 186.

burgeoning bazaars[160]. In the 13th century, the town was known for its shipyards and its textile workshops. The Honaine fortress has been later well described by Hassan El Wazzan, known as Leo Africanus, in the 15th century as a fortified small, and beautiful town founded by Africans.

Famous for its port surrounded by a high wall garnished with two short towers on each of the two sides (Fig.12), Honaine was hosting Venetian traders who were bordering the city with their boats bringing goods for the town of Tlemcen.

El Wazzani has continued describing the city and has noticed that the houses (Fig.13) were very beautifully decorated with mosaics and Zellige and were well maintained[161].

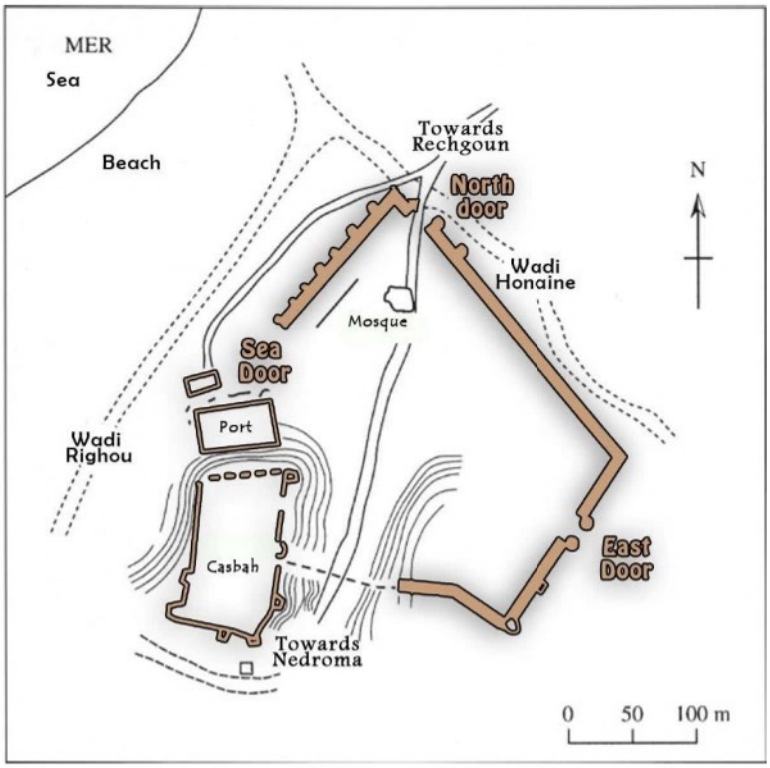

Figure 14: The City of Honaine remains.

Source:Marcais, G,(2000), Honain, Encyclopédieberbère, 23, pp. 3486-3489, Retrieved from : https://journals.openedition.org/encyclopedieberbere/1604, Accessed June 17, 2019

[160]Charif Al idrissi, Nuzhat al-Mushtaq Fi lKhtira al-Afaq: [The Book of pleasant journeys into faraway lands], V2. Alam al-Kotob, Beiruth, p.534

[161]Africanus, L. (1896). The History and Description of Africa and of the Notable Things Therein Contained, translated into English in the Year 1600, by John Pory, V 2, London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society. p.665.

Nowadays, only some remains still exist from the city wall, which was crossed by four doors: Bab El-Chergui, Bab El-Sennoun, Bab El-Kharajet, and Bab El-Kebira. Some parts of the Casbah wall still existed, dominating the city that covered 17 Hectares and in which there were residential areas, a Mosque, MoorishBain, and Dar el Imam palace.

2.1.4. The city on Ghazaouet (Nemours)

The city of Nemours, as called during the French colonization, was well known as a modern city that reflected the new values of the new region's Spanish and French inhabitants and from among the few first European cities in the west of Algeria.

The bay was known during the Roman era under the name of Ad Fratres, which was attributed to the twin rocks seen from the region's coast and still make the actual Ghazaouet City's particularity. El-Bekri has visited the region during the 11th century who has mentioned the existence of the Tiount city located not far from the bay that was, in addition to Honaine, one of the important ports of the Traras Mountains.

Later during the Spanish invasion of the region, Honaine was preferred, and the Ghazaouet Bay was not occupied. That was both because of the resistance in which the Traras tribes were engaged against the Spanish presence and the navigation disadvantages which have made the creation of a port an impossible task.

However, the region and its bay, known as "DjamaaGhazaouet" under the rule of Turks, attracted the French army's attention during the colonization period. That was for the physical configuration that made it favorable for military operations. In this period, the site (Fig.14) was also seen to be favorable for constructing a port that was necessary to help the French authorities in supplying their armies located in the extreme western regions[162]. Creating a port was not possible in the first instance, and

[162] Canal, J. (1887, April 13), le littoral des Traras, La Tafna, journal de l'arrondissement de Tlemcen. P. NP . Retrieved from : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5760215g/f3.item.r=Djamaa%20ghazaouet.

the rules have settled to create a slipway[163]. It was the same period(1846) that the site, all around the port, began to be urbanized, and the Nemours City started to be known as a new European city formed by stone constructions.

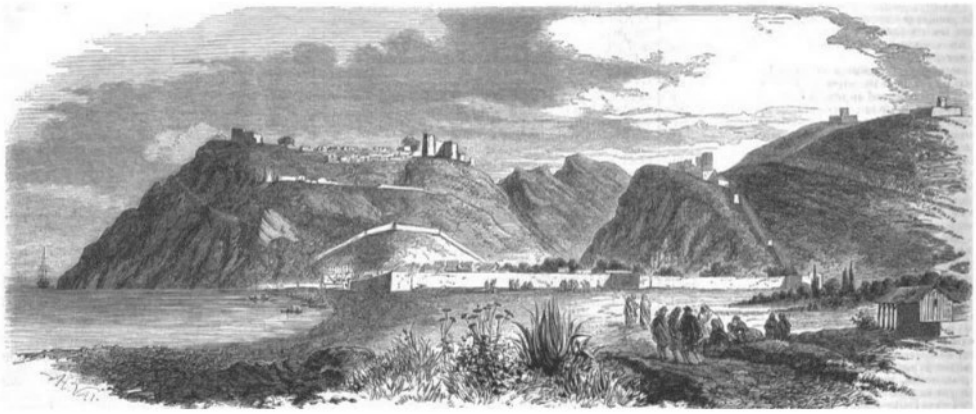

Figure 15: Nemours City surrounded by a fortified wall.
Source:L'illustration: journal universel. Paris: J.J. Dubochet, p.184.

In the first years of its establishment, and as was the case in several cities in the region, such as Tlemcen and Maghnia (Marnia), Nemours was encircled by a fortified wall of many towers bastions that surrounded the city 12 Hectares(Fig.15). However, the city was planned like European cities, formed by straight roads, vast places, and several stately buildings, from which the church is the most important one. It was constructed by following the architect Viala De Sorbier[164]in a central position with a large opening on the sea[165].

2.2. Traras Mountains rural built heritage :

As seen in the previous chapters, the Traras Mountains region has hosted several civilizations that have contributed to enriching its history and heritage. Its built heritage is urban and mainly rural. It includes several vernacular settlements (Fig.16)

[163]Lieussou, A. (1850). Études sur les ports de l'Algérie. Imprimerie administrative de Paul Dupont. P.16.
[164] French architect who has constructed several churches all around Algeria.
[165] Canal, J. (1893), Les colonnes d'Hercules, Bulletin de la société de géographie et d'archéologie de la province d'ran , Tome 13, pp.121-272, p.129.

with traditional architecture that bears witness to the conventional way of life intertwined with the natural beauty of the Traras region.

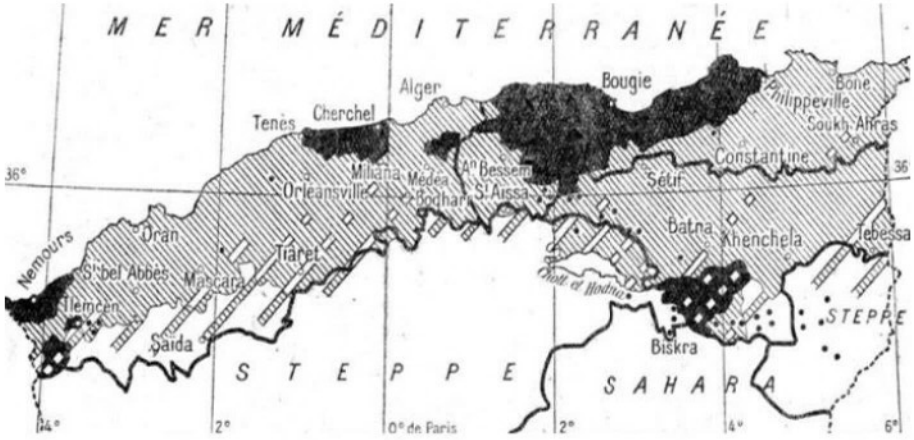

Figure 16: in black, regions with the most ancient villages in Algeria.
Source: Larnaude, M.M., 1944

The Traras Mountains villages and houses have also attracted the French authorities' attention, elaborating inventories. They have stated that the region is one of the most populated regions in Algeria. In this context, the French officers in charge of population data have counted hundreds of villages (Tab.6), composed of 4000 houses[166]. According to the same source, the number of homes has increased since the region's French occupation.

Table 8: Number of houses in the Traras Mountains region according to the French officers in charge of population data

Year	1839	1856	1868	1941
Houses	4000	2400	2800	18000

Source : (Tinthoin, R., 1961)

The traditional buildings are considered important features of the Traras mountain's cultural landscape. Just as urban monumental traditional buildings, the humble vernacular houses (Fig.17) constructed over centuries in this rural region, are

[166]Tinthoin,R.,*op., cit.,* p. 251.

now testifying to a traditional way of life in an ancestral community and remind us about their rich history and interesting know-how.

The traditional vernacular houses (Fig.18) included living spaces for humans, animals as well as storage spaces for food reserves. It has reflected the cultural, aesthetic, historical, religious values of the traditional rural community. This is why it deserves to be considered heritage and benefit from safeguarding and protection actions in the same way as the monumental buildings.

Figure 17: An existing traditional rural house located in the region of Swahlia, Mjiaa village.
Source: authors

2.3. Traras Mountains rural built heritage cultural significance:

The environment in such a densely populated region always has cultural origins; the Berber rural Tribes living in this region have shaped the natural environment and have produced a distinct cultural identity on the whole area. This studied region boasts a rich heritage in traditional rural houses built up over hundreds of years.

However, the Traras Mountains' traditional rural buildings bear witness to the traditional rural community way of life, which, according to historian and chronicler Ibn-Khaldun, begins to exist a long time before citizenship and creating cities. For the

father of sociology, life in the countryside is considered the cradle of civilization. It preceded the city. This latter owes its origin and its population.[167]

This humble rural built heritage, as the monumental one, have cultural value with development potential; Apart from the values traditionally accorded, rural heritage, through the architecture of the vernacular building, embodies and perpetuates the Traras mountains specific culture and identity, threatened on several fronts, economic, cultural and architectural.

Despite its immense worth, the rural vernacular buildings of the Traras Mountains region (Fig.19) has been threatened for too many decades either because of the rural exodus, the agricultural industrialization's critical economic situations experienced by the Tlemcen campaign, or because of the political situation experienced during the Algerian civil war, the straw that broke the camel's back.

Figure 18: (Dhar Ali Amokrane) one of the still-existing villages in the region of Souk Tlata
Source: Authors.

[167]Ibn Khaldoun (auteur), Mac Guckin De Slane William (trad). El Muqqadima : Les prolégomènes à l'histoire universelle. BERTI Edition : Alger, p.312.

In this context, the Traras Mountains rural vernacular buildings are today seen as useless and have been abandoned by their inhabitants who are not aware of its sociocultural and even economic value: It is more practical today, for a person in this region, to destroy or renovate his vernacular house, instead of searching for solutions that allow the reuse and the respect of the local traditions in terms of building construction.

The threat that weighs the most against this form of heritage is its cultural underestimation either by its owners or and more seriously, by the decision-makers at various levels. Therefore, it is necessary to make public opinion aware of this heritage's wealth and singularity and its cultural significance.

Faced with globalization, cultural homogenization, the Traras Mountains vernacular houses are now transmitting to the modern community; the ancient know-how, traditions, and customs of the Berber community originate from this region and allow for them to be anchored with their traditional culture and authentic identity. It ensured the emergence of a sense of social and cultural belonging and improved the quality of living. Indeed, this region's rural heritage promotes social gatherings and celebrations “Ouadda”, which are celebrated in most cases near the old vernacular settlements or near water sources.

The Traras Mountains' vernacular house is the expression of the time and community's socio-cultural values. These values have guided the location and the orientation of the buildings and the organization of their different functions.

In the Traras mountains rural buildings, the organization of spaces directly reflects the social preference for privacy and seclusion in family life. The house was designed to help the family leading a private and secluded life within the house. This is achieved by the court (Foust-Eddar), which is the house's heart that provides a sense of enclosure and privacy to the resident. The court is the female place where different functions can be done; it can be used as an extension of the kitchen in the morning and can also be used for other domestic activities from which strangers are kept out.

Instead of the courtyard, the house's intimacy is also guaranteed by an intermediate space named Sqif, a transition passing space between Foustededar and L'biot and was generally used as the same thing as L'biot.

The house interiors' private life was highly guarded in the Traras mountains house, explaining the limited number of openings towards the street. Despite that, these rural houses reflected the strong attachment between the family and the natural environment; the construction of these houses has integrated the outdoor air and has enabled passing from sun to shade, from the humid to dry, and to live inside and outside at the same time. Indeed, these traditional houses are closed off from views but open to wind and sunlight.

The Traras houses also reflected the standard organization of the traditional rural family. In this region, most of the rooms (Biot) are multipurpose and common; spaces are never strictly private or specialized. They reflect the adaptive social structure but also, and most importantly, the strong relationship between all the family members. The absence of distancing between them; the family members were usually sleeping together bonded one with the other.

The construction of the Traras mountains house in which the use of hands instead of tools reflected the tactile aspect of the owners, builders of their own house. They illustrated the absence of any intermediate between the matter and the constructor body. The domestic works were done over the ground on which the woman kneads the bread, wash and peel the vegetables, grinds sitting cross-legged or squatting.

Religious constraints have also contributed to the definition of the vernacular house configurations in this region and mainly in the house's orientation, which is looking towards the qibla for the daily prayers.

Conclusion:

The Traras vernacular houses constitute important and unique examples of authentic rural built heritage in terms of its socio-cultural significance, which should contribute to the community's education and its encouraging to be anchored with their social roots and culture. This kind of architecture is defined as the knowledge produced by a specific cultural group for itself and serves as a framework for its daily life, and is subscribed to the group's desires. Their humble design was based on finding solutions to people's socio-cultural and religious requirements as designing the house to have as much as possible intimacy, which was possible with the courtyard kinds of designs.

However, the Traras mountains are facing severe pressures threatening their social and cultural potential. Structural and demographic change, loss of infrastructure, and lack of investment have left their negative impact, often followed by a deep depression and lasting damage to the Traras rural community. Hence, rural built heritage began to gain attention and be considered to have great potential to encounter the rural areas development challenge, as was the case in many countries. This rural region has a very distinct culture that can be used in valorization and development schemes. The Traras Mountains region is considered as one of the Algerian particular cultural areas with a well-established history.

Indeed, the rural built heritage can become an essential element in the development of the Traras territory. It just has to be considered as a resource, a source of knowledge, pride, and self-esteem that should encourage the inhabitant of this region and their children to stay deeply linked to their land. Hence, the Traras rural built heritage is a source of local identity that should encourage people to participate in social activity and participate in the development of their region. This sense of pride and local identity is considered to positively affect the development of economic, cultural, and political practices.

Moreover, the rural vernacular houses, which are a significant part of the Traras Mountains' rural built heritage, can be considered a resource for economic development through multiple economic functions or only through tourism. Their conservation can help create jobs and other economic benefits.

To preserve these collapsing dwellings, it is vital to ignite awareness and increase the community's understanding of many of these traditional buildings' socio-cultural potential. Thus, this is crucial to provide funding for the next step, which is the physical conservation with which the passing of these traditional buildings to the future generation becomes possible.

To attain that, a very firm step must be taken to elaborate an effective policy aiming to valorize the rural built heritage in this region. The next chapter will develop an effective valorization approach proposal with a first practical step to identify and document the Traras Mountains' rural built heritage and its architectural features. This step will help raise people's awareness about the vulnerability of such a heritage and establish a knowledge base to be used in future conservation and valorization programs.

CHAPTER 04: TRARAS MOUNTAINS RURAL BUILT HERITAGE FEATURES IDENTIFICATION, DOCUMENTATION, AND INVENTORY: **PARADIGMATIC POSITIONING AND METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS**

Introduction:

The rural built heritage sites in the Traras Mountains region, briefly presented in the previous chapter, are not valuable for the community and the local or the national authorities who should initiate conservation and valorization programs. Therefore, the academic community must react to this state of neglect that seizes this vulnerable vernacular heritage, which will surely vanish without leaving any trace.

In this regard, identifying, inventorying, and documenting the rural built heritage features in this region are essential tools for establishing heritage values and, therefore, for its proper conservation and valorization.

Indeed, the ICOMOS principles for the recording of monuments, groups of buildings, and sites (1996), the Australia ICOMOS (2000) have both emphasized the importance of the identification, documentation of all relevant information of a heritage site as the first step in a preservation program or any operation aiming at heritage enhancements.

With such practical goals, the research methodology is based on a pragmatic logic dictated by the nature of the object studied. This consists of choosing a suitable method that allows us to examine our research problem. Within this framework, the study has adopted a particular methodology to achieve the research objectives. It will be mainly based on qualitative instruments, such as reconnaissance inquiry, informal talks, and decision-maker interviews. These are considered the most effective tools to identify local architecture, historic and cultural resources.

1. Traras Mountains Rural built heritage features identification, documentation, and inventory: A pragmatic approach.

This thesis aims to highlight the particularity of the Traras Mountains region's vernacular and modest heritage. It is seen as a key that can enhance the socio-cultural and economic conditions of the Traras Mountains region. Therefore, this vernacular heritage is mobilized to construct a local development policy and is considered essential in building and developing the Traras Mountains territory. With such a practical objective, there is a need to identify our paradigmatic positioning.

1.1. Paradigmatic positioning :

Designing a paradigmatic reflection is of capital importance for our research concerning identifying, documenting, and inventorying rural built heritage within a local development approach. It guides the research by controlling its evolution and the relevance and coherence of the research approach. Above all, paradigmatic positioning allows the establishment of research validity and legitimacy.

According to the literature, this reflection is consubstantial to any research; attention and seriousness must be given to the choice of research paradigm, considering the field of research and the objectives set.

Hence, conservation and valorization of heritage are making part of the field of architecture design. Thus, by positioning ourselves in a defined scientific framework, we will explain our perception of knowledge. The purpose is to build a research approach that articulates our ontological, epistemological, and methodological presuppositions and our potential contributions to knowledge within our field of research.

The paradigmatic positioning is one of the exercises expected in a doctoral thesis. It is a difficult one that requires a reflexive effort. This latter requires a backward glance, a rereading of one's work, and thus demands a certain maturity.

1.1.1. Research paradigm :

Thomas Kuhn, an American philosopher, first used the word paradigm in his book entitled The Structure of Scientific Revolutions to describe a researcher's philosophical way of thinking. It is a set of epistemological, theoretical, and conceptual elements that serve as a frame of reference for the community of researchers in a particular scientific field[168]. In addition to these epistemological elements, such as prestigious research results, founding experiences, beliefs, and values shared by a group of researchers. It is also described as a research's "worldview"[169], which is the perspective, or thinking, or school of thought, or set of shared beliefs that inform the meaning of interpretation of research data[170].

Within scientific research, a paradigm acts as a perceptual and cognitive mechanism that transforms "reality" into representation[171]. This mechanism is a selection and decomposition one that is intended to make reality intelligible. In other terms, the research paradigm is a transformative process implemented by the researcher to construct the scientific object of his research.

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[168] Kuhn, T. (2021). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (pp. 176-177). Princeton University Press.
[169] Mackenzie, N., & Knipe, S. (2006). Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods and methodology. *Issues in educational research*, *16*(2), 193-205.
[170] Kivunja, C., & Kuyini, A. B. (2017). Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts. *International Journal of higher education*, *6*(5), 26-41.
[171] Le Moigne, J. L. (1994). *La théorie du système général: théorie de la modélisation*. FeniXX.

Therefore, in a particular discipline, pragmatic positioning is crucial because it provides beliefs and dictates what should be studied, how it should be achieved, and how research data should be analyzed and interpreted.

According to the literature, multiple paradigms of research can be offered to researchers in various fields. However, they can be grouped into three main typologies: Positivist, interpretive, and pragmatic.

1.1.2. Elements of research paradigm:

A research paradigm comprises four (4) elements (Fig. 19), namely epistemology, ontology, and methodology[172].

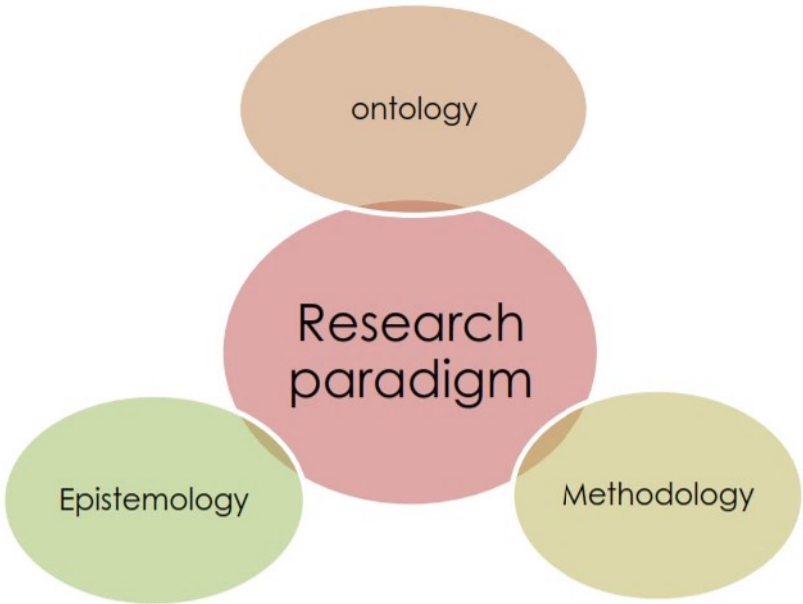

Figure 19: Elements of Research paradigm
Source: Authors

1.1.2.1. Epistemology :

[172] Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (Eds. 1985). Naturalistic Inquiry. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

The source of this term is Greek. It comes from *Episteme*, which means knowledge. It is used in scientific research to describe the first element of a research paradigm and refers to how a researcher comes to know the truth or reality about the subject of their research. In other terms, Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge and how it can be acquired.

Therefore, the adoption of a research paradigm is often the consequence of an epistemological choice. According to Jean Piaget, the epistemological choice consists of the study of the constitution of useful knowledge[173].

Thus, to understand the epistemological element of a research paradigm is important to ask the question of how can we know the truth? What can be considered valid knowledge? These questions are essential because the most important criteria by which research works are judged is their contribution to knowledge.

So, epistemological positioning is essential because it establishes how the researcher will proceed in the investigation of knowledge.

1.1.2.2. Ontology :

This is the second pillar of a research paradigm. The ontology of research deals with the nature of reality. In a general way, ontology is defined as the meaning to be given to “reality”; is there only one reality or several realities. It helps you to determine the form and nature of reality and what the researcher believes may be uncovered in this reality.

Taking an ontological position is essential to a paradigm of research because it helps the researcher decide about the research problem and its importance and how

[173] Piaget, J. (1967). Logique et connaissance scientifique.

he should approach to investigate and contribute to the solution of the research problem. Ontology makes the researcher ask a question about the nature of reality. Otherwise, it seeks to determine whether the reality of the studied situation is of an objective nature of the product of people's perceptions.

According to that, the ontology of research is associated with two important aspects; objectivism and subjectivism. An objectivist researcher believes that reality is unique and external to social actors (it cannot be evaluated directly); it is independent of the researcher who describes it. On the other hand, when it comes to exploring a problem, there is no single reality. The subjectivist researcher's objective is about understanding and taking into account the context and the people's perceptions. According to this second approach, the reality is constructed in the context studied because different contexts produce different realities.

1.1.2.3. Methodology:

The methodology is the third pillar of a research paradigm. It represents all the methods and techniques adopted by a researcher during his particular research field to reach one or more conclusions. According to John keeves, the term methodology refers to the research design, methods, approaches, and procedures implemented in an investigation and adequately arranged to discover interesting knowledge [174]

A research methodology enables the researcher to ask how the process of gathering data should be, which should allow answering to the research problem and, therefore, contribute to knowledge.

[174] Keeves, J. P. (1997). Educational research methodology and measurement. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

In general terms, there are two types of methods used in any field of scientific research; the quantitative approach and the qualitative approach. The choice of one of the approaches depends on the type of research question and the means available to collect research data. Funding also plays a fundamental role in determining the research approach.

1.1.3. Main research paradigms :

Several research paradigms exist in the literature, but the three most established ones are positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism (Table.9).

Table 9:the difference between positivism and interpretive paradigm

Paradigm	Ontology	Epistemology	Methodology
Positivism	Single and absolute truth or reality.	Objectiviste ; Reality can be attained and measured, and the process can be verified	A firm methodology based on Experimental strategies
Interpretivism	There are multiple realities, not a single one.	Subjectivist epistemology, reality, or truth is socially constructed.	Naturalist methodology based on qualitative approaches.
Pragmatism	Reality is constantly renegotiated, debated, and interpreted in light of its usefulness in new unpredictable situations	The best method is the one that solves problems.	Mixed method, design-based method, action research

Source: From various sources

1.1.3.1. **Positivism** :

Positivism is a philosophical branch that appeared at the beginning of the 19th century thanks to the efforts of the French sociologist and philosopher Auguste Comte who try to apply a natural science view on sociology.

According to the father of positivism, the wish of this philosophical current is that knowledge will inevitably progress by going into predefined stages, never by going backwards or by advancing towards unforeseen directions. He places religion at the bottom of these priorities by calling it fiction: «From the study of the development of human intelligence, in all directions, and through all times, the discovery arises of a great fundamental law. Each branch of our knowledge passes successively through three different theoretical conditions: the theological; the metaphysical, or abstract; and the scientific, or positive" [175].Thus, positivism was introduced as a reaction to theological and metaphysical as traditional epistemological means of knowledge. Positivism only supports the knowledge that results from verified experiences.

From an ontological point of view, this first paradigm of research believes that reality exists independently from social actors and experiences. Positivist researchers try to understand the social world by applying a natural science view. This latter's researchers investigate immutable laws among phenomena and explain them only throughout the cause-effect relationship. However, the given justifications should not be depending on the researcher's point of view, time, or place; they should be

[175] Richards, K. (2003). Qualitative inquiry in TESOL. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. Scott, D., & Usher, R. (2010). Researching Education (2nd ed.). London, England: Continuum

context-free and generalizable, which means if different researchers are working in different times and places, they will find the same conclusions.

From an epistemological point of view, this first paradigm of research believes that knowledge is exclusively gained through observation and experimentation. Thus, inquiring data should be objective; researchers are not more than objective observers of the phenomena that exist independently of them. They should distanciate themselves from the subject being investigated, and they should not intervene.

From a methodological point of view, positivist researchers prefer quantitative methodological instruments for collecting data because of their high ability to provide objective knowledge. Thus, positivist researchers rely heavily on Experiments as the most valuable tools because they can provide measurable results.

For the design of their research, positivists are based on a deductive approach, the formulation of a hypothesis or several hypotheses, the testing of these hypotheses while offering operational explanations, equations, calculations, and explorations to derive conclusions.

1.1.3.2. Interpretivism:

Many thinkers have called into question the scope of positivism as a research paradigm, which is limited to natural science and hardly applicable to other fields. Some of these serious problems have led Keith Richards to state that “Positivism is dead…It has become little more than a term of abuse.” [176]

[176] Richards, K. (2003). Qualitative inquiry in TESOL. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. Scott, D., & Usher, R. (2010). Researching Education (2nd ed.). London, England: Continuum

This situation has led to the birth of the interpretative paradigm of research, which emerged as a reaction to the positivism paradigm. In contrary to the first paradigm of research, this second one is more suitable for social science. Thus, It is a paradigm that is more focused on understanding and interpreting the meaning given by the social actors to the actions in which they are involved.

According to Max Weber, one of the interpretivism pioneers, the social world can only be understood by considering the subjective meanings and purposes that people attach to their actions[177].

So, from an ontological point of view, interpretivism is in contrast to positivism. Interpretative researchers believe that reality is not independent of the social actors' actions and perceptions. Reality is constructed by these people's experiences and subjective meanings. Therefore, this second paradigm rejects the existence of a single reality and the impossibility of its verification. Instead, it believes in the existence of multiple realities socially constructed.

From an epistemological perspective, interpretative research relies heavily on social actions, social actors' experiences, and subjective perceptions. Thus, interpretative epistemology is subjective. Interpretative researchers have to make part of the social reality and should not be distanciate from the studied subject. The researcher and the objects studied will thus be in interaction, and they will dialogue, question, hear, write notes, and finally record the research data.

From a methodological point of view, the social reality can only be understood through the participatory understanding of the social actors' perceptions. Therefore, the interpretative research strategy is naturalist: the researcher uses data collected

[177] Johannesson, P., & Perjons, E. (2014). *An introduction to design science*. Springer.

through interviews, questionnaires, and other instruments of descriptive data gathering.

1.2. Pragmatism as the most appropriate paradigm for our research:

As stated before, this work underlines the great possible usefulness of the steps consisting of identification, inventorying, and documenting the rural built heritage features of the Traras mountains region for a potential preservation and valorization program and that according to the pragmatism research approach.

As defined in the literature, the paradigm works as a heuristic, conceptual and practical tool that helps solve our specific research problems[178]. It presents the beliefs regarding the nature of reality and knowledge and defines the researcher's worldview[179]. For example, the Positivism paradigm consisted of the set of ideas that focus on precision, generalizability, reliability, and replicability of research results and claims that knowledge is based on objectivity, standardization, deductive reasoning, and firm control within the research steps[180]

The pragmatic paradigm, contrary to Positivism, reality can never be determined once and for all[181] , and it is more seen as what works rather than what is right. Hence, truth consisted of what is good and useful over time:" truth is whatever proves itself good or what has stood the scrutiny of individual users over time."[182]

So, the Pragmatic paradigm is a doctrine that denied the impossibility of achieving authentic knowledge concerning the absolute truth as was believed in the traditional

[178] Abbott, A. D. (2004). Methods of discovery Heuristics for the Social Sciences.P42
[179] Lincoln, Y. S., Lynham, S. A., & Guba, E. G. (2011). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences, revisited. *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*, *4*, 97-128.
[180] Creswell, J. W. (2013). Steps in conducting a scholarly mixed methods study.
[181] Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). Choosing a mixed methods design. *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*, *2*, 53-106.
[182] Baker, M., & Schaltegger, S. (2015). Pragmatism and new directions in social and environmental accountability research. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*.

paradigms (such as positivism) with firm methodology. In this approach, we must make do with plausible information taught to be appropriate to the practice's needs[183].

In contrast to the positivism paradigm, which believed in objective knowledge ensured through an inflexible methodology that consists of the examination of empirical evidence and the verification of hypothesis, the pragmatic paradigm asserts that acquiring knowledge is a continuous process characterized by flexibility which enables the research to be situated somewhere between objectivity and subjectivity [184].

Within the framework of the pragmatic paradigm, the researcher is free to choose and decide about the importance of the question and the adequacy of the methodology adopted for the research. Hence, the researcher's choice results from his beliefs, sociopolitical location, personal history[185]. However, it is suggested that the researcher identifies a genuine problem that makes part of the social situation, defines them, and addresses an inquiry to address them[186].

So, pragmatic researchers focus on obtaining the necessary information to answer the research questions. The pragmatic approach seeks to create knowledge to understand some parts of reality through inquiries[187] in the human's situation change and improvement. This approach has stated that philosophical questions can

[183] Ormerod, R. (2006). The history and ideas of pragmatism. The Journal of Operational Research Society, 57(8), 892–909. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4102403
[184] Goles, T., & Hirschheim, R. (2000). The paradigm is dead, the paradigm is dead… long live the paradigm: the legacy of Burrell and Morgan. *Omega*, *28*(3), 249-268.
[185] Morgan, D. L. (2007). Paradigms lost and pragmatism regained: Methodological implications of combining qualitative and quantitative methods. *Journal of mixed methods research*, *1*(1), 48-76.
[186] Dillon, D. R., O'Brien, D. G., & Heilman, E. E. (2000). Literacy research in the next millennium: From paradigms to pragmatism and practicality. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *35*(1), 10-26.
[187] According to Dewey (1931-1938) , see Dewey, J. (1986, September). Experience and education. In *The Educational Forum* (Vol. 50, No. 3, pp. 241-252). Taylor & Francis Group..

never be answered because meaning is inseparable from human experience and needs[188].

The adopted approach in this research thesis is seeking to solve the human problems and find practical solutions[189] in the domain of rural built heritage conservation and valorization rather than to find the truth or the reality of the same questions that can provoke endless disputes. In other terms, this paradigm enables the researcher to discover findings that matter using an unfirm methodology to understand the research problem and get practical solutions.

Within the framework of such a research problem concerning the conservation and valorization of rural built heritage, our research is adopting the pragmatic approach that is taught to be best for our particular search problem. Thus, the focus is on the research questions and the potential practical consequences rather than on their stringency methods. In this case, the chosen method may adopt formal and informal rhetoric[190]

Therefore, and According to this approach, there is no need for a firm methodology. Besides, it is not crucial whether the method consisted of a single method or multiple ones. The most important is that the adopted tools produced the desired consequences[191]. The pragmatic vision aims to address the research

[188] Ibid., p
[189] Pansiri, J. (2005). Pragmatism: A Methodological Approach to Researching Strategic Alliances in Tourism. Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development, 2(3), 191–206. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790530500399333
[190] Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). Choosing a mixed methods design. *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*, *2*, 53-106.
[191] Tashakkori, A., Teddlie, C., & Teddlie, C. B. (1998). *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches* (Vol. 46). Sage.

question, investigate a phenomenon, or test a theory with the most appropriate research method[192].

1.3. Methodological tools :

According to the pragmatic paradigm, the proposed method focused on identifying and documenting the architectural features of the Traras Mountains' vernacular rural constructions that were loosely studied before. It is based mainly on an architectural inquiry considered the most effective tool to identify local architecture and highlight the built heritage resources. The inquiry also aims to identify and make a detailed appraisal of a representative sample of the Traras Mountains' vernacular surviving houses. With that aim, a windshield inquiry is conducted to determine the type and number of houses in existence and collect preliminary information about their location, concentration, natural and topographical characteristics.

The windshield step is made in line with the web mapping inquiry using available areal imagery, with which 1626 locations were found, and a representative sample was selected.

This study method's core element is the architectural deep inquiry work, which allows gathering more accurate and consistent architectural information of the selected houses using traditional manual documentation tools as technical drawings and photographs.

As part of this identification and inventory inquiry, informal talks occurred with the local community to gain an insight into the houses' spatial and functional organization logic and architectural vocabulary.

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[192] Yvonne Feilzer, M. (2010). Doing mixed methods research pragmatically: Implications for the rediscovery of pragmatism as a research paradigm. *Journal of mixed methods research*, *4*(1), 6-16.

According to this methodology, it has been possible to identify and document the architectural features of the Traras mountains rural buildings, which were presented as building descriptions, illustrative drawings, and photographs.

1.3.1. Heritage inventory:

Within our pragmatic approach to the Traras Mountains heritage conservation and valorization, it is necessary to make an inventory, which should be seen as a research product, not just an administrative aspect. The inventory allows us to know what we have, and what should be preserved and safeguarded.

The inventory is not a legal instrument to recognize that cultural property is State heritage; many cultural heritage assets are not inventoried. In fact, inventories are fundamental in the practice of cultural heritage management. They allow the understanding of the nature and extent of heritage sites to be properly conserved and safeguarded.

The rural built heritage sites in the Traras Mountains region are not valuable for the community and the local or the national authorities. Inventories are therefore critical to rural heritage protection in this situation. The Preparation of a rural heritage inventory can effectively contribute to react to this state of neglect that seizes this vulnerable vernacular heritage, which will surely vanish without leaving any trace.

The inventory aims to identify and describe rural heritage sites for the purpoce of conservation and valorization and raise public appreciation.

1.3.1.1. Windshield and walking inquiries:

It is a necessary preliminary step to collect general information about the Traras Mountains region, which is relatively broad and challenging to understand and fully address all the aspects from the first instance. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the area through a preliminary inquiry, made by car, and in some cases, on foot, when it is hard to reach by car. The windshield inquiry was conducted intermittently between August 2017 and June 2019 with the author's tools and based on historical data, carts, and previous knowledge collected during the Magister degree preparation.

The windshield inquiry has been made by driving around the areas following press-established circuits and using available satellite carts. The tasks are taking photos and notes about the localization, integrity, and density of buildings.

The circuit of the windshield and the walking inquiry was designed to concern the whole area. Thus, it was decomposed and planned to suit the author’s daily possible inquiring time (between 4 and 6 hours). The work was therefore decomposed into 11 car-circuit and 15 foot- inquiry. All the car's circuits started from the relatively same point and cross the region’s primary and secondary roads and stop in the hard locations from which the short food inquiries began. A total distance of around 500 km was crossed and inquired as part of this windshield and foot inquiry of the Traras Mountains region and in where a total number of 249 locations were recorded.

Within the framework of this first step, discussion with people was always occurring, which was necessary before getting closer to any site, to avoid any misunderstanding with the house's owners, mostly when the site was still used. Despite making us take more time in each visited location, these talks have contributed to enhancing our understanding.

1.3.1.2. Web mapping:

This step is essential to correctly identify and locate the rural heritage element and create an accurate inventory of the Traras Mountains' rural-built heritage elements. The web mapping available tools are useful; they enhance the understanding of the rural built heritage and the traditional way of living in this rural area. It gives a set of useful tools to collect, store, analyze, and visualize the rural heritage and geographic and spatial information.

Therefore, the Google earth tool has been used to spatially inquiring and discovering the Traras Mountains region, inventory, and document all the potential rural cultural sites: ancient villages, hamlets, and isolated vernacular houses.

1.3.2. Architectural inquiry:

This step is more accurate in terms of collected information. It was based on recording the building's spatial configuration and details through simple and traditional recording tools. It was based on spatial sampling in which the selection of the study cases was based on a systematic sampling technique.

1.3.2.1. Systematic spatial sampling technique :

Here, the sampling size concerns the minimum number of surveyed houses required to identify, as good as possible, if significant differences exist. However, The authors cannot gather data from the entire area because of the limited resources (personal financing) granted to this work. The research aims thus at collecting data from a sample of vernacular houses. Hence, systematic spatial sampling is one of the most cost-efficient techniques to survey study areas limited in size.

This method has been very effective in many studies regarding forest inventories[193], landscape monitoring programs[194], and land use surveys[195].

In this research, the systematic spatial sampling aims to choose elements from vernacular house's population by selecting random starting points and selecting other distanced samples by following a fixed sampling interval.

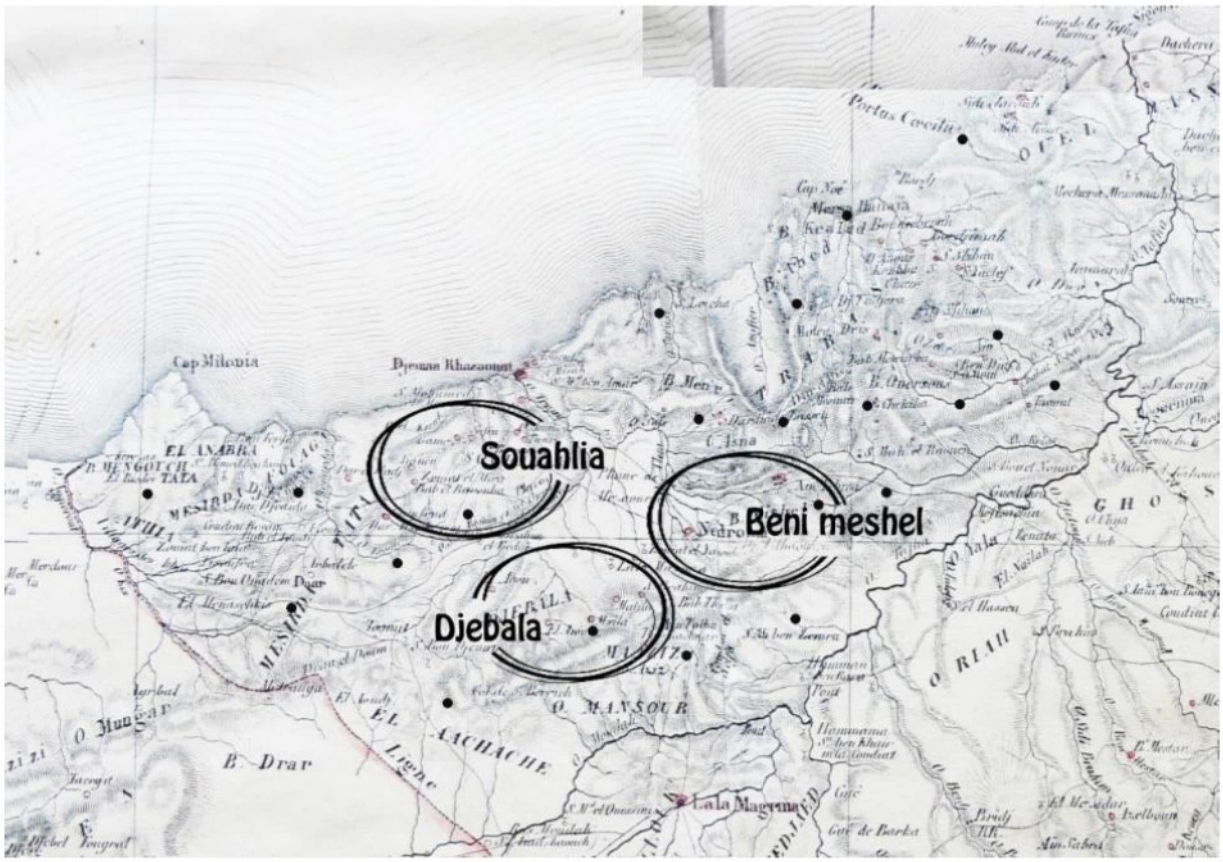

Figure 20: study cases repartition

Source: Authors

[193] Tomter, S.M., Hylen, G., Nilsen, J.E., 2010. In: Tomppo, E., Gschwanter, T., Lawrence, M., McRoberts, R. (Eds.), National Forest Inventories, Pathways for Common Reporting. Springer, Norway, pp. 411–424.

[194] Dramstad, W.E., Fjellstad, W.J., Strand, G.H., Mathiesen, H.F., Engan, G., Stokland, J.N., 2002. Development and implementation of the Norwegian monitoring programme for agricultural landscapes. J. Environ. Manag. 64, 49–63.

[195] Strand, G.-H., Bloch, V.V.H., 2009. Statistical grids for Norway. Documentation of national grids for analysis and visualization of spatial data in Norway. Statistics Norway, Oslo.

Therefore, the selection of vernacular houses' samples was made in two stages. The region of the Traras Mountains was confined to two representative areas (Fig.20): The first one contains Souahlia, Djebala, and Beni Meshel, where vernacular settlements and isolated houses are concentrated in where authentic information is supposedly present. A total number of 11 vernacular buildings located in settlements were randomly selected and studied in these two areas. The second region consists of the rest of the Traras Mountains region and from which 21 isolated vernacular buildings, homogeneously spread, were added.

Within this objective, a total number of **32** vernacular house cases were chosen from all around the region to be profoundly inquired. The case number was very limited by the budget at hand and the location, which was very hard to reach in some instances. However, the in-depth architectural inquiry focused on getting the selected houses' exact layout and its spatial and functional components. Sketches were thus quickly drawn, usually from a high point, and details were after that recorded.

The author was always trying to get closer to the people around using informal talks. He initiates conversations before getting closer to any site to avoid any misunderstanding and get more information from these people who were usually family members or someone who has lived there in some period of their lives. Unlike the windshield inquiry, during this step, time was available, and for that, the discussion was more developed with the people met and who have usually agreed to tell us more about the houses.

1.3.2.2. typological analysis:

Within our research framework, the typological analysis consisted of the classification of the Traras Mountains' vernacular houses layout's physical

characteristics. The purpose here is to generate architectural knowledge through possible typologies. The objective is to identify and understand the vernacular-built heritage architectural features and produce types that can be used in design to be in line with traditional architectural forms.

At this point, to make typological analysis, within the scope of our thesis, more meaningful, it is essential to understand the genesis of this concept and its historical transformation.

Since the 18th century, theoreticians believed that the built environment might constitute the primary source of architectural knowledge, which can be achieved through typological analysis. The classification facilitates identifying and understanding the built environment and saves time and effort by generating general typologies and extracting architectural knowledge from their details.

This approach tries to understand and explain the structure of the constructions by focusing only on their physical characteristics. Therefore, architectural productions are classified according to their spatial characteristics rather than functions. The latter may remain too reductive; several cases of buildings last longer than their initial functions. Thus, it is more convenient that the classification should be made by relying only on spaces.

It must remain clear that this approach does not wholly neglect the socio-cultural and economic factors which are complimentary to spatial characteristics and have an essential role in understanding architectural typologies.

This concept of type was first introduced to the domain of architecture during the enlightenment by Quatremère de Quincy in contrast to the concept of model[196] with which buildings were perceived as machines, and their production requires repeatability and standardization. Therefore, typology was introduced and implemented to help to return architecture to its natural origins. According to Quincy, type can be found and understood by looking at the first stage during which an architectural product emerged. Otherwise, type is the original reason for form in architecture.

While Quatremère de Quincy believes that type is the original reason of form in architecture, Jean Durand (1760 -1834), in his book entitled *Recueil et parallèle des edifices de tous genres, ancient et modernes* (Collection and Parallel of Edifices of All Kinds, Ancient and Modern, 1799-1801) focuses on the idea that type is "a method of composition based on generic geometry of axis superimposed on the grid."[197]

It can be claimed that Jean Durand has formed the basis of the typology concept as a design method. According to him, the architect's role is no more than composition and disposition to address the human needs in terms of convenience (solidity, salubrity, and comfort) and economy (symmetry, regularity, and simplicity).

These architects-theoreticians believe that the past is a form of knowledge and that typology is the instrument to import architectural knowledge from history. Thus, Typology can serve two purposes. It can be used to understand the historical form and improve design to be in line with architectural heritage (continuity).

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[196] Quatremère de Quincy, "Type" in Encyclopédie Méthodique, vol. 3, trans. Samir Younés, reprinted in The Historical Dictionary of Architecture of Quatremère de Quincy (London: Papadakis Publisher, 2000).
[197] Rafael Moneo, "On Typology", Oppositions 13 (1978), 28.

Thus, typological analysis is more than essential in the case of our thesis objectives. It will help in the identification, and the understanding of the Traras Mountains' built heritage features.

1.3.2.3. architectural Survey technique:

As mentioned above, information concerning the houses' architectural details was collected through an architectural survey method. This step aims at producing graphic representations on what still exists of a Traras Mountains vernacular houses representative samples. This is justified by the lack of graphic documentation needed in the identification process and potential conservation and valorization operations.

Figure 21: Architectural survey technique (Sketching step)
Source: Authors

To fill this gap, the architectural survey consisted of transporting on paper in a precise way, the whole of the measurements of the vernacular house. This was possible only with a group of two people using the following traditional tools:

- A Meter and a Decameter.
- A plumb line.

- A clipboard on which authors take preliminary sketches, measures, and notes.
- A distance meter is used to measure hard-to-reach places.

During this step, the process of the architectural survey consisted of three steps:

- Vernacular house spatial configuration sketching
- Measuring spaces
- Drawing précises graphic documents using available graphical tools(ArchiCAD and Photoshop Cs5)

The first step of sketching is carried out on-site by hand while retaining the space's forms and proportions (Fig.21). During this step, the author draws citations lines to save time during the next steps. Also, to avoid serious problems and significant waste of time during the architectural survey, it was useful to establish an overall mass survey of the surveyed vernacular houses and recognize all components. However, the deformation of spaces is not identified in the first instance and, for that, they cannot be transferred on the sketch. Anyway, they appear when taking measurements and in the final step of the architectural survey process.

Indeed, what was sketched as a perfect rectangular become, in the next steps, a slightly or roughly deformed shape. Therefore, to locate the deformation, it is necessary to proceed by **triangulation** (Fig.22). This method allows reproducing each of the surveyed vernacular houses' plans, whatever its shape.

After sketching, measures were taken using standard tools cited above using the triangulation method.

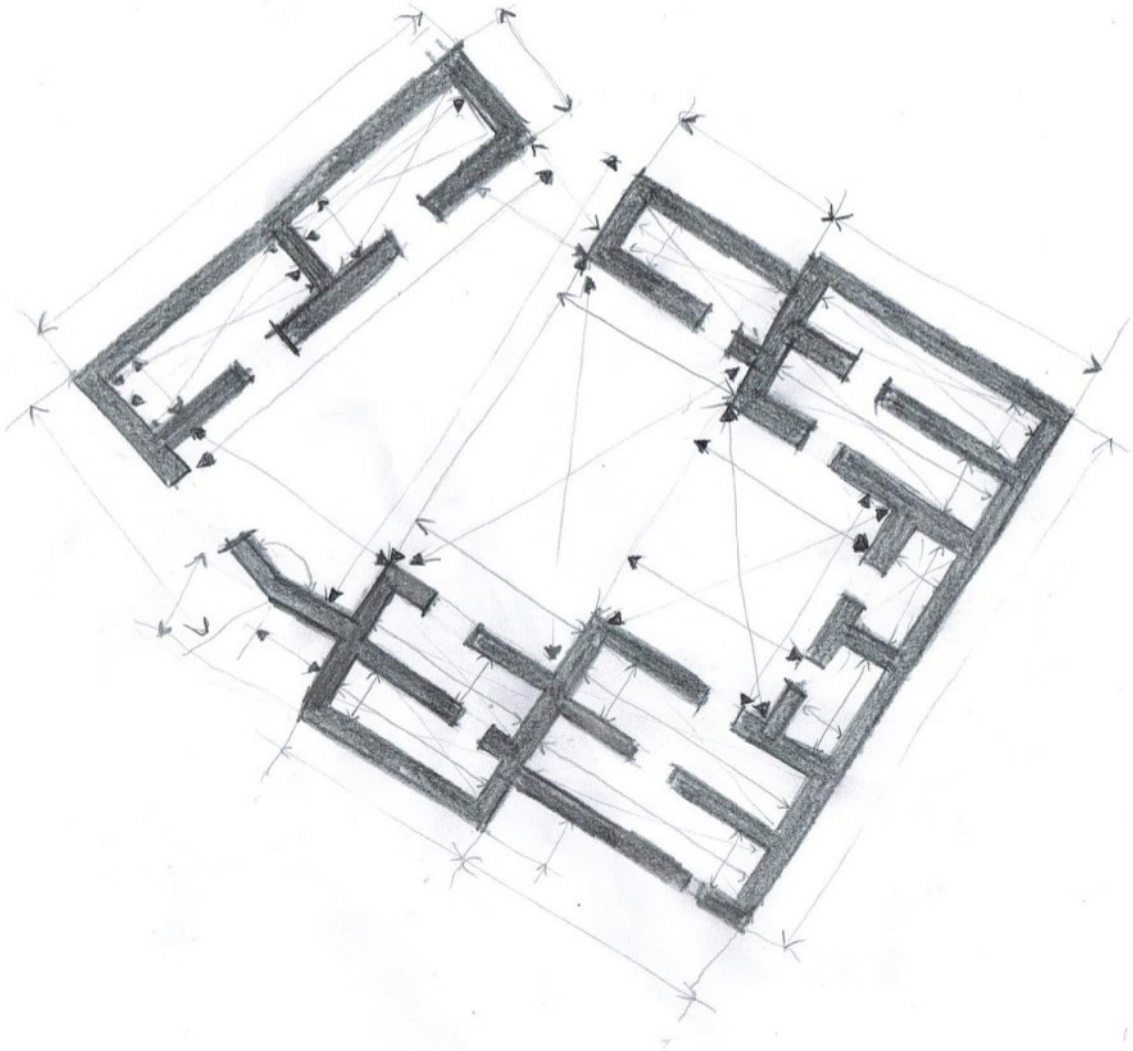


Figure 22: Example of sketches

Source: Authors

Finally, sketches were precisely resumed to produce representable and readable graphic documents. This step is guaranteed by using available computer drawing tools, mainly ArchiCAD 16 and Photoshop Cs5.

1.3.2.4. The role of Informal talks in generating data :

Preliminary information about vernacular houses has shown that all the cases are abandoned. Therefore, there are no families that still live in these vernacular houses. For this reason, it was not possible to collect data using the questionnaire tool due to the problem of getting a representative sample of the population concerned with the

rural vernacular houses. In addition, even if it existed, another problem is that the concerned population is old and mostly illiterate. Conducting a questionnaire survey, in this case, seems to be inappropriate and may not be representative.

However, Informal discussion with people around the surveyed houses was the building block of our research methodology to get an insight into users' perceptions. Also, they constitute a functional tool to document oral building traditions.

This methodological tool was seen as a constitutive element of qualitative data acquirement for a long time. Among other qualitative researchers, Sydney and Beatrice WEBB believe that informal conversations should be considered an important research technique because of their great potential to generate valuable data[198]. This methodological tool is still being used by scholars today[199].

In our thesis topic, Informal talks as a methodological tool aim to gain a deep understanding of the vernacular houses' particular configuration and functional components in their unique cultural context. So, our research's informal talks take place in the vernacular house's surroundings. The authors engage the person present in the houses' surroundings (in rural areas, being in a property means that you are one of the owners or that you are close to the owner's family and you know about its history) in a conversation about the value of the surveyed house, to establish an understanding of what's essential for them concerning rural built heritage.

Informal talks allow us to get more insight into the value of these vernacular houses and the importance of their identification and documentation to be conserved,

[198] Webb, Sydney & Webb, Beatrice (1932). *Methods of social study*. London: Longman Green.
[199] Such as (Fisette, 2013; Korobov, 2018; Park et al., 2016; Simpson et al., 2014; Thomson, 2015; thomson and trigwell, 2018; Vigo A and Soriano b, 2014)

valorized, and safeguarded for future generations. Informal talks permit us to understand the spatial configuration of the surveyed vernacular houses, their functional components, and the Traras Mountains houses' etymology. Therefore, 32 informal talks were conducted on the surveyed vernacular houses sites.

Once conversations are made, notes were derived from the content of the informal talk. The Six (06) mains ideas (Tab.10) that the informal talks have highlighted are presented in the table below:

Table 10: Five (5) mains ideas developed in the informal talks.

N°	Ideas
01	Information about the vernacular house such as state of construction, way of possession, living conditions, and actual usage of the house.
02	To which extent vernacular houses are important for the interlocutor
03	If any operation should be proceeded to conserve vernacular rural houses
04	For what purpose the conservation of the houses should be done
05	The contribution of vernacular rural houses in local development
06	Preferences concerning the use of traditional features in new constructions

Source: Authors

1.3.3. Decision-maker interviews :

To correctly identify rural built heritage aspects and the importance of its identification, documentation, and inventory for the local development enhancement, the work involved semi-structured in-depth interviews with employees of different departments concerned with heritage conservation (Tab.11).

Table 11 Interviewed profiles.

N	Profile	Age	Residence	Time
01	Employee from the Culture department (Tlemcen)	42	Tlemcen	30
02	Employee from the Tourism department (Tlemcen)	53	Tlemcen	32
03	Employee from the Nedroma municipality	45	Nedroma	34
04	Employee from the Souahlia municipality	54	Ghazaouet	31
05	Employee from the Honaine municipality	43	Honaine	31
06	Employee from the Djebala municipality	47	Djebala	34
07	Employee from the national office for the management and exploitation of protected cultural property	59	Tlemcen	40

Source : Authors

In Tlemcen province, the decision-makers concerned by rural built heritage conservation and valorization are employees of the central Traras Mountains regions'

communes', department of culture, tourism department, and employees from the national office for the management and exploitation of protected cultural property.

On a provincial scale, respondents' selection was exhaustive. But, at a local scale, due to limited resources, a random sample was selected. However, the choices were made to concern the entire region. Thus, four (4) local decision-makers were selected.

The semi-structured interviews were carried out with the mains eight (8) decision-makers. The first part of the interviews was concerned with obtaining respondents' personal information such as age, place of residence, and education level. The second part aimed to identify the respondents' perceptions and awareness about the Traras Mountains rural built heritage, the importance of the vernacular built heritage identification, and documentation steps in the local development enhancement (Tab.12). In all the cases, the interviews took place in the respondents' offices and have lasted more or less than 35 minutes.

Table 12: interviews content

	Topics addressed
Decision-makers	Is there any specific strategy concerned with the vernacular-built heritage of Tlemcen's rural areas and its implication in a local development approach?
	What do you think about the Traras Mountains' rural built heritage? Do you think that it can contribute to rural regions' local development? Is there any appreciation for its values?

Is there a need for the Traras Mountains' rural-built heritage identification, documentation, and inventory to enhance this rural region's local development?
Are there any difficulties regarding the consideration of rural built heritage and its implication in a local development strategy?
Is there any intention to preserve or enhance the rural built heritage and particularly the Traras Mountains ones?

Source: Authors

Conclusion:

This chapter discusses our research methodology, including the paradigmatic positioning and methodological instruments. The research strategy is based on a pragmatic logic that was guided by the research's objectives. This pragmatic vision consisted of choosing the more pragmatic (suitable) method that would enable us to understand, examine and respond to our research problem.

In the first instance, pragmatic positioning was discussed in the first section of this chapter. Defining the paradigmatic vision is important for our research concerning identifying, documenting, and inventorying rural built heritage within a local development approach. This step allows the proper guidance of the researching process by enabling the supervision of its evolution and the relevance and the coherence of the research approach. Above all, paradigmatic positioning allows the establishment of research validity and legitimacy.

Thus, with such a research problem concerning the conservation and valorization of rural built heritage within a local development approach, our research strategy has implemented a pragmatic approach that is more appropriate for our search problem resolution. Therefore, the focus is on the research questions and the potential practical consequences.

According to the pragmatic vision, the implemented methodological tools focused on identifying and documenting the architectural features of the Traras Mountains' vernacular rural constructions. It consisted of an architectural reconnaissance inquiry, seen as the most beneficial means to identify local architecture in the Traras Mountains region correctly.

With that aim, a windshield inquiry and web mapping survey proceeded simultaneously to find out the consistency of vernacular constructions and collect preliminary information about their location, concentration, natural and topographical characteristics.

Within our research framework, a typological analysis of Traras Mountains' vernacular houses layout's physical characteristics is preceded. This step aims to identify and understand the vernacular-built heritage architectural features and produce types that can be used in design to be in line with traditional architectural forms.

In line with these first steps, informal discussion with local people was always occurring. The Informal talks with locals present around the selected vernacular buildings were essential to our research methodology to get an insight into locals' meanings and interpretations. Also, they constitute an effective tool to understand and document oral building traditions properly.

To correctly identify rural built heritage aspects and the importance of its identification, documentation, and inventory for the local development enhancement, the work involved semi-structured in-depth interviews with employees of different departments concerned with heritage conservation.

Our methodological strategy is built according to a pragmatic vision that uses a comprehensive and qualitative approach to collecting data, their analysis, and interpretation. Within this framework, our methodological approach allows us to carry out qualitative surveys and validate the approach.

CHAPTER 05: TRARAS MOUNTAINS RURAL BUILT HERITAGE FEATURES IDENTIFICATION, DOCUMENTATION, AND INVENTORY: **FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

Introduction:

This research aims to suggest a process of identifying, documenting, and inventorying rural built heritage features in the Traras Mountains region that may achieve the enhancement of local development. For this purpose, the thesis has attempted to answer its key question; how will it be possible for the abandoned built heritage in the Traras Mountains region to be identified and documented to be preserved and valorized within a pragmatic approach to local development?

The underlying assumption is that the identification, documentation, and inventorying of the Traras Mountains built heritage features will enhance the region's local development and formulate a practical approach to rural built heritage conservation and valorization.

Hence, our research strategy is based on a pragmatic qualitative approach developed from an exploratory perspective. It is based on subjective points of view that guide us in our choices and interactions with the research object. Thus, the work involved reconnaissance inquiries, informal discussions with locals, and semi-structured in-depth interviews with decision-makers.

Our on-site work investigation was conducted in several stages. We began with a windshield survey and walking inquiries, which consisted of collecting general information about the Traras Mountains region. This preliminary inquiry, made by car, and in some cases, on foot, has enabled us discovering a large number of vernacular constructions' sites and understanding some aspects related to the different typologies. These steps were done in line with the web mapping inquiry. The latter has allowed identifying and locating the rural heritage element and creating an accurate inventory of the Traras Mountains' rural-built heritage sites.

Another investigation stage consisted of an in-depth architectural inquiry, which enables us to collect more accurate data based on recording the 32 selected

samples' spatial configuration and details using traditional and straightforward recording tools.

Once data is collected thanks to the tools cited above, a typological analysis is preceded. This step aims at the classification of the Traras Mountains' vernacular houses layout's physical characteristics. The purpose here is to generate architectural knowledge through possible typologies. This approach tries to understand and explain the structure of the Traras Mountains vernacular houses by focusing only on their physical characteristics.

Another stage of the collecting data process consisted of gathering data from our reference population. They enable us to understand more about the value of these vernacular houses and the importance of their identification and documentation to be conserved, valorized, and safeguarded for future generations. Therefore, 32 informal discussions were conducted on the surveyed vernacular houses. Also, our on-site work involved semi-structured in-depth interviews with decision-makers from departments concerned with heritage conservation.

The next chapter presents our research strategy's main findings, analysis, and interpretation with a pragmatic vision.

1. Inventory; Windshield and web mapping inquiries' findings :

The windshield inquiry and the web mapping inquiry using the available satellite images in the Google earth tool have allowed us to find a total number of 1626 locations which can be presented as follows (Tab.13):

Table 13: Vernacular houses, small localities, and villages numbers according to the windshield and the web mapping inquiry.

HOUSES NUMBER / LOCATION	NUMBER OF LOCATIONS	TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSES/LOCATIONS	GENERAL CASES OF LOCALITIES
1	1059	1059	**1059 isolated houses**
2	136	272	**Small localities (2-9) 519 localities 1911 vernacular construction**
3	161	483	
4	99	396	
5	44	220	
6	37	222	
7	24	168	
8	12	96	
9	6	54	
10	13	130	**Villages (12-26) 38 villages 530 vernacular houses**
12	7	84	
13	2	26	
14	2	28	
15	4	60	
16	1	16	
18	2	36	
19	3	57	
20	1	20	
23	1	23	
24	1	24	
26	1	26	
21 CASES		**1626 LOCATIONS 3512 HOUSES**	

Source: Authors

1.1. Preliminary notes :

The researcher has identified and noted the type and state of buildings and settlement sites' natural and topographical information according to the windshield inquiry. From all around the study area. The mains notes, according to the windshield inquiry supported by the web mapping inquiry, are as follows:

- The isolated houses, hamlets, and villages are spread all over the study area but are more concentrated in the Swahlia and the BeniMes'hel region.
- The majority of the villages, hamlets, and houses are abandoned, but there are houses still used in sheep breeding in some cases.
- Two kinds of settlements are noted: concentrated (Between 10 and 26 houses) and fragmented (between 2 and 4 small hamlets).
- The majority of vernacular houses are in an advanced state of disappearing, especially their wooden roof.
- The Traras Mountains region is more or less homogeneous in terms of vernacular built features:
- The constructions' entireties are square or rectangular courtyard houses constructed with stones, mod walls, and wood roofs.
- The villages, hamlets, and isolated houses are often located in a non-arable site, generally steep-sided.
- The houses, hamlets, and villages locations are often surrounded by prickly pear cactus.
- The houses are built on one level, composed of at least (4) four rooms (El Byut), and can have up to 10 rooms.

1.2. Typological analysis according to the windshield and web mapping findings :

According to the windshield results and the web mapping inquiries, tree typologies can be deduced. Firstly, the isolated houses are the most significant in type and number of vernacular houses (Fig. 23) (Tab. 13). They are homogeneously spread over the study area (Fig. 24). Secondly, Small localities typology is significant regarding the vernacular houses number (Fig. 23). It is the most diverse typology (Tab. 13). Thirdly, villages typology is the last one in terms of vernacular house and

localities number. It is concentrated in the Traras mountains region, particularly in the Jebala-Swahlia and Beni Mes'hel regions.

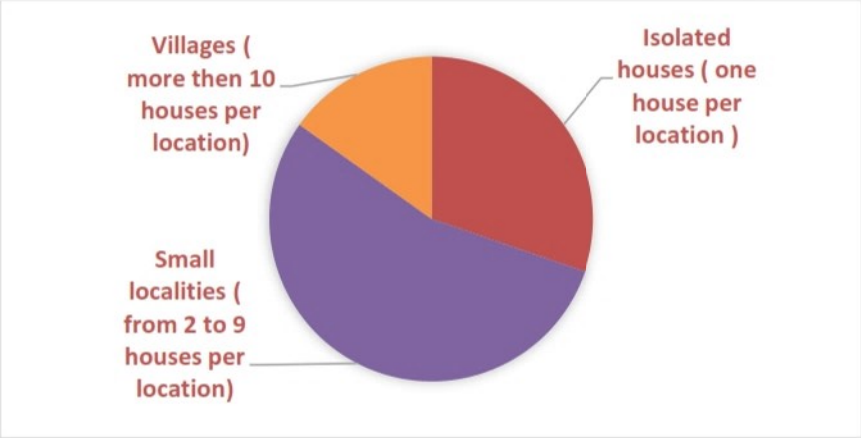


Figure 23 : localities type and consistency in accordance with the vernacular houses number. Source: authors

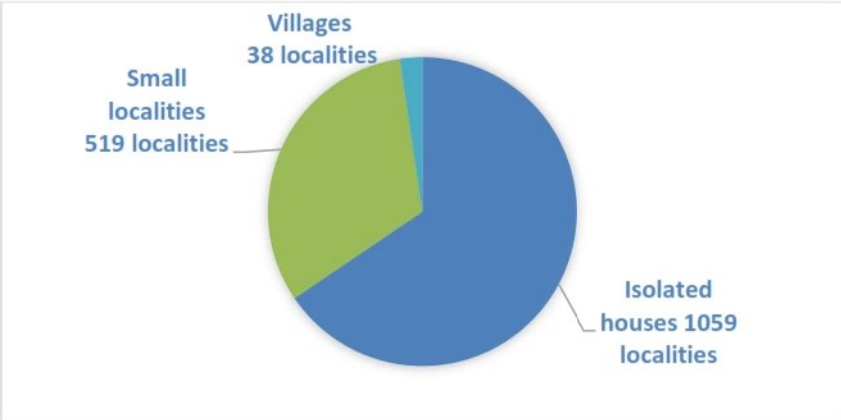


Figure 24: type and number of localities and their consistency in the Traras mountains region according to the windshield and the web mapping inquiry. Source: authors.

According to the windshield inquiry finding completed by the web mapping inquiry results, the Traras Mountains' region villages and hamlets mainly make part of the stepped kinds of settlements. The majority of them are located in steep-sided terrain, which gives rise to a particular type of architecture. Two main vernacular types of settlements are found in the region of the Traras Mountains. They can be distinguished according to their built density, which can be relatively significant in the concentrated one (Fig.21) and less in the case of the second type: fragmented settlements composed of a set of hamlets.

Figure 25: windshield and web mapping inquiry findings.

Source: Author

The first category of settlements represents the villages and hamlets founded in the region covering the center of the Traras Mountains region. The villages were making part of the Swahlia and Jebala ancient districts and tribes. The second category of settlements (Fig.22) is relatively less compact and discontinuous and mainly founded in the BeniMes'hel tribe ancient territory, which covered the region limited by the Fellaoussen Mountain and Tafna Wadi.

In addition to those two rural houses grouping, isolated vernacular houses (Fig.23), interspersed all around the Traras mountains region, are occupying a large part of the built environment. The isolated houses are attached to a big part of the Traras Mountains people's mentality, not searching for living in groupings. They prefer to stay independent. For them, it is unnecessary to have neighbors and live in villages[200].

Figure 26: Example of a concentrated settlement in which the density of occupation is relatively important.Source: Google Earth V 6.2.2.6613. (September 30, 2006), Traras Mountains, Algeria. http://www.earth.google.com, accessed April 17, 2019.

In the cases of the Traras Mountains settlements, rural vernacular houses are more often non-contiguous, even when people should be necessarily grouped for a reason or another. So, to ensure their houses' intimacy, habitations are still separated

[200] De Mauprix, C., *op., cit.*, p. 29

from one another at a certain distance and hid with the use of visual obstacles such as vegetation.

Figure 27: Fragmented villages.
Source: Google Earth V 6.2.2.6613. (September 30, 2006), Traras Mountains, Algeria. http://www.earth.google.com, accessed April 17, 2019.

Figure 28: Example of three isolated houses.
Source: Google Earth V 6.2.2.6613. (September 30, 2006), Traras Mountains, Algeria. http://www.earth.google.com, accessed April 17, 2019.

According to the windshield inquiry, the villages, hamlets, and even the isolated houses were mainly located in less- fertile or non-arable lands and are usually constructed around a water source or near it. However, water was essential for the

Traras Mountains people to survive in such a hostile area, and it was also the case of arable lands, which was the primary source of food.

Each of the Traras Mountains villages was provided with a small mosque, usually located in a particular site, which was relatively high, not surrounded by other constructions, and was close to the village's water source. The Traras settlements have no clear delimitation; all the paths are going directly towards the outside environment in the case of a high density. But in some cases, the villages are surrounded by pickle pear trees and protected as if it was a single house, protected by a fortified wall. It reflects how stable the relationship between the village's members was and how important it was to follow nature. The Traras Mountains villages' sites' topographical constraints, paths, and house forms and orientation were very disparate. The house construction depended on the site topography orientation to avoid more time consumption, material, and human force overuse.

According to this inquiry's preliminary step, it is assumed that the villages and hamlets' sites were analyzed and well-chosen by the rural community to avoid climatic effects. However, the site's location and orientation were decided to avoid arable lands and be close to water sources, and for the houses to receive sufficient sunlight and be protected against prevailing winds. The ancient people in this region were also very concerned with adapting villages to the natural environment and believed they should be integrated with nature. The villages, hamlets, and even the isolated houses were constructed with the slightest encroachment to the site around, which can be seen nowadays in abandoned villages. Nature has come back and hidden all human aspects easily.

The villages, hamlets, and isolated houses are, in the majority of the site, constructed with the same materials using the same construction techniques and following the same architectural traditions. It has produced a very high degree of sustainability and coordination with the natural context.

2. In-dept reconnaissance inquiry findings:

2.1. Typological analysis:

This in-depth inquiry is made to properly define and document the prevailing architectural features of the Traras Mountains built heritage. In this regard, the region of the Traras Mountains was confined to two representative areas: Swahlia and Beni Mes'hel in where the concentration of rural vernacular houses is significant. In these two areas, eleven (**11)** vernacular buildings were inquired. Besides, twenty-one (**21)** other isolated vernacular buildings, spread all over the inquiry region, were also added. This step has allowed us to gather more accurate and consistent architectural information.

Although being mainly homogeneous (according to the windshield and web mapping inquiry) in terms of vernacular construction features, the Traras Mountains vernacular houses' main typologies were sorted to create a typological list. However, only two Houses' typologies can be presented (Table.5).

The Traras Mountains vernacular house is a one-story courtyard house. Thanks to its centrality, the courtyard (Foust'Eddar) is the organizing element of the Traras Mountains rural house's spaces. The relationship between the house's different spaces was made possible with the courtyard (Foust'Eddar). According to the windshield and web mapping inquiry, the same pattern of courtyard houses is followed in the Traras mountains region.

Even though there are typologies in terms of building density in the Traras Mountains region (Villages, hamlets, and isolated houses), the houses' layouts are similar with just minimal differences. Thus, the two Traras Mountains' typologies are similar in terms of architectural characteristics, natural materials, functions and spaces organization. The only difference is that one typology is more "deep" than the other. The concept of depth presented here expresses the importance of privacy or intimacy in the Traras Mountains vernacular houses.

The Traras Mountains vernacular house expresses the private and social personality of the traditional ancient community. The intimacy of Traras Mountains' families was taboo. Therefore, by their high opacity and spaces hierarchy, the houses reject any penetration to the secrecy of the family.

2.1.1. Single depth house :

This first typology presents the type of courtyard house, in which private spaces are accessible directly from the courtyard (Foust'Eddar). So, from the exterior, only two hierarchical stages exist.

Figure 29 : Single depth house hierarchical stages
Source: Authors

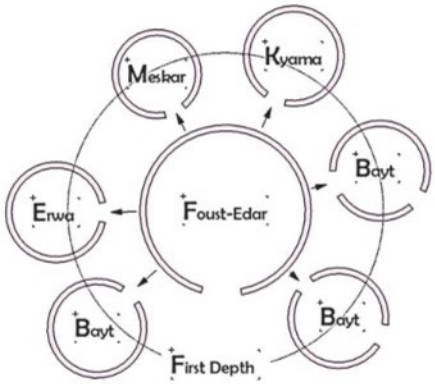
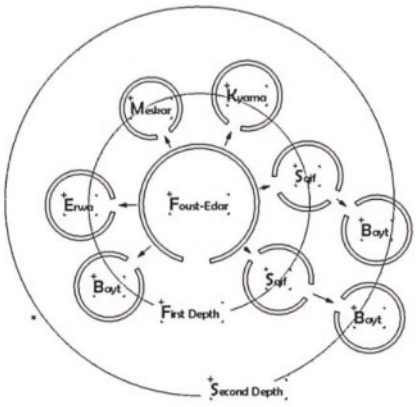
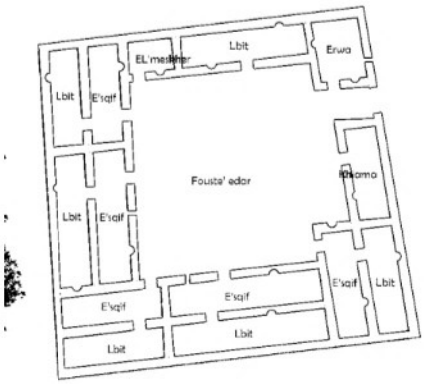
2.1.2. Double-depth house :

This second one is also a courtyard typology. The layout of this second typology consists of a central courtyard (Foust'Eddar) surrounded by rooms arranged over one level.

Figure 30 : Double depth house hierarchical stages
Source: Authors

In this typology, the private spaces (Byout) are not directly accessible from the courtyard but through another transition space called E'skif.

Table 14: Traras Mountains' vernacular houses typologies.

Typologies		
Single depth House		
Double depth House		

Source: Authors

2.2. Common characteristics:

According to the typological analysis based on the architectural inquiry findings, the selected vernacular house in different locations has some differences, particularly their size and the kinds of stones used in constructing the house walls. However, remarkable consistency in the form, structure, and spaces of the selected houses is observed.

2.2.1. Site choice and house positioning:

As was the case of a village site, the house site was also chosen according to the same considerations. The vernacular houses were implemented in well-chosen locations that can provide a suitable answer to several climatic constraints at the

same time. It was also crucial for the owners that the construction of their houses would not cost them too much time and effort and construction materials. For these reasons, the site was well chosen to enable the building from a topographical perspective; the site is generally a ledge where the conditions make constructing a habitation more or less easy. However, the traditional rural buildings in this region were always facing the South direction, which is the most favorable direction to ensure sun path penetration.

As seen before, the houses are often leaning against the slope of a hill. They implanted to follow the topographic curves and to be in good integration with the site topography. It determines the house's orientation, which is also decided to be South-opened, essentially enjoying a maximum of sunlight and avoiding winter winds and rainfall. The positioning often ensures the visual domination of the house over the surrounding natural environment. Moreover, this seemed well contributing to these buildings' stability, which, in some cases, is still standing.

Prevailing winds were often unpleasant in this mountainous coastal region. That is why it was also an essential element in this traditional rural habitation positioning, which was oriented so that winter wind penetration cannot be possible.

2.2.2. House spaces and their organization:

The layout of the Traras Mountains typical house (Fig.24, Fig.25, see also annexes 2) is often presented as a square or rectangular courtyard house, formed with narrow rectangular rooms surrounding a quadrangular courtyard named *Foust'eddar,* which serves at an open-plan living area during the day and, in some cases, for holding domestic animals at night. The roof is low in this vernacular house. The doors are thus short and small, which were, in some cases, simply sheltered by a small canopy. The room roofs are flat, constructed with wood logs, Ampelodesmos rods, and several white clay beds.

The vernacular house of the Traras Mountains region is elementary and typical. In most cases, the house is a just single level, in which were grouping, the stable or

sheep pen and the other human spaces. On the same level, humans and domestic animals were living. Therefore, the Traras vernacular house can be presented as a spatial and social unity that can be found throughout all the region's territory.

In most cases, all the house's spaces are organized with an introverted design idea. It contains all at once the living spaces for humans, spaces for animals, and food storage spaces, which can only be accessed through the Courtyard.

However, organization logic existed, guided by space's intimacy searching; the most private spaces are preferably positioned far away from the house's entrance. The stable and the storage room *Kyama* are generally the less private spaces and can be positioned close to the entrance. Traras houses usually have a little entrance on the lower side of the slope, but there are also cases where a second opening existed. It was relatively narrower and more often used to come out from the house, directly towards fields. This opening is named *Karaj'ya*.

According to the architectural inquiry and the informal talks undertaken with rural community members, the Traras habitation, as in the Berber house[201], has a set of functions that ensures the daily hard life of Traras rural man. It is composed essentially of human spaces, storage, and domestic animals' areas. However, in terms of spatial characteristics, the Traras region houses are particular from other regional vernacular houses by *E'skif,* which will be developed below.

In this kind of vernacular house, the chamber is a multi-use space that is called El-Bit. It is the principal human space and the main component of the house in which other complementary spaces (*E'skif*) are linked (Fig. 24, see also appendice 2). The form of this room is oblong, illuminated only by the opening of the door. This room surface varies between 12 and 16 square meters and not exceeding 2.30 meters in height.

[201]Bourdieu P. (1970), The Berber house or the world reversed". Information (International Social Science Council), 9(2): 151-170, p.14

Generally, in a Traras Mountains house, the room number varies according to how numerous the family members are. There was an example with up to five (5) rooms in the same house during the deep architectural inquiry. As seen before, the human parts are often oriented to be well enlightened by the sun.

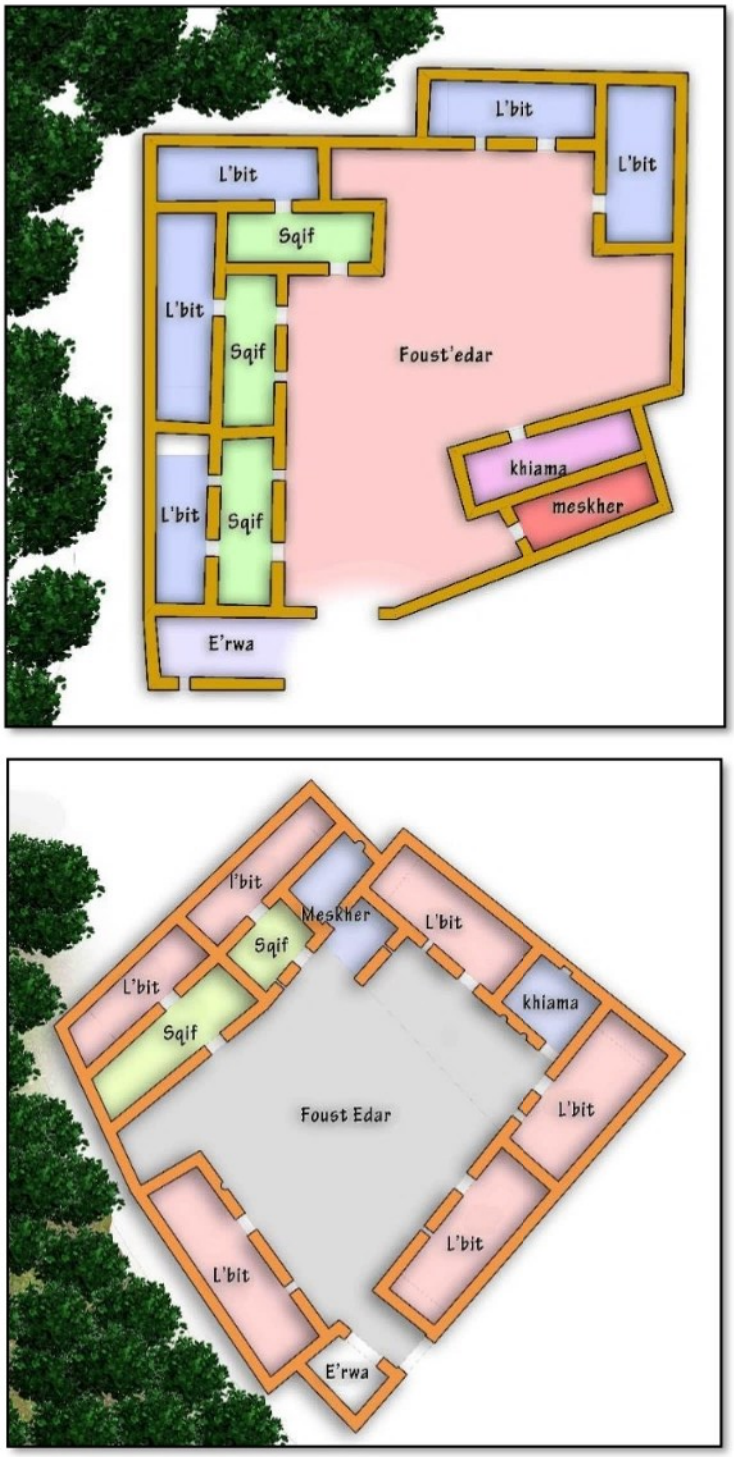


Figure 31: Two distanced Traras Mountains houses and their functional components, which are more or less the same. Source: Authors

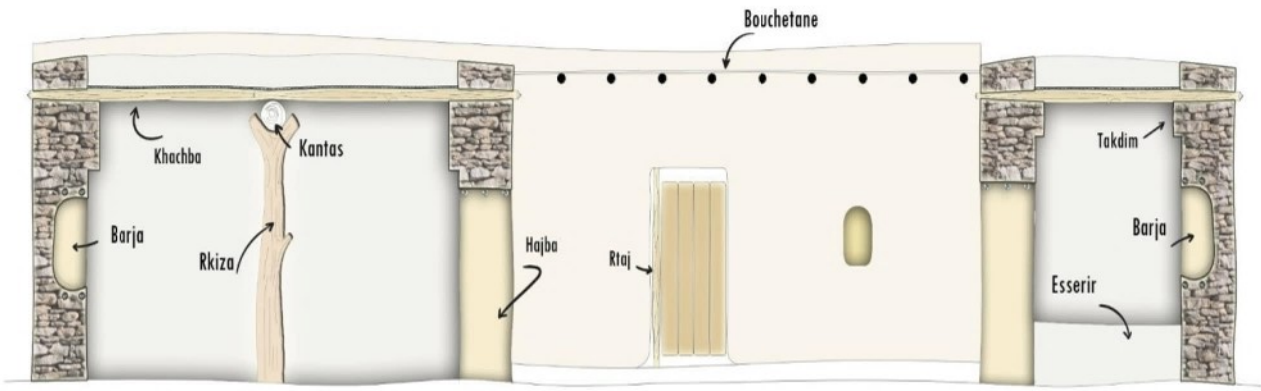


Figure 32: A Traras Mountains vernacular house architectural cut and mains component
Source: authors

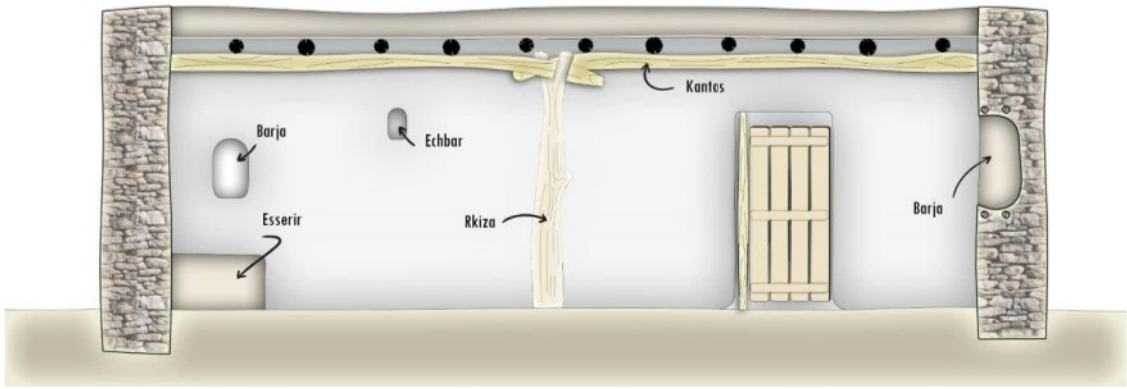


Figure 33: longitudinal section of a Traras Mountains room and their main components.
Source: authors

In the big part of the inquired houses, the chamber is a space where a niche is cut into the wall. This small space left from the wall thickness served as a small storage space known as *Barja* (Figs. 26 and 27). *El-Bayt* is coated from the interior with clay mixed with straw and whitewashed after that. A different, darker color is often applied to a certain height of the wall and other kinds of wall drawings for decorations.

As in the Kabylia vernacular Housecase, El-Bayt in the Traras mountains region does not necessarily have a window; it is a dark room that depends, for its ventilation, only on the door's opening which remains often opened for the whole day. The room can also have another tiny opening that serves only for ventilation during the winter when a traditional stove is necessary.

Figure 34: some kind of wall drawing find out in the village of Ighrem in the Northwest of The Traras Mountains region. Source: Authors

The entrance of the room is usually in the middle of the front wall, called *Hajba*. The opening width can vary between 72 cm and 97 cm and a maximum of 2.20 m in height (Fig.26). The room entrance is often marked by a step called *Retaba*. *El-Bayt* is also particular by its wood awning, which is, in fact, a part of the room roof that continues beyond the front wall limit, formed by a set of logs on which were laid reeds or branches battens. This awning is locally known as *Bou-Chetane*.

As we have mentioned before, E'skif is the particularity of the Traras mountains region houses. It is literarily derived from the Arabic word, which means the roof, and recalls the Skifa of the urban houses. However, in the Traras Mountains region, the *E'skif* is used simultaneously to designate two spaces (Fig.27); the first is a covered passage that serves as a transition between the exterior and the interior of the house (Fig.27). It is the first interior space beyond the house threshold[202]. The second space, also known as *E'skif,* is attached to another characteristic of the Traras Mountains houses, called locally *Bayt-F-Kalb-Bayt,* which means, word by word, a room amid another (Fig.24).

[202]Lebbal, N., *op., cit.*, p.41

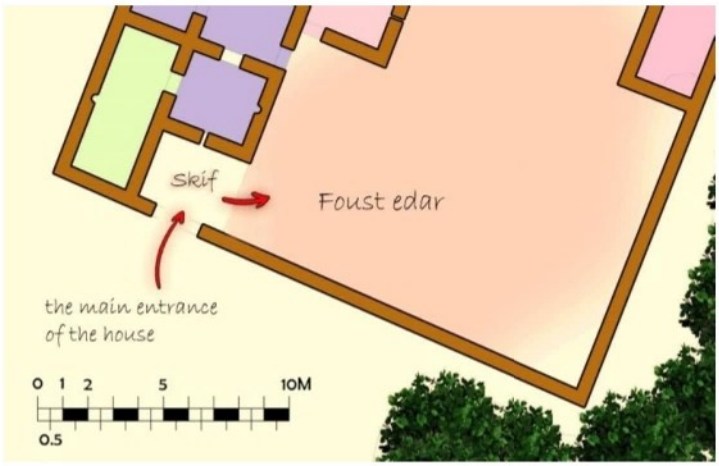


Figure 35: the E'skif as a covered passage that serves as a transition space between the exterior and the interior of the house; Scale: Source: authors

In the first case, the *E'skif* is a transition passing space between the outside and the courtyard. That is also true in the second case but between *Foust'eddar* and *El-Bayt*. In this last one, the *E'skif* is used as the same thing as El-Bayt. Because it is generally the most vented space in the house, *E'skif* is often preferred by the family members to do their various domestic works.

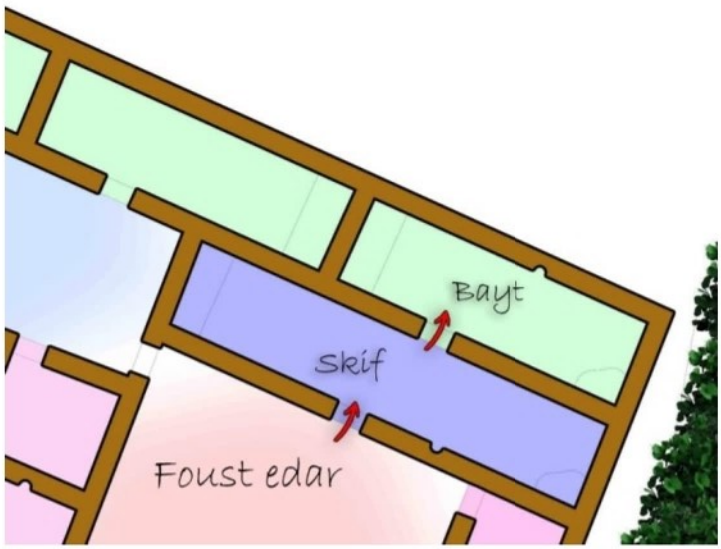


Figure 36 : E'skif as a transition space between the Foust Edar and the El-Bayt
Source : Authors

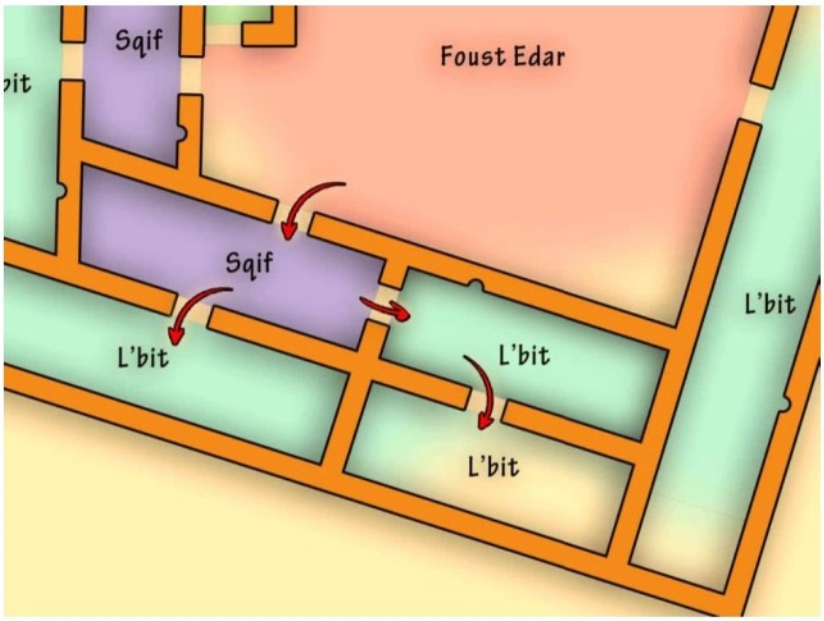


Figure 37 : E'skif can be a transition space related to up to three (03) chambers. Scale.
Source : Authors.

The Courtyard of this region's houses is known locally as *Foust'eddar*, which is also one of the main characteristics of this region's architecture. *Foust'eddar* means: in the center of the house. Once watered and cleaned, women use it to do various domestic activities. It is often on a single level, but in the case of a slope, the courtyard can be divided into many levels but always keeps its natural aspect. *Foust'eddar* of the traditional rural house may occupy almost half of the house surface, which signifies its importance.

The *Kyama* is also noticed as part of the Traras Mountains' house components, a room with the same aspects as the other rooms, but mainly by its location and orientation. The *kyama* is often found in a well-ventilated place and often close to *El-Mesker*. It is used for the short-term storage of all kinds of food reserves.

El-Mesker, which is another component of this kind of vernacular houses in, generally the narrowest room in the Traras rural house, *El-Mesker* is where food is prepared and cooked with fire for daily dining. It contains the house's fire pit known as *Gargoura*; a stone-lined hearth dug in the room's ground. This space is reserved for the wood used for making fires for cooking and heating the other rooms in winter.

The domestic animal space in these houses is called E'rwa, and it is generally located just in front of the house's main entrance and far from the part of the house human living areas. *E'rwa*is a covered and coated space such as another room and equipped with a feeder. This space can also have a large gate.

Each house in this region has at least one underground silo called locally Matmora, a traditional and primitive technique to store and save cereals(Fig.28), from storage pests, fire, and theft when it comes to a good season. The *Matmora* is simply a bottle gourd form dug into the courtyard ground (Fig.29) or near the habitation in an improvised location.

Figure 38: Two underground silos in the region of Msirda, one used for the store cereals, and the second was used as a bunker during the skirmishes between Algeria and Morocco in the 70s. Source: authors, March

2.2.3. The use of natural material in the construction

According to the architectural inquiry, the vernacular buildings of the Traras region are built with only natural materials with low environmental impacts. They are extracted from the houses' immediate environment and within everyone's reach; it is constructed essentially with stone, a very available material, clay and wood, and one the simple building techniques.

Stone is the primary building material used for constructing the Traras rural house, available with abundance around the construction site; the stone is used mainly to construct walls (Figs. 30 and 31). Its implementation is not a highly complex task; it is enough to carve it to ensure a suitable bond pattern. However, the stone's nature in the construction is different from one site to another. It depends on the site's geological nature. Here we can give the example of houses that used a solid and heavy stone known as E'ssam (Fig.30) and another house constructed with Tifkart(Fig.31), a light stone kind and relatively frailer.

Figure 39: Wall stone (*E'ssam*) masonry bond.
Source: Authors

Figure 40: Wall stone (*Tifkart*) masonry bond used in the majority of the Traras Mountains constructions and particularly in the regions of Beni meshal, Jebala, Beni Menir, and Beni Khaled.
Source: Authors

Wood is mainly used to construct roofs (Fig.32,33); it is indispensable in constructing the Traras mountains houses. It primarily comes from *Thuja* and olive trees, which are used beams, pillars, and opening lintels, the branches as battens. It is also used to fabric the doors and windows joinery.

In the Traras Mountains rural house, almost all the tree wood was needed and utilized, even tree branches, used initially as battens. Reeds were preferred later because of the decreasing wood resources. They were used as battens because of their silhouette and length. They ensure a well-sealed and uniform roof (Fig.33).

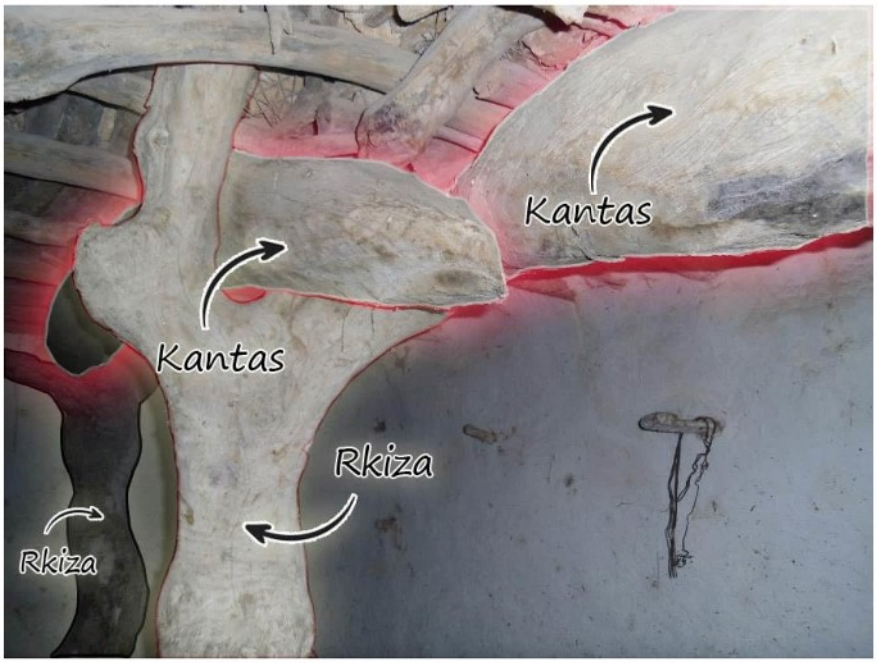


Figure 41: how wood elements were joined together.
Source: Authors March 2019

Clay is used as a binder. It is one of the main components of Traras house construction (Fig.34). It is manually extracted from the site surrounding areas, from a minor career known as *Hfayer*, and then transported with traditional baskets and on-site prepared.

Clay is often mixed with a straw called *Ramoud* ; a quantity of straw kept away for a more or less long period to be used in the construction and the maintenance of the House.

Figure 42: Logs and reeds in a Traras house roof.
Source: Authors

2.3. Reconnaissance inquiry findings' interpretation :

Focusing on the vernacular built heritage in the rural areas of the Traras Mountains region, this thesis aims at the necessity of conserving and valorizing the rural built heritage within a pragmatic approach. This latter is based on identifying, documentating, and inventorying rural built heritage features in the Traras Mountains region for potential conservation and valorization programs.

The results of this research represent the pragmatic approach, which consisted of producing what is valuable for the conservation and valorization of rural built heritage in the case of the Traras mountains region. Thus, our thesis has produced credible information taught to be appropriate to the practice's needs.

Our approach sought to solve problems and find a practical solution to the issues of rural built heritage conservation and valorization and the state of neglect in which Traras Mountains' rural built heritage is found.

This approach has enabled the researcher to discover findings that matter using a variety of methodological tools to understand the research problem and get practical solutions.

Within the framework of such a research problem concerning the conservation and the valorization of rural built heritage in the case of Traras Mountains, the focus was put on the research questions and the potential practical consequences rather than on the methods and their stringency. Therefore, this thesis results represented the Traras Mountains rural built heritage and its architectural features and produced useful and practical information for conservation and valorization operations.

However, The Traras Mountains rural built heritage is made up of details and peculiarities. It has been subjected to in-depth research to ensure effective conservation or valorization: It is only possible to protect what is identified and documented. In promoting the rural built heritage, the understanding and the identification of the resources are essential steps to understand the characteristics of the heritage, its potential, and problems. Within the framework of an effective conservation and valorization program, it is essential to identify, study, and document the heritage-built features that tell the history of the traditional rural communities.

To produce practical and useful data, the author used a method that consisted of identification, inventory, and documenting inquiry, and informal talks with people met at the studied sites to know and understand more about the studied objects.

Firstly, the identification, inventory, and documentation inquiry consisted of the windshield inquiry: this preliminary step is conducted to overview the entire study areas using a car and research and record preliminary information about the vernacular settlements and the vernacular houses' general nature and locations. This first step has allowed as finding a total number of 1626 locations divided into three main typologies; Firstly, the isolated houses are the most significant in type and number of vernacular houses. They are homogeneously spread over the study area. Secondly, Small localities typology is significant regarding the vernacular houses number. It is the most diverse typology. Thirdly, the village's typology is the last one in terms of vernacular house and localities number. It is concentrated in the Traras mountains region, particularly in the Jebala-Swahlia and Beni Mes'hel regions.

Secondly, The in-depth inquiry, Which is the significant component of the inquiry work, is carried out in the most relevant sites (32 sites) and allowing gathering more accurate information about the vernacular buildings architectural features, which were presented as building descriptions according to their type, functional component, and material and construction techniques.

The identification, inventory, and documenting inquiry has covered all the rural areas of the Traras Mountains region to identify and document all the built vernacular features.

2.3.1. Traras Mountains rural built heritage; an architecture of regularity and variation :

Two aspects characterize the Traras Mountains architecture. The first one is that it is an architecture of regularity; an architecture that overwhelms us with the feeling of unity, the common source, and the relation to a common root. The second one is that it is an architecture of variation; not one single house is identical to the one in front of it. It can be said that the Traras Mountains Architecture is the product of limited availabilities in terms of material, technical possibility, and of a homogeneous community order. This would explain regularity. On the other side, the fact that this architecture was based on craftsmanship explains various layout forms.

2.3.2. Identifying the changes in the Traras Mountains' vernacular houses spatial configuration: Permanence of the structure

According to the findings and particularly to these related to the typological analysis, there are no considerable changes in the Traras Mountains' vernacular houses and their spatial configuration; the houses of Traras Mountains' native people, grouped in villages to be protected, existed for centuries, as they are now.

However, very slow changes can be detected through the typological analysis. The first and basic house consisted of a single narrow room (Bayt) with an awning to reduce solar irradiation and internal space overheating. The room has no opening except the door's one. It was constructed with the same materials and techniques as found now in the inquired houses (all the house parts are similar in terms of construction materials and techniques).

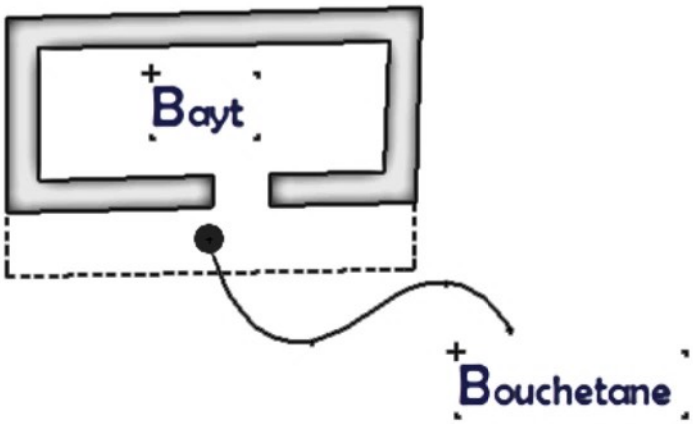


Figure 43: the first stage in Traras Mountains' vernacular house development.
Source : Authors

At this stage, it is important to make the difference between the Traras Mountains basic house and the Gourbis, which is not a type of housing; The Traras Mountains first and the basic house was constructed in settlements and was fitting the relative complex economy of the Traras Mountains community, which was not only based on cereal crop but also breeding and trees farming.

Because of being poor, Traras Mountains' people live in this same narrow room with their animals. Later, when prosperity increases, other spaces are constructed next to the first one; livestock is thus separated from the people's space, and other elements were created, such as *Meskar* and *kyama*. In this second stage, the Traras Mountains house adopts its current form of the courtyard house, on which three of four rooms overlook the courtyard.

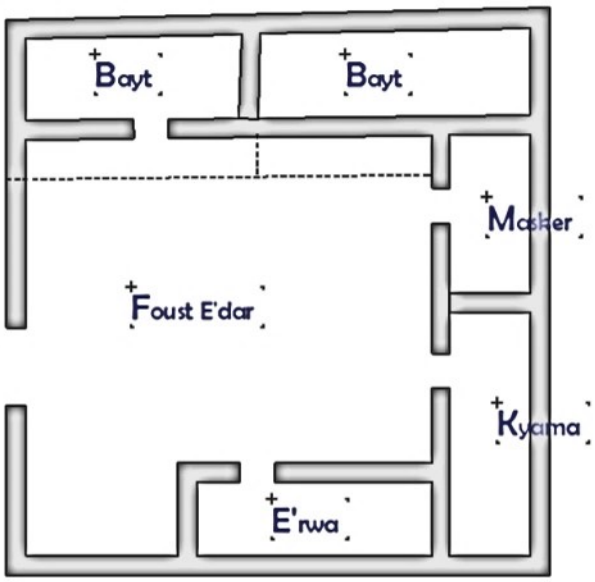


Figure 44: the second stage of the Traras Mountains' vernacular house development.
Source: Authors

In another stage of Traras Mountains' house development, another "depth" is introduced to the house. This space which was only covered with wood logs, was later constructed to constitute another space called E'skif.

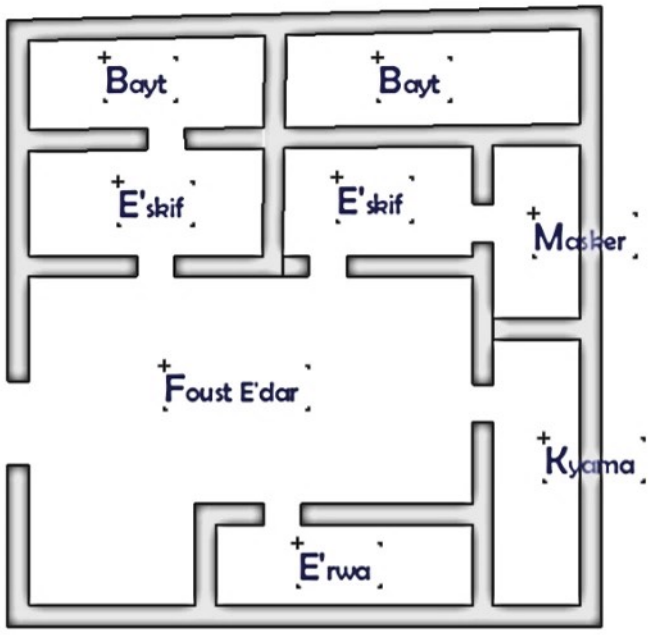


Figure 45: The third and final step in the Traras Mountains' vernacular house development.

Source : Authors

Thus, the Traras Mountains' house layout has slowly developed and varied little in relatively recent times. Indeed, the windshield, web mapping survey, and in-depth survey have shown that the Traras Mountains region is more or less homogenous in architectural typologies.

2.3.3. Meanings and symbolism:

The Traras Mountains' vernacular house is the expression of the time and community's socio-cultural values. These values have guided the location and the orientation of the buildings and the organization of their different functions. In the Traras mountains rural buildings, the organization of spaces directly reflects the social preference for privacy and seclusion in family life. The house was designed to help the family leading a private and secluded life within the house. It is achieved by the court (*Foust'eddar*), which is the house's heart that provides a sense of enclosure and privacy to the resident. The court is the female place where different functions can be done; it can be used as an extension of the kitchen in the morning and can also be used for other domestic activities from which strangers are kept out.

Instead of the courtyard, the house's intimacy is also guaranteed by an intermediate space named E'*skif* which is a transition passing space between *Foust'eddar*and *El-byut* and was generally used as the same thing as *El-byut.*

The house interiors' private life was highly guarded in the Traras mountains house, explaining the limited number of openings towards the street. Despite that, these rural houses reflected the strong attachment between the family within the house and the natural environment; the construction of these houses has integrated the outdoor air and has enabled passing from sun to shade, from the humid to dry, and to live inside and outside at the same time. Indeed, these traditional houses are closed off from views but open to wind and sunlight.

The Traras houses reflected the typical organization of the traditional rural family. In this region, most of the rooms *El-byut* are multipurpose and common, and spaces are never strictly private or specialized. This reflects the adaptive social structure

and, most importantly, the strong relationship between all the family members and the absence of distancing between them. The family members were usually sleeping together, bonded one with the other.

The construction of the Traras mountains house in which the use of hands instead of tools reflected the tactile aspect of the owners, builders of their own house. They illustrated the absence of any intermediate between the matter and the constructor body. The domestic works were done over the ground on which the woman kneads the bread, wash and peel the vegetables, grinds sitting cross-legged or squatting.

Religious constraints have also contributed to the definition of the vernacular house configurations in this region and mainly in the house's orientation, looking towards the *Kibla* for the daily prayers.

3. **Locals' perceptions and interpretations :**

Within the framework of informal talk's, the informants perceptions of the importance of the vernacular houses and their aspirations regarding the conservation and valorization of their vernacular houses are investigated throughout this step of informal talks. The five (05) relevant ideas that the informal talks have highlighted and the opinions of the talks' informants are presented in the table below.

First of all, the vernacular houses' value and the importance of the informal talks' informants were investigated. As a result, the informants believe that vernacular houses are important, and indeed even more so. In the same context, a relatively important proportion of the informal talks' informant does not understand the importance of the vernacular houses and don't know their actual value. From the results presented in the table above, it is also understood that there is still a considerable part of the rural community that assumes the worthlessness of the vernacular houses.

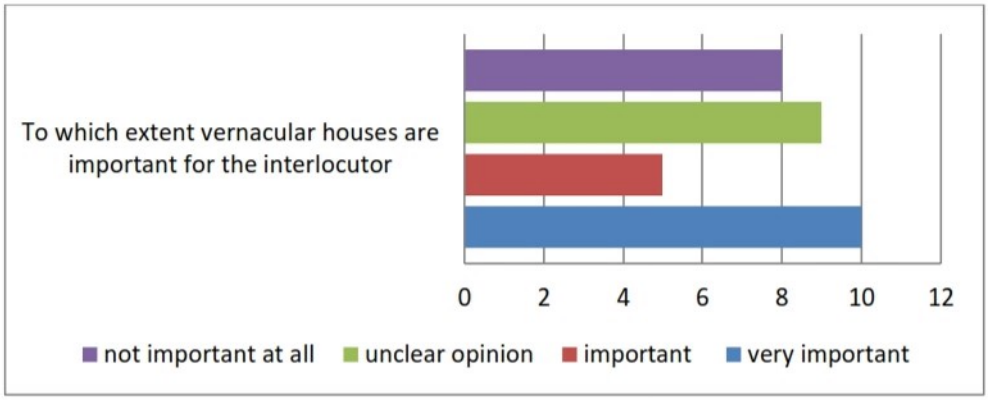


Figure 46: Informal talks' corespondent's reactions about how vernacular houses are important for them. Source: Authors

When it comes to the informants' perceptions about the desire of conserving or not the vernacular houses, the opinions, as in the case of the first idea, are split into two directions. The first one is a positive vision that believes in giving another life to the abandoned vernacular houses throughout conservation or rehabilitation operations. The second part has a pessimistic vision about vernacular houses conservation and thinks it is not a priority to conserve them. In this same vision, a significant proportion of the informants believes that the vernacular houses have to stay the way they are without any intervention.

Table 15: informal talks findings.

Informal talks mains ideas	Informal talks' partner's opinions			
To which extent vernacular houses are important for the interlocutor	Very important assets	Important assets	Not a clear opinion	Not important at all
	10	**5**	**9**	**8**
If any operation should be proceeded to conserve vernacular rural houses	They should be conserved	It is not a priority	They should be rehabilitated and reused for other purposes	They have to stay the way they are
	6	**8**	**9**	**9**
For what purpose the conservation of the houses should be done	For residential	For livestock	As a museum	Multifunctional
	5	**12**	**6**	**9**
The potential contribution of vernacular rural houses in local development	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not important
	10	**9**	**5**	**8**
Preferences concerning the use of traditional features in new constructions	Prefer vernacular house	Prefer modern concrete houses	Modern houses with traditional aspects	Two separate models
	5	**7**	**5**	**15**

Source : authors

When it comes to the informant's perceptions about the desire of conserving or not the vernacular houses, the opinions, as in the case of the first idea, are split into two directions. The first one is a positive vision that believes in giving another life to the abandoned vernacular houses throughout conservation or rehabilitation operations. The second part has a pessimistic vision about vernacular houses conservation and thinks it is not a priority to conserve them. In this same vision, a significant proportion of the informants believes that the vernacular houses have to stay the way they are without any intervention.

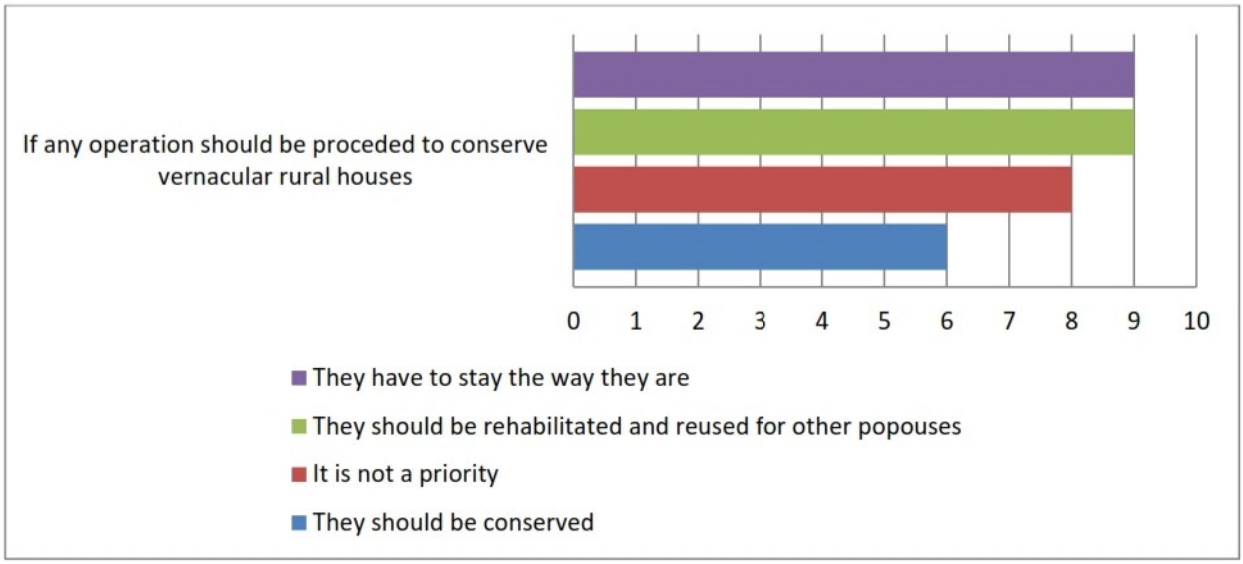


Figure 47: Informal talks' corespondent's reactions about if any operation should be proceeded to conserve vernacular houses. Source : Authors

More than 80 per cent of the informants believe that vernacular houses can provide an opportunity for the local people by using them either for cultural purposes or exclusively to generate economic benefits. However, a small portion of informants thinks that vernacular houses should keep their initial residential vocation.

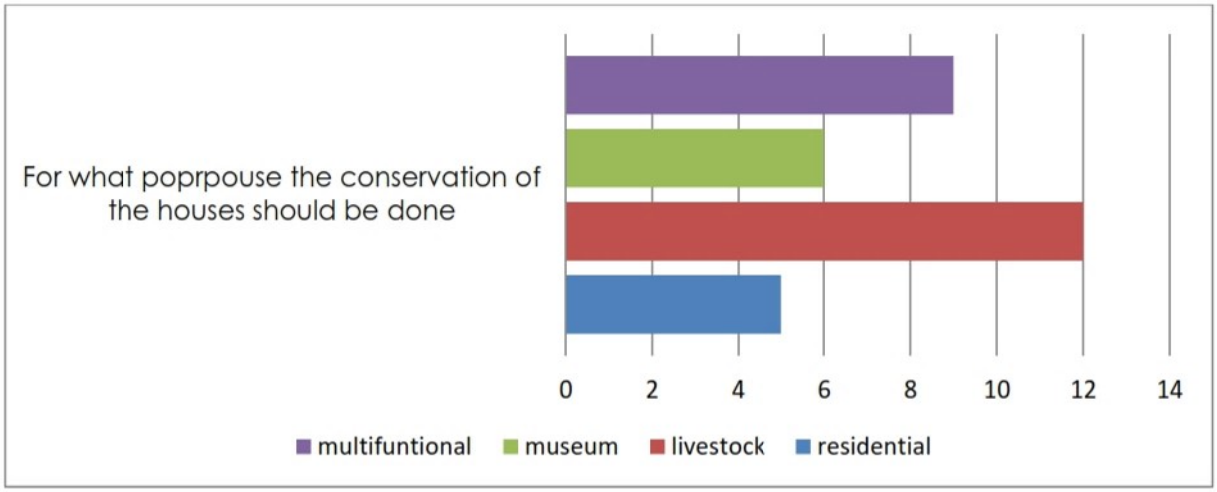


Figure 48: Informal talks' corespondents' reactions about the vernacular houses' conservation purposes. Source : Authors

When it comes to the local development issues, a large proportion of the informants believe that vernacular houses may greatly enhance rural areas' local development. However, a considerable part of the informants has a pessimistic vision about the actual contribution of vernacular houses in local development enhancement. It either states clearly about the unwothnessness of vernacular houses or prefers to stay neutral.

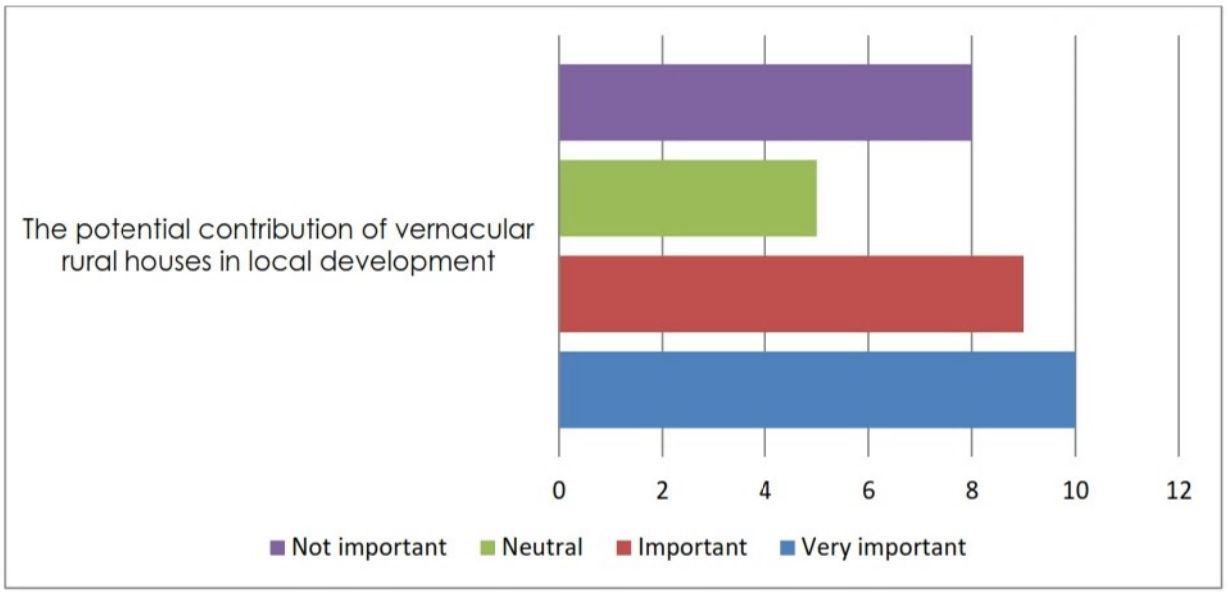


Figure 49: Informal talks' corespondents' reactions about the potential contribution of vernacular houses in the enhancement of local development. Source: Authors.

The final part of the findings table elucidates that most informants are willing to conserve their vernacular houses either as their principal home or secondary houses. They fully understand that the vernacular houses are the result of memories and that they should conserve them.

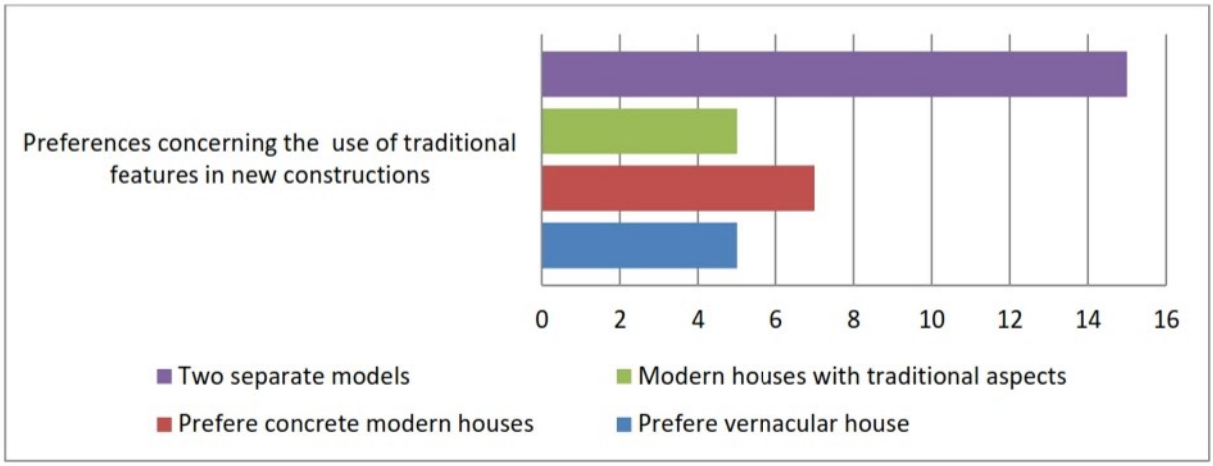


Figure 50 : Informal talks' correspondents'' reactions about their preferences regarding the use of vernacular houses features. Source : Authors.

In addition to the ideas investigated above, other information was collected throughout informal talks. They are summarized in the table below.

Table 16: Aditional information about vernacular houses.

Additional Information				
Age of the vernacular house	Less then 200Y	200Y-300Y	300Y-500Y	More then 500Y
	2	**9**	**11**	**10**
Way of possession	Self-constructed	Inherited	Purchased or Rented	
	5	**27**	**0**	
Property conditions	Shared		Personal	
	27		**5**	
Frequency of usage	Permanently	Seasonal	As a storage	Abandonned
	0	**8**	**9**	**15**

Source : Authors

4. **Decision**-makers interviews' findings and interpretations :

Interviews with decision-makers served as another important source of qualitative data collection. They were carried out with eight (8) local and provincial key decision-

makers. The aim was to understand the current situation, role, and priorities regarding vernacular architecture conservation and valorization in the Traras Mountains region.

Also, interviews with the key decision-makers were essential to identify rural built heritage aspects correctly and if there will be any consideration for the steps consisting of its identification, documentation, and inventory.

Below is an example of a structured interview with a local decision-maker showing its perceptions about built vernacular heritage, its present and future situation in the Traras Mountains region.

Once all the interviews were completed, they were first analyzed separately and then together to find similarities and differences in terms of ideas. The analysis of interviews' findings is a process of making sense of collected data and structure it to make it meaningful[203]. Hence, relevant phrases were highlighted, summarized, and categorized using key themes: conservation and valorization approach, identification, documentation and inventory steps, and Traras Mountains vernacular heritage importance.

From the decision makers' interviews, it appeared to be a strong willingness on the part of a significant portion of the local and provincial municipalities to consider the Traras Mountains vernacular heritage, preserve and valorize it as a part of a local development project. Indeed, according to one of the local decision-makers, Traras Mountains' vernacular heritage may constitute a key component of the Tlemcen province proximity project of rural development (PPRD). These proximity projects are trying as best as possible to overcome the Traras Mountains' insufficiencies in terms of local development but by focusing only on the enhancement of agricultural activities.

[203] Jones, S. (2004) 'Depth Interviewing', in Seale, C. (ed.) Social Research Methods: A reader, London: Routledge, pp. 257-260.

The interviews analysis has shown that the degree of knowledge and understanding of the Traras Mountains built heritage value, conservation, and valorization process is very low and needs more effort, which should be oriented towards preventing further deterioration of the region's region built heritage. Indeed, the findings show that authorities have a limited understanding of the Traras Mountains' built heritage values, and no clear and precise policy is currently being employed in practice.

In addition, many legislative instruments related to national cultural heritage, including laws, regulations, and instructions, are not motivating for rural vernacular heritage conservation and valorization. These legislative issues must be studied and resolved. Decision-makers need clear plans to outline the best future for Traras Mountains built heritage, including a conservation and valorization strategy to manage vernacular built heritage and tourism so that it becomes a source of local income.

Another complication raised during interviews is that a portion of the local government does not take the responsibility of protecting and managing vernacular heritage. All their attention and effort aims at modernizing villages and constructing new projects, even if this is at the expense of historical buildings. These Decision-makers do not think about protecting heritage, and in fact, they had weakened the rural vernacular heritage and its potential in enhancing local development. These decision-makers contribute to reducing the levels of understanding of heritage.

Therefore, efforts have to be made to protect the Traras Mountains' rural built heritage. Throughout the analysis of the findings of the interviews, that one of the main issues is the lack of attention paid to the local and provincial decision-makers qualification to improve vernacular built heritage through training courses, workshops, and research activities.

Despite all, motivation for conservation and valorization of vernacular-built heritage in the Traras Mountains exists, along with some awareness of the need for identification and documentation to effectively change decay conditions.

The results of the interviews were encouraging. They showed that the thesis conservation and valorization approach based on the identification, documentation, and inventory steps could be practical regarding enhancing the Traras Mountains region's local development. According to the correspondents, one of the challenges was identifying and documenting the vernacular heritage in the Traras Mountains region before it disappeared or died with seniors.

5. Traras Mountains rural built heritage conservation and valorization approch:

The rural built heritage of the Traras region constitutes a significant part of the region's historic and cultural resources, which can form tourist attractions. According to the informal talks, decision-makers interviews, and the fieldwork, Traras rural community has a distinct culture and landscape that makes its particularity and can be seen, from a local development perspective, as a development catalyst. However, the identification and the inventory steps have shown that the Traras Mountains region possesses traditional activities, religious ceremonies, events with special dressings and traditional music, particular language dialect (originate from Berber), artisanal production, and culinary traditions.

Moreover, in addition to the intangible heritage, and depending on the informal talks with the Traras mountain population, the built heritage composed of isolated houses, hamlets, and villages is a touristic, cultural element of the study area can be tourist attractions. The rural built heritage can become a core element in the development of the Traras territory. It just has to be identified and considered as a source of knowledge, pride, and self-esteem that should encourage the inhabitant of this region and their children to stay deeply linked to their land. The Traras

Mountains' rural built heritage is a source of local identity. That should encourage people to participate in social activity and take part in their region's development. This sense of pride and local identity is considered to affect tourism development in our study area positively.

In the Traras Mountains region, built elements have been abandoned because of multiple reasons that seem to be suitable for safeguarding the ancient building's authenticity and their traditional features. That will be a core element of establishing a culturally authentic experience for tourists who are often in the search for real and authentic experiences.

On its own, identification does not allow systematic resource valorization. Hence, based on informal talks and interviews with decision-makers findings, operational guidelines were proposed in this study to valorize rural cultural resources in the study area. Four points can be developed in the proposed plan:

- Creating public awareness about the Traras Mountains' rural heritage; can be done differently, such as social and cultural festivals, community meetings, audiovisual shows, exhibitions, annual celebrations, books, and publications. It is also essential to integrate the rural cultural heritage values and the importance of its conservation and valorization in the education program to feel concerned at an early stage.
- Establishing a foundation; the rural cultural heritage foundation’s goal will be to encourage the community to learn about the rural cultural heritage and contribute to the valorization plan. Such a foundation can take possession of the abandoned rural traditional building with the usucaption application and proceed with the land inquiry.
- Establishment of a technical commission; The technical commission works to provide, under an administrative point of view, an adequate mechanism for the application of practical measures for the appropriate rural built preservation; Its work includes mainly research, study, and inquiry.

- Creation of an operational consortium; It's an association composed of all the concerned actors to get funding from interested societies to prepare and execute the needed building interventions; In the buildings of the Traras mountains and according to field observation, it would be essential to preserve the traditional uses (Fig.4) of the buildings which are going to be possible because of the traditional agricultural and the livestock production that was maintained by the Traras mountains community. That will be essential to avoid profound architectural transformation and guarantee the building's authenticity and safeguard the buildings' strong relationship with the natural environment.

Conclusion:

In this last chapter, it has been reported that the Traras vernacular picturesque villages, hamlets, and isolated houses constitute important and unique examples of authentic rural vernacular buildings and from a socio-cultural significance point of view. Hence, this modest rural heritage should be taken into account in the community's education and its encouragement to be anchored with their social roots and culture and generate incomes and enhance the local well-being.

Therefore, this kind of architecture has been defined as the knowledge produced by a specific cultural group for itself and which served as a framework for its daily life and is subscribed to the group's desires. However, the Traras people's humble design was based on finding solutions to their socio-cultural and religious requirements as designing the house to have intimacy.

It is crucial to preserve this collapsing heritage, ignite awareness, and increase the community's understanding of this valuable vernacular heritage's potential. With this regard, the identification, inventory, and documentation inquiry were seen as essential and useful and were preceded in this thesis in the last chapter. These primary steps are fundamental in the Traras Mountains' rural built heritage conservation and valorization processes. Thus, it is crucial to provide funding for the next step, which is the physical conservation with which the passing of these traditional buildings to the future generation becomes possible.

Thesis conclusion:

Despite all the international initiatives, requirements, and orientations regarding rural heritage conservation, Algerian tools, and practices concerning rural heritage protection, preservation, and valorization are still immature and not very well developed. However, rural heritage may constitute one of the significant factors in rural areas' development; its preservation and valorization need to be among the main challenges of current local and territorial development approaches.

To make a practical contribution to the knowledge according to the pragmatic approach, the thesis focused on studying rural culture and rural living in the Traras Mountains region expressed through built heritage. The thesis general purpose has emerged out from the researcher's beliefs and personal history as a member of rural communities in need of self-identification with their origins. The rural built heritage has been recognized for its high cultural values and has been seen as a potential local identity resource, increasing the community bride and self-worth.

In addition to its high socio-cultural values, rural built heritage is also a potential economic resource. Its investment through proper preservation and valorization programs can enhance the community's well-being through multiple economic functions or simply through tourism, helping create jobs and other economic benefits.

In this respect, in the Algerian context, existing heritage conservation, and valorization policies should widen their scope. Thus, to include not only monumental and urban heritage, but also the modest heritage of the rural areas in where lived traditional communities for long centuries and where they have slowly produced what this thesis considered as built heritage.

Hence, this study helped create practical and useful results that may help in the process of raising awareness about the rural region of the Traras Mountains as one of the important historical and cultural areas in the Algerian territory in terms of vernacular built heritage.

Many traditional villages, hamlets, and isolated houses are still bearing witness to the traditional rural way of living and how the Traras region's people were shaping their environment to make it more suitable for a living. Various factors have influenced the Traras Mountains architecture, such as climate, locally available materials, and their cultural and particular mentality. That has given a specific kind of architecture identified both, with the abundant use of stone and stepped sites' construction.

Moreover, the thesis has emphasized the importance of preserving and valorizing this built vernacular heritage. It has provided practical information and proposals to avoid its loss and ensure its transfer to the future generation and its proper exploitation in local developments schemes.

Therefore, the thesis has required documentary research, identification, and inventory inquiry, and informal talks as necessary methodological tools. It studies and produces detailed information and technical materials useful and needed in the potential preservation and valorization programs and technical interventions.

The study helps ensure the community's needs in terms of practical and useful technical solutions and materials. It has also contributed to understanding how the formerly rural community lived in those spaces.

The thesis helps in answering the research problem questions that were formulated about the Traras built vernacular heritage preservation and valorization,

which were resumed as follows: How can rural built heritage, as one of the significant forms of heritage, contribute to the Traras Mountains region's local development? How can we make the community aware of the rural built heritage as a cultural resource in the Traras mountains region? How can rural built heritage in the Traras Mountains region be identified and documented to be preserved and valorized within a local development approach?

This thesis has stressed the strong belief consisted of the importance of proceeding with an identification, documentary, and inventorying inquiry. Documentation works concerning the rural built heritage of the Traras Mountains region to enhance these rural communities living conditions through a preservation and valorization approach to local and territorial development.

Through the documentary research, it has been shown that rural heritage, despite being a vulnerable and poorly exploited resource, can constitute a source of wealth and funding that enables the development of the Traras Mountains rural areas and preserving their identity.

At the core of this thesis, it is believed that the Traras Mountains region's rural communities need to be aware of the rural built heritage and be sensitive about its value as a cultural and potential economic resource. The concerned community must know the value of their built heritage as architectural, historical, and cultural resources. In the Traras Mountains case, it is crucial to identify, inventory, and document the built heritage characteristics. The most potent tool to achieve this thesis's objectives is the identification and inventorying inquiry that enables the production of useful information to ensure the understanding and the documentation of such a resource.

Thus, the thesis has adopted a pragmatic research strategy based on documentary research based on readings on rural architecture, sociology, and anthropology of both, national or elsewhere. Moreover, the thesis methodological strategy is not based only on literature reviews but also on inquiries, informal talks conducted at the studied sites. Interviews with decision-makers were also preceded.

In the first instance, the reconnaissance inquiry consisted firstly on the windshield and walking inquiries, which are preliminary steps conducted to overview the entire study areas using a car and research and record preliminary information about the vernacular settlements and the vernacular houses' general nature and locations. For more accurate details about the study area, satellite photos were also used to study the Traras Mountains region in terms of settlements and vernacular house inventory, location, repetitions, natural and topographical features.

The in-depth architectural inquiry is the major component of the inquiry work, carried out in the most relevant sites. It allows gathering more accurate information about the vernacular buildings' architectural features, which will be presented as building descriptions according to their type, functional component, and material and construction techniques.

Informal talks were a building block of our thesis' methodology. This methodological tool is aiming at gaining a deep understanding of the vernacular houses' special configuration and functional components in their special cultural context. Also, Informal talks allow us to get more insight into the value of these vernacular houses and the importance of their identification and documentation in order to be conserved, valorized, and safeguarded for the future generation. Informal

talks permit us to understand the spatial configuration of the surveyed vernacular houses, their functional components, and the Traras Mountains houses' etymology.

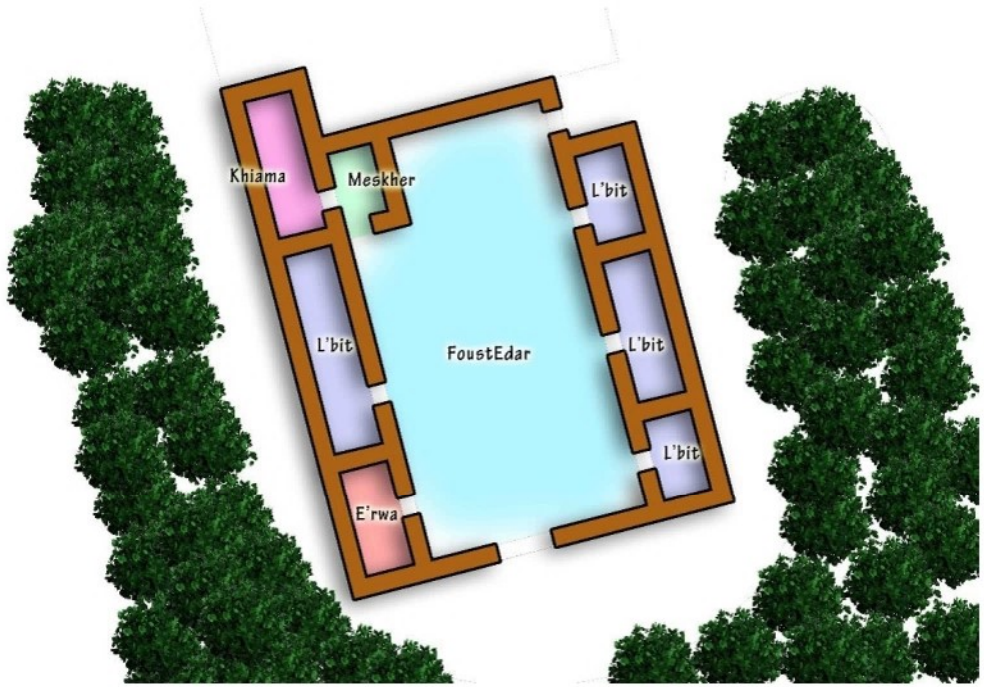
To correctly define rural built heritage features and the importance of its reconnaissance throughout the steps of identification, documentation, and inventory, the work also included semi-structured in-depth interviews with employees of different departments concerned with the issue of heritage conservation. The semi-structured interviews were carried out with the mains eight (8) decision-makers. It aimed at understanding the respondents' perceptions and awareness about the Traras Mountains rural built heritage, the importance of the vernacular built heritage identification, and documentation steps in the local development enhancement.

According to this methodology, this thesis was able to reveal the real importance of the Traras Mountains built heritage and contribute to raising awareness about its potential role as a catalyst in a local and territorial development perspective. The thesis has contributed to identifying, inventorying, and documenting the built heritage features of the Traras Mountains' rural vernacular buildings. In such a work, the researcher collected historical and geographical information and examined selected vernacular buildings. He has also recorded data about spatial and functional organization, construction methods, and materials. This study's final product is preservation supporting materials, such as plans, photographs, and descriptions of Traras Mountain's rural vernacular buildings.

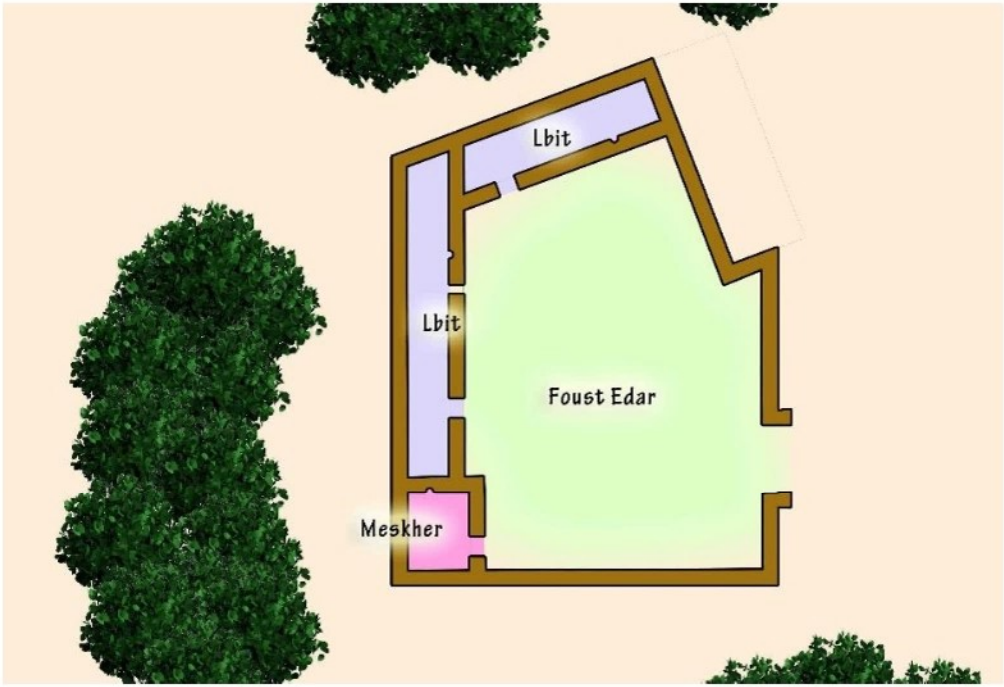
The thesis has contributed to creating a conservation and valorization approach and has suggested a set of practical guidelines, mainly focusing on raising community awareness about their built vernacular heritage.

Appendix

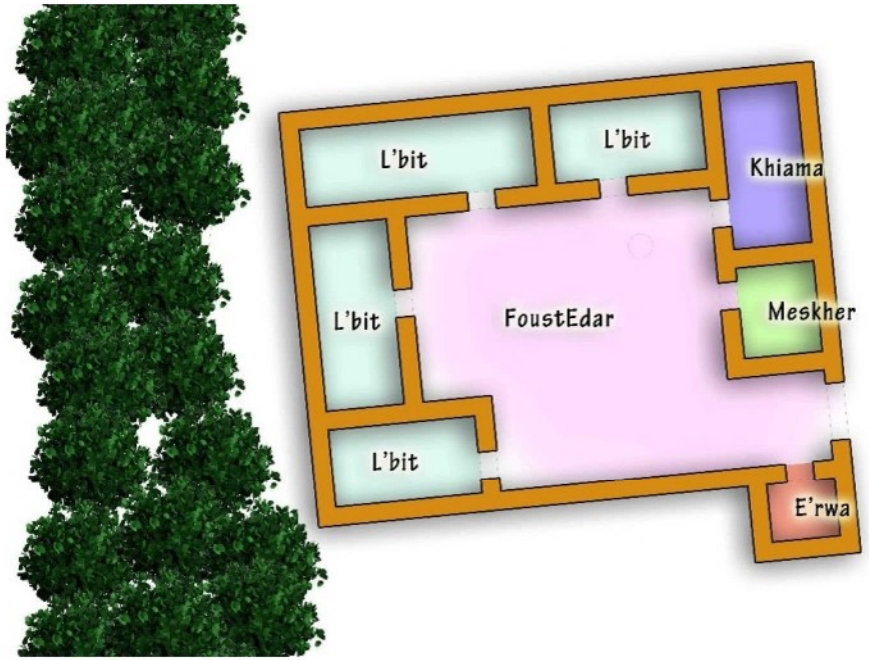
Appendix 01
In-depth inquiry findings



Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
34°59'40.64"N 2° 5'27.27"O	Steep sided terrain, in a non-arable land, at 295m in altitude, Surrounded by pickled pear trees.	1	2
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the South west.	☒ l'bit (04) ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☐ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☐ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone (Tifkert) ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☐ Reed ☒ branches



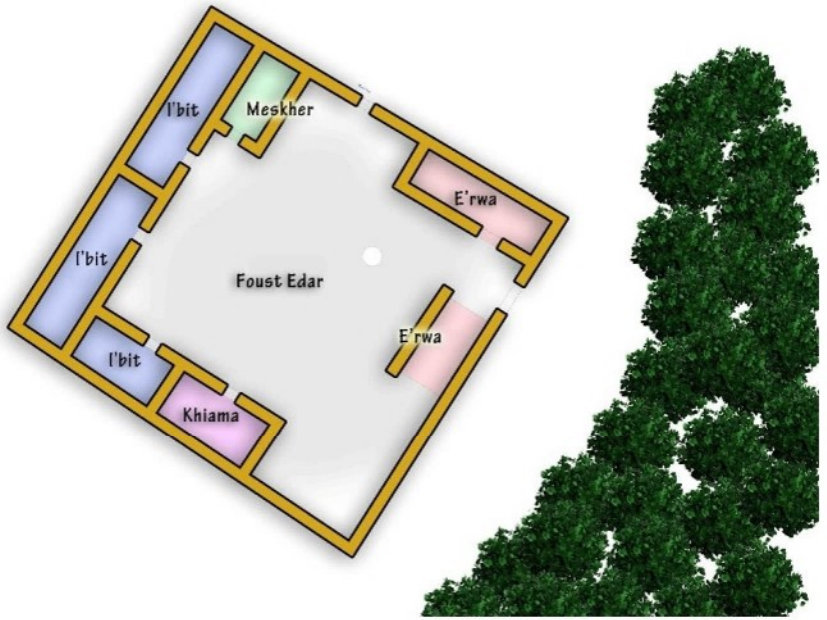
Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
34°57'59.98"N 2° 2'53.16"O	At the top of a hill, in a non-arable land, at 356m in altitude, Surrounded by pickled pear trees.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the South.	☒ l'bit (02) ☐ Khiama ☐ E'rwa ☐ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☐ E'chbar ☐ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone (Tifkert) ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☐ Reed ☒ branches



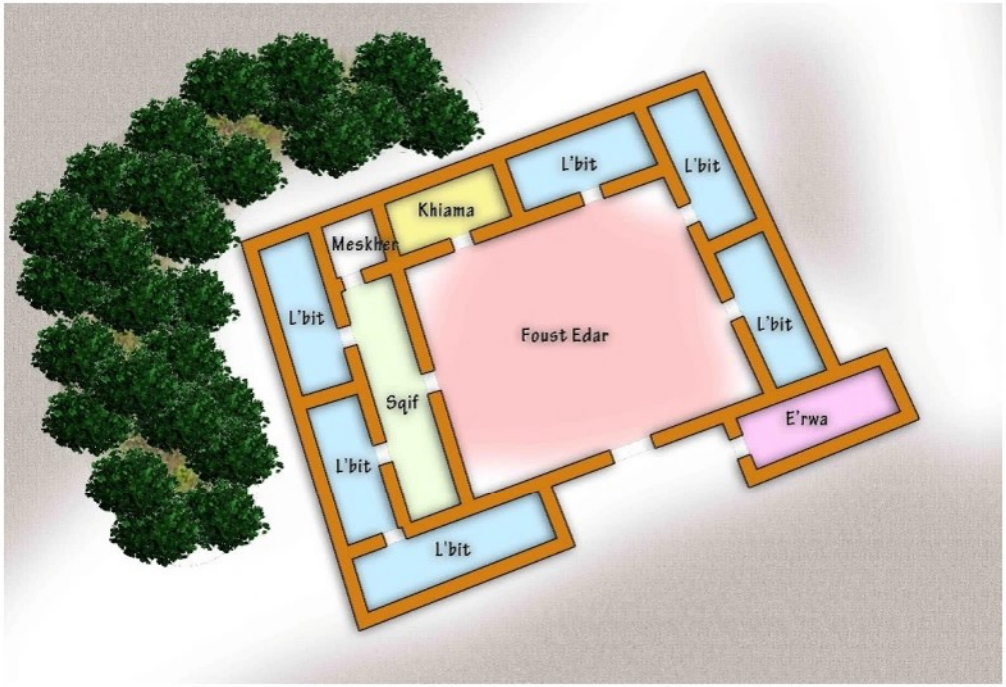
Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
34°56'28.34"N 2° 2'32.16"O	Steep sided terrain, in the limit of an arable land, at 390m in altitude, Surrounded by pickled pear trees.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the South east.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☐ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☒ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches

Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
35° 0'4.78"N 2° 2'12.10"O	Steep sided terrain, non arable land, at 356 of altitude.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the west side.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☒ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☒ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches

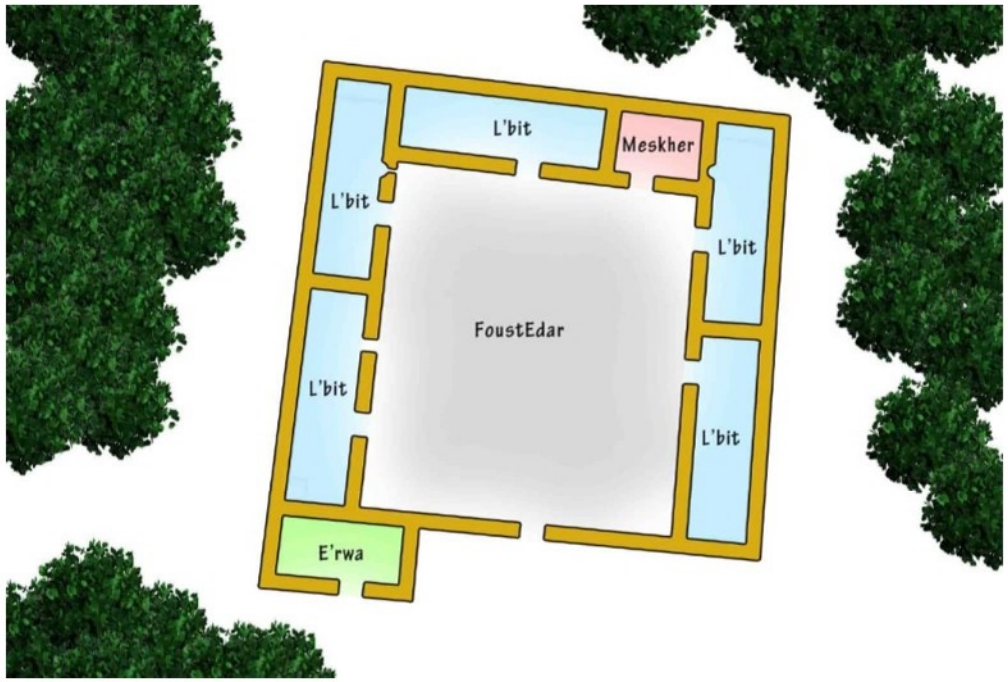
Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
35° 0'35.08"N 1°59'33.17"O	Steep sided terrain, non arable land, at 168m in altitude, Surrounded by pickled pear trees.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the South east.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☐ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☐ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches



Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
34°57'8.69"N 1°57'9.21"O	Steep sided terrain, in the limit of an arable land, at 490m in altitude, Surrounded by pickled pear trees.	01	02
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the south west side.	☒ I'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☐ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☐ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches

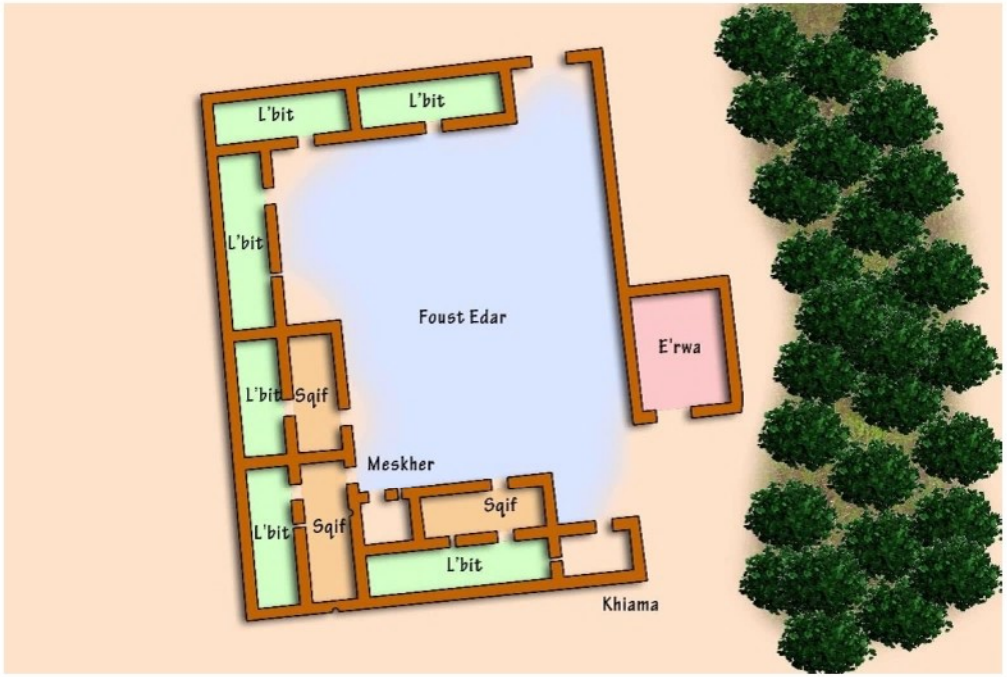


Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
34°53'24.67"N 1°55'31.13"O	Steep sided terrain, in the limit of an arable land, at 504m in altitude.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the South side.	☒l'bit () ☒Khiama ☒E'rwa ☒skif ☒Meskhar	☒E'srir ☒E'rkon ☒E'chbar ☒Bouchetan ☒Bardja	☒Stone () ☒Wood log ☒Clay+Staw ☒Reed ☐branches

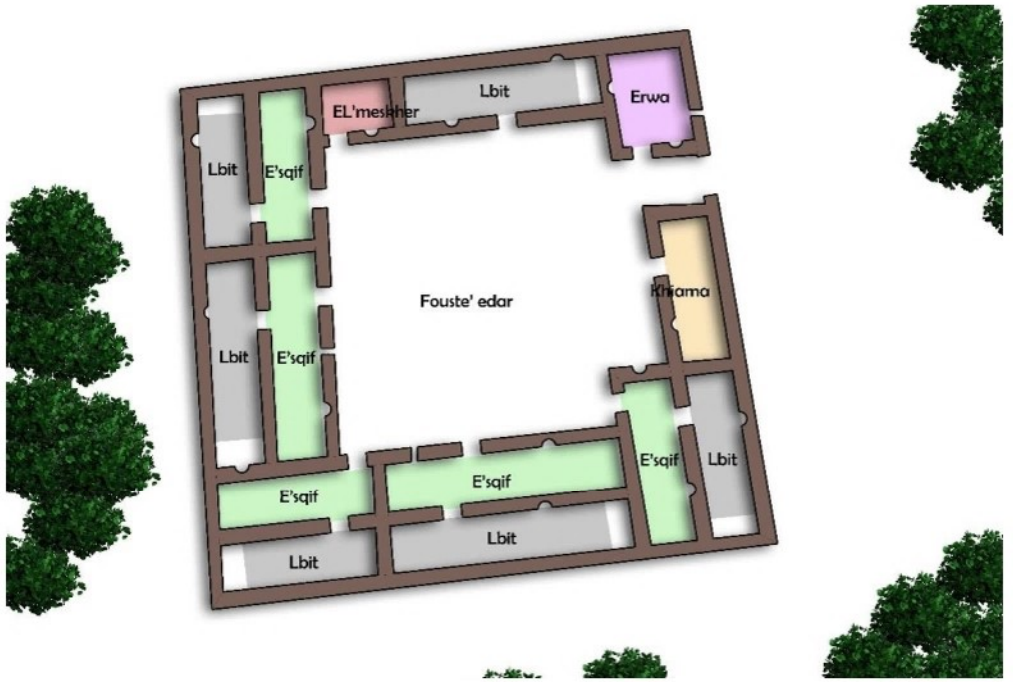


Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
34°54'20.85"N 1°49'1.78"O	Steep sided terrain, non-arable land, 518m in altitude.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the East side.	☒ l'bit () ☐ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☐ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☐ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches

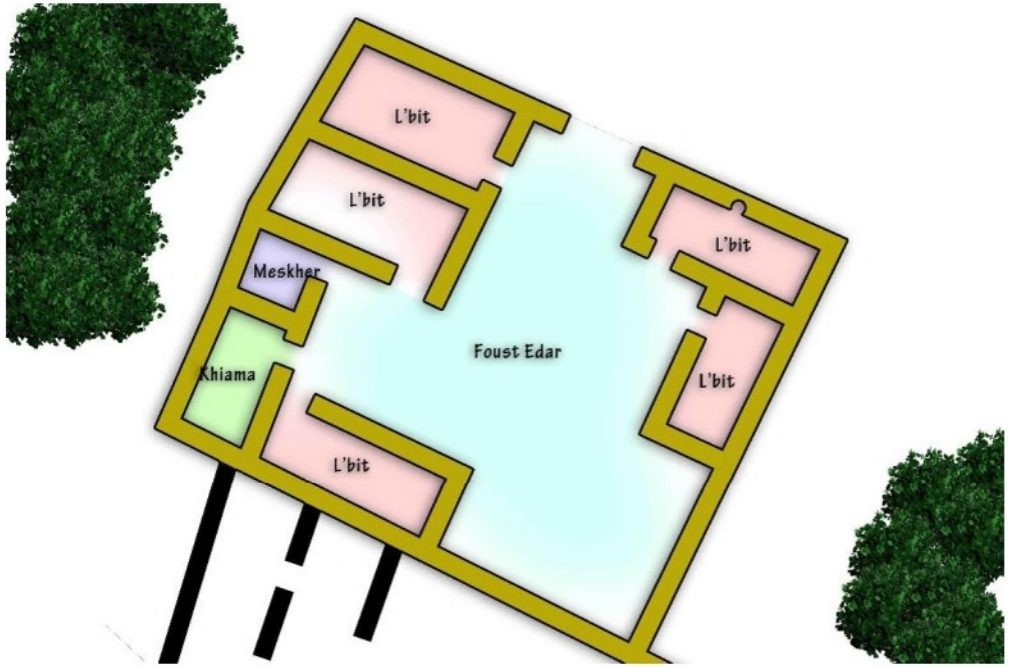
Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
35° 7'28.53"N 1°44'31.72"O	Steep sided terrain, non arable land, at 320m of altitude, in front of sea.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the south west side.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☒ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☐ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches



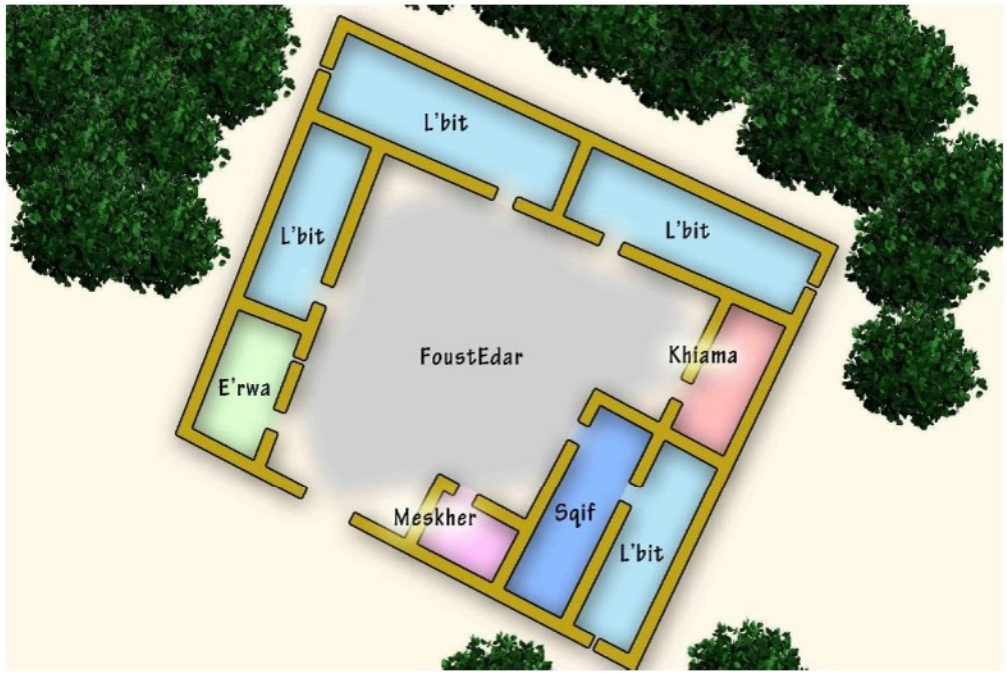
Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
34°54'18.28"N 1°41'0.37"O	Steep sided terrain, in the limit of an arable land, at 408m in altitude.	01	02
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the east side.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☒ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☒ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches



Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
34°58'16.01"N *1°36'30.16"O*	At the top of a hill, in a non arable land, at 298m in altitude, Surrounded by pickled pear trees	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the east side.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☒ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☒ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches

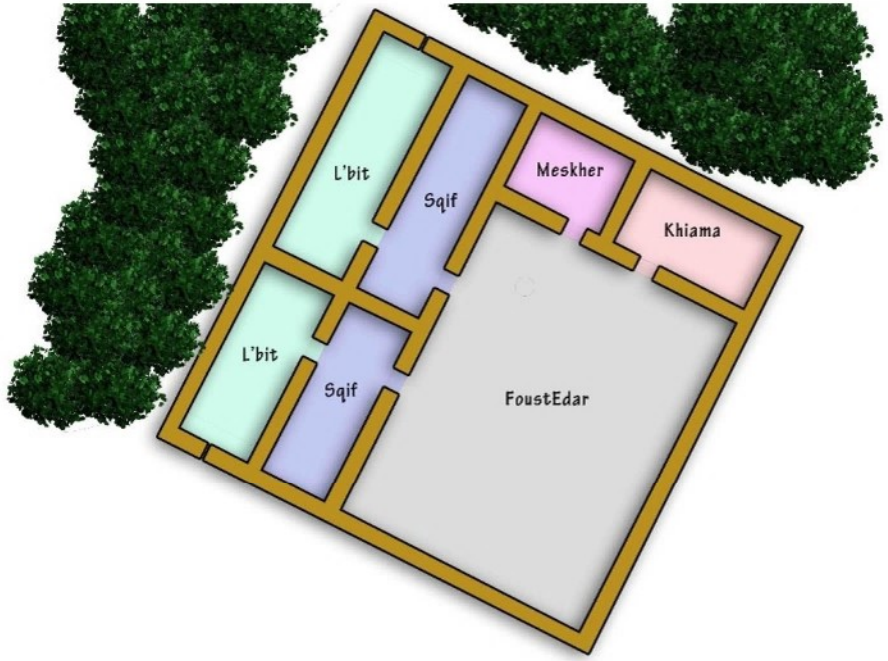


Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
35° 0'7.35"N 1°34'51.21"O	At the top of a hill, in the limit of an arable land, at 178m in altitude	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the east side.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☐ E'rwa ☐ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☐ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches



Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
Ouled ben zedoun 35° 2'39.02"N 1°32'23.37"O	Steep sided terrain, in a non arable land, at 220m in altitude. Surrounded by pickled pear trees.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the east side.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☒ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☒ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches

Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
35°11'50.35"N 1°37'30.38"O	At the top of a hill, in the limit of an arable land, at 98m in altitude.	01	02
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the west side.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☒ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☒ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☐ Reed ☒ branches

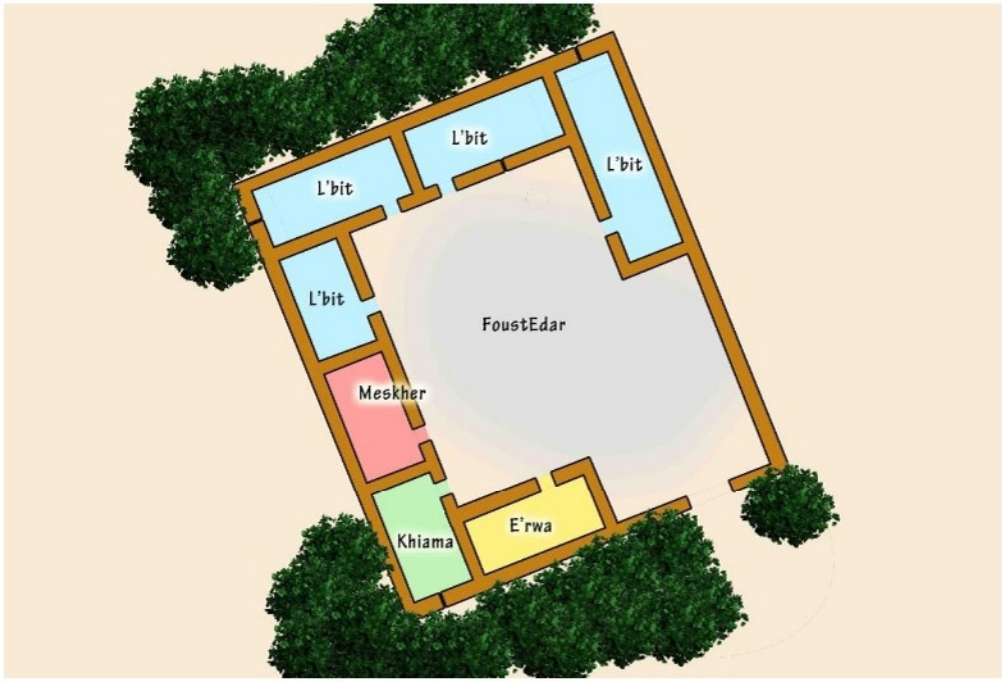


Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
35°10'43.60"N 1°34'52.94"O	At the top of a hill, Non arable land, 277 m in altitude.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the south side.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☐ E'rwa ☒ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☒ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches

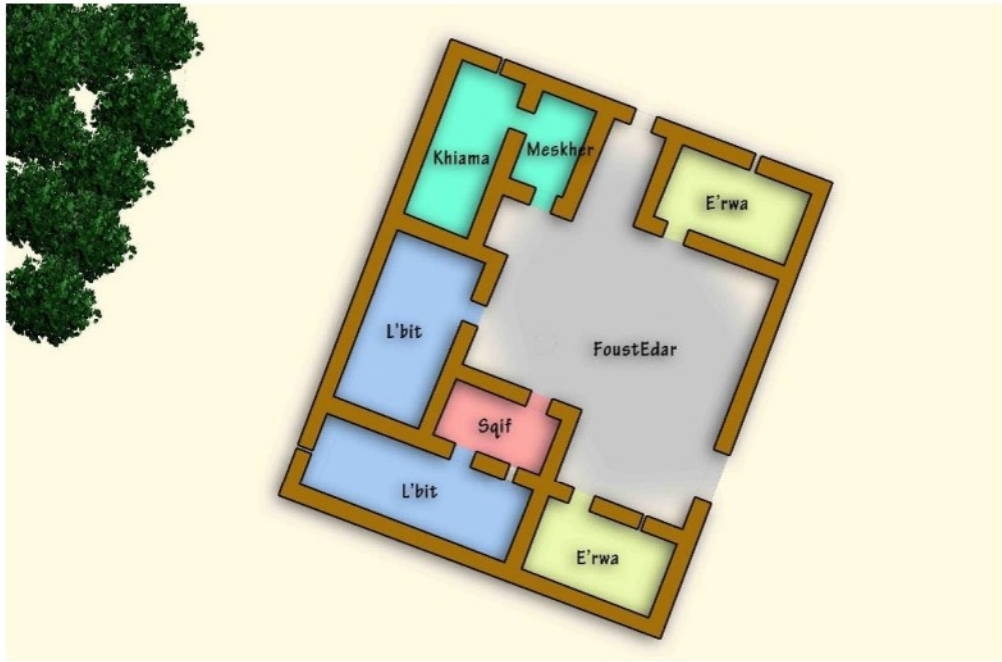
Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
35° 7'11.43"N 1°33'12.23"O	At the top of a hill, in a non arable land, at 345m in altitude.	01	02
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the east side.	☒l'bit () ☒Khiama ☒E'rwa ☒skif ☒Meskhar	☒E'srir ☒E'rkon ☒E'chbar ☒Bouchetan ☒Bardja	☒Stone () ☒Wood log ☒Clay+Staw ☐Reed ☒branches

Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
35° 5'19.28"N 1°31'40.93"O	At the top of a hill, non arable land, at 232m in altitude.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house if facing the south west side.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☒ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☒ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches

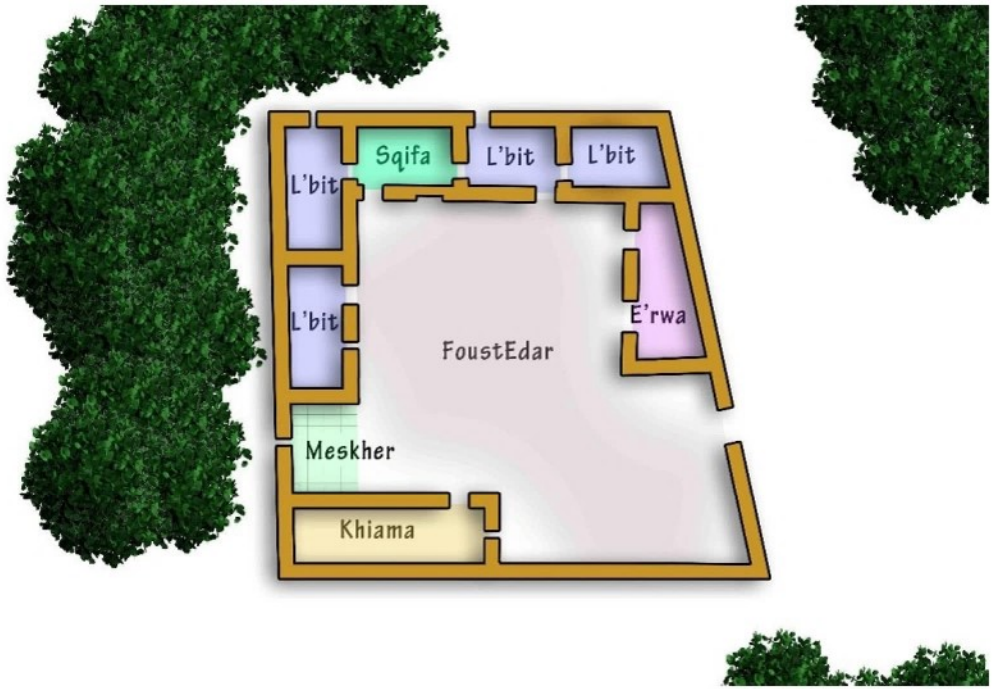
Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
35° 5'52.34"N 1°30'16.74"O	Steep sided terrain, non arable land, at 270m in altitude..	01	02
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the south east side.	☒l'bit () ☒Khiama ☒E'rwa ☒skif ☒Meskhar	☒E'srir ☒E'rkon ☒E'chbar ☒Bouchetan ☒Bardja	☒Stone () ☒Wood log ☒Clay+Staw ☐Reed ☒branches



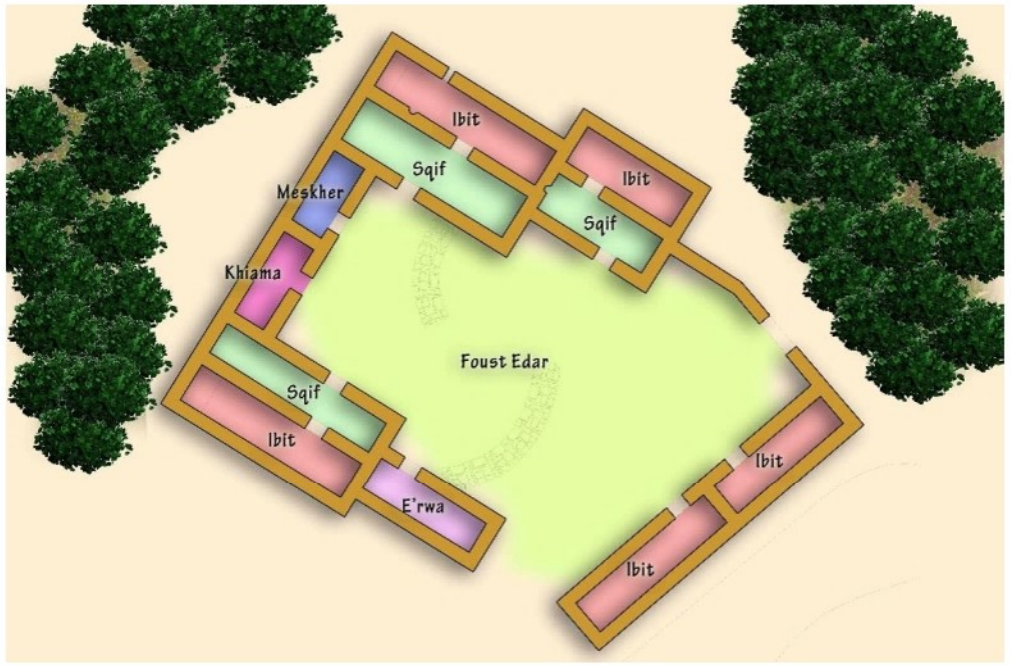
Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
35° 9'13.77"N 1°29'12.38"O	Steep sided terrain, in the limit of an arable land, at 80m in altitude.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the south side.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☐ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☐ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches



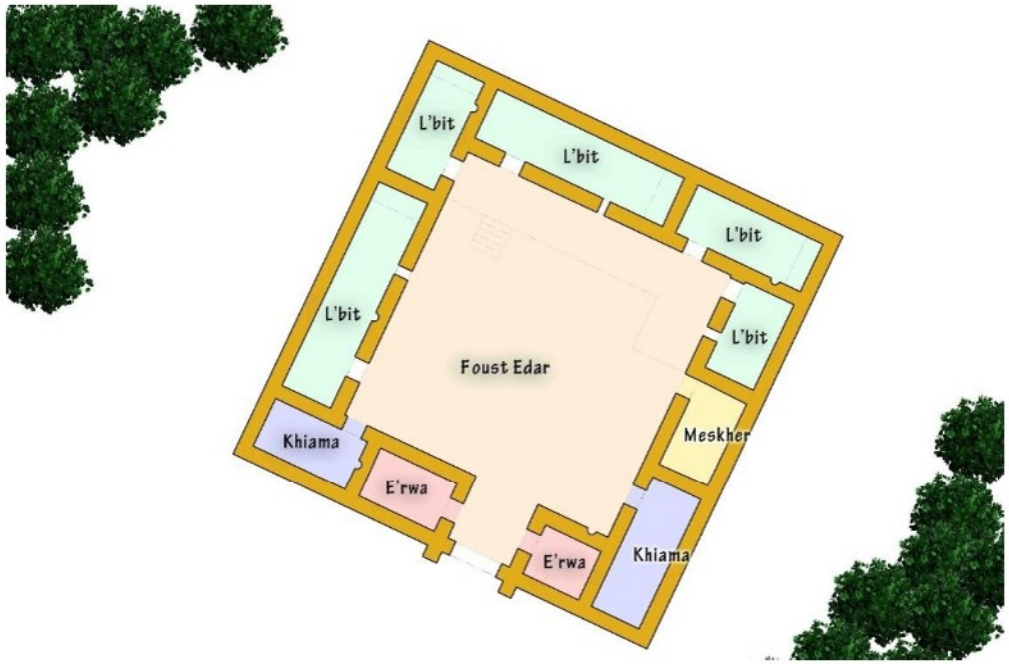
Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
35° 8'29.25"N 1°27'36.04"O	Steep sided terrain, non arable land, over Wadi*Tafna*, 136 m in altitude.	01	02
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the North east.	☒l'bit () ☒Khiama ☒E'rwa ☒skif ☒Meskhar	☒E'srir ☒E'rkon ☒E'chbar ☒Bouchetan ☒Bardja	☒Stone () ☒Wood log ☒Clay+Staw ☒Reed ☐branches



Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
35°16'12.28"N *1°30'38.95"O*	Steep sided terrain, in a non-arable land, in front of sea, 130m of altitude.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
In spite of its location in front of sea, the house is facing the South side.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☐ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☐ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches

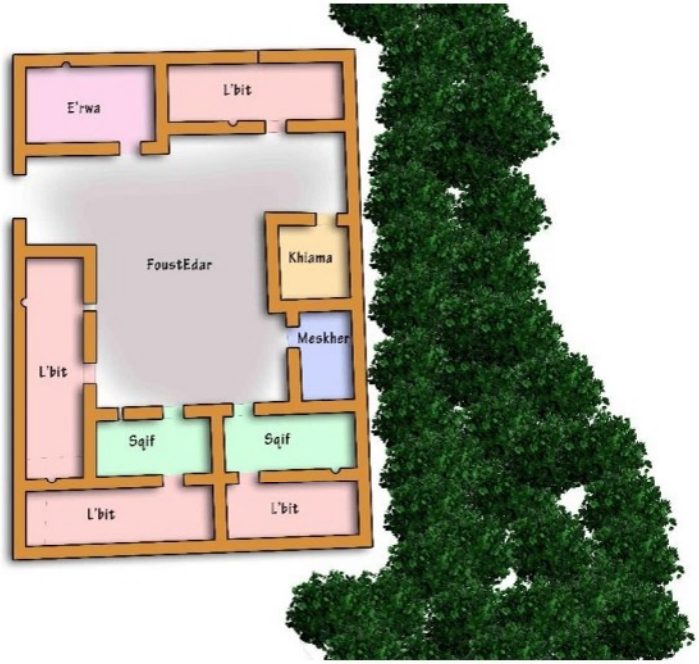


Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
bazlil *35° 3'57.61"N* *2°11'6.34"O*		01	02
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
At the top of a hill	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☐ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☐ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches

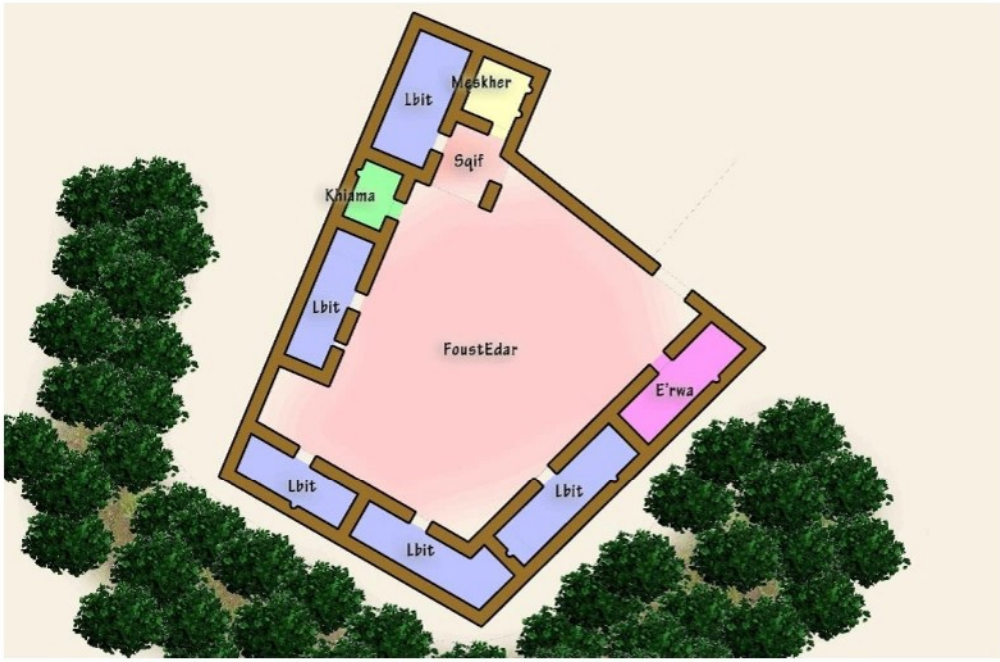


Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
Mjiaa *35° 1'40.75"N* *2° 5'45.65"O*	Steep sided terrain, non arable land, at 265m in altitude, Surrounded by pickled pear trees.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the South side. The house rooms are looking towards South east, south west and south.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☐ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☐ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches

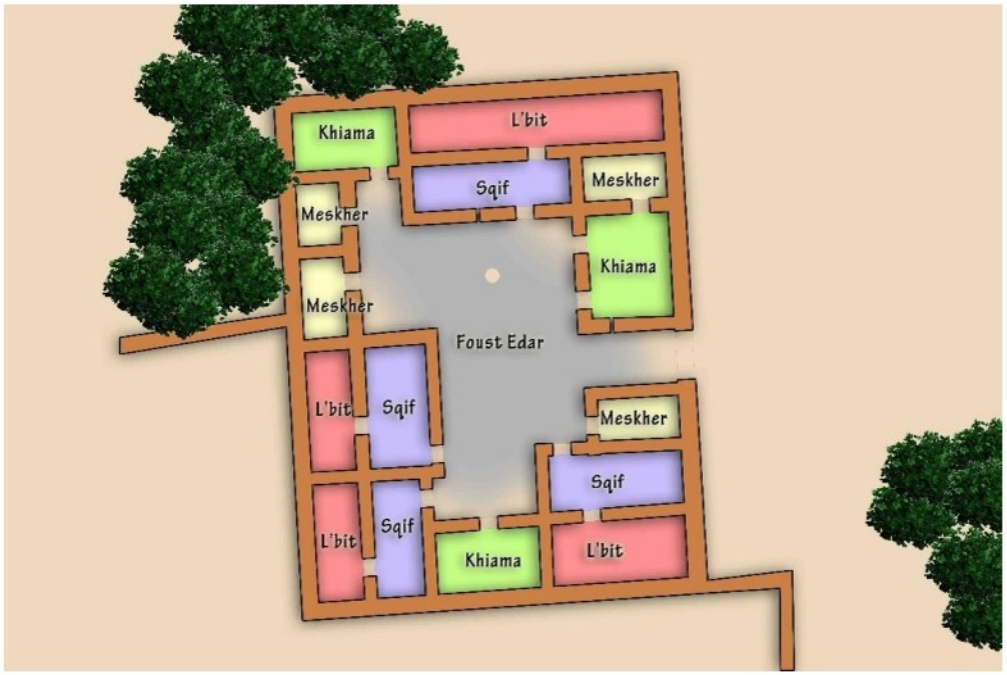
Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
Igheam *35° 1'23.83"N* *2° 1'37.70"O*	Steep sided terrain, non arable land, at 333m in altitude, Surrounded by pickled pear trees.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The houseis facing the west side. The house rooms are looking towards South, west and East	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☒ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☐ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches



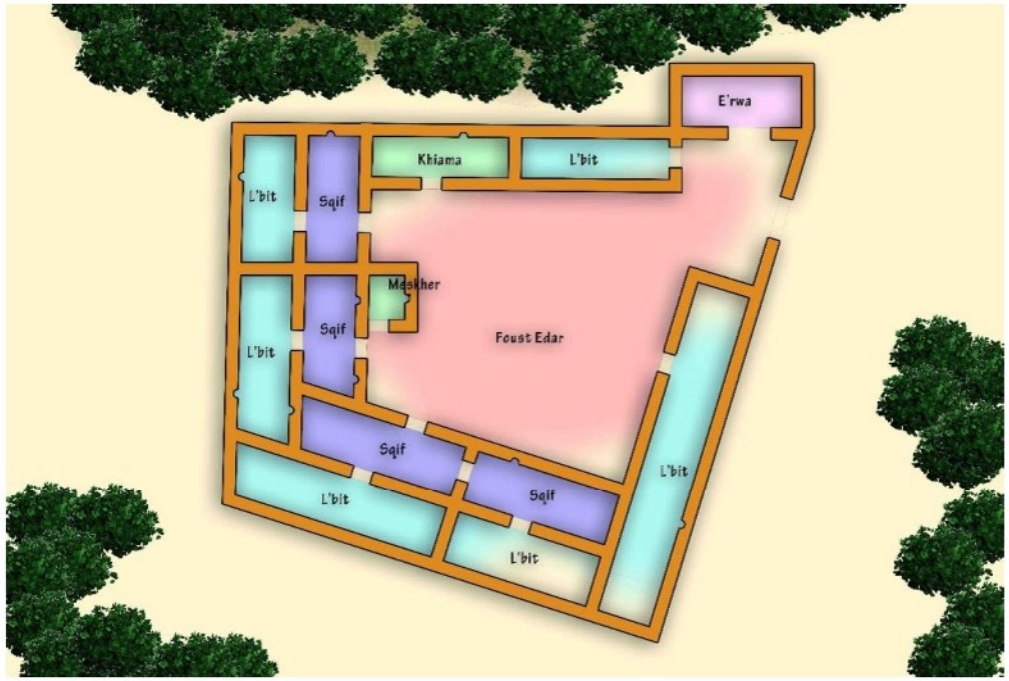
Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
Touardah dzoudah *35° 1'40.11"N* *1°59'5.42"O*	At the top of a hill, non-arable land, at 177m in altitude, Surrounded by pickled pear trees.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the South East side.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☒ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☐ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches



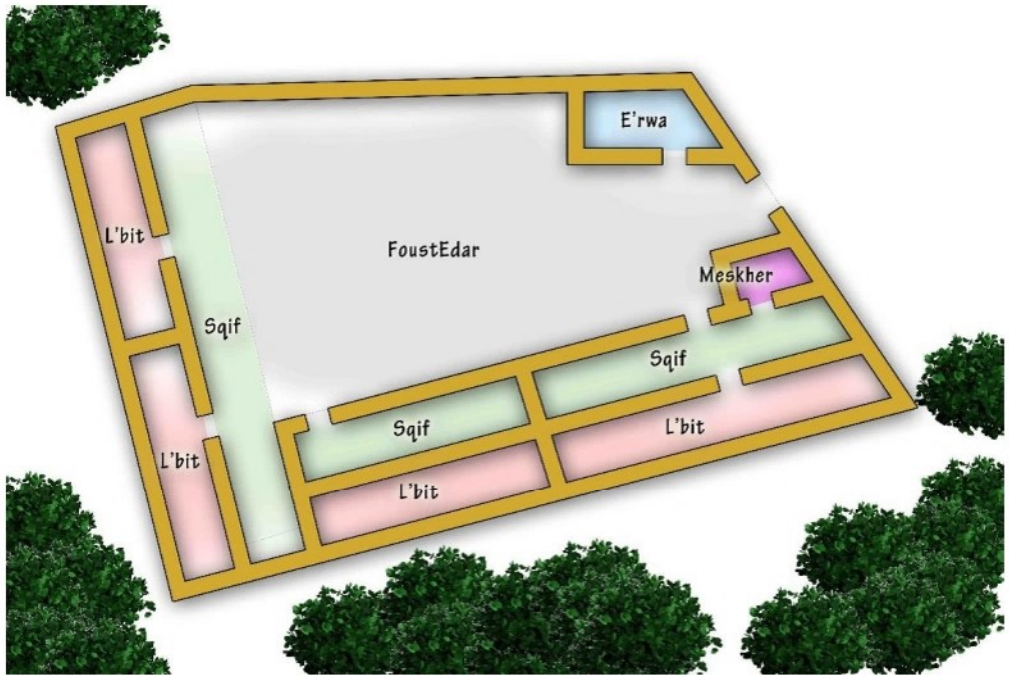
Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
Dar akaache *35° 0'7.94"N* *1°57'34.87"O*	At the top of a hill	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The houseis facing the west side.	☒l'bit () ☒Khiama ☒E'rwa ☒skif ☒Meskhar	☒E'srir ☒E'rkon ☒E'chbar ☐Bouchetan ☒Bardja	☒Stone () ☒Wood log ☒Clay+Staw ☒Reed ☐branches



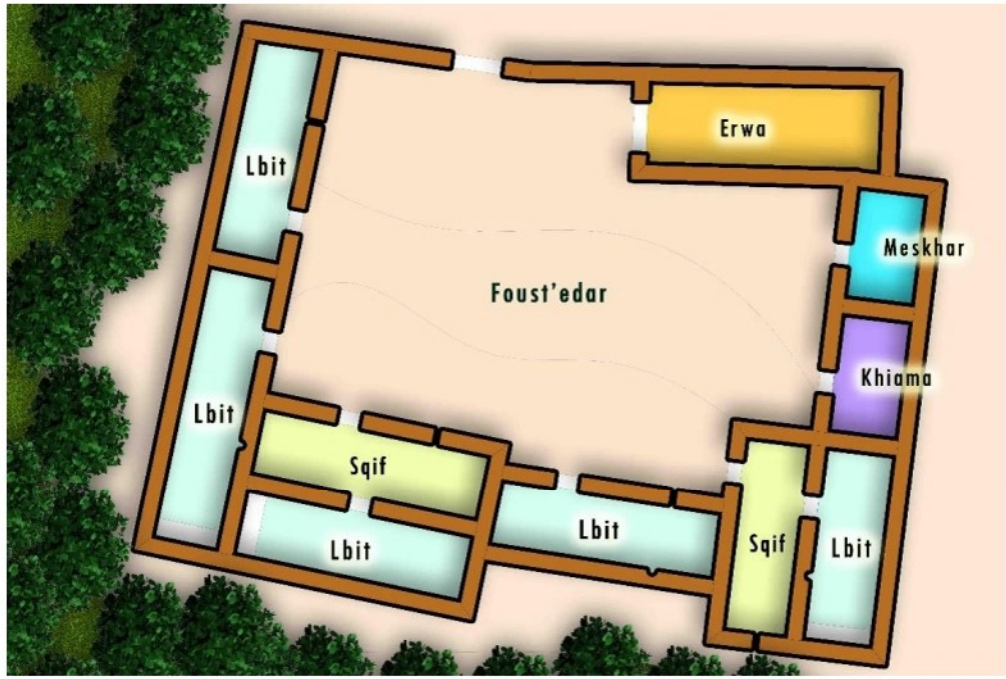
Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
Anabra 35° 5'23.53"N 1°53'42.12"O	Steep sided terrain, non arable land, at 106m in altitude, in front of sea.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The houseis facing the south west side.	☒l'bit () ☒Khiama ☒E'rwa ☐skif ☒Meskhar	☒E'srir ☒E'rkon ☒E'chbar ☐Bouchetan ☒Bardja	☒Stone () ☒Wood log ☒Clay+Staw ☒Reed ☐branches



Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
Dar ennaçer *34°56'11.98"N* *1°49'32.83"O*	At the top of a hill, non arable land, at 664m in altitude.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the South side.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☒ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☒ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches

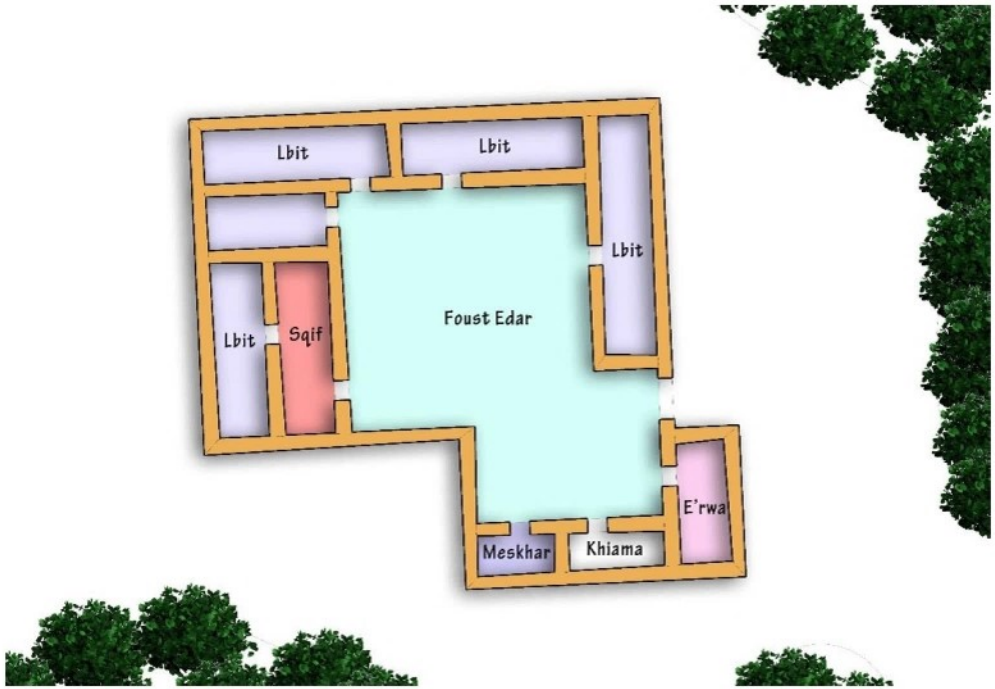


Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
35° 4'14.43"N 1°49'0.48"O	Steep sided terrain, non arable land, at 131m in altitude.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The houseis facing the west side.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☒ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☐ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches

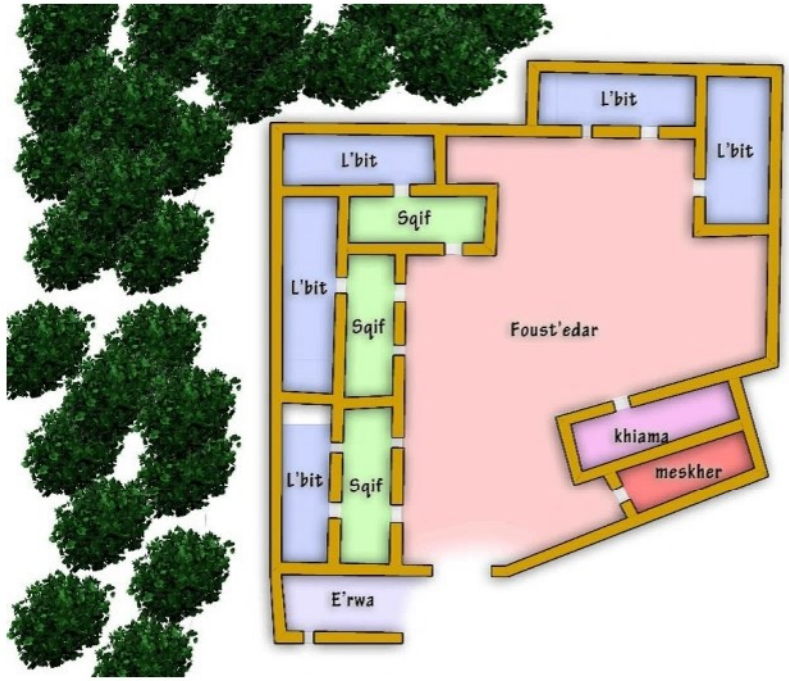


Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
35° 3'19.14"N *1°42'47.39"O*	At the top of a hill, non-arable land, at 432m in altitude, Surrounded by pickled pear trees.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The houseis facing the west side.	☒ l'bit () ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☒ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☒ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☐ Reed ☒ branches

Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
Ouled bouhenna *34°57'36.45"N* *1°43'27.66"O*	Steep sided terrain, non arable land, at 598m in altitude.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the oust side.	☒ l'bit (03) ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☒ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☒ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone () ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☐ Reed ☒ branches



Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
Chouachi *34°57'10.83"N* *1°38'23.81"O*	Steep sided terrain, non-arable land, at 294m in altitude, Surrounded by pickled pear trees from the east side.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the South side.	☒l'bit (04) ☒Khiama ☒E'rwa ☒skif ☒Meskhar	☒E'srir ☒E'rkon ☒E'chbar ☐Bouchetan ☒Bardja	☒Stone (Tifkert) ☒Wood log ☒Clay+Staw ☒Reed ☐branches



Location	Positioning	Number of levels	Number of entrance
Zailou *35° 0'50.71"N* *1°37'45.99"O*	Steep sided terrain, non-arable land, at **281m** in altitude, Surrounded by pickled pear trees from the west side.	01	01
Orientation	**Functional components**	**Rooms components**	**Construction materials**
The house is facing the East side.	☒ l'bit (05) ☒ Khiama ☒ E'rwa ☒ skif ☒ Meskhar	☒ E'srir ☒ E'rkon ☒ E'chbar ☐ Bouchetan ☒ Bardja	☒ Stone (Tifkert) ☒ Wood log ☒ Clay+Staw ☒ Reed ☐ branches

Appendix 02
Interviews transcripts

Employee of culture department

Q1 *Despite the existence of enormous potentialities in terms of cultural heritage, the rural regions of Tlemcen still suffer from a delay in terms of economic development. In Algeria and in Tlemcen, the protection and the valorization of rural, tangible, and intangible heritage is one of the federating themes of proximity projects of rural development (PPRD). These projects are carried out on previously identified territories to improve living conditions and ensure socio-economic development for local communities.*

In the case of the Tlemcen province, the application of PPRDs aims to reduce rural poverty and improve the living conditions of rural households.

Indeed, one of the pillars of this program, financed by the international fund for rural development, is strengthening local capacities and economic activities throughout tourism, crafts, and local products. However, Tlemcen province's PPRD , in the major cases of communes, including the Traras Mountains region, is more focused on diversification and valorization of natural resources rather than on cultural heritage conservation and valorization.

So, there is still a long way to go in terms of the Tlemcen's rural areas development, particularly in the Traras Mountains region. This region's cultural potentialities need to be identified, and then, peculiar programs need to be applied to enhance this region's development.

Q2 *Traras mountains region is one of the important regions in terms of cultural potentialities. The rural built heritage is one of the key components of the Traras Mountains culture. From what I know, the Traras Mountains region is one of the ancient Berber territories in Algeria. So, it is fully understood that it may contain very ancient villages and a very impressive built heritage. This built heritage should be preserved and valorized. At least, it should be identified. Within à framework of such a rural region development, built heritage should be identified, conserved, and valorized throughout its introduction as a key component in a development strategy. Regarding built heritage value, in our days, unfortunately, there is no consideration of appréciation for this heritage value and its high potentialities in improving the region's local development.*

Q3 *Without any doubt, I think it is urgent to identify, document, and inventory rural built heritage in this region. This vernacular heritage is one of the most vulnerable assets in our region. Thus, urgent operations should be done to conserve what remains of this heritage.*

Q4 *I think so. Taking this heritage into account throughout a conservation and valorization approach may be very difficult to achieve. One of the main problems is that we are talking about vernacular construction interspersed all around the Traras Mountains region, so a large geographical area to cover by this conservation and valorization program. Without collaboration and the help of particular, nothing can be*

done. Another problem lies in the fact that the major part of rural vernacular constructions of the Traras Mountains region are located in agricultural land and are private ownership. I think that will be one of the critical issues that a conservation and valorization approach should be taken into account.

Q5 *Actually, there is no intention to undertake preservation or valorization operations in the Traras Mountains region. Reasons are discussed previously. However, identification, documenting and inventorying this built heritage give us a big bush to think seriously about such a thing.*

Employee of tourism department

Q1 *At the level of the Tlemcen province, only historical monuments of great cultural and historical value are considered, classified, and protected by law. However, no strategy exists for the conservation, valorization, or management of the vernacular heritage of the rural regions of Tlemcen and, more particularly, in the case of the region of the Traras Mountains.*

We cannot hide the importance of such a strategy that considers rural areas' cultural and historical potential and allows them to contribute to their own economic, social,l and cultural development. Thus, the conservation and enhancement of the rural heritage of the Traras Mountains region will certainly have a positive effect and will undoubtedly contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of these regions in deficit.

Moreover, this strategy is necessary in current time with the policy of the Algerian state on the development of the shadow areas and which arrives, in fact, in the head of the priorities registered in the program of Mister, the president of the republic who affirmed on many occasions that the construction of the new Algeria could not be concretized without the promotion of the rural areas of the country.

The taking into account the heritage of the rural regions at the province of Tlemcen must thus stand as one of the pillars of a strategy of local development of its regions.

Q2 *In general, I know that this region has cultural, natural, and historical potential, but I didn't have a clear idea of that in terms of built vernacular heritage.*

Now that you have presented to me what it is really about, I realize that it is really about a cultural wealth that could be invested in improving the living conditions of the rural population through tourism, for example.

For the values of this vernacular heritage and noting the state in which it is, we clearly understand that there is a lack of appreciation of this vernacular heritage. It is necessary to put in place a strategy of conservation and valorization, which will aim at the sensitization of the population on the cultural, historical, and economic importance of this heritage.

Q3 *Absolutely. The identification, documentation, and inventory of this vernacular heritage is part of the conservation and valorization. It is an important step that will aim the sensitization of the population and the public*

authorities to the importance of this heritage for the development of rural communities.

In addition to increasing the sensitivity of the people to this vernacular heritage of their region and make them aware of its importance, these steps will also provide a basis for the development of concerted programs of conservation and valorization.

As I imagine, the definition of the vernacular heritage elements of the Traras Mountains region includes the description of specific elements for their safeguarding.

It is therefore quite correct that identification, documentation, and inventory are helpful steps in the conservation and enhancement process

Q4 *Indeed, and I start with the inexistence of regulatory texts that concern the care of rural vernacular constructions. This kind of text will fix the kind of intervention to carry out in each type of house. Also, no financial aid is granted for this question of rural built heritage and the conservation and valorization of this heritage.*

In addition to that, multiple obstacles will arise on the ground. I quote the problem of the private property of these constructions. Even if they are abandoned constructions, or in a state of degradation, enormous worries will be met and will have to be regulated in the first place.

Q5 *No intention or ambition exists either by the public or by decision-makers for rural heritage and, more*

particularly, for the Traras Mountains region. Actions aimed at raising public awareness are essential to remedy this problem.

The identification, documentation, and inventory of this kind of heritage in the context of the Taras Mountains region will give a huge push to start such an approach concretely.

Employee of Nedroma municipality

Q1 *Apart from the general regulatory texts such as the ordinance 67-281 of December 20, 1967, relative to the excavations, to the protection of the sites, historical and natural monuments, and the law 98-June 04 15, 1998, relative to the protection of the cultural heritage, i think that there is no other text to speak about the vernacular heritage of the rural areas with enough precision and by determining the guiding lines for its conservation and development.*

I believe that the law 98-June 04 15, 1998, relative to the protection of cultural heritage, for its part, has nevertheless spoken about the heritage of rural regions and has defined them as: "villages and traditional agglomerations characterized by their predominance of the zone of habitat, and which, by their homogeneity and their historical and aesthetic unit, present a historical, architectural, artistic or traditional interest of nature to justify the protection, the restoration, the rehabilitation and the development of it." But i fully understand that it is necessary to have texts and a

strategy based on a more detailed study, especially in the Traras Mountains region, to apply on the ground.

As far as local development of rural areas is concerned, we instead talk about the integrated rural development project, which aims at improving the living conditions in rural areas and that one of its objectives is the development of the tangible and intangible heritage of rural areas.

Hence, In the Traras Mountains region, i can say that no strategy is implemented in line with its texts and projects for the conservation and development of the cultural potential of this region.

Q2 *I think that rural built heritage is one of the defining characteristics of our region and our identity. Traras Mountains beautiful Vernacular houses and settlements are seen as cultural and identity anchors. They bear witness to the history of the traditional rural community and their way of life.*

I think that rural built heritage is suffering because of the comparison with other regions' monumental heritage and particularly those of urban regions. In addition, modern models of construction prevail over the old and traditional and imposes themselves in the Traras Mountains rural landscape because of the neglect of traditional architecture and local construction techniques.

The Traras Mountains built heritage is threatened today by physical deterioration and by nature effects. I believe that It needs to be considered, conserved and

valorized as a socio-cultural and economic asset. I believe that It can contribute significally to local development

Q3 *I think that it is more than a necessité to proceed to identify Traras Mountains rural built heritage. That is because of the severe state of neglect and abandonment in which Traras Mountains' vernacular constructions are. This is also important to raise the community awareness and appreciation of such a cultural resource.*

Also, I believe that the documentation and inventory steps are important because of the risk of disappearing of such a resource. The documentation step is either helpful for raising the local community awareness or for conservation and valorization purposes.

Q4 *I think so. For the application of any strategy and especially in heritage conservation or valorization, several difficulties may appear. In the case of Traras Mountains rural built heritage, any future strategy should be comprehensive. It must involve all the relevant actors in the field. Top-down initiatives are not sufficient in such a strategy. The implication of all actors is necessary. Down-top strategies are more suitable in such a case.*

I believe that problem regarding financing will constitute a significant enclave for such a strategy. State financing is not going to constitute a sustainable change in this région development enhancement. A sustainable method of financing should be implemented.

Also, I think that practical solutions and guidelines are missing. They should be studied and implemented to this region's rural heritage in order to properly operate.

Q5 *Unfourtunatly there is no intention regarding Traras Mountains' rural built heritage conservation or valorization. I think that is urgent to react to the state of neglect and to valorise this cultural ressource. Indeed, rural built heritage can contribute to the enhancment of the rural regions devlopment throughout the creation of new sources of incoume for rural households.*

Employee of Honaine municipality

Q1 *Tlemcen's rural built heritage is not concerned with a precise strategy to improve Heritage conditions and benefit from it to enhance the local development and improve the quality of living.*

There is only general text regarding heritage protection, such as the law 98-June 04 15, 1998, relative to the protection of cultural heritage. Such a law is general and cannot constitute a base for any conservation or valorization operations.

There is also what is called Proximity Project for Rural Devlopment but i think that are more focused on agricultural activities rather than rural heritage protection, conservation, and valorization.

Anyway, there is no strategy concerning the conservation or valorization of rural built heritage in Tlemcen rural regions, especially in the Traras Mountains region.

Q2 *Firstly, I think that the Traras Mountains region is one of the important regions in Algeria in terms of cultural and natural resources, which can be invested in tourism, for example. This region's vernacular heritage is important because it is bearing witness to the ancient community traditions. From what i know, The region's vernacular heritage comprises vernacular houses and picturesque villages constructed with traditional materials and primary techniques.*

Unfortunately, the significant cases of rural vernacular houses are seen as useless and have been abandoned by their inhabitants who are not aware of their values.

I believe that the rural built heritage and despite being essentially deteriorated can enhance this region's local devlopment throughout its conservation, valorization, and implementation in a local development strategy. In a Proximity Project for Rural Devlopment as for example or in another more precise strategy.

Q3 *I think so, the implementation of a local development strategy based on rural built heritage needs identification work, particularly in the case of the Traras Mountains region. That is because of the lack of public knowledge and understanding of such a resource.*

Thus, I think that Identification can do a great job to raise the local community's appreciation and the provincial authority's awareness about this issue. Documentation and inventory are also necessary steps to avoid the loss of such a resource and to know its actual importance.

The result of Identification, documentation, and inventory steps can constitute a database of valuable sources for conservation or valorization projects.

Q4 *I believe that various constraints may arise to ensure a local development based on the rural built heritage assets. The most important one is related to financing. The potential conservation and valorization operations need to be financed, in a long-term view, to achieve the local development target. So, a significant budget is essential to such a strategy. I think that the government can not take under their own responsibility the issue of financing. Other alternatives should be studied and examined.*

I think that the community's sense of responsibility should be strengthened to think seriously about the values of their rural built heritage, and to take on challenges regarding its conservation and valorization for local development purposes.

Q5 *I believe that there is no intention concerning the conservation or valorization of rural built heritage in the rural areas of Tlemcen province and particularly in the Traras Mountains region.*

I hope that your work regarding the Identification, documentation, and inventory may help to enhance such an endangered form of heritage and help to raise the public and authorities' awareness.

Employee of Souahlia municipality

Q1 *Actually, there is no strategy regarding rural built heritage conservation and valorization of the Traras Mountains region or elsewhere in Tlemcen province.*

The problem of not having any precise strategy regarding rural built heritage conservation or valorization in the Traras Mountains region is related to the top-down model of governance. This mode is favoring top decisions and excluding consultations with local stakeholders. It is a non-participatory model that has failed due to misunderstanding the local level role as a territorial entity with economic, social, and cultural specificities.

Nothing is, therefore, possible with such a mode of governance. We need to move towards the down-top mode of governance, giving more flexibility and permitting local decision-makers to take advantage of their territories' peculiar resources. Here comes the role of rural built heritage in the case of the Traras Mountains region, and starting from this point, we can talk about an effective strategy regarding the enhancement of local development.

Q2 *Traras Mountains region was an important cultural and historic centre that has been populated by Berber for long centuries. This region contains thus one of the ancient villages in the north of Algeria.*

Without a doubt, these vernacular settlements constitute one of the region's heritage elements besides natural and intangible heritage.

Vernacular houses and settlements present all around the Traras Mountains region bear witness to the ancient rural community traditional way of life. It has, therefore, cultural and identity values and need to be conserved and valorized.

Q3 *Absolutely. I believe in that. The identification, documentation an inventory of rural built heritage is the first step towards its real consideration, conservation and valorization.*

This vernacular heritage is considered to be particularly vulnerable because of weak legal protection and low appreciation among the general public.

The identification should raise the local community awareness and contribute in its conservation and valorization within a project of local development enhancement.

Q4 *I think so; it is normal to have difficulties when trying to apply any kind of strategy. That will be more critical in the case of the conservation and valorization of the Traras Mountains' rural built heritage for the purpose of local development.*

I think that the difficulties will be more attached to financing; The region is geographically huge, and the number of locations Is quite important. For their conservation and valorization, authorities should collaborate with other actors to ensure other sources of financing. Also, other difficulties may appear, such as the private nature of properties, which

Q5 *Despite its importance, Traras Mountains built heritage is rarely protected by precise laws. Great part of vernacular buildings are now abandoned and deteriorated. On top of that, there is no intention on the part of provincial or national authorities to establish their conservation or valorization.*

Employee of Djebala municipality

Q1 *Today, I can't really talk about a strategy of safeguarding the built heritage of rural areas and especially of vernacular houses. The isolated operations that have been conducted concerned only the restoration of important places such as mosques and zaouets. however, We can talk about general texts such as the law 98-June 04 15, 1998, relative to the protection of cultural heritage, which considers rural built heritage as equal to monumental urban heritage. But, this is not enough To guarantee appropriate care of this type of built heritage.*

Q2 *I cannot claim to know the Traras region very well. I had the opportunity to visit during a festival. We cannot remain indifferent to its architectural character. Yes, it must be an important engine of local development in the image of our neighbouring countries and M'zab at the local level.*

From what I know about this region, it contains ancient villages constructed by Berber for long centuries. The villages are abandoned due to the

Q3 *Identifying, documenting, and inventorying are the least complex ways to keep track of history and view the rapid upheavals that this type of heritage goes through.*

This approach will allow constituting a file of safeguard plans. Obtaining it will be a way to slow down anarchic constructions or demolitions.

The identification exercise will allow us to better know the specificities of this construction and frame the new buildings. It can guarantee, on the other hand, the local and more general awareness of the interest of this heritage. For that, it is necessary to make a work of sensitization.

Q4 *Of course! Today, without a global strategy to safeguard this heritage and without any will from the local authorities, there is no way to perpetuate the local development of the region.*

However, some difficulties may appear in applying such a strategy as is the case for any other strategy. Some serious issues can hamper the application of a Traras Mountains built heritage conservation and valorization strategy. The most important problem is that of financing. the built heritage in tis region is mainly abandoned and deteriored. That needs a big budget to restore or rehabilitate.

Also, there is the issue of population implication. The rural community needs to be implicated in this process. In fact, it is up to locals to ensure the big part of this strategy. They constitute the key component.

Q5 *If there is a will, it would be that of the inhabitants of Traras, who have a memorial and emotional attachment.This is perhaps the best way to safeguard this heritage for as long as possible, to make the youngest people aware of the link with their identity. But is this enough without a real will from the public authorities? I don't think so.*

Employee of the national office for the management and exploitation of protected cultural property

Q1 *I think that the Traras Mountains built heritage is an irreplaceable legacy and one of the main cultural pillars of this region's character. It can contribute to the enhancement of the living quality in such a rural region. It is a valuable resource that can contribute to economic development throughout tourism as for example. Indeed, the Traras Mountains region contains significant resources in terms of built vernacular heritage. The conservation and valorization of these assets should be ensured throughout the establishment of rural built heritage conservation and valorization strategy.*

Unfourtnetly, there is no existing strategy concerning the conservation and valorization of vernacular built heritage, either in Traras Mountains or elsewhere in Algeria. Apart from the general laws such as the ordinance 67-281 of December 20, 1967, relative to the excavations, to the protection of the sites, historical and natural monuments, and the law 98-June 04 15, 1998, relative to the protection of the cultural heritage, no recent texts are concerning vernacular heritage with enough detailing.

Q2 *I appreciate it a lot. The Traras Mountains rural built heritage include vernacular architecture, which contains constructions that have been shaped and developed over time.*

Traras Mountains rural region contain heritage and territorial resources that are likely to ensure their development. The promotion of cultural heritage assets in the Traras Mountains region motivates the initiatives to serve and contribute to its economic development. Traras Mountains rural heritage, created over hundreds of years by traditional rural communities, may play a significant role in declining areas.

Q3 *Of course, The vernacular built heritage in this region is considered one of the significant parts of the Traras Mountains environment and the basic social unit in which most social and cultural values were translated into architectural spaces.*

Such a cultural asset must be subjected to in-depth research to ensure effective conservation or valorization. In promoting the rural cultural heritage, the identification of these resources is essential steps to understand the characteristics of the heritage, its potential, and problems. Within the framework of an effective conservation and valorization program, it is necessary to identify, study, and document the heritage-built features that tell the history of the traditional rural communities

Q4 *Of course, the application of any strategy can encounter difficulties. I can begin with the inexistence of specific laws or guiding principles concerning the care of*

Traras Mountains rural vernacular constructions. This kind of text will fix the type of intervention to carry out in each situation.

Also, the problem regarding financing will constitute a significant enclave for such a strategy. State financing is not going to contribute a sustainable change in this region development enhancement.

In addition to that, I quote the problem of the private property of these constructions. Even if they are abandoned buildings or in a state of degradation, enormous worries will arise.

Q5 *Unfortunately, there is no intention regarding Traras Mountains' rural built heritage conservation or valorization. I think that it is urgent to take responsibility and to react to the state of neglect and valorize this cultural resource.*

I believe that rural built heritage can contribute to the promotion of the development of the rural regions through the creation of new sources of income.

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