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Honors theses

From research to the project: proposal for a requalification plan of Ksar Zenaga in the Figuig oasis, Morocco

by Ianira Vassallo

Tutor: Piergiorgio Tosoni

Co-tutor: Francesca De Filippi

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My university thesis develops essentially in two parts: phase one, the bibliographic research, which was necessary for the approach to the wide theme of preservation of the architectural heritage in the developing countries and phase two, a practical one, which was dedicated to the proposal of a requalification plan for the Ksar Zenaga, through a period of stage in the oasis of Figuig in Morocco.

The first phase of the research was crucial not only as a preparation to the project, but also as a personal study since the preservation theme is normally treated in academic studies only with reference to 'western' architecture.

During the period of my stage, I could observe how the aims of the work adapt to the project requirements, as the research is applied to the reality of the project.

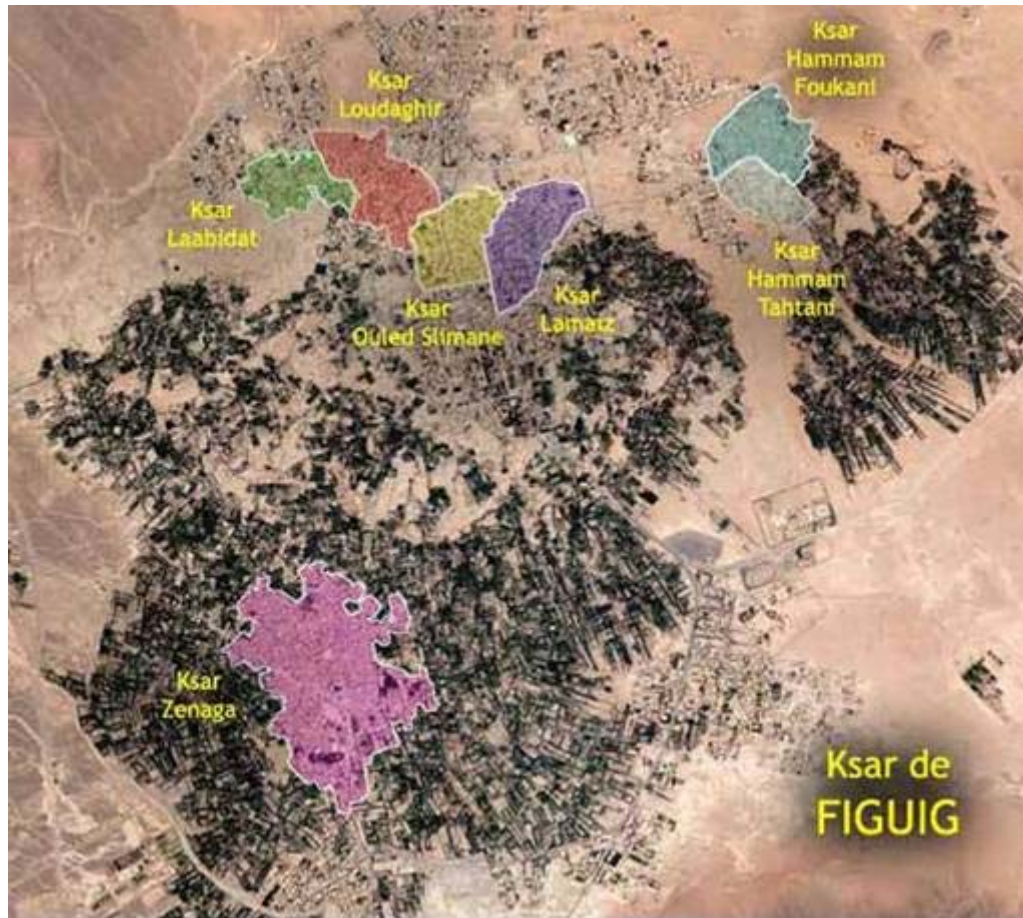
This work was made possible in particular thanks to the cooperation between the Politecnico di Torino and the NGO Africa 70, which allowed me to implement a project which is comprehensive and suited to the oasis territory.

This job is part of a wider project "The requalification of the cultural heritage in the Figuig oasis", coordinated by the NGO Africa 70.

My proposal for a requalification plan of the Ksar Zenaga takes its inspiration from the idea of improving the quality of life of the Figuig population, helping them in the best exploitation of the resources of their own territory and in making their homes more healthy.

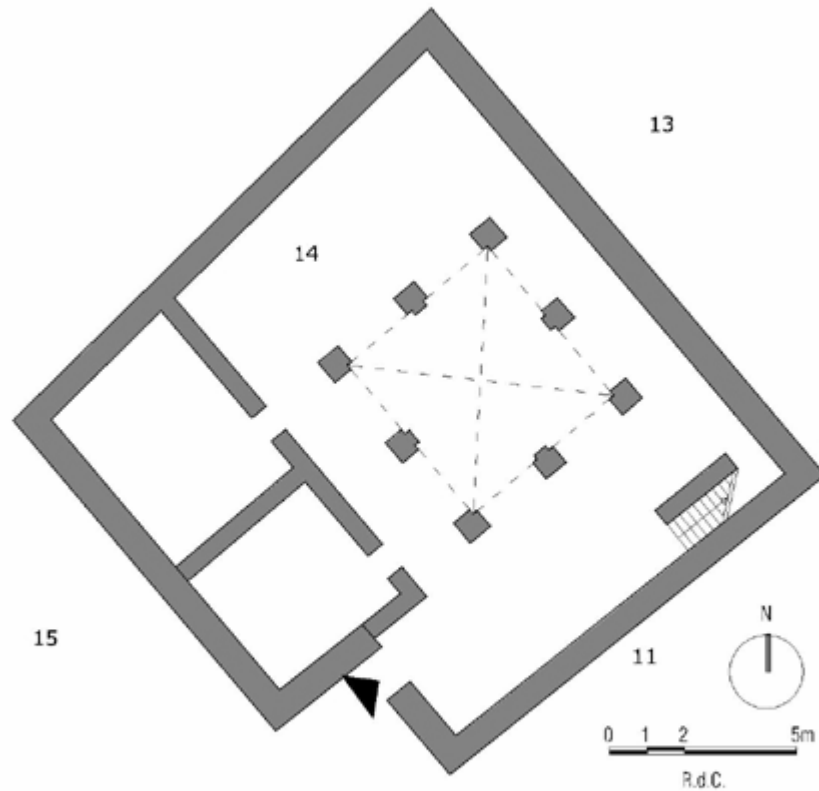
The Figuig oasis is located in the Oriental region, close to the desert, in north-western Morocco.

It consists of seven ksours and their respective seven palm groves.



Figuig Oasis with the different ksour

The ksar is a fortified village surrounded by a wall with four towers with one or more entrances. The interior consists of a tangled structure of buildings located one close to the other, separated only by roads (roofed in most cases). The Figuig ksour are mainly built of earth and they are composed with the adobe constructive technique. The traditional house in the oasis, located inside the ksar, has a patio type structure; this solution is particularly necessary for the ventilation and brightness of the building. The Oasis was once part of a circuit of caravan routes but numerous historical events and finally the closure of the Algerian boundary caused it to lose part of its territories and one ksar (it initially comprised eight ksour). This isolation condition also caused a crisis in its economic and social system.



Patio-house

My project develops essentially in six phases:

- the choice of the ksar
- the ksar subdivision into micro-areas
- the setting up of a reference classification
- inspections for the relief and filling-in of the classification form
- creation of a database for electronic data processing of the collected information
- final analysis with the consequent writing out of some town-planning indications



Photo of the state of decay of a traditional house

The idea of filling-up a classification form was given from the necessity to obtain an instrument to classify the ksar buildings and to understand the different types of decay in order to operate as effectively as possible on its tissue.

The database contains all information collected during the detection activity and supplies an overview of the classification work progress.

The architectural quality of the Ksar building concept appears evident as it witnesses the history of a society but also a construction technique which is still sustainable and that perfectly adapts to the climate and style of the local requirements for homes. Object of this research is to spotlight as maintenance works, requalification, more healthy environment of the buildings and a constant strict relation with the inhabitants of the oasis will allow to avoid the abandoning of the ksar and its consequent process of decay.

For further information, e-mail:
Ianira Vassallo: ianida@libero.it