

## **The medieval house, authenticity and mutation - case study Armandy's house in the old city of Annaba –Algeria-**

<sup>1</sup>Dr **LABBACI Ines,**

*Badji Mokhtar University, Faculty of Architecture, Annaba, Algeria*

*E-mail: [ineslabbaci23@gmail.com](mailto:ineslabbaci23@gmail.com)*

### **Abstract**

This paper reports on the strategies of appropriation of housing by people in old city of Annaba – Algeria- It developed the correspondence between the spatial arrangements of a building and the ways in which its occupants settle in it. The appropriation of the space is envisaged as a process of arranging it to suit the individuals' way of life. It is a process where they have to organize according to the specific context in which they find themselves. The adaptations and rectifications approved out show the size of the divergences between the spatial properties of their home and their sociocultural models.

**Keyword:** old city – housing – appropriation of space, usage.

### **1. Introduction**

In Algeria, particularly in Annaba, the Medina region has undergone several transformations over time with the succession of political regimes that have passed through it. The inadequacy of the urban fabric in the Medina to the current norms and practices of the inhabitants was the main cause of the changes that the Medins have established throughout the territory, mainly affecting the original urban form.

The changing society, economic restructuring and the housing crisis have changed the demographic structure of the Old City of Annaba. They have given rise to various models of differentiation and socio-spatial fractures.

Moreover, the inadequacy of these spaces for contemporary life and development accelerates the process of intervention and transformation through renovation and modernization operations through new activities involving other space organizations.

Appropriation of space is a control of one's own living space, in other words as an autonomous use. To those who use their own space as they please, the space they have produced, or have had produced, in their own image and measure, are opposed those who can only be satisfied with the spaces produced for them, according to the image that others have of their needs, their criteria, their very value, one might say. Not to mention the ones we don't want. Both subpoena and expropriation are opposed to appropriation.

Living in an old fabric of heritage value implies an exchange between the place and the occupant: if it includes actions that mark the places, it also implies that the place marks the one who occupies it. The historic place is changing, while at the same time transforming the way of life of the person or people who occupy it. Including the question of how society adapts the heritage framework to its needs.

The Medina of Annaba had been suffering for years from a problem of precariousness of unhealthy and over-densified housing. Families from the old city were leaving it and low-income rural immigrants found in the Medina a favourable reception structure, with large empty houses and a typology of patio houses that were well suited for rent by the room. Renting a single room was, in fact, the only option for families, usually large, with a maximum of one or two active members.

Social links, relationships with administrations, sociabilities, formal and informal social networks, everyday life, the various references to the belonging of inhabitants play an active role in social structuring and are mobilized as a resource in the creation of new relationships in the old city. As a result, the Medina area is invented, reinvented, adjusted, appropriated, re-referenced, restructured, united, disunited, gathered, opposed, built and produced according to the resources mobilized by the inhabitants. Economic and political constraints on living conditions are reactivated and also become resources that are involved in the construction of certain forms of solidarity, links and sociability.

Focusing on space practices therefore provides a unique insight into the historical evolution of the territory, but also into their genesis and fixation, into the modalities of their production and reception, and into socio-spatial operations. So the question that arises is: *What can we learn from the ways in which social groups reinvest heritage places about their relationship to space?*

## 2. Medina

A medina refers to the old part of a city as opposed to modern European-type neighbourhoods. This term is mainly used in the Maghreb countries, Spain, West Africa, East Africa , Because of their heritage and their know-how, a number of medinas are classified as World Heritage by UNESCO, particularly in North Africa,

### 3. The Medina:’s houses

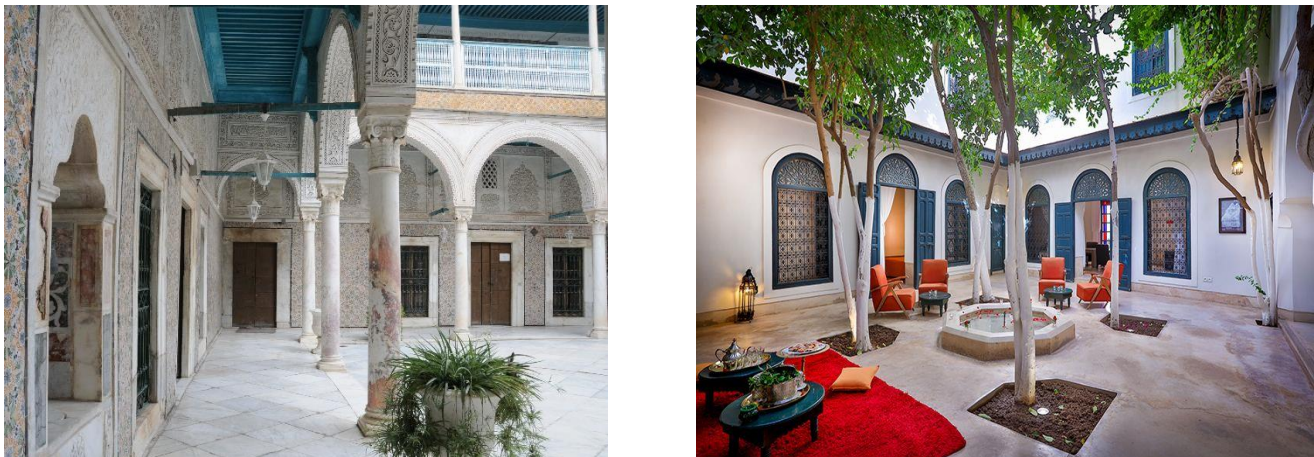
Kasbah’s domestic architecture is representative of a traditional human habitat representative of the Mediterranean Muslim culture. The house of the Kasbah appears clustered together, it has only one façade. It is estimated that this method of grouping houses dates back to the Ziride era. The living area is usually between 30 m<sup>2</sup> and 60 m<sup>2</sup>. It always has a view of the sea with its terrace, the light is usually provided by a window that overlooks the street or the patio.



**Figure 1:** the medina’s house

The gate always has a grid to allow the lower floors to be ventilated from the fresh air of the alleys. The mediness house is designed to indoors, more specifically to its patio (west dar) which is the heart of life and contains a well (bir). It is an area of conviviality for families, which are up to 4 to occupy a house, but also the traditional visitor reception space,

The walls are masonry works, consisting of low-baked bricks and mortar containing lime and thick land. The floors are made with wood logs according to a technique introduced by the Ottomans and the basement is built with a cradle technique.



**Figure 2:** the medina's house

**4-House types:**

**The house Alaoui:**

The Alaoui house is the only one whose patio does not give air and light to the dwelling. Built on a small plot, the ground floor includes shops or premises and the floors include a large room. In order to gain space this type of habitat uses crumbs,

**The house Chebka;**

The typology of this house responds to the minimum surfing constraint and is generally dependent (doubt: small house) of a larger house,



**Figure 3:** The house Chebka

### The house Portique:

This is the house typology in west Dar (center of house, patio) par excellence. It develops on a planetary surf of a minimum of 80 m<sup>2</sup>, allowing clearing the space of the patio. Depending on the size of the parcel, it develops a patio at one, two, three or four arcatures on two, three or four sides, (the arc can pull directly onto the wall); the most perfect order and the larger size give the palace,



Figure 4: The house Portique

### The palace:

The courtyard, the patio, the West ed-dar is the center the home universe and the space around which the house is created and which welcomes most of the family life. High density space community, which always respects the individual domain, is both destination and transition, interior and exterior, intimacy and conviviality. The patio is kept open to the sky.



Figure 5: The palace

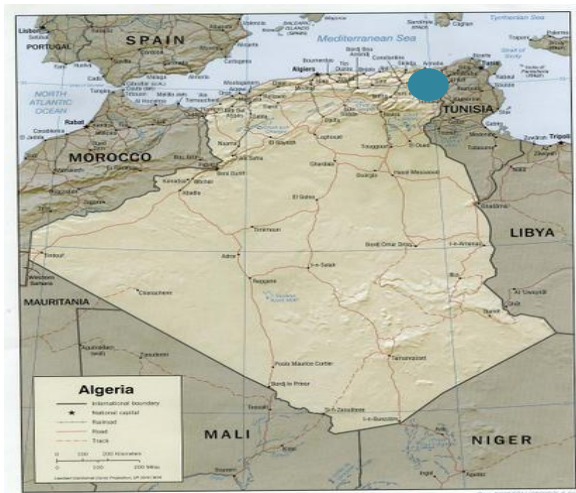
## 5. The medina of Annaba

### Location of wilaya of Annaba

Annaba, the fourth city of Algeria, is open on the Mediterranean coast on 80 Km, is it extends on flat ground by kissing a surface of 1412 km<sup>2</sup>. As a result, it benefits from a geostrategic situation that offers it the possibility of opening up to international space, and gives it a position of crossroads in trade.

### Location of Medina of Annaba

Its old town is a very dynamic and important center of life. From the city to the area of 16 hectares, this urban fabric presents an organic spatial organization, with a historical built frame, resulting from the overlay of two fabrics, otoman and colonial.



**Figure 6:** location of wilaya of Annaba



**Figure 7:** Location of Medina of Annaba

### The Historical Evolution of the Medina

The choice is to go to AKBET EL ANEB hill to respond to any enemy-landing attempt,

- **The 1<sup>st</sup> extension:**

The religious and scientific need gave birth to the Maruan mosque. it was a great university of the time..

- **The second extension:**

Urbanization on the promontory A few years after the first extension, the city grew again, but this time, in another direction, on the promontory, located just north of the nucleus of evolution and urbanization.

- **The urbanization of the western platform:**

The lower part of the hill was not the most favorable place for construction, given its proximity to the sea and the watercourse mentioned above, and this plain was an area of exchange,

**The morphology of the medina:**

The medina responds to organizational logic, where the central area, which encompassed both



religious activity (Saleh Bey mosque) and administrative activity, and other times commercial activity, plays the role of a structuring space. The latter presents itself as a center where three main streets come from three doors of the medina.

**Figure 8:** the SALAH EL BEY mosque

**Medina a listed sector:**

The medina of Annaba, has been classified since May 2013 saved area, by decree? executive of 13-186 of 25 Jomada Ethania 1434 corresponding to May 6, 2013 establishing and delineating the preserved area of the Old Town of Annaba.

Thus defined: «The preserved Old Town of Annaba» is a homogeneous urban complex characterized by the predominance of habitat zones, which is of historical, architectural, artistic and traditional interest representative of historical times in the region: ancient, Muslim, modern and contemporary.

**The Medina actually:**

Today, the reality of the medina is inexorable: ruined buildings, unsanitary, overcrowding, poverty, delinquency as many evils to put this «place of memory» into total chaos without the issue of rehabilitation being concerned with the managers of the city.



**Figure 9:** The Medina actually

### **5. ARMANDY'S HOUSE:**

**Situation:** house is located in the north west of the old town with a surface of 322 m<sup>2</sup>, with a height of 10 m, it is in R+ 1 with an accessible road;

It was built in the Otoman era, and was occupied by the colonial Aramnady in colonial times

Seen from the inside, the house is typically traditional in Arabic-Turkish style, it contains all the spaces that characterize, this type of house,

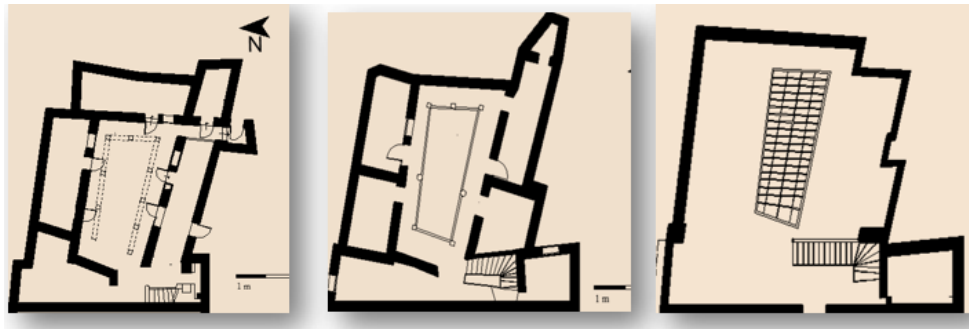
There is the «skifa» chicane that allows going to the patio or taking the stairs to the floors.



**Figure 10:** Situation of ARMANDY'S house.

It also allows the ventilation and sunshine of parts that do not have outdoor openings.

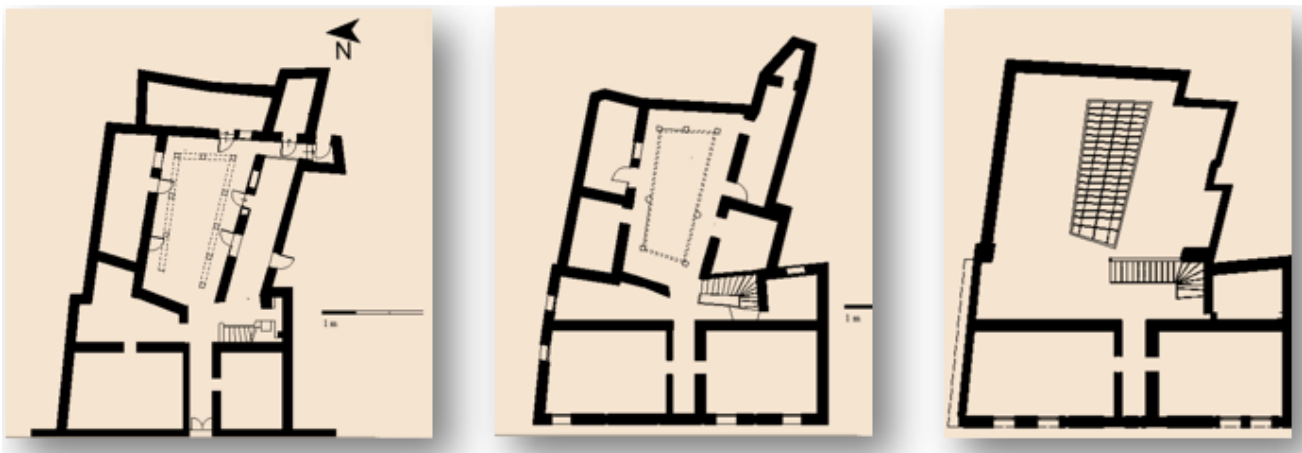
The first floor contains four large parts, and then you can access it with a terrace inaccessible by a staircase.



**Figure 11:** house of ARMANDY'S house.

### **ARMANDY'S HOUSE in the colonial era:**

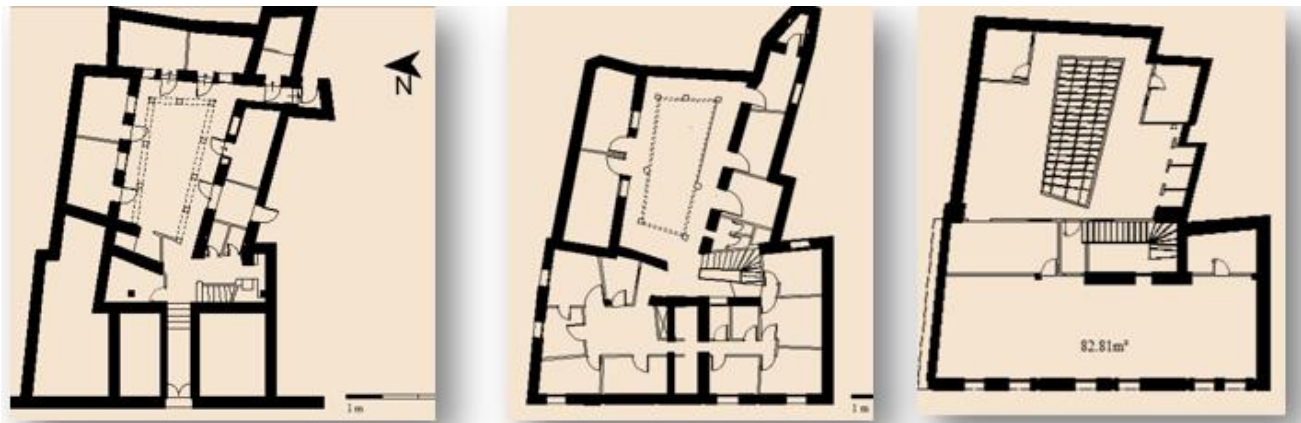
Seen from outside, the house brings together a colonial construction, with a neoclassical facade treatment, and the complete absence of the introverted facade, this explains that the façade was remade during colonization, adding the part that goes on the street. the latter and the result of in-perch performed on the ilot, which also explains the presence of two constructive systems: portico and beam poles,



**Figure 12:** house of ARMANDY'S house in the colonial era.

### **ARMANDY'S HOUSE actually:**

In recent years Armandy's house was converted to a dormitory, then to a business center, including the latter, which has undergone several changes; the adds of several separation walls to transform large spaces to small rooms that do not exceed  $10\text{ m}^2$ , reapplication of facade and tile coating on old materials, and the implantation of health units with an anarchic sanitation installation, adding an additional floor by building on the same old structure, all its changes influence on the structural and sanitary state of the house, which causes a lot of deep cracks, the reassembled hair, the detachment of coating, and corrosion.



**Figure 13:** house of ARMANDY'S house actually.

### **Conclusion:**

Living an ancient fabric of heritage value implies an exchange between the place and the occupier: if it includes actions that mark the place, it also implies that the place marks the place that occupies it. The heritage place is transformed, along with transforming the way in which the person is living

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