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La arquitectura islámica de Argelia en la producción académica argelina

Algerian Islamic Architecture in Algerian Scholarship

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Resumen

Este estudio examina cómo los investigadores argelinos han abordado la arquitectura islámica de Argelia en artículos científicos y trabajos de posgrado. La revisión abarca artículos disponibles en la Plataforma Argelina de Revistas Científicas (ASJP), así como trabajos de máster y tesis doctorales. Se cuantifican los trabajos identificados en cada categoría para ofrecer un panorama de la atención que la producción académica argelina ha dedicado a este tema.

Palabras clave — arquitectura islámica, Argelia, producción académica, Plataforma Argelina de Revistas Científicas (ASJP), análisis bibliométrico.

Abstract

This study examines how Algerian researchers have addressed the Islamic architecture of Algeria in journal articles and postgraduate research. The review covers articles available through the Algerian Scientific Journal Platform (ASJP), as well as master's dissertations and doctoral theses. It counts the works identified in each category to show how much attention Algerian scholars have devoted to this subject.

Keywords — Islamic architecture, Algeria, scholarly output, Algerian Scientific Journal Platform (ASJP), bibliometric analysis.

1- Islamic Architecture Through the Ages

The term "Islamic architecture" refers to all constructions built on earth with the aim of urban development that seeks to serve the individual and society, and to meet all their needs—whether residential, administrative, or cultural—without conflicting with Islamic beliefs. This architectural tradition spread across a vast region extending from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to China in the east. It is sufficient to note that Islam has shaped urban life by establishing the congregational mosque as the nucleus of all Islamic cities, serving as a central point for their planning and expansion, as well as a space for the creativity of architects in urban design. Prayers were prescribed to be performed in the mosque alone, rather than elsewhere (Mohrouk, 2018, p. 17).

Islamic architecture and Islamic arts reached their golden age with the emergence of the Maghrebi-Andalusian style, whose features can be traced back to the Great Mosque of Córdoba (169 AH / 785 CE), built by ʿAbd al-Rahman I. It has been stated that all advanced forms of architectural elements in Andalusian buildings originally stem from the structure of the Great Mosque of Córdoba. It represents the earliest foundations of Maghrebi-Andalusian art, which

first appeared during the Umayyad Caliphate in al-Andalus, then developed further during the period of the Taifa kingdoms, flourished under the Almoravid and Almohad dynasties, and reached full maturity during the Nasrid dynasty. The Mosque of Córdoba thus represents the main source from which Islamic arts in the Maghreb and al-Andalus drew inspiration.

Among the most important architectural characteristics of this style are the use of crenellated parapets, elongated arches—especially horseshoe arches—slender columns, capitals decorated with muqarnas, and ceramic mosaics. Minarets in this tradition are generally square in shape (Mohrouk, 2018, p. 23).

2- Islamic Architecture in the Central Maghreb up to the Modern Era

In the Central Maghreb, both pre-Islamic open cities—later incorporated and developed during the Islamic period, such as the city of Pomaria (Agadir)—and newly founded cities were widespread. Among these newly established urban centers was the Kalâa of the Banu Hammad, a city that served as an important outlet for the Hammadid dynasty and a key source for the emergence of a significant architectural style in the region. It featured a variety of architectural forms, including palaces, mosques, towers, and defensive walls (Miftah & Bouzidi Thani, 2024, p. 71).

Given the importance of architecture in reflecting the civilization and progress of states, the rulers of the Central Maghreb actively contributed to this field. Each sultan invested wealth, labor, and resources to construct monuments that symbolized the power of their rule (Chaoua, 2017, pp. 40-41). Among them were the Zayyanids, where each ruler left a distinct architectural imprint in the development of the Zayyanid state, including:

A- Olad Al-Imam Mosque: Its construction was connected to the old school (Olad Al-Imam School), which was built on the outskirts of the city in the direction of Kachout, during the reign of Sultan Abu Hammu, around 710 AH / 1310 CE (Boutaba & Arif, 2021, p. 132).

B- Olad Al-Imam School: It was built on the western side of the city of Tlemcen, near one of its five main gates known as Bab Kachout. This name was given to it in reference to the two sons of the jurist Imam, Abu Zayd Abd al-Rahman and Abu Musa Isa, whose father was an imam in the city of Breshk. The school was also known as the "Old School." (Boutaba & Arif, 2021, p. 132)

Distribution table of the number of published articles on Islamic architecture in Algeria

Author name	Article title	Journal name and issue
Ben Gouidour Samia	Jurisprudence and architecture in the city of Algiers during the Ottoman era	Journal of Scientific Research and Islamic Studies, Volume 14, No. 4, pp. 673–696, 2022-11-30
Ben Gouidour Samia	The function of the basement in the architecture of Algiers during the Ottoman era	Qabas Journal for Humanities and Social Studies, Volume 6, No. 2, pp. 1525–1542, 2022-10-13
Ben Gouidour Samia	Manifestations of Ottoman civilizational influence on the architecture of Algiers	Journal of Scientific Research and Islamic Studies, Volume 14, No. 5, pp. 67–90, 2022-12-31
Triki Slim – Nafti Wafia	Hotels in Algiers during the Ottoman era through sources – a statistical historical study	Algerian Historical Journal, Volume 8, No. 3, pp. 211–224, 2024-12-20
Maamar Chaouchou	Architecture and heritage in Algeria during the Ottoman era: palaces and baths of Algiers as a model	Maghreb Journal of Manuscripts, Volume 12, No. 1, pp. 99–122, 2016-12-30
Ali Ben Balla	Doors of palaces in the Casbah of Algiers in the late Ottoman period	Afkar wa Afak, Volume 9, No. 3, pp. 21–32, 2021-11-28
Allam Mahdia	Metal works in the architecture of the Casbah of Algiers during the Ottoman era	Revue d'études archéologiques, Volume 16, No. 1, pp. 138–151, 2018-12-15
Ali Ben Balla	Doors of palaces in the Casbah of Algiers in the late Ottoman period	Afkar wa Afak, Volume 9, No. 3, pp. 21–32, 2021-11-28

Ghouari Rziqa – Makas Malika	Woodwork and ceramic tile decoration in mosques of Constantine during the Ottoman period	Studies Journal, Volume 12, No. 2, pp. 295–313, 2024-01-22
Kemmad Hanane – Toumi Rafika	Ceramic decoration on Hamadian buildings – an artistic archaeological study	Historical Studies Journal, Volume 12, No. 1, pp. 17–26, 2024-12-11
Abdelkader Dahdouh	Ottoman architectural influences on mosques in Algeria during the Ottoman era	Roots of Knowledge Journal, Volume 1, No. 1, pp. 27–36, 2022-06-11
Rezki Nabila	Architectural artistic influences on monuments of Tlemcen through selected examples	Scientific Horizons Journal, Volume 16, No. 1, pp. 32–43, 2024-05-16
Ambarak Boutarn	Andalusian artistic influences on religious buildings in Tlemcen	Annals of History and Geography, Volume 3, No. 6, pp. 87–97, 2012-12-31
Ayyash Mohamed	Andalusian artistic influences on mosque architecture in the Zayyanid Maghreb	Journal of Social and Human Sciences, Volume 11, No. 1, pp. 230–263, 2021-06-28
Alwan Jamal Eddine – Ben Sheikh Hakim	Andalusian migrations and their artistic influence on Algeria (architecture and music, 15th–19th centuries)	Al-Miʿyar, Volume 27, No. 4, pp. 842–859, 2023-06-05
Bouchicha Ali	Housing in Algeria during the Ottoman era: a study of its architectural elements	Revue d'études archéologiques, Volume 19, No. 1, pp. 87–112, 2021-12-23
Samia Ben Gouidour	A glimpse of the suburban houses (Diyār Fahs) in Algiers during the Ottoman era	Al-Mufakkir, Volume 1, No. 1, pp. 41–67, 2017-05-20
Tahar Ali Wassim – Bouhassain Nouredine	Standardizing concepts of Islamic architecture (religious and civil architecture as a model)	Sawtiyyat Journal, Volume 19, No. 2, pp. 245–264, 2023-12-21
Bouziani Fatima Zahra	The impact of Islamic culture on civil architecture and urban planning in ancient cities: Tlemcen as a model	Minbar Journal of Archaeological Heritage, Volume 1, No. 1, pp. 235–247, 2012-12-01
Miftah Othman – Bouzidi Tani Soufiane	Military architecture in the Beni Hammad fortress and its influence on Almoravid military architecture	Revue d'études archéologiques, Volume 22, No. 1, pp. 70–84, 2024-12-31
Qarman Abdelkader	Supports and structural elements in Islamic architecture: a study of civil buildings in Miliana during the Ottoman era	Revue d'études archéologiques, Volume 7, No. 1, pp. 211–235, 2009-12-15
Faiza Tahraoui	Map of Islamic archaeological sites in Miliana during the Ottoman era	Minbar Journal of Archaeological Heritage, Volume 8, No. 1, pp. 205–222, 2019-04-01
Abdelkader Dahdouh	Islamic archaeological sites in Constantine during the Ottoman period	Journal of Islamic Culture, Volume 11, No. 1, pp. 69–114, 2015-01-15
Bachir Bougada	Andalusian civilizational influence on Islamic architecture in Algeria (gardens and promenades as a model)	Heritage Studies, Volume 11, No. 1, pp. 173–198, 2017-01-30
Ahmed Chakib Dali	Historical symbolism of Islamic architectural forms: the case of Tlemcen	Cartas Journal of Civilizational and Intellectual Studies, Volume 3, No. 3, pp. 22–38, 2017-01-05

Mohamed Mansouri	Almoravid religious architecture: mosques of Algiers and Nedroma	Annals of History and Geography, Volume 5, No. 9, pp. 179–198, 2015-12-31
Nefidessa Abdelkader	Religious symbolism in Islamic architecture	Algerian Journal of Research and Studies, Volume 5, No. 2, pp. 570–580, 2022-04-15
Omrani Iman	Decoration in religious architecture: descriptive study of Ketchaoua Mosque after restoration	Jamaliyyat Journal, Volume 7, No. 1, pp. 542–564, 2020-06-28
Touama Naanaa	Development of architectural decoration in Algeria during the Ottoman era: mosques of Constantine	Jamaliyyat Journal, Volume 7, No. 1, pp. 521–541, 2020-06-28
Mouchmouch Mohamed – Bouzerina Saïd	Mihrabs in religious architecture in Algeria during the Ottoman period	Qabas Journal for Humanities and Social Studies, Volume 5, No. 1, pp. 687–710, 2021-07-05
Amal Ramdalia	Religious architecture in Cherchell during the Ottoman period: the Great Mosque as a case study	Mitidja Journal of Humanities Studies, Volume 2, No. 3, pp. 68–85, 2015-04-14
Maki Hayat	Sabats in Islamic architecture	Revue d'études archéologiques, Volume 11, No. 1, pp. 257–274, 2013-10-17
Dhib Badirina	The pulpit in Islamic architecture	Afak for Sciences, Volume 1, No. 1, pp. 173–183, 2016-01-01
Sidi Mohamed El Ghouthi Bensoussi	Aesthetic appreciation in Islamic architecture: Tlemcen as a model	Heritage Studies, Volume 5, No. 1, pp. 251–268, 2011-12-31
Malas Hassiba – Menkoula Fatima	Social and religious dimensions in Arab-Islamic urban architecture – Casbah of Algiers as a model	Aleph Journal, Volume 10, No. 2, pp. 347–364, 2023-03-31
Hamdouch Zeheira	Sunshades in Algerian architecture during the Ottoman period	Al-Miʿyar, Volume 12, No. 2, pp. 1127–1139, 2022-01-11

The collected corpus of articles shows a strong scholarly interest in **Islamic architecture in Algeria**, with a clear thematic and chronological concentration.

1. Dominance of the Ottoman period

A first major observation is the **dominance of studies dealing with the Ottoman era in Algeria**, particularly in Algiers, Constantine, Tlemcen, and Miliana. Most articles focus on:

- urban architecture (houses, palaces, baths)
- religious buildings (mosques, mihrabs, pulpits)
- architectural decoration and materials (woodwork, ceramics, metalwork)

This confirms that the Ottoman period is currently the **most researched phase** in Algerian architectural studies, likely because of:

- availability of sources and monuments
- strong historical visibility in urban heritage (especially the Casbah of Algiers)

2. Thematic diversification of research

The articles are not limited to general descriptions; they show a **diversification of research themes**, including:

- legal and religious influence on architecture (jurisprudence and architecture)
- structural and functional studies (basements, supports, urban housing)
- artistic and decorative studies (ceramics, wood, metal, ornamentation)
- symbolic and cultural interpretations (religious symbolism, aesthetic perception)
- urban and spatial studies (maps of archaeological sites, urban planning)

This reflects a shift from purely descriptive studies toward **analytical and interdisciplinary approaches** combining history, archaeology, art history, and cultural studies.

3. Geographical focus

The research is geographically concentrated on:

- **Algiers (Casbah and Ottoman capital architecture)** as the primary focus
- followed by **Constantine and Tlemcen**
- and to a lesser extent Miliana and Cherchell

This indicates a research imbalance where major historical cities dominate scholarly production, while other regions remain less studied.

4. Recurring authors and scholarly production

Some researchers appear repeatedly (e.g., Ben Gouidour Samia), which shows:

- existence of specialized scholars in Ottoman architectural studies
- concentration of expertise in specific academic networks

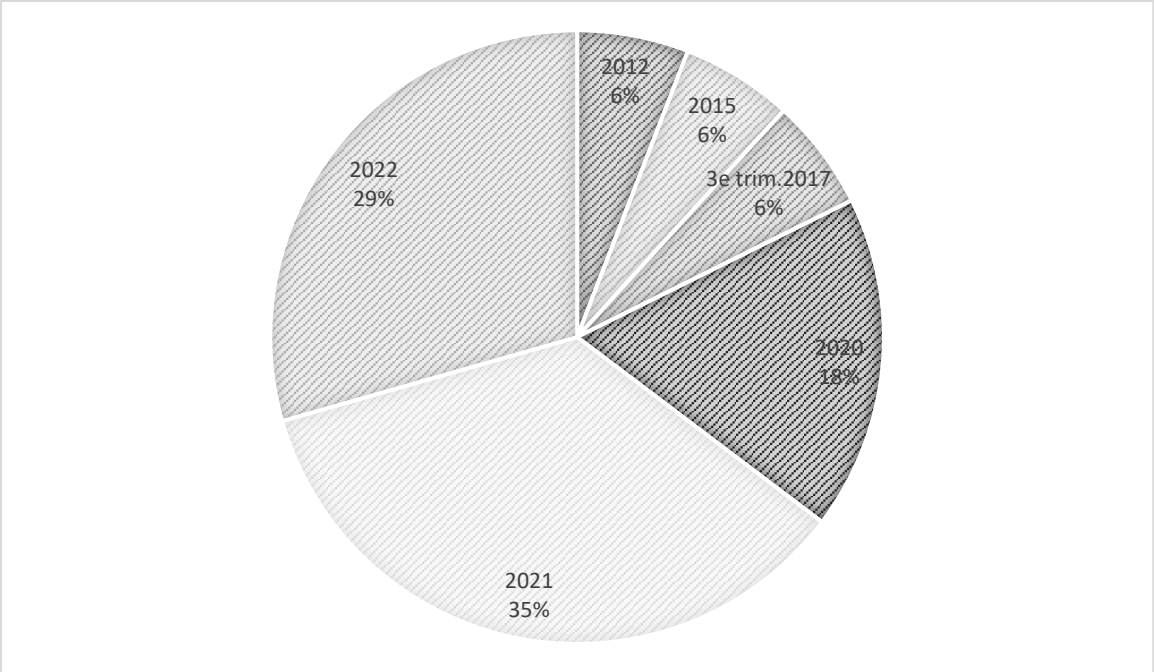
This also suggests that the field is still **relatively limited in number of active researchers**, rather than widely distributed.

5. Chronological development of publications

The bibliography spans from **2009 to 2024**, showing:

- a gradual but steady growth in publications
- an acceleration of research output in recent years (especially after 2020)

This indicates increasing academic interest in heritage and Islamic architecture in Algeria in contemporary scholarship.



The corpus comprises 36 diverse scholarly articles addressing different aspects of architectural heritage, with particular emphasis on architecture during the Almoravid, Hammadid, and Ottoman Islamic periods. These publications reflect a broad academic interest in the historical development, artistic characteristics, and architectural contributions of these successive periods. However, the distribution of the articles reveals a clear predominance of research devoted to Ottoman-era architecture, which accounts for 21 of the 36 publications. This concentration suggests that the Ottoman period has attracted considerably greater scholarly attention compared with the Almoravid and Hammadid periods, highlighting its significance as a major field of investigation in architectural studies.

An examination of authorship patterns also reveals the recurring presence of certain researchers, indicating their sustained contributions to the study of architectural heritage. Among them, Ben Gouidour Samia stands out, having authored four articles within the corpus. Such recurrence points to the involvement of established researchers in developing and enriching this field of scholarship, while also suggesting the existence of a relatively active group of contributors whose work has helped shape academic discussions surrounding historical architecture.

From a chronological perspective, the publication output demonstrates a notable concentration in recent years. The year 2022 recorded the highest number of publications, with six articles, followed by 2021 and 2020, each accounting for five articles. This pattern indicates a growing or sustained academic interest in architectural research during this period. Nevertheless, the publication record extends further back, with the earliest article dating to 2012, demonstrating that scholarly engagement with the subject has developed over more than a decade.

Overall, the distribution of publications according to historical period, authorship, and year of publication provides valuable insight into the research landscape of architectural studies. It reveals the predominance of Ottoman architectural heritage, the recurring contributions of particular researchers, and the increased visibility of publications in the period between 2020 and 2022. These observations offer an initial understanding of the evolution and thematic orientation of research on historical architecture, while also pointing to potential areas requiring further investigation, particularly the comparatively limited scholarly attention devoted to Almoravid and Hammadid architecture.

Conclusion:

Through the inventory and statistical analysis of the selected publications, this study highlights the scope and general orientation of academic research on Islamic architecture in Algeria. The findings reveal an uneven distribution of scholarly attention across the different historical periods, with a clear predominance of studies focusing on the Ottoman era. In comparison, the Almoravid, Hammadid, and Zayyanid periods receive relatively less attention, despite their significant contributions to the development of Islamic architecture in the region.

The analysis also reveals a diversity of research themes, encompassing religious and civil architecture, urban planning, construction techniques, decorative elements, materials, and the cultural and symbolic dimensions of architectural heritage. Geographically, research is concentrated mainly on major historical cities, particularly Algiers, Constantine, and Tlemcen, while other regions remain comparatively underrepresented. The recurring contributions of certain researchers further illustrate the presence of a relatively specialised academic community working in this field.

From a chronological perspective, the publications span the period from 2009 to 2024, reflecting a sustained academic interest in Islamic architectural heritage, with a noticeable concentration of publications in recent years. Nevertheless, the findings point to the need for broader research coverage, both chronologically and geographically, in order to develop a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of Algeria's Islamic architectural heritage.

Finally, this academic forum represents a valuable scientific contribution to the study of Islamic architecture. By bringing together relevant publications and research findings, it provides an organised digital reference for researchers and students, facilitates access to scholarly resources, and encourages further investigation into the historical, artistic, and cultural dimensions of Islamic architecture in Algeria.

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