



Territorial Identity and Sustainable Tourism; Resurrection of a Ghost Town: The Vernacular Town of Zriba Oliya as a Case Study

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Abstract

Once retreated to the mountain, the indigenous inhabitants of Zriba Oliya were organized in one ethnic and anthropological group closed upon itself. This old village was deeply marked by the total abandonment of its old establishments in favor of some more comfortable and practical industrialized constructions. Consequently, the village was left in ruins; a phantom village despite the feeble restoration attempts made by interveners. It is a cultural patrimony marking such a specific territorial identity being lost and disappearing. The association responsible for the safeguard of the medina of Zriba Oliya in collaboration with the local community has launched a recovery program in order to integrate it into the dynamics of sustainable tourism. With the development of mass leisure activities, how would this preserving orientation advocate “softer” tourism, more respectful of nature, endogenous heritage, and the cultural traits of the populations?

Keywords

Territorial identity • Vernacular architecture • Sustainable tourism • Préservation • Revitalisation

Introduction

The vernacular habitat is the expression of the popular culture values that each country has invested in housing and its extensions. It has gradually developed over the centuries and it has been executed with local techniques and means, which not only express specific functions but also satisfy social, cultural as well as economic needs. Through character,

originality, and invention, it shapes the environment and integrates naturally into it (Guindani & Doepper, 1990). Note that the term vernacular is consecrated by its use in the sense of “proper to the place,” a synonym of the so-known as architecture without architects, spontaneous, indigenous, rural, primitive, anonymous. This type of architecture synthesizes most of the specific elements that characterize the territory; its shape or rather its responses to climatic, topographical, socioeconomic, cultural, and technical factors on the one hand and its materialization linked to the endogenous resources which give it a considerable symbolic importance on the other. This type of architecture allows a community to define itself in relation to its space, traditions, and past.

Vernacular architecture makes therefore an important element of the territory’s identity. It is a heritage. In order to relate the heritage represented by the vernacular habitat to culture and identity, it is necessary to adopt a broad definition of culture, an anthropological definition that refers to the lifestyles, systems of values, and the worldviews of a given society. This type of culture brings together all the signs, symbols, representations, patterns, attitudes, and values inherent in social life (Guindani & Bassand, 1982). Territorial identity, on the other hand, results from the cultural profile of the community. Yet, it also reflects a number of other parameters that are constantly interacting and reciprocally conditioning each other. Examples include nature, landscape as and built patrimony, which significantly contribute to defining a sense of belonging to a population. The same applies to the economic activities and “know-how” of a given community, such as farming, pastoral activities, fishing, crafting, hunting, and harvesting. All these activities are in fact intimately “linked to the soil,” “specific to the place,” and completely inseparable from the natural, environmental, and human potential of the territory. They therefore constitute strong elements of the identity of the community in question. We find these elements and many others in the context of the vernacular building. This type of architecture reflects several dimensions of local and regional

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territorial identity; it is in fact a mirror of the territory, i.e., of the space inhabited and shaped by man. Any analysis of the vernacular architecture can therefore be based on a conceptual approach characterized by three reference poles from which each object can be methodically located:

- The human dimension: the man inscribed in the environment builds its socioeconomic, cultural, and historical features.
- The natural environment and landscape determine the architectural form through environmental data such as climate, topography, morphology, etc.
- Local endogenous materials (stone, wood, earth) shape the vernacular construction and determine the specific techniques for implementing the built form.

Today, vernacular architecture is at the heart of various projects related to the conservation and enhancement of the local, regional, cultural, and historical heritage. These projects go hand in hand with the development of an alternative tourism referred to as agritourism, ecotourism, or even farm tourism. Faced with the development of mass leisure activities, these offers advocate “softer” tourism, which is more respectful of the nature, the endogenous heritage, and the cultural characteristics of populations. Indeed, Zriba Oliya, a former vernacular town located in the governorate of Zaghoun in Tunisia, was marked by a total abandonment of its ancient settlements in favor of new industrialized constructions, which are more comfortable and functional meeting the current needs of man, which are constantly evolving and changing. As a result, the place has found itself in a state of ruin, a ghost town, despite the few attempts of restoration it had undergone on several occasions by some stakeholders. It is a cultural heritage marker of a specific territorial identity that was being lost and disappearing.

It was necessary to combine efforts in order to preserve, conserve, enhance, and revitalize this cultural and historical heritage being lost despite its great contribution to local development. Consequently, it was included in the alternative tourism circuit. Within this framework, the Association for the Safeguarding of the Medina of Zriba Oliya, in collaboration with the local community, has launched a recovery program to integrate it in the dynamics of sustainable tourism.

In this article, we suggest identifying how this preserving orientation advocates a “softer” tourism that is more respectful of the nature, endogenous heritage, and cultural traits of this population.

1 The Vernacular Village of Zriba Oliya

1.1 Itinerary

Zriba Oliya is the first nucleus of Zriba.¹ It dates back to the fifteenth century and it is located about 3 km from Hammam Zriba in the governorate of Zaghoun, 72 km from the capital Tunis. This old abandoned village stands on a rocky massif of Djebel Zriba at an altitude of 312 m and it extends over an area of 2 ha. One can reach the village of Zriba Oliya via Hammam Zriba by crossing the metal bridge of Oued El Hammam built in front of the mounds of the old fluorite mine, which was exploited during the period between 1970 and 1992. A 3.9 km path crosses the mine or rather the remains of an industrial exploitation with its whitish soil and corroded metal installations. When climbing the relief, one would enjoy the magnificent view of the natural landscape. Stone constructions with a ruin aspect would mark one’s arrival to the old village (Fig. 1).

1.2 The Prosperous Zriba

The village of Zriba expressed a constantly evolving social and spatial dynamic where the relationships between the population and its environment are structured according to the constraints of nature. As for community life, the Zribians act in solidarity as one big, united family. They share the same lifestyle, interests, culture, characteristics, and sense of belonging. Major works such as building a new house or harvesting wheat are accomplished by a collective effort.

The Zribian way of life has in turn led to a very rich traditional production drawing on the raw materials and natural components found on the site and its surroundings. The abandonment of Zriba Oliya and the choice of other

¹ Zriba or Hammam Zriba is a city located about 60 km south of Tunis at the foot of Jebel Zaghoun. Administratively attached to the governorate of Zaghoun.

Fig. 1 The vernacular town
Zriba Oliya



lifestyles led to the disappearance of the Zribian practices. Crafts,² livestock,³ and agriculture,⁴ which used to be their main economic activities, have disappeared along with a skill passed down from fathers to sons for centuries.

Zriba Oliya has remained the only settlement in the region for a long time. The inhabitants have exploited the plains for agriculture and the surrounding water sources to support themselves. The Zribians form a single ethnic and anthropological entity that has founded a closed economic system (Fig. 2).

1.3 Morpho-Degenartion in Zriba Oliya

“Everything that exists is in time and transforms into it. This transformation is part of a process that is, sooner or later, moving towards a certain degeneration and a sort of end”

² All members of a Zribian family participated in craft activities. Zribian women played an important role in craft work by transforming raw materials into consumer products. In her space within her bedroom and behind her loom, she transforms wool into carpets and clothing (kachbiya, kadroun, hram, etc.) and cereals into the many products that made up their daily diet. However, the Zribian man transforms raw materials into productive goods. From Alfa, stone, wood, reed, smar and straw, he manufactures the equipment necessary for his agricultural activity such as: hinge, ladder, seals, baskets, beehives.

³ This activity is considered as an important practice due to its considerable contribution in food production (meat and milk) and wool for weaving. The oxen are used to produce manure for agriculture. Also, the profusion of aromatic plants in the site encourages beekeeping activity.

⁴ The plain around the village of Zriba Oliya was used as a farming land. Olive growing and cereal harvesting occupied an important place in the life of the villagers. Socially, the harvest period was a time of celebration and gathering where Villagers shared the harvest and kept it in granaries dug into their houses.

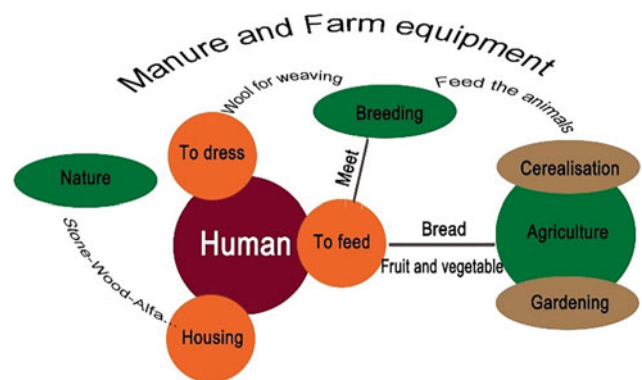


Fig. 2 The self-sufficient economic sectors of Zriba⁵

(Bertrand, 2000). The abandoned estate of Zriba Oliya, a village that was once coveted and autonomous, made it a marginalized space. Indeed, this village underwent irreversible changes with the emergence of colonial capitalism, which increased even after independence. The Zribians were forced to leave Zriba Oliya, a village which they have taken care to shape and sculpt for centuries, and which series of painful events have led to decay. One would note:

- The cohabitation of the villagers with the foreigners who have gradually infiltrated by affecting internal changes in the Zribian lifestyle.
- Land dispossession by settlers claiming the absence of land registration, a notion the village was not familiar with. Zribians were then forced to work on colonial farms in order to live. This was particularly the case in other villages such as Takrouna.

⁵ Diagram showing the closed circuit economy of Zriba.

- The construction of the school, serving both to integrate children into contemporary life and to prepare them for the tertiary sector, has accelerated the disequilibrium of the sociocultural balance: In fact, the main focus of acculturation, information, and dissemination was previously the family and children followed in the footsteps of their parents.
- With the discovery of the fluorine mine whose exploitation required manpower to, and the construction of the fluorite processing plant, “the number of workers increased from 21 in January 1952 to 82 in January 1953 including 63 inhabitants of the Zriba village.”⁶
- The destruction of the environment. This is mainly due to the low income of the Zribians who had started deforestation for the manufacture of charcoal for sale.
- The movement of the inhabitants of Zriba Oliya between 1964 and 1975 led to the creation of a new city, Zriba Hammam. At independence, a political decision that aimed to upgrade the mining sector was taken. The school was also moved to this new nucleus near the mine, “with the independence of the country in 1956, the mining sector was an important element in the Tunisian economy.”⁷
- The doubt and illusion of having the choice between staying and leaving for the new city was a guided decision by the displacement of the school and the encouragement of the first families who gave in.
- The acceptance of fate and the departure toward a new life.

This abandoned and deserted town, where the spirit of the place remains present but silent and mute has gone through a drastic break. In the quest for the moving history of Zriba and from meetings with villagers, we discovered a not only hidden, but also poorly told story; a story of painful separation and forced uprooting; a story of the progressive desertion of Zriba by its inhabitants. They were pressured by settlers to leave their homes. Besides, Zriba Oliya’s architecture is an on-site architecture, which is shaped by the morphological and climatic constraints of its environment. The vernacular of Zriba Oliya responds to the demands of its inhabitants with respect for nature, people’s lifestyle and social, cultural as well as economic character. Its alleys hierarchically serve public facilities and houses represented by squares were places for villagers’gatherings (Fig. 3). Its houses change and evolve in time and space to meet the needs of its users. Its devices preserve privacy and keeps away the eyes of strangers.

⁶Economic and social bulletin of Tunisia, no. 74, Study of village economy, the village of Zriba-Tunisien, Grossin J. Civil controller of Zaghouan, March, 1953.

⁷Extract from the article, National Office of Mines: Extractive mineral industry in Tunisia.



Fig. 3 Zriba Oliya in 1975 taken by Gabriel Camps⁸

Its architectural forms and local materials ensure a pleasant microclimate. To achieve an aesthetic that conveys a cultural identity. This architecture allowed this community to define itself in relation to its space, its traditions, and its past. For a long time after its abandonment, the Berber town of Zriba Oliya has represented a remnant of a formerly complete state. The phenomenon of degradation has invaded the place. It is generated from a complete presence of the village; a new form of presence is being marked by its missing parts: If it continues, it will lead to an irreversible loss and the village will certainly become nothing.

The survey of the built patrimony state allows classifying the constructions according to their degree of deterioration. As for constructions, which have undergone a severe deterioration, the whole is buried under stones and vegetation. Few walls resist and remain standing. Other constructions are moderately degraded. Yet, they have a clear template with the distinction between the rooms and the patio is still possible (Fig. 4).

2 Tourism and Sustainable Development; New Alternative to Zriba Oliya

“The vernacular built heritage is important because it is the fundamental expression of a community’s culture, its relationship with its territory is, at the same time, the expression of the world’s cultural diversity.”⁹ A mystical world with varied landscapes, where suddenly time stopped life, has left Zriba Oliya. It nevertheless kept all its purity. Wandering

⁸Gabriel Camps is a French prehistorian, specialist in the Berbers’history.

⁹Vernacular Built Heritage Charter. Ratified by the 12th General Assembly of ICOMOS, Mexico, October 1999.



Fig. 4 Current photo showing the degradation

through its deserted alleys, contemplating its splendid ruins, and being fascinated by its walls, which embrace the silhouette of the mountain, one would wonder why this village has lost its value. Reviving this village, which is a place where the genius of the place still resides, would enliven the debris. Watching over pieces of fallen stones reveals the urgent need to opt for a new alternative.

2.1 Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism development means any form of development of this activity that respects, preserves, and enhances, in the long term, the natural, cultural, and social resources of a territory. Among other things, the emergence of the concept of “sustainable tourism” comes from the perspective of applying the precepts of sustainable development stated since 1987 with reference to the Brundtland Report that gave birth, in 1995, to the concept of sustainable touristic development. Indeed, if we refer to the Brundtland Commission’s definition, sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

It was then defined as “a tourism activity that respects and preserves natural, cultural and social resources in the long term and contributes positively and equitably to economic development and to the fulfilment of the people who live, work or stay in these areas.”¹⁰ The adoption of the “Charter for Sustainable Tourism” by the participants of the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism, held in Lanzarote (Canary Islands, Spain) in April 1995, was an important milestone. Sustainable tourism was defined by 18 principles that take on board the objectives of sustainable development.

It therefore aspires to a reasoned development, associating the actors of tourism, public and private, NGOs and local populations, in a system of greater solidarity, allowing real local development through a more equitable sharing of the benefits, and burdens generated by tourism. Furthermore, this tourism must also be environmentally friendly.

The application of the precepts of sustainable development to tourism is therefore characterized by international cooperation and by the involvement of local actors for a more egalitarian model of tourism development, favoring a better distribution of wealth thanks to significant economic spin-offs. A model that also fully integrates environmental and cultural issues, managing resources, striving to limit the impacts of tourist activity, and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage. This charter was followed, at the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) in 1999 in Santiago (Chile), by the adoption of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. In order to be a frame of reference for the rational and sustainable development of world tourism, this code contains nine articles defining general rules and the aspirations of the charter and is addressed to the governments of the emitting and receiving households of the tourist activity, to the public and private tourism actors and to the tourists themselves (Knafou & Pickel, 2011).

Consequently, this type of tourism must be considered “as one of the major stakes of tourism planning. The notion of sustainable tourism is linked to that of sustainable development, which expresses the ‘sustainable’ character of development, i.e., development that does not call into question the natural and social environment” (Kinvi, 2005). This way of considering and practicing tourism “associates with faith the notion of duration and the sustainability of natural resources (water, air, biological diversity...) and social and human structures. The objective of sustainable development is, thus, to make compatible the improvement of conditions and standards of living that result from development and the maintenance of the development capacities of future generations. The concept of sustainable tourism is today a major challenge within the framework of the major orientations of economic development, especially from a regional point of view” (Kinvi, 2005). It is also interesting to note that sustainable tourism is one of the essential foundations for the successful integration of the tourism sector into the objectives of economic development. This orientation requires the implementation of a structured and thoughtful tourism approach, because inadequate and inappropriate planning can cause very serious harm and damage to the environment and the balance of the social environment. “Unplanned or poorly planned tourism results in the degradation of natural and cultural heritage and can be especially disruptive to the traditions and lifestyles of local populations, which can even make tourism unacceptable...” (Kinvi, 2005). Therefore, sustainable tourism must make

¹⁰ Council of Europe, Naturopa, no. 84, p. 7, 1997.

optimal use of environmental resources, respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, and ensure long-term sustainable economic activity.

2.2 Sustainable Tourism for Sustainable Territorial Development

The World Tourism Organization definition contains both perspectives, namely, respect and preservation of heritage and the capacity of tourism to produce resources to foster development in destination territories.

The question is how to apply the guiding principles of sustainable development to tourism, including tourism practice, destination governance, and the various components that make up this activity. These issues bring us back to the question of the governance system needed to transform tourism into a source of territorial sustainability.

Territory and tourism are linked. They represent an “essential duo” since the attractions of the territory constitute a motive behind the tourist’s chosen destination. The tourist offer, made up of these numerous resources, is then intrinsically part of the territory. Moreover, the attachment to the place is essential since the tourist activity cannot be located as the tourist keeps moving on the territory. These multiple resources then constitute the attractiveness of a territory and make it a popular tourist destination. Indeed, both nature and landscape, as well as built heritage, strongly contribute to defining the sense of belonging of a population. The same applies to the economic activities and the “know-how” of a given community such as agricultural and pastoral activity, handicrafts, hunting, and harvesting. All these activities are in fact intimately “linked to the soil,” “specific to the place,” that is to say completely inseparable from the natural, environmental, and human potential of the territory. They therefore constitute strong elements of the identity of the community in question. Territorial development refers to “any process of actors’ mobilization that leads to the elaboration of a strategy of adaptation to external constraints based on a collective identification with a culture and a territory.”¹¹ Thus, territorial development will depend on the willingness of the actors to mobilize in favor of a territorial organization. This mobilization is a long-run process and this dynamic of actors aims to reorganize the local economy facing the challenges and problems of the territory. It is an adaptation strategy. This territorialization mechanism in Zriba Oliya was based on the search for specific resources to this territory that allow it to differentiate itself from its neighboring vernacular villages, relying on the significant

social construction of the territory. Moreover, territorial development in this area aims to make it more attractive and competitive, bringing it to life again. A proactive process seeks to increase the competitiveness of this territory around a strong mobilization of actors. This new approach seeks to refocus the territory on itself, by enhancing its resources and highlighting its actors.¹² Indeed, territorial development follows several stages based on the construction of a project by actors, the elaboration of an adaptation strategy to the different constraints of the territory, the mobilization, and the revelation of the territory’s resources. These steps highlight the agreement of actors on a project with common aims, the consideration of the territory’s constraints, the expectations, and needs of the local populations.

3 Zriba Oliya Ghost Town Recovery Plan

A local, regional, and national symbol, the vernacular habitat is closely associated with the history of rural civilization, its traditions, lifestyles, and value systems. A history, which is eminently local and regional, yet omitted. The definition of a recovery plan aims mainly at the safeguarding of this territory, its protection and its enhancement through its revitalization with the objective of reviving the artisanal, cultural, and commercial activities within this former perimeter, which requires access facilitation, creation of a reception unit and establishment of a tourist circuit. This program has taken into account certain measures that influence the quality of the services on the visited places such as the provision of a car park offering parking possibilities and a pleasant immediate environment is also necessary. Museum techniques and animations are also a quality criterion. Finally, refreshment and recreational opportunities are necessary during the visit. Developing cultural and tourist activities in the heritage is based on the development of guesthouses, cultural and leisure spaces, crafts, workshops, etc. The suggestions of different tourist circuits that differ in the stages of the visit are based on the same places. The idea is to “recycle” the village to meet the needs of tourism: a field that is more oriented toward culture, ecology, and human beings subsequently ensures the sustainability and transmission of this legacy carrying a historical burden and reflecting on the collective identity of future generations. The recovery project brings together on the same site a complete change of scenery in a preserved and rich nature. Based on an original concept strongly linked to development tourism, the visitor will be able to discover the region through a

¹¹ Bernard Pecqueur, Rayssac S. course, Development and Sustainable Tourism, Tourism and Development.

¹² Marc Galochet, Guy Baudelle, Catherine Guy, Bernadette Mérenne-Schoumaker: Territorial development in Europe. Concepts, issues and debates. *Territoire en mouvement Geography and planning review* [Online].

project of grouping together hosting infrastructures such as accommodation, catering, a craft center, etc.

3.1 Restoration of the Mosque

The National Heritage Institute with the help of the Medina Safeguarding Association of Zriba Oliya restored the mosque in 2014. This mosque, marked by its cubic minaret, is the only place of worship in the village. This building has undergone restoration work (Figs. 5 and 6). Apart from its daily prayer activity, this building was a gathering place for villagers during religious holidays, weddings, funerals...



Fig. 5 The mosque before restoration

3.2 Restoration of the Mausoleum

The Sidi Abdelkader Mausoleum is in reference to Sidi Abdelkader who is the founder of the Qadiriyya¹³ in Baghdad. This building has been restored by the Association for the Safeguarding of the Medina of Zriba Oliya and the National Heritage Institute (Figs. 7 and 8). This mausoleum was built in the seventeenth century. It played the role of a Koranic school (Kouttab) dedicated to the children of the village. It was a place of celebration of festivals related to the cults dedicated to the marabout. These festivals were marked by the act of bathing in Zriba Hammam. It symbolized a gathering place for the Zribians.



Fig. 6 The mosque after restoration

3.3 Clearance of Roads and Plots

It was necessary to carry out work on roads (Figs. 9 and 10) and plots (Fig. 11) of the village, which are the destination of tours and the places intended for cultural activities and events.

The provision of a car park (Fig. 12), which offers parking possibilities and a pleasant immediate environment (Fig. 13).

3.4 The Signage

Just after the bridge spanning the Oued El Hammam,¹⁴ you have to take the path between the debris left by the old fluorine mine. Along the way, there are directional signs that facilitate the access to the site (Fig. 14). This is a very



Fig. 7 Before restoration

¹³ The Qadiriyya (in Arabic: القادريه) or Qadir brotherhood is a Sufi brotherhood founded in the eleventh century by Sheikh Moulay Abd al Qadir al-Jilani (we also pronounce Al-Jilali), whose sanctuary and mausoleum is located in Baghdad, city where he taught for many years.

¹⁴ A 45° sulfur hot spring, known for its benefits.



Fig. 8 After restoration



Fig. 10 An other principal road



Fig. 9 An other principal road



Fig. 11 Plot

important element. It is clear and continuous. At the village level, signs have been installed to provide visitors with information about the town and its history.

3.5 Creation of a Reception Structure

The project of redeploying “Dar Bel Hadj” into a tourist reception and animation center is a personal project, a visionary initiative of the owner of this house (Figs. 15 and 16). The accommodation is located at the entrance to the village in the upper part, which used to be the old nucleus of this building. It is located on the way that used to be the main road with its commercial vocation, not far from the mosque and the “Sidi Abdelkader” mausoleum.



Fig. 12 Provision of a car park



Fig. 13 The village today

It is a construction composed of rooms along the lane that opens onto the patio. The rooms which open onto the lane are small rooms were for commercial use. The other rooms overlooking the courtyard are for residential use. At the level of the courtyard, there is a sort of an attic buried in the form of a well “Matmoura” with a depth of 3 m.

As the development program aimed to create a tourist entertainment center meeting the standards (Fig. 17), it was necessary to meticulously transform the construction (Figs. 18 and 19) in order to have the necessary facilities of: a depot, a preparation area, a cooking area, a swimming pool, a restaurant, an exhibition room, a multipurpose room, an office and a sanitary block (man and woman) (Figs. 20 and 21).



Fig. 14 Directional signs



Fig. 15 The house before rehabilitation



Fig. 18 The house after rehabilitation



Fig. 16 Abandoned construction that requires general maintenance to preserve the original architectural aspect

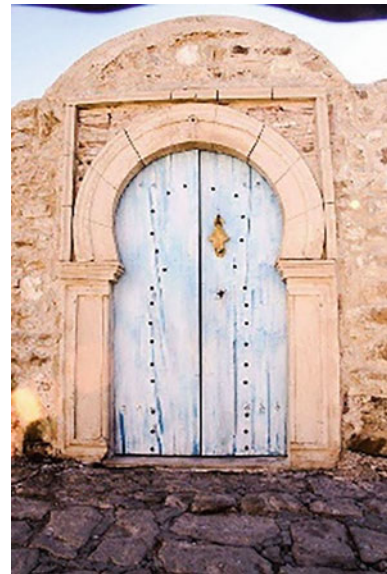


Fig. 19 Main entrance



Fig. 17 Advertising poster for the guest house



Fig. 20 The courtyard



Fig. 21 Outdoor space planning

3.6 The Organization of Cultural Events

Cultural events that are very common profoundly modify the cultural landscape within this area. Festivals and other cultural events are considered as important events, a unique and exceptional moment that brings together an audience around an unusual universe. The organization of cultural events is rarely the responsibility of a single actor. It rather relies on the collaboration of a group of people; local actors, regional partners, and government community. Events include street entertainment, parades, exhibitions, artistic evenings, etc. The deserted locality had aimed to sensitize people to the value of Zriba Oliya, its role in history, the originality and richness of its skills, its traditional way of life and the beauty of its traditional architectural character.

3.6.1 Cultural Activities

Furthermore, as a means of sustainable development, tourism must make sure to take into account local populations. Indeed, they do not only make an integral part of sustainable

development through the social pillar, but they also make the most important part of their environment since Man and nature cannot be dissociated. Local populations are important for tourism in a territory and they play several roles. The program for the revitalization of the old vernacular nucleus of Zriba Oliya called on these former residents to participate in various events (Fig. 22). These populations can be both parts of the governance process or they may constitute a local clientele very useful for the site (Figs. 23, 24, 25, and 26). In any case, integrating them in the tourist activity must be necessary for tourism that is a factor of sustainable development.

3.6.2 Sports

Today, natural resources constitute many tourist destinations and products. Indeed, since the end of the twentieth century, outdoor sports have been developed to become a real tourist offer and improve the attractiveness of the territories. The mountains appear as a real playground for these practices, which by being structured, contribute to the development of mountain areas. Thus, territorial resources, tourist products, and the structuring of the offer must be closely combined to make tourism an attractive and economically important activity.

Indeed, the site offers sports activities related to nature such as: zip lining, mountain biking, horse riding, walks with bivouac, fitness, and discovery trail (Fig. 27). By promoting self-awareness and contact with nature, the participants are necessarily respectful of the environment (Fig. 28).

3.6.3 Creativity Fostering Framework

Access to the vernacular heritage of Zriba Oliya encourages the discovery of the emblematic places of our territory, which are essential to forge cultural landmarks and stimulate creativity as well as imagination. Attracted to the landscape and the magnificent not only natural but also architectural

Fig. 22 Participation of former residents



Fig. 23 Exhibition of old utensils



Fig. 24 Parade



Fig. 26 Traditional marriage ceremony



Fig. 25 Open workshop

panoramas, the vernacular inspiration is qualitative. The village is seeking to consolidate a cultural practice and a new space for activities. The charm of the village has won the

hearts of artists, designers, and filmmakers whether Tunisian or foreign for ages (Figs. 29, 30, and 31). The discovery of this magical place has made the village of Zriba Oliya a land of unique inspiration.

Conclusion

We approached this study with the intention of determining the ways of upgrading obsolete architecture that is not taken into account by the actors working in the field of traditional heritage. Moreover, vernacular and modernity could be contradictory concepts. The vernacular building represents a catalyst for sustainable urban development between tradition and continuous innovation. Indeed, everywhere in the world, economic, cultural, and architectural standardization and the phenomena of socioeconomic globalization threaten the survival of the vernacular structures. They are extremely vulnerable when facing the serious problems of obsolescence, internal balance, and integration. Therefore, the fundamental matter is how to resist these forces not only by people, but also by governments, urban planners, architects,



Fig. 27 Sports practiced in the town



Fig. 28 Zriba Night Trail sport event

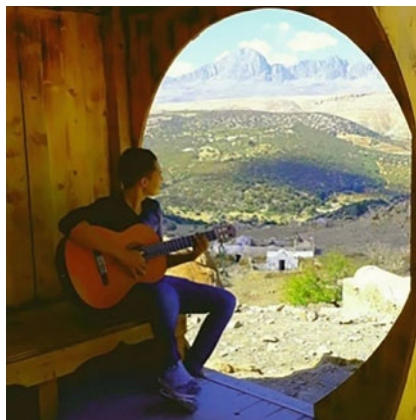


Fig. 29 Artist inspiration



Fig. 30 Shoot for a clothing brand

curators, and multidisciplinary groups of experts. Much of this cultural heritage, though priceless, is exposed to various threats due to man and the evolution of his environment. Fast and improvised modernization has resulted in a housing evolution that breaks with building traditions, building

materials, implementation, size, and shape. Vernacular architecture has therefore lost its role and function because of socioeconomic and cultural changes. Indeed, today, it



Fig. 31 Series filmed in 2020

becomes more and more neglected and abandoned in favor of industrialized constructions, which are more comfortable and functional. The latter better meet the current needs of man, which are constantly evolving and changing. The vernacular architecture of Zriba Oliya, like any architecture of this typology, is an integral part of the heritage of humankind and we are only its custodians who must pass it on to future generations. Therefore, the village revitalization and safeguarding project is not an end in itself. It is a catalyst, an incubator for small village projects. It has therefore been thought out in such a way that it would be a trigger which enables the villages concerned to manage their own development by carrying out direct or indirect activity or work linked to the site. The project is being carried out in several phases of construction and development allowing a

partial activity from the outset. From the beginning of the realization to its final design, the project is fundamentally evolutionary. The recovery program is therefore a long-run project. During the realization of this project, it was necessary to analyze and implement an approach in a deep reflection that takes into account the many socioeconomic parameters, which must be respected for rural development to be fully sustainable.

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