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**ABSTRACT**

**The Jurisprudence of Islamic Urbanism Through the Algerian Ottoman Archives 1549–1830: Imperial Decrees and Islamic Court Documents**

*فقه العمران الإسلامي من خلال الأرشيف العثماني الجزائري ۹٥٦ﻫ/۱٥٤۹م– ۱۲٤٦ﻫ/ ۱۸٣٠م: من واقع الأوامر السلطانية و عقود المحاكم الشرعية*

This book is based upon the doctoral thesis of the Algerian author Mustafa Ahmad bin Hammush. In a preamble, the publisher asserts that the book “fills an important gap within Islamic libraries by contributing a new and original dimension to contemporary schools of thought interested in ancient cities”. This is followed by a preface by the author Mustafa Ahmad Ibn Hammush, who discusses his concern in producing a seminal work on jurisprudence, the history of Islamic civilisation, and architectural culture, in addition to providing a sample of recommended works for scholars within the area of architecture and urbanism.

This book has three main parts. The first part discusses the Algerian Ottoman archives, which include Ottoman records of sales, the exchequer, and political, administrative and judicial bodies in central North Africa. The archives also pertain to higher political bodies and social and professional organisations. This part of the book concludes with an explanation of the importance of the Ottoman archives in providing information about architectural planning and design, ruins, buildings and urban management. The author elaborates on his analysis of legal documents, providing detailed information about the locations of buildings and roads and place names. He explains that such documents are tools for those studying old towns, as well as for those studying the complex layouts that have resulted from specific factors relating to particular towns and jurisprudence rulings. Such research can deepen understanding of administration and law amongst specialists in this field through knowledge of censorship mechanisms and the judgements that helped to enforce jurisprudence rulings in daily life.

The second part provides an alphabetical record of jurisprudential words and terms relating to architecture. These were extracted from documents on legal rulings in central North Africa in a bid to enrich architectural vocabulary and enable specialists to understand the cultural, material and social demands of Islamic society.

The final part of the book comprises imperial decrees relating to architecture (13 documents) and Islamic court documents concerning architecture (42 documents). The book also includes copies of many documents, accompanied by transcriptions where the originals prove difficult to read. According to its title, this part is an analysis of the documents. However, it includes only the original documents preceded by basic information such as their number in the National Centre for Algerian Documents, their date and contents, a survey of the text, the type of script, and a few words for clarification.

Arab and non-Arab references are provided at the back of the book in addition to five indexes on definition of terms found in the documents; places, towns and countries; authorities; architectural and urban terms; and professions and works.

Given that this book was originally a doctoral thesis, its organisation and lack of analysis are unusual. Nevertheless, in view of the author’s examination of 20,000 documents, this work is a comprehensive source of material for scholars. Significantly, the book highlights the spiritual dimensions that distinguish Islamic architecture.

Dahlia Sabry

Translated by Hugh Lovatt