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Fiction Movies as a Means of Culinary Heritage's Safeguarding and Research Referencing: Cases of Couscous Illustration in Tunisian Cinema

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Abstract

Couscous is a staple dish that became recognized and registered as an immaterial cultural heritage by UNESCO, simultaneously for Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania (UNESCO, Knowledge, know-how and practices pertaining to the production and consumption of couscous, 2020). It represents a mixture of love, heritage, and innovation, which links identity, originality, and modernization. The dish is eligible for two of the five broad domains in which intangible cultural heritage is manifested: social practices, rituals, and festive events. Once a fiction film represents this gastronomic heritage, it reflects the filmmaker's culture and identity during its international distribution. This study aims to compare the couscous dish's illustrations in Tunisian fiction films such as Halfaouine, Under the Rain of Autumn, and The Secret of the Grain; to prove how fiction movies be considered as an identity card for any filmmaker's homeland by reflecting the culinary cultural heritage of their homeland, or even a tourism promotion for his nation; and most of all to evince that a fiction movie could become a reference for researchers, in tandem with scientific articles and books.

Keywords: Tunisia; Fiction Movies; Ethnic Representation; Referencing; Couscous; Immaterial Cultural Heritage; Culinary Heritage Safeguarding



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INTRODUCTION

Faten Ridene

Throughout history, people and products have travelled between continents, which made cuisines of all over the world reflect the blend of cultures. It is a criterion that distinguishes the couscous dish, which represents a staple food in North Africa, and which traditions and customs deserve to be safeguarded from the erosion of globalization. It is the main reason for the eligibility of the couscous' practice and consumption, to be recognized by UNESCO as a common immaterial cultural heritage between Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauretania (UNESCO). Such an identitarian dish allows researchers and tourists to explore its origins and importance. Besides, its registration in the international immaterial cultural heritage list of UNESCO, proves nothing but being a significant achievement for the countries of North Africa, to acknowledge the importance of Couscous, and its need to be preserved for future generations. Our study aims to prove the important role played by Tunisian filmmakers who, unconsciously or by choice, made their motion pictures as an identitarian mirror, and a means of such an important immaterial cultural heritage's safeguarding, until transforming their movies into what we would like to baptize- "a scientific reference" along with essays, conferences proceedings books or journal articles. And more than that, being illustrated in fiction movies, makes this later an audiovisual reference which refers to the senses of hearing and sight at the same time, and then which ensures a rate of 30% of information's memorization, compared to the percentage of memorizing information from reading a text (scientific journal/book) which does not exceed 10% (Lalley & Miller, 2007). It is such a distinction that would make either

the researcher (in cinema, history, ethnic food, cultural heritage, gastronomy, and so on) or the general cinema audience; prefer to get detailed information about this identitarian and cultural heritage food, which would be easily understandable and most of all memorisable, when they, see and listen to, visual and acoustic signals that rapidly stamp in their memories the deepest details about the preparing and consumption of the couscous, and most of all, the linking of its preparation to many life stations and occasions that distinguish the Tunisians' life.

THE CULINARY ART INTEGRATION IN THE NARRATIVITY OF A FICTION MOVIE:

The gastronomy art of a country represents a meeting point between knowledge, skills, aromas, and arts. It also serves as an identity proof of a country (the author's homeland) with sedimented historical and hereditary dimensions that characterize it. When it is included as a narrative component in the screenplay, it becomes nothing but an implicit enlightening of its rituals and culinary practices, and then an intended acknowledgment of the author for the food identity of his land! Doesn't the director thus make the representation of couscous habits of cooking, preserving, and consuming, as an identifier of the nationality of the motion picture when it is shown in the framework of foreign competitions or international distribution, or while honouring its director or a member of its team, by screening it in an international festival? Isn't this an ethnic representation of such an identitarian gastronomy in the cinematic artwork? Doesn't the latter become an awareness-raising campaign about the historical value of this food and a means of preserving it as an intangible cultural heritage? Doesn't nostalgia bring a Tunisian spectator back to his homeland and his social memories while watching the movie? Isn't the representation of such unique gastronomy, a catalyst for tourism, tasting, and discovery of the filmmaker's identity? We will try to answer all those questions through an analytical and comparative study between some Tunisian movies in which we find multiple illustrations of couscous dishes and the methods of preparing and preserving its grains; included in their narrative structure, and this is what makes the film serve as a scientific reference together with books, journal articles and empirical studies, for researchers from the fields of heritage sciences, sociology, documentation, history, ethnology, anthropology, seventh art and other disciplines.

ARCHAEOLOGY OF COUSCOUS BETWEEN KITCHEN AND CINEMA: A SELECTIVE INVENTORY OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON COUSCOUS AND ITS **CULINARY PRACTICES:**

A selective inventory of scientific research on couscous and its culinary practices

The kitchen practice of the first humans has an archaeology that dates to prehistoric times, where flame represented a transitional point. Primitive men used fire as a means of illumination, heating, sanctification, and cooking, which led them to "transform food from its raw state to a civilized and cultural counterpart, using various techniques such as drying, and salting"i (Soula 254), which made their food practices play the role of "one of the references that control the human being in his individual and social dimensions"ii (Soula) .Then dealing with food has evolved in parallel with the development of research in the sciences of anthropology, sociology, and heritage so that cooking and its origins, techniques, tools, and components became a hub of interconnection and networking between exact sciences and humanities. For his part, the couscous dish has followed the same path, representing the focus of research from many perspectives of scientific investigation, which we present through the following table:

Research Title	Author(s)	Research methodology used to enlighten the couscous	
Huwiyat attaam wa	Imad Soula: professor of	An anthropological study published in the	
Taam Al Huwiya(Arabic research) [the identity of food and the food of identity] (Soula)	cultural heritage and	form of a scientific article, through which the	
	folklore at the higher	author presents the types, recipes, symbols,	
	Institute of Patrimony-	and rituals of couscous, to oscillate between	
	Tunis	the identity of food and the food of identity.	

Research Title	Author(s)	Research methodology used to enlighten the couscous
Conserves céréalières et rôle de la femme dans l'économie familiale en Tunisie (French) [Canned cereals and the role of women in the family economy in Tunisia] (Ferchiou, 1979)	Sophie Ferchiou: Professor of anthropology at the Higher Institute of Patrimony and filmmaker of anthropological documentaries -Tunis	A social study on the pioneering role of women in the family's economy through the customs of preserving grains, their derivatives, and spices: painstaking work that they do in addition to the rest of their family duties, without pay or reward, and of course preserving and preparing couscous grains had a great impact on this study.
Maiidat Ifriqiya: Dirassa fi Alwan Attaam (Arabic): [The Table of Of Ifriqiya: a study in Food Colors])Dabbabi. AL(2017 (Siham Al-Dababi Al-Missawi: A professor and researcher specializing in heritage and culture, her studies are characterized by the intersection between the disciplines of anthropology, history, and sociology.	Couscous represented one of the chapters of the book Ifriqiya's Table. The author researched its origins by returning to many historical, heritage, and even literary references to scrutinize the origins of couscous.
Couscous: Ethnic making and consumption patterns in the Northeast of Algeria (Loucif, 2018)	A group of professors and researchers from Algeria and France from the institutes of nutrition and biotechnology	The study presents couscous as a common dish among North African countries, based on a survey, aiming to identify the traditional pictogram of couscous and describe how its dishes are prepared.
Knowledge, knowhow, and practices of the production and consumption of couscous (UNESCO, Knowledge, knowhow and practices pertaining to the production and consumption of couscous, 2020)	International Committee for the Intangible Cultural Heritage - UNESCO	International recognition of couscous as a shared heritage between Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, and Mauritania

Table 1: An optional inventory of some academic research dealing with couscous

Couscous: an identitarian dish recognized on the International List of Intangible Heritage

Recipes and options for cooking couscous are classified based on the steam common cooking method, and the different sizes of its grains, from thin at one millimeter in diameter, to thick at three millimetres. Then the distinctive ingredients are added to the cooked dish. We may sometimes find it sweet with the thinnest grains, or what we call masfoof, containing sugar as a basic ingredient accompanying the delicate grains, to be mixed sometimes with milk, and sometimes with butter and sugar and left dry, with its additional ingredients varied between pomegranate seeds, grapes, and oleander fruits. dates, And dry fruits. As for salty recipes, they

vary according to the regions and occasions during which couseous is cooked, with mediumsized and thick couscous being preferred in most cases, and some Tunisian families preferring to use thin couscous. We sometimes find couscous with fish, sometimes with bird meat, and sometimes with sheep or cow meat, as we will display in the following table, with some recipes explained in the margins at the end of the research:

Variety of Masfoof	Couscous with red meats	Couscous with white meats	Couscous with fishes ^{iv}	Couscous Khodhra (vegetables) ⁱⁱⁱ
Masfoof Bel Hlib (with Milk) ^{vi}	Kosksi Belaâllouch (Couscous with ram's meat)	Kosksi Beddjej (Couscous with Chicken)	Kosksi Bel Calamar (Couscous with stuffed squid) ^v	Kosksi Bel Khudhra (Couscous with vegetables)
Masfoof Berrommen (with Grenade) ^x	Kosksi Berras (Couscous with ram's head) ^{ix}	Kosksi Belhjal (Couscous with Partridge)	Kosksi Bel Karnit (Couscous with Octopus) ^{viii}	Kosksi Bel Farfucha or Aârouch el
Masfoof with Deglet Noor or date ^{xii}	Kosksi Bel Osban ^{xi}	Kosksi Bel Arneb (Couscous with Rabbit)	Kosksi Saifi Bel Manneni (Summery Couscous with Grouper)	Besbes (Couscous with Fennel Fronds) ^{vii}
Masfoof Bel Fakia (with dried fruit) ^{xiii}	Kosksi Bellham El Bakri (Couscous with Beef Meat)	Kosksi Bessammen (Couscous with Quail)	Kosksi Rebiî Bel Bouri (Vernal Couscous with Mullet)	Kosksi Bel Foul (Couscous with Broad Bean)
Masfoof Bel Krima (with Cream) ^{xvi}	Kosksi Bel Qaddid ^{xv}	Couscous with Slugs	Kosksi Chetoui Bel Morjen (Wintry Couscous with Red Porgy)	Kosksi Bel Belbel (Couscous with Hottentot-fig) ^{xiv}
Masfoof Belaâneb (with Grapes)	Kosksi Bel Burzgan ^{xix}	Kosksi Belhalazoon	Kosksi Bel Warka (Couscous with Sole)	Kosksi Bel Bsal (Couscous with Onion) ^{xvii}
Masfoof Bezzabib (with Raisins/Dried Grapes)	Kosksi Belham Legaoud (Couscous with Calf Meat) ^{xxii}	(Couscous with Snail)xviii	Kosksi Bechcherkaou (Couscous with Smelt) ^{xxi}	Kosksi Muâffin Linnafis (Couscous - rotten- for postpartum)xx

Table 2: Classification of couscous dishes according to the ingredients used to cook them

The presence of couscous goes beyond its welcoming role on some occasions, to represent, from a different perspective, part of a hated cultural heritage that has been imprinted on our customs despite our noses, as some charlatans seek to move its grains before cooking them, with hands of a dead person before burying him, and without the knowledge of the dead person's family, for a goal that falls within the rituals of black magic and witchcraft. Its users think that it is A means to achieve vile desires characterized by a love of evil and hatred for others.

There are also many opportunities to cook couscous in our daily life and on many religious, joyful, or sorrowing occasions, where we find it with its various components mentioned in the above table, to decorate the daily family lunch or dinner table, or as a sign of welcome to guests, or to carry it during visits to righteous saints while seeking for their blessings, and this is what sometimes opens the arc of polytheism in God, depending on the intentions of the seekers.

We can also find the couscous dish decorating the table during the Ramadan Holy Month on two essential occasions: the night of the full moon on the fourteenth of the lunar holy month, or what we also call the night of the middle, and on the twenty-sixth of Ramadan, named in Islamic religion "Laylat al Qadr" [Night of Revelation].

As for the preference for the day of cooking couscous over the whole week, which varies across the governorates of Tunisia, we can find it somewhere distinguished as a basic dish for Friday, while other governorates' residents prefer to link its cooking to their weekly market's day, which varies from one governorate to another.

We can also confirm the association of the couscous dish cooking's with various stages of human life, as we can find it served to guests of the whole life occasions from new birth, "or what is called the Aqeeqah" (Higher_Institute_of_Heritage), to 'Kassâat Essbah' or the

"morning basin" for the newlyweds on the first morning after their wedding xxiii, or "the "Kosksi Muâffin Linnafis" [the rotten for the postpartum which characterizes the governorate of Gabes in southern Tunisia, or when celebrating the appearance of the baby's first baby tooth, or on the occasion of the boy's circumcision, or success in studies (baccalaureate/graduation), or even among the rituals of burying the dead and at the "Farq" ritual which corresponds to the third day after death which is, according to traditions, simple and not including many ingredients or lacks spices or condiments, taking into account the occasion of grief" xxiv (Higher_Institute_of_Heritage), and on all days and most - if not all - occasions of welcoming guests who fill the courtyard of the house and by distributing its dishes to the neighbours and their neighbours, as a sign of generosity and love.

Thanks to this diversity and richness, couscous has become worthy of being recognized as a food that symbolizes the Tunisian identity at the international level, with UNESCO as a shared intangible heritage between Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, and Mauritania (UNESCO, 2020). And despite its including many variations such as "what is prepared from wheat flour (...) which is white cusksiou, and what is prepared from barley and is called malthouth or barley cusksiou, (...) and what figures as masfoof and what is topped, and (...) what was made with meat, and what was prepared without meat, and what was made with good turnips and a lot of ghee..."xxv)Dabbabi. AL(2017 , it remains an identity card for Tunisia, as same as her red flag with its star and crescent.

There has been an effort to register couscous as a culinary heritage since the Intangible Heritage Convention issued by UNESCO in 2003 (UNESCO, Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003): an agreement that serves as an incentive for all the member states, to ensure the preservation of their intangible heritage with all its characteristics. The endeavor of Tunisian intangible heritage experts and researchers to register couscous as a national heritage was launched through an inventory card that was

prepared and published on the website of the National Higher Heritage Institute (Higher_Institute_of_Heritage), to finally intercede with the international recognition by UNESCO of couscous as an intangible heritage of knowledge, skills and practices associated with its production and consumption.; A shared heritage between Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, and Mauritania (UNESCO, 2020), and that is what confirms its deep geographical connection to North Africa and its classification as a sign that distinguishes its food heritage.

The inclusion of couscous in the narrative structure of feature films as an identity stamp for Tunisian fiction movies:

The use of couscous in the narrative structure of a fiction movie varies from one director to another, as it can be added intentionally, such as an aesthetic choice that embellishes the scene, or unintentionally between the events of the film, as if the director is saying through the scene: this is the Tunisian identity, and couscous is its proof.

We can find differences in its representation according to the artistic framework that includes aesthetic and technical choices in highlighting the couscous dish, which is evident in the directors' choice of shooting angles, scene staircases, color grading, and lighting: knowledge and technicities which differ according to the director's experience, age range, academic training, and the film schools in which they studied.

We are about to cite as an example a scene that 'screams' identity, national feeling, and national heritage, from the movie 'Fatma 75' directed by Salma Baccar. This movie goes back to the director's beginnings in 1975, when "its production coincided with the year of the International Women's Conference in Mexico"xxvi) Ridene(2021 '. 'Fatma75' is a docufiction about the socio-educational junction of the women's situation in Tunisia during the 1970s', by shows the revolution of a university student (girl), same as her teenagers, about the fact, although

finishing academic studies until getting a diploma, young women would do nothing but getting married, caring about their families as housewives and educating their children as mothers, being deprived of their right of working, and financing their own families, or allowing them to work in the same level/work grade of men, but having at most half of men's salary, and then being underprivileged from leadership and decision taking positions.

The research of this student, "Fatma," the main character of the movie, was manifested in the form of a field study during which she interviewed many women who had entered the labor market as workers, employees, and peasants in the countryside, in addition to her interview with the activist Bashira Ben Mrad about the conditions for establishing the Women's Union.



Figure 1: Two shots from Fatma 75, directed by Salma Bakkar, depict eating couscous with hands and the rural woman's closeness to her husband both at home and at work

The representation of couscous was made in this movie through two successive shots from the same scene, while characters (a framer and his wife welcoming their coworker for lunch) are eating together the couscous dish along with Leben (beverage of fermented milk). Through an alternation between 3/4 frontal/rear angles, and colour grades, Salma Baccar did her utmost to reflect the 70' social and anthropological criterium, figuring in the integration of women in social and financial responsibilities along with their husband, in addition to their task as housewives and mothers. She deeply painted her canvas with intangible cultural heritage, including the couscous dish, the traditional clothing characteristic of the agricultural areas, the traditional wooden table called "Meda" on which they eat, the sitting on the mat and the sheep's skin, and so on; which enriches the scene and uses it as: not only an identity card from which the foreign viewer infers the uniqueness of Tunisia, but also a mixture of sound effects, image, music, and dialogue, that give deep information for researchers from different fields, who aim to study the specificities of the 70' from different view angles.

Another example in which we can describe the use of couscous as a Tunisian symbol of belonging is embodied in the movie Zahrat Halab [The Flower of Aleppo] made by Ridha El-Bahi. It is the story of a mother, an emergency medicine specialist, who gave up her work in the emergency department of the hospital and sacrificed her career by traveling to Syria to look for her son, who was exposed to brainwashing, like many of his cohorts, until abandoning his studies and travelling as a "jihadi to Aleppo.". When she joined the group of young Mujahideen, truly named kamikazes, she kept presenting herself to them as a volunteer doctor, putting her knowledge and experience in emergency medicine at their disposal to provide relief, hoping most of all to find her son and save him. And to convince the Mudjahidat (fighting women) among whom she was surrounded, she volunteered to train with them on carrying and using weapons, and then expressed her gratitude for their trust by cooking a Tunisian couscous dish to honour Syrians and Arabs alike. Behind the reassuring character of her enemies lies Salma, the terrified mother seeking to save her son by searching among the Mujahideen teams, hoping to find him. And to place the scene of preparing couscous within the context of the deteriorating the psychological state of the desperate mother who is cooking it for her hosts, the director limited himself to an extreme long shot, not to diminish the identity value of the dish, as much as it is to highlight the mother's sadness and pain, ready to die to find her son and save him.



Figure 2:: The mother, "Salma" - Hend Sabry - during her abandonment of her professional life to search for her son Murad - Badis Al-Bahi - to save him.

In both mentioned examples, couscous sits on the throne of an identitarian culinary heritage, despite the differences in the frameworks for its use and the directorial choices for its representation on screen. Varying between a symbol of the lifestyle of a struggling peasant woman alongside her husband harvesting wheat with him, then grinding its grains and sifting its semolina to turn it into couscous grains, which would be later stored then cooked; and a mother whose heart is filled with the pain of separation from her son and who is filled with despair to find him among brainwashed teenagers, who fakely rewards the Mudjahidin with a plate of Tunisian couscous; the embodiment of this dish is evident as a cultural symbol for the filmmakers' homeland: Tunisia.

As our world becomes more interconnected, so does our appreciation of the diverse cultures and culinary traditions of each nation. However, because of the rapid pace of globalization, the authenticity and uniqueness of the culinary practices of each country's identity may, over time, be at risk of loss and extinction. Even if there are researchers in cultural heritage, history, or ethnology who have documented this culinary heritage through books and scientific articles, their references would only be read by students and researchers, which makes us conclude the effective role that the representation of these dishes in motion pictures could play.

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In addition to its valuable contribution to preserving this culinary heritage, movies can also spread knowledge of couscous cooking, with a deep linking of its ethnic and identity characteristics, on a much broader public scale than just the category of professors and researchers, to include the general population of citizens receiving the movie in halls or through rebroadcast on television stations or video-on-demand sites. Narrative films could also transport spectators to different times and places, giving them a direct experience of the culinary traditions of the embodied culture, thus preserving them, learning about them, and sensitizing them to their heritage value, in the various settings that directors can employ to represent couscous and its cooking rituals, as we will explain and compare between the movies in the following paragraphs, and this could play the role of an important medium to safeguard it through time and a reference to researchers, which mesmerizes in their mind, such identitarian heritage, more than articles and books do.

REPRESENTING AND PRESERVING THE CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS OF COUSCOUS PREPARING AND STORING IN BOTH "HALFAOUINE" AND "UNDER THE RAIN OF AUTUMN"²

Synopsys of "Under the rain of Autumn:

We can classify the movie Under the Rain of Autumn by Tunisian director Ahmed Lekhchine among the pioneers of Tunisian movies released during the 70' of the last century, which transformed the directors' usual approach from dealing with the issue of the French occupation in an epic, revolutionary character, and glorifying Tunisia's achievement of independence in 1956, to films with social dimension. In director Ahmed Al-Khashin's treatment of the

¹ Halfaouine is a Tunisian long fiction movie made by the filmmaker Farid Boughedir in 1990

 2 Under the Rain of Automn is a Tunisian long fiction movie made by Ahmed Lekhchine in 1970

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revolutionary role that Tunisian women experienced through their challenge to customs and traditions and entering the labor market in parallel with men, he struck at the latter's arrogance and condescension, and the destabilization of the family's balance, which is inevitable for women to remain at home to cook, clean, take care of the children, and raise them. The director did not only address the working woman, but also doubled her role in protecting her family after her drunkard husband's abandoning of his family duties. She and her daughter immersed themselves in the labour market by weaving Kairouan carpets at home and selling them to merchants, while her daughter worked "as a worker in a carpet factory" (CNCI, 2017).

Synopsys of "Halfaouine":

Despite the time gap of two decades between the release of the motion pictures "Under the Rain of Autumn" by Ahmed Lekhchine and "Halfaouine" by Farid Boughedir, the housewife who suffers from the husband's arrogance and tyranny represents a connection point between the two films. Despite Farid Boughedir's placement of the father's character in "Halfaouine" in the mould of an aristocratic cloth merchant, one of the country's nobles, who works to provide luxury and wealth for his family, the filmmaker chose to make this father much arrogant towards his wife until the audience finds her reacting by dominating the maids and cooks, hoping that she will find relief from her husband's arrogance.

Comparison of representations of couscous preparing and storing between the two movies:

Preparing couscous as an annual food supplies during family summer gathering, represents a social inheritance that is on the way to extinction in a society in which women have become researchers, full-time employees, and leaders in companies and political positions. As a result, the representation of such an ethnic social ritual, through a motion picture, makes this later

transcend its artistic role, to become an audiovisual mean of its safeguarding and enlightening of the couscous ethnographic and cultural value, and a scientific reference for researchers in the sciences of heritage, history, and cinema alike, together with books, articles... or perhaps also as a motivator for female viewers, encouraging them to return to this good custom and protect it from extinction.

During the festive family gathering to prepare the annual couscous supply, women from the family and neighbours gather in the courtyard of the house surrounded by packets of semolina, salt, and used utensils such as sieves and bowls, where a measure of thick semolina is spread in a wide bowl and sprinkled lightly with salt water, stirred with the fingertips to distribute the moisture evenly, then sprinkled with a handful of fine semolina while continuing to stir in the same direction with the palm of the hand, adding a light splash of water at times and a sprinkle of thin semolina at other times, so that it becomes in the form of small balls of varying size, that the women pour into a sieve with wide holes (wheat sieve), then they move the sieve and rub the grains with the palms of their hands until the thick lumps break up and all the atoms pass through the sieve holes. After that, they pour the crop into a second sieve with finer holes (couscous sieve) and rub the semolina grains with the palms of the hand until they are modelled and completely pass through the sieve holes. In a final stage, the women pour the crop into a third sieve (Tallâa sieve), which has finer holes than the couscous sieve; and without mixing by hand, they get rid of the semolina and fine grains until nothing remains in the sieve except the required couscous, which they keep aside and prepare all the operations in the same way until the quantities of semolina and particles remaining from the sieve are complete"xxvii)Kouki Al.(1997 ·.

In his film "Under the Rain of Autumn", the filmmaker Ahmed Lekhchine represented the customs of the preparation of couscous as an annual supplies, in a scene that lasts for more than six minutes. And before addressing the aesthetic and artistic standards in reading and analysing the scene's making of, shouldn't we vindicate on the movie sequence as a detailed reference about the stages of storing couscous, same as the data sheet that was included in both the list of intangible heritage on the website of the National Institute of Heritage in Tunisia, along with its registration on the immaterial heritage list of UNESCO that was validated during the annual meeting of 2020? (2018 أح.و.ت) (UNESCO, Knowledge, know-how and practices pertaining to the production and consumption of couscous, 2020)



Figure 3: The representation of the family celebration of preparing the annual couscous supply in "Under the Rain of Autumn"

Rather, there is a transcendence of memorization through text read in a book or a scientific article, by moving toward mesmerisation through sound, image, rhythm, and aesthetic director's viewpoints sometimes in the succession of shots and the choices of angles and stairs of photography, and at other times in the manual rhythms of the women's hands on the sieves, bowls, and bowls, embellished with intelligence on the oud, played by Tunisian music professor Mohamed Saadah, as a sound track that tickles the viewer's ear to the point of being able to stimulate his imagination to recall personal memories about this traditional celebratory gathering of Tunisian families or motivate researchers watching the movie as a reference, in which they could find the most minute details regarding the preparation of the annual couscous supply. It is an audio-visual representation that contributes to consolidating the historical information embodied in the mind of the viewer at a rate of 30 percent from the first sight of the shot, compared to a rate of only 10 percent (Lalley & Miller, 2007) if the receiver reads the information in the text of a journal article, book, or among international agreements for the preservation of intangible heritage.

This representation of the family celebration of preparing the annual couscous supply has a special aesthetic in the choice of photography scales and camera directions. We can acknowledge that the director used frontal and profile shots, to display the details of the movement of the women's hands while moving and striking the sieves to lower the couscous into the bowls; then the general shot and rear angle to show the teenagers entering the courtyard of their neighbours' house and offering them help through bringing water to the women who were preparing the annual supply.

This offer from Salem to help his neighbor's family is nothing but a way to see his beloved daughter, by joining her on the roof of the house, citing his proposal to help her lift the couscous gathered in a piece of cloth, given its heavy weight, and pulling it with a rope to spread it on the roof floor to dry. It is an implicit reason that leads him to the main reason, which is to find an opportunity to talk to the girl of his dreams in private on the roof of the house, which represents "a hidden meeting place for lovers" (RIDENE, The Seventh Art as a National Heritage Preservation - Tunisia Case Study through the Movie Halfaouine of Farid Boughedir, 2016). The same place and the same goal (spreading the couscous on the roof's surface to dry)

appear in a shot from the movie 'Halfaouine' made by director Farid Boughedir: a POV (subjective camera angle that makes the audience see the character's viewpoint), that exposes a group of young girls, watched by the child Noura while spreading couscous grains on a white quilt to dry in the sunlight. In both movies, the roof surface represents a getaway for young girls to share their secrets and for young lovers to talk secretly; and that is what gives the emotional and sentimental character to the representation of preserving couscous in the two movie cases.





Figure 4: The roof of the traditional house: place of drying couscous prepared for storage, lovers' meeting, and girls' secrets exchange

The couscous grains occupy the throne of the two scenes with breathtaking beauty and unparalleled charm, resulting from the aesthetic choices of the directors, which are nothing but a tribute to the couscous grains. Boughedir and Lekhchine took care to present the finest details of this festive family gathering, and the ethnic peculiarities that mark its presence in every Tunisian home, until teleporting the movies beyond their role as a means of displaying their messages to the audience, to become a reference for researchers of heritage, cinematic aesthetics, and science. Both movies, like any other motion pictures, in which we find a tribute to the Tunisian culinary heritage, could also be like a tourist campaign, during the international movies' exploitation, which would whisper to the minds of foreign spectators, to program a tourist visit For Tunisia, discover its culture, and taste its culinary identitarian dishes.

COUSCOUS AS A FESTIVE DISH BETWEEN HALFAOUINE MADE BY FARID BOUGHEDIR AND THE SECRET OF THE GRAIN MADE BY ABDELLATIF KECHICHE

Synopsys of "The secret of the grain":

To present the issues of immigrants from the Maghreb to France, the way they live there, and the spectrum of their mingling with French society; the director Abdellatif Kechiche exposes the character of Suleiman as the representative of the first generation of Tunisians to immigrate to France. Suleiman settled there, using port mechanics as a source of livelihood to support three generations of his family which was subjected to ups and downs in the atmosphere of its life and turmoil in the relationships of parents, children, and grandchildren, in addition to mixed Tunisian and French origins, until it reaches the decision to divorce. The father leaves the family home for a residence where he pays his rent on fresh fish that he brings from the port to the hostel owner. This later expressed how she was upset about filling her freezer with mullet fish instead of receiving a cash payment. In the face of this financial downfall, Suleiman seeks how to develop a standard of living for himself and his family by restoring a ship that he will make as a specialized restaurant in the Tunisian dish "Kosksi Bel Bouri" [couscous with mullet]. The launching of this restaurant will be a reason to gather the family members to cook and serve at the restaurant's opening ceremony, which would make the family touch return to normal, as we find them gathered with all their determination, love, and family warmth, to prepare a couscous dish for the restaurant opening ceremony.

The representation of Couscous festive dish in Halfaouine (film summarised in the previous paragraph)

When the scene is embellished with festive rituals such as a Kanun [Tunisian brazier made of terracotta] which embers bloom to sweeten the scent of the house with incense that fills its area and surroundings, the spectators could easily, even deeply feel immersed in the atmosphere of

the circumcision party where a group of women is cleaning the tripes of the sheep, another is preparing a magic mixture for stuffing, and a third is taking the needle and thread to embroider it. Then another group of women mixes the broth, oil, and spices, waiting for the Osban to be ready for adding it to the boiling pot where they cook couscous for guests. The spectators, with such detailed shots and deep aesthetic choices, should easily feel some flashbacks passing through their memory for family celebrations of the Islamic Aid Al Idhha, or even imagining the smell of incense: a spiritual touch should be installed in the audience's unconsciousness until increasing the speed of their pulse in parallel with the I crease in the narrative pattern of the scene, due to the chosen extreme close-up view angles, the combination which gathers the sound of incense burning in the Kanun, with that of the knife on the wooden bowl while chopping vegetables, and the women's ululations and performance of inherited songs as a sign of joy with the circumcision celebration.



Figure 5: Successive shots from a festive scene of the movie Halfaouine (The Child of Terrasses), where women prepare couscous with Osbane as a main dish to celebrate circumcision

The representation of Couscous festive dish in "The Secret of the Grain":

The movie: "The Secret of the Grain" made by Abdellatif Kechiche is a combination of various shots, which enlightens the preparation of Couscous with mullet fish as a celebration dish for a restaurant inauguration. The film director focused on alternating between medium and close-up shots, front, and side shooting angles, in addition to a mixture of colors characterized by a tendency towards the silvery shine of fish scales and fins and the freshness in the colors of peeled and cut vegetables: it is an aesthetic way that the film director used to illustrate the happiness of the prominent women in sharing their smiling faces among the components of this identity dish; in addition to the adherence of the various generations of this immigrant family to her cultural origins.

Although the second and third generations of the immigrant family speak only French, their integration into the stages of celebration and their love for the couscous dish was represented by their insistence on putting their mark in its preparation, even by helping to bring the cutlery or washing the dishes and spoons, without neglecting their adherence to fish as an essential component of the plate, together with the couscous grains, as a sign of gratitude to the father who seeks to open a restaurant specializing in Tunisian couscous with mullet in France, and who provides the family with his efforts the most luxurious types of fish that he purchases daily upon his return from the port. Although they can cook couscous with other types of meat, red or white, mullet has a special appearance on the dish, a sign of generosity and welcome to guests, and a close connection to the culinary heritage that the Tunisian family immigrating to France has preserved despite the passage of time. It is as if the director is emphasizing, through this shot, the role of preparing couscous in a celebratory manner among family members, as an alleviation of the pain of their alienation, thus making their interaction with the food, in the

form of the Tunisian "network of rituals and practices, connected to cultural values, symbols, and connotations"xxviii)Higher Institute of Heritage(.



Figure 6: The representation of Stages of preparing couscous with mullet fish, as a celebratory dish for the opening of the family project, which is a restaurant specializing in Tunisian couscous

And among the customs that characterized the cooking of couscous by our grandmothers, figures the fact of tying the couscoussier with a long, wet piece of textile that has different names in the different governorates, such as: Litam, Kfila, Hazzamia, Saddada... It is "a band that is placed between the Makful (components of couscoussier) "to prevent steam from leaking out" xxix and Kiskas")Higher Institute of Heritage(And in the movie's representation, and taking into consideration that the Tunisian family is living in France, Kechiche has used a close-up to show the replacing of the textile Kfila by aluminium foil, to place the cooking of couscous in the context of a contemporary family that adheres to its origins at the same time.

THE AESTHETICS OF PORTRAYING COUSCOUS IN A FEATURE FILM, FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A CAMPAIGN TO ENCOURAGE TOURISM TO THE **DIRECTOR'S COUNTRY:**

Before the beginning of the international tourist season, each country organizes an advertising campaign that it broadcasts on international television channels and via the Internet, seeking to draw the attention of foreign viewers to the beauty of nature, the charms of architecture, the peculiarity of the climate, and the customs and traditions of the host country. Through television stations, we see a combination of video capsules, often filmed using high-resolution cinematic techniques of superior lighting and advanced lenses that capture aerial scenes using drone technology, to display the luxury of the hotels, and the deliciousness of the traditional dishes of the host country, in addition to breathtaking natural scenes of sunsets and reliefs that gather coasts, mountains, and forests on the same geographical coordinates, cars and herds of camels roaming the desert sands to make them like mirrors that reflect their shadows, and coasts of silver sand that the waves fight with their ebb and flow and are embellished by underwater scenes shit to prove their clarity, purity, and richness with sea creatures and landscapes.

But regardless of the accuracy of the imaging techniques used and the quality of the capsule's images and sound, the touristic campaign remains light-years away from the aesthetics of scenes included in the narrative of a feature film, which has a deep link with the peculiarities and features of its characters and the aesthetic viewpoint of its director. We tried to confirm this by presenting and comparing identity representations in Tunisian feature films, through which the directors do their utmost to enlighten the sanctity of this dish and its representation of a mirror that reflects our customs and traditions.

Every Tunisian film containing scenes that embody the sanctity and beauty of couscous with the different methods and components of its preparation is shown outside the director's homeland within the framework of an international distribution, or as a candidacy in an international competition, or while an international film festival gives a tribute to its director or members of its artistic or technical team. Such international distribution could easily transform the role of a motion picture from an expressive art to a means of preserving this culinary heritage

in all its details, and an incentive for foreign audiences to visit Tunisia and taste the dish, or even limit themselves to searching for its recipe online and cook it to discover its taste, which represents a symbol of Tunisian identity.

CONCLUSION:

Fiction movies, which represent the artistic visions of filmmakers, depending on their academic training, and their experiences, could also have a role that goes beyond their artistic, entertaining character, or their being as a means of communication between the author and the audience, through which he presents his view of some universal issues in various fields; to become eligible for use by researchers in the cinematic, social, heritage, and archival sciences, as a scientific reference in parallel with scientific articles, theorizing books, statistical studies, and research and examination interviews with experts in various fields. A student of heritage or architecture, for example, can return to ancient and contemporary films, through which the director embodied the focus of his research through some shots from his artistic work, making its dual entity between sound and image, reincarnation, decor, and architecture employed in depicting the scenes... a more detailed reference. It is more accurate than its written counterpart (from book chapters, scientific conference proceedings, and individual or collective reference works) based on its impact on the spectator, so that he uses more than the sense of eyesight while watching the film and interacting with its events, characters, narrative details, and issues and situations that the director addresses from his own artistic perspective.

Any researcher could often read a scientific article, a book, a legal text, or an international agreement that classifies the couscous as an intangible cultural heritage for multiple countries. in a superficial way, by going over the abstract and subheads of the research or its references, or by reading the research body to use excerpts from it as citations in his research. This leads us to decide on the depth of the vision used by the researcher when he returns to a cinematic scene in which the film author values couscous as a culinary identity and an intangible heritage. The researcher could find himself, unconsciously, replaying the scene again and again, and stopping on repeated occasions over frames, knowing that a cinematic second is composed of twenty-four images, then may contain aesthetic and expressive differences that the naked eye of the viewer cannot perceive, so the researcher finds himself forced to stop the scene on many occasions by pressing the Pause button, or as some applications such as "VLC" allow him to view in detail the Twenty-four images that compose one second of the scene, in order to analyze them artistically and aesthetically. It is a way to decode the director's vision employed in the scene. This confirms to us the degree of depth that characterizes a cinematic reference in which the representation of a couscous dish is a component of its narrative structure, and through which the researcher can accurately address the ethnic specificity of this culinary heritage. Besides, the researcher can rely on a film as a reference, not only when researching the specificity of couscous and its cooking methods, but also as a means of preserving the national tangible and intangible heritage in all its types and components, which allows it to be classified as an identity card for the director and a means of preserving his national heritage. The safeguarding of material and immaterial cultural heritage of a country through a motion picture, could be made either through the characters' dress up in traditional Tunisian costumes that symbolize the various parts and regions of our country, or by filming in symbolic heritage places such as archaeological sites mosques, Moorish baths or fortresses of the Ottoman Empire, Moorish houses or Shrines of righteous saints, as much as illustrating many of our customs and traditions for different occasions...which allows us to classify the cinematic motion pictures as a means of preserving and valuing them and a reference for researchers, just like the books of theorists and the articles of researchers.

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ENDNOTES

- We have translated this original text from Arabic to English:"Tahwil al aghthiya min halatiha al kham ila wadhiya mutahadhira wathaqafiya, wathalika bistikhdam takniyat mukhtalifa mithla attajfif wattamlih" (Soula)
- ii We have translated this original text from Arabic to English: "Ihda Al Marjaiyat Adhdhabita lilInsan fi Boodayhi Al Fardi Wal Ijtimaiï" (Soula)
- iii Khodhra is the Tunisian dialect word for vegetables. So, Couscous Bel Khodhra is based on vegetables, while fish and meat are absent from its ingredients. And according to the different vegetables available across the seasons, we find it cooked in the winter with cabbage, turnips, and leeks, and in the rest of the seasons with carrots, green squash (that we call Kraa Butzina), or pumpkin and potatoes.
- ^{iv} There are many recipes for couscous with fish, depending on the fisheries producing it and the seasons in which it is caught
- V Stuffed squid shares the same filling ingredients as those used in Osban, with the addition of cumin, a spice often used in cooking fish.
- vi Ingredients of masfoof with milk: thin couscous, and sometimes it is replaced with grains of semolina; is cooked with steam then mixed with milk and sugar in a way that makes it somewhat liquid. Masfoof with milk is used as a morning breakfast meal or as a suhoor recipe during the holy month of Ramadan.
- vii Couscous with Farfousha/Aârouch el Besbes (fennel fronds) represents a winter dish par excellence, in which the couscous grains and the fronds of fennel are cleaned, cut, and put in the upper part of the couscous steamer, which pot is filled with sauce ingredients which are mainly tomato paste, harissa, and spices, and once dried, it is mixed then decorated with olives and red peppers
- viii Couscous with Karnit (Octopus) is a dish that distinguishes the coastal regions specializing in Octopus fishing, such as the governorate of Sfax, especially in the delegation of the Kerkennah Islands/Archipelago in the eastern part of Tunisia
- After slaughtering a sheep or buying a separate head from the butcher, we roast it over a strong fire to get rid of the hair, then scratch it to get rid of the burnt horny material. Then we break it with a cleaver into parts, then cut the ears and tongue and separate the brain for use in other dishes, the most famous of which is Ojja Bel Mokh. The broken head parts are used by placing them in the (closed) pot with the rest of the broth ingredients to be cooked on their steam, the couscous seeds placed in the couscous.
- ^x Masfoof with Pomegranate: After steaming it, we mix the masfoof with sugar, butter, and pomegranate seeds.
- on other days for those who could acquire the ingredients throughout the year. Its main component is the digestive system of the sheep, including the stomach and intestines, which are turned over and cleaned well, then stuffed with pieces of lungs, meat and liver cooked in boiling water, with the addition of spices, seasonings, parsley and celery cut into small sizes, and grains of rice (in some parts of the Center such as Kairouan, rice grains are substituted in Stuffing the Osban with couscous seeds, oil, and crushed garlic. After preparing it, the Osban is kept in the ice level of the refrigerator for storage over a period of months. It is used when cooking, like other meats, to cook what we call couscous with Osban. It may also be dried Osban prepared like ground meat, avoiding stuffing with vegetables and rice grains, and limiting the meat to be small, like balls.
- xii Masfoof with Deglet Noor or Date: after cooking it with steam, the masfoof should be mixed with sugar, butter, and pieces Deglet Noor or Date after having removed their seeds.
- xiii Masfoof with Fakia (a colloquial Tunisian word meaning dry fruits), whether almonds, pistachios, walnuts, or other dry fruits. Sometimes, if it is served on occasions to guests, it is made of multiple dry fruits.
- xivCouscous with hottentot-fig is a distinctive dish of the Metouiya: a delegation from the governorate of Gabes in southern Tunisia. It is also called distilled couscous. To prepare this meal, "the housewife begins selecting the hottentot-fig plant,

separating the impurities stuck to it, washing what she has collected, then cutting it with a knife, with the possibility of adding parsley and turnip leaves. Then it is cooked within about an hour in the pot after filling it half with water, and in parallel with cooking the hottentot-fig, she takes the initiative." The woman prepares couscous and couscous stock, which consists of onions, dried green and red peppers, and tomatoes, along with spices and local puree, adding a little water, salt, and oil, and leaves it to cook on low heat for about half an hour until the color of this sauce becomes red. After completing the cooking process, she puts it in the woman is in the couscous and kicks it with her hands to get rid of its water completely. These stages culminate in placing the couscous in a wooden bowl, which is usually large in size, mixing this couscous with distilled bulbal and stock, mixing it well, then placing it in small bowls to serve it to family members and distributing some of it to neighbors and relatives. This meal is distinguished by its flavour. Delicious)Reguigui Al. (2020.

- Lamb is cooked by cutting parts of its rib cage, breaking its bones, and leaving the meat in the form of thick strips. Then it is mixed with spices, oil, and crushed, sifted dried mint. Then it is left for two days to absorb the spices, and it is hung on clotheslines to be left in the sun until its outer surface dries completely while it remains in its middle some mellowness)Kouki Al.(1997 . It is preserved throughout the year in crystal containers, either completely dry or immersed in olive oil, at natural temperature. It is cooked with couscous and many other recipes.
- After cooking it with steam, the masfoof is mixed with sugar and butter and a cream is cooked based on egg yolks, starch, sugar, and milk. Then, in a hemispherical dish, we place a layer of the masfoof and a layer of cream in succession until we fill the dish and decorate it on top as desired (chocolate beans/dry fruits/mashed biscuits....)
- xvii Couscous with onions is popular on the coast (Sousse) and the center (Sfax), and it is cooked in the same way as couscous with farfosha, with the aroush basbas replaced with chopped green onions
- Despite its limited spread in the Republic of Tunisia as an agricultural product, snails are a raw material that can be developed and invested in areas with abundant rainfall in the coast and the northwest, due to their climate being suitable for the hatching of these molluses, which makes the couseous dish with snails exclusive to the governorates of Bizerte, Nabeul, and the northwest. And as an essential feature of cooking it, the consumer must let it soak for forty-eight hours before cooking it, in a bowl covered with perforated couseous to ensure that it does not suffocate and sprinkle it with some flour or carpentry residue to eat, which stimulates it to secrete its mucous waste. Then it is rinsed with water successive times so that it is ready for cooking and placed in couseous broth like any other. Of meat
- xix Couscous with Burzgan is considered a distinctive dish of the governorate of Kef in the northwest of the Republic of Tunisia. It consists of medium-sized couscous pieces steamed over lamb breast meat seasoned with salt, black pepper, cinnamon, and rosemary, which is mixed with a sauce consisting of onions fried in butter, spices, and milk, then garnished with meat and several dry fruits.
- xx As for the Nafis woman (postpartum), her family cooks for her a type of couscous called Kosksi Muâffin Linnafis (Couscous -rotten- for postpartum) in Gabes, which is characterized by the extensive use of dry legumes with some mountain herbs such as wreath and thyme (Higher_Institute_of_Heritage)
- xxi Shirkaw (Smelt) is a type of small fish that is used as a main ingredient in the signature couscous dish of the coastal governorate of Monastir
- xxii Couscous with camel meat is considered a dish that distinguishes southern Tunisia among the governorates known agriculturally for breeding camels, such as Gabes, Medenine, and Tataouine in the southeast, and Gafsa, Gbelli, and Tozeur in the southwest
- In some regions, specially the cape bon (-also known as al watan al kibli- which is the peninsula in far northeastern Tunisia), the first morning that follows the wedding is celebrated through the visit of the groom's family to the newlyweds' house, bringing with them what we call 'Kassâat Lâaroussa' [the bride's basin] or 'Kassâat Essbeh' [the morning's basin], which

- is a "bassine en cuivre étamé ou en terre cuite, ou encore en bois" [basin in tinned copper or terracotta or even wood] (Kaâk, 2016), full of couscous with ram's or beef's meat (depending on the social level of the groom's family) and decorated with candy, dried fruit, cubed sugar, hard boiled eggs and a bottle of syrup in the middle; and a plate of which is served to the congratulating guests, then to the new neighbours of the newlyweds.
- xxiv We have tried to translate this extract from the cited reference: "Wa wifqan littaqalid, yakunu hadha attabaqu basitan wa la yadhom iddat mukawinat wa tankosoho al Baharat wattawabil muraatan limunasabat al huzn" (Higher_Institute_of_Heritage 5)
- xxv We tried to translate this extract from the mentioned reference (originally written in Arabic)"ma yuaddu min daqiqi al qamhi (...) wahua ksicsu Abiyadh, wa ma yuaddu min châair wa utlaqu aalayhi malthuth aw ksicsu châair, wa (...) ma yakunu masfuf wa ma yakunu musuqqi, wa (...) ma suniâa bi lahmin wa ma uidda bighayri lahmin, wa ma umila biliftin tayibin wa samanin kathir...")Dabbabi. AL(82 صفحة 2017 ،
- xxvi This is our own translation of this extract from the chosen reference: "tazmana intajuhu mâa sanat inaîkad al muûtamar al âalami lilmarâa fi al meksique") RIDENE 'Salma Baccar: Aykounat al Mar\$aa Attunisiya wamirâat attalki bayna al fan wa assiyassa [Salma Baccar: the icon of the arab woman, and the mirror of encountring between art and politics], Arabic ' (2021)
- We have tried to translate this extract from the cited reference:"yobsatu mikdarun mina assamidi al ghalidh fi kassaatin aaridhatin wa yurachou bil maï al malihi rashshan khafifan maa attahriki bitarafi al asabii litawzii arroutoubati bisifatin muntadhimatin, thumma yurachchu bikabsatin mina assamidi annaiimi maa muassalati attahriki fi ittijahin Wahidin birahati al yadi maa idhafati rachchatin khafifatin minalmaii taratan warachchatan mina assamidi arrakiki taratan ukhra wahadha ma yuaddi ila iltihami habbati assamidi annaimi haula habbati assamidi al ghalidhi litusbiha fi chakli kurayatin saghiratin mutafauitati al hajmi, taskubuha anniswatu fi ghurbalin thi thukubin wassiaatin (ghurbalu kamhin) thumma yuharrikna al ghurbala wa yafrukna al habbati birahati ayadihinna ila an tatafattata al kutalu al ghalithatu wa tamurru kamilu aththarrati aabra thkubi al mankhali. Ithra thalika yasbibna al mahsula fi ghurbalin thanin thi thukubin adakka (ghurbalu couscousi) wa yakumna bifarki habbati assamidi bibatini al yadi hatta tukawlaba wa tamurra biakmaliha khilala thuqubi al minkhali. Wa fi marhalatin akhiratin, takumu al nisswatu bisabbi al mahsuli fi ghurbalin thalithin (ghurbali talâa) dhi thukubin adaqqa min ghurbali al couscoussi; wa biduni Khalti al yadi, yatakhallasna mina assamidi wa al habbati addaqiqati hatta la yabka fi al ghurbali illa al couscoussi al matlub liyahfadhnahu janiban wa yuidna kaffata al aamaliyati al mathkurati binafsi attarikati hatta tatimma kammiyatu assamidi wadhdharrati al mutakhallifati mina al mankhali")Kouki Al.(1997 6
- xxviii We have tried to translate this extract from the cited reference: "Chabakatun mina attoukoussi wal mumarassat, muttasilaton bil kiami warrumuzi waddalalat" (Higher Institute of Heritage 4)
- wix We have tried to translate this extract from the cited reference:" Achcharitu allathi yudhau bayna al makful wal kiskas limanii tasarrubi al bukhar ila al kharij")Higher Institute of Heritage(2018)