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Hammams (baths) and their symbolism in the Algerian society during the Ottoman era

Hammams (bains) et leur symbolique dans la société Algérienne durant la période ottomane

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Abstract :

This paper aims to shed light on the baths and their symbolism in the Algerian society during the Ottoman era, whether natural (mineral) or steam baths. These facilities became widespread in Algeria during this period. Like in other Islamic cities, these baths, particularly steam baths, proliferated across urban areas and were considered significant manifestations of civilization and luxury.

Baths played an essential role in society both socially and economically, as people frequented them for various purposes. Some visited steam baths for the sake of cleanliness or to purify themselves before performing religious rituals. Others sought natural (mineral) baths for treating physical and spiritual ailments or simply for relaxation.

During the Ottoman period, the first steps toward engagement and marriage often took place in the bath, where women gathered to discuss their personal concerns and exchange ideas, including topics such as cooking and adornment, etc. Baths also provided an opportunity for women to showcase their wealth and elegance. For men, baths served as venues for discussing important matters, such as marriage arrangements and business deals. Additionally, they occasionally functioned as sites for settling conflicts or eliminating rivals.

Keywords: Baths (hammams), Symbolism of the Hammam, Mineral baths, Steam baths.

Résumé :

Cet article vise à mettre en lumière les bains (hammams) et leur symbolique dans la société algérienne pendant la période ottomane, qu'elles soient les bains naturels (minéraux) ou les bains à vapeur, étant donné qu'ils sont parmi les espaces les plus répandus en Algérie durant cette période, à l'instar d'autres villes islamiques. Les bains à vapeur, en particulier, se sont multipliés dans les zones urbaines et étaient considérés comme l'une des caractéristiques significatives de la civilisation et du luxe.

Les bains ont joué un rôle important dans la société tant sur le plan social qu'économique, car les gens les fréquentaient beaucoup, chacun selon son objectif. Certains visitaient les bains à vapeur pour des raisons de propreté ou pour se purifier avant d'accomplir des rites religieux, d'autres cherchaient des bains naturels (minéraux) pour traiter les maladies physiques et spirituelles et d'autres simplement pour se détendre.

Pendant la période ottomane, les premières étapes vers les fiançailles et le mariage se déroulaient souvent dans le hammam par les femmes qui s'y réunissaient pour discuter de leurs préoccupations personnelles et échanger des idées, y compris des sujets tels que la cuisine et l'ornement, etc. Le hammam offrait également une occasion aux femmes de montrer leur richesse et leur élégance. Pour les hommes, les bains servaient de lieux pour des préoccupations de la vie, telles que l'arrangement des cérémonies du mariage et conclure des accords commerciaux. En plus, les bains étaient parfois l'endroit préféré pour régler des conflits ou éliminer des rivaux.

Mots clés : bains (hammams), la Symbolique des hammams, bains minéraux, bains à vapeur.

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Introduction :

Baths have existed since ancient times, particularly in Greek and Roman civilizations, but they gained a distinct character in Islamic civilization. Baths became a deeply rooted Islamic tradition after they had faded from other cultures. Until the end of the 19th century, baths remained a prominent feature of Islamic architecture in most cities across the Arab-Islamic world. They also served as indicators of urbanization in Islamic civilization, as they formed one of the essential units of a city, alongside mosques and markets. In Algeria, many cities became known for the proliferation of baths, especially following the arrival of the Andalusians and Ottomans. The architectural landscape of Algeria, from the 16th to the early 19th centuries, was shaped by two major artistic movements. The first, from the West, was heavily influenced by the culture of al-Andalus. The second, from the East, was brought by the Ottoman Empire.

Hammams (baths) have played a significant role in Algerian history and social customs; whether mineral natural baths or steam baths, they have represented an ancient tradition passed down through generations. Even those who had private baths in their homes frequently visited public hammams. This was especially true for women, for whom hammam days were akin to holidays, as they rarely left their homes otherwise. Beyond hygiene, steam baths also served as venues for matchmaking, celebrations, and the dissemination of news. Mineral baths, on the other hand, were sought for their purported healing properties, both for spiritual and physical ailments.

Thus, this research paper seeks to explore the significance of baths within society, particularly focusing on the management of steam baths in urban areas. What rituals did men and women observe when entering the bath? What social and economic symbolism of baths?

To answer this problem, we relied, on the historical and descriptive approach on this study, in order to show the symbolism of hammams and their Management in the Algerian society during the Ottoman era, through a historical perspective .

Despite the importance of the topic, specialised studies on the subject in Algeria during this era were archaeological studies. Like: Cherif-Seffadj, N, "Waqf et gestion des bains publics à Alger durant la période ottomane (XVIe-XIXe siècle)". In this article, she talked about the baths of Algiers, their locations, and the date of their constructions, as well as their architectural design and management. As for her second article, which is entitled "Medieval and Ottoman Hammams of Algeria: Elements for a Historical Study of Bath Architecture in North Africa," she addressed Algerian baths in the medieval and Ottoman periods from an archaeological perspective. Additionally, there are also some indications in some sources, books, and other studies relative to this topic. Such as, Carlier, O, "Les enjeux sociaux du corps. Le hammam maghrébin (XIXe-XXe siècle)", He spoke about water and baths in Maghrebian culture from an anthropological perspective.

1. Definition of EL- Hammam (Bath):

El-Himma (الحممة): by emphasizing the letter "Meem" (M), this term refers to a hot spring, primarily used for therapeutic purposes. **Al-hamīma (الحمية):** refers to hot water. For example, the phrase "hammamū -Al-Mā' " means "I heated the water", and from this, the term "hammam" came to signify the act of bathing (Ibn Manzūr, 1956: 153,154); hammams (baths) are generally used for washing. And can be categorized into two types: natural (mineral) baths, often used for healing purposes, and steam baths, constructed in cities and homes, which serve hygienic purposes.

The construction of Hammams (baths) dates back to ancient civilizations, but their aesthetics, both external and internal, evolved significantly during the Roman times; these baths featured

precious mosaics, marble, and gold-plated metals. When incorporated into the Islamic era, baths were no longer solely symbols of civilization but became essential for fulfilling the Islamic requirements of cleanliness and purification. Some baths were designated specifically for men or women, while others catered to both genders at different times (Muhammad Rizq, 2000: 84,85).

The construction of hammams has become as important in the Islamic community as that of mosques and houses, especially after the rapid spread of the Islamic civilization, Water in Islam is a symbol of life and purity (Karim, 2007: 17), as Allah (God) has praised those who purify themselves, saying: «**Inna Allāha yūhibū attawābīna wa yūhibū al mūtahirīn** » (Surah Al-Baqara, Aya 222), (Allah loves the repentant, and he loves those who keep clean), and this is how building hammams became so important that they came second after mosques (Karim, 2007: 17).

The baths were one of the basic facilities when establishing cities; for example, during the Ottoman era, when al-Shaykh Ahmad al-Kabīr settled in Blida in 1535 AD, Khayr al-Dīn Barbarūsse paid him a visit. in honor and support of him, Khayr al-Dīn Barbarūsse built a mosque, a bakery, and a bath in a place chosen by the murabut (holy man); thus, it was the first kernel for the foundation of the city of Blida (Trumelet, 1887: 580-585).

2. Baths in Algeria during the Ottoman era:

Baths were among the most prominent architectural features in Algeria during the Ottoman era, especially those constructed by the Pashas. These public baths were frequented by many people (Haedo, 1870: 195) and could be found in nearly every neighbourhood. Despite their significance, the exterior of these baths often resembled ordinary homes (Boyer, 1964: 215). In major cities such as Algiers, Oran, Mostaghanem, Blida, and Constantine, baths were typically located near mosques, markets, and shops, many of these baths closely resembled those in Constantinople and Cairo, and other cities in the Levant and were meticulously preserved. (Shaler, 1982: 99). Additionally, private baths were also installed in homes (Boyer, 1964: 215), varying in size and grandeur according to the wealth of their owners, although their basic layout remained consistent (Laugier, 1725 : 168).

In terms of interior architectural design, two types can be distinguished, reflecting both Ottoman and Andalusian cultural influences (Cherif-Seffadj, 2007: 212). Master builders, who fled Andalusia for refuge in Algeria and other Maghreb countries introduced construction and ornamentation techniques from their homeland. The Ottomans also significantly contributed to the architectural history of Algeria's urban centers. Hence, during the Ottoman era, Algerian baths were often referred to as "Turkish Baths" or "Moorish Baths", as they were primarily built by the Turks and the Moors, depending on the architectural expertise of the Andalusians and the Moors. incorporating the architectural expertise of both groups, Consequently, many French sources refer to these baths as "Bain Maure" (Moorish Baths) (Karim, 2007 : 33).

The Algerian baths were typically known for their consistent architectural composition, characterized by the presence of two temperature zones:

- **The cold zone:** this area consisted of the disrobing and resting room, where clients changed their clothes and relaxed after bathing, The coolness and tranquility of this space earned it the names "bit al q'ād" and "bīt al-bārda" (meaning "rest room" and "cold room"). This zone was adorned with ceramic motifs in various colors, covering the wall and featuring diverse arches, columns, and capitals.

- **The heated zone :** this section included the warm room (bīt al-wāṣṭa) and the hot room (bit al-skhūna); the hot room was centrally organized, with a large marble platform (al-rkhāma) in the middle used for massages. Surrounding the central space were one or two private rooms, each

equipped with marble basins. The hot room was typically square-shaped, with an octagonal dome punctuated by a small geometric opening. Other annexes included the storage room (makhzan) adjacent to the boiler for fuel storage, Sqīfa (a shed), and the furnace (stove room and copper pot) (Cherif-Seffadj, 2009 : 164,165).

In most Algerian baths, the floor of the hot room utilized hypocaust¹ tunnels to circulate steam coming from the furnace. The heat from the flames passed through these tunnels, efficiently spreading across the surface. This was made possible by the presence of two chimneys located on opposite sides of the hot room. The chimney embedded in the furnace walls further contributed to the heat distribution, sharing a common wall with the warm room. (Cherif-Seffadj, 2009 : 168).

In the heating system, using two tanks, the biggest one receives water from the outside to circulate it to the basins of the hot room through copper pipes. A portion of this water is discharged into the second tank, of smaller size, which plays the role of the boiler since it was fixed over the fire, located inside the furnace (oven), it contains boiling water, which is conducted to the hot water basins through pipes that file along with that of the cold water. (Cherif-Seffadj, 2009, p. 168).

As for the swimming pools, they were not common in public baths except in some of them (Khalasi, 2007, p. 38). So, it was impossible for infectious diseases to be transmitted, as Mascarenhas pointed out in the 17th century: “They were clean and sanatory for the body; neither a man nor a woman ever suffered from infectious diseases or any other ones” (Mascarenhas, 1998 :77).

It seems that the 16th century was the golden period for the construction of baths. The number of baths in Algiers did not exceed four or five by the middle of that century. However, due to the Andalusian migration to Algeria, the number of baths increased by the end of the 16th century and even outnumbered those in Istanbul later, especially after completing the construction of several springs in 1620 such as Telimly, Bīr-trāria, El-Hāmma, and Ayn Zebūdja (Cherif-Seffadj, 2007: 199), where the number reached around 50 to 60 Hammam, including two main ones: Hassan Pasha Hammam and Muhammad Pasha Hammam (Haedo, 1870: 195).

As for the 18th century, according to Dr. Shaw, there was not a single neighbourhood that didn't acquire a Hammam, and he stated around 12 regular hammams and 62 steam baths (Shaw, 1980: 294), for this number to decrease up to 31 hammams during the French colonialism, where they demolished 24 of them under the pretext of expansion and development of the town (Cherif-Seffadj, 2007: 204), One of the most known Hammams in Algiers is the Hammam installed by Hassan Pasha (Haedo, 1870: 195), imitating his father Khayr al-Dīn Barbarūsse when he built a Hammam for his Khalifs to benefit from its profits (Haedo, 1870: 81et 131).

This Hammam is located in the center of the town, consisting of ultra-solid basements completely covered in polished marble. It is divided into two square rooms that are spacious and wide. The first room is where the clients change their clothes and leave their properties that are safely kept. As for the second room, there are multiple small chambers that can take from 10 to 12 people. They are extremely hot chambers. Each room has a fountain to which hot water flows from the bath wall through bronze pipes that circle the second room, where large amounts of hot water arrive from a back room where the water is constantly heated. Each room has a marble tub that receives hot water, and near it is another tub of lukewarm water that is brought in the same way through special pipes (Haedo, 1870 : 195,196).

¹ - An ancient Roman central heating system with underground furnace and tile flues to distribute the heat.

The second Hammam, built by Muhammad Pasha which was named after him, is located slightly behind and at the east of Hassan Pasha's Hammam; it was also built in the same style yet smaller. People didn't frequent it often compared to Hassan Pasha's Hammam (Haedo, 1870: 197). Unlike this pattern, there were other Hammams such as Hammam Qaşr-El-Bayāt (the palace of the Beys) east of the Qaşbah, which consists of two floors: a ground floor with two rooms and an upper floor with a bathroom, a toilet and a restroom (Khalasi, 2007: 69).

One of the most important Hammams that have also existed in the city of Algiers are:

- Hammam Būkedūr near Sīdī Mhammad al-Sharīf
- Hammam Sīdnā in Al-Qaşaba
- Hammam EL-Blī
- Hammam Al-Aghā, in the al- Qaşaba al- 'ulyā (upper Qaşaba)
- Hammam Bāb al-Jadīd
- Hammam Sīdī Ramdān
- Hammam ṭāq- ṭāq
- Hammam hamza Khūja
- Hammam al-Fwīṭa (Hammam ' Abdī Pasha)
- Hammam al-Sbū ' a (Lions)
- Hammam Kūsha Mūsā
- Hammam al-Saghīr
- Hammam al-Mālah
- Hammam Al-Janīna
- Hammam Bāb- ' Azzūn
- Hammam Sūq -El-Kittān, and many others (Saidouni, 2008: 381).

As for the mineral thermal hammams, only a few existed in the city of Algiers; one of them is a source near Bāb- ' Azzūn, whose water temperature never surpasses 24°C (Bonnafont, 1839 : 51), whereas the province of Constantine was full of hot springs, be they thermal or sulfurous compared to Algiers. We can find Hammam Brada' and Hammam El-Maskhūtīn in Guelma, the source of Sīdī Yakūb, the source of Ayn-Hassan, the source of Sīdī-El-Habshī, and the source of Būmerzūk (Bonnafont, 1839 : 53-55).

3. Endowment baths (Waqf) :

During the Ottoman era, certain baths (Hammams) in Algeria were frequently established as real estate endowments (Waqf) in benefit of religious or charitable institutions. The Ottoman administration archives, including Bāylek Records and Court Documents (Mahākīm al-Shar' iyya-) provide substantial information on the management and financial revenues of these baths. Records from approximately 300 Bāylek and Bayt al-Māl (Treasury of Wealth) covering the entire Ottoman period (from 1005 AH/1596-1597 to 1272 AH/1855-1856) contain data on the endowment (Waqf) of the baths, which is also documented within the Waqf Foundation itself (Cherif-Seffadj, 2007: 206).

The establishment of a bath (Hammam) as an endowment (Waqf) did not always coincide with the date of its original construction. Some baths were designated as endowments from the beginning, and others during their second restoration or reconstruction, which generally occurred long after ; such as the Hammam Katshāwa, which was donated for the benefit of the mosque of the same name during its reconstruction by Hasan Pasha in 1210 H/1796AD, and the Hammam of the Safīr mosque, which was built at the same time as the reconstruction of the Safīr mosque in 1242 H/1826-27AD, by the last sovereign of Algiers, Husayn Dey. Where they were dedicated to one or more institutions long after their establishment. The beneficiaries of these endowments generally fell into two categories: one type directed the income to a single institution or divided it among several; the other type saw the income initially allocated to the founder's children and heirs, with the remainder transferred to religious institutions after their deaths (Cherif-Seffadj, 2007 : 210,211).

The first beneficiaries of the waqf (endowment) baths were mosques such as the Grand Mosque (Jāma' al-Kabīr), the largest Maliki mosque in Algiers, which received the proceeds of eight baths, two of which were exclusively reserved for its benefit. The Husayn Pasha Mitzū Murtū Mosque received revenues of five baths, with two fully allocated to it ; one of these baths located under the mosque, had revenues reached of 396 riyals and also benefited from the half of revenue of the hammam Bāb al-Wād, which was reached of 120 riyals (Baylīk, Records,147). While the 'Abdī Pasha Mosque benefited from the income of three baths, one of which was entirely reserved for the mosque, located near the al-Qaṣba al-Jadīda (new citadel), which was established by 'Abdī Pasha in 1143H/1730AD (al- Mahākīm, box129 : 15). The 'Alī Pasha mosque gained partial revenue from two baths, and the Khīḍer Pasha mosque received partial income from three baths. The Safīr Mosque had two baths included in its waqf. It is also important to note that these endowment baths were not always located near the mosques they supported (Cherif-Seffadj, 2007 : 210,211).

The second institution that benefited from the revenues of the baths was the water spring baths (al-'Ayūn), where thirteen baths were mentioned with part of their incomes being allocated to the springs under a contract known as "al-'Anā'," which refers to a long-term lease contract with the special condition of inheritance by the tenant's heirs. The third institution benefiting from the revenues of the waqf (endowment) baths was Meka and Medīna (the two holy sanctuaries), which owned nearly three-quarters of the waqf properties, dedicating their incomes to the poor. This institution benefited from the revenues of seven baths. The fourth institution, known as Sbūl al-Khayrāt, benefited from the revenues of two baths (Cherif-Seffadj, 2007 : 213,214).

4. Management of hammams and water resources:

According to historical documents, these baths were not always directly managed by their owners. Instead, they were often rented out to individuals who operated them in exchange for rent. The manager of the bath, known as the "Master" or " Ḥammāmjī," was responsible for overseeing the operation of the bath on behalf of the institution to which it had been endowed (Waqf). In some records, the manager is described as being responsible for the overall management of the endowment and receiving a separate salary in addition to the profit generated by the enterprise (Cherif-Seffadj, 2007 : 216).

The baths manager supervised a team of staff. For men's service, the internal staff typically consisted of three staff members: a guard, who also works as a cashier; a keyās (washer and masseur); and a third person, usually a young attendant, who moved between rooms, carrying towels, assisting the elderly, and ensuring the cleanliness and comfort of the bath for women. The staff was similarly organized, with roles including the cashier, the qabāḍat-alrrūzem (a woman who is responsible for guarding clothes), and the Tiyyābāt al-hammām, who performed washing and massage services. Additionally, external staff, such as those working in the furnace room, were responsible for maintaining the water supply to the bath (Carrier, 2000 : 1310).

Hammams were largely operated by Beni-Mzāb (the Mūzabites)¹, who were renowned for the professionalism and monopoly of this trade² (Spencer, 2007 : 100). Some baths were owned by the

¹ - The Mūzabites form a separate body. They owned all the flour mills, bakeries of the city, public baths, and meat farms (venture, 2006 : 34). Their corporation was the wealthiest. and often provided loans to the pasha, its members worked as bath attendants, sellers, millers (Tachrifat, 1852 : 23) donkey drivers, coal merchants, bakers, wheat and vegetable merchants (Haedo, 1870 : 196).

² - They were enjoyed more privileges than the Moors (venture, 2006 : 34).because they were distinguished by their dedication and mastery in the work assigned to them. Generally, they were sober and honest, only concerned with the interests of their trade, where they often acquired a reputation for integrity along with wealth, as well as its loyalty to the rulers and its support in their struggle against the Kūlūghlis, especially in 1629 AD (Haedo, 1870 : 196).

Mūzabites (Pfeiffer, 2009: 171), while others were rented as endowment baths (Hammāmāt Al-awqāf) (Cherif-Seffadj, 2007: 218). For instance, Hammam Sīdnā (Hassan Pasha) was rented by Bekīr Ben ūmar, the secretary of the Beni Mzāb community, and was later managed by his son after his death (Haedo, 1870: 196). However, despite their control of the profession, Ottoman authorities issued a law in 1698 AD that prohibited tenants from dismissing the employees or pitting them against one another, even if they intended to abandon the bath's lease (al-Shwīhad, 2006: 90).

Baths were supervised by a person called “Amīn el- hammāmjiya” or “hmāymī”¹ who was often from the Mūzabites, and his job consists of offering different services to the Beylek (Ottoman Administration), such as providing meat for the army and animals for them to use, and he also pays 400 Būjū to the Baylık as a rental fee for the sacred month of Ramadan and 50 Būjū per hammam (Cherif-Seffadj, 2007:218).

The endowment (waqf) baths are supervised by the manager (wakīl); as for the public baths, they are supervised by the water spring manager (Khūjat al-‘Ayūn)², who is in charge of water installations such as springs, canals, waterwheels, and public baths. He also oversees the endowments allocated to spend on their maintenance (Saidouni, 2008: 180). In addition to that, there were some Hammams that have been monitored by the army in order to impose certain ethics and ensure the well conduct of the baths, as stated by Ibn al-Shwīhad, that the Dey Muhammad Bekdāch and his army agreed on setting the times of entering the baths as follows: from noon to the afternoon for the people and from the afternoon to the evening for the adulteresses, and it has been signed in 1744 AD (al-Shwīhad, 2006: 128).

As for the times of using the baths, women were allowed to use them from noon till night and from night till noon for men (Haedo, 1870: 196), furthermore, women had their own bath which men would never dare to enter under any circumstances as they were safeguarded and protected places for women (Laugier, 1725: 187), and if any man sets a foot there, he would be put under immediate punishment (Mascarenhas, 1998: 77), and According to Haedo in the 16th century Jews were not allowed to enter Muslim Bath unlike the Christians (Haedo, 1870: 196), However, Dr. Shaw stated that in the 18th century Jews had their own bath, which could be noticed in the surroundings of Chlef (Shaw, 1980: 288).

As for the sources of water used to supply the Hammams, there were wells, springs, rivers, and valleys through channels of pottery, stone, etc., some of which were installed on the ground and some were installed underground. For instance, Algiers had four main channels to supply the city with water to drink: hammams, hotels, military barracks, etc. (Saidouni, 2008 : 375). Which were:

- Sāqiyat Tilemly (waterwheel) built by Hassan Pasha in 1550 AD with an extant of 4880 meters and secondary channel connected to it with a length of 908 meters and an average of 561 liters per day.
- Sāqiyat bīr-Trarīa (waterwheel): built by A‘rab Ahmad Pasha in 1573 AD with a length of 1700 meters and an average of 126144 liters per day.
- Sāqiyat El-Hāma was built by the Andalusian architect El-ūsta Mūsā between 1610 and 1611 AD, with an average of 777600 liters per day.
- Sāqiyat ‘Ayn Zabūdja was built by the last deys of Algiers Husayn Pasha. It is considered the longest waterwheel, with 11540 meters from which 9000 liters were dedicated to the

¹- hmāymī(Hammāmji): person who does the cleaning in the bath and provides warm water and massaging (al-Shwīhad, 2006: 46).

² - Secretary assigned to the administration of the city's water and fountains. Can also play the role of head of the Fountain Corporation.

main channels supplying 14 public springs in the city and an average of 734400 liters per day (Saidouni, 2008 : 376-387).

The baths were also supplied through tanks and reservoirs where rainwater was collected to be used during periods of drought and blockade or when earthquakes often damaged water supply channels. These reservoirs and tanks have been built since the 16th century, and their number was estimated at 1100 reservoirs in 1840 AD and were distributed on 2000 houses, each with a capacity of 70 cubic liters in 1840 AD and were distributed on 2000 houses, each with a capacity of 70 cubic liters (Saidouni, 2008 : 380).

5. Bathing process:

To access the bath, patrons were required to pay a fee. The price varied depending on the services offered by the hammam and the level of luxury of the bath. However, the amount rarely exceeded one Riyāl Būjū (Boyer, 1964 : 215). For example, at Hassan Pasha's bath, one asper¹ was paid to the bath supervisor, with additional payments required for massages or towels, depending on the client's requests (Haedo, 1870 : 196).

After paying the required fees, the client would leave his clothes in a large, guarded external room and proceed to another area with several extremely hot rooms. Each room could accommodate 10 or 12 people. Inside each room, there is a tub into which hot water flowed through bronze pipes from a rear room, and nearby, a second tub containing lukewarm water, which was brought a similar system of pipes (Haedo, 1870: 195,196).

The client would pass through rooms of gradually increasing heat until reaching the "sicakodasi," or Caldarium, as it was known in Roman times. Here, they would lie on sofas of marigold, enveloped in clouds of hot steam and pleasant aromas. After a few minutes of rest, two attendants would arrive to scrub the body and crack his client's joints, afterward, the client would return to the first room, where they would be offered drinks and spray him with rose water (Spencer, 2007: 114,115).

For women, after completing the various phases of steaming, servants would clean them from head to toe using rose water, then apply musk and other fragrances (Spencer, 2007: 115), perfume was also sprayed on their hair and their eyebrows drawn. Afterward, they would put on clothes that had been perfumed with aloe wood essence (Pananti, 1820 : 331) or garments that had been hanging in rooms filled with burning O'ud Al Qamari (incense stick) (Spencer, 2007: 115) .

Then, they move to another room to enjoy the dancers and singers' performances where fruits, jam, and drinks were offered (Pananti, 1820 : 331), as well as Sherbet, nuts, and other sweets such as lucum, the most preferred sweet for Turkish people, and the sweet fingers of the bride. And this is how Algerian ladies spend a day of their week in such a cheerful atmosphere (Spencer, 2007 : 115).

Unlike Algerian women, Jewish women were not used to going to the public baths, as they were not allowed to enter them under any circumstances. According to Haedo, the Jewish woman is filthy, and her smell was similar to that of a goat (Haedo, 1870 : 137).

¹ - **Asper**: Silver Currency, small coins equal to 1 cent and 2/3.

6. Symbolism of the hammam (bath) in society:

In Algeria, beyond their hygienic function, Hammams played important social roles. They were places where Algerians themselves for both religious and hygienic purposes. Men and women of Al-Haḍr meet in separate sections or rooms to arrange marriages, organize funerals, and discuss business, family matters, and social events (Spencer, 2007: 114).

6.1. Cleanliness and purity:

Bathing is an essential daily practice for people worldwide, and hammams fulfilled this need by serving multiple functions in society, particularly in terms of hygiene, purification, and religious rituals, especially in the Muslim communities.

In this respect, Algerian society was similar to other Muslim communities, as people frequently visited the hammam for cleanliness and ablution. As noted by Laugier De Tassy: "I found many hot baths in the city of Algiers, and they were not expensive, beside the ablution performed by Algerians before the five daily prayers, it is also common for them to bathe whenever time allows" (Laugier, 1725 : 169). This practice was especially observed on Fridays, the day of Jūmu'a prayer". For example, the Dey and Nobles would use the Dey's hammam every Friday, while on other days, their servants were allowed to use it and were treated with the same luxury, receiving washing and massages etc. (Mascarenhas, 1998: 78 et 98).

Although many Algerian women, particularly nobles, had private baths in their homes, they preferred visiting public baths at least twice a week in the afternoon, as the baths were only reserved for men earlier in the day. Women would bring one or more maids to carry items they needed for the Hammam, such as clean clothes, soap, or clay (Tefeul) from Fez, which was prized for its whitening and softening the skin (Haedo, 1870: 132).

The hammam was a favored space for women to perform their beauty rituals. After waxing, they would cover their bodies with Moroccan soap, which was known to whiten and soften the skin (Renaudot, 1830 : 58). African women would then massage them, as they often spent the entire day at the bath (Boyer, 1964: 216). Women also groomed their eyebrows, applied Kūhl (Kajal) to their eyes, and used Hinn'a on their hands (Renaudot, 1830: 59). Finally, they sprayed their bodies with perfumes, often made from roses, sage, rosemary, or orange blossoms, etc. (Haedo, 1870 : 133). Perfumes, particularly Musk and rose, were heavily favored (Renaudot, 1830 : 59).

It is worth noting that Algerian women frequently visited hammams (Renaudot, 1830: 58). This is why Pannanti remarked, " The women of Algeria are obsessed with baths, as it is the only place where they get to enjoy their personal freedom"(Pananti, 1820: 331). Additionally, Hammams provided an opportunity for some women to showcase their adornments and their families's wealth by wearing vests embroidered with gold and caftans made of soft fabrics and velvet, as well as golden and pearly ribbons on their heads. They also brought maids to serve them (Pananti, 1820: 299).

6.2. Relaxation and therapy:

Hammams served as a form of entertainment during the ottoman era, much like special gatherings for wedding, circumcisions, and births (Shaler, 1982: 88), as well as celebrations in public squares and religious events (Spencer, 2007: 112). Many people chose Hammams as a place of relaxation. When the body was weary, the bath provided comfort and relief, particularly for those under stress. Baths were highly effective in promoting relaxation and comfort (Carlier, 2000 :

1305). The atmosphere within the hammam had a significant effect on visitors, as noted by Ibn Khaldūn: " we can notice that people who go to the hammam, the moment they breathe its air and get used to the temperature of the air in their souls... they feel happy and some even starts singing out of pleasure". (Ibn Khaldūn, 2004: 194).

Since antiquity, baths have played a crucial role in people's lives, serving as a source of hygiene and treatment for various diseases across all age groups (Shaw, 1980: 82). Many visited baths for both treatment or diseases prevention (Doudou, 1975 : 14). Hammams specifically dedicated to treatment included natural mineral baths, which required visitors to wash before entering the tubs (Khalasi, 2007 : 39). Given the relaxing and therapeutic benefits of baths, they were often recommended as preventive and curative remedies, and were sometimes preferred over cupping (Hijāma) as they were considered complementary to plant-based treatments. Baths were even referred to as the "**silent doctor**" (Carlier, 2000 : 1305).

In Algeria, one form of treatment involved a belief in the healing powers of certain bath waters, which effectively transformed some hammams into hospitals. People would visit these baths seeking healing through immersion in their waters (Armand, 1859: 442). The waters were believed to cure various ailments such as scabies and pityriasis, as seen with the waters of Hammam Milwān in Blida (Bonnafont, 1839: 52) and Hammam El-Maskhūtīn in Guelma, known for their sulphurous and extremely hot waters (Shaw, 1980: 28), which were thought to treat fistulas, joint, rheumatism, fevers, and chronic skin diseases (Bonnafont, 1839: 53), Hammam Rīgha also attracts many ill people during spring, who think that it is quite efficient in treating jaundice, rheumatism, and many other chronic diseases (Shaw, 1980: 289). This is the reason why some Murabuts advised patients to bathe in the mineral baths in order to treat different skin diseases, rheumatism, and many others... (El Kechai, 2004 : 199).

These baths and springs were not only for bathing; however, they were a place where oblations and animal sacrifices were offered to the Jinns (demons). Thus, they turn into hospitals for treatment and healing as women and their negress maids go there carrying Būkhūr (incense), stoves, cake, sheep, goats, and roosters to slaughter them at the spring (Armand, 1859 : 442). Among these springs, there was one that was established in the outers of Bāb al-Wād by Dey Husayn Pasha in 1823AD (Saidouni, 2008: 373), called 'Ayūn Beni Menād (Seb'a - 'Ayūn or Ayūn El Jinn), which women visited every Wednesday (Trumelet., 1887, p. 360), asking for healing or fulfillment of their wishes (klein.H, 1937: 186,187).

They would slaughter chickens and offer them as oblation, thinking that the hot waters could keep the effect of the hidden spirits away from them (Saidouni, 2008: 373). The same thing was happening near the shrine of Sīdī Blāl, where there was a tub, and near it the black people would burn Būkhūr and slaughter chickens as an oblation to their black Lālla Yīma Hawā' (Trumelet, 1892: 360).

Whereas outside of Constantine there was Hammam Sīdī Msīd, from which hot water flows, lived several turtles that women believed were demons, and if one of them got sick, she would think it was because of the turtles. She would slaughter a white chicken and put it in a pot with its feathers at the spring and surround them by candles with the intention of healing. But according to Al-Wazān, some people deceived women by following them to the spring and taking the chickens to eat them (Al-Wazān Al-Fesī, 1983: 59).

6.3.Social events and ceremonies:

A. Engagement and wedding:

During the Ottoman era, it was rare for Algerian women to leave their homes, and when they did, they wore clothing that covered their faces. As a result, hammams became ideal places to find potential brides, as marriage was often a topic of discussion among women in these spaces. According to Schaller, "Marriage-planning was discussed by mothers and female relatives when they gathered at house events or baths" (Shaler, 1982: 87).

The Hammam functioned as something of a marriage agency, where mothers sought suitable brides for their sons and observed the girl's behavior. Once a potential match was found, men took over to investigate the family reputation and finalize the wedding arrangements (Carlier, 2000 : 1313). After agreeing on a date, preparations for the bride would begin, and she would be taken to the hammam three days before the wedding (Pananti, 1820:311). There, Moorish women skilled in beautification would adorn her (Haedo, 1870: 117).

B. The week of the new born:

Seven days after childbirth, family and friends would gather for a celebratory meal. Following this, the new mother and her child were taken to the hammam, accompanied by the sound of tambourines. The newborn was dressed in beautiful clothing and carried by African women or Christian servants, who marched in the center of the procession. After the mother and her child finished bathing, they would return home for further celebrations, including dancing to the beat of a tambourines (Haedo, 1870: 123).

C. Baths as a communicative space:

In addition to being centers for rest and rejuvenation since ancient times, baths played an important social role as spaces for gathering, conversation, and exchange of ideas about daily life. In the Algerian community, as in other societies, hammams were considered key sites for communication and news sharing (Carlier, 2000: 1306). This was especially true for women, who saw the hammam as an opportunity to go out, talk, and exchange ideas about cooking, adornments, and other topics. Social bonds were strengthened, and knowledge was shared within the baths (Carlier, 2000 : 1313). Even rituals, such as Palmistry, were practiced in the hammams, often to predict matters related to marriage or the health of a husband (Boyer, 1964 : 216).

Economically, hammams created several employment opportunities, such as for qahwāji (coffee/drink seller), the beautifier, el- Kiyās (scrubber), and Tiyyābāt al-hammām¹ (female scrubber). They also supported various trades by revitalizing industries such as soap making, towel production, al-būkhūr (incense), and perfumes, all of which were frequently used in the baths. Hammams also contributed to public revenue, With shaykh El-Baled collecting 12.4 ryal from the baths (Al-Shwīhad , 2006: 115). The hmāymī paid three Riyāl annually (Al-Shwīhad , 2006: 96), while the Amīn el- hammāmjiya regularly paid the Baylīk two types of royalties: « ijāra » fixed amount of 400 būjū paid during Ramadan, and haq al-sabet, a contribution from producers in stores, mills, and baths amounting to 50 būjū per hammam (Cherif-Seffadj, 2007: 218).

It is important to note that baths were used for a variety of purposes; according to Corrine Chevalier, many slaves in the early Ottoman era were imprisoned in the baths at night, but as their

¹- Tiyyābāt al-hammām (female scrubber), Kiyās (male scrubber): They have a strong structure and specialize in body exfoliation and massage the bodies of bathers with a glove made of burlap or horsehair called kāsa.

numbers grew, proper prisons were built (Chevalier,2007 : 58). Additionally, from the 18th century until the end of the 19th century, baths were used as hotels or accommodations for passing merchants who could not find rooms in inns, as well as for seasonal workers and peasants arriving to town (Carlier, 2000 : 1311).

Additionally, baths were often used as locations to eliminate enemies and settle political disputes, a practice dating back to the Ottoman period in Algeria. For instance, the ruler Sālem Al-Tūmi was killed by Arrūj Barbarūsse in the bath in 1516 AD (Haedo, 1870: 202- Laugier, 1725: 12), Similarly, Al-Hāj ‘Ali Pasha was assassinated in 1815 AD in the bath of his castle after six years of rule (Tachrifat, 1852, p. 85), following a conspiracy led by ‘Omar Aghā and Wakīl Al-Kharāj. When the Dey entered the bath, the door was locked, and a fire was set. Overcome by smoke, he was dragged outside and killed (Al-zahār, 1972: 111).

Conclusion :

From the analysis above, the derivation largely came from both the Andalusian and Ottoman cultures. So, the Andalusian and the Ottoman bath models seem to have been predominant from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Thus, it is clear that hammams (baths) in Algeria in the Ottoman era, whether built or natural (minerals), played a vital role in Algerian society during the Ottoman period. They were among the most important public facilities, with each neighborhood boasting one or more baths, making them essential for the community.

Hammams (baths) have played an important role in Algerian history and social customs, they have represented an ancient tradition passed down through generations; whether mineral natural baths or steam baths. While their primary function was cleanliness and purification for religious rituals, they served many other purposes, including the treatment of physical ailments such as joint pain, rheumatism, and skin diseases. Some natural baths even gained metaphysical significance due to popular belief in their ability to heal spiritual afflictions, fulfill wishes, and solve daily problems through sacrifices made to the spirits believed to inhabit them. This belief was often linked to the Murabitun. That's why they were even referred to as the silent doctor.

Hammams were also spaces for relaxation and leisure, facilitating communication and the exchange of ideas, particularly among women. Who have transformed the bath into a venue to display social status by showcasing their adornments and wealth. In addition, hammams played a central role in social events, such as circumcisions, childbirth, celebrations, and marriage arrangements. They were places where families formed alliances and business deals were made.

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