

## **Turkish Words in the Ottoman Documents (Beyt El-mal and Religious Court Records) Inheritances of Women as a Sample**

Leila Kheirani\*

### **Abstract**

The Registers of Beyt-El mal are considered as the main source for writing economic and social history. These registers were delivered by the institution of Beyt-El mal which is one of the most important institutions that existed in Algiers during the Ottoman period. It assumes the management of properties that belong to orphans and absent people. From the study of these registers, a great deal of Turkish words has found, therefore these words would be highlighted and the importance of the study in the economic and social history of Algiers in the Ottoman period would be specified.

**Keywords:** Turkish words, women, Ottoman, Beyt-El mal, Algiers

### **Kadın Terekeleri Örneğinde Osmanlı Belgelerinde Türkçe Kelimeler (Beytü'l-Mal ve Şeriye Sicilleri)**

### **Özet**

Beytü'l-Mal kayıtları iktisadi ve toplumsal tarihyazımının ana kaynağı kabul edilir. Bu kayıtlar Osmanlı döneminde Cezayir'deki en önemli kurumlardan olan Beytü'l-Mal kurumu tarafından ulaştırılmıştır. Bu kurum yetim ve kayıp insanlara ait malların idaresini üstlenmiştir. Bu kayıtlar çalışıldığında büyük miktarda Türkçe kelimelere rastlanmıştır. Bundan dolayı bu kelimeler Osmanlı döneminde Cezayir'in iktisadi ve toplumsal tarihini çalışmayı aydınlatacak ve önemli kılacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türkçe kelimeler, kadın, Osmanlı, Beytülmal, Cezayir.

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\* Assoc. Prof. Dr., University of Algiers 2, Algeria, l.kheirani@hotmail.com, (Makale gönderim tarihi: 2016-02-11, makale kabul tarihi: 2016-03-29).

## Introduction

The historical documents<sup>1</sup> are, for the historian and the researcher, the material evidence through which he is guided to the right way in order to reach a scientific result<sup>2</sup>. The several and various Ottoman documents available in the Center of the National Archives are clear evidence that Algeria had an accurate features administration and very well-organized too. Besides, as its system was well-structured and well-coordinated, we conclude that the State took care of recording all the data and cases submitted to its courts whether it has to do with the religious judge<sup>3</sup> or Beyt El-Mal i.e. the inheritances of deceased persons<sup>4</sup> as well as supervising and taking care of the cases of disadvantaged and needy people from the social strata<sup>5</sup>.

It also indicates that all the Algerian people had a structural archive administration, and the Basha had a special office in charge of searching in the archives for some documents that he has in need to understand a particular issue concerning the internal or external interests of the State<sup>6</sup>.

Algeria like the other Ottoman Provinces possesses extensive funds of official local documents going back to the Ottoman period which

<sup>1</sup> About the Ottoman documents, see :

- ليلي خيراني، واقع النساء في مجتمع مدينة الجزائر، دراسة مستقاة من مصادر محلية، 1830-1800، جامعة الجزائر 2006-2007، 13-25.

<sup>2</sup> - شهاب الدين يلس، الوثائق الوطنية، الفهرس التحليلي للوثائق التاريخية للرصيد العثماني 1058-1279-1648/1862م، عدد خاص 8-9، الجزائر 1980، 12.

- شهاب الدين يلس ، الفهرس التحليلي للوثائق التاريخية للرصيد العثماني " 1058-1279م/1648-1862م " عدد خاص 8-9 يخص دفاتر بيت المال و دفاتر البايك.

<sup>3</sup> - It concerns several contracts of religious courts available in the Center of the National Archives.

<sup>4</sup> - The series of Beyt El-Mal available at the Center of the National Archives conserved in a microfilm, for more details, see: A, Temimi, *Sommaire des Registres Arabes et Turcs d'Alger*, 2, Publication de la Revue d'Histoire Maghrébine, Tunis 1979.

<sup>5</sup> -The share of the poor from Beyt El-Mal

<sup>6</sup> -خليفة حماش، كشاف و وثائق تاريخ الجزائر في العهد العثماني، بالمكتبتين الوطنيتين الجزائرية والتونسية، منشورات كلية الأدب والعلوم الإنسانية، 2010، 286.

are all conserved in the Center of the Algerian National Archives<sup>7</sup>. They are rare regarding the XVI<sup>th</sup> century and few regarding the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, but they are abundant and various regarding the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century and the early XIX<sup>th</sup> century, which led some researchers to consider them as the only source of the end of the Ottoman Empire in Algeria<sup>8</sup>. Hence, this study doesn't concern the whole funds going back to this period but I limit it to the series of religious courts and the series of Beyt El-Mal.

### Documents of Religious Courts Contracts and their importance

The Ottoman documents were exposed to destruction and loss during the French reign of Algeria owing to the occupation and the prevailing and deliberate chaos from the employees of the administrative system. This situation led to the disappearance of a great deal of official documents from the hands of Algerian supervisors after being dismissed<sup>9</sup>. The loss of the Ottoman documents was not only limited to Algiers city but it was exceeded across all the cities that have incurred the French invasion including the cities of Constantine and Tlemcen<sup>10</sup>.

However, the documents that survived from the loss and defalcation are estimated to about 520 registers spanning in its whole 84000 pages, classified in the series of (Z) of the French documents and containing 47 boxes of size "7" among them 450 were registered. They were classified by the curator of documents Albert Devoulx<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> - عائشة غطاس، "سجلات المحاكم الشرعية و أهميتها في دراسة التاريخ الاقتصادي و الاجتماعي بمجتمع مدينة الجزائر -العهد العثماني-" إنسانيات، العدد 3، السنة 1997، 70.

<sup>8</sup> - ناصر الدين سعيدوني، "نظرة حول الوثائق العثمانية بالجزائر و مكانتها في تاريخ الجزائر الحديث"، مجلة التاريخ، العدد 4، المركز الوطني للدراسات التاريخية، الجزائر 1977، 140.

<sup>9</sup> - سعيدوني، نظرة حول الوثائق العثمانية، نفس المرجع، 145.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*, 145.

About the loss of the Algerian Ottoman documents, see the study undertaken by Abdul Jalil Al-Tamimi in the index of the Arab and Turkish registers in Algeria, the Maghrebian Historical Journal, 2.

<sup>11</sup> - Yels, *National Documents*, 8.

These registers comprehend 153 boxes, each box contains more than 100 documents and sometimes even more and they concern in their whole Algiers city and its neighboring regions<sup>12</sup>. These documents were collected from the different Hanafi and Maliki Algerian Courts, in the forefront the courts of Algiers city of the French administration in Algeria during the early thirty years of the occupation (1830-1860) via the agents of the local administration and the employees of the real estate service (Domaine) in Algeria to the need of the French authority at that time in order to identify all what has to with the private properties or Waqfs with a view to extort its properties, repeal its provisions and facilitate the procedures of its appropriation<sup>13</sup>.

These documents were various and abundant where the multifunction played by the judge at that time appeared through all the cases submitted to his council. These cases transcended its religious aspects to different aspects, thus we notice that the documentalists were keen on recording all the raised cases. Hence, the religious judge took care of implementing laws through punishing lawbreakers, looked into litigation and judged them and took care of minors, orphans and needy people affairs. He was the judge of personal status and the supervisor of Wafqs and Habous<sup>14</sup>. Besides, he looked closely at all the transactions between individuals regarding sale and purchase, procurement and donation contracts by way of example, not exhaustively. These cases were various and numerous in the religious courts and this is what made us point out to the eminent function of the judge who proved to be keen on implementing the provisions emanating from the Islamic Shariaa whether it had to do with Hanafi or Maliki doctrines<sup>15</sup>.

The Ottoman documents remain the main funds that we cannot dispense with them in our study concerning the social and economic

<sup>12</sup> - عائشة غطاس، الحرف و الحرفيون بمدينة الجزائر 1700-1830، مقارنة اجتماعية و اقتصادية، دكتوراه دولة، جامعة الجزائر 2001.

<sup>13</sup> - ناصر الدين سعيدوني، ورفقات جزائرية، دراسات وأبحاث في تاريخ الجزائر في العهد العثماني، دار الغرب الإسلامي، الطبعة 1، بيروت، 2000، 73.

<sup>14</sup> - غطاس، سجلات المحاكم الشرعية، 71.

<sup>15</sup> - مصطفى أحمد بن حموش، فقه العمران الإسلامي، من خلال الأرشيف العثماني الجزائري 1549-1830، 24.

life of the history of Algeria during the Ottoman Empire. Glasman has written about the importance of these documents saying: "...Any source cannot describe accurately the social, the political and the economic life as given by the documents of the religious courts since there are not only an accurate image of the urban structure of the society, but go beyond to describe the social relationships and its interaction..."<sup>16</sup>. Furthermore, Tamimi considers the Ottoman funds as a rich mine of fundamental information hoarded by the State in terms of social and economic data of any State<sup>17</sup>.

### Series of Beyt El-Mal registers<sup>18</sup>

Beyt El-Mal registers are considered as a primary source to write the social and the economic history. They are issued by the institution of Beyt El-Mal which is considered as one of the main institutions

<sup>16</sup> Vladimir Glasman, "Les Documents du Tribunal Religieux de Hama. Dans Les Villes de l'Empire Ottoman" *Activités et Sociétés*, 1, Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris 1991, 33.

<sup>17</sup> Temimi, Sommaire des Registres, 18-193.

See also about the importance of the Ottoman documents :

عبد الجليل التميمي، "الدفاتر التركية و العربية في الجزائر"، مجلة الأصاله، العدد 14-15، 1973، 36-37.

See also :

-محمود عباس حمودة، الوثائق العثمانية في تركيا ومصر ودول شمال إفريقيا، دار غريب للطباعة والنشر والتوزيع، القاهرة، 1999.

- دعد الحكيم، الوثائق الشرعية كمصدر لبحث الحياة الاقتصادية في العهد العثماني، ثلاث وثائق من دمشق تعالج ذلك. مقال في أعمال ملتقى الحياة الاقتصادية للولايات العربية و مصادر وثائقها في العهد العثماني الجزء 1 الجزء 2، منشورات مركز الدراسات والبحوث عن الولايات العربية في العهد العثماني، زغوان 1986.

<sup>18</sup> - About the definition of the institution of Beyt el-Mal and the registers of inheritances, see:

عبد الجليل التميمي، موجز الدفاتر العربية والتركية بالجزائر، منشورات المعهد الأعلى للتوثيق، تونس 1983.

Aumerat, "Société Historique Algérienne", *In Revue Africaine*, Volume 41, Alger 1897.

See also about the institution of Beyt el-Mal: Genty de Bussy, *De l'Etablissement des Français de la Régence d'Alger*, 2<sup>ème</sup> Edition T1 (5), Typographie de Firmin didot Frères 1839, 88-92; Albert Devouls, "Notice Sur les Corporations Religieuses d'Alger Accompagnée de documents Authentiques et inédits", Extrait de *la Revue Africaine* 1862, Typographie Adolphe Jourdan Alger 1912, 78-79.

located in Algeria at that time<sup>19</sup>. Besides, they comprehend accurate registry and inventory of all the inheritances of deceased persons who did not leave a legitimate heir and who their absence lasted long, thus they were considered as dead. The institution of Beyt El-Mal assumed the supervision of the liquidation of their inheritances which it has a share in it<sup>20</sup>. The documentalists were helping Beyt El-Maldji which supervised it in order to count and inventory all the inheritances and this operation cannot be carried out without its presence personally. Hence, all the inherited things were recorded in registers and if there wasn't a legitimate heir, the inheritance returned directly to the institution which was responsible for the disadvantaged strata i.e. needy and poor people as well as slaves and foreigners...<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> We notice the emergence of the institution of Beyt el-Mal in all the Arab provinces during the Ottoman Empire.

See the studies about the Damascus society:

- عبد الكريم رافق، "دراسة سكانية لدمشق و حلب في عام 1677-1861م من خلال سجلات التركات" منشور في مستنلة من أوراق في التاريخ والأدب مهداة إلى نقولا زيادة. وينعت بيت المالجي بالقسام، 88.  
- عبد الكريم رافق، "سجلات التركات (المخلفات) كمصدر للتاريخ الاجتماعي و الاقتصادي" مأخوذ من بحوث ودراسات في التاريخ العربي مهداة إلى الأستاذ نور الدين حاطوم، دمشق، دار الشمال للطباعة والنشر، دمشق 1992، 74.

Colette Establet, "Les Intérieurs Damasains Au Début Du 18<sup>e</sup> Siècle, Sous Bénédiction D'inventaires", *Les villes dans L'empire Ottoman activités et sociétés*, 2-CNRS, AIX en Provence 1994, 16-19; J. P Pascual, "Les Inventaires Après Décès; une source pour l'Histoire Economique et Sociale de Damas au 17<sup>e</sup> Siècle" *In les Villes Dans l'Empire Ottoman, Activités et Sociétés*, 1, Édition du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 46-50. Also about the Tunisian society: Dalenda Largueche, "Sur les Traces du Quotidien des Femmes Ordinaires", *vivre, paraître, et défier, familles marginaux dans le monde ottoman: femme, enfants, pauvre et handicapés, sous la direction de Abdeljelil temimi*, fondation temimi pour la recherche scientifique et l'information Zaghouan, Août 2002, 55-77

<sup>20</sup> - ليلي خيراني، واقع النساء، نفسه، 16-17.

For more details, refer to :

D. Largueche, "Histoire des Femmes aux au Maghreb: Culture Matérielle et Vie Quotidienne"; Textes Reunis et Introduits par D. Largueche, Centre des Public. Univ. Tunis 2000.

<sup>21</sup> Tal Shuval, *La Ville d'Alger Vers la Fin du 18<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, Population et cadre urbain, édition C.N.R.S, Paris 1998, 24.

See also :

These documents were characterized by their utmost accuracy in pointing out the details of inheritances. Thus, the inventory focused basically on the names of deceased women, their job and whether there were craftswomen among them, the places where they lived, all their wealth and all what they inherited from their families and relatives. Moreover we could get other details that actually informed us about the real life of women in Algiers city during this historical era. Nevertheless, a careful look to the content of these inheritances enables us to determine the demographic weight of this category as well as what is included in her acquisitions such as food, attire, jewelry, household furnishings and other various things that they possessed and even if they were insignificant, they were the best evidence and the truest impact which help us to acknowledge really the daily life of women as well as her material life and her economic status during that era.

### Turkish words

An accurate and careful reading of Beyt El-Mal registers makes us astonished about the great attention paid by the documentalists in determining the most accurate details regarding the effects of deceased person. These acquisitions i.e. attires, jewelry, foodstuffs, household utensils and furnishings, were called by names of Ottoman origins. In this study, we have shed light on a pattern of the registers of the period 1800-1817 as well as some marriage contracts that contained also the effects of the dowry called also by its Turkish names<sup>22</sup>.

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- ناصر الدين سعيدوني ، النظام المالي للجزائر أواخر العهد العثماني 1830-1792، ط2، المؤسسة الوطنية للكتاب .139.1985

<sup>22</sup> We have used specialized dictionaries of the local terms at that time in order to define the names of the effects such as: S. Benchneb, *Mots Turks et Persans conservés dans le parles Algérien, ancienne maison bastide*, Jourdan, Alger 1922, 13-87; P. Eudel, *Dictionnaire des Bijoux de l'Afrique du Nord, Maroc, Algérie, Tunisie, Tripolitaine*, Ed. Ernest le Roux, Paris 1906.

*Attires*

- *Babug*: is the shoe and it is the Besmaq.
- *Beskir*: is a long towel put on the knee.
- *Boqqa*: is a set of attires.
- *Hisa*: is a coarse fabric.
- *Tarbù (Tarbush)*: is a hat worn by men and even children when they get circumcised.
- *Farmla*: is a jacket; casaquin ; short and rounded in the front vest; woman corset very short and sleeveless.
- *Festan*: is a kind of short dresses embroidered with lace which the Algerian women wore with long pants when they went out.
- *Qoftan*: is a kind of jackets that are considered as luxury and pomp apparel made of embroidered silk and made of special plush too. It has short sleeves and up to the middle of the legs and sometimes beyond the knees. It has large buttons with gold or silver threads that start from the top to the belt level.
- *Srasef*: is the curtains extremity and may be of clothing too.
- *Kemha*: is a kind of fabric of silk.
- *Kitan*: is a cord or cordonnet.
- *Guzma*: is a long shoe.
- *El-Ghelila*: is a long jacket which was worn by men and women alike. It was made of light fabric and was made of cotton too.

*Jewelry*<sup>23</sup>

- *Sarma*: is a long plate put on the head which is decorated and inlaid. It is held through a conical scarf that ranges from 60 to 80 centimeters. It contains two plates put on the head, one on the front and the second on the back that are assembled one on the other.

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<sup>23</sup> G. Marçais, *Les Bijoux Musulmans de l'Afrique du Nord*, Imprimerie Officielle, Alger 1958.



### *Foodstuffs and household utensils*

#### *Foodstuffs*

- *Bazina*: is a kind of porridge made of semolina and meat.
- *Baqlava*: is a kind of cake made of leaves of dough stuffed with almonds and put in honey after being cooked.
- *Barania*: is a mixture of meat with gravy, eggs and bread.
- *Bergol*: is wheat that is boiled, dried and ground.
- *Burak*: is a kind of food prepared with thin and wrapped dough which is stuffed inside with meat and eggs.
- *Dolma*: is a kind of food prepared with vegetables stuffed with minced meat.
- *Setlag*: is milk with rice
- *Sarbet*: is sweetened water and lemon juice added to it.
- *Qavarma*: fricassee meat
- *Samsa*: is a kind of cake made of leaves of dough stuffed with almonds, then fried and dipped in honey.

#### *Household utensils*

- *Beqreg*: is a coffee pot
- *Bellar*: is a crystal pot.
- *Bengra*: is a window.
- *Bental*: is a piece of wood which supports a vessel under construction.
- *Buqal*: is a cup to drink.
- *Tebsi*: is a dish to eat.
- *Duzan*: utensils.

- *Sniwa or Sni*: is a big tray made of copper which contains various engravings in its middle. It is put on a basis of wood or directly on the table. We put on it meals such as Couscous. It is not assigned to drinking coffee as the latter is put on a tray known as Sniwa which is made of copper too<sup>24</sup>.

- *Tabla*: is a cork.

- *Tabuna*: is an oven for cooking.

- *Tas*: is a cup or a bowl.

- *Tassa*: is a kind of utensils where we put flowers. It is square used for sinks in Hammam and filled with water<sup>25</sup>.

- *Tawan*: is a ceiling of planks.

- *Tawa*: is a stove for frying.

- *Telwa*: is the coffee ground.

- *Carek*: is a kind of cake.

- *Zlabia*: is a kind of donuts shaped in thin tubes soaked very hot in honey.

- *Fanid*: is a kind of cake.

- *Tangra*: is a copper pot.

- *Forn*: is an oven of cabbages.

- *Fengal*: is a cup of coffee.

- *Qazan*: is a cauldron.

- *Qabak*: is an armour-plated vessel.

- *Lyan*: is a bowl.

*Different effects*

- *Tezdam*: is a wallet.

- *Khorda*: are insignificant and small things.

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<sup>24</sup> Eudel; op cit, 202.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid; 221.

- Hoga*: is a huge thing.
- *Dadda*: is a valet and servant.
- *Tabanga*: is a gun battery or a gun.
- *Tobgi*: is a gunner.
- *Tebla*: is a small board.
- *Tobal*: is wobbly furniture.
- *Tuq (Tuh)*: a Ponytail.
- *Anbar*: is a bridge vessel.
- *Fanus*: is a bell clock candelabrum.
- *Qarabortan*: are the parts of the entrails of the sheep that cannot be eaten.
- Qara*: is black.

### **Conclusion**

Ottoman documents that are studied in this article are not only considered as the main and primary source of studying the Ottoman history in Algeria but they also allowed us to write it in all aspects such as the social and economic ones. Besides, these archival documents have contributed to acknowledge the Ottoman cultural and urban heritage through which the local dialect have been loaded with Turkish words that remained entrenched in the Algerian Culture and its daily life for many centuries. I chose to study these words because they reflect the authenticity of Algerian Heritage that was mixed with the Ottoman one. Despite the fact that the French colonialism settlement of the country lasted for more than a century, the words and expressions used in the daily life remained the same. Hence, this is the unique evidence of the common history and the cultural integration between the Ottoman State and Algeria. Therefore, this is a concrete

proof that shows the greatness of the Ottoman Empire and its relationships with its provinces.

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