The management of urban space in cities in the Muslim world remains to a very large extent an enigma. Although much progress has been made in the last decade, the basic Orientalist assumptions about the "Muslim City" are still very much alive, especially among non-specialists. Despite a growing corpus of books and articles concerning individual cities or groups, one has the impression that, unlike the situation regarding Europe, where, as L. Benevolo says: "Practically all the cities... large and small, have been studied", but works of synthesis are few, the situation in the research of the "Islamic City" is quite different. This particular field of research was born under the assumption that there is a model of an Islamic City, which, in spite of the vast geographical area in question, and regardless of the long span of time separating the first urban creations of the Muslim Arabs and today's cities of the Islamic world, is basically changeless and unique. This assumption,

Tal Shuval is Lecturer at the department of Middle East Studies, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva 84105, Israel.

3 For a discussion of the main problems of Orientalism regarding the Muslim city see: Janet ABU LUGHOD, "The Islamic City — Historic Myth, Islamic Essence, and Contem-

Turcica, 32, 2000, pp. 169-196
which shaped the research for quite a long time, was first grappled with only in the late 1960s, by the participants of the congress that resulted in the publication of *The Islamic City*. In a recent article, André Raymond tries to show the extent to which the field has been freed from myths created by the “Orientalist” view of the City. However, what the radical revisionism of the old concepts has left us with, argues Raymond, is a tabula rasa. This is an over-pessimistic vision, but it does seriously raise the question of “what now?”. A partial response can be found in the works of Raymond himself, who insists upon a more realistic vision of the city. Beginning with the premise that “a city, that is to say a geographical concentration of a large population, can only subsist or develop within a system of coherent relations between its society and the space in which it expands”, we should try and learn how these relations were articulated, in order to begin to comprehend the “system”. The direction in which to proceed, then, is to describe the management of space occupation and of society in the city.

In the first part of the article some general principles of urban space management in different cities in the Islamic world (a term used here only in its geographical and historical sense), with no special regard either to chronological or geographical order, will be discussed. This part will serve as an illustration of the fact that some kind of management and of administration did indeed exist in the cities under discussion.

In the second part, one organizing principle, the distribution of wealth in some Arab cities of the Ottoman Empire, will be more deeply analyzed, first in general terms, concerning mainly the cities of Cairo, Tunis and Aleppo, and then, in greater detail, the city of Algiers.

Finally, in the last part of the article, I intend to examine whether, as far as the city of Algiers is concerned, the concentration of a rich population in certain areas of the city was accompanied by a higher standard of services than in other (poorer) areas. And since the services I allude

---

5 A. Raymond, “Islamic City”, *op. cit.*
to were, at least partially, under waqf administration, this might open a new discussion of the role of this particular institution, not in the economic center of cities, but in the residential area of eighteenth century Algiers, and maybe elsewhere.

The term “management” itself points to some sort of administration, therefore of consciousness and will. This sort of administration did exist in different forms: administrators at all levels of government hierarchy did influence the shape of cities from the establishment of the first amsâr. The histories of Basra and Kufa in the first half of the seventh century are relatively well known, and so are the histories of Madinat al-Salam, al-Qahira, Qairawan and other cities founded by the armies of different Arab-Muslim forces. They all involved some sort of planning, distribution of plots of land to different groups of the population, as well as an establishment of a sort of “public zone”, normally in the center, of what were to become cities. We are aware of decisions taken in the higher echelons of government that shaped cities, like the erection of city walls and of fortresses, or the relocation of tanneries in cities like Ottoman Cairo, Tunis and Aleppo, acts that involved the Ottoman Sultan. Even such obvious things as the building of complicated water systems to bring drinking water from afar influenced the shape of the cities. A governor’s intervention was not always direct, in the sense of ordering the building (or indeed the destruction) of certain areas. For example, the allocation of concessions in different regions to high-

---

7 Although I use examples from various cities, and from different periods, their sole purpose is to illustrate the fact that different levels and different forms of administration did exist. One should not infer from this that all examples existed in all the cities or in all the periods. Moreover, it is clear to me that the diversity of administrations of different cities and in different times is one of the main things to look for when studying cities in the Islamic World.

ranking officials was one of the Mamluk Sultan Nasir Muhammad’s (1293-1340) means for encouraging the development of Cairo. The urbanization of the region between the Khalig and the Khalig al-Nasiri, an area of some 600 hectares began in this way. The Ottoman Sultans’ indirect intervention through control of waqf foundations by his viziers is mentioned by Halil Inalcik as a means for the development of the “Islamic city of Istanbul”. Examples from various cities in diverse periods of this kind of direct or indirect planning abound, but the ones above should suffice. This kind of “pre-meditated” administration, however, was not the only kind; it is indeed questionable whether it was this that really shaped cities during the long period of their development and change.

Another level of administration of space was small-scale decisions that had to be taken in order to enable the everyday life of the city to follow its normal flow. One extreme example of such a level of administration is that of Ottoman Istanbul, where according to Nelly Hanna, “The state seems to have had a fairly tight grip on construction; no new building or repairs to older ones could be undertaken on any grounds, whether they were state-owned, privately owned or pious foundation, without the prior permission of the administration; the state was also in charge of the implementation of building regulations and employed special officials who could roam the streets of the city to spot any violations of these regulations or of any other requirements that people were supposed to apply”. Even if these regulations were, in practice, opposed by the population, they did exist and they were probably followed to some extent.

The application of this level of administration, on a small scale, day-to-day basis is to be seen in the way streets were controlled: in the difference of status between the throughway, defined by law as a public road immune from any obstruction, and the dead-end street, recognized as a private way belonging jointly to the abutters. In a case cited by

11 Nelly Hanna, *Construction Work in Ottoman Cairo (1517-1798)*, Cairo, 1984, p. 3.
A. Marcus, a group of residents sued in 1750 the owner of a qaysariyya for opening a back door from his property onto their street in Aleppo. The judge accepted the claim that the street was “a private way for the exclusive use of the residents” and ordered the owner to seal the door.14 Besides the fact that these residents had a say about their street, it is clear that the qâdi had real control over urban matters.15

Other forms of urban administration on different levels were controlled by other city officials, whose functions and power varied according to time and place, like the muhtasib, the shaykh al-balad, the mi’mârbâshâ (the head of the construction guilds) in Ottoman Cairo or kabîr al-muhandasîn of the Mamluk period and others.16

It seems, however, that there existed another kind of administration, an almost “spontaneous” one. I refer to the way in which geographical factors, for instance, shaped the city. In a very interesting chapter, E. Pasquali describes the evolution of what he terms the “Muslim Street” in Algiers.17 The hilly nature of the site is one of the main factors, he says, that not only shaped the streets, but also suggested the idea of constructing a sewer that was still functioning long after the French occupation of the city in 1830. A further utilization of the hilly character of the site was demonstrated in the same city in building houses so as not to obstruct the view of the sea.18 There were other, less “objective” factors, that had to do with society.19 Such factors were influenced by


14 A. Marcus, op. cit., p. 282-283.
16 N. Hanna, op. cit., p. 7-10.
19 About the importance of understanding the society in order to understand the city, see Amos Rapoport, “Culture and the Urban order”, in John Agnew, John Mercer and David Sopher (eds.), The City in Cultural Context, Boston, 1984, p. 50-75.
certain principles and values, that were developed and accepted by the society, which then implemented them without their being explicitly announced. One such principle was the concentration of certain groups of the population in specific quarters, based on different ethnic, religious or other criterions. Such quarters would typically contain a proportionally dense concentration of, say, non-Muslims (Jews or Christians) and other concentrations of this nature. Such concentration was rarely ordered by the governors, but the phenomenon itself is well known, and its segregationist nature was greatly exaggerated by several historians.20

The concentration of economic activities in the centers of the “traditional” Arab cities seems to conform to this kind of principle, for, as A. Raymond puts it, “The organization of the urban centers conforms to a logical pattern that is perfectly readable on the map, although it is difficult to say whether it is the result of deliberate action on the part of the authorities (imperial or local) or of a ‘natural’ evolution in which economic factors are responsible for a sort of spontaneous selection and localization of activities.”21

THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

Another principle of this kind is the concentration of wealth near the economic centers of cities and the relegation of poverty to the periphery. The question of wealth distribution in Arab cities of the Ottoman Empire is closely connected with one of the basic Orientalist assumptions regarding the “Muslim City”. Scholars have tried to claim that Muslim society is egalitarian in nature, citing as proof the lack of socio-economic segregation between Muslims in precisely the form of wealth concentration in certain areas of the city. In other words, according to this view, there is no such thing in the “Muslim City” as a rich quarter or a poor one, not so much because of the non existence of differences between poor and rich, but rather because the (unique?) character of


21 A. Raymond, Great Arab Cities, p. 33.
“Muslim society” does not approve of the exclusion of the poor. The resulting situation therefore is a complete amalgamation of both populations in the same quarters of the city, so that the demographic distribution within the city reflects an image of an egalitarian society. An example of that view is given in Antoine Abdel Nour’s book, which affirms that there was not a real distinction between rich and poor sectors of the city. Allowing for some differences between a richer center and poorer suburbs, the author explains, however, that due to the “social solidarity” of the urban population, “the juxtaposition of rich families and of poor ones is the rule in the Arab cities”, so that even these differences were never accompanied by “a cleavage between aristocratic and popular quarters”.

André Raymond, in an article published in 1963, obviously does not agree with this view. The very first sentence of this article (“Le point de départ d’une étude sur la localisation des quartiers de résidence ‘aristocratique’...”), and the use of the term “beaux quartiers” in the same article leave little doubt as to the economic character of the quarters studied. Two of Raymond’s recent articles deal with this problem. The first is mainly concerned with the city of Aleppo, the second deals with Tunis, Cairo and Aleppo. Raymond’s main argument is that, contrary to Abdel Nour, archival as well as archeological findings show clearly not only the existence of houses of different types (corresponding to different prices, and therefore testifying to different levels of wealth of the owners), but also the concentration of great numbers of what are considered bourgeois houses in certain areas of the cities, normally near their commercial centers. A second zone of somewhat lesser wealth develops around this first rich zone, followed by a poorer zone, so that an ideal type of the cities under study would form a “layout of successive

---

23 *Abdel Nour*, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
rings”, corresponding, as Raymond notes, to a similar arrangement in pre-industrial cities in general, as described by Gideon Sjoberg. In his article, based on the Geniza documents, S. D. Goitein notes that in Fatimid Fustat, “Like our own cities, the Egyptian capital was divided into neighborhoods of higher and lower values”. Thus the phenomenon not only existed, but also, at least in Cairo, we are dealing with an ancient phenomenon. Nelly Hanna, who studied seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Cairo notes: “the city can be divided into three principal zones: the zone of rich habitat in the central region, the zone of poor habitat in the periphery, and a third zone of average habitat situated in between the other two”. Indeed, many studies confirm the fact that at least in the cities of Aleppo, Tunis and Cairo, the richer population tended to concentrate in different zones of the cities, more or less according to the scheme offered by Raymond and Hanna.

THE CASE OF ALGIERS

All the studies mentioned above have studied the concentration of large, rich and expensive houses, inferring from their presence the very logical conclusion of the concentration of the rich population in those areas. Working on probate inventories registered by the bayt al-mâl in eighteenth-century Algiers, I did not find enough cases where the price, or indeed the ownership of houses was mentioned in the documents.

29 Nelly HANNA, Habiter au Caire aux xviie et xviiie siècles, Cairo, 1991, p. 183.
31 For the present study, two registers have been used: Centre d’Archives d’Outre-Mer (CAOM) in Aix-en-Provence, 15 Mi 1, vol. 2 and vol. 4. For detailed description of the probate inventories of the Algerian bayt al-mâl and of the registers cited: Tal SHUVAL, La ville d’Alger vers la fin du xviiie siècle: population et cadre urbain, Paris, 1998, p. 24-32.
Incidentally, one of my conclusions (one that seems to be corroborated by the research of M. Hoexter), is that private ownership of houses in Algiers in the eighteenth century is the exception rather than the rule, for most Algerians lived in rented waqf houses. In this case, considerable concentrations of large and expensive houses in certain areas of the city can not be considered indicative of the wealth of the inhabitants. The probate inventories did enable me, however, to find concentrations of rich populations in certain areas, based on the size of their inheritance.

The analysis of the inventories’ distribution according to wealth is done according to the different sectors artificially created on the city map by a grid of coordinates (see Map I). I have taken into consideration only the sectors for which I have found at least seven probate inventories. This choice of number is arbitrary. In order to establish the difference between relatively rich and relatively poor sectors, I have decided to use a coefficient of 1.5 applied to the average wealth of the group analyzed: the average for 1726 probate inventories registered between 1787-1793 and 1799 -1803, is 362 riyāl. A sector is considered relatively rich when the average wealth of its inhabitants is higher than this number multiplied by 1.5, that is, 543 riyāl (rounded to 545 riyāl). A quarter is designated relatively poor when the average wealth of its inhabitants does not exceed the indicated sum divided by 1.5, that is, 362/1.5 = 241.33 riyāl.

---


33 The total population in eighteenth-century Algiers is estimated at 50,000 at the most. According to the registers of the ocak, the number of its members in 1754 was around 12,000. The Baldı represented about 65 % of the city’s population: see Shuval, *op. cit.*, p. 51, 54, 123.

34 For reasons explained elsewhere, I have preferred to calculate the population according to the 48 sectors artificially created by the grid of the map. One sector corresponds roughly to one hectare (10,000 square meters). The use of quarters’ names is only done in order to facilitate the reading. Normally the name of the quarter that occupies the largest part of the sector is cited, but one has to bear in mind that the actual area studied does not correspond completely with it. For this reason I use almost indifferently both terms (quarter and sector): T. Shuval, *op. cit.*. p. 215-216. I would like to thank M. André Raymond for granting me permission to reproduce here the map of the city of Algiers as found in his *Grandes villes arabes*, p. 333. I would also like to thank Mr. Pieter Loupen for processing to their present form this and the other maps included in the article.

35 The choice of this number is based on my impression that an average calculated on a base smaller than that will be too small for any statistical conclusion. On the other hand, a larger number of inventories per sector would have considerably reduced the number of sectors taken into consideration.
The relation of the wealth of the richest section (Bâb al-Sûq quarter [G/6], 17 inventories, average of 1544 riyâl) and that of the poorest section (Bir Rummana [G/4], 7 inventories, average of 60 riyâl) is in the order of 26 to 1. Such a relation seems an important one, taking into consideration the fact that we are dealing with averages.

The picture of wealth distribution in the city according to the probate inventories confirms the fact that richer and poorer neighborhoods did indeed exist in Algiers at the end of the eighteenth century, and that to a certain extent, these zones had a tendency to follow the schematic plan proposed by Raymond and Hanna. I did find a concentration of richer population mainly (but not exclusively) in the central zone, corresponding to the economic, administrative and religious center of Algiers. This phenomenon, of the proximity of rich population to the economic center of Arab cities of the Ottoman Empire is well attested to by several works. The economic center of eighteenth century Algiers was situated mainly in an area north-east of the intersection [F/7] of two streets: al-Sûq al-Kabîr (connecting the two main gates of the city Bâb ‘Azzûn [B/8] and Bâb al-Wâd [I/5]) and Tarîq al-Bahr, leading to Bâb Jazîra [I/9]. The proximity to this economic center explains the relative wealth of the quarters ‘Ain al-Hamra and Sûq al-Jum‘ah [G/5], Bâb al-Sûq [G/6], Jâm‘i ‘Ali Bijînî and al-Rahaba al-Qadîma [H/6]. At least one part of al-Balânsa quarter [F/7] and its neighboring sectors [F/8 and G/8] seemed to benefit from the same setting.

The region of intense economic activity in Algiers stretched towards the south, all the way to the gate of ‘Azzûn [B/9]. This highly active economic area accounts for the presence of wealth concentration in the quarter of al-Bûza [E/8]. The sector D/7 was influenced by its proximity to al-Sûq al-Kabîr, as well as to Suwiqat ‘Ammûr, rich in economic activity. The lack of continuity in this rich region can be explained by

---

36 The difference in the price of houses in mid-eighteenth-century Aleppo, used by A. Marcus as a distinguishing mark between rich and poor quarters is around 84 piasters (average price paid) for the “smallest and least expensive dwellings”, and 1,242 piasters, the average price paid for the most expensive ones. That is to say a ratio of 1:15: see A. MARCUS, The Middle East, p. 319. The average prices of houses in different quarters in Cairo, in the same period are: 20,684 para in the richest areas and 4,825 para in the poorest ones. The ratio in this case is of 1:4.3: see N. HANNA, Habiter au Caire, p. 185.

the presence of the Jewish quarter of Saba‘ Luwiât [E/7], and of the Janissary barrack, Kharrâtîn [D/8]³⁸.

All these sectors were influenced, as I have said, by the very active economic center of the city. There were however other rich sectors, like the ones around the Sîdî Ramdân quarter [F/3], and those situated near the southern city wall: the Salâwi quarter [B/6], Hawâniât Bin Rabhah [B/5] and Bâb al-Jadîd [B/4] quarters. These sectors were situated in the peripheral regions of Algiers. Normally, in the Arab cities of the Ottoman Empire, the periphery was the domain of the poor. One of the reasons for this was the low price and greater availability of free space for building. This seems to be the reason for the appeal of the same regions to the rich who wished to build bigger houses, far from the busy center³⁹: With regard to the city of Algiers this explanation is purely hypothetical, for I have no solid evidence for the existence of big houses in these rich regions.

Bab ‘Azzûn street (the southern part of the Sûq al-Kabîr street) seems to have been influenced by two contradicting factors: the intense economic activity in its markets, manifest in its concentrations of wealth, (near the Balânûsa quarter [F/7-8], al- Bûza [E/8] and Suwiqât ‘Ammûr [D/7]); on the other hand, its location on the periphery of the city and the dense concentration of Jews and Janissaries might explain the poor sectors adjoining the same street. Thus we find a poor sector around the Dâr al-Qadîma quarter [B/7], around Bâb ‘Azzûn itself [B/8] and the quarter called Hidr Bâshâ [D/8]. Following the edges of the map of the city, the peripheral location of the poor sectors becomes evident: Bâb Jazîra [H/9 and I/9] and Sîdî ‘Ali al-Fâsi [I/7] are both peripheral and contain concentrations of Janissaries. Saba‘ Tabarîn [J/7-8], Bîr Rummânà [G/4], Kûshat Bû La’ba [F/4] and Hawâniît Ziyân [E/3] are also situated in the peripheral zone of Algiers.

One sector that does not follow this logic (of wealth concentration near the economic center) is G/7, where the average value of 30 probate inventories is of 238 riyâl. This low average is quite surprising, especially as the sector was surrounded by relatively rich ones. I cannot

³⁸ The probate inventory registers of the Algerian bayt al-mâl do not contain any Jewish inventory. Concerning the Janissaries living in the barracks, they represent one of the poorer groups of Janissaries in my sample: T. SHUVAL, op. cit., p. 91-95.

explain this irregularity, but it is interesting that some of the more expensive houses mentioned in the inventories were situated in this seemingly poor sector.

According to my analysis, then, the picture of wealth distribution in different areas of Algiers corresponds to what is considered the normal situation in the pre-modern Arab cities of the Ottoman Empire. Looking at the problem from another angle, that of wealth distribution according to the membership of different social groups, namely the military-administrative elite (the Turks) and the local population of the city inhabitants (the Baldi), we discover that each of these groups had its own distribution of wealth, thus rich and poor “Turkish” sectors and rich and poor Baldi sectors are easily distinguishable.40

At this point an explanation of the relations between the military-administrative elite and the local population of eighteenth-century Algiers is in order. Avoiding a lengthy description of the establishment at the beginning of the sixteenth century of the Ocak in Algiers, one must, however, take note of the special character of the Ocak, and the low level of integration of its members into Algerian society. Three issues in particular are of interest here: the participation of the Janissaries in the economic activity of Algiers, the marriage of members of the Ocak with local women, and the attitude of the Ocak vis-à-vis the sons of the Janissaries. These three issues have a bearing on two processes characteristic of the relations between center and provinces in the eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire, as proposed by E. Toledano, namely “Ottomanization” and “Localization”. I will claim that Algiers presents an extreme case, being very little influenced by these processes. This means that in Algiers there was a very low level of integration of the military-administrative Turkish elite into local society, and this state of affairs was manifested (among other ways) in the geographical separation of the rich Turks from the rich Baldi.

40 Following the Algerian registers, I use the term Turks to describe the members of the military-administrative elite of the vilayet. As to their origins see T. SHUVAL, op. cit., p. 59-64.
According to Toledano, the Ottoman Empire of the eighteenth century was characterized by the intensification of a dual process: "localization" of the Ottoman elite in the various Arab provinces, and the "Ottomanization" of the local elite. This dual process culminated in the fusion of the two components into one elite, within which local and Ottoman traditions coexisted; this coexistence legitimized the elite both in the eyes of the provincial society and the imperial center. Toledano offers a concise formulation: "in the dual process of Localization-Ottomanization, Ottoman soldiers, officers, and administrators, gradually developed local interests, joined the local economy, and married local women. They learned Arabic, acquired local tastes, and became locally acculturated. At the same time, members of wealthy families and urban notables achieved Ottoman power elite status by entering the administration. They accepted the privileged position of Ottoman culture and sought education in the imperial system, either in Istanbul or locally. They learned Ottoman Turkish, and were trained for government posts"41.

Toledano mentions economic activities and marriage with local women among the primary criteria for the "localization" of the Ottoman elite. The analysis of the Algerian probate inventories, however, shows a very different picture. With regard to participation in economic activity, the number of members of the elite in my sample who have been identified as being engaged in non-military economic activity is surprisingly low: only in 46 cases out of a total of 1072 probate inventories of members of the elite (4.3%) could such an activity be identified, compared with a rate of 44.7% in the group of native men (222 cases out of a total of 497). According to the probate inventories, there is very little room for talk about economic integration of the Turks in Algiers at the end of the eighteenth century.

The French Orientalist, Jean-Michel Venture de Paradis, who lived in Algiers almost two years (1788-90), summed up his impression of matrimony among the members of the Ocak in these words: "À Alger le célibat est un moyen de parvenir": in Algiers celibacy is the way to success42. There is of course some exaggeration in this statement, for

---


42 J.-M. VENTURE DE PARADIS, op. cit., p. 186.
members of the military-administrative elite did get married, and contrary to some views, most of the eighteenth-century Deys (heads of the Ocak) were married\textsuperscript{43}. However a comparison between the low marriage rate of the Turks (213 married out of a total of 1072, 19.9\%) and the much higher one of the Baldi (381 married out of a total of 900 men and women, 42\%) clearly shows that marriage was not as common among members of the Ocak, and that from this aspect too the integration of the Turks was very limited\textsuperscript{44}. 

Furthermore, the general attitude of the Ocak to marriage of its members with local women, and towards the offspring of these marriages clearly indicates its will to restrict the phenomenon. Marriage to an Algerian woman resulted in the expulsion of the married Janissary from the barracks, as well as in his removal from the list of beneficiaries of a daily ration of bread and of certain other privileges\textsuperscript{45}. The sons of those who did get married, called Kuloğlu (from which the French term Koulougli is derived), were not considered Turks, and were kept out of the ranks of the Ocak, at least in principle\textsuperscript{46}. Moreover, contrary to the situation in other Arab parts of the Ottoman Empire, in Algiers the enlistment of locals to the militia was very limited indeed\textsuperscript{47}. The Ocak preferred to pay a heavy political and financial price in order to maintain the system of recruitment elsewhere (mainly in Anatolia), in order to protect its “Turkish” character\textsuperscript{48}.

These examples illustrate the determination of the members of the military-administrative elite to maintain their special status, a determination that did not allow for the entry of members of the local elites into the ruling class. As for the way things were seen from the outside, Venture de Paradis describes a situation of total alienation of the Turkish

\textsuperscript{43} T. SHUVAL, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 101-103.

\textsuperscript{44} At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the probate inventories show a rate of 41.5 \% for the “civil” population and of 15 \% for the members of the elite. The difference of about 5 \% does not seem remarkable.


\textsuperscript{47} About the enlistment of Algerians to the Ocak see: T. SHUVAL, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 62-64. As for the situation in other parts of the Ottoman Empire see: A. RAYMOND, “Les provinces arabes (XVI\textsuperscript{e}-XVIII\textsuperscript{e} siècle)”, in R. Mantran (ed.) \textit{Histoire de l’Empire ottoman}, Paris, 1989, p. 354.

\textsuperscript{48} T. SHUVAL, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 64-65.
elite from the rest of the population: “Ces […] Turcs au milieu de tant de peuples [e.g. the inhabitants of Algiers] qui sont leurs ennemis…”49. A witness of the end of the Ottoman rule in Algiers, an Algerian Kuloglu by the name of Hamdan ben Osman Hodja, who gives a somewhat idyllic picture of the relations between the Algerians and the Ocak, offers an explanation for the complete exclusion of local elites from the military-administrative elite. According to him, the Turks did offer full participation in government to the Algerians at the time of the establishment of the vilayet of Algeria, but they declined the offer. This situation never changed50. Even if Hodja’s depiction seems in part too good to be true, the fact remains that this man, who knew well even the hidden sides of the administration testifies that there was no Ottomanization of Algerian elites.

GEOGRAPHICAL SEPARATION BETWEEN RICH TURKS AND RICH BALDI

The same criteria applied to the overall analysis are kept for the analysis of the two groups (Baldi and Turks). Thus, with the same coefficient of 1.5, a relatively rich Turkish quarter is one where the average wealth of the population (925 inventories, an average of 311 riyâl), exceeds 465 riyâl, a relatively poor quarter is one where the average wealth is below 205 riyâl. Regarding the Baldi (total of 616 inventories, average wealth of 521 riyâl), a relatively rich quarter is one whose inhabitants’ average wealth exceeds 780 riyâl. A poor Baldi quarter is one whose inhabitants’ average wealth is below 345 riyâl. The differences between the richest and the poorest Turkish sectors are in the order of 54 to 1 (2983 to 55 riyâl), those between richer and poorer sectors of Baldi are in the order of 24 to 1 (2942 to 125 riyâl).

According to the probate inventories, the general picture of wealth distribution is more congruent with the framework proposed in the case of the Turks than in that of the general population. Mainly concentrated around the economic administrative and religious center of Algiers, with less “anomalies” than the general map of wealth distribution, the rich Turkish population is to be found in the sectors of Msîd al-Daliyya

[E/6], Suwiqat ‘Ammûr [D/7], al-Bûza [E/8], Bâb al-Bahar [F/8], Jâmi‘ ‘Ali Bijnîn [H/6] and ‘Ain al-Hamra [G/5]. They form an almost perfect ring around this center. The number of inventories is too small in the sector of Sbat Biyâla [F/5] to be taken into consideration. The average wealth of the Janissaries who lived in this sector, however, is quite high (867 riyâl). The ring formed by rich Turkish quarters seems to have stretched towards Bâb al-Wâd [I/6 and I/5]. Incidentally, one of the four most expensive houses mentioned in the probate inventories was located in this area (near Hammâm al-mâlih) [I/6], confirming perhaps the presence of a rich Turkish population there51. Also situated in the sector of Bâb al-Wâd is a caravanseray (fundûq Bâb al-Wâd), a favorite residence of the Algerian Janissaries. As we have seen, the degree of participation in economic activity was very low among members of the Ocak. The reason for their attraction to the center is to be found, therefore, in the presence of the administrative center of the vilayet in the region52.

In the quarter of Sîdî Ramdân [F/3], quite a long way from the city’s center, we find another concentration of rich Janissaries. One explanation that can be offered for the presence of this rich group of Turks is its peripheral location, like the relatively rich quarters in the southern part of Algiers. But this particular concentration of rich Turks may also have a historical reason: this is where the pre-Ottoman qasbah of Algiers was situated. It does not seem impossible that the new rulers of the city used the place until the new qasbah was built (during most of the sixteenth century), and the relative wealth of the sector reflects this fact. It should be noted that this quarter is quite distinguishable from the poorer neighboring sectors by the level of services in the form of a local market (hawanît), a public bath house (hammâm) and three public ovens for baking bread (kûsha) that were located in it (maps II and III)53. The presence of these facilities seems connected with the type of population living in the sector.

The relatively poor Turkish sectors were generally situated in the peripheral zones of the city, as well as in the upper part of Algiers. It is not surprising that these poorer Turkish quarters were also the most

---

51 Half of this house, whose price was 18,560 saima, belonged to a qa’id by the name of Muhammad al-Saghir. It is mentioned in a probate inventory dating from the beginning of the eighteenth century. CAOM, 15 Mi 1, vol. 1, p. 54.
52 About the political, administrative and military center of Algiers see T. SHUVAL, op. cit., p. 163-176.
53 The problem of this kind of service is discussed below.
densely populated Turkish ones. This is the case in the sectors where the barracks of the Janissaries were located: the two Dâr al-Inkishâriyya: al-Qadîma and al-Jadîda and their vicinity [B/7], as well as the barracks of Kharratîn [D/8], of Dâr al-Durûj [H/9] and of Usta Mûsa [I/9]. Two other sectors housing barracks, Bâb ‘Azzûn [B/8] and Muqriyyin [I/8], do not quite qualify as “poor sectors”, but the average wealth of the Turks living in them is sufficiently low to allow the conclusion that big Janissary concentrations lowered the wealth level of the sectors in which they were found. There is nothing astonishing in this conclusion, for according to the probate inventories analyzed, the poorer members of the military-administrative elite were those who lived in barracks (average wealth of 82 riyâl, as compared to 311 riyâl for the assembly). The barracks then, formed big concentrations of poor Janissaries, hence the correspondence.

The peripheral sectors of Sîdî ‘Ali al-Fâsi [I/7] and Saba‘ Tabarîn [J/6-7] in the lower part of Algiers, and all the sectors around the new Qasbah [B/3, C/2-3, D/3] in the city’s upper part, were inhabited by relatively poor Turks. Living far from the economic and administrative center of the city, a long way from the caravansaries and the barracks, therefore away from a “Turkish milieu”, was the price that many among the less rich members of the elite who left the barracks had to pay.

If the picture drawn by the distribution of wealth of the Turks corresponds more or less with the pattern offered by Raymond and Hanna, things are somewhat different concerning the Baldi. Here the situation seems more complicated. The relatively rich Baldi were less dispersed than the Turks were: the probate inventories indicate two regions. One was near the center of the city (divided in two by the central economic zone [G/7]), near Jâmi‘ al-A‘zam [G/8], and in the sectors of Bâb al-Sûq [G/6] and Sûq al-Jum‘a [G/5]. This concentration was obviously influenced by its nearness to the economic, administrative and religious centers. The second concentration of rich Baldi was located, according to the inventories analyzed, in the southern part of the city, in the peripheral sectors of Hawanît Bin Rabha [B/5] and al-Slâwi [B/6]. Aside from being located in the peripheral region of the city, a fact that can explain the relative wealth of its Baldi population, the reason for its relative richness is historical. In all probability, this area was built after the arrival of the Turks in Algiers, at around the time of the arrival of the Muslim population expelled from Spain, part of which constituted a relatively
wealthy social stratum. It is very likely that these rich quarters, at the end of the eighteenth century, are a continuation of the settlement in the area of the rich “Moriscos” at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

A comparison between the location of the rich of the two groups shows that there is little correspondence between rich Turkish and rich Baldi sectors (only two out of a total of fifteen sectors house both rich Turks and rich Baldi). This, and the peripheral location of two out of the five rich Baldi sectors, also characterized by the absence of rich Turkish sectors in their immediate proximity, indicate a high level of separation of these two groups. In other words, while a juxtaposition of rich Turks and poor Baldi (or of rich Baldi and poor Turks) in the same sector is quite common, very rarely do we find the rich of both groups in the same sector (out of ten zones of rich Turks and five of rich Baldi, only two contain a population of the two groups). This fact cannot be interpreted as a sign of the amalgamation of the population suggested by Abdel Nour. My argument is that the dividing line between the Turks and the rest of the population is clearly marked, perhaps more so here than in any other part of the Ottoman Empire. The different habitation patterns of rich Ocak members and of rich Baldi are thus the geographical manifestation of the social separation (should one speak of alienation?) of these groups. Nevertheless, only the rich seem to have been involved in this separation. The presence of rich members of the military-administrative elite seems to have had special appeal for members of other groups of the population, so that we find higher density of population in these sectors than the average: the average number of probate inventories emanating from all the groups of Algerian society in the years 1786-1791 and 1799-1803 (Jews and Janissary residents of the barracks not included) per sector that I have found is about 27.5. This average tends to rise significantly in the eight sectors characterized by the presence of rich Turks, to reach 36 inventories per sector.

On the other hand, the three sectors inhabited by wealthy Baldi are less densely populated: 21 inventories per sector. The two regions in which both groups resided were amongst the most densely populated in Algiers: an average of 45 inventories per sector. In this

54 The registers do not contain probate inventories of Jews. The Janissaries living in barracks (403) form “artificial” concentrations, hence their omission from this calculation.
case, the high density of the population confirms the fact that these two sectors benefited from such a privileged location, that even the separating “ethnic” lines between the rich of both groups were transgressed.

The analysis of the probate inventories shows quite clearly the existence of both rich and poor quarters in eighteenth century Algiers. Situated mainly around the economic, administrative and religious center of the city, the rich quarters follow a pattern found in other Arab cities in the same time period. The few exceptions (rich quarters located in the peripheral parts of the city) correspond with another pattern, also to be found in the other cities.

A closer analysis, however, shows another factor that seems unique to Algiers, that of the separation of rich Algerians from rich Turks. Speaking of the city of Tunis in the eighteenth century, A. Raymond remarks that “the socioeconomic characteristics of the Andalusians [Muslim inhabitants of the city that arrived after their expulsion from Spain, mainly in 1609] proved to be more powerful than the community of national origin, and they determined a partition following the hierarchy of wealth; the more prosperous part of the community merged with the local bourgeoisie, while the greater number constituted a national quarter in a popular district”55. In the city of Cairo, in the same period “[t]he horizontal frontiers delimiting the social strata proved to be […] more determinant than the vertical frontiers that separated ‘foreign’ ruling caste from the indigenous ra’ya”56. In Cairo and Tunis, then, socio-economic circumstances influenced settlement patterns of the population no less, and maybe even more, than ethnic origin. In Algiers, however, the situation was different. As I have tried to demonstrate, the difference in Algiers’ pattern of residence may be the manifestation of its social reality, that of the exclusion of members of the local elites from the ruling institutions, as well as the lack of integration of members of the Ottoman elite in the local society. The rich of these two groups, who could choose where to live, show by their choice their mutual antipathy. The poor of the two groups, who were denied that possibility, had to live where they could, even if it meant living near neighbors they did not particularly appreciate.

56 Ibid., p. 68.
Another question concerning the existence of rich quarters, is about the level of services to be found in them. In his book about the city of Aleppo, A. Marcus remarks: “The well-paved streets, abundant services, and handsome homes of some neighborhoods posed a marked contrast to the slumlike appearance of other districts”\(^57\). And yet, explains Marcus, this does not necessarily correspond to a simple differentiation between rich and poor quarters. It seems, then, interesting to try to see whether in Algiers such a correspondence, between wealth concentration and better services existed, and if so, in what form? In order to answer this question, I intend to compare the locations of urban services (public baths — \textit{hammâm}, small quarter markets — \textit{suwîqa}, \textit{hawaništ}, mills — \textit{furn} and bakeries — \textit{kûsha}) with the location of the rich quarters. Another comparison will be made, between the location of these services and the relative density of the population in the different parts of Algiers.

Before beginning the analysis, I should point out a few facts concerning these facilities. I was able to locate 34 \textit{hammâm} in Algiers (map III). Although it seems that most of them coexisted during long periods, it is not clear whether all of them existed at the end of the eighteenth century. Moreover, the geographical distribution of these public bathhouses depended on water supply in a city built on a hilly site. The water supply of Algiers depended on a very elaborate system, consisting of canalization and aqueducts bringing water from distances that could reach more than 10 km\(^58\). Although the city’s uppermost part, the \textit{Qasbah}, had its water supply from one such aqueduct (providing water for instance to the sole \textit{hammâm} to be found in the region, inside the \textit{Qasbah}), water supply represented a real problem in the region. As a result, no other \textit{hammâm} was located higher than 85 meters above sea level. Besides, the public bath was an institution closely connected with religious activity, therefore it was normally located near the city’s mosques\(^59\). This accounts, for example, for the concentration of four bathhouses near \textit{Jâmi’ al-A’zam} [G/8], Algiers’ principal mosque.

\(^{57}\) A. MARCUS, \textit{The Middle East}, p. 319.


Another remark concerns the small, non-specialized markets of the residential areas. As the main economic zone of Algiers was situated in the lower parts of the city, inhabitants of the hilly parts must have found it very difficult to do their everyday shopping there. This explains the almost exclusive location of the non-specialized markets on the hillside. I was able to locate only nine out of the twelve mentioned in the documents (map II). All of them existed at the end of the eighteenth century. As regards the wheat mills, I was able to locate 26 out of 28 mentioned in the documents (map III). I am not sure, however, that all of them existed at the time under study, for some might have disappeared before.

The situation is quite different with regard to the bakeries. I have used a waqf document dating from 1805, listing 71 such bakeries (69 out of which are identified, map III) belonging to the waqf al- Haramayn\(^{60}\). Other bakeries may have existed at the time (the documents mention some 98 at different dates), but the list covers the major part of the bakeries at the time. In spite of all these reservations, I think that the analysis proposed is useful, even if the conclusions that can be drawn from it are limited.

A simple comparison between the number of the institutions mentioned above in the rich quarters and in the poor ones shows no marked difference in the level of services: if the totality of the rich sectors (12) includes ten public bathhouses, two local markets, nineteen bakeries and four mills, the totality of the poor sectors (12 as well) includes seven hammâm, no local market, ten bakeries and seven mills. The differences are not big, even if there is a slight advantage in favor of the rich sectors. In short, the probate inventories show no correlation between the richness of a sector and the level of services offered to its inhabitants. This result, surprising as it may be, raises another question: did the distribution of urban services follow any logic, and if so, what was its nature?

The answer seems to be the density of the population. The average number of probate inventories per sector is around thirty-six\(^{61}\). Only in fourteen sectors have I found a higher number than this (about 29% of the total number of sectors. Of these, five sectors are defined as poorer than the average, three as richer than the average, the rest are in between). These 14 sectors enjoyed the services of 16 hammâm (50% of

\(^{60}\) CAOM 15Mi 52 z 159.

\(^{61}\) All the probate inventories (1726) were taken into consideration for this calculation.
the total number, an average of more than one public bath per sector),
4 local markets (44.4% of the total number, one local market per 3.5 sec-
tors), 14 mills (about 54% of the total number, an average of one mill
per sector), and 22 bakeries (about 32%, 1.6 bakery per sector). The
other 34 less densely populated sectors (about 71% of the total number)
contained an average of a little less than one hammâm per sector, one
local market per 6.8 sectors, one mill per 2.8 sectors and 1.4 bakery
per sector.

But the phenomenon is even more marked when the number of
sectors containing three or more of the different institutions is counted,
for 8 out of the 14 densely populated sectors (57%) as compared with
4 out of the 34 other sectors (12%) boasted three or four different sorts
of these urban services. It is impossible to determine whether the level
of the services in a sector was the reason for it being densely popu-
lated, or whether it was the density of the sector that led to the estab-
lishment of the urban services in it. In some cases, notably the quarters
in the southern part of Algiers, around the port of ‘Azzûn [B/7-8, and
D/8], where five out of the eight barracks of the Janissaries were situ-
ated, it does not seem illogical to assume that the presence of a great
number of (relatively poor) members of the military-administrative
elite was the reason for the high level of services in the region62. On the
other hand, this level of services is absent from the vicinity of the other
three barracks.

Another region well served by these institutions, situated at some dis-
tance beneath the Qasbah [B-C-D-E/5 and D/4] is relatively far from
such concentrations of the militia members. It contains the most densely
populated sector on the hilly side of Algiers according to the distribution
of the probate inventories, the quarter of Sîdî Muhammad al-Sharîf
[C/5]63. Two other sectors in this region [D-E/5] are defined as densely
populated (46 and 45 inventories respectively), one sector [B/5] is
defined as relatively rich (618 riyâl). Finally, sector D/4 is less popu-
lated (27 inventories) and of an average wealth (396 riyâl). It is impos-

62 It seems to me that the five sectors B/7-8, C/7-8 and D/8 form one region, in spite
of the apparently low level of services in B/7, housing two barracks (Dâr al-Qadîma and
Dâr al-Gadîda), containing only one bakery and one mill, but located next to sector C/7
with its two public baths, three bakeries, one mill and one local market.

63 Eighty probate inventories were identified in this area (average wealth of 333 riyal),
of which 29 are members of the Ocak (168 riyal) and 51 are civilians (426 riyal): 37
Baldi (451 riyal), 8 Kabyls (225 riyal), 3 “civil” Turks (92 riyal) and three converts (991
riyal). See SHUVAL, op. cit., p. 228.
sible to say if the dense population led to the construction of the region’s six hammâm, ten bakeries, five mills and four local markets, or if, on the contrary, it was the presence of these facilities that appealed to the population.

Be that as it may, the analysis shows clearly that a very logical pattern of better services to the more densely populated regions of Algiers did exist at the end of the eighteenth century. These services were mainly owned by various awqâf, and some by the Ocak, in the framework of what the French termed “Le Beylik.” As we have seen, a list of bakeries dating from 1805 accounts for 71 bakeries (whose existence at that date is definite) out of a total of 98 mentioned in all the documents that I have studied (whose coexistence in the same period is not at all certain). Most of Algiers’ shops belonged to various waqf, and so did the public baths and the mills. It seems to me that this calls for a deeper look at the role of this institution, whose importance for the urbanization of several cities has already been underlined by different researchers.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the eighteenth century, Algerian society was far from being an egalitarian society. This was manifested, among other things, by the concentrations of rich population in certain areas in the city, following a pattern that can also be found in Cairo, Tunis and Aleppo in the same era. However a closer look into the distribution of wealth in Algiers reveals another pattern, one of spatial separation between the rich of the two main components of the city’s population: the members of the military-administrative elite — the Turks — and the local population native to the city — the Baldi. This separation was the result of specific historical conditions that influenced the character of the Algerian Ocak from the first days of its establishment in what was to become the Algerian vilayet. Unfortunately, the source material available does not permit the same analysis for earlier periods in Ottoman Algiers history that I have made for the end of the eighteenth century. Thus we have to make with a “freeze frame” kind of description, without being able to

---

look for the development of both patterns of habitation. Nevertheless, as these two phenomena were the spatial manifestations of social realities, and the latter are the results of changing conditions, it is quite certain that in both cases we are dealing with dynamic (albeit slow) processes. I intend in a future project to compare the habitation patterns of Algerian society in the last quarter of the eighteenth century with those of the end of Ottoman rule in 1830. A major change was produced in 1817, when the Dey moved with most of his administrative apparatus from his palace in the city center [F-7] to the Qasbah in the uppermost part of the city [B/C-2]. Although the span of time between this event and the conquest of Algiers by the French is only 13 years, it will be interesting to see whether any change can be detected in this short period.

Surprisingly, wealth concentration does not seem to have improved the level of services in the rich quarters. Urban facilities were to be found where they were most needed, that is, in the city’s large concentrations of population. These facilities being for the most part owned by different *awqāf*, this phenomenon calls for further investigation of the role of the *waqf* institution in the residential parts of cities. It also raises a question about the (lack of?) planning in Ottoman Algiers, as well as in other cities in the Islamic world.
Map 1. Algiers at the end of the eighteenth century
Map 3. Public ovens, public baths and mills
Tal Shuval, Poor Quarter/Rich Quarter: Distribution of Wealth in the Arab Cities of the Ottoman Empire, the Case of Eighteenth Century Algiers

The analysis of probate inventories registered by the Algerian administration of finances (bayt al-mâl) at the end of the eighteenth century shows quite clearly the existence of both rich and poor quarters in eighteenth-century Algiers. Situated mainly around the economic, administrative and religious center of the city, the rich quarters follow a pattern found in other Arab cities in the same time period. A closer analysis, however, shows another pattern that seems unique to Algiers, that of the separation of rich Algerians from the rich members of the military-administration Ottoman elite (“Turks”). The difference in Algiers’ pattern of residence may be the manifestation of its social reality: exclusion of members of the local elites from the ruling institutions, and lack of integration of members of the Ottoman elite into the local society. An analysis of the distribution of urban facilities (public baths, quarter markets, mills and bakeries) in the city shows that they were to be found where they were most needed, that is, in the city’s large concentrations of population.

Tal Shuval, Quartiers riches/quartiers pauvres: la distribution de la richesse dans les villes arabes de l’Empire ottoman, le cas de la ville d’Alger au XVIIIe siècle

L’analyse des inventaires après décès enregistrés par l’administration des finances (bayt al-mâl) d’Alger à la fin du XVIIIe siècle montre clairement l’existence de quartiers riches et de quartiers pauvres à Alger à l’époque. La répartition de ces quartiers semble assez conforme au modèle proposé pour les autres villes arabes de l’époque: concentration des quartiers riches autour du centre économique, administratif et religieux de la ville, présence des quartiers pauvres dans les zones périphériques. Une comparaison entre le plan de répartition des riches membres de l’élite militaro-administrative d’Alger et celui des riches Algériens de souche fait apparaître un phénomène qui semble être propre à Alger: une exclusion mutuelle des riches des deux groupes. Ceci semble être la manifestation géographique d’une réalité sociale: l’exclusion des membres des élites locales des institutions de gouvernement, et la faible intégration des membres de l’élite ottomane à la société locale. Une analyse de la répartition de l’équipement des quartiers (bains publics, marchés non-spécialisés, moulins et fours à pain) montre que ces équipements se trouvaient là où on avait le plus besoin d’eux: dans les zones de forte concentration de la population.