

THE SURVIVING HISTORIC HAMMĀMS OF THE MEDINA OF TRIPOLI - LIBYA: TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE DIMENSIONS

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Abstract

Unlike the other medinas in the Arab-Islamic world, the medina of Tripoli (capital city of Libya), has never had many historic public baths. This is probably due to a more conservative tradition where most of the Libyan women use the hammām only once, as part of their pre-wedding preparation and celebration. This paper presents an analysis of the three and only remaining hammāms of Tripoli and the way they are used and perceived today. Based on the results of a survey conducted by the authors in July 2008 (as part of an AHRC funded research project on the historic hammāms of North Africa) the architectural characteristics of these historic structures are presented along with their increasing usage by a cosmopolitan population (Tunisians, Moroccans and Sudanese) living inside the medina. This paper also outlines a number of guidelines for the sustainable use and adaptation of the hammām within the Libyan context.

Keywords:

Historic hammāms; Tripoli-Libya; tangible/intangible heritage; architecture.

Introduction

Hammāms were and are still key urban facilities in the old medina of Tripoli despite their small number. Contrary to some countries of the Maghreb (the Levant), historic public baths of the Maghreb are still operating and enjoy a large local clientele. Moreover new hammāms are still being introduced in recently built neighbourhoods. However, the majority of the historic public baths encounter difficulties due to the change of their heating, water distribution, lighting and ventilation systems and the increasing costs associated with their running. In the case of the medina of Tripoli, local social customs and habits are still strong and new ones have been introduced by Tunisians and Moroccans living in Tripoli. Despite these several changes, the hammām still plays an important role in the social context of the historic medina of Tripoli.

The Medina of Tripoli and its Urban Fabric

Libya has a remarkably rich history and various successive civilisations gave Tripoli its architectural diversity and character. Founded in the 7th century BC, by the Phoenicians and

occupied successively by the Carthaginians and the Romans, this capital city counts today a population of 2,093,000 inhabitants. The city was known as Oea during the Roman era and its current name has its origin from the word Tripolis meaning three Roman cities in Libya: Oea, Sabratha and Leptis Magna.

Tripoli grew and evolved through different eras and civilisations: Phoenicians 7th century BC, Romans 1st century, Vandals 5th century, Byzantine 6th century, Arab-Muslims 7th century and Ottoman from the 16th century until the Italian invasion in the beginning of the 20th century. Throughout most of its history it has been the gateway to sub-Saharan Africa and an important start or end point of many trading caravan routes. The Ottoman (1551-1711 and 1835-1911), the Karamanlī (1711-1835) and the Italian (1911-1943) and British (1943-1951) colonial periods left a distinctive mark on the city's architecture and urbanism.

The Medina of Tripoli is an ancient walled city. Its high walls were originally built on the landward side to repel attacks from the interior, and these survived many invasions throughout the centuries. The city's sea-facing wall is less ancient, however, as it was built in the 8th century by Tripoli's Muslim ruler. Three large gates provided access to the old town through the fortified city walls: Bab Zanāta in the west, Bab Hawāra in the southeast and Bab Al-Bahr in the north wall. The city walls are still standing today.

The basic street plan of the medina was laid down in the Roman period when the walls were constructed as protection against attacks from the interior of Tripolitania, and are considered

well planned, possibly better than modern street plans. In the 8th century a wall on the sea-facing side of the city was added. The achievement of a strong urban image was the result of different building activities that concerned religious, collective, and commercial institutions, together with the careful design of the defensive walls, bastions, and the castle (Kala'a), as well as the creation of particularly refined houses and residential spaces.

The specific features of the urban fabric of Tripoli are due to a process of assimilation of models belonging to other urban cultures of the Mediterranean world. This explains the particular way the houses' windows, balconies and terraces open onto the street, unlike in other Islamic medinas, where the buildings are more introvert. The polarization of the urban routes on the waterfront was clearly a Roman heritage (Micara, 2008). The organisation of the arteries inside the medina was basically planned on the Roman grid. Hence the hammāms of the medina were also located on these main arteries, as was also the case of the Hadrianic baths built by the Romans in Leptis Magna, few kilometres East of Tripoli.

Tripoli used to be a transit city to Sub-Saharan Africa, for merchants and camel caravans plying the Saharan trade routes. The old city was then the site of several large inns, known as caravanserais or funduqs. There were also few hammāms or public baths built during the Ottoman era (Messana, 1973), and which were used by the merchants and travellers of the caravans transiting by the medina of Tripoli.

After the Libyan independence from the Italian occupation in 1951, many traditional families

moved out of the old city to occupy houses and apartments formerly used by the departing Italian population. These newer houses were equipped with better sanitation, water supply and other facilities, and the houses in the old city were left abandoned. Most fell into a sorry state of disrepair, as a result of neglect. By the mid-1970s, many of these fragile and beautiful buildings collapsed.

A project to restore key buildings and to trace back the city's architectural history was then launched by the Libyan authorities in the mid-1980s, under the authority of the Agency for the Management of Historic Cities in Libya –AMHC-. This has been undertaken with a particular focus on monuments such as mosques, large houses, consular residencies, pashas' houses and other key amenities such as hammāms in the old city. Furthermore, the project has seen another dynamic push by the beginning of the 21st century.

Hammāms of Tripoli in Travellers' Accounts

Hammāms (public bathhouses) are one of life's focal points in Tripoli despite their small numbers compared to other Islamic cities in the Mediterranean. They play the same role as those of other North African and Middle Eastern cities, and are seen as a place not just to clean up, but to unwind and socialise.

Hammāms of Tripoli, despite their small number, have been described in several travellers' accounts. They were all built during the first Ottoman era (1551-1711). The first who cited these bathhouses is al-Bakri (Abbas & al, 1968: 31). However he just noted that the medina had nice hammāms without indicating their number. In the 12th century, the Moroccan traveller al-

Tijani states: "I entered the medina, and I found hammām al-balad (medina). This hammām is next to the Kasbah (commonly called kala'a or citadel), small but surely nicely decorated as I also notice it is part of a mosque waqf. There are also two other hammāms in the medina, but they are less decorated" (al-Tarabulss Medina magazine, 1984: 55).

Hence, and according to al-Tijani, the medina of Tripoli counted three hammāms in the 12th century. The number of hammāms in Tripoli did not exceed four, even though it was stated in some travellers' accounts that it counted up to 8 and sometimes 10 hammāms. However, the credibility of these un-authored accounts is not confirmed as there is no historical evidence.

City / Year	1930s/40s	1970s-80s	2000-2008	Operating Hammāms
Damascus	40 ¹	20 ²	13 ³	
Aleppo			12 ³	
Fez	30 ⁴		15 ³	
Cairo	47 ⁵	33 ⁶	5 ⁹	
Tunis	53	23 ⁷	15 ⁹	
Tripoli	4	3 ⁸	2 ⁹	

Table 1: The Hammāms in the Cities of North Africa and the Levant. (Authors, 2008).

Main surveys on hammāms in different Arab cities and their authors since the 1930s:

1 Ecochard and le Coeur, 2 Munir Kayyal, 3 Magda Sibley, 4 Edmund Secret, 5 Edmond Pauty, 6 Andre Raymond, 7 Ahmed Saadaoui, 8 Abu-Chouireb, 9 Magda Sibley & Fodil Fadli

At the beginning of the 16th century (1518), Hasan ibn Muhammed al-Wazzan al-Fasi (Joannes Leo Africanus) described the customs and some manners of Tripoli inhabitants. He says:

"People of Tripoli like eating in the hammāms and have parties there –i.e. weddings– as they sing and dance inside. In each hammām, there is a barber...the majority of hammāms is registered as a wakf of mosques and schools–madrassa-s-..." (Leo Africanus, 1956: 384).

The French surgeon Gerard, who was captured and imprisoned in Tripoli by the end of the 17th century made a clear description of the medina of Tripoli and the manners of its people. Gerard made a surprising note on a different building type which also he referred to as a hammām; "The medina of Tripoli was a naval base for the pirates of Algiers, Sila, Tunis and Tripoli. They built several buildings where they imprisoned the Christian captives. The prisoners called these buildings "Bagno" (bath or hammām); because of the heat they felt inside these buildings, as they were as hot as hammāms" (Abu-Chouireb, in Athar al Arab, 1992: 85).

Early in that century, In 1604, Iskandar Pasha builds next to the Jama'a Sidi-Darghūt the homonymous hammām, confirming a new urban focus, created by the two first Ottoman governors of the Medina, halfway between the Marcus Aurelius Arch and the crossing of Arba' Arsat. It was also called hammām al-Seghīr (the small hammam), as it was considered as the smallest public bath in the medina. In 1658, Athmane Pasha al-Sakazli (the Ottoman wali-governor of Tripoli) ordered the construction of a hammām located in the centre of the medina, precisely at the Arbaa Arsat-four columns-. It was called hammām al-Kebīr (The Great hammām).

Traveller Ibn Abi-Dinar (17th century) listed four hammāms in the medina and its surroundings. In the 19th Century, the British archaeologist

H.S.Cowper, who visited Tripoli in 1895, noted that the medina counted four hammāms. These ones are: Darghūt, al-Helga, al-Kebīr and al-Gourjī. This number did not include hammām Mizrāne, as this one is located outside the fortification walls of the medina. Today this hammām has totally disappeared, and a car park stands on its ruins. Hammām al-Gourjī closed few years after Cowper visit to Tripoli, and the building was used as a warehouse (Al-Manawī, 1987: 104). It totally disappeared around 1920's. Hammām al-Kebīr has known the same misfortune, as it is mostly in ruin today.

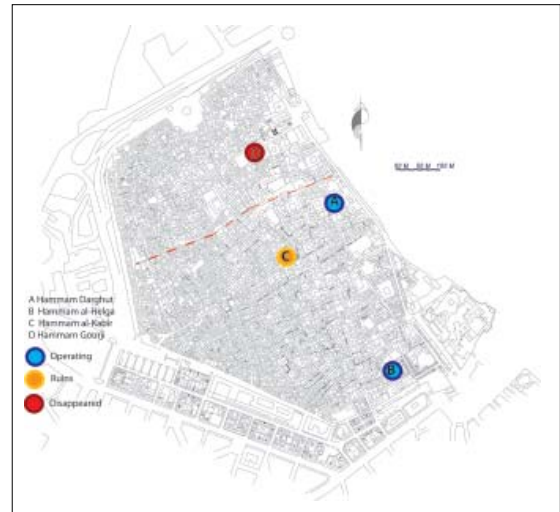


Figure 1: Location of the Historic Hammāms in the Medina of Tripoli (Source: Authors, 2008 adapted from AMHC, 2007).

In July 2008, during the fieldwork carried out by the authors, the two remaining historic baths of the medina were operating; hammām Darghūt and al-Helga, while hammām al-Kebīr was in an

advanced state of decay, however the large changing room remains and is still covered by a gigantic dome (figure 2). It is currently used as a slum accommodation by poor African immigrants, and was until recently used as a market with individual small shops.



Figure 2: Dilapidation of Hammām al Kebīr; View of the Remaining Dome (Source: Authors, 2008).

Architectural Characteristics and Urban Integration

Hammām Darghūt is part of the complex of the same name (Figure 3) comprising also the mosque, a turba (cemetery), a madrassa (school), a midha, the imam's house and stock rooms. It is a wakf property (a religious endowment) of the Othman pasha madrassa, which is located in Shari' Darghūt pasha. While this hammām has undergone a full restoration in 2005 and is currently fully operating, Hammām al-Helga has benefited from maintenance work only. Hammām al-Kebīr has however partially collapsed, its large undressing room covered with a large dome still remains.

Al-Helga is located near Sūq al-Attāra and al-Liffā. It operates for men and women on a rota-basis (table 2). Whereas hammām Darghūt offers more time slots for men's bathing sessions and is easily accessible by car, hammām al-Helga caters more frequently for the female clientele and has difficult vehicular access. According to the interviews carried out by the authors with the managers of the two operating baths, and based on behavioural observation of the users, the location of the two hammāms has influenced their managers to target their clientele on a gender basis. Sūq al Attāra (perfumes) and al-Liffā (clothing) is mainly frequented by women. Hence hammām al-Helga targets more women than men.

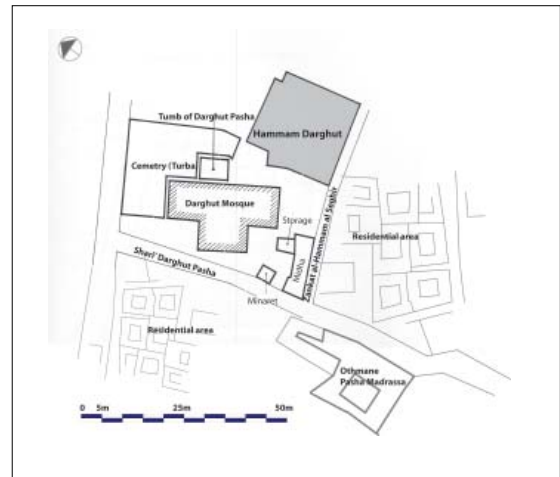


Figure 3: Hammām Darghūt Part of an Urban Complex (Source: Authors, 2008).

On the other hand, hammām Darghūt is next to a large mosque, is easily accessible by car and is adjacent to a sūq which is mainly frequented by

men (jewellers and copper market). It was also reported by the women interviewed in the two public baths that it is becoming more difficult to hold pre-wedding parties at hammām al Helga because of it being accessed from a narrow and busy market street with no parking facility nearby. Hammām Darghūt seems to be a preferred venue for pre-wedding celebrations as it is located near one of the gates of the Medina where it is easier to drop off a large group of women, coming from residential neighbourhoods in the new parts of Tripoli.

The historic hammāms of Tripoli have the characteristics of being part of an urban cluster of facilities, located in a strategic area of the medina along the main arteries of the urban quarters. This urban facilities' cluster consist usually of a mosque, a market area (sūq), a theology school (madrassa) and sometimes a caravanserai (founduk).

They continue to provide an important socio-cultural centre for the population of the medina of Tripoli specifically and attract clients from outside the medina for pre-wedding celebrations, and in the eve of major religious festivities such as the end of Ramadhan (the

fasting month), Eid al Adha and other religious festivals. They are owned the by the Waqf (a religious endowment institution) through their affiliation to either a mosque, a madrassa or an administrative amenity (i.e. dīwan).

Similarly to other hammāms in the Maghreb countries, the spatial organization of the bathing spaces of the hammāms of Tripoli is based on a linear transition from cold to warm to hot spaces. It has a simple spatial organization based on non-perfect symmetry.

The hammām is composed of different rooms and spaces as shown in figure (4) however it can be subdivided into three main zones:

- 1- The cold zone composed by the entrance skīfa and the changing spaces (A and B in Figure 5).
- 2- The hot/bathing zone composed of the transition space (warm room), the bathing spaces (hot room, D, d1, d2, and d3 in Figure 5).
- 3- The heating zone composed of the furnace (F), the water tank (f1), the fuel storage spaces (E and e1 in Figure 5).

The main architectural spaces (the undressing

Slot	Day / Hammam	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7.30 am to 6pm	Darghut	Men	Women	Women	Women	Women	Men	Men
6pm to 11 pm		Men	Men	Men	Men	Men	Men	Men
8 am to 6 pm	Al-Helga	Women	Women	Women	Women	Men	Women	Women
6 pm to 11 pm		----	----	Men	Men	----	----	----

Table 2: Opening Times and Bathing Sessions for Men and Women in Hammām Darghūt and Hammām el-Helga (Source: Authors, 2008).

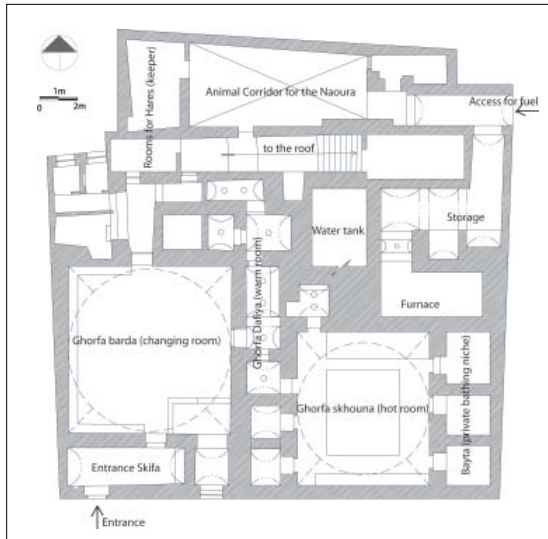


Figure 4: Hammām Darghūt Plan (Source: Authors*, 2008)
*Authors developed this drawing based on the physical survey they carried out on the hammām, but also on verifying measurements of previous survey drawings developed by the AMHC (2005).

room and the hot room) are composed of two large square shaped rooms (B and D in Figure 5) covered by two large domes. The entrance of the hammām opens onto a narrow street “Zanqat al-Hammām al Seghīr” whereas the entrance to the furnace is located on the eastern side wall of the building, opening originally onto a narrow alleyway which is now part of the courtyard of a recently built courtyard complex of craft shops and workshops. Apart from the entrance and a small high window, the facade of the hammām is a blank white wall. The roof consists of two main domes and a series of vaults and chimneys.

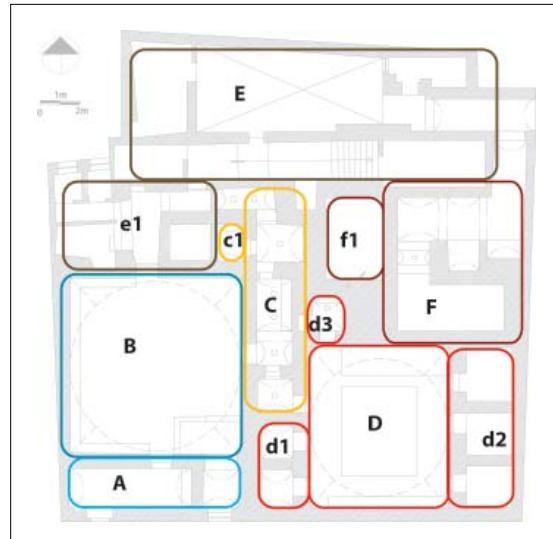


Figure 5: Hammām Darghūt in Tripoli, Zoning Decomposition (Source: Authors, 2008).

All Tripoli hammāms are equipped with their own well (bi'r, f1 in Figure 5). The furnace is traditionally fuelled by wood and/or by-products of local traditional workshops such as wood shavings. The fuel was delivered to the hammām on the back of donkeys. Nowadays, the heating system operates using “naftā” (diesel). These compulsory modifications caused economic and environmental inconveniences to the hammāms managers and users. Some of the interviewed users (in July 2008) were complaining about the “different” heat inside the hammām as compared to when the structure was heated using the traditional fuel. Hammām users (particularly at hammām el-Helga) also complained about the smell of the



Figure 6: Roof of Hammām Darghūt and Immediate Surrounding (Source: Authors, 2008).

“naftā” inside and outside the hammām; in the neighbourhood.

Social Role and Cultural Importance of Tripoli's Hammāms

The public bath plays an important role in the social activities of the Muslim community. It is the venue for a number washing rituals and the conduct of major ablutions before prayers. It is also a meeting space for interaction of various social groups, which regularly visit the hammām.

The public bath strengthens the bonds between its regular users. Initial findings from the surveys and participant observation conducted by the authors in the two hammāms during the fieldwork of July 2008 indicate a number of interesting results related to the contemporary socio-cultural dimensions of the hammām. These findings are based on interviews carried out by the authors with the hammāms' managers and users, and on direct observation inside the different spaces of the two buildings.



Figure 7: The Furnace in Hammām Darghūt (Source: Authors, 2008).

Structured interviews and questionnaires targeted all type of users visiting the two operating hammāms. They focused on the hammām usage frequency by the clients, their bathing practices and their perceptions of the hammām, considering both tangible and intangible dimensions. Observations on women's social practices inside the public bath have been conducted by the female author, while the male bathing sessions have been carried out by the male author. Observations

were made on different days of the week and at different times of the day depending on the schedule of the bathing sessions for men and women. Insight was therefore gained into current bathing practices and the use and occupation of spaces inside the baths.

Traditionally, the hammām plays a significant role in arranging marriages. In conservative communities such as in Libya, women who are looking for suitable brides for their sons would go to the bathhouse for this purpose. It is also customary, in many parts of the Muslim world, for the new bride to be taken, with her friends, to the hammām where she is prepared, groomed and applied the henna' (Herbal paste once applied leaves red/brown colour). The groom is also escorted there, the night before he meets his bride. This custom is still strong and alive as witnessed by the authors during the summer of 2008. In fact, it is worth mentioning here that some local Libyan women visit the hammām only once in their lifetime and this is before their wedding ceremony.

According to the Libyan traditional beliefs; a women who does not go to the hammam before her marriage, will not make a beautiful bride (old Libyan popular saying).

Unlike the hammāms in the other Arab-Islamic countries, the entrance to the hammām is nowadays always managed by a male keeper (even during women's session). The manager sits at a desk located in the entrance skīfa, the transition space and waiting area between by the hammām entrance and the undressing room. He is responsible for receiving the entrance fee and manages a small shop selling soft drinks, soap and shampoo, towels and other hammām necessities. However, inside the

hammām, a woman is in charge of supervising the undressing room and managing the space during the women's session. The changing area (Figure 8) is a large square room with a central fountain "nafoura" and is covered by a large dome with openings at its base. Hammām users mentioned that initially the undressing room contained private wooden cubicles which have been recently removed by the management

to provide a cleaner and more open space to control. The undressing room has subspaces with different levels of privacy. These include a wooden mezzanine level the "sedda" as well as one or two private rooms that can be rented for special occasions. Lockers are provided for storing valuable before proceeding to the bathing spaces. Clients bring their own towels and other bathing utensils.



Figure 8: Hammām Darghūt Changing Space (Source: Authors, 2008).

From the changing room, the bather enters to the warm transition room by a small door. It is a rectangular longitudinal room, where the "kiyass" or "Kiyassa" the male or female scrubber provides the service of scrubbing and massaging the clients after they had sweated in the hot room and carried out a first and quick wash of their body. In Libya, the majority of hammām workers (Kiyassine or kiyassat) are either Moroccan, Tunisian or Sudanese. In fact this is mainly due to the fact that there are many immigrants working in Tripoli coming from other North African countries such Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, where the contemporary hammām tradition is much stronger than that of Libya.

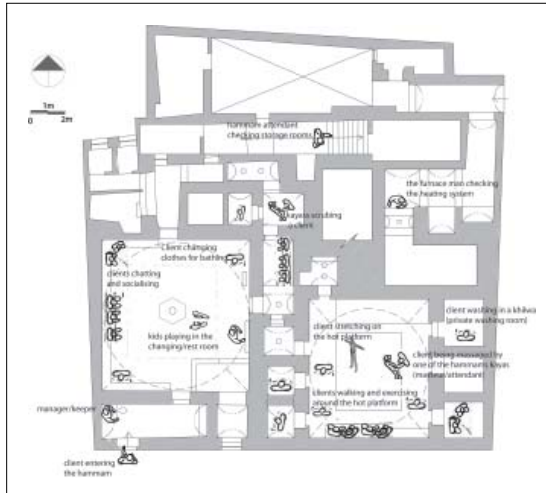


Figure 9: Users and Spatial Use Inside Hammām Darghūt (Source: Authors, 2008).

The manager of hammām Darghūt used to be a worker of the AMHC. He had been given the responsibility of renting the hammām and

managing it himself in July 2007. The manager H.M says "...Hammām Darghūt is an important heritage for the medina of Tripoli. I have worked on the hammām during all the stages of its restoration. Hence nobody else can manage it better than me".



Figure 10: Small Bathing Room (bayta) Inside Hammām Darghūt (Source: Authors, 2008).

With regards to the type of clientele of the hammām he added "The hammām receives locals, Arab workers living in Tripoli and tourists... they all like bathing in hammām Darghūt,

because it has kept its original features thanks to the good restoration initiative. In some good days the hammām receive up to 150 customers...and sometimes even more". These historic public baths represent a familiar space and common heritage for the cosmopolitan North African immigrant population of Tripoli, living both inside and outside the medina.

The manager of the hammām tries to keep the entrance fee as low as possible, despite the increase in fuel and electricity prices. The fee for hammām Darghūt is fixed to 2 Libyan Dinars for adults and ½ Dinar for the kids. The customer pays the kiyass (masseur) separately inside the hammām. In addition to body scrubbing and massage, the women customers receive other services. These include body hair removal, eye brow plucking, henna application and tattoos and even hairdressing from a mobile hair dresser. All these services are not included in the entrance fee but are paid directly to the women providing the services inside the hammām. The fee payable to the kiyass depends on the client and on the services and massages offered by the kiyass or the hammām attendant. It can vary depending on the financial situation of the client and the service they require. As such the hammām is (to some extent) still an egalitarian space as both poor and wealthier clients can use it and can choose which services they receive or not receive.

Despite the fact, that there have been new hammāms built recently in Tripoli, the majority of people interviewed inside the public bath, prefer using the historic hammāms of the medina, because of their original character but also because of the quality of their spaces and heating and the quality of service they provide.

Out of 15 women clients interviewed inside hammām Darghūt, 10 mentioned having been to the newer hammāms outside the medina but prefer to return to hammām Darghūt because "this is an old hammām that has been restored, it has high domes and one does not have the feeling of being squashed in a space with a low ceiling, I like the domes and the vaults and the airy feeling of this old hammām. The new hammāms provide new services such as hairdressing, a small cafeteria etc... but do not have the qualities of the old hammām, such as space, good heating and beautiful features" mentioning about the staff, this interviewed client says: " I like coming to this hammām because of Meriem the Kiyassa, she has been working here for more that 15 years and she is an excellent kiyassa,... some clients follow her as she also works in Hammām al-Helga, when hammām Darghūt is open for men. ... You do not find a kiyassa as a good as Meriem in any of the new hammāms..."

During the summer time, the hammām has a huge number of women's parties, as it is the season for weddings. As stated earlier, the tradition that the bride and the groom have to have a "wedding" party with their friends in the hammām is still strong in Tripoli. According to hammām Darghūt manager "...The Tuesdays are the special days for wedding parties in the hammām...in the seventies there were long queues at the entrance of the hammām, it received easily up to 60 bride a day...counting in average 14 women accompanying the bride...this made it up to 900 customer a day".

A man client interviewed while bathing, said "we used to come here minimum twice a week... plus once every Wednesday when there was

the groom party before his marriage..."

Facing hammām Darghūt is a building which used to be a school. During the summer when the pupils are away, part of the school used to be open for the large number of women who came with the bride to be to hammām Darghūt and was used as a gathering place for those coming to the pre-wedding parties in the bathhouse. Today this building is being restored and it will be used as a hotel. The manager

complained about this and said "it would have been better if it was restored and re-used to be a complementary amenity for the hammām... imagine when women come bathing they need to leave their kids somewhere, it would have been better if it was planned as a community centre with multiple activities such as nursery daytime, and community gathering place in the evening."

In winter the hammām activities double.



Figure 11: Men Bathing Inside Hot Room Central Space in Hammām Darghūt (Source: Authors, 2008).

According to hammām Darghūt manager, the consumption of water is doubled then. The bath is used in winter mainly for health reasons by both men and women. An old man interviewed inside the hammām said “I usually come twice a month to the hammām when it is hot. However in winter I come at least once a week, mainly Fridays...I also meet with my Arab friends who come to the hammām mainly on Friday.” Bathing practices in the two historic Ottoman hammāms of Tripoli are strongly alive, and they represent a good example the rich intangible heritage associated with these important historic structures of medina.

Conservation and restoration institutions in North Africa should learn from the restoration process and the reuse scenarios adapted by the AMHC in the perpetuation of the hammām tradition in the medina of Tripoli, despite their small number.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The two historic hammāms of Tripoli- Libya still play a central part in the social and cultural life of the Libyans and the North African immigrant population of Tripoli. They provide a number of functions, and sustain a rich tradition of bathing and health care. It is still a meeting venue for friends and relatives especially during pre-wedding celebrations. The two remaining historic hammāms in the medina of Tripoli are operating and are kept in a good functioning condition. In fact, and due to their small number compared to other Arab-Islamic cities, they have received more attention and protection from the Libyan authorities. Nowadays, they are still receiving large numbers of users, Libyans, Arabs or overseas tourists.

New public baths inspired by the two remaining historic structures continue to be built in every new modern neighbourhood. However, a short visit to some of them and comments from the hammāms users indicate that they are poorly designed, their heating system is in some cases risky and they can sometimes constitute a safety and health hazard. This is because there are no clear regulations and guidelines for the planning, construction and management of new versions of the traditional hammām that are emerging everywhere. Opportunities for perpetuating the good practices of the traditional public baths can be summarized in the following main points:

- The need to develop clear design guidelines for building new hammāms
- The need to identify adequate materials and construction techniques that are responsive to the specific internal micro-climate of the hammām (i.e. appropriate plasters and renders that behave well under high temperature and humidity conditions)
- The need to increase awareness of the local people and organisations on the importance of such structures but also to promote the use of historic hammāms by larger tourism developers.
- The need to introduce health and safety directives for the usage of hybrid heating systems (combination of modern techniques with the design of the old furnace).

Different innovative approaches should be developed for the sustainable use of the “modern versions” of the hammām. Therefore, particular attention has to be given to adapting modern technologies, reviving traditional construction methods, recycling water, reducing

environmental pollution and using renewable energy. Future implementation plans need to take into consideration the requirements of the local stakeholders and inhabitants so that the hammam can develop into a sustainable resource for the local neighbourhood and the city. Hammāms, either the historic or newly built ones should be part of a complex dedicated to the health, wellness of the urban population.

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Notes

1- The data collected during the fieldwork in Tripoli (July 2008) was through:

- Authors Interviews with owners/managers of the two historic hammāms of Tripoli
- Authors questionnaires/interviews with the users of the two hammāms
- Authors meetings and interviews with architects and engineers involved in the restoration and maintenance of hammām Darghūt and hammām al-Helga.

2- The International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES) Transliteration system has been used in this text.

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