



### **Footnotes:**

1 The Maghrib was the only Ottoman domination in which power was not in the hands of the same family. Power was, in fact, transferred by election of a group of the most influential merchants and soldiers after the death of the reigning Dey. R. Oliver and A. Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p.6.

2 It is derived from the word سلطان *Sultān*. It is a title used to show "strength", "authority", or "rulership" [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

3 The word corsair was used by the Europeans at that time to refer to the merchants. Originally, "corsair" is derived from an Italian word meaning "to choose". R. Oliver and A. Atmore, op. Cit., p.6.

4 Arudj was known in history as Arudj Barbarossa. He was born in the 1470' on the isle of Lesbos. He was one of four brothers of a Muslim Turkish knight and a Christian woman. He was a sailor and a trader. He became a well known Turkish privateer and Ottoman governor. He was killed in 1518 when he was fighting against the Spanish in Tlemcen which was at that time controlled by the Ottomans. [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

5 The word refers to Islamic religious institution for teaching. It is in fact a Koranic school, a place of study, a school or college, usually for religious education.

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and regional speech until the present. Among the most common Turkish words which were of cultural and historical importance are words like *hammam* (Turkish bath) and *turbe*: (tomb). Such words were even accepted to be part of literary written contexts.

A great number of Turkish words that had been adopted in Tlemcen and which are still used nowadays are derived from an Arabic origin. As a matter of fact, Turkish has borrowed a lot from the Arabic language as a result of the expansion of Islam on the one hand, and geographic proximity and cultural contact on the other. Among the most common Turkish words which have been adopted in Tlemcen and which have their origins in Arabic are words like *medresa* (school), *zmane* (in the old ages), and *dzamija* (mosque).

It is worth noting that the expansion of the Ottoman Empire was a great deal about spreading Islam. Interestingly, it was particularly Islam which could, to a great extent, shape the Tlemceni mentality throughout many centuries up to now. Being a religion of peace and brotherhood, it explains such traits often used to refer to the local people as being “peaceful” and “well educated”. Indeed, nowadays Tlemcen has a distinguished character of its own. It is among the rare Algerian cities in which folk traditions are best preserved. Being a chief centre of Islamic culture for many centuries and a leading artistic centre with incomparable buildings, religious, education, and cultural institutions, it has become one of the most famous Muslim cities that took after Islamic cultures and civilisations.

By the time of the Ottomans, Tlemcen had become an important centre of Islamic culture. It was a home to several famous poets and thinkers. It was also a home to a number of cultural institutions dedicated to preserve the city’s culture. Nowadays, the influence of these people is still resented through local people’s inherited traditions and habits.

sixteenth century and the early twentieth century. Nowadays, the expression is used to refer to the mixed descendents of Ottoman Turks and local women.

The intermingling of both groups: the Ottomans and the local people fixed on that land a character of change and fluctuation that was already detected during the passage of the preceding forces throughout literature, architecture, art, and many other aspects too. Nonetheless, the period of the Ottoman domination in Tlemcen witnessed an attempt at cultural and artistic revival.

Interestingly, architecture in Ottoman Tlemcen shows the strongest impact of imperial Ottoman styles which did not totally disrupt the vibrant traditions of the old Berber, Arab, and Hispano architectures. Instead, the Ottoman rule shows strong continuities with the past, although patronage is somehow different.

Doubtless, the Ottoman centralized power oversaw building throughout the empire resulting in the fostering of generally homogeneous Ottoman architectural styles which displayed a variety of building types including mosques, *madrassas*<sup>5</sup>, palaces, markets, and fountains. By and large, the architectural undertakings were under the patronage of the Ottoman governors who not only looked for models in Istanbul but also travelled to Italy to get material such as marbles for instance.

In terms of linguistics, language during the Ottoman period showed a flexible attitude, and Turkish represented the most important source of vocabulary during that era. Doubtless, and unlike today, Ottoman words were not all the time readily accepted particularly during the first decades of the Ottomans' domination. Indeed, the local people started to albeit unconsciously and sometimes even unwillingly to adopt borrowed words from a language that belonged to an alien rule. Throughout time, however, Turkish vocabulary started to be adopted and later adapted in the local people's colloquial

Ottomans' savoir faire in developing gun-powder. Most important of all, the Ottomans' power was highly centralized. It was also transferred to a single person, and not divided among rival princes, and was actually ruled by a same family for over seven years.<sup>1</sup> furthermore, the Ottomans' military strength also goes back to the incorporation of religion as part of the state structure with the sultan<sup>2</sup> considering himself as the protector of Islam.

The Ottomans' military influence in Tlemcen was achieved by 1517 after the success of corsair<sup>3</sup> Arudj<sup>4</sup> in capturing the city of Tlemcen from its sultan, Abu Zayan, the Beni-Zian lineage last member. The two Muslim privateer brothers Arudj and Keir Eddine better known in history as "Barbarossa" or "Red-Beard" were very instrumental in extending the Ottoman influence in Algeria and Tlemcen more particularly. They were, in fact, effectively active at a time when Spain was setting up its presidios in the Maghrib, and throughout the Algerian northern coasts in particular, and throughout the Algerian northern coasts in particular, stopping in this way the Spanish ambitions in Algeria.

It is without significance that it was the Ottomans' military strength which helped spread the Ottoman influence over the area of Tlemcen and the Maghrib as a whole. However, it was also the extraordinary social and cultural attributes of the Ottomans which led them eventually to establish Islamic traditions and culture in Tlemcen which were to last to the current day.

The interaction between the Ottomans and the local people of Tlemcen paved the way for the emergence of a community known in history as the "kouloughli" community which was to last to the present day. "Kouloughli" is, in fact, a term that is derived from the Turkish word "*Kuloglu*" (the contraction of *kul* meaning "subject" "soldier" and "slave", and "*ogul*" meaning "son" to give the expression "son of soldier". This community is in fact, the outcome of marriages of Turkish males that were for the most part janissaries (i.e., all officers and soldiers) with indigenous women between the

*Ottomane sur la cité et son peuple. Beaucoup d'intérêt sera donné aux événements socioculturels, mais les dimensions politiques seront aussi examinées.*

### **Tlemcen under the Ottoman Empire: Influence and development.**

The Ottoman Empire was one of the greatest and most powerful Muslim empires of the modern era. By the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, the empire was at the height of its power. Its culture and military expansion crossed over into Southern Europe, Western Asia, and North Africa with Egypt and the Maghrib at the forefront. In the so called Maghrib, the Ottomans were highly involved in Northern Algeria with a special interest in Tlemcen. In fact, the city's location on a crossroads between the Mediterranean coast and the Sahara, and between Algeria and Morocco has made it, since the ancient times, a commercial centre which attracted different dynasties including the Romans, the Berbers, the Arabs, the Spanish, and later the Ottomans and the French.

The intervention of these races was so extensive, and the fusion of their cultures so complete that it is almost impossible to assign any trait of the civilisation which emerged to any particular group. What actually happened was that before the culture and the civilisation of Tlemcen could take shape there had come into being a new group of people referred to in history as "the Ottomans" who were to have an eminent impact over the land of Tlemcen and its peoples. This obviously does not mean that socio-cultural stabilisation was then achieved. Invasions from all directions continued to take place over the land after the passage of those people. Nonetheless, the Ottomans were to play an eminent influence over the land and its peoples which was to last to the present.

The reasons behind the Ottomans' success in the Maghrib in general and Tlemcen more particularly, was the

## Tlemcen under the Ottoman Empire: Influence and development.

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### Abstract :

*The city of Tlemcen witnessed the passage of successive dynasties throughout its long history. The favourable geographic factors and the presence of diverse races who shared with each other their own peculiar cultural and social experiences gave to Tlemcen a unique place in all Algeria and Africa as a whole. The Ottoman Empire was one of the greatest, most extensive, and long-lasting empires which had marked Tlemcen's past and present. Throughout subsequent decades, what became known as the Ottoman Empire expanded its political, social, cultural, and religious influence over the land and its peoples. In this respect, the present paper examines the extent of the Ottomans' influence in Tlemcen and the way local people responded to it. Emphasis will be given to the socio-cultural developments, but the political dimensions will also be examined.*

### Résumé:

*La ville de Tlemcen a été témoin du passage de dynasties successives durant sa longue histoire. Les facteurs géographiques favorables et la présence de races diverses qui ont partagé avec l'un l'autre leurs propres expériences culturelles et sociales ont donné à Tlemcen un cachet civilisationnel et universel unique en son genre. L'Empire Ottoman était l'un des plus grand empires qui avaient marqué le passé et présent de Tlemcen. Pendant des décennies ultérieures, ce qui été connu comme l'Empire Ottoman a étendu son influence politique, sociale, culturelle et religieuse sur la terre et ses peuples. À cet égard, la présente communication examine le degré de l'influence*