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The Distinctiveness of the Wedding Ceremony in Tuat Region in the 20th Century

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وبعد قيام (الطالب) (الطالبين) (الطالبتين) بتصحيح كل الملاحظات والتوجيهات المقدمة من
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Dedication

Here I am, I have come to the end of my journey in this dream, to begin again another dream that awaits me...

The moments of my university path have ended, moments in which I lived through many situations and circumstances, some of which were beautiful and some that were somewhat intolerable, and days passed that always made us feel bored and helpless, and difficult stations we faced, but we completed our dream and our journey and continued with renewed energy to complete our desired goal, which we have always wished to complete.

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and my supervisors. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents, Lalla and Ahmed Obeid Allah whose words of encouragement led me to where I am standing at this instant. My grandmother who had a big part in creating this piece and my siblings who never left my side and are very special.

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Last but not least, I dedicate this work and give special thanks to my inner self for not giving up on the pursuit of our dreams.

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Abstract

The family is considered to be one of the most important components of a society. The family in the Tuati society with its components and the characteristics of its components differs from the family in the urban societies in terms of the conventions and customs controlling and governing it. The Islamic family in the area of Tuat is based on the Islamic teachings of the religion according to the Qur'an and Sunnah. Nevertheless, it is still standing in terms of its establishment steps and the stages of its construction according to the traditions, customs and conventions which have been passed over generations, and from generation to another; its name has been embedded between them over days and nights. In this study, we will try to find out about the nature of engagement and marriage in the Tuati community during the late 20th century and up until now, and how much its uniqueness and distinctiveness differ from the rest of the families in the other Sahraoui communities, as well as from the urban communities in the north. To have more information we ought to know the steps of engagement and its features then the marriage and its decrees and customs with reference to the value of dowries, which vary according to each and every family in the Tuati community, with a review of the post-construction of the family. Then we dealt with the birth of children in the Tuati community and how it is sacred and celebrated traditionally by the Tuati people.

Keywords: Family, Tuat, Engagement, Marriage, traditions, Customs, dowry, Society, Children Birth.

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“Official” linguistic transcription (used in papers/articles)

Number	Transliteration Symbols	Arabic Letters	Examples
1	<i>q</i>	ق	<i>qsur</i>
2	ḥ	ح	<i>Henna</i>
3	ʔ	ع	<i>El-ʔjar/laʔjār</i>
4	ṭ	ط	Mrabṭīn
5	ḥ	ح	ḥlal / bḥur

Introduction

Algeria is one of the Northern African countries. It has a large number of different fantastic places that show its impressive picture towards the outside world. Each part of Algeria is characterized by a set of traditions and customs, which are very distinctive from the other parts of the country. Tuat represents the biggest part of Algeria. Tuat, Adrar today, is well known by its great history that gives it a special rank and interest among the other regions. Tuat, by itself, represents a new world consisting of several and multiple tribes, races, ethnicities, and cultures living together in one single area sharing one vintage culture and heritage. The Tuati society glorifies the family as it is considered to be one of the basic components of society. The family in the Sahrawi society with its components and the characteristics of its components differs from the family in the urban societies in terms of the traditions and customs controlling and governing it. Marriage ceremony in Tuat region shapes the essence of the Tuati culture. This paper attempts to describe the marital ceremony and the rituals of the Tuati marriage from the first step to the last. We will try to find out about the nature of engagement and marriage in the Tuati community during the 18th and 19th century, and how much its uniqueness and distinctiveness differ from the rest of the families in the other desert communities, as well as the urban communities in the north. To have more information we ought to know the steps of engagement and its features then the marriage and its decrees and customs with reference to the value of dowries, which vary according to the constituents of the Tuati community,

with a review of the post-construction of the family. Then we will deal with the case of the newborn and how the Tuati family glorifies this event and how it celebrates it with joy and delight. In this paper, we will deal with several items covered by three chapters: in the first chapter, I formulated a historical and cultural background to Tuat and the Tuati society and its social classes. In the second chapter, I joined many items together starting from marriage in general and the status of both men and women before and after Islam. Then I specified marriage upon its nature in Islam, and then lastly, marriage in Algeria and its traditions and customs. In the third and last chapter, I talked specifically about marriage in the region of Tuat. I dealt with its rituals and traditions in a more detailed manner through interviews and pictures taken by me personally so that I could coin this review on the beauty and preserving nature of the Tuati people.

Literature review

This topic was not tackled very often considering the lack of the sources. Yet few researchers did conduct decent researches upon Marriage Ceremony in Tuat region.

Professor Ben AbdLmoumen Bahia (2015) in "*The Situation of The Tuati Woman through the Descendings Al Ghania of Bulbala through the 13th/19th Century*" wrote all about the conditions of the Tuati woman and pointed out the marital ceremony in the Tuati society. He also talked about the dowries and the divorce in the Tuati society.

In (2020), Abd-el-Kader Ben Djaafri in his book "*Omi Tuat*" wrote about marriage in the Tuati society in details, including old traditions and rituals that are no longer implemented in today's Tuat.

In an article published in Al-MIEYAR scientific magazine in 2020 entitled "*Engagement and marriage in the Twati community during the 18th- 19th centuries*" by Nourredine Ben Ticha&LahlaiIssad wrote about the engagement in a general manner and how it is taken in the Tuati society. They also referred to the marital life in Tuat region.

What I did is dig deeper in the Tuati community to list all the rituals which are until now being adopted. I talked about engagement and its procedures, and all the other events hosted from the day of the engagement until the last day where the wedding officially ends. I provided also pictures to authenticate the wedding ceremony so that I could vividly bring the Tuatitraditions and customs to the light. I also added a section to talk about the Tuatichild birth and how the child is celebrated by in the Tuati society.

Chapter One

Background to the Region of Tuat

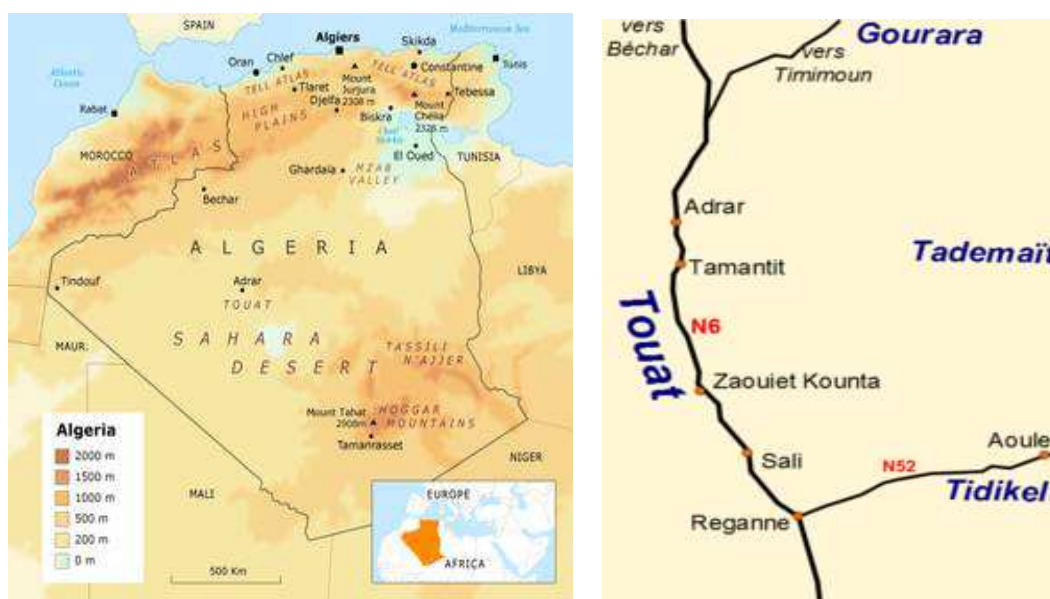
1.1 Concise Introduction to Tuat Region

Tuat is a natural area in the Southwest of the Algerian Sahara that contains a series of small oases. In the past, these oases were important for the convoys crossing the desert.

1.1.1 Location

The region of Tuat is located in the southwest of the Algerian Sahara, which is an integral part of the African Sahara Desert and is about 1500 km away from the capital Algiers. It is bordered to the north by the region of Gourara, to the south by the region of Tidikelt and the desert of Tanezrouft, to the west by Erg Chechad and to the east by the plateau of Tadmaït. The region of Tuat is thus located between the region of Gourara and Tidikelt.

Figure I: Adrar location map



Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/84/DZ_-_Tuout_Region_-_Villes.png

1.1.2 Population:

According to general population census of the year 2023, the population of this region is approximately 436,601 people with the highest rate of population falling in the Wilaya of Adrar and Timimon: 49,237 people in Timimon and 43,903 in Adrar forming

the highest percentage compared to the rest of the other regions. The origin of the population in these areas dates back to the origins of three main known origins, namely the Berbers and their origin from the north and they lived, and still live until now, in the central Sahara. As for the Arabs, their arrival was through intermittent periods, especially when the northern region was abound in conflicts, while the Black (people descending from slaves descendents) element and is considered by researchers to be the oldest element due to the peoples who lived since the dawn of time. The oldest villages which were built were in the form of fortifications dating back to very ancient times, attributed by historians such as Cheikh Molay Ahmed TahriIdrissi¹ and IbnKhalidun to the first Berber tribes that came to the region; they are the Gaetuli²; the rate of immigrant tribes continued until the arrival of migrations from the Arabs, who built villages during the seventh century AD; and other *qsur* known as the *qsur* of Taurirt in the areas of Timimon and its suburbs and also in Reggane.

It may not be enough to get acquainted with the traces of Tuat and the customs of its people by simply visiting its superb, diverse areas and it is not enough to wander the streets, nor just to see its vintage buildings. One has to live its reality by noting the distinct ways of living of its people and dive deep into it to discover the treasures that this beautiful historical area provides. It is a completely different point from those areas shown in films. We have not heard of them in the tales and we have not read their details in the novels. It was a point of contact and confluence of caravans coming from north to south, towards the markets of West Africa (West Sudan). Due to the distance of the region from the centre of urbanization, it has become immune from the theater of conflicts and wars witnessed by the Islamic Maghreb. Hence, the people took refuge for them to escape from the enemies

¹*Ahmed TaharAlldrissi* was one the greatest historians in Tuat region and a religious teacher who appeared in the late 1930s (See Figure I).

²*Gaetuli*: was a name of ancient Berber tribe inhabitingGaetuelia. they lived in the Atlas Mountains.

where they preferred to stay in the desert despite its harshness to submit to their rulers and remained open to the migrations of different tribes, and these tribes came to it at successive intervals and in different circumstances from the beginning of the Islamic conquest of the Maghreb until the eighteenth century AD where the first capital and icon of the region was the city of Tamentit due to its scientific, religious and urban excellence. Then, the capital moved to Timmi at the end of the seventeenth century AD. (الإدريسي، صفحة 13)

The French entered the region after several negotiations due to the resistance of the people at the beginning of the twentieth century. On its court are *qsur* and population gatherings dating back to ancient times, historical landmarks that stand proud and lofty, bearing witness to a glorious commercial, cultural, and civilized past. Among the *qsur*¹ and multiple gatherings, history laid its foundations, established its pillars, and immortalized its features in several *qsur*. As well as the wondrous cave of Temassekht, on which the ancient *qsar* sits.

Touat is composed of three main sections which are Gourara, Tuat or Middle Tuat, and Tidikelt. Gourara includes the following districts (municipalities): *Qsar*OuledKdour, Ouled Said, Timimon, Ouled-Aissa, Talmin, Charwil, Mtarfa, Daldoul, and Ouaghrou. Central Tuat covers twelve municipalities which are: Tsabit, Esabaa, Buda, Adrar, Timi, Tamentit, Fenuoghil, Tamest, Zaouiat-kounta, Inzegmir, Sali, and Reggane. Tidikelt, on the other hand includes four districts: Aoulef, Timoukten, Akebli, and Tit.

¹*Qsar*: is a term used frequently in the region of Tuat to refer to a small village that consists of inhabitants of different races under one culture.

Figure II: AhmedTahar Al Idrissi



Source:<https://cdn.eljadidelyawmi.dz/wp>

In this aesthetically antique region, many traditional and cultural representations are endorsed. Tuat had been the land of wonders, since it had been the home of many traditions and rural customs. A visitor to Adrar discovers the Popular Folklore Dance (*Barud*), the antique stores that sell the regional customs such as: The *Gandoura* which has witnessed several enhancement for the past years. Not to forget the Tuati textile: *El-?jar*¹, *El-qashabiya*², *El-Burnus*³ and many others. The Tuati people usually relate the instability of the weather- since the weather in Tuat is often dominated by sand storms and blowing winds-to the benign or evil psyche of people since the Tuati people do not get seduced by the fabricated looks and appearances. Yet, rather they believe that the personality of an individual is manifested - in their view - in the purity of the heart, the purity of one's soul, and the purity of one's intention; thus they do not tend to exaggerate in dressing too luxuriously in matter of the culture or the style of social, economic life. Tuat is considered to be a natural wonder in which each *qsar* has its own treasures and unique characteristics. For instance: Tamentit has the biggest oases of palm trees. Although the golden-yellowish sand is what seems to be the catchiest wonder, fougara-the oldest source of irrigation-remains the optimum attention drawer for the visitors.

¹*El- ?jar*: a piece of clothing worn by the women to cover their faces while being outside the house

²*El-Kachabia*: also known as kchabia is a traditional Berber clothing

³*El-Burnus*: a long cloak of coarse woolen fabric with a pointed hood, often white in color, traditionally worn by Berber men in North Africa.

1.1.3 The Etymology of the Term Tuat

If we go to the origin of this word, we find that there are differences in defining the concept of the word Tuat, as the opinions of historians differ greatly regarding the naming of this latter. Around ten different interpretations have been tackled on the paradoxical name of Tuat. Four of which will be discussed as follows:

Abd Allah- Al Ansari states that the word Tuat goes back to one of the Southern- Sahara tribes. On the other hand, Mohammed Ben Abd Al- Karim Al-Bakraoui states that the term Tuat was introduced as it is because the two leaders, Ali Ben A-Taib and Tahar Ben Abd Al- Moumin were taking "*Al-atawat*"¹ from the inhabitants of Tuat in 565 AC; therefore; this territory became known as Tuat. From another angle, Ahmed Al- Idrissi A- Tahri states that Tuat is named as such because the word 'Tuati is for prayer' an Arabic expression suitable for prayer. (الصادق، 2003، الصفحات 26-28) (Researcher's translation from Arabic and French.)

Martin- A.G.P on the other hand clarifies that the origin of the term Touat is rooted in the word "Ouasis" which existed in many languages and among those languages French; meaning oasis which is a fertile spot in a desert where water is found. (Martin, p. 115)

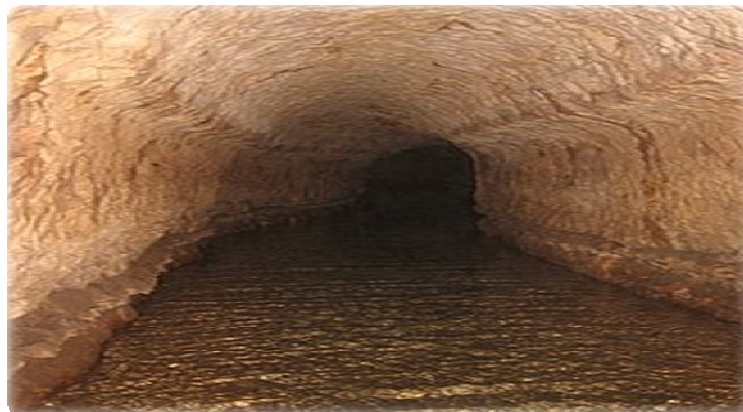
The term Tuat is said to be of Tamazight origin, it was given to that space or part of Algerian Sahara. A keen dispute had taken place searching for the reason behind naming that area of Algeria as Tuat. Consequently, several novels and articles were written notably to explain and to clarify the term's origin. Most of those perspectives acknowledged that the term Tuat, according to recent etymological studies, the word Tuat refers in the Amazighi language to the lower places. So Tuat, as an internal part, is located under the thoracic cavity.

¹*Al-Atawat*: a legal amount of money paid to the governor in exchange of protection

1.1.4 The Social Classification in Tuat Region (The Social Ladder)

The early first foundation of Tuat local social stairway went through several phases characterized by the coming of various groups of people from different geographical places representing numerous ethnicities. The first inhabitants were, as stated earlier, Berbers, they came to settle in Tuat in huge numbers. The majority of them were of Zenata¹origin. They brought many achievements among which building, decorating, farming, digging deep *fouggarat*², and other activities. Their arrival to Tuat was characterized by immigrating in groups over different intervals of time. For political reasons, Berbers were always living in a continuous quarrel with the other tribes. Consequently, there was a severe need for settling things by getting rid of that disagreement, the idea of living in a social class-based society started its primary rebound to evolve and to be the appropriate solution for that time of need.

Figure III: A Canal linking *Fouggarat*



Source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/f0/QanatFiraun.JPG/247px-QanatFiraun.JPG>

¹*Zenata*: a group of Amazighi tribes, historically one of the largest Berber confederations

²*Fougara*: is an old method of irrigation used generally in the south of Algeria; specifically in Tuat. It is considered one of the most marvelous wonders of the Tuati land (See Figure II).

1.1.4.1 The Shurfa:

The class of "Shurfa" is known the highest social class in the Tuat social community. They are also known as "the Nobles", and they see themselves as special people because they belong to the Prophet Mohammed's descent (peace be upon him). Under this understanding, it is said that the Shurfa are the children of El- Hassan and El- Hussein, sons of Caliphate Ali and Fatima, daughter of the Prophet. (Bouhania, p. 166).

1.1.4.2 The Mrabṭīn:

They are considered to be the second class of the Tuat social ladder. Alike the Shurfa, they appear to be the second-highest class as well. They are both, noble and aristocrats; their name is derived from the word "*Almoravids*" who ruled North Africa and part of Andalusia for centuries. They are people of religion. That is, they work as "Imams" mostly and Qura'nicschool teachers. Their main objective is to instruct sayings and percepts of Allah and his Messenger, Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him.) (Bouhania, p. 167)

1.1.4.3 The Zwa/ People of the Shrines:

This class comes after the Shurfa. They are believed to be the descendants of the first Caliphate, Abu BakrEssediq. The Zwa had to pay collective tributes to the Shurfa who protected them from any dangers. They were thoroughly arabicised right from the first centuries of the Muslim conquests of North Africa.

1.1.4.4 The Arabs:

This class shapes the majority of the Tuati community. They are the third class in the society descending from the Mrabṭīn. Like the Mrabṭīn, the Arabs devote themselves to preaching "the word of God" to people of the other classes.

1.1.4.5 The Haratīn:

They are the lowest class in the social categorization. They are people of black skin. The etymology of the word "Haratīn" is controversial and doubtful. For some people, that word consists of two parts: "Hurr" meaning free and "Thani", referring to a second time. Hence, the word Hartani means "second generation of free slaves". They used to work as farmers, land- workers, constructors, and in other activities which may seem difficult and hard to do for The Shurfa and the other classes of the Tuati society. (Bouhania, p. 169)

1.1.4.6 The Slaves:

This category falls under the same umbrella as the Hartanis. They are also another lower class in the social hierarchy. They are black; their ancestors were brought from sub-Saharan Africa to Tuat as slaves. Most rich families bought them in exchange for gold, salt, and silk. They are demanded to do the most difficult tasks like digging *fouggarat*, farming various crops, irrigation. Nowadays, slaves do not exist as they have been freed and are now labeled as the Haratīn.

Chapter Two

Marriage before and after Islam: with a Reference to Marriage in Algeria

2.1. Definition of Marriage

Marriage is defined as a union of two individuals that creates a family bond and entails legal and/or social rights and obligations. It is a constitution that is observed almost universally. Different categories of people around the world have different norms and practices when it comes to marriage. In Islam, Marriage is especially important. It is considered to be very sacred. The Arabic word for marriage is Nikkah. Marriage is not obligatory, yet if a person feels as if he/she is capable of taking this highly important step, then it is recommended. Marriage is also a legitimate path to creating a family and a legitimate way to satisfy one's sexual desires.

2.1.1 The Social Definition of Marriage

There is a lot of talk about defining marriage socially due to the different views of sociologists on marriage. We find among the definitions that it is considered to be a “sexual relationship” that imposes social relationships consisting of two of both sexes, and is expected to continue over time in order to have children and may include social sanctions. Illegal relationships are not accepted in regards to society, considering that Islam excludes this sort of relationships, and in addition to the intercourse between the two partners in marriage and the affection of paternity and motherhood, we find that marriage enjoys social approval. When defining the relationship between husband and wife, fathers and children and the family bond, it becomes a legal contract that is distinguished with sanctification and religious blessing.

2.1.2 Customary Marriage

Customary marriage is a type of marriage in which everything is conducted depending on the qualifications of both the man and the woman where only their agreement settles this case without any legal advisory. There are several ways by which

this marriage is done according to the society including a contract between the husband and wife or by whom they are represented according to the religious beliefs. (سالمي و جرادي،

صفحة 236)

2.1.3 Some Ancient Forms of Marriage

In pre-Islamic Arabia, a variety of different marriage practices existed. The most common and recognized types of marriage at this time consisted of:

2.1.3.1 Surrogacy Marriage

Surrogacy refers to an arrangement, often supported by a legal agreement, whereby a woman agrees to the delivery or labour for another person or people, who will become the child's parent(s) after birth. Surrogating marriage is a form which was performed anciently by men whereby a man sends his wife to another man who possesses certain features so that these features can be passed on to the infant. This dates back to the Babylonians who permitted this act to prevent divorce.

2.1.3.2 Exchange Marriage

Exchange marriage, a form of marriage involving an arranged and reciprocal exchange of spouses between two groups. Exchange marriage is most common in societies that have a unilineal descent system emphasizing the male line (patrilineality) and a consistent expectation of post marital residence with or near the groom's family (patrilocality). Arabs, in the past, used to perform this type of marriage where a man has his sister married to another on the condition of taking the sister of his as a trade base. In Islam, it is known as Shighaar marriage and it is prohibited according to the teachings of Islam for what it contains of injustice to women and denying their right. It was narrated from Ibn Umar that the Prophet said: "There is no shighaar marriage in Islam." Narrated by Muslim (1415).

2.1.4 Some Modern Forms of Marriage

There are several types of marriages across all societies in the world. But, the most common marriage types include the following:

2.1.4.1 Interracial Marriage

This type of marriage varies between race and ethnicity. It is an arrangement that takes place between people of different ethnic, racial, and/or cultural backgrounds. Surprising as this might be, this is not an arrangement which had always been accepted. At one point, this was an extremely controversial topic around the world, and was even unacceptable. This perception has obviously changed over time, but some people still claim to feel stigmatized or dignified for marrying outside of their racial line.

2.1.4.2 Arranged Marriage

An arranged marriage is one that agreed upon by the families of the male and the female wanted to be associated. Unlike love-based marriage, in this case love is not a priority. This type is mostly spread and widely embraced in Tuat precisely and eastern societies in general region seeing it to be very solid. In this marriage, love is said to come after the marriage ceremony; along with the children and responsibilities that tie the family together. For this, it is regarded as the most solid type of marriage until this time although it has gone through some changes from what it used to be in the past. With these eminent changes, it came to be viewed as a modern kind of marriages.

2.1.5 Women and Men before and after Islam

In pre-Islamic Arabia, men and women's status varied widely according to the laws and cultural norms of the tribes in which they lived.

2.1.5.1 The Value of Men and Women in Ancient Times

Men and women lived in the barbaric tribes in the ancient times an animalistic life that is similar to a life of pets sharing the shadows of a hut where the man behaved as he pleased out of obsessive control and the possessive instincts. As the man benefitted from animals' fur, milk and meat, as he considered the woman a property that belonged to him exclusively and that she was only created for the sake of serving him. As the man lived in the ancient tribal times, he used to buy any woman he wanted and sell her to whoever for mutual exchange, pleasure or services; and he had the right to abandon or kill her to benefit of her meat in the days of starvation or feasts. He also considered everything that fell under her control as his property having no right to perform any business transactions. Women during the dark times were compelled to obey the man, a father or a husband willingly or unwillingly; as she was compelled to take care of the domestic works and whatever men needed. (الطباطبائي م.، صفحة 275)

2.1.5.2 Women's Value in Islam

After all what women suffered through times in all aspects of life from humiliation to condescension as they were of weakness and a slogan of fragility, Islam came to legislate and preserve the rights of women; and cancelled all what was thought of about women and showed their real image. The value of men and women in Islam, considering that they are both humans, is the same since humanity as a whole is traced back to Adam and Eve. (الطباطبائي م.، صفحة 276)

Islam set the difference between humans only in a matter of the piety¹, as the Holy Qur'an says: " يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ {13}"

¹Piety: the quality of being pious; fidelity and dutifulness in religion; devoutness.

"O, people! We created you from a male and a female, and we made you races and tribes, so that you may come to know one another. Verily the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most God-fearing of you. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware."(Surah al-Hujurat, 13).The almighty created human beings from a female and a male combined together, " And their Lord responded to them, Never will I allow to lose the work of [any] worker among you, whether male or female; you are of one another" (Surah Āl-'Imrān, 195). All of these Qura'nic scripts prove that Islam has showed clearly the high status of women in comparison to men that neither of the two is superior to the other except in mater of good deeds. This shows us the massive difference between men and women in ancient times and after Islam arrived, and what it accomplished for both men and women but especially women; that it alleviated the status of women and made them equal to men except in some cases where it regarded the nature of the situation. Islam also regarded both of the work of men and women accounted, **"Every soul, for what it has earned, will be retained"** (Surah Al-Muddathir, 38).

2.2Marriage in Islam

Islam views marriage as a social institution as old as humanity itself. It can be defined as a relationship between a man and a woman recognized by customs or laws and involves certain rights and obligations. Both of the parties involved within this divine union and for the case of children being born under this lawful attachment. Hence marriage has two roles to serve: one is to modulate the link between the two parties involved; the other is to maintain humanity existence through children.

2.2.1. Marriage in Qur'an

Firstly, Islam does not uphold marriage as a union only for the gratification of sexual drive, but a social contract with wide and varied obligations and responsibilities. The

reason behind it is that, according to how Islam gratifies women, a woman is not a tool in the hand of man, but a spiritual and moral being who is entrusted to him on the sacred pledge to which Allah is made a witness. Hence, the wife is not meant to provide luscious pleasure only to the husband or the female to the male, but to fully co-operate with him in making the life of the family and ultimately of the whole humanity significantly meaningful. The Holy Qur'an has glorified the importance of marriage through many verses, as it stresses upon the people to marry seeing that marriage is the most effective manner whereby one can lead a virtuous life free from immorality, indecency and emotional inhibition. The holy Qur'an says: **"They (your wives) are as a garment to you, and you are as a garment to them"**(Surah Al-Baqarah, 187). This verse shows the basic purpose of marriage in Islam. Islam enjoins that a wife and husband should have the most intimate and loving relationship. Each should protect and safeguard the interest of the other.

The Holy Qur'an says, **"And marry those among you who are single (whether men or women) and those who are fit among your male slaves and your female slaves; if they are needy, Allah will make them free from want out of His grace; and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing."** (Surah an-Nur, 24:32).

This verse strongly emphasizes the importance of marriage in Islam. The word 'single' in here refers to every single person, and is applicable to every man who is without a wife and to every woman who is without a husband. The verse adds up that those who show the right attitude in their dealings with you and in whom you find the capability of discharging the responsibilities of married life.

As one delves more into the very core of Islam, another element will be captured which is a crucial role of Islam, and that is that it provides complete guidance for all aspects of daily life. It will be found that the instructions regarding marriage are

particularly comprehensive in both the Holy Qur'an and Hadith (the Prophetic traditions). In Islam, marriage requires the approval of both parties. The future bride and groom must be willing to accept marriage. Nobody is entitled to force them upon doing beyond their will. There is a marriage contract between the groom or the side that represents him, and the guardian of the bride, who is referred to as the *El-Wali* in some rural areas. If both parties reach an agreement, only then the marriage ceremony can be held. The Islamic community is one of the many cultures that dearly embrace arranged marriages. The Islamic ideas of arranged marriage propose a traditional and sensible approach to marriage.

2.2.2 Marriage in the Sunnah(Prophetic Traditions)

In the Sunnah, marriage is seen as half of religion as to show its importance and relevance in the Islamic religion:

'AbdullāhibnMas'ūd (may Allah be pleased with him) reported:The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: **"O young men, those of you who can afford to should marry; it restrains the gaze and fortifies one's chastity. Those who cannot should fast; it controls the sexual desire."** (Sahih Muslim, 1400c).

In this Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) advises the youth to marry if they can afford to raise and support, both financially and emotionally, a family regarding that it is an uneasy responsibility. For those who cannot, but long for it, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) recommended them to fast, because this contains rewards and diminishes sexual desire by means of resisting food and drink. As a result, the soul debilitates and the blood veins through which Satan¹travels are consequently blocked.

For this, the Prophet considered to be necessary for which he labeled it as "Fulfillment of Half of the religion."**Anas reported God's Messenger as saying, "When a**

¹*Satan*: the leader of the devils in Islam. He refused to keel before Adam for which he was banished from heaven.

man marries he has fulfilled half of the religion; so let him fear God regarding the remaining"(Mishkat al-Masabih, 3096). Abu Hurairah narrated, **"There are three who are promised the help of Allah: The Mukatab¹who wants to buy his freedom, the one who gets married seeking to keep himself chaste, and the Mujahid who fights in the cause of Allah"** (Vol.4, Book 26, Hadith 3220). In this Hadith, Allah has paved his assistance to three categories: the one who fights for Islam; the slave who seeks freedom; and the man who wants to void sinning by marrying. These three elements cannot be attained without Allah's will. Almighty Allah has assured to help the man who refrained from any sinful act like: adultery and kept his lust restrained as this requires a great effort and determination. A woman or a man, they both will be rewarded if they embrace purity of the soul and intentions.

As it is clear, marriage is a very serious undertaking for Muslims. The two parties will discover a combination of intellectual, emotional and spiritual fulfillment as they will find guidance from Allah and His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) on marital/family relations, from proper mate selection to marital problem resolution. An operational system will be seen where viable structure, clear responsibilities, roles and goals guide us; where the balance provides a safety net for all parties in a family. Of course, Islam presents the ideal image of marriage. Its realization depends on the actions of each family member.

2.2.3 Purposes of Marriage

As it has been clarified by now, Muslims do not indulge into marriage on a whim, Allah has set goals and certain reasons for it. The main concept of marriage is for the sexes to offer company to one another, love and nurture one another, procreate children and live in peace and calmness according to what Allah ordered. Marriage serves as a means to

¹*Mukatab*: the slave who has made a contract of manumission(liberation).

emotional and sexual contentment and as a means of tension reduction. It is also a form of worship because it is obeying Allah and his Messenger. It is seen as the only possible way for the sexes to unite and live in harmony. (Dogarawa, p. 02)

2.3 Marriage in Algeria

In Algeria, marriage ceremonies differ from one region to another. They include many rituals and traditional steps which both parts have to prepare for. Alike all Arabs, Algerian people see marriage as a religious event above all based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The holy book indicates that marriage should be built upon love and mercy. Muslims speak of marriage as "half the religion", that is, one's religion is complete once he or she gets married. The very step towards marriage is clearly the engagement. In Algeria, alike all parts of north Africa, engagement is not only an agreement between the groom and bride. It passes beyond this to a matter of religion and family. A man might go to the house of the woman whom he wants to ask without even seeing the woman; just by seeing her parents. This is the traditional way. Nowadays, couples are often acquainted with each other before the arrangement of the engagement. However, this ritual of the first step remains irreversible. Only a man can ask for the hand of the woman although it is known in Islam that a woman can ask a man's hands as Khadija did to the Prophet Muhammad through a friend. Before the announcement of the engagement to the public, the groom has to pay a visit to the bride's family to ask her hands. Women cannot proceed with this arrangement unless they consent. Women are not to be forced on this matter but parents' opinion stays important and decisive.

Within this first step towards marriage, the families concerned agree on the date of the ceremony and all the details of the wedding. While the boy and girl are engaged, they

are allowed to visit each other under what is known as *El-Shoufa*¹. Al-Mughirah bin Shu'bah proposed to a woman, so the Prophet said: "**Look at her, for indeed that is more likely to make things better between the two of you.**" (Jami` at-Tirmidhi 1087). This Hadith shows the significance of permitting the two parts to see each other to keep the relationship warm.

During the engagement, the main themes of discussions are the dowry, the costs of the two events, the guests and the date.

2.3.1 Marriage Ceremonies in Some Regions in Algeria

Algerian men and women are free to marry whomever they want as long as the marriage partner is approved by the family. Parents have a more realistic and practical view on life in general that can guide their children guidance in selecting the appropriate mate for marriage.

2.3.1.1 Marriage in Tlemcen

In this region, girls start preparing what is known as *El-Zhaz*² as in Arabic means the nest. Girls collect and sew what they can preparing for the ceremony for marriage. In Tlemcen, people are mostly known to marry from their family so the priority goes to the cousins and relatives at first. (Meziane, 2015)

2.3.1.2 Marriage in Oran

Unlike in Tlemcen, marriages in Oran still hold the same traditions of the past as the bride only sees his groom once on the day of the engagement. The next day, he takes the bride to her parents to sign the contract of marriage. After this, the groom prepares an enormous feast inviting all the relatives and friends.

2.3.1.3 Marriage in the Kabylie Region

¹*El-Shoufa*: also known as the NadraShari'a, is what Muslims do when they are engaged to keep ties friendly.

²*El-Zhaz*: a collection of homemade clothes, makeup and perfumes that the bride buys using the dowry.

The Kabylie wedding is a wedding full of ancestral traditions. When a young man wanted to ask for a girl's hand, he has to go to the girl he wanted to marry and sacrifice a sheep or a goat on her doorstep without being caught by a member of the girl's family. If he succeeds, her hand is granted to him. The engagement according to Kabyle traditions is very solemn because it engages the two families. Rituals vary slightly between families. The request for the girl's hand, with the sacrifice of a sheep or a goat on the threshold of the girl's house, can be carried out by the young suitor who must succeed in this ritual, without being surprised by a member of her family. The arrangement of the marriage might also be done between the two families: the fathers of the bride and groom then the debate in front of witnesses regarding the amount of the dowry, during a meal at the father of the young girl's house. As the wedding date approaches, the two families commence preparing. The groom's parents offer symbolic gifts to those of the young girl's family: a quintal of semolina, wheat, olive oil and butter. One of the traditional rituals among many others.

The day before the wedding, the traditional Couscous¹rolling and the *Henna*²ceremony take place. As well as the delivery of the bride's trousseau³by the future husband and certain members of his family.

2.3.2 The Preparations Arranged by the Algerian Bride

The Algerian bride unlike the other brides, as she goes through several preparations once a man officially proposes. The tours start from a shop to another. From modern fabric to traditionally made clothes to furniture stores. The Algerian bride has to purchase everything needed because she is moving from one lifestyle to a different one. As these preparations vary from one girl to another, and from a region to another. Each bride has a

¹*Couscous*: a traditional North African dish of small steamed granules of rolled semolina.

²*Henna*: a natural dye extracted from a plant used to draw on hands, arms or for dyeing hair.

³*Trousseau*: can be also called *El-Zhaz*, is the bride's possessions delivered by the groom.

special taste in the colours and quality of the clothes she buys. The bride also buys a *salon*¹ consisting of decorated pieces, wrapped in the finest and best types of fabrics, in addition to purchasing handmade carpets with great precision and a delicate aesthetic touch, alongside the luxurious curtains that are suitable for this salon. She also buys paintings, vases, and various decorative pieces that sparkle the corners of the house, especially handmade silver utensils. Also, buying everything needed for the bedroom such as blankets and curtains, pillows, suitable furnishings, and simple and beautiful antiques for decoration, for example. Not to forget to mention kitchen utensils, such as tea sets, fine coffee, and dishes for serving Algerian sweets, and these dishes are often handmade from pottery. In addition to the kitchen utensils needed to make various other dishes.

¹*Salon*: a collection of pillows and couches matched in the same style usually used for sitting and rarely for sleeping.

ChapterThree

Marriage in the Region of Tuat

3.1 Marriage in The Region of Tuat

The marriage ceremonies in Tuat, the state of Adrar, has a distinctive nature since it is more traditional than the other parts of Algeria. Marital relationships in Tuat follow a material and most importantly, a racial diagram. Every man is entitled only to ask the hands of a woman of the same racial background. As stated before, the Tuati society consists of four major classes: the Shurfa, the Mrabtīn, the Arabs, and the Hartanis. Twaja and Tuareg also shape a significant percentage of the Tuati population. When it comes to marriage, the Tuati people are restrained to marry only from their equal social class. Otherwise, shame and disgrace will follow the family if one is to ask the hand of a girl below his social class. This situation works in both ways, a man from a lower class cannot ask the hand of a woman whom is socially higher than his. For this matter, Ibn Arafa¹ said in the fourteen century: "Honor must be respected in the country, if this door is opened, great consequences will be caused" (بن عبد المؤمن، صفحة 31)

Most Tuati people are still holding on to the traditions and social customs which have been passed through many generations. Every guy in all over the Islamic nation generally and specifically the Tuati people aspire to fulfill half of their religion by getting married. The Tuati groom and bride have to go through several steps regarding the marital bond. The very first step is the engagement and it is a sacred tie between the two parts and an announcement of the desire and the sincerity of the intention of the two parties that they want to complete their life path with each other. The engagement is the acknowledgment of love and the manifestation of that love publicly, where in Tuat the young man informs his family of his desire to marry a woman whom he likes. Usually this desire is revealed to the mother before the father as she is the one who tells the father about their son's

¹*IbnArafa*: IbnArafa, by his full name Mohammed Ben Mohammed Ben Arafa al-Werghemmi, born in 1316 in Tunis and died in 1401 in Tunis, is an Ifriqiyān imam, the most illustrious representative of Malikism during the Hafsid dynasty.

willingness towards marriage. At the same time, the girl tells her family or hints to them about it. The young man's family sets a date to go to the fiancée's house to arrange for this settlement. It is also known that in Tuat region the boy rarely goes with the family for the engagement. The family often goes on his behalf without him being present. Before this procedure, usually the family of the boy gives a promise or a word to the girl's family as sacred deal that the guy has expressed his intention to come and ask for the girl's hand soon enough. Until then, this word stands significantly between the two families as a symbol of honor.

The region of Tuat has a distinguished nature in matter of marriage ceremonies, summertime in the state of Adrar is the favorite time of holding a marriage, and among what distinguishes it is the continuous and collective wave of weddings, group banquets, and the reading of *Es-Selka*¹. Not a single day passes of the week but the visitor to this city hears the shots and sounds of *El-Barud*², and songs emanating after midnight from here and there, accompanied by the ululation of women through the cars roaming the streets.

The season of marriage lasts a long time in Adrar, as it begins with the end of the spring season, and continues until the middle of the autumn season, but it increases significantly in the summer, which is considered more suitable despite the high temperature because it is the period that coincides with the holidays since most people are on a break giving them a higher chance to attend the marriage ceremony of a relative or a friend.

As stated before, the Tuati people have special traditions of marriage, traditions that seem somehow complicated if not strange, and expensive as well. What is remarkable is

¹*Es-Selka*: an activity where the Qur'an is being read collectively by a group of people.

²*El-Barud*: a folklore dance performed in different regions in an organized shape of a circle using locally made rifles.

that the residents of this region still maintain to some extent the customs and traditions inherited from the ancestors that characterize the wedding ceremony under the argument of preserving the origin is a virtue. One of these customs used to be that a man is not entitled to see or talk to his fiancée from the moment of her engagement, as the family only pays a surprising visit to the bride's family to keep the pulse and maintain the ties. Another tradition that had been known in the Tuati region is the rise in the dowries apart from the expenses of the jewelry and edible merchandise such as: oil, tea, meat, milk and flour. All of this is to hold a fancy dinner on both the day of the engagement and marriage.

These habits made many young men in the region refrain from marriage, and others resort to neighbouring regions to complete half of their religion because of this tendency to boast the amount of dowry in the Tuati society, as well as excessive, wasteful and large expenses that mostly lead one to drawn in debts in most cases, and thus ends up creating a very difficult situation that is difficult to bear. Despite all of this, many middle class families still live with this situation fearing the staggering criticisms of the people behind their back in society. Preparing for a Tuati marriage might cost around 500 thousand DZD at least for only the marriage feast without including the other gatherings of the friends, family and the bride's other parties hosted before and after the night of the wedding.

This is briefly to point out how marriages take place usually in Tuat region. As distinctive as they might be, they are often expensive and luxurious. The next few paragraphs will be allocated to dig deeper in the steps of marriage ceremony in the Tuati region and to shed light on some of the traditions which are still until our present day in practice.

3.1.1 El-Kelma

El-Kelma' is a word used in the local dialect literally meaning 'the word' and it is used to mean 'formal agreement'.

After an everlasting struggle with one's self, the boy looks for the girl with whom he wants share the rest of his life in a decent manner according to the Tuati traditions. Usually, the young boy spots the future bride after a series of visits to feasts, friends' houses or maybe just an unexpected look on the streets while passing by. So he starts building a life in his imagination, number of kids or even the names of these unborn children.

After this train of thoughts, when the guy finally gathers his courage and enough confidence, he confronts his mother about how he feels towards this woman and the mother usually blesses this intention or tries to explain to her son if the family of this bride-to-be is not easygoing. So, she tries not to get her boy's hopes too far until the mother makes sure of the family's background and status. As it is well known, the social status plays a significant role in the Tuati environment in almost everything.

After the preliminary blessing, the mother often sends her daughter or a friend of this mistress to unveil the curtain so that this girl and her family start digging on the boy's history to find any flaws or shortcomings. While in the process of looking, the girl also consults her relatives and friends to take their opinion on this matter. After this, the girl has to make an opinion, whether she agrees or disagrees, so that the family of the boys can settle. If it is a disapproval, it is a courtesy in the Tuati society to give a reason so that the boy can work his way through this flaw and try to improve it. If it is an approval, the family of the boy spreads the word after the father sets a date to visit the family of the future bride. In this process, the two families meet to put *EL-Kelma* as an initial approval to this marriage. The two families arrange a simple lunch welcoming their future son and daughter in law. This lunch is usually attended by the elderly of the two families to honor this sacred bond newly created between these two families. Usually, after this familial

gathering, the girl puts sign on her hands with *El-Henna* to show that she has been linked to this boy who gave *El-Kelma*.

Soon enough, the news goes viral as it does not take long until that whole village knows. It is often heard that many boys express their desire to have wanted to propose to this girl but it is late for remorse once the word is agreed upon.

There used to be another sign to imply that the girl and the boy have been united when the mother of the boy begins to speak about the girl's past in a benign manner to show that this link has been planned for a long time; and also to express the mother's approval to this girl.

During the process of *El-Kelma*, the boy has to demonstrate his love and generosity by showering the family of his future bride with gifts whenever possible. The girl usually responds using the same method, as she brings gifts to the mother of her future groom and spending some quality time with his sister if there is to pave the way for a healthy relationship between the two families. (بن جعفري، الصفحات 379-380)

3.1.2 The Engagement

After the phase of *El-Kelma*, the groom starts to prepare himself for the engagement. *El-Kelma* usually takes a considerable period of time until the groom prepares himself well to send his family on his behalf to make this bond official.

At this point, it is then that the groom prepares the kit that contains everything the bride needs to show his willingness and determination toward the future bride; the companion who will accompany him through the course of his life, and shares it with him, its bitterness and its sweetness. The engagement is a public manifestation of love, and usually declared to the mother before the father as the mother tells the father once the family decides to pay a visit to the family of the girl. At the same time, the father of the groom announces the news to the future bride's father for them to prepare for this event to

host the family of the future groom. The groom buys a bag known traditionally as El-Kantina¹ containing different kinds of things such as: cosmetics, Khimar², Jellaba³, perfumes, sugar, clothes and other things needed by the bride. When this bag is handed, usually the grandmother of the bride comes to check everything thoroughly in it to give her blessing that the approval has been given to the groom.

It is crucial to mention that the consent in the Tuati society is an extremely fundamental element unlike what is claimed on the Tuati region. This is to negate all of the false claims that the woman is controlled by the man and that she has no saying in these matters. The Tuati thinkers fought against these unfair treatments towards women guaranteeing her rights as stated in the holy Qur'an and the social customs. (نشرة، صفحة 74)

On the day of the engagement, some families decide to go during the day and others prefer to go at night to the future bride's house depending on the preference and the distance between the two families; in case the bride and groom are from different regions. Before the departure of the family of the groom to the house to the future bride, all the relatives gather at the house of the groom to prepare the bag and its contents with the presence of the groom. The Tuati people have a belief that the groom should not accompany his family on the day of the engagement. This remains dependent on each family, some families take the groom with them on the condition of not seeing the bride, but most of the Tuati people do not. It is also a habit to roam around the cemetery on the way to the future bride's house. Once they arrive at the house, the first person to meet them is always the father or the older brother if the father is deceased. Then, they hand El-Kantina to the father who gives it to the grandmother. After this, women and men are separated from each other.

¹*El-Kantina*: a term used in Tuat to refer to the bag brought by the family of the groom that contains different types of makeup and other things the bride needs.

²*El-Khimar*: a piece of clothing worn by Muslim women to cover their hair.

³*Jellaba*: a Moroccan piece of clothing worn by women usually when being outside the house.

Women serve dates and milk while the two families exchange nice words with joy and delight. Then, the main meal is served, lunch if the engagement takes place during the day; dinner if it is held at night.

After this, the betrothal ring is presented by the mother, sister, and other relatives of the groom who attended. The ring is usually wrapped with a sparkling and glittery paper in a shape of a present. Then, the mother or the groom's sister puts it on the future bride's finger to announce that the bond has been officially refined. Then, the mother hands an amount of money that varies from one family to another. The usual amount is estimated to be around 30.000 to 50.000 DA handed by the mother to the fiancée's mother.

Following this, ululation and clapping fill the house as they are known to be sign of happiness and expression of contentment.

Meanwhile, the men read Ayat EL-Korsi¹ along with Surah El-Ikhlâs, El-Falaq, An-Nas and. Ending this gathering with *Dua*² and warm handshakes. (Obeid Allah M. , A Personal Interview, 2023)

3.1.2.1 *El-Fal*

While the men say *Dua*, the mother of the bride prepares her for *EL-Fal* which is an activity of putting *El-Henna* on the hands of the future bride. Usually, *El-Henna* is put on the palms of the future bride by either the future groom's mother or the sister.

After putting *El-Henna*, women celebrate this occasion by eating cake. The cake is a traditional and modern habit bought by the future groom a sign of affection. It usually contains around three layers of different flavours. The two families share it together with joy and laughter.

¹*Ayat El-Korsi*: the holiest verse of Qur'an. The verse number 255 in Surah Al-Baqarah.

²*Dua*: is essentially an expression of submission of faith to God and of one's neediness and gratitude.

3.1.3 The Dowry in Tuat Region

As stated previously, the dowry of the Tuati people is amongst the highest ones in Algeria considering that its minimum is around 200.000 to 250.000 DZD. Every family tries to reach highest bargain. This is due to the social pressure on the family of the groom as the dowry is viewed as an element to brag about. The more the future groom pays, the more famous and respected the family comes up to be.

The dowry worth is controlled by whether the future bride is a working woman or a staying at home woman. Financial stability plays a huge role in the case, if the future bride works, the dowry is usually found out to be high because it is well known that working women are not easy to please. On the other hand, home-staying women are known to have less strict desires and conditions.

The dowry in Tuatis not determined by beauty or ugliness, it is a matter of one's capacity to give according to his financial status. Some families pay it on the day of the engagement; given by the mother of the future groom. Other families pay it three or four days after the engagement depending on the decision of each family. The Tuati people agree to name the dowry *Es-sdaq*. Also, the Tuati people make sure that the dowry of their daughters is alike their peers; as the parents of the grooms spend much on behalf of their sons as form of generosity and determination especially the wealthy ones.

The dowry is known to be a form of payment legalizing the marriage in Islam. It is used mainly to cover the future bride's *Zhazof* clothes, gold, jewelry (rings, bracelets, necklaces) and other things required by the bride. Some of the Tuati brides use it to buy gold mostly and the rest of *El-Zhaz* usually is paid for by the husband's personal money later in the marital life. Others spend it carefully and with caution making sure to fulfill their needs without further expenses.

In Tuat region, it is most likely that the *Shurfa* and the *Mrabṭīn* give a dowry higher

than the other classes in the Tuati society in respect to the social ladder and rank. The fathers of the Shurfa family also give almost what the husband has offered as a sign of cherish and respect to the traditional norms, and to hold the family's status in the society.

(بن عبد المؤمن، صفحة 33)

3.1.4 Setting the Date of the Wedding

After all the keen preparations for the wedding, the families of both the future groom and bride gather to agree upon a suitable date for the wedding ceremony. In the Tuati society, the final word is determined by the father of the groom. On the day of this event, the two families gather once again, as on the day of the engagement without the future groom, with *El-Jmaʔa*¹. This group of people known as *El-Jmaʔa* attend to verify the date of the wedding so that it does not conflict with another ongoing wedding. After setting the date, the two families and *El-Jmaʔa* join together for a well prepared meal, whether lunch or dinner. It is accustomed in the Tuati society to serve peas with *El-Melfouf*² instead of Couscous on this occasion.

Figure IV: A picture of *El-Melfouf*



Source: <https://img-global.cpcdn.com/recipes/5330f39176987acf/600x96cq70/photo.webp>

¹*El-Jmaʔa*: is a group of people involving the elderly men of every family close to the groom's family.

²*El-Melfouf*: is a traditional dish prepared with the liver of sheep wrapped in fat. An oily and greasy dish served in grand occasions (See Figure III).

At the end of this event, the men of the family of the bride shake hands with the family of the groom ending it with a Tuati saying: "الله يكمل ما بقى على خير, و العقوبة للنهار الكبير", "Allah yuḥmil mā baqqā ʿalā ḫayr". (Obeid Allah M., 2023). This saying expresses the warm wishes for the bride and groom to continue together happily hoping for them to reach the "big day" which is the wedding day healthy and with great spirit.

3.1.5 The Rituals of the Wedding Ceremony

Before the start of the wedding ceremonies, the Tuati mother of the bride prepares *Es-Sfouf*¹, *L'bḥur*², and prepares all the utensils of the kitchen usually borrowed from the relatives and friends to cover the needs of the occasion. At this point, the bride has prepared *El-Zhaz* and purchased all what is needed for the wedding. The groom also, at this point, has finished the work in his house and prepared well for his big day. For this matter, women, men and girls are allocated a day on which they attend.

In this chapter, we will discuss the different events hosted within the marital ceremony in the Tuati society which give the Tuati marriage its unique touch.

3.1.5.1 The Day Allocated for Women

Known also in the Tuati region as "the feast of women", or in the Tuati dialect as *ʔrdet El-Nsawin*³, the bride's and groom's mothers invite few women a day before this event to peel the vegetables and prepare meat or any other thing needed for this gathering. On the next day, those invited women gather once again to prepare *L'-ḥbez*⁴ for the guests as the meal before lunch, and Couscous for lunch. After this, all the invited women (guests

¹*Es-Sfouf*: crushed hard dates usually eaten with milk or water. The Tuati people have it mostly in Ramadan or before having lunch.

²*L'bḥur*: They are small sticks or balls of aromatic paste used to fumigate rooms in the house. A form of natural scent.

³*ʔrdet El-Nsawin*: is gathering for women on the first day of the Tuati wedding.

⁴*L'-ḥbez*: is a Tuati traditional dish made from flour. It is usually prepared using milk or sauce.

arriving from other *qsar* and the ones from the same *qsar*) gather in large room to play drums and sing folk songs mainly those songs praising the Prophet Muhammad.

In the afternoon of this day, guests are served homemade pastries and tea while dancing, chatting and enjoying the rest of the evening.

3.1.5.2 The Day Allocated for Girls

This day takes place after the day of women that is after *ʔrdet El-Nsawin*. It is usually set a day after *ʔrdet El-Nsawin* depending on each family. It is exclusively hosted by the family of the bride. On this day, while guests are being served at the family of the bride's house, the bride goes to a beauty salon to get hair fixed, makeup put, and nails done. After dinner, all of the attendants gather to play the drum. While the bride wears *El-Kaftan*¹, the rest of the guests wait for her to come out to meet her giving her their blessings.

After this, the guests are served with coffee and different types of the most delicious pastries and cookies.

3.1.5.2.1 The Night of *El-Henna*

At this night of girls, the Tuati bride mainly chooses to wear a house robe to meet the girls who are waiting for her to witness her putting *El-Henna*. The bride usually chooses her aunt for this task or another elderly relative in case the aunt of the bride is not available. After this, the bride cuts a piece of the cake and feed it to the woman who is applying *El-Henna* on the bride's hands ending this occasion with dancing with joy filling the atmosphere (See Figure IV).(Obeid Allah M. , A Personal Interview, 2023)

¹*El-Kaftan*: is a traditional piece of clothing worn by women in many cultures.

Figure V: A Bride Applying *El-Henna*

Source: A Picture by the Author.

Figure VI: The Tools Used for *El-Henna* Night

Source: A Picture by the Author.

3.1.5.3. *L'gbul*

Is term used in the Tuati region that refers to the day of the wedding when the father of the groom chooses someone who is old in matter of age and wisdom to represent the groom. Usually this person is from the same family, a brother or even the uncle of the father if available.

On this day of *L'gbul*, men gather for a well prepared feast at night. In the meantime, people read Surah El-Fatiha while the father of groom presents the man chosen to represent his son. This person is known in Tuat as *EL-Wakil* who himself passes the word to the Imam. Then the Imam announces that the bride, the daughter of this person and that (naming her ancestors) has accepted the groom, the son of this and that (naming his ancestors.) (Molay Djeloul)

Meanwhile, the bride usually prepares herself, her robe and her hair at the beauty salon for going to her parents' house alongside ululation. At this point, the groom enters the hall in which men are gathered to wear *El-Burnus* and the sword. Then, the uncle usually puts *El-Kuhl*¹ in the groom's eyes. After this, the family of the groom picks the bride in a parade of cars to take her to her new house, her husband's house, in an atmosphere of joy and delight. While the groom exits the hall, his friends form a group to walk him to his house while reading *El-Burda*² and they wait for him to enter his house before they depart. At this point, the bride has been walked by women to her house waiting for her new life companion.

Amongst the Tuatisongs which women utter when the bride is on her way to her house:

"بسم الله لي فيا لحتو فيك يا دار بوياء"

"Biṣmāllhīlīfīālhūfīkyādārbuyā"

"In the name of Allah, what is in me I left it back in my father's house"

This saying means that the bride has put everything bad or ominous behind her, and now she is starting a freshly new life.

While women walk her to her doorstep, they sing a Tuati song:

بسم الله و بالله ** و الصلاة على رسول الله"

راحت لالا رايحة ** راح الخير معاها

¹*El-Kuhl*: is a cosmetic product, used mainly for the women on the eyes..

²*El-Burda*: is a form of the religious poetry made to compliment the prophet.

سماها امغيلية ** سماتو افحل ميه

"يا سعد اللي جاتو ** جات لدارها

"BiṣmAllahi w biḷlhi ** waḷṣālāiṭuḷarasūliAllahi

Rāḥaṭ laḷarāḥaṭ ** rāḥaḷkḥaḷrumḷahā

samāḥāḥamghylya ** smaṭuḥḥaḷ mīh

yāsaḷḍiāḷlīḷjatu ** jaṭ li dārḥā"

"In the name of Allah and with Allah ** and the prayers be upon Allah's Prophet

*Lala*¹ went ** the goodness went with her

He named her his queen ** she named him his mother's knight

How lucky the one to whom she came ** she came to her house"

When they arrive at the bride's house, the Tuati people have a habit of putting a spoon or a knife at the doorstep, and then they pin a nail in one of the corners of the house while singing:

"سمرت أوتادها ** او ربات أولادها"

"samāraṭ ḥḥāwṭāduhā ** ḥw rabāṭ ḥwḷādahā "

"She pinned her wedges ** and raised her children"

This saying indicates that the bride has started a stiff and solid life based on compassion and love, and with this love she will raise her children.

This tradition in the Tuati region means that the bride has settled in her newly established house and that she will raise her children well, strongly with undivided attention. It also suggests that the house is firm, not only in matter of its structure, but also in matter of the connection between the bride and the groom. (سرقمة, p. 108)

3.1.5.3.1 *El-Burnus* and the Groom's Sword

The sword and *El-Burnus* have a symbolic meaning in the Tuati region. They deem the groom as an emperor of his days and his time. For a duration of seven days, the groom

¹*Lalla*: is title used frequently in Tuat expressing highness and respect. Typically used to call the women of Shurfa descent.

wears *El-Burnus* and carry the sword to repel demons and to establish between him and the other people around. The groom wears *El-Burnus* and carry the sword from the day of *El-Henna* as sign of aura; as the long-awaited knight. (بن جعفري، صفحة 394)

3.1.5.4 *El-hlal*¹

Is an event held after the day of the wedding night to celebrate the new bride for moving from single life to marital life. It starts from the early morning under the supervision of the groom's mother where women gather to have lunch. The bride enters the hall where women are gathered wearing white. The bride receives a basket filled with candy and nuts, then she puts her hands on it as a blessing. Then, these nuts and candy are distributed on the women who are in this hall with the bride. After this, the bride returns to her room while women finish this event with drums and dances. (بن جعفري، الصفحات 402-403)

Figure VI: A Picture of the Bride on *El-hlal* Day



A Picture by the Author.

3.1.5.5 Coffee Day

¹*El-hlal*: is a Tuati term used to refer to the event where the bride prepares herself for the wedding night

Is the third day after the wedding night. In the Tuati region, coffee day is the day when the bride shows off her abilities in making biscuits, dressing, and even dancing. It is a special day for girls only alike the second day of the wedding ceremony that is allocated for girls, yet it differs from it in the way the bride is dressed and that this coffee day takes place at the bride's new house, and not her parents'. In the morning of this day, the Tuatibride goes to the beauty salon before the guests arrive whilst her family relatives and friends prepare the hall or room for this event. The coffee day mostly starts from the afternoon until sunset. The Tuati bride usually wears three dresses for this event, mostly traditional and sometimes modernly styled to show her fashion sense to the girls in the room.

3.1.5.6. The Bride's Leaving Day

This is usually is the seventh after the wedding night, and in some places in Tuat it is the third day after the wedding night. The Tuati bride on this day visits her parents house after seven days in her house to have either lunch or dinner. Before the bride has the meal at her parents' house, she, her husband and the woman assigned to keep her company visit the bride's uncles, relatives and older people in her village (in case the bride married a man from another village) as a sign of respect and for obtaining blessing. Then, the bride returns to her parents' house to have dinner or to have lunch in a warm atmosphere with her parents and relatives whom she has not seen for duration of approximately seven days. This visit also shows that the Tuati groom is welcomed into the bride's family, and has become an undivided part of it.

3.2. The Birth of Children:

As soon as the newly married couple has their firstborn, happiness and joy fill the house and all the members of the family rejoice in this delightful event. It is accustomed in the Tuati society that the wife goes to her parents' house for a duration of four to five

months. During this period, the parents' house remains open for the guests as they come from the *qsar*, and even from other neighbouring *qsur* to congratulate the family on their newborn reciting the saying: "مبروكا لله يعافيه", "mabrūk, Allah yʔāfīh" offering their warmest wishes and hopes for the newborn to remain healthy in the future. (حوتيه، صفحة 370)

Another dear tradition for the Tuati people is performing *Adhan*¹ in the right ear of the newborn. After a week on the newborn, the family hosts a feast for the relatives, neighbours, and even the Imams and teachers of the Qur'an to recite it after this feast. After the latter ends, all those who were invited join the Imams in reciting few verses of the holy Qur'an, and then they end reading *Dua* for the newborn. Another tradition known in the Tuati society is to announce the name of the newborn loudly in the crowd as a sign of pride and happiness. (بن عبد المؤمن، صفحة 36)

¹*Adhan*: is the Islamic call for prayer. The word *Adhan* means 'to listen'

Conclusion

In the end, one can realize how Tuatis another world completely different from what we know, it is a completely distinct point from those areas that we have not seen in cinema films, and we have not heard about in stories and we have not read its details in novels. It is the cradle of the first historical civilizations that paved the way to the other arriving civilizations. The Tuati admirable traditions, golden yellowish sand, and vast mud-made *qsur* are what give this region its distinct and lovable aura. Not to forget the wondrous irrigation system using the *fouggarat*. Along with these traditions of Tuat, comes the Tuati marital ceremony and its warm nature and it is clearly described through what we had. These teachings are a form of traditions and customs related to a deep and keen attachment to the Islamic conscience and the connection to the qur'anic schools. This profound connection is what makes the Tuati region distinct from the other regions. It can be said that Tuat has traditions and social customs that render it unique from the other Algerian regions. Whether these customs concern the societal level such as the social norms, or what concerns our case of the study "The Marriage Ceremony in the Tuati Region".

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Conclusion

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