

Good the history of roman baths and hamams essay example

[Art & Culture](#), [Painting](#)



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Presentation and Analysis of three paintings on Hamams and Roman Baths –
‘ A Female Turkish Bath or Hammam’ by Jean-Jacques-François Lebarbier
(1738–1826) painted in 1785, ‘ Roman Bathing’ by Ledent Pol (1952-)
painted in 2013 and ‘ A Favourite Custom’ by Sir Lawrence Alma - Tadema
(1836-1912) painted in 1909– Reflections on the technique, the beauty and
artistic power of each painting – Reflections on the feelings caused by each
one of the paintings on the nature of Roman baths and Hamams

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Abstract

This paper will present you with three famous paintings on Roman Baths and Hamams. Two of the paintings are on Roman Baths and the third one is on a Turkish Hamam. Either characterized as Roman Bath or a Turkish Hamam, the place is above all a kind of Bath. And it certainly is a kind of Bath which attracts people since it turns automatically into a public place of meeting other people, hanging out with friends, sharing your bath with them, relaxing not alone but with company. Both kinds of Baths are public Baths whose

history goes so many years ago. It was in Ancient Rome that the construction of houses needed a public bath. And it was in Turkey that the Turks began in the fourteen century to construct their first public baths. This paper is a kind of case study which based on the study and analysis of the three paintings, each one of which holds its own share in people's admiration, proves the magic attraction of Roman Baths and Hamams and how they managed although being simple public Baths to generate so much interest and inspiration to representatives of the Art field. The feelings drawn on each one of these paintings and their power in depicting the magic of these public places is the thematic core of this case study.

Key Words: Roman Baths, Hamams, painting

Presentation and Analysis of three paintings on Hamams and Roman Baths – ' A Female Turkish Bath or Hammam' by Jean-Jacques-François Lebarbier (1738-1826) painted in 1785, ' Roman Bathing' by Ledent Pol (1952-) painted in 2013 and ' A Favourite Custom' by Sir Lawrence Alma - Tadema (1836-1912) painted in 1909- Reflections on the technique, the beauty and artistic power of each painting – Reflections on the feelings caused by each one of the paintings on the nature of Roman baths and Hamams

It was the construction of the houses in Ancient Rome that made the need for public baths more than simply demanding. Lead pipes was the way to have water supplied in the houses of Ancient Rome. But according to the taxation system of those years, pipes were considered to be one of the criteria upon which the economic status of each family and each house was to be measured. In other words, houses owned by middle class

representatives could not hold their own baths since the taxes they would have to pay for it would be more than just expensive. At the same time though the need for personal hygiene never stopped existing so more and more public baths started being constructed.

Soon after the first constructions of the first baths and their being used by more and more people, an increasing trend towards using public baths started taking place. Each public bath was not just perceived as a place where one could keep his / her hygiene. The public Bath turned out to be something much more important. It turned out to be their meeting place. Either by women or men the enjoyment was equally enjoyed. The public bath was not a joint of enjoyment though. It was much more than that. It was the participation along with others, either friends or friends to be or even indifferent people, in something common. It could be argued that Roman Baths were a kind of a social thermometer which measured the situation for anything it went on within the society and the way people dealt with it. The Roman Bath consisted of three parts. There was the 'frigidarium' which was the cold bath, the 'tepidarium' which was the warm bath and the hot bath which was the 'caldarium'. The engineering skills of those years which made the heat possible to be kept in the area of the Bath are remarkable. The Turkish Hamams were created by Turkish in the fourteen century and it was in the early 19th century that they began entering other countries of Europe. Hamams are like steam spas and are still nowadays one of the greatest tourist attractions for people visiting Turkey.

The paintings

It seems that due to their social role Roman baths and hamams have drawn the attention of artists provoking their interest in depicting not just the place and its construction but the whole surrounding atmosphere of the place.

The first painting ' A Female Turkish Bath or Hamam' by Jean Jacques

Francois Lebarbier is a living painting which talks to the audience's heart.

Jean Jacques Francois Lebarbier is a French writer and painter born in Rouen in 1738. He died in Paris on 1826 and his most famous painting has come to be considered the one titled ' Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen' in which he depicts the historical moment of the declaration of Human Rights. Lebarbier is a French painter known for his attraction to French history which appears to conquer most of his paintings. This painting of his on the Female Turkish Bath or Hamam, is once more an effort on behalf of the painter to capture a historical moment of people's everyday life in the past and in his own present. A moment of people's everyday life which had not still entered the European lifestyle. It is the depiction of a luxurious female hamam which seems to be mainly constructed by marble and it is flooded by women. The most intriguing characteristic of all is the sense of freedom and enjoyment that the painting puts across to those looking into it.

There are numerous women, others dressed and others half-dressed who are sitting either before the moment of their entering the steam spa or just after they seem to have finished their steam spa. There is this kind of air of relaxation. The main characteristic of this painting is its social aura. This is indeed a place of meeting, of talking, of independence of women who seem

to be pretty engaged in whatever it is that they are doing or that they are talking about.

Then there is the painting of nowadays by Ledent Pol which causes great admiration mostly because of this mystique nature it depicts. Ledent Pol born in Belgium in 1952, has come to painting since 1989. He is a modern painter who has spread his inspirations in fields such as the landscape and the female nude body while experiencing moments of her everyday life. This is the painting of a nude woman who is ready to enter the bath, the hot water. Her hair up, her body so alive like breathing its anticipation of feeling the enjoyment of the hot water it is to enjoy. The woman seems ready to dive in her own independent moment of enjoying her diving in enjoyment and relaxation. All stress of the day, all agonies, all thoughts seem to have flown away. It is the picture of the woman who can belong to any period of time. She is the woman who travels throughout time joining different periods of time together. The Bath is a place similar to the ones described by history, a luxurious one like the one existing in ancient Rome. But this is a bath that could be constructed in such luxury nowadays so that it resembles the first constructions of roman baths. Nevertheless, the main characteristic of the bath which is intensely given by the writer is the hot water, the steams and the nude female body. And this painting of this woman who is entering the water and she is half in the water and in outside, is a picture which gives people the feeling of being absorbed into personal enjoyment.

Last but not least the third painting which is ' A Favorite Custom' by Sir Lawrence Alma - Tadema (1836-1912) painted in 1909, is a luxurious painting giving the sense of calmness, relaxation and escape form the city's

noise and fuss. Sir Lawrence Alma - Tadema is a Dutch painter who once he visited England, he decided to settle there in 1870 and he spent all his life there till his death. Sir Lawrence Alma -Tadema is a painter widely acknowledged for his being attracted to the classical period, the classical civilization and lifestyle. As a result most of his paintings seem to depict moments of the Roman Empire, the luxury and exaggeration conquering specific fields and moments of that period of time. This painting ' A Favorite Custom' is one of his depictions of one most popular moment in people's lives during the years of the Roman Empire. All women depicted in this painting are a picture of an old tradition, a custom which proves that people always had their own ways of finding their moments of relaxation. But it is not only relaxation that is put across through this painting. It is also the sense of luxury and enjoyment and people indulging in the beauty of life, through one of their customs.

Conclusion

Notice could be taken that all the above mentioned paintings are paintings which depict hamams and roman baths enjoyed by females. This is not by chance since most famous paintings on roman baths and hamams appear to be of female ones. This is probably due to the fact that bathing is an activity closely bonded with women who have always been supposed to be the ones paying more attention to their appearance and beauty and who like art shows had always managed despite the era they lived in to find their own moments of independence, devoting time to their body and soul.

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