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Historiographical Overview on the Post Conflict Reconstruction in Syria:
From the mid-19ᵗʰ Century to the 2011 Crisis

Dr. Anas SOUFAN

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Introduction

Until today, the surviving architectural heritage shapes not only a physical component of the Syrian cities' landscape but also, a symbolic and representational element for their populations. How could we imagine Damascus or Aleppo without their Citadels and the neighbouring linear souks? In spite of the foregoing essential value, this heritage did not cease to modify under three main factors: the usual utilization upgrading; the demolition in the framework of urban redevelopment operations; and the destruction after disasters or military confrontations. Since 2011, many historical

zones have been irreversibly affected by unscrupulous deliberate attacks, vandalism, intentional and unintentional destruction contributing to erase the achievements of past cultures of Syrians. The end of the military battles would stop the physical destruction and open the doors for ongoing sociopolitical confrontations which might regenerate other armed conflicts. At any rate, after the war, Syrians will undertake, together, divided or with others, a huge re-building process whose success and continuity depends particularly on the ability of the local society (or societies) to realize the specificities of the crisis; to appropriate a shared rebuilding culture, to have a powerful leadership; finally, to gain the backing of the international community and related organizations. In other words, the main challenge defying any *Postwar Reconstruction Scheme* is the identification of its philosophies, directive rules and adequate methods to commercialize itself in front of the concerned Syrians or other decision makers. Accordingly, this scheme should be the outcome of a multidisciplinary, collective, creative, accumulative, representative, and interacted dialogue amongst several actors: the concerned state institutions, the civil-society associations, the private sector bodies and the related international organizations. Politics, investors, architects, planners, historians, economists, archeologists, sociology and anthropology experts should be consulted.

In this framework, the present paper emphasizes on a defined question: what is the practical attitude that might reply to the Syrians inspirations as concerns the rehabilitation of their affected architectural heritage? In fact, the response is built upon two assumptions: on the one side, the term "rehabilitation" includes all initiatives permitting to a historical monument or zone to be regarded and reemployed; on the other, the answer to the prior question depends on four levels of investigation: the situation on field; the economic and political context; the Syrians' vision to the subject, as well as the recovery of the heritage's functions in case of total reconstruction. Regarding the ongoing war, the first two levels could not be defined at present. The third and fourth levels will be outlined according to a historiographical approach describing the Syrians' attitudes as concerned the destruction and reconstruction of several historical zones, in time of war and peace, since the mid-19th century until today.

At any rate, several key-questions should be raised: how the notion of the urban and architectural heritage has been shaped; how this cultural evolution affected the reconstruction of historical zones, after wars, disasters or after urban redevelopment projects; what has been the role of the official authorities; how a proposal for the heritage's rehabilitation should be qualified? And which UNESCO's contribution might be expected? The demonstration of these topics depends on empirical and bibliographical resources including funds of archives, books, reports, interviews, inquiries, statistics,

films, photos, plans and maps. The paper will be organized according to the following chronological order: the first phase, contemporary to the Ottoman Reforms, achieved in 1918, witnessed the emergence of the notion "heritage" in its current meaning. The second, ended in the late 1970s, marked the deep confrontation between the notions of Modernity and heritage. The third phase, broken by the current Syrian crisis in 2011, characterized by a kind of national acceptance and increasing international impact in the heritage preservation. The paper concludes by presenting the *"Heritage Reactive Rehabilitation Scheme",* an overview on the potential postwar reconstruction of Aleppo's historic zones.

Ottoman Reforms: Heritage, Arabism, Ottomanism and Westernization

Although many medieval buildings of religious, military and civil functions were preserved and considered as local heritage, it was merely from the 1880s onwards that the heritage culture began to find place in the local society thanks to the <u>Syrian literature</u> and the <u>Ottoman Reforms</u>. Since the 1870s, the Syrian literature have been playing an increasing role in the Arab awakening [النهضة العربية] reflecting the increasing enlightening impact of the press and the educative system. Evidently, at the late 19th century, the Syrian literature's influence was still limited on minority of the society. However, the examination of this influence permits to illustrate the development of the civil society's thought as much as its vision to the heritage and to the urban modernization. *Al-Jinān*, *al-Muqtaṭaf*, *al-Hilāl*, *al-Jāmi'ah al-uṯmāniyyah*, *al-Muqtabas*, *al-Mašreq*, *al-Manār* as well as the historic novels and the travel stories[1] were Syrian journals of Islamic, Christian and secular tendencies which, during decades, have approached four main issues: the sense of modernity [التمدن]; the artistic taste [الذوق الفني العصري], the attitude as to European styles [الطرز الأوروبي أو التفرنج], and the value and definition of the local heritage [الإرث]. Subsequently, these journals could elucidate firstly, events directly linked to the heritage preservation, restoration or destruction; secondly, the work of archeological European missions in the region; thirdly, the changes of the heritage appropriation by the Syrian civil society in the framework of the Ottoman Reforms context.

Following the promulgation of the first edict of Reforms, *ḫeṭṭi šerif*, in 1839, the Sublime-Porte endeavored to improve the economic, political and military situation of the Empire. The objective was to initiate a radical rupture with the past and to establish an Ottoman modernity facing Russia and Europe. Accordingly, series of reforms have affected the urban and architectural space, contributing to a kind of wished or by chance westernization. Consequently, new urban and architectural references such as the

Neoclassic were introduced permitting to Syrians to recognize another urban and architectural fabrics than the deeply rooted traditional models. Consequently, when the "modern" western architecture dominated the cities extensions, such as the s new administrative centers, the foregoing Syrian journals began to handle the memorial and representative values of the local traditional architecture displaying, according to their religious or secular ideologies, different readings of the cities' urban transformations.

On the one side, the westernization of the urban and architectural space pushed the conservators to claim the preservation of the "predecessors' art, skills and architecture, considering them as Islamic heritage. Abdul-Azīz al-'Azmah (1856-1943) gave example of this camp. He showed his regret and disappointment for the use or the imitation of Western styles criticizing at the same time the prevailing of westernized tastes [وغلب التفرنج على الأذواق][2]. On the other side, the liberals (e.g. Arab nationalists) explained their pride relating especially to the non-Ottoman heritage, due to the Umeyyad, Ayyoubide and Mameluk periods, designated it as a "Arab" heritage. This situation coincided with the mounting of the *État-nation* principle in the region and subsequently, the struggle to attain a form of decentralization, then, the definite independence from the Ottoman Empire. The educative system, composed of Civil [المدارس الأهلية], official and Western missions' schools had indirect impact on the appropriation of the local heritage. If the teaching of the Arab history was practically ignored by the Ottoman and Western missions' schools, it constituted a principal material in the Civil schools involving an Arab nationalist spirit according to many authors such as 'Aḥmad Ḥilmi al-'Allāf (1898-1959)[3]. In other words, the *"Arab"*, non-Ottoman heritage had to be approached and instrumentalized to reinforce the Arab nationalists' propaganda about the existence of one Arab Nation.

In the late 19th century, the Sublime Porte, pointing to strengthen the tie and the common identity of the Empire provinces, attempted to create a national Ottoman style based on inspirations from Europe and local traditional fabrics. As a result, a new generation of administrative buildings has emerged and proved for the Ottoman subjects, Syrians for instance, that the heritage might be a reference in the urban modernization of their cities. Al-Hedjaz Railway Station in Damascus (1908-1914) and the Horologe tower of Bāb al-Faraj in Aleppo (1899) are relevant examples. Indeed, the construction of these buildings materialized the first experiences of the Making-Heritage Process in the modern history of Syria. This process continued and took more significance during the colonial and postcolonial periods. However, if the era of the Ottoman Reforms witnessed the first concerns of the making heritage process, it witnessed also the destruction of parts of the traditional fabrics following of natural disasters,

fires, urban redevelopment projects, even, armed confrontations such as the accidents of the 1860 in the damascene district of Bab Touma.

Reconstruction of Bāb Tūma, 1862-1870s

Under the influence of the riots and the bloody confrontations between the Druses and the Maronites in the Mont-Lebanon, the Christian quarter Bāb Tūma, where most of Europeans and wealthy Christians lived was attacked with the complicity of Ottoman soldiers. The socially less powerful Christians of Midān were not attacked. Although the Damascenes Muslim notables protected a lot of families, thousands were killed and others leaved to Beirut, Egypt and Europe.
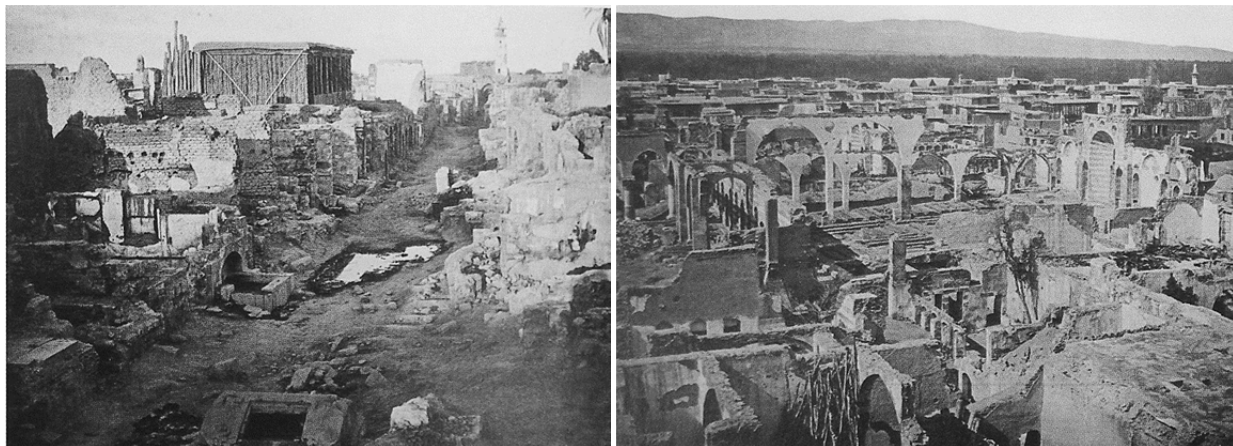
PL.I - Left: Bāb Tūma, 1863, via recta, 1863, Buildings either side stand in ruins, prepared for reconstruction, (Royal Collection of HM Queen Elizabet II, RCIN 2700964)
Right: Bāb Tūma, 1863, St. Mary's church, al-Maryamiyyah prepared for reconstruction, (Royal Collection of HM Queen Elizabet II, RCIN 2700963)

Following the accidents, an International committee was constituted in order to determine the necessary procedures and reactions. The committee consisted of the extraordinary envoy of the Sublime-Porte, Fouad Pasha as well as the representatives of Grand Britain, France, Russia, Prussia and Austria. Its main mission was the organization of the reconstruction process particularly, the material reimbursements for the movable and immovable estates. [75] million Ottoman Qirsh were dedicated as reimbursements of immovable estates. More than [45] million were collected through the "extra tax", raised on Damascus' Muslims and Jews, except, those who protected Christians during the accidents. Several sources reported that at least 80% of the houses on the quarter's two main streets were

destroyed[4], including all European consulates, exception the Britannic one[5]. According to the records of the aforementioned committee, [1413] house have been affected and many builders, sculptures, carpenters and woodworker were killed during the accidents.

The reconstruction began in 1863 and concluded in the beginning 1870s. About third of buildings still lay in ruins by 1868[6]. The requests of the damaged Damascenes tempting the Ottoman authority to undertake itself the reconstruction of the quarter[7]did not succeed and the inhabitants were reimbursed in order to assume themselves the reconstruction works. The quarter's initial urban pattern was preserved by employing the same cadastral and spatial organization (with inner courtyards), materials and architectural styles. Nevertheless, two novelties might be underscored; the use of new techniques of decoration especially the vegetal and landscape wall painting; as well as the opening of windows in the streets façades.

The urban and architectural consequences of the accidents went beyond the destruction of buildings. Many Christians including the well-known builders and stone sculptures leaved the city. Hence, the city's economic activities as well as its construction market did not regain their previous prosperity except after the return of the Christian capitals and professionals of construction, at the end of the 1870s. According to Stephan Weber, craftsmen from all over the Empire were sent to Damascus for the redevelopment of Bāb Tūma[8]. The problem of immigration of Christians was discussed by the foregoing Ottoman and international committee[9]. For this reason, the reconstruction of Bāb Tūma and Bāb Šarqi have not been achieved until the early 1880s.

Although the petitions of inhabitants ensured on the realization of the houses in their previous states, including their ornamentations[10], the question of aesthetic references or styles of the reconstruction process has not been raised by the Syrian authors of that period. Instead, they focused on the reasons of the accidents and their societal repercussions[11]. Today, it is meaningful to interrogate why this part of Bāb Tūma district makes a principal feature of the Syrian heritage in spite of its linkage to a terrible accidents? The answer on this question depends on technical and societal interpretations. Obviously, there was an obligated engagement with the local traditional technologies and styles regarding the nonappearance of other options. Secondly, in such situation, it will be usual to recuperate whatever that links the present to the past and guarantee the continuity of the artistic style. As concerns the societal side, the belief of both, Christians and Muslims that these accidents were isolated and stranger to the damascene society, in which, Muslims, Christians and Jews lived together during fourteen century.

1918 - Late 1970s: Urban fabrics inside ongoing sociopolitical confrontation

Four different political regimes governed during this phase: the Arab Kingdom under Fayçal Ibn al-Hussein, 1918-1920; the colonial, 1920-1946, the postcolonial, 1946-1963; and the Ba'th Party rule from 1963 until today. The Arab Kingdom was the first Syrian authority that recognized the protection of the local heritage through the foundation of the first museum in Damascus exhibiting Islamic, Byzantine, Roman, Greek, Hittite, Egyptian and from Palmyra collections[12]. During the Mandate and even more so after independence, the recognition of the added political, economic and scientific value of the local heritage became more evident. Nevertheless, until the end of the 1970s, the constant confrontation between the notions of heritage and modernity was in favor to the "modernization" of the urban and architectural space and contributed to the loss of large traditional fabrics. This situation should be attributed to the civil society reformist debate on a side, to the position of the public authorities as concerns the necessities of "modernization" on the other.

Heritage between civil society debate and official policies

The cover of the journal *Dimashq*, of secular spirit, sketched the Umeyyad mosque on a side, a view of the Old Damascus on the other. This observation resumes many aspects of the Syrian civil society's attitude towards the question of heritage that could not be understood except in the framework of its ongoing debate about the following issues: the identification of the right kind of modern society and State; the identity of the society; the place of Islam and Islamic law; and the vision to the role of the West in the local restructure or modernization, [الإصلاح].

The Syrian literature reflected this debate as concern the urban and architectural space, highlighting the combination of old and modern cities in Damascus, Aleppo and other Syrian cities, emphasizing at first on the contradiction between the old cities and Modernity; then, on the necessity of the urban redevelopment and modernization of traditional zones; finally, on the place of heritage in the building of the national Arab identity. However, the accelerated changes during the 19th – 20th centuries, the "revolutionary upheavals", according to Sāṭii al-Ḥuṣari[13], proved the domination of the renewal or modernist current and the decreasing of the conservators' powers.
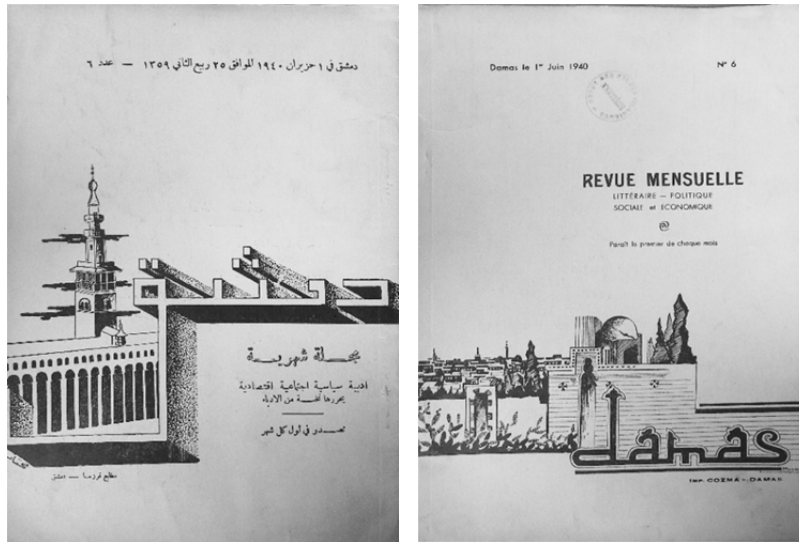
Taqii ed-dīn al-Ḥeṣnī, historian (died in 1940), discussed the necessity to adopt what he called the "new civility [التمدن الجديد] which characterized Western nations when they replaced the religious ties by national patriotism"[14]. Nevertheless, he criticized the blind imitation [التقليد الأعمى] of Europeans, attributing his position to the dissimilarities between European and Oriental tastes, customs and ethics, admitting a kind of hybridity between the predecessors' local civilization and Western progress[15]. Muhammad Kurd Ali, (1876-1952), important reformer and politician, founder of the Arab Academy in Damascus, would resume the look of the most of the highly educated Syrian class to the value and future of the old cities. On a side, he illustrated the contradiction between the *prosperous future of the modern districts* of Damascus[16], and the *humble milieu[17], poor and depressing aspect* of its old city[18]. On the other, he showed his admiration to the historic monuments in addition to the belief that the development of arts should be built not only on European references but also on local traditional ones[19]. In his assessment about the historical zones of Damascus, Kurd Ali has charged *al-waqf* administrations the loss of many Islamic buildings and objects attributing his reflection to the omission of these administrations as concerned the maintain and restoration of many vulnerable historic buildings[20].

At the 1970s, many residents of the middle and upper classes of the Old cities left their traditional houses to live in residential suburbs that could provide more modern amenities. This change might be also explained by the failure of the public plans targeting the preservation and the development of the traditional quarter. Afif Bahnasi, former chief of the DGAM[21], argues this situation by the vision of both the government and the civil society to the old city as *the mark of the past, not as the materialization of*

a continued lifestyle, based on values, traditions and tastes. Bahnasi charged the municipal authorities the task to propose the necessary plans targeting to repair the foregoing unbalanced situation[22]. Abdul-Qader al-Rihāwi, an officer specialized in the preservation of heritage in the DGAM during more than thirty year, attributed the destruction of the most important traditional houses in the Arab cities to their owners. According to him, without the governments' protections, most of the distinctive traditional house would have been demolished[23]. Undoubtedly, the aforementioned vision of the Syrian civil society to the question of local heritage should not be isolated from the general educational and economic context nor from the official policies reflecting the ongoing confrontation between necessities of old cities' redevelopment and preservation.

As for the official authorities, the appropriation of the Syrian heritage had other meanings and objectives. In fact, the French Mandate justified its presence in the colonies (Syria and Lebanon in our case) by several approaches including their linkage to the Greco-Roman civilization and heritage and subsequently, France *doit réclamer presque à l'égal d'un patrimoine[24]*. Therefore, it was essential to encourage the archeological missions, especially, as concerns the pre-Islamic periods. In this framework, a department of Antiquities was annexed to the office of the French Haut-Commissariat since the establishment of the Mandate in 1920; subventions were granted to French archeological missions; several museums and institutes of historic and archeological studies were constituted; and many Syrians have leaved to Europe in order to achieve studies in human sciences such as the history and archeology. Until the early 20th century, the French stigmatized the architectural heritage of colonies as being backwards and fossilized. Hence, under the influence of 19th century's urban ideologies, they adopted the principles of *tabla-raza* for a radical urban reconstruction. Several Algerian cities give related examples.

On the other hand, the mandatory authorities promoted the coexistence of two urban systems in Syria. As a result, the old cities were generally preserved, but large demolitions have been undertaken in order to release historical monuments[25] or develop the traffic network in the interior and exterior of the old cities. Political reasons would argue this option, notably, the consciousness of the French authorities that the expulsion of population from their historic cities would have inflict uncontrolled struggles. Additionally the French were cautious to the usefulness of displaying the distinction between an old and a modern cities attesting the constructive modernist impact of their Mandate[26]. Nevertheless, the conservation of the old cities had its limits when it has been opposing to the Mandate's stability or presence. Hence, the French Mandate acted for the development of the surrounding and interior traffic

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of the old cities not only for economic reasons but also for military requirements[27]. Moreover, in its reactions against the Syrian revolt in 1925, the French Forces destroyed many monuments and historical zones. The quarter of Sidi Amoud, located in the Western side of the *interamuros* Damascus, is a relevant example.

Sidi-Amoud - *Hariqah*, memory of the place and place of the memory

On October 18th 1925, about four hundreds Syrian revolutionary entered the old city of Damascus. They attacked the 'Azem Palace, headquarter of the French Haut-Commissaire. (al-Ḥakīm, Ḥ., 1965, 1, 282). Thus, from October 18th to October 20th, the French army has been bombarding the city. As a result, the district of Sidi Amoud was mostly annihilated and several traditional masterpieces of the old city, such as the al-'Azem Palace, were affected, burned or destroyed. Ḥasan al-Ḥakīm, one of leaders of the revolt and a former prime minister in the colonial and post-colonial periods defended the revolutionaries' attack against the 'Azem Palace indicating to their "attempts, to protect the palace antiquities" in spite of the tough confrontations with the french soldiers. (al-Ḥakīm, Ḥ., 1965, 1, 282).
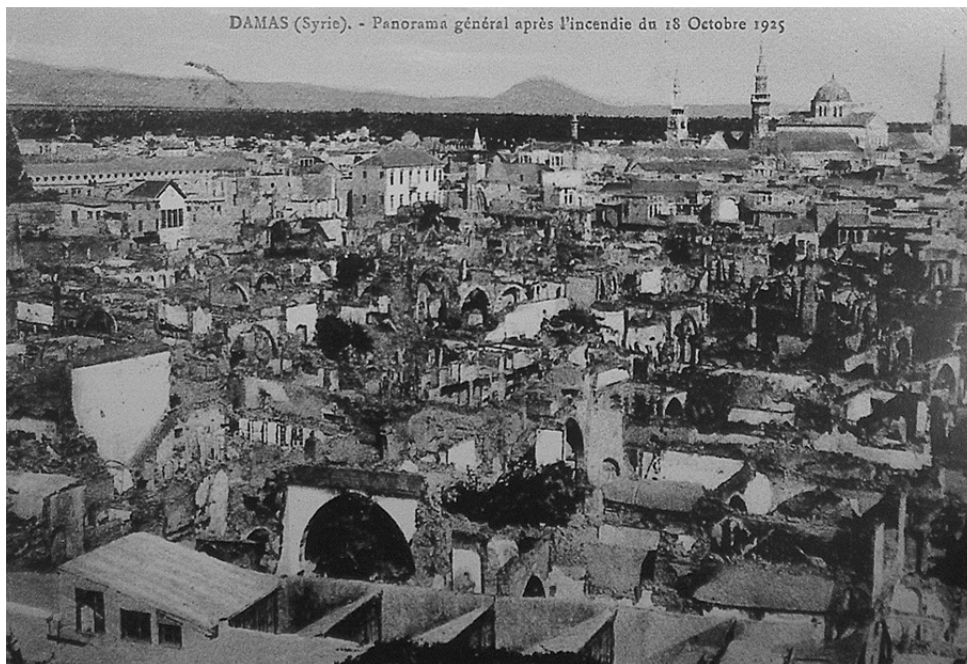
PL. III. French post-card of the city after the destruction of Sidi Amoud quarter.
(G. Degeorge, *Damas perle et reine d'Orient*, 2005)

After the revolt, a large reconstruction process was initiated and achieved several years later. Until today, the official and popular name of this district is *al-hariqah*, the fire. The reconstruction of the district was undertaken since 1926 considering the following features: the location as a part of the old city; the symbolic meaning of the place as battleground against the colonizer; a French political need to repair the

The modern fabric of Sidi 'Amūd, al-Ḥariqah quarter, Main Square, (©A. Soufan, 2009)

degradation of the France image in Syria and the world after these important destruction as well as technical and financial constraints. In this framework, the French Haut-Commissaire promulgated the decree n° 227 on April, 18th, 1926, targeting the organization of the reconstruction process. The decree defined the modern character of the district determining on the one side, the forms of the new constructions, servitude, materials, colours and heights, on the other, the general urban organization: a regular territorial division, a colonnaded street and central main square.

Aleppo, Architecture of Modernity buildings, Colonial and Post-colonial period, (© A. Soufan, 2010)

At the same period, another building tendency was mounting. It depended on the use of local heritage references as well as the European forms and technologies in construction. Both the mandatory rulers, the Syrian opponents and the Syrian civil society looked positively at this style. For the French, it was a manner to demonstrate the admiration and the intention to reinforce the contact with the Syrian conservators. For the Syrians leaders, these buildings shaped a way to prove the local Arab identity and to remind of the glorious past. Monuments on al-Nasr Street in Damascus and in al-'Azīzyyeh quarter in Aleppo, of high architectural value and quality, illustrate the previous perception.

Between al-Ḥariqah district and the neighbouring al-Nasr Street buildings, we continue to interrogate what is the historic, technical and emotional value of their buildings today? How many Syrians do realize that al-Ḥariqah has been the outcome of a post conflict reconstruction process? How did the transformation of this part affected the whole Damascus? What a Syrian power would have decided for such situation? Is the architectural aspect liable to the general dislike towards this district or its linkage to a specific war or period?

Historical zones in the concerns of European planners in Syria

The Mandate's urban policies concentrated on the building of separated modern districts lying near the old cities. French architects or planners have been charged the preparation of master plans of several cities, for instance, Rene Danger [Master Plan of Damascus,1937], and Michel Écochard and Commission from Aleppo Municipality [Master Plan of Aleppo, approved in1938]. Undoubtedly, the old cities shaped

the basis, on which, the aforementioned plans have been built. All planners were encountered to the same issue: how to sustain the deeply rooted commercial activities of the old cities in rational harmony with the introduction of the mechanic traffic?

The response to such exigency imposed the destruction of parts of the old cities. In addition to this fundamental reason, the planners had more or less a different understanding of the meaning of heritage preservation relatively to our time. They portrayed the heritage as monuments but not as an urban and social structure. This perception was highlighted by René Danger when he presented the guidelines of his proposal related to the historical zones of Damascus: creating two main traffic axes North-South and East-West; establishing issues from the old city towards a new ring-road; releasing the classified historic monuments[28].
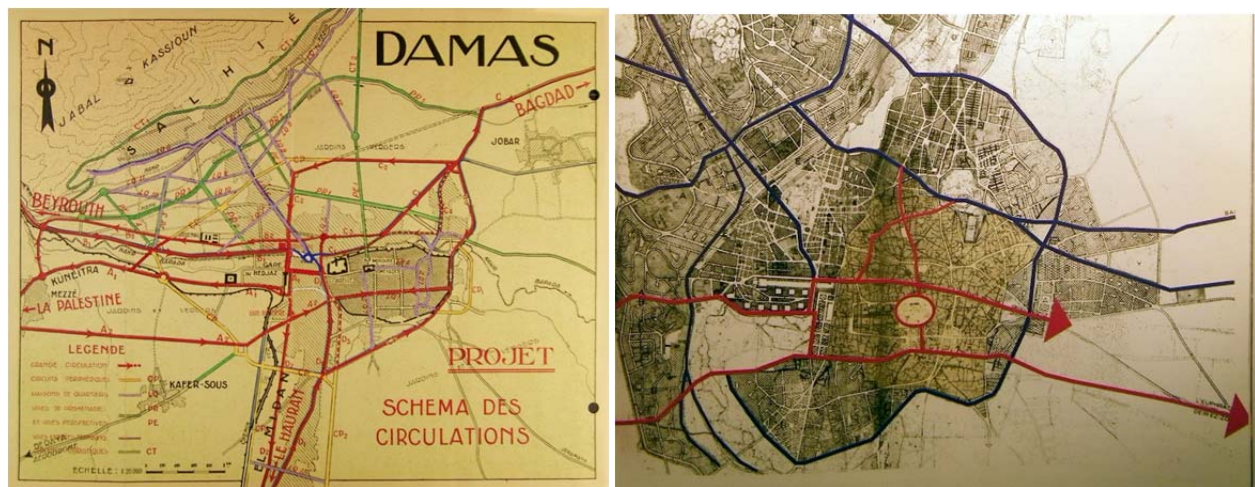
Left: Traffic Scheme, René Danger, 1937.
Source : SIAF/Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine, Danger frères et fils, n° 116 IFA
Right : Trafic Scheme, Master Plan of Aleppo proposed by André Gutton, 1952.
Source: Mona Khechen, in: Aleppo, Rehabilitation of the Old City, 2005.

After the independence in 1946, significant parts of the Syrian urban heritage have been demolished under the pressure of either sociopolitical claims of the public authorities, or the ideologies of concerned European planners. In the beginning of the 1950s, the Municipality of Damascus undertook a plan of redevelopment of the place al-Margeh and its surrounding. Most buildings due to the Ottoman Reforms in the late 19th century were demolished. Other constructions, in the prevailed "International style" were implemented. This project was a clear initiative to erase the trace of precedent rulers of Syria. After the arrival of Bath Party to the power in 1963, Syria opened a new page in its modern

history. Many changes in the economic, political, social and cultural fields took place including the policies of the heritage conservation and urban modernization. The examination of the law of Antiquities [n° 222], promulgated on October 26th 1963, in application until today, gives a relevant reading to the question of heritage at that time.

The regard of the Syrian and European planners to the old cities became more destructive than during the Mandate. Several reasons would explain this viewpoint. At first, the departure of French in 1946 gave the French planers more liberty in their urban proposals because, they were acting in their own names, charged by a Syrian independent government, not by the French authority. Then, after the Second World War, there was an obvious overcome of modernism on principles and aspects of authenticity and heritage for several reason, linked to the postwar reconstruction in Europe. Finally, the demographic shifts and economic pressures generated by unsettled national and regional context made the urban redevelopment increasingly insistent, bearing in mind the wars of 1948-56-67-73 and the rural and refugees' exodus towards the big Syrian cities.

In this context, the master plan schemes proposed by André Gutton for Aleppo in 1952 and by M. Écochard and C. Benchoya for Damascus in 1968 had several suggestions stigmatizing the traditional fabrics. Both plans recommended to replace Western *extramuros* historical zones by modern districts in addition to improve access and connectivity of the old cities through wide traffic axes surrounding or cutting their heart. Écochard defended his vision legitimizing these demolitions by indicating to the continued juxtaposition process of historical layers in all old cities: "*Some people think, the old city or the old part of the city must not be modified in order to keep the touch the time gave it. It is a static vision which opposes even the history, because, the living character we find at all crossroads, at all places where divers buildings and public monuments shape the perspectives and details, are the fact of superposition of eras with their different styles, life ways and models. Why could not our era equally superpose?*"[29]. However, the Gutton's highways "from the sea to the desert" and Écochard's "king Fayçal Street" have not never been achieved.

On the other hand, the Master Plan of Aleppo, presented by C. Benchoya and the Technical Office of Aleppo Municipality 1969-1974 demonstrated more consideration to the old Aleppo. It divided the *intramuros* city into historical districts (48 Hectare including about 150 monument); old districts without historical character (77 Hectare) and insalubrious or defected districts (27 Hectare). Specific regulations related to the conservation, renovation or construction were proposed for each zone. This project avoided the establishment of streets cutting the historical districts. According to the planners: it is

important to tackle with the fact the traditional and modern urban fabrics could not be conciliated. Moreover, there are no evaluative passage from the traditional to the modern fabric[30].

After the war of 1973, a regional tumultuous context caused more and more economic pressures including the housing sector. The question of the preservation of the traditional urban fabrics retreated. Nevertheless, the inscription of the old city of Damascus in the UNESCO's List of World Heritage, a huge event as concerned the heritage preservation strategies changed the foregoing situation.

From late 1970s to the crisis: internationalization of the heritage preservation

The period from the late 1970s until the Syrian crisis reveals the growing appropriation of the local heritage by wide part of Syrians who became more engaged in its preservation than before. All the existed heritage was considered thanks to several reasons.

First, contextual and educational: the inscription of several cities and sites in the UNESCO World Heritage List heightened the local heritage in the eyes of Syrians and their public authorities. These lasts were forced to update significantly their organs, strategies and legislations. Nevertheless, in spite of these initiatives, many others are insistent and should be realized especially as concerns the legislative field. It is true, the heritage preservation was no more instrumentalized in the sociopolitical debate regarding the stagnation of the political activities in the country. As a novelty, it has been instrumentalized for international and regional political purposes. For instance, the increasing linkage between Syria and Turkey during the first decade of the 21th century contributed to the inscription of more Ottoman monuments in the list of the national heritage as well as to the establishment of more common historical research projects. In any case, there was a national consensus about the appropriation of the growing heritage, seen as a factor in the Syrian national building or at least, an appreciated element by all the Syrian classes. Who is the Syrian who does not feel proud to have the ruins of Palmyra or the theatre of Busra?

Undoubtedly, the educational system reinforced the linkage of Syrian students to their history. From the preliminary school until the bachelor, all students learn about the history of the region, Europe and the world, from the antiquities to the late 20th century. This focus on the history met the Ba'thist ideology, initially based on claims about the common interests, language, geography and history of the one Arab nation. Hence, it was comprehended the Ba'th Party, in rule since 1963, has been backing the engagement of Syrians to their "glorious" past. Another feature must play an important role in term of developing the Syrians' linkage to their heritage. It concerns the emergence of a new Islamic modernist current enclosing members of different social classes. The expansion of this current comes back to the 2000s when many Islamic schools, institutions and councils (*al-qubaysiyyat* for instance) were established and accepted by the Syrian government. The emergence of this current might be explained by several reasons, notably, the desire of a part of Syrians to response to additional secularization of the society and state. Once again, the flourish past has been used as argument and way to preserve the Islamic culture identity.

Second, economic: during the 1980s, Syria suffered from international embargo which disturbed its policies and economy. After the Fall of Berlin Wall in 1989, it was affected by huge economic and cultural transformations. The Syrian economy had to be reformed and altered from socialist to liberal temperament. For several national and regional factors, the government considered the tourism as a potential pillar of the economic progress. Accordingly, the development of the touristic facilities of the old cities and sites was inevitable. As a result, the historical zones have been reconsidered and witnessed a remarkable increase of their real estate values, and their inhabitants realized the economic importance of their properties. This tendency was enhanced when rich Syrian, Arab and European businessmen, actors, politicians or others, have purchased prestigious properties in these cities, in the countryside and in their native towns. Obviously, this situation was supported by the injection of huge monetary masses invested in the country especially, during the first decade of the 21th century. But at the same time, the increasing importance of the private local and foreigner capital added new obstacles in front of the preservation of the Syrian heritage, bearing in mind that the historical zones were amongst the most attractive targets for the local and foreigner investors in the real estate.

Third, technical, this phase favored the physical contact between the Syrian society and its heritage through several ways: at first, the transformation of many traditional houses in the historical zones into restaurants, hotels, clubs, galleries, or centers for academic institution: for instance, Faḫri al-Barūdī house was acquired by the Faculty of Architecture in Damascus and transformed into center for the

studies related to the restoration and management of the old cities; then, the construction of plenty of housing projects and touristic establishments whose names, designs and urban environments were linked to the Syrian heritage; finally, the production of many series, films or artistic shows inspiring from the local history, acted in historic monuments and site, (e.g. Busra Festival).

There is no doubt the aforementioned reasons and alterations were not sufficient to convince all Syrians nor their concerned public institutions with the worth of the heritage preservation. Many inquiries demonstrate the tendency of a part of inhabitants of the old cities to replace their traditional houses by high buildings. Their main argument is to provide housing for the descendant families of the owner in order to keep them in their original quarters. In many cases, this attitude should not be understood as ignorance of the heritage value, but as a response to necessities and the research to live in dignity when the family members become more and more numerous. In this rate, it is essential to bear in mind that, the old cities' houses are not all the well-known palaces nor the imagined paradises. There are equally plenty of dwellings of limited aesthetic and functional significance. However, the municipal policies need more structural and technical improvements. Until the crisis, the abandon of many projects of demolition or intervention on historical monuments and zones, such as those related to al-Hejaz Railway Station (built in the 1910s) and King Faysal Street in Damascus, was not acted by the concerned public bodies, but by the highest political authorities. The corruption, powerlessness, inflexibility, incompetence or the problems linked to the legislative texts explain this observation.

One of the most pertinent aspects of the handled period was the emergence of a new mentality of reconstruction of the demolished historical zones based on the preservation of its architectural history instead of the implementation of *replicas of "Modern Movement" architecture*[31]. The reconstruction of Bab al-Faraj district in Aleppo, demolished in 1978-1979 illustrated this trend. As a result of the implementation of new large avenues issued from previous Master Plans, in the northwestern corner of the old city of Aleppo, regarding the authorities and people pressure for demolition and total redevelopment, the Bab al-Faraj quarter was demolished. An ambitious project was proposed retaining a strong political backing but at the same time, a notable resistance of part of the population. The first project proposed the construction of sixteen tower with their facilities. After the presentation of several architectural proposals, years of discussions, international expertize (of UNESCO and other) a different project, more interrelated with old Aleppo's traditional urban fabric was adopted. Citizens, local architects, politicians, and national public bodies were involved in this project. According to S. Bianca[32], *"the history of Bab al-Faraj project reflects a significant change of attitude to conservation during a*

critical phase of the city's development. [...], this process [...] reflects the growth of a city wide and even national consensus". Over the time, the aforesaid change deepened, the heritage worth enlarged and the conservation strategies amplified, culminating in highly studied projects of reconstruction of destroyed monuments or zones. The project of reconstruction of al-Kilaniyyeh (al-Zanbaqi) district in Hama, initiated in 2005 is a relevant example.

Project of reconstruction of al-Kilāniyyeh (al-Zanbaqi) district in Hama, 2000s

On June 3[id] 2013, the official Syrian journal, *Tashreen*, presented al-Kiāniyyeh district as historic and architectural masterpiece and part of the Syrian Ayyoubid, Mamlouk and Ottoman heritage. The district, composed of traditional houses, noteworthy civil and religious buildings, was mostly destroyed during the military confrontations of February 1982 between the regular Syrian Army and the Islamic rebellions, fortified especially in al-Kilāniyyeh and al-Baroudiyyeh districts. In 2005, a project for the reconstruction of al-Kilāniyyeh was initiated by the Chief of the Municipal Council of Hama M.-Amin Qundaqji. It concerned the identic reconstruction of the river façade of al-Kilāniyyeh including the well-known *Qaṣr aṭṭayyārah*, al-zāwiyah al-Qādiriyah, *hammam* aš-Šeikh, mosque al-Šeikh Ibrahim al-Kilāny and *hammam as-Sultan* which is located on the faced riverside of Orontes.
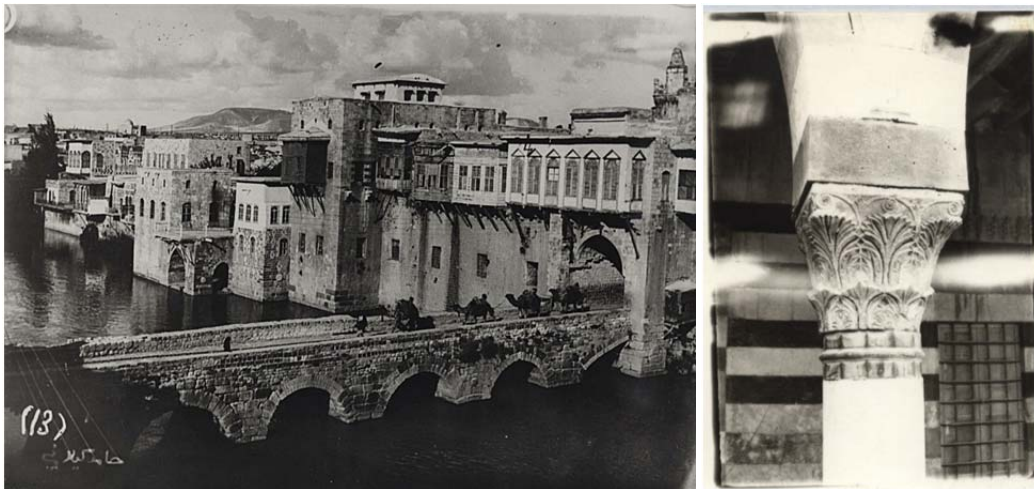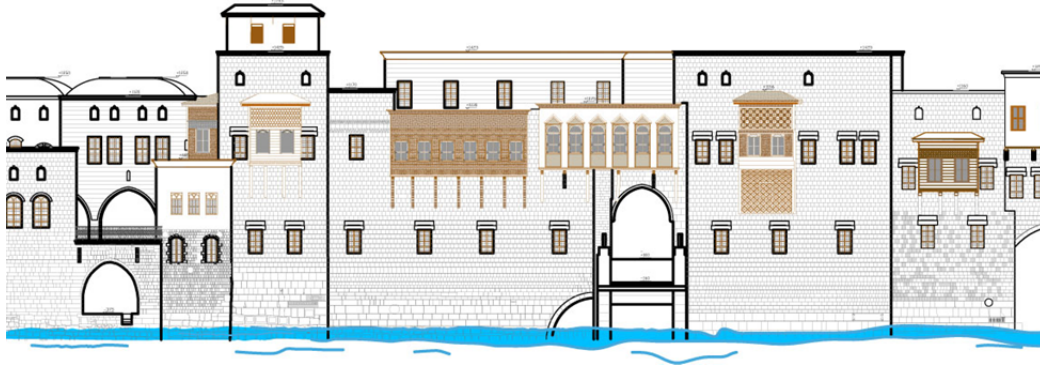
Up: al-Kilāniyyeh, Qaṣr aṭ-ṭayyārah, al-Kilāniyyeh Bridge, capital from the interior courtyard, before 1982.
Down: The river Façade of Qaṣr aṭ-ṭayyārah according to the proposal of reconstruction
Courtesy of the University Unit for the Architectural Studies, Professor Radwan Tahlawi.

Undoubtedly, the project found the favor and backing of the highly political authority. The University Unit for the Architectural Studies, managed by the Professor Radwan Tahlawi (Hama native, 1942-2009) has been awarded the realization of the historical study, the architectural and other related studies. Hundreds of plans, of eminent historical accuracy have been achieved on depending on considerable photographic funds, plans and archives documents, provided especially by the city's inhabitants shaped the basis of the project. According to the designer, the inhabitants' encouraging reaction and heartfelt desire to present any possible support to the study of the project proved the noticeable popular sympathy to this initiative.

The deployment of the reconstructed spaces was the subject of long discussions an enlarged round-table gathering the concerned actors. All religious buildings preserved their original functions. On the other hand, the houses were transformed into hotel, conference hall, wedding halls, cafeteria, restaurant and traditional artisanal workshops and bazar. Hence, the first and second phases were submitted in 2006; the third one in January 2009 and the whole architectural model and plans were achieved in the end of 2010. The realization has not been initiated. The General Direction of Antiquities and Museums had a minor consultative role and the Public Establishment for Engineering Studies and Consulting assumed the checking out of the proposal.

Many readings might be related to the experience of al-Kilaniyyeh, but unambiguously, it demonstrated the upgrading of the official mindsets as concerns the heritage approachs even if they were linked to atypical political or sociocultural struggles. In addition, the project would have aimed not only to erase the memory of 1982's confrontations - at least, for the coming generations of Syrians - but also, to end three decades of wait for reviving a fragment of Hama's history and heritage. In other words, even

before the launch of its realization, al-Kilaniyyeh reconstruction project represented an extensive reconciliation step for the district's inhabitants and those of the whole city of Hama.

Indeed, the foregoing three case studies illustrated the societal and physical consequences of diverse reconstruction experiences in Syria. *They demonstrated that over the time, the material and visible characteristics of the heritage reconstruction endure and affect the generations; nevertheless, the related psychological and moral narratives change incessantly in agreement with the society context.* These experiences should be profoundly analyzed and deployed in the literature of a potential postwar reconstruction regarding several points that associate them to the current situation: being relatively recent examples; applying similar methods of destruction; raising similar national and international reactions and challenges; taking place in various historical circumstances; affecting the same kinds of historic monuments, finally, being discussed and assessed by the Syrian civil society. Thus, in the light of the previous approaches, the potential rehabilitation of the destructed historical zones should be built not only on practical features, but also, theoretical societal and cultural principles. The linkage of the heritage, identity and postwar reconciliation would be the fundamental topic, which could not be tackled without the understanding of the heritage's memorial and representational functions.

Architectural Heritage memorial and representational functions

Architectural heritage has both practical and abstract functions: it is at once a shelter of human activities, a memorial instrument and a representational art. In this respect, the architectural aspect, constituted by the interior and exterior façades, exercises the representative and memorial functions, providing indications about the technical process, the cultural identity and the narratives intended by the builders and owners. However, the interpretation of the architectural aspect depends on the beholder's beliefs, physical situation, psychological state in addition to his artistic, cultural and sociopolitical references and convictions. Indeed, several beholder's beliefs can be present simultaneously as concerns an architectural façade and as Oleg Grabar underlines "they may even conflict with each other as is already the case with liking or disliking works of art"[33]. On the other hand, G.W.F. Hegel describes the universal mission of Art as a means that enables Man to represent himself generally or individually and to materialize this reality[34]. Robert Venturi, refers to 'symbols' in his definition "Architecture is a shelter with symbols on it", then, he announced "the urbanity we were

seeking would come from space and signs"[35]. As for Gottfreid Semper, "everywhere when a new thinking finds its place in the soil of a culture and appears to be assimilated by the public conscience, it finds a support in architecture in order to define its adequate monumental expression"[36]. This perception meets the vision of other scholars and thinkers[37]. Finally, in his presentation about the ethical role of architecture, Karsten Harries has wondered "if the language of architecture, too, is a language of representation?[38]" With the foregoing approaches in mind, the postwar rehabilitation of the Syrian heritage would reply to three main functions: reshaping the physical environment dedicated to human activities such as the housing, work and worship; re-establishing the painful (during the crisis) and pleasant memory (before crisis) of its users, owners and beholders; and portraying how Syrians represent their past and future after the crisis. In this framework, the efficiency of this rehabilitation depends on the convictions of each beholder and user as well as the characteristics of the concerned monument, bearing in mind[39] that each secularized or religious place has its distinctive links to the language, the past, the community, the physical world and the values of the society, in other words, its links to the identity of the society or its groups.

Architectural Heritage - Identity

A flagrant fragmentation characterizes the Syrian society at present. Syrians are divided according to at least three main sociopolitical currents, national, Islamic and ethnic, whose weight, values, convictions and projects are quite distinct. Syrians raise claims about communities, nationhood and national identity: what is "a nation"? Do I live in a "Stateless" nation? What are the geographic boundaries of my country? Who are my co-nationals and partners? Who are my real enemies? In fact, the correlation between Man's identity and his urban and architectural environment implies that the question to be addressed is how to nurture a significant architectural forms which express identification with deep-rooted human values and sociocultural, economic and political convictions.

Since 2012, civil society and armed groups have refused the Syrian national identity. The establishment of the Islamic Caliphate as well as the last claims of certain opponent groups in Aleppo to replace the Syrian currency by Turkish one are relevant examples. These claims generate others, relating to the urban and architectural environment: What is my artistic identity? What are the components of my architectural heritage? What is the place of authenticity and renewal in the reconstruction process? What are my priorities after the disastrous war? Could the architecture keep its traditional role as a vehicle of meanings and a project of the society? If the civil society's currents observe these approaches

in differentiated ways, the declared official attitude is more discernable, especially as concerns the heritage's place in the society. The fact that the governmental DGAM entitles its website "*Our Heritage empowers us, to form our presence and future*", [تراثنا هويتنا ، حاضرنا ومستقبلنا] upon photos of non-religious heritage holds a lot of meanings and messages[40].

Undoubtedly, the reconstruction process could not deal with all foregoing approaches regarding two kinds of reasons. The first, prior or not linked to the crisis, concerns the specificities of the memorial and representational functions of the building as well as the role of the international capital in the development of the country (and its future reconstruction). The second get involved during the crisis shaking the demographic composition and the sociocultural discourse. The interior and exterior exile as well as the arrival of thousands of non-Syrian "residents" would have a clear imports. For instance, in the early days of the confrontations, the main declared motivation of the arrived non-Syrian fighters was to "defend" the members and holy places of a religious confession. Since the summer of 2014, the most common motivation is to settle for longtime in Syria, to live at the first place in an Islamic Caliphate[41]. In this context, the main challenge is to fight the cultural elimination or eradication tendency largely approved by radical groups as a response to their profound civic defeat. The battle with this thought, long, complex and highly challenging, should be educative and based on parallel development of local secular values and reformed religious ones. In this rate, the response to the cultural eradication practiced by Islamic groups should be built on the fact that, the Islam has become a pillar of the human civilization when the conquered societies could maintain their cultures, then, reestablish others in agreement with the Islamic one such as the Christian Islamic art and the Jewish Islamic art[42].

On the spot, the identity issue still restricted as concerns the annihilation of historical monuments. The declared admitted destructions have affected the self and the otherness monuments. Often, these lasts have not considerable aesthetic historical value. The destruction of mausoleums in Aleppo, Deraa and al-Jazeereh is a relevant example. On the other hand, the generalized unintentional destruction gets rid of many historical monuments and zones. The presence of two soldiers in a house, mosque, church, khan or souk has justified according to most rivals, its destruction, even, with its surrounding neighbors. In other words, often, the historic worth and quality of buildings have not been able to prevent the military actions. This point might be explained by educational reasons linked to the vision of the Syrian society of the heritage as well as the belief of most rivals that their existence itself depends on the consequence of the current war and evidently, the existence is more worthy than a reference to a lost world. The destruction of a large part of old Aleppo is obvious example.

Hence**,** regarding the memorial and representational functions of the heritage; the usual ongoing cultural and sociopolitical divisiveness of Syrians; the legitimate desire of Aleppins to enjoy the rebuilding and to erase the legacies of the war without depriving their city of its heart; and in the light of the studied experiences: Bāb Tūmā, Sidi Amoud and al-Kilāniyyeh, <u>it is essential to reconstitute the destroyed architectural heritage in Aleppo according to its pre-crisis situation</u>. This civic task should be involved by the public sector, the local users with the backing of specialized international organizations. In term of realization, several probable scenarios might be imagined, deliberated and developed. The following proposed *Heritage Reactive Rehabilitation Scheme* might be one of them.

Heritage Reactive Rehabilitation Scheme, HRRS, Aleppo

This scheme is built upon the adoption of either the restoration of the partially affected historic buildings in referring to the international conventional standards; or the whole relative identical reconstruction in case of heavily damaged or total destruction according to a decided technical and aesthetic Charter.

The objective of this Charter is to give theoretical and technical standards that regulate the employment of traditional and modern forms, materials and techniques of constructions. The HRRS has to be not only inspired from certain international conventions such as the "UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape Recommendation" of 2010, but also conformed to the protection of the private property; the cadastral geometry, the integrity of historical structure and the exigencies of the technical Charter. A multidisciplinary committee, instituted by experts and Syrian administrators outlines a plan of intervention according to the situation on field. In case of total reconstruction, the residents and users of the old city should be consulted about the aesthetic outcome of the proposed projects of reconstruction related to the concerned monument. Several arguments support the adoption of the aforesaid scheme.

First, the inevitability of the architectural change

The potential postwar reconstruction process does not follow the first war or disaster that has inflicted physical transformations in a Syrian city. Subsequently, the demolition and destruction, the restoration and rehabilitation, in other words, the ongoing forced urban and architectural restructuring has made

part of the Syrian cities' history. Merely few sacred monuments and landmarks preserved a part of their authentic characters. The site of the Umeyyad Grand Mosque in Damascus and Aleppo; their multiple fires, modifications, restorations and their affirmed value for significant part of Syrians, raise the question about the meaning and limits of the notion "authenticity" and its implication in the urban and architectural development. This perception is supported by the fact that, significant part of Syrians believe that the present Syrian heritage combines the legacies of all civilizations having ever existed in Syria, without distinction of their origin or religion. [56 % according to opinions survey accomplished by the author in April 2014 on [396] Syrians, having different political and sociocultural position, living in their country and abroad were polled].

In parallel to the foregoing forced change, architecture in Syria has been always the subject of self-generated change. G. Semper indicated that the new architectural styles do not emerge from the creation, but from precedent fundamental models on depending on the principles of the natural growing, transmission and adaptation, closely to the breeding of organic species[43]. Then, Semper explained the stylistic change is the act of at first the reformer of the society and then, the architects[44]. O. Grabar refers the artistic change to two main characters. The first is that change in meaning and change in form are two separate facts that depend on each other but do not necessarily coincide. The second is that change takes place not only through modifications in the perceptible form, but also, through an interplay between the features of the form and the mind of the beholder[45]. As Jorge Silvetti has argued: *change must be conceptualized as neither erasing nor continuing the old city, but as a new stratum that solidifies ever thickening crust*[46]. While their urban evolution displays generally a coherency as concerns a consistent genius loci, there was not necessarily a strict uniformity of styles. There was even a continuous hybridity amongst local and imported styles or tendencies.

Al-Bimāristān an-nūrī, Old Damascus, (A. Soufan, 2009)

Second, the unceasingly change in the historic value of building and vision of beholder

In 1879, when the Ottoman governor Midhat Pasha burned down tens of monuments to widen the famous *Decumanus* in old Damascus, he did not realize that one century later, in 1979, the devastated zone will be inscribed as part of the humanity heritage thanks to his tough intervention. How could we imagine the sentiments of the original expulsed inhabitants when the vehicles cross upon their disappeared houses and memory? Hundreds meters on the North-East, at the same period, the Bab Touma quarter was in general reconstruction after its 1860's tragic accidents. How could the inhabitants live in their quarter that witnessed the manslaughter of part of their families? All changed three generations later. Moreover, today, the descendants of the aforementioned inhabitants are proud to be part of the two zones. Undoubtedly, many Syrians - except, for some specialists or historians - do not distinguish between the authentic or reconstructed parts of the indicated two zones. The general architectural aspect as well as the memorial and representational value of all monuments are the same. The third example concerns the project of reconstruction of al-Kilaniyyeh district in Hama. In spite of the tragic memory, the inhabitants themselves were fundamental actor in the reconstruction project, providing the necessary documentation targeting for an" identic reconstruction". However, sometimes, the memory of the war could be constantly perceived. This is the case of al-Hariqah or the ancient Sidi-Amoud district which could not desert neither its out of ordinary architectural design - relatively to the old city - nor its awful name *al-hariqah* or the Fire linked to October 17th-18th 1925 bombarding. In

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agreement with the previous examples, there is every reason to underscore, on the one hand, the value of a reconstructed monument for the future generations is different of those who lived the war or disaster. On the other, the feeling of the historical continuity would be mainly technical referring to the similarity of the used materials, heights, forms and styles.

Third, the technical feasibility

Priorities: Any process of reconstruction is lengthy and mutating. After security, Syrians visualize to recover the stable housing, sanitation, education and the launch of the economic activities. The question of memory, style and future will not be approached immediately, but later, and maybe, too late. Accordingly, the HRRS should take the necessary time-span of study to be profoundly discussed before the beginning of any kinds of works in site. The HRRS in Aleppo should interest to the technical features such as the time, cost, context of site, and existing competences.

Kind of destruction: Part of the destroyed buildings, stone constructions, conserve parts of their walls or foundations. This situation facilitate a future reconstruction. The project of al-Kilaniyyah in Hama depended largely on the remained parts of buildings. On the other hand, being built in mud bricks or destroying through underground mining, many historic monuments have been transformed in sand. How could they be recuperated? Unavoidably, new traditional or modern materials will be utilized.

Documentation: In this context, the documentary support plays inevitable role. In addition to the available data or elements in field, a huge mass of documents and drawings belonging to many monuments of Aleppo exists until today: they are diverged among public institutions such as the *Waqf* and the General Direction of Antiquities and Museums; in faculties of the University of Aleppo; in possession of several European institutes of research or international organizations; international bodies having a role in the rehabilitation of the old Aleppo (e.g. (e.g. Agha Khan Trust for Culture's Historic Cities Support Programme and *Gesellshaft Für Technische Zusammenarbiet* / GTZ - 1992); as well as in the possession of Syrian and foreigners researchers, architects, historians and others.

Reactivating traditional construction carriers: The reconstruction projects imply the reviving of traditional artisanship and the absorbing of huge labor resources which, since 2011, have been losing part of their industrial, agricultural, commercial and active infrastructure. As Muhammad Kurd Ali indicated[47], the reconstruction of the Umeyyad mosque after the fire of 1893 permitted the reactivating and the development of the local craftsmanship. Indeed, many artisanal sectors have developed and

been employed in the construction projects referring to the old cities, achieving during the colonial and postcolonial periods[48], for instance, the stained glass windows *(ta'šīq),* underglaze painting (*al-qišāni),* openwork in wood, marble and stucco panels *(taḫrīm)*, Arabesque or Arabic thread decoration *(ar-raqš - ḫayṭ 'arabi)*; polychrome marble / stone panels (*ḥašwah)* and others.

UNESCO attribution: Undoubtedly, multifaceted programs of training for the concerned labor forces should be undertaken in cooperation with specialized national and international institutions. In this rate, the UNESCO could be a main actor, participating especially in the elaboration of the aforementioned Charter of HRRS, employing its political, cultural and technical international presence, conducting or coordinating with other related initiatives such as the UN-ESCWA *"The National Agenda for the Future of Syria"* which designates the cultural heritage and the Syrian civil society's support as two main priorities in potential postwar reconstruction. However, all related initiatives should be considered when their objectives, initiators and principles are discernable and in accordance with the interests of Syrians. Finally, considering the education of youth refugees as part of the security question, the UNESCO updates its efforts according to the circumstances of the current war or exile. The EU-UNESCO *Jami'ti* initiative ('my university') in Arabic, dedicated to the youth Syrian refugees in Jordan might be a promised experience.

Conclusion

Analyzing the genesis of cultural identities and the meaning of the historic cities needs to be undertaken from within by portraying the inner forces' impacts that could create the cultural changes. Therefore, the postwar reconstruction, highly complex and challenging, should be built upon the interaction between doctrinal, practical and theoretical frameworks. It carries several meanings for Syrians: physical reshaping their urban and architectural environment; psychological materializing the end of years of violence and suffering; economic giving the appropriate context to revive the local economy and affairs, finally, symbolic reflecting the result to years of resistance for ones, revolution for others.

Today, the region absorbs the outcome of its turbulent historical development. A new battlefield in the long running struggle over the notions of identity, nationhood and modernization will endure, and the postwar reconstruction process will be significant not only for what it says, but also, for what it neglects to say about the past, the present and the future. The empirical research and bibliographical investigation demonstrated that since the mid-19th century, the ongoing ideological confrontation

between secular and religious local forces produces a differentiation of reactions towards postwar reconstruction experiences. Consequently, the urban and architectural space, including the historical monuments, have been often reshaped according to several factors, but especially according to the ideologies of the reformer, sponsor and time technologies. Thus, during a potential postwar reconstruction in Syria, the heritage will bear continue alterations: part of this heritage will disappear and new buildings or sites will be considered as heritage. In other words, the urban integrity of Syrian old cities, for instance Aleppo, is threatened.

The post-conflict reconstruction process represents the rehabilitation of the urban and architectural environment, equally, an attempt to reinterpret the country's identity and to recreate a new collective memory for a civic-minded nation or an outdated emerging groups and nations. In this framework, the reconstruction of the architectural heritage does not shape necessarily a part of the postwar reconciliation regarding not only the regressive differentiation of appreciation which was released during the crisis, but also, regarding the ongoing contradictions between the local liberal and conservative forces in their historical struggle about the reality and specificities of the ambitioned progress of the society.

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[5] Murray, 1868, 444; Porter, 1877, 43; Ḳaṣāṭli, 1879, 152.

[6] Murray, 1868, 444

[7] *The accidents in 1860, Reports,* 4th annex, session 31, July, 2nd 1861.

[8] Weber, S., *Damascus, Ottoman Modernity and Urban Transformation 1808-1918*, 2009, I. p.

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