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Planning**
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Master Thesis

**FROM PRESERVATION TO VALORIZATION. URBAN
POLICIES FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS
FOR DAMASCUS CULTURAL HERITAGE**

Supervisor/s
Prof. Ombretta Caldarice
Prof. Mario Artuso
(co-supervisor)

Candidate/
Mikhail Marwan Wassouf

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Abbreviations

UNESCO: The United Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ICOM: The International Centre of Museums

ICOMOS: The World Conservation Council for World Heritage Sites and Monuments

UN-HABITAT: The United Nations Human Settlements Programs

UNCHS :United Nations Centre for Human Settlements

GIZ: Deutsche Gesellschaft für international Zusammenarbeit

IDP: Internally Displaced Person

DGAM: Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums

SDG: sustainable development goals

WHL: World Heritage List

WHS: World Heritage Site

BCD: Beirut Central District

SOLIDERE: Lebanese joint-stock company responsible for planning and redevelopment of the BCD

ISTAT: Istituto Nazionale Di Statistica

OCHA: The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UNDP: United Nations Development programs

IMF: The International Monetary Fund

TLC: Taking care of old buildings by providing maintenance, repair, and restoration.

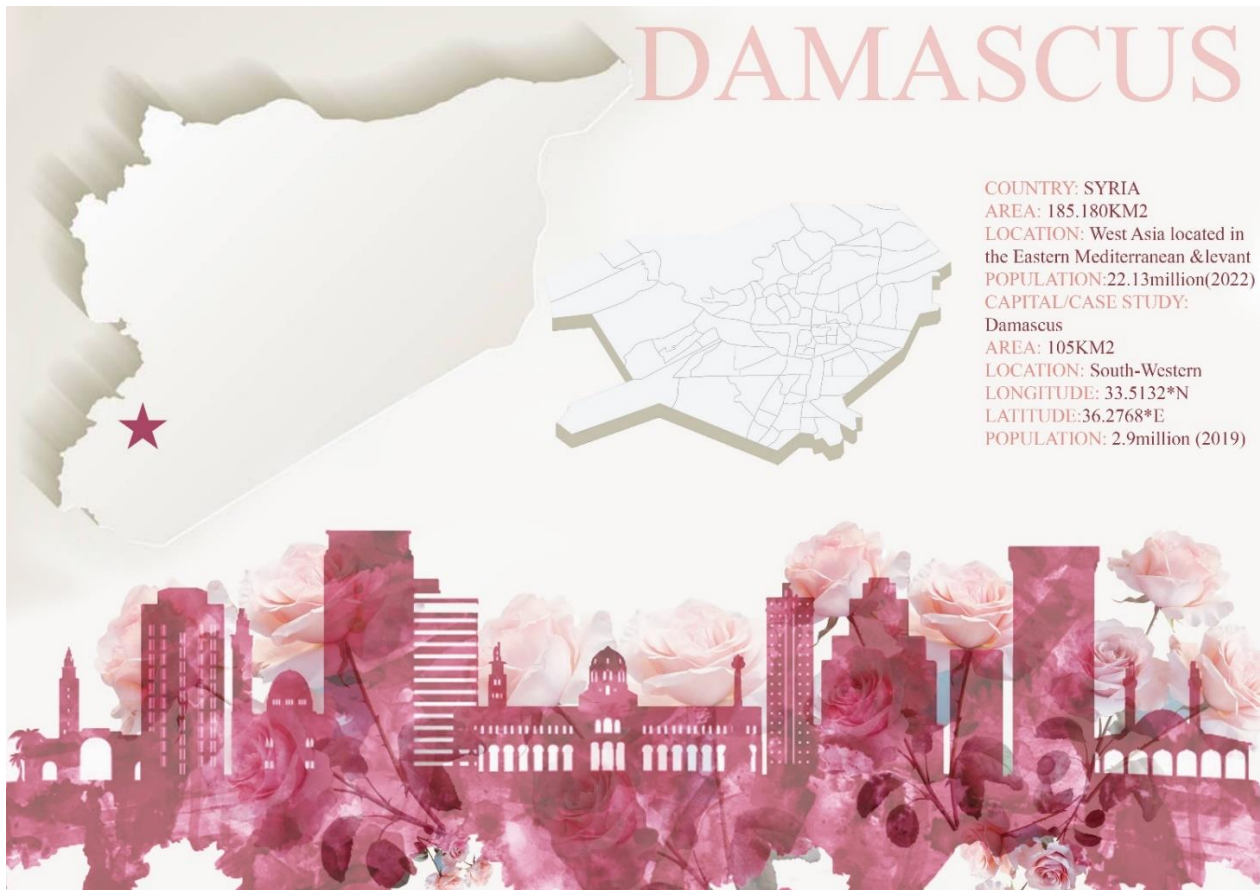


Figure.0 Source: Author elaboration

Abstract

Damascus, renowned as the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world, boasts a rich urban history extending over 5000 years. This historical background made Damascus a focal point in urban studies, characterized by a wide range of historical buildings that make up its cultural heritage. However, the ongoing situation in Syria has severely threatened these structures, which lead to great degradation and destruction. The preservation of historical buildings is crucial not only for maintaining the city's architectural legacy but also to support its socio-economic fabric, and to re-use its places as it was before and in new ways. This research delves into the complexities of urban planning in Damascus and emphasizes the critical need for effective cultural heritage management. It explores the challenges and strategies in preserving and valorizing historical sites, highlighting the importance of integrating these efforts into broader urban development plans. Key objectives include the fact to understand the current urban planning dynamics in Damascus, evaluating the national approach to preserving cultural heritage, and proposing policies to support the city's revival. By addressing questions on the role of urban planning, the effectiveness of preservation versus valorization, and the application of new specialized planning tools, this study aims to provide practical solutions to help Damascus honor its past while fostering future resilience.

INTRODUCTION

“Dull, inert cities, it is true, do contain the seeds of their own destruction and little else. But lively, diverse, intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration, with energy enough to carry over for problems and needs outside themselves.” – Jane Jacobs.

Her name is Damascus. She is the oldest capital in the world. With the title of “the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world”, her urban history extends to more than 5000 years. Damascus has thus been a center of focus in urban studies. The city is characterized by a rich cultural background engraved in its numerous historic buildings. Throughout the years, this rich endowment of cultural heritage has degraded due to several factors among which the start of the ongoing war.

War is among the most challenging events threatening the preservation of historical buildings and tangible cultural heritage generally. In Syria, many historic buildings have been targeted by parties involved in the world leading to their degradation and sometimes their destruction. The country has lost a large amount of historical buildings including neighborhoods in some cities (Homs, Aleppo..). Urban environments are conditioned by historical buildings. their preservation and protection against deterioration or destruction constitutes one of the main challenges in architectural conservation. Conservation is a very complex mechanism when it comes to historical buildings as their characteristics differ from ordinary buildings. It becomes more trivial when one adds that the degradation or destruction comes from natural causes or wars.

The preservation of tangible cultural heritage does not concern only the site itself. In fact, resurrecting historical sites after conflicts is insufficient if one does not consider their urban surroundings. Thus, reconstruction plans should consider the site to preserve and the urban environment surrounding it concerning inhabitants' daily life aspect.

Historical buildings are an important factor in economic growth not simply for tourist purposes but also because they positively increase the economic status of cities. Consequently, there are several ways in which reconstruction plans and preservation of historical sites affect economic growth. On one hand, they are responsible for the creation of opportunities and jobs for locals. On the other hand, they strengthen the local community's sense of identity shaping resilience in the face of unpredicted changes. When an event like war occurs, locals adapt to change through that sense of community engraved in tangible historical buildings strengthening the role of preservation on resilience. In the face of bombs, fires, floods, famine,` and other types of destruction most cities fell

and eventually rose again. In the MENA region, just like Beirut, Baghdad, or Aleppo, Damascus will rise again.

This research studies the importance of the preservation of historical buildings in historical old cities like Damascus. our purpose is to analyze the dynamics of urban planning and its importance in the revival of old cities aiming to improve the societal environment and future protection in the face of risk.

Research Objectives

This research dives into urban planning and cultural heritage management in Damascus, Syria. It is about exploring the city's layers and complexities. First of all, we aim to understand the intricate challenges of urban planning nowadays in Damascus, considering the city's rich history, social dynamics, and environmental facts. The next step is to figure out how the nation approaches preserving the cultural heritage of Damascus uncovering the policies and strategies. As well as we delve into the concept of valorization in post-war Damascus and figure out what it means and how it impacts the preservation and promotion of the city's cultural treasures. last but not least, we are putting together some forward-thinking policy recommendations to help and protect Damascus's cultural heritage due to the planners, and any others involved in preserving the city heritage and guiding its development. Our goal is to deepen our understanding of urban planning and cultural heritage in Damascus and offer practical solutions to help the city thrive while

The main objectives of the research are the following:

- Understanding the complexities of Urban Planning in the actual state of Damascus.
- Describing the national planning approach to Cultural heritage in Damascus.
- Define Velarization in post-war torn Damascus.
- Advance policy recommendations to support the valorization of Damascene cultural heritage.

Research starting questions and thesis structure.

Given the city's rich cultural and historical heritage, there's a need to balance preservation efforts with urban development demands. In contrast, urban planning plays a critical role in reformulating effective strategies for the preservation and revitalization of Damascus's cultural heritage.

One relevant question is whether preservation alone suffices to counteract cultural heritage destruction or if valorization involves actively promoting heritage sites. The cultural significance proves more efficient. Nevertheless, specialized planning tools could help and support the adaptation by offering guidelines and frameworks for integrating heritage conservation into urban development plans. Those tools may include zoning regulations, heritage impact assessments, and programs aimed at adopting sustainable development practices, and with the help of planners and innovative planning tools, Damascus can super pas the complexities of preserving its cultural heritage while facilitating the city's continued growth and prosperity.

The questions we ought to answer in this research are the following:

- What is the role of urban planning in finding adequate strategies for Damascus Cultural Heritage?
- Is preservation the best strategy for the destruction of cultural heritage? Or is valorization a more efficient approach?
- How can urban planning tools support the process of adaptation?

Part 1: Damascus Cultural Heritage and the post-war reconstruction policies.

Chapter 1. The main problem: Post-war reconstruction, overview.

1. Reconstruction in Historic Areas 'post-war.'

Modern wars are perhaps the biggest threat to cultural heritage—unfortunately, bombing. Extensive long-distance weapons use is a great danger to preserving historical sites. In the aftermath of wars, one of the main methods used to recover the original state of historic areas, buildings, or sites is Reconstruction. The main aspects of reconstruction include restoring heritage sites using traditional techniques and preserving the cultural identity by consulting experts in international and local

communities. In the context of Damascus, Syria. It means restoring carefully the iconic sites by using traditional techniques and international experiences. Applying these policies and principles in Damascus should shed light on preserving cultural heritage, securing funding and expertise, and compliance with regulatory standards to ensure sustainable reconstruction.

2. General Concepts of reconstruction of Historic Buildings.

After wars and armed conflicts, reconstruction plays a major role in rendering the historical sites to their original appearance. Works of reconstruction are based on certified documentation and conjectures, this method requires a precise collaboration between the experts of architecture, archeology, history, and preservation sharing the same goal: Cultural preservation.

We ought to define reconstruction as “the act of depicting through new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location. The Reconstruction Standards establish a limited framework for recreating a vanished or non-surviving building with new materials, primarily for interpretive purposes” Weeks & Grimmer, 1995. An important addition to this definition is that even, if possible, Moving a historical building is considered reconstruction. Of course, the only justification for such a measure is national interest, and its impact on the cultural value of the site and the the environment is consciously calculated.

2.1. International Charters for the Reconstruction of Historical Sites



Figure 1 source, author elaboration

The Venice Charter, crafted 40 years ago during the 2nd International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, marked a significant milestone for ICOMOS. It laid the groundwork for the establishment of ICOMOS, coinciding with the resolution to create an international organization dedicated to the preservation of monuments and sites. Piero Gazzola, the first President of ICOMOS, highlighted the Charter's importance in his preface to the congress papers, noting its role in establishing ICOMOS as the leading authority in monument restoration and conservation.

Gazzola emphasized the Charter's role in setting high standards for conservation work, becoming an essential reference for experts worldwide. He stressed the Charter's enduring significance, asserting that its principles would continue to guide conservation efforts for years to come, cementing Venice's name in history. While acknowledging that the Charter reflects the time of its creation and requires periodic reinterpretation, Gazzola affirmed its indispensability as an instrument for international conservation work.

The Venice Charter remains a cornerstone document for ICOMOS, referenced by subsequent Charters and Principles adopted by its General Assemblies. Despite its historical context, it continues to provide invaluable guidance for conservation efforts on a global scale, with attempts to replace it, such as the Cracow Charter of 2000, acknowledging its enduring relevance. Gazzola's words remind

us of the importance of upholding the Charter's standards as we navigate future challenges in conservation.

2.2. Influential factors in the reconstruction process.

The reconstruction process is affected by several factors. Whilst some of them have a positive impact, others have a negative impact. Several perspectives coexist for the justification of reconstruction. While the process is often praised, it also has been contested. Arguments in favor of Reconstruction of cultural buildings and sites have many objectives. Those objectives are more than enough justification.

‘First of all, the historical site can hold a national symbolic value. Its importance is attached to the country’s history or an important national figure. The reconstruction thus preserves not only the material building but also the non-tangible heritage the site holds.

Second, historical sites, in addition to their cultural value, sometimes have other functions, the restoration of such sites can bring back the usefulness of the site or create a new purpose for the site.

Third, works of reconstruction have an educational aspect. The process needs extensive works of searching, reading, and collecting information about the history surrounding the site. Research implies a greater understanding of the country’s history and may open new academic insights.

Fourth, historical buildings are an important part of tourism in countries. Therefore, reconstruction can enhance tourism after wars and disasters.

Fifth, reconstruction is part of site preservation which plays a role in reducing development challenges in addition to supporting the use of what is already there.’ Stanley-Price(2010)p.32-46

Arguments against Reconstruction

Referring to Stanley Price in his book ‘The Reconstruction of Ruins’ Despite the many positive aspects it offers, some factors are less favorable for reconstruction.

The first opposition is related to the historical significance of the destroyed building.

As a matter of fact, the destruction itself can be a testimony of a particular historical event therefore, reconstruction erases this testimony. Another reason for opposing reconstruction regards the

authenticity of the building. Reconstruction transforms the building from a historical landmark to a newly constructed one which affects its integrity.

Other contestations are more technical. Since reconstruction should be based on the accuracy of some documents, the public might be misguided to think the building is authentic. In addition, sometimes reconstruction projects do not completely protect original evidence. Another important aspect is that of taking into consideration the environment in which reconstruction is going to take place. The surrounding environment is an important factor to take into account, failing to do so would be counterproductive. Some historical sites are complex to deal with, especially in old cities. Reconstruction projects can fail to mimic different historical periods incarnated in single sites.

2.3 The Concept of Reconstruction in the Historical Centers

Initially, the attention was aimed at the reconstruction and restoration of individual buildings.

With little to no consideration of the surrounding environment and its maintenance.

However, with time attention grew towards the importance of the surrounding areas for the reconstruction of historical buildings particularly in historic centers. This created an increase in the consciousness of experts involved in reconstruction plans. Thus, maintaining the historic neighborhoods and the urban fabric of a historical center became one priority.

Nowadays, restoration processes are more complex due to new apprehensions. It extends to several aspects related to the city, such as its history, art, archeology, economy, sociology, its population, and infrastructure are important. There are many reasons for which the maintenance and reconstruction of Old cities are important. The purpose is the preservation of the cities with their population, their dwellings, and their economy. Preservation aims to protect the identity and the life of cities as such.

Every restoration project should consider all its components and respect them as parts of the restored cities in perfect harmony with the reconstruction.

Reactions to preservation projects in old cities are diverse among people. some people have a strong interest in preserving the heritage of their cities, whilst others are not driven by it. Population that

have little to no interest in preserving the historical heritage of their cities tend to build new structures that alternate the old characteristics of the city. Thus, historical centers risk gradually disappearing in the face of urban expansion and new buildings. Therefore, the line between the past and the present is blurred. Alternatively, it is often argued that the present is the prolongation of the past, therefore the destruction of the past is the destruction of the present rather than the future.

2.4. Approaches and principles for guiding reconstruction efforts following the period of post-war

Reconstruction efforts following the post-war period are complex and require careful planning, well-coordinated, and implementation to reconstruct economies, Institutions, and societies. Several principles and approaches that identified as essential for guiding successful reconstruction efforts:

- Participation and inclusivity: making sure all stakeholders, which include government, agencies, local communities, civil society organizations, and international partners. Are also involved in the planning and decision-making processes.
- Sustainability: Focus on manageable advancement rehearses that advance long-haul versatility and natural protection. This remembers financial planning for environmentally friendly power, green foundation, and economical horticulture to alleviate future dangers and upgrade the versatility of networks.
- Need Assessment and Prioritization: Direct far-reaching appraisals to distinguish the most critical requirements and needs for reproduction, considering the physical, social, and natural elements of recuperation. This designates assets actually and addresses the most squeezing difficulties.
- Rule of Governance and Law: Reinforce foundations, advance law and order, and battle debasement to lay out a steady and straightforward administration structure. This is urgent for advancing responsibility, equity, and confidence in post-war social orders.
- Human Rights and Social Justice: Maintain basic freedoms standards and elevate civil rights to address disparities, underestimation, and separation. This includes guaranteeing equivalent admittance to potentially open doors, administrations, and assets for all portions of society, including weak gatherings like ladies, kids, and dislodged populaces.
- Education and Capacity Building: Put resources into education sectors, such as schools, kindergartens, and abilities improvement, and limit working to enable people and networks to

partake in the reproduction cycle. This incorporates remaking schools, preparing educators, and elevating long-lasting learning amazing chances to upgrade human resources and advance social attachment.

- Infrastructure Rehabilitation: reconstructs fundamental resources like spans, schools, medical centers, bridges, and utilities to re-establish essential administrations and work with monetary recuperation. Foster new resilient design standards and incorporate disaster risk reduction measures to minimize future vulnerabilities.
- Cultural heritage Preservation: preserve and promote cultural heritage sites, traditions, and identities as integral components of post-war reconstruction. This adaptation contributes to reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts.
- International Cooperation and Coordination: adopting international cooperation, and solidarity to mobilize financial resources, and technical expertise for reconstruction efforts. Engage with multilateral associations, donor agencies, COE, and regional partners to leverage resources and expertise effectively.

Guidelines and rules for reconstruction:

The goal of these rules is to outline rules and guidelines for reconstruction efforts, concerning archeological research, the preservation of historical features, and documentation practices. It serves as a framework to ensure that reconstruction projects are conducted methodically and responsibly with a focus on legitimacy and the preservation of cultural heritage. By emphasizing the significance of conducting thorough archaeological research, maintaining detailed documentation, and preserving historic features, It aims to encourage the adoption of best practices in reconstruction projects, which in turn helps ensure that restored structures and sites maintain their integrity and authenticity.

-Archeological research: ‘Week&Grimmer, 1995’ Recognizing the remaining portions of the notable structure or site requires archeological research to involve these reports in the replication of materials, plans, and plans in the noteworthy regions.

-Documentation:

- ‘week&Grimmer,1995’: exact documentation required to legitimize rebuilding and never based upon conjecture.

- 'Feilden, 1982/2003': material and techniques should be reported and accompanied by drawing and plan. In any reconstruction process, documentation is essential during the timelines of the work – before- during, and after

-Preserving historic features:

'week&Grimmer,1995' In reproduction plans, keeping up with all memorable or archeological pieces is fundamental furthermore, materials of a structure or site that have proof of the past and have been reported, to be utilized again during the reproduction cycle if practical. Decrease switches up the structures to save the metropolitan texture however much as could be expected.

3. Post-reconstruction experiences

The interest in post-war reconstruction has its own story, closely tied to the Cold War and how it influenced the study of modern Europe's history. It's evident that before the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, the focus of this book—the reconstruction of Europe between 1945 and 1948- Tony Jud- wasn't a big part of Cold War history studies. If it was mentioned at all, it fell into two separate categories.

To truly grasp how to rebuild old cities like Damascus, Syria, it's crucial to look at what's been done worldwide. Learning from other reconstruction efforts' successes and failures can give us valuable insights. By studying different examples closely, we can determine the best ways to plan for reconstruction and avoid repeating past mistakes, identifying strategies that promote sustainable development and long-term stability in post-war cities. This way, we can use good examples as a blueprint for the successful rebuilding of Old Damascus.

3.1 Post-war Reconstruction in Lebanon: Case study: Beirut Historical Center

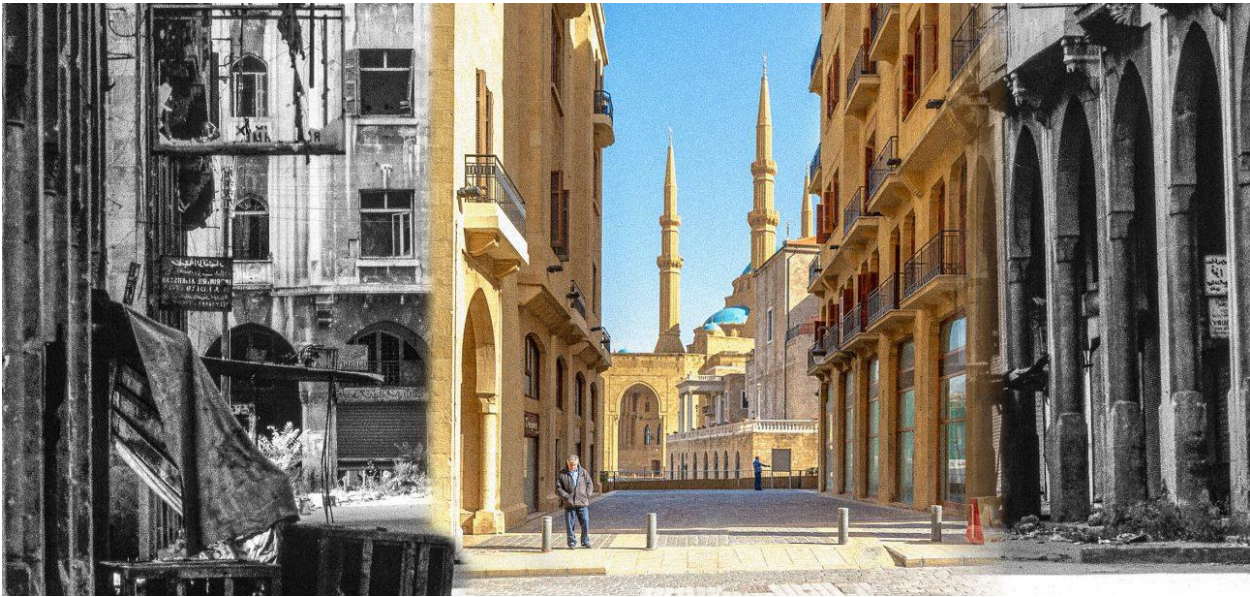


figure 2

Source: <https://birdinflight.com/en/architectura-2/20230116-beirut-post-war-reconstruction.html>

In the past century, the Middle East has faced numerous challenges, including wars, terrorist attacks, and mass migration, leading to the displacement of people and the destruction of homes and cities.

This has resulted in the loss of precious heritage and history, eroding the identity of communities.

In this example case study, I focus on Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, which serves as a case study to explore the process of post-war reconstruction in the Middle East.

Beirut, one of the oldest cities in the world as her neighbor Damascus, in 1990 had just gotten out from a 15-year devastating Civil War.

The Lebanese Civil War started on 13 April 1975 and ended on 13 October 1990 due to internal religious problems and foreign interventions. During this period Beirut was divided into two parts called the 'Green line' that divided Beirut into two parts: East-Beirut and West-Beirut. Right-winged Christian parties (Phalangists, Lebanese Forces) controlled East- Beirut whereas the National Liberal party and its allies controlled West Beirut. The demarcation line, or the green line (greenery took over the no man's land), crossed from the BCD all the way up to the south of Greater Beirut.



map.1

Source: <https://shoplt.homerenovationreview.org/category?name=green%20line%20beirut>

Lebanon has a very complex social and political composition, in this sense of diversity Lebanon has no sovereignty over cities, and this is what encourages the political parties to intervene in the post-war reconstruction ventures. After the Civil War, Beirut Center was left deserted, and everything was ruined, robbed, and damaged. It was a time of post-war reconstruction, the SOLIDERE* company took charge of financing the project.

‘SOLIDERE’ is a Lebanese joint stock company responsible for redeveloping and planning the Beirut central district BCD. It was founded in 1994 under the authority of the Council of Development and Reconstruction.

In 1994, SOLIDERE reconstructed 190 hectares and initiated a reconstruction project in Beirut's city center 'downtown'.

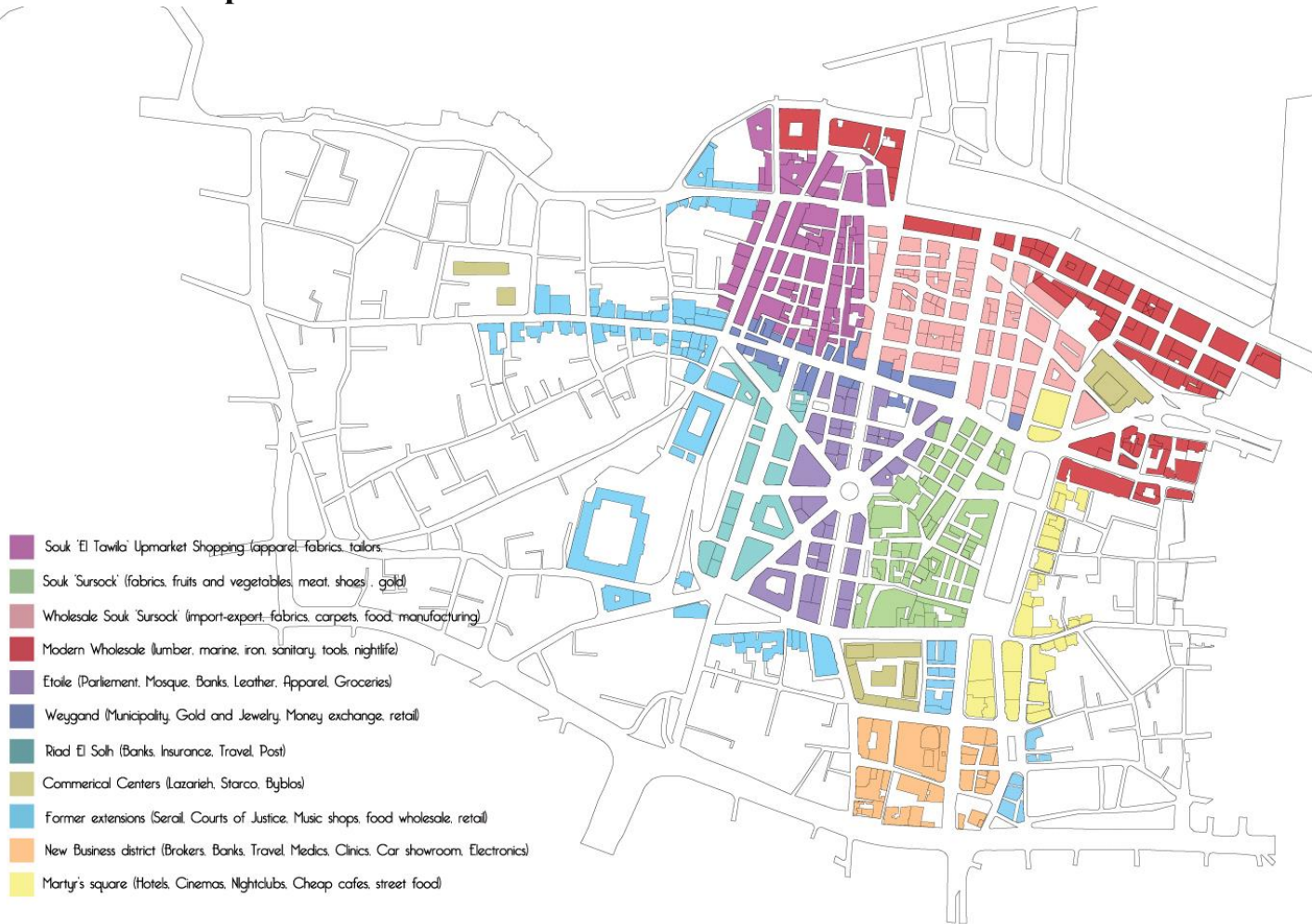
SOLIDERE's venture involved not just constructing new areas like Saifi village and the Souk, but also reshaping the urban landscape of Beirut. They also focused on enhancing infrastructure, safeguarding parts of the city with archaeological significance, restoring historical buildings, and incorporating them into the new city plans due to their architectural importance. This effort revitalized trade and tourism in the area. However, it's important to note that the project also involved demolishing many damaged buildings.

While SOLIDERE aimed to rejuvenate Beirut, it was a private enterprise backed by external powers, particularly the Gulf countries. Its primary objective was to transform Beirut into a sought-after destination in the Middle East for global investment, ultimately benefiting the company and its Gulf partners financially.

The Solidere projects had many pros and cons. Starting with the pros of the project, it was the point that changed upside down the situation in Lebanon in the economic and political sectors, it turned Beirut into an exile, its distinguished architectural projects, and it was a very attractive point for many international projects and plans. Due to those factors, Beirut became an attractive center for tourism.

In another hand, the cons weren't just about rebuilding the city after the war and filling in the gaps left by destruction. It aimed to revitalize the historic center of the city through new urban projects. However, this led to the creation of a separate downtown area, distinct from the surrounding city, and that led to many problems such as segregation and gentrification.

Solidere master plan



Map.2

Source: <https://projectivecities.aaschool.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Yas-img07.jpg>

4. Preliminary Insight

the case studies that have been mentioned before, show that post-war reconstruction efforts have changed significantly from one location to another according to the history of the place the causes of destruction in the urban fabric destruction, and the characteristics of individual buildings and the surrounding it.

Several variables play a huge role in governing the reconstruction process, including factors such as civilian engagement, the quality, and reliability of available documentation, the financial consideration which is very important, the extent of the damages incurred, as well as the importance of the historical property.

Coming back to the example of Beirut at a certain point, we see the place lost its historical identity and the sense of authenticity when it was controlled by political powers.

Meanwhile, when a reconstruction plan is focused on reclaiming the prewar style if it's guided by community engagement, effective leadership, and widespread participation among city residents, reconstruction efforts have the potential to attain authenticity, integrity, and a cohesive sense of urban continuity along with preserving the historical identity of the place. another reconstruction method is to keep the ruins of the historical building as a war memorial after wars could be a symbol to remind the citizens of the war this way could not be always justified but otherwise, places will be ruined and protected without life.

On the other hand, some reconstruction projects are based on the less possible amount of intervention in the building, in a way making a way for the historical layers that are associated with the notable events and belong to different eras to be seen on the building. Furthermore, certain reconstruction endeavors emphasize a minimal intervention in the existing structure, herewith preserving the historical layers associated with the momentous events and spanning different eras. This way often allows for the integration of new building materials alongside the old ones and exemplified the Museum of Beirut, ultimately from a research perspective, reconstruction efforts should strive to strike a delicate balance between these approaches, prioritizing the preservation of the city's historical identity while seamlessly incorporating new elements that harmonize with its established fabric.



Figure.3 Source: Author elaboration

"Oh, Sham with the mighty sword that never ceases... You are the words of glory in every book. Before you history was drenched in darkness, and after you it is written in the stars." –Said Akel

Chapter 2 - The National Planning Approach an overview of state-decided planning policies.

1. The Damascus Cultural Heritage.

Damascus is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world and has a remarkable cultural heritage rich in history, art, and architecture. It has one of the most important positions ancient worlds, due to its unique architectural structure, traditional craft, and religious diversity. Damascus, the city of Jasmine, is distinguished by its unique architectural design, for example, the Umayyad Mosque dating back to 715AD, one of the oldest and largest mosques in the world is known for a stunning mosaic. The purpose of the mosque has always been religious since the first millennium BCE transforming from a temple to the Cathedral of John Baptist and to a mosque. Damascus has rich religious and cultural sites, siting the old city of Damascus a UNESCO World Heritage, the church of Saint Ananias, the oldest church and give insight to the early Christian history, and many other places as churches and mosques. Mentioning Damascus means, also the traditional crafts, the textiles, and the special Damascus steel swords as Fulcher of Charters said, ‘the words from Damascus were famed throughout the known world for their exceptional quality and beauty’. It was a vibrant example of Damascus craftsmanship and had a wealthy economic income. Besides the craftsmanship, we can't mention Damascus without the Souk (market)al-Hamidyah, the role trade center of the city since the Ottoman period, which is a microcosm of the city’s commercial heritage. Moving to literature and arts. Damascus has been the center of Arabic literature, poets, music, and art. According to Philip K.hitti ‘ Damascus has been a cultural hub for centuries, fostering a vibrant literary and artistic community that has significantly influenced the Arabic-Speaking world.’ Also, the city is very well known in the Arabic language, which is the closest to the classic Arabic, and for this reason, it was the destination for foreigners from all over the world to study the Arabic language and practice the most correct accent in Damascus. Furthermore, urban planning preservation, combining modern planning with historical preservation is a vital matter to preserving Damascus's cultural heritage, and blending contemporary architectural development with the classic one in the city's history is essential to preserve its unique character while supporting the growth ‘ICOMOS’. The cultural heritage in Damascus is rich and complicated, showing the historical significance and the continuity of it. From the architectural marvels, religious and cultural sites, craftsmanship, and specialty of the city itself, Damascus will always be a testament to the enduring legacy of its past.

2. The Theoretical concepts to deal with historical buildings and historical areas.

Due to the heritage value, the Europeans started to show it more in the early 20th century, logically after the war, the need to protect the heritage became larger. Due to the enlargement of the need to protect the cultural heritage, the idea extended the European countries and spread to cover Africans, Asians, and Americans (Jokilehto, 2011b, P:2) . A lot of new plans and methods were proposed for the new development of the historic areas, as well as rules were produced to deal with each building despite of type and size of destruction that has afflicted the buildings and also its importance in the heritage and history.

2.1. General Concept of Historical buildings and Historical areas.

In '*Conservation of Historic Buildings*', Bernard M. Feilden wrote "A historic building gives us a sense of wonder and makes us want to know more about the people and culture that produced it. It has architectural, aesthetic, historical, documentary, archaeological, economic, social, and even political and spiritual or symbolic values; but the first impact is always emotional, for it is a symbol of our cultural identity and continuity—a part of our heritage. If it has survived 17 the hazards of 100 years of usefulness, it has a good claim to being called historic." (Bernard M, 1982/2004)

Historical buildings and historic areas in Damascus include a set of concepts that confirm the city's distinctive cultural and architectural identity. First of all, Cultural Synthesis: The historical areas from a cultural composition that reflect a mix of diverse influences from different historical eras that have left a mark on the history of Damascus. It is a complex mix of the city's rich multifaceted historical narrative. Transmission of Tradition: The historical buildings and areas function as vessels of tradition, safeguarding customs, rituals, and societal norms that have persisted through successive generations. This preservation facilitates a seamless connection between historical epochs and contemporary times and promotes clear communication and community historical awareness. Urban Morphology: The organization and structure of historical areas contribute significantly to the center of Damascus's urban morphology. Narrow passages, traditional courtyards, and communal squares collectively configure a distinctive urban character and reflect the historical social and spatial paradigms. Touristic Allure: The historical buildings and areas function as pivotal attractions for tourists, and global visitors. This influx not only bolsters the local economy but also fosters international recognition of Damascus's historical and cultural import. Preservation Complexities: Despite the cultural significance, historical structures preservation complexities, environmental needs, and the imperative for sustainable urban development, making a balance between conservation imperatives and the

evolving needs of the population is a constant academic and practical challenge. Last but not least, Community Association: Historic areas frequently serve as communal associations, where markets, squares, and religious sites serve as focal points for social interactions, religious observances, and cultural festivities. This dynamic function substantiates a robust sense of community within the historical context.

2.2. The significance of Historic places and Buildings.

The concept of significance of historic buildings and places has a very big value in historic preservation. Within this concept, preservations encapsulate their entire theoretical framework, the ideological and political considerations, also the admiration for the ability to utilize historical fabrics as a way of reflecting upon the past. 'significance' explains the rationales behind the preservations of a site or building, including the values and the utility as well as identifying the aspects most urgently in need of protection. Once selected, the importance becomes the basis for planning strategies, design decisions, and formulating policies and rules. (Mason, R. (2004). *Places Journal*, 16.)

However, there exist challenges application and conceptualization of significance. The foremost among these is the preservation field's failure to fully acknowledge its contextual nature. By placing undue emphasis on the fixation of places and their associated meanings, preservationists have excessively objectified and formalized their understanding of memory and historical authenticity. Given that significance serves as the primary tool within the field for achieving this end, it becomes pertinent to deconstruct this issue further.

2.3. Damascus Historical Buildings Classification according to their importance.

Regarding the classification of historic buildings within the old city of Damascus, a categorization typically revolves around evaluating their cultural, historical, architectural, and social significance. These classifications frequently include a range of categories:

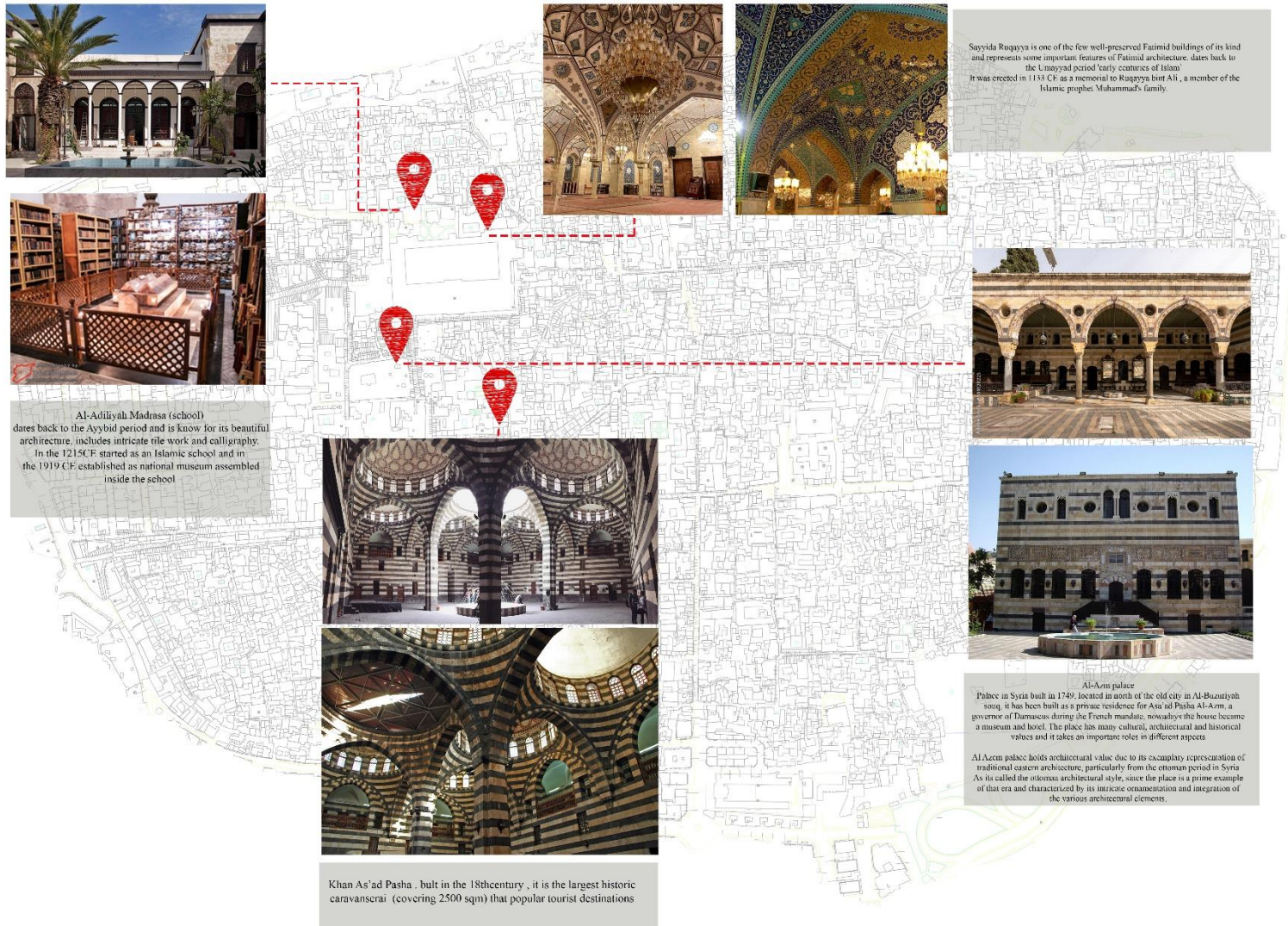


Figure.4 Source: Author elaboration



Figure 5 Source: Author elaboration

A-Monumental Buildings: This grouping encompasses structures of remarkable architectural or historical importance, including mosques, palaces, churches, and public edifices.

Ummayyad Mosque



Figure.6

source:https://as2.ftcdn.net/v2/jpg/05/03/13/21/1000_F_503132150_6dAmNOB23JhU0m4S1Z4HA3bGA5RAfIXO.jpg

The Umayyad Mosque (Al-Jami al-umawi)

As known as the Great Mosque of Damascus, stands as a multifaceted emblem of profound cultural, architectural, and religious importance and shows the rich historical tapestry of Damascus. The cultural value of the Umayyad represents a testament to architectural fusion as it shows a harmonious merge between the Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic architectural styles that matches a part of the region's cultural diversity.

It represents the Damascus cultural identity and symbolizes the nation's rich historical legacy, which fosters a sense of honor and unity among its populace.

The urban value of the Umayyad,

-Located within the heart of old Damascus and exerts a profound influence on the surrounding urban landscape, serving as a pivotal hub for religious, economic, and touristic activities.

-The preservation is not only limited to the mosque's architectural value but also contributes to the conservation of Damascus's esteemed historical urban fabric, which also reinforces the status as a UNESCO World Heritage site. As an attractive global tourist point, the Umayyad bolsters local economies, fostering cultural exchange and bolstering the urban sustainable development endeavors.

B-Architectural Heritage: These buildings are esteemed for their architectural excellence, representing diverse architectural styles and historical periods evident within the city's development.

Al-Azm Palace



Figure.7



Figure.8

F.7- https://as1.ftcdn.net/v2/jpg/05/09/12/82/1000_F_509128225_WhRUi7Dfs7NapfcMvu6tvHBsN8L3A0NX.jpg

F.8- https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/f5/Azem_Palace_02.jpg/800px-Azem_Palace_02.jpg

Al-Azm palace (Qasr Al-Adm)

The palace in Syria was built in 1749, located north of the old city of Al-Buzuriyah souq, it was built as a private residence for Asa'ad Pasha Al-Azm, a governor of Damascus during the French mandate, nowadays the house has become a museum and hotel. The place has many cultural, architectural, and historical values and it takes an important role in different aspects. Al Azem Palace holds architectural value due to its exemplary representation of traditional Eastern architecture, particularly from the Ottoman period in Syria. As is called the Ottoman architectural style, since the place is a prime example of that era and characterized by its intricate ornamentation and integration of various architectural elements. The architecture of the palace showcases a blend of Islamic, byzantine, and Persian influences.

The urban values of Al Azem Palace have historical context since it's situated in the middle of the old city of Damascus and occupies a central location within the urban landscape. The palace is one of the prominent landmarks in Damascus and contributes to the historical context of the city.

The preservation of the palace contributes to the conservation of the old city Damascus's cultural heritage as well as its efforts to maintain its architectural integrity and historical authenticity to help

safeguard the city's identity and promote a cultural continuity amidst rapid urbanization and development pressure.

C-Cultural and Religious Sites: This category includes religious structures, shrines, and locations of cultural importance, reflecting Damascus's rich religious and cultural heritage.

Saint Paul's Window (Bab Kisan)



Figure.9



Figure.10

Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/kukkaibkk/5228794825/in/photostream/>

Saint Paul's window, a religious Christian believes that this ancient gate in the old city of Damascus believes to be the site where Saint Paul escaped from Damascus in a basket (according to Christian traditions). This gate is counted as a pilgrimage site for those who can pay homage to Saint Paul's missionary journey.

Al-Adiliyah Madrasa



Figure.11 Source: <https://wikimapia.org/4305382/Al-Adiliyah-Madrasa>

Madrasa (school) dates back to the Ayyubid period and is known for its beautiful architecture, including intricate tile work and calligraphy. In 1215CE started as an Islamic school and in 1919 CE established a national museum assembled inside the school. Over the decades, Al-Adiliyah School has been exposed to a lot of damage as a result of vandalism, earthquakes, and fires. It was sometimes used during the Ottoman period for purposes other than science and teaching, as it was converted into warehouses for goods and stables for horses. Successive restoration operations were also carried out on the structure and building, but it preserved its basic units and external facades. The school was restored during the reign of King Faisal I in 1919 and was converted into the headquarters of the National Museum and the Arab Scientific Academy.

Khan As'ad Pasha



Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c6/Khan_As%27ad_Pasha_Panorama.jpg

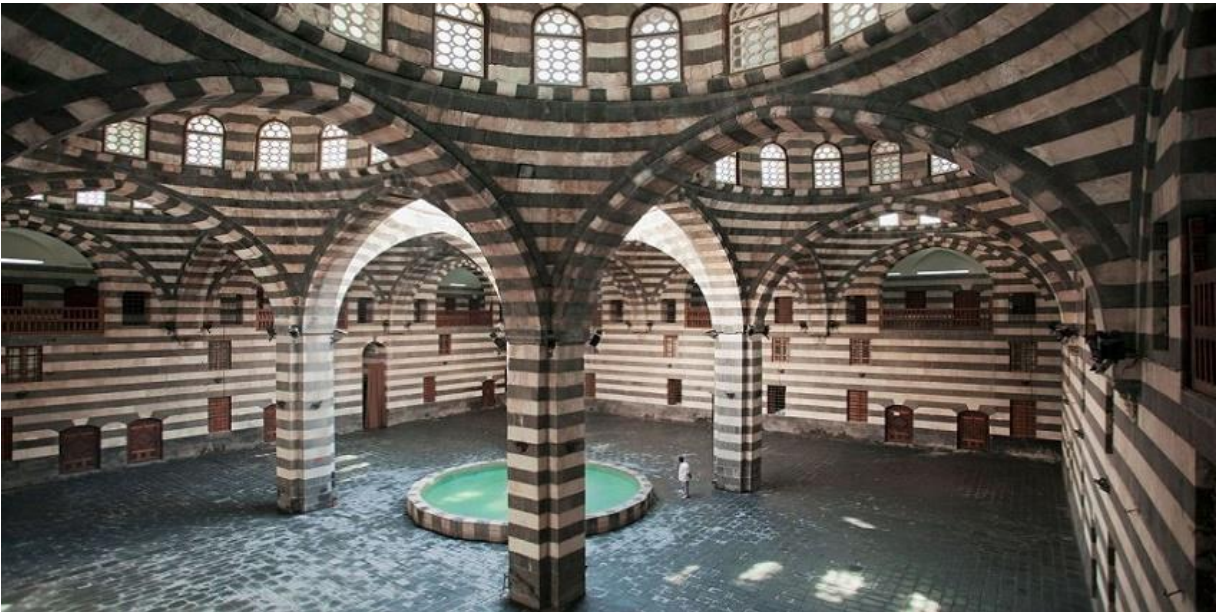


Figure.12

Reference: <https://alalamsyria.ir/news/7450>

Dome of Khan's As'ad Pasha



Figure.13

Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/36338186@N05/3414961286/in/photostream/>

Khan As'ad Pasha. built in the 18th century, it is the largest historic caravanserai (covering 2500 sqm) that popular tourist destinations.

Sayyidah Ruqayya Mosque



Figure14

Source: <https://www.safarway.com/en/property/sayyidah-ruqayya-mosque#gallery>

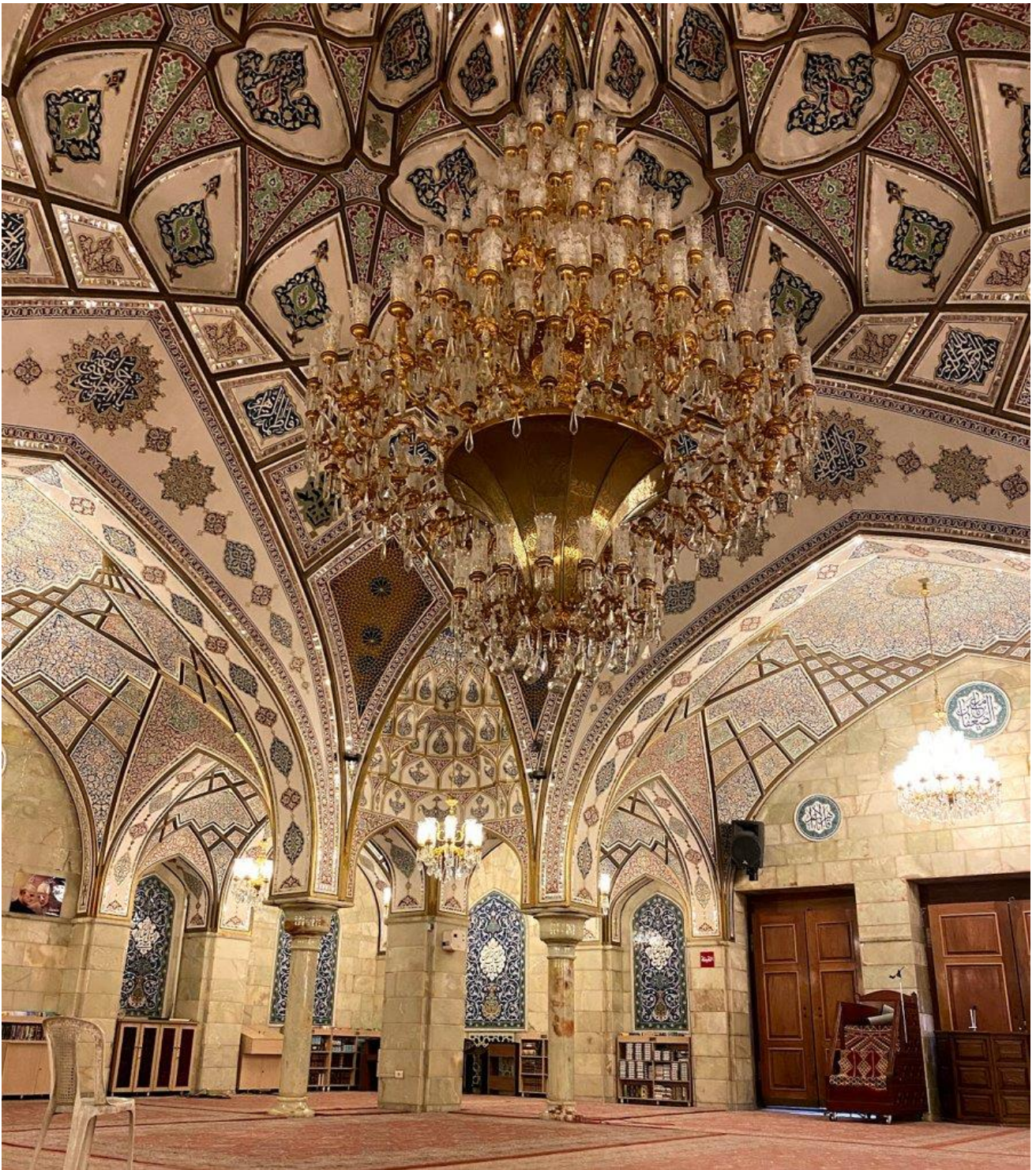


Figure15

Source: https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fgbu-presnenskij.ru%2Felektronnoe-obraschenie%2F%3Fu%3Dsayyida-ruqayya-mausoleum-damascus-qq-PMOWxBcB&psig=AOvVaw3xhO_irkpI4PxQOXQj3Lge&ust=1714563573025000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=0CBIQjRxqFwoTCLi_s5ft6YUDFQAAAAAdAAAAABBK

Maktab Anbar



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19

Fig.16-17 Source:

https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D9%85%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A8_%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%B1#/media/%D9%85%D9%84%D9%81:%D9%85%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A8_%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%B1_-_Maktab_Anbar.jpg

Fig.18-19 Source: <https://syriaphotoguide.com/damascus-maktab-anbar-%D8%AF%D9%85%D8%B4%D9%82-%D9%85%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A8-%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%B1/>

Maktab Anbar is located in the heart of Damascus. Constructed in the mid-19th century by Yusuf Anbar. In the beginning, it was a residential family then converted into a school and then a cultural center. The architecture reflects a blend of Ottoman and European.

D-Vernacular Architecture: Buildings that embody the traditional architectural styles and construction techniques indigenous to the region, typically observed in residential settings.

The vernacular architecture in Damascus reflects how the history is rich, the cultural diversity, and local building traditions, some features that simplified the vernacular architecture in Damascus are:

Courtyard houses (Arabian courtyard houses), the most vernacular architecture in Damascus is courtyard houses, these houses are centered around a central courtyard, which is used as an outdoor private space for the house. Typically features a fountain, jasmine, and orange trees, providing natural ventilation and freshness during the summer.



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23

Source: <https://www.baytalfann.com/post/the-art-and-heritage-of-courtyard-homes-in-syria>

Wooden Screens (Mashrabiya)

The Mashrabiya is a traditional architectural feature. Its aesthetic appeal and social significance, the Mashrabiya has served practical purposes in controlling natural light and ventilation.

It is a wood latticework located mostly on the second story of a building or higher, usually lined with stained glass. The Mashrabiya is an element of traditional Arabic architecture used since the Middle Ages up to the mid-20th century.



Figure 24

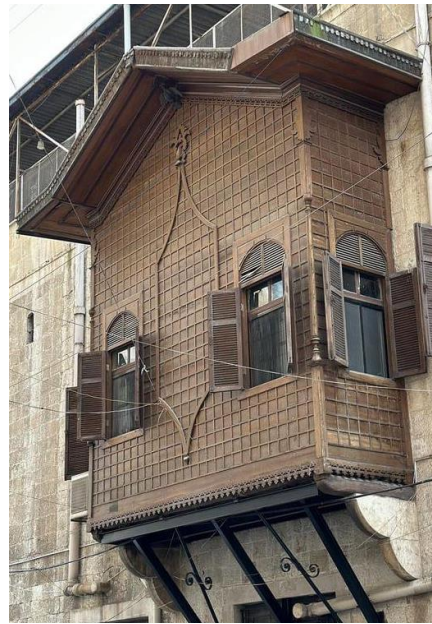


Figure 25



Figure 26

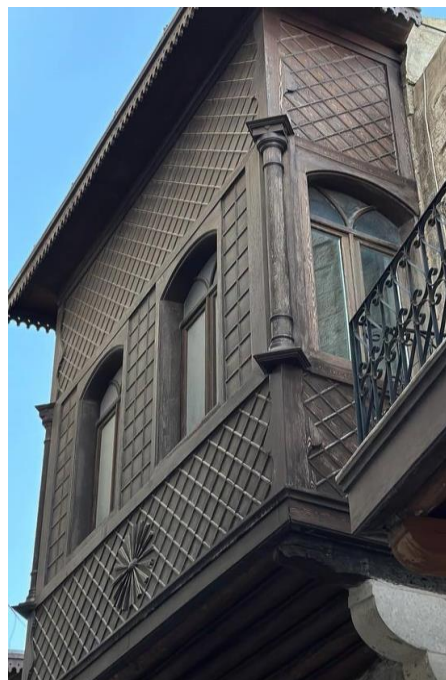


Figure 27

Source: by the architect Aram Habeshiam

Islamic Geometric Patterns:

Islamic geometric patterns are a prominent decorative and beauty element in vernacular architecture in Damascus. These patterns are often found in the plasterwork, and wood carving adorning the facades of the houses, walls, and ceilings of traditional buildings and domes, as it's called mosaic too, which became one of the symbols of Arab beauty and especially Syrian and the levant.

Patterns on Domes

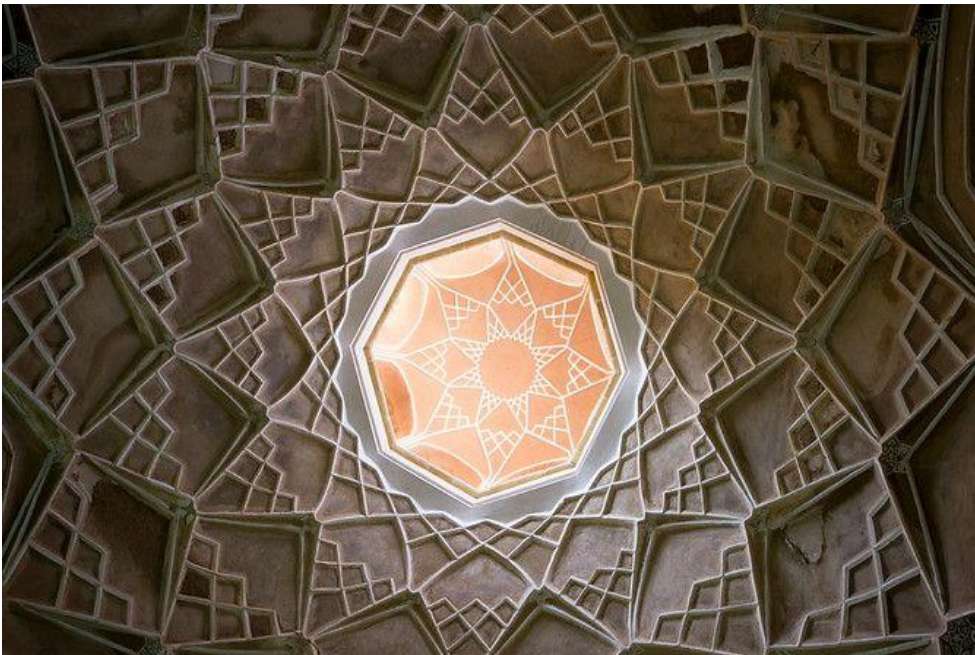


Figure 28



Figure 29

Figure28, Source: <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/10-ceiling-with-islamic-patterns--199284352233940240/>

Figure 29 Source: <https://scenetraveller.com/Discovery/Spiritual-Beauty-in-Syria-s-Great-Mosque-of-Damascus>

Patterns on walls

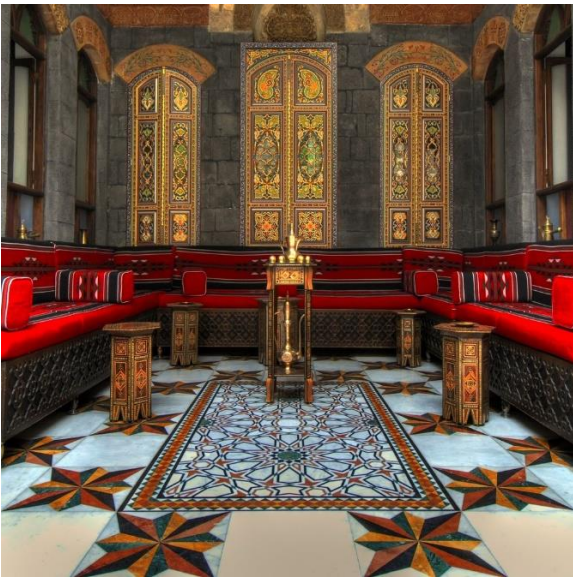


Figure.30

Fig.30. Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/syria-interior-of-an-old-palace-in-damascus-explore--494129390356637501/>

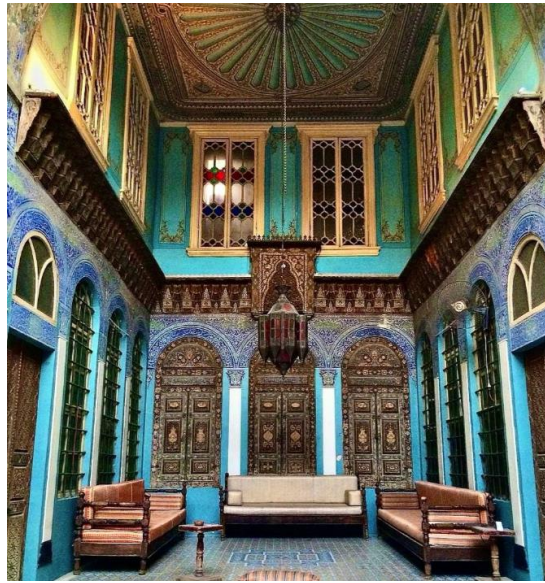


Figure.31

Fig.31 Source: <https://www.baytalfann.com/post/the-art-and-heritage-of-courtyard-homes-in-syria>

Patterns on flat ceilings with wood artwork.

In traditional Syrian architecture, particularly in Damascus, flat roofs and ceilings are distinctive features. Rooftop terraces are utilized as extra outdoor living areas, offering unobstructed views of the sky and natural light. These spaces commonly serve for social events, drying clothes, and cultivating gardens.



Figure

32

Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/452102>

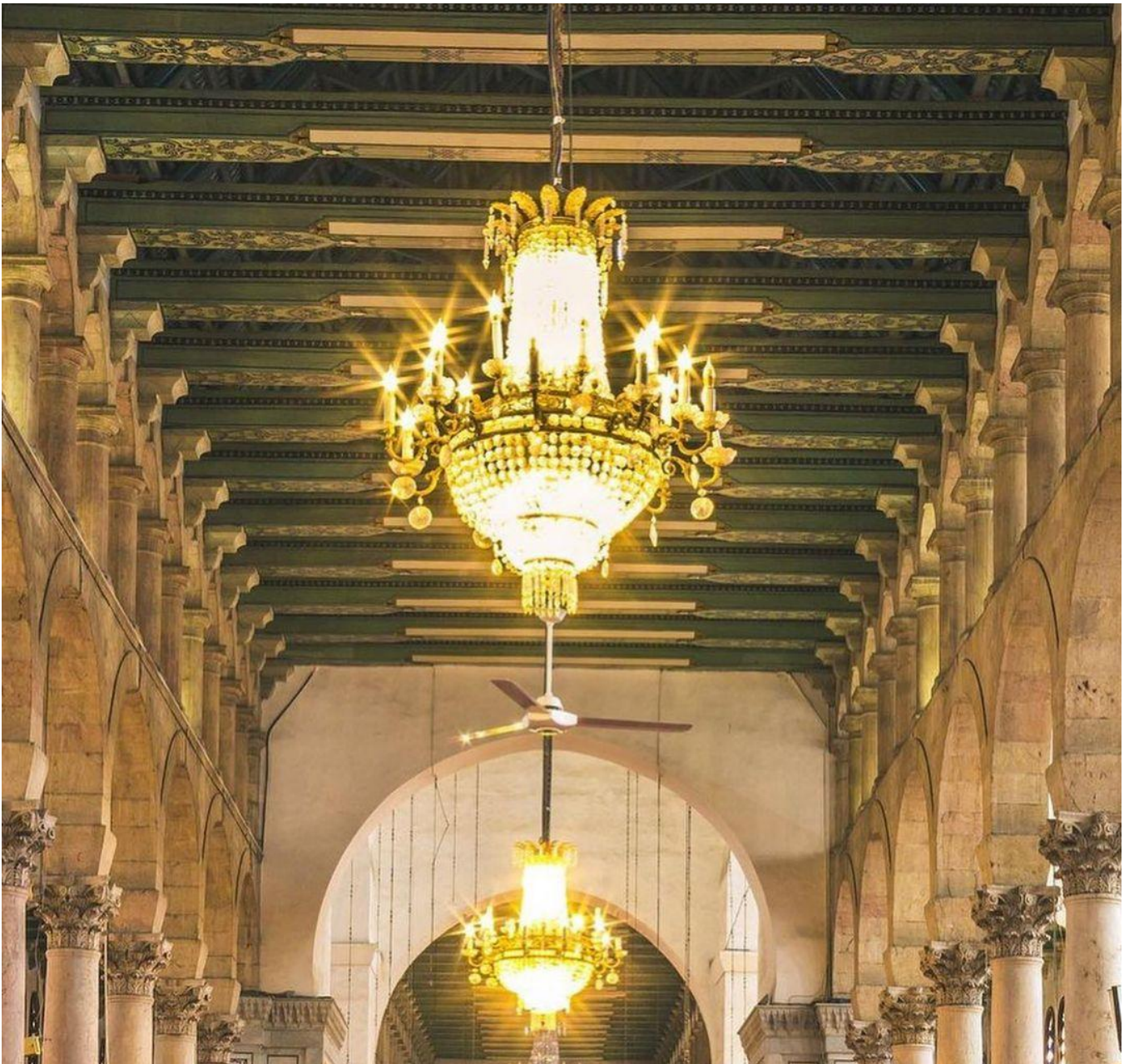


Figure.33

Source: <https://scenetraveller.com/Discovery/Spiritual-Beauty-in-Syria-s-Great-Mosque-of-Damascus>

E-Urban Fabric: This classification includes the whole neighborhoods and streets that still hold their historical charm and layout, as well as plays a big part in shaping the overall vibe and identity.

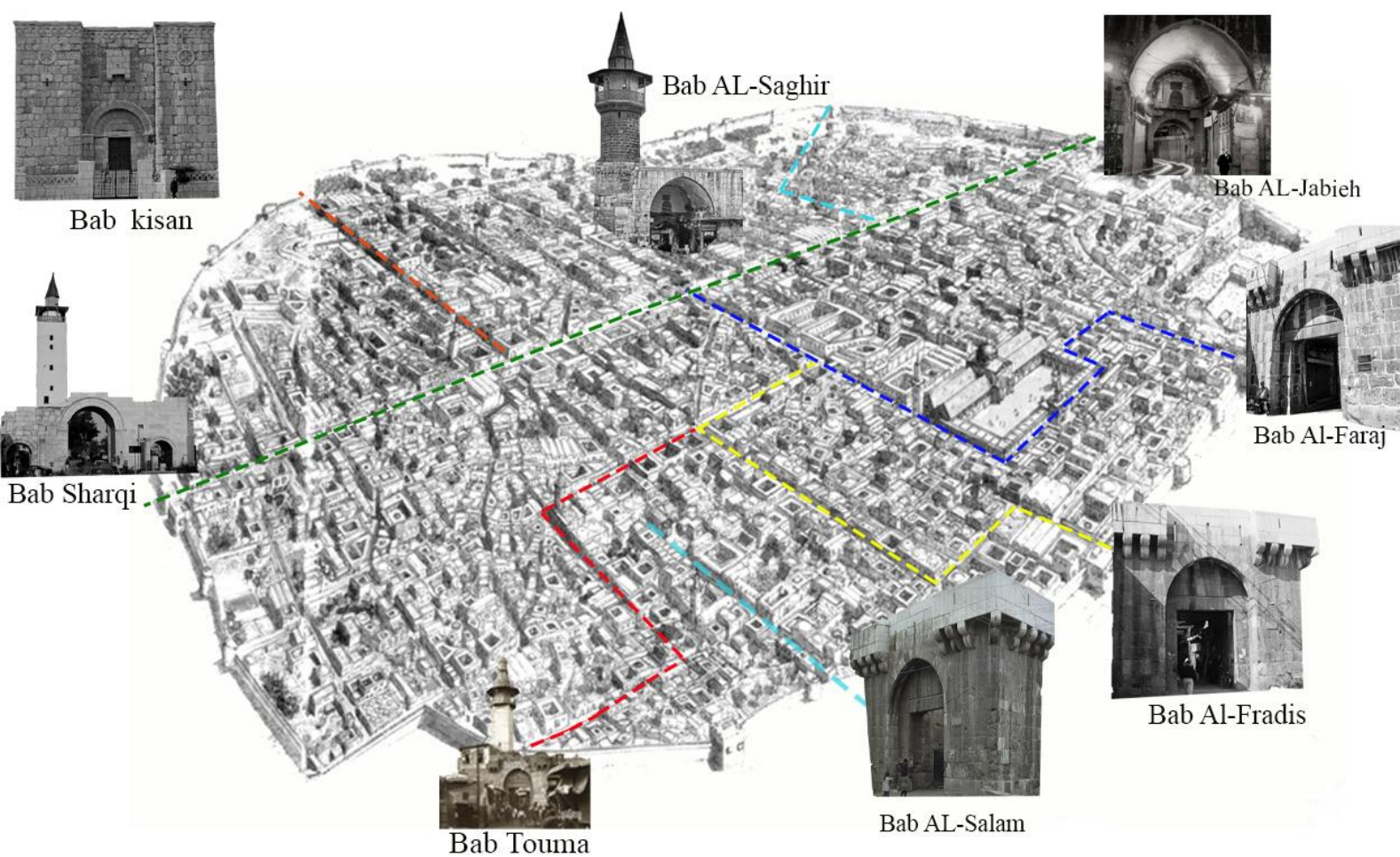


Figure.34

Source: Author elaboration

The seven doors of Damascus.

The origin of these doors is seven doors, they were opened in the first century BC, and they were called according to the seven stars, which are: Bab Al-Faradis, Bab Al-Janiq, Bab Touma, Bab Sharqi, Bab Kaysan, Bab Al-Saghir, Bab Al-Jabiya. Some of them are still in place, meanwhile some others have been removed. These seven planets engraved from stone were hung on them: Mercury on the AL-Faradis Gate,(Bab) the Moon on the Bab Al-Salam, Venus on the Bab Touma, the Sun on Bab Sharqi, Saturn on Bab Kaysan, Mars Bab Al-Saghir, and Jupiter on the Jabieah Gate. The important thing about the straight street (the green line in Figure 43) has a rich history and is believed to have existed in some form or another as early as the second millennium BC as its history can be traced back to ancient times. During the Roman era, the straight street known then as the ‘Via Recta’ was a bustling trade route, studded and lined with local shops and public buildings as it ran from the eastern gate of the old city known as Bab Sharqi to the western gate Bab Al-Jabieh with remnants of the

magnificent tetrapylon still standing today. The straight street was first mentioned in the bible, in the Book of Acts telling the story of the conversion of Paul the Apostle previously known as Saul, and attending to persecuted Christians, where Paul met Ananias, and till nowadays there's the church of Ananias that we will mention it later on.

The relation between Astronomy and the gate of Damascus.



Figure.35

Source: Author elaboration

It was stated in ‘dectionary of countries’ (Mu’jam al-Buldan) by Yaqut al-Hamawi that the first wall placed on the earth after the flood was the wall of (Damascus). The city wall had seven gates in the Roman era, but on the western wall, the gates were increased and decreased from time to time whenever the wall was renewed, doors were closed and others were opened as needed.

Currently, some of these doors (Abwab) have disappeared and been replaced by buildings, roads, or markets, and with time some doors have been added as secondary gates inside the city.

We can identify the original Roman doors on the Damascus Wall, from their distinctive shape. They consist of three arched openings, the largest of which is the central opening, while the two side openings are smaller. They were used for pedestrians.’

Bab Touma



Figure 36



Figure 37

Source: <https://farahmahbub.com/portfolio/syria-damishq-city-of-jasmin/>

Bab Touma, ‘Thomas Gate’ is one of the famous historical landmarks in Damascus dating back to the Roman times. The Gate has significant modification by the Byzantine and Islamic eras. Nowadays is one of the most popular tourist attractions and the symbol of the city's resilience.

Bab Al-Fardis

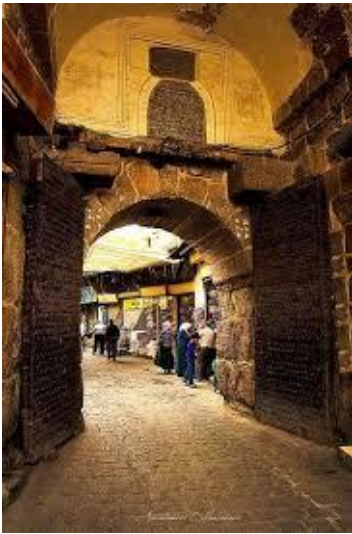


Figure 38

Source: <https://www.olddamas.com/Listing/%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%B3/>

Bab Al-Salam



Figure 39

Source: <https://sana.sy/en/?p=307762>

Bab Al-Salam, which means ‘Gate of Peace’ back to the Roman era and built a part of the city's defensive fortifications. This gate is constructed using large stone block units and features an arched passageway, showcasing Roman engineer techniques adapted and modified over time.

Bab Sharqi



Bab Sharqi, known as ‘Eastern Gate’ dates back to the Roman period when it was a part of the city’s defensive walls. The Gate was built in the 3rd century AD, it was the main entrance gate to the city along with the Roman street plan and it was a part of the Decumanus Maximus (ancient Roman street).

Figure.40

Source:https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=abf976e12d8dcb8e&sca_upv=1&rlz=1C1VDKB_itT932IT932&sxsrf=ADLYWJVKt7waPU9LisW6vrlGzOYie4hPQ:1715262567132&q=%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8+%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%82%D9%8A&tbm=isch&source=Inms&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjBo4qA24CGAxUO2SoKHejiB78Q0pQJegQIDRAB&biw=1536&bih=695&dpr=1.25#imgrc=DWARdeWxMpfKMM&imgdii=ADbMbrtssvDExM

Bab AL-Faraj



Figure.41

Source:https://www.facebook.com/529673363809714/photos/a.529713063805744/1131413043635740/?paipv=0&eav=AfaYEBWM-wDqC15KnYbSREtyl-xtL6sdz_8a971_cLfLhRwe4tmntBmgLoKx6joHDd4&_rdr

Bab Al-Faraj translated to 'Gate of Relief' or 'Gate of Joy' has a sense of safety it provides to those entering the city. Been constructed during the Ayyubid period, which spanned the 12th century and it was the fortification of Damascus. The main task was as a defensive fortification, and as a crucial entry point has a special location in the city which gave it the power of access to the old city.

-Intangible Heritage: these classifications might also consider things you can't physically touch, similar to traditional crafts, cultural, and ritual customs linked to particular buildings and/or areas. Intangible heritage, generally in Syria, can be mentioned as an example the traditional Syrian music and dance forms, as 'Dabke'. Also in craftsmanship, include intricate inlay work, mosaic, famous Damascene textiles.

2.4. Historic Buildings Preservation.

Preserving the historic areas of any place in a small or big city means preserving the values it contains such as historical, architectural, archaeological, spiritual, social, political, and economic values. *Emotional value, cultural value, use value* by Jane Jacobs.

"These values pertain to the subject emotional attachment in all its ways in case individuals or communities. the encompasses the border cultural significance of the urban area. It also refers to the practical utility and functionality of a building for its occupants."

Jacobs highlighted the multifaceted nature of urban spaces and argued for a historic approach to urban planning preservation that takes into consideration not only the economic but also the social, cultural, and emotional well-being of the communities.

Intervention policies in conservation projects

The conservation projects aim to save the historical buildings for the future and these interventions are determined through the physical conditions of the building. In consonance with Bernard Melchior Feilden 'the minimum effective intervention is always the best'. The types of intervention policies with possible repercussions that BMF according to his book are:

SEVEN DEGREES OF INTERVENTION

POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS ON VALUE

PREVENTION OF DETERIORATION (INDIRECT CONSERVATION)	Intended to reduce change but certain kinds of value may be given priority, so values change at different rates.
PRESERVATION OF THE EXISTING STATE	Many values are kept, and utility and possibly aesthetic and information values slowly decrease.
CONSOLIDATION OF THE FABRIC (DIRECT CONSERVATION)	Utility increases but information decreases for example DNA information
RESTORATION	Utility and aesthetics may increase but information and material authenticity may decrease
REHABILITATION	Contextual value increases, and potential uses may decrease.
RECONSTRUCTION	Material authenticity decreases, and information may increase
REPRODUCTION	Reproduction is different since the original object is not necessarily irreversibly affected by this intervention

Table.1



Prevention of deterioration (indirect conservation)

Feilden's perspective on the "prevention of deterioration" underscores the significance of proactive measures to sustain the condition and value of cultural heritage assets, thereby contributing to their long-term conservation.



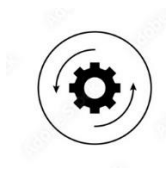
Preservation of the existing state

In this context Feilden tried to advocate for policies and practices, this approach suggests that we should prioritize keeping buildings or places as they are, without making big changes. It's all about making sure we preserve the historical significance, and the original character of our cultural heritage. The idea entails the retention of the historical urban fabric as well as the historic form.



Consolidation of the fabric (direct conservation)

As known as direct conservation, fabric generally refers to the physical elements of a building or monument and could be a wall, foundations, or structural components. On the other hand, consolidation refers to the fortifying of these materials to prevent further deterioration and to secure the longevity that is related to the structure. He advocates to use of traditional methods and materials if it is possible to consolidate the fabric of historic buildings. Generally, it is aligned with the principles of preserving the main fabric of historic structures while ensuring their structural longevity and stability.



Restoration

Restoration is all about fixing or rebuilding parts of a building that got damaged or lost. We use new materials that match the original ones to keep the building's history and cultural value intact. It's important to accurately show the building's past, including any changes made over time. So, any new additions should look different from the original parts to preserve the building's authenticity. Restoration isn't just about replacing things – it can also involve cleaning up old buildings. Sometimes, old buildings have layers of history from different times, and we usually don't uncover those hidden layers unless there's a good reason to do so. *Feilden, 1982/2003*



Rehabilitation

The rehabilitation applies to either the preservation of historic buildings and their surrounding environment, encompassing the revitalization of the building itself and the provision of requisite amenities and services to make it easier its functional objectives. Whether reinstating it for its original purpose or reallocating it for contemporary uses, as well as maintaining active engagement with a historic property is widely regarded as the optimal means of ensuring its preservation.



Reconstruction.

This process is all about taking care of the old buildings and old parts of the city that we are working in. Usually, it involves rebuilding after things like war, fire, and natural disasters. The main focus is to make sure that this place is still being used and has value for the community. Buildings and reconstruction mean, using new materials, but we always base our own decisions on accurate records of the building and never rely on conjecture. As well as there is another way of reconstruction, which entails dragging the historic property to another place from the original place in a way to protect it from decay, however, this form is supposed to be well justified because might expose the building to an environmental hazard with time.



Reproduction.

This process involves making replicas of existing artifacts to replace damaged or missing parts of a building, typically focusing on decorative elements, to preserve its aesthetic and artistic significance. However, if any part of the building is deteriorating irreversibly or is at risk due to environmental factors, the most appropriate action is to relocate that portion to a suitable location. Then, replicas can be made of the deteriorated parts to replace them, ensuring the preservation of the building's original version. For example, in Egypt the Sphinx underwent restoration, and to protect it from further erosion caused by pollution and weathering, a replica was installed at the site while the original was relocated to a nearby museum for conservation.

2.5. Criteria for selection of the Historic Buildings according to their outstanding universal value

Since many historic sites and structures are subject to various forms of degradation, it is critical to establish criteria for determining which sites should be conserved.

By doing so, the preservation of these buildings may enhance the standard of the urban environment. Thus, if a historical property satisfies any of the following requirements, it ought to be nominated for the historic preservation list: “

- To represent a masterpiece of human.
- To exhibit an important interchange of human values, over some time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning, or landscape design.
- To bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living, or which has disappeared.
- To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble, or landscape that illustrates a significant stage in human history.
- To be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria)
- To contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.
- To be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth’s history, including the record of life, significant ongoing geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features.
- To be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals.
- To contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation” *UNESCO*

3. The Influence of Preserving Historic Structures on Urban Environment.

Preserving historic buildings is closely linked to enhancing the value of any location. Therefore, the outcomes of preservation efforts are significant for any country that recognizes its importance.

Based on Eagen's book. 'Eagen, S.2001.13.407', likely dives deep into how preserving old buildings affects cities. It talks about how these buildings shape the vibe and identity of urban areas, and how they can help cities grow and thrive. Plus, it explores how saving old buildings can boost local economies by attracting tourists and increasing property values.

Eagen also looks at the environmental side of things, comparing the impact of keeping old buildings versus building new ones. And it doesn't stop there – it touches on the cultural and social importance of preserving history in cities, making people feel more connected to where they live.

Lastly, Eagen discusses the challenges and opportunities of fitting historic preservation into city planning and policies, showing us both the good and tough parts of keeping history alive in modern cities.

Generally, the impact of historic preservation on the urban environment concludes different sectors:

-Influence on urban development: highlight how preserving historic structures fuels urban development and revitalization goals. By repurposing old buildings, cities could attract investment, tourism, business projects, and many more, while all the activities aim to reactivate the neighborhoods while preserving their historical essence.

-Economic advantages of heritage conservation: to enhance tourism as a valuable resource for the country, also to create a new employment prospect due to the implementation of conservation programs.

-Social and cultural significance: emphasis on the social and cultural value of preserving historic landmarks. Those units of buildings serve as focal points for cultural events and community gatherings, implementing a sense of belonging and connection among residents.

-Challenges in urban planning integration: this could involve balancing preservation priorities with development pressures, fixing conflicting interests, and devising innovative strategies to safeguard historic resources while meeting contemporary urban needs.

-Environmental considerations: examine how preserving historic structures lines up with environmental sustainability goals. Retrofitting old places typically consumes fewer resources and generates less waste than we do construction, contributing to urban sustainability efforts.

-Preservation's Role in Shaping Urban Identity: these structures often symbolize a city's history and cultural heritage, enriching its landscape with landmarks that evoke a sense of place.

3.1.The Concept of Urban Preservation in the Historical areas.

The concept of urban preservation in historic areas involves the protection, conservation, and management of the built environment within these areas. It encompasses buildings and landscapes that play a role in the character and identity of the historic area. The preservation efforts may include: Giving a building a new purpose: finding new ways to use old buildings that keep their special charm and history surviving. Making the streets look better: keeping the ways and public spaces in historic areas looking good and making sure they still feel like what they belong to. Taking care of historic buildings: to be sure old buildings stay strong and true to their original look by fixing them up and giving TLC. Planning and Designing with History in Mind: new rules and guidelines for how new buildings should look and how old ones must be taken care of in historic parts of town. Involve everyone in supporting and getting people who live and work in such a historical area to keep them taking care of the place and to make it special and make them a part of keeping the maintenance of the value.

International charters provide a broad overview of key concepts related to the care, upkeep, and reverence for historic elements. They aim to safeguard these elements from any actions that could diminish their historical or artistic significance. However, while these charters offer general definitions of historic preservation, they don't delve into the specific details of individual buildings, including their historical structures, physical conditions, or surrounding environments. Each historic building requires tailored interventions and the use of various techniques, which necessitate informed decision-making based on thorough studies. Successful urban and architectural preservation work hinges on the ability to make these informed decisions. Unfortunately, a lack of financial resources often poses a significant obstacle to cultural preservation efforts, particularly in less developed countries like Syria.

Preservation in urban areas.

Urban conservation is all about saving and protectivity to the cultural, historical, and architectural treasures found in cities. It is how to keep the essence and importance of urban places intact by using different methods to maintain their character, integrity, and significance. This includes looking after the buildings, monuments, parks, and other landmarks that make up the unique charm of urban areas. Moreover in some cases conserving a solo building might not have as high significance as if we conserve a group of buildings together might create a special significance and being able to reuse the places in different activities, also enhances their pertinence to the area.

The main concept of urban conservation

The concept of urban conservation pertains to the safeguarding and preservation of the historical, cultural, and architectural legacy within urban environments. It encompasses a range of methodologies designed to uphold the integrity, character, and significance of built landscapes, including venerable edifices, thoroughfares, communal spaces, and noteworthy landmarks.

Urban conservation endeavors acknowledge the intrinsic value of upholding and commemorating the historical and cultural heritage inherent to urban locales, while also accommodating contemporary urban development and expansion. This necessitates a delicate equilibrium between facilitating sustainable urban growth and ensuring the preservation of the distinctive identity and essence of urban areas, the essential tenets of urban conservation include:

Identification and Documentation: The systematic identification and documentation of historic structures, edifices, and locales of cultural import situated within urban precincts.

Preservation and Maintenance: Implementation of measures aimed at safeguarding and upholding the physical integrity of historic buildings and infrastructure through routine maintenance and reparative efforts.

Adaptive Reuse: Repurposing historic structures for contemporary functions while conserving their architectural attributes and historical significance.

Streetscape Enhancement: Enhancement of the aesthetic quality and historical ambiance of urban thoroughfares and communal spaces through landscaping initiatives, installation of street furnishings, and judicious signage.

Planning and Design Guidelines: Formulating and executing urban planning policies, design standards, and zoning directives to govern development initiatives and conservation efforts in urban settings.

Community Engagement: Actively involving local communities, stakeholders, and residents in decision-making processes concerning urban conservation endeavors to cultivate a sense of ownership and stewardship among urban denizens.

Justification for urban conservations.

Conservation plans extend beyond individual buildings or sites to encompass the entire environment that holds historical significance. (Yusof, Mui, Lik Meng, & Sook Fern, 2007) Additionally, the significance of urban conservation can be outlined as follows:

Economic Impact: Urban conservation initiatives contribute to communities economically by promoting the reuse of existing buildings instead of constructing new ones. This approach helps to mitigate urban sprawl and creates job opportunities.

Cultural Appreciation: Urban conservation plays a vital role in fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of local history among communities.

Property Value Enhancement: Urban conservation efforts can enhance the value of historic properties within a given area.

Tourism Attraction: Historic centers that undergo conservation efforts become more appealing destinations for tourists, thereby contributing to local economies through tourism revenue.

Efficient Urban Spaces: Urban conservation plans facilitate the efficient utilization of spaces within cities, promoting sustainable development and preserving the character of urban areas.

4. Historic areas in Syria and the impact of the conflict

Due to the conflict in Syria, which began in 2011, has profoundly affected its historic areas, renowned for their cultural heritage and ancient monuments. These sites, including UNESCO world heritage sites such as the ancient city old Damascus, Carc Des Chevaliers, and Aleppo ancient city, have suffered extensive damage and destruction.

The impact of the conflict on Syria's historic areas is multifaceted:

Physical destruction: historical buildings, cultural marks, and archaeological sites have been extremely affected, damaged and some destroyed due to the bombing and attacks. Due to that archeological and architectural treasures have been lost.

Displacement of communities: the displacement has eroded social cohesion and cultural continuity within the communities because many residents have to flee their homes due to the conflict.

Loss of cultural heritage: the loss has led to loss the of intangible and tangible cultural heritage which includes artifacts, cultural practices, religious practices, and ancient monuments.

Challenges to reconstruction: reconstruction areas pose significant hurdles owing to the impact of conflict, resource constraints, and the intricate nature of restoring ancient structures. To succeed, this reconstruction needs meticulous planning, global cooperation, and ongoing investment to safeguard Syria's cultural legacy for generations to come.

Lists of figures show historical places before and after

Aleppo Citadel



fig.1



fig.2

Umayyad mosque-Aleppo



fig.3



fig.4

Church back to the 9th century



fig.5



fig.6

Figure.42 Source: author elaboration

krak Des Chevaliers - Homs



fig.7



fig.8

Palmyra



fig.9



fig.10

Historical Palace - 11th C



fig.11



fig.12

4.1. Causes of deterioration in the areas and historical buildings

Many cons elements affect the state of the buildings such as:

A- deterioration by environmental factors:

Variable climate conditions such as rain, wind, snow, and frost may contribute to the deterioration of buildings. Especially Damascus is known for its hot summer weather and humidity. High humidity levels can lead to moisture in buildings materials specially in wood structures. And moisture which also grows the mold. Damascus is a seismic active region, as we have seen in the last earthquake in February 2023. Air pollution, particularly in industrial areas, can deteriorate buildings. Thermal movements, including material contraction and expansion, car pollution, and industrial factories lead to form acid rain which has a bad effect on the building materials such as limestone, marble, and sandstone which they are commonly used in the ancient structures of Damascus. Furthermore, natural disasters such as flash floods, erode the foundations of buildings, and debris causes additional damages. The force of the rainwater and flooding can cause collapse.

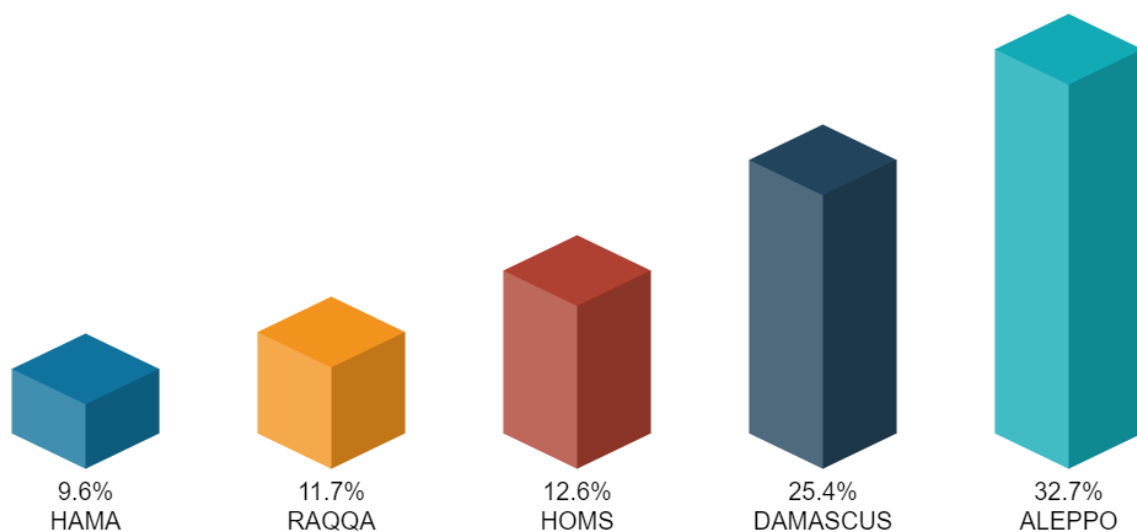
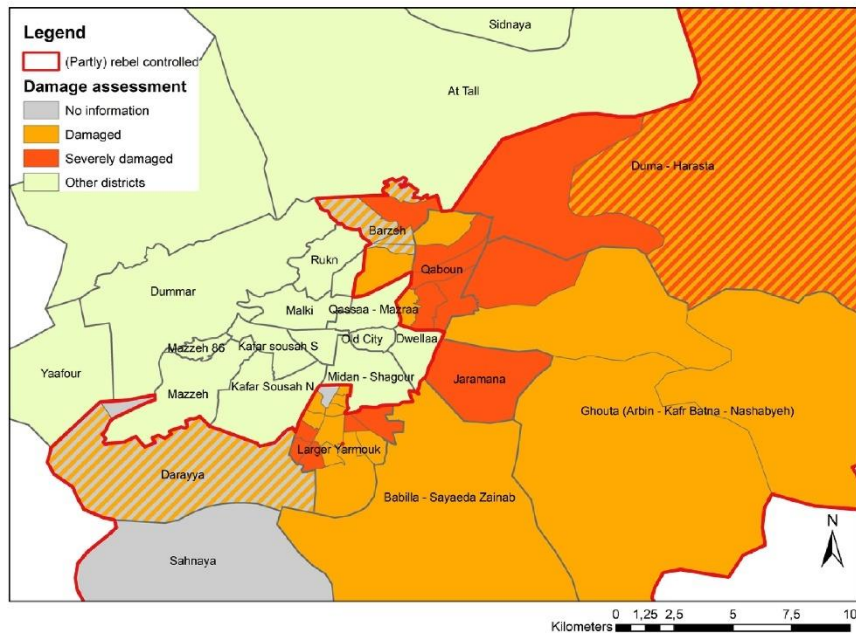


Figure.44 damaged percentages in cities referring to 2019.

Source: Arch. Lina Kutiefan Director Syrian World Heritage Sites.

War-Damage (2011-2018) in districts of Damascus Metropolitan Area



Map.2

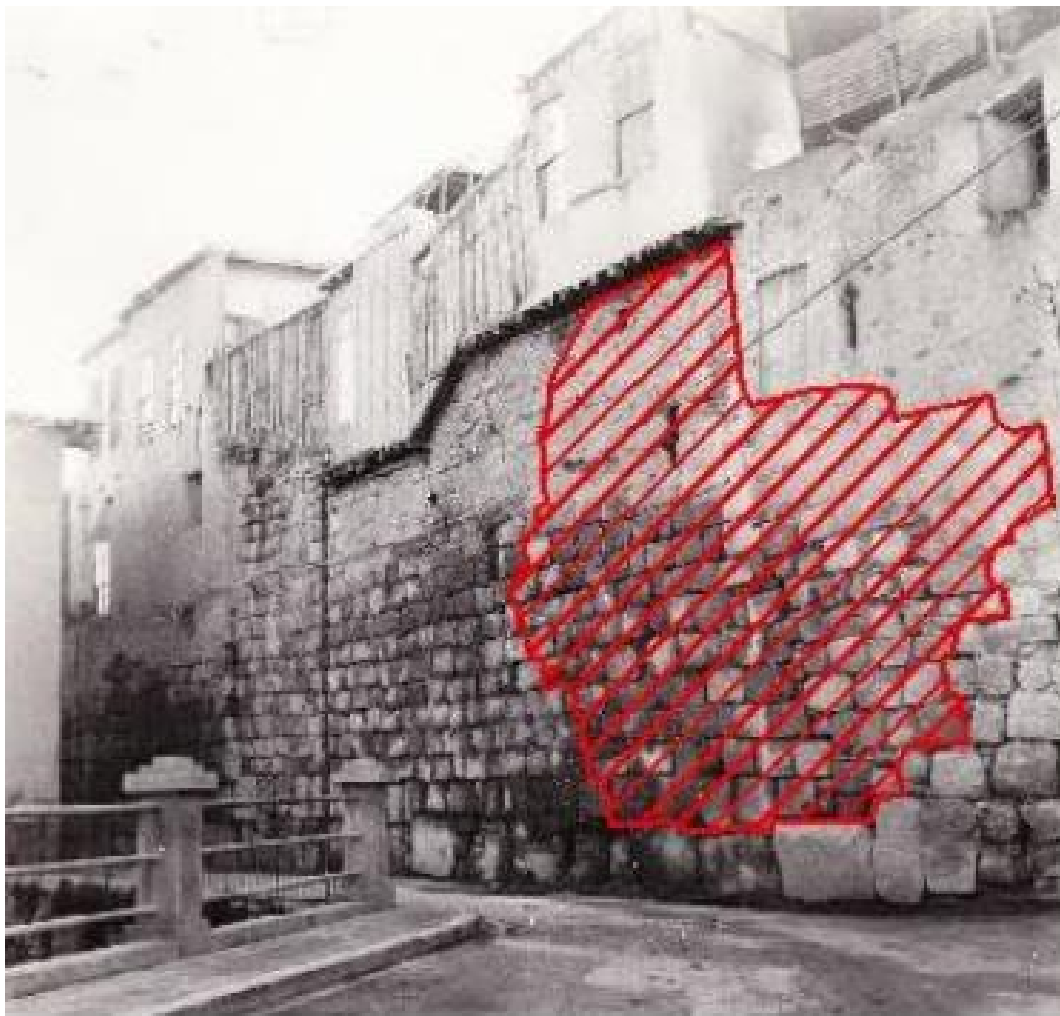


Figure.45 Source: Arch. Lina Kutiefan Director Syrian World Heritage Sites.

A part of the ancient city wall collapsed in the area between Bab Al-Salam and Bab-Touma marked in red color. Due to the lack of maintenance, monitoring of structural changes, and restoration, the moisture has been clear in the areas of the collapse. The damaged sewage network in the district adjacent to the wall, which led to water leakage inside the walls to reach the foundations level.

B-Deterioration by Human activities:

Awareness: The lack of awareness toward the preservation of cultural heritage and the ancient architectural and archeological sites that represent the past of knowledge of years.

- Urbanization and development: the bustling growth and development happening in the old city of Damascus brings along challenges for our historic buildings and infrastructure. Nowadays with the new construction projects and urban development underway, our beloved old structures face the risk of being damaged and disrupted to their historical essence.
- Pollution: pollution from cars, lorries, public transportation, and mismanagement is harming our historic sites and monuments in the old city. Dirty air speeds up the aging of our buildings, while polluted water weakens the very foundation that holds them up.
- Unauthorized Alterations: sometimes, well-meaning but unauthorized changes to our historic buildings end up causing irreversible harm. Whether its renovations have gone away, additions that do not quite fit, or the removal of original features.
- Unregulated commercial activities: sometimes, the hustle and bustle of commercial life in the old city can get a little out of hand. Street vendors and unauthorized signs clutter up our streets and cause real damage to our historic charm. And when commercial enterprises do not play by the rules, it's not just our buildings that suffer but also our whole sense of history and identity suffers too.

Souk Al Hamidiyeh- deterioration due to human activities



Figure.46

Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/souk-al-hamidiyeh-damascus-syria--130463720432344721/>

Souk Al-Shalaan at midnight



Figure.47

Source: <https://www.syria.tv/%D9%84%D9%85-%D9%8A%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%AB-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B0-%D8%B3%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%85%D8%A7-%D8%B3%D8%A8%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AF%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%AF%D9%85%D8%B4%D9%82-%D9%82%D8%A8%D9%84-%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%9F>

4.2. War impacts on the urban environment.

'Journal of Housing and the Built Environment, 38(3), 1939-1982'. The impact of war on Damascus has been devastating, in every aspect of city life in many ways. Starting with the structure of the city, roads and bridges, bombs and artillery fire have torn through the streets and infrastructure at first. As well as know that Damascus is a wealth of historic and cultural landmarks, many of which have been damaged during the conflict. Ancient monuments, mosques, churches, and souks have been targeted.

Structural losses The most presentable impact of wars on the urban environment is the building damage and urban structures.

Economic impact: the economic impact repercussion of war on urban areas deeps and varies, first. The reduced productivity and war disrupted normal economic operations, resulting to decreased productivity across various sectors. Such as infrastructure, limited resource access, and security risks may force businesses to close or operate at lower capacities. This productivity decline can stifle long-term economic progress and urban development. Also, here we could include tourism and investment decline, in urban areas heavily reliant on tourism and foreign investment may experience a significant downturn during conflict. Safety concerns and damage to cultural sites may deter tourists and investors, resulting in revenue loss and decreased work chances.

Cultural impacts: the impact of war on the urban landscape of the old city old Damascus is profound and wide-ranging. It includes the devastation of the cultural heritage, with very important historical sites, landmarks, and monuments that all suffered from extensive damage from shelling, bombing, looting, and natural disasters. This destruction led to the loss of both tangible and intangible cultural practices, affecting traditional customs and rituals associated with the sites. Furthermore, the conflict disrupts cultural continuity, fracturing community ties and making it challenging to pass down cultural knowledge to future generations. additionally, the illicit trade of stolen artifacts 'as well in Palmira, Homs, Hama, and some other cities further depletes Syria's cultural heritage, while tensions along ethnic, religious, and sectarian lines threaten the diverse cultural fabric of Damascus, leading to discrimination and marginalization of certain cultural groups.

Political impact: Disasters and wars often bring about unstable political circumstances. This instability can result in the weakening or collapse of governments at different levels, whether local, regional, or national. However, the extent of this impact varies depending on the strength, flexibility, and preparedness of these governments to handle emergency situations and facilitate recovery and reconstruction efforts. Ultimately, political stability emerges as a crucial factor in the success of reconstruction initiatives. (UNITED NATIONS, 2009) **Social impacts:** Wars and disasters have a

direct impact on residents when they strike their cities and surrounding areas. This often forces people to seek shelter in cellars and face challenges in accessing necessities like water and other supplies. Consequently, these circumstances give rise to various social disruptions, including significant social and psychological issues, increased poverty, and deteriorating living conditions.

4.3. The Impact of conflict on historic areas and buildings in Syria.

Damages in Syria have caused to numerous historical buildings, including all 6 UNESCO world heritage sites not only in Damascus but in the country in general.

UNESCO World Heritage Site, Damaged the fortress towers:

Le Crack de Chevalier



Figure.48

Source: <https://www.wallpaperflare.com/search?wallpaper=krak+des+chevaliers>

The Crac des Chevaliers, located in Homs, Syria, it is one of the most important preserved medieval castles in the world, and has a significant historical site and relevance. Built in 1031AD by the Emir of Aleppo. In 1271 the castle was captured by the Mamluk sultan Baibars, marking the end of the Crusader presence in the Homs region. During the war in 2011, the Crac was affected a couple of times by much damage, but it is still the symbol of Syria's rich historical heritage and yet it ranks among the world's most admirable architectural marvels.

The Dead Cities



Figure.49

Source: <https://www.amusingplanet.com/2016/08/the-dead-cities-of-syria.html>

The dead cities are abandoned settlements back to the Byzantine and Roman eras, scattered across northwestern Syria, once thriving with agriculture, trade, and craftsmanship. Dead cities have been designated UNESCO World Heritage sites like Serjilla, Al Bara, and Qalb Lozeh.

The ancient theatre of Bosra



Is a town in southern Syria, administratively belonging to Daraa and geographically part of the Hauran region, it is mentioned in 14th BC Egyptian. It became the prosperous provincial capital of the Roman province of Arabia Petraea.

Figure.50

Source:

<https://www.lookphotos.com/en/images/70346092-The-ancient-roman-theater-of-Bosra-Syria>

Palmyra



Figure.51

Source: <https://www.thoughtco.com/ancient-ruins-in-palmyra-syria-3996122>

Source: <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/miranda/la-et-cam-five-reasons-why-palmyra-matters-as-archaeological-ruins-site-20150520-column.html>

Palmyra, located in the Syrian Desert Northeast of Damascus, is famous for its rich history and stunning archeological remains. Known as Tadmor and dates back to the second millennium BC. Was the centre of trading hub that reached its zenith in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD under Roman rule, and Queen Zenobia famously led a rebellion against the Roman empire in the 3rd century.

Monastery of St.Elian.



Figure.52



Figure.53

Fig.52 <https://www.pinterest.ch/pin/204421270564463288/>

Fig.53 <https://www.foxnews.com/science/christian-saints-bones-unearthed-in-monastery-destroyed-by-isis>

Our Lady of Saidnaya Monastery

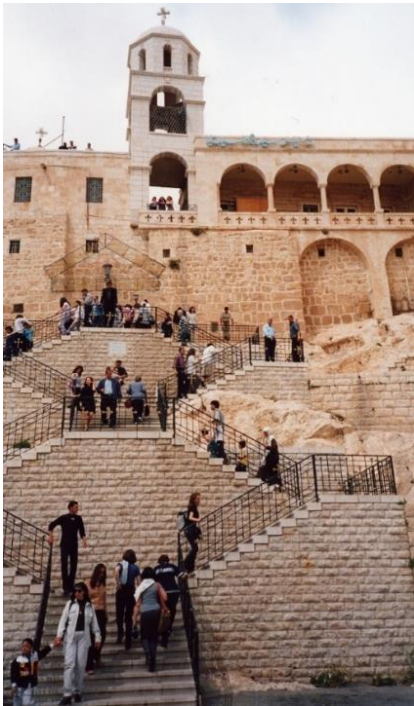


Figure.54

Source. :https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Lady_of_Saidnaya_Monastery#/media/File:Syria283.jpg
<https://www.azad-hye.com/articles/maaloula-syria-where-the-language-of-jesus-lives-on/>
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/haykal/4148285774/in/photostream/>

Saidnaya Monastery is a monastery of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch (where the language of Jesus lives). One of the most ancient monasteries in the world and in the Middle Eastern regions. Been founded by the Byzantine emperor Justinian in 547 AD. The monastery has two of the oldest icons in the world, one of them is the depiction of the Last Supper.

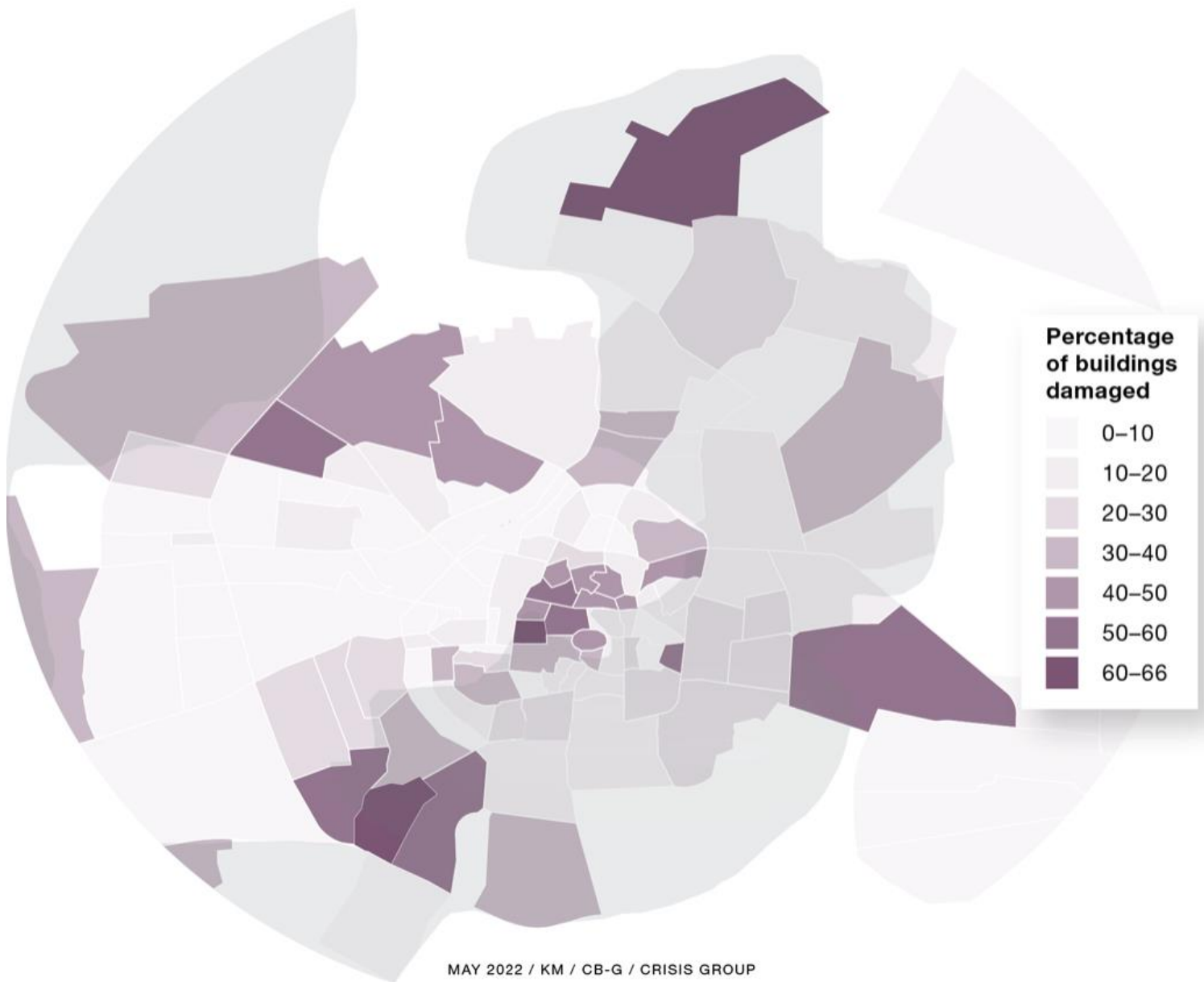
The Fortress of Saladin



sits on a rocky cliff 30km east of Lattakia city, it was fortified site at least the mid-tenth century AD. The castle underwent a major reconstruction in 975 under the Byzantines.

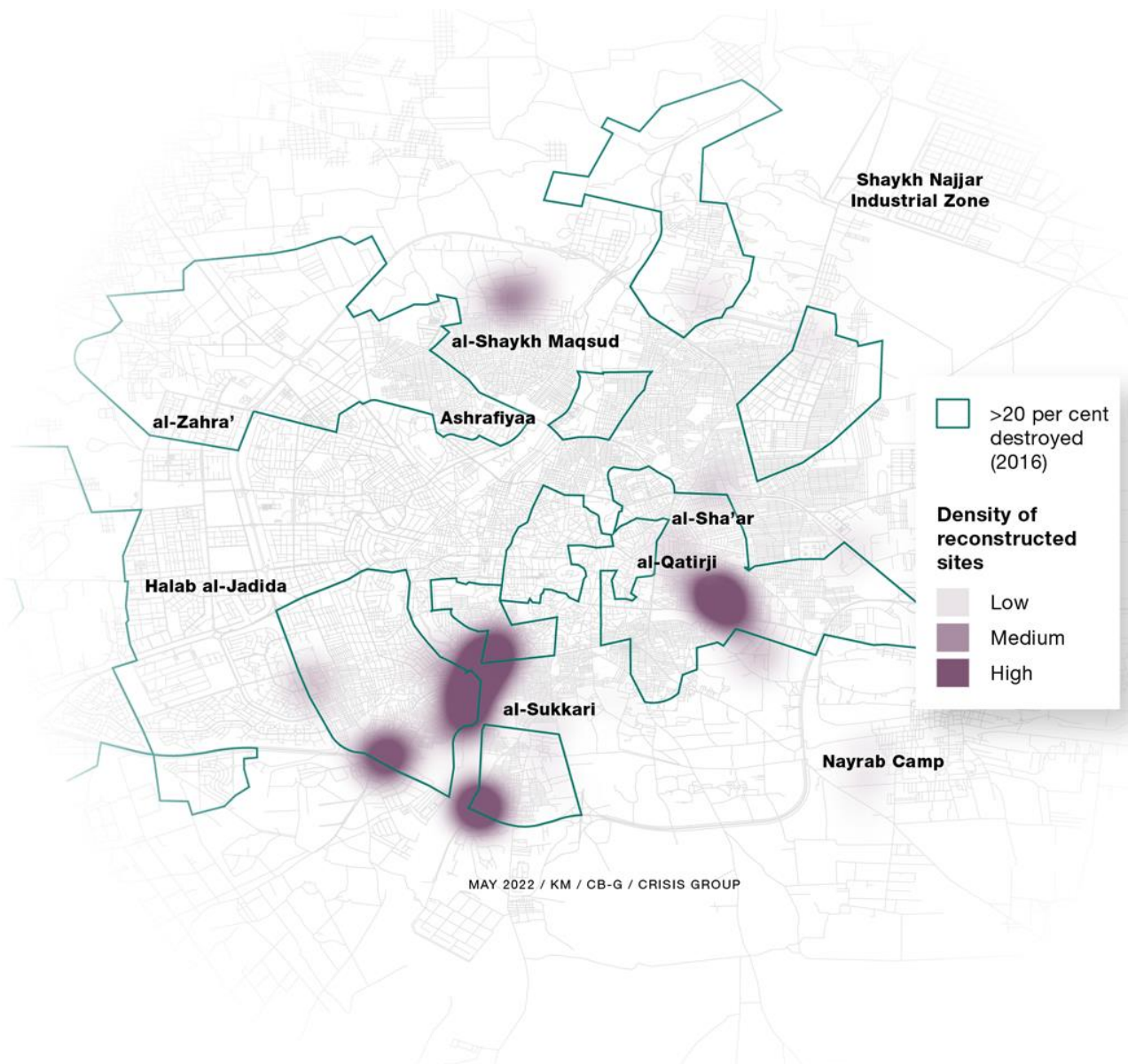
Figure.55

Source: <https://www.sharjah24.ae/ar/Articles/2023/03/14/gh7>



Map.3 The damage percentage all over Syria

source: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/syria/syria-ruling-over-aleppo-ruins>



Map.4 Areas of Building Reconstruction Compared with Patterns of Destruction

Source: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/syria/syria-ruling-over-aleppo-ruins>

4.4. The struggle to protect Cultural Heritage post-war policies and challenges.

The cultural property protection policy in Syria since 2011 has been guided by international standards outlined in the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in Armed Conflict and the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. The focus of this policy is on safeguarding cultural sites in their original locations and retrieving stolen or looted cultural artifacts. However, despite these

efforts, the policy has not effectively halted the plundering and illicit trade of cultural objects in Syria, like the challenges faced by neighboring countries in the past.

International conventions concerning the safeguarding of the Cultural Heritage.

Before discussing enhanced protection, it's important to understand the two categories of protection under the 1954 Hague Convention: general and special.

General protection covers various cultural properties defined by the Convention, including movable or immovable property of significant cultural heritage value, buildings designed to preserve cultural property, and centers containing monuments. This protection applies universally, regardless of ownership or origin, and it's up to each state to identify such cultural property within their territory. Special protection, on the other hand, is more selective and can be granted to certain types of property like refuges for movable cultural items, centers with monuments, and other immovable cultural property of exceptional importance. However, special protection isn't automatic and requires meeting specific criteria, including being located away from industrial or military sites and not being used for military purposes. Requests for special protection must be made by the state where the property is situated and are subject to approval by the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in Conflict. Cultural property under special protection is listed in the International Register of Cultural Property under Special Protection, maintained by UNESCO. While special protection has not been widely adopted due to practical difficulties and political tensions, it represents an important effort to safeguard cultural heritage during armed conflicts.

Enhanced protection, this concept was introduced in Chapter III of the 1999 Second Protocol to the Hague Convention. Enhanced protection is granted to cultural property of the utmost importance to humanity, protected by adequate domestic measures, and not used for military purposes. A declaration to this effect must be provided, and enhanced protection is granted by the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in Armed Conflict, leading to the inclusion of the property in the International List of Cultural Property under Enhanced Protection. At the time of writing, seventeen cultural properties from ten parties to the Second Protocol have been inscribed in this list. The guidelines for enhanced protection clarify criteria for the importance of cultural property, the submission process for requesting enhanced protection, and the use of a distinctive emblem for marked properties. The process involves detailed evaluation and documentation, with requests submitted to the Committee through the UNESCO Secretariat. The distinctive emblem, a shield in

blue and white outlined by a red band, serves to identify and protect cultural property under enhanced protection during conflict. These guidelines aim to ensure the effective implementation of enhanced protection measures and prevent misuse of the emblem. Generally, enhanced protection represents a significant advancement in safeguarding cultural heritage during times of conflict, offering additional layers of defense for invaluable cultural treasures.’

International and local legislation regarding the protection of the Syrian heritage

Referring to Cunliffe, E., Muhesen, N., & Lostal, *International Journal of Cultural Property*, 23(1), 1-31. Protecting the Syrian cultural heritage needs wide collaboration on all levels. It is a complex action to be undertaken, because, In some cases, the heritage debate could be different from one community to another and hence could lead to more fragmentation and stimulate the conflict.

5. Cultural Heritage Recovery.

Since the crisis started, several stakeholders have initiated damage assessments, interventions, and dialogue on post-crisis reconstruction for the crisis-affected areas of the city, as well as undertaking initiatives to document damage based on existing archives, historical data, and recent surveys and documentation. Meanwhile, a loss of institutional capacities and Brain-drain of experts who contributed to the pre-crisis GIZ/IDP heritage restoration effort is a challenge for the implementation of a coordinated, comprehensive, and integrated recovery approach and urban planning sensitive to the historical context of the cities that has a massive damaged as Damascus and Aleppo. furthermore, the directory of the old city DOC and DGAM.

6. Preliminary Insight.

The significance of preserving the historic cores of cities is multifaceted, deriving from their historical, artistic, aesthetic, cultural, social, and economic value. Furthermore, safeguarding these areas is considered a collective responsibility aimed at preventing any form of deterioration, particularly during periods of conflict. The evolution of preservation concepts for historic buildings, largely spurred by the aftermath of world wars, reflects a concerted effort to reclaim and reconstruct cities to their pre-war state. While wars and disasters often inflict substantial damage on urban heritage, they can also present opportunities for innovative approaches to preservation, thereby enhancing the urban environment. Various intervention strategies may be applicable in historic preservation endeavors, contingent upon factors such as the physical condition, unique characteristics, and extent of damage sustained by the buildings post-war. These interventions should adhere to the codes and legislation outlined by international charters for the protection of world heritage sites.

Chapter 3. The Interplay between Cultural Heritage and Planning ‘a Culturally Based Approach to Planning.

Based on the book of Sacco, Blessi, and Nuccio ‘Cultural Policies and Local Planning Strategies: What Is the Role of Culture in Local Sustainable Development?’ examines the crucial role of culture in fostering sustainable development within local communities. It highlights the integration of cultural policies and urban planning strategies to boost economic growth, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability. The authors advocate for a culturally based approach to urban planning, using cultural heritage to enhance quality of life and stimulate local economies.

As mentioned in the book, they argue that cultural heritage should be a central element of urban planning strategies. This includes preserving historical sites, promoting cultural tourism, and embedding cultural values in the development process. By doing this, cities can create unique identities that attract visitors and investors, fostering economic growth. As Sacco et al. (2014) state, "Cultural heritage provides a sense of identity and continuity in a fast-changing world, and its preservation can help maintain the unique character of local communities."

Cultural policies also enhance social cohesion by developing inclusive public spaces and promoting community participation in cultural activities. This helps bridge social divides and foster a sense of belonging among residents. According to Sacco et al. (2014), "Engaging the local community in cultural activities and heritage preservation fosters social cohesion and strengthens the community's connection to their cultural roots."

Moreover, the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage can lead to economic revitalization. Heritage tourism generates revenue and creates jobs, while the adaptive reuse of historic buildings attracts businesses and visitors, stimulating local economies. Throsby (2001) emphasizes that cultural heritage significantly boosts the economic vitality of cities by attracting tourism and investment, creating a multiplier effect on local economies.

Integrating cultural heritage into urban planning also promotes sustainable development by encouraging the use of traditional building materials and techniques, which are often more environmentally friendly. This approach helps support the cultural landscape, crucial for environmental sustainability. Bandarin and van Oers (2012) highlight that cultural heritage

conservation aligns with sustainable urban development goals by promoting resource efficiency and reducing the environmental impact of new constructions.

In conclusion, Sacco, Blessi, and Nuccio underscore the essential role of cultural heritage in local sustainable development. By adopting a culturally based planning approach, cities can preserve their unique identities, enhance social cohesion, stimulate economic growth, and support environmental sustainability. This integrated approach ensures that cultural heritage is not only protected but also utilized as a vital asset for comprehensive urban development.

This part is dedicated to the illustration of our argument through a case study 'Venaria Reale'.

The Venaria Reale Project was promoted by the European Union, and by the Ministry of the Cultural Heritage and Piedmont Region, and it was the largest restoration project in Europe concerning a cultural asset. The concept of the restoration is to revive the baroque splendour inspired by the Duke Carlo Emanuele II of Savoy who conceived the plan for the Reggia di Venaria. The palace extends over 80 thousand square meters of floor space and is known as the greatest example of the baroque style.

In Venaria they worked Filippo Juvarra, Amadeo Castalamonte, Michelangelo Cavore. After World War II, Savoy had to leave Italy, after that all properties became the right of the government, and they had no idea what to do with it. 1961 was the biggest manifestation because it had the first restoration.

La Venaria Reale was declared part of UNESCO World Heritage in 1997. It reopened in 2007 after completing the largest European restoration project. The reopening of the Venaria Reale has a significant impact on both the local economy and tourism in Turin. Based on the statistics studies by ISTAT the place attracted over one million visitors and topped the first rank of the most visited places in Italy. The tourist influx brought substantial economic benefits to the region, supporting local businesses, and creating new job opportunities.

The Venaria nowadays after all what I passed through, it is not only a cultural and historical site but also plays an important role in the sustainable development of the Piedmont region, and by preserving the site, the project helped maintaining the unique identity of the local. Due to the huge space that the

site occupied the palaces and its garden, it provides a setting for cultural events and activities aside of attracting the tourism industry.

The restoration of Venaria Reale has had an impact, seen through the rise, in tourism and associated revenues. It has mixed as a driver for the economy drawing in visitors from both within the country and abroad thus supporting various local businesses. The success of Venaria Reale serves as an example of how cultural heritage sites can play a role in fostering economic growth and social unity through well-executed restoration and preservation efforts.

If we were to depict the changes in tourism and economic effects post-restoration through a chart, we would observe an increase in visitor numbers and related economic advantages. This data emphasizes the significance of cultural heritage sites, in progress and their capacity to stimulate economic development.

Number of visitors to the Palace of Venaria in Turin in Italy in 2019 and 2020

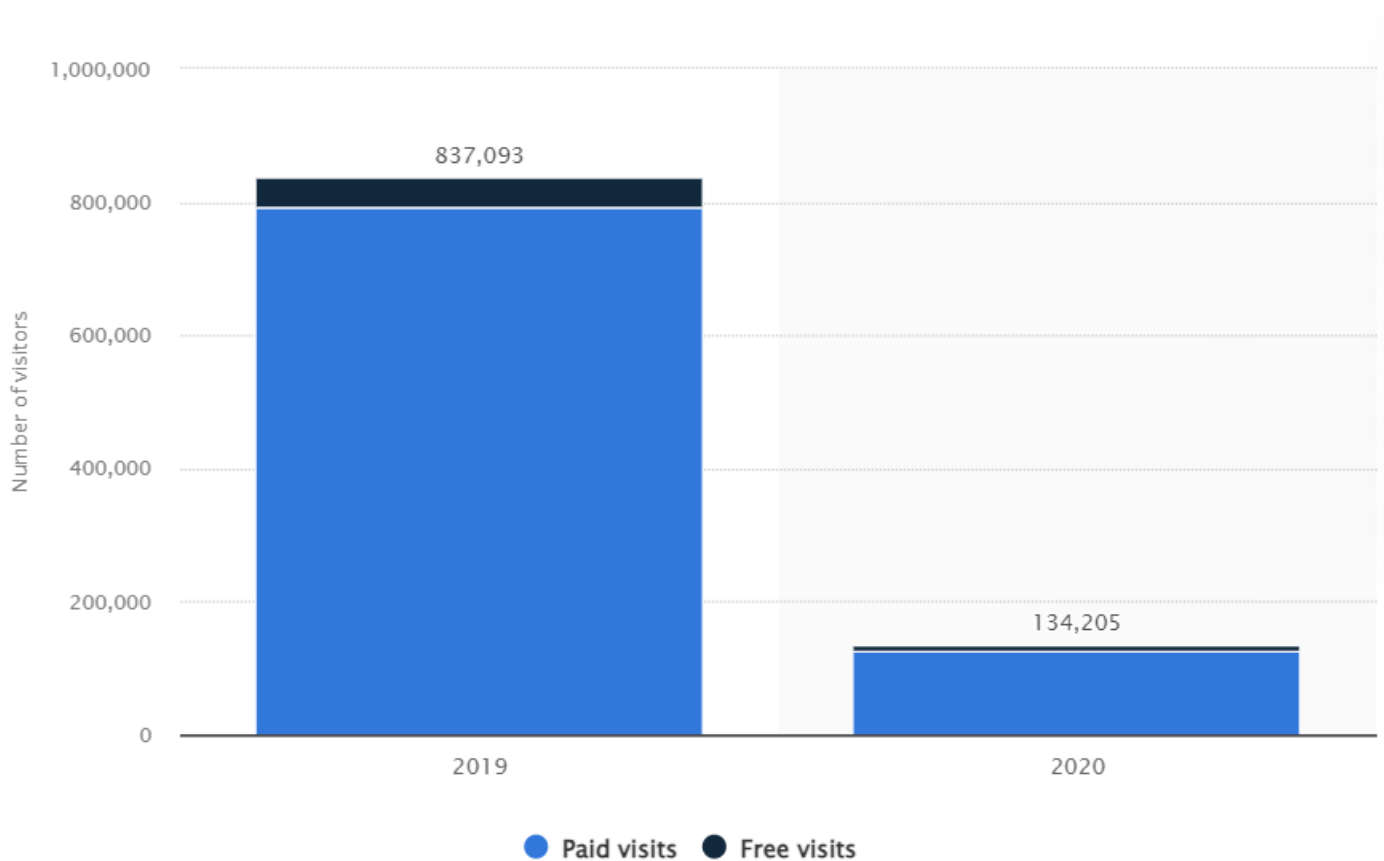


Figure.56

Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1034557/number-of-visitors-to-the-palace-of-venaria-in-turin/>

Number of visitors to the Palace of Venaria in Turin, Italy in 1995 and 2020.

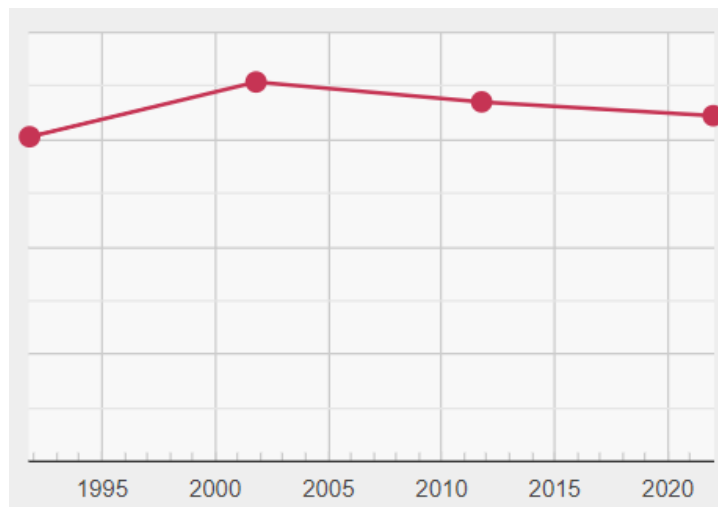


Figure.57 Source: Istituto Nazionale di Statistica Italia.

Chapter 4. The potential of urban planning in a complex context such as the reconstruction of Damascus.

Rebuilding a post-conflict city represents a unique opportunity and significant challenges. In a city like Damascus that has passed and suffered from different damages such as wars and natural disasters, reconstruction demands a thoughtful approach that addresses, economic and cultural intricacies specific to each area. As we will see later in this section, Jerash-Jordan is taken as the case study to compare it with Damascus, and by examining the urban transformation effort on it, we can extract valuable lessons and problems to avoid Damascus. Jerash is not a post-conflict city, its urban development strategies highlight effective methods in urban planning and heritage conservation.

The case of Jerash, Jordan Historical and urban context.

Jerash is well known for its well-preserved Greco-Roman ruins. The city has successfully managed to preserve its historical sites while adapting a modern urban development. This equilibrium serves a good strong example of integrating historical preservation with contemporary urban planning. Perseverance in Jerash allowed the establishment of a sustainable environment that respect its historical context while simultaneously with economic growth.



Figure.58

Source: <https://www.memphistours.com/jordan/Jordan-Travel-Guide/Jerash-Attractions/wiki/Jerash>



Figure.59



Figure.60

Fig.58 https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=6798127eb6819917&sca_upv=1&rlz=1C1VDKB_itIT932IT932&xsrf=ADLYWIIKky8FUT0J8qHzhAFSechRwD5Ag:1716550538683&q=jerash+city&tbm=isch&source=lnms&sa=X&sqi=2&ved=2ahUKEwjTjuOImaaGaxVOxQIHHTY-DZcQ0pQJegQIDBAB&biw=1536&bih=695&dpr=1.25#imgrc=-p8_4SGA5yEC3M

Fig.59 <https://elitevoyage.com/experiences/jordan/discover-the-roman-city-of-jerash/>

The context of Damascus. As we have already mentioned, Damascus world's oldest continuously inhabited city, has been extensively passed through many difficult and complicated problems such as war and natural disasters with time, and the reconstruction has involved a complicated scenario of restoring heritage sites, rebuilding, and the needs of a displaced population.

Reconstruction Damascus faced many significant challenges due to the huge, large-scale damages, with entire neighborhoods obliterated and infrastructure severely damaged. Due to the difficult situation that the city still facing, the situation is harder to secure funding, ensure safety, and achieve consensus among various factions.

Potential Urban Planning Strategies for Damascus.

Building the city of Damascus require a deliberate and incremental strategy, as a critical infrastructure and essential services, also residential and commercial areas for structured process. Some studies and research, it show that more engagement in local communities in planning is vital and dynamic to show and address the needs of displaced people and adopt cooperation. Making an equilibrium between heritage conservation and modern urban development as we have seen in Jerash, by producing heritage zones and using sustainable and eco-friendly practices, this will help to preserve the history of the city. Another factor that also has an important role in achieving the goals is the international collaboration with NGOs and companies is crucial because it helps not only in the economic support and funding but also in innovating solutions to support the reconstruction of the Damascus context. The expected outcomes and benefits can conclude in implementing the strategies that it help in developing a resilient and sustainable urban environment in Damascus. Compared with Jerash, Damascus has the requirements to merge urban living with preservation.

Rebuilding the city of Damascus aside the challenges that are facing, is an opportunity to invent a sustainable and resilient city. , Damascus can effectively manage its complex reconstruction by choosing and fostering the successful strategies and urban planning that been used on Jerash to rebuild. The plan has to include a phased approach, community involvement a balance between heritage and modernity, and at the same time international collaboration. All of those strategies could help Damascus to transform into a revived city full of culture and into a better future.



"We shall remember Damascus, the 'Pearl of the East,' the pride of Syria, the fabled garden of Eden, the home of princes and genii of the Arabian Nights, the oldest metropolis on Earth, the one city in all the world that has kept its name and held its place and looked serenely on while the Kingdoms and Empires of four thousand years have risen to life, enjoyed their little season of pride and pomp, and then vanished and been forgotten."

Mark Twain

Figure.61

Part 2: Guidance for Planning Reconstruction

Chapter 1. A Comprehensive Outlook of the Future of Damascus.

Damascus is a turning point in its lengthy and rich history. After a long time of instability, disasters, unsafety, and horrific violence, it is starting to feel the first hints of calm. The enormous reconstruction process will begin, offering a unique chance to rebuild and revitalize Damascus. Reconstruction of Damascus aims to resurrect the spirit and heart of a city that has for millennia been the crossroads of civilizations. Doctor Abdullah Khoury, a noted Syrian historian, emphasizes, "Rebuilding Damascus is not just about infrastructure; it's about restoring the soul of the city. Every stone in the Old City has a story, and we must ensure these stories are preserved."

The reconstruction effort centered on this fine line between respecting the past and looking toward the future. We explore all the different aspects of organizing and conducting Damascus rebuilding in this part, this comprehensive view presents insights from professionals and community voices on a range of topics from maintaining renowned historical sites to integrating innovative infrastructure and from boosting community engagement to refreshing the local economy. Professor Omar Al-Aziz, an expert in Middle Eastern architecture, states, "The future of Damascus lies in its ability to blend the old with the new. We must create a city that honors its past while providing new and modern amenities and opportunities for its people." The concept and main goal are to create a resilient and dynamic city that lasts for future generations; by collaborating with planners, architects, researchers, and designers, reconstruction requires meticulous planning and a phased approach. Urban planners and architects advocate for a comprehensive plan prioritizing essential services like water, electricity, and transportation, alongside rebuilding homes, schools, and hospitals damaged in the conflict. "Reconstruction is an opportunity to build back better," explains Leila Hafez, an urban planner involved in post-conflict projects. "We must integrate sustainable practices and resilient infrastructure to ensure Damascus can withstand future challenges, whether environmental or socio-political."

In conclusion, in the outlook of the future of Damascus, Reconstructing Damascus is a monumental task requiring a multifaceted approach, combining respect for its historical heritage with the need for modern infrastructure and economic revitalization. By involving local communities, integrating sustainable practices, and fostering international cooperation, Damascus can emerge from the shadows of conflict as a symbol of resilience and hope.

As renowned Syrian poet Nizar Qabbani said, "Damascus, the start and end of my journey, will rise again, not just as a city but as a testament to the enduring spirit of its people." Looking ahead, the

reconstruction of Damascus offers a unique opportunity to build a city that honors its past while embracing the possibilities of a brighter, more inclusive future.

Chapter 2. Guidance for planning recommendations and policies.

Rebuilding post-war cities is an important project that needs careful planning to provide inclusive, inviting spaces for locals and visitors alike. Rebuilding after the catastrophic effects of war is a special challenge for Damascus, a city steeped in history that dates back thousands of years. Through the examination of effective solutions and the integration of contemporary concepts of urban design, Damascus may become a dynamic, inclusive city that embraces the future while paying tribute to its history.

Historical Heritage Preservation. Preserving the historical and cultural legacy of Damascus is one of the main objectives of its reconstruction. With its historic buildings and unique souks, the Old City of Damascus, a UNESCO World Heritage site, perfectly captures the essence of the city's rich past. The Old City is deemed "an exceptional testimony to the civilizations that have successively occupied it" by UNESCO. To preserve the cultural identity and draw in history buffs, efforts must be made to repair historical sites and preserve the original architectural style.

Improving Transportation Within Cities. Enhancing urban mobility is essential to ensuring that visitors and locals alike can easily reach the city. Rebuilding after a war offers a chance to rethink transportation systems. Research has indicated that cities with effective public transportation networks see increased visitor numbers. For instance, research that was published in the *Journal of Transport Geography* shows that there is a 15% potential gain in tourism with better public transportation. Accessibility in Damascus may be greatly increased by developing pedestrian-friendly zones, adding tram systems, and improving bus services.

Establishing Cultural and Public Areas. Developing lively public and cultural areas is crucial to encouraging neighborhood involvement and drawing visitors. Restoring public squares, parks, and cultural institutions might be extremely important in Damascus. One prominent cultural and historical site that can operate as a hub for local and tourism activity is the Umayyad Mosque. The World Tourism Organization states that a 20% boost in tourism may be attributed to well-developed cultural amenities. The cultural environment may be enhanced by the opening of new museums and art galleries as well as the renovation of public areas like Al-Hamidiyah Souq.

Involving Local Communities. Participating in the reconstruction process with the local community guarantees that the development satisfies their demands and promotes a feeling of community

ownership. Planning sessions, seminars, and public consultations can all be used to promote community involvement. Research published in the Journal of Urban Affairs claims that public satisfaction with urban development projects rises by 25% in places where local communities are included in the planning process. Involving the public in the renovation of public areas and neighborhoods in Damascus can contribute to the development of a resilient and welcoming urban environment.

Giving Sustainable Development Top Priority. The foundation of Damascus' rehabilitation efforts needs to be sustainable. Crucial actions including green areas, encouraging environmentally friendly construction, and making sure waste management systems are effective. According to research, cities with lots of green space and sustainable practices can draw eco-aware tourists and enhance the quality of life for locals. The development of parks, urban gardening, and the use of renewable energy sources can all be advantageous for Damascus.

In conclusion, a one-of-a-kind chance to combine contemporary urban planning with historical preservation is the restoration of Damascus. Through the implementation of several strategies such as cultural heritage preservation, improved transportation, public space development, sustainability, community engagement, and technology use, Damascus may provide an atmosphere that is both hospitable and lively for both locals and visitors. These tactics, backed by facts and fruitful case studies from other post-war cities, may steer Damascus in the direction of a thriving and welcoming future.

Chapter 3. Planning governance: Possible outcomes shaping the governance of planning policies. Set of issues and complexities for a sustainable post-war governance

Damascus has been lately passing in a very harsh moment that left the city with significant infrastructural damage, sociological and economic disruption, and population displacement. Due to that is a complex and multifaceted challenge. Damascus needs a comprehensive framework that addresses immediate recovery while promoting long-term sustainability. Deep down on understanding the context of post-war Damascus and according to 'OCHA' the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, over 12 million Syrians have been displaced. The city reconstruction offers the opportunity to reimagine, rebuild, and improve urban governance and planning practices.

The issues in post war have sorted in various outcomes, first the restoration of infrastructure and services. The priority and starting up in post-war governance is the restoration of basic infrastructure and public services. This includes rebuilding streets, water systems, electricity grids, and healthcare facilities. In referring to the studies of the World Bank estimate that the cost of infrastructure reconstruction in Syria could exceed 300 billion Dollars. Taking into the considerations the fair distribution of resources and the involvement of local communities in the planning in way of addressing the specific requirements of affected populations. Another crucial point we can highlight is the historical and cultural preservation. As we have mentioned already before how much Damascus is rich in historical and cultural heritage and it requires a careful preservation effort. Many places have suffered from different damages and UNESCO confirmed the importance of integrating cultural heritage preservation into urban development plans to maintain the city's identity. For this reason, the policies should balance reconstruction with the preservation of cultural landmarks to train back the city historical significance and attract back the tourism. Moreover, sustainable urban development involves promoting environmentally friendly building practices, rebuilding green areas, manage to limit any type of waste in the natural resources. According to 'UNEP' the United Nations Environment Programme, sustainable urban development helps in enhancing the quality of life and economic opportunities for the residents. This framework should incorporate the principle of sustainability to reduce the environmental impacts and promote a healthy and better urban environment. In addition, social inclusion and community engagement due to ensuring its participation in the planning process is essential for effective governance. The displacement of a million has helped to bear new and diverse dynamic community structures in the city, and the study published in the Journal of Urban Affairs spot the light that community engagement leads to higher satisfaction with urban development projects and adopts a sense of owning places among residents Inclusive decision-making procedures that take into account the opinions and requirements of every community member must be given top priority in governance policies. Finally, economic revitalization. By supporting small businesses, creating new job chances, and attracting investments. Based on the World Bank notes that economic revitalization can limit and reduce poverty and improve living standards. To reach the goal, which would be by ensuring the benefits of disturbing equality among people to encourage economic growth.

Reconstructing Damascus is a complex step that faces various challenges, effective planning needs navigating national and international dynamics and support to ensure stability and fund the project and share knowledge and new modern way to rebuild and restore what has been rested with the help of local governmental agencies, international organizations, local communities and NGO's demanding a deep communication and collaborative decision-making process.

The United Nations Development Program ‘UNDP’ point up the importance of the multi stakeholders’ partnership in the recovery period to manage the financial resources, human capital, supplies and materials, with the ‘IMF’ international monetary fund stressing the need for a clear and accountable financial managements. Also the importance of legal and regulatory frameworks to guide the reconstruction including land ownership laws, and environmental regulation to enhance sustainable development and protect the rights of the citizens.

We propose several recommendations to deal with those complexities for sustainable governance in Damascus. First, the establishment of a centralized reconstruction authority. This authority would facilitate decision-making as well as guarantee coherent planning. The centralised authority should work hand and hand with local governments, international organisations and representatives of the community according to the citys needs. Another strategy is to promote community-based planning initiatives to encourage social inclusion and verify that efforts of reconstruction are adequate to the residents' needs. This strategy includes the creation of platforms for community participation. A crucial aspect of long-term planned resilience for a city like Damascus is promoting sustainable practices in all aspects of reconstruction. This ought to happen through green building materials, the use of renewable energy, and efficient waste systems of management. The incorporation of green spaces and the encouragement of pedestrian alternatives would increase the quality of life. Additionally, transparency of governance and accountability are a must to ensure effective resource management and rebuild public trust. Policies should elaborate mechanisms for monitoring reconstruction projects and evaluating reconstruction projects. Finally, we would like to shed light on the need for international support and its expertise in providing valuable skills and resources to the reconstruction of Damascus. International organizations, voluntary agencies and foreign help should be facilitated by the current governance to remedy the lack of financial and technical assistance. In conclusion, the post-war in Damascus has a special opportunity for reshaping urban governance, creating resilience and a sustainable city. As we have spotted light key issues like economic activities, governance framework, and sustainable development could lead to a promising, sustainable, and better future and achieve equitable outcomes .

Based on the statistics data that we have, we can tell how much the percentage of tourism been decreased from 2000 till nowadays.

Tourist arrivals in Syria between 2009 and 2010 (excluding one-day visitors)

	2009	2010	Difference	% change
Arabs	3,590,273	4,654,530	1,064,257	+30
<i>Non-Arab Tourists</i>	1,436,679	2,387,260	941,581	+66
<i>Incl. Turks</i>	381,677	864,988	483,311	+127
Incl. Europeans	390,354	440,311	49,957	+13
Syrian Expatriates	1,064,937	1,513,060	448,123	+42
Total	6,091,889	8,545,849	2,453,960	+40

Figure.62

Source: The Syria Report, “Numbers Confirm Surge of Syria’s Tourism Industry”, 24 January 2011, <https://bit.ly/3wOKnnz>

Tourism in Syria had a very fast-expanding economic sector in the pre-war period. The percentage of visitors reached to peak in 2010 with 9.4 million travelers to the country with an average of 7 nights booked per visitor as an average of 1.2 million visitors according to the survey of the World Economic Forum in 2010. Tourism represents the second largest income after oil exports. the total revenue from the tourism sector was estimated at 8.3 million USD. From 2011 to the end of 2018, due to the current situation in Syria, the tourism sector was estimated at over USD 50 billion, according to Minister of Tourism Mohammed Rami Martini. Physical destruction rendered 1,500 tourist facilities out of service, including almost 400 hotels and thousands of restaurants, meanwhile on another hand more than 250,000 jobs were lost. Many projects and ideas set down to restart the rebuilding and restoration of many places with the hope to re-attract people and to make them know more about the rich culture and the history of the country and also to attract investment in order to stimulate economic growth.

Year	Arabs	Non-Arabs	Total
2010	6,281,525	3,175,097	9,456,622
2011	3,159,187	2,274,009	5,433,196
2012	1,182,546	381,774	1,564,320
2013	619,940	51,632	671,572
2014	621,499	55,268	676,767
2015	672,670	81,940	754,610
2016	931,387	111,945	1,043,332
2017	1,149,130	132,416	1,281,546
2018	1,620,229	181,830	1,802,059
2019	2,219,626	204,659	2,424,285
2020	405,242	74,122	479,364
2021	531,223	129,683	660,906

Figure.63

Source: The Syria Report, <https://bit.ly/42BxKsj>

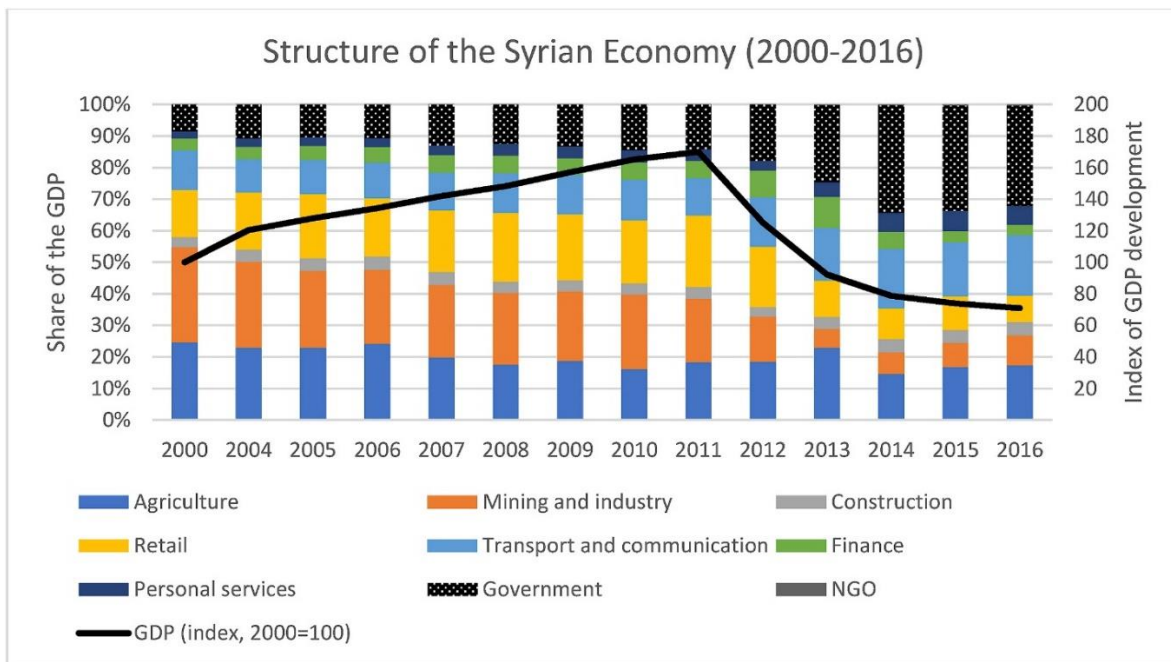


Figure.64

Source: https://ars.els-cdn.com/content/image/1-s2.0-S0197397519309464-gr9_lrg.jpg

Activities that have been done and are to be done, to show the culture of Syria and specifically ‘The Rose of Damascus’



Figure.65

Source:<https://www.torinomagazine.it/mostra-fotografica-installazione-artistica-rosa-damasco-siria-giardini-musei-reali-torino/>

‘The Gardens of the Royal Museums welcome the photographic exhibition The Rose of Damascus. From Syria to Turin and the artistic installation Floral Tapestry of Craftsmanship, a cultural project conceived and conducted by the Royal Museums with the Syria Trust for Development and the Santagata Foundation for the Economy of Culture, to promote the role and importance of the centuries-old heritage Syrian culture in the Mediterranean basin through one of the most well-known and iconic products of that region, the Damascus Rose.’

The exhibition's inauguration offers the opportunity to delve deeper into Syrian art, history, literature, and archeology through cinema, meetings, debates, and musical tributes, to discover Rose's path from the Middle East to the heart of Europe and the many connections with Syrian culture.



Figure.66

Source: <https://www.fondazioneasantagata.it/in-evidenza/la-rosa-di-damasco-a-torino/>



Figure 67



Figure.68

Source: Author elaboration



Figure.69



Figure.70

Source: Author elaboration

Upcoming exhibition in Sanremo 2024



Figure.71

Source: <https://www.fondazioneasantagata.it/in-evidenza/la-rosa-di-damasco-a-sanremo/>

Conclusions

The importance of the buildings and historical areas in Damascus lies in their role as a witness to the past civilizations and the diverse cultures, giving to the city the identity, and the roots of where we come from and educating the future generations aware of their history, culture and in the field of architecture and urban. Our thesis emphasizes the necessity of integrating preservation with urban revitalization. The methods of architectural and urban conservation are based on many distinct aspects influenced by many factors such as political, economic, and social factors. Each city requires a specific examination, and each case should be properly considered to achieve successful urban preservation. War remains an indelible mark on cities and areas, the most significant witness being the cultural heritage loss and the damage to the built environment. It poses severe threats to the cultural properties and damages, however, comprehending the multifaceted impacts of war from economic to political and social reasons, can push a powerful motivation toward urban historic preservation.

This work focuses on the reconstruction efforts in post-war Syria generally and Damascus specifically. We highlighted the importance of rebuilding as a means of urban conservation. By treating the city as a unit reconstruction, we showed that we can increase the preservation of historic properties and give a high value of any place.

To understand the complexities of Urban planning and cultural heritage management in a war-torn country like Damascus, one ought to dive into layers of challenges. Given the city's rich cultural and historical heritage, we advance that there's a need to balance preservation efforts with urban development demands. In contrast, urban planning plays a critical role in reformulating effective strategies for the preservation and revitalization of Damascus's cultural heritage.

Adequated strategies for the valorization of cultural heritage are multifaced. In essence, urban planning should evaluate the historical, artistic, aesthetic, cultural, social, and economic aspects of cultural heritage to determine an efficient approach. The evolution of preservation concepts for historic buildings, largely spurred by the aftermath of world wars, reflects a concerted effort to reclaim and reconstruct cities to their pre-war state. While wars and disasters often inflict substantial damage on urban heritage, they can also present opportunities for innovative approaches to preservation, thereby enhancing the urban environment. Various intervention strategies may be applicable in historic preservation endeavors, contingent upon factors such as the physical condition, unique characteristics, and extent of damage sustained by the buildings post-war. These interventions should play an important role in reconciliation and social reconstruction. War poses severe threats to

the cultural heritage. In this context, reservation is important but is hardly enough. To have sustainable urban development, cultural heritage should be considered as an acting factor. Urban planning plays an important role in elaborating adequate strategies to protect Cultural Heritage. In the case of Damascus, which has a unique identity, adopting a culturally based planning approach is crucial. It allows to enhance social cohesion, stimulate economic growth, and support environmental sustainability. Therefore, cultural heritage should not only be preserved but also be integrated as an asset of urban development and stick to the codes and legislation outlined by international charters for the protection of world heritage sites.

In the process of rebuilding Damascus, there is a possibility to reach resilient and sustainable foundations. The choice of strategies applicable to the case of Damascus has to take into account the balance between heritage and modernity with the help of international collaboration. Combining respect for its historical heritage with the need for modern infrastructure and economic revitalization is a crucial starting point. Damascus can emerge from the shadows of conflict as a symbol of resilience and hope. It is important to learn from history, like in the case of Beirut, to prevent the loss of historical identity due to current situation dynamics.

Meanwhile, a reconstruction plan is guided by community engagement, effective leadership, and widespread participation among city residents. Reconstruction efforts have the potential to attain authenticity, integrity, and a cohesive sense of urban continuity along with preserving the historical identity of the place.

The future of Damascus is determined by the effort of balancing between respecting the historical heritage and the need for the new modern infrastructure. This process aims to ‘restore the soul of the city’ as Dr. Khoury mentioned, by preserving the rich history of each stone in the city of Damascus. Experts, NGOs, and communities shed light on the importance of how much is important of integrating sustainable practices to ensure that the city will resist future challenges. Referring to Leila Hafez an urban planner ‘reconstruction is an opportunity to build back better’ due to the involvement of the local and international cooperations that work together to help Damascus to stand up again. Moreover, preserving the cultural heritage is a crucial fact as UNESCO stated ‘Damascus a testimony to the civilizations that have successively occupied it’. Taking care of the cultural activities and sites would help to increase the use of at least 20% more than usual. Prioritizing sustainable development through eco-friendly practices and green spaces would enhance the quality of life for the locals and minimize the percentage of pollution that has increased due to the situation. Integrating those

strategies, Damascus would involve into dynamic and resilient city that enhances the city's rich history. As a complex and challenging situation especially with the displaced of more than 13 million Syrians according to the United Nations Office, the city rebuild must help in the immediate recovery while promoting long-term sustainability, and to achieve it is necessary to finance the cost of the reconstruction which's almost 300 billion dollars according to UNESCO.

Damascus and generally Syria have a diverse and rich heritage. The damage to cultural heritage means the loss of an identity and a past specific to this city. Rebuilding and reconstructing the heritage of the country is crucial. Rebuilding plays an important role in helping the population to recover after the war since it is linked to their cultural resilience. Rebuilding and saving the cultural heritage are an important matter but also prioritizing the help for those who have lost their houses and properties during the war and providing them with a shelter instead of what they have lost. Aside from helping and exchanging experiences between countries in the preservation of cultural and architectural heritage can enhance the knowledge and practice in this field.

A one-of-a-kind chance to combine contemporary urban planning with historical preservation is the restoration of Damascus. Through the implementation of several strategies such as cultural heritage preservation, improved transportation, public space development, sustainability, community engagement, and technology use, Damascus may provide an atmosphere that is both hospitable and lively for both locals and visitors. These tactics, backed by facts and fruitful case studies from other post-war cities, may steer Damascus in the direction of a thriving and welcoming future.

Post-war Damascus has a special opportunity for reshaping its urban, creating resilience and a sustainable city. As we have spotted light key issues like economic activities, governance framework, and sustainable development could lead to a promising, sustainable, and better future and achieve equitable outcomes.



Figure.72

source <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/87/43/4b/87434b2075fde2265ca917fdbebc80ad.jpg>

“Do you know what it means for a person to live in a bottle of perfume? Our home was that bottle. I am not trying to bribe you with an eloquent simile, but rest assured that with this simile I am not oppressing the bottle of perfume... but rather I am oppressing our home. And those who live in Damascus and penetrate its narrow lanes and narrow quarters know how Paradise opens its arms to them from where they do not expect...

A small wooden gate opens. The night journey begins on green, red, and lilac, and the symphony of light, shadow, and marble begins. The orange tree bears its fruits, the dahlia is pregnant, and the jasmine gives birth to a thousand white moons and hangs them on the bars of the windows... and the flocks of swallows do not gather except with us...The marble lions around the central pool fill their mouths with water...and blow it out...and the water play continues day and night...the fountains never get tired...and the water of Damascus never ends...” Nizar Qabbani – Syrian Poet



Figure.73

source: <https://models.com/work/british-vogue-the-road-to-damascus>

THANK YOU

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