THE SITE-SPECIFIC INTERVENTION AS A TRANSITIONAL PHASE OF RECONSTRUCTION: A SYRIAN CONTEXT

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Abstract

Drawing upon my experience as a Syrian migrant from Aleppo, this practice-based research seeks to reassess the important contribution of hammams (public baths) and bimaristans (traditional 'hospitals') to a Syrian cultural identity and collective memory. It focuses on two historical sites in the old city of Aleppo: hammam Yalbugha and bimaristan Arghun. These structures were both badly damaged during Syria's civil war, and are currently unusable and left to fall further into ruin. Reflecting upon the significance of such hammams for the local community – and their connection to bathing – the thesis addresses how temporary interventions within such structures might articulate questions of healing, affect and participation through the use of water (the supply of which they are entirely dependent). The contention is that these interventions would aid the processes of memory reconstruction through the reciprocal interactions they engender.

Such a proposal takes place within the context of a continuing water crisis in Syria, where the historically significant water supply infrastructure has been partially destroyed, and the supply of water has been both targeted (through acts of war) and politicised. In emphasising the importance of water in terms of its relation to rituals of bathing crucial to a collective memory, the research seeks to bridge between function and aesthetics in the design of interventions that explore the notion of usership and the application of speculative design ideas to real-world problems.

As such, the thesis not only examines these buildings as artefacts, but will research how a process of temporary rehabilitation might utilise water through mnemonic devices, while providing solutions for water collection in order to make the interventions self-sufficient. The proposed site-specific, temporary architectural interventions (as prototypes) are intended for the transitional phase of the rehabilitation process, but also aim to inform the longer-term restoration of these important cultural artefacts. The propositional design practice utilises condensation systems to collect water for the local community and those involved in the reconstruction process, and in so doing evoke poetic connections to embedded memories through sound and other sensory engagements.

The early stages of the research focus on documenting the current condition of the structures and the historical development of sophisticated water infrastructures within Aleppo. The presentation of this material – integrating maps, photographic documentation, texts and video footage – is an integral part of the practice. The later stages involve the design of the interventions, realised through drawings, models and scaled prototypes.

To the memory of my grandparents

Hana and Mohammed

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Introduction

The context for this research is something I have had direct experience of, as a Syrian migrant from Aleppo. I was forced to leave Syria in 2016 and move to London in search of safety and opportunity. The Syrian civil war started in 2011 and has had a devastating impact, particularly on the urban city of Aleppo and its community at large.

The war has resulted in over 500,000 deaths (according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, 2018), and has led to multiple human rights violations and a massive refugee crisis. Millions have lost their livelihoods and are struggling to meet their basic needs, including accessing clean water, electricity, food, medical care and shelter. During the writing up of this thesis, the already dire situation has been significantly worsened by the devastating earthquake in February 2023.

While the humanitarian consequences are rightly the focus of much discussion about the impact of the conflict (and the subsequent earthquake) on Syrians, this thesis addresses a less well-known consequence of the destruction: namely, to the cultural infrastructure. My particular concern is the loss of hammams (public baths) and bimaristans (traditional 'hospitals'), and the impact of such a loss to a Syrian cultural identity and collective memory. Many of these structures have been badly damaged during Syria's civil war, and yet despite their important social role they are considered a low priority in terms of the reconstruction process. Not only are these important secular buildings under-researched as institutions, but the issue of their restoration or reconstruction is marginalised in comparison to governmental and religious sites. Many such buildings are unstable structurally, and are tragically being left to fall further into ruin. This is the particular area of research that I have chosen to focus upon, and given the lack of systematic research into both their past significance and future viability, I claim this as an important contribution to knowledge.

This thesis therefore focuses on two emblematic historical sites in the old city of Aleppo, Syria: hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri (a public bath) and bimaristan Arghun al-Kamili (a traditional 'hospital'). While both sites are researched, I seek to co-opt aspects of the traditional healing role of water in the bimaristan into a design proposal for hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri. This will constitute a temporary intervention that will shore up the badly damaged structure, provide a forum for debate by creating a gathering space in the spirit of the Islamic "Sabil": a public drinking fountain that provides free, clean drinking water to the general public. I therefore concentrate the practice component of the research on designs for this important structure. However, in proposing a temporary intervention within the hammam,

Fig 1. Daniel C. Waugh, *General view - Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri*. 2010. Digital photograph (source: archnet.org).

Fig 2. Bgag, *Bimaristan Arghun al-Kamili*. 2001. Digital photograph (source: wikimapia.org).

which is intended to articulate questions of healing, affect and participation through the use of water (the supply of which is absolutely crucial to the viability of the original hammam), I believe that the project acts as an exemplar that would potentially be applicable to other damaged structures. My contention is that such interventions would aid the processes of memory reconstruction through the reciprocal interactions they engender, and this approach offers a model that could be replicated elsewhere.

The research investigates the historic importance of these two buildings, and the potential role of architectural interventions into such structures for contributing to, and helping to define, a Syrian collective memory and social identity associated with their original use. The research emphasises the role that bathing traditionally plays through its focus on the historical and socio-cultural aspects of such structures, set against a context of the symbolic and pragmatic role of water in the current Syrian water crisis. These buildings are considered an iconic embodiment of our historical culture and traditions. As a Syrian migrant with my own experience of using these baths, the aim for my practice is to highlight the importance of preserving such buildings by re-imagining their temporary use. Drawing upon the past and an uncertain present (and unpredictable future), I aim to enable a new sense of belonging by re-establishing the centrality of their role within the local community through the importance of generating clean water: a new function that nevertheless refers back to sensory memories of bathing and the healing role of water as used in the bimaristans, as well as evoking the role of the Sabil as a traditional meeting place that crosses social and economic boundaries.

As an interior and spatial designer, the practice component therefore constitutes a form of speculative design (Dunne and Raby 2013), in that it imagines a potential future and social dreaming. This is a tool to generate not only physical design solutions but speculative ideas which nevertheless address real social issues. Such an approach is allied to the notion of what Fred Scott (2008, 64) refers to as an *interventionist* approach (which he contrasts to *restorative* approaches). Here, temporary site-specific interventions within the ruined structures evoke experiences and memories of such spaces specifically through the use of water. The aim is to reconstruct an affective relationship between the body and space in ways that recall the affect (physical, mental and emotional) once associated with these culturally significant buildings. The interventions aim to extend the debate about the eventual architectural restoration of such structures in ways that engage a wider community beyond that of professional specialists, and in so doing fuse the functional (by generating a clean water supply) with the poetic (evoking the ‘healing’ sounds once associated with such buildings).

The research objectives are to: (1) assemble historical documentation of the buildings and their use, including the healing roles once played by hammams and bimaristans; (2) gather survey information on the current damaged condition of the sites (thereby establishing a network of interested parties still in Aleppo); (3) conduct primary research into the cultural significance of hammams to a displaced community, including face-to-face interviews (manifest as a series of transcripts); (4) design a temporary intervention, as a test case or prototype, that replicates the experience of the original buildings during the reconstruction process; (5) engage the current water crisis so that any intervention is sustainable, and does not place an extra burden on the existing water infrastructure.

The thesis, therefore, will consist of five main components, namely: 1) interviews with local government officials and experts, 2) memory mapping exercise and public and engagement consultation activities, 3) historical research on the buildings, 4) the proposed intervention design, and 5) a film.

Research question

The main question underlying the research is:

- How can temporary interventions articulate questions of healing, affect and participation, and aid processes of memory reconstruction through the reciprocal interactions they engender?

However, there are various distinct aspects to this question. This includes: 1) generating speculative designs for architectural interventions that serve as a memory of the hammam's original function; 2) referencing the historical and cultural aspects of the site and generating prototypes that incorporate new contemporary technologies that generate clean water; 3) gathering together documentation and historical archival material that potentially has a significance beyond the remit of the thesis, and making such material available to a network of other researchers engaging the reconstruction of Aleppo; 4) using the 'virtual' design to stimulate discussion about the potential reconstruction of these culturally significant structures.

The intervention prototypes thus seek to connect the historical aspects with a pertinent contemporary issue, narrating the story of such buildings through the role that water plays. Given logistical constraints (which have been exacerbated by the Covid 19 Crisis), the design is to be realised as a digital design, but then (post-submission) shown to a Syrian audience in order to gather their responses (see Appendix 1, p.117). As an interdisciplinary

project, the research straddles site-specific installation and architecture through the notion of the site intervention, hence bridging the aesthetic and the functional (addressing real-world issues). I will here reference: Arturo Vittori's Warka water installation that generates water for isolated countries subject to drought; Doug Aitken's sonic fountain installation; the canopy for Kufstein Fortress Arena by SEFAR Architecture. In addition to the multi-disciplinary research group, Forensic Architecture offers a precedent for the role of digital documentation within such an approach that combines information collecting, mapping through mixed media/computer rendering in ways that uncover the complexities of underlying political and cultural forces. The Egyptian architect Hasan Fathy offers a precedent for such community-focused architecture (within an Islamic context).

Research context

The research focuses on Aleppo's old-city area, the most culturally significant but affected area, where archaeological sites, historic houses, mosques and markets became a battlefield. As reported by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in 2015, 'the Old City of Aleppo has been severely damaged due to the armed conflict and very large portions of the property appear to have been completely destroyed. Some experts estimate that 70% of its core zone has been affected by this large scale destruction and compare it with Berlin and Warsaw after World War II.' Progressive efforts are being undertaken to rebuild the city. Many projects and international organisations are engaged, but only a few proposed studies have been implemented, such as Suq Al-Saqatiyya rehabilitation in the old city (2018-2019)[1], which is the first post-conflict conservation project of this scale in Aleppo to have suffered minor damage as a result of the February 2023 earthquakes.

My own research addresses the transitional stage between immediate disaster-relief and long-term reconstruction, emphasising the cultural and psychological aspects during the transition stages of a city's reconstruction. The hammams are recognised as an essential aspect of Aleppo's sense of identity (Altenbi 2011), and the role of temporary interventions (entirely reversible) is to re-establish something of that identity - to reintegrate aspects of traditional healing principles through the use of water. These temporary spaces are proposed to be located within the ruined building during the period of staged rehabilitation,

[1] The project was carried out by the Aga Khan Foundation in partnership with NGOs and various administrations such as the DGAM (Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums), which supervises conservation projects in the ancient city, the municipality, the Governorate, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Syria Trust for Development (Syria Trust For Development, 2020).

and to act as a focus for funding for the eventual architectural restoration of the structures, while engaging the local community by offering a forum for discussion.

Despite its common usage in the field of social practice, where the term intervention 'denotes any sort of deliberate effort to alter a human situation in some desired direction' (Sieber 1981, p. 9), I use the idea of intervention in a specific way relating to architectural and spatial design. The notion of intervention in this study is therefore taken as a vehicle for rehabilitating heritage buildings in such a way to engage spatial, temporal and social contexts. For this reason, I do not refer to 'intervention' as it is commonly understood in social practice, but rather to describe a particular attitude towards intervening into existing architecture in contemporary spatial practice (particularly in historically sensitive situations). Perhaps the most influential definition is that of Fred Scott (2008), who adopts an interventionalist approach utilising terms such as the 'prop': an armature the function of which is to stabilise a fragmented structure. In this regard, the role of the interventional work provides support, protection and indication to what is missing, and it aims to do this not in a way that engages ‘style’, but ‘in a straightforward, honest and non-rhetorical manner' (Scott 2008, p. 118). And, importantly, it is an approach that can be reversed, allowing the possibility for more permanent architectural responses if and when funding is made available.

Methodology and methods

My research is practice-based is an approach undertaken ‘in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcome of that practice’ (Candy 2006, p. 3). As will become clearer later, the impetus behind the spatial practice of proposing a temporary design installation within the ruined structure of hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri is not to emphasise a singular ‘output’ as such, but to develop a transferrable approach to such historically sensitive sites, specifically during the period where the structure themselves are still unstable (requiring temporary props to shore them up). Such interventions form part of a practice committed to engaging community discussion, such that the designs facilitate not only a stabilisation of the structure (preventing further damage), but in so doing (1) evokes memories of the site (and its original function) through the use of water, and (2) provides a forum for the community to be involved in discussions about the culturally important structure’s future rehabilitation.

The written thesis adapts a multidimensional, interdisciplinary approach in its research methods, analysis, and use of sources of information. The aim is to provide a

comprehensive and contextualised perspective on the current problems facing two of the most important historical sites of Aleppo. In this regard, the research process involves different stages. These include:

1) historical research into the architecture and traditional therapies associated with hammams/bimaristans through a literature search, and by developing a network of relevant professionals; 2) gathering survey material on the post-war architectural condition of the potential study sites, using contacts in Aleppo; 3) collecting qualitative data through online and personal interviews, and evolving participatory design strategies with participants from Aleppo; 4) thinking about the visual presentation of research materials as a form of practice; 5) a digital prototyping process: setting a framework of strategies for the development of architectural interventions; 6) evaluating the effectiveness of the architectural design through a systematic review using my network of expert bodies with specialist interests in heritage.

During the initial stages of my research, I aimed to develop a comprehensive framework that combines elements of archaeological theory, architectural reconstruction, heritage studies, social and cultural anthropology. However, the published studies on historical site preservation (in a Syrian context) largely focus on the physical and technical aspects of reconstruction, and the current intervention policies do not provide flexibility for public engagement in post-war recovery. For that reason, my research employs qualitative research methods through interviews and participatory practices in order to gather various perspectives (from participants of different backgrounds) toward preserving archaeological sites in Aleppo and supplement conceptual discussions for the literature and practice review. This emphasis on preservation will then be contrasted with my own concern with intervention at a transitional measure. (Refer to Appendix 1, p.117 for detailed information on the interviews and participatory practices).

In addition to the interviews, a literature analysis will be undertaken to identify current approaches of site preservation and intervention strategies around the world (see chapter one) and outline the potential methods which could be applicable in the context of rehabilitation in Syria. The theoretical basis of this study comes from multiple sources, including: Fred Scott's theory of architectural alteration as a process of intervention (2008); Ignasi de Solà Morales's (1985) concept of architectural intervention as analogy; the notion of social design and design for the real world (Papanek 1971); Dunne and Raby's theory of speculative design (2013). Of course, there is a substantial literature on the wider aspects of conservation and preservation, going back to classic texts such as John Ruskin's *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (2005 [1849]), where he sets out his opposition to the practice of restoration, describing it as

> the most total destruction which a building can suffer: a destruction out of which no remnants can be gathered: a destruction accompanied with false description with the things destroyed. Do not let us deceive ourselves in this important matter; it is *impossible*, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture. (Ruskin 2005 [1849], p. 353)

However, upon reviewing this literature, it was clear that most of the conservation/preservation policies originate from western studies, indicating a much stronger focus on site preservation in Europe and a disconnect between European and middle eastern interpretations in historic preservation. The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Policy (ICCROM), for instance, conducted a survey of conservation literature (including architecture) from 1992-2016, and discovered that 89.2% emerged from first authors based in Europe and North America, with only 0.7% originating from first authors in Arab states (ICCROM n.d, accessed 12 July 2023). ICCROM is an intergovernmental organisation that attempts to stimulate debate to include countries where the subject of conservation is marginalised. Since 2004, their Architectural and Archaeological Tangible Heritage in the Arab Region programme has been central to their mandate, becoming an important force for cultural heritage in the region.

As a result of the under representation of Arabic perspectives on conservation (let alone Syrian perspectives), the study will supplement a wider analysis of methodological approaches to site preservation with a more informal narrative analysis of the ideas and responses that emerged from my own interviews: conducted with specialists and non-specialists, which add ‘an element of personal interaction between the researcher and the respondent not present in other forms of data collection’ (Simister 1995). It is hoped that the new knowledge produced would not only complement the previous studies on preservation (in a Syrian context), but develop a constructive dialogue between designers, community, and policymakers. This study addresses the knowledge gap relating to i) under-representation of Arabic or Syrian perspectives against the overrepresentations of Eurocentric perspectives; ii) informal narrative analysis (one-to-one interviews) as opposed to wider quantitative analysis.

Few studies have investigated the influential role of hammams as institutions within a Syrian culture (such as the manuscripts of Khayer al-Din al-Asadi 1940-1970). However, there is limited information regarding their traditional practices and spatial use, both in eastern and western literature. There is a gap in knowledge around the cultural context and complexities of such institutions, particularly their role in promoting social and cultural integrity. This gap was identified through the extensive research on traditional hammams, where I investigated

historical and contemporary perspectives covering the years 1885-2018. For that reason, I collect information from various resources extending beyond existing literature, which only briefly describes the hammams in Aleppo and their major features.

I have conducted historical research on documents from both Middle Eastern resources and European orientalists' collections, newspapers and magazines such as Al Adeyat (1931-1940). It should be noted that the secondary sources for this approach were mainly based on Arabic literature that I translate into English. The main problem of collecting these materials (exacerbated by Covid restrictions) is the limited availability of such resources online and the lack of access to government materials of architectural records. This led me to conduct interviews to further explore the research subject by using contacts from Aleppo, professors, and architecture students who also helped provide materials and images that reveal the current situation of the historic sites.

The role of documentation as an archival practice forms an integral part of my research. I gather and investigate a number of visual materials, in particular, images gathered from contacts in Aleppo and the visual archive of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, as well as documentation conducted by westerners, such as the archival materials of Ernst Herzfeld Papers on northern Syria (1908-1930), the photographic collection taken by the architect and planner Michel Écochard (during the French mandate of Syria), when he worked on a range of restoration projects of monuments in Aleppo in the 1930s and 1940s. Furthermore, I gather images from my own family photographic collection, which serve a significant role as part of this visual research.

This visual and material evidence allows for the exploring of untold narratives that reflect the political and socio-cultural representations of the past. Thus, this historical approach is not limited to describing past events only but rather building an interpretation and analysis of different elements of the past associated with such historical structures. That necessitates an understanding of the impact of the past on the present and future issues and developments. The argument is that these historic buildings have been marginalised in the context of recent discussions about the reconstruction of destroyed cultural heritage monuments in Aleppo. The absence of their architectural presence, loss, and destruction put them at risk of being forgotten. Therefore, the primary aim is to use this research as a tool to reconstruct a memory of a culture in danger of being lost.

As a result, the process of the documentation combines two different approaches:

1) the visual research methods which enable the evaluation of the current condition of the sites and the understanding of the socio-cultural aspects of the city. This comprises (a)

archaeological site mapping, collecting architectural records and hard information materials, such as images and drawings about the sites; (b) involving strategies for archival data collection to cover the historical, political, and social aspects of the research. This is considered as primary research including data gathered from site visits to Aleppo as well as interviews with various stakeholders. Establishing a network of both professional and family stroke personal contacts has been crucial to identifying the stakeholders. Word of mouth contacts have been important in establishing such a network; 2) qualitative research methods of data collection (secondary research); (a) oral history through analysing interviewees past experiences and applying memory retrieval strategies; (b) the data which emerges from semi-structured interviews.

Integrated methods of participatory and visual research form a substantial part of the study. The documentation of interviews provided insight into aspects of lived experiences. The use of visual data collection informed the design practice and highlighted the concerns about post-war complexities, particularly the social and political aspects. Therefore, the research considers using design theories that address real-world problems, incorporating aesthetic design principles such as speculative design (Dunne and Raby, 2013) and the work of Victor Papanek on socially oriented design, such as the classic text *Design for the Real World* (1971).

The book *Toward a Lexicon of Usership* (2013) by theorist Stephen Wright challenges art's link with aesthetic function, prioritising 'use' and arguing that we should deactivate art's aesthetic function (to render it inoperative) (2013, p. 19). Wright argues that 'it is only by deactivating this debilitating, use-precluding function that [practitioners] can make way for a purposeful aesthetics of art; an aesthetics repurposed in the name of usership' (2013, p. 19). Wright, in particular, proposes the benefit of what he terms a '1:1 scale' (2013, pp. 3-5). He argues that: 'Art and art-related practices that are oriented towards usership rather than spectatorship are characterized more than anything else by their scale of operations: they operate on the 1:1 scale' (p. 3). For Wright, they are propositions of what they are, rather than scaled-down models that represent. Wright describes an approach that is very close to my own 'usership-oriented' initiative centered around the notion of the interventionalist proposition but that serves a function over and above its ostensible function of gathering water:

> When an art-informed practice is ramped up to the 1:1 scale, deactivating its primary aesthetic function and activating instead its usual or useful function, there's no sure way of seeing it as art. There are certainly no perceptual properties to tip us off once its coefficient of artistic visibility drops to the negligible. To perceive such practices as

> art requires some supplementary theoretical information, something that lets us know that the initiative, whatever it may be, is both what it is, and a *proposition* of what it is; some external knowledge letting us know that the initiative's existence does not exhaust itself in its function and outcome, but that it is *about* something. It embodies meaning. (Wright, 2013, p. 6)

The particular social issue and set of meanings to be addressed in this thesis is one of cultural memory of a particular 'use', specifically in relation to the role of the hammam's in the life of ordinary Syrians living in Aleppo. So while this is also set against the context of the Syrian water crisis, with the proposition producing a very real function of generating drinkable water, the meanings it evokes go far beyond.

The participatory and use-oriented research was therefore chosen to examine the roles and meanings of space and place of such institutions and their impact on people's everyday experiences. It is a community-based approach, and often it can be difficult for the participants to express themselves verbally and recall their past experiences.

One method I have employed as a generator is a 'memory map' method, which I believe is appropriate for approaching the subject studied as it afforded another way of seeing how people perceived and experienced the spaces of Aleppo. The main idea here is to draw annotated maps for the site (hammam Yalbugha) and its surroundings from memory, then draw what first came to mind in terms of the image of the bathhouse space. The analytical component of this method helped to see how these physical spaces were remembered and imagined and, in so doing, informed the qualitative research in a socio-spatial dimension. In addition, starting the interviews with the mapping task helped the participants focus on the site and place themself within it, which enables retrieving information and details from their past memories. Throughout this practice, the sketch mapping technique was articulated to visually represent the participants' experiences and emotions toward the space, which, as a result, provided physical evidence for this research and allowed participants to express and share personal narratives throughout the rest of the interviews. (For a detailed discussion of the memory maps approach, see Appendix 1.2, p.139)

In the initial stages of the thesis, I was planning to construct design prototypes, that were to be used to invite Syrian refugees and migrants in this country to engage in discussions in order to receive responses and design feedback. The visual and historical archive materials were to be used as a tool to inform non-specialist audiences and people who do not know the situation or some of the historical or cultural aspects of the hammams. However, Covid 19 (and its impact upon the University's workshops) put significant restrictions on the production of such prototypes, and the emphasis has instead been on generating digital

representations of the 1:1 scale proposition. After the submission of the thesis, it is intended to enact similar participatory sessions using the digital versions of the design.

Contributions and Structure of the Thesis

This study set out to assess the importance of public baths as cultural institution, intending to characterise the role they play in the social and cultural life of the ancient city. It is hoped that this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the hammams as a physical manifestation of the cultural traditions, beliefs and values that link past narratives with the present and future. The practice element is manifest as an intervention into one of the destroyed hammams; I have developed this design as a prototype for an alternative way to experience ancient sites in the aftermath of a conflict. Thus, the design solution is a specific response to the Yalbugha bathhouse, but it is also an approach that could be replicated elsewhere.

The research is presented in three themed chapters that describe how the study was conducted and developed. The analyses of chapters one and two will help this research present an in-depth understanding of the research problem, the issues facing the old city's historic fabric and lead this research to prepare appropriate recommendations for rehabilitation of the Yalbugha bathhouse, which will be presented in Chapter three. Each chapter opens a range of questions that can be used to generate further research in this area.

Chapter one outlines the historical and political factors that shaped both the society and the urban fabric of the old city of Aleppo. It addresses the impact of conflict on individuals and the community as a critical element in the political debate informing the design thinking process. This chapter also illustrates the potential problems and challenges of post-conflict reconstruction debates. It is concerned with setting out the research design strategy and positioning it through a systematic literature review of different approaches to conservation, architectural attitudes towards interventions in historical sites.

In this Chapter, the following topics will be discussed:

- The effects of war on the archaeological sites.
- Collective memory and the process of reconstruction.
- Weaponising water as an instrument of war in Syria.
- Water scarcity in times of crises (COVID-19).
- The politics of conservation.

Chapter two investigates the historical, social, and cultural context of the research, with particular reference to the project sites (hammam Yalbugha and bimaristan Arghun).

The first section of this chapter demonstrates the history of the Syrian bath and bathing culture, specifically in the old city of Aleppo. It will be centralised on its social, cultural and symbolic significance in the context of tangible and intangible heritage. Secondly, the chapter presents the architectural and healing methods of ancient bimaristans to understand the influence of design in promoting a healing environment. Site and context analysis will help this study find the appropriate methods and materials that can be used to tackle the problems and solutions in protecting such historical sites.

The research provided an opportunity to study and understand the concept of domestic and public fountains in Aleppo, which raises many questions about the Syrian identities, and the social, cultural, and religious aspects of these identities. This chapter will elaborate further on the healing principles through water use and its spiritual connection to places, whether it was placed in the courtyards of traditional Syrian houses or placed in more prominent public spaces. It focuses on the links between water uses in architecture and the human experience of space, which combines elements of the past and the present.

Chapter three presents the conceptual framework of the research, in and through practice. It describes previous work related to the current area of research, and by so doing, provides a critical evaluation of these works in reference to the research problem. This chapter aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the design proposal, introducing a new intervention approach for rehabilitating historical sites in times of war.

The second part of the chapter will include methods for data representation (online archive) since the research outcome elements will be mapped to a timeline, a visual storytelling tool so that users can explore and connect the different events being investigated.

Finally, the concluding chapter proposes a new method for architectural interventions, and rehabilitation of heritage sites. It will explain the significance of the research findings and setting out recommendations for future research.

Summary

This research offers valuable insights into developing a design approach for interventions within architectural sites of historical importance, which can play a vital role in protecting heritage properties in a war situation. While this is the primary aim of the research, it is also

hoped that if activated, this would contribute to the healing process after damage has been done. The findings suggested that the temporary structures could secure the protection of the built heritage and allow for dialogue and the recovery of the specific memory of place, engaging practicalities to facilitate post-conflict reconstruction. Furthermore, the proposed design intervention would have a significant impact, generating publicity and raising awareness of heritage protection and current real-world problems, particularly issues related to water scarcity.

The thesis, overall, will be presented in two parts: a written text, drawings and images (part one), and a comprehensive documentation of my practice (part two). The latter includes historical images of key events, structured by the chronological stages of the research (as a form of a timeline design) to helps the reader draw connections between the presented events. Finally, the thesis will feature a video QR code that will directly lead scanners to my work and display video material once the QR code is scanned; a weblink to the site can also be accessed without a smartphone.

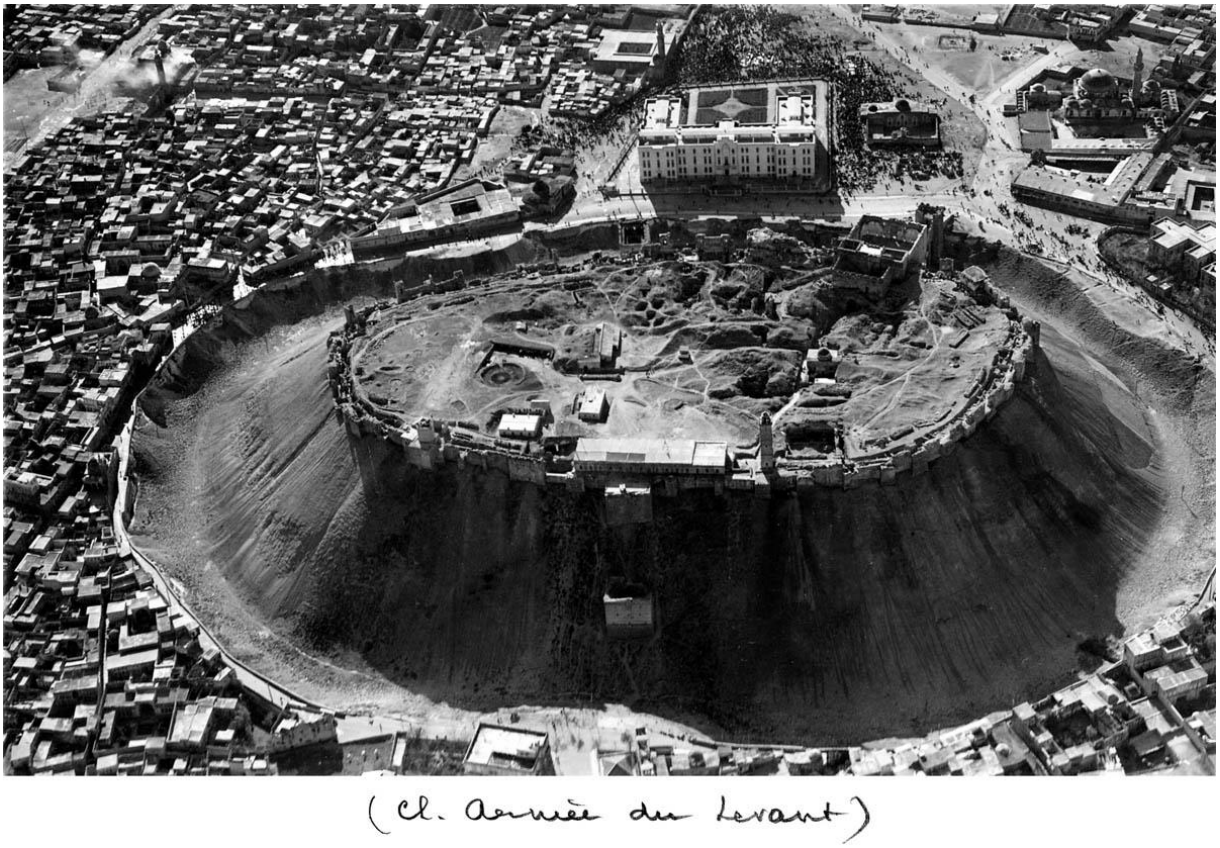


Fig 3. Michel Écochard, *Aerial view of Citadel at Aleppo.*1930s (source: Aga Khan Trust for Culture).

Chapter 1 Historical and Political Context, and the Politics of Reconstruction

Any strategy for reconstructing Aleppo's hammams and bimaristans must acknowledge the particular social and political context of Syria's civil war. The war left a devastating legacy of destruction, with the city of Aleppo at the centre of some of the war's fiercest fighting. Few buildings having been rebuilt since the fighting largely halted in 2016. And then, during the writing up of this thesis, another disaster struck the city, this time geological in origin. On 06 February 2023, a Mw 7.8 earthquake struck western Syria (the epicentre located near Gaziantep, across the border in southern Turkey), followed by a second Mw 7.8 earthquake some 9 hours later. According to the *International Blue Crescent* (2023), 8,476 people died in Syria, with over 14,500 injured, with over fifty thousand deaths in Turkey. In addition to this devastating human loss, the damage caused by bombardment and fighting has been significantly added to by the collapse of buildings. Despite the importance of the earthquake and its aftermath, given its occurrence towards the end of my writing of the thesis, I will focus my attention on the earlier phases of destruction.

Since the war was started in 2011, nearly 4.8 million people have left the country, an exodus that has had enormous cultural as well as economic and humanitarian consequences. Aleppo, the most damaged city, is the oldest and the largest city in Syria, a cosmopolitan city where people from different faiths lived peacefully. Known for its medieval architecture and rich cultural history, it is a United Nations World Heritage Site, named the 'Capital of Islamic Culture' in 2006. And yet much of this architectural heritage has been destroyed by the war and two earthquakes, and the city faces enormous logistical problems in relation to any proposed reconstruction of the city.

In order to register something of the importance of bathing as a cultural institution, we need only note the sheer numbers of facilities afforded its inhabitants. Aleppo housed 177 hammams during the medieval period (Al-Homsi 1983, p. 134), and while these numbers declined, up until the start of the war hammams formed an integral aspect of Syrian culture. The use of the therapeutic sound of water in fountains in structures co-related to hammams, called bimaristans, was integral to attempts to alleviate a range of psychological conditions. Most of these structures have now been destroyed or partially destroyed, including important architectural sites such as Hammam Yalbugha and Bimaristan Arghun (the focus of this thesis). This destruction is not just architectural in significance but represents a huge cultural and symbolic loss.

Given the scale of the problems faced by the processes of reconstruction, my research focuses on two sites within Aleppo's old-city area, which as noted earlier is the most culturally significant but affected area. Progressive efforts are being undertaken to rebuild the city. Many projects and international organisations are engaged, but to date none of the studies proposed have been implemented. Such a situation has been exacerbated by the earthquakes, which caused significant damage to some structures that had largely escaped war damage. It is hoped that the research will play a role in generating publicity about the importance of international funding for these buildings' eventual reconstruction, and to raise the profile of the hammams as an important part of the secular cultural life of the city.

As such, focusing on hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri and bimaristan Arghun al-Kamili, my own research addresses the transitional stage between immediate disaster-relief and long-term reconstruction, emphasising the cultural and psychological aspects during the transition stages of a city's post-war and post-earthquake reconstruction. The hammams are recognised as an essential aspect of Aleppo's sense of identity, and the role of temporary interventions is to re-establish something of that identity - to reintegrate aspects of traditional healing principles through the evocative use of water. The practice element of the research therefore comprises temporary spaces that are proposed to be located within the ruined buildings during the period of staged reconstruction, and to act as a focus for funding for the eventual architectural restoration of these historic structures.

1.1 The Historical and Political Context

1.1.1 The aftermath of War and Destruction

Hannah Arendt (cited in Bevan 2006, p. 13) argues: 'The reality and reliability of the human world rests primarily on the fact that we are surrounded by things more permanent than the activity by which they were produced.' To lose all that is familiar – the destruction of one's environment – can mean a disorientating exile from the memories they have invoked. Arendt's comment accurately reflects the current status of Yalbugha al-Nasiri and bimaristan Arghun al-Kamili, structures that have (albeit badly damaged) survived the civil war and earthquakes, while the activities of bathing they once housed have been marginalised, forced back from the public realm into private space. Privatised hammams have lost a sense of the collective experience so crucial to the role they played in Syrian society.

Historically, Syria has experienced both the advantages and the disadvantages of its geographical position as a 'crossroads' between Europe and the East. It was, and remains, a

major trade route connecting east and west, which has economic benefits but makes it a desirable acquisition to external parties. Over the millennia, many powerful groups have seen Syria as an important factor establishing the viability of the route either west or east. Thus, Syria has been ruled by Amorites, Hittites, Assyrians, Akkadians, Greeks, Romans, Ubbayids, Ommayids, Mameluks and Ottomans at various times since the 2nd millennium BC (Al-Tabbakh 1925). Each group has left its mark on the cities, including Aleppo, which makes them a 'living history book'. Now a UNESCO cultural Legacy site, Aleppo has survived numerous disasters but remained essentially whole as an architectural and cultural entity. Aleppo has evolved gradually over the centuries, but grew much bigger in the 20th century, expanding into the surrounding localities; the old historic centre, however, remained as a busy, active part of the city, with its social fabric intact and its baths, mosques, madrassas, souks and khans providing scenes of constant activity. This is what the civil war has threatened.

This density has social implications. One former resident of the Farafrah district I spoke to remembered how, even as an only child, he was never short of playmates. The pattern of housing built back-to-back, where each unit is constructed around its own courtyard, meant children could freely go from house to house, while the narrow lanes between the houses were safe play areas, too narrow for most motor traffic. Here, there is a merging of private and public space. The groups of houses would open onto more open areas, with hammams and other public facilities, such as the mosques and bimaristans. These places took on an important role as public gathering spaces, as they served as multifunctional spaces where communities would meet and celebrate various occasions together (Hajjar 2010).

The place this resident described is the result of long years of evolution, where courtyard houses offer a sophisticated urban lifestyle which provides an ideal setting for the intricate patterns of prevailing cultural traditions, perfectly adapted to Syrian climatic conditions. Through its physical structure, it combines outdoor and indoor living with complete measures of safety, privacy, environmental realism and comfort. It is not only practical for the climate but adaptable to modern living, to the extent that there are still many citizens who much prefer to live in such environments, though war damage means that few of the original 110,000 inhabitants remain, and very many of the housing units are either destroyed or substantially damaged (as are the public buildings which graced these areas). Again, the recent earthquake has significantly added to this destruction, though the extent of this at this moment in time is difficult to ascertain.

The recent relative stability has meant that it is feasible to now contemplate undertaking repairs to these badly damaged areas. It is useful to note the words of UNESCO's Assistant

Director-General for Culture, Ernesto Ottone, when he states: ‘Culture and cultural heritage are powerful catalysts in overcoming the challenges of recovery and reconciliation for cities devastated by armed conflict. Inclusive dialogue, respect for cultural diversity and a sense of community ownership, helps cities recover from the trauma of war and secure a lasting peace’ (UNESCO 2018).

As noted earlier, many efforts are being undertaken to rebuild the city. However, few of these plans have been enacted, and many that have been damaged by the earthquake. In particular, they are facing two major problems:

1- financial: to reconstruct the area requires significant financial support which is currently unavailable (due to the financial and economic crises in the country).

2- the matter of time: the reconstruction process of such places needs many years in order to be completed. The United Nations said that if the funding were provided it will take 10 to 15 years in order to rebuild the old city, maybe even more (UNESCO, 2018).

Such evaluations pre-date the earthquake damage, where an estimated 5.37 million people across Syria have been made homeless, with nearly half of its population affected. In Aleppo alone, there were 444 deaths (Zinklo, 2023) with numerous buildings collapsing. In particular, the Citadel of Aleppo was badly affected.

Syria is, therefore, going through a cultural identity crisis, and our history and civilisation are at risk of being permanently erased. The destruction of the ancient city was substantial, and the reconstruction of what was demolished would take a considerable time (with many structures remaining unstable). The old city is well-documented, but the biggest obstacle is the lack of financial capability and lack of infrastructure. The effects of the war mean that there is also a shortage of skilled labour able to undertake such complex reconstruction processes.

In addition to the huge financial and logistical challenges to reconstruction, there are also political and religious priorities when it comes to rebuilding and restoring certain areas in the old city. However, as a result of the current Islamic dominance, there seems to be financial support to rebuild religious sites such as the Great Mosque of Aleppo (the Umayyad Mosque) but not to support long-established cultural institutions such as the hammams. The former is funded by a charitable foundation run by Chechen funders, who are funding the reconstruction of some of the major historic Islamic buildings, such as Aleppo's landmark mosque (in collaboration with the Syrian Ministry of Religious Affairs) (Al-Olabi, 2018).

1 Damaged and collapsed domes
2 Damaged dome
3 Damage to the facade
4 Debris

Fig 4. *Hammam Yalbugha*: Damage Assessment, 2017. Digital photograph, Left: The main façade of the hammam. Right: The northern façade of Hammam Yalbugha. Edited by Sally Hilal (source: www.UNESCO.ORG).

In terms of secular architecture, the government, along with the help of the community, is carrying out limited plans to reconstruct the old Souks and Khans in order to revitalise the commerce and industry in the area, hoping to boost the local economy, encouraging small-scale traders. One of these examples is, the Suq al-Saqatiyya, will be considered later in this chapter.

But what about other historic buildings with cultural significance? Hammam Yalbagha's reconstruction, for instance, needs considerable financial support, as it was heavily damaged by war, and then by the earthquakes (see fig. 4). The rebuilding strategies are unlikely to be executed in the near future, as the Hammam is not currently considered a priority by the government, precisely because it would not generate any significant income. This prioritising of religious and economic factors means that the culturally significant hammams and bimaristans are therefore largely ignored. This is the context in which the practice component of the PhD is to be seen. This is discussed elsewhere, but it is worth noting here that the proposed site-specific, temporary architectural interventions (as prototypes) are intended for the transitional phase of the rehabilitation process (in distinction to the rehabilitation of Suq al-Saqatiyya discussed above), but also aim to inform the longer-term restoration of these important artefacts, and to generate discussion to raise their profile as important cultural institutions.

Robert Bevan, in *The Destruction of Memory* (2006), explores the wider subject of war crimes against architecture and their tragic consequences for a nation. Bevan investigates a series of case studies in which the war and conflicts' main target was the destruction of architecture, such as the collapse of the World Trade Centre 'Twin Towers' in New York, and the destruction of the Old Mostar Bridge in 1993 during the Bosnian war (which will be investigated later in this thesis). Bevan argues that the destruction of historical monuments and artefacts during war and conflict is therefore a deliberate act of war: there is an intention to erase a nation or an ethnic group by destroying its cultural identity, by erasing significant symbols that represent power, value and history of societies such as Mosques and libraries etc.. This relates to what happened in Syria (Aleppo in particular) during the latest civil war, when the rebels blew up tunnels under the city's ancient quarter, claiming that they were targeting areas where the military was stationed. This is an example of cultural genocide, 'the intentional destruction of national groups on the basis of their collective identity' (Jones, 2006, p. 10). I believe that Aleppo's important hammams and bimaristans need to be seen in such a context of cultural genocide, a situation exacerbated by the distorted prioritising of commercial and religious architecture over a secular activity facilitating not only everyday

rituals of bathing, but places that foster debate and discussion (places of resistance) outside of the control of the state or religious authorities.

1.1.2 Weaponisation of Water: The Water Crisis

Starting at the beginning of the civil war in 2012, the water crisis in Aleppo has been one of the major obstacles which is still affecting civilians, specifically those who live within the old city area, due to a substantial number of targeted attacks on its water systems. Water was used as a tool of war, in that various sides, including the armed militants, were responsible for aiding in the destruction of the water systems, which led to several problems such as the control of the main water pumping stations and the contamination of drinking water. Significantly, two main underground tunnels that supply water for the majority of the city were blown up, and, as a result of the explosions, sewage leaked into the clean water system.

A reservoir on the River Euphrates, which rises in Eastern Turkey, is the only source of domestic water to Aleppo. The river is a crucial source of socio-economic development for Turkey, Syria and Iraq with Turkey controlling the flow of 90% of the river. During the recent war, the Turkish forces repeatedly decreased the water flow and, at times, completely cut off the water into Syria. Even now, according to the UN, the Euphrates River water supply is at 40% of its previous level (Pedersen, 2021) due to deliberate human intervention. Still, it is excitative by climate change, which has also added to the problem. This ongoing conflict over the Euphrates water began in the 1960s. However, in the Syrian conflict, the water became an instrument of war and whole populations were deprived of drinking water. It should also be noted that the River Tigris, which also flows from Turkey through Syria is still being used in the same way, so that the Syrian town of Hassakah is frequently denied water.

During the ongoing conflict, various armed parties controlled or targeted the main water stations in the region. For example, Aleppo's key water treatment and pumping station, Al-Khafsah (located on the western bank of the Euphrates River and held at the time by the so-called Islamic State), was hit during an airstrike attack intended for the surrounding area, which led to the destruction of a significant part of the station.

As a result of the water system issues, local people resorted to using the undrinkable water from the Queiq River (also known as the Aleppo River), which was previously the ancient water source for the city. The river arises in south-eastern Turkey and has also been controlled by Turkish dams since 1950, causing it to dry up completely in the late 1960s (Ayboga, 2019). However, pre-war, in 2008, water from the Euphrates was diverted to revive the dead river system as a resource for agricultural development. Due to the water system

Fig 5. A water-filled hole at the site of an airstrike in Aleppo. September 24, 2016. Photograph: REUTERS/Abdalrhman Ismail (theguardian.com).

Fig 6. Civilians fill containers with water in Aleppo, Syria. December 14, 2016. Photograph: REUTERS/Abdalrhman Ismail (mitchellrepublic.com).

issues caused by the conflict, local people were forced to use the undrinkable water that still flows in this system.

One solution to the lack of water in the taps has been to deliver water directly to dwellings using water trucks. However, providing water in this way is costly, while the trucks themselves can also cause problems in that previously, these trucks were mainly used to transport fuel oil, which can contain toxic components and are difficult to clean. The results have been seen in an increase of waterborne disease leading to deaths, mainly of children and the elderly (Davison 2015). Resulting from this situation, the locals drilled a great number of wells to attempt to secure drinking water, which led to the scarcity of groundwater in Aleppo due to unregulated drilling. At the same time, besides the spread of waterborne diseases, these phenomena have led to widespread poverty. The water system issue also indirectly contributed to serious inflation in the price of livestock and agricultural goods. With support from non-governmental organisations such as the Red Cross and the United Nations, the Syrian government received assistance to drill wells in multiple locations throughout the region as well as supporting the filling of water tanks. However, the well and tank water in Aleppo, 'is not nearly enough to sustain the needs of the population,' according to the U.N. Resident and Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria (2016).

During the active part of the conflict, people struggled to obtain water and lined up in long queues waiting for their turn at public wells (this is something of which I had direct experience before coming to the UK in 2016). Such tasks frequently took hours, and carrying water cans for long distances requires a substantial amount of time and a great effort. This typically involved women, children, and elderly people, and as a result of this strenuous activity, health and physical problems occurred.

In 2019, the government started restoring the damaged water station and water systems. The city gradually started to recover and the situation had started to improve, at least marginally. However, the damage to and contamination of the clean water networks require time and it may not be possible to restore a sufficient supply. The issue of water scarcity puts the region at great risk in the future and requires immediate action. The water level of the Euphrates River is decreasing year on year, and the groundwater is less. Therefore, it is necessary to find alternative sustainable water systems for the community that integrate economic, social and ecological considerations.

This situation has been worsened by sanctions, and then Covid 19. The economic sanctions, initially imposed on Syria by the United States in 2019, shared one purpose, the eradication of the reigning regime. While these measures were intended to be punitive measures solely aimed toward the governing body, aiming to weaken it into utter submission, they later

demonstrated the devastating results of the inhumane dystopia enforced upon the Syrian people. In addition to over 80% of the citizens being pressured into the lowest living standards of poverty, the economic crisis also finds itself echoing between the walls of hospitals which lack any medical equipment or preparations that would stand a chance of success in fighting the threatening pandemic.

The Covid crisis hit Syria in 2020. In the period between 2020 and 2022 many people struggled to find essential first-line medications commonly used to fight covid-19, such as paracetamol and other types of pain relief, mainly because of the deteriorating national pharmaceutical industry that caused a shortage of these products. Furthermore, any import of medical drugs from foreign laboratories was strictly forbidden by the protocols of the sanctions against Syria. The rapidly increasing number of COVID-19 fatalities in this period reflected not only the suffering of a population, but the demoralising imminent doom of a nation that was once known for its rich culture and history. Among other issues were the shortages of personal protective equipment (masks and sanitisers) that were only infrequently found and are sold at outrageous prices. There was a growing concern regarding the awareness of people, as the majority chose to completely disregard any social distancing protocols and methods despite the government's attempt to introduce several restrictions. After years of war, the inadequate living conditions, increasing poverty along with the pandemic, the people of Syria found themselves in a dire situation; stay at home and starve or work and risk being infected.

One of the most effective methods of preventing the spread of the Covid virus is simply washing the hands thoroughly, and while Covid rates have fallen this is still a pressing need. Though it may seem strange, even this seems to be considered a privilege, as clean water does not reach most households and is frequently cut off completely. Those who are lucky enough to have access to water need to purify and sterilise it first, using boiling techniques that require gas, which along with petrol and as a result of those same sanctions, is nowhere to be found at reasonable costs. The situation is beyond tragic and needs urgent intervention to secure the most basic human rights. The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights stated, 'The right to water clearly falls within the category of guarantees essential for securing an adequate standard of living, particularly since it is one of the most fundamental conditions for survival' (2002). Designers and planners may not have the authority to change systems, but they do have the knowledge to encourage public spaces as a platform for participation and debate for change.

Another crisis then hit Aleppo in 2022. On 10 September 2022 the Ministry for Health officially announced a cholera outbreak in Aleppo (UNICEF 2023), after 15 confirmed

laboratory cases. According to UNICEF report of 16 January 2023: ‘tens of thousands of suspected acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) cases have been reported in all governorates’. This situation was exacerbated by the floods which affected camps in Idlib, where many had fled to escape the fighting elsewhere. UNICEF and the Ministry of Health instigated a successful vaccination programme to curb the spread of cholera, starting on 04 December 2022. One of the responses (with direct relevance to my own intervention) is the instigation of oral rehydration points throughout the city:

> According to Dr Reem, a Department of Health worker responsible for oral rehydration points in Aleppo, awareness on staying safe from cholera is the ‘first line of defence against the disease’. “Simple hygiene practices can keep people cholera-free. Also, it is important to highlight these practices for women who are breastfeeding and help them to keep their babies and families healthy”, she said. Patients with cholera symptom, including acute watery diarrhoea, are referred to oral hydration points and provided oral rehydration salts to ease symptoms.

The report continues

> “Having oral rehydration points at health centres has been very important during the spread of cholera. For many patients with cholera symptoms the centre was far more accessible - in terms of transportation and financial costs - than hospitals. At the rehydration points, they received the care and treatment they needed to ease their symptoms. For severe cases, we’d refer to hospitals,” explained Fatima, 24. She receives patients with cholera symptoms in an oral rehydration point at the UNICEF - supported Department of Health centre in As-Safira.

However, despite these efforts, when, on 06 February 2023, a Mw 7.8 earthquake struck western Syria, followed by a second Mw 7.8 earthquake some 9 hours later, an already extreme situation was made considerably worse. Apart from the other devastating effects, the earthquake severely disrupted what had been a successful vaccination campaign, causing further widespread damage to water supply and transport links. Camps and reception centres, such as those at Idlib, are especially vulnerable to a resurgence of cholera and other waterborne diseases, with the underlying cause being a lack of clean water supplies (requiring major infrastructural changes).

Reporting on this situation in *The Guardian*, the journalist Ruth Michaelson describes the cholera resurgence after the earthquake, despite earlier efforts to contain the spread. She records, on 21 April 2023, how the earthquakes compounded the worsening living situations

by destroying infrastructure and further displacing the population. In a citation worth quoting at length, she reports:

> The devastation of the earthquakes make a resurgence in cholera inevitable. By early April, more than 13,000 cases and at least 23 confirmed deaths had been recorded in the region.
>
> “We did our best to contain the outbreak”, says health official Hussein Bazaar, bowing his head in the corridors of the Bab al-Hawa hospital, on the border with Turkey. A supply of cholera vaccines arrived in Idlib 10 days before the earthquakes, he says. “The cholera outbreak got cast aside as bigger things happened, given our limited capacity”.
>
> “I’m worried, as the earthquakes affected the water supply, any basic infrastructure was destroyed”, says Dr Wajih al-Karrat, as he moves between beds in a makeshift hospital that was once a school, in the town of Haram. Around him, children wail in their beds, the lack of basic supplies evident on the shelves about them. Chipped paint covers the walls as nurses scrub the corridors.
>
> The resurgence of cholera across Syria … over the past year, feeds on long-term infrastructure problems that plague the north of the country, as well as disrupted aid supplies. (Michaelson 2023)

The article accurately reflects a worsening situation, where the earthquakes have added to a water crisis that was first weaponised by war. This is the reality of the context for my project.

1.2 The Politics of Conservation

1.2.1 Preservation/restoration

Within Syria's current economic and political situation, the process of post-war and post-earthquake reconstruction itself raises questions about rebuilding; is it better to repair, restore or reconstruct the monuments destroyed by war? I want to first reflect upon historic preservation theory (making references to some key historic texts), then assess how such approaches play out in actual conservation efforts in Aleppo, before proposing a different, interventionalist approach.

Traditionally, preservation and restoration specialists are usually opposed to the idea of ‘reconstruction’. They believe that it may lead to falsification or distortion of history as it

creates alternative realities and new forms that never existed in the past, characterised as 'fake replicas'. This view has a long history which can be traced back to a position first developed by John Ruskin (1819-1900), who described the restoration practices in his book *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) as 'the most total destruction which a building can suffer: a destruction out of which no remnants can be gathered: a destruction accompanied with false description of the thing destroyed' (Ruskin, 1849, p.184). Ruskin believed that the actual value of a building lay not just in its physical materials but in its age and historical significance. He emphasised that the passage of time and the accumulation of history imbued a building with a unique character and aesthetic. Ruskin's focus on the importance of "Age" as a significant aspect of a building's value influenced his stance on restoration. Thus, he argues:

> For indeed, the greatest glory of a building is not in its stones, nor in its gold. Its glory is in its Age, and in that deep sense of voicefulness, of stern watching, of mysterious sympathy, nay, even of approval or condemnation, which we feel in walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity. It is in their lasting witness against men, in their quiet contrast with the transitional character of all things, in the strength which, through the lapse of seasons and times, and the decline and birth of dynasties, and the changing of the face of the earth, and of the limits of the sea, maintains its sculptured shapeliness for a time insuperable, connects forgotten and following ages with each other, and half constitutes the identity, as it concentrates the sympathy, of nations : it is in that golden stain of time, that we are to look for the real light, and colour, and preciousness of architecture. (Ruskin, 1849, 234)

Ruskin's position develops a critique of advocates of restoration such as the French architect and theorist Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814-79), who famously restored many medieval buildings and landmarks in France, including those destroyed or abandoned during the French Revolution, including Notre-Dame in Paris. In sharp contrast to Ruskin, Viollet-le-Duc argued that: 'To restore a building is not to maintain it, repair it or remake it: It is to re-establish it in a complete state which may never have existed at any given moment' (Viollet-le-Duc1866, p. 14). Viollet-le-Duc believed in restoring buildings to their idealised state, often incorporating his creative interpretations (Clark 1989). His restoration approach involved repairing the damaged elements and recreating missing or decayed components. He saw restoration as a means to complete and enhance the original design, even if it meant introducing new elements or altering the historic fabric; he believed that an architect's additions or modifications could enhance and complete a historical structure, going beyond strict adherence to historical accuracy. Viollet-le-Duc therefore championed an interpretative

approach to restoration. His theories sparked debates about the appropriate methods for preserving and restoring historic structures in the 19th century to the present time.

Viollet-le-Duc's viewpoint, however, faced early opposition from Adolphe Napoleon Didron, an esteemed nineteenth century French art historian and archaeologist (Lasc, 2018, pp.1-288). Didron advocated for a more cautious and conservative approach to restoration, emphasising the importance of consolidation and repair over extensive reconstruction. He posited that it was better to preserve the existing elements, repair any damages, and only resort to restoration when strictly necessary. He suggests that consolidation, which involves stabilising the existing structure, should always be preferred over extensive repairs. Furthermore, if repairs are necessary, they should aim to rectify specific damages rather than attempting a comprehensive restoration. According to Didron, restoration should therefore be undertaken only when essential, focusing on preserving the historical authenticity and integrity of the monument. Didron thus argued that restoration should aim to reveal the historical layers of a building rather than recreating missing elements. He believed that every historical structure carries its unique story, and alterations should be limited to stabilising the existing fabric without introducing subjective interpretations.

In particular, Didron criticised Viollet-le-Duc's tendency to impose his creative vision on the restored buildings, the latter suggesting that such an approach improved the authenticity and integrity of the original design. By contrast, according to Didron, restoration should be guided by meticulous research (rather than creative imagination), relying on historical documentation, archaeological evidence, and expert analysis to ensure faithful preservation. The contrasting perspectives of Viollet-le-Duc and Didron highlight the ongoing debate in the field of restoration regarding the appropriate balance between historical accuracy and architectural interpretation. Generally, Didron's opposition to Viollet-le-Duc's approach highlights the importance of authenticity, historical accuracy, and minimal intervention in restoration practices. His emphasis on thorough research and respect for the original fabric of a building provides valuable theoretical points for considering architectural interventions in damaged historical sites. Thus, for Didron: 'For ancient monuments, it is better to consolidate than repair, better to repair than to restore, and better to restore than to reconstruct' (cited in Cameron, 2017). This brief statement encapsulates Didron's viewpoint, prioritising consolidating and preserving existing architectural elements over extensive repairs or reconstructions. His stance emphasised the significance of safeguarding the original fabric of a building while minimising interventions that could alter its historical integrity.

This debate is relevant because it sheds light on the ongoing tensions between two contrasting restoration philosophies. To summarise, Viollet-le-Duc's approach advocated for the reinterpretation and completion of historical buildings, guided by the notion that the architect's interventions could help revive the structure's original essence. By contrast, Didron's viewpoint stressed preserving the building's authentic character, promoting the idea that minimal interventions were preferable to extensive restoration.

The clash between the two represents a pivotal moment in restoration history, highlighting divergent opinions on approaching architectural conservation. Their differing perspectives continue to shape the discourse and practices surrounding restoration, prompting critical reflections on the delicate balance between preserving the historical fabric of ancient monuments and the creative interpretation necessary to breathe new life into these architectural treasures.

Echoing Ruskin's contention that the issue is not just historical accuracy, but rather that 'the greatest glory of a building is not in its stones' but rather 'in its Age' (Ruskin p. 177), Georg Simmel (1858-1918), a German sociologist and philosopher, likewise explored the romantic aspects of ruins. Simmel regarded ruins as symbols of the transience of human existence and the interplay between nature and culture. His writings on ruins offered a philosophical perspective on the aesthetic and emotional experience they evoke. Simmel's ideas resonate with Ruskin's emphasis on the value of age and history in architectural appreciation. This way of thinking was clearly reflected in various research studies and practices on archaeological properties and conservation debates, such as the contribution of the Italian architect Camillo Boito (1836-1914), who defined eight heritage preservation principles in his 1883 book Prima Carta del Resturo, stressing the need to maintain transparency and integrity while restoring missing parts of a building damaged to its former state. In other words, he advocated for a balanced approach that aimed to preserve architectural monuments' authenticity and historical value while allowing for necessary interventions. He also emphasised the importance of understanding the historical context and artistic significance of a building before undertaking any restoration work. Hence, Boito (like Ruskin and Simmel) rejected Viollet-le-Duc's approach of adding non-historical elements, arguing that restoration should be based on rigorous research and respect for the original design. He also acknowledged the influence of John Ruskin's ideas on the importance of age and patina in architecture.

Importantly, Boito's theories influenced the Italian debate on restoration, emphasising the need for careful and informed decision-making in preserving cultural heritage. His approach

paved the way for a more scientifically grounded and context-sensitive restoration practice in Italy, which continues to guide preservation efforts today. Boito's work contributes to the broader understanding of restoration as a delicate balance between preserving the historical fabric and ensuring the long-term viability and appreciation of architectural heritage. His ideas eventually found expression in the twentieth century Venice Charter, the (1964) International Charter on Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, providing an international framework for conservation, which also formed as a foundation of (ICOMOS) the International Council on Monuments and Sites. And Article 9 of the Venice Charter explicitly states that work carried out on an historic building 'must be distinct from the [original] architectural composition and must bear a contemporary stamp'.

In the same vein, the *World Heritage Committee's Operational Guideline for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* followed the same guidelines of the Venice Charter when it states: 'In relation to authenticity, the reconstruction of archaeological remains or historic buildings or districts is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances. Reconstruction is acceptable only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture' (UNESCO 2017).

A key example of such an approach is the revitalisation of Warsaw's old town in 1945, after the Nazi troops systematically demolished its historic centre to the point of almost complete erasure. This case exemplified the effectiveness of such an approach in twentieth-century post-war reconstruction, while acknowledging the emotional connection to place. Despite the immense destruction, where everything other than the building foundations were removed, the Polish government and the neighbourhood started a large-scale project to rehabilitate the old town (Kalman 2017). The reconstruction efforts were guided by meticulous research, historical documentation, and adherence to traditional building techniques. Expert artisans and architects reconstructed buildings, streets, and public spaces to produce a replica of the old architecture. In addition to the resilience and bravery of the Polish people, the Old Town of Warsaw was restored to show the need to preserve cultural heritage in the face of tragedy.

There are more contemporary examples of such a research-led approach, responding to attacks targeting UNESCO protected cultural sites in several locations, particularly, such as in Syria and Iraq. As a result, there was a shift in the international attitude toward post-conflict historical reconstruction sites. One example is the 2004 reconstruction design of the old bridge (Stari Most) in Mostar. The original 16th-century Ottoman bridge was destroyed during the Bosnian War in 1993, causing significant cultural and symbolic loss. The reconstruction of Stari Most was undertaken with great care and respect for the bridge's

historical and architectural value, including the sourcing of the stone used in the reconstruction. The process involved an extensive research phase, including examining historical records, photographs, and expert consultations. The reconstruction design aimed to recreate the bridge's original form and construction techniques, utilising traditional materials and craftsmanship. The revitalisation of Stari Most restored a vital transportation link, brought together communities, and symbolised the process of healing and reconciliation. This example underscores the importance of meticulous research, community involvement, and a commitment to preserving a place's cultural and historical identity.

How might the reconstruction of the old city of Aleppo draw inspiration from these principles to ensure that the revival of its architectural heritage aligns with the city's rich history and cultural significance? After considering examples of conservation efforts in Aleppo, I want to investigate the potential impact of architectural intervention as a temporary measure in order to generate a debate around reconstruction, in preserving cultural heritage and fostering resilience in war-torn cities like Aleppo. This approach, with this emphasis on dialog is very different from the approaches of Ruskin and le Duc's. By considering the historical and political context and engaging in the debates surrounding preservation, restoration, and reconstruction, architects and policymakers can make informed decisions about the future of the historical sites and the broader revitalisation of Aleppo's old city.

1.2.2 Conservation Efforts in Aleppo

The Old City of Aleppo has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage site due to its exceptional universal value and significance (Alsalloum 2019). The urban area possesses a distinctive and irreplaceable cultural asset due to its historical and architectural legacy, encompassing notable features such as the ancient citadel, mosques, baths and markets. Preserving the Old City of Aleppo holds significant importance in safeguarding Syria's abundant cultural heritage, nurturing a sense of national identity, stimulating tourism, and facilitating the social and economic rejuvenation of the surrounding area.

Aleppo has some remarkably well-preserved ancient buildings, but the city's recovery has been typically slow (not unlike other countries impacted by war). With all the financial challenges and a set of conservation policies that have themselves been 'weaponised', rebuilding the entire historical fabric of the city in a short span of time is logistically and financially impossible. Of course, as mentioned earlier, this situation has been severely exacerbated by the earthquake in 2023, which has undone earlier attempts at restoration. Even when attempted, in many cases across the city, historical buildings' reconstruction has failed, such as the case with Bab al-Ahmar bathhouse, an ancient Hammam situated in front

of Aleppo's citadel. Unfortunately, the Hammam structure has been modified, to which additions, such as brick tiles, now conceal its original dome, thereby compromising its historical integrity (fig 7). The utilisation of red tiles presents a discordant element that is incongruous with the aesthetics of Islamic architecture and the characteristics of the old city. And despite the building's historical significance, the bath owner decided to integrate elements that were in direct opposition to the architectural principles as manifest in the ancient city; this posed a threat to the historical authenticity of the bath, as it gave the impression that the alterations had always been a part of its original form. By contrast, I am arguing that rehabilitation that preserves the original integrity of the architecture is essential in the case of Aleppo. Furthermore, finding a systematic approach that contributes to economic, social, and political rehabilitation is essential for post-conflict reconstruction's legitimacy and effectiveness, alongside restoring physical infrastructure for supporting inclusive development.

Thierry Grandin is a French architect consultant. He moved to Aleppo in 1982, where he worked extensively with international organisations on the preservation and restoration of listed buildings in Syria. He currently continues to work closely with the United Nations and is also a member of the International Council on Monuments and Sites. During a conference led by the United Nations in Turkey (2019), Grandin stated that 'UNESCO' has failed in protecting the archaeological sites in the old city of Aleppo, as the conflict parties refused to cooperate with the efforts made by the organisation. He believes that without local authorities' engagement, the UN's meetings will remain in vain, despite the efforts made over the past few years.

Furthermore, Grandin, who supervised the major restoration project of Aleppo Citadel in 1999, pointed out that the reconstruction and restoration process will take a long time. Many cities that have been destroyed by war took more than half a century to be rebuilt; this is evident in the case of Dresden's old town in Germany, where the restoration work continues to the present. Syria's current economic situation and political uncertainty is not what is required for a substantial rebuilding of damaged areas. In conjunction with America's range of sanctions on Syria that came into effect in June 2020 (signed by President Trump), Known as the 'Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019', externally-funded reconstruction from Russia and Iran has also been halted. As the Guardian's Martin Chulov writes in June 2020, 'US "Caesar Act" sanctions could devastate Syria's flatlining economy' (Chulov 2020). Chulov argues that 'on the eve of its implementation, the new [Caesar] law has been interpreted as a catch-all for a broader push that aims to crush two of the regime's main

Fig 7. The dome of Hammam Bab al-Ahmar. 2023. Aleppo, Syria (source: The Hammam owner).

backers, Iran and Hezbollah' (Chulov 2020). The devastating earthquake has made the situation much worse, with the Syrian Arab Red Cross and other aid organisations appealing for an end to western sanctions that all too often brutalise not the regime but its citizens.

Notwithstanding the wider financial and political issues, when discussing culture, value, and public policy, Alrifai further criticises the government's regulations to protect the cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible. He argues that Syria is considered one of the countries with a vibrant history of archaeological sites and monuments; moreover, it is the richest with many aspects of cultural heritage. This, in turn, represents a cultural and economic wealth that distinguishes this country from the rest of the world; however, he also emphasised that this would be only possible if the government carefully managed and preserved those places of cultural significance. Unfortunately, the cultural sector in the city does not receive the required financial support from the state, even though it has long term economic benefits for the city. Investing in culture contributes to economic growth, and it has always been seen as an integral and essential component of sustainable development. For this reason, changing policies is a crucial strategy at this stage; the main point is to focus on sustaining cultural values and employing them to contribute to cultural, social, and economic development.

One notable example is the rehabilitation of Suq al-Saqatiyya, a UNESCO world heritage site listed in 1986. The restoration project of the suq serves as an exemplary model for the strategic planning of archaeological site reconstruction in Syria. The project was realised through collaboration between the Aga Khan Foundation for Cultural Services in Syria and national and local authorities, including technical bodies such as the Aleppo Old City Directorate, the General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums, as well as private bodies represented by The Syria Trust for Development.

Suq al-Saqatiyya is located south of the Great Umayyad Mosque in Aleppo's old quarters. It is one of Aleppo's 37 historical markets, the world's longest and oldest network of suqs dating back to the fourth century BC, with a combined length of 15 km and covering an area of approximately 16 hectares, the majority of which suffered severe structural damage to the point of near destruction. Before the war, the suq was a thriving market famed for its lively ambience, elaborate architecture, and various businesses offering anything from textiles and spices to traditional crafts. It possesses a long history and has served as an important economic centre and a meeting place for the neighbourhood populations.

Suq al-Saqatiyya is characterised by its narrow, winding alleys and covered passageways, creating a labyrinthine network of interconnected spaces. The arches and vaulted ceilings are prominent architectural elements, providing structural support while adding aesthetic

Fig 8. Suq al-Saqatiyya after restoration. 2020. Digital photograph (source: thebestinheritage.com).

beauty to the suq (see fig. 8). The facades of the buildings within the suq display a variety of architectural styles influenced by different periods of construction and renovation. These facades often incorporate decorative elements such as carved stone, elaborate woodwork, and intricately designed metalwork, adding visual interest and showcasing the craftsmanship of the artisans who contributed to their creations. Furthermore, the suq encompasses a variety of shops and market stalls, each displaying its unique architectural character. These spaces are designed to accommodate the specific needs of different types of trade, with some featuring open storefronts while others have enclosed interiors. The design of the suq promotes a vibrant and interactive atmosphere, inviting visitors to explore its narrow streets and experience the sensory delights of the bustling marketplace.

Overall, the architectural features of Suq al-Saqatiyya combine traditional Syrian and Islamic influences, showcasing the intricate craftsmanship and attention to detail of the artisans of the time. The unique combination of architectural elements contributes to the suq's charm and cultural significance, making it an important heritage site within the Old City of Aleppo. According to the Syrian Deputy Minister of Tourism Nedal Mashfej, the decision to reconstruct Suq al-Saqatiyya was influenced by several factors, including the historical significance of the suq, its architectural importance, and its potential as a pilot project for wider restoration initiatives within the Old City. However, the primary reason for selecting this particular suq was its suitability for rehabilitation rather than a complete reconstruction, as the destruction in this area was less than in other parts of the suq. Suq al-Saqatiyya project aimed to showcase the effectiveness of restoration techniques and generate momentum for future projects.

However, the prioritisation of Suq al-Saqatiyya over other severely damaged suqs faced criticism. Some individuals questioned the decision, arguing that the reconstruction efforts should have been more evenly distributed across the seriously affected suqs. They maintain that focusing on a single market is at the expense of the restoration needs of other significant historical sites. Furthermore, some argue there have been apprehensions about the processes of decision making, arguing by contrast the necessity of enhanced communication and increased public participation in decision-making procedures concerning reconstruction strategies. Establishing transparent and inclusive decision-making processes is of utmost importance to effectively address the community's wide range of interests and concerns. This criticism highlights the challenges of decision-making in post-war reconstruction and the need for a balanced approach that considers the broader restoration needs of the city. An article published in 2020 by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) provides insights into the evaluation and success factors of the

reconstruction efforts. While acknowledging the positive outcomes of the restoration of Suq al-Saqatiyya, such as revitalising the market and preserving cultural heritage, it emphasises the importance of the need for comprehensive social reconstruction. This includes addressing the social aspects of the area and rebuilding the social fabric that was disrupted by the conflict.

Moreover, the impact of the conflict on the social and economic life of Aleppo is significant. Despite the relative success of the reconstruction of the suq, some business owners are still hesitant to return until the overall economic situation in the city improves. This underscores the interconnectedness between the physical reconstruction and the revival of the social and economic spheres. It highlights the need for holistic approaches beyond the restoration of buildings and prioritising the recovery of the city's social and economic vitality. So while the reconstruction of the suqs is a significant step, the impact of the conflict on the wider social and economic life of Aleppo extends well beyond the physical restoration efforts. The city's economy needs to be revived to attract business owners' return and ensure the area's sustainable revival. Moreover, the social aspect of the community needs to be reconstructed to rebuild trust, cohesion, and a sense of belonging among the residents.

This brings me back to the issue of the Hammams. Neglecting historical sites like the public baths in the discussion of reconstruction plans highlights the need for a comprehensive and inclusive approach that encompasses all aspects of cultural heritage and community needs. Aleppo's conservation efforts must show a diverse strategy considering historical relevance, community involvement, and reusing materials from war debris. While the restoration of Suq al-Saqatiyya serves as a pilot project, addressing the criticisms regarding prioritisation, lack of communication, and the need for comprehensive social and economic reconstruction is essential. By safeguarding and revitalising the Old City of Aleppo, it is possible to preserve Syria's cultural heritage, stimulate local economies, and promote social cohesion in the wake of the devastating war.

Perhaps, even more importantly, this thesis argues for a deeper connection to place. Women's active participation in the post-World War II clearing of bombed cities in Germany is a prime example of the critical role that community engagement played in the post-war reconstruction, after the horrors of fascism. This contributed to a breakdown in traditional gender roles, given the mass displacement and psychological damage of many former soldiers. It was a response to the enormity of the destruction caused by Allied bombings and firestorm damage. The so-called *Trümmerfrau* or "rubble women," who helped with cleaning debris (a time-consuming and laborious process) significantly aided the city's rehabilitation. While many were paid, many also volunteered, and the women worked in all weather

conditions, organised into groups of between ten to twenty that formed a lines where bricks were passed from hand to hand. Their involvement facilitated the physical rebuilding and symbolised resilience and community solidarity during a time of immense hardship. It symbolised not only a rejection of the former regime but constituted an extraordinary example of resilience and self-organisation where women (rather than men) played a central role. This example underscores the importance of including the local community in reconstruction processes and empowering them to actively contribute to restoring their city.

In *Altering Architecture* (Scott 2008, 202-4), Fred Scott gives a moving example of such a poetic and yet material connection to place in the wake of destruction caused by war. This was the post-war reconstruction process of the Alte Pinakothek in Munich, heavily damaged by Allied bombing in 1944. The restoration (or, more accurately, rehabilitation) was carried out by the architect Hans Dollgast, who wanted to commemorate the work of the *Trümmerfrau*. Following its severe damage during World War II, the museum was reconstructed using salvaged materials, including re-salvaged bricks. The rehabilitation is an exemplar of a particular connection to place, with the rhythm of the new façade (constructed in reclaimed bricks) echoing (without attempting to mimic) the pattern of the original stonework, designed by the building's original architect Leo von Klenze. This approach honoured the history and memory of the original structure and provided a tangible connection between the past and the present. Reusing war rubble material in reconstruction projects holds significance in preserving collective memory and creating a sense of continuity. And as Scott states: 'When Dollgast fimally came to mend the façade in 1952 with such reclaimed bricks he made a frank commemoration of the aerial destruction of Munich and of the austerity that followed, and provided a memorial to the women who with their hands had begum the reconstruction of their homeland after the disasters that has fallen it' (2008, p. 203). It is an approach that will inform my own practice, as we shall see later.

1.2.3 An Interventionalist Approach

This research is not proposing a solution for reconstruction practices but rather constitutes an approach to developing interventions in culturally significant buildings that are marginalised in discussions about Aleppo's reconstruction. The notion of intervention, 'literally and metaphorically', will be used as 'an instrument of interpretation' (MacCormac 1991).

A growing body of research recognises the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, which combines new contemporary elements within existing historical structures. One such example is the transformation of the Reichstag building, New German Parliament, by

Norman Foster Associates. In my opinion, this method remains critical in many aspects, even though it is rarely feasible to retain the original function of historic buildings. While such an approach is hard to accept by those convinced that heritage is valued entirely by its qualities inherited from the past, and should always be left as it is, adaptive reuse is a way to reanimate a building that has lost its function. This approach differs from that of Viollet le Duc, as it is not a recreation or reinterpretation but a new intervention that does not claim to replicate the original architecture.

Previous studies on conservation philosophy suggested different approaches to rethink the future of ruins. According to Fred Scott: 'The ruin is the means by which a building addresses its past, present and future'; in his view 'The altered building is an inhabited ruin' (2008, p. 126). In the case of Aleppo, each historic building has its own characteristics and value. Moreover, the recent conflict left numerous marks on Aleppo's ancient walls, and this 21st-century tragedy is part of Aleppo's history now. Therefore, while respecting the integrity and authenticity of such monuments, the design must protect and preserve the building's historical value and modify its function to meet current and future needs. A notable example of such an approach is the Wazir Khan Hammam Conservation in Pakistan, discussed later in the thesis.

In his book *On Altering Architecture* Fred Scott (2007) challenges the notion that preservation and restoration should strive for historical accuracy and proposes an alternative approach that embraces rehabilitation through change and adaptation. Scott argues that buildings are not static entities but living entities that continuously evolve and adapt to the needs of the society inhabiting them.

In the case of Aleppo, such an approach is particularly relevant due to the extensive destruction caused by the war and the recent earthquake in the city. As a symbol of cultural heritage and communal identity, Hammam Yalbugha, for example, requires more than just restoration to its original state; rather, as we shall see later, it necessitates an intervention that acknowledges the scars of the conflict while revitalising the space for contemporary use.

Scott's approach emphasises the importance of understanding the inherent qualities of a building and its context rather than being bound by rigid notions of preservation. He suggests that alterations should be guided by a deep understanding of the building's essence, cultural significance, and the community's needs. This approach allows for a more flexible and adaptive intervention that respects the past while embracing the present and future. It acknowledges the layers of history and the scars of conflict while allowing new narratives to emerge.

By considering Scott's theory of architectural intervention in the restoration or rehabilitation process in Syria, architects and policymakers can approach the reconstruction process with sensitivity and creativity. The interventionist approach encourages them to consider the layers of history embedded in the ruins and to envision the bath's transformation as a living space that responds to current needs. This approach fosters a dialogue between the old and the new, allowing the historical bath to regain its significance as a vibrant and functional part of the city.

Scott's theory also highlights the potential for architectural interventions to contribute to a place's social and economic revitalisation. In the case of Aleppo, the reconstruction and adaptive reuse of the Hammam can catalyse community engagement and economic development. By incorporating contemporary amenities, such as a space for public debate, education or exhibition spaces, the building can become a vibrant hub for cultural exchange and learning, fostering a sense of pride and ownership among the local population.

Besides, an interventionist approach encourages sustainable design practices. The reconstruction of Aleppo's historical Hammams can integrate sustainable technologies and strategies that align with current environmental considerations. Incorporating renewable energy sources, water conservation systems, and passive design principles can ensure the intervention's long-term viability and ecological sensitivity. Additionally, Interventionist strategies that encourage the reuse and repurposing of existing materials and structures can minimise waste and resource consumption. This involves avoiding unnecessary removal of existing elements and reducing the need for extensive rebuilding. Such practices contribute to overall project sustainability, ensure reversibility, and prevent additional costs associated with demolition and reconstruction.

However, Scott's approach reminds us that it is crucial to approach intervention with sensitivity and respect for the site's historical fabric and cultural heritage. The interventionist approach should not disregard the intrinsic value of the original structure but rather seek a harmonious integration of old and new. Scott's theory underscores the need for a thoughtful balance between preservation and innovation, aiming to create a dialogue between the existing context and contemporary interventions.

In general, I believe that Fred Scott's theory on architecture and alteration offers a relevant and comprehensive framework for approaching the intervention and reconstruction of the historical baths in Aleppo. By embracing an interventionist approach, architects and designers can go beyond mere restoration and engage in creative reinterpretations that address the current needs and aspirations of the community. Scott's emphasis on

understanding the historical context, fostering community engagement, promoting sustainability, and finding a harmonious balance between old and new provides valuable guidance for revitalising Aleppo's architectural heritage. Through sensitive and innovative interventions, the historical Hammam can regain its significance as a vibrant cultural space and contribute to the overall revitalisation of the old city of Aleppo.

Another theorist arguing for an interventionalist approach is the Catalan architect Ignasi De Solà Morales. Solà Morales's concept of architectural intervention as an *analogy* provides further insights into the interventionist approach. Utilising a linguistic term, Solà Morales proposes that architectural interventions should be understood as analogies rather than imitations (Nesbitt, 1966). Rather than replicating historical styles or mimicking original structures, interventions should be designed to establish a meaningful dialogue between the existing context and the new additions. He writes:

> Here the analogical procedure is not based on the visible synchronism of independent orders of form, but on the association made by the observer over the course of time. By this means situations of affinity are produced and, thanks to the connotative capacity of the languages evolved in the intervention, relations or links are established between the historic building - real and/or imaginary - and the elements of design that serve to make the building effectively dependent. (Solà Morales 1985, 43)

This linguistic idea of analogy is critical of approaches to intervening that merely draw a contrast between the new and existing; rather, he states: 'As an aesthetic operation, the intervention is the imaginative, arbitrary and free proposal by which one seeks not only to recognise the significant structures of the existing historical material but also to use them as analogical marks of the new construction' (Solà Morales 1985, 45).

Applying Solà Morales's concept to the intervention in Aleppo implies that the new elements introduced to the historical building should respect the original architecture while not merely expressing their contemporary nature, but seeking analogies that establish an affinity. This approach promotes a harmonious coexistence of old and new that places value on interpretation, where the intervention becomes an integral part of the historical fabric without overpowering or diminishing its inherent qualities.

However, in addition to such an interventionist approach, guided by Scott's theory and De Solà Morales's concept of analogy, we should also encourage architects and policymakers to engage with the community and stakeholders throughout the reconstruction process (Gonç & L 2020). This statement underscores the significance of participatory design and

community engagement in guaranteeing that the intervention aligns with the requirements and ambitions of the populace of Aleppo. Architects can acquire valuable insights and design spaces that mirror the identity and aspirations of the city's inhabitants by engaging the community in decision-making processes. This allies an interventionalist approach to lessons learnt by participatory design. Additionally, the interventionist approach should also allow for sustainable and adaptive reuse of resources. Rather than starting from scratch, architects can integrate elements of the existing ruins and employ sustainable construction practices. This approach reduces the environmental impact and preserves the authenticity and material heritage of a city such as Aleppo.

In conclusion, an interventionist approach advocated by Fred Scott and Ignasi De Solà Morales is highly relevant to architectural interventions in the historical sites in Aleppo. This approach encourages a creative and adaptive response to the destruction caused by the war, considering the community's needs and the evolving nature of architectural heritage. By embracing change and alteration while respecting the essence and context of the building, an interventionist approach can contribute to the reconstruction and revitalisation of one of Aleppo's historical baths as a vibrant and meaningful space for the future.

Fig 9. *Hammam Yalbugha Al-Nasiri*: Before and after Aerial image, 2010 – 2017. Republished by UNESDOC (source: unesdoc.unesco.org).

Chapter 2 The Archaeological Sites

The northern Syrian city of Aleppo has a significant cultural and historical past. Historic public baths, or hammams, have been integral to city dwellers' everyday lives and social networks for millennia. In Aleppo, Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri is a notable historical landmark. The hammam has a long history dating back to the Mamluk Sultan al-Nasir Yusuf's rule in the 13th century. It played a significant part in the cultural and social fabric of Aleppo by serving as a gathering spot for residents and guests to cleanse and mingle.

The public baths in Aleppo have a long history going back to when the city was a significant Silk Road trading hub (Boggs 2022). Aleppo developed a vibrant and diverse cultural milieu, the busy trade route drawing traders, tourists, and intellectuals from around the globe to its cosmopolitan city. The need for public hygiene and bathing facilities arose naturally, leading to the establishment of communal bathhouses throughout the city.

For several reasons, preserving the memory of places like Yalbugha is crucial, representing the ancient city's social and cultural character. These institutions are primary physical reminders of a community's rich history and heritage. They act as a living record of earlier generations' traditions, customs, and way of life. We ensure that future generations can connect with their origins and comprehend the historical context in which they exist by conserving them. As Bettina Kolb and Heid Dumreicher write (2008, p. 17), 'the Islamic public bath has a double value from the point of view of cultural heritage: it is a valuable historical building with a rich architecture and specific cultural phases. It is also a socio-cultural heritage'.

These institutions significantly shape the social structure of a community. They serve as meeting places which promote a sense of community, solidarity, and engagement. Public baths like Hammam Yalbugha were not merely places for physical cleansing but also as important social hubs where people from different backgrounds would come together, exchange stories, and build relationships. Preserving these institutions allows for the continuation of such social practices and reinforces the community's cultural identity.

In addition, these architectural gems contribute to the unique character and charm of the old city. The numerous architectural ideas, materials, and crafts utilised in their creation attest to the originality and genius of previous generations. They are commonly used as metaphors for the region's architectural legacy and to demonstrate the cultural influences that have shaped the city. By maintaining historic structures, an environment of serenity is produced,

as well as a tangible link to the past, which contributes to the aesthetic integrity of the urban fabric.

In 2008, the *International Journal of Architectural Research* publishes a special issue of the tradition of hammams in the Mediterranean. In the editorial, guest editor Magda Sibley (2008) argues that the issue 'addresses a research subject that has been far too long neglected' (2008, p. 10). Noting the gendered importance of such institutions, she argues that 'hammams played a key role not only in providing washing facility for the conduct of major ablutions necessary before praying but also a venue for social interaction and rituals, marking religious celebrations and major events in the life of women' (2008, p. 10). She contrasts this reality to the fantasies of European imagination, and the erotic imagery of a painter such as Ingres. Sibley's article includes an image of Hammam Yalbugha prior to its destruction. And crucially, she notes of a successful earlier effort to restore Hammam Ammuna, a small neighbourhood hammam in Damascus, which was a direct result of the HAMMAM project of 2007:

> This building has been saved from closure and decay as it has been purchased by a local private investor who restored the building and re-opened it as a working hammam for women with the introduction of contemporary facilities and services. This hammam has become a focal point for the local community. Its restoration and re-opening, have brought new hopes for this otherwise neglected neighbourhood. It has also triggered new local initiatives for improving the urban environment of the extra-muros historic neighbourhood of Al Uqaiba. (Sibley 2008, p. 10)

This hammam is remarkable in having survived both the war and earthquakes, and is still in use today. In October 2014, Roula Aboukhater wrote a conference paper on the hammam, entitled 'Role of participatory process in the rehabilitation of an Ayyoubid bath in Damascus, Syria' (Aboukhater 2014). Aboukhater remarks on how central were participatory approaches to the design process. The hammam's original reputation had deteriorated, and it was in a poor physical condition with weak social connections to the local community. She emphasis the role of trust building, and this involved instigating a women's group meeting including women who had been excluded from using hammam Ammuna for a long time period. A public presentation was criucial to the project's success. As her paper concludes:

> The rehabilitation work, the activities and the realized small projects in the neighbourhood are tangible and sustainable results of successful participation. Hammam Ammuna became more integrated in the historic urban fabric and it corresponds to the local people's wishes. People are now proud of having it as a valuable cultural heritage in their neighbourhood. What happens in Damascus through

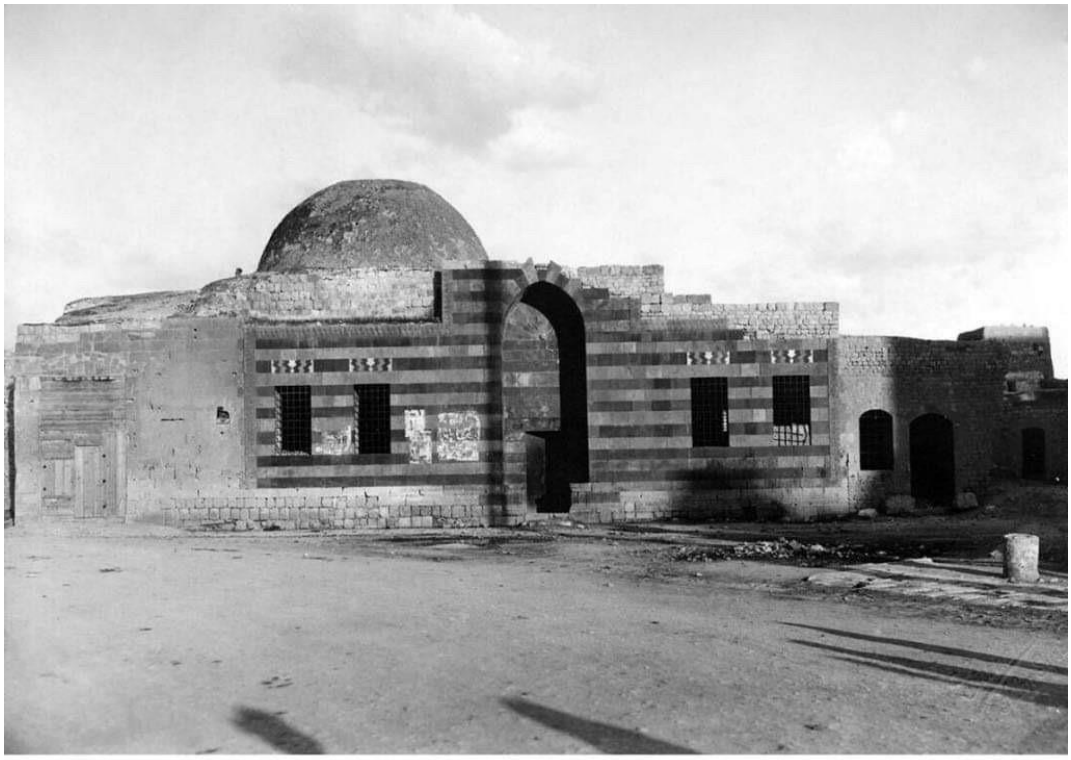
> the HAMMAM project was a first step and many lessons were learned concerning community participation in development projects. It is a good example of the effective role of participatory approach on rehabilitation of cultural heritage. (Aboukhater 2014, n.p.)

Such a participatory approach will also be crucial to my research and the proposed intervention into Hammam Yalbugha.

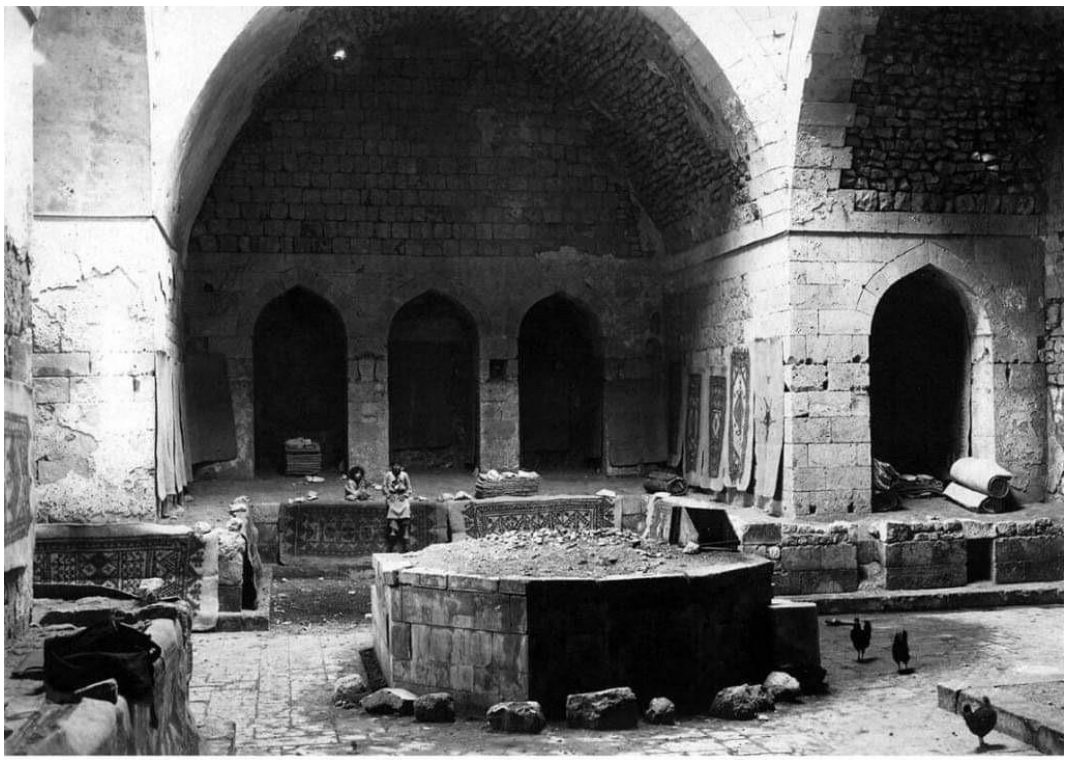
2.1 Hammam Yalbugha is one of the most impressive public baths in Syria, built in the mid-fifteenth century by the Mamluk governor of Aleppo Amir Yalbugha al-Naseri (Archnet, n.p). Built close to the entrance to the Citadel, it was originally constructed on the ruins of a previous hammam which had been destroyed during Timur's raid of Aleppo (Archnet, n.p.). Renovated several times, and used as a felt making factory (fig.10), it was finally bought by the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums in the 1960s, who carried out minor renovations, and then restored by the Syrian Ministry of Tourism to be reopened again to the public in the late 1980s. Sadly, it has again been badly damaged, almost destroyed, in the present fighting in 2014.

Except for the time when it was destroyed by Timur (Tamerlane)[2] , and a time in the 20th century when it was unusable, the hammam was in use continuously throughout its history. Generally, the hammams were an important part of the social life of the city, most often located next to a mosque, so worshippers could be ritually cleansed before saying their prayers, as the prophet Mohammed had wished. This is an important difference from the Roman baths, which were centralised social centres for meeting and socialising while cleansing. Another difference can be noticed in the structure. Whereas the Roman bath used the cold room as an introduction, the Islamic/Turkish model used it as a recovery phase at the end of the bath. Again, the Romans were fully immersed in the cold water, but this was regarded as a 'filthy' habit, effectively sitting in one's own dirt; by contrast, the Islamic model used bowls of running water to be poured over the bathers while they were scrubbed, soaped and generally cleansed (Keshishian, 2006).

[2] 1336–1405, Mongol conqueror of the area from Mongolia to the Mediterranean; ruler of Samarkand (1369–1405). He defeated the Turks at Angora (1402) and died while invading China.



Alep hammam au pied de la Citadelle



Alep hammam au pied de la Citadelle

Fig 10. Michel Écochard, *Yalbugha Baths Restoration.* ca. 1905. B & W prints (source: Aga Khan Trust for Culture).

As a typical Mamluk[3] hammam, the Hammam Yalbugha had three sections: the *frigidarium*, *tepidarium* and *caldarium*, each section under a large central dome and with four *iwans* (chambers), or seating areas, around the walls. Entry was through a symmetrical entrance with traditional Mamluk courses of black and yellow stone on the walls, known in Arabic as *ablaq* decorations, and a fine tiled floor. The domed and vaulted washing areas were lit by saucer-shaped glass plugs set into the domes and giving an evocative light inside (Hajjar, 2010). When it was last restored, in the late 1980s, much care was taken to use traditional materials and methods in order truly to restore the structure to its former glory, and a laundry, café, kitchen and other service rooms were added at the back of the building. Throughout its history, until the late 19th century, this hammam was used by local people and merchants from outside the city, remembering that Aleppo was one end of the great trading routes from the far east and so had many visiting merchants, who typically stayed in the nearby khans while doing their business.

The very early hammams were strictly restricted to men. However, exceptions began to be made for women who were sick, then for those who had given birth, so that by the medieval period they were for both men and women, though strictly segregated either in structure or by allocating separate gender-specific times for men and women. We have an account by Formby (2018) of an old woman from Aleppo, who talked about her hammam visits at the beginning of the 20th century. She belonged to a prosperous family, and one day each week they took over the Hammam al Ahmar, near to the Hammam Yalbugha and also close to a small mosque. In the morning the men would go to the bath, accompanied by male servants, and with female servants carrying food and clean clothing. The same afternoon it would be the turn of the women; again, this would include all the females in the house, carrying clean clothes, food and fruit. She mentioned especially Kebbe, a local meat dish, and oranges as the preferred diet. In winter they travelled the few hundred metres by carriage, but in the summer, they walked there, around one side of the citadel and she remembered it as the highlight of her week (Formby 2018).

It is clear that the hammams were important social centres, allowing women to escape from the isolation of their houses. In fact, it could be grounds for divorce if a husband forbade his wife visits to the hammam. They were also places for social occasions: from parties where a potential bride could be ‘checked out’ for ‘physical defects’ by the mother-in-law, to post-partum celebrations for a new mother. A young man would be taken by his friends for a pre-

[3] Relating to the Mamluk dynasty, which ruled Egypt and Syria from 1250 to 1517.

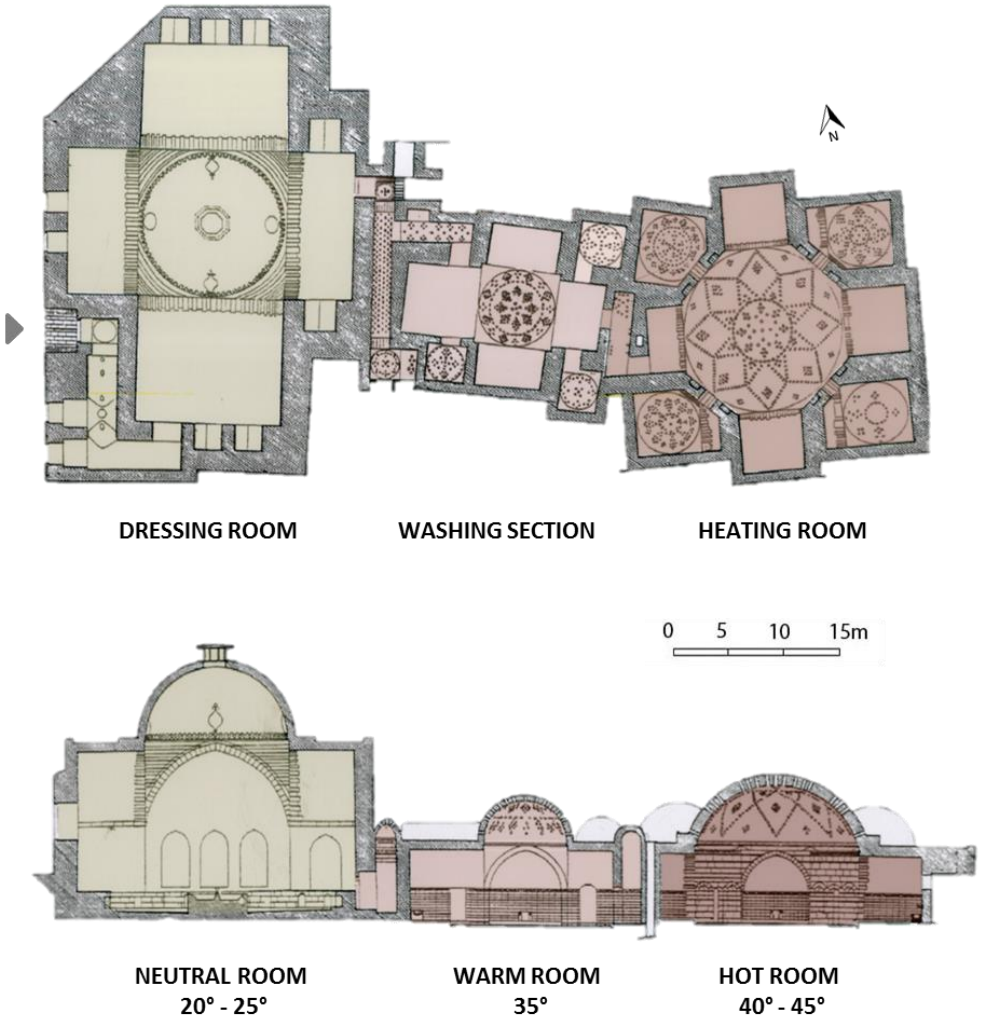


Fig 11. *Yalbugha Baths Restoration,* 1989. B&W drawing - Section and Ceiling Plan, Edited by Sally Hilal (source: archnet.org). The original draughtsperson cannot be unattributed.

nuptial bath, the very ‘clean’ version of a ‘stag night’, and then he would be brought by them to his wedding. An English doctor of the 17th century also wrote of the practice of taking a patient who had survived cholera to be cleansed at the bath, showing that he was well, and ready to be reintegrated into society.

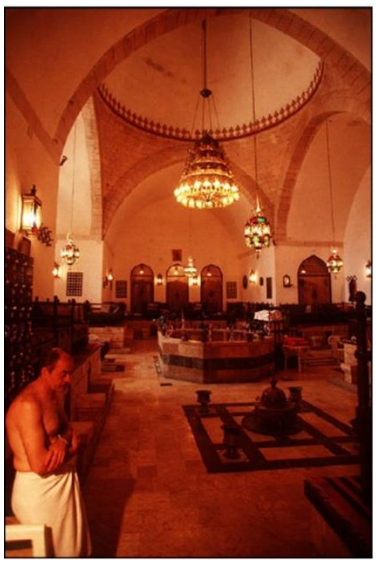
In order to truly experience the bath, it was necessary to have the correct accessories, and Umayyad[4] pictures show women carrying baskets and bags with them to the hammam. These might have contained oils, soap and scrapers to remove the dirt. In Aleppo, the local olive oil soap was used, perfumed with bay oil, while fuller’s earth clay (with its natural capacities to remove grease and dirt) is still used for the hair, and parties would be incomplete without henna for hair colouring and skin decoration, to go along with the music and the food. Special sandals, a flat foot-piece supported on two pieces of wood, fore and aft, kept the feet from the floor, and some of these are finely decorated with inlaid mother of pearl. There were also towels, the best being beautifully embroidered wraps, and black pieces of rough cloth for scrubbing off the dirt. During cleansing, it is more practical to be naked, but afterwards bathers are wrapped in special cloths, or change into their own clothes to rest and recover (Altenbi 2011).

The city has long been known for its ancient hammams which were characterised by their unique rituals and architectural design. After the war only 18 hammam have survived: left partly damaged but not completely destroyed. The Syrian archaeologist Maher Hamid said ‘Rebuilding a Hammam such as Yalbugha, requires seven or ten years of continuous work’ (ALabed, 2016).

Traditional Architecture and the Bathing Culture: The architecture of Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri, an iconic historical bathhouse in Aleppo, Syria, is a testament to the grandeur and sophistication of Mamluk architecture during the 13th-15th centuries. This magnificent structure exemplified the fusion of Islamic and Mamluk architectural styles, showcasing intricate details and exquisite craftsmanship.

Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri was designed as a lavish and opulent bathhouse, reflecting the social and cultural significance of public bathing in Aleppo then. The bathhouse consisted of interconnected spaces, each serving a specific function and contributing to the overall

[4] Relating to the Umayyad dynasty in Damascus that ruled from A.D. 661 to 750.



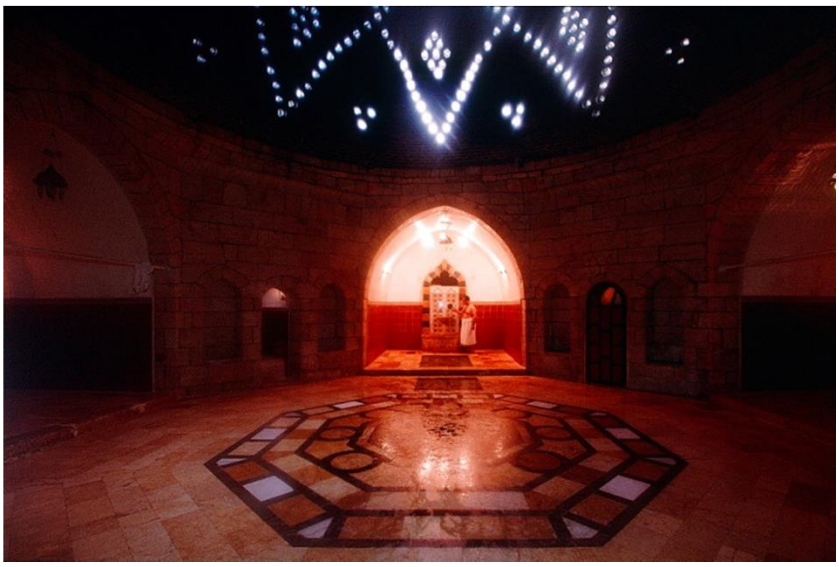


Fig 12. Sally Hilal, *Bathing objects*. 2019. Photograph (source: Author's Archives).

Fig 13. *Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri*. 1983. Digital photograph. Left: the dressing room - Right: the heating room (source: archnet.org).

bathing experience. The entrance of the hammam featured an elaborate portal adorned with decorative motifs and inscriptions. This grand entrance transitioned from the bustling streets of Aleppo into a tranquil and luxurious oasis of relaxation. The portal was embellished with intricate carvings, geometric patterns, and calligraphic designs, showcasing the mastery of Mamluk artisans.

Upon entering the hammam, visitors entered a large vestibule known as the *al-Barani*. This space served as a reception area, where bath attendants greeted guests and guided them through the various sections of the bathhouse. This space was characterised by high domed ceilings and decorative arches, creating a sense of spaciousness and grandeur with a central fountain in the middle.

From this section, visitors would proceed to the dressing rooms. These rooms were designed to provide privacy and comfort to bathers as they prepared for their bathing experience. The rooms featured alcoves or niches where bathers could store their belongings and change into bathing attire. The walls were adorned with intricate tile work and decorative plaster, adding a touch of elegance to the space.

The heart of the hammam was the central bathing area, known as the *al-Wastani*. This space was a large, square area and was adorned with beautifully crafted marble, mosaic tilework, and stained-glass dome openings, creating a mesmerising play of light and colour. Surrounding the central bathing area were more private rooms known as *al-Khelwa*. These rooms were designed for individual or group bathing and featured smaller pools or basins, and were adorned with decorative arches, intricate plasterwork, and mosaic tile patterns, creating an intimate and serene atmosphere.

The hammam also featured a heated room called *al-Juwwani*, where visitors could experience a warm steam bath. This room had a heating system, fuelled by wood or coal, which circulated hot air through pipes to warm the space. It was decorated with ornate stucco plasterwork and marble accents.

Throughout Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri, the architecture showcased a harmonious blend of Islamic and Byzantine influences. The use of intricate geometric patterns, calligraphy, and arabesque designs exemplified Islamic artistic traditions, while the arches, domes, and ornamental details reflected Byzantine architectural elements. The architectural work is a poignant reminder of Aleppo's rich history and cultural legacy. Its intricate details and exquisite craftsmanship represent the pinnacle of Mamluk architectural achievements, and

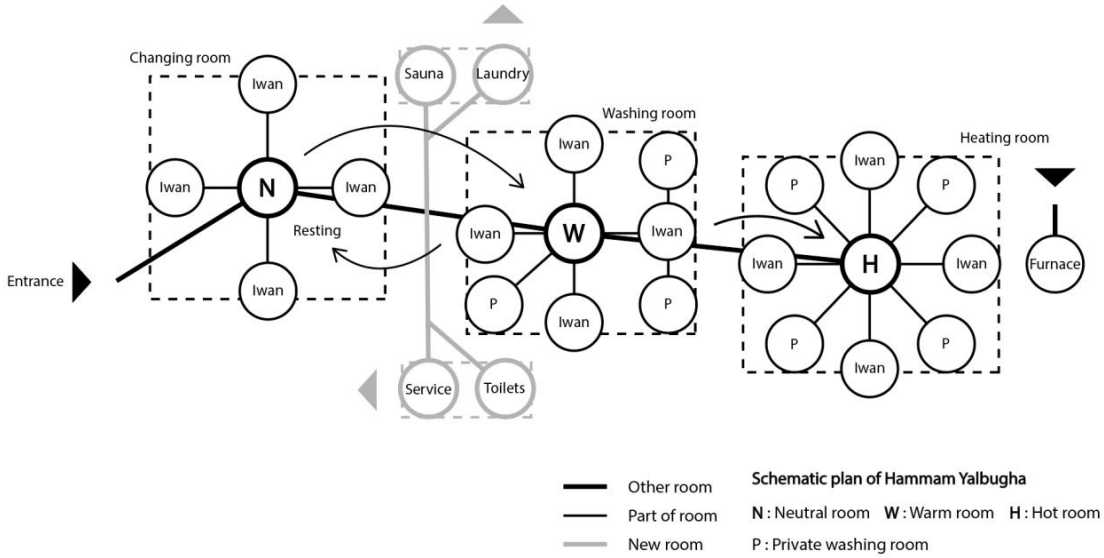


Fig 14. Aga Khan Trust for Culture, *Yalbugha Baths Restoration.* 1989. Aerial view (source: archnet.org).

Fig 15. Schematic plan of Hammam Yalbugha, 2020. drawn by Sally Hilal.

its rehabilitation would not only reinstate an architectural gem but also contribute to the revitalisation and healing of the city's spirit.

The Renovation of the Bath: Before the war in Aleppo, efforts were made to renovate and restore Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri, aiming to preserve its historical and architectural significance. These renovation projects were carried out to revive the bath and ensure its continued existence for future generations. Previously, extensive research and documentation had been conducted to understand the original structure and design of the bath, relying on historical records, photographs, and archaeological investigations by the Syrian Military Housing Establishment in 1982.

The restoration work was first conducted by the Department of Antiquities in 1960, with the stabilisation of the existing structure only, without any concern about the possible future use of the hammam. This involved reinforcing weakened walls by using cement, repairing damaged foundations, and addressing structural issues caused by age and natural wear.

The hammam remained closed until the late 1970's, when the Ministry of Tourism showed interest in restoring the hammam to its original function and invited architects from the Old City Directorate office to rehabilitate the site to its former glory. The expertise of architects and engineers played a crucial role in ensuring the structural stability of the bath. Following the stabilisation phase, the focus shifted to meticulously restoring architectural elements.

Over time, architectural features which had been damaged or lost were reconstructed, based on historical evidence and archaeological findings. This involved recreating decorative motifs, arches, domes, and other architectural elements using traditional craftsmanship. The aim was to revive the bath's original grandeur and aesthetic appeal. In parallel with the architectural restoration, efforts were made to reinstate the functional aspects of the bath, including refurbishing water channels, repairing the central pool (bayt al-ma), and ensuring proper plumbing and heating systems. The goal was to recreate the authentic bathing experience that the hammam had once provided.

Throughout the renovation process undertaken by the Ministry of Tourism[5], community engagement and local involvement were vital. The restoration of Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri was seen as a collaborative effort, with community members contributing their knowledge and expertise. This encouraged a sense of pride and ownership while ensuring that the rehabilitation reflected the cultural values and requirements of the neighbourhood.

[5] The restoration project of Hammam Yalbugha, led by the architect Nabil Kassabji, was considered and shortlisted for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1989.

The hope was that this hammam would become once again a place for communal gathering, relaxation and social life, and a centre for the preservation of cultural traditions (ICOMOS-ICCROM 2020).

Unfortunately, the outbreak of the war in Aleppo and the recent earthquake have together disrupted the renovation efforts and caused further extensive damage to the bath. The work that had been accomplished before the war was significantly affected, and the future of the restoration project remains uncertain due to the large number of ancient buildings needing post-war and post-earthquake repair, the situation being exacerbated by the general shortage of funds.

The Bath Heating System: Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri's heating system was crucial in providing visitors with a comfortable and enjoyable bathing experience. It offers valuable insights into the bath's functional aspects and demonstrates the ingenious engineering techniques employed in traditional hammam design.

Historically, traditional hammams utilised a heating system known as a hypocaust. This system involved an underground furnace or boiler that generated heat through pipes or channels embedded in the bathhouse walls or floors. A central furnace known as the *al-Qamimi* was one of the heating system's most important components. This furnace produced the heat necessary to heat the bath water and surroundings, and it was often installed in the basement or in a separate room. To facilitate heat distribution, the bath incorporated a network of channels and pipes known as the *Qanat*. These channels carried the hot air and steam from the central furnace to different areas of the hammam, ensuring an even distribution of warmth throughout the bathing rooms. The heat warmed the bathing areas and created a steamy and relaxing atmosphere.

There were underground water tanks, known as *Birka*, which served as reservoirs to supply water for heating. These tanks facilitated water circulation and acted as thermal stores, releasing heat gradually to maintain a consistent temperature (al-Asadi 1981).

During the renovation process, efforts were made to retain the authentic elements of the original heating system while incorporating modern technologies for improved efficiency and sustainability. The restoration team carefully inspected and repaired any damaged or deteriorated sections of the hypocausts, ensuring proper insulation and airflow.

In some cases, where the original heating components were beyond repair, replicas were created using traditional craftsmanship techniques and materials to maintain the historical

integrity of the bath. These replicas were integrated into the existing system, preserving the architectural authenticity while ensuring functionality.

To enhance the energy efficiency, insulation materials were introduced to minimise heat loss and optimise heat distribution within the bath. This helped create a more sustainable and environmentally friendly heating system.

Furthermore, the renovated heating system was equipped with modern controls and monitoring systems to regulate temperature and ensure the safety of visitors. These allowed for better heating system management, optimising its performance and providing a comfortable bathing environment.

Overall, the renovation of the bath heating system before the war aimed to balance preserving the historical character of Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri and incorporating modern technologies for improved efficiency. The restoration focused on repairing and replicating the original components while introducing insulation and modern controls to enhance functionality and sustainability. By reviving the bath heating system, the renovated Hammam Yalbugha could once again provide visitors with a truly authentic and comfortable bathing experience.

The Bath Water System: Historically, this hammam had a sophisticated water system supplying the visitors' bathing needs by providing a hygienic and enjoyable bathing experience within the hammam. The water supply for the bath was sourced from natural springs. The water was carefully channelled into the hammam through underground aqueducts or pipes which ensured a steady water flow to various bath areas, Including bathing rooms, fountains, and pools.

The bathwater system incorporated hot and cold water supplies to accommodate different bathing preferences. The hot water was typically heated using the bath's heating system (described on p.57). The heated water was then directed to the bathing rooms and pools, providing warmth and comfort to visitors. On the other hand, the cold water sources were supplied through separate pipes or channels to balance the temperature and ensure a constant flow for rinsing and cooling purposes, providing a refreshing bath.

The water system of Hammam Yalbugha aimed to provide a regulated and controlled bathing experience. Various features, such as water valves and controls, allowed bathers to adjust the water flow and temperature according to their preferences. To maintain hygiene, the system incorporated efficient drainage systems that removed used water and waste from the bathing rooms and pools. The wastewater was then carefully channelled through

drainage pipes or channels, preventing accumulation or contamination within the bath complex.

Overall, the bathwater system was designed to provide visitors with a seamless and comfortable bathing experience. With hot and cold water supplies, regulated controls, and efficient drainage systems, the system ensured cleanliness, temperature control, and a soothing bathing environment within Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri.

The Current Situation of Hammam Yalbugha: The unfortunate events of the war and the recent earthquake in February 2023 have left Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri in a state of severe destruction. It will be difficult to restore the building, formerly a significant representation of Aleppo's cultural legacy, to its previous state because it has received irreversible damage. A very few original architectural features remain and its stability has been seriously compromised.

First the fighting and then the earthquake severely damaged the building's walls, roof, and internal areas. The destruction is made worse by the failure of critical structural elements, including domes, vaults, and supporting columns. These events have left the hammam in ruins, making it structurally unstable and unsafe to enter.

Given the extent of the damage, restoring the building to the state it was before the war and earthquake is not feasible at the moment. The complexity of the architectural features, the loss of original materials, and the challenges posed by the site's current condition make it impractical to reconstruct the hammam to its former glory in the Immediate future.

However, despite the impossibility of restoring the building at the moment, it is crucial to recognise and preserve the memory and significance of Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri. The ruins serve as a poignant reminder of the cultural and historical heritage of Aleppo. The site can be transformed into a space where people can gather to reflect, pay homage, and commemorate the importance of the hammam in the city's social and cultural identity.

Efforts should be focused on stabilising the remaining structures to prevent further deterioration and collapse. While the physical reconstruction of Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri may not be possible due to the substantial cost, preserving its memory and creating a space for reflection and dialogue can contribute to continuing its legacy within the city. Through such interventions or rehabilitations, the spirit and cultural identity associated with the hammam can be honoured and remembered despite its current unfortunate damaged condition.

Fig 16. *Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri*, Earthquake destruction. Aug 2023. Digital photograph: Sally Hilal.

Fig 17. *Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri*, main facade. Aug 2023. Digital photograph: Sally Hilal.

2.2 Bimarisatn Arghun is one of the most important historical hospitals in the Islamic world, built in order to treat mental and physical illnesses. The healing technique they used was primarily based on the sound of water, light and music. There is a misconception about the meaning of the word bimaristan, which is of Persian origin, resulting from blending two words: *bimar* meaning 'ill person' and *stan* meaning 'location or place' (al-Asadi 1981). Some people falsely believe that a bimaristan equates to what in the West was traditionally referred to as a lunatic asylum, while the word was used in medieval Islam to indicate a place that provides medical and surgical treatment for patients. However, it is the case that in every bimaristan there was a ward dedicated to treating mental illness (Al-Ghazal 2007), which has contributed to the confusion. To put it another way, a bimaristan was the historical equivalent of a modern general hospital, treating a range of conditions.

The bimaristan is one of the most significant landmarks of the Middle Ages, springing up all over the Islamic empire, every Islamic city having its own health institutions to provide medical education and free healthcare. The first-ever hospital in the Arab world was founded in Damascus by an Islamic ruler named Walid ibn Abdulmalik. Established between 706 and 707 CE, its purpose was to treat people with chronic diseases such as leprosy and blindness. The hospital provided those patients with free treatment and accommodation, especially those who came from impoverished areas. It was one of that group of foundations built by caliphs and sultans as charitable institutions for the 'public good,' and to honour their memory (Nagamia, 2003).

Conditions in a hospital were described in the letter of a young Frenchman letter from a bimaristan in the 10th century:

> Dear father, any place in this hospital is extremely clean; beds and pillows are covered with fine Damascus white cloth. As to bedcovers, they are made of gentle soft plush. All the rooms in this hospital are supplied with clean water. This water is carried to the rooms through pipes that are connected to a wide water fountain; not only that, but also every room is equipped with a heating stove. As to food, chicken and vegetables are always served to the extent that some patients do not want to leave the hospital because of their love and desire of this tasty food. (Translated by Al-Arshdy, 1990).

In the Islamic golden age, the bimaristans were advanced in providing medical services to the public. They were more like modern teaching hospitals, in which doctors study all types of specialised treatment and surgical procedures. According to ancient travellers, there were two systems of receiving healthcare treatment, including both inpatient and outpatient care.

Fig 18. Max von Oppenheim, *Bimaristan Arghun al-Kamili* - The main courtyard. 1899. black and white photography (source: arachne.uni-koeln.de).

In addition, some of them included places designated for those who needed permanent or semi-permanent care, such as homes for the elderly, or those who require special care and must be completely socially isolated, such as leprosy patients and people with mental and psychological disorders (Hajjar 2010). Due to constantly accommodating such medical conditions within the institution, the public associated the bimaristan or 'Morstan' - a name sometimes mistakenly used by so-called ‘commoners’ - with the mental asylum.

According to later chroniclers, Ibn Butlan, a Christian physician from Baghdad and a traveller, who visited the Emirate of Aleppo in the mid-fifth Islamic century 440 AH - 1048 AD, described exhaustively an ancient bimaristan within the city in his medieval book *Taqwim al-Sihhah* (The Maintenance of Health), which means that health services had begun in Aleppo in earlier times. Later, the most prominent of these was the Arghun Al Kamili, completed in 755 AH, corresponding to 1345 AD. Moreover, this bimaristan as it stands today is considered living evidence representing the cultural changes and the brilliant architecture of the ancient city of Aleppo and the Islamic world as a whole. It was registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1986 as part of the ancient city of Aleppo.

The bimaristans are among the world's most advanced structures when built, where early Islamic Arabs greatly excelled in their construction methods, besides the invention of various devices which also supported the water supply systems and gave a supply direct to local people. Arghun al-Kamili hospital is a prominent example utilising such advanced techniques, in that it was designed to resist earthquakes and to be a naturally ventilated space. The structural design system is based on the concept of having separated halls, each one of which was used for a particular specialty (for instance, the care ward service for women). The bimaristan was intended to be used by men and women, the women occupying a special section, giving privacy and excellent humanitarian medical practices, as described by Arabic and Persian scholars and poets' texts.

In the Middle Ages, the Arabs were pioneers in various types of sciences, including medical, engineering, and this is registered in the historical records. Their lands contained the most advanced engineering knowledge at the time, while the institutions they built provided medicine, medical instruments and a body of research knowledge, making a major contribution to the historic development of medical practice and literature. This included a knowledge of the dangers of infection. In this light, it is useful to recall Abu-Bakr al-Razi's method when he chose a location to build a bimaristan in Baghdad by ‘hanging a piece of meat in several places for a few days and deciding in favour of the place where meat was found to be least infected’ (Al-Ghazal 2007, p.3).

The public utility service genuinely cared for human health during this period, providing all they had to serve patients with food, clothing, medicine, and care throughout the year. This coincided with the dark ages in Europe, where the mentally ill were mistreated, sometimes being viewed as being possessed by evil spirits: abused, banished, and tortured (Shaath 1991).

Timeline: The Aleppo bimaristan is recognised as one of the greatest architectural feats in the history of the early Islamic world, which prompted the Aleppo Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums to employ it as a Museum of Medicine and Science in the Arab World. Pre-civil war, the museum showcased a collection of wax sculptures representing famous physicians from early Islamic times. It was also dedicated to displaying inventions of surgical instruments and medieval medical manuscripts.

The building's core structure dates back to the Middle Ages when it was built on a residential palace site, bought by the deputy of Aleppo sultan Arghun Al-Kamili. Additions and alterations to the existing building were made between 1454 to 1456 during its in-use period. In later years, the historical hospital was neglected and poorly maintained until 1884, when restorations and repairs were made under the rule of the Ottoman sultan Brahim Pasha.

The hospital remained in use until 1914. At that time, it was officially closed and left to fall into ruin. However, as mentioned by Shaath (1991), a humble family lived there as property guardians. They built two shelters for themselves in the southern chamber, as seen in (fig.19). In his book, Allen O. Whipple (2003) also noted that following his visit to the bimaristan in 1959, he could not inspect the inside thoroughly as three Arab families occupied it.

After the bimaristan was abandoned, parts of it were demolished or repurposed when the Ottoman empire came to an end. These included a prayer room and a sabil-fountain with an underground cistern that provided the building and passer-by with drinking water. The building was in a state of disrepair. However, it was eventually restored and returned to its original condition by the Directorate of Antiquities, which later converted it into a museum.

Main gate entrance and location: The bimaristan was located at the heart of the ancient city of Aleppo, surrounded by busy public spaces such as markets, baths, and mosques (as the bimaristan fund relies on the Islamic endowments and the donations made by merchants and philanthropists). Even so, it was a quiet place that offered respite from the noise of city-centre living. It was built in the quarter of the south-eastern side of the old city, near Bab Qinnasrin gate, one of the historical gates in ancient Aleppo.

Fig 19. *Bimaristan Arghun al-Kamili* - The main courtyard: two shelters in the southern chamber. ca. 1921. black and white photography (source: arachne.uni-koeln.de).

It was originally a palace built for the Ayyubid emir of Aleppo and bought by emir Arghun al-Kamili during the Mamluk period. A great part of the building was removed, but the main gate remained and was incorporated into the current building, the original gate boundaries can still be seen today. On each side of its entrance facade wall there is an Arabic inscription in thuluth script, which includes the provisions of the bimaristan endowments. The first/main gate is located on the west side of the building. It is a half-dome entrance with three rows of decorative muqarnas (ornamental moulding) containing engraved Mamluk motifs and blazons [6] on the underside. These are primarily to indicate the person responsible for supervising the construction of the bimaristan.

The first section: From the first entrance of the building, you walk through an area 'a hallway' to get into the main section of the bimaristan. This area contained three wings providing different public services, such as consulting rooms and a pharmacy (on the left side), with windows overlooking the street to provide medical care services for outpatients, inpatients, and physicians. To the right side, this space includes a waiting area - two rooms with seating where people can wait or be checked for a range of minor illnesses (Tabbaa, 2010).

The second section: The main hall consists of a central courtyard (an open-air space) surrounded by smaller rooms on the east and west side. In addition, roofed colonnades were built on both sides, providing shaded access to those single rooms which open onto the courtyard. Each porch stands on four stone columns.

In early Islamic times, engineers invented an earthquake-resisting structural system since the city of Aleppo is set on major earthquake fault lines. Therefore, within the bimaristan, they applied a resistant construction method by bridging the columns that hold up the porch roof through the use of wooden planks between the capitals and the arches (fig.53). In so doing, it holds the building together and provides structural strength and stability, the structure absorbs and withstands the forces of the earthquake. For that reason, the building survived strong quakes. The 1138 AD earthquake is known as one of the most devastating earthquakes in recorded history, and it has seen times of war and conflict, but the bimaristan remained standing. It is still standing today, despite the damage accrued from the recent

[6] A blazon (Mamluk Rank) is an emblem adopted by sultans and rulers to denote the role of courtiers serving the sultan, their duties, and ownership. They date back to the sixth century AH until the beginning of the ninth century AH. Typically it was worn on their shields and turbans as part of their outfits. In addition, it is seen carved on stone walls and buildings' facades, as is the case for the bimaristan.

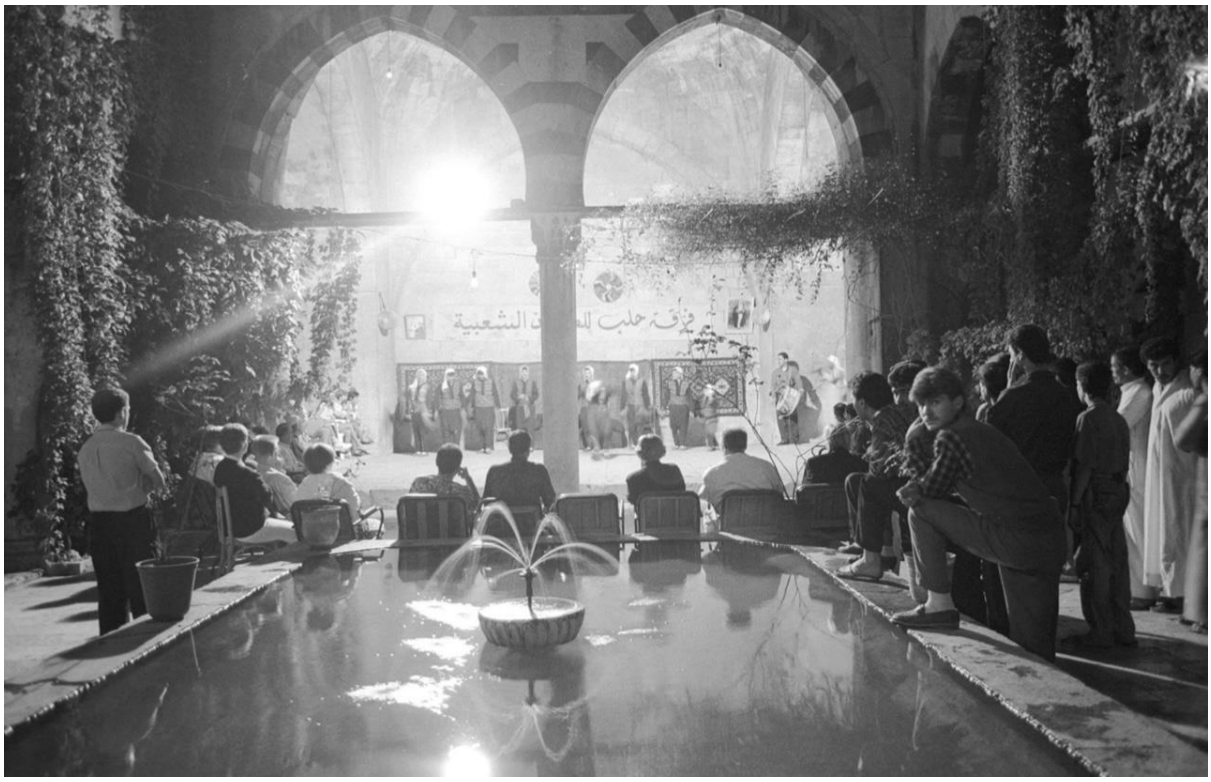


Fig 20. *Bimaristan Arghun al-Kamili* - The main courtyard. 1983. Photograph: Christine Delpal.

devastating war. We find examples of similar architectural systems in complex buildings within the city, which were built around the same era, such as the Ottoman and the Al-Firdaws Schools, and others.

The courtyard has a large limestone pool with a fountain situated in the heart of the space. According to Al-Tabbakh (1988), in ancient times, flowers and medical herbs were planted in pots placed around the edge of the central pool (the pool beam), blending the architectural beauty with nature to bring a sense of serenity. According to al-Asadi (1981), the scented plants in the courtyard were used as a natural remedy to help reduce stress and anxiety, and to promote calmness.

The courtyard has two vaulted chambers 'iwans' which open on one side to the court. They are placed along the central axis of the building, facing each other. The southern iwan is the grand hall which served as a lecture and meeting hall. It was a place where the students could observe and learn from more experienced doctors. In contrast, the northern iwan had a wall fountain 'salsabeel' feeding a water channel connected to the central pool. This salsabeel had a carved stone slab, on which the water flowed down the surface of the northern iwan to reach the pool through a narrow covered channel (which unfortunately no longer exists). Recently, remains of terracotta channels have been discovered in the back wall of the iwan. They are believed to be connected with the qanat tunnel, the bimaristan main water supplier.

Additionally, patients would sit there listening to the music performed by a group of musicians employed to assist the patient's recovery process by creating a pleasant and relaxing environment. The two domed chambers (iwans) rise one step above the courtyard; thus, patients are protected from sun and rain. The space has the ideal architectural acoustics in the building for sound and music. Therefore, it has been used as a venue for folklore performances which share musical experiences with tourists, in a place where you can witness the Aleppien culture through space, time, and music. These performances include folk and dervish dancing (fig. 20).

This section leads to the third part of the building, through a narrow corridor that separates the courtyard area from the rest of the building, leading to three different wards. (It is believed that these wards were designated for psychiatric and neurological diseases.)

The third section: Islamic civilization placed great emphasis on cleanliness and purity of the body, mind, and soul. Water is referenced many times in the Quran, God said: 'we made from water every living thing' (Surah 21: Al-Anbya, verse 30). Therefore, water features were found throughout the land in public gardens, hospitals, and mosque courtyards.

Fig 21. YasserTabbaa, *Bimaristan Arghun al-Kamili* - Small northern courtyard: view of open dome from below. 1983. Color slide (source: archnet.org).

Fig 22. YasserTabbaa, *Bimaristan Arghun al-Kamili* - Top View of Octagonal Courtyard and Fountain. 1990. Color slide (source: archnet.org).

In medical practices, they respected the physical, psychological, and spiritual needs of patients. Therefore, each ward has a central opened dome that allows light, fresh air and rain to enter, and a corresponding pool below in order to bring comfort and tranquillity to patients. Thus, the therapeutic sound of water was the most important part of the treatment, after herbal medicines and remedies.

This section has three wards with several rooms. Each has its own courtyard, where music was played during the daytime or religious songs at night so the patients would not feel alone. They also placed a water fountain in every section, and changed the water flow three times a day depending on the time. For example, it would be more active in the morning, and it would become very soothing and gentle by sunset. They used this technique as a practice of meditation, in addition to carving certain patterns and designs on the fountains' corners, aiming to shift the patients' attention toward it.

Every section in this bimaristan was built in a precise way with certain details to treat different illnesses (see the plan on Appendix 2, p 145). For example, the first ward of this section was made to treat difficult mental disorders; the dome (skylight) opening is smaller than those in other sections, as it was built to reduce the amount of light that is entering the rooms. It was believed that light increases the level of tension and stress in such cases (Hajjar, 2010). The design does not allow the noise of the patients to escape, nor does it let the outside noise disturb the patients in the bimaristan, it was designed and built to act as a sound insulator.

The second wing is in the shape of an octagon. It includes eleven rooms that have no openings except for their entrances, surrounding a more spacious courtyard with a domed ceiling opening which allowed for increased access to light and air. The third wing was dedicated to treating women in separate rooms from men. It is a rectangular space that includes four rooms plus two small chambers (iwans). Additional facilities and services were available, including a kitchen, storage room, and shared bathrooms.

The stylistic semiotic approach in design, embodies water and light in a way that was not only decorative but also more spiritual. This is evident in the Mamluk-era architecture (the same period in which Hammam Yalbugha and Bimaristan Arghun were built). Such understanding was influenced by similar investigative case studies in Turkey (as Aleppo was a part of the Ottoman Empire) and Egypt, both like Aleppo, were under the rule of the Mamluks. The design details of such buildings have greater meaning, related to spirituality and healing. There is a 'divine presence' symbol, represented by different elements such as the domes/skylights and the water basins in the courtyards.

Fig 23. *Qastal Ali Beik*. 1907. Drinking fountain in Aleppo (source: archives.eure.fr).

2.3 Water Supply Infrastructure

One cannot talk about the role of the hammam and bimaristan without discussing the water supply infrastructure on which they were entirely dependent.

Since the founding of the city, the primary source of drinkable fresh water in Aleppo has been from harvested rainwater and streams, supplemented by water reaching Aleppo from the River Queiq and the Hailan spring (Al Ghazy 1922). The latter sources supplied public baths, drinking fountains, mosques, schools and private households through pipeline and aqueduct systems for more than 5000 years until the beginning of the twentieth century. Meanwhile, the water of Aleppo's wells was used for industrial purposes only, as it was not drinkable. That is the reason why Aleppo is considered 'poor' when it comes to water resources, hence the high value of water in the city throughout history (Kasmo 2018).

Despite these limited sources, Aleppo had many public fountains and public water reservoirs, and this system allowed people throughout the city access to water. The water fountains were decorated with carvings and engravings that showcased the excellent Aleppine workmanship, with characteristics that differed according to the era in which they were built. The literary engravings and carvings on the arches and walls of the water fountains are considered a living record and proof of the city's history, as it was the custom to write on them the name of the person who built them and the date that construction was completed. These public fountains and water reservoirs also played an essential social role, as all the citizens of different social status were obliged to gather around these water resources. Unfortunately, in the first half of the 20th century, more than 90% of them were repurposed as shops, or warehouses for nearby shops (see fig. 24).

In traditional courtyard houses, the Aleppines collected rainwater for domestic use; the rooftops collected the winter rainwater which then drained into pipes leading to water tanks beneath the buildings. The tanks were carved out of (or built into) the bedrock and their water remain both pure and drinkable. The wells, by contrast, were used to provide water primarily for cleaning and watering, and for agriculture, as its saltiness made it undrinkable.

Studying the history of Aleppo's water infrastructure and understanding the traditional methods and techniques which were adapted to provide water is essential. These methods were an effective and environmentally responsible solution to securing the clean water needed for each family, where historically methods (such as collecting rain water through an underground reservoir in each house as described above) provided the water needed for daily use. These historical methods of supplying and collecting water in Syria provide

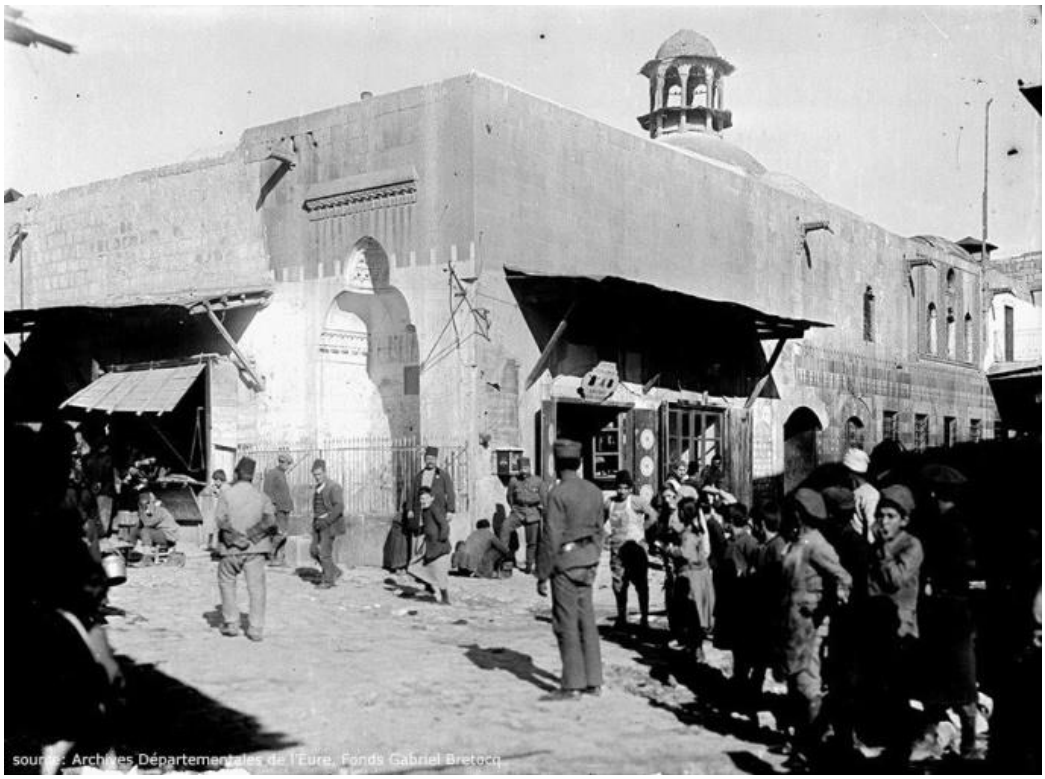


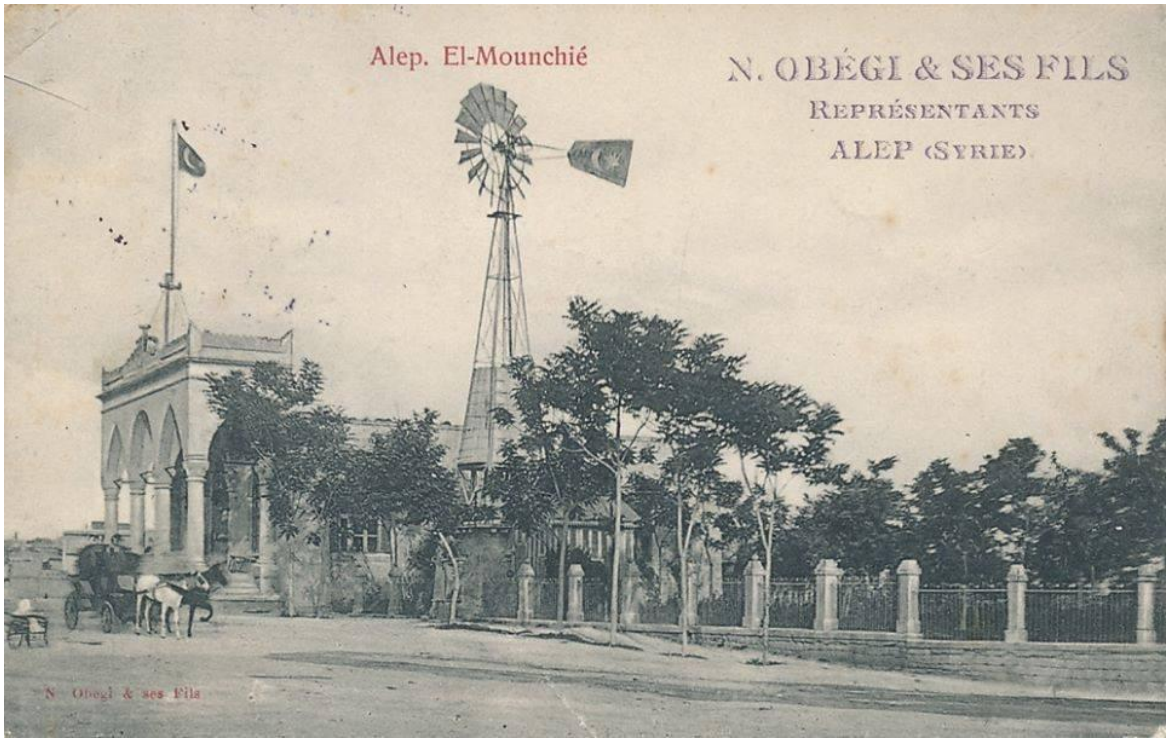
Fig 24. Gabriel Bretocq, *Absher Pasha Sabil*. 1920 – 1970. Water-drinking fountain in Aleppo repurposed as a shop (source: archives.eure.fr)

numerous concepts in answer to the problem of water shortage, and, in my opinion, these methods need to be re-examined and adapted to the current situation to provide necessary clean water. However, climate change and unsustainable agricultural practices have worsened the situation, leading to groundwater depletion and the drying up of rivers. A decrease in rainfall and runoff has further strained water resources, increasing the risk of water scarcity in the country.

Until 1910, as mentioned earlier, the city was supplied with water through an open canal that originated from the waters of Hailan spring, which then fed large water tanks (Qastal or Sabil) and was distributed to multiple areas of the city (Abdulrazak 2013). The Qastal (public fountain) is an integrated structure, which usually consists of a large underground water tank built of stone, with two openings. The first allows entry to the person responsible for cleaning the tank (usually once a year), and a second, in the middle of the tank, is to allow it to be filled. Built above the underground water tank is a structure which has one or two domes that help to cool the temperature (due to its thermal performance) in summer and to keep it comfortably warm during the winter, in order maintain a cold-room atmosphere for the water. This room contains small tanks that service street users from faucets on the exterior of the building). Unfortunately, after the water reached the city's residential areas in 1955, most of these structures were destroyed and are no longer in use. Furthermore, very few water structures survived the recent conflict, and those that did are substantially damaged and obsolete without any recognition or protection.

In 1896 a mechanical generator system was added to the design of Qastals in Aleppo. Six tower structures were built, designed to allow citizens to extract groundwater. This was done using windmill turbines/towers in order to provide the Qastal, forming the base of the structure, with water (see fig. 25). There is only one complete tower structure left, which is not in use, and another that is a ruin in a different area of the city. These structures, while performing a different function, offer a useful prototype to the proposed temporary site-specific intervention and will be discussed further in chapter three.

The value of water in Islam, along with its conservation and dispensary, holds great significance within the religion, and has influenced water supply infrastructure development in Islamic cities. Al Ghazy, in his *book The Gold River in the History of Aleppo* (1922), provides valuable insights into the cultural and architectural aspects of water supply systems in Aleppo. This section explores the value of water to Islam, and the definition, origin, and architecture of the Sabil, a public drinking fountain.



25. Al-Azizieh windmill, drinking fountain. 1901. Republished by Alaa Alsayed (source: National Archive of Aleppo).

26. Aleppo, Al-Azizieh, ca.1920 during French mandate (source: Archives Departementales de l'Eure. Fonds Gabriel Bretocq).

The Value of Water in Islam: 'We made from water every living thing' (The Prophets 21:30). Water has a profound spiritual and practical significance in Islam (Faruqui, Biswas, & Bino 2001). It is considered a blessing from God, necessary for sustenance and purification. Islamic doctrine places a high value on water as a gift from God and promotes its conservation and wise usage. The essay emphasises that the Qur'an is filled with verses that discuss the importance of water, its place in creation, and our duties as stewards of this precious resource. In Islamic belief, water is connected to cleanliness, purity, and spiritual cleansing. It is vital in various religious rituals, such as ablution (wudu) before prayer and ceremonial cleansing. Water is also mentioned in the Quran as a gift from God and a source of sustenance not just for humans, but for all living beings. The Islamic tradition strongly emphasises the preservation and protection of water resources as an act of stewardship, which has clear ecological associations.

Conservation and Dispensing of Water: The concept of "israf," meaning excess or extravagance, is discouraged in Islam, and Muslims are encouraged to conserve water daily. This principle informs the design and management of water supply systems in Islamic cities, where efficient infrastructure and practices are employed to minimise water waste (Amery, 2001: pp.481–489). Al Ghazy discusses various traditional practices and techniques employed in the city to save and manage water, such as using qanats (underground channels), cisterns, and innovative irrigation systems. These systems aimed to optimise water distribution, minimise wastage, and ensure equitable access to water resources.

Definition and Origin of the Sabil: A "Sabil" is a public drinking fountain that provides free, clean drinking water to the general public and is common in Islamic communities. Sabils initially arose in the early Islamic period and rapidly became an essential feature of urban infrastructure, generating unique forms of street architecture. According to Ibn Shaddad (1953), the concept of the Sabil stems from the Islamic idea of "Sadaqah," which emphasises charitable acts and the provision of public services for the benefit of society.

In Islamic societies, the Sabil holds great cultural and religious significance. It represents a tangible manifestation of generosity and social welfare, reflecting the values of compassion and benevolence promoted by Islam. The establishment of Sabil reflects the commitment to ensuring that the basic need for water is met by providing it freely to all, irrespective of their social or economic standing. This is a principle that I will return to when developing my own design interventions.

Fig 27. *Two Syrian women drink from an ornate fountain*, 1946. Photographed: W. Robert Moore (source: www.nationalgeographic.com.au).

The strategic location of Sabil ensures easy access for individuals in need of water. They are often located in open areas close to mosques, hammams, marketplaces, or major thoroughfares. The Sabil plays a vital role in fostering community interaction and inclusivity by providing free drinking water. It becomes a hub where people from diverse backgrounds can gather, interact, and engage in acts of charity and social exchange. Again, these are functions that my own design interventions refer back to.

In summary, the Sabil is a public drinking fountain originating in Islamic societies, rooted in charity and community service principles. Its design, architecture, and strategic placement reflect Islam's cultural, artistic, and egalitarian values. By providing free access to clean drinking water, the Sabil serves as a symbol of generosity, social welfare, and communal harmony, ensuring the basic needs of individuals are met and fostering a sense of shared responsibility within a rich tradition of using water to generate a sense of community.

The Architecture of the Sabil: The architecture of the Sabil reflects the rich Syrian cultural and architectural heritage. The design and construction of Sabils varied across different regions and periods, showcasing local architectural styles and influences. They were typically constructed as stand-alone structures near mosques, markets, or other public spaces. They were designed to be visually appealing and served as landmarks within the urban fabric. The architecture of Sabils often incorporated intricate decorations, calligraphy, and geometric patterns, displaying the artistic skills of craftsmen of the time.

Ibn Shaddad (1953) describes in detail the water dispensing mechanisms used in Sabils, including using faucets, spouts, or basins. Some Sabils also featured storage tanks or underground cisterns to ensure a continuous water supply. The architectural design of Sabils also considered the comfort of users, providing shaded areas, seating, and sometimes even ablution facilities for ritual purification. Again, functional, symbolic and metaphorical aspects merge.

In conclusion, water has always held a significant place in Syrian culture and history, and its conservation and responsible use are integral to Islamic teachings, and embedded within its rituals. Of real significance to my own project, the Sabil, as a public drinking fountain, represents the principles of charity and community service. Its architecture showcases the artistic and architectural heritage of the city, while its practical function provides access to clean drinking water for the public. Understanding the value of water in Islam and the architectural features of the Sabil contributes to a broader appreciation of the cultural, religious, and architectural aspects of the water supply infrastructure in the old city of Aleppo.

Chapter 3 Practice Review

Chapter one laid out the historical and political context of the project, and investigated the politics of conservation. Specifically, I developed an argument for an interventionist approach to the problems faced in Aleppo of the destruction of cultural institutions such as the hammams and bimaristans. In this chapter, I develop such an interventionalist approach further through the notion of temporary architectural interventions, proposing an exemplar project that will act as a model that could be applied elsewhere. In the previous chapter, I then investigated the wider functional and symbolic properties of water through the historical spatial and social practices within the city of Aleppo. I discussed the characteristics that distinguish the hammams and bimaristans as cultural institutions, and their significant role in contributing to and influencing the development of cultural identity. However, I now return to the notion of intervention in the context of rehabilitating the historical fabric in the ancient city of Aleppo, specifically the Yalbugha bathhouse, which has received little attention so far in the reconstruction plans for rebuilding the old city. This chapter aims to identify approaches and methods of rehabilitation by investigating existing literature focused on specific examples which may contribute to a broader debate in the dialogue between historical heritage and the process of creative reconstruction.

3.1 Temporary Architectural Interventions

My research investigates the connection between aspects of water infrastructure and the need for clean drinking water, together with a designed response to issues relevant to the restoration/reconstruction of Hammam Yalbugha and Bimaristan Arghun. I am proposing a series of temporary interventions within the ruined hammam structure, which will not only provide safe access and facilitate rehabilitation rather than reconstruction, but also produce a limited supply of fresh water (and ultimately evoke memories of the original use of the building). This is consistent with the multisensory experience of bathing which played such a key aspect in the lives of Aleppo citizens prior to the war.

The research employs aspects of speculative design (Dunne and Raby, 2013) as an approach, applied to address the particular problematic situation of water and to lead design thinking to open up new possibilities for imagining the potential futures of the post-conflict recovery and restoration of historical sites. In their book, *Speculative Everything* (2013), Dunne and Raby proposed normative concepts that use design practice as a tool for

speculating how things could be in possible futures. They provided ideas and alternative scenarios that address the use of design to support and enhance the human experience as a means of social change. For them, 'design can play a role in highlighting what might happen if behaviour does not change, what can be achieved if it does, or simply communicating what needs to change and how' (p.161). Everything starts with the ‘what if’ question.

Thus, Dunne and Raby’s interest lies in ‘the idea of possible futures and using them as tools to better understand the present and to discuss the kind of future people want, and, of course, ones people do not want’ (p.2). In other words, Speculative design suggests an approach seeking to create future-based debates situations that aim to engage the wider public and collectively to challenge the present real-world problems. It provides a critically-oriented method, essential to both my research and practice.

As such, the initial stages of my practice-research developed strategies for community engagement to better understand the research subject and to acquire greater insights based upon the interviewer’s perception (see Appendix 1, p.117). Through interviews, participatory and visual practices, this research has influenced and informed the design thinking. The interviews provided new lenses for looking into the research problem from the perspective of the public, who are considered key stakeholders in this study and ‘participants in the construction of their own futures and not only participants in the design process simply as users or consumers’ (Staszowski, Brown and Winter 2013, p. 31).

The design aspect of my research proposes temporary structures that will (at least in conception) be installed during the post-war reconstruction planning until the financial resources for the eventual long-scale reconstruction are available. The project itself is envisaged as generating interest in this ultimate reconstruction. The architectural practice juxtaposes ancient methods to supply potable water integrated with new technologies such as devices to extract water from the air. This latter method was developed in the 1960s by the engineer Carlos Espinosa Arancibia.

The original construction of the building facilitates the use of such hybrid techniques. As mentioned earlier, historically, the hammams were filled with water from springs, wells, and underground tunnels (qanats). Therefore, as structures they were built below ground level to facilitate the transfer of water into the building – as the water tanks must be lower than the water channel level. The thermal performance of the original building promotes the formation of condensation, being built partly underground, and contained by thick walls that secure the

Fig 28. Arturo Vittori, *Warka Water Towers.* 2015. Bamboo structure to collect and harvest rainwater (source: warkawater.org).

building against changes in the weather, winds, and storms (Dashti, 2016). These factors helped to maintain an even temperature within the building in all seasons. These early means would be described today as ecologically responsible, though they were also highly cost-effective.

One important reference here is the *Warka Water Tow*er, a design by the architect Arturo Vittori, which provides an alternative source to supply water in communities having no access to running water. It is a lightweight bamboo structure covered with polyester mesh material that helps to collect rainwater and harvest water dew into a reservoir at the bottom of the structure (see fig. 28), and can easily be constructed and replicated by local communities without the need for professional builders or complex tools or equipment. The design itself is available through open source means, publicly accessible so that anyone can download and repeat. The structures soon became not just a source of safe drinking water (a pressing issue in the North East region of Ethiopia where the project was first developed) but social gathering places, and it was this aspect of the design which felt relevant to the situation I was dealing with in Aleppo. Similar design principles applied to Carlos Espinosa's *Macrodiamante fog catcher*, developed in Antofagasta, Chile, in the late 1950s. One of his three-dimensional prototypes, a 'mist trap', captures the humidity by channelling water from the clouds to the ground. (fig. 29)

My proposed intervention draws upon the technology of the *Warka Water Tower* [7]and the *Macrodiamante fog catcher*, but adapts it to the urban situation of Aleppo and the structural condition of the hammam. The main architectural intervention will be located within the inner room of the bath (*the caldarium*): an octagonal shaped room surrounded by four vaulted bathing chambers (*Iwans*). It was designed to be the hottest room in the hammam, traditionally heated by a hypocaust underfloor heating system, which consists of ducts and tunnels placed within the walls and under the caldarium floor and heated by a furnace at the back of the building (where the water cisterns are located), circulating hot air within the space (Abdulrazak 2013).

Pre-war, the room had a large domed ceiling decorated with small geometric glazed openings - in the shape of a star (known as Qamariyyat). These are considered a key

[7] It is worth noting that the Ethiopian Water Tower project was shortlisted for an Aga Khan Award for Architecture in the 2000s; however, it did not win an award as it was not found to be very efficient in generating sufficient quantities of water. In contrast, my design project takes a different approach. Rather than aiming for a permanent solution like the Warka Tower, the water in my design plays a more symbolic role, where the quantity of water is not so crucial.

Fig 29. Carlos Espinosa, *Macrodiamante fog catcher*. 1970. Fog catcher installation (source: integradoatrapanieblas2011.blogspot.com).

feature of the hammams, allowing natural light to enter and adding an aesthetic quality to the space. This section of the building complex is the most affected by war, as the central domed roof collapsed when tunnels were blasted under nearby historical buildings which connected with the tunnels beneath Yalbugha (fig.30).

At the heart of my design response is to bring together two functional imperatives: (1) to provide safe drinking water for the local community, and to develop a social gathering place to encourage debate and discussion about rehabilitation and future reconstruction; (2) to provide temporary support for the badly damaged structures, preventing further collapse and facilitating safe entry. In turn, these functional imperatives also perform an imaginative role as reminding the community about the rituals of bathing through the sound of water.

Therefore, the temporary intervention will take the form of a timber frame structure to provide essential structural support to the building. The frame will reference the formwork for rebuilding the original dome, but with different characteristics. It will be a domed frame that holds the water tower structure, but also encourages the airflow circulation in the room and provides a natural cooling effect. Thereby, when the warm air cools down, the water vapour in the air turns into water droplets, eventually fall through gravity, providing safe drinking water.

The practice thus responds to both social and ecological considerations, and the environmental factors in the city: the seasonal variation in temperature and the amount of rainfall. Thus, the design will utilise a kinetic canopy as a device able to adapt to various climatic conditions. It collects rainwater in winter and serves as shading canopy in summer.

As noted above, the design will also provide a safe path for people to access the hammam, through connected mesh walkways, raised above the ground, and continue to merge in a circular structure with stairways that serves as a miniature amphitheatre: a seating space where people can gather in order to share stories of their own experiences of the hammam (i.e. a place of exchange, stimulating debate and idea generation).

Crucially, a central drinking fountain will provide potable water, which will be harvested from the rain in winter, dew, and fog in summer. The water drops fall into a collector made of natural fabric and then pass into a water tank through a funnel, with a metal filter container. These phenomena will generate sounds, produced by the water drips when they hit the container surface. In doing so, it becomes a sound installation intended to evoke memories of the building’s original use. Furthermore, the run-off water would avoid the normal route of urban mains drainage and instead flow into a purification bed of ecological planting of reeds and herbs, hereby also supporting regenerative ecology surrounding the site.

Fig 30. Omar Sanadiki, *Blossomed vegetation on the damaged Yalbugha bathhouse.* 2019. Aleppo, Syria (source: cnbc.com)

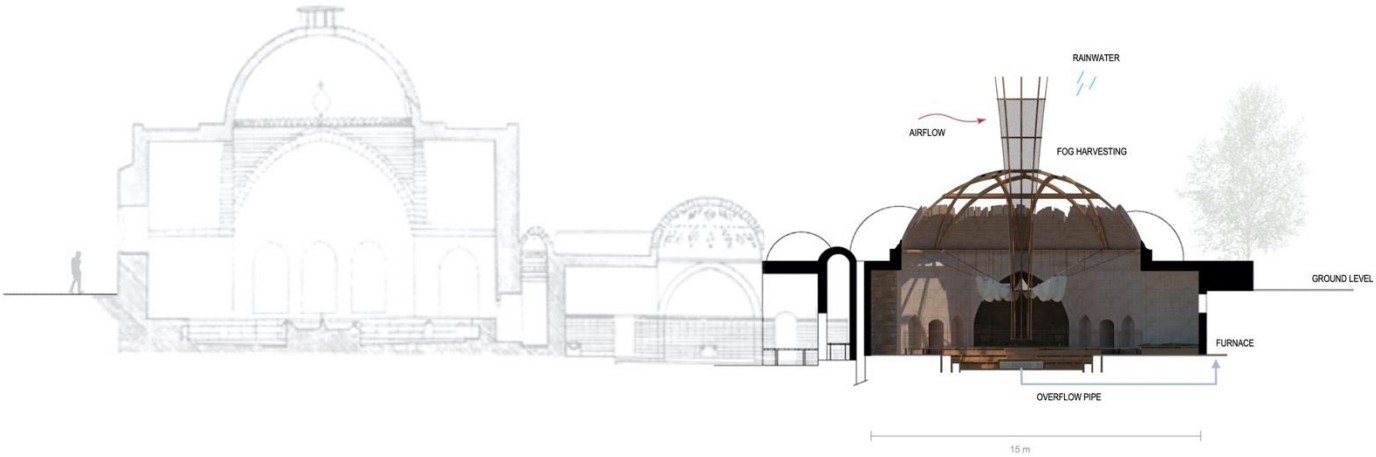


Fig 31. Sally Hilal, *Hammam Yalbugha,* Conceptual architecture diagram. 2023.

The water-collector will be made of wool felt (a fabric from goat hair), which references the historical felt used in the hammam. As mentioned before, the hammam at one point was used as a felt making factory (ca. 1905). This use of felt also references the use of such fabric qualities to harvest fresh drinking water, such in the design of *The Nomad Pavilion* in Jordan desert by Dina Haddadin and Rasem Kamal in 2018. They used a similar concept to the *Warka Tower* but in a different context; in a dry environment they used a breathing skin made from woven goat hair, similar to the materials used in Bedouin tents. Such a reference to traditional craft is something that I am keen to use in my own design.

The interventions design thus aims to draw attention to the importance of preserving the hammam. It will not only provide a source of drinking water for the community, but is also designed to create a public and social space where people can gather, rest, and reminisce about the past. The design is shaped to mimic the aesthetics of the original architecture, and to reinforce the value of the bathing culture of the hammams to a society traumatised by war. Rethinking the future of such historical buildings provides frameworks for new methodologies which might be applied to similarly situated practices within the old city of Aleppo.

Examples of Architectural Interventions in Historical Buildings

Three rehabilitation interventions from different countries were reviewed in this study. Two examples are from Europe, namely Spain and Switzerland, while the third is from Pakistan. The latter was chosen to illustrate an Islamic city with a pre-Islamic history, like Aleppo. In my terms, these interventions are intended to rehabilitate the buildings rather than restore or renovate them to their previous state. Their architectural language also distinguishes between the intervention and the pre-existing architecture. The aim, in other words, is to make the building usable again while preserving its former significance and restoring it at a certain stage in its history.

Wazir Khan Hammam Conservation in Lahore, Pakistan

This site was restored by the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme which is an initiative from the Aga Khan Trust for Culture to help cities revitalize historic areas in a way that is beneficial in social, economic, and cultural aspects (*Aga Khan historic cities programme* (2023).

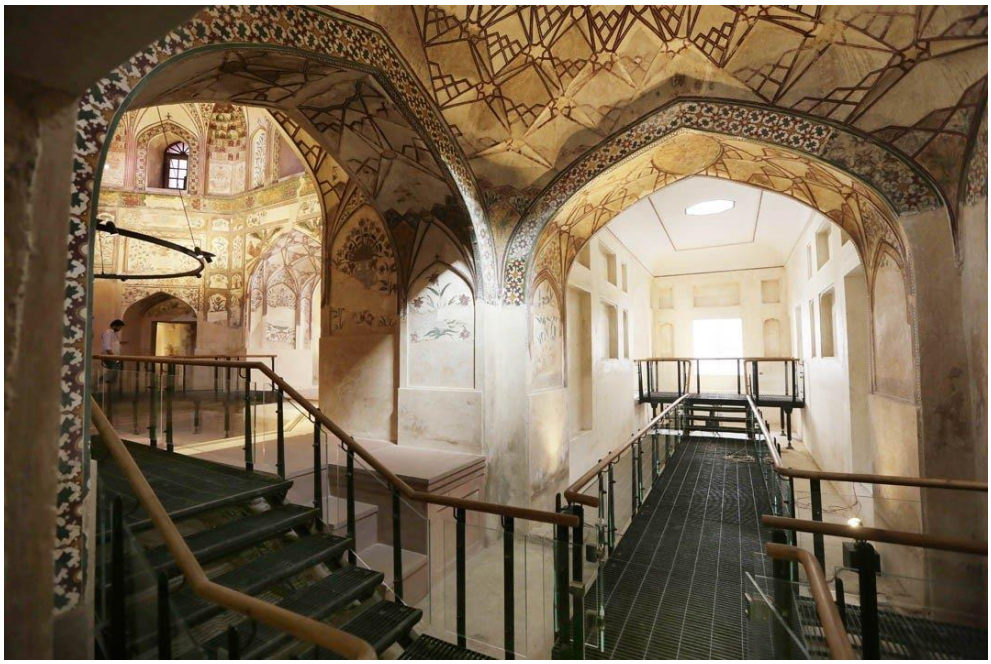


Fig 32. *Shahi Hammam Restoration.* 2006. Lahore, Pakistan (source: Aga Khan Trust for Culture).

The Wazir Khan Hammam site, located in Lahore, Pakistan, is a great representation of the architectural legacy of the Mughal era common in the 1526-1858. It fuses various styles like Central Asian, Indian Hindu, Persian, and Turkic. The site was built in 1634-1635 CE by Wazir Khan, a governor of Lahore at the time under the reign of emperor Shah Jahan (*Wazir Khan hammam Conservation Lahore, Pakistan*, n.d). It was intended to serve as a Turkish bath for the general public and given it stood between the Delhi gate and the Wazir Khan Mosque, it served as a stop over to visitors to the city's mosque (Qureshi 2018).

The site fell into ruin around the 17th century following the decline of the Mughal empire. It started being misused functioning as different things in time including a primary school, recreation centre, dispensary, municipality office, government employee quarters, and hosting shops along its walls (Qureshi 2018).

The rehabilitation attempt began in 1991 when wall paintings that had been plastered over were exposed. Marble floors were also laid out as part of this rehabilitation. However,restoration 'stopped short of fully realizing the original configuration of the bathhouse, its waterworks and its floor finishes' (*Wazir Khan Hammam Conservation Lahore, Pakistan*, n.d).

A new attempt was made in the 2012-2015 period via a joint effort between Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme and Royal Norwegian Embassy in Pakistan. The rehabilitation involved extensive archaeological investigations and analytic studies and also architectural and photographic documentation to record the existent condition of the building and its surroundings. The archaeological excavation effort was also able to uncover the original building's water heating arrangement, under-floor remains, and water disposal system of its hypocaust constructions (*Wazir Khan Hammam Conservation Lahore, Pakistan*, n.d). On the exterior fresco, chemicals were used to remove the white wash that had formed. Then, the waiting bay where people taking a bath would wait was converted into a sitting area and a museum for current use.

Peter Zumthor's 1986 Shelter for Roman Ruins in Chur, (Graubünden, Switzerland).

The architect behind this rehabilitation is Peter Zumthor, based in Switzerland, and who is well known for great attention to detail and unique use of materials. He was commissioned in 1986 to create a protective layer over the Roman ruins dating back to 15 BCE that had been found in Chur, a city Switzerland (Alonso 2020). Having been quoted saying 'Architecture is not about form, it is about many other things,' Zumthor ensured his rehabilitation did not simply recreate the past but instead created a way to invite feelings of humility, warmth, and tranquillity to the visitors of the building (Swisher 2010).

Fig 33. *Shelter Roman Archaeological Site.* 2018. Chur, Switzerland. Photograph: August Fischer (source: atlasofplaces.com).

The ruins in question were three buildings. Two of them had their foundations still remaining while the third had just a corner left. The ruins were perceived as representative of a thriving Roman city and hence restoring and protecting their form was a way to preserve the glimpse into the Roman era and its rich history.

The rehabilitation process taken by Zumthor was immaculate and extensive. The overarching goal was to create protective casing for each of the ruins in an abstract fashion that mimicked the original volumes of the structures (*Atelier Peter Zumthor & Partner AG - Shelter Roman Archaeological Site, 1985–1986*, 2018). Also, this had to be done without the casings competing with or overpowering the ruins. To achieve this, he made lightweight outer walls from timber and ensured the inner remains could be seen from outside. This porous characteristic was a parallel to the porous stone that Romans used in construction.

Zumthor then installed steel doors and a suspended bridge extending from a floating staircase. The original entrances were maintained via the used of peep-show constructions that allowed visitors to see the inside. Access to the ruins is however via the bridge which runs the entire length of the buildings at a raised level; meaning visitors do not interact directly with the foundations. There are tunnels connecting from the bridge sections from one ruin to another almost mimicking time travel (Alonso 2020). In addition, to allow better exploration, a black sheet is placed behind the original walls. The entire project also fits within the surrounding with Swisher, a mentee to Zumthor saying, ‘The simplicity of the wooden louvered boxes instantly conveys a sense of welcoming without being ostentatious, as well as an acknowledgment of not being the main attraction of the archaeological site’ (Swisher 2010).

This rehabilitation generally inspires introspection given how it is meant to elicit feelings of warmth, tranquillity, and humility. Such introspection is also encouraged by the vulnerable nature of the interior. Also, the structure transcends time because it fits modern architecture in Italy without losing the site’s original theme (Ghoshal and Woll 2014).

Carles Enrich Studio, Historic Merola’s Tower

The rehabilitation work on Merola Tower, also known as the Castle of Merola, was done by Carles Enrich Gimenez, the lead architect at Carles Enrich Studio. Enrich’s reputation as an architect lies in his innovative and sustainable designs that elicit intentional ethos of combining the old and the new in a way that also feels future-minded (Phillips 2020). His approach is well exemplified in this site’s work.

Fig 34. *Recovery of Merola's Tower.* 2019. Puig-reig, Spain. Photograph: Adria Goula (source: carlesenrich.com).

The tower dates back to the 13th century and is located in Puig-reig, a municipality in Catalonia. In its original form, the tower had a rectangular based of about 5m by 3.8m and rose about 14.8m high (*Recovery of Merola's Tower/Carles Enrich Studio*, 2020). The structure was used as a watchtower. The deterioration happened over time, but severe damage is thought to have occurred by earthquakes in 1428 and tremors around the 1500s. In 2016 also, part of the tower's coronation (top part of the wall) got detached (*Carles Enrich Studio, Historic Tower*, 2020).

The incident in 2016 led to an initial rehabilitation attempt that planned to install props on the tower's façade. However, Carles Enrich came up with a better plan in 2019 that involved a timber scaffold and a concealed staircase that would restore the tower's initial levels and vantage point. The rehabilitation process thus involved construction of those elements and the resulting structure was $40m^2$ and beyond replicating the volume, it added a new form that excludes lightness, warmth, and a curious balance. This means the structure was both restored and reinvented. The construction process entailed recovering the foundation with lime concrete and raising the structure using 14 anchor points perched on the stone canvas. The architect also projected into the future since the staircase was placed such that it would allow future maintenance of the tower.

Overall, this rehabilitation is reasoned out, practical, and futuristic. This is because Carles Enrich Studio proposed something better than the originally intended quick fix of using props on the tower. Then, they made a structure that resembled the original tower hence giving the feeling of what it would have looked like. Similar to Peter Zumthor's rehabilitation of the Roman Ruins, mimicking the original structure takes imagination out of the question and allows visitors to be transported to the historic times when the first structures stood. Lastly, the practical aspect is that a staircase was installed to help maintain the tower in future should it have more damage.

The examples covered in this section, Wazir Khan Hammam in Lahore, the Roman Ruins in Chur, and Merola's Tower in Catalonia, demonstrate that architectural interventions are important in preserving historic sites and the memories and cultures that they represent. Also, they show that the rehabilitation process extends beyond applying quick fixes into more thought out and nuanced architectural decisions that not only restore and preserve but also help integrate the sites into contemporary society including its landscapes. Peter Zumthor and Carles Enrich Gimenez particularly exemplify such architectural decisions in their choices to recreate the sizes of the original sites while ensuring further damage will not happen and doing all this in a non-intrusive way to both the sites and the surrounding environments.

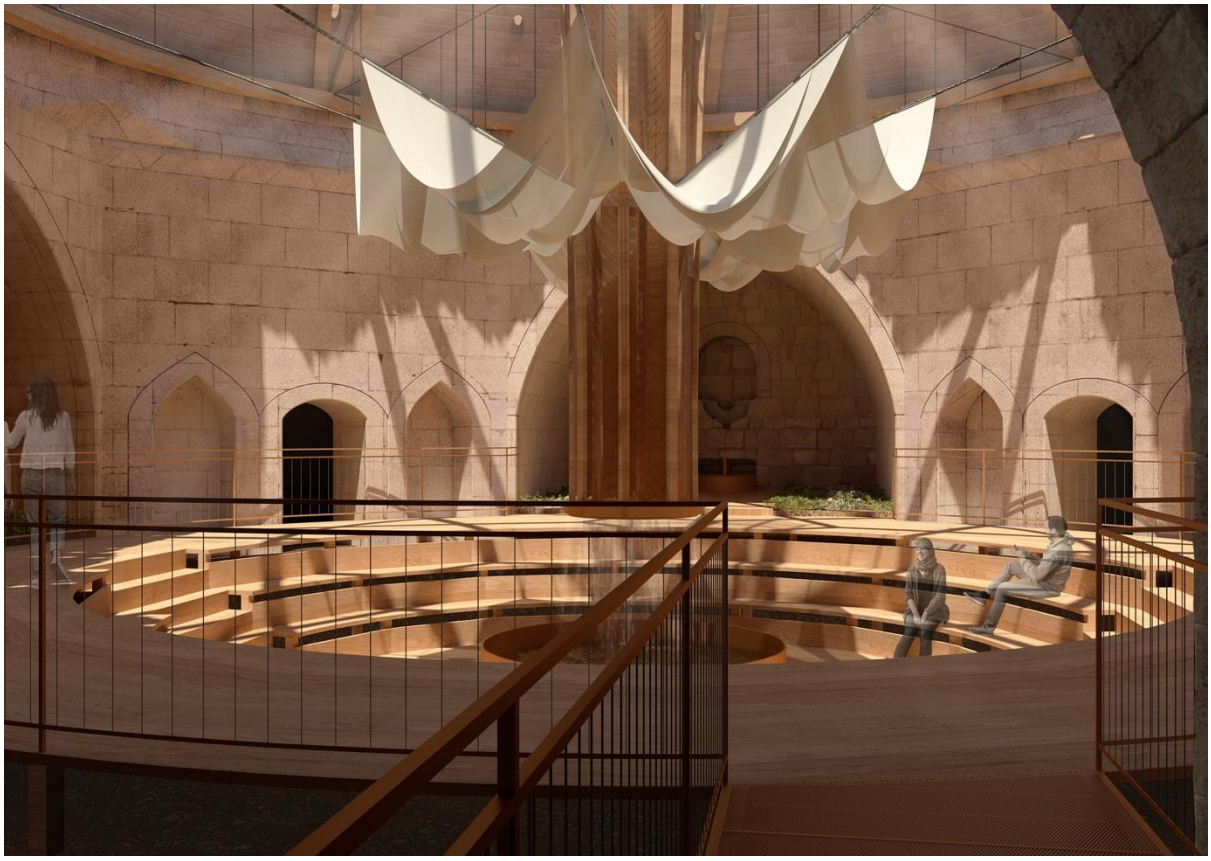


Fig 35. Sally Hilal, *Hammam Yalbugha Architectural Intervention.* 2023. 3D Rendering.

3.1.1 Interventions in Public Space: The User Experience

As I emphasised earlier in this chapter, the design [as described on page 86] combines functional imperatives related to water generation and structural stability with historical references and mnemonic devices, while also evoking memory. The intervention acts as an analogy, in Ignasi De Solà Morales's linguistic sense of being an interpretation that reengages the user and the building in a dialogue with its past through their design and spatial arrangement. The design can also be understood as a journey through time: a dialogue between the old and new in the 14th/15th century Mamluk bathhouse. It builds on the concept of social space, which focuses on repurposing the building while sustaining its cultural value. And all the design moves are entirely reversible, consistent with the idea of a temporary intervention.

To set the scene, the project leads the user through historical and social time from a stable and peaceful past, through a destructive conflict, to the present moment when people who have suffered trauma are now enduring deprivation. The creative intervention raises the possibility of new hope. It embraces ecological phenomena of atmospheric condensation, drawing life-giving and cleansing moisture from an arid environment.[8]

The journey through space starts from a raised pathway beginning in the main entrance of the bathhouse, allowing visitors to access the building and to move safely from one spatial unit to another. In so doing, it becomes a spatial device that connects the three sections of the building while maintaining views through the site.

The first part of the pathway is roofed for protection; as the southern side with the entrance to the rooms is heavily damaged, you can get a sense of the demolition inflicted on the building once entering the space. It is later followed by the first section of the bathhouse, quite colossal with high ceilings and a dome that centres the space. Through the explosion-inflicted holes of the perforated dome, the streams of light are reflected in the remnants of the central pool which is wreathed with a hint of nostalgia, reminding you of once serene times when celebrations, dancing and music took place within the building. Now, these corners hold nothing but silence, lacking any warmth. My design seeks to reanimate these forgotten spaces through the visitor's movements.

As you continue walking into the second section of the hammam, below the ground level, the sounds and noise slowly fade into the background until you feel the utter silence isolating you from the outer milieu. This section has a lower temperature, cool in the summer and

[8] A discussion with David Cross in 2020 for the *New knowledge Through Research* Session.

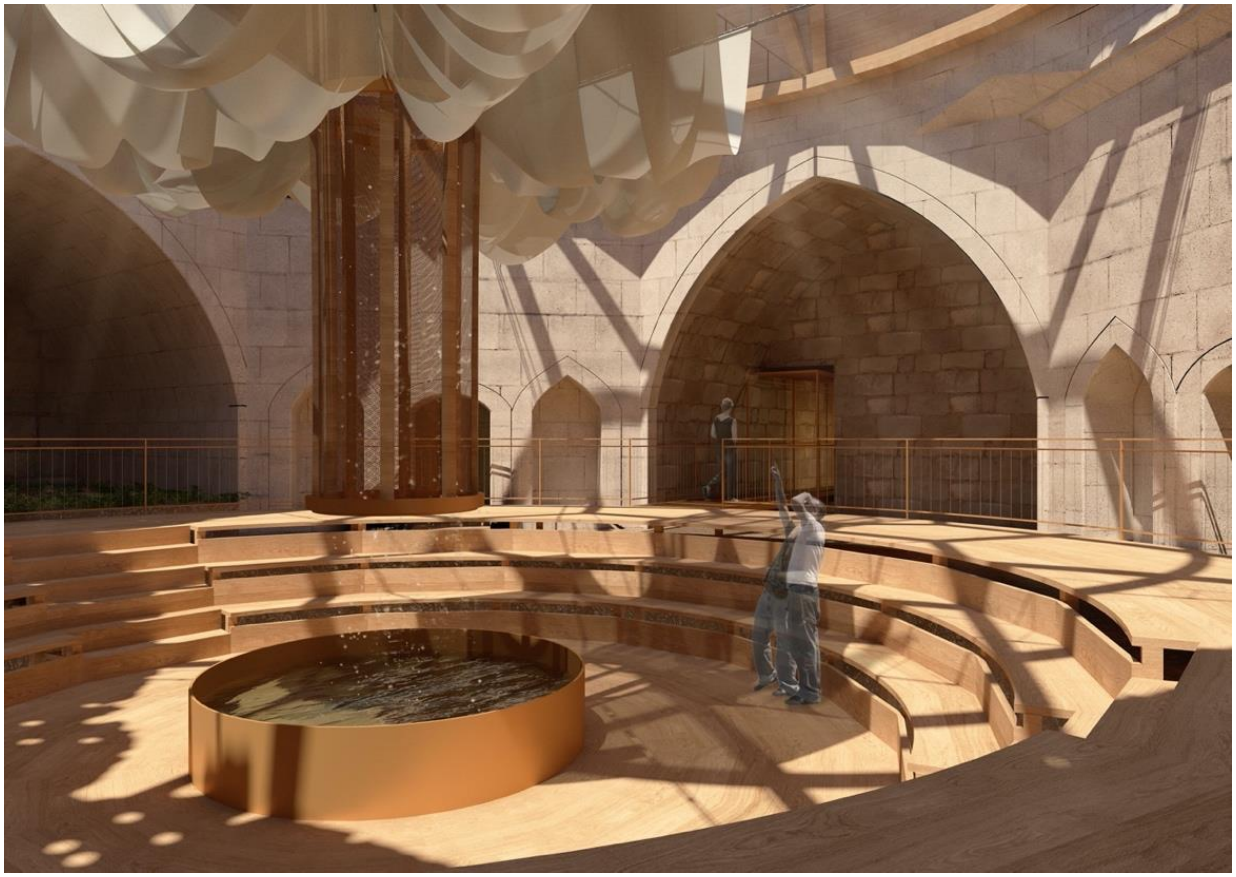


Fig 36. Sally Hilal*, Hammam Yalbugha Architectural Intervention*. 2023. 3D Rendering.

warm in the winter since it is built underground. It is also noticeably dim but faintly lit by the warming light streaming through the dome holes, whose shape resembles a small constellation of stars.

Ending this spatial journey, you pass through several other parts that end with a lively, well-lit open area filled with the purl of water in the pool (i.e. the action or sound of purling where water moves in ripples to create a murmuring sound). The light beams dance on the water's surface. The shadows of the interwoven dome structure are also reflected, shaped to mimic the original Islamic star pattern, which holds an aesthetic quality and brightens the space with natural light. This section provides a place where one can sit and find tranquility, peace and stillness by being secluded from the stressful outside world. The purl of water aids relaxation and meditation in contemplating the grandeur and aesthetic value of the architecture of a building rich with memories and history. The multisensory aspect goes beyond the merely visual, through sound, smell, temperature and an awareness of the physicality of the original stone structure.

In addition, the water fountain is used to secure drinking water for the people, introducing taste (another sense), while it creates a whole experience that connects to their physicality and emotions. It encourages people to think about their own perception of space, culture and sensory experience.

In the past, the hammam front windows were used to attract visitors and tourists with the enticing scents escaping the building and the soft, soothing melodies played inside. It was an inviting, lively, and attractive public space built upon this idea which evokes a compelling element of mystery. For me, this is a key strategy for making the public space appealing, and awakening senses often shut down in times of conflict. Such an approach is a direct reference to the sensory healing aspects of the bimaristans. As you walk through the first section, you will also hear your steps echo because the walkway is constructed from metal mesh. Someone who is blind or visually impaired can use these sounds (and those of their cane) to locate themselves within the space. However, as you go further inside and reach the second section, wooden boards replace the mesh floor in order to put you at peace and help fade the sound of your steps while simultaneously the sound of water begins to grow. The splashing sounds of water from the fountain tempt you to seek out this place, and to gain the tactile feel of the water itself. The intervention elements are all integrated and designed in a way that can lead you on this journey, which culminates in the act of drinking the perfectly clean water. However, the core design intention is to also create an evocative space with minimum interventions and intensify the users' connection to this remarkable

cultural and historical place, by embracing the bathhouse's social and functional aspects to bring the community together in a social gathering.

Fig 37. Sally Hilal, 3D Exterior Rendering for the dome structure. 2023. Original photograph: Omar Sanadiki.

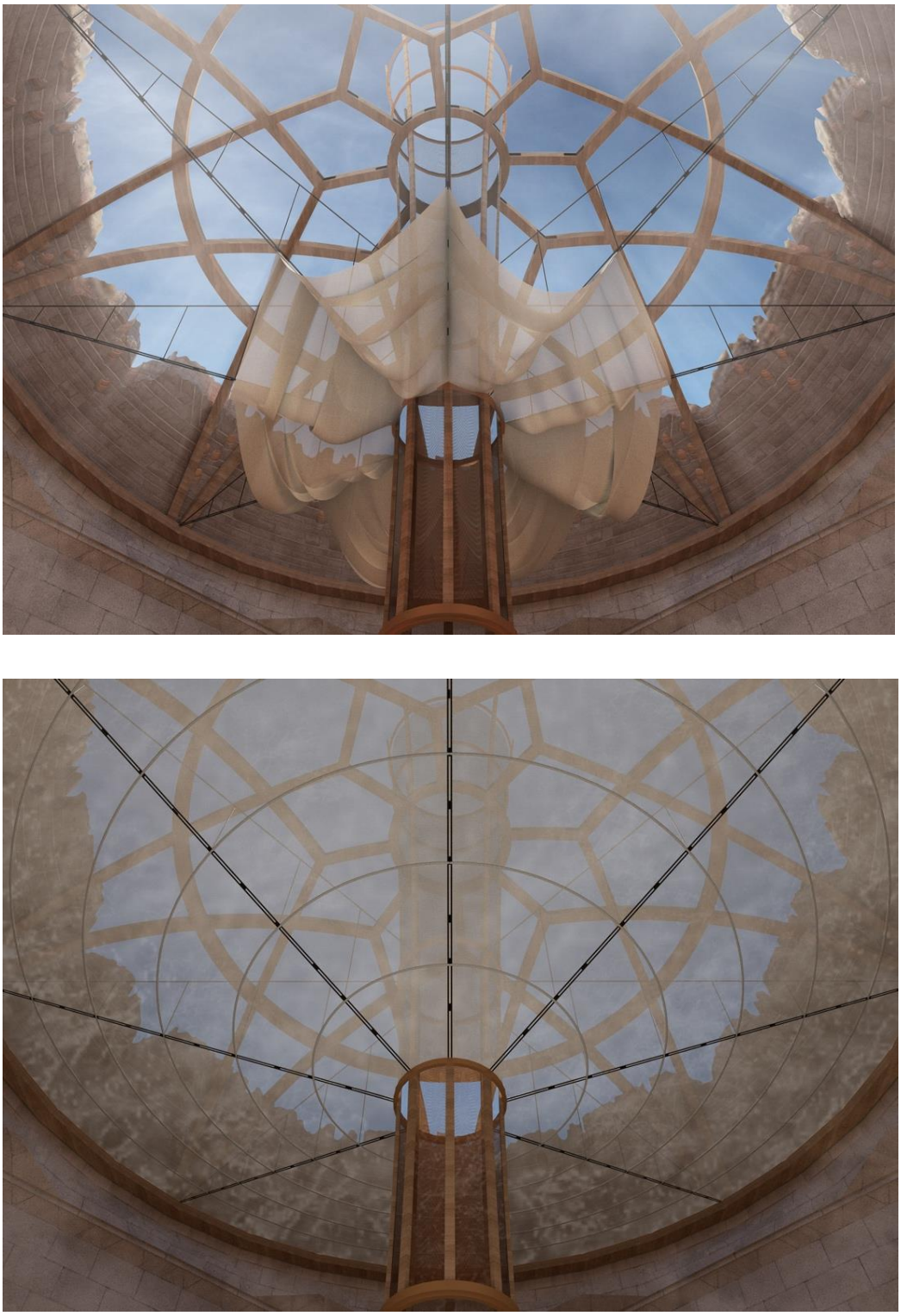


Fig 38. Sally Hilal, Hammam Yalbugha - the dome structure and water collector. 2023. 3D Rendering.

Fig 39. Sally Hilal, 3D Exterior Rendering for the new entrance design. 2023.

Fig 40. Sally Hilal, Walkway design. 2023. 3D Rendering.

3.2 Documentation and The Archival Practices

3.2.1 An Annotated Timeline

As well as evolving such a temporary intervention, the role of documentation as integral to the practice forms a significant element of the research. My approach is to explore ideas of data representation through narrative and visual imagery which help in understanding the role that water plays within a socio-cultural and political context. The thesis will expand here upon how the water infrastructure has been partially destroyed, and the consequences for the population of Aleppo.

A narrative timeline will be used as an evaluative tool for the research materials. It offers an analytical way of understanding both the history of the city and the role of water, which will be elucidated by presenting physical traces of a variety of events and intersections with political/social issues as a form of a data-based timeline. The aim of this visual timeline is to interpret the complexities of information and historical narratives, associated with the research subject, as an approach to communicate information to viewers. It also offers an alternative form of evidence presentation for future research, in the manner of Forensic architecture. [One important example hear is the case where Forensic Architecture digitally reconstructed a model of a Syrian prison in Saydnaya (2016) – a project led by the human rights organisation Amnesty International]

I am interested specifically in the methods of this discipline to combine a variety of evidence sources, such as using new media, witness testimony, and material analysis to provide evidence (replicating aspects of the analysis generated with respect to cases of war crimes or other human rights abuses around the world). Through architecture, filmmaking, and storytelling, they create a new platform to represent and discuss such cases through exhibitions, requiring the viewer to negotiate the complexities of the situation.

This engages the way in which art and architecture were used historically as a practice to aid one's memory; the 'Memory Palace' technique, which was first invented by Simonides, using spatial imagery as a medium to recall specific information. For example, I will refer to Simonides' story; when he had just walked out of a banquet hall full of people, the roof suddenly collapsed, crushing everyone inside so their identities could not be established. Simondias used his memory to reconstruct the flow of their conversation in relation to the architectural space, in order to identify the bodies (Yats,1999). Eyal Weizman refers to Simonides' incident in one of his investigations. 'As told by Francis Yates in the Art of Memory. The ancient and lost art reserved a special place for architecture as a medium for establishing relations between memory, narrative, and destruction' (2017, p. 46).

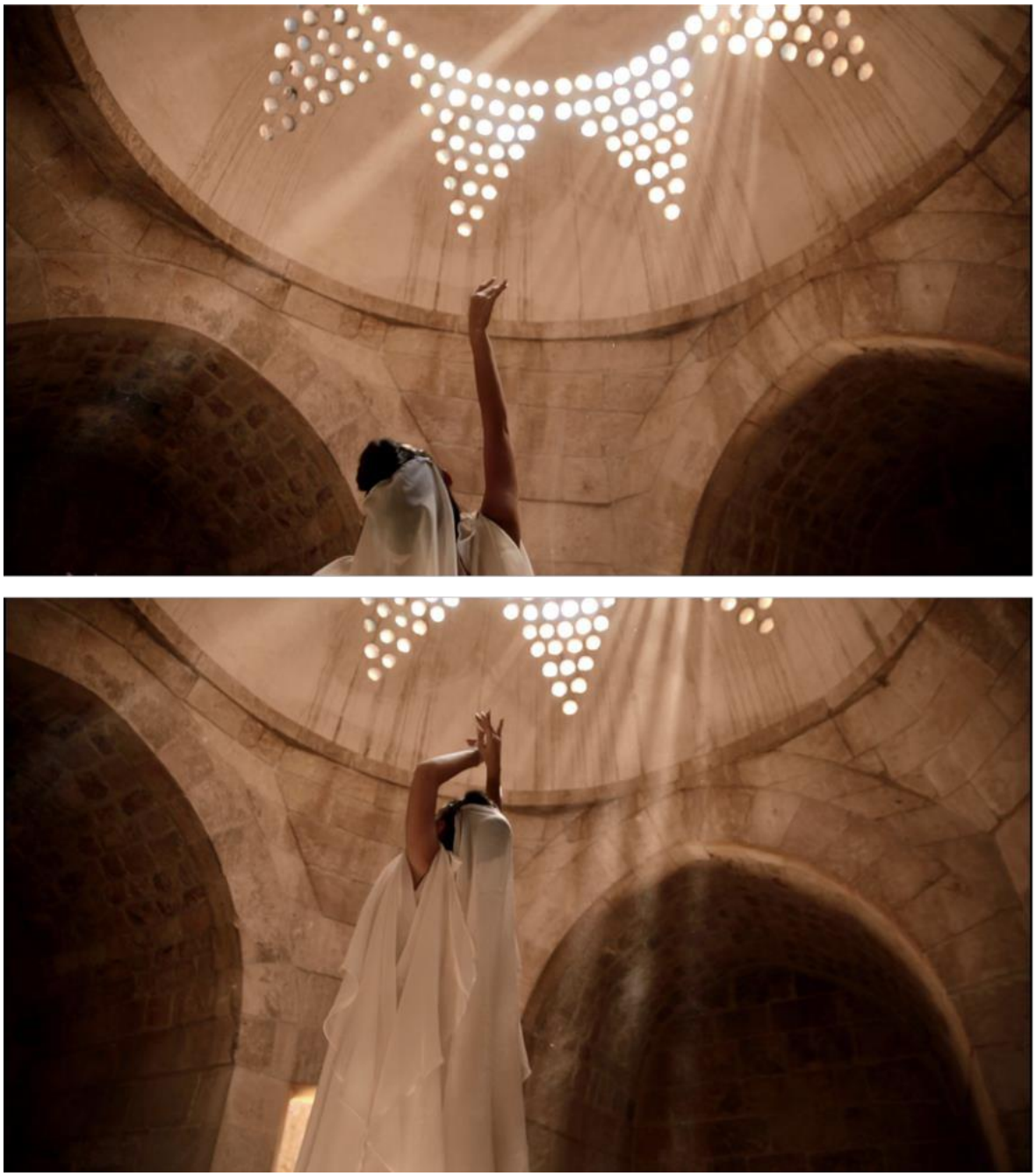


Fig 41. Sally Hilal, The Dance Scene. 2018. Captured image from a film work. Aleppo Citadel, The Royal Hammam

3.2.2 Storytelling and Video Installation

Another aspect of the documentation is to reassert the significance of bathing (and its associated rituals) in the lives of ordinary women from Aleppo, particularly with respect to the communal aspects of bathing. There is a singular lack of representation of women using the hammams, despite its importance to our cultural identity. I therefore proposed to make a film that directly confronted this issue, juxtaposing it with the reality of the destruction of Aleppo during the civil war. The installation was first installed at the *Discursivity* exhibition at Camberwell Space in 2020.

As it is impossible to enter Hammam Yalbugha due to the amount of destruction on-site, during my return to Aleppo in 2018 the filming process took place in two different locations. The first is at the ancient Royal Hammam of Aleppo's Citadel, which is the closest hammam to Yalbugha in terms of location and building materials, as both were built in the Mamluk era. The second is a (newly built) private hammam, situated at the *Sheraton* hotel in Aleppo's old-city area.

The film aims to reflect on the current social, cultural, and political concerns; the first part of the film, illustrates the rich tangible and non-tangible elements of the Syrian bathing culture. It utilises film scenes to represent concepts of bathing rituals and showcases the use of authentic objects. It also highlights the characteristics and aesthetics of these buildings. The role of the film is to provide greater visibility to these cultural practices and social behaviours, reinterpreting an aesthetic experience of the space incorporating both sounds and visual sense.

The dancing woman scenes aim to engage the viewers through the dancer's body movements, which can somehow induce a light trance; this scene is meant to be both sensuous and emotion-evoking, highlighting aspects of the bathing rituals that have been suppressed during a time of war. The water element has always been linked to women historically, as both were associated with life, birth, purity, and fertility representations.

Alongside the bathing scenes which emit a sense of tranquillity and serenity, are juxtaposed real war scenes - real frontline footage of rebels fighting the Syrian army from Yalbugha, including the precise moment when the rebels blew up an underground tunnel, which led to the destruction of the hammam's infrastructure.

The film asserts not only the importance of such sensuous spaces for women, but the value of our heritage despite the ongoing conflicts. It combines different narratives, elements, and perspectives, and the use of multi-screen installation contributes to connecting the meaning

Fig 42. Filming, The Royal Hammam. 2018. Photograph. Aleppo Citadel (source: Author's Archives)

between these fragmented frames. The film will be further edited; historical scenes will be added along with the other segments to set the story within the film's narrative.

An important reference for this practice is Harun Farocki's work, who was known for his interest in the production of image and subject of labour. He also had a passionate interest in film theory and the social and political aspects of image representation. His work also addresses the relationship between the word and the image through his political essay films.

Farocki frequently used a structured narrative technique to deliver a powerful message to the spectators through his films: 'Because so many images already exist, I am discouraged to make new ones; I prefer to make different use of pre-existing images,' he said in a 2008 interview with The South China Morning Post in Hong Kong. 'But not every image can be recycled; a hidden value must pre-exist' (Fox 2014). I am interested in Farocki's multiple screen video installations, and his particular juxtaposition of historical footage and political documentaries, and the way he combined existing footage with new materials to create a relationship between the images. Farocki referred to this technique as 'the soft montage', a technique my own work adopts.

Please scan the QR code below to watch the video.

Or visit the weblink: https://vimeo.com/848705470

Chapter 4 Conclusion, Findings, and Future Research

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis has been to develop an alternative, interim or temporary strategy towards reconstruction which could be implemented in a short time frame and with a limited budget. It is a strategy that is informed by an interventionist approach, as proposed by Fred Scott (2008) and Ignasi Solà Morales (1985). While conceived as an interim approach, the contention is that this might (1) rekindle lost memories associated with cultural artefacts (in this case, hammams), and (2) eventually inform a more comprehensive rehabilitation plan for Aleppo's historic fabric (which could be implemented in the city within the next five to ten years). The design solution proposed in chapter three not only plays a role in, literally, shoring up the ruined structures of Hammam Yalbugha - preventing further damage or collapse - but crucially provides a forum for debate. The purpose of this approach is to explore the relationship between architectural structures, forms, materials, and social-psychological processes of reconciliation and healing from trauma.

Moving beyond the PhD, the thesis and practice are both written and presented in a format that can potentially influence planners, NGOs, and policymakers, aiming to affect the decisions of governmental bodies in Syria. Thus, this concluding chapter presents a new design thinking strategy for rebuilding conflict-damage sites in the old city area, not by pre-determining such a strategy but through temporary interventions that engage the wider population in debate about what will happen to their city.

The central theme of this thesis is to develop an integrated approach for the sustainable rehabilitation of heritage properties in Aleppo, through the linkage between the notion of usership in design and the existing methodologies regarding the functional and structural rehabilitation of archaeological buildings, with a particular reference to traditional water practices in the region.

4.1 Key Findings of the Research

The project began with the question: How can the historic city of Aleppo be rehabilitated, given all the complications caused by the ongoing civil war in Syria? This is a somewhat daunting question given the complexities of the political situation in Syria, and the additional factor of the recent earthquake which has made the situation far worse than when I first

started the research process. My aim has been to draw upon a particular focus on institutions that embody its social, cultural, and economic significance, such as the public bath.

By examining interconnected theories, this study constructed an initial conceptual framework that served as the foundation for the research, which studies and analyses two historical buildings registered on the world heritage list, recognised and overseen by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), namely the Hammam of Yalbugha al-Nasiri (1491) and Bimaristan Argun al-Kamil (1354).

Based on this, a main research question was established, namely: "How can temporary interventions - within such institutions - articulate questions of healing, affect, and participation, as well as aid processes of memory reconstruction through the reciprocal interactions they engender?" This subject was worthy of research not only because there is a noticeable lack of research on hammams (Sibley 2008), but because the existing rehabilitation policies in Syria were based upon methods primarily used in Western countries and did not recognise the relevance of Islamic principles and culture in rehabilitating historic sites in the country.

The institutions such as Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri, hold a significant role in shaping a city's cultural identity. They serve as repositories of collective memory, preserving the traditions, customs, and values that define a community's identity. In this thesis, I have proposed an intervention to provide access to the damaged building and transform it into a place for dialogue and reminiscence that aligns with an intention to keep the memory of the hammam alive until funding for complete reconstruction becomes available.

This is, at heart, a participatory approach, which reflects an earlier restoration of the Hammam Ammuna in Damascus (Sibley 2008, Aboukhater 2014). By allowing people to visit the partially ruined hammam, the intervention creates an opportunity for the community (and in particular women, often excluded from access to such baths [9]) to connect with its past and maintain a sense of cultural continuity. Visitors can experience the architectural remnants, observe the remaining historic features, and better understand the hammam's significance, and its relation to its urban context. This first-hand encounter fosters a personal connection to the cultural heritage and encourages a collective appreciation for the city's history.

[9] Hammams are traditionally used by both men and women, but never at the same time. Most will have specific hours of the day or even designated days for women and men, respectively. While hammams were only permitted for men at first, women were eventually allowed to visit them (see p.50). However, there are still some hammams that are regrettably exclusively assigned to men at all times.

Adding a space for conversation and reminiscence to the hammam's devastated state gives the structure a new layer of significance and function. It serves as a space for individuals to gather, exchange personal narratives, and participate in dialogues about historical matters. This promotes a sense of community and enables the exchange of knowledge and memories between different generations. It also allows educational initiatives, guided excursions, and cultural events to foster a deeper appreciation of the hammam's historical and cultural context.

Such a programme might be thought of as a contemporary equivalent of the Islamic Sabil: a drinking fountain that provides free, clean drinking water to the general public, as an act of public good. As noted earlier, the Sabil holds great cultural and religious significance, representing a tangible manifestation of generosity and social welfare (reflecting the values of compassion and benevolence promoted by Islam). It also plays a role in fostering community interaction. These features are absolutely key to the design prototype I have developed, but this is then allied to the whole issue of the crisis in water infrastructure (with the resultant issue of waterborne diseases, addressed earlier).

In addition to its cultural and health significance, the proposed intervention serves the further practical purpose of stabilising the building. By facilitating access to the hammam, necessary measures can be taken to ensure its structural integrity and prevent further decay. Temporary interventions, such as bracing or reinforcing unstable sections, can be implemented to protect the remaining architectural elements. This not only safeguards the physical structure but also preserves the visual identity of the hammam as a distinct part of the cityscape.

Over the centuries, these hammams evolved in architectural style and design, influenced by the changing tastes, technologies, and cultural influences prevalent during different periods. The bathhouses were transformed to accommodate the needs and preferences of the residents while still retaining their fundamental purpose of providing a space for cleansing and relaxation.

In particular, the hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri is a testament to the architectural splendour of Aleppo's historical bathhouses. Named after the Mamluk governor Saif al-Din Yalbugha al-Nasiri, this hammam was originally constructed in the mid 14th century and was built again in 1491 during the Mamluk period, characterised by a fusion of Islamic and Byzantine architectural styles. It served as a lavish and grand bathhouse, showcasing the luxury and magnificence of the era.

Unfortunately, the hammam has suffered severe damage as a result of both the ongoing war in Syria and a devastating earthquake that struck Aleppo in February 2023. The conflict has taken a toll on the architectural integrity of the hammam, with parts of the structure destroyed or heavily damaged due to bombings and shelling. The earthquake exacerbated the situation, causing additional structural instability and collapsing building sections.

The combined impact of war and the earthquake has left Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri in a state of ruin and disrepair. The destruction has not only affected the physical structure of the hammam. Still, it has also caused the loss of invaluable historical artefacts and architectural details that were once integral to its character.

The war and earthquake have profoundly affected the preservation and future of Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri. Protecting and restoring the hammam will require comprehensive assessment, stabilisation, and reconstruction measures. Given its historical significance, there is a pressing need to prioritise preserving and restoring this archaeological site to safeguard its heritage and ensure its cultural and architectural value for future generations.

Considering this devastation, architectural intervention becomes crucial in preserving and revitalising the Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri. This thesis explores the possibilities of architectural intervention in the adaptive reuse of this historical site, considering both the conservation of its heritage value and the integration of contemporary elements to serve the community's evolving needs. By doing so, Aleppo's past and the shape of its future can be honoured by its architectural heritage.

4.2 Key Contribution to New Knowledge

A survey of the public baths of Aleppo was conducted by the author in 2022, with the help of members from the *Adyat* Society, to provide an updated list of the still-existing historic public baths and their condition and usage in the 21st century. Of the 24 operating hammams identified in 1981, only 12 were still operating in 2008, with the remainder being either demolished or changed function. After the Syrian war and the recent earthquake, only a few hammams survived the destruction, with only four being renovated and now operating in 2023. The few surviving examples are located within the walled city, according to Ibn Shaddad (1217-1285) in his book *Al-a'laq al-khatira,* a historical geography of Syria (al-Sham) and Upper Mesopotamia (al-Jazira), there was 71 Hammam inside the old city and additional 31 hammams in private houses.

This thesis therefore constitutes an important contribution to an under-researched area. Not only does it provide new information [10]about the Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri (which will be valuable for future researchers), but it applies the strategies of temporary architectural interventions to a new situation of post-war reconstruction in Aleppo. The project allies a longer tradition of interventionist approaches to very real problems faced by the situation in Aleppo in such a way as to not only confront outdated approaches to reconstruction, but to do so in a way that engages participatory design (a forum for discussing approaches to the city's reconstruction) and the very real need for drinking water (in the tradition of the Sabil). It is these intersections that establish new knowledge, which has been made more pertinent by the impact of the two earthquakes in February 2023.

4.3 Recommendations for Further Research

The future of Aleppo's drinking fountains:

The Sabil reminds society how we used to have a certain level of respect and reverence for water and how our ancestors used to treat it. There is much to be learned from the Syrian drinking water culture, which provides insights into improving water management and applying these traditional principles to modernist society. I therefore recommend the following:

- The government should prioritise restoring and rehabilitating the historical water fountains in the Old City, whether the structures are unused or demolished. Additionally, exploring ways to utilise traditional water collection methods is essential to improve the quality of drinking water sources in the city.
- It is crucial to raise awareness within the community, especially those residing in the Old City, about the symbolic value of these water structures, highlighting their significance equal to any other cultural assets. Emphasising the need for preservation and safeguarding against any tampering is vital.
- Cultural research studies and discussions about the future of the old city must incorporate information on the importance of these water structures, elevating awareness and support for their preservation.

[10] The research on hammam Yalbugha uncovered insights into the historical, architectural, and cultural significance of hammams in Aleppo. As such, the study highlighted their potential to address contemporary real-world issues.

- Drawing inspiration from the principles, elements and forms of the historic drinking fountains of Aleppo al-Sabeel, they should serve as prototypes in designing and constructing new fountains and public water sources throughout the city.

Recommendations for the conservation and rehabilitation of cultural heritage:

- Integration: The Old City structures blend into the surrounding urban environment, becoming inseparable rather than surviving as an isolated enclave.
- Consultation: Collaboration between the community and architectural professionals is crucial for the successful renovation of the Old City and the preservation of its historical essence.
- Flexibility: Long-term social, ecological and economic changes should be considered during rehabilitation to ensure historic cities' adaptability.
- Inclusiveness: The rehabilitation process should consider the needs of individual inhabitants and the community as a whole, ensuring the involvement and benefits for all.
- Originality: Each heritage building is distinct and possesses unique characteristics, requiring solutions that carefully consider both the context of the Old City and the sensitivity of the building structures.
- Adaptation: The rebuilding of historic cities should accommodate demographic, social, economic, and tourism factors within the Old City or heritage regions. It is also essential to incorporate strategies that can adapt to and mitigate climate breakdown into the restoration efforts. This involves implementing adaptation measures like increasing water storage and recycling greywater, as well as mitigation efforts such as reducing carbon emissions through the adoption of renewable energy and improvements in energy efficiency. Furthermore, initiatives like reafforestation and soil regeneration are vital. These actions not only address climate impacts but also promote healing from trauma by fostering harmony between social and ecological systems.

The rehabilitation efforts must preserve the buildings and foster community activities while promoting social, commercial, and economic development. This approach aims to maintain a vibrant environment in these historic places and strengthen the profound connection between people and their environment.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Cultural significance of the loss of cultural icons

1.1 Semi-structured Interviews

During my visit to Aleppo in summer 2018, I had the chance to interview some Syrian experts, professionals, and locals - including a private historical hammam owner. The content of the interviews focuses mainly on the history of the hammams and the situation of post-conflict reconstruction of the cultural heritage in Aleppo.

I also had an Interview with a group of **members** from the **Archaeological Society of Aleppo "the Adyat":** The interviewers were from different faiths (Muslims, Christians, Armenians), aged between 40 and 70. They also came from different backgrounds such as; medicine, literature, engineering and philosophy.

The interviewer shared their personal experience of growing up in such a historic environment, witnessing the changes that occurred over the past decades and initiating various efforts to preserve the substance and the spirit of the old city of Aleppo.

In the following sections, I will provide a content analysis for the interviews that contributed to significant aspects of the research.

Sakhr Al-Olabi, Professor of Archaeology at Aleppo University, Syria is an expert architect and archaeologist responsible for the running of one of the largest reconstruction and restoration projects in the Old-City of Aleppo. His expertise is formed on the basis of his time in Germany where he focused through his research on the post-World War reconstruction processes in Berlin, Germany. His connection with such processes, government bodies and non-government organisations has played an integral part in generating funds for the reconstruction in Aleppo, Syria. He is currently working on the restoration of the Great Mosque of Aleppo (Umayyad Mosque) in alliance with the Republic of Chechnya of the Russian Federation (Akhmad Kadyrov Fund).

During the interview with Dr. Sakhr, the following points were discussed:

a) Insights into the post war architectural condition of different Archaeological sites around the city of Aleppo including Hammam Yalbugha and Bimaristan Arghun; a background of the current situation in the Old City area; strategies for reconstruction;

Study #1 - Semi-structured interviews			
Interviewees	Research Method	Description / Data Collection Method	Duration
TK: a civil engineer, secretary of the Archaeological society of Aleppo (Al Adeyat), Editor-in-chief of its magazine	Individual Interview	Face-to-face	2 Hours
SO: an architect and professor of Archaeology at University of Aleppo	Individual Interview	Face-to-face	1 Hour
TK: an engineer and the president of the chamber of the Minstry of Tourism in Aleppo	Individual Interview	Face-to-face	1 Hour
Members of the Archaeological society of Aleppo	Focus Group	Face-to-face	1 Hour
AS: a research historian	Individual Interview	Online/Telephone	1 Hour
AR: a Hammam owner	Individual Interview	Face-to-face	1 Hour

Participant List Table for Study #1, 2018 - 2019.

b) the obstacles and challenges the government is facing with the reconstruction process and the plans for a recovery reconstruction strategy.

c) Syrian cultural identity in relation to Hammams and Bimaristans; the preservation of cultural identity to the community at large and the role of cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible).

'When we first entered into the area after 5 years of fighting, we could not recognise it as it was covered by ruins; now after clearing away the area the image became clearer'. During the evaluation phase, which took part 6 months after the rebels left the Old City, the city faced a multitude of problems that included the lack of skilled workers, finances and funding. As he put it, 'where to start?' Dr. Sakhr outlined the approach being undertaken by the government. The priority for the government consisted of retaining the cultural identity of Aleppo and restoring its historical urban fabric. The restoration process began in areas that were less damaged. Due to the destruction of the city, the urban planners and policy makers where able to identify an area for development that stemmed from pre-war times. They also identified systems that were not appropriate to traditional principles of the city in terms of building methods. With this in mind, it has given private funders freedom to decide which buildings they reconstruct, and such developers ignore the rules for reconstruction set in place by the government 'they can't control everything' (Dr. Sakhr). Additionally, if a private funding company approaches an area they wish to reconstruct, they will be given access to do so, which in turn will leave other areas in their current state of destruction.

According to Dr. Sakhr it is crucial for our community to understand the value of retaining its tangible and intangible heritage. Due to forced migration, access to professional knowledge about the history of the city has become limited. Dr. Sakhr stated that it is important to retain the tangible and intangible heritage of the city because this is what forms our cultural identity, and to find ways of imparting such knowledge to new generations. As a result of the lack of skilled professionals, the government is trying to involve the younger generation by involving architecture students as a means of community outreach. The students take on the responsibility of clearing debris in areas that were affected by destruction. The purpose of this is to generate a forum for open conversations, with archaeologists responsible for retaining the original stones in order to reuse these to rebuild the city. This is also a way of sharing knowledge from the experts. Aleppo will be rebuilt by its people.

Tamim Kasmo (1946-2022), a civil engineer and a researcher in the nonmaterial cultural studies (particularly in Aleppo). He is secretary of the archaeological society of Aleppo, the"Adyat" (a non-governmental organization) and the Editor-in-chief of The Adyat magazine. As a result of the war the National Library of Aleppo was burnt by the rebels. Mr Kasmo works with the Adyat to preserve the remaining historical documents, which are now housed in the Adyat. The interview took place within the Adyat, which allowed me to access these documents with Mr Kasmo. Mr Kasmo shared his insights that derived from his current research and lived past experiences.

As stated by Kasmo, through cultural anthropological studies, social media is becoming a mirror of the Aleppian communities' behaviour. He drew attention to 3 main elements that interest our community: 1) art and architecture 2) music and food 3) water. This is derived from his current research that analyses behavioural psychology of Aleppo's cultural identity through social media. The urban fabric of Aleppo represents its diversity. Aleppian's have been captivated with the arts and architecture of their city in contrast to the political unrest happening in the city, 'they value the craftsmanship of artefacts and the elements associated with it', an example of this is the Muqarnas, which is a form of ornamented vaulting, usually applied under domes or arches in the Old City. Music is an important element of the everyday life of Aleppos cultural identity. traditional music and authentic performances such as the dervish dance.

As part of our traditions in Aleppo, every week most families invite musicians and singers to the courtyard of their houses for social gatherings and celebrations – this tradition also took place in Hammams and Bimaristans as a way of healing mental illnesses. Most of the old structures have poetry carved into the stones, such that the poetry connects the interiors and exterior of the building as a means of recording significant events in relation to the building.

The element of water is essential and has an impact and great significant for people who lived in Aleppo, on account of the dry climate which surrounds the city. Due to religious beliefs, Aleppians consider water an essential aspect of everyday life this is because it resembles purity and cleanliness of their bodies. Kasmo believes that Hammams have a greater impact on society rather than Bimaristans: 'Hammams are part of our history and everyday life, they created a distinctive social phenomenon'.

I contacted the Ministry of Tourism in Syria and interviewed the President of Syria's Northern Chamber of Tourism;

Talal Khoudeir is an Engineer and the President of the Chamber of Ministry of Tourism in Aleppo, Syria. He is also known for his stores that hold fine antiques and objects relating to Syrian culture and identity. These stores have been in his family for over 100 years with the first store opening in the Old City, where he grew up. His work currently focuses on highlighting the importance of conserving Syrian culture in order to rebuild the Old City of Aleppo, not only the architecture but also the traditional crafts to support local workers and aid in rebuilding the identity of the Old City.

We discussed the history of the role of the Chamber and its contribution to post-war recovery in Aleppo. The role of the chamber is to protect archaeological buildings and to support the preservation process in the old-city area. This is evidenced through their running of courses that help establish knowledgeable tour guides. They support hand craftsmanship by providing locations at more affordable rental prices in the old city to generate income and revive the traditional industry in Aleppo.

The interview ended with an open conversation about Mr Talal's personal experiences and connection with the old City. He took me on a tour to the Hammam and his parents courtyard house which is located in close proximity of the Hammam. This allowed him to reminisce and share his memories with me.

Furthermore, he discussed hammam rituals according to his personal experiences as he used to visit hammams with his grandfather weekly: 'hammams were an essential part of folklore, where people shared memories and celebrations – this was usually on Thursdays or Fridays. This was also dependant on each family's "class status" in the Old City'. He described the traditional object that were carried in to these spaces such as traditional hard bar Aleppian soap (ghar) and bathing towels made of pure silk.

'Aleppo survived two major earthquakes prior to the war. It was built on two hidden cities – I believe because of the spirit of our people we will be able to rebuild our city again, better than it was. An example of this in action is what is happening with the rebuild in the old souk' (Mr Talal).

1.1.2 Semi-structured Interviews 2021 - 2023

A transcript of interview with the Syrian Deputy Minister of Tourism - Nedal Mashfej 2021. Dubai, UAE

مقابلة مع المهندس نضال مشافج - معاون وزير السياحة السوري

دبي، ٢٠٢١

- سالي هلال: بشكل عام اريد ان اعرف ما هي استراتيجيات الحكومة المتبعة بتطوير قطاع السياحة بسوريا؟

نضال ماشفج: كما تعملين حالياً ان قطاع السياحة في سوريا قبل عشر سنوات اي قبل الحرب في سوريا، كانت السياحة أحد أكبر مكونات الاقتصاد الوطني والمصدر الثاني للعملة الاجنبية من بعد النفط. كنا كقطاع سياحي حكومي او خاص متوجهين لنكون في المرتبة الاولى، واصبحت اعداد السياح الاوروبيين والعرب تصل احيانا الى عشر ملايين سائح سنويا، لا شك كان هناك تنوع فريد بتنوع الجنسيات بالإضافة الى زوار اليوم الواحد من دول الجوار كلبنان والعراق. بالإضافة لفترة الصيف عند اعتدال الجو كانت الزيارات العائلية السياحية للمغتربين، بمعظم الاحيان كنا نصل الى نسبة إشغال عالية بأماكن الاقامة السياحية الى درجة عدم امكانية استقبال اي سائح جديد. كل ذلك حفز في تلك الفترة فكرة مهمة انه بلا شك إذا اخذنا السياحة بمنظور استراتيجي بثلاث محاور وهي محور الترويج بما تحمله من دعاية وتسويق وحملات اعلانية ومحور الاستثمار بما يحمل من اشادة منشآت ومطاعم وكل اشكال الخدمة السياحية، ومحور التدريب والتأهيل لتخدم هذه المنشآت. هذه المحاور الثلاثة كانت تسير بالتوازي نوعاً ما بحيث ان عملية الترويج او التسويق لسوريا كوجهة بالمنطقة لكون سوريا نقطة فارقة بالميزان السياحي في منطقة الشرق الاوسط، لان الزيارة السياحية المنظمة من منطقة اوروبا لم تكن تأتي فقط الى سوريا كوجهة وحيدة، بل كبرنامج الى عدة وجهات في المنطقة، فكانت سوريا تحظى بأعلى حصة من مدة الزيارات واعلى نسبة إنفاق من هذه البرامج، وكانت الوجهات الاخرى تعد كقيمة مضافة لهذه البرامج، فنحن حالياً نطمح لاستعادة هذه المكانة. بعد سنوات الحرب في سوريا اتت الاجراءات الاحادية الجانب والتي لا اعتبرها عقوبات لان العقوبات تضعها جهات قضائية بينما هذه الاجراءات وضعها بشر، وبعض الدول الاخرى حذت نفس الطريق وسارت بنفس التيار. نحن نعمل من هذا الإطار بان سوريا لديها محبين واصدقاء واهل، صمدت سوريا خلال هذه الفترة واستطعنا ان نبرهن ان مبادئنا واساسيات حياتنا هي الصحيحة ونحن بنينا عليها.

نحن اليوم بعد هذا الاجراءات والحرب الطويلة وعامين من وباء كوفيد-١٩ من اجراءات تقيد التحرك للسياحة كمعايير جديدة فرضت علينا التي لم تكن بالحسبان أصبح العمل السياحي مقيد وصعب، ولكننا مع ذلك استطعنا البدء باستعادة هذا القدوم السياحي من مختلف المناطق الاوربية والعربية.

نحن اليوم بسوريا عندنا مئات الطلبات من مكاتب سياحية سورية عادت الى العمل ضمن الاطر التي تكلمنا عليها كرحلات سياحية منظمة ضمن إجراءات البروتوكولات الصحية بالنسبة ل كوفيد.

المستقبل بالنسبة لنا واعد، لا شك ان القطاع السياحي هو قطاع مهم جدا ونظرا لأهميته كان مستوى التدمير الذي وقع على البنية التحتية السياحية ذات تأثير كبير جداً. يوجد لدينا وقت لإعادة بناء هذا القطاع بمختلف اشكاله كبنى تحتية اساسية نعمل عليها بشكل كبير وكتشريعات وتسهيلات تصدر وقوانين استثمار جديدة. ونعمل بشكل كبير بالنسبة لأقناع الجهات المسؤولة عن الاستثمار الخارجي من اوروبا او من الدول العربية بالعودة الى سوريا وضمان هذه الاستثمارات بأن سوريا مكان لتوطين رؤوس الاموال

الجديدة بكل المفردات العصرية للاستثمار وللترويج والتسويق السياحي. هذه هي خطتنا اليوم بان نعيد الثقة بسوريا كوجهة امنة لقضاء رحلة سياحية واستثمار سياحي امن ولبناء مستقبل مزهر ومتناسب مع متطلبات العصر والجيل الجديد.

- سالي هلال: برأيك ما هي المدة الزمنية التي ستنتعش فيها السياحة في سوريا؟

نضال ماشفج: لا شك بأن البناء يحتاج الى فترة طويلة، لكن نحن كسوريين لا شك اننا مجتهدين. اين ما تواجد السوري يتميز بعمله كمثال السوريين في مصر الذين أصبحوا من الصناعيين المتميزين، ومثله السوريين الذين ذهبوا الى الامارات وتركيا والشرق الاقصى الذين قدموا صورة جميلة. اغلب الطباخين المتميزين حاليا في الوطن العربي هم من السوريين الذين درسوا في مراكز وزارة السياحة كتدريب وتأهيل سياحي. نحن خلاقون ومبدعون وسنسرع ونصل الليل بالنهار حتى نعود لإعادة اعمار بلدنا. نحن محكومون بالأمل وسنعود ونبني بالأمل. لا يمكنني اعطاء إطار زمني دقيق لعودتنا لكن ما أستطيع ان اضمنه انه لن نوفر اي جهد او وقت لنعود. نتمنى ان لا يتجاوز المخطط العشر سنوات.

- سالي هلال: ما هي التحديات المادية كتمويل؟ هل يوجد اي تمويل خارجي؟

نضال ماشفج: لا شك ان عملية التطوير او اعادة البناء والهيكلة بحاجة الى مصادر تمويل. ليس بالمخفي ان الدول التي وضعت العقوبات على سوريا تحاول بأن تجفف مصادر التمويل بالنسبة لنا. اعتمدنا على هذا التمويل لفترة طويلة وكنا من الدول الوحيدة التي استطاعت الصمود خلال فترة حرب العشر سنوات بتمويل ذاتي من دون استيراد اي شيء ما عدا الامور النادرة جداً. لكن كزراعة وصناعات متنوعة كله كان اعتمادا ذاتيا. لا شك ان قسم كبير من مصادر الطاقة التي كنا نعتمد عليها بالتصدير والتي كانت توفر مدخول بالعملة الاجنبية اصبحت خارج سلطة الدولة. كانت سوريا تنتج حول ٣٨٥ ألف برميل نفط يوميا يكفي لحاجة السوق المحلي ويصدر الباقي لدول الجوار. اليوم لا يتجاوز الانتاج ال ٢٠ ألف برميل بعد ان وقعت الحقول تحت سيطرة مجموعات مدعومة خارجيا لتضغط على سوريا اقتصاديا. بالإضافة الى حاجتنا الى مصادر تمويل نعتمد فيها على السوريين المغتربين للبدء بمشاريع استثمارية للمساهمة في اعادة الاعمار والتوجه الى الدول الصديقة والحليفة لعرض الفرص الاستثمارية وخصوصا من الجانب السياحي بتجهيز عدد من المواقع القابلة للاستثمار منها منشآت دمرت بصيغة استثمارية جديدة رشيقة ومرنة بحيث تحقق الجدوى الاقتصادية لصاحب المنشأة وللشريك المساهم في اعادة الاعمار وللدولة ايضا. من هنا نحن بحاجة للدعم من الاصدقاء والاشقاء بتدفق هذه الاموال. نحن من جهتنا نظمنا هذه الالية واطرنا هذا الموضوع ضمن تشريعات تضمن لأصحاب رؤوس الاموال الحرية والمرونة بالدخول والخروج وحركة هذه الاموال داخل وخارج الدولة وسهولة عودة الارباح الى بلد المنشأ. نوعا ما بدأنا برؤية بوادر هذه السياسات الجديدة من خلال بعض الطلبات لمشاريع يتم عرضها واقبال المستثمرين عليها. ونحن في بداية العام القادم سننظم مؤتمر الاستثمار العام الذي سيدعى اليه اهم رجال الاعمال المهتمة بالاستثمار من كل الاطياف في سوريا للاطلاع على الفرص الاستثمارية الموجودة بمختلف القطاعات الاقتصادية كاملة.

- سالي هلال: بالنسبة لمسألة الترويج داخل البلد، يوجد لدينا مشكلة عند جيل الشباب حيث انهم لا يملكون معلومات كثيرة عن المناطق السياحية او عن التراث بشكل عام. هل هناك اي خطط لأشراك الشباب في هذا المجال؟

نضال ماشفج: أحد النقاط التي لم يتم اغفالها عن قصد لكن لم يتم الاهتمام بها بشكل كبير فترة ما قبل سنوات الحرب هو موضوع السياحة الشعبية والسياحة الداخلية. لأنه بلا شك كانت جميع المكاتب والجهات والمؤسسات وحتى وزارة السياحة منهمكة بقدوم اوروبي وعربي كبير فأصبح موضوع السياحة الداخلية بعيد قليلا عن الاهتمام وعاد كأولوية الى المرحلة الثانية او الثالثة خلال سنوات الحرب وما بعدها عندما أدركنا اهمية هذا القطاع وانه من الضروري جدا إذا اردنا ان نحاول تعويض القدوم الاوروبي ان نعمل على القدوم الداخلي. حركة السياحة الداخلية والشعبية بحيث تحقق الجدوى الاقتصادية او الحد الادنى للجدوى الاقتصادية لتشغيل المنشآت لتؤمن للناس الوضع الاقتصادي الامن بالحد الادنى بحيث تضمن استمرارية هذه المنشآت والعمال المسؤولين عن

ادارتها. اتجهت الوزارة الى الكثير من المشاريع التي قامت بها بمناطق تطوير سياحية كبيرة بحيث طرحت شواطئ مفتوحة بأسعار رمزية بأخذ عين الاعتبار مستوى الدخل بالنسبة للشريحة الاكبر في سوريا وهي شريحة ذوي الدخل المحدود. طرحت ايضا منشآت اقامة واطعام تلبي احتياجاتهم وتوفر خدمة سياحية مقبولة ضمن الحد الادنى من الشروط السياحية من حيث النظافة والبيئة والخدمة السياحية المتميزة. لا شك ايضا ان السياحة الداخلية والشعبية حاليا يعمل عليها عدد كبير من المكاتب السياحية لتعويض الفاقد الاوروبي. وأصبح لها اختصاصيين يقومون بها، ولكن مازالت السياحة داخلية الشعبية المنظمة كمفهوم وثقافة ضعيف قليلا بسبب وجوده بطريقة اهلية بين الناس بمفاهيم التنزه العشوائي العائلي لكن مع ذلك هو يندرج ضمن السياحة الشعبية الداخلية.

- سالي هلال: الا يجب ان تدخل هذه الافكار في مناهج التعليم السوري؟

نضال ماشفج: تم الاتفاق مع وزارة التربية منذ فترة طويلة على ادراج مادة التربية السياحية كأحد المواد الاساسية في مرحلة الحلقات التعليم الاساسية وتمت الموافقة عليه. وسنقوم بأدراج هذه المادة ضمن المناهج الجديدة مع العلم ان المفردات لهذا المنهاج السياحي حاليا موجود ضمن مواد تعليمية اخرى مثل الجغرافيا والتاريخ بحيث اننا نعطي معلومات كبيرة عن المواقع الاثرية والسياحية واصول الخدمة السياحية ومستقبل العمل في القطاع السياحي. لكننا ومن ضمن الثقافة السورية العامة لا ننظر الى العمل ضمن القطاع السياحي بجدية مع العلم بأنه في الوقت الحالي يمكن ان يضمن مدخول مادي اعلى من وظائف اخرى. والعمل السياحي يتضمن مجالات عدة ومهمة لكن هذه الثقافة لم تصل بالشكل الذي نتطلع اليه لكننا نعمل عليه بشكل متواصل. الان في سوريا يوجد ١٧ مدرسة سياحية، ٨ معاهد تعليم سياحي ما بعد المدارس و٤٠ مركز تدريب سياحي وفندقي خاص يرفد العملية التعليمية بالإضافة الى كليات السياحة وكلية تطبيقية وهي الاولى على مستوى سوريا تدرس العلوم السياحية بأسلوب تطبيقي بنسبة ٦٠٪ تعليم عملي و٤٠٪ تعليم نظري وهو نسبة مرتفعة مقارنة بباقي الكليات التطبيقية الاخرى.

- سالي هلال: هل يوجد منصات معترف بها توفر فرصة للشباب لتقديم افكارهم من ناحية التطوير السياحي، كإعادة اعمار منشآت سياحية؟

نضال ماشفج: نحن في وزارة السياحة نوفر موقعين على الانترنت كالموقع الرسمي الذي ينقل ويعكس نشاطات وزارة السياحة في سوريا والتي تنعكس بشكل مباشر او غير مباشر على القطاع السياحي وموقع اخر ترويجي يروج للنشاطات والفعاليات التي تقوم بها الوزارة او اي جهة اخرى متصلة بالوزارة. كمنصة بالشكل الذي طرحتيه لعرض افكار الشباب هي موجودة وحاليا يتم تطويرها بحيث ان تستطيعي ان تعرضي الافكار ليس فقط لوزارة السياحة، بل على جميع المنشآت السياحية في سوريا. نتمنى خلال فترة بسيطة مع بداية العام القادم ان نفتتح هذه المنصة التي تربط بها كل المنشآت التعليمية والخدمية والسياحية والاقامة والاطعام مربوطة بشبكة واحدة. الغرض الاساسي منها كان ربط احتياجات المنشآت السياحية البشرية مع سوق العمل ومراكز التدريب السياحي والفندقي بحيث ان تغطي احتياجات المؤسسات السياحية لمدة ثلاث او أربع سنوات من القوى البشرية العاملة. هذه المعلومات تعالج في مراكز التعليم السياحي والفندقي ويتم توزيع الادوار بين المدارس والمعاهد والمراكز التدريبية باختصاصاتها من دورات بين الثلاث أشهر لتعليم مهارات بسيطة الى دراسات تمتد الى ٥ سنوات بهذه الطريقة يمكن اي أحد ان يقوم بعرض مشروع ليأخذ وتولّى به الجهة التعليمية.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PROFESSIONAL PARTICIPANTS

You are being invited to participate in a research project titled:

'The site-specific intervention as a transitional phase of reconstruction: A Syrian context'

This is a practice-based research project that examines hammams (public baths) and bimaristans (traditional 'hospitals') and their contribution to a Syrian cultural identity. Many of these structures in Aleppo have been substantially destroyed during the recent conflict. My aim is to document the current condition of the structures (collecting publically available material) and their cultural significance (using interviews with Syrians).

The interviews will help me in the design process of developing temporary site-specific interventions within the ruined structures. The installations aim to extend the debate about the eventual architectural restoration of such structures in ways that engage a wider community beyond that of professional specialists.

I have invited you to be interviewed as a professional with relevant expertise in these structures and their cultural significance.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign the Consent Form on the last page of this document. You will be given a copy of both the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form to keep.

This document is [3] pages long, including the Consent Form. Please make sure you have read and understood all the pages.

Interview Consent Agreement with Nedal Mashfej, p.1

ual: university of the arts london chelsea

Participant Consent Form

(In keeping with the UAL Code of Practice on Research Ethics)

Research project title: **The site-specific intervention as a transitional phase of reconstruction: A Syrian context**

Research investigator: Sally Hilal

Research Participants name: *The Syrian Deputy Minister of Tourism Nedal Mashfej*

The interview will take approximately one hour. We do not anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project. Ethical procedures for academic research undertaken from UK institutions require that interviewees explicitly agree to being interviewed and how the information contained in their interview will be used. This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you therefore please read the accompanying information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

- the interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced
- if requested, you will be sent the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors
- the transcript of the interview will be analysed by Sally Hilal as research investigator
- access to the interview transcript will be limited to Sally Hilal and academic colleagues and researchers with whom he might collaborate as part of the research process
- the actual recording will be kept in secure storage for the duration of the project, and will be used for the research only. Any information provided will not be distributed via social media, or enter the public realm other than through the final thesis or related research exhibitions of my practice.

Interview Consent Agreement with Nedal Mashfej, p.2

By signing this form I agree that;

1. I am voluntarily taking part in this research. I understand that I do not have to take part, and I can stop the interview at any time;

2. The transcribed interview or extracts from it may be used as described above;

3. I have read the Information sheet;

4. I do not expect to receive any financial remuneration for my participation;

5. I can request a copy of the transcript of my interview and may make edits I feel necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made about confidentiality;

6. I have been able to ask any questions I might have, and I understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future.

Please initial box

I agree to be video/ audiotaped for this project. ☒

7. I hereby give my permission for UAL to publish, copyright and use pictures or video footage of myself, which may be included in whole or in part, within the research remit outlined above.

8. I agree that my data will be kept for future research purposes such as publications related to this study after the completion of the study.

The Deputy Minister, Eng. Nedal Mashfej

Printed Name

18 November 2021

Participants Signature Date

18 November 2021

Researchers Signature Date

This research have been reviewed by the University of the Arts London. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

researchdegrees@arts.ac.uk

Interview Consent Agreement with Nedal Mashfej, p.3

A transcript of interview with the Chairman of Syrian Chambers of Tourism - Talal Khoudeir

2021. Dubai, UAE

مقابلة مع المهندس طلال خضير - رئيس اتحاد غرف السياحة السورية ورئيس مجلس إدارة غرفة سياحة المنطقة الشمالية، نائب رئيس مجلس إدارة مؤسسة الوطنية للتمويل الصغير.

دبي، ٢٠٢١

- سالي هلال: اولا اريد معلومات أكثر عن سوق السقطية والاغا خان. عندما بحثت لم أجد كيف ولماذا اهتموا بسوق السقطية بالذات عن غيره؟

طلال خضير: منظمة الاغا خان واثناء عملها في حلب ركزت على سوق السقطية لأنه كان الاقل تضررا واقتصرت على الاضرار على الواجهات. البناء كان قائما بدون اضرار. حاولوا ان يكون مثالا لترميم باقي اسواق المدينة القديمة. عملوا على البنية التحتية الالكتروميكانيكية وتوليد الكهرباء بالطاقة الشمسية وهو نظام جديد لم يكون موجودا من قبل لتعويض الفقد للطاقة بشكل عام. وعدد محلاته ليس بكثير حوالي ال ٧٥ محل. فكان بالإمكان انجازه بسرعة فكان هو السبب الرئيسي هو عدم وجود تهدم.

- سالي هلال: عندما يختارون المواقع. هل يختارون المواقع التي تدر المال للمدينة؟ مثال حمام يلبغا المهدم لم يفتح ولا يوجد مخططات قريبة له؟

طلال خضير: ان لحمام يلبغا عقد استثمار موقع بين وزارة السياحة مع مؤسسة الاغا خان وهم حاليا متوقفين عن العمل في المجال السياحي. الان هناك اعادة توازن عقدي لهذا الاستثمار ان كان لمبنى السرايا او الحمام. نتمنى ان يكون هناك في الفترة القريبة عقود جديدة والية جديدة للعمل ليعود الحمام الى الخدمة.

لدينا نقطة يجب ان نشير اليها هي ان ترميم اسواق المدينة القديمة هو محل اهتمام العديد من الجهات والمنظمات الداعمة مثل الشارع المستقيم الذي يبدأ من باب انطاكية وينتهي بسوق الزرب بمحور طوله ٨٥٠ متر. تم وضع اول وثيقة تم التشارك عليها بين الحكومة وبين الاشخاص الموجودين في هذه الاسواق من فعاليات تجارية ومنظمات وجهات من غرف الاقتصادية كتجارة وصناعة وسياحة والمنظمات الداعمة لإعادة تأهيل الاسواق.

هذا السوق له قيمة عالية وعدة اساسيات بني عليها المشروع. من باب انطاكية التي تم فتح حلب عبرها وتحريرها من البيزنطيين على يد القائد ابو عبيدة بن الجراح، وبني اول جامع هناك وهو جامع الشعيبية بمواجه باب انطاكية. وله ايضا قيمة تجارية اذ كانت جميع القوافل التجارية التي تأتي من انطاكية الى حلب تمر من هناك كسوق تجاري هام وقوافل طريق الحرير التي كانت تمر من هناك. وهناك جزء منه تم تحويله الى سياحي كبعض البيوت العربية القديمة التي تحولت الى فنادق تراثية ومطاعم. التنوع الموجود على هذا الطريق من اسواق مختلفة كله جعل المنطقة جاذبة للسياحة. ويتم الان حاليا ربط جميع المحاور التي توصل هذا السوق بالأبواب. تم ترميم سوق الحرير الذي يتعامد مع هذا السوق الذي يصل من الجامع الاموي الكبير الى السوق مباشرة. تم تأهيله واعادة استثماره واعادة كل التجار وهي النقطة المهمة التي نهتم بها والتي وضعتها الحكومة بأولياتها لتفعيل الاسواق واعادة النشاط التجاري.

- سالي هلال: بالنسبة لإعادة الاعمار، في عام ٢٠١٨ عند زيارتي لعدة مواقع مثل حمام باب الاحمر، لاحظت استخدام بعض المواد مثل السيراميك. ما هو وضع مثل هذه التجاوزات وكيف سيتم التعامل معها؟

طلال خضير: حاليا تم وضع اجراءات وقيود صارمة في هذا الموضوع في لجنة حماية المدينة القديمة وتم وضع شروط ان اي مبنى سيتم ترميمه سيعاد الى مخططات ١٩٣٢ التي تم توثيقها ايام الاحتلال الفرنسي. هذا الموضوع سيساعد على اعادة المباني التاريخية والاثرية الى ما كانت عليه سابقا وحاليا نتخذ كل الاجراءات الصارمة بخصوص هذا الموضوع ويعاد تأهيل اي مبنى متجاوز سابقا من جديد لإزالة التجاوزات.

- سالي هلال: في حلب لفت نظري التركيز على الفنادق والمطاعم في السياحة. بخصوص المباني الاثرية الاخرى، لماذا لا يتم اعادة توظيفها بطريقة ان تعود على المدينة بعوائد مادية بدون تغير وظيفتها الرئيسية؟

طلال خضير: بصراحة نحن في حلب نفتقد لعدد الفنادق الذي يعد قليل جدا. وكان محيط القلعة الذي يعد محور سياحي هام وتم استعادته في عام ٢٠١٦ بعد تحرير حلب، كان الاهتمام الرئيسي هو اعادة الفنادق التراثية في محيط القلعة. يوجد لدينا فندق الكارتون المتهدم بشكل كامل، تم تلزيمه لشركة خاصة استثمارية ستعيد بناءه كفندق وسيعود كبناء تاريخي بنفس المواصفات وسيتم اعادة بناءه بنفس الحجر الاصلي. يوجد مبنى ملاصق له وهو مبني مديرية الخدمات الفنية تم تلزيمه لمستثمر سوري مقيم في الكويت وسيكون فندق بمرتبه ٤ نجوم ب ٦٣ غرفة من كافة الخدمات.

الموضوع الذي تطرقت له هو مهم جداً فلدينا مبنى وهو مدرسة سيف الدولة، هذا المبنى سيكون مركز توثيقي لكل مدينة حلب، تم تأهيله وهو عبارة عن ٣ مباني، تم تأهيل أحد المباني واستمرار العمل على تأهيل المباني الاخرى حتى نهاية العام. سيكون هذا المبنى مركز ذاكرة المدينة ومؤهلا الكترونيا ليستطيع اي أحد يريد ان يحصل على اي معلومة عن المدينة القديمة كيف كانت وكيف تم اعادة اعمارها. والعمل يتم بأيدي سورية محلية بكل فخر ولم نعتمد على ايادي خارجية وسنعيد اعمار حلب وسوريا بأيادي سورية. يوجد دعم من المنظمات لكن كل العمل يتم بأيادي سورية.

- سالي هلال: هل هناك نقص باليد العاملة كحرفيين؟

طلال خضير: اليد العاملة متوفرة حاليا ومن الممكن ان نحتاج أكثر. لذلك هناك مراكز تدريب وتأهيل تعمل عليها كل المنظمات مثل الامانة السورية والاغا خان لتدريب الحرفيين والاعمال اليدوية وهي جزء من العمل الذي نقوم به.

- سالي هلال: مثل البيمارستان الأرغوني عندما تم فتحه وتنظيفه من الخراب. ما حاله الان؟ هل هو مغلق او مفتوح للعموم؟

طلال خضير: هو مفتوح الان، هناك اعمال تأهيل لم تنته بعد لتعرض جزء منه لأعمال تخريب، ونحن سنعيده كما كان سابقا. يفتح الان للزوار بشكل خاص. لكن الان الاهم هو اعادة فتح متحف حلب الوطني، فقد تم استرداد كل المقتنيات وتم افتتاح الصالة الاولى بجهود جبارة للمحافظة على المقتنيات بخطوة تحسب لوزارة الثقافة والمديرية العامة للأثار والمتاحف. اعيد افتتاح اول صالة ويتم التحضير لفتح الصالة الثانية.

- سالي هلال: بالنسبة للحمامات الشعبية التي فتحت بحلب كما اعتقد هي ٣ (القواس، باب الاحمر، الجديد)

طلال خضير: يوجد العديد من الحمامات القديمة التي تم اعادة تأهيلها وفتحها ويرتادها الحلبيين بشكل خاص. مثل حمام الصالحية، السادات، القواس، وحمام الجديد، وباب الاحمر. يوجد ١٢ حمام تم اعادة تأهيلهم ودخلوا الخدمة وجاهزين لاستقبال الناس.

- سالي هلال: كيف يتم الترويج للمناطق السياحية بحلب. مثال هل يوجد لوحات ارشادية للمواقع الاثرية؟ هل يوجد خطة لجذب الشباب والفئات العمرية الاصغر؟

طلال خضير: نحن كاتحاد غرف السياحة وغرفة سياحة المنطقة الشمالية بحلب بشكل خاص. رسمنا عدة مسارات للسياحة الداخلية والسياحة الدينية، لأن حلب تشتهر بموروث ثقافي كبير جدا بالنسبة للسياحة الثقافية والدينية.

يوجد عندنا أكبر عدد جوامع وكنائس في حلب، فنحن نستقبل كل الاديان ومنفتحين على الجميع. بالنسبة لغرفة السياحة قامت برسم مسارات تخص المسارات السياحية ضمن اسواق المدينة القديمة وحول القلعة من ضمنها زيارة المصابن لصناعة صابون الغار الذي تشتهر فيه مدينة حلب. اعيد افتتاح عدد كبير من المصابن في المدينة القديمة وتم تأهيلها من قبل اصحابها، يتم العمل فيها على صنع الصابون بنفس الطريقة منذ ١٠٠٠ عام. هذه المسارات رسمت وحاليا لدينا عدد من الادلاء السياحيين في غرفة السياحة وتقوم الشعبة الخاصة بهم بهذه المهمات. توجهنا بداية الى المدارس الخاصة لجولات سياحية للطلاب لتعريفهم بالمواقع الاثرية وكيفية التعامل مع الموقع الاثري الذي يجب ان يكون هناك حرص شديد في زيارته. فنحن نوجه الادلاء لشرح على كيفية حفاظ على الموقع كنظافة عامة وعدم الكتابة على الجدران. سنحضر في المستقبل لاتفاقية مع مديرة التربية في حلب ومن الممكن ان نعممها مع وزارة التربية ليتم تنظيم الرحلات المدرسية العامة برفقة دليل سياحي متخصص ومرخص من وزارة السياحة ويحمل مؤهلا دراسيا ليأخذ الاطفال والطلاب المعلومات بطريقة صحيحة.

- سالي هلال: عندي سؤال اراه متكررا عن سياسة اعادة الاعمار ان هناك نزعة دينية او سياسية. لذلك بدأوا بالجامع الاموي والاسواق لأنها ذات مردود للاقتصاد. هل هناك انتقاء ام هي بحسب الاهمية؟

طلال خضير: حاليا الاولويات هي ليست ذات نزعات لكن هناك اولويات. المدينة القديمة وخصوصيتها وهي اطول سوق مغطى في العالم دخلت تسجيل اليونيسكو كموروث من التراث الانساني. من المهم جدا ان نعيد اسواق المدينة القديمة والقيمة التاريخية للجامع الاموي. عمر الجامع الاموي ١٤٠٠ سنة فالعمل فيه كان يجب ان يسرع لأنه نقطة جذب سياحي مهمة وبنفس الوقت عندما يتم ترميم معلم مثل الجامع الاموي فإن المحيط حوله سيتم ترميمه بنفس الوقت لأنه الناس سترتاد الجامع. الفكرة لا تدخل في المواضيع السياسية او الدينية انما هي الاولويات. يوجد دعم بالنسبة للجامع الاموي من الخارج وسيتم تأهيله بشكل نهائي في النصف الاول لعام ٢٠٢٢.

اهم نقطة هي ان المئذنة التي تدمرت وهي اهم مئذنة في المنطقة وسوريا هي ان يتم اعادة البناء بالحجر نفسه. استعننا ببعض الخبرات الخارجية وبعض المستشرقين الذين زاروا حلب والذين وثقوا المئذنة حجرة حجرة فتم الاستعانة بهم. يتم العمل على كل الترميم داخل الجامع بأعلى مستوى وبأدق التفاصيل بوجود لجنة خاصة تضم مدير الاثار بحلب وعدد كبير من المختصين بالآثار والمغتربين.

- سالي هلال: مثلا مثل المباني المدمرة بالكامل لن يتم ترميمها الان بسبب الكلفة وحجم العمل. هل هي متروكة بانتظار مستثمر معين؟

طلال خضير: المباني المدمرة مثل فندق الكارتون كما ذكرت هي مدمر بشكل كامل لكن الان يتم توقيع بين مستثمر سوري محلي مع وزارة السياحة. ونحن هنا في دبي للقاء عدد من رجال الاعمال ودعوتهم الى سوريا. كما ان الامارات لها سابقاً استثمارات مهمة في مجال الفنادق والتطوير العقاري فانتهزنا الفرصة في اكسبو دبي في مناسبة اليوم الوطني السوري للقاء وعرض قانون الاستثمار الجديد الذي يتضمن ميزات وتسهيلات لكل من يريد ان يستثمر في سوريا. فدعونا المستثمرين الى سوق الاستثمار العام الذي سيعرض فيه أكبر المشاريع ان كانت سياحية او صناعية. سيتم تحضير له في النصف الاول من العام القادم في دمشق. نحن نحتاج ان يكون معنا السوريين المغتربين ليعودوا ويساهموا في اعادة البناء لأنه الحكومة لن تستطيع العمل بمفردها فهي بحاجة القطاع الخاص.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PROFESSIONAL PARTICIPANTS

You are being invited to participate in a research project titled:

'The site-specific intervention as a transitional phase of reconstruction: A Syrian context'

This is a practice-based research project that examines hammams (public baths) and bimaristans (traditional 'hospitals') and their contribution to a Syrian cultural identity. Many of these structures in Aleppo have been substantially destroyed during the recent conflict. My aim is to document the current condition of the structures (collecting publically available material) and their cultural significance (using interviews with Syrians).

The interviews will help me in the design process of developing temporary site-specific interventions within the ruined structures. The installations aim to extend the debate about the eventual architectural restoration of such structures in ways that engage a wider community beyond that of professional specialists.

I have invited you to be interviewed as a professional with relevant expertise in these structures and their cultural significance.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign the Consent Form on the last page of this document. You will be given a copy of both the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form to keep.

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Interview Consent Agreement with Talal Khoudeir, p.1

ual: university of the arts london chelsea

Participant Consent Form

(In keeping with the UAL Code of Practice on Research Ethics)

Research project title: **The site-specific intervention as a transitional phase of reconstruction: A Syrian context**

Research investigator: Sally Hilal

Research Participants name: *The Chairman of Syrian Chambers of Tourism Talal Khoudeir*

The interview will take approximately one hour. We do not anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project. Ethical procedures for academic research undertaken from UK institutions require that interviewees explicitly agree to being interviewed and how the information contained in their interview will be used. This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you therefore please read the accompanying information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

- the interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced
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- the actual recording will be kept in secure storage for the duration of the project, and will be used for the research only. Any information provided will not be distributed via social media, or enter the public realm other than through the final thesis or related research exhibitions of my practice.

Interview Consent Agreement with Talal Khoudeir, p.2

By signing this form I agree that;

1. I am voluntarily taking part in this research. I understand that I do not have to take part, and I can stop the interview at any time;

2. The transcribed interview or extracts from it may be used as described above;

3. I have read the Information sheet;

4. I do not expect to receive any financial remuneration for my participation;

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Eng. Talal Khoudeir

Printed Name

18 November 2021

Participants Signature Date

18 November 2021

Researchers Signature Date

This research have been reviewed by the University of the Arts London. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

researchdegrees@arts.ac.uk

Interview Consent Agreement with Talal Khoudeir, p.3

Perspectives and experiences of policy makers and professionals 2021 - 2023

In 2023, I had the opportunity to interview professionals from Syria to gather insights for my intervention design. Although I had initiated contact in late 2021, but unfortunately, all plans had to be cancelled due to the devastating earthquake that hit Syria and Turkey in February 2023. Given this situation, the preparatory consultation work was carried out upon traveling to Syria in August 2023.

Through these interactions, I was able to gather valuable insights, expertise, and perspectives from individuals with specialised knowledge in heritage conservation and restoration in Syria. I recorded these interviews, and the outcomes, along with the archival materials I collected during my studies, will be presented on a website after submission. The website will be accessible to the public and will provide information for those interested in the field, and for future research purposes.

Interviews

The Chairman of Syrian Chambers of Tourism
- Talal Khoudeir

2021. Dubai, UAE
2018. Aleppo, Syria

Academic, Architect and Heritage Consultants
- Mhd Kheireddin Alrifai

2023. Aleppo, Syria

Historian
- Dr NourAldean Altenbi

2023. Aleppo, Syria

The Syrian Deputy Minister of Tourism
- Nedal Mashfej

2021. Dubai, UAE

Historian, Honorary Chairman of Al Adeyat
- Mohammad Kujjah

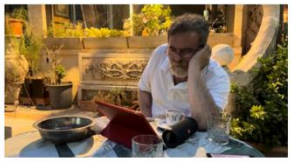
2023 . Aleppo, Syria

Writer and Storyteller
- Ghazwan Bostaji

2023. Aleppo, Syria

The Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums in Aleppo
- Sakher Al-Olabi

2023. Aleppo, Syria
2018. Aleppo, Syria



Renowned Artist
- Youssef Akil

2023. Aleppo, Syria

Views and experiences of migrants and stakeholders 2020 - 2023

Immigrant Voices

- Nour Bazerbashi

2020. **Dubai, UAE**

- Nour Aljabri

2020. **Dubai, UAE**

- Omaia Akil

2023. **Virtual Interview, DE**

- Yahya Khoudeir

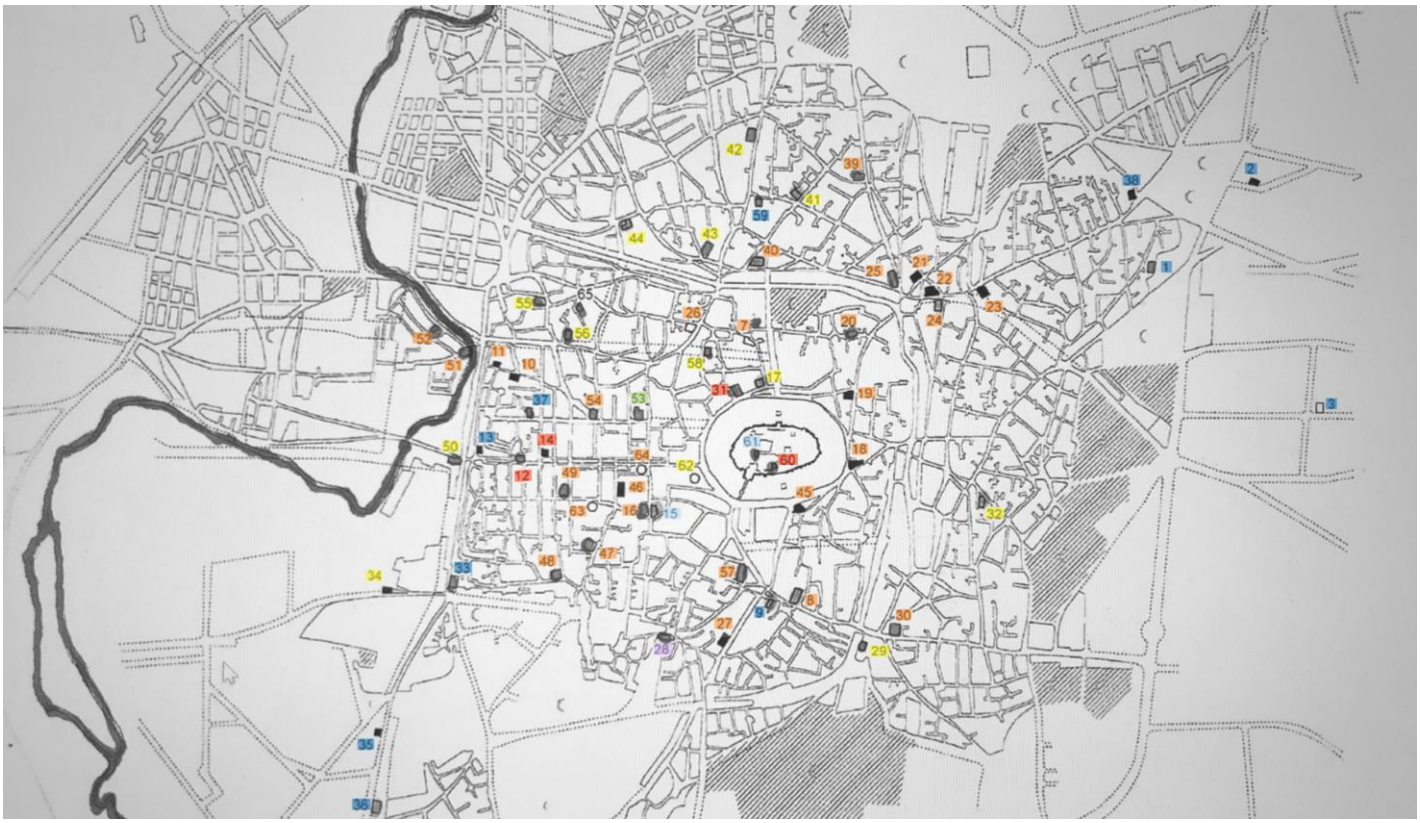
2020. **Dubai, UAE**

- Saher Hilal

2021. **Virtual Interview, KSA**

1.1.3 Mapping the historical hammams of Aleppo 2023

The following image is a record of the historical hammams of Aleppo, which I mapped during my visit in August 2023 with the assistance of Dr. Altenbi from the Al Adyat Society. This map shows the locations of 65 hammams in Aleppo, including those that were demolished and no longer exist. Each site is colour-coded according to the year of construction for easy identification. Additionally, the table provides the names of the hammams and their respective neighbourhoods.



Old – BC
Hamdanid Dynasty
Zengid Dynasty
Ayyubid Dynasty
Mamluk Period
Ottoman Period
New

Fig 43. Mapping the historical hammams of Aleppo. 2023. (source: Sally Hilal and NourAldean Altenbi).

Mapping Aleppo's Hammams:

Hammam al-Jadideh – Kallaseh - N	33		Hammam Queen of Syria (Queen Zenobia) - N	1
Hammam al-Atiqa (al-Fastiqa) – Kallaseh - O	34		Hammam Shwehneh – Turbet Lala (Qahwet al-Shaar) - N	2
Hammam A'aro – Kallaseh - N	35		Hammam Mahmoud Ghadab – Karm al-Katerji - N	3
Hammam al-Sha'ar – Kallaseh - N	36		----------	4
Hammam Hourieh (al-Faqqas al-Saghir) Aqaba - N	37		----------	5
Hammam Qarlek (Shwehneh) – Qarlek - N	38		----------	6
Hammam Aghyur – Aqyul - M	39		Hammam Azdamer – Bab al-Nasr - M	7
Hammam Ouj Khan – Marashli - M	40		Hammam Ashkatmer (Ashiq) – Aajam - M	8
Hammam al-Almaji – Almaji - O	41		Hammam Ghalato – Qassileh - N	9
Hammam al-Basatneh – Basatneh - O	42		Hammam Gharnata – Jub Asadullah - M	10
Hammam al-Qawwas - Tableh - O	43		Hammam al-Sadat – Jub Asadullah - M	11
Hammam al-Bahramieh (Barham, Bahram) al-Jadidah - O	44		Hammam Bazdar (al-Safi) – Aqaba - A	12
Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasri (al-Nasri, al-Lababidieh) – Altunbgha - M	45		Hammam al-Malaki (al-Malika) – Aqaba - N	13
Hammam al-Nahhasin (al-Sitt) Saffahieh - M	46		Hammam al-Khawaja (al-Jadeed, al- Faqqas al-Kabeer, al-Naeem) - Aqaba - A	14
Hammam al-Jawhari – Bab Qinnasrin - M	47		Hammam al-Haddadin – al-Saffahieh - Z	15
Hammam al-Malha (al-Maleh) – Jalloum al-Kubra - M	48		Hammam Mikhan – Saffahieh - M	16
Hammam Itab – Jalloum al-Kubra - M	49		Hammam Mustafa Pasha -Farafra - O	17
Hammam Woudewi – Jisr al-Salahef - O	50		Hammam Bab al-Ahmar (Balouj) – Uglu Beik - M	18
Hammam Tughan - Ainein - M	51		Hammam al-Bayyada (Ibn Nafis) - Bayyada - M	19
Hammam al-Awafi - Ainein - M	52		Hammam Balban – Mustadam Beik - M	20
Hammam al-Wasani (al-Wisani, al-Wasano) Soueqat Ali - BC	53		Hammam al-Haddadin (al-Afandi, Hanano) – Shmesatiya - M	21
Hammam al-Oubarieh (al-Oubari) Soueqat Hatem - M	54		Hammam al-Jadid (Khas Beik) – Shmesatiya - M	22
Hammam al-Tal – Bahsita - O	55		Hammam Raqban – Ibn Yakoub - M	23
Hammam al-Salhieh (al-Jadeed) - Masaben - O	56		Hammam Souq al-Ghazl (al-Farah, al-Faraj) – Khan al-Sabeel - M	24
Hammam al-Thahab (al-Nasser, al-Jurn al-Asswad, al-Thahabi) inside Bab al-Nayrab - M	57		Hammam Souq al-Saghir (al-Sabeel, Zeitoun, Haroun, al-Khawaja, Badr al-Deen) – Joqour Qastal - M	25
Hammam al-Khankarli (al-Khankrli) - Farafra - O	58		Hammam al-Qadi (al-Najashi) - Bandara - M	26
Hammam Qastal Mesht – Qastal Mesht - N	59		Hammam al- Salehieh (Azdamr) Obeis Mosque - M	27
Hammam al-Qasr al-Malaki – al-Qala'a - A	60		Hammam al-Hamadani (Hamadan, Bazzeh, Bazzeh Square) - H	28
Hammam al-Nour al-Din – al-Qala'a - Z	61		Hammam al-Ayyoub - Qubtian - O	29
Hammam al-Shebani – Sahet Bazzeh - O	62		Hammam Barsin – Tala'aran - M	30
Hammam al-Banat – Jalloum al-Kubra - M	63		Hammam al-Sultan – Farafra - A	31
Hammam al-Dalbeh – Souq al-Hamam - M	64		Hammam al-Balat al-Fuqani (al-Jaberieh) - O	32

Old – BC
Hamdanid Dynasty – H
Zengid Dynasty – Z
Ayyubid Dynasty – A
Mamluk Period – M
Ottoman Period – O
New – N

Study #2 - Participatory practice				
Method	Gender	Age	Status	Objective
Community Participatory	F	22	/	Ethnographic research
	F	24	/	
	M	29	Migrant	
	F	31	Migrant	
	M	35	/	
	M	42	/	
	F	56	Migrant	
	M	60	Migrant	

Participant List Table for Study #2, 2018 - 2019.

1.2 Participatory Practices - Memory Maps

I developed a series of a participatory methods based on Giordano Bruno's mnemonic principles and techniques, which were originally created by the ancient Greeks. All the participants were from Aleppo, half of them still live in the city while the others are migrants.

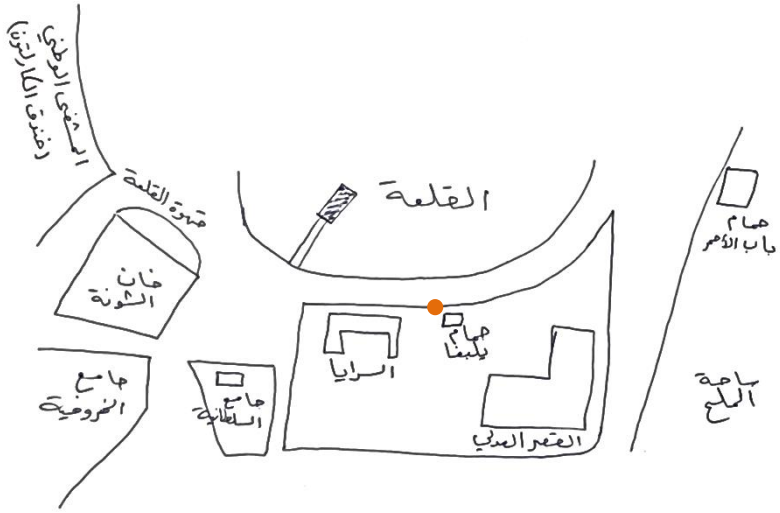
The practice was based on the principle of drawing maps from memory. Every participant was asked to sketch a map that represents the location of Hammam Yalbugha and its surroundings solely from memory, and then to send a picture of their drawings in order to discuss them. The result was a number of maps that differed from each other based on the age of the participant, the level of memories they have, and the events that link them to that area.

From the results, it was the oldest participants who drew annotated maps in detail with the correct names of every architectural monument in the area. An interesting example can be seen in the first image sent by one of the participants, who spent the majority of his youth before the war in the old city area where he has many memories, as he used to go there with his grandfather who owned properties in the old Souk. It is clear that he was able to locate the site of the Hammam and its surroundings, as well as the important monuments around it, in clear detail (see fig. 44).

At the other end of the scale were young participants who were raised during the war. Their maps were quite simplified, lacking details, with less events described and more uncertain memories (see fig. 45). This is understandable because it was not easy to find participants belonging to this age group, most of them knowing it only as a war zone and thus unable to remember details of this part of the city. Their drawings showed a number of vague empty buildings drawn poorly, which perhaps indicates the participants' lack of personal attachment toward these empty structures.

After comparing the drawings, it is clear that the maps reflected different periods of time. These sketches ultimately embodied the experiences and memories of those people turned into tangible matter, which created a new source of information derived from the participants' own personal experiences.

One interesting factor is the absence of the historical Grand Serail building (an enormous government building, located near the Hammam before it was completely razed during the war); despite its importance, the monument was not found in any of their drawings, which indicates that its absence on the city's map and media are already leading to it being forgotten. This applies as well to Hammam Yalbugha which also faces the risk of being



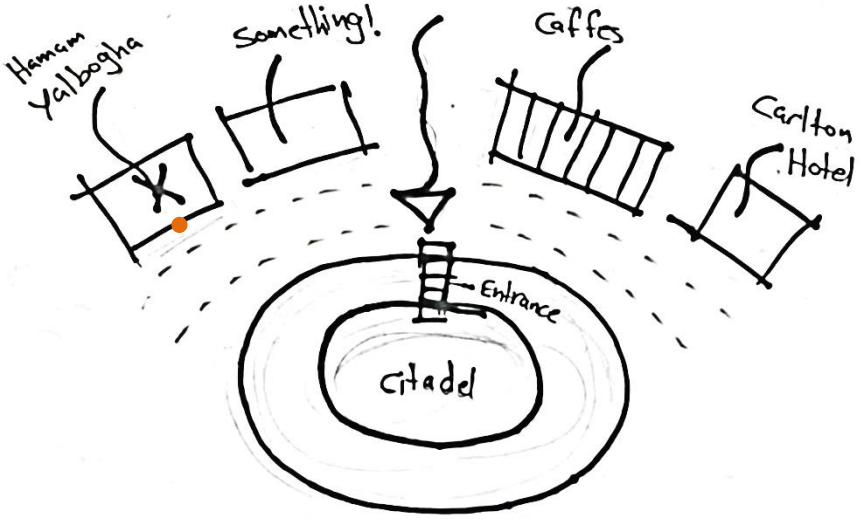


Fig 44. Annotated map for Hammam Yalbugha, 2019. drawn by an old participant.

Fig 45. Annotated map for Hammam Yalbugha, 2019. drawn by a younger participant.

forgotten when several factors are considered:

1) the Hammam is closed and no one is allowed to enter it, nor does anyone have the intention of renovating and rebuilding it at the moment.
2) the absence of knowledge regarding its historical and cultural value in the new generation which seems largely ignorant regarding this structure. The elderly people are usually known to be the ones who are informed about this Hammam and its stories, and who have had experiences there. But the real question that lies ahead is, what happens when we lose this small group of cognisant and informed people?

For the second practice, the participants were asked to draw an object that symbolises the first thing that crosses their mind when the discussion of traditional Hammams in Aleppo is brought up. The result was a collection of different simple sketches that were associated with the rituals of the Hammam. Each object tells a story from the memory of the person who sketched it. For example, drawing the Hammam fountain and associating it with the social gathering after bathing was finished. Some of them made sketches of the Hammam bowls, Aleppo Soap bars, and the unique wooden clogs used in the hammam that are popular only in Aleppo (candy is even made shaped like those clogs, one of the traditional candies which is still popular nowadays).

The difference between the drawings indicates that each corner of the Hammam held a special memory for someone. The object that was the most frequently drawn however was the Hammam basin, which is considered one of the Hammam's most vital elements and used to be made from a single boulder of rock or marble. People would use bowls to scoop water from it and pour it over themselves, and even when people started installing bathrooms in their houses, those basins remained in use for a very long time alongside the modern baths and showers.

I was reminded of a basin we have in our house in Aleppo, which my father insisted on taking from our grandparent's old house once they moved out and installing it in his own new home, as it brings him many memories from his childhood.

With the help of those drawings, I developed a better understanding of how these traditions were mostly observed, how they had changed, and how they affected people's daily lives. In order to look further into this matter, I reached out to family and friends on the internet and asked them whether they still maintain such traditions after all this time.

Through on-line social networks, I asked a group of Aleppines if any of them owns such a basin in their bathroom at home and whether they still use it. If they do, they were asked to take a picture of the basin and send it to me. I received several positive responses regarding this subject and through open discussions with the participants, learned of their personal memories of these basins.

The results lead to a similar conclusion where the participants point out that the water scarcity issues in Aleppo led them to the use of traditional bathing methods again during the war (such as water basins) as effective bathing could be accomplished with much less water using the basin than with a bath or a shower. The following section illustrates selected examples demonstrating the use of such objects at the present time:

The first image is of an old stone basin the owners kept in their house despite renovating their bathroom. The second image is also of an old basin, but its owners replaced it with a plastic basin in their bathroom and installed the old one in their garden as a plant pot (figs. 46, 47). The house owner also mentioned that her father had kept using it for a long period and would not let it go. During the war in Aleppo, the whole family started using it again due to water issues.

Fig 46. Left: Old stone basin at Hilal's residence. 2019. Aleppo. Photograph: Dima Hilal (source: Author's Archives).

Fig 47. Plastic basin replaced the original stone basin – now as a plant pot. 2019. Aleppo. Photograph: Kinda Albeik (source: Author's Archives).

I associated this story (the idea of repurposing the old basins) with Hammam Yalbugha during the renovations in the later 1980s. The ancient basins were replaced with identical new ones, and the old ones were turned into plant pots to decorate the square in front of the Hammam entrance. One of those 533-year-old surviving basins is at Youssef Akil's house, which is still being used today (fig. 49).

The third image features a basin belonging to an elderly woman who still uses it (fig. 48). She mentioned that it was a wedding gift that she has always used, and it remains practical and easy to use, especially for older people.

Fig 48. Stone basin at Mounla's residence. 2019. Aleppo. Photograph: Sally Mounla (source: Author's Archives).

These discussions created narratives that are connected with the historical significance of these authentic objects. It also added valuable information for the research (as shown earlier in the first practice), and at the same time, it highlighted the problems of the water crisis in Aleppo nowadays and how people have started using the old traditional method to bathe and to keep clean.

According to Maurice Halbwachs: 'Collective frameworks are, to the contrary, precisely the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society' Halbwachs (1992, p. 40). The simple object, the hammam basin, seems to be part of this 'collective framework' and a symbol of life as it was.

Fig 49. The original stone basin of Hammam Yalbugha at Akil's residence. 2023. Aleppo. Photograph: Sally Hilal.

Appendix 2: Images and Drawings

2.1 Bimaristan Arghun al-Kamili - Floor Plan

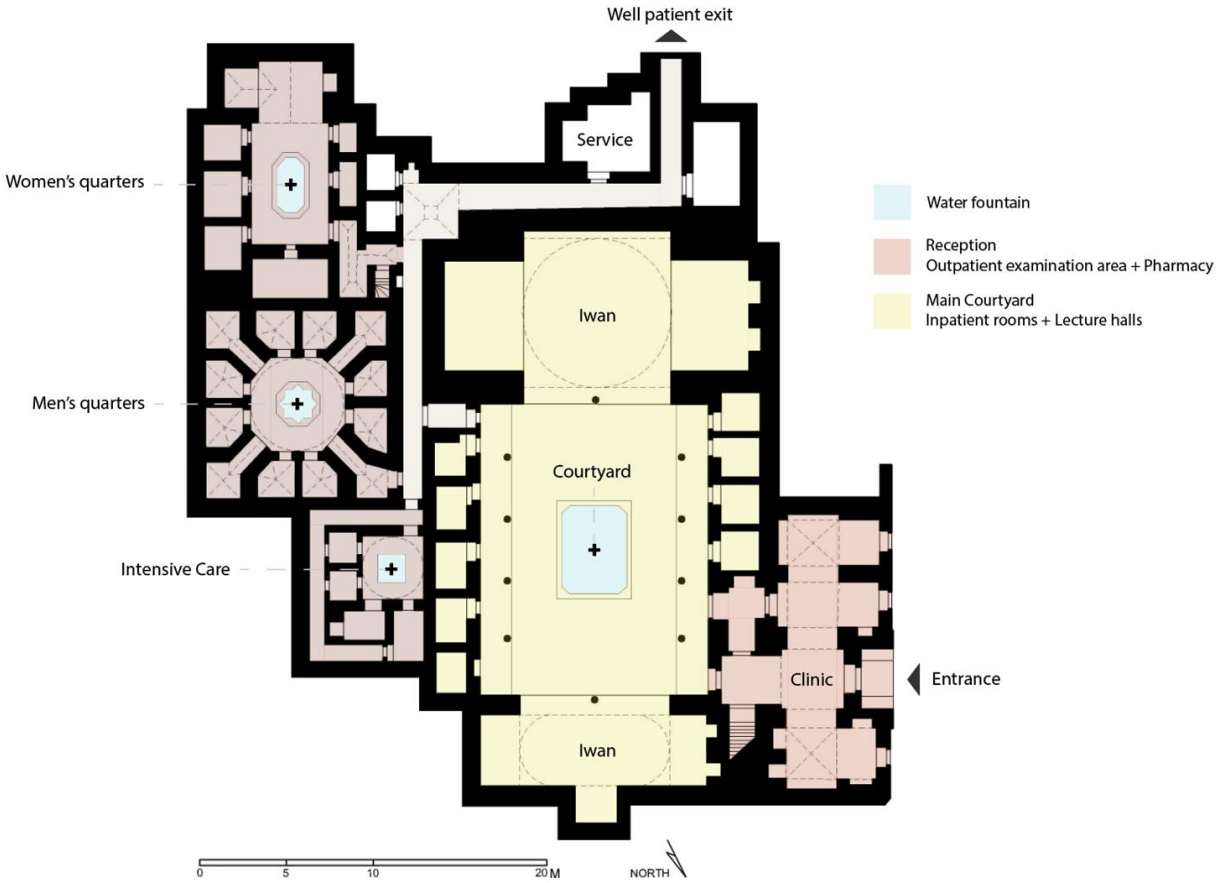


Fig 50. *Bimaristan Arghun al-Kamili,* 2003. drawing - Floor Plan, Edited by Sally Hilal (source: archnet.org). Original draughtsperson: Saeed Arida.

Fig 51. *Bimaristan Arghun al-Kamili,* Water fountain. 1983. photograph by Yasser Tabbaa (source: archnet.org).

Fig 52. *Bimaristan Arghun al-Kamili,* Dome view. 1983. photograph by Yasser Tabbaa (source: archnet.org).

Fig 53. Bimaristan Arghun al-Kamili, View of Side Portico of Main Courtyard, 1983. photograph by Yasser Tabbaa (source: archnet.org).

Fig 54. Bimaristan Arghun al-Kamili, Folkloric dance performed in courtyard, 1987. photograph by Jamal H. Abed (source: archnet.org).

2.2 Bimaristan Arghun - engraved Mamluk motifs and blazons on the main gate

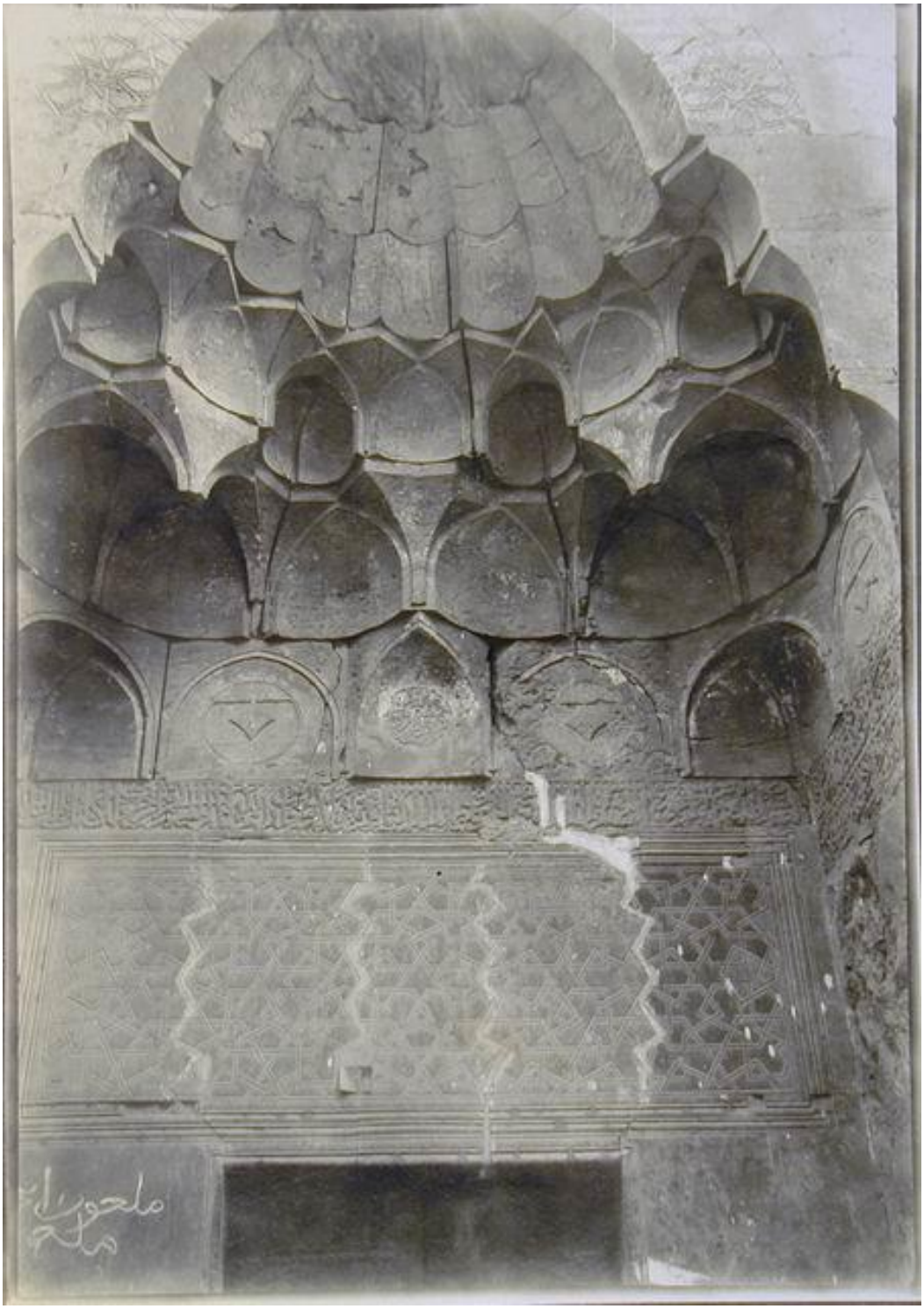


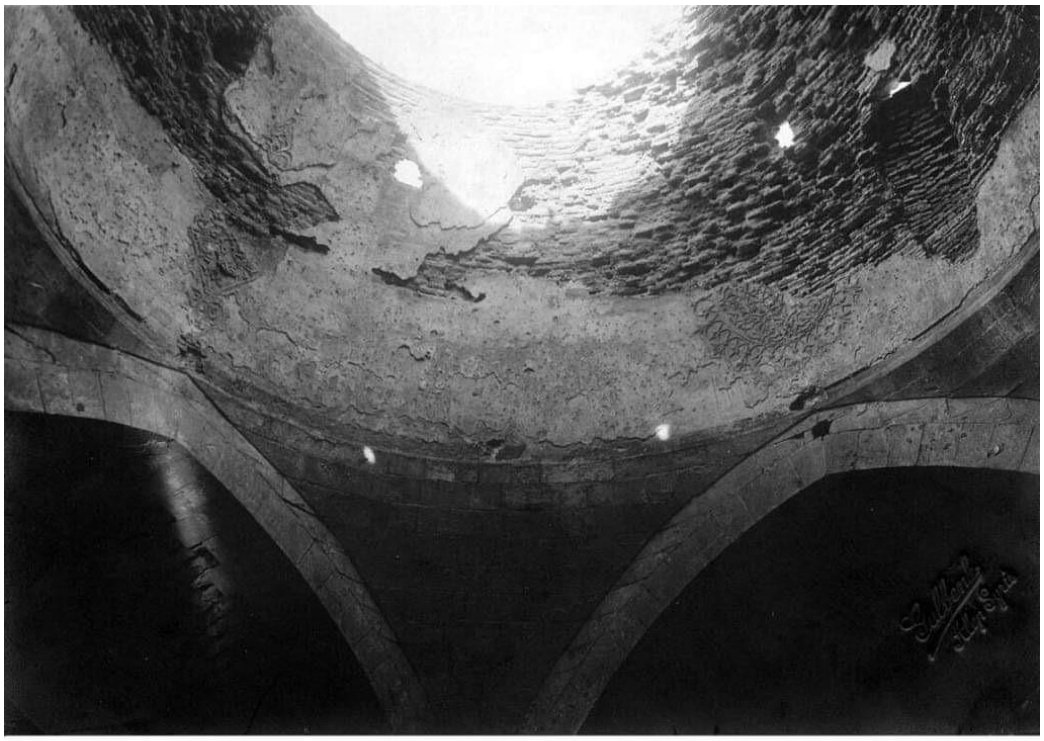
Fig 55. Entrance portal in Bimaristan Arghun al-Kamili, 1919-1921. Photograph: K.A.C. Creswell (source: collections.vam.ac.uk).

2.3 Women in the Bath - Paintings

Fig 56. Camille Rogier, *Entering the Bath*. 1846. Paper (source: collections.vam.ac.uk).

Fig 57. Jean-Étienne Liotard, *A Frankish Woman and Her Servant*. 1750. Oil on canvas (source: art.nelson-atkins.org).

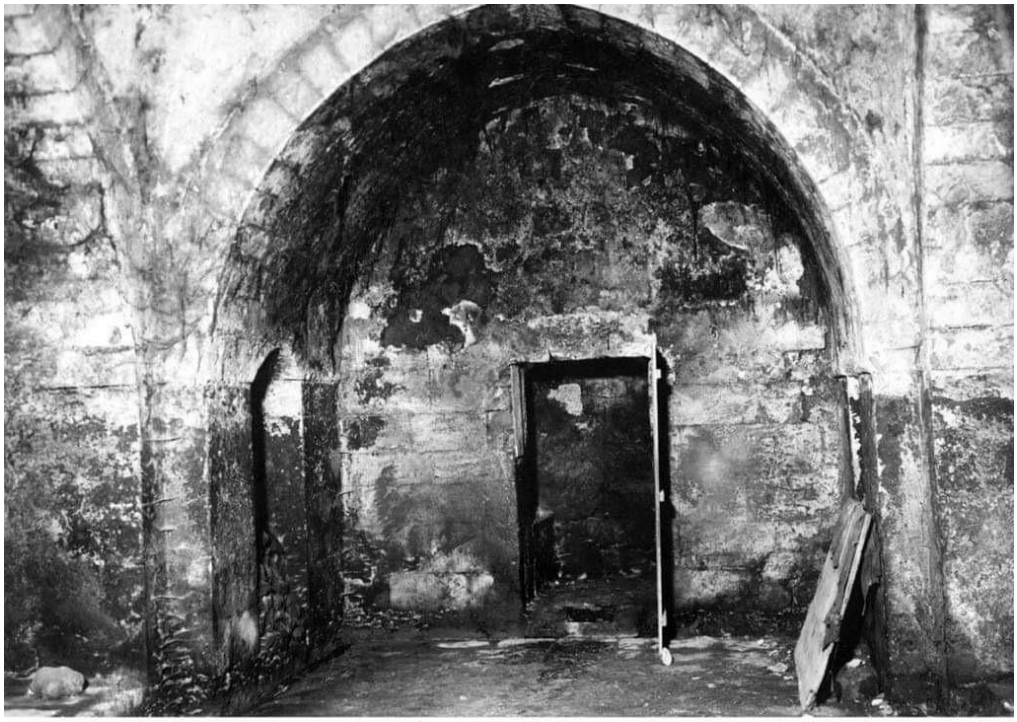
2.4 Hammam Yalbugha - when used as a felt factory



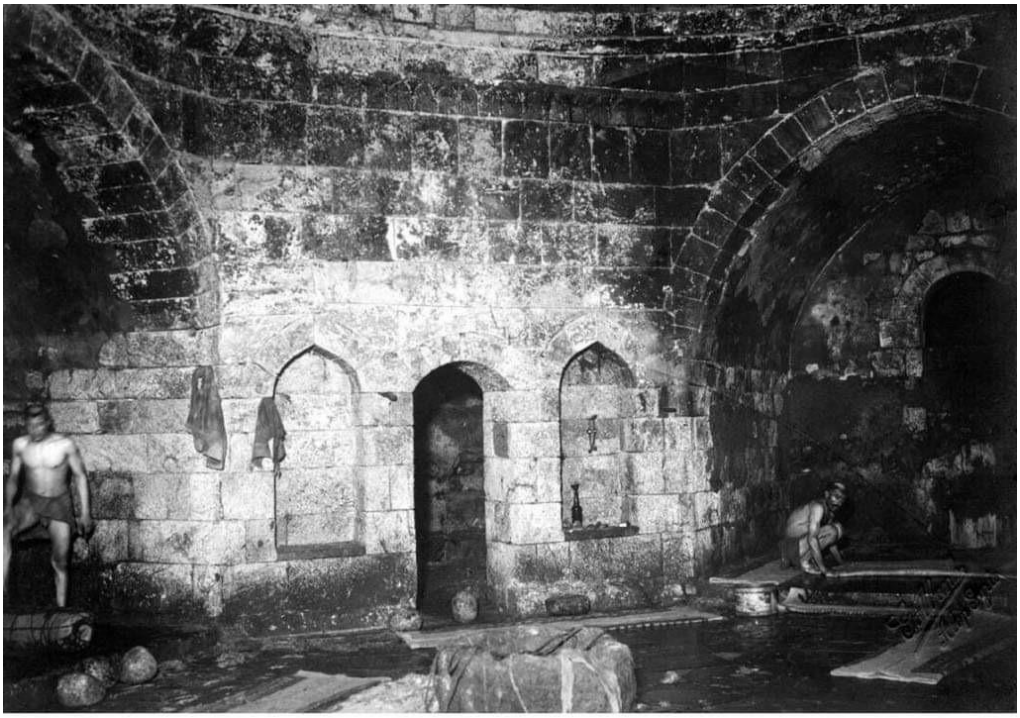
Hammam el Nassiri (Nasri)

Hammam el Nassiri (Nasri)

Fig 58. Michel Écochard, *Yalbugha Baths Restoration.* ca. 1905. B & W prints (source: Aga Khan Trust for Culture).



Hammam Nassiri près de la Citadelle



HAMMAM NASSIRI (NEAR CITADEL)

salle de déshabillage (?)

Fig 59. Michel Écochard, *Yalbugha Baths Restoration.* ca. 1905. B & W prints (source: Aga Khan Trust for Culture).

2.5 Plan of Hammam Yalbugha - After Renovation

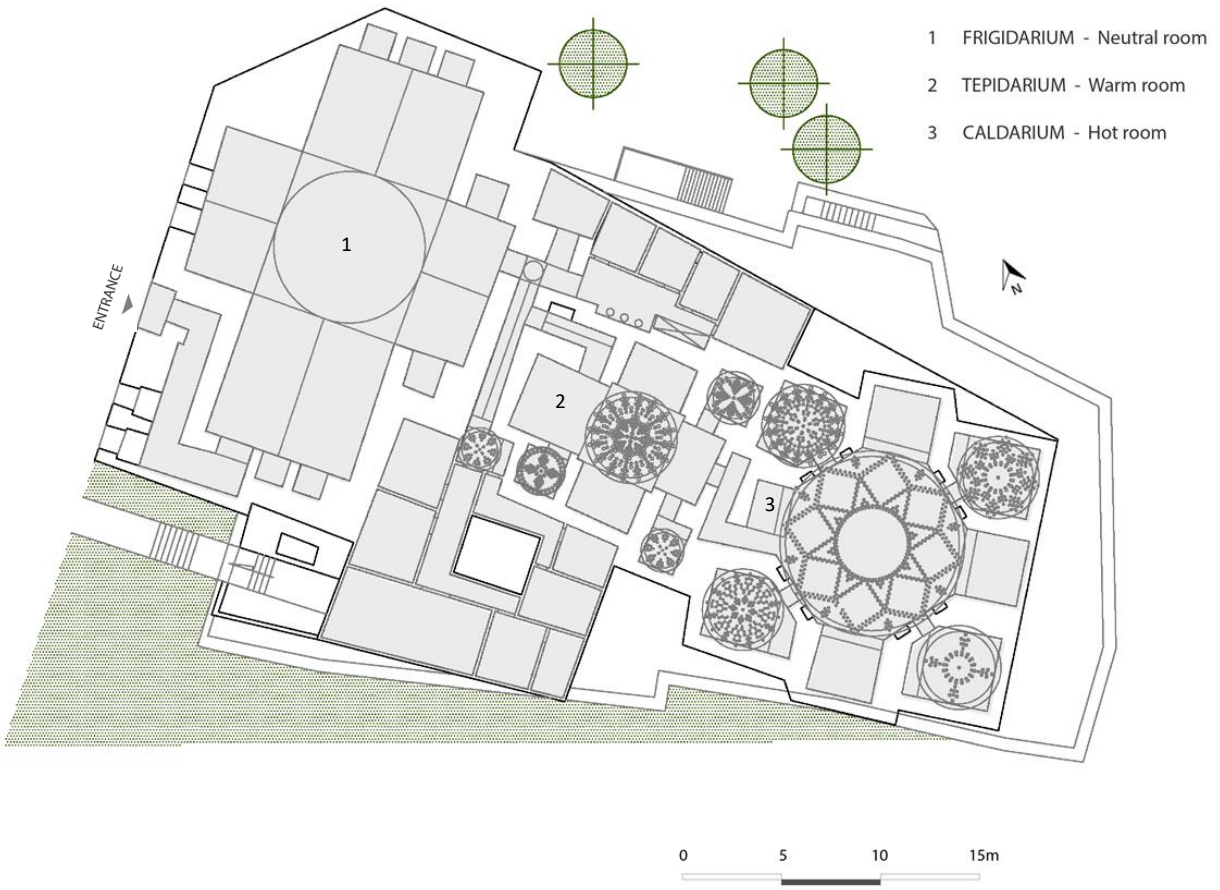


Fig 60. *Hammam Yalbugha,* Floor plan, 2020. drawn by Sally Hilal.

2.6 Hammam Yalbugha - 2019

Fig 61. Omar Sanadiki, *Blossomed vegetation on the damaged Yalbugha bathhouse.* 2019. Aleppo, Syria (source: cnbc.com)

2.7 Hammam Yalbugha - 2023

Fig 62. Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasiri, Earthquake destruction. Aug 2023. Digital photograph: Sally Hilal

Fig 63. Bottom: Hammam Yalbugha al-Nasir destruction. 2022. Digital photograph: Osaid Hilal.

2.8 Traditional Bathing Objects

Fig 64. *Bathing objects,* 2019. Photograph. From the top: 1) The author's grandmother hammam bowl - dating back to 1905. 2) Aleppo Soap - Olive and laurel oil soap. 3) Fullers earth clay. Taken by the Author in London.

Fig 65. *Bathing objects*, 2019. Photograph. Handmade embroidered silk sheet used to carry hammams essentials. It was a gift for the author's great-grandmother on her wedding - dating back to 1940. Taken by the Author in London.

Fig 66. *Bathing objects,* 2019. Photograph. From the top: 1) *Drira (Aleppo soil)* used to soften the hair and nourishing the skin. 2) *Loofah*, bath scrubber. 3) Hammam towel, used as a traditional cloth. Taken by the Author in London.

Fig 67. *Bathing objects*, 2019. Photograph. Handmade embroidered silk sheet used to carry hammams essentials. Taken by the Author in London.

Fig 68. Stuart Freedman, 2002.from the top: 1) a man drinks tea after a bath at Yalbugha Hammam; 2) a man is washed in the hammam; 3) two men sit together after a massage and a bath by a masseur in Yalbugha.

Fig 69. Hammam al-Nahaseen clean towels and bathing cloth, 1980s. Photograph: Stefano Bianca (source: archnet.org).

2.9 Public Water Fountains

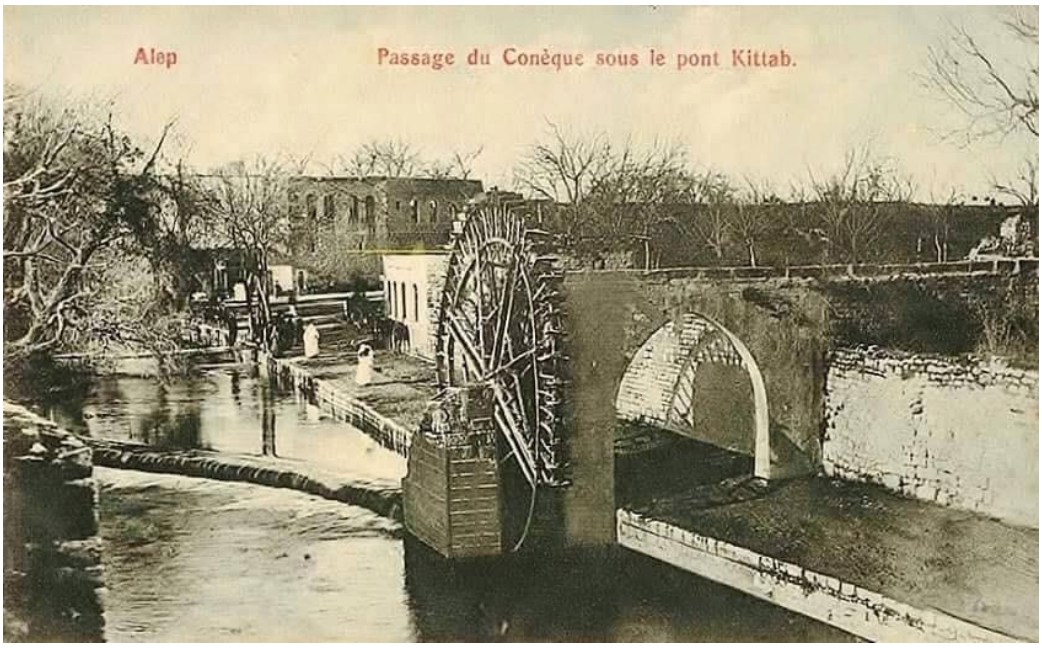


Fig 70. The Queiq River. Aleppo, Syria. 1950. Postcard (source: Ernst Herzfeld).

Fig 71. Qastal al-Harami Sabil, 1250-1517. Photograph (source: Ernst Herzfeld).

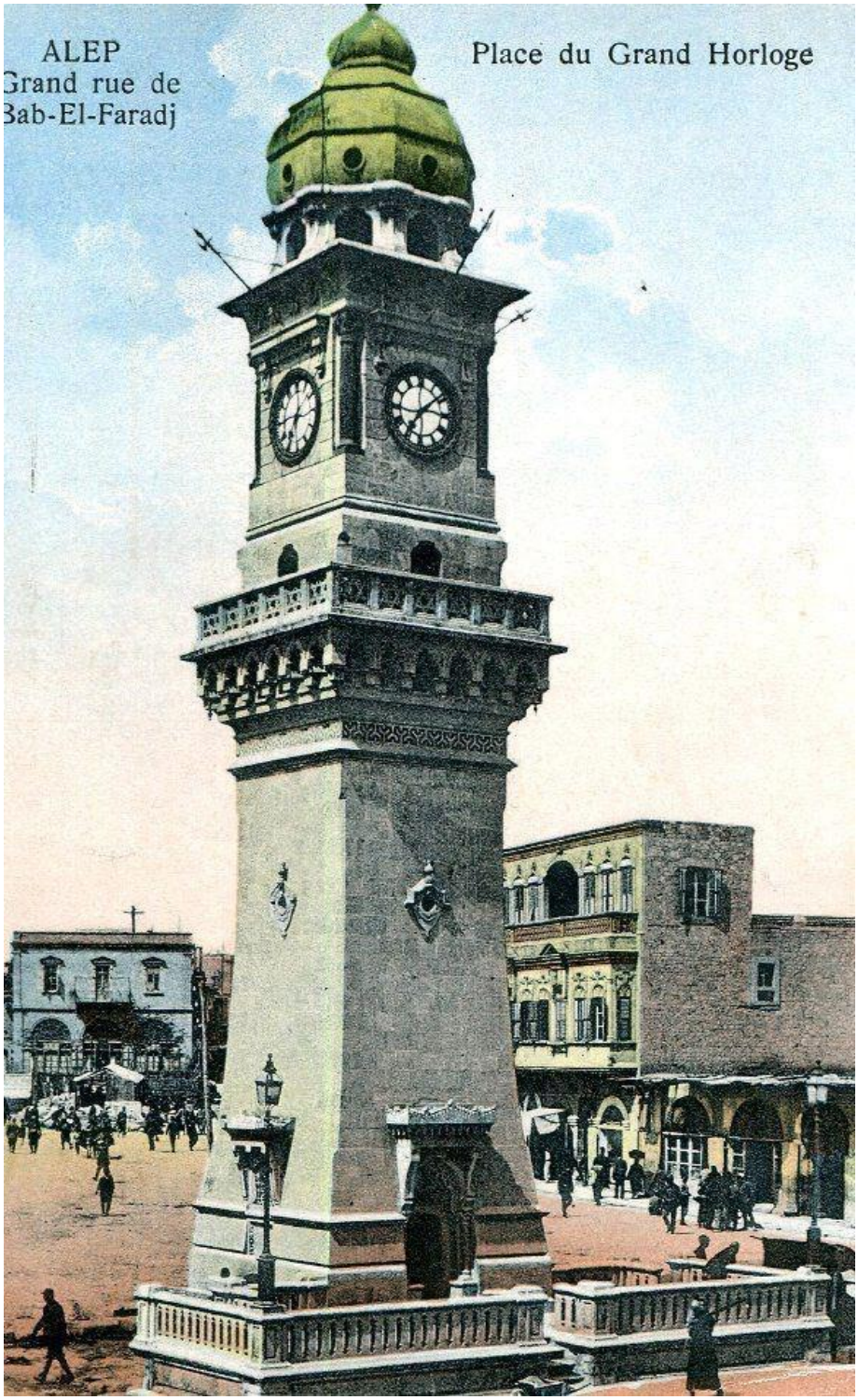


Fig 72. The qastal of Aleppo in Bab al-Faraj, circa 1910s. Postcard (source: Joseph Megarbane).

Fig 73. The square of Bab al-Faraj, 1929. Photograph (source: delcampe.net).

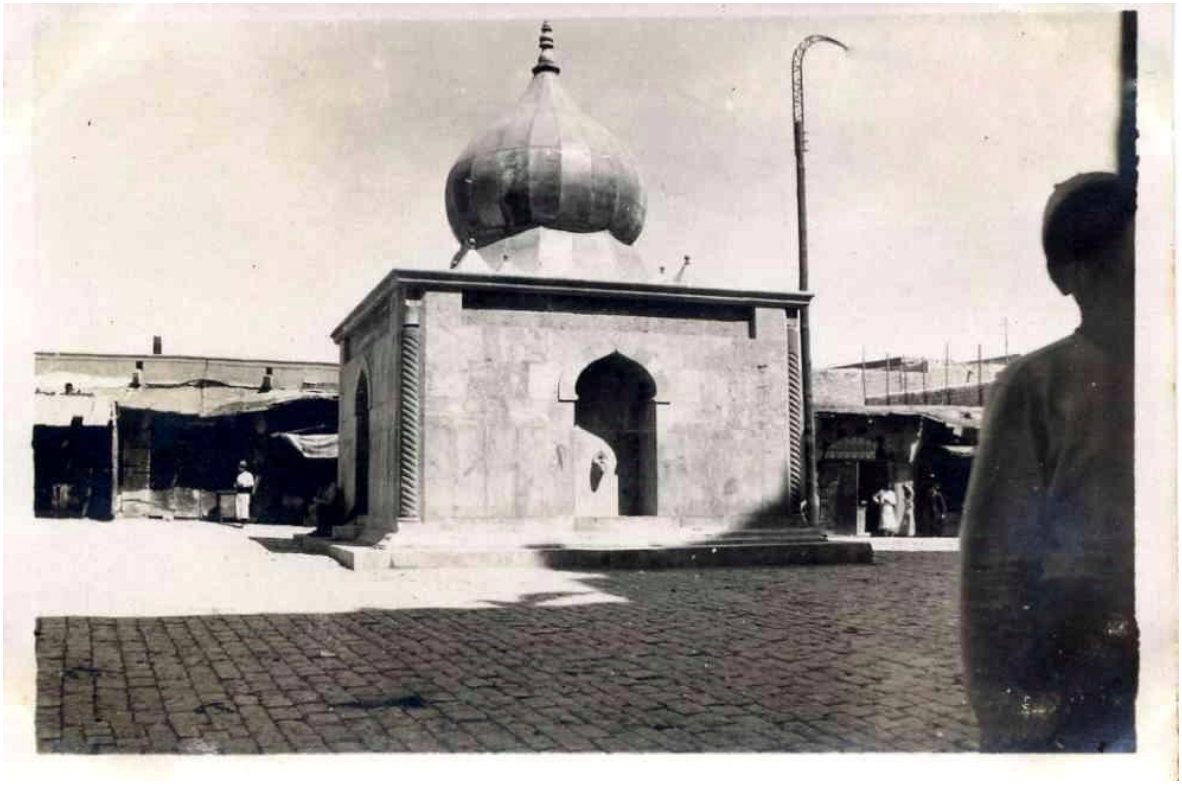


Fig 74. Qastal al-Nafiia in Bab Al Faraj, (n.d.) Photograph (source: Saleh Zakkour).

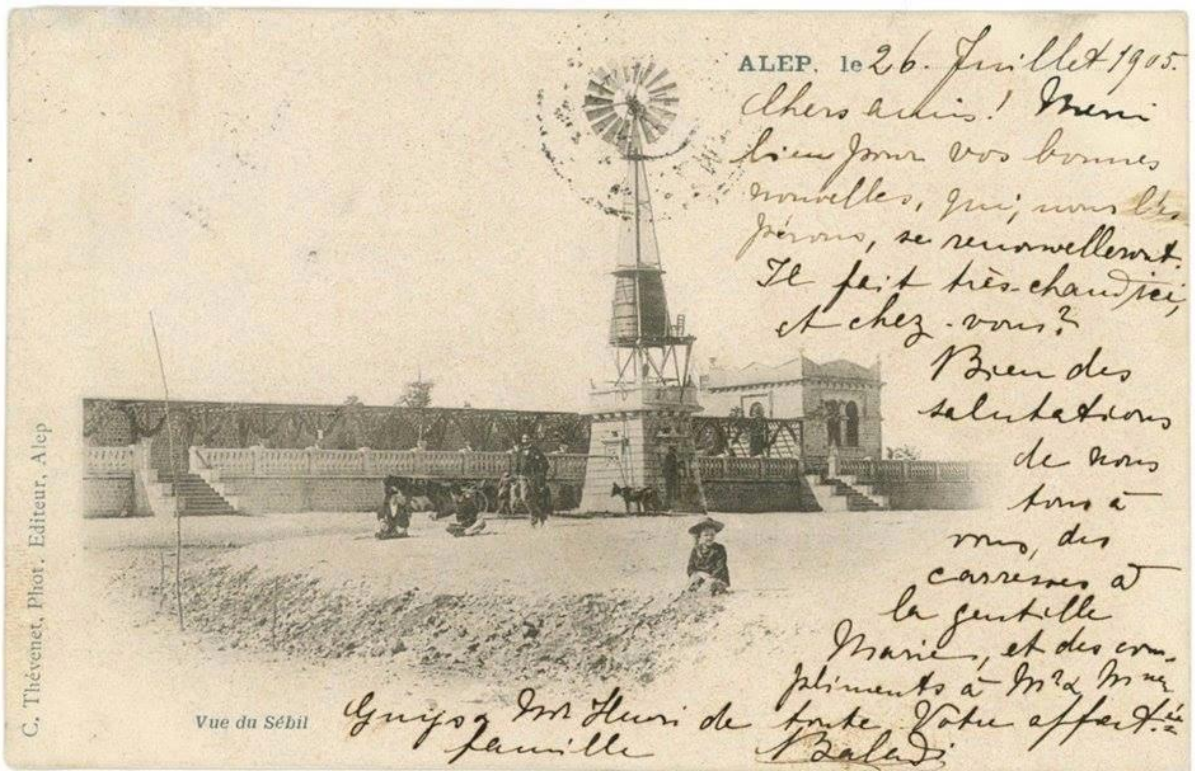


Fig 75. Al-Sabil park windmill, Aleppo. 1900 – 1905. Postcard (source: Mary Evans).

2.10 Residential Water Fountains

Fig 76. Brother and sister playing in water fountain at our home in Aleppo. 1998. Photograph (source: Author's Archives).

Fig 77. The author's sister by the water fountain at grandparents' house. 1993. Photograph (source: Author's Archives).

Fig 78. Family photo by the ‘salsabil’ fountain at Akil’s residence.1992. Photograph (source: Khaled Akil).

Fig 79. Youssef Akil after he finished building the ‘salsabil’ fountain at his garden.1980s. Photograph (source: Khaled Akil).

Fig 80. The water fountain at Akil's residence from the author's visit. 2023. Photograph: Sally Hilal.

Fig 81. Two photographs of a family posed by the same fountain in Aleppo, the first is taken in 2021 and the oldest in 1910. (source: Khaled and Omaia Akil).

Fig 82. Drinking fountain at Shalhoub's old Damascus house, 1946. Photographed: W. Robert Moore (source: nationalgeographic.com.au).

2.11 Conceptual Architecture Diagram 2020

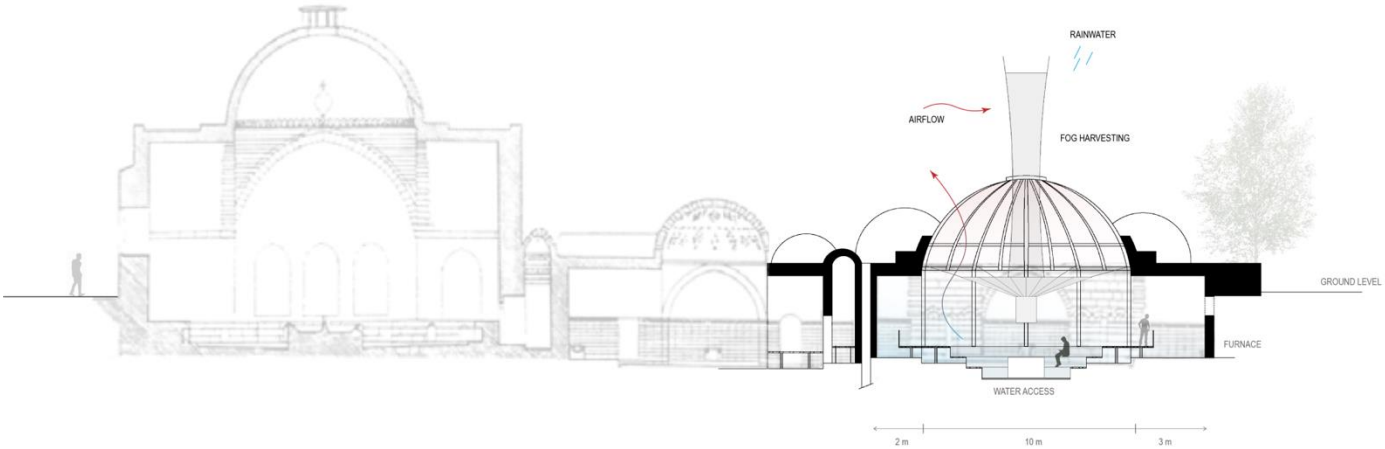


Fig 83. *Hammam Yalbugha,* Conceptual architecture diagram, 2020. drawn by Sally Hilal.

2.12 The Walkway Design

Fig 84. Sally Hilal, 3D rendering for the walkway. 2023.

Fig 85. Sally Hilal, 3D rendering for the walkway. 2023.

2.13 The Bathhouse: The Ritual of Reconnecting

Fig 86. Sally Hilal, For Discursivity II: The Hammam Rituals. 2021. Multiscreen video. The Triangle Space Gallery, London.

Fig 87. Sally Hilal, At the Discursivity exhibition. 2020. Video installation. Camberwell Space, London.

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