

PRE - DIPLOMA
Proposal

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”Jeg sto oppe på taket og ventet på far, mens mor bakte.
Huset lå høyt oppe langs tre hovedveier, helt på toppen
sånn at du så alt av utsikten.”

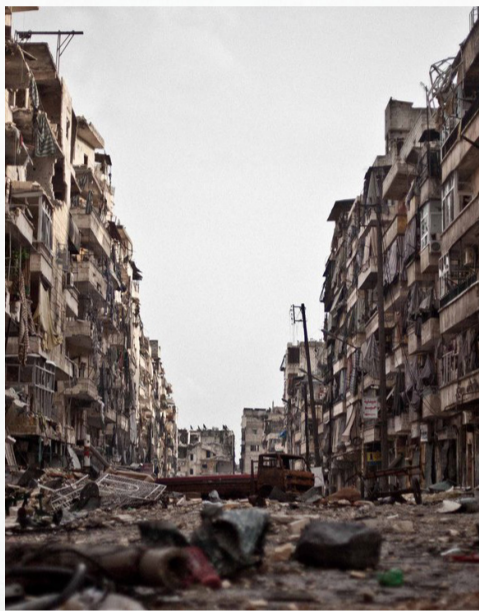
Anonym, 49år - Syria



ALEPPO - Jürgen Fiege



BACKGROUND



The civil war in Syrian Arab Republic, which has started in 2011, created the biggest refugee crisis after the World War II. According to UNHCR, over 4 300 000 people has left the country and fled to Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and now Europe. While world leaders are looking for the international solution of the Syrian civil war and refugee crisis, many Syrians are looking forward for the opportunity to come back home as soon as the war is over. ¹

Living conditions in the current refugee camps and temporary buildings across Europe and other countries are mostly inhuman, making refugees feel desperate, since there's also nowhere to come back as the Syrian towns are in ruins, offering nothing to people who once lived there.

Syria is mired in the humanitarian catastrophe of the century—one causing immense suffering and posing national security problems that echo throughout the region, Europe, and the United States. The damage from the conflict presents not only a massive rebuilding challenge, but a strategic environment particularly ill-suited to large-scale development efforts.

Rebuilding should start as opportunities present themselves, but in line with the larger political-economic strategy. The strategy should be pragmatic but evaluate opportunities in their political context—the Syrian conflict—and the implications of tackling them for political legitimacy. Planning and execution should both include resettling displaced persons. The conditions conducive to their safe return overlap with many of those necessary for sustainable, inclusive development. Humanitarian aid should be made available anywhere it is needed, but sustained development should be limited to opposition areas.¹

The process of reconsolidating Syrian society will take more than a year and, possibly, more than a decade. But it is necessary to rebuild the country that has just suffered through a brutal civil war that lasted years, and priority must be given to the humanitarian component of this process. In no case can one link the country's restoration with the achievement of unrealizable political tasks, such as restructuring the government and pursuing democratization in a Western manner, as happened, for example, in Iraq after 2003². We must begin with implementable, targeted measures designed to improve the living conditions of ordinary people.

It is important to concentrate on those sectors that will be crucial for the Syrians, not only in the short term but also in the long term: infrastructure, energy, water, transport, as well as agriculture, education, and health care. Investing in these sectors will be important for those people who did not leave their homes, and for those who were forced to flee—either to safer parts of the country or abroad.

Of course, this will not allow for the quick resolution of problems associated with the return of all internally displaced persons and refugees, who amount to almost half of the country's population. Nevertheless, there are already hundreds of thousands who have already returned or are willing to do so in the near future.



Half of Syria's hospitals have been destroyed, often by deliberate targeting



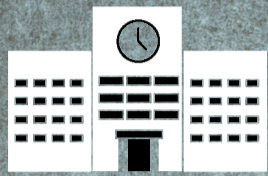
Some 70 percent of all Syrians have no access to clean water



An estimated two out of three Syrians live in extreme poverty¹

1 RAFIK HARIRI CENTER FOR THE MIDDLE EAST, REBUILDING SYRIA
2 RAFIK HARIRI CENTER FOR THE MIDDLE EAST, REBUILDING SYRIA

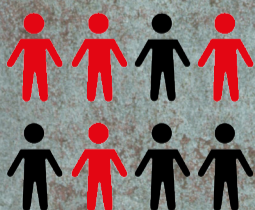
1 <http://www.unocha.org/syrian-arab-republic/syria-country-profile/about-crisis>



School attendance has dropped by 40 percent, as facilities are destroyed and children have been compelled to work.



The economy is estimated to have shrunk by nearly two thirds from 2010, amid serious fiscal and monetary pressure.



Half of all Syrians have been displaced internally or made refugees¹

Their return and reintegration will also mean a certain political choice, which, given normal living conditions and the support of the international community, can be a sustainable, long-term contribution to the consolidation of society and the establishment of stability, not only in Syria, but also throughout the region.

This is not the first time that Aleppo is the theater of large urban deconstruction and of acts of war traumatic for the population. On various occasions, the city has been reconstructed in accordance with specific practical and ideological choices.

Every time the city was transformed, even before the Ottoman era, this process involved an interpretation of the past. This is true of all cities, but in a city like Aleppo, one of the oldest permanent settlements in the world, this dimension has particular importance. The interpretation of the past that was present in all projects for the future was the expression of precise ideological conceptions, but also of precise techniques of urban transformation, specific professional competences, a specific institutional framework, and more general cultural imaginaries of the city.

In Aleppo, all transformation processes were historically linked to previous processes of transformation. Those of the Ottoman era echoed medieval transformations, for example.

¹ <http://www.unocha.org/syrian-arab-republic/syria-country-profile/about-crisis>

BRIEF

The cost of war cannot be quantified but the price Syria has to pay now is much more than it can afford. And even if we assume that conflict is solved, still the daily life they used to live is impaired. It is the community of people in Syria that have suffered the most and without including them, the significance of the place will perish.

Challenge of this proposal is to create a space that acts as a vessel in reviving the destroyed neighbourhoods and encourage inhabitants to come back. A space that respects the past, responds to present and incorporates the possibility of a bright future of Syria.

The concept of authenticity has been one of the main instruments used to define policies aiming at heritage protection during the last few decades. The concept also became more than an instrument, it shaped entire approaches to the question of the built heritage and the process, social and political that is aiming at its conservation and restoration.¹

This proposal reflects on such debates around the city of Aleppo, Syria. Urban studies and architecture are focusing recently on solutions and rethinking ways to serve affected communities. This has led to the removal of old techniques and architecture of the region like **courtyard housing** and vertical expansion, their presence and the knowledge of their techniques and affection has become very rare.

If we take a step back and shed light on the remains of these old houses that are precisely the houses between residential buildings in town and neighborhoods, we find that they give scale to these areas. But there is an arid assumption that life will not return to it and we have to remove it. Why can't we say that it is a center of life and that there is a great tangency for its a function to be restructured?

1 Building and Destroying Authenticity in Aleppo: Heritage between Conservation, Transformation, Destruction, and Re-Invention, Nora Lafi

The courtyard house is one of the most enduring architectural forms, transcending regional, historical and cultural boundaries. Its balance of simple appropriate construction, environmental control and social and familial structures continues to engage architects and architectural historians. The emphasis on courtyard in Islamic architecture gave it the name of the "architecture of the veil", because it focuses on the inner spaces (courtyards and rooms) which are not visible from the outside. Courtyard housing is an architectural device with a long history first appearing in the buildings of Syria and Iraq three millennia ago. Arab nomads made use of the concept of a courtyard during their movement and stay in desert.¹ They set up their tents around a central space, which provided shelter and security. With the development of Arab-Islamic architecture, the courtyard became an essential typological element. It is likely that the previous nomadic desert lifestyle of arabs had a strong influence on their desire to have an open space or spaces within their permanent houses. The courtyard fulfils a deep rooted need for an open area of living.

In this proposal i want to look into the courtyard houses as a typology in Syria, and present a number of examples of courtyard houses in Aleppo.

The traditional courtyard house in Syria is composed of three parts: A basement floor, a ground floor comprising the main living areas called "Al Salamlek" nad a first floor comprising the private areas called "Al Haramlek"² The basement floor enjoys an even temperature throughout the year. It is therefore an attractive living space in periods of extreme winter or summer temperatures. The basement acts as a thermal moderator during the hot dry season, as it allows the hot air collected by the wind catchers to be cooled and humidified before it is released to the courtyard space. It is also used for the yearly storage of food supplies as is the case in many courtyard houses in Aleppo, which has endured many wars. The houses are usually accessed through a humble space leading into a spacious and beautifully landscaped courtyard. The entrance door usually leads to narrow passageway at the end of which another door or curtain filters the entrance to the courtyard, allowing this latter to be totally private and visually inaccessible from the outside, even if the door is left open which was frequently the case as the old city neighbourhoods used to enjoy a high level of security.³



Typical tents of Arab nomads I

1 Courtyard Housing: Past, Present and Future, Brian Edwards, Magda Sibley, Peter Land, Mohammad Hakmi

2 Courtyard Housing: Past, Present and Future

3 Courtyard Housing: Past, Present and Future

Landscaping also plays an important role in the courtyard of traditional Syrian courtyard. It consists mainly of two categories: decorative planting such as climbing jasmine and rose bushes or other plants such as citrus trees.

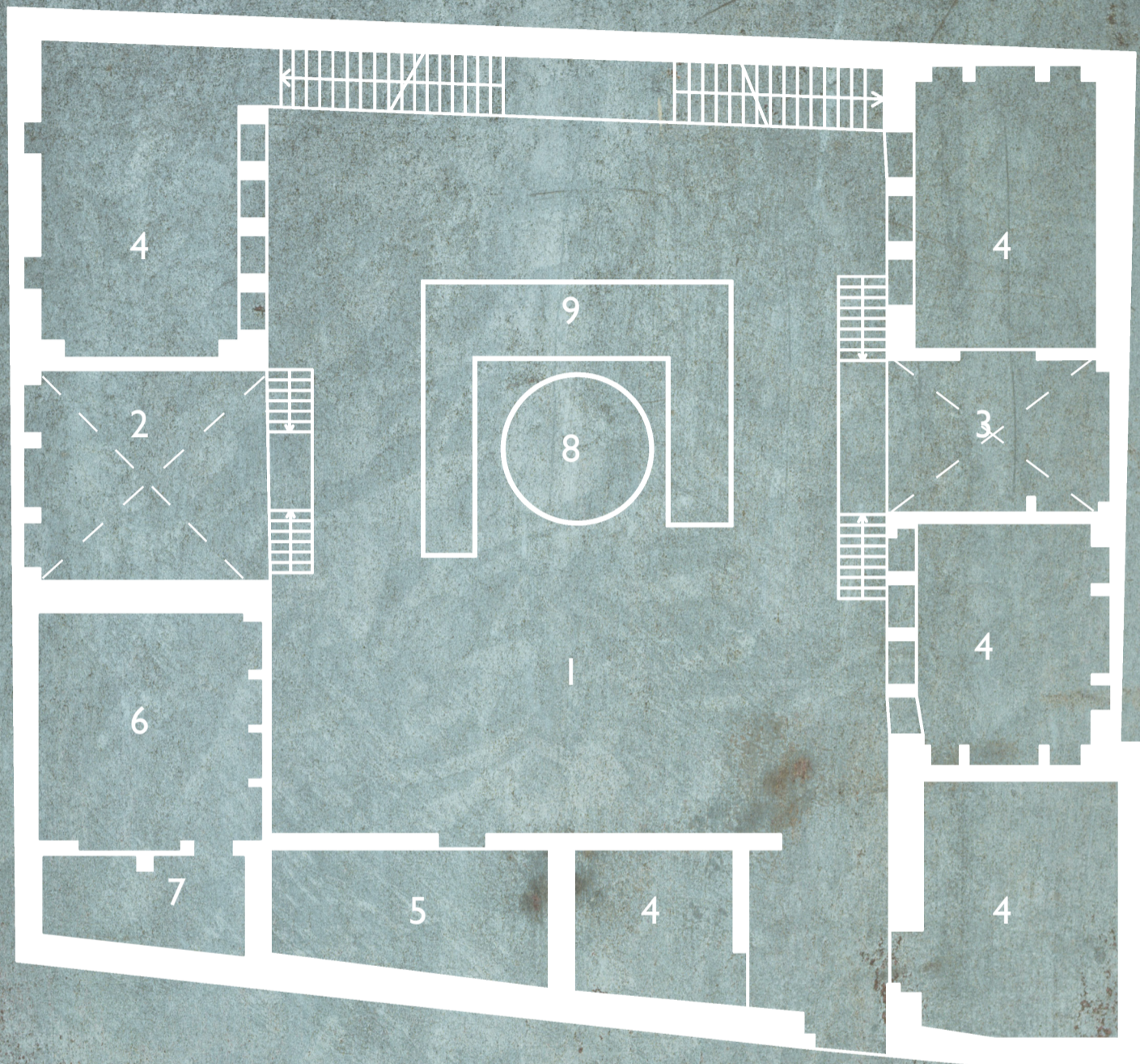
The *iwan* is an important covered open space from which the aesthetic qualities of the courtyard can be enjoyed. It provides a raised platform used as a pleasant and comfortable open air reception and seating area and a venue for evening events such as playing of traditional music. The *iwan* is usually located on the north facade of the courtyard to catch the cool breeze during the summer. The *iwan* comprises two symmetrical rooms facing each other.

Facing the *iwan* is the main guests reception hall used for special ceremonies and festivities such as eid. This hall is the most decorated space in the house and contains the best furniture and is often covered with a dome. In addition to the *iwan* and the reception areas, the ground floor also contains the kitchen and toilets.

The first floor is called *Haramlek*. It is a word of Turkish origin meaning a women's section in the house.¹ The living and sleeping areas are totally segregated. Small apartments can sometimes sometimes be found on the first floor, particularly in the case of extended families.



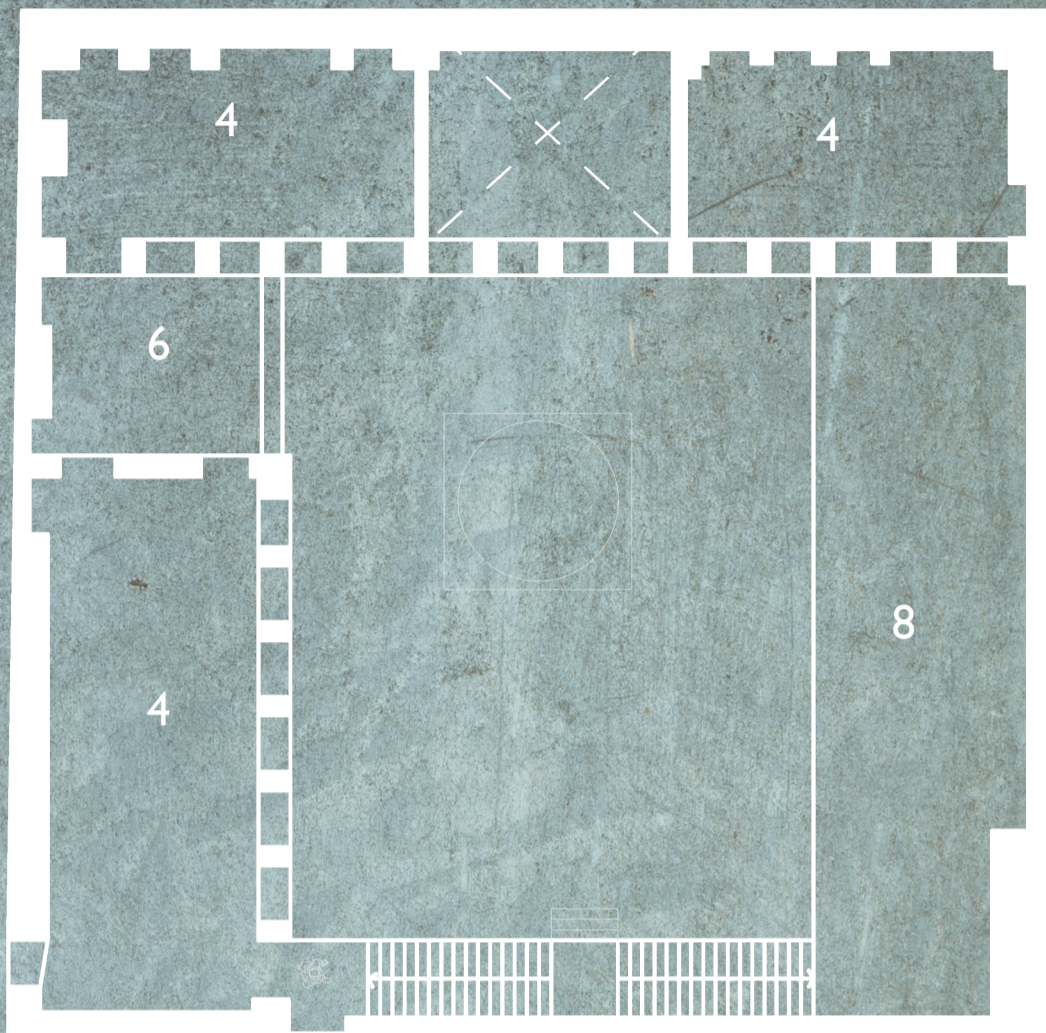
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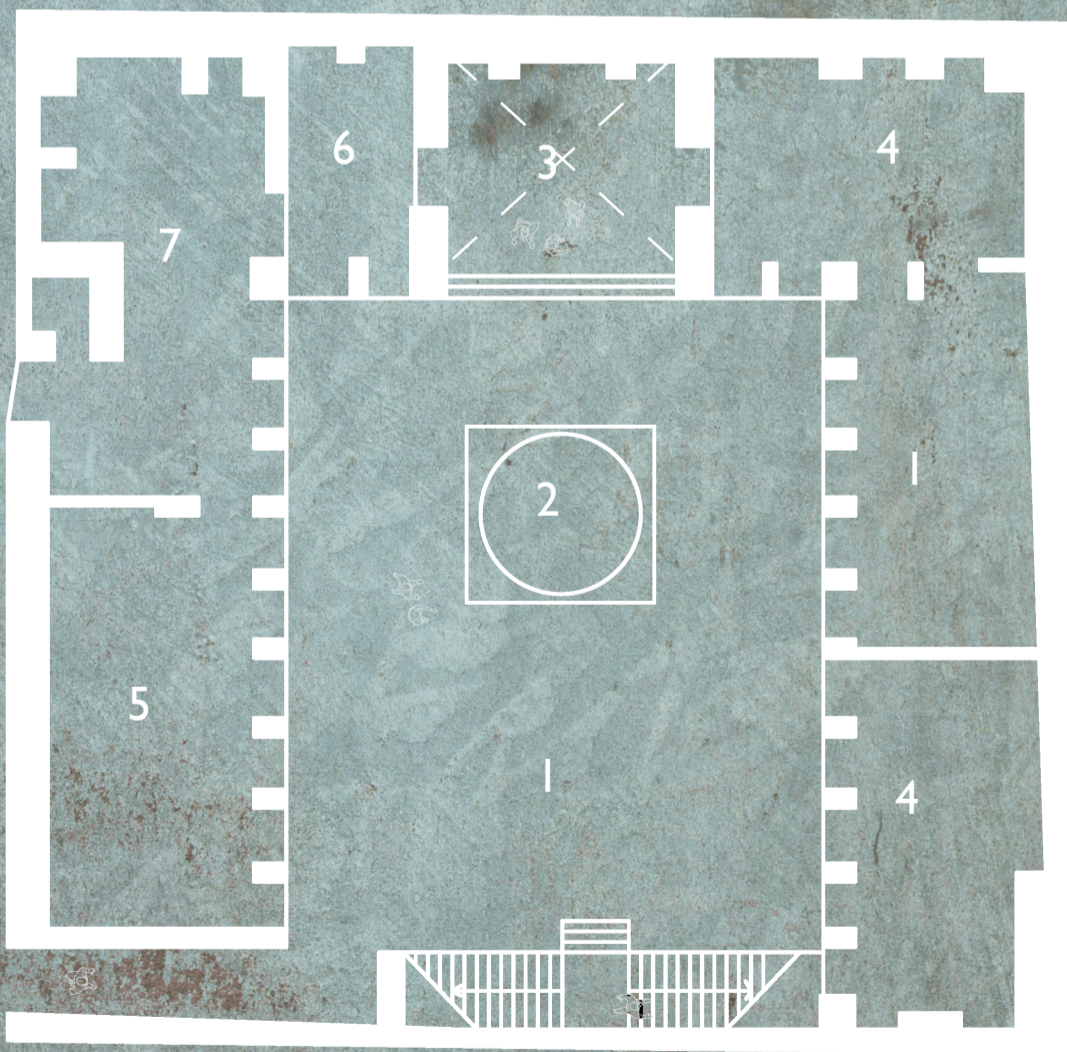
With this first house we find a summer iwan (living space) about two levels high, central fountain and trees within the courtyard. The traditional house has multiple uses as comfort and resting, protection and security, protection for women's privacy and the customs of the inhabitants, and entertaining guests. All these factors have determined the concept of the traditional house. The main concept is, open on the inside and closed to the outside. The inside is organized around the court.¹ Floors are accessed by side staircases. The courtyard house is built to provide a good thermal comfort. A central fountain and iwan helps maintain the temperature.

- 1 Courtyard
- 2 Summer Iwan
- 3 Winter Iwan
- 4 Room
- 5 Kitchen
- 6 Event room
- 7 Bathroom
- 8 Marble pool
- 9 Flowerbed

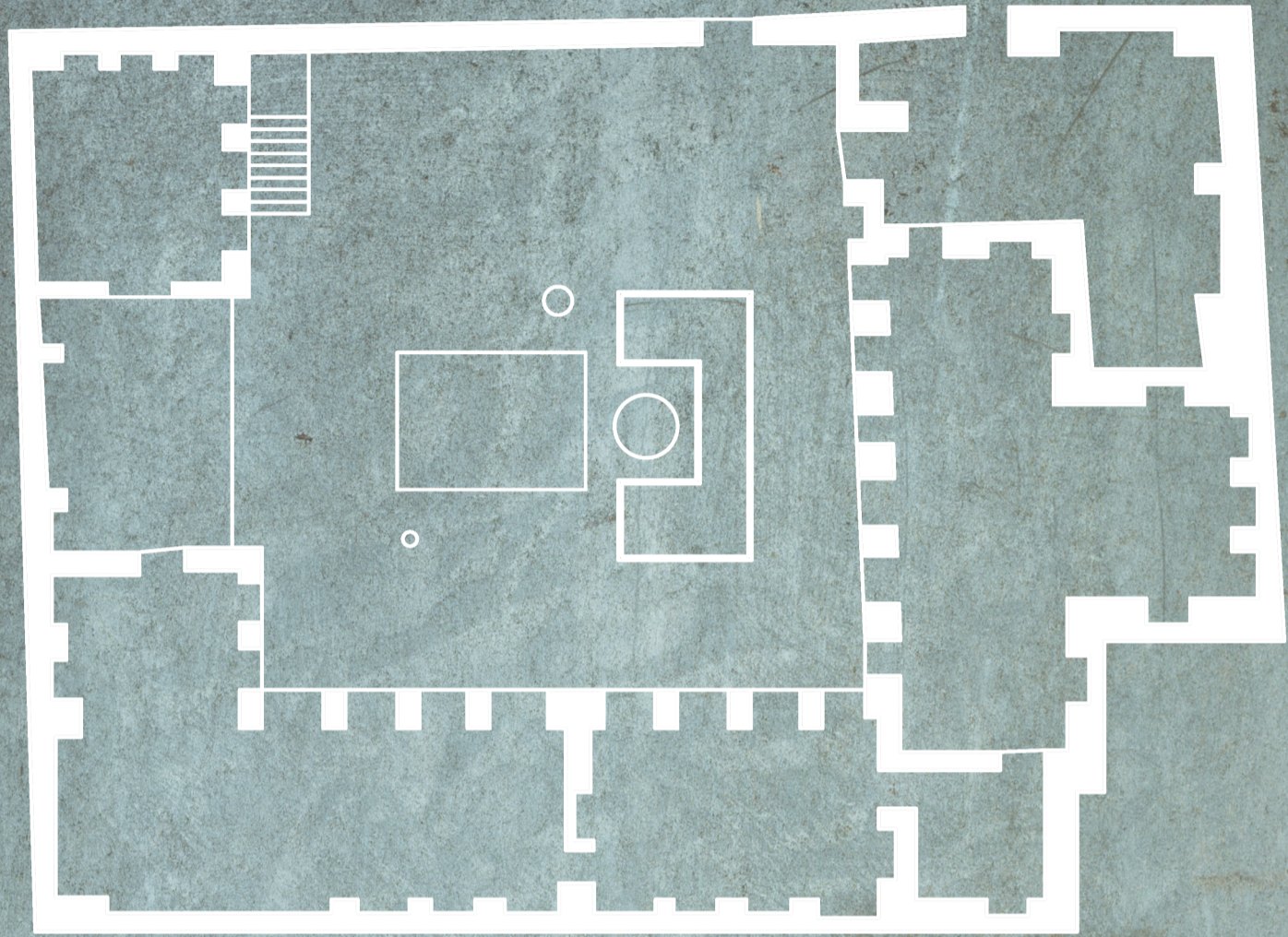
First floor plan



Groundfloor



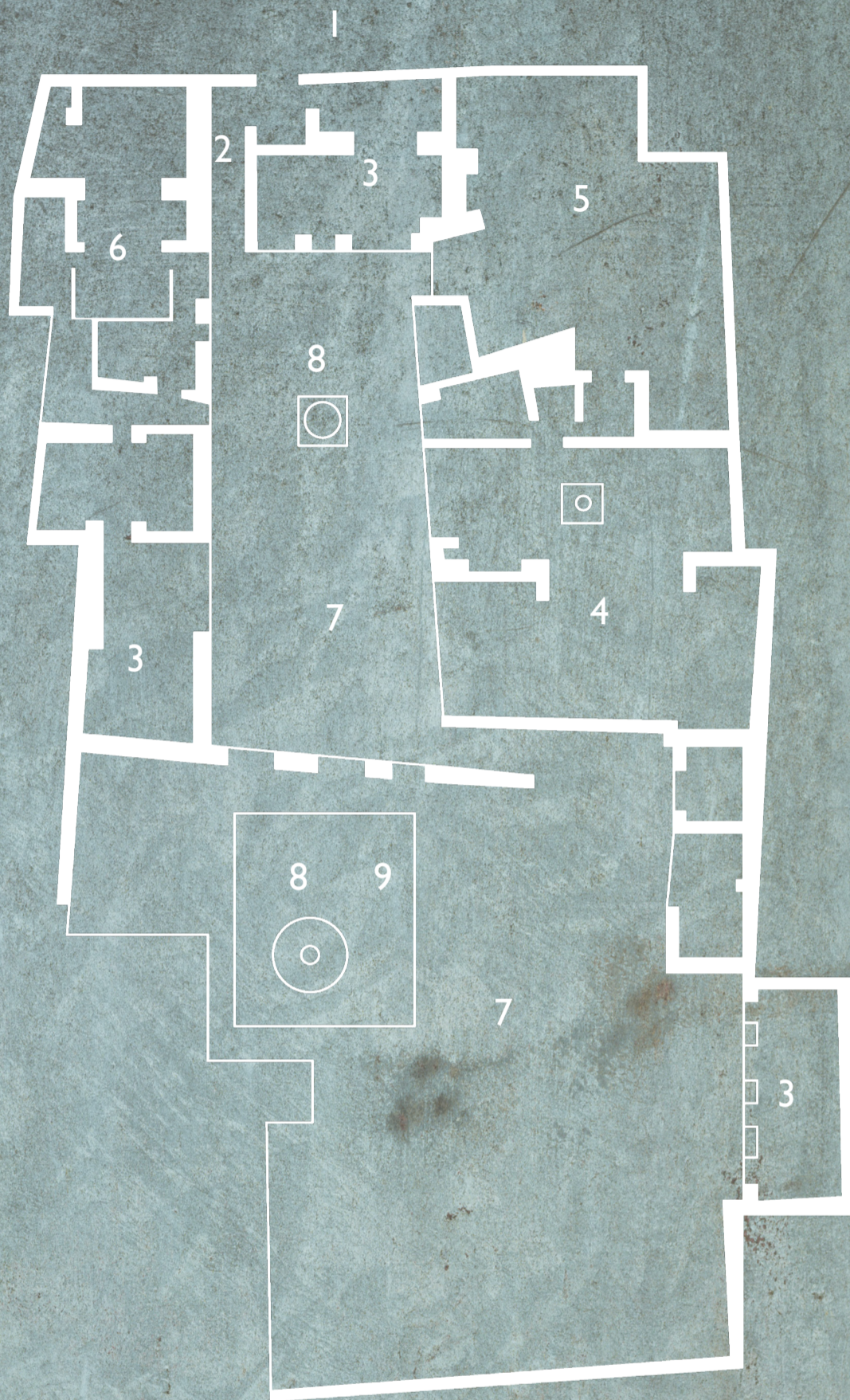
- 1 Courtyard
- 2 Marblepool
- 3 Iwan
- 4 Room
- 5 Eventroom
- 6 Bathroom
- 7 Kitchen
- 8 Rooftop



Groundfloor



Cross section A-A



Ground floor of a complex private mansion from the 17th/18th century.

- 1 Alleyway
- 2 Entrance
- 3 Informal covered reception
- 4 Formal male reception
- 5 Kitchen
- 6 Prayer room
- 7 Courtyard
- 8 Marblepool
- 9 Flowerbed



Expansion of the courtyard houses in clusterform in the late 18th century. A cluster like this usually contain all different types/sizes of courtyhouses.

"Throughout the millenia, urban civilization have left behind traces that besides being recognized as heritage of their country, are also an extraordinary contribution to the whole world. Cities that were born wel before the roman colonisation, and that survived well after its end: living cities and dead cities that both share the presence of ruins created by time, and rubble produced by war"

Syria - The making of future - From Urbicide The architecture of the city book - Universita luav di Venezia



When we look at the image of these typologies next to each other we see the urban texture that extends horizontally according to the needs of societies. If we bring the image closer, we can see the path that extends like veins reaching to the unit that forms all this. At the center of this we will find the courtyard houses. Court houses are the basis of societies in these regions. Especially since they are built by the inhabitants, from their land, and to serve their environment. It is a sustainable urban social and functional fabric that varies between cities and rural areas.

Further I will present different urban lots to work with the idea to retrace shape of urban's lot that were destroyed from war, in order to conserve the morphology and city's identity.

How will the new urban lot look like?

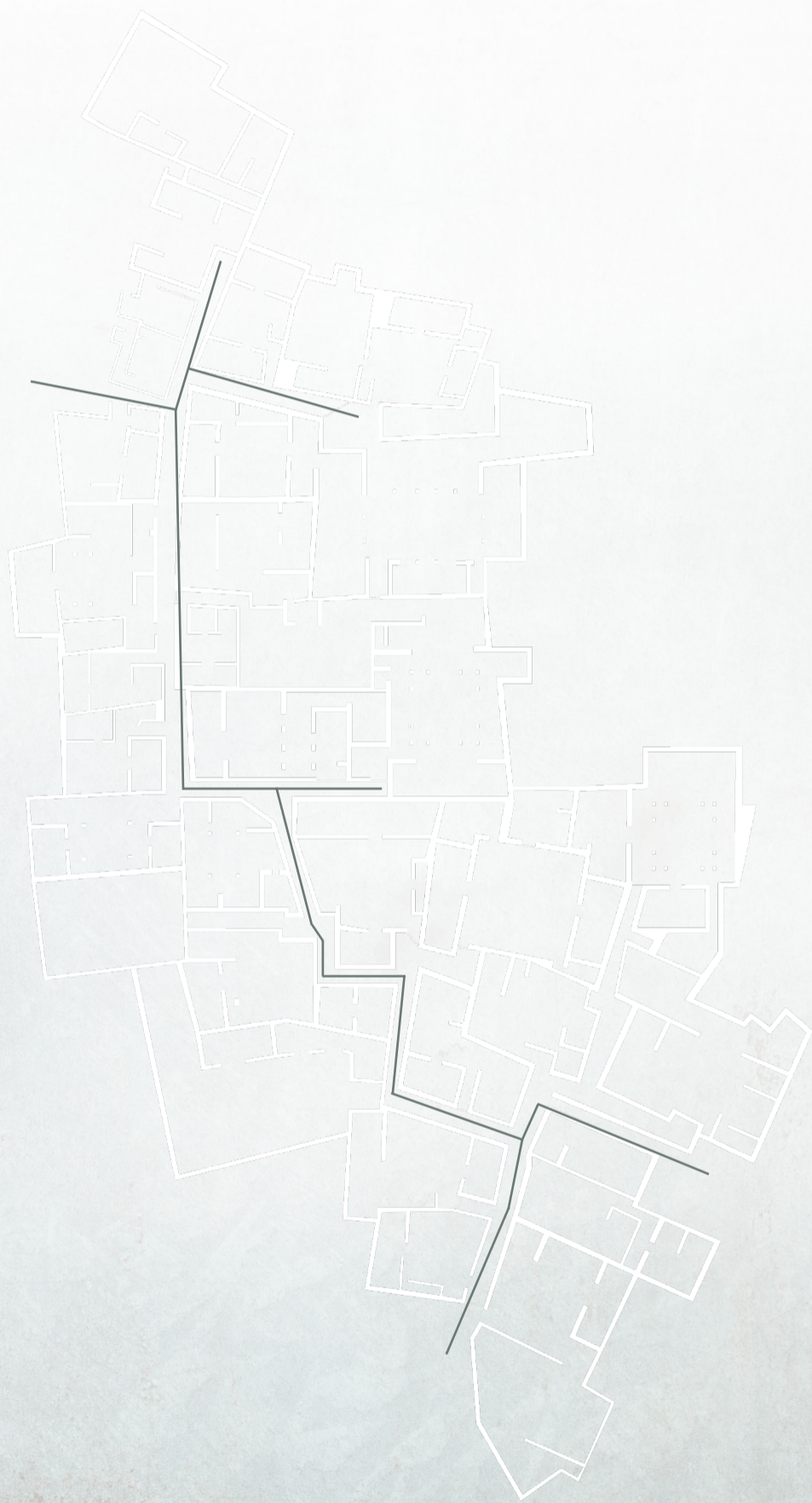




Quarter in Aleppo



Courtyards



Infrastructure (veins)



A typical arabic quarter in Old Damasus 18th century



Courtyards



Infrastructure (veins)



-1



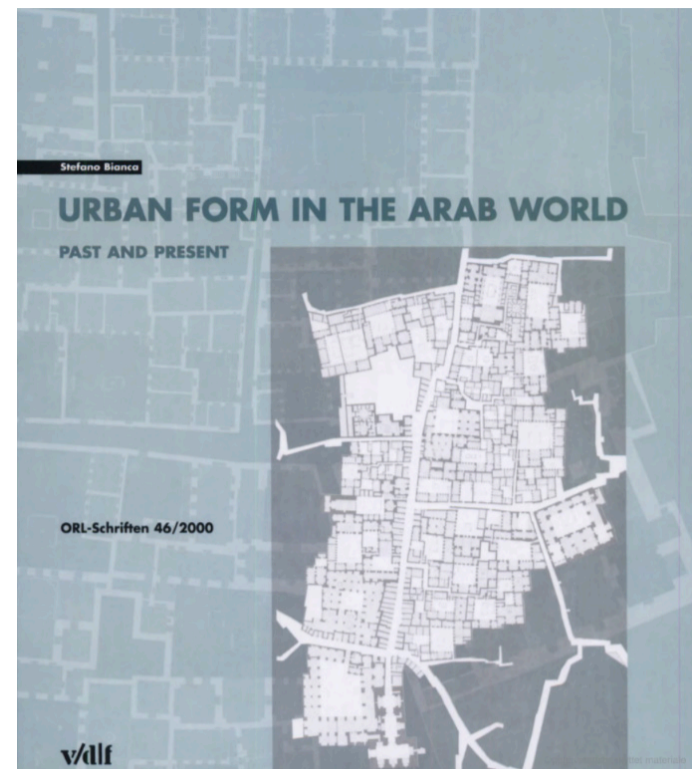
How will the new urban structure of Syria look like? How can we include the old traditions and techniques to re create the community that ones existed in these ruins?

Having considered the traditional Syrian courtyard house and its characteristics, it is evident that the form of the courtyard house presents a number of qualities that are still relevant to contemporary domestic life in Syria. But now more than before do we see a need for people to show care and help each other. We can see that with the changing world more and more of the urban structure has changed from being those closed clusters to more organized urban lots with public functions placed inbetween.

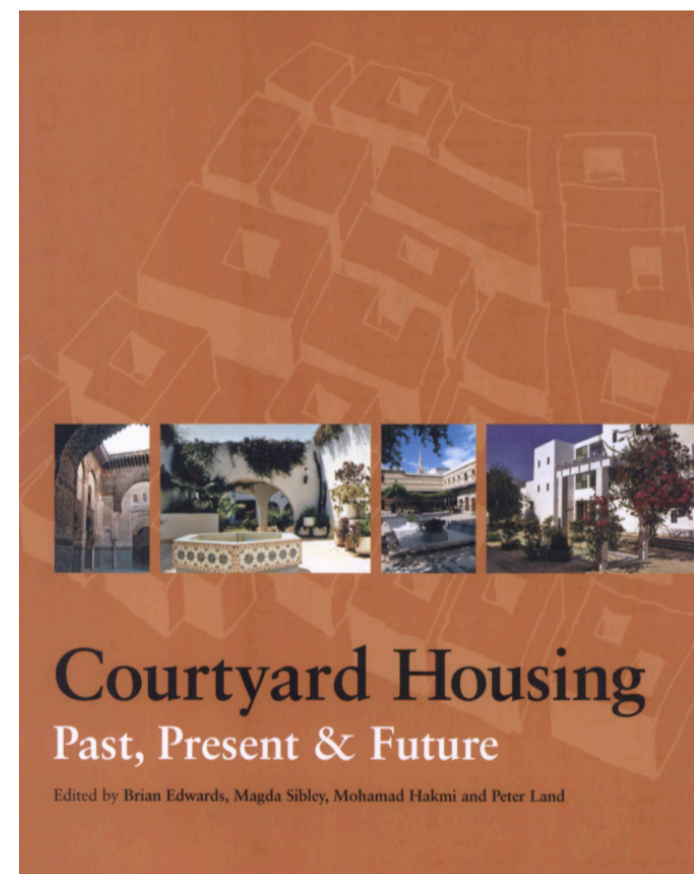
There are major changes that have occurred in the social structure of Syria, which affected to some extent the viability of the traditional courtyard house for contemporary family living, such as deconstruction, families of different sizes, etc.

The Arabic house with its internal courtyard has become rare and has almost completely disappeared in contemporary architecture. So how are we to live in a rapidly-changing world where all meanings of family tradition and culture have changed dramatically?

Is there a scope for a new housing typology based on maximizing the benefits of a courtyard organization and responding to the needs.



- Urban Form in the Arab World: Past and Present, Stefano Bianca



- Courtyard Housing: Past, Present and Future , Brian Edwards, Magda Sibley, Peter Land, Mo-hammad Hakmi
- Building and Destroying Authenticity in Aleppo: Heritage between Conservation, Transformati-on, Destruction, and Re-Invention, Nora Lafi
- REBUILDING SYRIA, A Localized Revitalization Strategy, By Faysal Itani and Tobias Schneider

Key references

AUGUST

- Site plan 1:5000
- Volume studies
- Concept and program
- Analysis diagrams
- Site analysis

SEPTEMBER

- Concept and program
- Volume studies
- Final concept and program description
- First drawing set 1:200

OCTOBER

- Developed Drawing set 1:200
- Model 1:500
- Detail drawings
- Finished overall idea

NOVEMBER

- Final drawing set 1:200
- Final details 1:50
- Final diagrams
- Final illustrations
- Model 1:200

DECEMBER

- Finished model 1:200
- Prepare presentation

- Plans drawings 1:200
- Section drawings 1:200
- Facade drawings 1:200
- Detail drawings 1:50
- Situation plans 1: 1000
- Axonometric drawings

- Site model 1:5000
- Project model 1:200

- Concept diagrams
- Site analysis diagrams

- Project description
- Pre-diploma booklet
- Project development booklet

- Interior and exterior illustrations

Hand-in List