



FONDATION
OSMANE MOUNIF AÏDI
Culture, Communication et Développement

Bab Al-Salam Hall for Starch Processing 19th Century - Documentation, Restoration and Rehabilitation

A study prepared to obtain a professional training
and qualification Master's Degree
in the preservation and restoration of historical and archaeological monuments
and natural sites by the
« **Center of Higher Studies for the Restoration of Historical Monuments
and the Preservation of Natural, Archaeological and Urban Sites** »
at the Faculty of Architecture in Damascus University

Student Mrs Yara Touma
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Excerpts from the study:

Preface:

The study will focus on the section selected in the area to the north of Old Damascus gate, between Bab Al Salam and King Faisal street, which is the old city expansion area towards the north. This section is exemplary because it represents the most important professions and crafts which flourished on the banks of the Barada River, such as mills, tanneries, and starch processing premises, as well as the social activities of that time, namely the cafes and gardens.

The study proposes the restoration and rehabilitation of the two premises (Aqsab 334-335), namely the Bab Al-Salam Hall for Starch Processing (now a museum for the profession) and the Bab Al-Salam Cafe, in conformity with the suggested plan of the Old City. On that basis, the study examined the historical development of this section and of these two professions, analyzing all historical data available, in order to conceive an appropriate rehabilitation plan for the two premises, taking into consideration all details up to the furnishing and greenery which reflect the historical value of the premises.

The reasons for selecting this project:

- The significant location of the project being on the axis which links the Old City inside the gates from Bab Al Salam to King Faisal Street, as well as the importance of documenting and rehabilitating these historical sections lying outside the wall, and stressing their importance and close connection to the urban structure inside the wall. In addition to that, the section is rich with important historical premises, such as Bab Al-Salam Gate, the Old City wall, Bab Al-Salam Mill, Al-Zaïm Mill, as well as Al-Aqsab Mosque and Sultan bath which are located in King Faisal Street.
- Second, the need to document and revive starch processing premises due to the fact that such profession has almost disappeared in the Old City. Besides, such premises represent beautiful architectural models for the environment-friendly crafts which existed on the banks of Barada; therefore it is crucial to preserve what has survived of such professions and their tools.
- Third, reviving and rehabilitating the sections and buildings in the vicinity of Barada River, this is considered the lifeline of Old Damascus, as a first step towards reviving the whole Barada axis.