

**STUDY OF CULTURAL MATERIAL OF SYRIA
ON A LONG-TERM PERSPECTIVE:
COMPARING THE DATA**

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After four years of war in Syria, many archaeological sites such as Palmyra, Apamea or Qal'at Seman, some museums, several historical monuments and centres of ancient towns such as Aleppo or Homs have been damaged to varying degrees by fighting, pillaging and illegal excavating; some of them have even been destroyed. Since 2012 UNESCO, the EU and the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums of Syria have appealed to the warring parties to spare the Syrian heritage and have made the international community aware of the necessity to protect this rich cultural heritage for the benefit of future generations. This endangered heritage of buildings and archaeological material has been tragically focused on by the media but there is also a heritage which is not so easily perceived and which is even more vulnerable, that of skills, techniques and traditional practices. This less obvious heritage is all the more in jeopardy because it involves people. It could well be forgotten or lost when the rebuilding and the inevitable modernising of the country takes place.

My recent researches focused on this heritage¹⁾. It was about implementing a new method for the Islamic world which consists of jointly exploiting Arab texts, miniatures, archaeological material and ethnological studies by pursuing three objectives: 1) making the origins of cultural differences and modern practices apparent; 2) bringing to light the survival of production methods, skills and customs which lasted over varying periods of time; 3) explaining why certain crafts stopped temporarily and finally disappeared.

1. Cross disciplinary comparison of sources: a new and productive research method

Cross-referencing has already proved its effectiveness in the study of cultural material. Productive research has been carried out concerning the Middle Ages in the West²⁾ and the Byzantine Empire³⁾. The present state of research makes data comparison possible. Numerous Arab sources have already been edited but have only been exploited by historians and philologists. Excavations undertaken in the Middle East have produced large quantities of material, which have been the subject of chronotypological studies carried out by archaeologists. Finally, since the end of the 19th century, geographers, historians and ethnologists have brought together a large amount of information on urban and rural ways of life and of the Bedouins in Syria. Thus many publications exist which offer much information the exploitation of which is often compartmentalised by discipline and chronological period. In order to survey the objects and former practices interwoven in the present, it is all the more necessary to spot them before they disappear, my method consists of, on the one hand comparing the data, which comes from different disciplinary fields, and on the other hand, working on the long term perspective. The discipline of history refuses to deduce continuity between two states when the two periods are too far from each other. I would like to free myself from these constraints.

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1) The Gerda Henkel Foundation-LabexMed supported me with a post-doc grant in 2014–2015 and a research grant in 2016–2018.
2) D. Alexandre-Bidon, M.-T. Lorcin, *Le quotidien au temps des fabliaux*, Paris, 2003.
3) V. François, "Cuisine et pots de terre à Byzance", *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, 134. 1, pp. 317–382.

It's not a matter of deducing continuities but of noticing resemblances and similarities which can then lead to more detailed studies and to envisage a transmission of skills over a long period⁴⁾.

The texts are an extremely valuable source of information on daily life. The documentation I use is varied, Arab texts written in Iraq, Syria, Arabia and Iran between the 8th and 15th centuries. There are literary works, poetry, history books, cooking recipes, travel accounts, market regulations, professional dictionaries and old encyclopaedias. The obvious range of this corpus can be explained by the fact that the data is widely dispersed in works that deal marginally with material culture. It is therefore necessary to consult varied sources to get information on urban and rural ways of life, ways of life in the steppes, on ceremonies and customs in the courts of the caliphs, on farming and craft activity, on ways of travelling and table manners.

There are pictures in rare manuscripts of cooking utensils, for service and storage. In the *Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī* miniatures for example, carafes, goblets, bowls and dishes are placed in the context in which they are used and connected to a particular place⁵⁾. These images sometimes help us to understand the use of objects found in excavations.

The archaeological material of my corpus, pottery and glass objects come from a range of sites in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. In this framework I give priority to discoveries made in very defined contexts: in the fortresses of northern Syria and Lebanon, in the large cities of Syria and Iraq (Raqqa, Damascus, Alep, Samarra and Basra) but also in villages of the mid-Orontes valley for example. My corpus is thus mainly made up of material used in urban and rural contexts from the Abbasid to the Mamluk period. I do not however neglect products of the Ottoman period with which I am less familiar⁶⁾.

Various types of sources enable us to approach daily life in Syria from the 19th to the early 20th century. They provide information on the habitat, utensils used every day in cities, in the countryside and by the Bedouins. I refer to studies in human geography, ethnographical surveys⁷⁾ and old books listing professional vocabulary such as the *Qāmūs al-Šinā'āt al-šāmiyya*, also named *Dictionnaire des métiers damascains*, a book written between 1890 and 1905 or 1906 by two Damascene scholars Muḥammad Sa'īd al-Qāsimī and Ğamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī. It was published in two volumes in 1960⁸⁾. It offers an invaluable insight into the economic and social life of Damascus in the last decades of Ottoman rule. These writers hoped to attract attention to the diversity of Syrian craftsmanship, certain sectors of which were beginning to disappear due to strong competition from imported European products. They wanted to make Syrian people and the state to react in order to preserve what could still be preserved. My approach is of a similar nature.

2. The permanence of techniques and uses

The cross disciplinary comparison of sources enables us to ask questions about objects and practices

4) Thanks to my training I can move from one discipline to another. My studies of the Islamic world at the University of Damascus have familiarised me with Arab sources, which I can handle with ease. I have been an archaeologist with the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums of Syria since 2003, curator of the Hama museum and then director of excavations for the Hama region; I have carried out several field studies on the crafts of Northern Syria. The thesis for my PhD, directed by Professor V. François and defended in the Aix-Marseille University in 2014, as well as diverse studies of material have enabled me to acquire a sound knowledge of the pottery produced and used in the Middle East between the 9th and 15th centuries. I. Shaddoud, *Céramique des forteresses croisées, ismaéliennes, ayyoubides et mameloukes de Syrie du Nord*, PHD, Aix Marseille University, 2014.

5) T. 'Ukāša, *Fann al-wāsiṭī min ḥilāl Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī*, Cairo, 1992.

6) Concerning the latter exchanging views with V. François (CNRS-LA3M, Aix-en-Provence) has been essential.

7) J. Weulersse, *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient*, Paris, 1946; O. D'Hont, *Vie quotidienne des 'Agēdāt. Techniques et occupation de l'espace sur le Moyen-Euphrate*, IFEAD, Damascus, 1994.

8) Ğ. D. al-Qāsimī, Ḥ. al-'Azm, *Qāmūs al-šinā'āt al-šāmiyya (Dictionnaire des métiers damascains)*, Z. al-Qāsimī (ed.), La Haye, 2 vol., Paris, 1960.

by analysing and describing the functions, often lost, of certain types of pottery by giving us information about technical procedures which were used for a long time, sometimes interrupted, which have continued to be used up to the present day. As an example here are some of my results.

2.1. The permanence of practices

In the Arabian Peninsula today ovoid shaped jugs with long flared necks can be found which are usually hung on the walls of reception rooms like decorative objects (pl. 1: 1). Only older people remember that they used to be used for storing a honey and butter mixture. As written sources, pictures and archaeological data prove, this type of object called *al-ġhala* or *ġarrat al-‘assal wa al-samn al-ġhala* and the way it was hung, are very old. In the “The devotee and his dreams” in *Kalīla wa Dimna* translated into Arabic by ‘Abd Allāh Ibn al-Muqaffa’ in the 8th century, a holy man stored, in a jug, a mixture of late-summer honey and butter made in the spring⁹⁾ (pl. 1: 2). As the text tells us those two products were very expensive, storing them for a long time would enable him to sell them for a good price and thus make a profit by speculating on their rareness. This jug with its precious contents was not preserved in a storeroom but hung on the wall or hung on the beams in the devotee’s bedroom as the text relates and the miniature. This butter and honey flask and its use are also described in *al-Kitāb al-buḥalā’* written by al-Ġāḥiẓ in the 9th century¹⁰⁾. On the basis of texts and illustrations it is possible to specify how this type of jug was used. Examples were found in the Abbasid layer of excavation of Raqqa or Salamiye in Syria or in Valencia in Spain from the 10th-11th century period, bearing an inscription written in manganese referring to honey¹¹⁾ (pl. 1: 3). It is also possible to bring back meaning to the hanging of these objects found in houses in the Sultanate of Oman today. We can objectively infer that this object has been continually used over time.

2.2. The permanence or rediscovery of skills

The 12th century level excavations in the citadels Massyaf, Abou Qobeys, Shayzar and the Crac des Chevaliers in Syria, have revealed bowls and shaped cooking pots, the internal and external surfaces of which have been deliberately blackened¹²⁾ (pl. 1: 4). A field study carried out near the village of Tartous has supplied information on the technique which could have been implemented to obtain such surface treatment. A family of farmers, who occasionally make pottery, produce cooking pots of the same shape as those found during excavations, concave based bowls with a flat rim and basic incised decoration (pl. 1: 5, 6). They are black like the others. When the bowls and cooking pots were fired the potters placed them on the ground and covered them with dried oak leaves (pl. 1: 7, 8). The fire is carried out in such a way that the leaves burn slowly. This type of firing involving a technique of secondary smoking gives the pottery a nice uniform black surface exactly the same as the archaeological material. Observing present day traditional crafts can be a source of supposition concerning former skills. The similarity between these bowls is so obvious that despite gaps in sources concerning these two observations this technique seems to have lasted for a considerably long period.

2.3. The permanence of techniques and uses over a long period of time

As my research shows, the making, setting up and using of different types of ovens has continued up to the present in Syria, without any major changes. Three different ways of baking bread are referred to in the texts: 1) in stone/brick built ovens, it is baked at a high temperature and can be difficult to digest if the baking is not done properly; 2) in a *ṣāġ*, a metal or ceramic plate which is

9) Ibn al-Muqaffa’, *Kitāb Kalīla wa Dimna*, Paris, 2005, pp. 20–23.

10) al-Ġāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-buḥalā’*, Beirut, 1960, p. 51.

11) Picture kindly given to me by Rose Albrecht.

12) Shaddoud, 2014, pl. 135: 1, p. 135.

placed directly on top of the oven; 3) using *tannūr*, the bread is cooked with a gentle continuous heat and it's the best way.

Excavations and texts demonstrate that bread ovens have been used since the 10th century. During excavations which I directed in Syria, I unearthed several bread ovens dated from the 11th to 13th century: at Abou Qobeys (pl. 2: 1, 2), Qal'at Massyaf (pl. 2: 3), Crac des Chevaliers (pl. 2: 4) and Qal'at Marqab (pl. 2: 5). In Abou Qobeys, there is a complex installation; several *tannūr* can be found alongside stone/brick built ovens. This bakery supplied the whole garrison and the surrounding villages with bread. Some of these ovens such as the one used in Qal'at Marqab from the 12th to the 13th century were used over a long period and only ceased to be used at the beginning of the 19th century (pl. 2: 6). In urban areas stone/brick ovens have never really disappeared (pl. 2: 7–9). Those which have survived beside the large industrial bakeries with their electrically heated ovens have become more modern. They can be found in many districts of Syrian towns and supply the inhabitants with different types of bread. However the number of local bakeries has gradually diminished, as they couldn't compete with the industrial ones. With the war, the shortage of fuel and because it is difficult to get a regular supply of electricity, the industrial bakeries have serious operating difficulties. This is why more and more artisan bakers are rebuilding traditional ovens and repairing those that were no longer used. The main advantage of these small structures is that they can be fuelled with wood. Olive and lemon tree wood is considered to be the best fuel. This is therefore an example of resorting to past practices through necessity. We can notice a somewhat similar phenomenon in Syrian refugee camps; women, who still know about past techniques, build small ovens such as those built in Syrian villages at the beginning of the 20th century (pl. 3: 1). In this way they can cook meals (pl. 3: 2) and even bake bread on a *ṣāğ* (pl. 3: 3), a metal disk placed on top of the oven. This cooking method is very old as confirmed by the remains of ovens found in my digs in Tell al-Nasriyah and at Abou Qobeys for the 11th to 13th centuries (pl. 3: 4, 5) and the miniatures of *Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī* of the 12th century¹³⁾ (pl. 3: 6).

The *tannūr* is a cylindrical shaped oven which varies in size, made from clay and used for baking bread (pl. 3: 7, 8). Excavations and texts demonstrate the *tannūr* have been used since the 6th century, and this word of Syriac origin appears in the Koran¹⁴⁾. It was part of Arab and Muslim households and is still used today in traditional homes. Three sorts of bread were baked in the *tannūr* (*al-rağyf*, *al-kmāğia*, *al-faṭā'ir*). These different sorts of bread are still made today in Syria and they still have the same names. According to Abbasid sources, that oven could also be used to grill meat or simmer stews in earthenware cooking pots. In the 7th century according to *Kitāb al-Ṭabīḥ* written by Ibn Sayyār, whole meals being cooked in *tannūr* ovens were called *al-tannūrīāt*¹⁵⁾. Such practices still continue today. During excavations which I directed in Syria, I unearthed several tannours, only fragments of the oven wall are left and the remains of the oven chamber. In Abou Qobeys, there is a complex installation; several tannours can be found alongside stone/brick built ovens (pl. 2). This bakery supplied the whole garrison and the surrounding villages with bread. Some of these ovens such as the one used in Qal'at Marqab from the 12th to the 13th century were used over a long period and only ceased to be used at the beginning of the 19th century. In Tell al-Nasriyah village, occupied from the middle of the 12th to the middle of the 13th century, as the latest excavations show, each house had its *tannūr*¹⁶⁾. It was apart in a special room. In the 12th century Ibn Sayyār

13) R. Ettinghausen, *La peinture arabe*, Geneva, 1962, p. 112.

14) M. Oubahli, *La main et le pétrin. Alimentation céréalière et pratiques culinaires en Occident musulman au Moyen Âge*, Casablanca, 2012, p. 174, 193–197, 201, 589; al-Ġawālīqī, *al-Mu'arrab min al-kalām al-a'ğamī 'alā ḥurūf al-mu'ğam*, A. M. Šākīr (ed.), Cairo, 1943, p. 84, 86.

15) Ibn Sayyār, *Kitāb al-Ṭabīḥ*, K. Öhrnberg, S. Mroueh (eds.), *Studia Orientalia*, 60, 1987, p. 12, 224, 241.

16) I. Shaddoud, "Fabrication et utilisation des *tannūr* au Bilād al-Chām (IX^e-XX^e siècles)", *X^e Congress AIECM3 on Medieval and Modern Period Mediterranean Ceramics, Antalya (Turkey)*, Ankara, 2018, pp. 127–135.

points out that that room should be near the kitchen and in the direction of the prevailing wind to ensure a good draft. This suitable location was all the more necessary because the smoke coming from the oven was an inconvenience. This often caused quarrels between neighbours as Ibn al-Rāmī al-bannā', a master mason in Hafsid Tunis, recounts¹⁷⁾. It was thus recommended that the *bayt-tannūr* should be built far from the living area. Strangely enough the *tannūr* could be built on the second floor of a house as al-Ġāḥiẓ recounts in the 9th century¹⁸⁾. The heat from the oven had damaged the ceiling of the room below which meant that the owner, a miser who wanted to economise on building material, had to regularly redo the floor of the room. An ethnographical survey that I carried out in central Syria in 2006 shows that today the bread oven is still to be found in a special room slightly away from the house, the *bayt-tannūr*. This room is partly covered and the walls have small openings to let out the smoke (pl. 4: 1–3). More often than not, adjacent to this room, they would have built a well-covered storage area, called *bayt al-qaṣrīn*, in which bundles of firewood and various types of fuel were kept. In former times there were mainly bundles of firewood and cow dung but, in the 9th century, the slaves who sorted the rubbish would bring anything that could burn to keep the fire going in the *tannūr* ovens¹⁹⁾. When the results of this survey are compared to historic sources we see that these clay ovens continue to be made. They require a homogeneous mixture of an equal quantity of calcareous clay and red clay rich in iron, to which are added hemp threads, fragments of tiles or large broken jars and powdered basalt. This method was already evidenced in the 9th century, in the *Kitāb al-buḥalā'* in which we read that a slave was responsible for going through the bins and retrieving fragments of pottery which were then sold to *tannūr* makers²⁰⁾. In a 12th century list of market regulations it is specified that the Damascus *tannūr* makers used special clay, different from that used to make tableware²¹⁾. In the late 19th century, this craft was one of the most widely spread in Damascus as al-Qāsimī asserts²²⁾. Today in villages where houses are made from clay, tannours are still made as they were in the Middle Ages (pl. 4: 5–7: pl. 5: 1–4), on the other hand when houses are made from blocks of cement or breeze blocks the walls of the *tannūr* oven are made from clay but the bench is made from the same material as the house. In urban areas *tannūr* have never really disappeared (pl. 5: 5, 6). Those which have survived beside the large industrial bakeries with their electrically heated ovens, have become more modern. They can be found in many districts of Syrian towns and supply the inhabitants with different types of bread. However the number of local bakeries has gradually diminished, as they couldn't compete with the industrial ones. With the war, the shortage of fuel and because it is difficult to get a regular supply of electricity, the industrial bakeries have serious operating difficulties (pl. 8: 2–4). This is why more and more artisan bakers are rebuilding traditional ovens and repairing those that were no longer used. The main advantage of these small structures is that they can be fuelled with wood. This is therefore an example of resorting to past practices through necessity.

The comparison of data from different sources has led me to highlight the permanency of building methods. In texts from the 10th to the 15th century, which deal with construction, methods for domestic rural housing there is mention of rooms with ceilings pierced with a circular hole called *al-rawzana*²³⁾. Its function is not specified. However the field research that I carried out on rural housing in Northern Syria from 2001 to 2006 enables me to offer an explanation for this zenithal opening which is still

17) Ibn al-Rāmī al-Banna', Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥamad b. Ibrahīm al-Laḥmī, *al-I'lan bi-ahkām al-bunyān*, F. B. Sulaymān (ed.), Tunis, 1999.

18) al-Ġāḥiẓ, 1960, p. 101.

19) *Ibidem*, pp. 137–143.

20) *Ibidem*, p. 143.

21) Ibn al-Uḥuwwa, *Ma'ālim al-qurba fī ahkām al-ḥisba*, R. Levy (ed.), Bagdad, 1932, p. 133, 223, 224; al-Māwardī, *al-Rutba fī ṭalab al-ḥisba*, A. Baddrān (ed.), Cairo, 2002, p. 189, 358.

22) al-Qāsimī, vol. I, 1960, p. 71.

23) Ibn Sīda, Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Ismā'īl al-Andalusī 458 h., *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ*, vol. I: 5, Beirut, s.d., p. 137.

called by the same name (pl. 6: 1). I have often noticed that a half jar without a handle was embedded in the hole with its opening facing downwards (pl. 6: 2–4). It is in fact a tunnel used to bring down the wheat, lentils and barley put on the rooftops to dry. This grain is stocked in a cabinet-style silo in the room or in a cylindrical masonry silo or made from wood. This method makes a controlled flow of crops towards the stocking place possible. This ancient practice is however disappearing. On the one hand the extensive use of concrete even in rural areas makes it impossible to pierce the hole and, on the other hand the war has destroyed many traditional village houses.

3. How skills can disappear in an urban environment

The joint study of crafts through sources and ethnographical surveys attest to the disappearance of certain artisanal activities or the gradual substitution of objects which contribute to the decline of traditional trades. There are many reasons for this.

3.1. The temporary disappearance of craftsmen and/or work tools in spite of making an effort to adapt

At the beginning of the 15th century Tamerlane seized Damascus. The city was pillaged and partially burned and a large number of its inhabitants were massacred or deported. Not only precious goods were requisitioned but also skilled workers. All sources, whether Arabic, Persian or Latin agree about the transfer of craftsmen from conquered cities²⁴). Tamerlane was indeed in the habit of taking craftsmen with him on the Transoxian road: from Tabriz in 1386, Shiraz in 1388, from Bagdad in 1393, Delhi in 1399 and Damascus in 1401. According to Ruis Gonzales de Clavijo, Henry the Third of Spain's ambassador to the court of Tamerlane, "De Damas, il fit amener tous les maîtres qu'il put trouver, dont ceux qui font des tissus en soie de plusieurs sortes, ceux qui fabriquent des arcs semblables aux arcs utilisés par ses hommes, ainsi que des armuriers, et des verriers et des potiers, lesquels sont les meilleurs du monde". The conquest of the city by the Mongol troupes brought about an upheaval in the layout of the areas assigned to crafts and trade. Several districts were burned and the master craftsmen were deported to Samarkand leaving their workshops empty, or in the hands of inexperienced apprentices. According to the art historian, the potters' district was destroyed²⁵). It is generally accepted that the potters' craft in the city never got over the winter of 1400–1401. However several facts prove the opposite. It would be risky to measure the effect of the Mongol conquest on the city's means of production and it would be difficult to determine how quickly the economy of Damascus recovered even if western travellers claim it did so quickly. However various discoveries including those made during excavations in the citadel of Damascus attest not only to a rapid recovery concerning pottery making but also concerning technical and decorative innovation. Indeed, in 1411, Ulugh Beg, the governor of Samarkand, authorized by decree, the liberation of the craftsmen captured by Tamerlane. Damascene potters, exiled in central Asia then went back to their city having acquired new skills that they made available to local clients. The fact that potters started to use green pigments in the 15th century can probably be put down to this movement of craftsmen. Indeed green metal oxides were used in Iran under the Mongols and in Timurid central Asia from the 14th century on to colour tiles which were cut up and combined to make mosaic coverings. Tamerlane's conquest of the city certainly temporarily stopped the production of earthenware tableware in Damascus over an indeterminate period of time but the return of the craftsmen, having acquired new techniques and a new range of decoration, stimulated and vitalized production during

24) Ibn 'Arabšāh, Abū Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Dimašqī 791–854 h., *'Aḡā'ib al-maqdūr fī nawā'ib Taymūr*, 'A. M. 'Umar (ed.), Cairo, 1979, p. 6, 172–176.

25) A. Lane, *Late Islamic Pottery*, London, 1957, p. 16.

the 15th century. One of the fundamental features of large Middle Eastern cities like Damascus, Aleppo, to name but a few, is the continuation of craft facilities in the urban fabric over a very long period of time. Concerning the medieval period, texts, particularly the one written by Ibn ‘Asākir, attest the existence of areas occupied by the makers of specific crafts²⁶). They have been identified, located and mapped.

Even if the history of the craft of glass making in Syria is of great interest, all the more so because it shows that this activity continued over a long period of time, we will only go over here some of the stages which will shed some light on the state of this craft today which is a mixture of tradition and a commitment to change. Since the Phoenician period Syria has enjoyed a reputation for the production of glass objects, mosaic tessera or floor and wall tiles. In the workshops of Raqqa, Damascus, Aleppo and Sidon, the glassmakers developed a wide range of manufacturing and decoration techniques, which made their reputation throughout the world²⁷). Glass in all its variations was one of the largest sources of trading between the Orient and the West. The wreck of the Serçe Limanı in particular shows this clearly. The ship sank off Rhodes in the 11th century; it had sailed from the Syrian coast bound for Constantinople. The ship carried a large range of intact glass vessels made at some glass factory on the Fatimid Syrian coast²⁸) and three metric tons of glass cullet that was to be remelted and made into new glassware. Two tons were raw glass that had been broken into small chunks to facilitate its transport. Two-thirds of the other ton consisted of glassware that has been discarded, after cracking or becoming misshapen during manufacture, and then also broken into small pieces for transport. The remaining cullet consisted of glassware produced during every stage in the manufacture of glassware. The cullet was probably being transported to Constantinople, the most important glass-making centre in the Byzantine World. The famous glassmakers of Venice found it advantageous to import glass cullet from Syria during late medieval times. Written sources show that it used to be transported from countries with a long tradition of glassmaking to regions that were sometimes new to glass production: an agreement between Bohemond VII, prince of Antioch, and Venice stipulates that the Venetians would have to pay a tax on all cullet exported from Tripoli; a notarial act mentions “barrila plena vitro coloris blavi” that was transported to Majorca in the 14th century by a Genoese galley that had come from the East. The trade in this commodity was subjected to strict regulations²⁹). Ibn Ğubayr, a traveler (died in 1217), admired the locally made coloured lamps in the Omayyad mosque³⁰). In the Mamluk period the Damascus glassmakers were famous throughout the Middle East for their enamelled glass which they continued to make under the Ottomans³¹). In the Middle Ages the workshops were to be found in the al-Šāġūr district south of the old town. Ibn Šaddād, in the 12th and 13th centuries, pointed out a glass workshop beside the al-Ḥašābiyyn mosque and that there was also a *hammam* for the glassmakers in that district³²). During a rescue excavation that I directed at Bāb Šarqī in 2000, we discovered blocks of raw glass in the Ayyubid and Mamluk layers near the city wall. In the 15th century, the economic and political decline of Syria as well as commercial and industrial competition from the Europeans undermined

26) Š. al-Munaġid (ed.), *La description de Damas d'Ibn'Asakir*, Damascus, IFPO, reprint 2009; N. Eliséeff, *La description de Damas d'Ibn 'Asakir (traduction française)*, Damascus, IFPO, 2009.

27) M. Abou al-Farāġ al-'Ušš, “al-Zuġāġ al-sūrī al-mumawah bi-al-mīnā' wa al-ḡahab fī al-'ašr al-wassīt -1”, *Les Annales archéologiques de Syrie*, 16, T. 1, 1966, pp. 37–56; *idem* “al-Zuġāġ al-sūrī al-mumawah bi-al-mīnā' wa al-ḡahab -3- Maġmū'at al-Muḡhaf al-waṭanī bi-Dimašq”, *Les Annales archéologiques de Syrie*, 18, T.I, 1968, pp. 33–66.

28) G.F. Bass, R.H. Brill, B. Lledó *et al.*, *Serçe Limanı, volume II, the Glass of an Eleventh-Century Shipwreck*, Texas A&M University Press, 2009.

29) D. Jacoby, “Raw Materials for the Glass Industries of Venice and the Terraferma about 1370-about 1460”, *Journal of Glass Studies*, 35, 1993, pp. 65–90.

30) Ibn Ğubayr, *Rihlat ibn Ğubayr*, Beirut, s.d., p. 246.

31) S. Carboni, *Glass from Islamic Lands*, London, 2001.

32) Ibn Šaddād, 1980, p. 103.

the making of enamelled glass in the Mamluk territories. Soon after 1400, there is considerable evidence of Venetian glass exports to the Near East. During the 16th–17th century Ottoman glass-manufacture in Turkey was insignificant and the Ottomans, like the whole of the Levant, were dependent for fine glass upon imports from the glasshouses of Venice, later Bohemia and possibly Spain too³³). In the 18th century, the family of glassmakers called Āl al-Qazzāz, originally from al-Ḥalīl in Palestine, a town famous for its glassmaking, came to live in the al-Šāgūr district of Damascus³⁴). At that time those glass craftsmen made small glass objects, beads, cupping glass, amulets and, to order, small size window panes, lamps for mosques and small flasks. The sand came from ḡabal ‘Addrā by convoys of donkeys. It was carried out in the same way as that described by al-Bīrūnī in the 10th century³⁵). Those family firms carried on until the end of the 19th century. In parallel, circa 1813, the Sublime Porte granted Muslim al-‘Umarī the right to set up an industrial area for glass making at Bāb Šarqī financed by Syrian investors. German experts were assigned to equip the factory and train the workers. Several members of the al-Qazzāz, family who had been taken on as skilled workers, were introduced to modern techniques and equipment and a different way of organising work. The success of this enterprise, which produced large amounts of income created numerous disputes between the financiers. Its production of low priced and good quality glass and cut-glass ware competed with European products. Brawls among workers, encouraged by the Europeans led to the destruction of the work tool and to the demolition of the furnaces³⁶). This resulted in the closing of this business. For their part, at the end of the 19th century, the different branches of the al-Qazzāz family in al-Šāgūr banded together in a joint glass factory in which large furnaces were built. They made the production of large objects possible such as glass jars (pl. 6: 5), vases, bowls and jugs which were sold by street vendors to well off consumers of the town in the Friday souks. The increase in furnaces in that district led to competition that was harmful for the market. In the 1970s, fourteen of them, spread out over several districts of the city, operated for a very variable annual length of time³⁷). To the south of the old town, in the d’al-Šāgūr, neighbourhood, one of the workshops dates back to the end of the 19th century, another to 1910 and the other two were set up during the Second World War. To the west of the old city, at Bāb Šarqī, the glass workshops go back to the Second World War whereas two others were set up in 1964 and 1973. Four workshops opened in 1952, 1962, 1965 and 1972 in Ġawbar on the western Ġūṭa road. These workshops, which are of two types have been gradually pushed out to the outskirts of the city for administrative, economic and technical reasons. There are the artisanal glass workshops where humans use a tube to blow the glass into shape by free blowing or using a mould. The same craftsman makes the whole object. Until 1930, the glass was made from gritty silicate and alkaline compounds, the sand came from the region of Qalamūn and the alkaline from Ġizlāniyyé near Nabk. The glass paste thus obtained was mixed in equal proportions with local and imported broken glass during a second firing, this is ironic when we know that during the Roman, Byzantine and Medieval periods Syria sold its broken glass to the second-rate workshops of the Mediterranean area. The furnace, made out of basalt or rammed earth, was heated with wood and olive stones, relatively cheap fuels but which required a large stocking area. It was difficult to reach a high temperature and to maintain and control a regular temperature. In order to confront industrial competition, some glass workshops modernised and became semi-mechanised. The blowing in a mould is done with the help of an air compressor. The assembly line system was used. Three workers took turns for the making of each object. After 1930, the glass paste was prepared from broken glass which came

33) M. Rogers, “Glass in Ottoman Turkey”, *Istanbulur Mitteilungen*, 33, 1983, pp. 239–266.

34) M. al-Kayāl, *Ma’ātr šāmiyya fī al-funnūn wa al-šinā’at al-dimašqiyya*, Damascus, 2007, p. 103.

35) al-Bīrūnī, *al-Ġamāhir fī al-ġawāhir*, Y. al-Hādī (ed.), Tehran, 1995, pp. 363–366.

36) Kayāl (al-), 2007, p. 132.

37) G. Imam, F. and J. Métral, R. Naffākh, “L’artisanat du verre à Damas”, *Bulletin d’Etudes Orientales*, XXVII, 1974, pp. 141–182.

from Europe. In the 70s, the glass workshops were supplied with raw material by local carbonated drinks factories, glaziers and collectors of broken glass. Other fragments were imported from countries around the Arabian/Persian Gulf. Furnaces made with bricks and refractory firebricks covered with rammed earth on the outside have been heated, since the Second World War, with fuel oils. These new fuels made it possible to reach high regular temperatures with a smaller workforce. They could be stored in tanks and were space-saving. In the semi-mechanised glassworks, the craftsmen adopted a new type of furnace. The tunnel annealing furnace was time-saving, reduced the number of workers needed and the risk of breakage. Since the end of the 19th century, everyday mass produced objects were made in Damascus, storage jars (*qaṭramīz*) blown or blown/moulded which were transparent or slightly greenish and which could contain 3 to 5 liters (pl. 6: 5, 6). These containers were used in a domestic context and also by shopkeepers to preserve olives, cheese, aubergines, gerkins and jam (pl. 6: 7; pl. 7: 1, 2). Glass for oil lampes (*ballūra*) either blown or blown/moulded was another large part of the production. These lamps were used in villages where there was no electricity. The glassmakers made small-scale series to order of stills, mosque lamps, small bottles for arak, thick opaque bell-shaped glass coverings to light the domes found in *hammam* (pl. 7: 3) and decorated dark blue jugs for oil. In order to open new prospects, some glassmakers from the Āl al-Qazzāz family did not hesitate to leave Damascus carrying only a few tools to travel across Syria and Lebanon. They were itinerant glassmakers, trying to acquire new clients. Between 1922 and 1929, on the initiative of M.E. de Lorey, the director of l'Institut Français d'Art et d'Archéologie of Damascus, the Damascus glassmakers made copies of old decorated objects³⁸⁾. They were exhibited in the Palais Azem and in the Foire Internationale located in the museum of Damascus in 1936. These objects targeted a foreign clientele for direct sale or through the intermediary of dealers in Damascus or Beirut. During the Second World War, the threat of foreign competition disappeared. In the absence of imported products, the glassmakers supplied all the necessary articles for everyday life and for industry. Usefulness prevailed over the artistic aspect. Ten artisanal workshops and five semi-mechanised workshops set up in the outlying districts of the city. At this time the price of glassware, and craftsmen's incomes were high. As soon as peace had returned, foreign products had once again invaded the Syrian market whereas the industrialisation of the country was beginning. This contributed to the decline of the traditional craft and consequently to the closure of most of the glassworks which had been set up during the war, to the benefit of factories. Between 1955–1958, the glass factories employed 400 workers whereas the glass workshops only employed 40. There were only 5 of the former and they produced mainly objects inspired by Islamic art and sold to the antique dealers of Damascus and Beirut. To stem the crisis which was affecting artisanal glassmaking, the authorities took measures to encourage the craft of glassmaking and to revive it. They were behind the setting up in 1958, of a pavilion showing local crafts within the Damascus International Fair and the organising of itinerant exhibitions in Arab and foreign countries and the creation in 1972, of a craft market in the Takiyya Sulaīmāniyya³⁹⁾. This traditional production expanded in the 1970s, large orders came for the Syrian, Arab and European markets. In the Damascus International Fair, Ḥasan al-Qazzāz, a master glass blower, could be seen blowing a glass object in front of a Syrian and foreign audience, fascinated by his skill. The glassmakers who specialised in the making of *objets d'art*— tableware but also mosque lamps, beads, glass balls — made glass tinted green, brown, turquoise and new colours like blue and purple. The main decorative techniques used were painting, guilloche, relief painting, gilding and enamelling. Louis al-Ṣarāf, a Christian who worked with his wife, was perhaps the most famous decorator. His speciality was decoration using the old metallic

38) *Ibidem*, p. 164.

39) *Ibidem*, p. 168.

luster technique⁴⁰). The glassmakers entrusted their products to him and he decorated them using motifs based on Arab/Islamic art. He was backed by the Minister for Culture in the 1960s and was encouraged to pass on his skills to the new generation of glassmakers. He taught in the Academy of Arts, he recognised however it was impossible to make a decent living from such a job. The consumption of artisanal glass increased on the internal and foreign markets. Between 1958 and 1972, the number of workshops tripled. Some craftsmen who had left the trade returned and new glassmakers appeared. Their socio-economic situation improved. In 1973, the Āl al-Qazzāz family still had the largest number of glass factories but employed Damascene, Egyptian and Palestinian workers along with workers from Armanāz. Whereas a glass factory employed 550 workers, the thirteen Damascene artisanal workshops employed between 120 and a 150 workers. They made traditional everyday objects: jars, glass for oil lamps which were not affected by foreign competition because at this time European factories no longer made this type of product. They also produced *objets d'art*. In 1973, some young craftsmen took French language classes in order to better understand the needs of foreign customers. The 1970s was a prosperous period for glassmakers comparable to the period from 1940 to 1949 but from the 1980s, they began to be affected again. Because of the electrification of Syria, the market for oil lamps almost completely disappeared. The large glass jars were replaced by plastic containers which were cheaper, less fragile and thus easier to transport, and because of the large scale arrival of industrial canned foods. At that time and until the beginning of the civil war, in Damascus, in Bāb Šarqī and at the Takiyya Sulaīmāniyya some glass blowers were still working in small workshops (pl. 7: 4). They produced various objects of glass tableware for the Syrian market but which were also very popular with tourists (pl. 7: 5–9). The Hassan al-Qazzāz family, who had set up in the Takiyya Sulaīmāniyya, produced decorated glass objects until 2006. In 2004, they presented their artistic production at the Fes Silk Road Festival in Washington⁴¹). In the years around 2000 the Bāb Šarqī glassmakers, found a way to dispose of their production. They supplied pieces of tableware which were blown and bubbled to the famous glassmakers of Biot in Provence who resold them as if they were locally made and doubled or tripled the price⁴²). The glass blowers carried on working there until 2008 when they moved their furnaces to Zamalka, east of Damascus and to Yaldda and Sbiynah in the southeast. The recent bombing of all these districts destroyed artisanal workshops as well as big factories. Glass making has now completely stopped in Damascus.

The town of Armanāz, south-west of Alep, had been known for its glass blowing since the 19th century as vouched for by many travellers and geographers⁴³). Ten or so factories were involved in this activity but only four glassworks were left in 1936 and they worked seasonally, during the agricultural off-season. They supplied their owners with an additional income. Up until 1880, the glassmakers of Armanāz made glass paste with local earth silicates and alkaline composites imported from ġabal Bišrī or from Europe via Beirut — a paradoxal reversal of the situation as, since the Roman Empire, Syria had exported sodium and potassium vegetal ash for the production of raw glass in the Mediterranean area. In the 1930s, broken glass collected in Aleppo, Beirut, Latakia and Antioch was used. Only fragments of glass made in Armanāz and the fragments of window panes were melted again in order to obtain translucent glass without bubbles unlike the workshops of Damascus which used broken bottles thus producing a paste full of bubbles and also cloudy glass. The furnaces were fuelled with olive wood. The traditional equipment used was basic. The production base was made up of large jars of varying sizes for household preserves (*qaṭramīz*). Two workers produced up to 24 jars a day. The glassworks also supplied glass suction cups, small arak flasks and for order only,

40) Kayāl (al-), 2007, p. 162, 166, 168, 170, 171.

41) *Ibidem*, p. 152, 153.

42) Information kindly given to me by V. François.

43) J. Gaulmier, "Note sur la fabrication du verre à Armanāz", *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, VI, 1936, pp. 53–59.

jugs, drinking glasses and cups sometimes decorated with red or blue glass. The way these blown glass objects are made is accurately described in Gaulmier's survey. Their product marketing was quite simple. Farmers bought a donkey load of glass directly from the workshop which they would sell for their own benefit in Aleppo, Antioch and Hama, sometimes even as far as Latakia and Deir ez-Zor. Such as it was in the first third of the 20th century, this work carried out by fifteen well paid artisan glassmakers was stagnating. The customers, with the exception of *qaṭramīzāt*, preferred the more transparent European glass. During and after the Second World War, the glass workshops stopped being profitable and some craftsmen came to Damascus. Now the opposite movement has occurred. Having been deprived of their place of work in Damascus, some glass workers went to the large glass producing centres in Armanāz. Indeed, glass production has never stopped in that town and it can be stated that unlike many Syrians the Armanāz glass workers have profited from this war. Indeed because of fighting, it has become difficult even impossible to get supplies from the outside. Agreements with the rebel troupes encouraged them to produce and supply local people with preserving jars, drinking glasses and jugs. The glassmakers of that city are the last to practice their trade.

As we have seen, the glass blowing craft has been through many ups and downs over the last three centuries. New technical choices and modern practices have not prevented traditional crafts from continuing, they have been able to come back to life several times. Those crafts supplied customers with useful objects and tableware in the old tradition. After the reconstruction of the country, the glassmakers will have to keep their ancestral skills and acquire new ones so as to improve their production of traditional objects. They should also organise the trade circuits better and probably expand them. Otherwise these artisanal workshops will be doomed to disappear unless they can exploit the fashion for artisanal glass, the traditional heir of blown glass craftsmanship.

The making of the famous Syrian 'ud has been suspended because of the war as most of the craftsmen have left the country. The 'ud is a plucked string musical instrument widely used in Arab countries since the Umayyad period as textual and iconographic documents show⁴⁴⁾ (pl. 8: 1–3). The chronicler al-Aṣfahānī recounts, in his "Livre de chants", that in the palace of Haroun el-Rachid in Bagdad in the 9th century, one could hear 'ud players accompany sung poems⁴⁵⁾. Muslim musicologists of the medieval period wrote works on this oriental lute with eleven to twelve strings which is pear-shaped and has a short neck. They deal mainly with rhythms, modes and matching scales with the meter of sung verses. In the Arab texts from the 9th to the 15th century, we found information relating to the way this instrument is made. The sound box of the instrument was made from beech and chestnut wood⁴⁶⁾. These woods of different hardness gave a special sound to the instruments. The Syrian 'ud was still, a short while ago, very renowned in the Arab world. This instrument is used especially for solo improvisation, the 'ud is the "sultan" of the instruments which form the *takht*, that is the traditional instrumental ensemble composed of the *qanun* (a type of cithare), an 'ud (a lute), a *nay* (a reed flute) and a *daff* (a tambourine)⁴⁷⁾. The 'ud player animates cosy family evenings or *soirées* between friends and accompanies the singers. The famous Egyptian singer Oum Kalsoum had indeed ordered the instrument, to accompany her singing tours, from an old Damascene craftsman of the Nahhat family. The Nahhat family, originally from Greece, was a famous family of lute players and their instruments are exceptional. The lutes were made to order and each

44) K. Otto-Dorn, *L'art de l'Islam*, Paris, 1967, p. 48, pl. 53; L. Bender, D. Baudis, M. Alloula et al., *Qantara. Patrimoine méditerranéen. Traversées d'Orient et d'Occident*, Paris, 2008, p. 186.

45) Abū al-Faraġ al-Aṣfahānī, 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, *Kitāb al-aġānī*, Beirut, 1994.

46) A.R. Ṣubḥī, *Ta'riḥ al-'ūd*, Damascus, 1999.

47) N. Allao, A.-M. Bianquis, "Luth, luthistes et luthiers", in A.-M. Bianquis, E. Picard (dir.), *Damas. Miroir brisé d'un Orient arabe*, Paris, 1993, pp. 219–225.

of the Nahhat brothers and cousins had his own shape and proportions. The Nahhat family made Damascus one of the great *'ud* centres like Bagdad and Cairo. Unfortunately they never passed on their art. Musicians of the Arab world have been showing a new interest in the *'ud* over the last few years and the order books of the Damascene lute makers have been full. However the production methods have changed. In the 19th century, a lute maker made the whole instrument: the body was made from yew or walnut, the soundboard from cedar and the roses from perforated wood lined with mother of pearl decorated the soundboard *'ud*. Before the civil war, most lute makers used machines and the craftsmen only made a part of the instrument. They had set up in the suburbs of Damascus and they mass produced lutes for tourists and for export. They didn't use the same materials, for example the roses were plastic. However Ali Khalifé still made excellent lutes to order. The Kebbé family used traditional methods, producing in small quantities, 10 to 20 lutes a month. In the 1990s, a renewed interest for traditional music made some musicians look for instruments with a different sound. Thus Abd al-Salam Safar, a famous flutist, had a model made which could reach high notes. For the actual making of the rounded sound box of the instrument which is made from bars of wood forced into a barrel shape (the word *'ud* means wood or stick) the Syrian craftsmen who maintained the tradition used local material particularly Damascus walnut wood. They have now taken refuge in Beirut and have had to give up that wood and use walnut wood from the United States (pl. 8: 4). If their expertise continues, the sound of the Syrian *'ud* which made the reputation of the Syrian lute makers will change because of this change in the wood supply. In Salamiye, in 1990, different political groups were behind the creation of music classes for children. This overall project included the making of *'ud* and other string instruments. The lute maker in charge used wood imported from the USA, Europe and Russia. At first his products were intended for the local market but he gradually increased his production. During the war, he carried on working alone and today he sells to Homs and Hama. The expatriate inhabitants of Salamiye are faithful customers.

3.2. The progressive and irreversible disappearance of a profitable craft

In the Middle Ages, Syria was famous for its silk production and the most famous workshops were in Damascus. They made rich brocades and all sorts of silk fabrics. These silks were mainly bought by pilgrims, who, after visiting the Holy Land took back home rich Syrian fabrics. These iridescent heavy silk materials were embroidered with gold or silver and decorated with animal figures woven into the fabric; they were highly valued in the West and used to make priestly vestments and church decoration⁴⁸). Silk figured among the three or four most renowned articles in Syria. Although demand and Muslim technique remained practically stationary during the centuries following the Mongol invasion, silk weaving and silkworm rearing constantly spread in Europe. The virtual monopoly of Muslim weavers in the European market was broken for the first time by the Italian weavers of the 15th century. After this the progressive movement of silk production from East to West took place. During the 18th and 19th centuries local production experienced deep changes caused by the Ottoman Empire becoming part of the world economy, the Europeans being the main participants⁴⁹). The Balta Liman treaty, signed in 1838 between the Sublime Porte and the British government, marked the beginning of the entry of European trade into the Ottoman Empire. Up until this period Syria exported to France high value-added silk fabrics. Following this, the country exported less and less fabrics and more and more thread and at the end of the century they sent less and less thread and an increasing number of silk cocoons. The growth of the silk industry in Europe has had a double impact on Muslim production: in a negative way by increasing competition in the highly specialised area of silk weaving,

48) M. Lombard, *Les textiles dans le monde musulman, VII^e-XIV^e siècles*, Paris, 1978.

49) R. Banat, A. Ferguene, "La production et le commerce des textiles à Alep sous l'Empire ottoman: une forte contribution à l'essor économique de la ville", *Histoire, Economie & Société*, vol. 29^e année, n° 2, 2010, pp. 9–21.

and in a positive way by increasing the demand for raw silk. The mechanization of sericulture and weaving in Europe in the 19th century gave the final blow to traditional Muslim craftsmanship. Even if the number of workers in the textile sector fell, looms were still being used. In Damascus in the mid 1870s there were more than 5000 left employing 16 000 people. However the workers mainly used poor quality thread left them by the European industrialists. Indeed in order to avoid the best thread being used in the local workshops, the weavers of Lyon imported second-rate Chinese silk thread into Syria; in 1902, 120 tons of silk from Shanghai was unloaded in Beirut harbour. There was an irreparable decline in Syrian silk making during the 20th century. Silk making in Syria today has become quite a marginal activity⁵⁰⁾ (pl. 8: 5, 6; pl. 9).

3.3. Survival strategies

In regards to the earthenware craft I have focused my research on raw materials and craft organisation. I have given priority to two types of written sources. First, the manuals of *hişba* that is to say market law books composed by jurists. These texts deal with the market police of the major Arabic cities and with the regulations of craft activities. I concentrated on the *hişba* drafted from the Abbasid time to the Mamluk period⁵¹⁾. The second main written sources is the *Qāmūs al-Şinā'āt al-Şāmiyya*, also named *Dictionnaire des métiers damascains*. The authors often exhibit more concern for the ethical aspects of craft production according to the tradition of the *hişba* manuals. These written sources show the evolution of the craft during the Middle Ages and refer to other works in which these questions are brought up. We know, thanks to the encyclopaedia written in the 10th century by Iḥwān al-Şafā' and to al-Ansāb written by al-Sam'ānī, that some potters were specialist⁵²⁾. In the chapter on earthenware crafts the above mentioned writers distinguish between the *dannān* who makes the *dinn*, in other words the large jars; the *ğarrār* who produces the medium-sized jars, then come the *ğaddār* who creates cups, small bowls, plates and basins and the *quḍūrī* who produces cooking pots. The most tiresome jobs are given to slaves. They prepare the clay and tread on it in large basins full of water. They fuel the kilns with wood and transport the pottery to the sales location. In the workshops the production and selling tasks are not done by the same people. As far as raw materials are concerned the rules put in place from the 11th to the 15th century stipulate that the clays intended for the making of jars, cooking pots or tableware must be different. The different types of clay are all sold in the souk. The potter cannot get his supplies directly from the clay deposits but must buy the clay from a trader. The market inspector makes sure that the suppliers do separate the different raw materials. He also keeps a close watch on the composition of the different types of clay in order to avoid any cheating. Porters, from the souk, who specialise in this job, carry the clay to the potters. The *hişba* bring to light the fact that the porters watch what is going on for the inspectors who question them about any possible wrong doing that they might have witnessed. The *muḥtasib* make sure that the tableware is properly covered with a layer of alkaline glaze, which waterproofs the walls of the container and make it easier to clean. Alchemists mix the components to form the glaze⁵³⁾. The market inspector also checks the quality of the glaze. Some craftsmen, in order to save money, do in fact use poor quality glazes which rapidly chip with wear. He also reports frauds. Some tradesmen have no qualms about filling cracks in cups, vases

50) C. Mabéle, *Les artisans du textile*, Marseilles, 2012.

51) Māwardī (al-) 2002; Uḥuwwa (al-), 1932; Ibn Bassām al-muḥtasib, *Nihāyat al-rutba fī ṭalab al-ḥiṣba*, in *fī al-turāt al-iqtisādī al-islāmī*, Beirut, 1990, pp. 317–482.

52) Iḥwān al-Şafā', *Rasā'il Iḥwān al-Şafā' wa ḥulān al-wafā'*, vol. 1, Beirut, s.d., p. 281, 284; al-Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb*, A. al-Yamānī (ed.), Beirut, 1980, vol. V, p. 69, 108, 112; vol. VI, p. 256; vol. VIII, p. 120, 251; vol. IX, p. 155, 209; vol. X, p. 76, 167, 240, 491.

53) Bīrūnī (al-), 1995, p. 367, 368.

and cooking pots with a mixture of plaster, egg white, fatty substance and clay⁵⁴). As the defects are hidden in this way the objects can be sold as if they were top grade. The firing of pottery is also regulated. It is stipulated in these texts that the potter must not fuel his fires with rubbish but with straw, alfalfa or wood. Because of conflicts, especially at the end of the Mamluk period, potters had difficulty being supplied with raw materials. They resorted to clay which was not very suitable for their products and craftsmanship went into decline. During the Ottoman period two production systems coexisted: large city workshops which employed numerous professional potters, often of the same religion and belonging to guilds and small family workshops in rural areas and providing seasonal employment. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Syrian products had to compete with imports of crockery from Europe (pl. 10: 1–3). Over the last sixty years the arrival on the local market of manufactured European products has seriously downgraded the local and artisanal industry. Ceramic production has been affected in the same way as silk weaving. Different studies have enabled us to evaluate the place that European imports of tableware in the Ottoman Empire compared to local production as part of the rise of the cultural and economic imperialism of western European countries⁵⁵). Trade statistics, world fair reports, French consular documents, the archives of the major Mediterranean ports, the minutes of the French Chamber of Commerce of Constantinople and the archives of European pottery factories involved in the export of crockery to the Ottoman Empire reveal that, from the 18th to the early 20th century, large amounts of European vessels were sold throughout the Empire. From 1724, the commercial archives of the port of Marseilles, which was in a dominant position in the maritime trade of pottery, demonstrate the existence of a ceramic trade with the Levant. As French consular records show, numerous cargos of pottery were unloaded in the ports of Saïda, Tripoli and Beirut in the 18th and 19th centuries. The records of exits from Marseilles harbour show that between 1724 and 1780, 1 395 Biot jars (large containers well suited to the preserving of water and oil, made in the Alpes maritimes region) were sent to the Levant (pl. 10: 4). They can be found all along the coastline from Saïda to Tripoli between the end of the 18th century and the first third of the 19th century. According to the French consul in Beirut in the early 19th century “les jarres de France” were chosen at the expense of local products from Latakia which are not glazed and break easily. According to consular records and statistics, pottery made up a large part of European imports of tableware to the Levant from the 18th century but particularly in the 19th. Trade sources make it possible to make an estimate of 29 000 porcelain and tin glazed ceramic objects unloaded in Haifa harbour in 1893. Larger quantities were unloaded in Beirut and Tripoli in 1896. They were loaded in Marseilles and came from the factories of Sarreguemines, Creil-Montereau, Gien, Choisy-le-Roi and Saint-Amand-les-Eaux. The “fabrique Impériale et Royale” in Nimy, near Mons in Belgium, also exported a part of its production to the Levant. Company agents were stationed in Beirut in 1894 and Damascus in 1896. Meanwhile, England with its Staffordshire manufacturers flooded all the markets with their glazed ceramic ware and everyday earthenware and stoneware pottery. In 1870 the biggest English pottery exports sent to the eastern Mediterranean went to Turkey, Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Greece. As written sources attest the Ottoman Empire represented a substantial market for the big European manufacturers. The modernisation of the Ottoman Empire, in the last quarter of the 19th century, was not without impact on the regional pottery production. The arrival of the railways did in fact alter supply methods. According to French consular reports they were still loaded in Marseilles, but also in Trieste, a major commercial port whose prosperity

54) Uḥuwwa (al-), 1932, p. 222; Ibn Bassām al-muḥtasib, 1990, p. 440.

55) V. François, “Jarres, terrailles, faïences et porcelaines dans l’Empire ottoman (XVIII^e-XIX^e siècles)”, *Turcica*, 40, 2008, pp. 81–120; *eadem*, “European Pottery Imports in Ottoman Bilad al-Sham (18th–19th centuries): Archaeological Data and Written Sources”, in F. Hitzel (ed.), *14th International Congress of Turkish Art Proceedings*, Paris, Collège de France, 2013, pp. 317–325.; V. François, A. Ersoy, “Fragments d’histoire: la vaisselle de terre dans une maison de Smyrne au XVIII^e siècle”, *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, 135, pp. 377–419; M. Milwright, “Imported Pottery in Ottoman Bilad-al-Sham”, *Turcica*, 40, 2008, pp. 121–152.

was facilitated by the construction of the railway line that connected the city with Vienna. Porcelain products from the major manufactures of Saxony, Austria and Hungary were transported there in this way. The data for the late 19th century, still reports transportation of pottery from France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Great Britain, Italy and Turkey. The French Consul General in Beirut, in the late 19th century, encouraged the French manufacturers to adapt their product for sale in the Middle Eastern market, taking into account the tastes of consumers and, I quote, their “love of flashiness” and to sell at good prices. In this context the Syrian production centres could not compete with European imports which looked more modern and were cheaper. In the field, various examples of European tableware, some models adapted to oriental taste, have been discovered in excavations in Damascus, Aleppo, St. John of Acre, Jerusalem and Alexandria in particular. From the early 19th century western travellers complained that there was European tableware on sale in the bazaars and souks, it was not exotic for them but undoubtedly seemed more modern for oriental customers. This massive influx of cheap tableware had a considerable effect on local production, as attested by Al-Qāsimī in his dictionary of professions written in Damascus at the end of the 19th century. In this survey, several commentators confirm that there are fewer potters and repairers of porcelain because of the low cost of imported tableware. European glazed ceramic ware called *al-maliqī* replaced local products. If the potters of Damascus continued to make pottery, which were simple earthenware recipients, they were only sold to butter merchants, *ful* (beans) and *hummus* (chickpeas) vendors and to farmers too⁵⁶). The imports effected potters but also consumption patterns. These cheap articles, bought in town or in the countryside by a large range of consumers could easily be replaced. It was no longer necessary to get them mended by tableware repairers who until then did good business in the souks. Earthenware crafts, particularly the making of tableware, which had been carried on in Damascus since the Fatimid period and some of which had made the city famous during the Ayyubid, Mamluk and Ottoman periods, was no longer economically viable at the end of the 19th century. During the 20th century, the earthenware was gradually replaced by Chinese plastic plates, aluminium bowls and plastic cans which were more practical and above all cheaper. With this context I have demonstrated the strategy used by some potters over the last few years. They have thus adapted their production to a new market for foreigners and hotel owners anxious to “sell” tourists something of the Orient of the past. In the al-Arbaʿīn district of Hama, a pottery which had been in business for several generations, made glazed tableware of mediocre quality: storage jars, jugs, milk churns for Bedouins and villagers. Gradually these earthenware recipients were replaced by Chinese plastic plates, aluminium bowls and plastic cans which were more practical and above all cheaper. Given this situation, it became impossible for their pottery to compete with these new containers and several sons working in the family pottery changed their job. However one of them, Abu al-Rukab refused to give up making pottery. As making pottery for everyday use was no longer profitable, he decided to change his output and adapt to a new type of demand. He decided to turn to designs of past times. He was attracted to Syrian architectural ceramic work and tableware of the Ottoman period and tried to master the necessary production techniques. In his workshop at present he makes decorative tiles very similar to those made in Damascus from the 16th to the 18th century and bowls in the Ottoman style (pl. 10: 5, 6). These objects are produced for foreign and local clients. He does, in fact, supply tiles for restoring mosques in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. These architectural ceramics are also used, as a reflection of cultural heritage, to decorate restaurants and new hotels in historic districts of old cities. His strategy of returning to the past has paid off. By using former production methods which are the result of a long research on materials used in the past and by using traditional designs he can now earn his living and contribute to the preserving of traditional skills and the styles of the medieval and Ottoman potters of Syria.

56) Qāsimī (al-), 1960, p. 355, 356.

Since Middle Ages and until now, the Hama, Aleppo and Euphrates areas, in the supplied the whole Mediterranean world with cotton (pl. 10: 7, 8). In the 13th century, Syria was a great producer of cotton both in quantity and quality and the weaving of cotton material was widespread⁵⁷⁾. However, at that time, the speciality of the Syrian workshops seemed to be fabrics made of a silk cotton mixture. Hama for a long time was known as the weaving of cotton household linen and the technique of stamping on canvas⁵⁸⁾. However the arrival of manufactured products from Europe in the 19th century and then more recently from China have damaged local weaving. Textile crafts have suffered much from this. Some decided to give up whereas others chose to produce traditional quality pieces. Thus the al-Madanī brothers in Hama, household linen weavers, use only Syrian cotton and natural silk from the region of Deir Mama. The seven sons continue to use the same skills learnt from their father, respecting traditional techniques but they have improved the quality (pl.10: 9). They have decided to make only high quality fabrics. The women of the family embroider designs of Ottoman inspiration, using silk thread, or sometimes mixing gold and silver thread, on tablecloths, table napkins and *hammad* towels (pl.10: 10, 11). Unlike the difficulties met by other textile craftsmen, the al-Madanī family has been able to continue to produce artisanal household linen using old looms, excellent quality fabrics directed at the European market and rich Syrians.

The strategies adopted by these craftsmen so as to be able to make a living from their crafts involve carrying on using old skills and being inspired by styles of the past whilst giving priority to quality. Others use advanced techniques to improve their crafts like the stonecutters of Aleppo.

Since medieval times traditional building methods in the old city have produced an exceptional group of buildings, a relatively well-preserved inheritance. The traditional materials used for construction, stone, lime and wood came from local sources. Despite different treatments depending on the quality or use in building, these materials gave the city unity and brought homogeneity of colour and shape to the urban landscape. Lime, used for thousands of years, was the binder and the base of the mortar. From the beginning of the Ottoman period up to the French Mandate the architecture of traditional houses progressively changed and from the second half of the 19th century new domestic architecture appeared. This new design with a central hall is drastically different from the traditional architecture of Aleppo which is difficult to modernize⁵⁹⁾. At first, the external facades were very plain, with roughly shaped stone blocks, uncoated, in the tradition of the exterior cladding of the old city. However, before 1890 balconies, front steps and rich and more varied decoration appeared in dressed stone. Islamic or Arab decoration disappeared from the decorative range to be replaced by a range of western or Ottoman decoration which covered facades from 1900. This new way of living remained a reference until the 1960s and for a few years these houses have become part of the city's heritage. Construction techniques have indeed changed. From the end of the Ottoman period metal sections appeared in the local markets and reinforced concrete towards the end of the French mandate. For building, blocks of cement have often replaced stone. Although stone was a material, which was cheap and easily available at Aleppo, it has become costly and difficult to use. The fact that it has been put aside is not only due to financial reasons but because skills have been lost and materials are no longer available in their previous form. Today building with load bearing stone is rarely carried out in Aleppo but according to the building regulations, which are rarely adhered to, the basic building

57) Abī al-Qāsim b. Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-'arḍ*, Cairo, s.d., p. 200.

58) A.W. Yūsuf, "Ṭawā'if al-ḥiraf wa al-ṣinā'āt aw ṭawā'if al-aṣnāf fī Ḥamāh fī al-qarn al-sādis 'aṣar", *Les Annales archéologiques de Syrie*, 19, T. I-II, Damascus, 1969, pp. 85–102.

59) J.-C. David, "Nouvelles architectures domestiques à Alep au XIX^e siècle; expressions locales d'un phénomène régional", *Colloque international URBAMA, Tours, 15–16 juin 2001: La maison aux trois arcs et l'architecture domestique au Levant depuis 1800*, Beyrouth, Tours 2003, 2004, pp. 217–243; J. A. Massih, J.-C. Bessac, *Glossaire technique trilingue de la pierre l'exploitation en carrière*, Guide archéologique n° 7, Beirut, IFPO, 2009.

material for the old city is still stone and, more generally is obligatory for the whole city⁶⁰. Stonemasons were still working in a traditional way in the 1970^s–80^s (pl. 11: 1, 2). Nowadays stone-cutting is mechanised, it is done with electric saws and high-pressure water jets which make it possible to cut the limestone blocks in a neat and accurate way. Two techniques coexist. The first involves covering the masonry (a concrete framework is filled with masonry consisting of blocks of cement) with stone blocks. This technique produces walls 30 to 40 centimetres thick and involves weight constraints. This method can only be used for the whole facade. For the second method the stonemasons cut thin stone veneers, a few centimetres thick, which are then stuck onto the walls of the basic structure. These stone veneers are very thin which means that they can be used just on parts of the facade and decoration can be used in different areas, giving priority to the main points of the composition of facades. The implementation of thin stone veneers generally imitates classic construction methods but can also lead to more original compositions. This recent development constitutes an important step in stonework which is so praised and admired in Aleppo. Stonecutters have been able to adopt new technologies enabling them to fulfil more easily and cheaply traditional needs which are evolving.

In order to continue their work, several stone cutting workshops, in Hama and in the area have decided to make imitations. The craftsmen recuperate legally blocks of marble and limestone from old abandoned houses or strip archaeological sites illegally (pl. 11: 3, 4). They use traditional and modern tools to cut the stones and age them with different substances to give a patina. In this way they create capitals, cornices, spandrels and parts of doors decorated with motifs borrowed from Roman, Byzantine and Islamic decoration (pl. 11: 5, 6). As an expert who advises the law courts I can confirm that they are very good quality copies and specialists could be taken in by them. These cut blocks are then sold fraudulently in Lebanon or Turkey. Maintaining skills, even in this way, enables us today to rebuild identically or restore old buildings destroyed during the war in Aleppo and Homs. The Aga Khan Foundation, which is taking charge of a part of this work, employs stone cutters with recognised skills. In the workshops of Hama, the forgers also carve very high quality statues in the Sumerian, Assyrian and Greco-Roman style (pl. 11: 7). Some glassmakers have no qualms about blowing very good copies of Roman glass, with an antique patina and which are then sold as an antique abroad (pl. 11: 8). Others make well crafted fake mosaic floors, in Idlib and Hama, using ancient techniques and decoration in the Roman and Byzantine style. When it's possible, they recycle old mosaic tessera or cut bracelets out of Roman or Islamic glass in order to replace the glass paste (pl. 12: 1–3). To facilitate their sales, they don't have second thoughts about burying them in archaeological sites on the limestone Plateau so as to prove their age and better fool the buyers. Other mosaic makers, installed in Kafarnubel near Idlib, since 1996, and whose work is perfectly legal, took refuge in Mersin in Turkey in order to carry on with their work. The craftsman and his workers at the *Ibla Mosaic Art workshop* produce mosaic floors using traditional methods for Turkish and Lebanese customers. They make Greco-Roman and Byzantine copies as well as portraits of Atatürk or Erdoğan (!) and landscapes. We can't be sure if all these artisans were motivated at first by preserving their skills. It's understandable that their priority above all is to make a living from their craft. Whatever their work framework may be they contribute in this way to preserving traditional production techniques.

3.4. The impact of the civil war on traditional handicraft: some examples

The conflict which is at present destroying Syria, paradoxically has contributed to the revival of certain

60) T. Grandin, "Les problèmes de réhabilitation privée des monuments du patrimoine alépin: le cas des demeures traditionnelles", in J.-C. David, T. Boissière (dir.), *Alep et ses territoires. Fabrique et politique d'une ville (1868–2011)*, IFPO, Beirut-Damascus, 2014, pp. 481–519.

craft activities. So, some glass workers who having been deprived of their place of work in Damascus because of the war, went to the large glass producing centres in Armanāz. Glassmaking never stopped in that city and it can even be said that unlike many Syrians the glass makers of Armanāz have taken advantage of this war. Indeed, because of the fighting, in the region of Idlib, it has become difficult even impossible to get supplies from outside. Agreements with the rebel troupes encouraged them to produce and supply local people with preserving jars, drinking glasses and jugs. The glassmakers of that city are the last ones to carry out their trade. Somewhat similarly the production of potters north of Aleppo has started up again which was unhoped-for. In Kafra, a workshop made pipes, chimney flues and terracotta gutters with great competition from PVC pipes or cement of different sizes which was less expensive and made in Syrian factories, because of the fighting, this workshop has closed and the potters have gone to refugee camps. Since the spreading of hostilities to the whole country, some PVC factories have stopped their production. Those which are still open have great difficulty in disposing of their products because long distance delivering has become difficult if not impossible and production costs have considerably increased because of electricity cuts and the shortage of fuel oil. When the Aleppo region became more peaceful, potters from the Kafra workshop went home. They are taking advantage of the rebuilding of houses, production has started up again and large quantities of pipes are being produced as they are easier to place than PVC ones and in that there is also a cement shortage (pl. 12: 4, 5). Traditional building work is also resuming (pl. 13: 1, 2). In the regions of Aleppo and Idlib, non-governmental humanitarian associations are supplying tents at 900 euros per family in order to house many refugee families from Homs, Aleppo and Damascus. Their lifespan is estimated at one year. Two associations, The Union of Civil Society Organization financed by the UN and the Qatar Red Crescent Society, have proposed another solution, for the same price: the building of traditional houses of 36 or 24 square metres using ancient traditional methods which are better adapted to the climate and give more privacy and extra comfort (pl. 13: 3–6). This solution, furthermore allows for men and women to be employed for the building. The walls are made from mud bricks, a mixture of earth and straw covered with a coating of rammed earth. These houses which are made using traditional techniques in Syria⁶¹, have a flat earth roof on wooden beams and a plastic tarpaulin. In order to facilitate the making of bricks and to make more in a shorter time, an engineer from Sfira has invented a machine which compresses the earth and the straw so as to make the bricks harder and more regular in size (pl. 13: 7). Thus we see that the mastering of ancient skills can be useful in times of crisis.

4. Documenting skills because we are unable to maintain them: textiles in Syria

Another important aspect of Syrian craftsmanship which is today disappearing is that of weaving done by Bedouins. Indeed the policy of making the Bedouins sedentary carried out by successive governments since the 1950^s, present day hostilities going on in the steppe as well as the closing of frontiers between Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, have had a considerable effect on the way of life of these nomads. Their subsistence economy and their way of life largely depend on the animals which provide them with meat, milk, leather and wool (pl. 14: 1–3). Fewer and fewer of the women who are in charge of the making of tents in their entirety, inside partitions and floor rugs, do weaving (pl. 14: 4, 6, 7; pl.15). In the Hadidiyyīn tribe for example, the women made not only the tent canvass but all the cloth for lining the inside and for decoration with patchwork and appliquéd cloth and embroidered panels as well as reed partitions to divide up the different

61) P. Rondot, "Les tribus montagnardes de l'Asie antérieure. Quelques aspects sociaux des populations kurdes et assyriennes", *Bulletin des Etudes Orientales*, 6, 1937, pl. I: 1; S. Reich, *Etudes sur les villages araméens de l'Anti-Liban*, Documents d'Etudes orientales, VII, 1938, p. 56, pl. VI: a.

areas of the tent. In 2007, these canvass houses were replaced by houses roughly built with concrete breezeblocks. Materials couldn't be hung on the very hard walls but the women carried on making panels of coloured patchwork because they were used to making them and liked doing it. Two years later, these panels were replaced by Chinese materials. Furthermore, the gradual replacement by cars of camels, horses, mules and donkeys has contributed to the disappearance of woven saddle rugs and saddlebags. From 1980 to 1990, there were almost 1500 felt makers in the region of Aleppo, men working in the city and Bedouin women. Originally, the felt rugs had the natural colour of sheep's wool, grey, white, black or brown. In order to make their products more attractive, the craftsmen introduced chemical dyes which enabled them to create brightly coloured patterns (pl. 14: 5). The gradual disappearance of this activity began around the 1990s. This is due to intensive sheep rearing which disrupted the traditions connected to wool and the appearance, on the Syrian market, of Chinese plastic mats which were easier to keep clean. Only a few craftsmen still use this technique in the Aleppo area⁶².

For this last aspect of my research, I could cross the information I gathered myself in the field and the studies conducted by Claude Mabéle, a textile artist who is enamoured with Syria. She wanted to collect, protect and pass on a skill, that of Syrian textile making. In order to do this, she travelled around Syria between 2002 and 2010 in search of the last textile craftsmen. She herself knows textiles and the way they are made very well, she has carried out an extensive survey from Damascus to Aleppo via Homs, Hama, Dreikich, Qseir, Deir Māma, Shoghour, al-Bâb and Qala'at Najem. She has acquired many pieces of material and dresses which are today in several French state-owned collections: in the Musée Bargoin in Clermont-Ferrand; in the Musée des Confluences in Lyon and in the MUCEM in Marseilles. These are mainly large shawls, both silk and cotton, silk Bedouin scarves, rolls of silk brocade, cotton tablecloths decorated with a block print pattern, multicoloured patchworks, large embroidered panels, felt rugs and partitions for tents (pls. 24–25). A short book and several exhibitions as well as a 45 minutes documentary film have brought a first insight into this activity which has been carried out both in cities and amongst the Bedouins. C. Mabéle also has a collection of more than 300 photographs that I will use in to make technical data sheets about this heritage which is disappearing or has completely disappeared today. These data sheets would back up the material collections kept in French museums. The data concerns: — urban workshops using silk, cotton, sheep's wool, goat hair and articles made by Bedouins; — city craftsmen and the women of the Hadidiyyīn, Turki and Hawks Bedouin tribes and those on the banks of the Euphrates; — raw materials, silk (*ḥarīr*), cotton (*quṭun*), sheep's wool (*ṣūf*) goat hair (*šar*); — production techniques (preparing the thread, block printing techniques, screen printing and felt work, patchwork, appliqué, embroidery and dyeing); — equipment (blocks), traditional hand weaving looms and Jacquard weaving looms (pl.16). The survey will also deal with retail outlets and thus stalls in the souks of Damascus and those of Aleppo — which were destroyed during the war — of which there are numerous shots⁶³.

In order to better understand these doomed skills, I will make a cross disciplinary comparison of sources as I am used to doing. My knowledge of ancient texts will indeed enable me to compare the recent data with that mentioned in the *hišba* and by several authors of the 11th–13th centuries pertaining to the cultivation of cotton, silk production, the making of material and their regulated sale⁶⁴. Concerning the Ottoman period, I will make use of the post-death inventories of Damascenes established in the 18th century⁶⁵. They give us much information on lace-makers, tailors and dyers; city cloth sellers; on their work areas; on the different types of cloth and the various garments to

62) Mabéle, 2012.

63) D. Hubert, "Les *Qaysariyya* de textile: un équipement dans la ville d'Alep", *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, XXXVI, 1984, pp. 127–135.

64) Māwardī (al-), 2002, pp. 315–329; al-Uḥuwwa, 1932, p. 136, 137, 141, 143.

65) C. Establet, J.-P. Pascual, *Des tissus et des hommes. Damas vers 1700*, IFPO, Damascus, 2005.

be found in houses and their uses. For this period other studies put textiles in the economic context of the Ottoman Empire and the trade relations with Europe, in particular the silk trade between France and the Ottoman Empire in the 18th century⁶⁶). At the end of the 19th century, technical terms and technological details were collected by Adrien Barthélémy for his *Dictionnaire Arabe-Français des dialectes de Syrie*⁶⁷). He photographed several silk and cotton spoolers. The silk, cotton and woollen cloth crafts, dyeing and the cloth trade were documented by al-Qāsimī at the beginning of the 20th century. Several fairly recent ethnological studies are on the printed canvasses of Hama⁶⁸), on the *ikatés* fabrics of Aleppo and Damascus⁶⁹), on the Bedouin textile craft *‘Agēdāt* in the Middle Euphrates⁷⁰), on the survival mechanisms set up in the textile craft in Aleppo⁷¹) in the 1980^s. These craft activities will also be surveyed in parallel with the Syrian textile industry⁷²) which has expanded since the 1970^s. Thus this is about documenting different branches of the textile craft through this rich collection of images taken in the 2000s and to reposition this major Syrian activity in a wider historical context to show how this activity has declined and perhaps find potential solutions in order to save what can still be saved.

* * *

From the Middle Ages until just a short time ago Syria was one of the most renowned Middle Eastern countries for its handicrafts. The craftsmen have always been able to innovate and offer their customers quality products. This desire for modernisation has sometimes carried a high price for the public as it is partly responsible for the massacre of Damascene Christians in 1860. It should be remembered that European factories made textiles which began to pour on to the Syrian market in 1840 and made thousands of craftsmen and weavers in Damascus and Aleppo disappear. Hand looms were not able to resist the arrival of industrial production. Only one Christian family, the Boulad family, managed to resist this competition⁷³). In the Middle Ages the Boulad family specialised in the making of steel blades which made their fortune. From the 16th century, they became engaged in the important Damascene silk business. In the 19th century, they were renowned silk makers and owned several factories in Damascus. In 1850, in order to improve their production, they bought French Jacquard weaving looms. Thanks to their branches in Beirut, Jerusalem and Izmir and their European family network, their high quality fabrics, particularly the silk brocades, were marketed in the Middle East and in Europe. In 1859, the silkworm disease caused silk worm breeding in China and France to disappear. Syria escaped that scourge which caused a net increase in demand for Syrian silk⁷⁴). Encouraged by the silk makers of Lyon, the French Second Empire government then suggested to the Ottomans that they might provoke — through high-ranking Muslim intermediaries — the persecution of Christians which finished by the expatriation of all the Syrian silk workers to Egypt and the buying up of their products at a cheap price. If the French expedition of 1860–1861 was intended to support the Christian communities of Syria of which France had declared herself to be the protector, the economic rivalry linked to production and the silk trade played

66) Banat, Ferguene, 2010; S. Yilmaz, *La soie dans les relations commerciales entre la France et l'Empire ottoman au XVIII^e siècle (1700–1789)*, PhD, Paris I-Sorbonne University, 1985.

67) D. Chevallier, “Techniques et société en Syrie”, *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, XVIII, 1963–1964, pp. 85–93.

68) J. Gaulmier, “Note sur les toiles imprimées de Hama”, *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, VII-VIII, 1937–1938, pp. 265–279.

69) D. Chevallier, “Un exemple de résistance de l'artisanat syrien aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles. Les tissus ikatés d'Alep et de Damas”, *Syria*, XXXIX, 1962, pp. 300–324.

70) D'Hont, 1994; S. J. Henri Charles, “Quelques travaux des femmes chez les nomades moutonniers de la région de Homs-Hama”, *Bulletin d'études orientales*, VII-VIII, 1938, pp. 195–214.

71) J. Cornand, “L'artisanat du textile à Alep: survie ou dynamisme ?”, *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, XXXVI, 1984, pp. 79–126.

72) J. Cornand, *L'entrepreneur et l'Etat en Syrie: le secteur privé du textile à Alep*, Paris, 1994.

73) T. Bülād, *Ta'riḥ al-funūn wa al-ṣinā'āt al-dimašqiyya*, trad. I. Bülād, Damascus, 2003, p. 171, 175.

74) G. Ducoussu, *L'industrie de la soie en Syrie*, Paris, 1913.

a part in this bloody episode. Thus we see that craftsmanship is an important issue in a country's development. I have provided a few examples which show the potential of cross disciplinary comparison of sources based on written sources, archaeological material and ethnological surveys in order to study skills, techniques, practices and traditions and how to deal with their maintenance, their disappearance or how they can adapt. Syria's policy concerning its heritage, when the country begins its reconstruction, will most probably give priority to historical sites, buildings and museums. The acknowledgement of traditions and skills that has made the reputation of this country for several centuries must also find its proper place. I think that a good knowledge of traditional crafts and the way they evolve over the long term would enable us to highlight the ways to help artisans to carry on working and to earn a good living. Tradition does not mean excluding new technologies which can enable old trades to live on. Traditional crafts must be able to make a successful transition from the old world to the new. This is an important challenge for the future. The Syrian state and the Syrians must be made aware of how rich their artisanal heritage is in order to prevent its disappearance. These crafts can be an important source of wealth for the country when peace returns and Syria opens up again to outsiders.

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Pl. 1: Jug for storing a honey and butter mixture in the Sultanate of Oman today (1); miniature in the *Kalīla wa Dimna* (Ibn al-Muqaffa', 2005) (2); pot for honey in Spain, 10th–11th century (© Albrecht) (3). Black cooking pots from the Abou Qobeys excavations, 12th century (Shaddoud, 2014) (4); current manufacture with the same techniques in Tartous today (5–8) (cl. Alsaleem).



Pl. 2: Brick/stone built bread oven, Abou Qobeys, 12th–13th century (1–2); bread oven at Massyaf (3); bread oven at the Crac des Chevaliers, 12th–13th century (4); stone built bread oven at Marqab, 12th–13th century (5) and during the Ottoman period (6); wood fuelled bread oven in Lebanon (7); oil fuelled bread oven in Syria (8); industrial bakeries in Salamiye (9).



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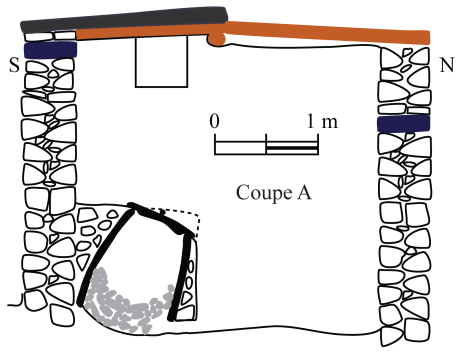
Pl. 3: Masonry ovens in the refugee camps today (1–3); remains of ovens at Abou Qobeys, 11th–13th century (4, 5); masonry oven in the Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī, 12th century, (Ettinghausen, 1962) (6); tannūr in al-Ṭayyibe (7) and Ṣūrān (8).



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Pl. 4: Bayt al-tannūr in Salamiye (1–3); traditional manufacturing of the tannūr in Şūrān (4–8).



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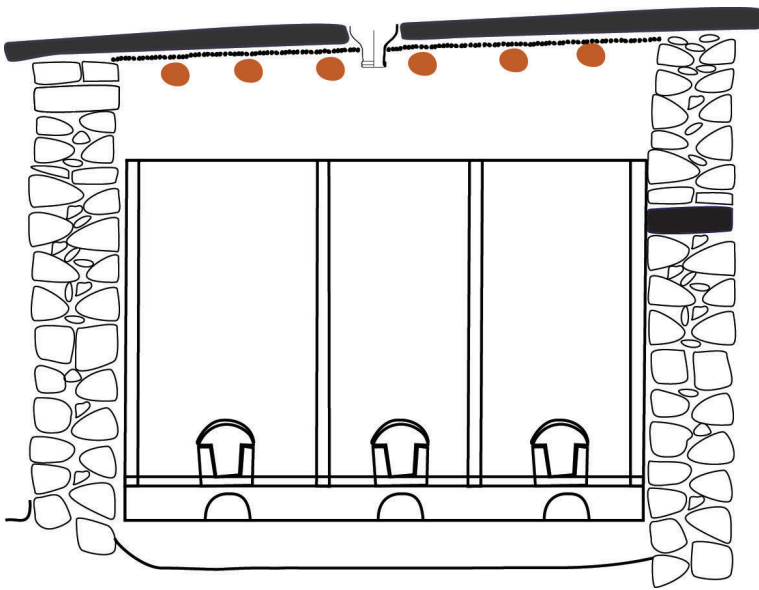
Pl. 5: Tannūrs in Şūrān (1), in Tartous (© Alsaleem) (2) and metallic tannūr in Salamiye (3); traditional and modern tannūrs fuelled with wood (4), gaz (5) and fuel (6).



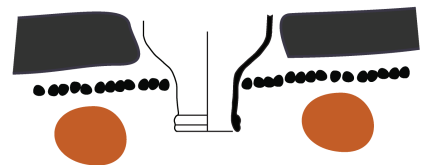
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Pl. 6: Wheat put out to dry on a roof in Damascus (1); *al-rawzana*, half jar embedded in the ceiling of the granary at Salamiye (2–4); *qatramiz*, glass storage jar in Damascus (Imam, 1975) (5); al-Qazzāz glassmaker in Damascus (al-Kayal, 2007) (6); glass storage jars in Damascus, 1890 (7).



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Pl. 7: *Qatramiz* carrier from the workshop to the souk, Damascus, 1890 (1); glass storage jars, Damascus, 1980 (2); bell-shaped glass coverings to light the domes of hammams, Aleppo (3); glass blower in Damascus (4); glass tableware and decoration pieces for the Syrian market and for the tourists (5–9).



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Pl. 8: An 'ud on the fresco in the Umayyad palace at Qaṣr al-Ḥeir al-Ġarbī, 724–743 (from Otto-Dorn, 1967) (1); a musician playing 'ud on a lustre painted ware, 11th century (Bender, Baudis, Alloula *et al.*, 2008) (2); 'ud player in a miniature from Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī, 12th century ('Ukāša, 1992) (3); Ḥalid al-Ḥalapī in his workshop, Beirut, 2016 (4). Silk cocoons in Syria (5, 6).



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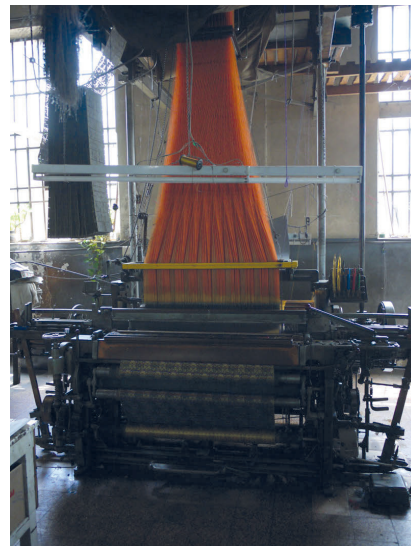
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Pl. 9: Silk making in Syria from the raw material to the modern mechanization (1–5) (© Mabélé, 'Ukāša, 1992); coexistence of traditional workshops (al-Kayāl, 2007) (6) and manufactures - Mezannar manufacture for the silk brocart (© Mabélé) (7).



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Pl. 10: French and English tablewares in Istanbul, 19th century (1–3); French jars from Biot in Istanbul, 18th century (4). Syrian imitations of Ottoman tiles, Hama (5, 6). Cotton cultivation, Qal'at Nağim (© Mabelé) (7, 8); production of traditional quality pieces in the al-Madani brothers workshop, Hama (9–11) (© Mabelé).



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Pl. 11: Stonecutters in Tartous, 2004 (© Sassine) (1, 2); copies of Roman and Byzantine architectural elements with old marble and limestone blocks, Hama, 2006 (3–4); stonecutters, in Damascus, 1930 (5) and Aleppo in present time (© Zakkour) (6); statues in Roman styles made in Hama, 2009 (7); copy of Roman glass (8).



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Pl. 12: Fake mosaic floor using ancient techniques and decoration in the Byzantine style, Idlib, Hama and Ibla workshop in Turkey (1–3). Pipes, chimney flues and terracotta Gutters made in Kafra for the rebuilding of houses in present time (4–5).



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Pl. 13: Building of traditional houses in Damascus and North Syria, 1936 and 1937 (Rondot, 1937, Reich, 1938) (1, 2) and 1980 (3); houses made today for refugee families in Idlib and Aleppo using traditional techniques (4–6), a machine which compresses the earth and the straw (7).



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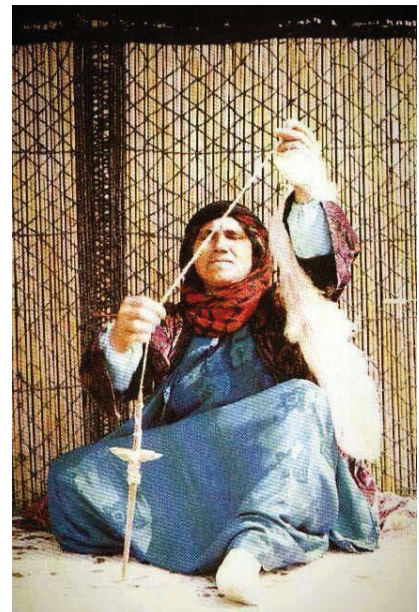
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Pl. 14: Preparation of lamb and goat wools by the Bedouins (© Mabélé) (1–3); Bedouin from Homs weaving a tent (4) (Henri Charles, 1938); felt rug (© Mabélé) (5); spinner in a miniature from the *Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī*, 12th century (Ettinghausen, 1962) (6).



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Pl. 15: Bedouins in Salamiye making reed partitions (© Mabelé) (1–3); Bedouin tents in Salamiye, white for the summer and black for the winter (4, 5); weaving elements for the tents (© Mabelé) (6).



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Pl. 16: Block printing technique on cotton and silk (© Mabelé) (1–4); urban workshop using silk and making brocart (© Mabelé) (5–7).