Residents of the Cities in the Levant

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Abstract

Since the Umayyads took over the rule of the Levant, the reconstruction of the region began during their era, the term "reconstruction," according to Ibn Khaldun, means that people settled in one place, and the ultimate goal of urbanization is civilization, followed by the build of a state, where the Umayyads replaced the nomadic lifestyle with urban living. The Levant, as a geographical area of civilization, possesses the elements necessary for life, previous civilizations, such as the Arameans, Phoenicians, Hellenistic, and Roman, thrived there, each contributing its own architectural and cultural characteristics. The prosperity of the cities in the Levant throughout its long history can be attributed to a combination of economic and commercial factors that played a significant role in the emergence of both inland and coastal trade cities, due to the abundance of agricultural land, rainfall, and river waters. With the arrival of Muslims in the Levant, urban development flourished, transforming ancient cities into Islamic ones. Mosques, governor's houses, and walls were constructed to ensure their security and political stability. The Umayyads also established new cities out of necessity and civilizational advancement, such as Ramla and Rusafa. The predominant characteristic of these new cities was their military necessity, along with economic benefits. The Roman city necessarily included a fortress due to its military nature, but Breneh argues that a city should also have commercial centers, markets, and trade routes. Greenbaum described a city as having political authority, markets, geographical boundaries, and a council of residents. The Arab city was distinguished by its mosque, markets, governor's house, walls, and palaces. Massignon noted that Islamic cities relied on key elements, primarily financial institutions, money changers, and commercial shops (qaysariyya). Some Islamic cities were built on a tribal basis, as the foundation of society was tribal. The Arabs were not new to urban life; Mecca and Medina were already established commercial and religious cities before Islam. With the Islamic conquests, Muslims built cities in Egypt and Iraq, so it was not strange for Arabs to inhabit or develop cities. Thus, Arabs populated most of the regions and lands they entered, spreading civilization and urban life in industry, agriculture, and trade. The conquering Muslims were the first to transform the Levant into cities and military camps, moving their dwellings from tents to houses. Omar bin Al-Khattab ordered the people to settle in cities like Damascus, Aleppo, and Hama, which during the Umayyad period had mosques, centers of governance, administration, and markets. After the Muslims settled, they added a number of modern cities such as Ramla and Rusafa, which were built by Hisham bin Abdul Malik. What is important to us here is that the Arab Islamic conquests were a factor in the ever-developing civil and urban construction, such that they were able to create advanced human activities in the political, economic and social fields and the emergence of civil society institutions such as housing, institutions, craft unions and others, as the Levantine cities became productive cities that provided all the necessities of life for their residents under the Umayyad rule.

Keywords: Umayyad Caliphate, Reconstruction, Islamic Cities, Urban Development.

Introduction

Since the Umayyads took power in the Levant, they initiated a comprehensive and extensive process of construction; urbanization, which refers to building and construction for the purpose of housing and establishing structures, as stated in Arabic language dictionaries (1) Ibn Manzur, Lisan, p. 4. We find that Ibn Khaldun, who explored the term "urbanization," then established a specific meaning for it that has a broad and comprehensive connotation, related to an independent science he called "the science of urbanization" (2) Ibn Khaldun, Introduction, p.

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335. This scientific term was first used by Ibn Khaldun and refers to the gathering of people and their residence in a specific place; Ibn Khaldun studied urbanization in two fields:

1.   First: Bedouin architecture, which is the oldest.

2.   Second: Urban architecture, which follows.

He made the advancement and development of peoples in their nomadic or urban societies dependent on the nature of urbanization. He studied its dynamics and the developments occurring within it, concluding that the ultimate goal and result of urbanization is civilization, which he described as conditions that exceed the necessities of urban life. He contrasted civilization with what is referred to as "king," meaning the state. (3) Majid, Islamic Civilization, p. 2.

In our study of the urbanization of cities in the Levant during the Umayyad period, our concept generally aligns with Ibn Khaldun's description of urbanization. One of the most significant developments in the structure of Arab society after the spread of Muslims and their influx into the Levant was their transition from life in the desert to residing in cities. Historically, it is evident that urban life in the Levant has been active since ancient times, as reflected in the fame and names of the Aramaic, Phoenician, and Hellenistic cities (323 BCE) in the eastern Mediterranean, which were at the peak of Greek influence in the ancient world and were cities with a distinct character.

The civil life during the periods of Roman and later Byzantine rule was characterized by a distinctive pattern, as the concept of the city for the Romans was a specific political and social notion derived from Greek civilization, to which they added what they deemed suitable and aligned with the circumstances of their state.

During the Roman era, the Levant was divided into numerous regions (1) Philip Hitti, p. 294-295, where the prosperity and development of the Levantine cities can be attributed to a combination of economic and trade factors, as well as their geographical location. One of the most significant aspects was the Levant's position on global trade routes, leading to the emergence of many inland cities as thriving trade stations. Coastal cities also flourished, and some cities contained relatively extensive agricultural lands. The abundance of water and the presence of rivers further supported their establishment, along with many industrial centers, such as textile production, for which the Levant was historically renowned, transforming Levantine cities into advanced cultural hubs. (2) Fathi Othman, Islamic Borders, p. 30.

The Islamic conquests played a significant role in the revival of cities and urban development in the Levant. The conquering soldiers settled in the ancient Levantine cities, transforming places with old urban systems, such as Damascus, Aleppo, and Homs, into Islamic cities that adopted an Islamic identity and character. These cities were imbued with the characteristics and qualities of Islamic urbanism to meet the needs of Muslims, starting with the construction of the grand mosque in accordance with the prophetic tradition, and the establishment of the governor's residence and public facilities like markets, housing, and walls, ensuring political stability and security. Additionally, the general development necessitated the construction of several new or newly established cities, such as Ramla and Rusafa. Through this urbanization, the Arabs demonstrated that they were a rapidly evolving and growing nation that builds and develops wherever they settle, rather than causing destruction. (3) Archibald Lewis, The Naval Forces, p. 11, 15.

If we want to study the Islamic city in the Levant, we must return to the past and the cultural history of the Arabs in this area, and clarify the idea of cultural communication between the past and the present, which is beneficial for preserving the artifacts and plans of the Arab Islamic city and the advantages and benefits of that modern and contemporary Arab century in the Levant. (4) Abd Al-Jabbar Naji, Studies, p. 30.

One might wonder: what is the city in the Levant? Foreign scholars have contributed to the study of it; some of them traced the origins of the city to the existence of a fortress or tower, and these are proponents of the military theory and military interpretation of the city's emergence (1) FemaitLand, Township and Borough, p. 18. This is connected to these fortifications and castles for the purpose of protecting themselves and their trade in general. (2) Kenneth, Bolding: The Death of the City, p. 133.

As for the opinion of Henri Pirenne, especially considering him as a specialist in the study of trading cities: he states that a fortress or citadel does not possess the characteristics of a city, because the fortress is closed off and designated for military personnel, not for all the inhabitants, both civilians and military. This is particularly true during times of war, as it only provides the essential necessities of life for a limited period and does not facilitate the daily civil life. What is important in a city or fortress is the centers and commercial gatherings established around them, where traders meet outside the walls, benefiting from these economic and geographical conditions, such as the passage of trade caravans along trade routes, along these routes, centers arise that gradually transform into trading cities outside the fortress walls, according to this interpretation, the city is primarily a community of traders. (3) H. Pirenne in the Historian and the city, p. 133.

Likewise, we find the orientalist Grunchaum citing a Greek historian who died in 176 CE, as having explained the characteristics that a place must have for it to become a city and the name of a city. He found that it consists of seven basic characteristics: the presence of political authority, a gymnasium, a theater, and a market. (4) - Van Grunbaum: The Muslimtown and Helienistic, p. 364. Water, clear borders, and a council that includes members and representatives of the population, thus, this place is a city. (5) Abd Al-Jabbar Naji, History of Cities, p. 42-45.

There is no doubt that historians and geographers have contributed, like others, to clarifying the criteria and specifications for the places, locations, regions and towns that were later called the city, and this is the core of our topic on the cities of the Levant (6) Al-Maqdisi, the best divisions, p. 47, mentions that the dowry is a common place where the boundaries are established, and amir (sultan) resides there and pays its expenses and collects its tax from the branches and trees. (7) As for Yaqut al-Hamawi, he mentions the components of defining a city, including: the size of the population, the necessity of providing a population density, the presence of a congregational mosque and a pulpit, the availability of potable water and economic production from agriculture and trade. (8) Yaqut, Dictionary, p. 421, 114, 4, 5.

As for Ibn Khaldun, who is an expert in population development, he contributed to setting definitions of the city and the characteristics that it must have. (1) Ibn Khaldun, Introduction, p. 851.

As for recent studies on the city, a study on the history of Islamic civilization highlighted the foundations of building an Islamic city in terms of the presence of the mosque, markets, the governor's house, walls and their gates, as well as the existence of large buildings such as palaces

and recreational facilities like attached gardens. (2) Majid, History of Civilization, p. 102-107. Additionally, the French researcher L. Massignon, in his research on the Islamic city, views markets as the central component of the city's economic structure. According to Massignon, the Islamic city relied on several elements, the first being the financial aspect, which refers to the financial offices for expenditures or revenues and money changers in the markets. The second element is the qaysariyya, which consists of a collection of shops and various commercial establishments within a market that has a fixed entrance. The third element is the market or a group of markets, and the fourth element is the presence of a school, educational house, or university adjacent to the mosque within the city. (3) L. Massignon, p. 473-90.

Masinus' studies of the city and its structure were followed by other important prospective studies, such as Bernard Lewis's study, in which he traced an important and special aspect, namely the role of the guild in the city for the professionals. (4) M. Lewis, The Islamic History, p. 20-22.

The French researcher and Orientalist, Marcais, who is knowledgeable in the Arabic language and its dialects, raised the issue of classifying Arab cities into two categories: the first category includes cities that were established as a result of the Arab Islamic conquests, where Islamic religion and Arab military strategy had a significant impact on their formation. These cities, known as "al-amsar," were founded by the Arabs, highlighting their civilizational contributions to the establishment of new cities in his view. The second category comprises cities that existed prior to the Arab conquests, namely ancient cities that held a prominent civilizational status during the Greek and Roman periods. (5) W. Marcais: LIslemisme. P. 86-100.

The French oriental archaeologist Edmond Pauty also addressed the same topic in his research on types or categories of cities. He referred to the two ancient categories as "self-originating cities," which emerged from a simple initial presence and then evolved into a city, known in gradual development as moving from small to large, expanding and developing. This represents the spontaneous evolution of a city. The other category, according to Pauty, is "created cities," meaning cities that were deliberately planned and constructed based on specific foundations and principles, rather than developing gradually like self-originating cities. He also pointed out the population distribution of Islamic cities (1) E. Pauty, Villes et Villes in Annale de, Instituted, Etudes orientales (1 × 1951) PP. 52-72, it was built on a tribal foundation at the time, as the basis of society and its leadership was primarily the tribe until the Umayyad period. The social plans shaped the general layout of the city and became the foundation of its architectural structure, which was distributed tribally, Pauty pointed to the importance of the market and its significant strategic location for social and economic considerations next to the mosque, then he identified the existence of the wall, which served as a line of defense and protection for the city and was essential to its formation, the cemetery was located outside the walls, and Pauty may be one of the few who considered the cemetery as fundamental to the city's formation, along with the straight central street, which is a characteristic of Arab Islamic cities. (2) E. Pauty, op cit, p. 74-75. I believe that Arab Islamic cities were somewhat influenced by Roman cities in the Levant, where the straight street can be found in most ancient Roman and Greek archaeological sites in the Levant and Egypt.

However, there was an opposing trend regarding the urban development of the city among some Orientalists. They found that the situation of the Arab city was originally a model or a direct evolution from Roman or Greek cities, and that as Islamic cities, they were disorganized. Among the proponents of this view was the French Orientalist Sauvaget, who stated that the cities of

Damascus, Aleppo, and Latakia were not Islamic; they are ancient cities that existed before the Islamic conquests, specifically before the year 15 AH when the Arab conquerors entered the Levant after the Battle of Yarmouk. He argued that their planning was not Islamic and that they remained ancient cities, with the Arab conquerors not adding any significant amount of planning to them. Instead, they retained their old layouts without change, and the few or superficial additions made led to a distortion and decline in their internal structure. It is evident that Sauvaget's views are accurate and applicable to the city of Aleppo (3) J. Sauvaget, Alep, Paris 1941, p. 68-69.

Thus, it represents Aleppo as one of the Arab Islamic cities. As for the other Arab Islamic cities, the description of "sauvage" does not fully apply to them. The city of Aleppo is historically characterized by its antiquity, with its origins in construction tracing back to the Canaanite period rather than to the Roman or ancient Greek rule in the Levant.

Additionally, the Orientalist Stern researched and explored the structure of the Arab Islamic city, discussing the views of others such as Mossignon, and noted in his study that the urban planning of Islamic cities was derived from ready-made plans of ancient Greek cities, such as the street and the central market; and that the city does not contain a cohesive structural unit and its architectural layout is disorganized (1) S. M. Stern, The constitution of the Islamic city in Islamic city (Oxford) 29, 30, 32, 36, 40.

The collection of these various opinions and beliefs focuses on the study of the history of Islamic Arab cities since the Islamic conquests of the Levant. It is a specific field in the construction of Islamic Arab cities, encompassing historical aspects, urban planning, as well as social and economic dimensions. This is part of the broader topic of Arab civilization, which intersects with the civilization of its artifacts and geography. This leads us to understand that the Arabs had a pre-existing concept and knowledge of the city, derived from their famous cities in Al-Hijaz, Mecca and Medina, and their ancient trade with the Levant and Yemen, as mentioned in a Qur'anic verse in Surah (2) (Quraish, The Holy Quran, p. 602).

The Arabs were familiar with urban centers in the Arabian Peninsula before their spread in urban areas prior to Islam. In the Quran, there are expressions referring to various types of population and human gatherings, including urban ones, which are the subject of our research where commercial dealings and economic activities such as buying, selling, and monetary exchange take place. (3) The Holy Quran, Surah Al-A'raf, Verse 123:

﴿ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ آمَنتُم بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ آذَنَ لَكُمْ إِنَّ هٰذَا لَمَكْرٌ مَّكَرْتُمُوهُ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ﴾

And in Surah At-Tawbah, Verse 101: ﴿وَمِنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْمَدِينَةِ مَرَدُواْ عَلَى ٱلنِّفَاقِ﴾ In all cases, the Arabs were acquainted with urban life before Islam and before the conquests.

Thus, the city is the place or the gathering of people; and the term "Hadara" also refers to cities, as you say Hadarat Al-Sham, which refers to Damascus, and Hadarat Iraq, which refers to Baghdad, due to what it contains of authority, power, scientific schools, mosques, institutes, markets, the seat of the Caliphate, and the expression Hadara (1) Al-Jawhari, Al-Sahah, entry Hadara. It refers to cities and villages, and Hadara is the person who lives in cities or villages. In this, Al-Zamakhshari points out an important matter in this regard when he says: What is meant by Hadara is building a house (home), and the equipment of construction is brick and plaster (2) Al-Zamakhshari, Asas Al-Balagha, p. 130. It means the stones used in building houses in cities. As for the expression civilization, its linguistic origin has been determined by the root (Hadar), (Hadra), and (Hadaara), and it means residing in the city. (3) Majid, History of

Civilization, p. 9.

There is another term for the Islamic city that was first used by Muslims, which is "Misr" or "Al-Amsar." In language, it means the boundary or barrier between two matters or locations (4) Ibn Manzur, Arab Tongue, entry on Misr. This designation is associated with the Islamic amṣār or cities or villages established by the Arabs after and during the conquests, particularly noting the two most famous cities, which are Basra and Kufa in Iraq. This term or expression is equivalent to the term "city" that the Arabs built on the edges of the desert to maintain a direct connection with the center of the Islamic caliphate (5) Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan, 336, 445; Al-Tabari, History, p. 41.

Thus, the definition of a city or urban area becomes clear; it is a place where people gather and engage in economic, political, and social activities. For Arabs, the concept of the city is both ancient and modern, as it is inherently part of their living areas in the Arabian Peninsula before and after Islam. They have a genuine experience with cities, where the city signifies urbanization, civilization, and development, in contrast to villages and the desert.

When we apply this to the Levant during the Umayyad period, which is our main topic, we notice that the Arab Islamic armies were distributed into military divisions that camped and settled near the main cities of the Levant. Over time, due to military, social, and economic circumstances, these divisions and centers evolved into stable urban centers. This is particularly significant as the Levant had a unique status concerning cities, with Muslim Arab conquerors residing in the ancient cities of the Levant and its surrounding areas, specifically in its four main military divisions: Jund Damascus, Jund Homs, Jund Jordan, and Jund Palestine, followed by Jund Qinnasrin. This contrasts with their settlement in Iraq and Egypt, where they lived in military bases designated for their habitation (6) Ibn Al-Adim, Bughyat Al-Talab, p. 141.

Therefore, it became customary in the Levant that the tent encampments of the Muslim army, which had surrounded the cities during the siege of Damascus led by Abu Ubaidah Amir ibn al-Jarrah, transformed into residential towns (1) Ibn Asakir, History of Damascus, 1, p. 186. Historical accounts indicate that the Arab tribes forming the Muslim army besieged the city of Damascus for nearly a year until it was conquered. After the conquest, the Arab Muslims did not settle in the city immediately, waiting until they could secure all of the Levant. Thus, each tribe initially camped in their tents around Damascus. Once the conquest was fully realized, the tents were converted into complete settlements with the construction of houses, cultivation of land, and its reclamation, all in the same area designated for each tribe, which led the second caliph, Omar bin Al-Khattab, to grant them the land they had developed and inhabited. (2) Edmond Pauty, Villes spontanecs et villes. P. 58, 59.

Omar bin Al-Khattab established a rule for women and ages, directing the leaders of the armies in the Levant that they should not reside in villages but rather leave them for the cities. This emphasized the necessity of remaining in the cities, ensuring that each city had at least one mosque as a fundamental support for building the Islamic city and its unity, while prohibiting any manifestation of division or individuality (3) Ibn Asakir, History, p. 231.

Another important principle emerged in the construction of the Islamic city, which was the settlement of the conquering Muslims among the local population. Most of the peace terms with the cities of the Levant were based on the condition that the tribes would disperse within their new urban centers, meaning they would occupy the houses that had been vacated by their former inhabitants and share their homes. Here, we observe that the residential organization was based

on placing tribes according to tribal foundations, with each tribe having its own designated quarter. The basic unit for sharing and interaction among the Arabs was the tribe, not the individual, which served as the foundation for the military fighting units (4) Khalifa bin Khayyat, History, p. 126-130, Abd Al-Amir Abd Al-Hussein, The Umayyad Caliphate, p. 141.

We notice the emergence of a new model in the Arab city that aligns with the nature of the Arabs, where the function of the Islamic Arab city is defined by two factors:

The first factor: the presence of political and administrative authority, which is linked to the governor's house where the prince or appointed governor resides.

The second factor: the existence of the congregational mosque for prayer, as directed by Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab, after which the planning and establishment of the other parts of the city, such as markets, walls, tribal housing, and roads, take place. (5) Majid, History of Civilization, p. 94, 95.

If these functions and conditions are applied to the cities of the Levant, we will find ancient cities that existed and were built before Islam. However, with the arrival of Muslims to the Levant, they were imbued with an Islamic character during the Umayyad Caliphate. We have several examples of this, such as:

Damascus City

It is the city that took the lead in leadership, as it was chosen to be the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate and the residence of the caliph. It was under the command of Muawiya bin Abi Sufyan when he was its governor, and when the caliphate passed to Muawiya, he made it his capital for several reasons, including its significant geographical location on trade routes and the abundance of water from rainfall and flowing waters like the Barada River in the heart of Damascus. (1) E.12, art Dimddhk. Vol. 11, p. 283. In earlier days, it was the capital of the Ghassanids, allies of the Romans, and a trading hub for summer caravans coming from the Hijaz led by the leaders of the Umayyads before Islam (2) Al-Adawi, The Umayyads and the Byzantines, p.125. Under the leadership of Abu Sufyan, it was a city located inland, far from the coast, on the edge of the Balqa region. It also became a military camp during the Islamic conquest. One of the most notable changes in the urban planning of Damascus during the Umayyad Caliphate was the construction of the Grand Mosque and the Caliph's palace, which served as the center of governance and administration in the Umayyad state. (3) Ibn Asakir, History of Damascus, 1, 9-13.

The city's plan did not change upon the Muslims' entry, as the people settled in the houses and residences (4) E. 12, art Dimadhk. Vol. 11, p. 283 that had been vacated by their inhabitants. The city of Damascus was surrounded by strong, formidable walls and had gates on all sides. (5) Ibn Asakir, History (manuscript) translation of Khuraim bin Fatik. Such as Bab Touma and Bab Al-Sharqi, among others, and parts and remnants of this wall and the gates still remain to this day, and the wall has become one of the most important features of Islamic cities (6) Issam Al-Din Abd Al-Raouf, Al-Hawadir, p. 31; Hassan Ibrahim, History of Islam, pp. 54-55. The construction of the wall around the city of Baghdad was implemented during the Abbasid Caliphate in the time of Al-Mansur, indicating that it became part of the architectural model in Islamic cities.

The city of Damascus distinguished itself during the time of the first Umayyad caliph, Muawiya bin Abi Sufyan, by adopting a rectangular shape, divided in the middle by a straight road lined

with public and private buildings, surrounded by a fortified wall and gates. At the center of Damascus stands the Grand Mosque and the caliph's palace, where Muawiya built the famous Green Palace, which served as the administrative palace of his caliphate (7) Andre Mikhael, Islam and Its Civilization, translated by Zainab Abd Al-Aziz, p. 110.

Near the caliph's palace in Damascus were the houses of Muawiya's in-laws from the Banu Kalb, the family of his wife, Maysun bint Bahdil Al-Kalbi. Their lineage was politically advantageous, as their status among the Arabs made them strong supporters of Muawiya, thus they lived in close proximity to him. The Umayyads also established residences near the Green Palace, and their homes became some of the most prominent in Damascus (1) Al-Ya'qubi, History of Countries, p. 99. As the city expanded, homes began to appear both within and outside the walls.

As for the Ghouta of Damascus, its orchards, and the surrounding villages (2) Muhammad Kurd Ali, Ghouta of Damascus, pp. 10-19. One of the most prominent features of the city of Damascus, according to Yaqut, is the abundance of rivers and flowing water, and among the city's plans were the cemeteries (3) Yaqut, Dictionary, entry on Damascus, p. 465. These cemeteries were established outside the walls of the city of Damascus, and thus we can say that the city of Damascus was built on solid foundations that took into account the needs and requirements of humans. It carried an ancient architectural character, which was then infused with the characteristics of an Islamic city since its opening by Abu Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrah through a peace agreement. (4) Ibn Jubair, The Journey, p. 274; Ibn Al-Firkah, Mukhtasar Al-A'lam, p. 34.

The Mosque of Damascus was established during the governorship of Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah, next to the church. In a narration by Abu Zar'ah, it is mentioned that "people were correcting their copies of the Quran according to the recitation of Atiyyah bin Qays while sitting on the steps of the church from the Mosque of Damascus before it was demolished" (5) Abu Zar'ah, History of Abu Zar'ah, p. 173, 346. Al-Mas'udi noted that Al-Walid bin Abd Al-Malik began the construction of the Grand Mosque in Damascus in the year (87 AH - 705 CE), and the work continued until the year (96 AH - 714 CE) (6) Al-Mas'udi, Meadows of Gold, vol. 3, p. 96. This Mosque of Damascus is famously known as the Umayyad Mosque and is considered one of the masterpieces of Islamic architecture in Damascus. It is also referred to by other names, including the Great Umayyad Mosque or the Mosque of Damascus. Yaqut mentions that it is one of the wonders of the world. (7) Yaqut, Dictionary, vol. 2, p. 168.

Its importance lies in being the mosque of the capital of the Islamic Caliphate, and the first mosque in the Levant built on such a scale, particularly in Damascus. The Umayyad Caliph Al-Walid bin Abd Al-Malik was motivated to construct it in such an aesthetically pleasing manner, with grandeur in its architecture and beauty, as he desired a large mosque in the capital of the Caliphate that befits the greatness of Islam and the Islamic state in Damascus. (8) Najda Khamas, Studies in Media Archeology, p. 28, 29. It is one of the oldest historical Islamic mosques that retains its original layout, providing a clear idea of Islamic architecture in the early Islamic period; the layout of the Umayyad Mosque served as a model for later Islamic mosques. The mosque was built in a rectangular shape, measuring 122.5 meters from east to west and 50 meters wide, consisting of an open courtyard surrounded by several covered porticoes and a number of columns. (1) Suad Maher, Islamic Architecture Through the Ages, 1, p. 213, 214.

Among the ancient cities of the Levant, the renowned and famous city of Aleppo stands out. It is one of the self-originating cities characterized by its antiquity. The Orientalist Sauvaget wrote a book about the city of Aleppo (2) Sauvaget Alep, Paris, 1941, P.P. 68. Additionally, Ibn al-

Adim authored a book titled "The Cream of Aleppo's History" (3) Ibn Al-Adim "The Cream of Aleppo's History." He also wrote "The Pursuit of Knowledge in the History of Aleppo" (4) Ibn Al-Adim, The Pursuit of Knowledge in the History of Aleppo, Damascus, 1988. Geographical and historical sources state that the city of Aleppo holds historical sanctity due to the presence of a place or site where it is said that the Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, worshipped.

The architectural conditions of the city of Aleppo have undergone various developments and different historical stages. Sauvagt states that it is a city of organized construction since it was built and planned on systematic foundations, with straight streets and a square-shaped wall. Within the city, there is a network of rivers and water channels, as well as market complexes resembling what Arab geographers referred to as "qaysariyat," which are one of the forms of commercial and artisanal establishments. These are among the oldest types of commercial structures in the ancient heritage city of Aleppo in Syria, and their presence was essential for public life within the city. This planning remained intact until the arrival of the Arab conquerors. Historical accounts indicate that its residents initially feared the Arab armies, so they fortified themselves in the Aleppo Citadel until they sought peace and safety from the leader of the Muslim army, Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah. He made a peace treaty with them concerning themselves, their children, the walls of their city, their churches, their homes, and the citadel within the city. (5) Ibn Hawqal, "The Image of the Earth," p. 163; and Ibn Khordadbeh, "The Routes and Kingdoms," p. 75. During the Muslims' campaign after leaving the city, there was a directive from the first caliph, Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, that Muslims should only fight those who fought against them from the Roman army. They were also to leave civilians and worshippers to their affairs in churches or temples, without aggression unless absolutely necessary, and even to refrain from killing animals or cutting down trees. Thus, Abu Ubaidah worked to respect all treaties and made peace with the cities of Greater Syria without imposing any forced agreements, as the goal was to spread Islam and ensure security and stability among the people.

The Muslim Arabs stood in Aleppo before a Greek-Roman city whose organization did not align with that of their own cities; and since it did not have any significant administrative role or status, the city of Aleppo, along with the city of Qinnasrin, remained part of the military district of Homs during the period of Arab Islamic rule under the caliphate of Muawiya bin Abi Sufyan and his son Yazid the first (1) Abd Al-Jabbar Naji, Studies in the History of Arab Islamic Cities, p. 190. What gave it the character of an Islamic city was the construction of the grand mosque within it. According to historical accounts, the Great Mosque of Aleppo, also known as the Grand Mosque of Aleppo, was built during the caliphate of the Umayyad caliph Suleiman bin Abd Al-Malik. The Mosque of Aleppo was comparable to the Mosque of Damascus in the precision of its construction, the magnificence of its decorations, and its organization, as Suleiman bin Abd Al-Malik intended for the Mosque of Aleppo to be as masterfully built and splendid as the Mosque of Damascus. Historical sources indicate that valuable architectural elements were transferred from the Church of Foros, which Ibn Al-Shuhna described as one of the wonders of the world, adding that the King of the Romans offered seventy thousand dinars for three columns from it, but his offer was rejected (2) Muhammad bin Al-Shuhna, The Selected History of the Kingdom of Aleppo, pp. 61-62. The Mosque of Aleppo was later burned, as mentioned by Ibn Al-Shuhna, by Emperor Phocas when he entered Aleppo in the year (351 AH) (962 CE) (3) Najda Khammash, Studies in Islamic Antiquities, p. 25.

As for the market, the Romans built a marketplace complex known as the Qaysariyya, as previously defined; however, sources do not clarify the nature and specifications of this Qaysariyya or the distribution system of the markets within it. (4) J. Souvget Alep, p. 59. The

well-known citadel that Aleppo is famous for dates back to ancient times and has consistently provided protection for the city and its inhabitants. It also played a significant military role; its location was central to the city of Aleppo. As a result of the citadel's important position, urban units and residential buildings were distributed based on it. Many Arab travelers, historians, and geographers have noted the significance of the Aleppo Citadel. Additionally, there was a wall surrounding the city, enclosing it on all sides, and the construction of the Aleppo wall dates back to the days of the Ptolemies, featuring several gates like other ancient cities of the Levant. (5) Nasir Khusraw, Safarnama, p. 44; Ibn Jubayr, Journey, p. 225; Ibn Battuta, Journey, p. 45; Al-Maqdisi, Ahsan Al-Taqasim, p. 155; Ibn Shaddad, Al-A'laq Al-Khatira, p. 50.

Among the ancient cities of the Levant is the city of Homs, which holds a strategic position in terms of transportation and the movement of trade caravans due to its location midway between the cities of Damascus and Aleppo. In addition, it is a fertile agricultural area where the Orontes River flows through its lands. It is said that the planning and organization of the city date back to the Romans, as archaeologists have traced the remnants of a city built according to a rectangular plan. (1) E. 12, Art Hims. The city of Homs was opened by the commander Abu Ubaidah Amer bin Al-Jarrah after the conquest of Damascus in the year (16 AH - 637 CD). He entered it peacefully, and its inhabitants made a pact with him after he granted them a covenant of safety, ensuring their protection for themselves and their property, as well as safeguarding the walls of their city by not demolishing their churches and their mills, which refer to grain and crop mills, except for the revenue from the Church of John. (2) Abu Zar'ah, History, p. 137.

According to historical sources, the Church of Saint John was one of the largest churches in Syria at that time. The Islamic Encyclopedia states that the Church of Saint John was converted into a mosque, and that around five hundred men from the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to live in this open city, which suited the nature of their open lands. The mosque was renovated during the reign of Al-Walid bin Abd Al-Malik, and there was an active scientific movement within it. According to one narration, seventy of the early companions of the Prophet frequented it in Homs. (3) Ibn Saad, Al-Tabaqat, p. 448.

Hama was also one of the ancient cities of the Levant that was frequented by the states that ruled or controlled the region. It was known as (Epiphania) (4) Epiphania E. 12, Art Hamat, vol. 3, p. 119. Similarly, the city of Baalbek, which was referred to as Heliopolis, is located in the Bekaa Valley, famous for its ancient ruins. (5) E.12. Art BALABAK, vol. 3, p. 970. The city of Jerusalem (Aelia) or Al-Quds in Palestine is distinguished by its religious significance and is called the Holy City. (6) Yaqut, Dictionary, p. 274, entry on Palestine, Kirsuple, Antiquities, p. 50. Thus, these cities are considered examples of ancient cities in the Levant during the Umayyad Caliphate.

The Umayyads did not limit themselves to the old cities; rather, the circumstances led them to build new cities in the Levant. Thus, new cities were established in the Levant, such as the city of Ramla and Rusafa. The city of Ramla is located in the district of Palestine and is one of the cities that were built during the Umayyad Caliphate. It was founded by Suleiman bin Abd Al-Malik when he was the governor of the district of Palestine during the caliphate of his brother, the Umayyad caliph Al-Walid bin Abd Al-Malik (86-96 AH). (1) Al-Baladhuri, Futuh Al-Buldan, p. 143; Al-Mas'udi, Al-Tanbih and Al-Ashraf, p. 327. Archaeological studies conducted by Krizol and reported by Sauvage confirm this. (2)

- Creswel, A short Account of early muslim Architectare Beirout. 1968. 50.

- Combe, Sauvaget, Wiet, Repertoire chron ologigue d'epigraphie Arabe. Le Cairo,vol. XI, PP. 189.

It is the only city established by the Arabs on virgin land, which is the coastal city of Ramla. This is supported by Al-Baladhuri in "Futuh Al-Buldan," stating that before Suleiman bin Abd Al-Malik, there was no city of Ramla, only sands, from which its name was derived (3) later, during the caliphate of Suleiman bin Abd Al-Malik from (95-96 AH), Ramla became his residence, where he lived before assuming the caliphate of the Muslims. He gained the advantages of social relations from the love, loyalty, and obedience of its inhabitants, among the features of the construction of Ramla is that it is surrounded by a strong wall built of stone and plaster, slightly elevated, with numerous iron doors, totaling twelve, the Umayyad rulers used to spend on the wells of Ramla and its forces, which later faded away. Little remains of the city of Ramla, as it was struck by an earthquake that destroyed it (4) Translated Islamic Encyclopedia, p. 100; Brockelmann, History of Islamic Peoples, p. 148.

Also, the city of Rusafa: Rusafa of Sham, distinguishing it from Rusafa of Baghdad, or Rusafa of Hisham, named after its builder, the Umayyad caliph Hisham bin Abd Al-Malik (105-125), it is located in the middle of the desert west of the Euphrates River. Historical accounts mention that it is one of the ancient cities built by the Romans and was known as "Sergiopolis," named after the saint "Bergius," who holds a high and esteemed status among Syrian Christians. (5) Yaqut, Dictionary, p. 3, entry on Rusafa of Sham; it is also found in the accounts of the kings of Ghassan; perhaps Hisham bin Abd Al-Malik constructed its walls or built parts of it to inhabit. (6) Translated Islamic Encyclopedia, p. 121. However, archaeological studies have proven that Hisham's residence was not within the Christian city, the remains of which still exist today in "Sergiopolis," as this religious center continued to be a bishopric until the end of the 11th century CE. Archaeological missions have discovered Hisham's residence outside the Christian center, where they found remains of a structure resembling a fortress measuring 80×40 meters, surrounding a central courtyard and encircled by round towers. (1) Anonymous author, The Eyes and Gardens in the News of Truths, p. 101; Majid The Arab state, p. 2, 280; Anwar Al-Rifa'i, Islam and Its Civilization, p. 355.

Al-Tabari mentions that the caliphate was granted to Hisham while he was in the palace of the western district. When he built Al-Rusafa, he moved there, and it became his residence until he died. (2) Al-Tabari, History, 7, p. 25.

Located 160 km northeast of the Eastern Al-Jir Palace (3) Saleem Adel Abd Al-Haq, Reconstruction of the Western Al-Jir Palace Wing at the Damascus Museum, in the Syrian Archaeological Annual, 1951, 1, p. 36. The remains of both palaces still exist in their locations in the Syrian desert, and photographs of these palaces show that they are in good condition after being reassembled in the Damascus Museum, retaining their bright colors.

The Arab Islamic conquests were a significant factor in urban development, the conquest and the spread of Islam among nations were accompanied by construction, agriculture, and security for the inhabitants regarding their lives and properties, as the Arabs settled in the existing Levantine cities, these cities transformed into Arab Islamic cities, altering their character. Soon, human activities flourished, necessitating direct development in economic and social fields, this calls for shedding light on the urban population and the nature of the crafts they engaged in.

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