

Original article

ARCHITECTURAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY TO MEHMENDĀR MOSQUE
IN ALEPPO

Abd el-razik, M.

Lecturer of Islamic Architecture, Islamic dept., Faculty of Archaeology, Cairo Univ., Egypt

E-mail: Mansour.arch22@yahoo.com

Received 21/7/2015

Accepted 20/9/2015

Abstract

This mosque is considered to be one of the most important surviving Mamluk monuments in Aleppo, it contains many elements that still remain from the time of its construction, including the main façade, main entrance, minaret, open courtyard, and the main portico, etc. The mosque was renewed many times in the Ottoman period and a lot of extensions were added to it. This paper will study the mosque through a description and analytical study of its parts and architectural elements, in addition to determining the accurate date of the construction and highlight the renewal works that occurred, especially in the Ottoman period. All the attached maps and figures (except Map no.1, Figs. 2 & 3) have been developed by the author. Also, all the photographs have been taken by the researcher.

Keywords: *Mosque, Façade, Entrance, Minaret, Portico, Inscription*

1. Introduction

Aleppo is considered to be one of the most important cities in Syria. the history of this city and its civilization do not relate to Islamic conquest, but many civilizations were found there before the Islamic conquerors came [1], also its name 'Aleppo' was known for many centuries before Islam. This name is related to the hill on which the citadel of the city was built, and the name has been used as a title for the hill since the coming of *Ibrāhim Al-Khālil* to the city [2]. As in all Syrian cities, Islamic conquerors reached Aleppo in (16 A.H. / 636 A.D.) under the leadership of *Khāled Ibn al-Waleed* and *Abu Obāida Ibn al-Ga'rrāhi* in the period of the *Omār Ibn al-Kha'ttāb* caliphate [3,4]. Under Islamic rule the city played an important role in political events, and its

importance always came after the capital Damascus [5]. Under the state of Islam, numerous Islamic governments ruled the city since the beginning of the Caliphate and passed through Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid, Merdacin^(a) [6] etc., until the city entered the rule of the Mamluk sultans in Egypt^(b) [7,8]. In this period it had considerable importance because of its geographical location, as it was considered to be a border city for the Mamluk state; its location on the north-eastern edge made it a focus of attention from Mamluk sultans [9]. Many monuments were constructed in Aleppo during the Mamluk period, so this city is considered to be one of the most important Arabian cities by virtue of its monuments [10]. These monuments varied in their functions between military

buildings^(c) [11], civic buildings^(d) [10], and religious buildings. The various buildings in the city are distinguished by

2. Mehmendār Mosque

This mosque is considered to be one of the most important Mamluk mosques that remain in Aleppo. Although it was renewed many times after its construction it still retains many parts that go back to the Mamluk period, especially, the main façade with all it

2.1. The mosque's location

Mehmendār mosque in Aleppo is situated in the center of the old city, in a quarter that is named by *Mahall'ett Bab Al-Nasr*. This quarter was given this name because it is situated inside *Bab al-Nasr*^(e) [12] one of the old city gates. This quarter is bounded by *Al-Farafra* quarter on the southern side, *Shahin bek* on the eastern side, the Trench, *Al-khandak*, on the northern side, and *Sweeqat Ali* on the western side [12]. As for the location of the mosque from the

the surviving elements, that reflect Mamluk architectural styles [10].

contains from the entrance gateway, inscriptions, and decorations. Moreover the minaret that surmounts the main façade, although it was dismantled after the construction, still represents the Mamluk architectural style.

quarter of *Bab Al-Nasr*, it is situated in the head of a side street which is named *Bab Al-Nasr Street* on its southern side where it joins the principal street which leads to *Al-Saba'a Bahraat Square*^(f), fig. (1-a, b). Besides Mehmendar mosque, the quarter includes a lot of monuments that belong to various periods, including, *Hammam Al-Kadi*^(g), which is located in the same street (*Bab Al-Nasr Street*) on the northern side from the mosque, and it is dated to the Ayyubid period [13].

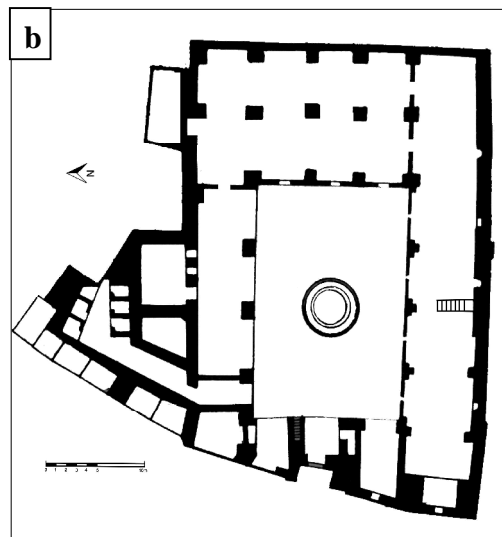
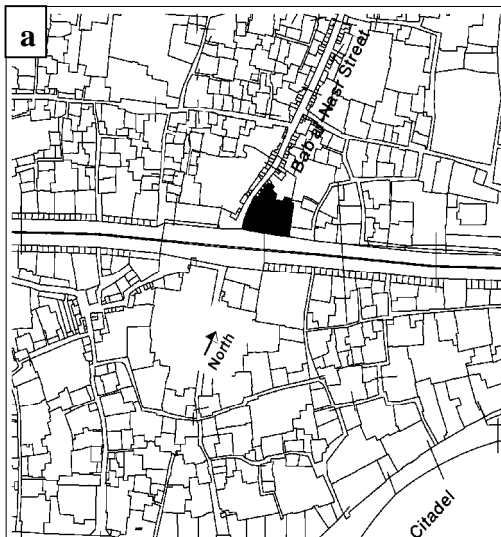


Figure (1) a. location map of the Mehmendār mosque, b. plan of the mosque, c. the main entrance of the mosque.

2.2. Founder and foundation date

The historical literature agreed unanimously that the founder of the mosque was *Hossam Al-Din Al-Hassan Ibn Balaban* [12-14,15], who was known as *Ibn Al-Mehmendār*, this term

indicates the person who is responsible for the guests in the palace of the sultan [16]. *Hossam Al-Din Al-Hassan Ibn Blaban* was one of the princes of Aleppo in the (8th A.H. / 14th century A.D.) [13],

and he belonged to the house of *Al-Mehmendar*, a famous house in this period^(h). He was a brother of Al-Amir *Ala'a Al-Din Ali Ibn Balaban* who occupied the position of *Al-Hajib* in Damascus and then Aleppo [14]. He was also a brother of Al-Amir *Mohammed Ibn Balaban* who was appointed by Sultan *Barquk* as a deputy in Aleppo [15]. Regarding the mosque's foundation date, we can observe that the historical literature did not mention the accurate date of the mosque's foundation, but it referred to an approximate date in the (7th A.H. / 13th A.D.) century [12-14,15]. From the preceding, we couldn't determine an accurate date for the mosque's foundation, especially as the mosque didn't contain any inscriptions on the date of its foundation. Besides this, the period that the founder lived in, cannot be determined accurately, this means that, the historical literatures didn't mention the date of the founder's birth and death for dating the mosque to this

period. However, we can suppose that the date of the mosque's foundation was in the (8th A.H. / 14th A.D.) century. This supposition is based on what is mentioned in the historical literature about the founder's brothers, who lived in the same period; *Ali Ibn Balaban* was born in the beginning of the (8th A.H. / 14th A.D.) century and died in (756 A.H. / 1355 A.D.), also *Mohammed Ibn Balaban* who died in (792 A.H. / 1390 A.D.) [14]. Accordingly, we can suppose that *Al-Hassan Ibn Balaban* lived in this period, also *Ibn Al-Āgamy* noted in his book *Konoz Al-zahab* that he saw the *Waqf book* that specialized to the mosque and he noted that this book was dated 702 A.H. [13], but he didn't mention the exact date of the mosque, So the conclusion, which can be drawn from this is that the mosque was founded in the (8th A.H. / 14th A.D.) century, and probably in the beginning of this century according to what *Ibn Al-Āgamy* said about the date of the *Waqf book*.

3. Architectural description

3.1. The main façade and the main entrance

The mosque occupies an irregular area and including two façades, fig. (2). The first one is the main façade, and is located on the west side; it is distinguished by its simplicity, built of stone, and rising to 7.40 meters. At the western end there are six shops which were among the endowments, the *Waqf*, that were endowed on the mosque by its founder. This façade also includes, in the middle, the main entrance which is composed of a huge rectangular recess that rises to 7.40 meters, its width is about 2.80 meters, pl. (1) & fig. (3). To the left and right of the lower part of the recess there is a rectangular terrace, a *Meksala*, pl. (2). At the top, there is a half dome with a pointed section

supported on stone stalactites crowning the recess of the entrance, the outer line of the half dome is decorated with a frieze of floral decorations, also there is a circle under the base of the half dome filled with floral and geometrical decorations, pl. (3). Under the decorative circle there is a straight lintel of stone above the entrance that leads to the interior of the mosque. This entrance is closed by two wooden doors but they are not from the time of construction; the left and right side of the entrance are decorated with black and yellow colors, this style which is known in architectural terms as *Al-Ablaq*, which means using building blocks that vary in their natural colors and are organized according to a

particular style to make an attractive pattern on the façades of buildings [17]. The main façade includes also a Mamluk *Naskhi* inscription on the right of the

recess of the entrance, pl. (4), this inscription contains two lines, each of them is inside a rectangular cartouche, and it reads as follows:

‘Damned son, Damned who painted any thing that has a spirit beside this mosque, or raises a picture of anything that has a spirit to collect the people on it or sell it. ⁽²⁾Who made this, became one of the people who the prophet said about them who made this pictures will be tormented on the day of resurrection and will be said revived what you created and thank God’.

‘ملعون ابن ملعون من تعاطى تصوير ما فيه روح بقرب هذا الجامع أو يرفع صورته ما فيها روح ليجمع الناس عليها أو يبيعهها ^(٢) ومن فعل ذلك كان داخلا في عموم قوله صلى الله عليه وسلم وإن أصحاب هذه الصور يعذبون يوم القيامة ويقال أحيوا ما خلقتم والحمد لله’.

This inscription was recorded on the main façade of the mosque and may have been appointed as the space beside this façade was specialized as a market or a place where the people collected to buy and sell. This inscription was engraved on this façade to prevent people from buying and selling pictures, which have a spirit, because these kind of pictures are hateful in Islam, and the phrase ‘*Damned son Damned ...*’ which was used in this inscription is repeated on many monuments in Aleppo [18]. Beside the inscription on the right side, there are

two windows; the first one overlooks a rectangular room located on the western side of the mosque's open courtyard, the second overlooks the southern portico. At the end of the main façade from the south, there is a rectangular window surmounted by a relieving arch and tympanum, it was used as a window for the *sabil* room to supply passers with water, so this mosque included a public fountain that was an extension to it, but nothing remains of it now except this window.

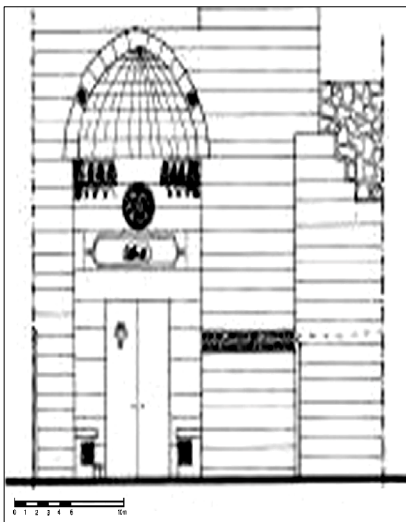


Figure (2) Façade of the main entrance.



Plate (1) The main entrance.

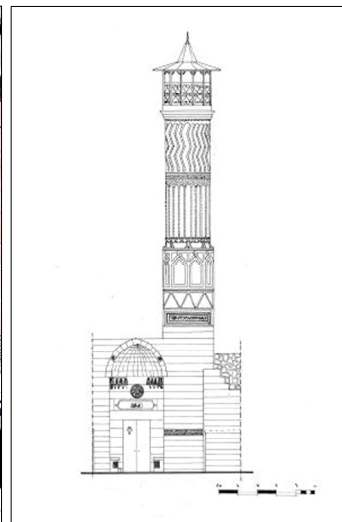


Figure (3) Minaret and main entrance.



Plate (2) Lower part of the main entrance



Plate (3) Upper part of the main entrance



Plate (4) Mamluk *Naskhi* inscription on the main façade.

3.2. The minaret

The main façade includes the minaret which surmounts the main entrance in the middle, fig. (3). This minaret is characterized by a unique style for Aleppo and it is considered to be the most magnificent of the minarets of this city; its style was affected by the oriental style both in general shape and in decoration, pl. (5) & fig. (4), it also affected on some minarets in Aleppo that were constructed after it, such as the

minaret of Al-Maidani mosque⁽⁴⁾ [19]. This minaret on the summit of the entrance begins on the lower part with a square base, its height is 1.70 meter, its outer surfaces are devoid of decorations except for two rectangular cartouches at the top of the western and southern sides. The first one on top of the western side is blank, but the other one includes an inscription in one line in Mamluk *Naskhi* script, pl. (6), and it reads as follows:

‘Praise to you my god you are the owner of it, for a blessing that I don't deserve it, that I increase my negligence and you honor me, as I deserve the honor by the negligence’

‘إلهي لك الحمد بداية أنت أهله على نعمة ما كنت لها قط إذا زدت تقصيرا تكرا ما كاني بالتقصير أستوجب الفضلا’

Besides these, the square base includes a sundial ‘*Mezwala*’ carved under this inscription but the pointer of it is lost, pl. (7), also it includes on its eastern rib a door that leads to the minaret's staircase, the square base ends at the top with a pyramidal triangles that transfer the square shape to octagonal shape, these pyramidal triangles is decorated with geometrical ornaments that represent the polygons that were made by deep carving. Above the pyramidal triangles there is another shaft of the minaret, it is octagonal, 1.60 meter

high, each of its eight ribs is decorated by a lobed arch surmounted by a circle medallion. Above the octagonal shaft there is the main shaft of the minaret, it is cylindrical in shape, and its height is about 6.30 meters; this shaft is divided in tow parts, the lower one is decorated with projecting vertically organized ribs, the upper one is decorated by zigzagging, projecting ribs. The projecting ribs have been found in the eastern Islamic world's architecture, so it is considered a reflection of eastern architecture in the Syrian architecture.

On the top of the main shaft of the minaret – the cylindrical shaft – there is an open balcony that is used for the call to prayer; this open balcony is surmounted by a conical cap topped by a

crescent. The second façade of the mosque is a side façade, but it overlooks a main street, it is very simple, it doesn't include any detail or decoration, and it is lower than the main façade.

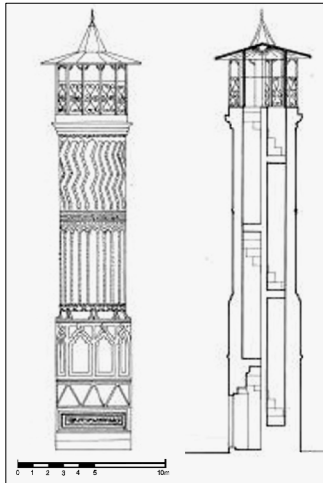


Figure (4) Minaret from inside and outside

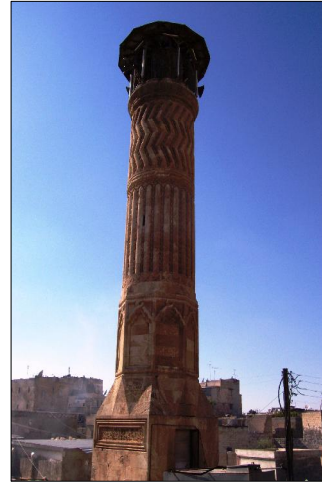


Plate (5) The minaret



Plate (6) Mamluk *Naskhi* inscription on the main façade. Plate



Plate (7) Sundial 'Mezwala' on the base of the minaret

4. Inside the mosque

Behind the main entrance there is a rectangular vestibule surmounted by a pointed vault, it is very simple and devoid of decorations, it contains a small door fronted by two stairways on the right. This door leads to a small room especially for the mosque's guard; through this vestibule we can reach the interior of the mosque which includes a rectangular open courtyard that is surrounded by three porticos on the southern, eastern, and northern sides. So, three sides of the open courtyard are overlooked by porticos, the western side

is occupied by the entrance vestibule, moreover, two rectangular rooms, the first one on the southern edge of the right side of the vestibule beside the southern portico. It is roofed by a pointed vault opening onto the courtyard, also it includes a window on the western rib that overlooks the main façade; this room was once used for ablution services but is no longer. The second room is located on the northern edge on the left side of the vestibule. It also has a pointed vaulted roof but it doesn't open on the courtyard like the vault of the first

room. It was changed to open at the back through the main façade and is blocked on the courtyard side; this room is now used as a perfume shop. Between the entrance vestibule and the second room

4.1. The main portico

The main portico of the mosque is the southern one, it is the largest of the mosque's porticos, it composed of one aisle, it extends from the east to the west side to 38.90 meters, and its width from the north to the south is 6.10 meters. This aisle is divided on the inside to seven areas, pl. (8), all of them are square and roofed by cross vaults except two areas, the first one in front of the main prayer niche (*Mihrab*) it is a square area but it roofed by a dome rising above a ribbed drum with ten windows, pl. (9), the dome and its drum are based on a transition zone of spherical triangular pendentives, the drum is constructed of stone, and the dome is made of red brick, it is smooth and devoid of decorations on the inside or outside. It has a semicircular section, pl. (10). The second one is located in the western corner, it is a rectangular area 3.40 x 2.52 meters and roofed by a pointed vault, its floor is about 80cm above the floor of the portico, On the western side there is another recess again roofed by a pointed vault, the western wall of this recess includes a small window overlooking the main façade of the mosque, this rectangular area was used as a *sabil*, and it was joined with the *sabil's* window which still survives on this corner of the main façade. Inside the portico there are three prayer niches (*Mihrab*) located in the southern wall *Qibla wall*, the middle one is the principal niche, fig. (5) & pl. (11). It is composed of a simple niche devoid of decoration and covered by new paint, it is topped by a pointed arch decorated with a radiological decoration in brown and yellow; this arch is set on two columns, the first one on the right of the niche and the other on the left. The two other niches are secondary and smaller than the principal one. This portico

there is a small door fronted by three stairways, it leads to a rising stone staircase; through which the roof of the mosque and the base of the minaret can be accessed.

includes also one pulpit located in the middle of the *Qibla* wall beside the principal prayer niche on its right hand side, fig. (6) & pl. (12). The pulpit is built of yellow marble, its length is 3.04 meters and its width is 1 meter; on the front there is a door that leads by eight steps to the Imam's seat, which is topped by a small cupola that is supported on four columns; under the preacher's seat there are two open doors, which are named *Al-Rawda two doors*. This pulpit includes also an inscription above the door, this is written in *Naskhi* script in one line in a rectangular frame, its content is the unification certificate '*No God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*' ' لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله', this inscription is written on a background of the leaves of the planet, and above it there are five serrated crestings decorated with floral motives. Most probably this pulpit is from the time of construction as it was mentioned in *Konoz al-zahab* in the Mamluk period [14]. There is a reporter's tribune inside the main portico, it is located in front of the principal prayer niche above the middle door that is on the northern wall, pl. (13). It is composed of a rectangular balcony supported on two columns with Corinthian capitals, it includes two inscriptions and two panels, the two inscriptions are written in square *Kufic* script, it contains the name, *Muhammad* 'محمد' repeated four times, the two panels are hexagonal in shape and are occupied by geometrical decorations. This main portico overlooks the courtyard through an arcade composed of four pointed arches, they rest on three huge pillars, pl. (14) & fig. (7), but this arcade was changed after the renewal work in Ottoman times [14], and is closed now, and overlooks the courtyard through four

doors, where the openings of the arches are closed and one door is open under every arch, at the top of every arch there is also a rectangular window with a keel arch was opened. The door that is located in front of the main prayer niche is the main door, so it is distinguished from the others, it has two marble columns on its right and

two others on the left, these four columns bear a rectangular panel decorated by pierced polygons. The façade of the main portico includes also a prayer niche beside the main door on its right side, fig. (8); it is composed of a simple niche devoid of decorations and topped by a pointed arch with stalactites.



Plate (8) Inside the main portico



Plate (9) The dome in front of the Mihrab from inside

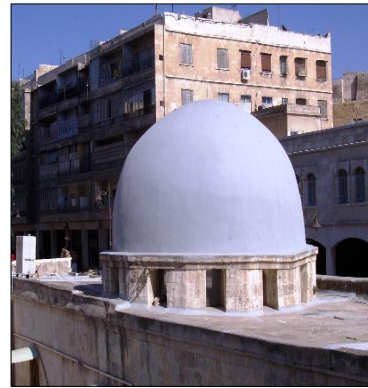


Plate (10) The dome in front of the Mihrab from outside

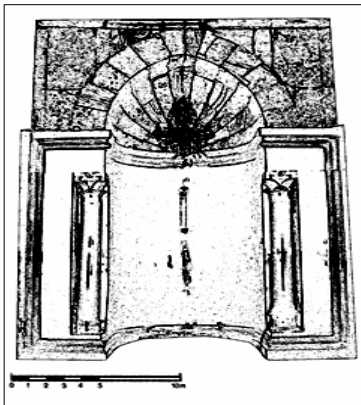


Figure (5) The main prayer niche.



Plate (11) The main prayer niche.



Plate (12) The pulpit in Qibla wall.

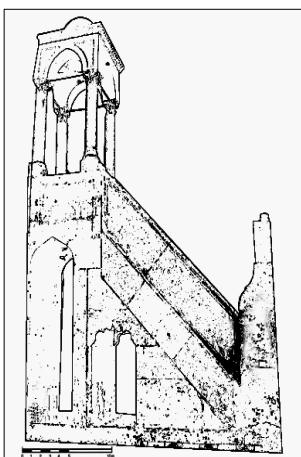


Figure (6) The pulpit in Qibla wall.



Plate (13) The reporter's tribune.

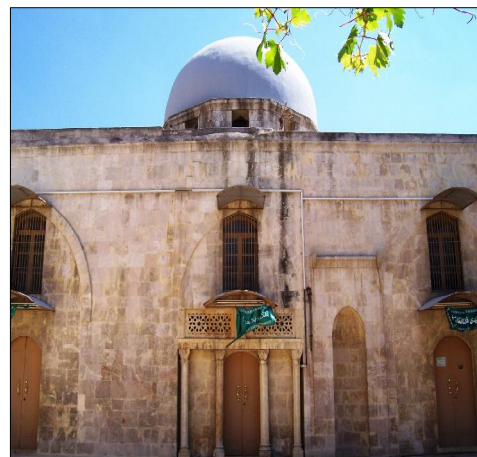


Plate (14) Façade of the main portico-southern portico.



Figure (7) An inscription on the pulpit .

4.2. The eastern portico

The second portico inside the mosque is the eastern portico, it is a rectangular shape, its length is 18.5 meters, its width is 11.42 meters, it is composed of two aisles separated by an arcade of three pillars, each of the two aisles is divided into four square areas, all roofed by cross vaults, the southern wall, which separates this portico and the southern portico, includes two doors

‘بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم، يا أيها الذين آمنوا اركعوا واسجدوا واعبدوا ربكم وافعلوا الخير لعلكم تفلحون، صدق الله العظيم’

In the center of the prayer niche there is an oval medallion including inside, the second inscription ‘Allah is the greatest’ الله أكبر, The third inscription located under the medallion is ‘I ask for forgiveness from the great Allah’ أستغفر الله, The fourth inscription located in the lower part of the prayer niche is ‘Allah forgive my sin’ اللهم اغفر لي ذنبي, all these inscriptions are written in floral Kufic script in blue on a floral background. In the northern wall there is

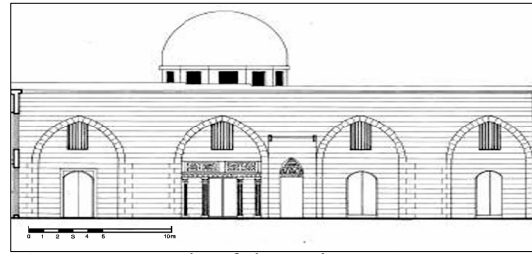


Figure (8) Façade of the main portico- southern portico, vertical sector.

leading to the southern portico. Between these two doors there is a flat pottery prayer niche added to the mosque as one of the Ottoman additions, it is rectangular and is topped by a semicircular arch, it is decorated with four inscriptions, fig. (9) & pl. (15), the first one is wrapped round it from the inside border; it is a Koranic quotation *Al-Hajj 77*.

a door that leads to a room used as a home for *Al-Muezzin*. This portico overlooks the open courtyard through a triple arcade, pl. (16), but it is changed now that the open pointed arched is closed and was replaced by three doors, and there is a window above each one to light and ventilate the portico from the inside, these changes have returned it to the renewal which occurred in Ottoman times [15].

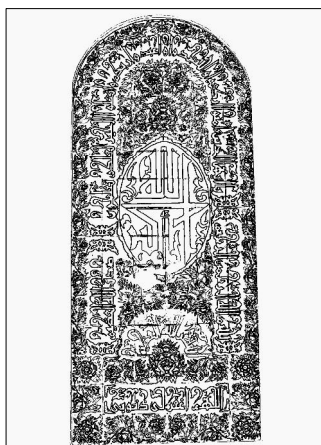


Figure (9) Pottery prayer niche details to inscription and decorations.



Plat (15) Pottery prayer niche in the eastern portico.



Plat (16) Façade of the eastern portico.

4.3. The northern portico

This is the smallest of the mosque's porticos, it consists of one aisle that is 16.10 meters long and 4.95 meters wide, this aisle is divided into three square areas, each one roofed by a cross vault. In the middle of its northern wall there is a door that leads to a rectangular room used as a home for *Al-Imam*, there is another door in the middle of the eastern wall and joining it to the eastern portico. This portico overlooks the open courtyard through a triple arcade composed of three pointed arches, pl. (17), the arches here are open and supported on two pillars. this portico was renewed after the time of construction during the addition work

زواق نمر مبشرين
ن حمد دام تمكين
متولي بها الترمانييني

١٣٢٣

This portico was used as a chapel in addition to ablution services, beside it on the northern side there is a door leading to a long corridor roofed with a pointed vault; At the end of this corridor



Plat. (17) Façade of the northern portico.

5. Renewal works

A lot of renewal works occurred to the mosque in various historical periods. It was renewed for the first time in the Mamluk period, after the earthquake that occurred in Aleppo in (806 A.H. / 1404 A.D.). This earthquake

that occurred in Ottoman times, and this is attested by an inscription on the façade of this portico, pl. (18). The inscription is composed of three verses, and proves that the mosque was renewed in the Ottoman period in the reign of *Sultan Abd Al-Hameed II*, the inscription also determined the accurate date of this renewal as (1323 A.H. / 1905 A.D.), this date is recorded in the inscription in numbers and letters; the date is engraved in numbers under the three verses and the last verse represents the date by the way of *Hesab al-Gommal*, the inscription noted in the last verse that the supervisor of this renewal is a person called *Al-Termanini*.

قد شيد يسر للدين
في ظل خليفتنا السلطان
للووقف أجر أرخ والـ

there is a triangular lobby roofed with a pointed vault, and there are three small rooms on the left of this lobby and three others on the right; these rooms are used as a toilets.



Plate (18) Monumental inscription on the façade of the northern portico.

destroyed numerous monuments in Aleppo. The Mehmendar Mosque was affected by it; its southern portico was destroyed. However, it was reconstructed and the prayers were performed there [20], the historical literature mentioned

that the supervisor of this renewal was one of Aleppo's merchants, and he spent his own money on these works [15]. In (1237 A.H./ 1831 A.D.), another earthquake occurred in Aleppo, the mosque was greatly damaged by it, and the eastern and northern porticos were destroyed, the southern portico was also affected but it wasn't destroyed completely. Moreover the endowments of the mosque, the *Waqf*, were strongly influenced and most of their parts were destroyed, so their yield was greatly reduced. The restoration of the mosque became difficult, after that the clerics supervised these endowments and returned to work until the yield increased, in (1323 A.H. / 1905 A.D.), one of the clerics named by Mohammed Baha'a Al-Din Al-Termanini assumed the restoration of the mosque, he reconstructed the eastern and southern porticos, and he provided the northern portico with a source of water for ablution services in addition to the performance of prayers, he also paved the courtyard with white marble [15].

The renewal works that were achieved by Mohammed Baha'a Al-Din Al-Termanini are attested in a monumental inscription on the façade of the northern portico, the inscription includes the name of *Sultan Abd Al-Hameed II*, and stated that the works of this renewal were achieved in his reign, also it includes the date of renewal recorded in numbers and letters in addition to the name of the supervisor of these works limited to his nickname, *Al-Termanini*, but the full name is mentioned by *Al-Tabbakh* in his book, *A'alam Al-Nobla'a* [15]. After a period of time the mosque was destroyed again and prayers stopped being performed in it, by the year (1343 A.H. / 1934 A.D.) It was repaired, redecorated, and flourished again, after that the prayers were performed in it [15]. One of the most important renewal works that occurred to the mosque related to its famous minaret. This minaret was famous as a leaning minaret, and there were fears of its falling, so it was dismantled and rebuilt in (1362 A.H. / 1943 A.D) [20].

6. The effect of the Syrian revolution on the mosque

Aleppo is famous for a historical heritage that spans pre-historic times until the end of the Ottoman period. This is evidenced by sites and archaeological monuments scattered all over the city. Today, after more than four years of civil war, the city's archaeological and culture heritage is in danger and the situation of the museums, archaeological sites, and monuments such as Al-Mehmendār mosque is very worrying. The architecture of the mosque has been completely affected by the current events and many parts of it have been destroyed, it was bombed many times beginning on (October 9, 2012), this caused mass destruction in many parts of

the mosque, such as its minaret which was considered to be one of the most magnificent of the Syrian minarets, this minaret was damaged by a shell on top of its base; it is now threatening to fall, pl. (19). The inside of the mosque was also severely damaged by these events. The dome in front of the middle niche was destroyed and has fallen to the floor, pls. (20 & 21), also the reporter's tribune was destroyed and has lost its façade, the pulpit lost a lot of its parts such as its door and the inscription that was located above it. Different parts of the mosque were completely destroyed. The mosque must obtain attention after these events to save it from complete destruction.



Plate (19) The effect of Syrian revolution on the minaret.



Plate (20) The effect of Syrian revolution inside the mosque.



Plate (21) The effect of Syrian revolution on dome of the mihrab

7. Results & Discussion

From the preceding, Mehmedar mosque is considered to be one of the most important surviving monuments in the city of Aleppo; it reflects the architectural characteristics of Mamluk style through many elements that still remain from the time of its construction. The study supposed that the date of the mosque has been determined to be in the beginning of the (8th A.H. / 14th A.D.) century; although the historical literature did not mention the accurate date of the mosque's foundation and referred to an approx. date in the (7th A.H. / 13th A.D.) century, This supposition is based on what is mentioned in the historical literature about the founder's brothers, who lived in the same period, in addition to the waqf book of the mosque which was dated by 702 A.H. The study referred to the eastern influences which appeared in the architecture of the mosque especially in its minaret which characterized by a unique style and reflects these influences both in its shape and its decorations. Also the study points out that the mosque included a public fountain *Sabil* that was an extension to it,

but nothing remains of it except its window, which is located in the main façade. Although the mosque includes many elements that still remain from the time of its construction, but the study points out that a lot of renewal works occurred to it after its construction; these renewal works were dated by various historical periods, but the majority of it occurred in Ottoman period, and added some addition to the mosque and preserved it from being destroyed. The works which were achieved by Al-Termanini were considered to be the most important; these works were attested in a monumental inscription inside the mosque. Also between the important renewal works that occurred to the mosque in Ottoman period, the works which related to its famous minaret, that it was dismantled and rebuilt in (1362 A.H. / 1943 A.D). The paper pays attention to the effect of the Syrian revolution of the mosque, and referred to that the architecture of the mosque has been completely affected by the current events and many parts of it have been destroyed and badly need restoration.

8. Conclusion

At the end, the paper studied Mehmedar mosque which is considered to be one of the most important surviving Mamluk monuments in Aleppo city. The study included an analytical study to what were mentioned in the historical literatures about the founder of the mosque and the foundation date, and it supposed an approximate date to the construction of the mosque. The paper included also a descriptive study to the architectural elements of the mosque, which are mostly going back to the date of construction, so it clearly reflects the architectural

characteristics of Mamluk style. The paper also shed the light to other effects which appeared on the mosque such as the eastern influences which clearly appeared on its minaret. In addition to the original elements which are going back to the date of construction in Mamluk period; the paper shed the light to the additions which were added to the mosque after the date of construction, especially in Ottoman period. The paper also showed the bad state of the mosque after the Syrian revolution and referred to the parts that were destroyed as a result to these current events.

Endnotes

- (a) The Merdacin ruled Aleppo after the period of Fatimid rule ended, and they continued to rule the city between (414 A.H. /1023 A.D.) and (473 A.H. /1080 A.D.), after which the city was ruled by Seljuks.
- (b) The Mamluks were able to achieve unity between Egypt and Syria after their defeat of the Mongols at *Ain Gāloot* in (658 A.H. /1260 A.D.) After that Aleppo became a Mamluk province like all the Syrian cities.
- (c) One of the most important military buildings in Aleppo was the citadel, which is considered to be one of the most important monuments in Syria. Its origin is related to the pre-Islamic period, after which Muslim rulers took an interest in it and renewed it many times. They also added extensions to it, so that this citadel became one of most formidable buildings in the city.
- (d) There were numerous civic buildings in Aleppo including palaces, houses, public fountains, khans, hospitals, bazaars, etc.
- (e) Bab al-Nasr situated on the northern side of the old city of Aleppo. The first name of it was the gate of Jews *Bab al-Yahood*. It called this because the houses of Jews were inside it, and their tombs were outside. After that *Al-Zaher Ghazi* renewed it and changed its name to *Bab Al-Nasr*.
- (f) This square is one of Aleppo's most famous squares, it is located on the north-western side of the Citadel, at the head of the street that leads to the great mosque of Aleppo.
- (g) It is one of the most magnificent Aleppo's public *hammams* and it is still retains all its parts. It was dated to the Ayyubid period, and renewed in the Mamluk period in the reign of *Sultan Al-Ghori*, its entrance is decorated by a Mamluk Naskhi inscription including the name of *Sultan Al-Ghori* and the date of renewal (914 A.H. /1508 A.D.).
- (h) Al-Mehmendar was one of the most famous families in Aleppo in (8th A.H. / 14th A.D.) century, many members of this family ruled Aleppo and occupied many high positions there, and the family has a cemetery situated beside *Bab Al-Maqam*.
- (i) This mosque is considered one of the most famous Aleppo mosques, it is situated in *Al-al magi* quarter, it was built in the Ottoman period in (934 A.H / 1527 A.D.) by *Al-Amir Hussein Ibn Mohammed Al-Halaby* who was famous as *Ibn Al-Maidani*, this mosque has a magnificent minaret; its shape and its decorations affected by the minaret of Al-Mehmendar Mosque.

References

- [1] Sauvaget, J., (1941). *Alep, Essai sur le développement d'une grande ville syrienne, des origines au milieu du XIX siècle*, Librairie orientalist paul geuthner, Paris.
- [2] Ibn Al-ādeem, K., (1997). *Zobd'at al-halab min tarikh halab*, Dar Al-ketab Al-Araby, Damascus.
- [3] Al-Hāmawy, Y., (1906). *Mo'gam al-boldan*, Vol. 3, Matba'Et Al-sa'ada, Cairo.

- [4] Ibn Al-Shohna, M., (1984). Al-Dorr Al-Montakhab fi tarikh halab, Dar Al-ketab Al-Araby, Damascus.
- [5] Ibn Al-Hanbaly, M., (1972). Al-Zabad wal darb fi tarikh halab, Manşhorat Markaz Al-Makhtotat Wal torath, Kuwait.
- [6] Sobeaty, H., (1981). Tarikh al-dawla al-merdsia fi halab 414-473 A.H / 1023-1080 A.D, PhD, Arabic Arts dept., Faculty of Arts and Humanities sciences, University of Al-Kedees Youssef, Beirut.
- [7] Al-Mansoury, B., (1993). Mokhtar al-akhbar- tarikh al-dawla al-ayyubia wa dawlat al-mamaleek al-bahria hatta sanat 702 H., Al-Dar Al-Mesria Al-Lebnania, Cairo.
- [8] Marfeen, E., (1985). Modon al-şham fi al-asr al-mamloky, Dar Al-Ehsan Li al-teba'a Wal Naşhr, Damascus.
- [9] Hamza, A., (2000). Niabet halab fi asr slateen al-mamaleek (648-923 A.H / 1250-1517 A.D), Al-Hai'aa Al-Mesria Al-a'amma Lel ketab, Cairo.
- [10] Talas, M., (1956). Al-Athār al-islamia wal trekhia fi halab, Matba'et Al-Tarakky, Damascus.
- [11] Sawwaf, S., (1967). Kal'et halab kowwa wa gabarot, Matba'et Al-Ehsan, Syria.
- [12] Al-Ghozzi, K., (1999). Nahr al-zahab fi tarikh halab, Dar Al-Kalam Al-Arabi, Aleppo.
- [13] Abd El-Razik, M., (2011). Al-hammamat al-a'amma be madinat halab monzo bedayat al-asr al-ayyubi hatta nehayat al-asr al-othmani, PhD, Islamic Archaeology dept., Faculty of archaeology, Cairo Univ.
- [14] Ibn Al-Āgamy, A., (1997). Konoz al-zahab fi tarikh halab, Dar Al-Kalam Al-Arabi, Aleppo.
- [15] Al-Tabbkh, R., (1923). A'alaam al-nobala'a bi tarikh halab al-shahba'a, Al-Matba'a Al-Amerria, Aleppo.
- [16] Al-Basha, H., (1965). Al-fenoon al-islamia wal waza'ef ala al-athar al-arabia, Dar Al-Nahda Al-Arabia, Cairo.
- [17] Briggs, M., (1924). Muhammadan architecture in Egypt and Palestine, Oxford Univ. press, London.
- [18] Herzfeld, E., (1955). Inscriptions et monuments d'Alep, Impremmerie de l'Institute Français d'Archéologie Orientale, Cairo.
- [19] Al-Hemsey, F., (1983). Halab al-kadema, Manshorat Al-Modoria Al-Amma lil Athar wal Matahef, Damascus.
- [20] Othman, N., (1992). Al-handasa al-insha'ia fi masajed halab, Manshorat M'ahad Al-Torath Al-Elmy Al-Arabi, Aleppo.