



Old City of Aleppo, A recovery of a World Heritage Site, a recovery of a community “Syrians 'soul is back”

PhD. arch. Hala ASSLAN



In Syria, The Old City of Aleppo was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1986. During the conflict the Ancient city of Aleppo has suffered a severe damage and destruction, which was the motivation of UNESCO, in 2013, to classify the city as “endangered site” on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in accordance (article 11, paragraph 4) with the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage adopted by the General Conference at its 17 session in Paris, 16 November 1972.

The Old City of Aleppo – composed of the Citadel, the Great Mosque of Aleppo, the ancient city within the walls and the old cell-like quarters outside the walls – has an approximate area of 350 hectares (860 acres; 3.5 km²), housing more than 120,000 residents. It won the title of the "Islamic Capital of Culture 2006", and has had a wave of successful restorations of its historic landmarks

"*Souk al-Saqatiyya*, arabic. سوق السقّطية", a part of the Old City of Aleppo, is located in the center of it. with its architectural formation it is considered the most admirable Souk as an evidence of eternity and permanence of the city. As well as, it is considered a model of the Souks during the Ottoman period in Aleppo. Its arches are following one another in succession of a shadow and light play, as one of its most Islamic architecture characteristics.

Since 2011, as a result of the armed conflict, extensive damage occurred at all levels of the historical souk. After the destruction, and in order to rehabilitate this cultural heritage *Souk al-Saqatiyya* : General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums in Syria (DGAM) and the Aga Khan Trust announced a project of restoration and recovery in 2018. I was part of the team assigned to prepare a study to rehabilitate and revive the ancient souk. To reach our goals we used The most recent methods of documentation, preservation and protection which are based on BIM (Building Information Modeling), HIM (Historical Information Modeling). The study plan was designed to be a Pilot Project for subsequent studies. At present, the study has been adopted to restore the first historic souk in the ancient city of Aleppo after war...

The Great Mosque, the Umayyad Mosque, (Arabic: جَامِع حَلَب الكَبِير, Jāmi' Ḥalab al-Kabīr) is the largest and one of the oldest mosques in Aleppo. It is located in al-Jalloum district, near the entrance to Al-Madina Souq. The mosque is purportedly home to the remains of Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, both of whom are revered in Islam and Christianity. It was built in the beginning of the 8th century. However, the current building dates back to the 11th through 14th centuries. The minaret was built in 1090, by an architect named , *Hasan ibn Mufarraġ al-Sarmini*. This giant, frequent victim of history's wars.

The Minaret of Umayyad Mosque was destroyed during fighting in the Syrian conflict in April 2013. The crumpled heap of stones, all that is left of the minaret of the Great Mosque of Aleppo, asks questions of us all. How do we “restore” or “repair” or “rebuild” a jewel of Seljuk civilization from which millions of Muslims were called to prayer five times each day for 900 years in one of the oldest cities of the world?

The Syrian authority has started to build the minaret as close as possible as the original minaret was, adopting the idea :“ By rebuilding the ancient Great Mosque of Aleppo, Syrians are rebuilding their community, when the mosque is restored, everything else will return not only those who pray but people shopping who stop in the colonnades to rest, because the mosque is the heart of this area. This is not just a religious symbol. It is a social place, part of the local culture.”

Such like Dresden, Budapest, Milano, Warsaw, Kraków, Rotterdam, Le Havre ou Varsovie ;

**“When Aleppo is rebuilt,
it will be because of the love of its people”.**



bringing life to the heart of Aleppo ...

