Proceedings of Symposium on Mosque Architecture, Vol. 2B, pp. 1-18,College of Architecture & Planning, King Saud University (1419H-1999)

Unity in Traditional Mosque Architecture: The Great Omari Mosque, Gaza City, Palestine

Abdel Rahman Mahrok

Department Of Architecture, Islamic University

Gaza, Palestine

Abstract: The mosque is a distinguished hallmark of unity of the Moslem Ummah. Unity in architecture does not go far from unity in Islam. It is all about being united together and composing one whole. For mosques to reflect unity of Moslem Ummah, their reflection of architectural unity is a must. It is indispensable to understand the conceptual relationships between unity in Islam and unity in mosque architecture. Yet it is essential to interpret the architectural unity of mosques. The concern should be primarily directed towards the composition of the mosque as a whole but not its style details or external characteristics. Such a study attains greater importance if mosque architecture has evolved through elongate and contrasted historical frameworks.

Introduction

Origins of the Great Omary Mosque in Gaza, Palestine dates back to the pre- Islamic period. It has since then been developed through several dynasties which has impinged it with different architectural consequences.

This paper examines the architectural evolution of the Great Omari Mosque in order to explore its architectural unity and the factors which has shaped it.

Both the Mamluk and the Ottoman dynasties, and the Palestinian High Islamic Council contributed to the development and preservation of the mosque. Original composition of the building and its Mamluk and Ottoman additions follow several principles of architectural unity. They also exhibit several important features of unity and integrity. Despite their different historical frameworks, the Mamluks, the Ottomans and the Palestinian High Islamic Council managed to preserve the unified wholeness of the mosque. This implies nothing but the sensitive architectural orientations of the Moslems and the Islamic unity, which impinged their mosques.

Framework of the Study

In search for restoration and resurgence of architecture, it is crucial to study its composition and spatial patterns in order to understand its quality. Unity is one of the important factors which influence the quality of architecture because *"the object of all good architecture is to create integrated wholes"*.[1, p. 33] Therefore, understanding architecture primarily stems from the understanding of integrating elements, which produce wholeness in the architectural composition. Unity is a principal condition for every aspect of art including design arts. It

can not be exclusively confined to the internal relationships in the composition but also it extends to include the relationships between the composition and its surroundings. [2, p. 72]

In architecture, unity is a quality of the design composition. [3, p. 6] It is also considered one of the main objectives of design.[4, p. 93] Not only it is concerned with visual exterior and style details of the design, but also it is an inherent feature of design interior and its functional relationships. It is a spirit, which penetrates through every aspect of design and formulates a theme or a doctrine around which design elements evolve.[4, p. 94]

Moreover, unity is considered the main aspect of architectural beauty, which stems from a unifying ideology and the integration system of the design elements. [2, p. 143]

In this sense, unity constitutes a balancing factor, which governs the suitable relationships between the elements and their ability to integrate together. In so doing, unity employs several principles by which it is possible to produce a satisfactory architectural composition. In fact, most principles of architectural composition contribute to unity. This result in a wide range of principles, aspects and features of unity. Vitruvius had set several principles of architectural beauty. Three out of six of these principles contribute to unity. They are disposition, rhythm and symmetry. [2, p. 133]

On the other hand, it is argued that a general outline of architectural composition can be found in the writings of the Moslem philosophers Abu Hayan Al-Tawhedi, Al-Ghazali, Ibn Sina and Maskawaih.[2, p. 23] Nowhere, unity also appears as a major factor affecting the quality of art. Its principles include proportion, form and color.[2, p. 193]

Attempts to figure out principles of architectural composition in Islamic architecture include several principles of unity like repetition, rhythm, abstraction, color and proportion. [2, pp. 33-47]

More recently, unity is considered to have several elements and aspects. Elements of unity include texture, color, tone, direction, proportion and shape and form. Aspects of unity are dominance, harmony, vitality and balance. [3, pp. 6-9]

Additionally, Hammoda (1990) argues that wholeness of architectural composition is governed by the following principles: axis, repetition, rhythm and basic composition unit. [5, p. 131]

On the other hand, organizational principles which help to build integrity in design compositions can be divided into three categories:

- Spatial principles which include nearness, enclosure, interlock, continuity, similarity and figure and ground.
- Structural principles which include balance, tension, rhythm, proportion and scale.
- Ordering principles which include axis, symmetry, hierarchy, datum and transformation.[4, p. 93]

It is of course possible to continue the search for many other classifications of unity in architectural composition.

In search for a general model of principles of unity from the above classifications a long list would result in. The application of such a list in the analysis of an architectural composition would be too long and complicated. A unified and integrated architectural composition is primarily constructed from several basic elements which include points, lines, planes, volumes and spaces.[4, p. 9] These elements are usually composed according to certain principles in order to exhibit features of wholeness and integration. These features together fulfill unity in the architectural composition.

In mosque architecture, certain principles and features of unity attains greater importance. Mosques are devoted for the intricate relationship between "**earth**" and "**sky**". They are

dominated with proportion, direction and axis. They are rectangular, flat and horizontal with minarets, domes, arches and vaults pushes towards the sky. The whole composition is harmonized in materials and spaces; in solids and voids. Vitality is also strongly exhibited in this intricate relationship between horizontality and verticality, and solid and void. Among the different principles of unity, this paper employs proportion, direction, axis and solid and void in the examination of the architectural composition of the Great Omari Mosque. Features like dominance, harmony and vitality are used to assess the overall unity of the building.

The City of Gaza: General Background

Gaza is one of the largest and most important cities at the southern coast of Palestine. It is the administrative, political and economic center of Gaza Governorates Region.

It is believed that Gaza is the 4th city built on earth.[6, p. 19] It has a strategic location at the gate between Africa and Asia. It is also an important junction on commerce routs between south and north, and east and west. Accordingly, it was a target for many attacks and wars which destroyed it several times.[7, p. 72] On the 14th, Dec. 634 AD, Moslem Arabs conquered Gaza and since then it has been delighted in the gratitude and dignity of Islamic civilization. Crusaders occupied the city in 1109 AD before being liberated by Salahuddin Al-Ayubi in 1187 AD.[7, p. 76] From 1260 to 1516 AD Gaza remained under the role of the Mamluks. Gaza reached its golden architectural age under the Mamluks who furnished the city with so many mosques and other types of public buildings.[6, p. 22] In 1516 AD, the Ottomans inherited the Mamluk legacy in Palestine. Although they did not have the Mamluks' interest in the development of mosques, Gaza continued to witness the construction of few new mosques. Efforts were also directed to the development of the Great Omari Mosque. During World War One, the British army bombarded Gaza from sea and air. Large areas of the city were destroyed including many historical mosques. The British regime did not pay any attention to the restoration and preservation of historic mosques in Gaza.[8, p. 4] When the British Mandate was terminated in 1948, Gaza was ruled by the Egyptian Government. Despite the extensive interest of the Egyptians in archeology and historic architecture, nothing was done towards the historic buildings of Gaza. Furthermore, the Egyptian administration also crossed out more historic buildings in order to open new roads in the city.

These detrimental exertions against historic buildings and mosques were escalated under the Israeli occupation after 1967. Architectural identity of the city witnessed further deflections under the dismay and insecurity of the occupation (figure 1). Attitudes towards historic buildings and mosques have also been changed. People had no interest in the restoration and conservation of historic buildings but eagerness to replace historic buildings with new ugly concrete structures. Nowadays, there is a desperate need in Gaza to understand, preserve and develop architectural unity of historic mosques which symbolize the glorious heritage of the city (figure 2).



Fig 1: Contemporary urban image of Gaza.



Fig 2: Ibn Marwan mosque, disparate need for preservation.

Historical Development of the Great Omari Mosque

This mosque is located in the heart of the old town within its traditional market (figure 3). It is believed that the building (figure 4) was before Christianity an idolatrous temple. When Christianity spread in Palestine, the building was in the 5th century AD destroyed and a church was built on its ruins.[9, p. 62] It is argued that the building had not been completely destroyed but rather the signs of idolatry since there is no proof for the destruction of the temple and the building of the church. After the Islamic conquest and upon the request of the indigenous population, the church was transformed to a mosque.[9, p. 64] It was called the Omari Mosque to commemorate this auspicious event.[6, p. 27] Yet the decree of conquest of Khalif Omar Ibn Al-Khattab for the Christians of Jerusalem secured their churches.[10, p. 91] He even refused to pray in a church in order not to transform it to a mosque.[10, p. 98] This makes some recent Palestinian historians believe that the building of the mosque is different from that of the church since Islam prevents such change of churches into mosques.[11] This argument needs further verification through deeper historical consideration of the building.

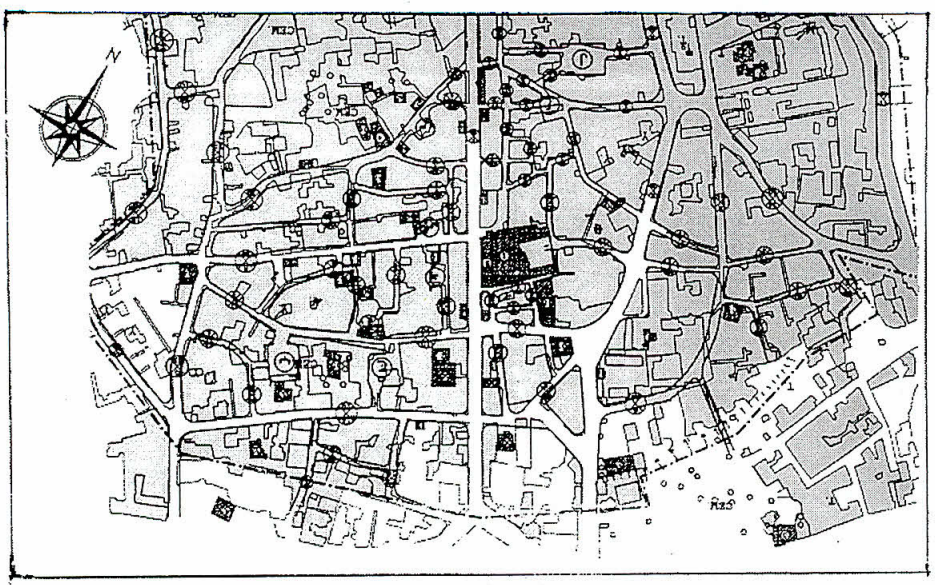


Fig 3: Location of Great Omari Mosque.

Nothing is available about the mosque until 1149 AD. It is believed that the Crusaders destroyed the mosque and built a church over its ruins. [9, p. 145] Abu Hashim (1995) believes that Islamic features in the building might had been destroyed but not the whole building.[6, p. 31] The Crusaders did not destroy Al-Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock mosques in Jerusalem despite all their atrocities in the holy city.[11, p. 157] The changes which might had been introduced to the building makes it looks like a new crusader one. [12, p. 332]

On the road of Salahuddin Al-Ayobi, the Mamluks completely liberated Palestine from the Crusaders and afterwards from the Mughals by mid 13th century AD. The Mamluks directed great attention to the Great Omari Mosque. By this date, the mosque merely consisted from the prayer hall (***bait assala***); a rectangle with main transept and two isles directed to the east. During the role of Husamuddin Lajin AL-Mansouri (1237-1299 AD) of the Bahri



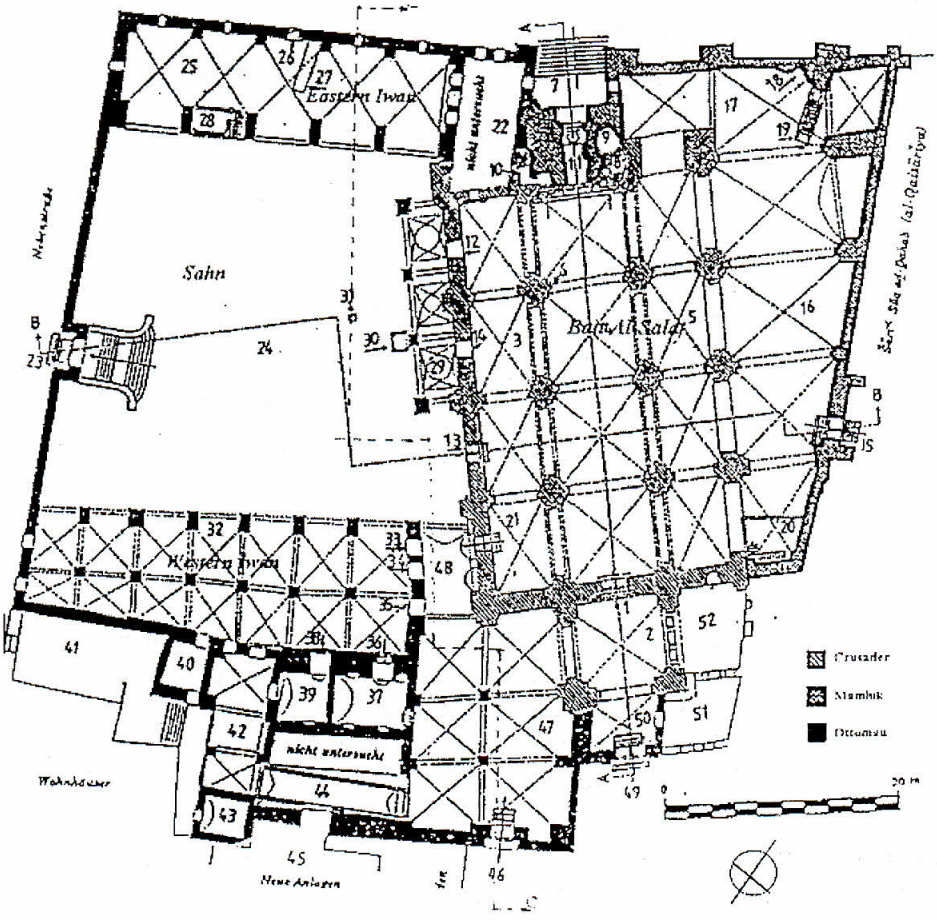


Fig 4: Plan and general view of the Great Omari Mosque.

Source: [11. P. 489], Photo by author.

Mamluk Dynasty (1250-1380's AD),[13, p. 15] a door was opened and a minaret was built at the eastern wall in 1297.[9, p. 68] This development came only a year after Husamuddin Lajin restored the mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo and added an octagonal trunk on the top of its minarert.[13, p. 55] In the same year, a new window was opened in the northern wall. [6, p. 30; 9, p. 69] Another window and a door were opened in the same wall in 1299 during the role of Annasir Mohammad Ibn Qalawun (1293-1341 AD), the greatest Mamluk builder.[6, p. 31; 9, p. 70] During trhe same reign, another great development was made to the mosque in 1330 AD. Two arcades (***riwaqs***) were added to the east and south of the building. A door was opened in the new southern wall and a prayer niche (***mihrab***) was added in the eastern arcade. A bench (***dikka***) was also placed at the western edge of the southern arcade.[6, p. 72] Afterwards, the mosque continued to survive both in its building and functions for more than 400 years with no significant development.

The greatest development of the mosque was made under the role of Mohammad Al Bakri (1765-1818 AD). A wide courtyard (***sahn***) and three arcades were added to the north of the mosque. A pulpit (***minbar***) and a bench were added to the eastern arcade of the courtyard. A school (***madrasa***), abultion space (***maida'a***) and toilets were also added to the west of the new development. A door was also opened in the northern wall of the courtyard, [9, p. 78] and a portal was added to the western door. In 1842 AD, Darweesh Hasan Basha, the lieutenant colonel (***mutassarref***) of Gaza provided the mosque with a stone abultion reservoir and ordered some maintenance work in the building. [9, p, 81] The latest recorded development in the mosque during the Ottoman role was in 1885 AD. Kinj Ahmad, the director of endowment in Gaza provided toilets and water taps for abultion and opened a new door to the north of the western door. [9, p. 83]

In the First World War, the mosque was greatly damaged and its minaret was destroyed. It was not before 1926 AD when the High Islamic Council renovated the building. It has been surviving since this last renovation. UNESCO conducted a study in 1992 for the preservation and restoration of the mosque,[9, p. 94] but nothing has been done until the moment. It recently suffers from dangerous deterioration which desperately needs redevelopment and restoration.

Unity in the Great Omari Mosque

The Great Omari Mosque has survived with many changes during several dynasties and has continued to preserve its dignity and identity. This fact in its self gives the mosque a very distinguished position in the architectural heritage of Gaza. The building has been developed through a long period of time and has a great historic value. The study of unity in this inveterate building is a very important approach to explore the quality of its architectural composition. It is also essential for the understanding of the evolution of this composition through the prolonged periods of its history. The following discussion deals with some principles and features of unity in this mosque.

Principles of Unity

The architectural composition of the Great Omari Mosque employs many principles of unity. These principles provide for several features, which formalize the overall unified

identity of the building. Some of the most distinguished principles of unity are considered below.

Proportion, Direction and Axis

The prayer hall of the mosque mainly consists of the original core of the building and the Mamluk additions. The original core consists of the main transept and 2 isles (figure 5). It is rectangular in plan with width/length proportion = 1/1.647 which is nearly the proportion of the golden section: 1/1.618. The transept is divided into 4 squares while each of the isles is divided into 4 rectangles with width/length proportion approximately equals the golden section. Both the isles and the transept emphasize the direction of the building to the east. Since the transept consists of odd number of cross vaults, the center of the building lies on the line between the two middle squares. These two cross vaults therefore represent the central space of the composition.

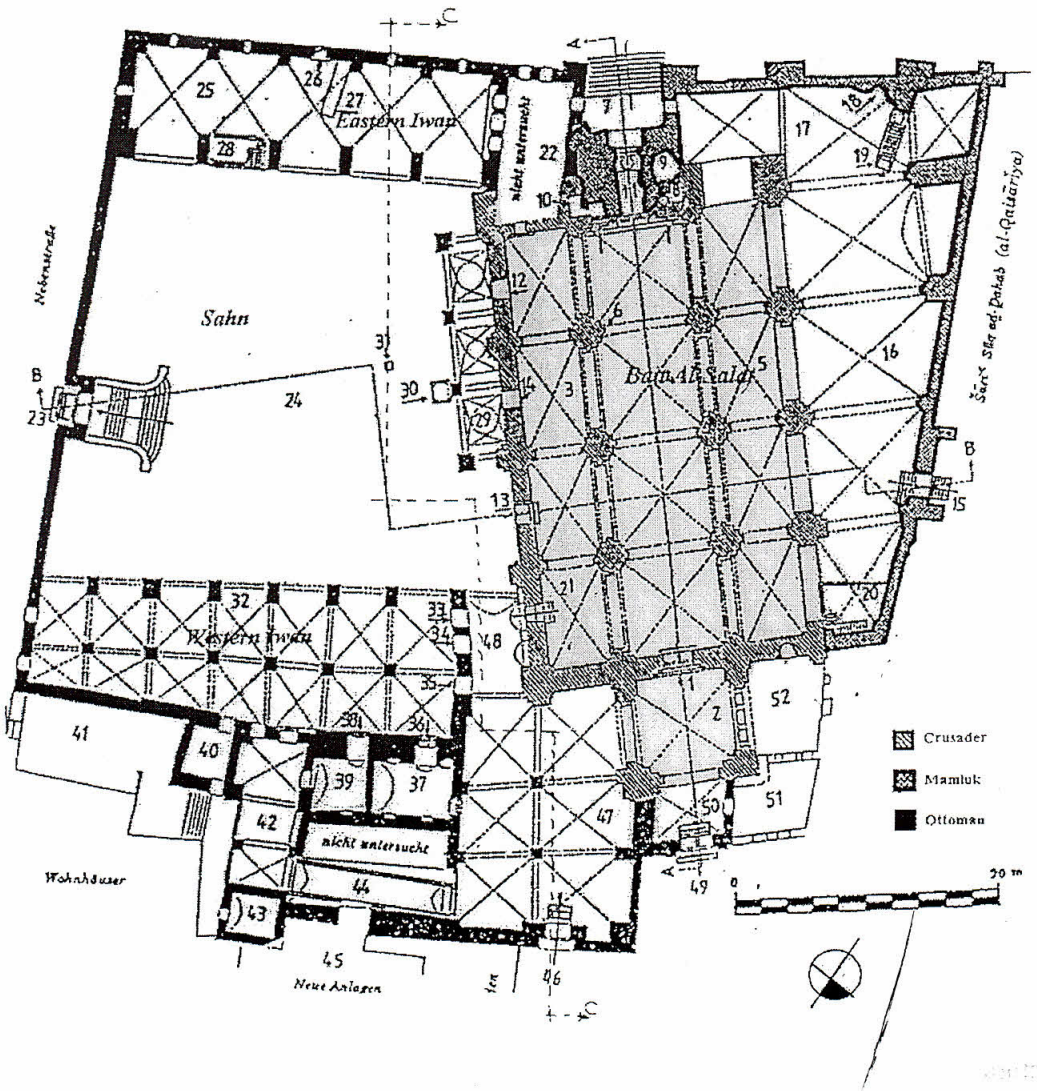


Fig 5: Plan of the Great Omari Mosque, the prayer hall (the original core).

Source: Author's reproduction based on figure 4.

The Mamluk widening (figure 6) does not conform to the formal shape of the core. Although this change in the direction and orientation of the building might not seem justified, it is strongly suggested that the new southern wall was made parallel to Makka (***qibla***) direction. It was an attempt to reshape a huge and heavy interior of the historical building to carefully suit the prayer function. Yet the new addition to the east did not correctly relates to Makka direction. At the same time, the minaret base and the new door in the eastern wall are at the center of the transept and axially related to the western door.

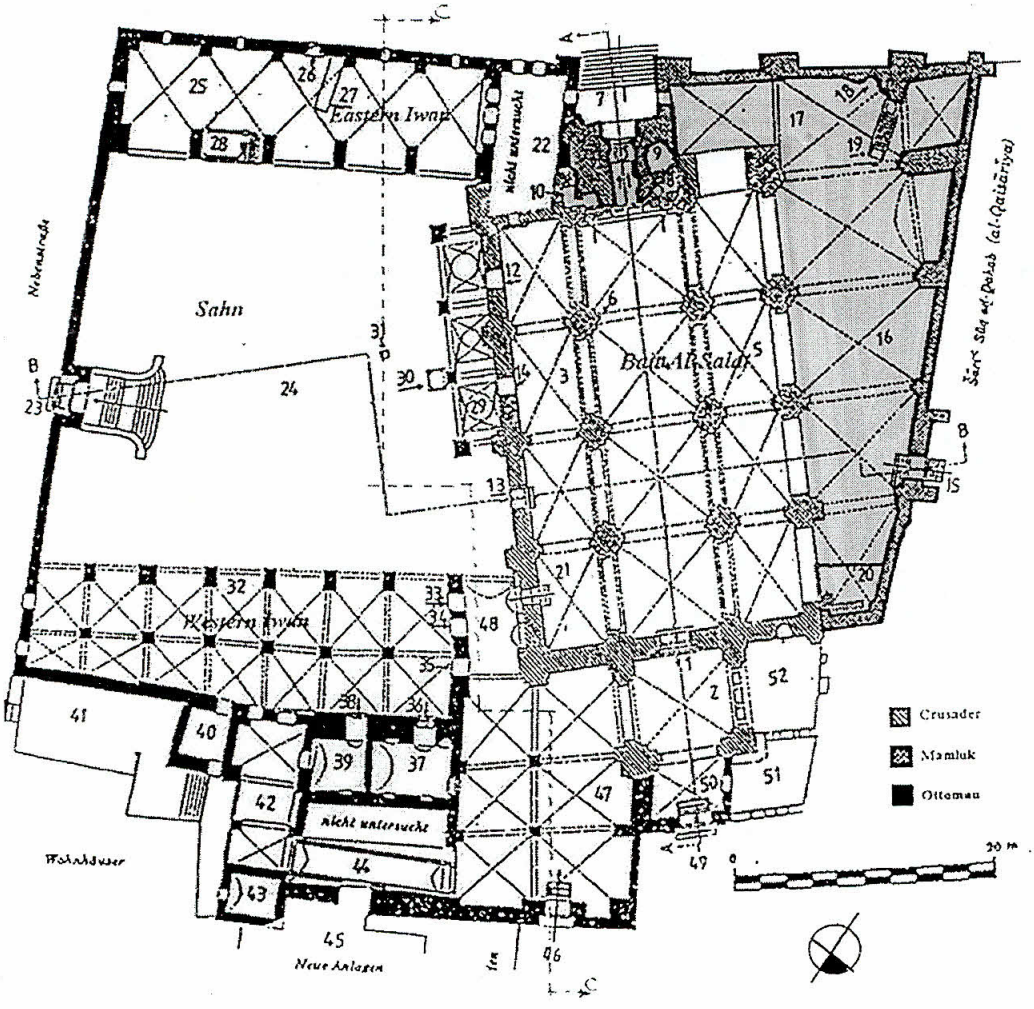


Fig 6: Plan of the Great Omari Mosque, the prayer hall (Mamluk widening).

Source: Author's reproduction based on figure 4.

The Ottoman widening (figure 7) did not uniformly conform to the original core of the building nor to the Mamluk additions. It seems that the main concern was to widen the mosque and to provide the required facilities. The arcades of the courtyard are irregular both in their plans and elevations. Continuity of the arcades is also lost. The northern boundary of the courtyard is merely a wall while the other three arcades do not relate to each other.

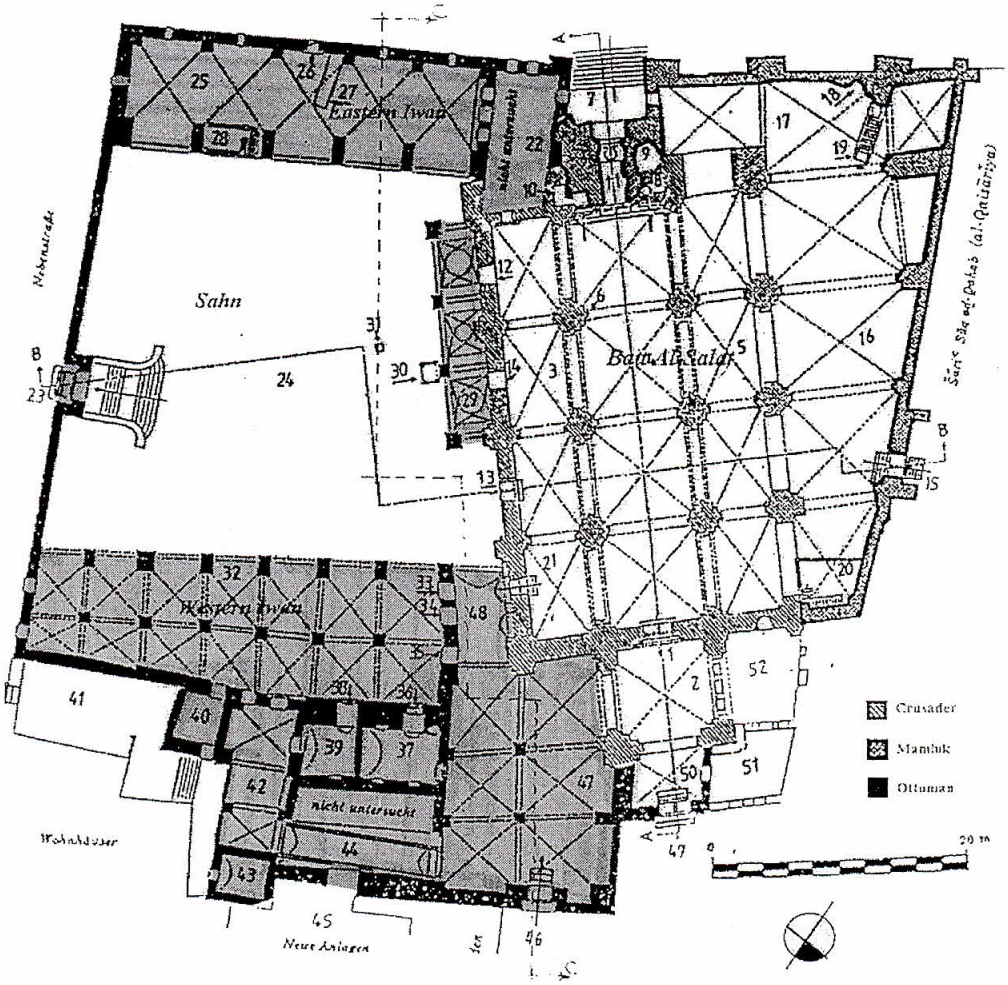
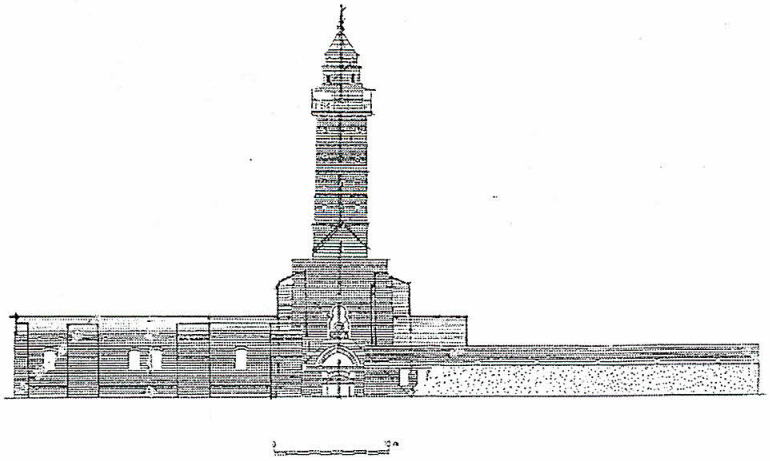


Fig 7: Plan of the Great Omari Mosque, the courtyard (Ottoman widening).

Source: Author's reproduction based figure 4.

Looking at the eastern elevation (figure 8), it is quite obvious that the Mamluk part of it contains important architectural and structural elements. It therefore retains richer spatial quality than the Ottoman part. The Ottoman addition also increases the horizontality of the elevation. The minaret has a beautiful octagonal trunk fixed on a heavy rectangular base. The trunk is divided into 5 intervals by white marble friezes. The first interval is a square transformed into an octagon. The 5th interval is covered with a very narrow metal-railed balcony crowned with a small pavilion, which is a diminutive replica of the trunk. The pavilion is domed with a conical octagon bearing a finial. The form of the minaret visually emphasizes its height, which reaches around 30 meters. At the same time, the minaret provides vertical balance for the horizontality of the eastern elevation. It also has a clear axial relationship with the entrance underneath.

Although the remaining part of the minaret after World War One has the same shape of the existing base, there is no information about the minaret before its destruction. Style of the existing minaret does not exactly mach any of the documented Mamluk minarets.[13, 14, 15] Yet it is interesting to notice that Salem,[14, p. 31] demonstrates that Syrian influences on minaret architecture in Egypt clearly appear in the minaret of Ezzoddin Aybak in Salkhad which has a long octagonal stone trunk divided into intervals by marble friezes. Existing minarets of other Mamluk and Ottoman mosques in Gaza also have the same style. It would therefore be possible to conclude that the existing minaret of the Great Omari Mosque



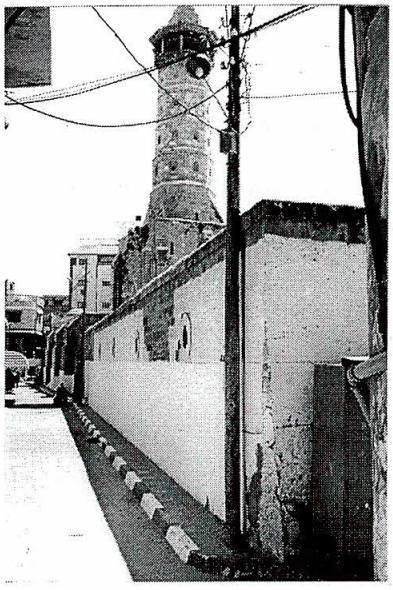
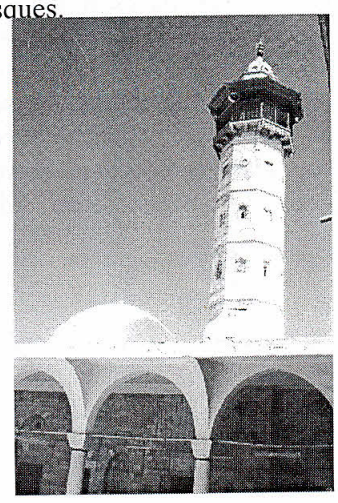


Fig 8: Great Omari Mosque, eastern elevation.

Source: [11, p.492], Photo by author.

relationship between man and his creator. No other physical example symbolizes this fact better resembles the original minaret. This minaret had its own style, which had been adopted by most of the minarets in Gaza (figure 9). Figure (10) reveals the composition of the western elevation. The main entrance, the circular window, the stone gable and the minaret have clear axial relationship, which

emphasizes the verticality of the elevation. At the same time, verticality of the elevation provides a clear than mosques.



Assayed Hashim

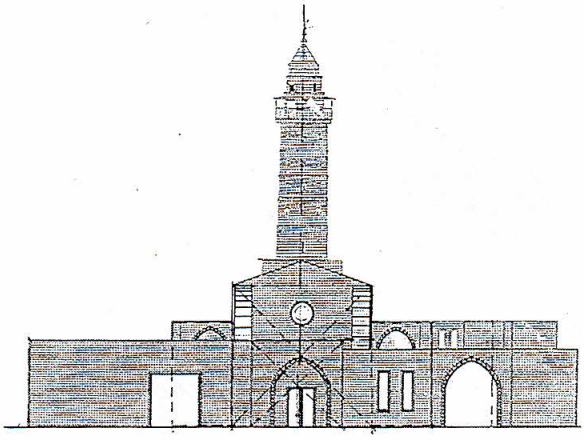


Ibn Othman

Fig 9: Historical minarets in Gaza.

Yet again like what has been concluded from the eastern elevation, Ottoman additions to the western elevation did not add much richness and quality to the mosque's composition.

Figure (11) at the same time exhibits a good spatial combination in the north elevation of the prayer hall. Gradual recesses from the Ottoman arcade to the minaret provides the elevation with a gentle motion from the "**ground**" of the courtyard to the "**sky**" of the minaret. Eight narrow vertical strips divide the flanks of the transept into nine parts. Three of the parts have three pilasters, other four parts have four windows and the two parts at the edges are plane. The vertical strips were designed as vertical channels for rainwater. The Ottoman arcade is not fitted within the composition of the elevation. It seems strange and incomplete. Flank pilasters are axial with isle pilasters and together with the channels and the minaret they enhance the verticality of the elevation. Interior of the prayer hall (figure 12) is longitudinally divided into 4 parts each is a golden section rectangle. It is vertically divided into three equal horizontal parts.



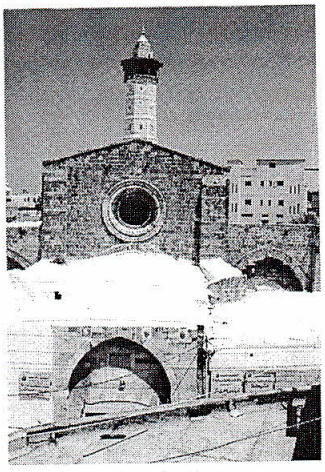


Fig 10: Great Omari Mosque, western elevation,

Four windows in each bay looking onto the roof of the side isles let the flanks of the transept. Windows of the transept and the isles are proportioned and centered in each of the vertical parts. They also support the verticality of the interior space of the mosque.

The general form of the mosque signifies proportion, direction and axis in the transept, the isles and the minaret.

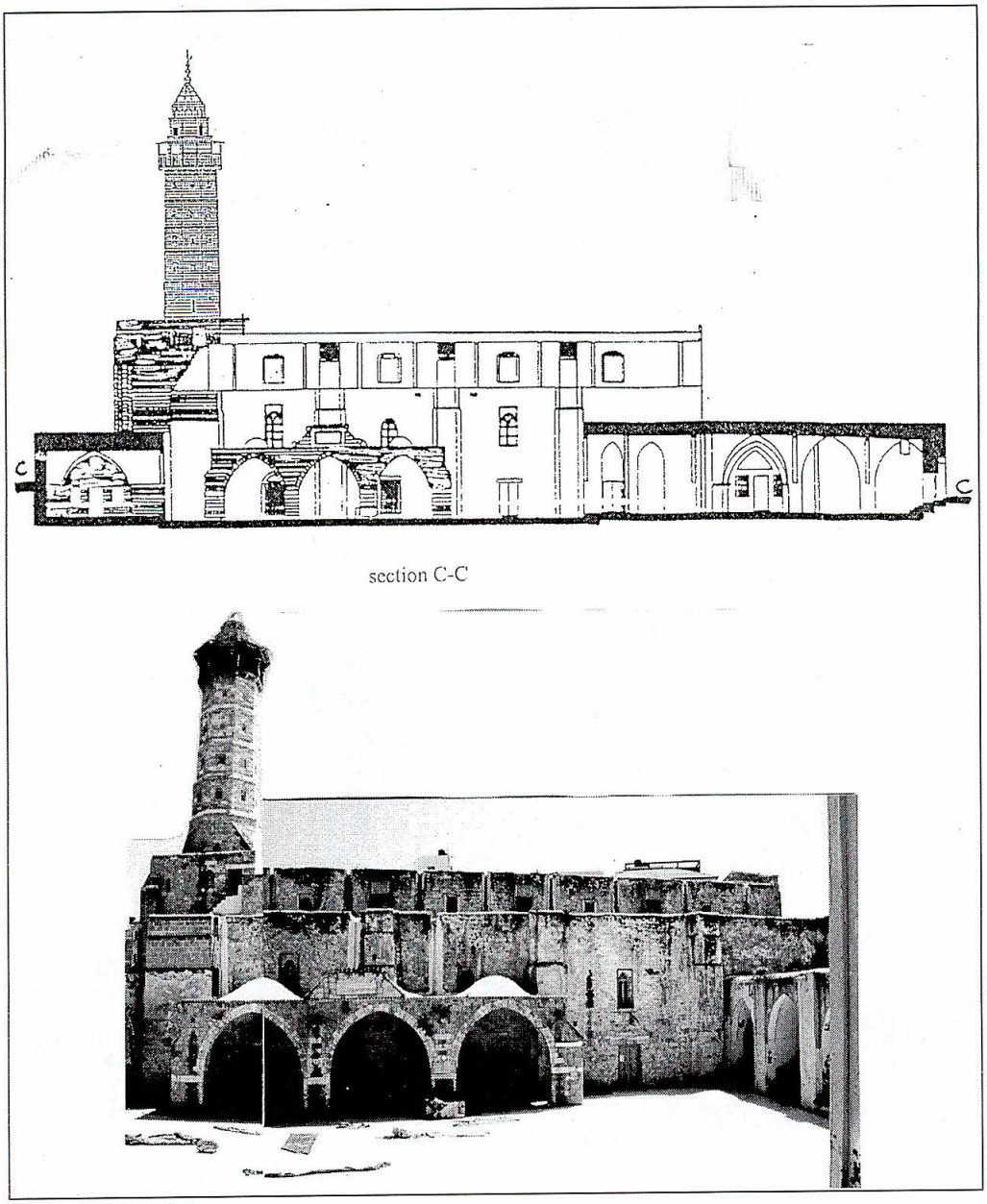
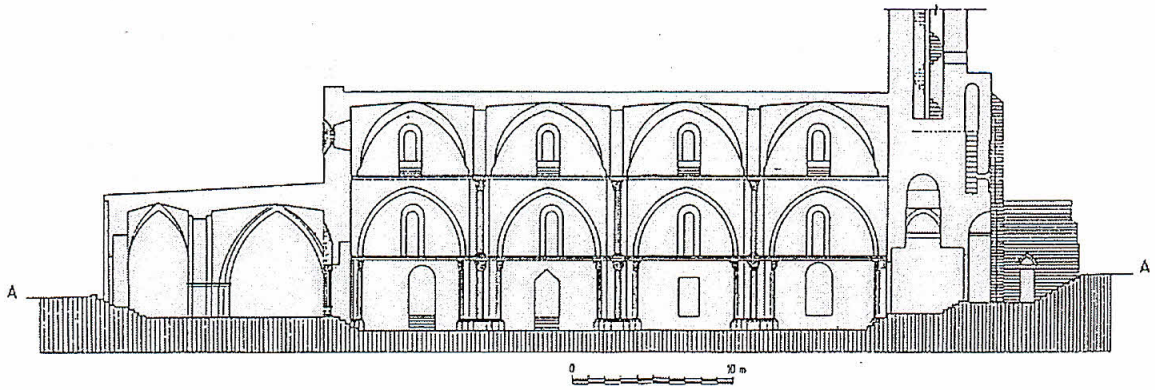
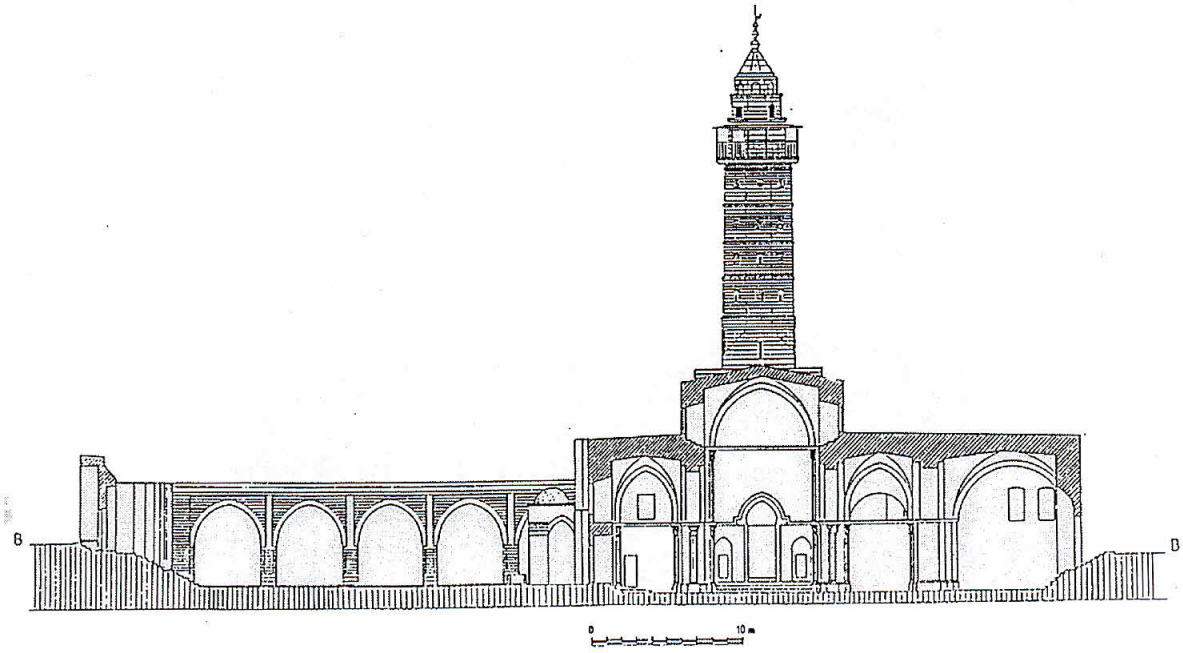


Fig 11: Great Omari Mosque, section C-C showing the north elevation of the prayer hall.

Source: [9, p.70], Photo by author.



section A-A



section B-B.

Fig 12: Great Omari Mosque, section A-A and B-B.

Source: [11, pp. 490-1]

Solid and Void

The plan of the mosque is a distinguished example of spatial arrangement in Islamic architecture. It usually has a thick heavy outer boundary, which might be seen as a representation of the finite life and universe. A huge number of columns are carefully distributed inside this boundary. These columns represent finite spatial accidents, which can not penetrate the boundary for their spatial expression. Rather, they find expression upward towards the sky through arches, vaults, domes and minarets. Interior of the prayer hall of the Great Omari Mosque is enclosed inside thick stone walls. Its heavy cross-vaulted roof is supported by large piers, which are uniformly divided the small space. This makes the interior seems as if it had been cut from the huge mass of the stone structure. Moreover, the whole structure of the mosque is deeply dug into the ground below the surrounding streets. With the stepped exterior composition of the transept and the isles, this also makes the whole volume of the prayer hall seems as if it had been cut off a heavy stone mass. The irregularity of the courtyard, the arcades around it and other Ottoman additions also support this conception.

Elevations of the prayer hall are more solid and massive than void and spatial. It is suggested that the triple-arched arcade at the northern elevation had been attempted to add some space to the massive elevation. Although the eastern and western elevations are smother and exhibits more voids than the northern elevation, they still exhibit the massive solid of the mosque.

Aspects of Unity

Principles of unity contribute to the genesis of several features of unity in the general composition of the Great Omari Mosque. Main features are dominance, harmony and vitality.

Dominance

Although both the Mamluk and Ottoman additions significantly increased the area of the mosque, they could not dominate the spatial expressiveness of the original core. On the other hand, the prayer hall, the minaret and the courtyard are the main three elements, which dominate the composition of the mosque. The prayer hall dominates the mass of the building while the courtyard dominates its void. At the same time, the minaret vertically dominates the sky of the composition.

Harmony

It is one of the distinguished features, which greatly influences the state of unity in the composition of the Great Omari Mosque. Despite the historical evolution and the continuous change of the mosque, satisfactory arrangements can be observed within its general structure.

Interior of the prayer hall pleasantly features harmony in the arcades of the transept and the isles and their roofing. Spaces between the arcades, voids of the windows and solids of the piers all express a sense of harmony and integrity. Exterior of the prayer hall also features the harmony of its solids. The horizontal direction of the transept and the isles is harmonized with the verticality of the minaret. Despite the irregularity of the courtyard and its arcades, it

exhibits harmony in its general composition and in its relationship with the huge mass of the prayer hall.

Vitality

Many elements are important for establishing an image of a complete composition for the Great Omari Mosque. Yet two elements are vital for this composition and without them it would lose much of its identity and integration. They are the prayer hall and the minaret. Vitality of the prayer hall stems from its visual and functional importance. Without the prayer hall, prayer would not be functioned properly in the courtyard and the arcades especially in hot summer and rainy winter. At the same time, the visual composition of the mosque would lose its proportion, direction and axis by removing the prayer hall from it.

On the other hand, the minaret is extremely vital for the identity and unity of the mosque. Although the minaret is no longer needed for the call for prayer, it is vital for the proportion direction and balance of the architectural composition of the building.

Conclusion

The Great Omari Mosque possesses great history and prominent heritage. It is one of the finest pieces of Islamic architecture in the whole region of Gaza governorates. Its evolution shows that it had strong resistance against decay and destruction. Even the bombs of the British army could not bring it to the ground in World War One. As soon as the Moslems of Palestine awaked from the shock of the war, they worked very hard to rebuild the mosque and repair the destruction despite all the problems, difficulties and shortages of the country after the war. Such a situation clearly indicate the great love and respect the Palestinians paid for their Great Mosque. This distinguish relationship had always made the people aware and sensitive towards any efforts to renovate the building or add to its structure. The mosque had therefore been consciously developed with no disturbance or drastic changes to its unified integrity. The Mamluk additions provided the prayer hall with mass and volume and connected it to the sky. The minaret supported the axis, proportion and direction of the transept and the isles. Its verticality was also proportioned with the horizontality of the hall. The Mamluk additions did not exactly conform to the rigid geometry of the original core. They inserted some fine movement in the structure by breaking the lines and planes of its rigidity. The Ottoman additions seem as if they had come to support this fine movement in the structure of the mosque. They did not conform to the rigidity of the original core nor to the Mamluk additions. Their lower height, lighter mass and horizontal expansion provided the heavy mass of the prayer hall with suitable background and gradual upwards movement. This movement was also supported by the insertion of the void of the courtyard. The courtyard and its arcades at the same time add more void to the solids of the mosque' mass. All these features are composed with good harmony, which enhances the integration of the mosque. Yet still it is possible to find some vital elements which dominate the structure and provide it with its special unified identity.

The Great Omari Mosque is still a dominant element of the urban structure of Gaza and it is vital for the Islamic identity of the city. Its important heritage should be preserved and greater efforts should be directed to its conservation and renovation.

References

[1] Rasmussen, S E. *Experiencing Architecture*. Cambridge, Mass., 1962.

[2] Hammoda, O., *Theories And Values Of Architectural Beauty*. Cairo: Dar Al-Maaref, 1990 (Arabic).

[3] Smithies, K. W. *Principles Of Design In Architecture*. Wokingham: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co. Ltd., 1981.

[4] Bell, Simon. *Elements Of Visual Design In The Landscape*. London: E&FN Spon, 1993.

[5] Hammoda, Y. *Architectural Composition*. Cairo: Dar al-Maaref, 1990 (Arabic).

[6] Abu Hashim, Abdel Lateef. *Historic Mosques in Gaza City*. Gaza, Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs, 1995 (Arabic).

[7] Salha, Rae'd. *The City Of Gaza: A Study in Urban Geography*. Gaza, 1997 (Arabic).

[8] Skaik, I K. *Gaza Through History*. Vol. 9, Gaza, 1983 (Arabic).

[9] Al-Mubayid, S. A. *Historical Islamic Buildings in Gaza And Its Strip*. Cairo: Egyptian General Book Institute, 1994 (Arabic).

[10] El-Aref, Aref. *A History of Jerusalem: Detailed Account Of The Holy City*. Jerusalem: Al-Andalus Publishing, 1986 (Arabic).

[11] Sadeq, Mu'een. *Mamluk Architecture in Gaza*. Berlin, 1991 (German).

[12] El-Aref, Aref. *History of Gaza*. Jaffa, 1943 (Arabic).

[13] Behrens-Abouseif, D. *Islamic Architecture in Cairo: an introduction*. Cairo: American university in Cairo Press, 1989.

[14] Salem, S A. *Egyptian Minarets*. Cairo: Shabab Al-Jami'a Institute, no date (Arabic).

[15] Mostafa, S L. *Islamic Architectural Heritage In Egypt*. Beirut: Dar An-Nahda Al-Arabiya, 1984 (Arabic).

الوحدة في عمارة المساجد التقليدية:
المسجد العمري الكبير في مدينة غزة، فلسطين

عبدالرحمن المحروق

قسم العمارة، الجامعة الإسلامية

غزة، فلسطين

ملخص البحث: المسجد هو أعلى دلالة على تماسك الأمة الإسلامية والوحدة في العمارة ترمز للتماسك في الإسلام وتكامل المسلمين كأمة واحدة. فإن كانت المساجد تعبر عن تماسك الأمة الإسلامية فإن تعبيرها عن الوحدة في العمارة يصبح ضرورة قصوى.وبالتالي يجب تعميق مفهوم العلاقة بين الإسلام والوحدة في عمارة المساجد. ومن الضروري أيضا ترجمة وتحليل وحدة عمارة المساجد بالتركيز على تكوين المسجد ككل وليس على تفاصيل طرازه المعماري أو ملامحه الخارجية.

وهنا تكمن أهمية مثل هذه الدراسة خاصة بالنظر إلى أن عمارة المساجد قد تطورت خلال حقب تاريخية طويلة ومتباينة, وذلك من دراسته أحد المساجد التقليدية مثل المسجد العمري الكبير في مدينة غزة بفلسطين.