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MOSQUE OF BAHRAM PASHA AND ITS ENDOWMENTS IN ALEPPO (SYRIA)

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ABSTRACT

This paper aimed to study the mosque of Bahram Pasha in Aleppo, Syria. This mosque known as al-Bahramyia mosque is considered to be one of the most important mosques in Aleppo that constructed in Ottoman era. It was built in the end of (10th A.H/ 16th A.D century) by Bahram Pasha the governor of Aleppo, he built it on Ottoman style and endowed a great *Waqf* to it. Here we studied the general plan of the mosque, and tie between its architectural style and the parallel mosques in Aleppo and rest of the country, in addition to analytical study of its architectural elements. The paper studied also the endowments of the mosque that allocated by its founder in the city of Aleppo and other cities such as Gaza and Cairo, noting that the majority of these endowments still remain especially in Aleppo. This paper includes also a number of maps, illustration figures, photographic plates to the mosque and its endowments most of them published for the first time.

KEYWORDS: Mosque, Minaret, Open courtyard, Sanctuary, Endowments, Portico, Basin, Main portal

1. INTRODUCTION

Aleppo city, in Syria, became one of the provinces which belonged to the Ottoman Empire since the date (922 A.H/ 1516 A.D) (Sauvaget, 1941). Ottoman Aleppo has a great importance under the rule of Ottoman Sultans; it became a base of the northern Syria (al-Hemsi, 1983). The importance of Aleppo increased under the patronage of Ottoman Empire because of its strategic location as it became a key trading station along the east-west and north-south routes of a large Empire (Godard, 1938); also the commercial state has flourished in Aleppo during this period (Qal'agy, 1989).

In Ottoman period many monumental buildings are constructed in the city by its governors beginning of the sixteenth century, this century which contemporary with building of three famous Ottoman complexes, the first one was the mosque of al-Khesrowiyyia which constructed by Khesro Pasha (Hadjar, 2007), the construction of this mosque or complex marked the beginning of the building activity which was continue through the sixteenth century (Kafescioğlu, 1999). The second great mosque that constructed in the same century was al-A'adilyyia mosque which constructed by Mohammed pasha Dukaqin (Heretany, 2006), he endowed a great waqf to his mosque, so this mosque and its endowments represent a great complex in the city (Kafescioğlu, 1999).

The third one which constructed in the sixteenth century in Aleppo was al-Bahramiyya mosque- which the paper aimed to study it- the founder of this mosque endowed a great waqf to it in Aleppo, that's what made it one of the most famous complexes that constructed in the city in Ottoman period. By the end of the sixteenth century the building activity didn't stop in Aleppo, that there were many great buildings and complexes were constructed in the city after this period.

The majority of congregational mosques which constructed in Aleppo during the Ottoman period reflected the characteristics of Ottoman architecture such as its wide areas, huge domes covered by lead which surmounting the whole space of the sanctuary, open courtyard surrounded by aisles which roofed by small domes, convex minarets which rising to the heaven, in addition to some kinds of decoration such as the mosaic works which decorated the majority of these mosques from its inside. In the same time these Ottoman mosques didn't lack to the local Syrian styles which clearly appeared on it, especially in Bahram pasha mosque.

These great mosques which constructed in this period characterized also by its huge endowments, that the founders of these mosques were interested in building many endowments and endowed it to their mosques to guarantee the continuous of its work (watenpaugh, 2004), that the yield of these endowments was spent on the purposes of restorations and renewal works.

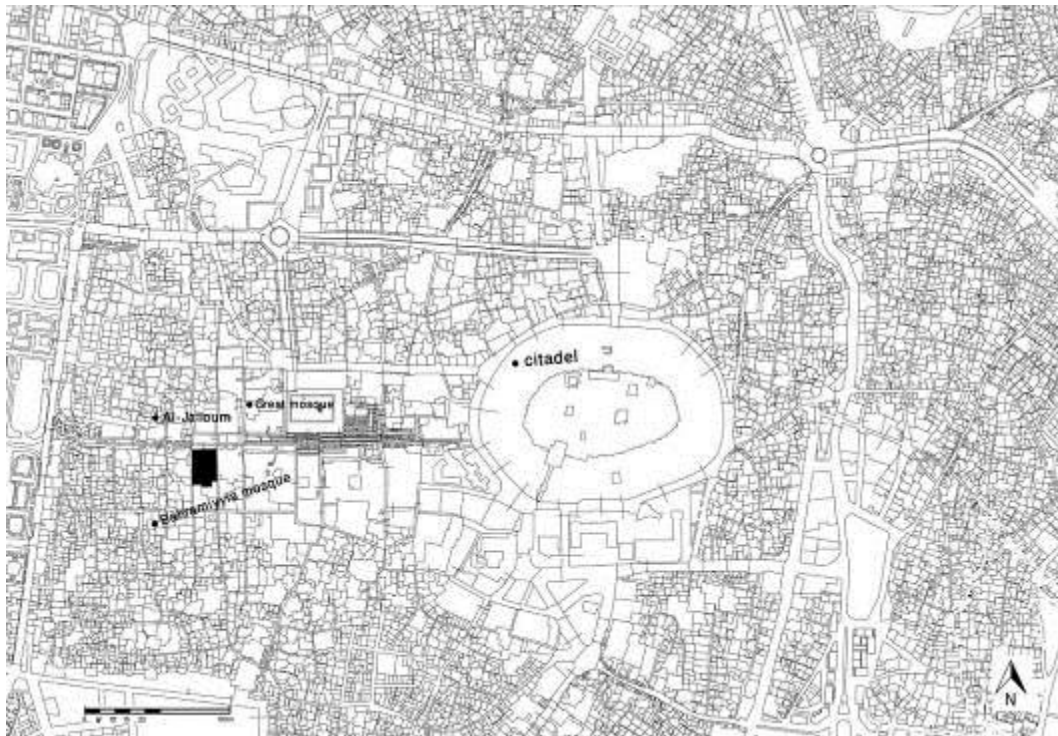


Figure 1. Map of the old city of Aleppo, Location of Bahram pasha mosque. Center of planning and archaeological studies, Aleppo. Developed by author.

2. BAHRAM PASHA MOSQUE

This mosque is one of the most famous mosques in the city of Aleppo, and it considered the third great mosques that constructed in the city since beginning the Ottoman period. It was built on Ottoman style, but it also included some characteristics of the local Syrian architecture (Talas, 1956). The people in Aleppo city knew this mosque by *al-Bahramyyia* mosque as related to its founder. It is famous by its huge waqf where its endowments spread beside it, and spread also in other districts in the city, in addition to the other endowments which situated in other cities such as Cairo and Gaza.

3. LOCATION OF THE MOSQUE

The mosque situated in a vital site in the city of Aleppo, this site characterized by its commercial activities, where many goods are sold and bought and manufactured on it. The district which the mosque situated in it known by *al-Jalloum* which considered to be one of the most famous sites in the old city of Aleppo (Fig. 1), and it has a wide area in the city's center.

The mosque located in the center of al-Jalloum district tending to the west, it is bounded by the hospital of *Nour al-Din* and *al-Mar'ashly* house from the south side, a side-street from the east side known by *Zoqak al-bahramyyia*, the market or *Suq* which the founder endowed it on the mosque from north side, and a side-street known by *Zoqak al-sudan* from the west side (al-Ghozzi, 1999).

4. FOUNDER AND FOUNDATION DATE

Although the mosque didn't include a monumental inscription regarding the founder and the accurate date of foundation; there was a consensus between the historical sources that its founder is Bahram pasha, and its foundation date is (991 A.H/ 1583 A.D) (al-Tabbakh, 1923; al-Ghozzi, 1999), but this consensus is based on the waqf book or the book of endowments which determined accurately the whole mosque's details, its founder, foundation date, its border, architectural component, and the endowments which were allocated to it in Aleppo and other cities.

The waqf book which was allocated to the mosque and its endowments by the founder was lost, but fortunately the abstract of this waqf book was mentioned by al-Ghozzi - the historian of Aleppo - in his book *Nahr al-zahab*, he referred in his book that this waqf book was dated by (991 A.H/ 1583 A.D), and it was allocated by Bahram pasha the governor of Aleppo to his mosque in al-Jalloum district, and the endowments which were appropriated to the mosque in Aleppo and other cities, after that al-

Ghozzi mentioned the abstract of this waqf book which including a concise architectural description to the mosque, in addition to an enumeration to its endowments (al-Ghozzi, 1999).

The founder of the mosque was one of the governors of Aleppo during Ottoman period in the end of (10th A.H/ 16th A.D) century, his full name as mentioned in the historical sources Bahram pasha son Mostafa pasha son Abd al-Mo'een. The accurate date of his rule is not known exactly, whereas al-Ghozzi mentioned that, he understood from the waqf book that Bahram pasha was a governor of Aleppo in 991 A.H/ 1583 A.D, but he didn't know exactly when he was appointed in the rule and when his reign was ended (al-Ghozzi, 1999). But al-Tabbakh noted in his book *A'laam al-noblaa* that Bahram pasha appointed as a governor on Aleppo in (988 A.H/ 1580 A.D), and his reign continued to the date of his death in (994 A.H/ 1586 A.D), and he was buried with his brother on a tomb in the mosque's garden (al-Tabbakh, 1923). Therefore, the reign of Bahram continued to six years began in (988 A.H/ 1580 A.D) and ended in (994 A.H/ 1586 A.D).

5. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The mosque has a rectangular area included three principal parts; the first one is the open courtyard, the second is the sanctuary *prayer hall*, and the third is a private garden. The mosque has three facades; the first one is the main façade which is located in the northern side, the second and the third are side-facades and they are located in the west and east side (Fig. 2).

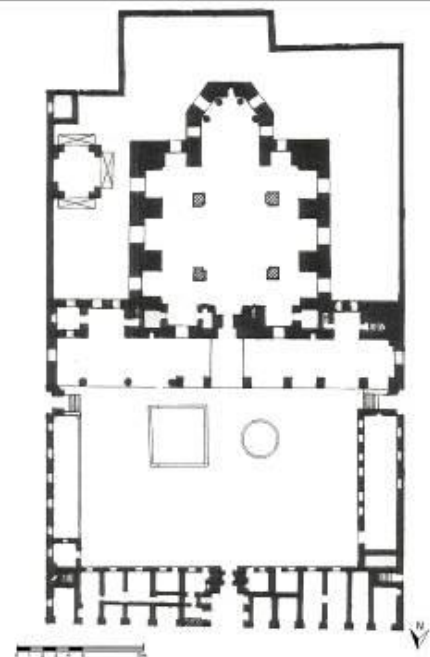


Figure 2. Plan of the mosque. Center of planning and archaeological studies, Aleppo.

5.1. Mosques Entrances:

The mosque has three entrances; the first one is the main entrance, it situated in the middle of the northern façade (Fig. 2), it consists of a huge recess roofed by shallow dome based on spherical triangle pendentives, in the middle of the south rib of this recess there is another recess roofed by pointed vault, in the lower part there is a terrace *mastaba* on the right and left side used as a seat to the guard. Between these two terraces there is the entrance which leads inside the mosque, the open of the entrance surmounted by an arch made of a number of voussoirs, above this arch there is a rectangular panel from marble without decorations, above this panel there is another one in a shape of a pointed arch, the outer border of it made of stalactites while its center occupied by floral decorations, the whole façade of the entrance decorated with al-Ablaq style by black and yellow colors.

The other two entrances are side-entrances, the first one of them situated in the middle of the western façade, and the second situated in the middle of the eastern façade on the same axis of the first one (Fig. 2), each one of them are composed of a small recess topped by a pointed arch, this recess includes in its lower part the open of the entrance which leads inside the mosque through a short corridor ending by a staircase.

5.2. The Open courtyard

The open courtyard occupied the northern section of the whole area of the mosque; it has a rectangular area, its length from the north to the south 14.5 meters, and from the east to the west 25 meters (Fig. 2,3), its floor paved by yellow stone tiles. The courtyard includes a square basin, as mentioned in the waqf book this basin was used as a water basin to ablutions purposes, and it was built from yellow marble, it has a window with iron grills and a brass pipes, the waqf book mentioned also that this basin was roofed by a projecting bracket topped by a red brick dome, and the water was transferred to it from Aleppo canal *qanat Helan* in a pottery tubes, in addition to a water well beside the mosque (al-Ghozzi, 1999). But now the shape of this basin was changed (Pl.1), that it was destroyed in (1300 A.H/ 1883 A.D) (al-Ghozzi, 1999), and reconstructed a gain to be a square shape, its length 5.5 meters, and its depth .50 meter, it was rebuilt from stone instead of marble, and it became roofless, that the brick dome was destroyed and was not rebuilt again. Moreover the square basin which is situated in the open courtyard, there is also a fountain located besides the square basin from the west side, it has a circle shape, it was built from yellow marble, and it is higher than the

basin that its height is 80 cm., while the high of the basin is 50 cm. only (Pl. 1).



Figure 3. General view of the mosque. Center of planning and archaeological studies, Aleppo.



Plate 1. Open courtyard, square basin, and circle fountain.

In the north side of the courtyard there are a row of shops, which were a part of the *Suq* which was endowed on the mosque. In the west side there is a rectangular hall, its length from north to south 11 meters, and its width from west to east 3 meters, it has a prayer niche in the middle of its southern wall, the eastern wall of this hall has six windows overlooks to inside the courtyard, this hall has only one

portal opened inside the courtyard, and it situated in the northern edge from the eastern wall (fig. 2). The hall was constructed by Abdallah bek al-'alamy the supervisor of the mosque's waqf in (1344 A.H/ 1925 A.D), he constructed this hall to use in prayers because the sanctuary of the mosque didn't has the capacity to the prayers numbers (al-Tabbakh, 1923). The east side of the courtyard didn't has any buildings except one square room in the northern edge, it has a window overlooks to outside and one door opened inside the courtyard, also there are five windows in this side overlooks to outside the mosque.



Plate 2. Façade of the aisle which separates between the open courtyard and the sanctuary.



Plate 3. Inside the aisle which separates between the open courtyard and the sanctuary.

In the south side of open courtyard there is an aisle extends from the west to the east, this aisle separates between the courtyard and the sanctuary, and it overlooks to the courtyard by nine pointed arches based on six stone pillars and two marble columns (pl. 2), the aisle was divided from its inside to nine square areas, each one of them are roofed by a shallow dome based on spherical triangle pendentives (pl. 2,3), but now nothing remained of these nine domes except the five domes which located in the east side, while the other four domes which topped

the west side from the aisle are destroyed and replaced again by four cross vaults.

This aisle has two iwans, the first one situated in the east side, it is a square area and roofed by a pointed vault, on its south side there are two windows overlook to the back garden, it has one door on the right hand leads to keel corridor including a staircase which leads to upstairs, on the left hand there is another door leads to a small square room including three windows, the second iwan is situated in the west side, it is a rectangular area and roofed by a pointed vault, it has one door in both right and left sides, the door which is situated in the right side leads to a rising staircase leads to the minaret, while the door which is situated in the left side leads to a rising staircase leads to upstairs, also there are two windows in the south side overlook to the back garden.

Among the inclusions of this aisle two prayer niches, they are used as an indicator to *qibla* direction for the people who pray on the open courtyard and the aisle when the sanctuary had not the capacity to prayer numbers. The aisle also has two windows with iron grill, the first one is situated in the east side and overlooks to *Zoqak* Bahram pasha, the second is situated in the west side and overlooks to *Zoqak* al-Sudan. These two windows also topped by a rectangular window covered by a veil of stucco and color glass.

5.3. The Minaret

The mosque has a lone minaret located in the middle of the west façade. It was built on Ottoman style and it is considered to be one of the most famous minarets that constructed in this period (al-Hemsey, 1983) (Pl. 4), (Fig. 3,4). It consists of a square base, two shafts, one balcony, and summit; the square base based on the roof of the mosque, it ends in its top by beveled corners to transfer the square base to the shape of the first shaft which has a cylindrical shape, it is the main shaft of the minaret, it is very simple and has no decorations, it is surmounted by a circle balcony based on three rows of stone stalactites. Above this balcony there is the second shaft which has also a cylindrical shape, but it is smaller and shorter than the first one, it is very simple and blank from decorations, and it is surmounted by a conical cap covered by sheets of lead.

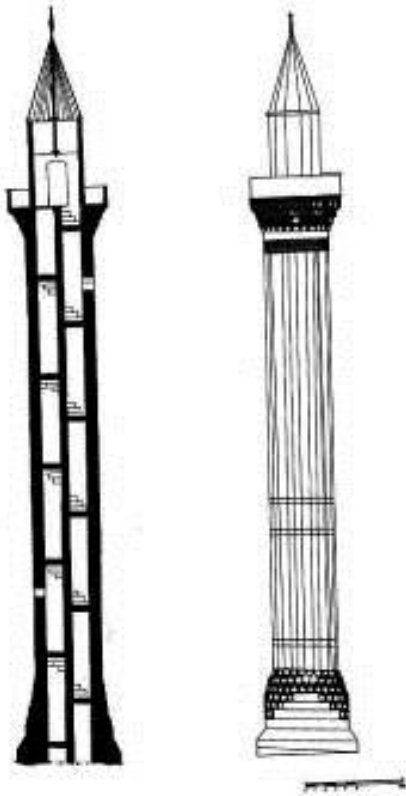


Figure 4. The minaret, interior sector and outside view. Center of planning and archaeological studies center, Aleppo.



Plate 4. The minaret, general view.

This minaret is not related to the construction era, because it fell during an earthquake (Kennedy, 2009), and it was rebuilt in (1111 A.H/ 1699 A.D) (al-

Tabbakh, 1923). the date of reconstructed was recorded also on a monumental inscription located in the top of the minaret's portal, this monumental inscription composed of six verses, its content includes praise and immortalize to this renewal works, the last verse includes the date of reconstruction by the manner of *Hesab al-gommal*.

وسمت بقدر كل مشاد
أس السخاء ومنهل القصاد
وأثار أجرا أب دون نفاذ
والخير أمنح بالهناء ينادي
جل استواها باستوا الأعداد
في عكس رقم كالجلالة بدي

قامت فصادمها السحاب بمرّة
حاكت علاء قدر طه المصطفى
فهو المعمر من أنار منارها
بشراه أجرى بالسرور بناءها
ها كل وزن تم فيه مؤرخا
وهلالها باللطف حلّى مؤرخا

5.4. The Sanctuary

The sanctuary *prayer hall* occupies the south section. It has only one entrance located in the middle of its northern wall (Pl. 5), there is a similarity between it and the main entrance of the mosque, it consists of a vertical rectangular recess surmounted by a pointed vault based on two engaged columns, among them there is the door which leads to inside the sanctuary, it topped by an arch consists of engaged voussoirs, the colors alternated on them between Yellow and Black.



Plate 5. Entrance of the sanctuary.

Above the door's arch there is a rectangular panel made from white marble, it is surrounded from its four sides by a frieze of black marble, it is very simple and blank from decorations and inscriptions, above it there is another one based on a frieze of Yellow marble stalactites. Also its outer border is made

of marble stalactites, its inside decorated with marble floral decorations. As the main entrance of the mosque, the whole façade of this entrance built on *Ablaq* style with Yellow and Black color.

The sanctuary consists of a huge square area (Pl. 6), it is paved by marble tiles, and it was roofed by a huge dome based on four arches rested on the wall of the sanctuary (al-Ghozzi, 1999), this style of domes is a popular style in Ottoman architecture. But the style of the mosque of Bahram pasha's dome was changed now, because this dome didn't relate to the construction era, whereas the original dome was destroyed during an earthquake in (1237 A.H/ 1822 A.D), and it remained a ruin for forty years for lack of waqf's yield till the dome's lead was sold (al-Tabbakh, 1923), and it reconstructed again by its price in (1276 A.H/ 1860 A.D) (Heretany, 2006), the new dome supported on four arches rested on four huge pillars constructed inside the square area of the sanctuary (Fig. 2), while the arches of the original one rested on the side-walls of the sanctuary, so these walls were very strong and very thick to bear the block of the dome.



Plate 6. Inside the sanctuary.

The sanctuary includes two rooms in both sides of its entrance; the first one located in the right hand, and it was used as a storage room to the carpets of the mosque as mentioned in the waqf book; the other one located in the left hand, and it was used as a storage room to the lighting tools of the mosque (al-Ghozzi, 1999). The east and west sides of the sanctuary include three recesses, each one of them is roofed by pointed vault and overlooks to the sanctuary by pointed arch rested on two marble columns, inside each one of these recesses there is an open window overlooks to the back garden. These windows are surmounted by a decorative panels in the shape of a pointed arch made by ceramic, these panels are decorated by geometrical and floral decorations by blue

color on a white floor, some examples of these panels have inscriptions which about a *Koranic* quotations.



Plate 7. Iwan of the main mihrab.



Plate 8. The main mihrab.

The south wall of the sanctuary includes also three recesses, the right and the left one are similar to the previous recesses, but the middle one is different, that it is about a huge iwan which is allocated to include the main prayer niche *mihrab* (Fig. 2), (Pl. 7), this iwan

overlooks to the sanctuary by a pointed arch, its shape is pentagonal, it has a five ribs each one of them - except the central one - decorated by a pointed arch rested on two marble columns, between of them there is an open window overlooks to the back garden, above each one there is a panel made by ceramic and decorated by geometrical and floral decorations by blue color on a white floor, the central rib decorated also by pointed arch rested on two marble columns, between of them there is the main mihrab, it consists of a squinch surmounted by pointed arch rested on two engaged marble columns, inside the pointed arch there are five rows of stalactites arranged on a triangle shape, the squinch also covered by marble tiles by white and black colors, this mihrab is elaborately made and what characterized it the voussoirs of its arch which made by fantastic colored marble and it like the overlapping circles and it similar to the mihrab of al-Ferdows school in the same city (Kennedy, 2009) (Fig. 5), (Pl. 8).

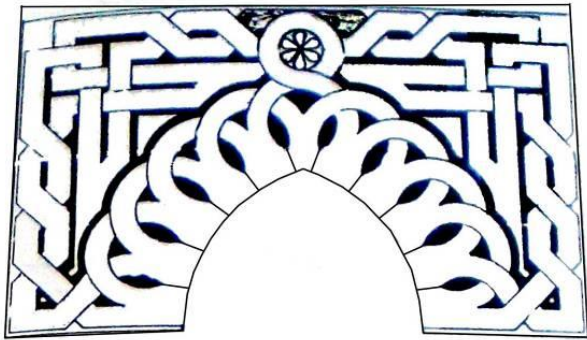


Figure 5. Decorations of the main mihrab.



Plate 9. The marble pulpit inside the sanctuary.

The sanctuary includes also the pulpit which located in front of the mihrab's iwan from the right side (Pl. 9), it made of colored marble, and it is very fantastic although it is blank from decorations and inscriptions. The sanctuary includes also the reporter's tribune; it made of colored marble and rested on marble columns, from it we can reach to the hanging iwan which located in the back of the sanctuary. As mentioned in the waqf book this hanging iwan was used in performance the prayers side by side the sanctuary (al-Ghozzi, 1999).

5.5. The Back garden

The mosque includes a private garden located behind the sanctuary, surrounded the sanctuary from west, east, and south side, and all windows which located in the sanctuary overlook to this. This garden was planted with various trees by an appointed gardener by the founder to take care of it (al-Ghozzi, 1999). It includes the tomb of Bahram pasha the founder of the mosque and his brother.

6. THE MOSQUE'S STYLE

The mosque was built on Ottoman style, and it has been influenced by the style of the mosques which constructed in the city in earlier Ottoman period such as al-Khesrowiyyia and al-A'adilyyyia mosque, the sanctuary in the three mosques consisted of a huge square area roofed by a huge dome. But the compatibility between Bahram pasha mosque and earlier Ottoman mosques in the city doesn't mean that there is no differences between them, but it is characterized by the pentagonal iwan which allocated to its main mihrab, also the dome which surmounted the square area of the sanctuary rested on four huge pillars instead of resting on the side walls. Also the general view of the mosque of Bahram pasha's plan is closer to the classical form of the Ottoman mosques which consist of two principal sections, the covered one represents the prayer hall, and the second represents the open courtyard.

Although the style of the mosque is considered to be a clear reflection to the Ottoman style both in general plan or architectural elements, nevertheless it reflected also the local Syrian styles such as the main mihrab which influenced by the mihrab of al-Ferdows school in Aleppo (Kennedy, 2009), also the façade of the main entrance and the façade of the sanctuary's entrance, they constructed on the local style which spread in Aleppo before the Ottoman period. So, this mosque constructed on Ottoman style with the survival of some local elements.

7. THE ENDOWMENTS OF THE MOSQUE

The waqf system was a tradition that has been followed in Islamic civilization in order to ensure the

continuity of the religious buildings. Bahram pasha endowed a great waqf on his mosque, the buildings of this waqf located beside the mosque and other districts in the city of Aleppo, in addition to the endowments that located outside Aleppo, noting that most of these endowments mentioned in the waqf book of the mosque (al-Ghozzi, 1999).

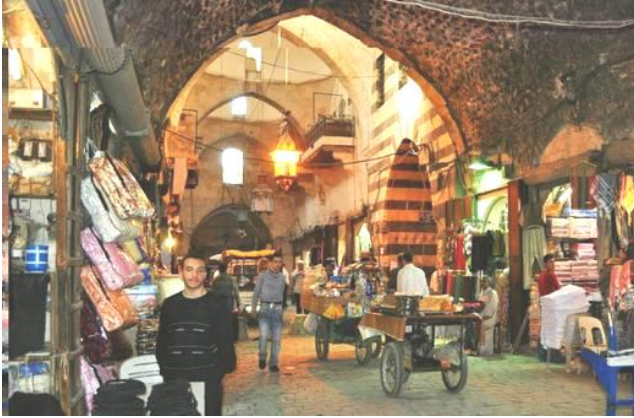


Plate 10. suq Bahram pasha in al-Jalloum district, Aleppo.

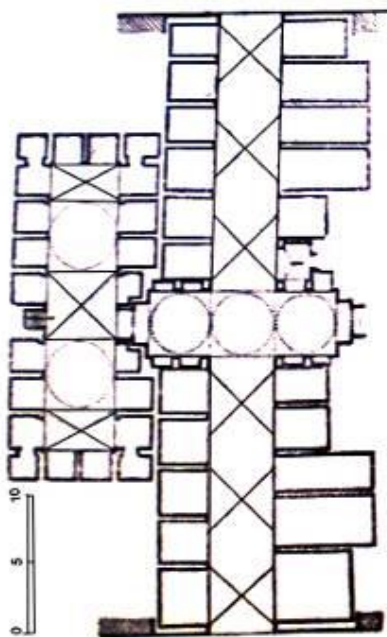


Figure 6. Plan of Suq Bahram pasha. Sauvaget, Alep, p. 217, fig. 55.

The endowments beside the mosque represent in a great suq extends along the northern façade of the mosque; it consists of two rows of shops separated by covered street (Fig. 6), (Pl. 10). This suq with a system of domes is a fine example of these structures that are utilitarian in purpose. Above the northern suq there are a qaysariyyia and a coffee house endowed also on the mosque (Reymond, 2008). Beside the western entrance of the mosque there is a kottab endowed on it. Many of these endowments are still

remain, but the majority of them are destroyed and reused in another function (Heretany, 1991).

In al-Jadida district there is a public bath *hammam*, it is still remain and its state is very good (Abd al-razik, 2014) (Fig. 7), (Pl. 11). In the same district there was a qaysariyyia surmounted the previous Hammam, but it now destroyed. The founder endowed also a mill for grinding grain located in the bank of city's river *Nahr quwiek* (al-Ghozzi, 1999).

The endowments of the mosque didn't limit on Aleppo city, but also there are many endowments endowed on the mosque in Cairo, that the waqf book mentioned that between the endowments of the mosque in Cairo stable, public bath known as Hammam al-jadida, coffee house, and two shops famous by the founder in suq al-sabahy beside the mosque of sultan Hassan (al-Ghozzi, 1999).

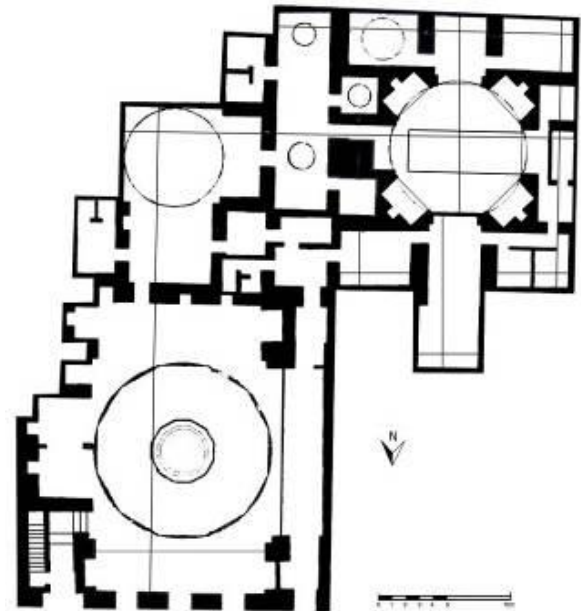


Figure 7. Plan of hammam Bahram pasha. Mansour Abd al-razik, Al-hammamat al-'amma, p. 711, fig. 90 .



Plate 11. Façade of hammam Bahram pasha in al-Jadida district, Aleppo.

The endowments of the mosque extended also to Gaza, that the founder endowed six carats planted with olive trees, in addition to twelve carats from sha'ban orchard in the same city, moreover twelve carats planted with olive trees in a village beside Gaza city known by Domer (al-Ghozzi, 1999).

The waqf of this mosque was considered to be one of the greatest waqfs in Aleppo city, it was producing a great yield, the founder set several conditions to spend it, and there was someone who supervised on it, and was entrusted with spending the yield according to the founder's conditions.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The paper indicated to that the mosque of Bahram pasha was constructed on Ottoman style which spread in Aleppo in this period with some different in details, such as the mihrab's iwan and the pillars of the dome. Although the city of Aleppo included

many mosques that constructed on Ottoman style, but this mosque is considered to be the closer one to the classical Ottoman style which characterizes the great Ottoman mosques around the Islamic world. Although the mosque was constructed on Ottoman style, nevertheless it included some local influences which were used in Syrian architecture before the Ottoman period. The mosque was renewed many times, therefore some of its architectural units were changed such as the main dome and the square basin inside the courtyard, and some extensions were added such as the hall which located in the west side from the courtyard. The waqf which endowed on this mosque is considered to be one of the greatest waqfs in Aleppo city, and its endowments spreads around the mosque's site and in other districts in the same city in addition to the endowments which located in Cairo and Gaza.

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