Dialectics of Architectural Heritage in Palestine

Abdurrahman Mohamed

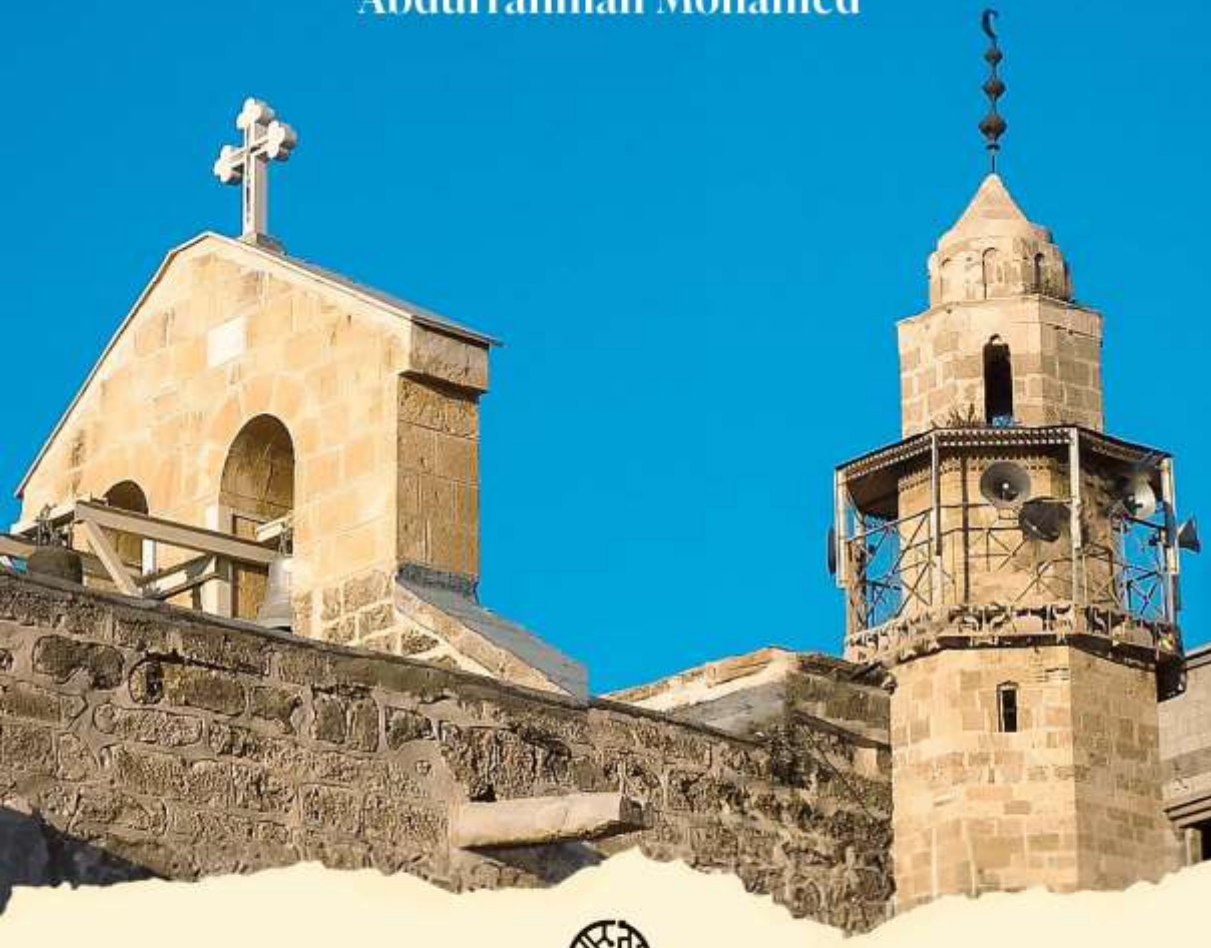

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Photo: Katib al-Wilaya Mosque and Church of Saint Porphyrius, side by side in Gaza, Palestine (Credit: IWAN Center) - Cover design: Israa Mohamed

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PREFACE

Architecture is considered one of the greatest products of man through history. It is the most important witness to the lives of people with all their political, religious, economic, and cultural sides. It gains its importance of being the strongest link with the heritage of predecessors. All societies work hard to protect their architectural heritage and keep it safe and maintained. The holy Palestine is well known with its distinguished architectural heritage that is very rich and diversified. This architectural heritage gains added value because of the religious monuments of sacred churches, mosques, and schools. Architectural heritage represents the past peacefully settled in its stones and ornaments. Architectural heritage in Palestine is a dialectic complexity mixing past and present, death and life, sadness and happiness, and peace and war. The Palestinian architectural heritage can only be understood through these dialectic relationships that shaped the Palestinian existence on the land of Palestine. It has been refusing and resisting all the attempts of aggressive wars and invasions to destroy this existence. It always has represented an important weapon for Palestinian existence always resurrected from death and destruction.

Only with the Israeli occupation since 1948 the architectural heritage of Palestine witnessed systematic destruction. This occupation destroyed, changed the functions, and changed the names of the many historical buildings of Palestine and all their Arabic and Islamic symbols. The architectural heritage in Gaza city has been the victim of this aggression since the start of this century with continuing military attacks. Many Palestinian, Arab, and international organizations have worked very hard to save what has remained despite the financial, technical, and security difficulties. IWAN Centre for Architectural Heritage at the Islamic University of Gaza with the help of the International Committee of the Red Cross and Prince Claus Fund managed to conserve several buildings. Some of these buildings continued to serve their original functions like Al Samra Turkish Hammam and Al Omari Mosque in Jabalia. Other buildings were adapted to new functions like Al Alami house which has been reused as a cultural center. At the same time, the instructors, and students at the departments of architectural engineering and civil engineering at the Islamic

University of Gaza contributed to the conservation activities practically on site and by several studies and research. All these efforts went in vain with the unprecedented destructive Israeli war started on Gaza in October 2023 that threw against the wall all international principles and ethics. Most if not all historical buildings have been destroyed including the Grand Omari Mosque which is considered in this book. The Islamic University of Gaza and its IWAN center for architectural heritage have also been savagely destroyed. The destruction of architectural heritage in Gaza was employed as a barbaric tool for the uprooting of the Palestinian existence from Gaza.

This book is a collection of 4 chapters written on architectural heritage of Palestine. The first chapter discusses the dialectics of architectural heritage in Al Khalil district with a phenomenological approach for place attachment. It emphasizes the dialectic relationships in Palestinian architectural heritage that inseparably attach the Palestinians with their land. Chapters 2 to 4 deal with issues of architectural heritage in Gaza.

Chapters 1 to 3 introduce new concepts that never appeared before to the study, analysis, and management of architectural heritage. They open the door wide for future development and applications on architectural heritage in Palestine and worldwide.

Despite the pain of losing completely or partially the historical buildings mentioned in these articles in this war, the articles remind with this heritage that will never die.

The book is an attempt on the road of resurrection of the Palestinian Phoenix (Anka). Through the mountains of rubble and the smokes of death, the Palestinian heritage will be resurrected.

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March 2024
Antalya

ÖNSÖZ

Mimarlık, tarih boyunca insanın en büyük ürünlerinden biri olarak kabul edilir. Siyasi, dini, ekonomik ve kültürel tüm yönleriyle toplumların hayatlarının en önemli tanığıdır. Seleflerinin mirasıyla en güçlü bağ olma özelliğini kazanıyor. Tüm toplumlar mimari miraslarını korumak, onu güvende tutmak ve sürdürmek için çok çalışırlar. Kutsal Filistin, çok zengin ve çeşitli seçkin mimari mirasıyla tanınmaktadır. Bu mimari miras, kutsal kiliseler, camiler ve okulların dini anıtları sayesinde katma değer kazanmaktadır. Mimari miras, taşları ve süslemeleriyle huzur içinde yerleşmiş geçmişi temsil eder. Filistin'deki mimari miras, geçmiş ile bugünü, ölüm ile yaşamı, üzüntü ile mutluluğu, barış ile savaşı birbirine karıştıran diyalektik bir karmaşıklıktır. Filistin mimari mirası ancak Filistin topraklarındaki Filistin varlığını şekillendiren bu diyalektik ilişkiler üzerinden anlaşılabilir. Bu varlığı yok etmeye yönelik her türlü saldırgan savaş ve işgal girişimini reddediyor ve direniyorlar. Mimari miras, her zaman ölümden ve yıkımdan dirilen Filistin varlığı için önemli bir silahı temsil ediyordu. Farklı işgalcilerin tüm zulmüne rağmen Filistin, mimari mirasının kitlesel olarak yok edilmesine asla tanık olmadı. Filistin'in mimari mirası ancak 1948'den itibaren İsrail işgaliyle bu kadar sistemli bir yıkıma tanık oldu. Bu işgal, Filistin'in tarihi binalarını, Arap ve İslam sembollerini yok etti, işlevlerini değiştirdi, isimlerini değiştirdi. Özellikle Gazze şehrinin mimari mirası bu yüzyılın başından itibaren bu saldırganlığın kurbanı olmuştur. Birçok Filistinli, Arap ve uluslararası kuruluş ve dernek, mali, teknik ve güvenlik zorluklarına rağmen geride kalanları kurtarmak için çok çalıştı. Gazze İslam Üniversitesi'ndeki Iwan Mimari Miras Merkezi, Uluslararası Kızılhaç Komitesi ve Prens Claus Fonu'nun yardımıyla birçok binayı korumayı başardı. Bu yapılardan bazıları, Cebaliye'deki Al Samra Türk Hamamı ve Al Omari Camii gibi orijinal işlevlerini sürdürmeye devam etti. Kültür merkezi olarak yeniden kullanılan Al Alami evi gibi diğer binalar da yeni işlevlere uyarlandı. Aynı zamanda Gazze İslam Üniversitesi Mimarlık Mühendisliği ve İnşaat Mühendisliği bölümlerindeki öğretim üyeleri ve öğrenciler, koruma faaliyetlerine uygulamalı olarak yerinde ve çeşitli çalışma ve araştırmalarla katkı sağladılar. Tüm bu çabalar, İsrail'in Ekim 2023'te Gazze'de başlattığı, tüm uluslararası ilkeleri ve ahlakı yerle bir

eden benzeri görülmemiş, yıkıcı savaşla boşa gitti. Büyük Ömer Camii ve El Başa Sarayı da dahil olmak üzere tarihi binaların tümü olmasa da çoğu yıkıldı. Gazze'deki mimari mirasın yok edilmesi, Filistin varlığının kendine özgü diyalektik ikiliğini unutarak Gazze'den koparılması için barbarca bir araç olarak kullanıldı.

Bu kitap Filistin'in mimari mirası üzerine yazılmış 4 makaleden oluşan bir koleksiyondur. Birinci bölümde, Al Khalil bölgesindeki mimari mirasın diyalektiği, mekan bağlılığına yönelik fenomenolojik bir yaklaşımla tartışılıyor. Filistinlileri topraklarına ayrılmaz biçimde bağlayan Filistin mimari mirasındaki diyalektik ilişkileri vurguluyor. 2'den 4'e kadar olan bölümler Gazze'deki mimari miras konularını ele alıyor.

1'den 3'e kadar olan bölümler, mimari mirasın incelenmesi, analizi ve yönetimi konusunda daha önce hiç ortaya çıkmamış yeni kavramları tanıtmaktadır. Filistin'deki ve dünya çapındaki mimari mirasa ilişkin gelecekteki gelişmelere ve uygulamalara kapıyı sonuna kadar açıyorlar.Bu savaşta bu yazılarda bahsedilen tarihi yapıların tamamını veya bir kısmını kaybetmenin acısına rağmen yazılar hiçbir zaman ölmeyecek bu mirası hatırlatıyor.

Bu kitap Filistin Anka kuşunun yeniden diriltilmesine yönelik bir girişimdir. Gazze'deki moloz dağları ve ölüm dumanları arasında Filistin mirası yeniden dirilecek.

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March 2024
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Chapter 1

The phenomenology of place attachment in the Palestinian traditional village dwelling

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ABSTRACT

This research uses the phenomenological approach to explore place attachment in the Palestinian village dwelling. The research explores this attachment through inside-outside dialectics and their representations on the architecture of the dwelling. Place attachment is an important aspect of the relationship between people and their built environment. People are usually attached to their dwellings more than any other place. This attachment represents the bond between people and their dwellings. This bond and sense of belonging extend beyond the space of the dwelling and become important anchors for the attachment of people to the area around the dwelling that extends hierarchal to include the different spatial levels of the built environment around the dwelling and form the sense of patriotism. The Palestinian village dwelling represents place attachment in a distinguished manner affected by the ontological value of land in Palestine and the special aspects of the life world in Palestine under occupation. This study explored the dialectics of this attachment in the Magara (cave) dwellings in Al Khalil (Hebron) district using phenomenological interpretative analysis. The Palestinians could represent their attachment to their Magara dwellings in a distinguished phenomenological representation that gave the Magara great value and meaning. This study is the first of its type to deal with the phenomenological aspects of architecture in Palestine and it opens the door for future work to deal with this important issue.

Keywords – Palestine, Dwelling, Phenomenology, Space, Attachment.

INTRODUCTION

The dwelling represents an objective existential phenomenon of our life world. Heidegger was the first to introduce the philosophy of dwelling into phenomenology. He linked the existential nature of the dwelling to life world or the world of daily life. The phenomenon of the dwelling has existential reality which all people perceive in the same way. And it has architectural realities that people differ in their perceptions because of the differences in their emotional and sensational contents. And because of the many meanings and ideas that are used in architectural productions. This is in addition to the specialties of human subjective frameworks such as culture, society, and ideology.

Man has been associated with the dwelling since the dawn of history, from the days of his cave settling. He looked for a place in the space that extended before him. He began making the place of the dwelling by choosing a specific location of land to be suitable for establishing the new shelter. This choice and preparation were not merely mechanical or environmental though it had these characteristics. It was the sense of place which led to the decisions of where and how to delineate this place. The search for meanings responding to what he wanted to see and learn and what he wanted to know and explore. There also were the feelings and emotions for making the place to be loved, looking good, and seemed viable. This initial stage was then followed by the creation of the architectural space of the dwelling. He built his first primitive structure not only as a shelter. He didn't just come out of the cave to make a shelter. Shelter, refuge, and protection were fulfilled in the cave without adding architectural elements to it. They were also fulfilled in other forms of dwelling. But he wanted to express his being in this world. He wanted to interact with the vast space and respond to the interactions of feelings and emotions in his heart, and thoughts and visions in his mind. From here, the dwelling and its organic connection to man was created. It is not possible to look at the emergence of architecture without a careful understanding of this relationship before looking at its material components (Maveety, 2008).

Phenomenology of the dwelling and sense of place

The dwelling represents the most important type of human interaction with the environment and the life world. It is the basic form of being-in-the-world as invented by Heidegger. Despite the many studies that dealt with the dwelling from its cultural, social, psychological, and engineering aspects, few dealt with the basic philosophy of the establishment of the dwelling and the symbols and meanings associated with each dwelling that distinguish it from the others. Among the many approaches that dealt with this subject, the phenomenological approach stands out in its ability to explore what is behind the physical structure of the dwelling in terms of these meanings and indications. According to Heidegger, the dwelling establishes the relationship between the cosmological world, the anthropological man, and the structure of the dwelling. This relationship includes various transformations in man's relationship with the world of the dwelling: from existence to presence, from presence to settlement, from settlement to place, from place to dwelling, and from dwelling to place. In his book: The Present - Language - Place (2009), Christian Norberg-Schulze showed that limiting the dwelling to the quantities of materials used in its construction is limiting its value to the mere walls, ceilings, and floors that make it up, emptying it of the spirit of place, and the absence of the meaning of being. Edward Ralph believes in his book Place and Nowhere (1976) that a dwelling loses its meaning if it cannot have a sense of place in the location in which it originates. (Gonabadi et al, 2020).

Dwelling and the attachment to the place

People are attached to their dwelling places more than any other place. Attachment to the place is defined as the emotional bond between people and place. It is the sense of place that makes people feel the places around their dwellings differently (Qazimi, 2014). It is the spirit of place that penetrates between the dwellings and through them, between the alleys and around the corners. It is the atmosphere that gives the place a title and sign (Rajala, 2020). From the point of view of phenomenology, the place is defined as a focal point in which people experience meanings and actions, gather spatially and temporally, interact, respond, and create social and cultural spirit that spread through the place (Seamon, 2018).

The place is a hierarchical spatio-temporal formation that extends in different spatial and temporal layers depending on the size and location of the place and the times through which it is used (Foote and Azaryahu, 2009). In contradiction to the private interior space or spaces of the dwelling, this place is communal, and open. It can be around the hearth in front of the dwelling or the gathering place a little apart. Or it can be the village square on a larger scale. The place, and its physical and human contents differ in each one of the spatial levels and its associated temporal connections. But all of them are strongly attached to the dwelling which represents with other dwellings the built mass that encloses the place and gives it its existence and spatial and physical identity. These dwellings house the residents who use the place and fill it with life and activity. The dwellings also are the temporal controllers and space organizers of the place depending on the social and cultural settings of the community that regulates the relationship between place and the dwellings. The spatial and temporal levels of the place are classified according to the meaning they disseminate and the functions they provide. They can be safe, communicative, progressive, livable, and meaningful.

However, regardless of the spatial, temporal, or physical classifications of the place, the fact remains that the phenomenology of place is more than all of this. The true meaning and the highest value of the place stem from people associated with it and the waves of meanings, feelings, and ideas that penetrate through and blow the place with its special spirit. Phenomenology helps to understand the qualities, values, and the spatio-temporal settings of place through three important aspects of people-dwelling-place interconnections (Seamon, 2000).

Comprehensiveness of dwelling-people-place association

Describing these interconnections between Dwelling, people, and place requires appropriate language. The minimization of the relationship between any of these three components to be understood separately regardless of the others is a minimization of life world within which they exist. The main characteristic of the interconnections between these elements is the comprehensiveness of their organic unity. They cannot be deconstructed or separated from each other. They form a system that cannot

be disassembled. Dwelling is connected to place and people are attached to each one of them separately, and to both as a unit. Place attachment cannot be understood without people and people cannot have a place without dwellings. Therefore, all social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental orders of people need to be considered. This in addition to the psychological aspects with emotions, feelings, inspirations, and aspirations. Phenomenology provides a unique approach with a common language for understanding these three elements and the system they compose and its effect on place attachment (Seamon, 2014).

Dialectics of daily life and dwelling place

The human relationship with the place, despite the complexity and overlapping that characterize it, is not a linear, straight, continuous relationship. Also, it is not a circular or spiral relationship that is flexible, smooth, and regular. This phenomenological relationship usually contains contradictory and opposing arguments.

Seamon 2014 provided an intersecting account for the contradicting relationships between people and their places and the different dynamics that govern them. He introduced 2 concepts for these dialectics, movement and rest, inside and outside. Inside outside dialectics will be used in this research with reflection on dwelling space then to be applied to traditional Palestinian village dwelling.

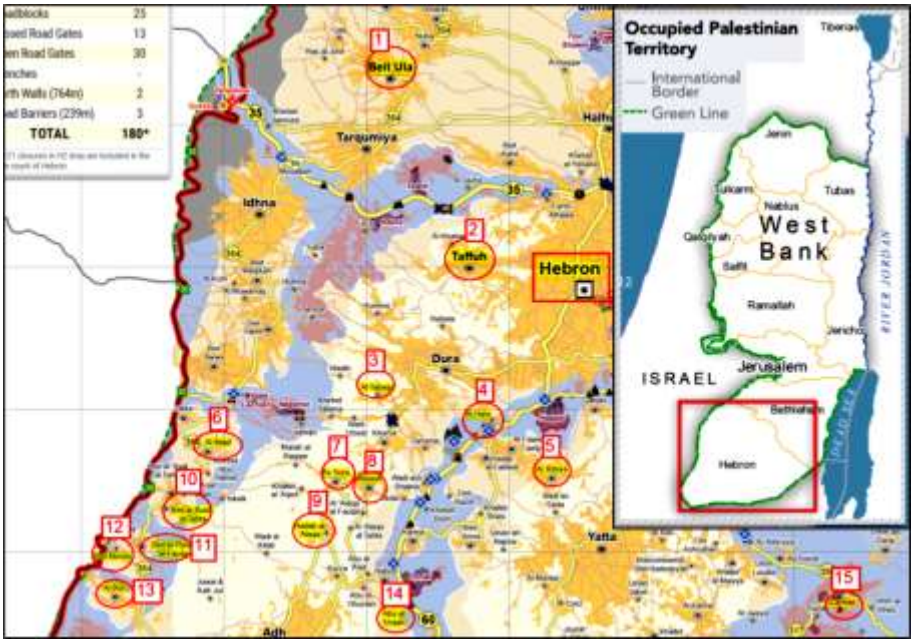
Inside and outside dialectics

The place at the origin of its being contains the dialectical relationship between the inside and the outside, as the beginning of its existence arises from the enclosure of an inner void. When this enclosure occurs, the dialectical relationship between the inside and the outside starts. If the place is the village square, then outside is the structure of dwelling masses or other building types depending on the spatial level of the place, and the movement spaces among them. When the place is the hearth place then the outside is cognitive space beyond the boundaries of the people's activity around the hearth. Through inside outside relationship, the attachment to the place is strengthened on the one hand, and on the other hand, its features are

crystallized through the meanings, ideas, and feelings that arise from this relationship. The inside is part of the outside and vice versa. There is a similarity between them, but they differ in size, area, shape, formation, materials, and details. And they are different in the function that each of them performs and the function that people perform in each of them. They are also different in the expressions that are associated with each of them. Despite these differences and contradictions that they generate, it is not possible to imagine the existence of one without the other.

AREA OF STUDY

All the villages are in AKD which is at the southern end of the of the west Bank (Figure 1). AKD is the largest in land and population among the 16 districts of the Palestinian authority. The area of the district is approximately 1000 km2 and its population reached around 1 million in 2019 (ARIJ, 2019). The city of Al Khalil is the capital of the district has 4 cities in addition to Al Khalil city and it has 13 towns with municipal councils. The district has 32 villages with local councils and several other small hamlets (PCBS, 2017). 15 villages were referred to in the research and the caves of 14 villages were studied (Figure 1). Most of the dwellings considered were developed during the British Mandate occupation or the Jordanian role afterwards.



Village names:
1- Beit Ula, 2- Taffuh, 3- At Tabaqa, 4- Al Hijra, 5- Ar Rihiya,
6- Al Majd, 7 As Sura, 8 Imreish, 9- Adab Al Alaqa, 10- Beit ar Rush at Tahta,
11- Beit ar Rush al Fauqa, 12- Beit Mirsim, 13- Al Burj, 14- Abu Al Urqan, 15- Karmel.

Figure 1: Map of Al Khalil District showing the 15 villages of the research.
Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2018).

METHODOLOGY

The research problem of this study is to find out how the Palestinian villagers represented their place attachment through the architecture al Magara. This research depends on the narrative phenomenological of the architecture and spatial setting of one type of the Palestinian village dwelling which is the Magara (cave) in the Al Khalil (Hebron) District (to be abbreviated as (AKD).

Narrative research was used because the research depends on the analysis of images of the dwellings to understand the experience of the Palestinian villagers and their life in the Magara dwellings (Clandinin and Huber eds., 2010). The phenomenological descriptive research was used in order provide deeper understanding of the lived experience of the residents of Magara. Phenomenological research was also used to explore the meanings of place attachment in the architecture and design of the Magara (Alhazmi, 2022). In particular, the phenomenological epoch concept was used to prevent any bias from the researcher as a Palestinian towards the analysis of the place attachment of the Magara. Phenomenological reduction was used in order to describe the lived experience of place attachment of the Magara. In this regard tow concepts were specifically used. The texturing of architecture and spatial settings of the Magara and the structuring of the place attachment meanings in them (Gonabadi et al, 2020). Images of these dwellings were collected from Riwaq- Registry of Historic Buildings (2023). The work was part of the course Palestinian Architecture taught by the author at the Department of Architectural Engineering, the Islamic University of Gaza, Palestine. Several districts of Palestine were studied including AKD. The villages were chosen arbitrary without any sampling criteria to give examples of authentic original Palestinian architecture. This research does not consider any phenomenological exercises directed to the students' experience of such architectures. Although their discussions and comments provided interesting insights.

The phenomenological narrative approach necessitates the application of the Epoch concept which means that the researcher abstains from any bias towards the phenomenon in consideration and cuts off all previous relationships with it. The introduction of the study area and the villages will

not include any consideration of their Political, national, or ideological settings.

Types of Village dwellings in Al Khalil

After the inspection of the traditional dwellings of almost all the villages in AKD, it was possible to identify the following types:

Magara (cave)

It is believed that cave dwelling started in Palestine since 500 thousand years (Manasra, 2017). What is extraordinary about the cave dwelling in AKD is that they are quite new developed in the 20th century during the British Mandate occupation and the Jordanian role. some of them are still in use until recently. Second, these cave dwellings have been treated in a very distinguished way in their external form, especially the entrance which sometimes has an arch, and entrance stone façade. There is no intention here to discuss the interior space of the cave dwelling. It needs to be discussed in separate research. (Figure 2) shows Cave dwelling in the villages of At-Tabaqa and Beit Mersem.

1

2

Figure 2: Cave dwelling in the villages of At-Tabaha (1) and Beit Mirsim (2).

Toor (Beehive or Tholos)

The Toor represents 1 step higher than the Magara in its architectural physical quality. It is a unique type of dwelling in Palestine. A small, lowered space at the side of the road or in the middle of a flat area is developed into a dwelling by making use of its 2 or 3 sides and adding one

façade or 2 in addition to a flat roof. The roof usually is made of tree trunks, thatch, stones, and mud. The roof complements a passageway or a flat working place above. Added facades of the Toor are built with stone with a door with a flat stone little and sometimes arched. Some examples surprisingly resemble the concept of the Mycenaean Tholos (Como, 2009). The Mycenaean Tholos was a tomb for the dead but the Palestinian Toor is for life. The Palestinian Toor has a distinguished difference. A special ontological philosophy and life perception that enabled people to transform it into a dwelling. (Figure 3) shows the Toor dwelling in the villages of Hadab Al Alaqa and Al Batniyeh.

1 2

Figure 3: Toor dwelling in the villages of Hadab Al Alaqa (1) and Al Batniyeh (2).

Skeefeh (stone walls with flat roof)

The Skeefe is a single space ground floor dwelling with rubble stone or rough stone walls and a flat roof usually made of tree trunks, thatch, stones, and mud. It has a linteled or arched door with smooth stone jams (Hmdan, 1996). Usually, these dwellings are separate and have open spaces around them. The door opens to the outside space directly to an area called Kassah along the width of the dwelling. The Kassah has a smooth lime mortar floor that is usually used as the outdoor family space. (Hmdan, 1996). If the Skeefe exist in a multiunit

Composition then is called Dar. And if the single or multiunit has a walled fence around it or at one of its sides then it is called Hosh. These 2 types will be explained later. (Figure 4) shows the Skeefe dwellings in the villages of Al-Surrah and Al-Mowarak.


1 2

Figure 4: Skeefe dwelling in the villages of Al-Surrah (1) and Al-Mowarak (2).

Aqed (Stone cross-vaulted single space)

The Aqed dwelling is a gain a single space dwelling with stone walls and cross vaulted roof that is more expensive and technically complex than the Skeefe roof. It is usually built by families with better economic capabilities. Its stones usually are finer than Skeefe stones and its door is usually arched. Sometimes there are small openings in one or more of the walls. Like Skeefe, the Aqed usually has a Kassah yard in front of its door. And it might form a Dar if more than one unit unite, and it might have a Hosh. (Figure 5) shows Aqed dwellings in the villages of At-Tabaqa and Beit Mirsim


1 2

Figure 5: Aqed dwelling in the villages of At-Tabaqa (1) and Beit Mersem (2).

Dar (stone cross vault- multiple space)

Usually, the Dar is for large families with better economic abilities. The walls and the roofs have better handcrafting, and the main façade has 1 or more large windows open at the Kassas. (Figure 6) shows Dar dwellings in the villages of Beit Ola and Majd.

Figure 6: Dar dwelling in the villages of Beit Ola (1) and Majd (2).

Hosh (single or multiple Skeefe or Aqed with stone walled yard)

What distinguished the spatial form and arrangement of these dwellings in all the villages studied that they are exist separately and individually independent with quite wide areas between them contradicting the traditional urban structure of traditional Palestinian cities and the compact structure of larger villages and towns. Their doors and windows open freely and directly to the outside. Women, men, and their children used the Kassa for their different activities freely without any barriers or embarrassment. In certain cases, larger families sought to enclose the semi-private space of the Kassa with medium high stone walls to transform it into a totally private space. It is not only economic, social, or political factors that might work separately or collectively to generate this type of dwelling. Other important factors related transformations in the perception of the dynamics of the life world of the village. (Figure 7) shows Hosh dwelling in the village of Al-Majd.

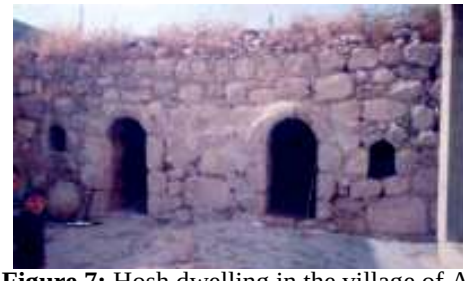


Figure 7: Hosh dwelling in the village of Al-Majd.

El-Elliye (Multiple or single Aqed with first floor rooms and terrace)

Richer families could build an Aqed on the ground floor and top it with a first floor aqed room with open or walled terrace. The ground floor could be used by the family or sometimes it was used for the animals. A stone stair leading to the first floor and usually it is at the corner of the ground floor Aqed which is the strongest structural part of the building. Elliye dwellings existed in their simple form and structure independently in the space of the village.

The name Elliye is known in the vernacular village culture but could be found in all the famous resources of Palestinian architecture but one internet source, Palestine Blog by Mohammed Hamdan (Hamdan, 216). (Figure 8) Shows El-Elliye dwelling in the village of Beit Ola.

Figure 8: El Elliye dwelling in the villages of Beit Ola.

ANALYSIS OF MAGARA INSIDE-OUTSIDE DIALECTICS AND ATTACHMENT TO PLACE

The cave is an inside space. It is connected to the outside world through one of its sides only, its entrance plane. Closing this plane completely cuts the cave from the outside world. The cave is surrounded from all sides except the entrance with bold, cold, and solid rocks. Nothing can penetrate through them. The space of the cave as a result is dark, cold, and damp. The cave space means secrets and mysteries. It means hiding far and deep from the outside world. It means fear and horror from outside aggressive forces. The forces of human other creatures' enemies. Or the fear of destructive natural forces. The cave thence means isolation and decreasing relationships with outside to the minimum possible. It means regulating this relationship to be at certain times and in certain manners. If the source of fear is the enemy, then it's coming or going controls the relationship. If the source of fear is natural, then its time and season control the relationship between the cave and the outside world. The cave means temporary stay for short time, not to settle nor to dwell. It lacks the sense of place and place attachment. It is about endless waiting for a change in the atmosphere around to abandon and to leave.

On the other side, the cave is "quietness and privacy". It means reflection and meditation. It means purifying of the mind and the soul. The special relationship between the limited dark and cold space of the cave and the open air and light outside gives the mind clues and excitement to discover the realities of all. The cave is a place to think of existence, universe and beyond. Many philosophers went through this experience and brought great ideas to humanity. The cave is religious and sacred. Several prophets and their followers lived for a certain time in their lives in caves. The cave is generative and resourceful.

Magaras of the Palestinian villages in AKD, (Figure 9) present special and distinguished situation. The Magaras in all the villages have similar spatial settings and similar façade structure as if they were built by the same group of people although the villages spread over a wide area of AKD. This reflects a common cave culture that is acceptable and respected. It is also a reflection of the common skills of caring for these types of dwellings. Such cultural and architectural common agreement not only represents a strong

social bond but also a distinguished place attachment. The Magaras of these villages are not isolated from the built-up mass of the village (Figure 10).

There are several Magaras in the same village that are part of its structure, and they integrate strongly and organically with it and with its natural settings (Figure 11).

The facades of the Magaras are built carefully to adore. Natural stones of the site are used reflecting a kind attachment to the natural environment (Figure 12).

The facades are similar in many aspects (Figure 9). The rough stones are carefully laid in the same way with a door that connects intelligently between the indoor and outdoor space making the outdoor space a livable extension for family activities and enhancing the sense of place in front of the Magara (Figure 13).

There is always the tendency to strongly link the Magara to its front yard as a transitional space between the inside and the open space outside to mix both with each other (Figure 14).

The way the stones are laid in the facade of the Magara shows love, care, and passion for the stones themselves and for the earth from where they were obtained, the rocky hills, and mounds which make the distinguished space of the village. It also shows the happiness of these people caring for these stones. It shows the knowledge and skills of how to assemble them in a poetic manner with passion and sincerity. The aesthetics of these façade gives them a distinguished visual accent of a fine art language. The treatment of the doors with flat stone lintels or arches reflects the care that was directed to them, the love of doing them and the love of the wall itself and the space at both of its sides. Many people were born in these Magaras which became their life world. They walked out their first steps and played on the ground of the Magara front yard where they learnt their first world-of-life. They were raised in this place going in and out of the Magara and connecting the two spaces together. Many are still living in these Magaras or at least using them as a sign of a strong connection with the Magara and its place.

Figure 9: Magara in the villages of Al Khalil District.

Fig. 10. Magara in the village of Beit Ar-Roash Al-Foka.

Fig. 11. Magara in the village of Beit Mirsim.

Fig. 12. Magara in the village Hadab Al-Alaqa.

Fig. 13. Magara in the village Abu Al-Urqan.

Fig. 14. Magara in the village Abu Al-Urqan.

CONCLUSION

The Magara dwelling in Al Khalil District provided a unique example of the phenomenological connection between people and their land with all its fine details. The Palestinians could intelligently transform the Magara into a distinguished place with a strong sense of attachment that the villages cannot be imagined living without. The Palestinians transformed the ugly, dark, and damp Magara into a beautiful visual art piece full of life. They used these poetic architectural designs for the facades of the Magaras to convey their love of life, of land, and of the small pieces of stone of their villages. This research is the first of its type to examine the phenomenological dialectics of dwelling place relationship with the inside outside concept in the Magara dwelling in the Palestinian village. The research is the first reference to add new village dwelling types to the literature of the Palestinian architecture. Additionally, the research proved in a very simple, plain, and straightforward phenomenological reflection the indispensable and inseparable natural, historical, and organic attachment of the Palestinians to their land and it fine details. Finally, the research opens the door for more opportunities to use the phenomenological approach and the concepts of dialectic dwelling place and space relationships in the Palestinian architecture.

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Chapter 2

The Phenomenology of Historical Village Dwellings in Palestine

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ABSTRACT

Palestinian villages were one of the arenas severely affected by the British occupation in 1918 and then the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. The brutal occupation has been destroying villages and displacing their people to control Palestinian territories. Hundreds of villages were destroyed, and their people were expelled. Consequently, many architectural and urban records of Palestinian history and its of cultural, political, and social aspects were lost. But the worst also occurred with the separation between the Palestinians on both sides of Israel borders since 1948. Generations outside the borders grew up on what remained of the memories of their fathers and grandfathers and the images of the Palestinian villages and their houses. Palestinian students of architecture lost the ability to interact with these spaces and structures necessary for the development clear understanding of Palestinian architecture.

This chapter presents an effort attempted by the author to use the phenomenological approach to connect students of architecture at the Islamic University of Gaza to Palestinian architecture. An important part of the exercise was directed to village dwellings remained in Israel after 1948.

The phenomenological approach proved useful in helping the students understand Palestinian architecture from the available digital images and photographs available for the village dwellings. The students used their phenomenological cognition to produce architectural drawings for these dwellings which continue to represent a useful source on Palestinian architecture.

Keywords: Palestine, Village, Architecture, Phenomenology

INTRODUCTION

Historical architecture is considered one of the most important and authentic records of the history of societies and their cultural, economic, social, and political movements (UK Archive, 2023). This is because it is one of the greatest records of human settlement of earth, the longest in time, and the most surviving evidence throughout the ages. Vernacular architecture is distinguished from the architecture of the elite. It is widespread in place, and has the deepest influence on the people, because it houses most of them (Arome and Çagnan, 2021). It is the most faithful in expressing the conditions of societies because it was built by the people for the people to provide shelter and refuge. In contrast to the architecture of the elite, which is built by distinct members of society to express themselves and their political, economic, social, and cultural powers. It also often expresses luxury, extravagance, and corruption (Hnin, 2022). In many cases, it is unjustly built from people's money, but not for their sake. In other cases, it expresses authoritarian power for the purpose of dominating society and controlling its capabilities.

In Palestine, the village was and still is one of the important and influential Palestinian spaces in history. It was and still in modern history a wide arena for the hidden and declared conflict over the Palestinian land since the beginning of the Zionist project and the British Mandate (Al-Ju'beh, 2008).

One of the most prominent features of the Palestinian village is its distinctive urban texture (Carabelli, 2019). The placement of villages on their sites depended on the nature around them, as they merged into the geography of the place and its history in a unique organic manner. The elements of the village structure were distributed in harmony with the natural environment and the social and cultural settings. As for its architecture, it represented the truthful and pure expression of Palestinian culture, its artistic formations, its visual compositions, and the skill and creativity in the use of building materials and construction techniques (Al-Ju'beh, N. 2008).

On the other hand, the Palestinian village was one of the arenas severely affected by the British occupation in 1918 and then the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 (Ginat, 2018). The villages and their land the largest area of Palestine, and therefore controlling the villages

and their land represented an important goal to control the country. Occupation brutal powers have been destroying villages and displace their people to achieve this goal. Hundreds of villages were destroyed, and their people were expelled. Consequently, many architectural and urban records of Palestinian history and its cultural, political, and social aspects were erased.

Not only that, but the worst also occurred with the separation between the Palestinians on both sides of Israel borders in 1948. Generations grew up on what remained of the memories of their fathers and grandfathers. Many efforts were directed to write down these memories in books, stories, anecdotes, and poems. Yet on the other hand, these generations lost the experience of real living coexistence with urban spaces and their architectural structures of those lost lands. Consequently, Palestinian students of architecture lost the ability to interact with these spaces and structures necessary for the development of urban and architectural creativity and the associated patterns of Palestinian culture and history. Those who grew up in Gaza Strip after 1948 were less fortune than those of the West Bank. Gaza Strip, since World War I, has been suffering from economic and political problems that affected various cultural and social aspects, including patterns of urban development and architectural formation. This situation worsened after 1948 and continued after 1967. Urban and architectural separation left its traces on the artistic and cultural conscience of those generations over the years without any attention being paid to the need to address this situation, nor to the appropriate methods for such treatment. In 1993, the Department of Architectural Engineering was established at the Islamic University of Gaza, which started to contribute, albeit in a limited way, to building the urban and architectural awareness of the new generations of architecture students. However, the study plan of the department did not include a specialized course in Palestinian architecture to provide an integrated systematic study to build students' self-awareness of Palestinian architecture and its characteristics. This remained the case until 2007, Dr. Abdurrahman Mohamed was the first to suggest to the department that such a course should be offered due to its great importance and because the architecture department in any Palestinian university should seriously be committed to offer this course with this name. The head of the department at the time, Dr. Farid Al-Qeeq welcomed the proposal and insisted that Dr.

Mohamed should teach the course. It was quite a challenge. Not only in determining the study material for the course, but also because most of the students did not Gaza Strip and their urban and architectural experience of the Palestinian architecture remained confined to refugee camps and overcrowded cities that lacked the standards of good urbanization. They did not have the opportunity to live with any model of historical Palestinian architecture, except the few old houses that still exist in the old city of Gaza and very few remains in other cities. It is true that the study of history, including the history of urbanization and architecture, is usually done theoretically by studying the available written sources, but because human awareness is restricted to the spatial-temporal frameworks drawn by the elements of urbanization and architecture formations, the spatial-temporal coexistence of architecture is considered one of the most important tributaries of its awareness and understanding. This was not available, but there was a unique opportunity to apply a distinguished experience to compensate for this deficiency through the phenomenological approach in architecture, which Dr. Mohamed also was the first to teach in 2006 in the same department as a separate course. Within this very special context of students of architecture at the Islamic University of Gaza and their study of the Palestinian architecture of the occupied villages, the phenomenological approach provides a unique opportunity to explain the Palestinian architecture to the students from one side, and at the other side to understand the reactions of the students towards this architecture. Through several years, many dwellings were studied in tens of villages in 1948-occupied Palestine and 1967-occupied Palestine. The concern mainly was directed to the districts of Jerusalem and Al Khalil (Hebron), and to Gaza city and its environs. This chapter studies 11 villages in Jerusalem district.

PHENOMENOLOGY

Giving a specific definition for phenomenology is a challenge especially if it is to be directed to people outside the circle of philosophy. Phenomenology appeared as an intellectual movement in the early twentieth century by the philosopher Edmund Husserl, and then by his student Martin Heidegger. Then it became one of the important trends in looking at, studying, and analysing phenomena of the world. Husserl believed that phenomenology is a subjective process that depends on perception. Awareness is the basis of perception and self-realization requires the existence of the phenomenon in front of it. Husserl used the term world of life to refer to the world of self-interdependence that precedes our theoretical experience of natural phenomena. At the same time, Husserl believes that objective, empirical, natural experience is nothing but the product of human factors and their related aspects of culture and society. Accordingly, the phenomenological approach moves away from the rigid rules of the experimental approach. It relies on the researcher himself who records his impressions of the phenomenon and how he experiences it in the reality of the life world without any hypotheses about the phenomenon. This highlights the importance of the relationship between the researcher and the phenomenon. Thus, the outcome of the phenomenological approach will be narrative analytical studies and not the conclusions of objective tests. (Teodosio, 2005).

The phenomenological approach uses sensational perception to explore the phenomena and their relationships with the people and then tries to understand the sensational reactions of these people (Maveety, 2008).

On the contrary, Heidegger looked at phenomenology as a method of perception that does not require the presence of the self in front of the phenomenon. He describes phenomenology as the way to allow what shows itself to be seen through itself. For him, phenomenology is not primarily about the phenomena that we want to study, but rather about the way in which we study these phenomena. Phenomenology is a method for exploring the hidden sides of these phenomena and making them manifest themselves. In this regard, Heidegger believed that man is distinguished from other species because of his spatial relationships with his world. This world,

according to Heidegger, is divided into material phenomena and non-material phenomena. Material phenomena includes original natural phenomena such as sun, moon, earth, and sky in addition to man-made phenomena, such as buildings, roads, and squares. Non-material phenomena also include feelings, sensations, habits, traditions, ideals, and principles. Heidegger considered that this world existed before man. Then his struggle started for the making of place and the creation of space and integrating them with the physical and human environments. These places and spaces represented the world of daily life in which he grew and developed (Gonabadi et al, 2020).

The philosophy of Modernism did not prove viable for explaining the phenomena of life, especially those which are connected to people and are related to their social and cultural aspects. As such, architecture cannot be understood only through the material components. Because there is always more than that, people who make this architecture and those who use it, all have their personal, communal, social, cultural, and psychological characteristics. For such kind of complex relationships, phenomenology provides a suitable approach for its study, analysis and understanding. This approach rejects the adoption of natural sciences as the sole means for the development of human knowledge. It relies on reflective and intuitive thinking that does not depend on any priori assumptions to develop knowledge. The phenomenological approach is not an empirical approach. Phenomenological knowledge cannot be obtained through experimentation and objective analysis, as there are always subjective human aspects which have their impact on guiding knowledge development. Phenomenology is a descriptive cognitive approach that deals with the phenomena of existence through study and analysis to reach the hidden secrets and meanings that surround them. The phenomenological approach is one of the descriptive analytical research methods that aims to explore the secrets of the hidden phenomenon and its hidden meanings and implications.

Phenomenology and architecture

The history of architecture cannot be confined only to the history of building materials and methods of construction, but it is the history of ideas produced by society and culture. Every society has its own culture that

distinguishes it from others. (Ehrett, 2023). Post-modern and post-positive period usually looks at the products of architecture and the built environment in general with its functional components and structural calculations. While the phenomenological approach searches in these products for the meanings and ideas that guided man during their production. This is evident in Husserl's saying that awareness of the world is not merely passive acceptance of what is in it but is the active and intentional participation in the formation of what is in it. This is exactly what applies to studies of architecture, which should not limit architectural creativity to the means and materials of producing the built form but must include the human interactions that contributed to its production (Teodosio, 2005).

The Phenomenological approach reveals the spirit of the phenomena. Through this approach we better understand the sensory perception of architecture and the built environment, or in other words, the sense of architectural space and the sense of architectural place. Both space and place have expressions, symbols, meanings, and secrets formulated by the culture and social structures of their makers. (Maveety, 2008).

The spirit of architectural space and the spirit of the urban place expresses themselves in the world of existence through their spatial components of floors, walls, roofs, and materials with their colors and textures. They also have their natural aspects that interact with them such as shadow, light, darkness, heat, cold, humidity and air. (Maveety, 2008). All these elements and aspects refer precisely and specifically to the content, concept, and rhythm of the world of daily life, which people usually do not pay attention to, nor to its details. This world cannot be imagined without the human being in it. (Simon, 2000).

Phenomenology of the dwelling and sense of place

The dwelling represents an objective existential phenomenon of our life world. Heidegger was the first to introduce the philosophy of dwelling into phenomenology. He linked the existential nature of the dwelling to life world or the world of daily life. The phenomenon of the dwelling has existential reality which all people perceive in the same way. And it has architectural realities that people differ in their perception because of the differences in their emotional and sensational contents. And because of the

many meanings and ideas that are reflected by them. This is in addition to the specialties of human subjective frameworks such as culture, society, and politics.

Man has been associated with the dwelling since the dawn of history, from the day he came out of the cave and looked for a place in the space that extended before him. He began making the place of the dwelling by choosing a specific location of land to be suitable for establishing the new shelter. This choice and preparation were not merely mechanical or environmental though it had these characteristics. It was the sense of place which led to the decisions of where and how to delineate this place. The search for meanings responding to what he wanted to see and learn and what he wanted to know and explore. There also were the feelings and emotions for making the place to be loved, looking good, and seemed viable. This initial stage was then followed by the creation of the architectural space of the dwelling. He built his first primitive structure not only as a shelter. He didn't just come out of the cave to make a shelter. Shelter, refuge, and protection were probably more fulfilled in the cave than in the hut. But he wanted to express his being in this world. He wanted to go out into the vast emptiness of space and interact with it responding to the interactions of feelings and emotions in his heart, and thoughts and visions in his mind. From here, the dwelling and its organic connection to man was created. It is not possible to look at the emergence of architecture without a careful understanding of this relationship before looking at its material components. (Maveety, 2008).

As an example, the round houses of Britain which date from the Bronze Age throughout the Iron Age illustrate this reflection of dwelling. This dwelling reflected the very primitive existential perception of the round horizon around the sight of the human.

The dwelling represents the most important type of human interaction with the environment and the life world. It is the basic form of being-in-the-world as invented by Heidegger. Despite the many studies that dealt with the dwelling from its cultural, social, psychological, and engineering aspects, few dealt with the basic philosophy of the establishment of the dwelling and the symbols and meanings associated with each dwelling that distinguish it from the other. Among the many approaches that dealt with this subject, the phenomenological approach stands out in its ability to explore what is

behind the physical structure of the dwelling in terms of these meanings and indications. According to Heidegger, the dwelling establishes the relationship between the cosmological world, the anthropological man, and the structure of the dwelling. This relationship includes various transformations in man's relationship with the world of the dwelling: from existence to presence, from presence to settlement, from settlement to place, from place to dwelling, and from dwelling to place. Christian Norberg-Schulze is considered one of the best in the study of analgesic phenomenology. In his book: The Present - Language - Place (2009), he showed that limiting the dwelling to the quantities of materials used in its construction is limiting its value to the mere walls, ceilings, and floors that make it up, emptying it of the spirit of place, and the absence of the meaning of being. (Gonabadi et al, 2020). Edward Ralph believes in his book Place and Nowhere (1976) that a dwelling loses its meaning if it cannot have a sense of place in the location in which it originates. (Gonabadi et al, 2020).

Regarding the Palestinian village dwelling, it is a special representation of the phenomenological meaning of dwelling. It shows how the architecture of the dwelling evolved from human consciousness of architecture in a compatible way with his existential meaning he found himself adopting it by nature. The Palestinian villager built his dwelling from his perception of his relation to his land. He wanted to feel the deep sense of place by taking care of his land in a meditative way to make himself an existential part of the safety and belonging found in the basic relation of human and land.

Key approaches in phenomenological research

phenomenological research has special concerns on the suitable ways for dealing with the phenomena of the lived world and the world of the everyday life. The special connections between the phenomena, people, and the researcher require suitable frameworks of inquiry that are sensitive to issues like subjectivity and prejudice. Yüksel and Soner (2015) introduced 6 approaches of phenomenological inquiry. They include Lived Experience, Intentionality, Epoché, Phenomenological Reduction, Imaginative Variation, and Co-researchers (Yüksel, 2015).

This research used 2 approaches. The first was the lived experience approach. The students were for the first time subjected to the Palestinian traditional village dwellings and their distinguished architecture. This approach investigates the lived experience of students with the phenomenon of the Palestinian village dwelling. It is their first time and first-hand experience of the phenomenon and their actions and reactions, activities, and behaviours were observed. The second approach was Imaginative Variation. The students were trained to use their imagination to produce their own pure original designs for the dwellings concentrating on the relationship between it and the surrounding to express the sense of space of the dwelling. At the same time, we examined the 3Ds of the dwellings produced by the students and used our imagination to assess their perception of sense of place of the dwellings.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The course Palestinian Architecture was given to 2 separate groups of male and female students according to the education system at Islamic University of Gaza. 18 female students worked on the villages of Jerusalem district. The villages were chosen randomly from the list of the district villages. None of the students has ever visited any of the villages or any other similar villages in Palestine. The main source for photos of villages in 1948-occupied Palestine was the website Palestineremembered.com- https://palestineremembered.com/ . The main source for photos of villages in 1967-occupied Jerusalem was the website of Riwaq - Centre for architectural conservation- https://www.riwaq.org/home , and its registry of historic buildings, https://www.riwaq.org/riwaq-register/registry-historic-buildings . Students also were free to search for information on these villages and their dwelling architecture from any other resources. Their task was to experience the architecture of the village and to prepare plans, sections, and elevations of at least 2 examples of dwellings based on the photos of the village. Special attention was paid to the production of 3D images of the dwellings. They were free to choose any available means of visual presentation. Discussion, presentations, and narratives continued for the whole semester.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The exercise was too exciting. When Palestinians talk about their history, country, land, and architecture they feel great stimulation. The students were raised under occupation and their lived experiences totally were occupied with its brutal aggression. Their life world did not exceed the tiny area of Gaza District of 360 km^2 sieged from two sides by Israel, from south by Egypt, and from west by sea. The exercise represented for them a chance to have a new lived experience in the classroom with the virtual architecture of the Palestinian village. It was a tough struggle for Dr. Mohamed and for them. Dr. Mohamed studied, worked, and lived in the West Bank and visited Jerusalem and its environs several times. Dr. Mohamed also visited several Palestinian cities and villages that were occupied in 1948. Yet these youth students never did. They struggled very hard to be immersed in the life world of the Palestinian village to understand the atmosphere of its urban structure and architectural detail. How could they have a lived experience in an imagined built environment? How could they feel the sense of place of imagined places? How could they feel the sense of architecture without being immersed in its space?

The following discussion of the students' work shed more light on these questions.

The images of Sataf village (Table 1) used by the student clearly show a strong relationship between the dwellings and the village atmosphere. They show the organic relationship between the dwelling and the context. Students were free to use any means of visual presentation for their dwellings. This one (and all the others as will be shown later) used SketchUP software. The 3Ds were bare and bold volumes of the dwelling without any sense of life or significance or relationship with context. The type of figures, trees and grass are not Palestinian. They even lack the sense of nostalgia, the sense of pride or the story telling of any life feature of the village dwelling.

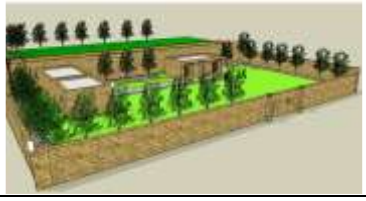
Sataf village (1948-occupied Jerusalem District)
Images of inspiring houses and remains
 
3Ds of students' imaginations of the houses Example 1
 
3Ds of students' imaginations of the houses Example 2
  

Table 1: Reconstruction of Palestinian dwelling in Sataf village.

Although the Deir Yasin village photos (Table 2) show several elements which represent richness of lived experience in the spaces of the dwellings and between them in this village, students represent the dwellings as separated units without the richness of the original photos. The plants used in the context are not the same in the images of the village.

It is worth to mention that this village specifically is linked to a massacre in 1948 that live with despair and grieve in the memory of every Palestinian.

Deir Yasin village (1948-occupied Jerusalem District)
Images of inspiring houses and remains



3Ds of students' imaginations of the houses


Table 2: Reconstruction of Palestinian dwelling in Deir Yasin village

It is noticed that Nataf village (Table 3) has unique sense of place which put it on the list of UNESCO's tentative World Heritage Sites. It has many inspiring houses compositions. In the other hand, when students re-imagine the sense of place here, they could not reflect the sense of natural landscape that surrounded the dwellings. However, this result emphasizes the effect of the forced displacement of the ancestors of the students from their original land.

Lifta village images (Table 4) raise the notion of internal space cognition and its relation to the outer original space in the Palestinian village. The construction system used, the raw building materials, and the other elements distinguished the Palestinian dwelling was remodelled by the students in their try to experience the sense of living inside the village dwelling. It is noticed that they reflect the elements they noticed in the

images, but they still cannot connect it to the overall sense of place that represents the unique duality of indoor-outdoor spaces in the Palestinian village.

The general photos of Ain Karem (Table 5) village show that the village full perception is inherited it its natural intricate components of hills, trees, rocks, and dwellings. The students who work here show their perception of the dwelling as perceived from the monochrome image. The student did not reflect his sense of the material of this dwelling.

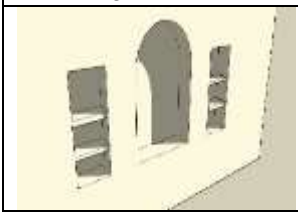
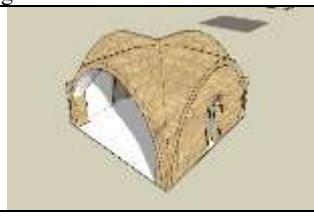
Nataf village (1948-occupied Jerusalem District) Images of inspiring houses and remains	
	
3Ds of students' imaginations of the houses	
	

Table 3: Reconstruction of Palestinian dwelling in Nataf village.

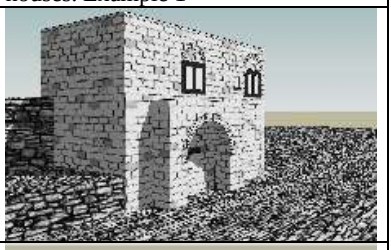
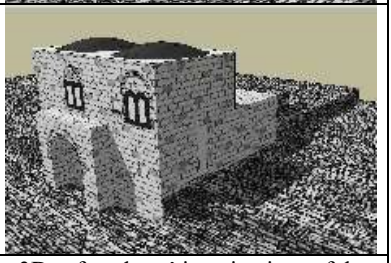
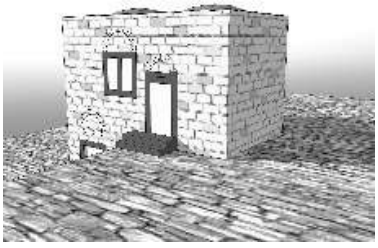
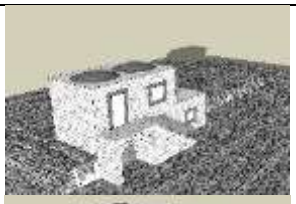
Lifta village (1948-occupied Jerusalem District)	
Images of inspiring houses and remains	3Ds of students' imaginations of the houses. Example 1
	 
Images of inspiring houses and remains	3Ds of students' imaginations of the houses. Example 2
 	  

Table 4: Reconstruction of Palestinian dwelling in Lifta village.

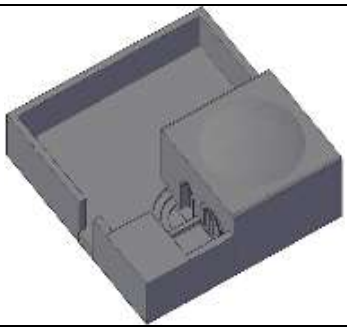
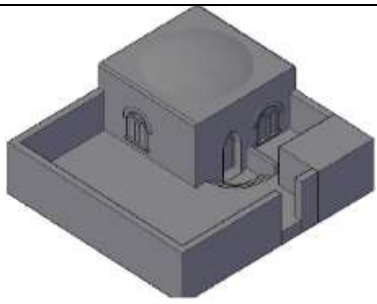
Ain Karem village (1948-occupied Jerusalem) Images of inspiring houses and remains	
	
3Ds of students' imaginations of the houses	
	

Table 5: Reconstruction of Palestinian dwelling in Ain Karem village.

The images of Beit Mahsir (Table 6) inspiring houses show how these two houses are rich with Palestinian dwelling elements. Here, the student reflected the details in his imagination of the house. However, it is noticed that they could not catch the full perception of the context of the Palestinian dwelling among the village. This is due to the altered sense of place that is caused by the occupation and the dramatic disconnection it made in the whole Palestinian life-world experience from that time till now.

Beit Mahsir village (1948-occupied Jerusalem District) Images of inspiring houses and remains	
	
3Ds of students' imaginations of the houses	
	

Table 6: Reconstruction of Palestinian dwelling in Beit Mahsir village.

The cubic form of the inspiring remaining house of Deir Aban (Table 7) village was illustrated by the student via a 3D program with different proportions for door and window. It was represented as an isolated structure away from its context.

Al-Qubeiba village (Table 8) inspiring houses seem to be more detailed and spacious than the previous villages. It is noticed that the student added a perception of the contemporary materials to feel time continuity for this house as it is still inhabited by its owners.

Deir Aban village (1948-occupied Jerusalem District) Images of inspiring houses and remains	
	
3Ds of students' imaginations of the houses	
	

Table 7: Reconstruction of Palestinian dwelling in Deir Aban village.

The images of Abu Dis village (Table 9) show clearly that the built environment of this village is tending to be more transitioning towards civilization in that period (1967). The student perceived the sense of place of the inspiring house of this village in similar way he perceived her contemporary built environment, so it is noticed that she added a wall in front of the doors of the house as a representation of property boundaries that used to be in civilian spaces.

Al-Qubeiba village (1967--occupied Jerusalem District) Images of inspiring houses and remains	
	
Images of inspiring houses and remains	3Ds of students' imaginations of the houses. Example 1
	 
Images of inspiring houses and remains	3Ds of students' imaginations of the houses. Example 2
	

Table 8: Reconstruction of Palestinian dwelling in Al-Qubeiba village.

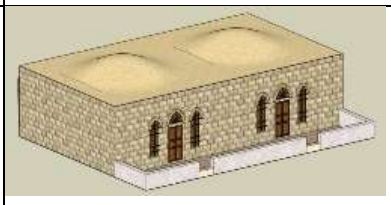
Abu Dis village (1967--occupied Jerusalem District) General images of the village	
	
Images of inspiring house	3Ds of students' imaginations of the house
	

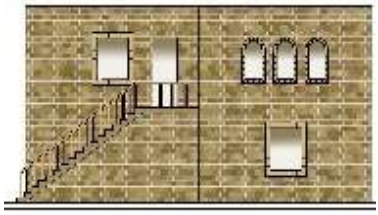
Table 9: Reconstruction of Palestinian dwelling in Abu Dis village.

Nabi Samwil village (Table 10) shows the raised natural landscape of the village's terrains. The inspiring house shows a palace with several spaces and two stories. The student illustrated this unique architectural composition with its natural material and completed the living experience in this house by

adding developed elements such as stairs and iron works. However, the student also could not catch the full sense of place with its natural context.

Nabi Samwil village (1967—occupied Jerusalem District)
Images of inspiring houses and remains

3Ds of students' imaginations of the houses



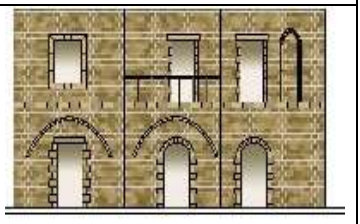


Table 10: Reconstruction of Palestinian dwelling in Nabi Samwil village

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is concluded that even if the Palestinian students lost the ability to interact with their existential context where their real architecture emerged and developed, the phenomenological approach and cognition helped students to catch some aspects of the villages and its dwellings.

Although it is noticed that the students could not represent the organic sense of place of natural landscape fully, it is considered very valuable to expose the students to such experience to build their conception to their architecture gradually.

In addition, The Palestinian sense of place and belonging is harmfully affected by the occupation. The ancestors belonging to the land feeling was altered in dramatic way which affect the sense of being and the everyday lifeworld.

Furthermore, although the largest number of Palestinians are descendants of villagers, it is clearly noticed that the new generation, including architecture students, have difficulties in simulation and living the lifeworld and experience of village life which is, in essence, the very original existential connection of the human to the earth.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Chapter 3

GAPRU, a new Approach for The Conservation of Historic Cites

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ABSTRACT

The Mediterranean historic cities face many challenges confronting their conservation efforts. Historically, several approaches have been applied for dealing with the conservation of historic city canters. Orthodox conservation approach looking at the architectural heritage as a static bulk of stones need technical interference to preserve them in a statue-like conditions. Such approaches not only damage the continuity of these stones but also jeopardize the urban life around them. This research developed a more comprehensive and holistic approach to the conservation process. The conservation of historic cities through this approach is characterized as Generative, Adaptive, Participatory, and Responsive- Reuse. It is abbreviated as GAPRU. Two case studies have been used to illustrate the importance of GAPRU. The first one is Gaza Old Town, Palestine where the absence of GAPRU has led to the complete transformation of it to devastated ugly concrete structures. The second is the historic city of Naples, Italy which suffers several problems in its urban heritage environment. This research raises the alert that GAPRU is crucially needed to be applied to the conservation efforts in historic cities to avoid serious deterioration in their historical urban heritage.

Key Words: Conservation, Gaza, Antalya, Naples, Historic Cities.

INTRODUCTION

Cities are places where each citizen recognizes himself. Each place is unique, resulting from relations between environment, society, and culture; the preservation of this heritage depends on how these relations will be carried on in the future. To say it with Patrick Geddes, the city renewal is a job for the citizens (Ferraro, 1998). Historic cities are very complex expressions of culture, reflecting the relations between people and places during the passage of time. With their large spatial-temporal scales, they constitute a continuous geographical timeline from generation to generation and between regions and countries. Not only their architectural visual value is unique and distinguished, but also their symbolic social, political, and economic contexts extraordinarily shape the identity of their citizens. "They reflect the accomplishments of a significant cross-section of the world cultures, and while some represent the efforts of indigenous cultures…. All mingle their diverse influences in creative fashion to create unique forms and patterns of use" (Doratli et al, 2004).

Historic cities of the Mediterranean have very special significance for the distinguished roles they have been playing in the histories of their countries and the world. City- states of the Phoenician and Assyrians and those of north Africa and south Hispania followed by Greek and Roman cities made the Mediterranean basin a theatre for interactive exchange of cultures and civilizations. This process continued through the Middle Ages across Muslim and Christian banks of the Mediterranean where Beirut, Sidon, Jaffa, Gaza, Alexandria, Antalya, Marseilles, Valencia, Venice, and Napoli continued to have the same influential role in world culture, trade, and politics. The preservation of these canters has increasingly been the concern of many courtiers and led to the formation of several international bodies to provide frameworks for cooperation and partnership and share experiences and knowledge in a field that suffers from many complicated problems and challenges. Amongst the distinguished examples of such bodies appear UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM and more recently the International Committee of the Red Cross, ICRC. Within the Mediterranean basin, sincere efforts have been organized by REHABIMED and EUROMED HERITAGE programs to provide help, consultancy, and support for the conservation of architectural heritage in the region.

Yet despite all these efforts, many cities still face many constraints to success, the most important of which are lack of political will and sufficient investment of both the public and private sectors. These constraints are affected by several factors:

- The concentration of financially profitable investments only on certain parts of the historic center such as revitalization of historic areas with tourist potential.
- lower-income residents have no role in urban revitalization and have thus been excluded from conservation efforts.
- The limitation of conservation projects is to only deal with the physical fabric of the historic cities with little interest in other components of the urban structure like the social, cultural, economic, and political factors.
- The absence of a comprehensive approach to conservation to provide programs for the whole historic urban environment. The main approach used is the preservation of the historical buildings and sometimes provisions for reuse are employed.

Doratli et al, (2004) argue that conventional planning approaches for conservation cannot provide suitable solutions for these problems. They are straightforward protection approaches that mainly deal with technical-scientific issues concerning material aspects of historic canters. They are directed to site-specific recording, protection, and regulation, rather than the comprehensive assessment of historic canters. At the same time these approaches deal with the urban environment as a static geometrical gridiron with fixed spatial-temporal boundaries which contradict with the evolutionary generative processes that shaped the historic environments (Steinberg, 2009). At the same time, new approaches tried to by-pass these old-fashioned ones came about with separated individualized concepts mainly concentrating on adaptive reuse and participatory conservation stimulating the public participation in the conservation process (Cutajar, 2008). Fister (2001) denoted to the concept of the Granada Convention in the 1970s: "integral protection" which highlighted the role of the built heritage not only as document of history but also as a quality part of the human environment (Fister, 2001). To achieve this important goal, there is a need to consider a comprehensive approach for architectural conservation that can address the diverse issues responsible for making the traditional human

environment pleasant places for life. This approach employs the revitalization of historic city canters depending on the following principles:

- Generative processes.
- Adaptive reuse.
- Participatory conservation.
- Responsive preservation.

GENERATIVE PROCESSES

Generative development processes are those processes responsible for the creation, development, and continuity of "dynamic complex adaptive environments that embody the virtues of complexity and sustainability" (Hekim, 2007). These processes are practices by the people of the traditional environments themselves governed by their special social, cultural, political, and economic systems. These processes are continuous and adapted by the whole community to the ever-changing spatial-temporal needs governed by great flexibility of the social system. The result is an organic dynamic livable fabric of the built environment. On the contrary, pre-planned blueprints schemes prepared by a few watch dog philanthropists in closed offices governed by the wills and wishes of the decision makers produce static dispersed spaces disconnected from the actual dynamism of the community. It further impinged the community with dispersion and discontinuity. Generative processes have the following components:

- Ethical norms derived from the history and value system of society.
- Private and public rights are exercised with equity and justice.
- Private and public responsibilities are clearly well apprehended.
- Flexible system of Control and Management progressively responsive to the needs of the community.
- Comprehensive sets of rules and codes well-articulated with all the previous components.

Revitalization of historic city centres should therefore consider their generative nature. The liveability of their spatial-temporal development and change should not be frozen in fixed images that only represent one ring in their historical chain. The use and reuse of the traditional built environments need to respect the original processes that generated them. The modern concept of urban regeneration in revitalization plans when mistakenly applied to the historic city canters brings catastrophic destruction. Revitalization of these canters can by no means be brought through malls, tall office buildings and wide boulevards. Nor it can be generated by reusing historical buildings and spaces for restricted activities that cut off the continuity and change cycles in their communities. It is believed that modern

urban planning brings nothing to US cities but canters for capitalism not as humane habitats directed to improve the lives of their citizens.

ADAPTIVE CONSERVATION

Historical buildings represent high value resources in terms of their social, historical, and cultural wealth. Abandonment results in rapid irreversible deterioration. The problem here lies in the high costs of their maintenance. Privatization and the economic reuse of historic buildings provide suitable solutions to this problem. Adaptation concentrates on preserving the quality of the historic city while at the same time adapting the built environment and the activities undergoing within it to modern economic, cultural, and social settings. Urban revitalization therefore can be used to support adaptive reuse of historic cities, to strengthen their economic base and to respond to the social and economic needs of their inhabitants. The preservation of historic cities as static examples of traditional building technologies is refuted. The same can be said for harmful intervention for only economic stimuli. Aspirations of the community in addition to their culture and social settings should be taken into consideration within a comprehensive approach addressing the very special circumstances of historic cities.

It is important to keep in mind that adaptive re use should be governed by suitable rules and guidelines to secure the historical built environment from harmful interventions. These guidelines concentrate on the preservation of the historic environment with minimum intervention to keep the authentic character of the structures.

PARTICIPATORY CONSERVATION

Participation in conservation projects is usually misunderstood by limiting it to holding public relations programs by which public agencies market their orthodox conservation plans. On the contrary, participation is a seriously crucial drive to develop working relationships with stakeholders in historic cities. Owners, users, investors, and politicians are becoming crucial partners in architectural heritage conservation. All these parties require careful attractive prospects to be involved in the conservation process while preserving their legal rights and providing them with economic incentives for active participation. They may include tax exemptions and transfer of floor space indexes. At the same time, the budget constraints of the stakeholders should be observed. Conservation policies also need to consider private market paradigms suitable for boosting the economy of the historic cities. The ideal aim of participation is that stakeholders will be promoted to finance, implement, monitor, and evaluate conservation activities in their areas (Kamal, 2002). Suitable regulatory and legal frameworks are significantly needed for the organization and management of such conservation processes.

RESPONSIVE RE-USE

Architectural heritage conservation is a responsive process to counter act against decay and deterioration affecting historical buildings in the first instance. Yet it is quite apprehended that this process cannot be superficially oversimplified to stop at the physical fabric of historical buildings. These buildings were originally constructed through a prolonged complex response to a wide set of factors that create the whole structure of the human life with all its ever changing social, cultural, and economic contexts (Hekim, 1991). When these contexts change while their original physical containers - buildings- retain their original characters, the real challenge is not to preserve these characters or to adapt them to some new uses, but it is how to make this preservation and adaptation respond to real problems, needs and aspirations of the community (Buyukdigan, 2003). It is argued that this is the most important measure for the success of conservation programs in historic cities. It is the measure of how these programs relate to the aspirations of the community. The environment is one of the most important concerns for consumers who increasingly they continue to confirm their desire to purchase products and services from environmentally responsive companies (D'Amore, 1992). Historical buildings in this regard were environmentally wise especially in terms of their building materials and construction techniques. It is quite interesting here to notice that these buildings had wise uses that conform to both their physical structures and their socio-cultural and socio-economic contexts (Ipekoglu et.al., 2007). Therefore, limiting responsive conservation to only incorporating environmental technologies like solar panels or photovoltaic cells in historical buildings is a misrepresentation of the overall qualities of these buildings and their potential to respond to a wide variety of needs and aspirations.

"Restoration and state-promoted conservation projects need to be replaced with ones in which people participate and the restored and renovated areas became places of recreation and cultural activity rather than museums and monuments. In addition, their conservation management and maintenance became the responsibility of local governments and communities rather than departments of antiquity or archaeology" (Hasan, 1992).

THE COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION APPROACH, GAPRU

It is evident from the above discussion of the different approaches of heritage conservation that each of them concentrates on certain aspects of historic cities. Despite the distinguished importance of each of them, it comes short to fulfil the required demands of historic cities with their long list of complex challenges. Generative conservation by virtue implies the continuous adaptation of the built environment to the ever-changing activities of the community. The adaptive reuse will never come to success without the full participation of the community in the finance, management, and administration of the whole revitalization process. And only if all these factors respond to the actual needs and aspirations of the community (not the dreams of the planners nor the whims of the decision makers), it can be said that real conservation of historic cities can be achieved. It is argued that considering GAPRU will open a new era of architectural heritage conservation in historic city canters and help alleviate much of the hardships and challenges facing them.

GAPRU AND THE HISTORIC CENTER OF GAZA

The interest in architectural conservation of historic buildings of Gaza Old Town was initiated in 2000 by a cooperation program between Department of Architectural Engineering, Islamic University of Gaza and Politicnico di Milano University, Italy. IWAN Center for Architectural Heritage was thence established because of this cooperation program. IWAN Center was destroyed in the Israeli war against Gaza in 2008. It was thence refurbished with a grant from Prince Claus Fund in 2009. It continued its mission with greater commitment and dedication to saving what remained of the historical buildings in Gaza. During the current Israeli war against Gaza which still running while these words are written, IWAN and the whole Islamic University of Gaza have been reduced to rubble. This is in addition to most of the historical buildings preserved by IWAN projects and many other monuments.

Gaza old town with its recent architectural heritage dates to the Ottoman period although it is believed that some structures are Ayyubid or Mamlok. By the turn of the 20th century, it had a beautiful traditional Mediterranean townscape (Figure 1). It had splendid Ottoman architectural style distinguished with houses of courtyards, riwaqs and iwans (Figure 2). And it is yet another good example of the peaceful coexistence between Moslems and Christians where mosques and churches share the same walls for centuries. A unique example is the coexistence of Kateb el Wilaya mosque with the Church of Saint Porphyrius which is believed to be one of the oldest churches in Gaza (Figure 3). Both monuments have been seriously damages and around 20 Christians were martyred with an in Israeli bombardment of the church in December 2023.

Gaza city started to undergo serious problems with the deterioration of economic conditions during the last years of the Ottoman regime which affected many of its structures. This deterioration escalated at the after math of World War One due to the changes in the socio-political structures and the effects of the war where many buildings have been damaged including its Great Omary mosque (Figure 4). These changes seriously affected the socio-cultural and socio-economic patterns in the old city. The gradual decay continued and intensified through the following decades resulting in

unprecedented damage to the fabric of the old city which has completely lost its traditional character.

Figure 1: Townscape of Gaza at the turn of the 20th center.

Figure 2: Al Galayeni courtyard house with riwaq.

Figure 3: Saint Porphyrius church and Kateb Al Wilaya Mosque share the same wall.

With the dramatic changes brought about in Gaza after WW1, development and continuity in its built environment was greatly disturbed

with the consequences of the war and the end of the Ottoman rule. It took some years before the British mandate could bring order and stability to the. This dramatic shift cut through the continuity of the traditional generative processes and produced new trends pushed forward by the British authorities. New modes of production appeared with the development of paved roads and vehicle transportation systems.

New building materials and construction systems began to replace the heavy stone walls and vaulted roofs. The city began to creep westwards onto the sand dunes searching for wider spaces and modernized urban facilities. Due to out-immigration, many traditional buildings became abundant with no intention or resources to maintain them. And those who remained have no choice but to introduce huge modifications to their buildings. The British mandate enforced Town Planning Orders since 1921 with some controls on development in the old city (Mahrok, 1995). They were helpless to confront the great pace of change affecting society (Mahrok, 1999). At the same time, the ruling class had no real intentions for such conservation and encouraged the development of new cultural styles in terms of language, uniform, norms, building materials and construction. The construction of the new municipal building in the heart of the old city represented a clear manifestation of this direction (Figure 5). After the end of the British Mandate in 1948, Gaza was subjected to another new traumatic disaster. Cut from the whole Palestine, put under the military Egyptian administration, and flooded with huge flows of refugees.

Figure 4: Destroyed minaret- Great Omary Mosque 1918 WW1

Figure 5: Gaza new municipal building before 1948 old Gaza.

The generative processes were deviated to alleviate the heavy burden of the new conditions of fear, perplexity, poverty, and siege. Moreover, the Egyptian administration stepped further to encourage the expansion of the city westwards with very few orthodox planning controls. Uncertain economic activities continued to exert more damage to the historic center. The catastrophe reached its climax when the Egyptian administration decided to erase a large area of the historic center to open a wide street (Figure 6). Under such irresponsible administration, private responsibility towards the historic Gaza vanished while the deterioration of ethical norms continued consequently. This situation continued until 1967 when Gaza came under Israeli occupation which aimed at furthering the deterioration of the whole Palestinian community and its built environment.

Since 2000, IWAN center has been struggling to rescue some of these buildings, Al Samra Turkish Bath (2000-2002) (Figure 7) and Al Alami House (2009-2010) (Figure 8). Both have been destroyed during the recent war started in October 2023.

Principles of adaptive reuse or participatory and responsive conservation have very little to do with this very complicated and fractured environment. Yet it is seriously crucial nowhere to denote that while all GAPRU elements stressed the importance role of the community in the revitalization of historic cities, this role was almost absent in the case of Gaza. The different regimes that controlled Gaza in the 20th century forced the Gaza community to be so helpless and careless towards its historically built environment. The inauspicious circumstances of Gaza were the result of the consequent catastrophes the last of which is the Israeli war against Gaza since October 2023. This war resulted in the displacement of most of

the Gazans outside the city and the destruction of its built environment including most of its historical buildings (UN News-Global perspective Human stories, 2024). While it might seem too late for Gaza to act now, there is a lot of hope in Gaza and worldwide that this war will end and the Palestinians with the help of their friends will take care of the historical city of Gaza.

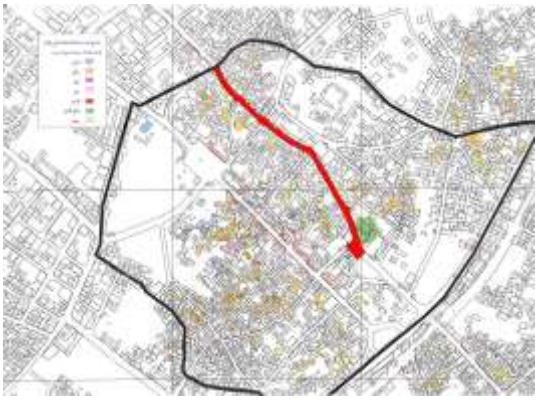

Figure 6: Al wihda street erased large area of Gaza Old Town.

Figure 7: Al Samra Turkish Bath in Gaza Old Town.

Figure 8: Al Alami Historical courtyard house in Gaza Old Town.

GAPRU AND THE HISTORIC CITY OF NAPLES

The Historic Center of Naples, a World Heritage Site since 1995 is a unique case. With its 981 ha, it is one of the largest in Europe. The hills, the volcano and the sea make the Bay of Naples a beautiful landscape (Figure 9). “Spaccanapoli”, the core of the historic city of Naples is magnificent with its old buildings and delicate architectural details (Figure 10). Along the ancient Decumanus Inferior, San Paolo church still preserves on its facade two columns of the Roman Temple it was built on (Figure 11). Santa Maria la Nova Monastery (Figure 12) has a spectacular courtyard and colonnades. The architecture of the city is strongly characterized by cloisters and courtyards, as the magnificent Mediterranean tradition.

The long history of the city began in the 7th century BC, when the Greeks settled for commercial purposes. in some districts the population density is comparable to the highest in the world (SISTAN- Sistema Statistico Nazionale, 2001). Chronic chaos, vandalism and poor management of public affairs undermine the very identity of the city, devaluing its cultural and environmental resources, which are considered among the richest in the world. These manifestations can be traced in some examples from the Ancient City. In Palazzo Marigliano, porches of palace courtyards which were originally used for horses, cars park in front of them (Figure 13). In Via Anticaglia, Neapolitans used the Roman theatre to live in due to the lack of spaces (Figure 14). Most of the historic tissue of the Ancient City are found in a serious state of decay (Figure 15). The protection of the historic center of Naples needs actions to coordinate urban renewal with the recovery of memory. This is important to combine, conservation and development, as a key factor for the affirmation of its identity (Aveta, 2009). Conservation projects will not work, unless the meaning of protecting the cultural heritage is deeply shared.

Figure 9: A panoramic view of the Bay of Naples.

Figure 10: Spaccanapoli the core of the historic center of Naples

Figure 11: Santa Maria la Nova Monastery

Figure 12: Port'Alba - Piazza Dante- historic center of Naples

Figure 13: Palazzo Marigliano

Figure 14: Via Anticaglia

Figure 15: Via Pisanelli

In 2007 the Municipality of Naples started the rehabilitation program "Grande Programma Centro Storico UNESCO", funded mainly by the European Union and parts of the project are still undergoing (Municipality of Napoli, 2024). Reference is made to the Strategic Orientation Document (DOS), in which intentions and actions planned are explained. The goal of the program was to encourage development and enhance the quality of the environment and the community to achieve sustainable development (Por Campanya- FESR, 2024). The strategy of the conservation plan, has divided the site into 4 main areas of implementation:

- the Ancient City, designated to Citadel of Studies, Arts and Culture,
- the eastern coastal side, designated to commercial districts,
- the Spanish Quarters, designated to commercial districts,
- the western coastal side, designated as a monumental and tourist district.

The plan intended for the Ancient City highlighted culture as the primary source for development through two main drives (Table 1):

The Driver of Culture

Aimed to reorganize cultural institutions within the Citadel (like universities and museums) with services and economic structures in a connected network to support traditional arts and crafts.

The Driver of Reception

Aimed to deal with the causes of physical and social degradation, and to improve infrastructures and services that make the Citadel welcoming for residents and visitors. This research examined the two drivers against the general principles of GAPRU to evaluate the level of their comprehensive application in the conservation plan.

GENERATIVE PROCESSES

The two drives dealt with two main aspects of the generative processes: culture and quality of the built environment. They influence all actions of the local government, enhancing existing initiatives and promoting new ones to achieve a more humane city. They reduce discomfort and inequality by promoting integration. It reverses the mechanisms that produce and consume material wealth but create social and cultural poverty (Fusco and You eds., 2006). Yet it is found that DOS looked at these aspects weakly without connecting them to the overall processes and mechanisms still working in the ancient city.

Generative processes can by no means be limited to listing projects with their budgets and employees. Main components of the generative processes to be considered in such projects include:

- There is a need to conserve ethical norms derived from the history and value system of Neapolitans to provide them with confidence and a strong sense of belonging.
- Equity and justice are two major foundations of any conservation program and are responsible for satisfaction and commitment. Conservation projects should carefully deal with private and public rights through careful measures of transparency and impartiality.
- The above two points necessitate that private and public responsibilities are clearly determined to provide people with comfort, cooperation, and contentment.

All the above-mentioned points would never succeed without the development of suitable sets of comprehensive rules and codes prepared with full participation of the community.

Table 1: Drivers of Culture as tools of conservation in Naples Historic City.

The Driver of Culture		The Driver of Reception	
INTERVENTION	FUNCTIONS	INTERVENTION	FUNCTIONS
Restoration of 2 major monuments	Part of 14th century walls New National Museum wing	Destination to social use of 11 buildings	2 students' house, 1 museum, 1 artisan center, 4 canters of assistance, 2 unspecified
Restoration of 10 religious' buildings	use confirmed	Restoration for social use of 11 religious complexes	4 churches, 2 canters of assistance, 4 hotels, 3 unspecified
Restoration and re-use of 14 religious complexes	2 guest houses 2 museums 2 conference rooms + 1 auditorium 7 unspecified	Recovery and adjustment of 4 schools	4 schools
Restoration for cultural use of 16 public buildings	7 museums and similar 2 churches 1 documentation center 1 center for social assistance 1 point for promotion of handcrafts 1 school and 1 college adjustment the "City of Youth Project" (unknown)	Redevelopment of urban spaces	open spaces, streets, gardens, purchase of ecological features
Support to cultural institutions	8 unspecified	Restoration and re-use of 15 public buildings	1 neighbourhood centre, 4 offices and similar, 9 unspecified
7 Interventions of Urban Archeology	7 archaeological spots	Public safety interventions	lighting and new police stations
		Restoration of major private buildings	private buildings

ADAPTIVE CONSERVATION

DOS defined tangible and intangible measures to implement the program, by direct interventions on structures, spaces, buildings, and by initiatives to support the economic and social contexts. Tangible measures include:

- Development of social urban structure: favoring gathering places, canters for cultural activities and social assistance, strengthening of human capital and skills, ensuring equal opportunities for women.
- Development of tourism infrastructure: improving knowledge and quality of services.

A degree of priority is accorded to the rehabilitation of paths, open spaces, and places for the enjoyment of culture (museums, exhibition halls, conference rooms) compared to places for educational facılıtıes. There is a small number of schools to be adjusted, as well as sites related to university activities. This could meet the need to obtain quick positive impacts. It could also signify grater intention for returns from tourism, with less intention to most buildings inhabited by humble people, facing an unacceptable degree of decay.

Also considering the large number of buildings destined for social functions, it is vital to make these functions capable of promoting sustainability. To make a historic city a better place to live in, it is needed to get a better quality of life by refine the tools available like technologies, public facilities, and access to services. DOS needs to place greater emphasis on the allocation of social structures and to educate and raise awareness.

PARTICIPATORY CONSERVATION

As first step, DOS refers to three main instruments to gain people participation:

- Great Program Window, an office where information is given, and projects shown.
- Grand Program website, with a newsletter to keep people updated.
- Forums and meetings organized according to a program widely spread.

So far, the results obtained look insufficient. The Window has never been established. The website is not updated constantly. There have been meetings, but not enough spread to ensure a real inclusive policy. In this situation, participation cannot be limited to the spontaneous one, but must be representative. Functions and priorities were to be defined through investigations, questionnaires, and surveys, dragging people into the process, not waiting for volunteers.

Naples, like all the Mediterranean areas, has an enormous heritage, which may become an important polarity, attracting people and interests, if communication, services, and accessibility are improved. The purpose is not banally the touristic one, but it is to bring the territory into the lives of citizens, to enable the professional community to participate in the future development, and the administrative sector to recover some quality of management. Special attention should be paid to the following issues:

- Support for economy: financial and tax incentives for businesses and commercial enterprises to improve the environment in which companies operate.
- Actions for urban safety: strengthening local police, socio-educational services, and help for victims of crime.

RESPONSIVE REUSE

Carrying out the DOS Program would now serve to build confidence and to give back some hope for the future to Neapolitan people. This is one of the most important sides of responsive historic preservation: to induce vitality and confidence in the lives of people. Historic preservation is in its core is a preservation of the value system of the community. These intrinsic values are rooted in cultural traditions, norms and signs and symbol systems of society. And as Gerard (2006) put it clear:

> "The value of the historic center of Italian communities like Assisi or Gubbio is not only represented by each of their monuments, but by the integration between the various monuments and the surrounding environment that has been shaped over many centuries to define their collective cultural identity and particular historical sense of unity. Intrinsic value reflects this sense of cultural belonging, resulting from the unified integration of many diverse components that all combine to express the "spirit" of the place " (Girard, 2006).

DOS must clearly address these intrinsic values and to reactivate their role in the preservation of Naples historic center and to respond to new needs and aspirations of the Neapolitans resulting from the changing social, cultural, and economic settings. DOS should be aware in this regard that these values should not be restricted to cost-benefit analyses but rather they should be dealt with within a multidimensional approach of value-system heritage conservation. DOS needs to go ahead with global voices stressing the importance of historic preservation responses towards technological innovations and sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

Mediterranean historic cities have a common heritage which represents a precious phenomenon linking together three continents and their people while at the same time facing similar challenges. The unbalanced modernization of past decades in a region of strong social and cultural persistence had dramatic impacts: a flat and un-personal modernity risks breaking up what centuries of history had united. Sensitive situations form one side and the growing tourism on the other add pressure to their delicate social, economic, and traditional urban systems. The conservation of these historic cities is a shared responsibility of the Mediterranean countries but can by no means be limited to certain approaches dealing only with single-sided aspects of them. As the cities resulted from a translation in materials of a certain shared idea of life, the linkage between communities and their lives rooted in a special place must be re-established as a precondition to conservation. GAPRU represents a comprehensive approach for such intervention that includes all necessary aspects of the revitalization process of historic cities. The absence of GAPRU and the integration between its components and the lack of centrality of generative processes, resulted in the loss of the whole traditional environment of what was one of the distinguished Mediterranean historic centers, Gaza. Unfortunately, the undergoing of the current war that resulted in the destruction of most of the historical remains in historic Gaza jeopardized the application of GAPRU for long times to come. This raises peaceful cooperation and respectful integration as the main needs for conservation of the human dignity and its historical buildings.

Many lessons should be learnt from Naples which is still struggling to save its magnificent heritage and rebuild its identity within a comprehensive framework. GAPRU provides a unique opportunity that is offered for the first time with its comprehensiveness to care for the conservation of historic cities. It also opens the doors for future research to provide the detailed components of the framework and the indicators and measures for its assessment and evaluation.

NOTE ON FIGURES CREDIT

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Chapter 4

Architectural unity in Grand Omari Mosque, Gaza, Palestine

Abdurrahman Mohamed

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 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 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. This research studies the aspects of unity in the architecture of the Grand Omari Mosque in Gaza Old Town, Palestine in its architectural form using its plan, elevations, and general form through its morphological development. It was found that Grand Omari Mosque still a dominant element of the urban structure of Gaza, and it is vital for the Islamic identity of the city. The development of unity in the architectural morphology of the mosque has been a manifestation of unity within the Islamic community of Gaza in specific and the Moslem nation in general. Its important heritage should be preserved, and greater efforts should be directed to its conservation and renovation.

Keywords: Mosque, Architecture, Unity, Gaza, Palestine.

INTRODUCTION

Origins of the Grand Omari Mosque, GOM, in Gaza Old Town, GOT, Palestine dates 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 GOM to explore its architectural unity and the factors which have shaped it.

Both the Mamluk and the Ottoman dynasties, and the Palestinian High Islamic Council, PHIC, contributed to the development and preservation of the mosque. The 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 PHIC managed to preserve the unified wholeness of the mosque. This implies nothing but the sensitive architectural orientations of the Moslems towards the concept of Islamic unity, and how to reflect it on their buildings.

FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

In search for restoration and resurgence of architecture, it is crucial to study its composition and spatial patterns 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" (Rasmussen, 1962: 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 cannot be exclusively confined to the internal relationships in the compos1t1on but also it extends to include the relationships between the composition and its surroundings (Hammoda, 1990: 72). In architecture, unity is a quality of design composition (Smithies, 1981). It is also considered one of the main objectives of design (Bell, 1993: 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 (Bell, 1993: 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 (Hammoda, 1990: 143). In this sense, unity constitutes a balancing factor, which governs the suitable relationships between the elements and their ability to integrate. 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 results 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 (Hammoda, 1990: 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 AI-Tawhedi, Al-Ghazali, Ibn Sina and Maskawaih (Hammoda, 1990: 23). Nowhere, unity also appears as a major factor affecting the quality of art. Its principles include proportion, form, and color (Hammoda, 1990: 193). Attempts to figure out principles of architectural composition in Islamic architecture include several principles of unity like repetition,

rhythm, abstraction, color, and proportion (Hammoda, 1990: 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 (Smithies, 1981: 6-9). Additionally, Hammoda (1990) argues that wholeness of architectural composition is governed by the following principles: axis, repetition, rhythm, and basic composition unit (Hammoda y., 1990: 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 (Bell, 1993:93).

It is possible to continue the search for many other classifications of unity in architectural composition. In search of a general model of principles of unity from the above classifications a Jong 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 (Bell, 1993:9). These elements are usually composed according to certain principles to exhibit features of wholeness and integration'. These features together fulfill unity in 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 by proportion, direction, and axis. They are rectangular, flat, and horizontal with minarets, domes, arches and vaults pushing 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 the examination of the

architectural composition of the GOM. Features like dominance, harmony and vitality are used to assess the overall unity of the building.

THE CITY OF GAZA, GENERAL BACKGROUND

Gaza is the largest and most important city 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 (Abu Hashim, 1995: 19).It has a strategic location at the gate between Africa and Asia. It is also an important junction on commerce routes between south and north, and east and west. Accordingly, it was a target for many attacks and wars which destroyed it several times (Salha, 1997: 72). On the 4th of 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 (Salha, 1997: 76). From 1260 to 1516 AD Gaza remained under the rule 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 (Abu Hashim, 1995: 22). In 1516 AD, the Ottomans inherited the Mamluk legacy in Palestine. Gaza continued to witness the construction of few new mosques. Efforts were also directed to the development of the GOM. 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 (Skaik, 1983:4). When the British Mandate was terminated in. 1948, Gaza was ruled by the Egyptian Government. Despite the extensive interest of the Egyptians in archaeology and historic architecture, nothing was done towards the historic buildings of Gaza. Furthermore, the Egyptian administration also crossed out more historic buildings to open new roads in the city.

These detrimental exertions against historic buildings and mosques were escalated under the Israeli occupation after 1967. The 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 1: Contemporary urban image of Gaza
Source: Courtesy of IWAN Center.

Figure 2: Ibn Marwan Mosque, disparate need for preservation
Source: Courtesy of IWAN Center.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREAT OMARI MOSQUE

This mosque is in the heart of the old town within its traditional historical 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 (AI-Mubayid, 1994: 62). It is argued that the building had not been 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 (AI-Mubayid, 1994: 64). It was called the Omari Mosque to commemorate this auspicious event (Abu Hashim, 1995:27). Yet the decree of conquest of Khalif Omar ibn Al-Khattab for the Christians of Jerusalem secured their churches (EI-Aref, 1986:91). He even refused to pray in a church in order not to transform it to a mosque (EI-Aref, 1986:98). 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 (Sadeq, 1991). This argument needs further verification through deeper historical consideration of the building.

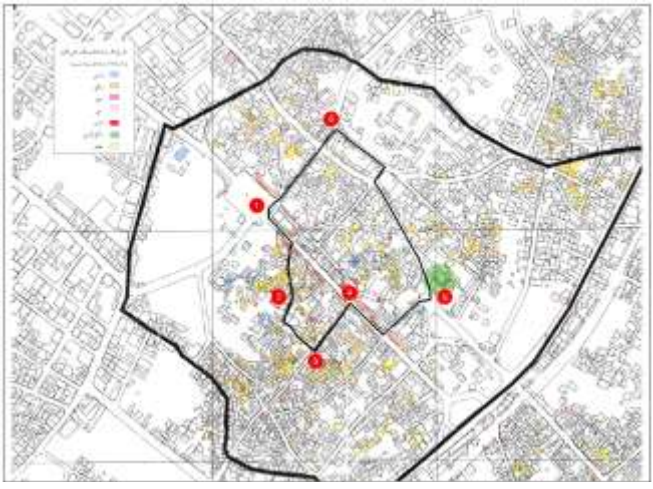

Figure 3: Location of GOM in GOT, No. 4 on the map.
Source: Courtesy of IWAN Center.

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 (AI-Mubayid, 1994: 145). Abu Hashim (1995) believes that Islamic features in the building might have been destroyed but not the whole building (Abu Hashim, 1995: 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 (Sadiq, 1991:157) The changes which might had been introduced to the building makes it looks like a new crusader one (EI-Aref, 1943: 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 paid great attention to the GOM. By this date, the mosque merely consisted of the prayer hall (bait assala); a rectangle with main transept and two isles directed to the east. During the role of (Mansouri, 1237-1299 AD) of the Bahri Mamluk Dynasty (1250-1380 AD), a door was ope1ied and a minaret was built at the eastern wall in 1297 (AI-Mubayid, 1994: 68).

Figure 4: View of the GOM.
Source: Courtesy of IWAN Center.

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 minaret (Behrens-Abouseif, 1989: 55). In the same year, a new window

was opened in the northern wall. (Abu Hashim, 1995:6, AI-Mubayid, 1994: 30). 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 (Abu Hashim, 1995:31, AI-Mubayid, 1994: 70). During the 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

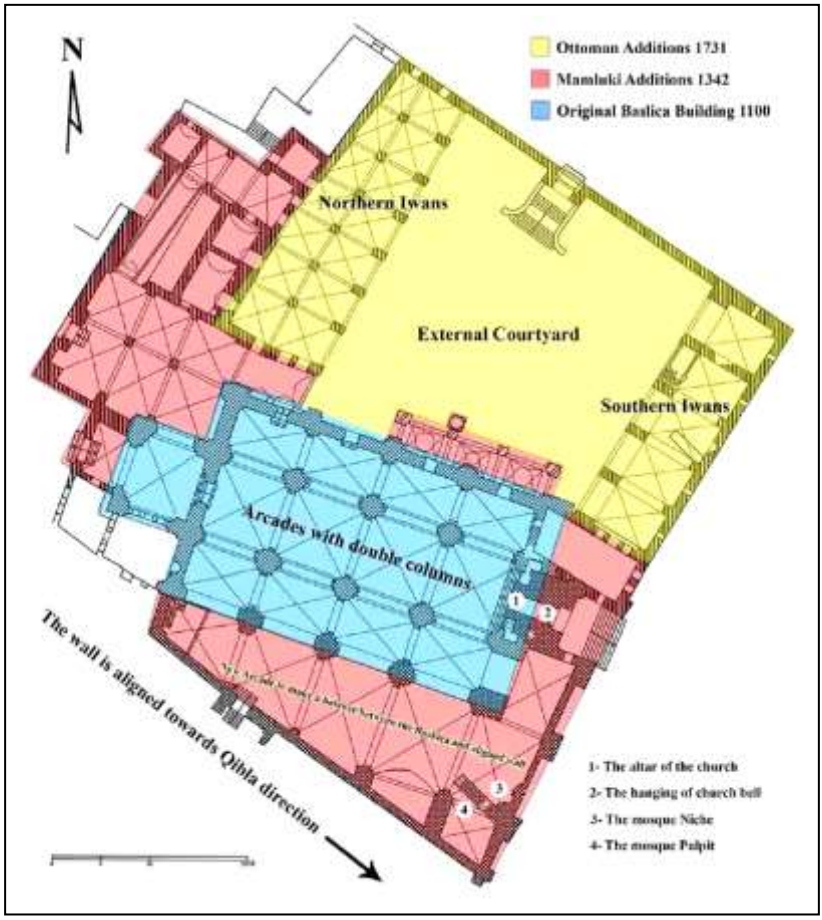

Figure 5: Plan of the GOM showing its morphological development.
Source: Courtesy Prof. Ziyad S., University of Malaya.

the western edge of the southern arcade (Abu Hashim, 1995: 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 (1765-1 818 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), ablution 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, and a portal was added to the western door (AI-Mubayid, 1994: 78). In 1842 AD, Darweesh Hasan Basha, the lieutenant colonel (mutassarref) of Gaza provided the mosque with a stone ablution reservoir and ordered some maintenance work in the building (AI-Mubayid, 1994: 81). The latest recorded development in the mosque du ring the Ottoman role was in 1885 AD. Kinj Ahmad, the director of endowment in Gaza provided toilets and water taps for ablution and opened a new door to the north of the western door (AI-Mubayid, 1994: 31). 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, (AI-Mubayid, 1994: 94), but nothing has been done after. It recently suffers from dangerous deterioration and needs redevelopment and restoration.

UNITY IN THE GREAT OMARI MOSQUE

GOM has survived many changes during several dynasties and has continued to preserve its dignity and identity. This fact gives the mosque a very distinguished position in the architectural heritage of Gaza. The building has been developed over a long period of time and has great historic value. The study of unity in this inveterate building is a very impo1iant 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 GOM 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 an 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. The Mamluk widening (Figure 5) 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 relate to Makka direction. At the same time, the minaret base, and the new door m the eastern wall is at the center of the transept and axially related to the western door.

The Ottoman widening (Figure 5) 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.

The minaret has a beautiful octagonal trunk fixed on a heavy rectangular base (Figure 4). 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 ve1tical 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 as the existing base, there is no information about the minaret before its destruction. Style of the existing minaret does not exactly match any of the documented Mamluk minarets. Yet it is interesting to notice that Salem,114' p.311 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 minaret of the GOM represent the 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 (figures 7 and 8).

Figure 7: Historical minarets in Gaza. Assayed Hashim Mosque.
Source: Courtesy of IWAN Center.

Figure 8: Historical minarets in Gaza. Ibn Othman Mosque.
Source: Courtesy of IWAN Center.

Figure (9) reveals part of the composition of the western elevation. The main entrance, the circular window, the stone gable, and the minaret have a clear axial relationship, which emphasizes the verticality of the elevation. 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 9: Western elevation of the main aisle of the mosque.
Source: Courtesy of IWAN Center.

Figure (10) 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 provide 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, the other four parts have four windows and the two parts at the

edges are plain. The vertical strips were designed as vertical channels for rainwater. The Ottoman arcade is not fitted with in 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. The interior of the prayer hall (figure 11) is longitudinally divided into 4 parts each is a golden section rectangle. It is vertically divided into three equal horizontal parts. 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 aisles, and the minaret.

Figure 10: North elevation of the prayer hall of GOM.
Source: Courtesy of IWAN Center.

Figure 10: Interior of the prayer hall of GOM.
Source: Courtesy of IWAN Center.

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 cannot penetrate the boundary for their spatial expression. Rather, they find expression upward towards the sky through arches, vaults, domes, and minarets. The interior of the prayer hall of the GOM is enclosed inside thick stone walls. Its heavy cross-vaulted roof is supported by large piers, which are uniformly divided into small spaces. This makes the interior seem 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 concept.

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 GOM. 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 compos1t1on 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 GOM. Despite the historical evolution and the continuous change of the mosque, satisfactory arrangements can be observed with in its general structure. The 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. The 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 ve1ticality of the minaret. Despite the irregularity of the courtyard and its arcades, it exhibits harmony m its general composition and m its relationship with the huge mass of the prayer hall.

Vitality

Many elements are important for establishing an image of a complete compos1tton for the GOM. 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. The vitality of the prayer hall stems from its visual and functional importance. Without the prayer hall, prayer would not function 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 proportional 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 sho1tages of the country after the war. Such a situation clearly indicates the great love and respect the Palestinians paid for their Great Mosque. This distinguishing 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 inse1ted 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.

GOM 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.

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BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Abdurrahman Mohamed has 35 years of experience in the profession and 28 years in academia. He worked in several universities in Palestine, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Turkey. He also worked as an urban planning consultant for the Palestinian Ministry of Planning and the United Nations. He became the head of department of Architectural Engineering, the Islamic University of Gaza, and the Director of its IWAN Center for Architectural Heritage.

In 2018 he joined Antalya Bilim University where he was the initiator and organizer for the cooperation agreement between the university and Kepez Municipality. He also was the initiator and organizer for Urban Design Competition hosted by Antalya Kepez Municipality.

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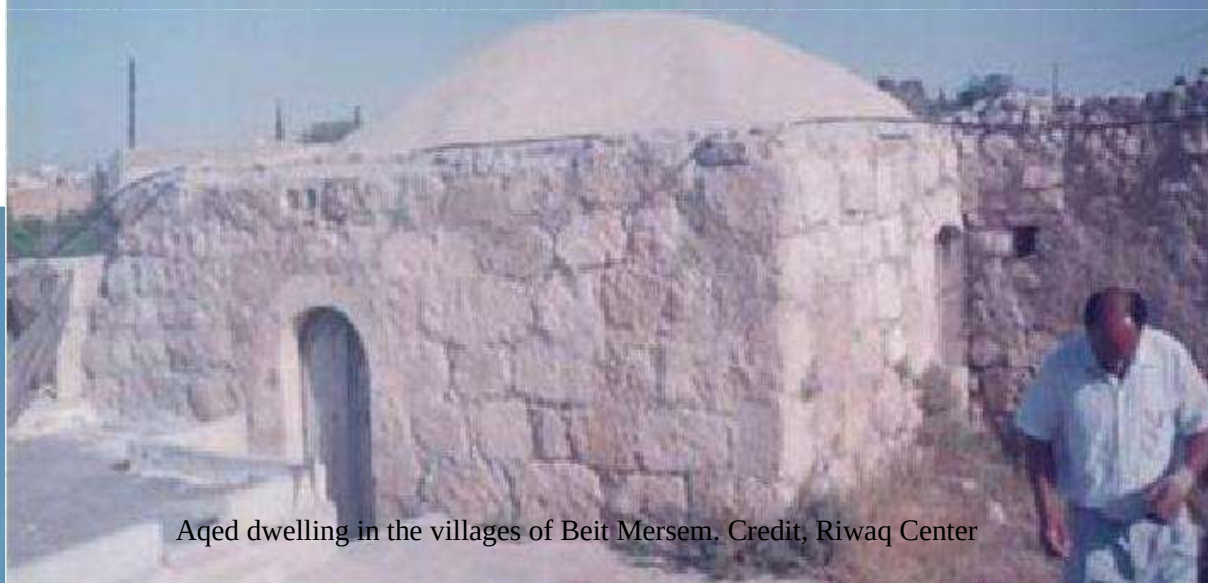
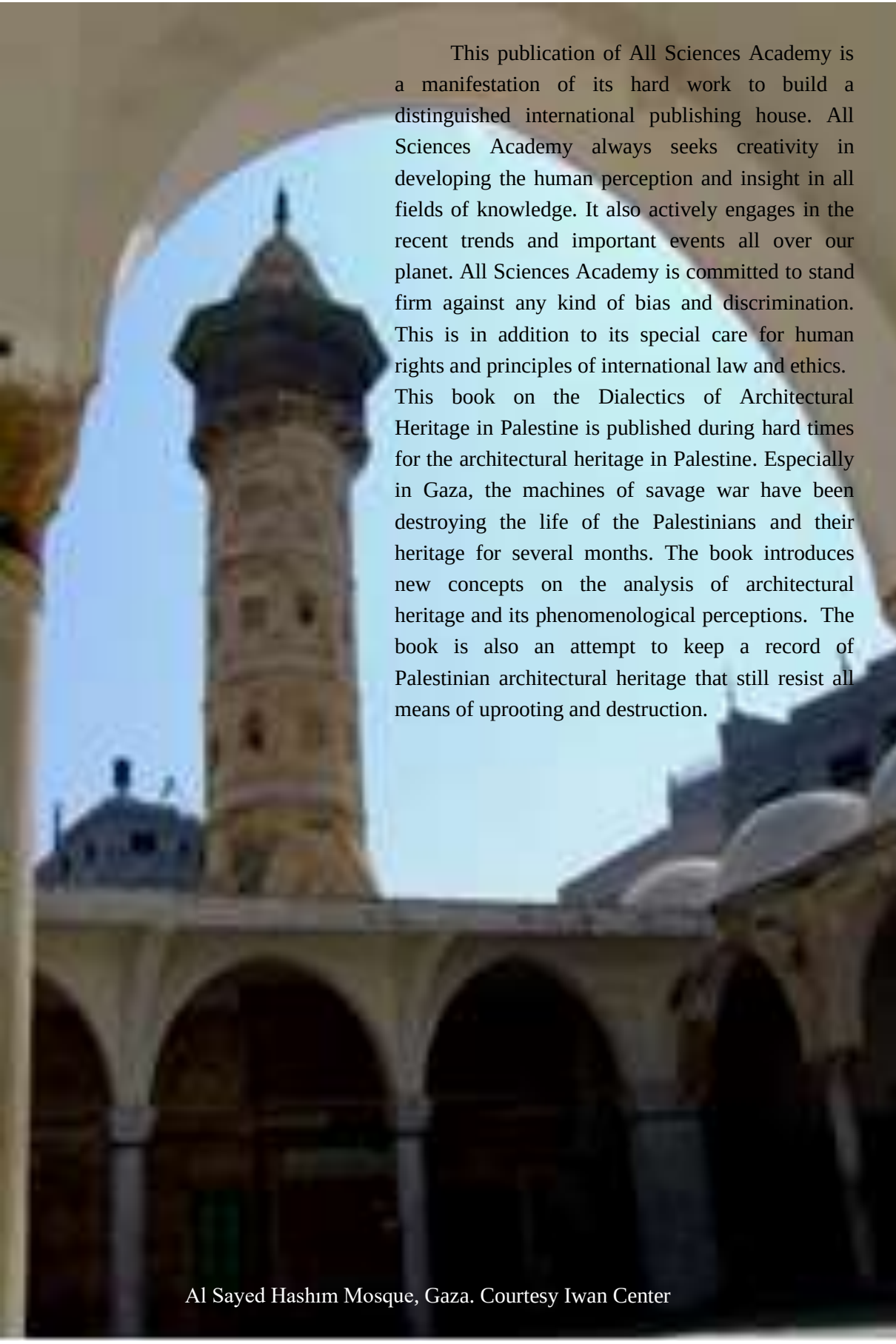


Aqed dwelling in the villages of Beit Mersem. Credit, Riwaq Center



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This book on the Dialectics of Architectural Heritage in Palestine is published during hard times for the architectural heritage in Palestine. Especially in Gaza, the machines of savage war have been destroying the life of the Palestinians and their heritage for several months. The book introduces new concepts on the analysis of architectural heritage and its phenomenological perceptions. The book is also an attempt to keep a record of Palestinian architectural heritage that still resist all means of uprooting and destruction.

Al Sayed Hashım Mosque, Gaza. Courtesy Iwan Center