

FROM URBICIDE TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY

SYRIA - THE MAKING OF THE FUTURE

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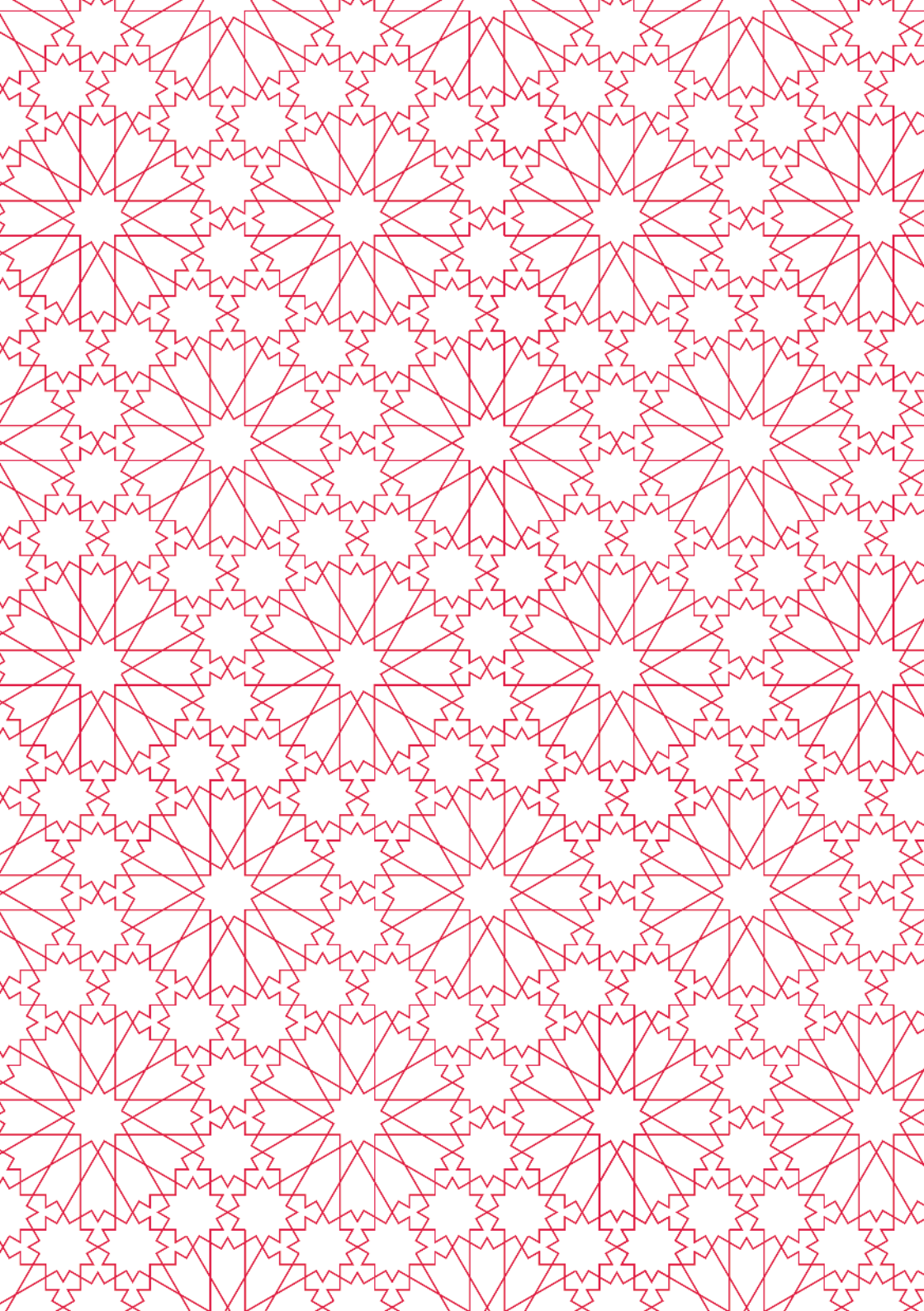
Armando Dal Fabbro

— ALEPPO / 36°11'52"N 37°09'37"E

ALEPPO. TRACES OF FUTURE

WAVE.
2017


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SYRIA – THE MAKING OF THE FUTURE FROM URBICIDE TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY

W.A.Ve. 2017

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Armando Dal Fabbro

Aleppo. Traces Of Future.

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WAVE.
2017



W.A.Ve. 2017

Alberto Ferlenga

W.A.Ve. is now at its fifteenth edition but, despite this, its characterising formula still works. Since its beginning, when it did not have its current name yet, being a design workshop and an international architecture exhibition at the same time has made it a unique product. If we consider that each year more than 1,500 students and 30 teachers are involved, we cannot deny that even the numbers are sizable. In these 15 years, about 23,000 students (not counting students from abroad) and 450 architects (not counting assistants) have developed a project experience at Università Iuav di Venezia that takes place in a narrow span of three weeks, during which Iuav venues become training and meeting sites. Its open-air workshop feature has brought many prestigious architects and names of the international scene to the classroom venues of the Cotonificio Veneziano and Magazzini: Pritzker prizes such as Eduardo Souto de Moura or Alejandro Aravena, masters such as Yona Friedman and Pancho Guedes, and renowned professionals such as Sean Godsell or Carme Pinos. Under their guidance, Iuav undergraduates and foreign participants have developed (together and making no age distinction) a project experience that pertains to the city of Venice and many other places as well. The same summer days also see the spaces of the Santa Marta Auditorium and the Tolentini Cloister become the scene of large conferences, making it possible for hundreds of students to follow the latest international projects or reflections on the most pressing issues concerning cities and territories. Above all, however, W.A.Ve. is special for the atmosphere that it creates during its three weeks of work; discussions, projects, and meetings are often expanded and brought outside the classrooms, in bars and Venetian *campi*, and in the exhibitions that follow, transforming the campus of Santa Marta into a major international architecture showcase.

For all these reasons, W.A.Ve. is unique and renowned among architects and students of Architecture around the world, becoming one of the most representative expressions of a school, Iuav, that has built its peculiar quality on international exchange, laboratory experience, and on city studies.

Peace and Architecture

Benno Albrecht

1 – Elio Vittorini in “Il Politecnico”, n. 1, September 29, 1945.

2 – Pierre Rosanvalon, “La democrazia dell'emergenza”, “La Repubblica”, April 16, 2012.

We invited many architects to Venice, to contribute to the discussion on the reconstruction of countries destroyed by the madness of men. Like a round table, Università Iuav di Venezia became the venue for the dialogue and discussion on the possibilities of architecture to preserve and reconstruct Peace. The will and desire for Peace was the guest of honour of our 2017 W.A.Ve. workshop.

A post-WWII Italian intellectual, Elio Vittorini, said that it was necessary to form “not a culture that consoles in times of suffering, but a culture that protects from it, fighting and eliminating it”¹.

We see the University as an institution that serves society and the generations of the future, alertly vigilant and working to stay one step ahead. The relationship between Universities and Administrations can become operational and productive, precisely because the university is the exact place to test hypothetical future models – an “Academy of the Future”², as described by Pierre Rosanvalon – to overcome the fragmentation of knowledge and educate in global civic responsibility.

In Iuav’s W.A.Ve. workshop, a future of Peace, the reconstruction of Peace, has become an academic topic, a forecast technique, and an experience in practical planning of the future.

The immanence of the “environmental and human disaster” that we see today in Syria overcomes the

concept of architecture (understood as a need, consequence or manifestation of something else), leading the discipline to inevitably participate, as an integral part, in the resolution of a local/global “political and environmental” issue. In fact, one of the most pressing topics in the field of civil commitment (and in the operational field of architecture) is how to deal with the consequences of urbicides, with the deliberate violence against cities, with their destruction, and with the intentional elimination of collective memory made of stone.

Venice is where reflecting on these things is possible: a city that was described, by Richard Bonington and by Antoine-Claude Valéry, as “a Palmyra of the Sea”³.

However, we side these reflections with the words that John Adams wrote to his wife from Paris: “The science of government is my duty to study, more than all other sciences; the arts of law and administration and negotiation should take the place of, indeed, exclude, in a way, all other arts. I must study politics and war, that our children may have freedom to study mathematics and philosophy. Our sons must study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain”⁴.

3 – Valéry Antoine Claude Pasquin, “Venise et ses environs”, Société belge de librairie, Bruxelles, 1842, p.2.

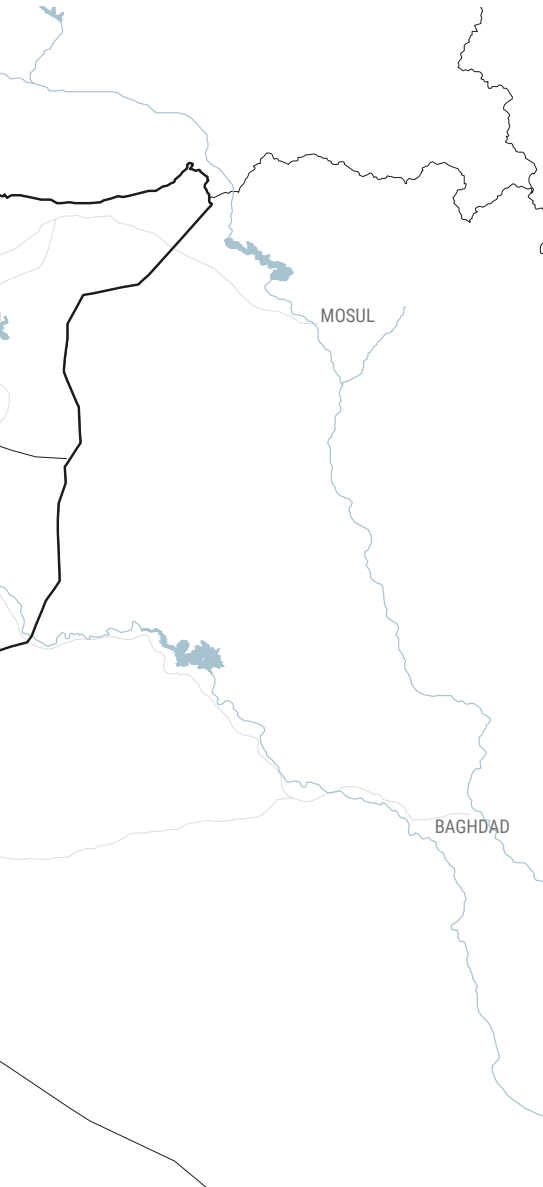
4 – Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, post 12 May 1780, in L.H. Butterfield, Marc Friedlaender, eds., “Adams Family Correspondence”, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1973.

SYRIA – THE MAKING OF THE FUTURE

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W.A.Ve. 2017



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Paredes y Pedrosa
UNLAB
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Architects

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AL MEZZEH

VMXarchitetti

ARIHA

Plan Collectif

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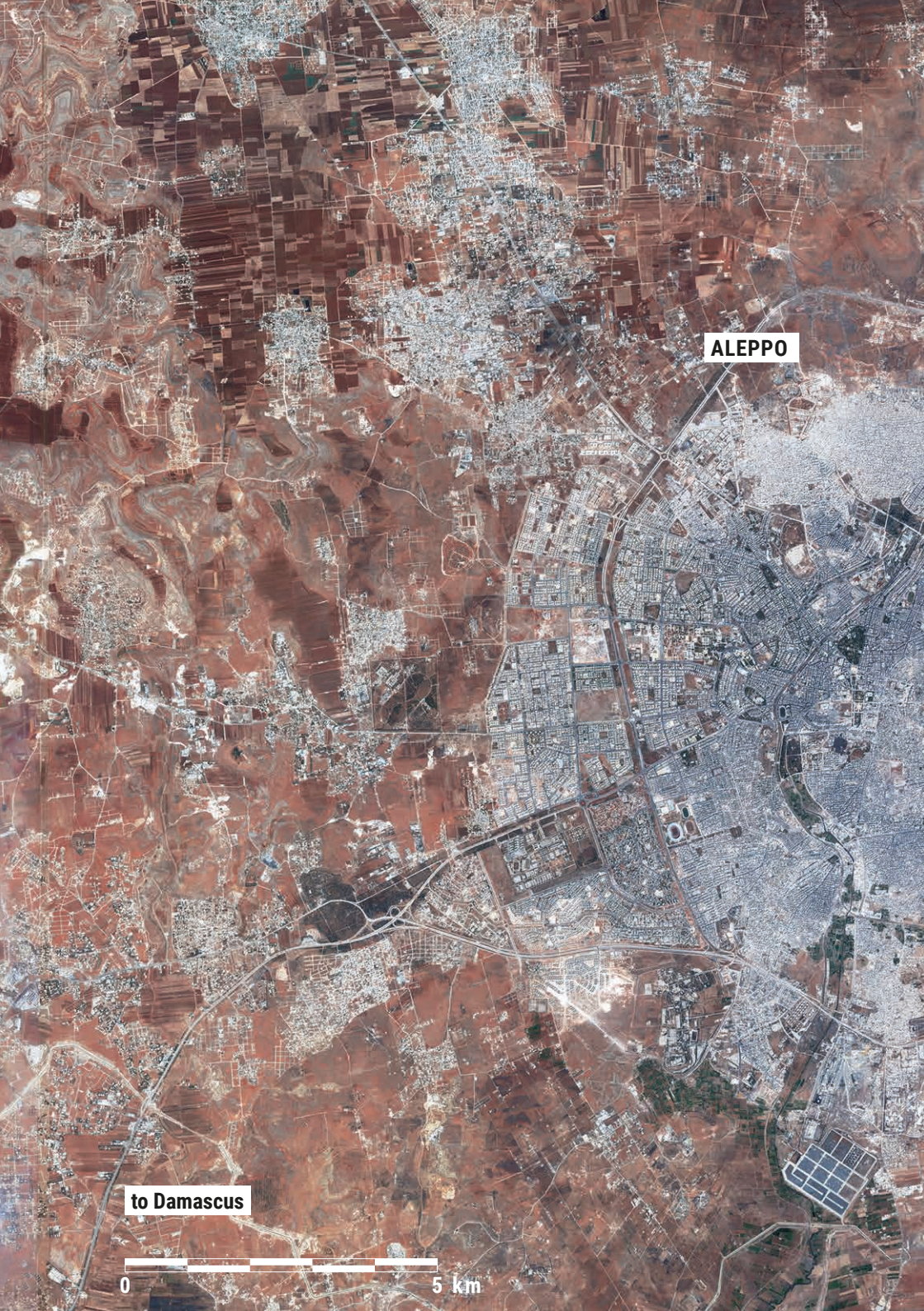
SAROUJA

BOM Architecture

SHAHBA

João Ventura Trindade

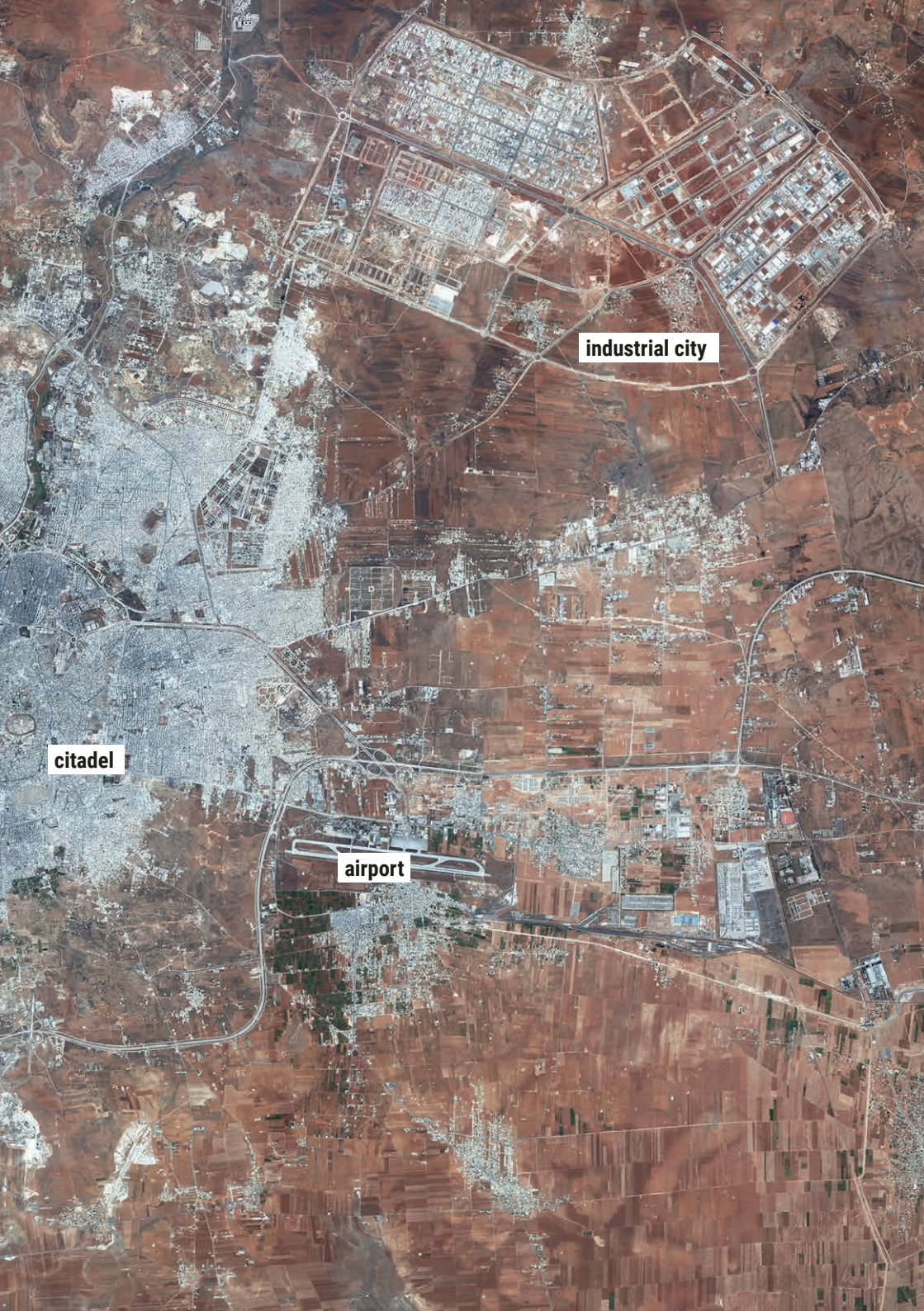




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to Damascus

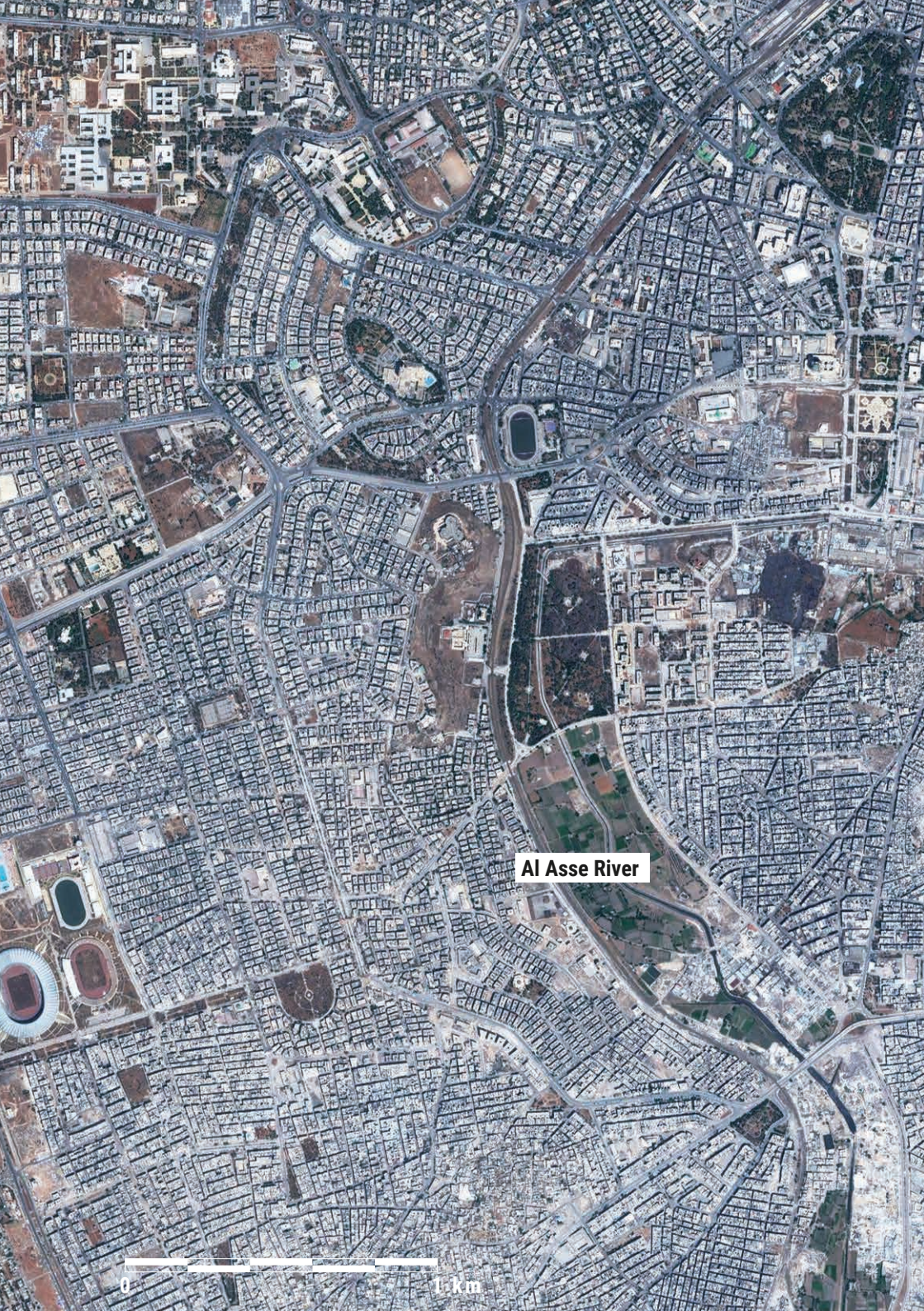
0 5 km



industrial city

citadel

airport



Al Asse River

0 1 km



ALEPPO OLD CITY

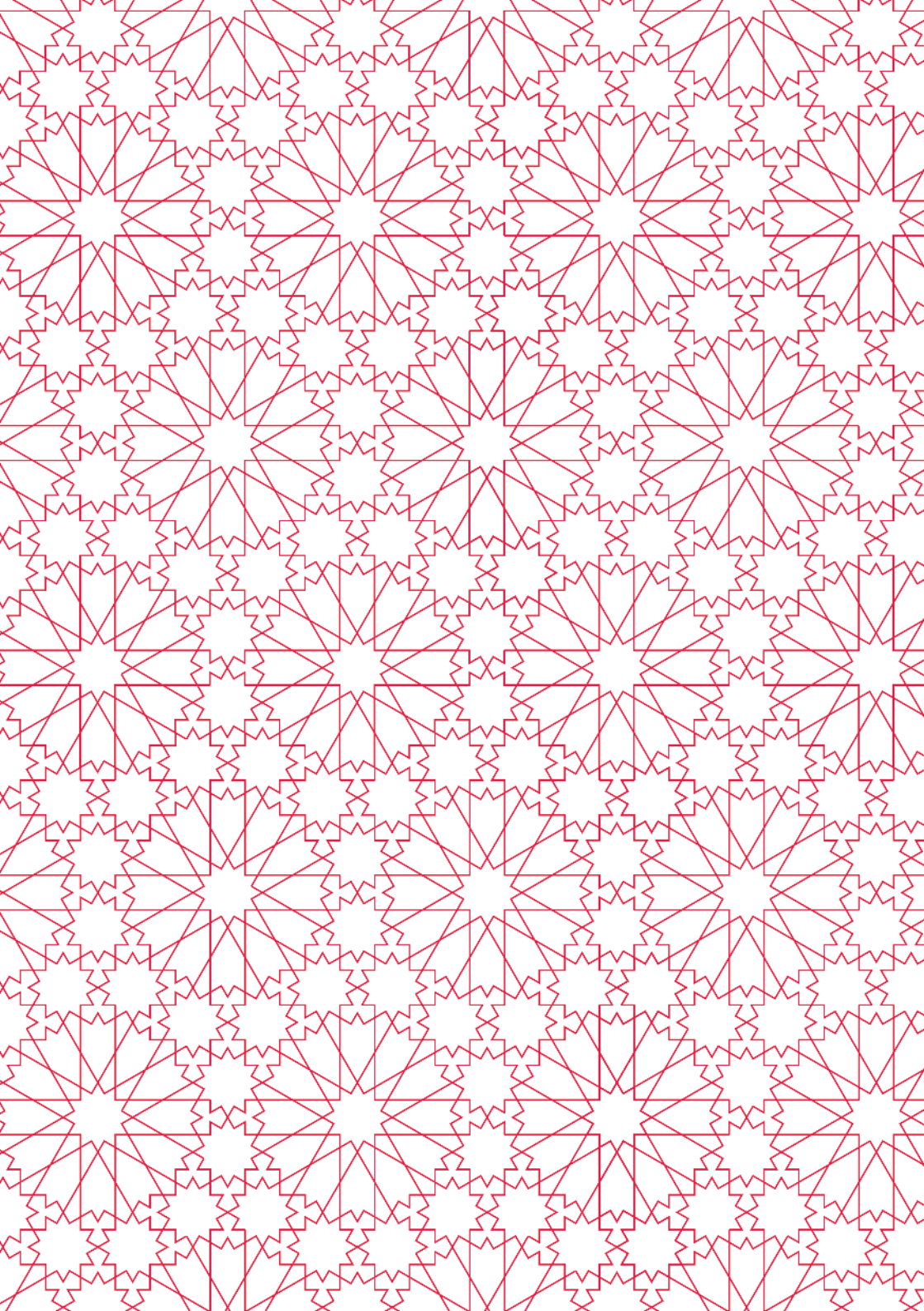
Suk

citadel





– The continuous armed Syrian conflict that reached Aleppo in 2012 caused severe damage and destruction to invaluable monuments and inhabited neighbourhoods. Therefore, the historic city has been added to the list of endangered cultural heritage. Since 2011, the conflicts in Syria have caused more than 400,000 dead and millions of refugees. The historic monuments and the cultural heritage continue to be damaged, as a strategic instrument to destroy the cultural identity of the Syrian population: 25% of historic buildings are damaged, 40% are partially destroyed, and the Souq (historic Arab market) has been burnt down completely.



A manifesto for Aleppo

Camilla Donantoni, Anna Fabris, Matteo Piacentini, Francesco Soriani

Aleppo was born in ancient times as a Hellenistic colony, placed in the middle of a system of commercial traffic between Persia, Anatolia, and Iraq; later on, it established itself as a port-city in the desert, located between the Euphrates River and the sea, at the crossing of worlds and caravan routes.

Today, the city is waiting for something more than a project. Aleppo looks forward to a rebirth, starting from its foundations, from the depths of its urban history and from its forma urbis. It doesn't just need a project but, indeed, a strategy, a great work plan able to communicate and interpret historical knowledge and urban renovation.

The citadel – the emporium and the souks, the mosques and their minarets, the sanctuaries and their tombs – and the archaeological sites suggest a way towards the future, that does more than simply recall the past. It isn't possible to ignore its most ancient monuments, signs of a strong historical and cultural identity.

Starting from what is left, because what is left is the connection between new and old, memories and future combine.

Destruction as re-construction: first element of a new project designed to not forget the necessary extreme act that would be able to connect the permanence of memory and the thought of a renovation strategy.

The past city and the future one could live together in the present, if able to refuse any kind of imposed form.

The city's rebirth has to start from the reconstruction of its monuments, located in the historical centre, along Kandar al Rum. Meanwhile, the planning strategy will aim at the redrawing process of gardens and parks, partially following the curvy line of the Qeweya River, and partially following the external ring that represents the union between the city's big empty spaces.

Two realities that face each other, located between abstraction and reality: on the one hand, the stone city's magmatic matter; on the other, the modern city's urban imprint, whose irregular geometry encloses, like a treasure chest, the heart of the ancient city.

So the ancient city will rise with the new one, with the same fervour, evoking the strength that has contributed to make Aleppo bigger and greater since the very beginning.

Aleppo. Traces of future

Armando Dal Fabbro

If we should lose our roots, what would our cultural references be? What disorientation would result from it? What would happen if we were to lose our origins and the chance of not recognising their founding values? The feeling of disorientation originated by the contemporary appearance of Aleppo – a city destroyed and raped by war and whose ruins show themselves to the world – demands a reflection on how architecture could re-interpret what is left and influence the city's rebuilding project and its urban and civil future.

The reflection on the different formative phases of Aleppo's urban pattern is related to a deeper research, connected to the characters of the city that are located on the Mediterranean Sea. Guarantor of civil, cultural, artistic, and architectural model exchanges, the Mediterranean Sea has allowed the development of mixtures and interesting contaminations related to different cultural influences.

The heritage of the various phases of the city's construction, emphasised by the use of stone, has granted the permanence in time of the forma urbis and of a specific morphological character. In some regions of on the Mediterranean Sea, where the urban morphology and the original architectural characters were similar to those imported by the Romans, these characteristics are affirmed with force, promoting the conservation of the city's original aspects. Especially in the Big Syria Region, the permanence of Roman Centuriation tracks, and

previous phases, is stronger because in this region the advent of Islam has not represented a break with the ancient tradition. Syrian cities, differently from many other European cities, that developed a period of stasis with the end of the Roman Empire, have enjoyed a new creative propulsion, keeping the same main lines of the previous urban structure, even if including new aggregative logics. In this context, Aleppo takes the shape of historical permanence in time and – since made of stone – a city that has preserved itself in 5,000 years of uninterrupted urban history, and keeps track of all the different structures whose stratification in time has originated the last phase.

Placed in the middle of a big caravan network between Mesopotamia, Armenia, Turkey, and the south region of Syria, Aleppo has enjoyed profitable cultural exchanges in time: indeed, from the pre-Hellenic age to the pre-modern one, Aleppo has represented the connection between the spice route and the silk one.

In the Roman and Byzantine ages, it became one of the most important cities with a pre-Islamic Syrian urban system, it assumed a very important role for the wine and oil commercial exchange, finally establishing itself as a territorial hub during the final period of the Roman Empire. The advantageous geographic position has assured Aleppo an important development not only during the Roman age, when the caravan route system was employed by the Roman network, but also after it, as an international crossroads. As for previous anthropological approaches, related to the natural morphology of the territory, it is impossible to not consider the tell (artificial or semi-artificial and regular up-

lands, shaped by stratifications of material). An example of social identity is the city's pre-Islamic Acropolis. It is the present citadel's archaeological site, called Ayyubide before and then Mamelucca. It is a semi-artificial and really impressive upland, a calcareous outcrop re-shaped by man, at the heart of the city, and origin of the *decumano massimo*, ancient ridge that divides the city in different geometrical sectors. Reading Aleppo's urban pattern on the French cadastral maps of the 1930s, what has come to light is that the orthogonal alignments of the urban pattern are oriented along the North-South/East-West axis.

After a previous historical and cultural research related to the city's origins, the planning approach moves firstly from the monuments, or from the ruins that are left of them, in order to freeze the results of an anthropological destruction that cannot be forgotten, as it is a manifestation of history. The sense of identification and recognition belongs to the city's architecture, because it is a vehicle for the transmission of a community tradition. Indeed, the construction activity aims at the renovation and conservation of those buildings that have been considered as ideological and cultural identity and that nowadays are supporting elements of the city and the community architectural composition. They represent an identity issue in the relationship between past and future, as memory of the past and as a starting point, because monuments are the reason why the city lives and recognises itself as such.

Monument, as *memento*, in the meaning of being a place of memory, testimony of a material community's recovery, whose essence is immaterial.

Therefore, the Monument is intended as a re-foundation action of the city. Starting from what has been left in time, remains and elements that bring memory will be re-used in the interpretation of the contemporary city. Monuments belong to the future, for this reason, they are distinctive signs of re-construction: you must start from monuments since they are places in which people can recognise themselves. It is not only the material reconstruction of the building, but also the need to recognise a place and its identity as a testimony of society and people's life. We think that the ancient city's monuments are the tools for the re-foundation of the city, starting from the proof of what had originated it.

This is why, from the debris of monuments, "new ruins" will rise up setting themselves free from their vestige status to become instruments ready to build a new future. The monuments we chose for the first phase of the city's re-foundation are enclosed within the ancient city wall limits. There is a first ring limiting the city of stone, surrounded by a new ring of the green city: a second ring that foresees the return of the inhabitants who had to escape from the stone city. A "concentric" project, starting both from the double faced principle of monument restoration, and from the building of the green city.

Two rings: the first one belonging to the stone city, and the second one belonging to the green city. The external ring becomes a useful instrument in order to re-think the new city. We assume that the historical memory is not enough: we will try to link historical memory to a new one. Both these systems, the one connected to the past and the one

projected towards the future, belong to the same single strategy. The new monuments are what we will try to re-interpret and propose through the contemporary city dimension. The contemporary city is going to develop in the external ring, where the green belt will rule the urban system, holding together different themes: historical gardens, park of Memory, and the big ring that would become an infrastructural boulevard-system.

We cannot ignore both construction and destruction, so the first planning approach is the recognition and the documentation of the main architecture within the city in order to be able to interpret it and translate it in a new project for a new city.

The monuments we have chosen for our project have been translated in stone characters, fragments, the remains of a tragedy of war. In the ancient city, the relationship will be established with its effect on the city in time, beginning from the rebuilt monuments and fixing the urban blocks from which the monuments will rise again.

A starting point of the project is the history of the city itself, from which we can begin to re-build in the historical centre in the near future. After that, the residential city will grow naturally on its own.

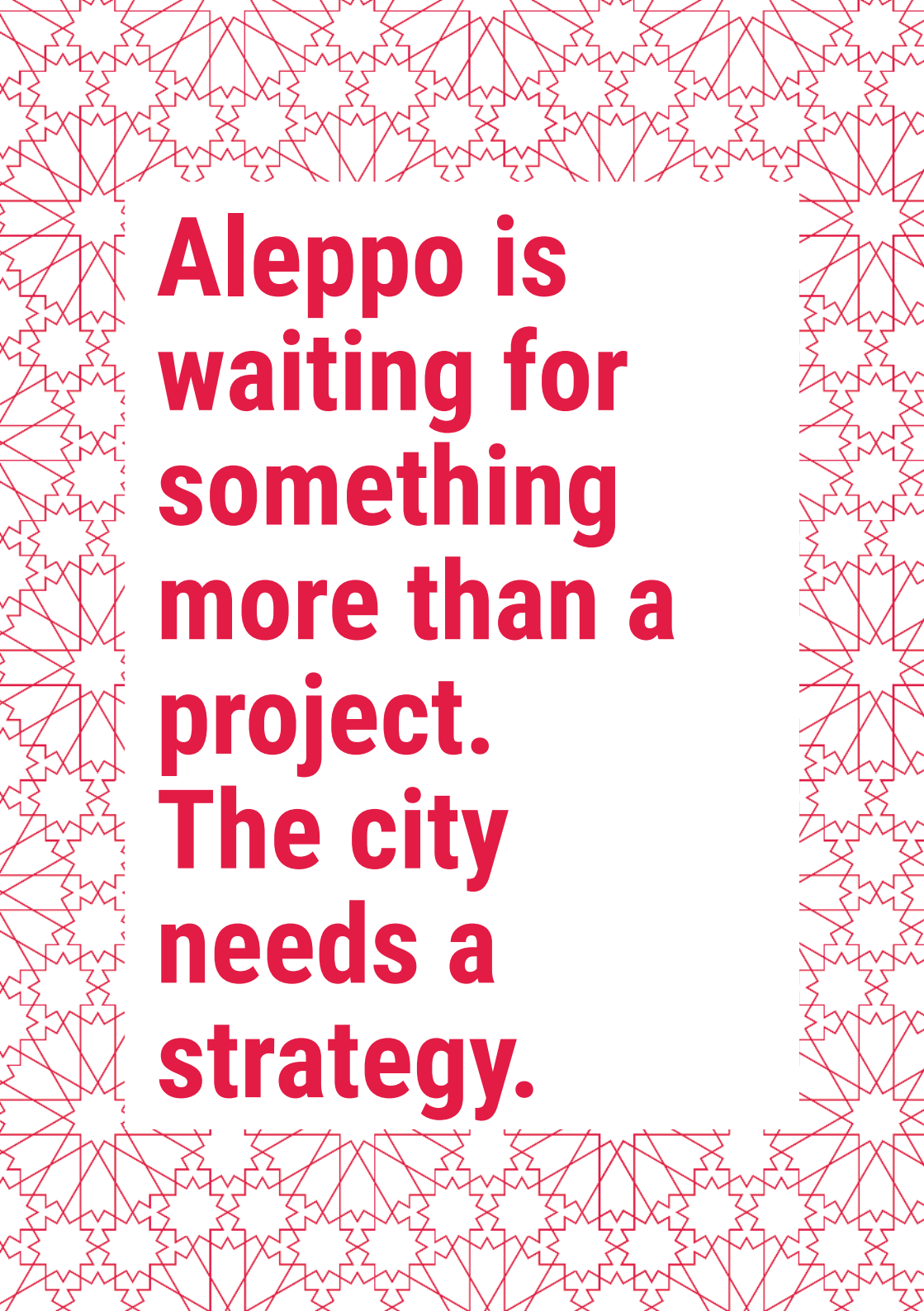
At the same time, though, we must think about the construction of the contemporary city. The green belt wrapped around the historical city, where the widespread urban pattern converges, could host a new satellite residential system, shaping a polycentric city, configured in free-standing parts. A system composed by vertical elements will stand out against the edges of the city, recalling

the well-known and familiar image of the minarets that have already crowded the ancient city.

The two concentric enclosures would be morphologically different, but ideologically connected: the first one would be a civic cradle, with the citadel rising and bearing clear signs of the ancient Roman Centuriation; and the second one made of big green areas, lying near the ancient city and the desert.

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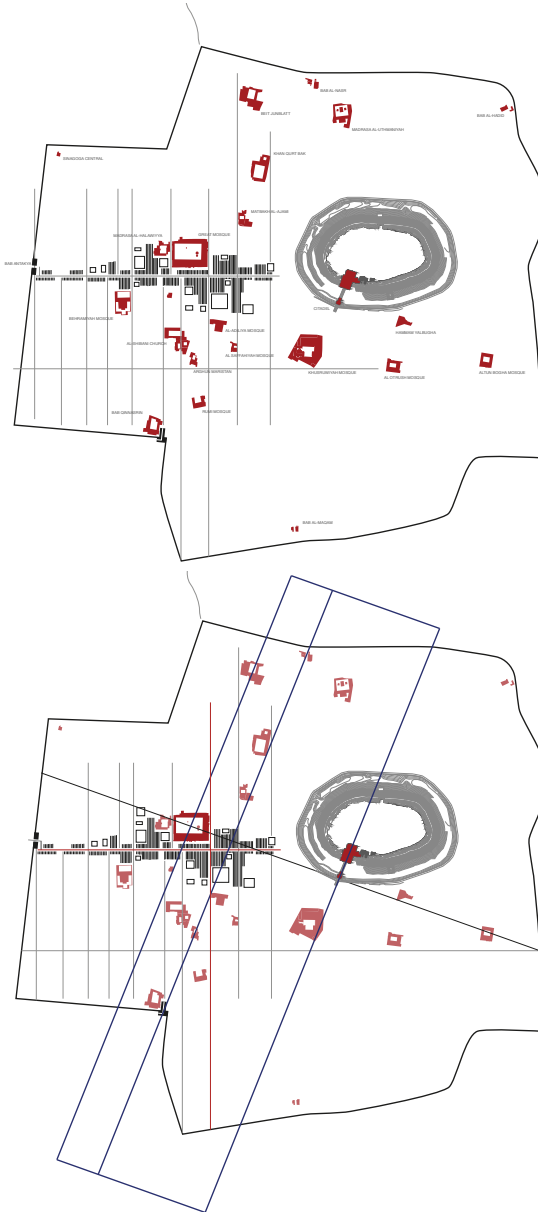


**Aleppo is
waiting for
something
more than a
project.
The city
needs a
strategy.**



ALEPPO. TRACES OF FUTURE





– Aleppo's urban shape.

– Principal monument of the urban and architectural stratification and urban axes.

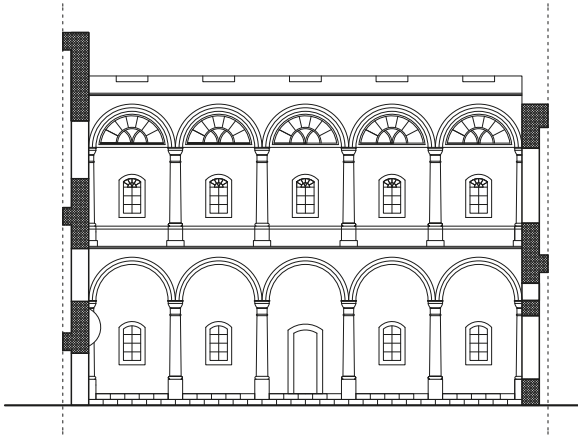




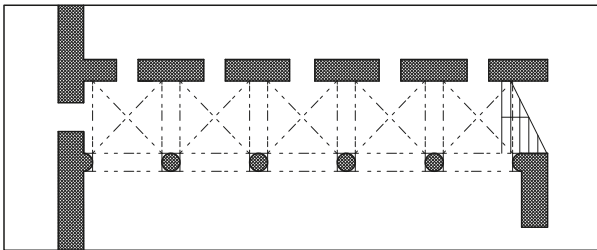
– The new strategy for Aleppo.

– Al-Otrush Mosque.

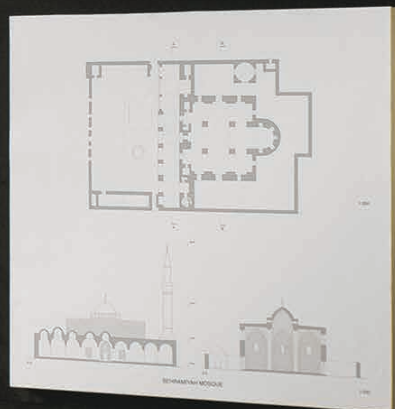
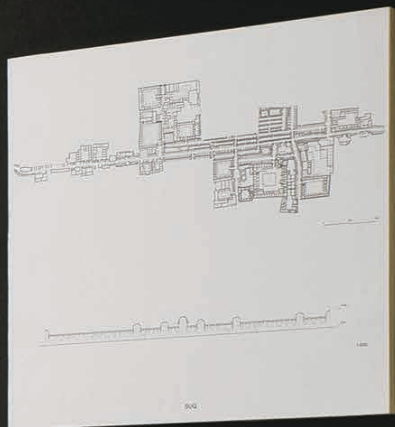
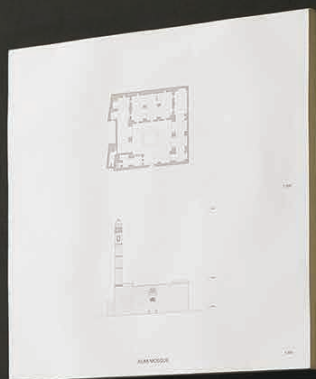




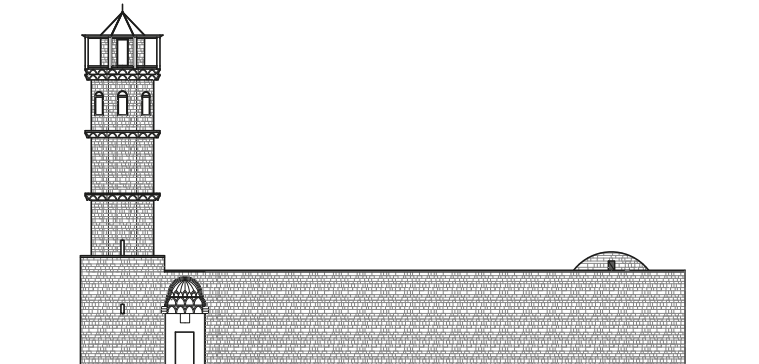
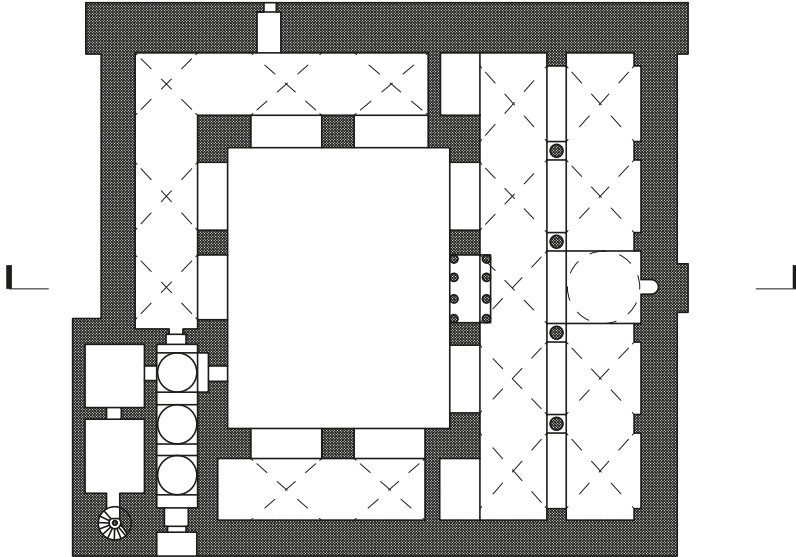
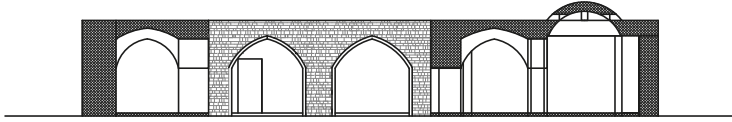
– Al-Shibani Church.







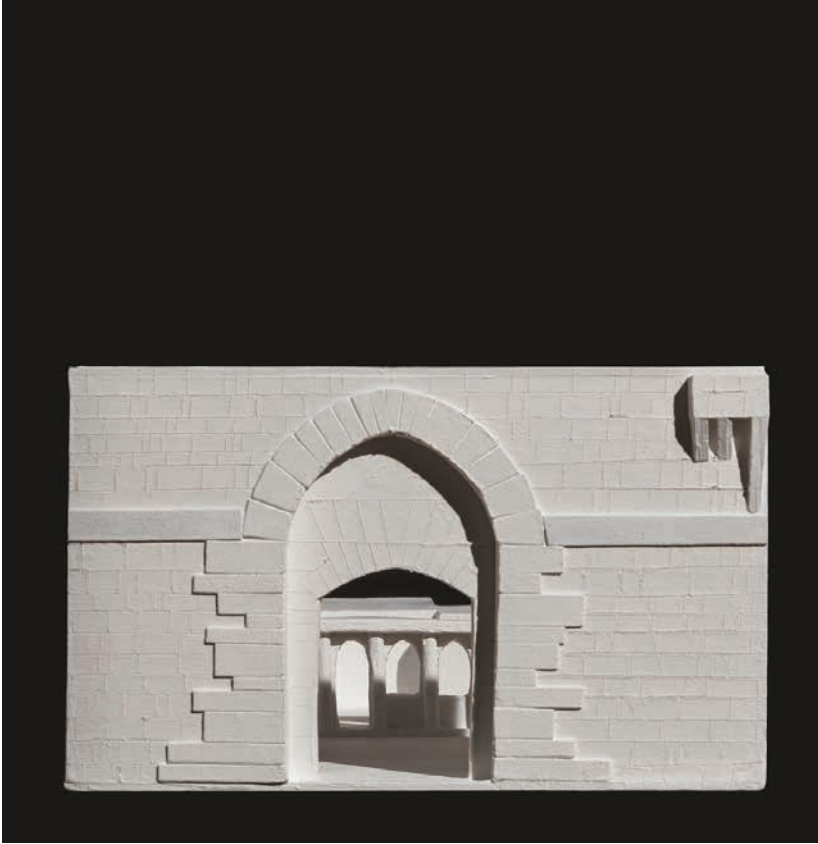
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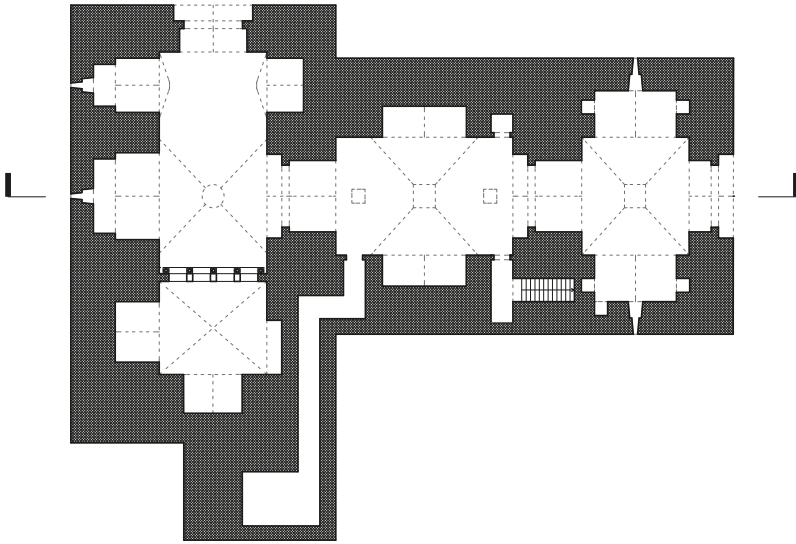




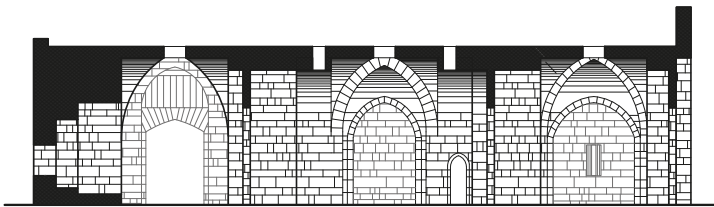
— Altun Bogha Mosque.

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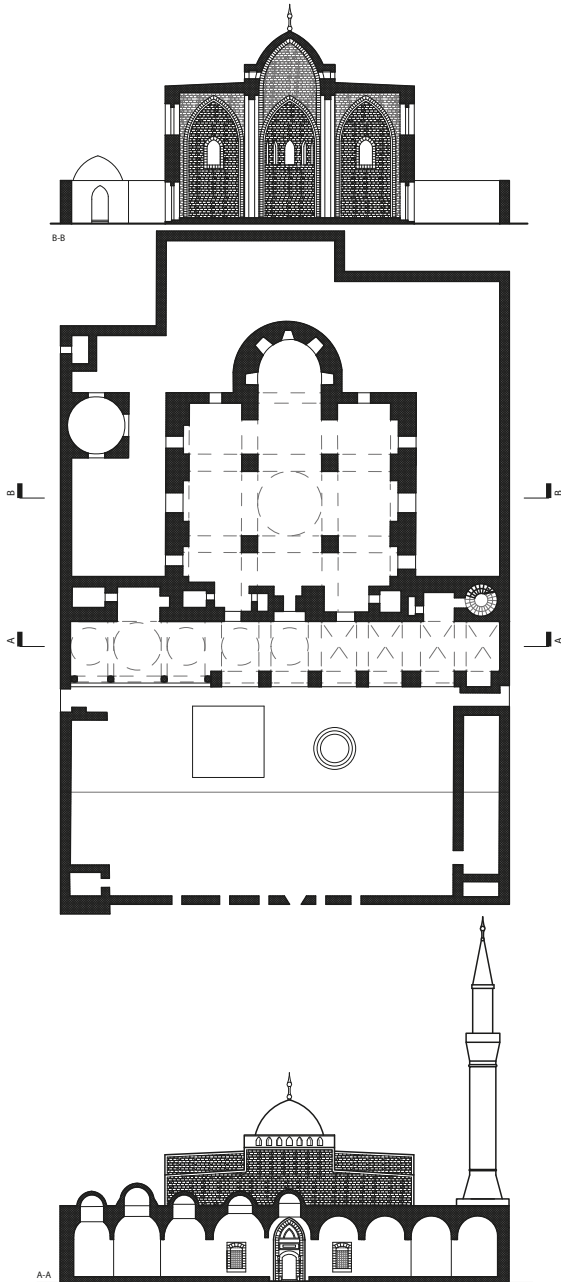
— Bab Qinnasrin.



**A concentric
project
strategy.
Two rings:
the stone city
and the
green city.**



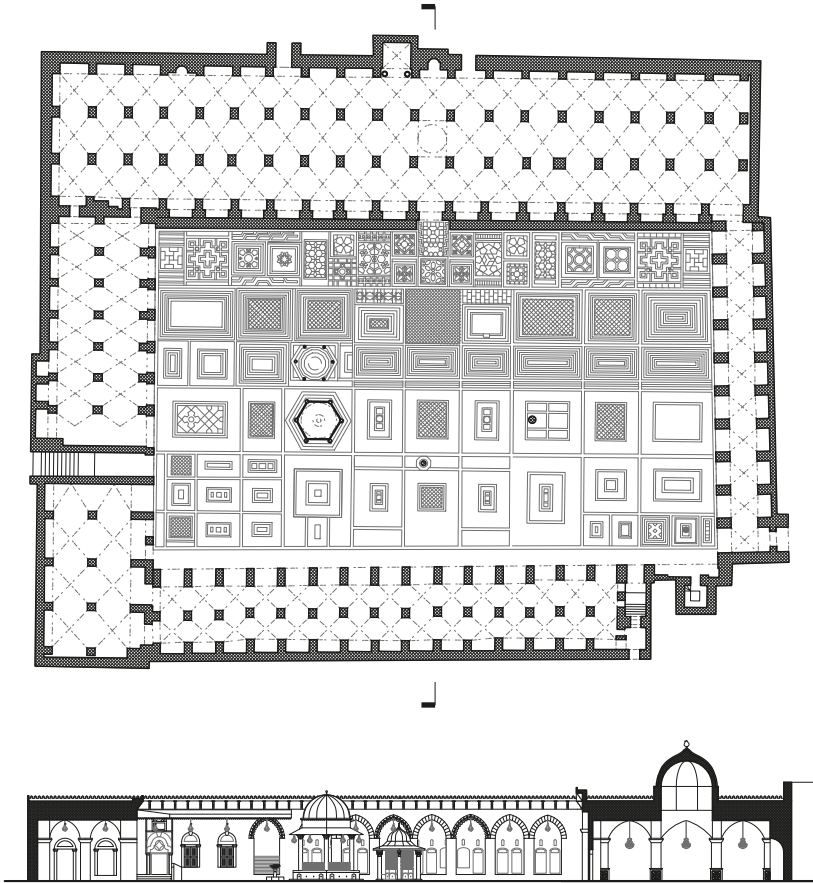
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– Behramiyah Mosque.



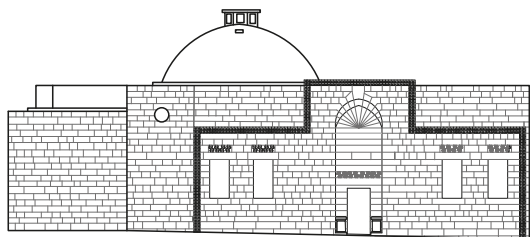
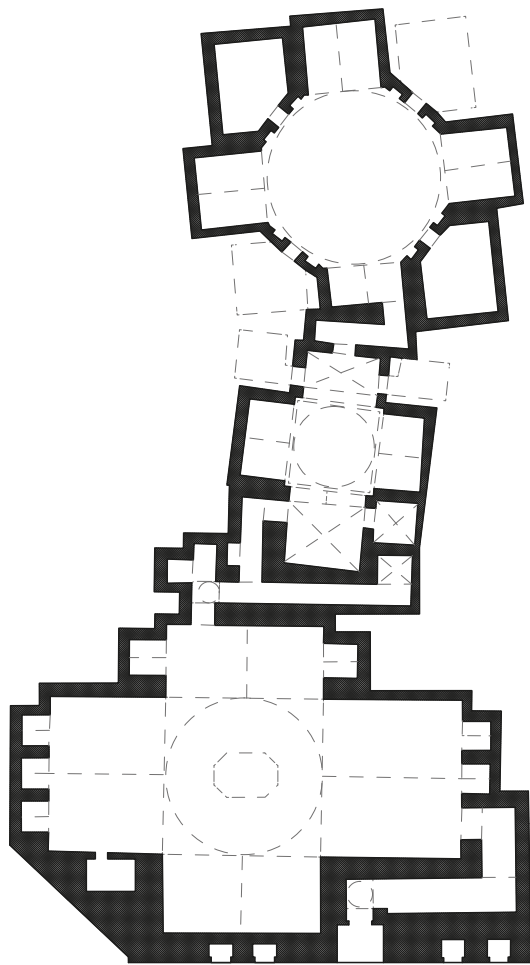


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— Great Mosque.



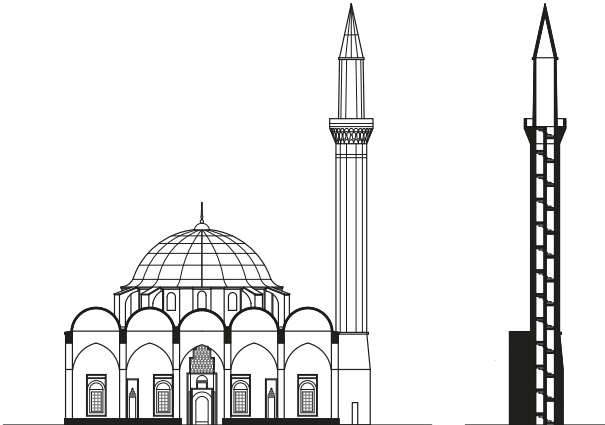
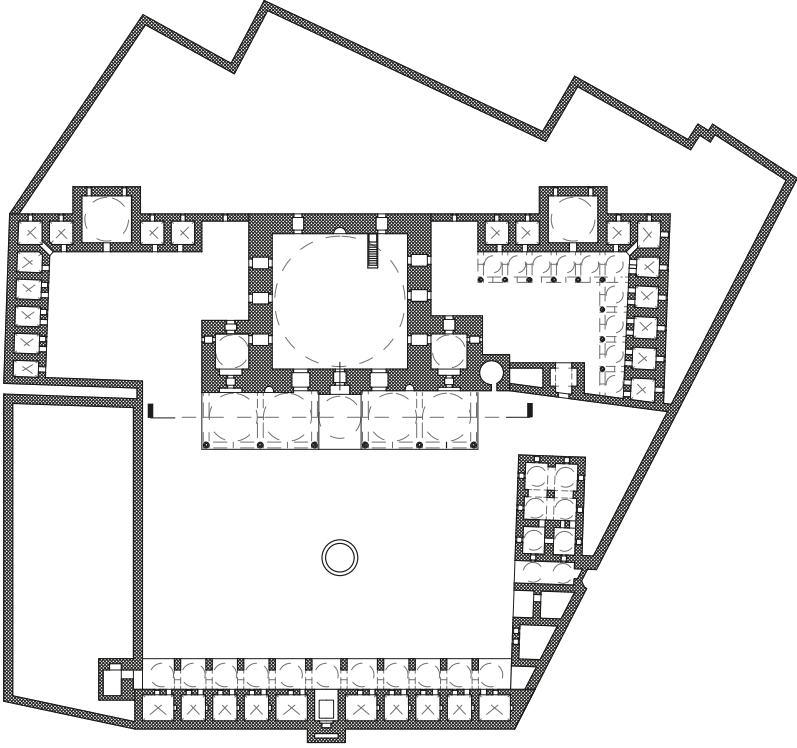
– Hammam Yalbugha.

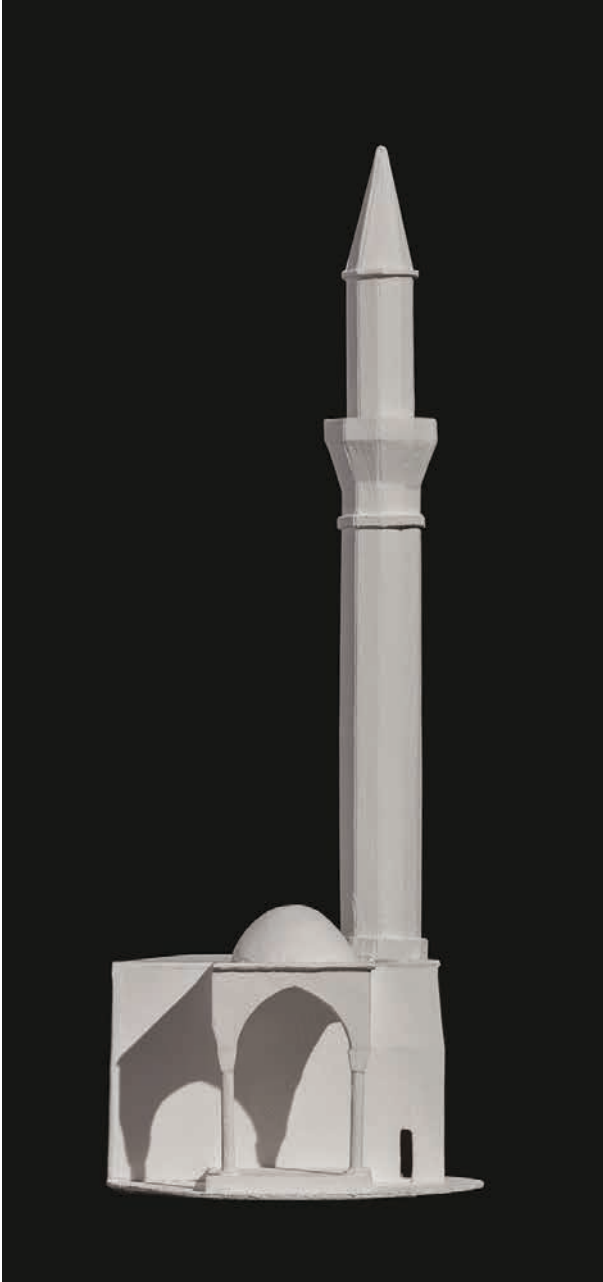




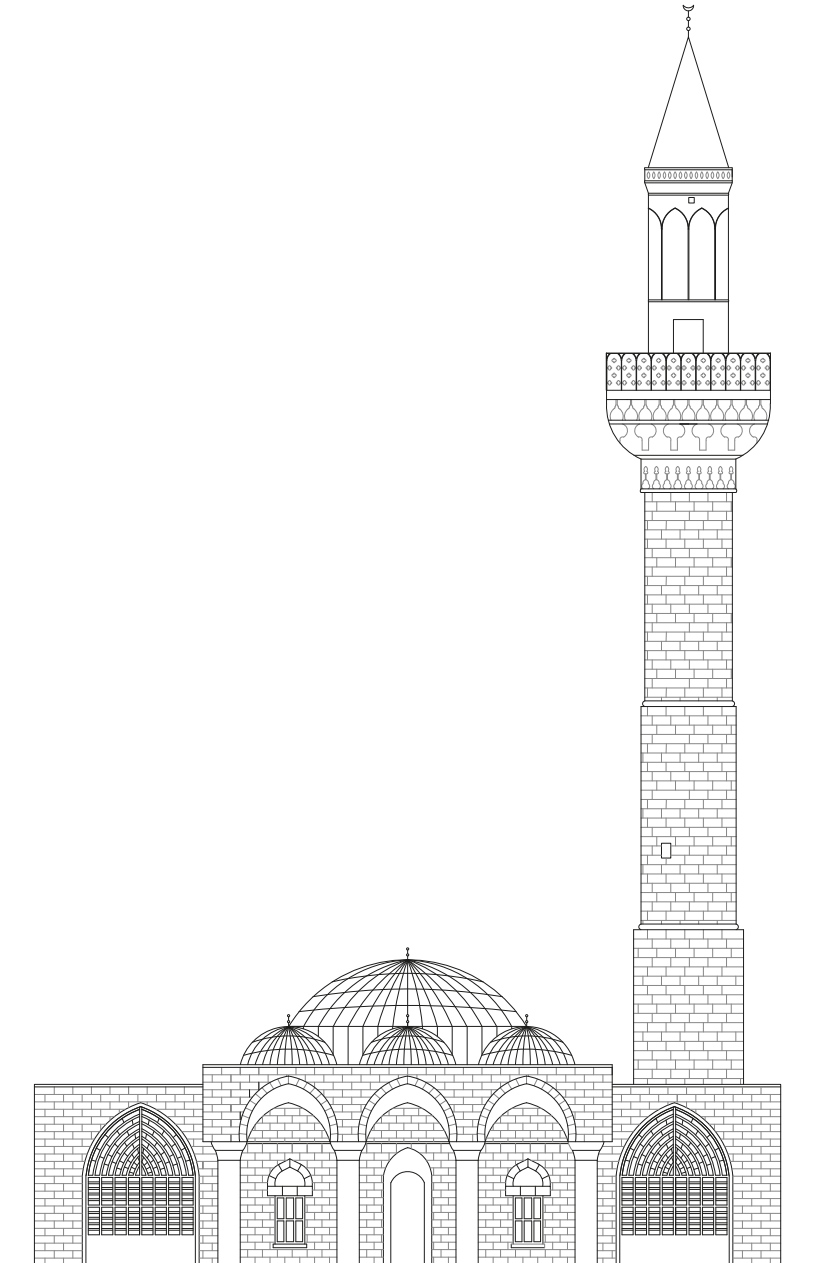


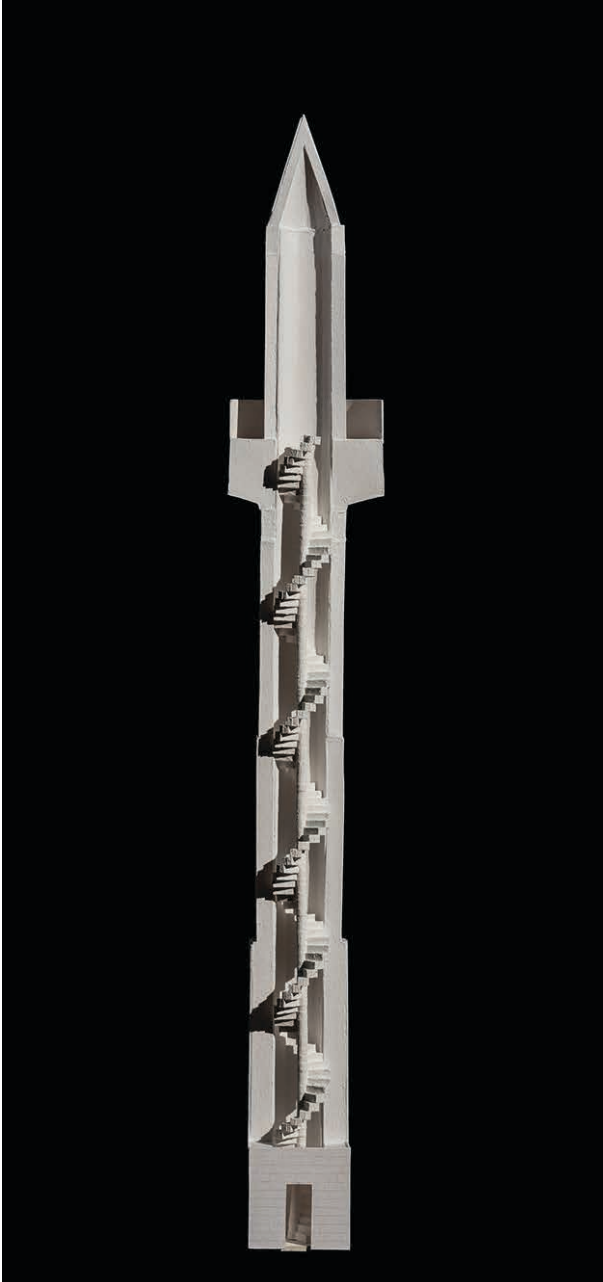
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– Khusruwiyah Mosque.





— Madrasa Al-Uthmaniyyah.

ALEPPO. TRACES OF FUTURE



**Monuments
belong to
the future.
Destruction as
re-construction,
first element
of a new
project.**



ALEPPO. TRACES OF FUTURE





ALEPPO. TRACES OF FUTURE



Armando Dal Fabbro

– Venice, Italy

Armando Dal Fabbro teaches Architectural and Urban Composition at the Department of Architecture, Construction and Conservation of Università Iuav di Venezia. Since 2001, he has been a member of the board of the PhD in Architectural Composition at Iuav. He has also been visiting professor at the Institute of Architectural Design of the Cracow University and the Fachhochschule of the University of Munster MSA.

His research interests move from the critical approach to the works of the modern movement and some particular experiences of Italian rationalism, in relation to the architectural and urban history for the construction of the modern city and the transformations of the contemporary city. Lately, his research has focused on urban regeneration and on architectural upgrading projects for dismantled industrial areas.

Tutors and Guests

Camilla Donantoni

Graduate *cum laude* in Architecture, Construction, and Conservation at Università Iuav di Venezia, she attended a Master in Architecture, Archaeology, and Museography at the Adrianea Onlus Academy. Since 2014, she has been collaborating at Iuav, where she has been a PhD candidate for the Architectural Composition curriculum since November 2015.

Anna Fabris

Graduate with full marks in Architecture for the Old and the New at Università Iuav di Venezia with a thesis on the regeneration of the Lignano Sabbiadoro spa complex. Today, she works at the professional studio Fabris Architecture. Since 2017, she has been collaborating at Iuav with prof. Armando Dal Fabbro.

Matteo Piacentini

Bachelor Degree in Environmental Architecture at the Politecnico di Milano. Today, he is a thesis student of prof. Armando Dal Fabbro at Università Iuav di Venezia for the Graduate Degree Programme in Architecture for the Old and the New.

Francesco Soriani

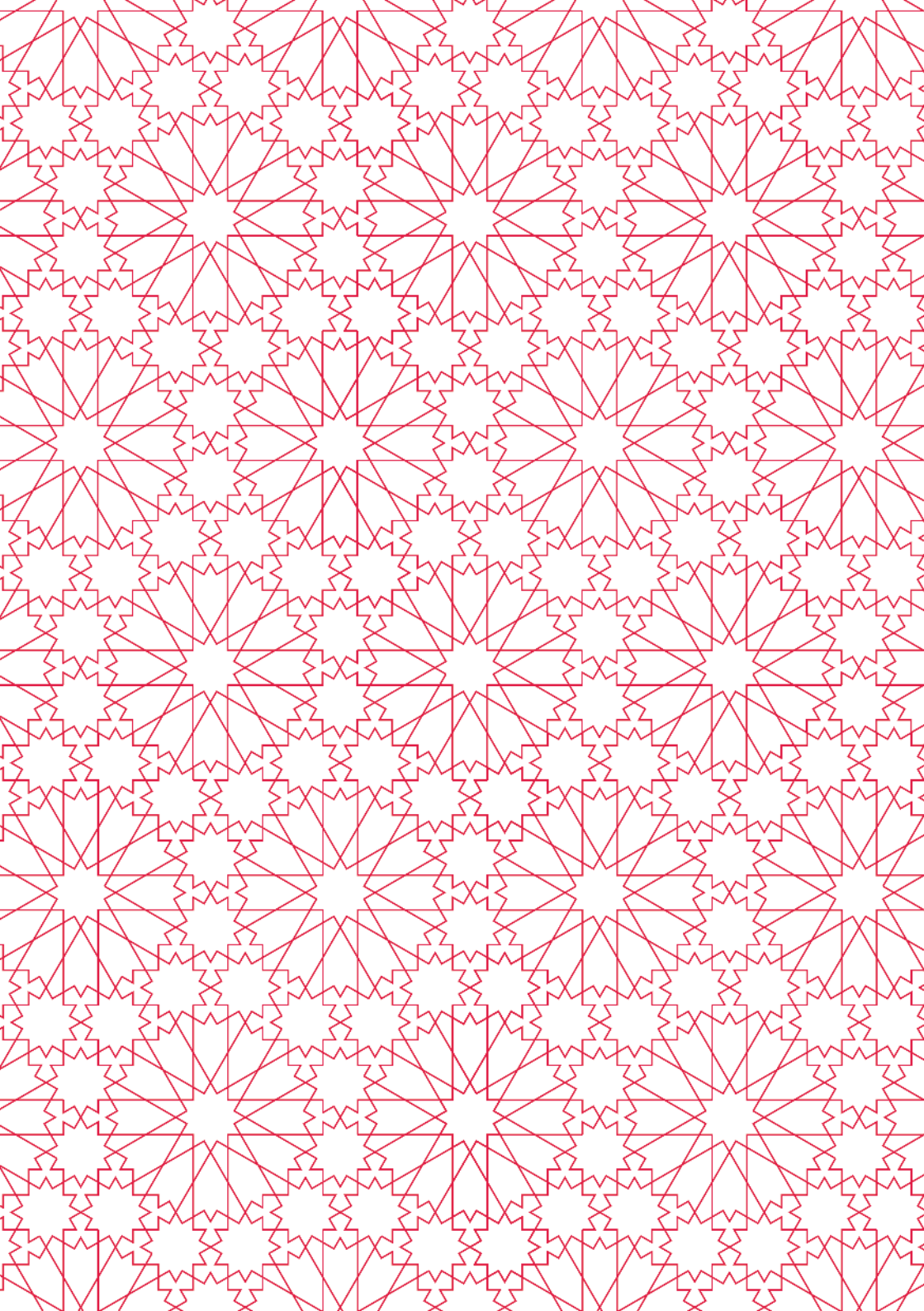
Graduate with full marks in Architecture for the Old and the New at Università Iuav di Venezia, with a thesis on the recovery of the archaeological area of Colle Oppio in Rome. He participated at national and international design competitions. Since 2016, he has been collaborating at Iuav with prof. Armando Dal Fabbro.

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SYRIA - THE MAKING OF THE FUTURE

FROM URBICIDE TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY



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