

Fabbrica della Conoscenza

XV INTERNATIONAL FORUM

Le Vie dei
Mercanti

Carmine Gambardella



**WORLD HERITAGE
and DISASTER**

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Knowledge, Culture and Representation

La scuola di Pitagora editrice

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Collana fondata e diretta da Carmine Gambardella

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ID 134

The Great Mosque of Aleppo. A historical monument under siege

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A constant peculiarity of the most recent wars, and even more when it comes to ideological disputes, is the devastation of cultural heritage. The hatred that arises from these historical artefacts is greater when the architecture is considered a symbol of the culture of the party deemed hostile. The Great Mosque of Aleppo, is one of the cultural heritage sites declared as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986. In recent years, battles have developed more frequently in urban areas and from this mosque started the first riots of the Syrian revolution in March 25, 2011. The mosque has become a symbol of the tragic civil war in the middle of a fierce dispute. At the beginning of 2013 the historical library and its splendid wooden minbar, and the mihrab finely carved stone suffered irreparable harm when it was set on fire. On 24 April 2013 the minaret was reduced to pile of rubble after a heavily armed confrontation.

The Great Mosque was founded at the beginning of the 8th century and rebuilt and renovated several times over the centuries. The most important work was carried out under the leadership of sultan zengide Nur ad-Din in 1174 and, subsequently, by the mamluk sultan Qalawun during the 13th century. The minaret is a rather splendid Seljuk construction, built in 1094, during the reign of Alp Arslan. This essay traces the architectural history of the mosque and aims to bring to the attention of the Italian university community what is happening in one of the places considered by many the berceau de l'humanité.