



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE



CONSERVATION PROJECT OF THE  
ASLAM AL-SILAH DAR MOSQUE

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

September - December 2007

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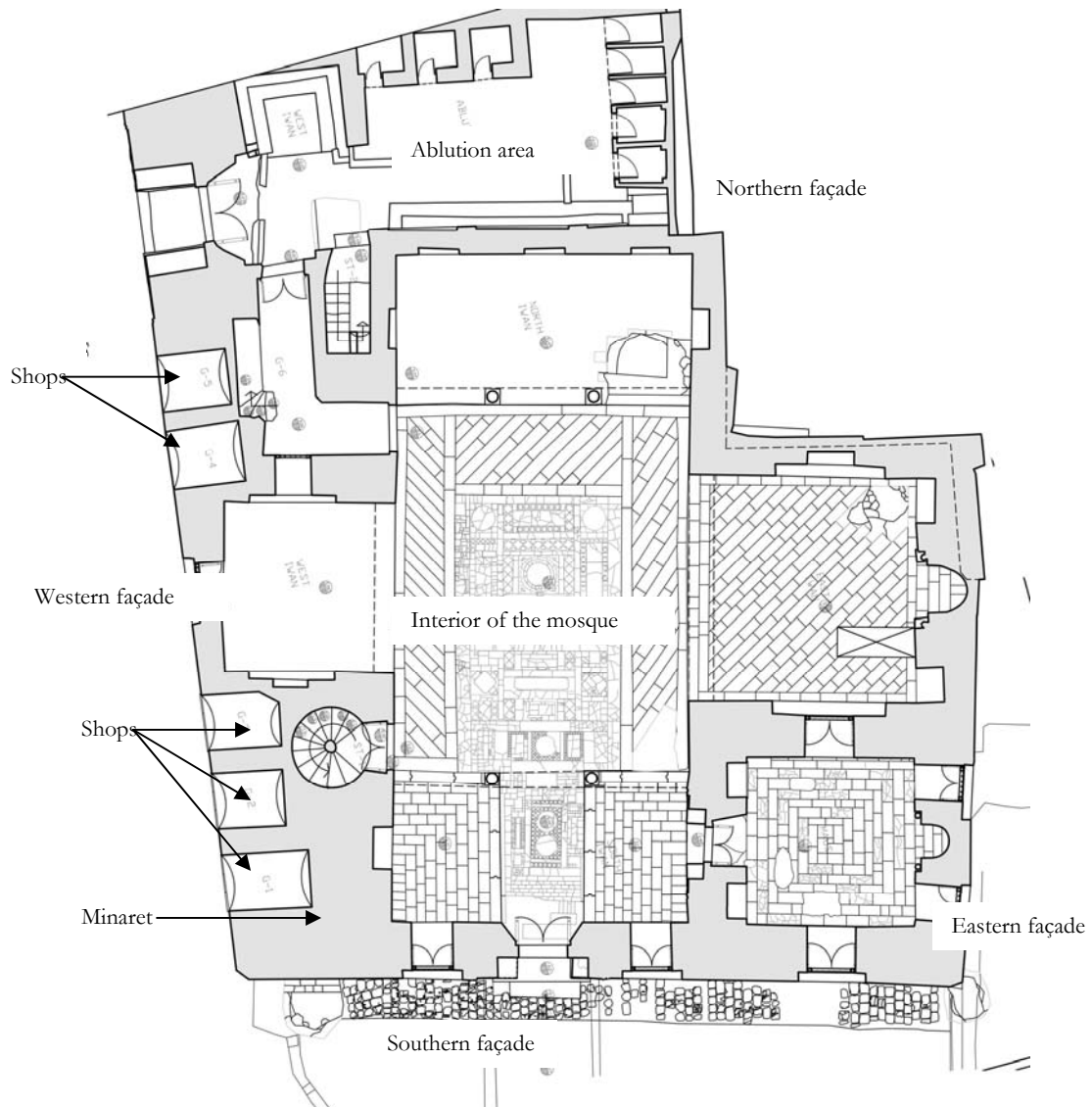
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### 1. Description of the Project's components

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. The exterior elevations:    | Southern façade, eastern façade, northern façade, western façade |
| 2. The roof :                  | Roof of the mosque's courtyard, iwans and rooms                  |
| 3. The minaret:                | Minaret platforms and elevations                                 |
| 4. The ablution area:          | Ablution area and electro-mechanical items                       |
| 5. The interior of the Mosque: | Interior floor, elevations and ceilings of the Mosque/mausoleum  |



## 2. TECHNICAL REPORT

### Summary

The project is proceeding well and with a lot of progress. The components ASLAMIN and ASLAROOOF are completely finalized and ASLAFACA is almost complete with minor activities remaining. Activities in ASLAMOSQUE started in 2007 and are almost finalized.

In 2008 the main activities will be in ASLAMOSQUE mainly in the interior of the prayer area (the mosque courtyard and four iwans) and ASLAMIDA. It was decided to shift this component from 2007 to 2008 for practical reasons and needs of the site. Currently the design drawings of the ablution area are finalized and a schedule and plan is being prepared for its activities.

In terms of documentation the existing condition drawings are finalized and some decorative details are being updated; intervention drawings are in progress and run in parallel with the activities on site. All wooden elements are documented and drawn.

### 1. Documentation and design:

#### Architectural documentation:

As mentioned in the previous report: All existing condition drawings of the mosque in terms of elevations, plans and sections are complete.

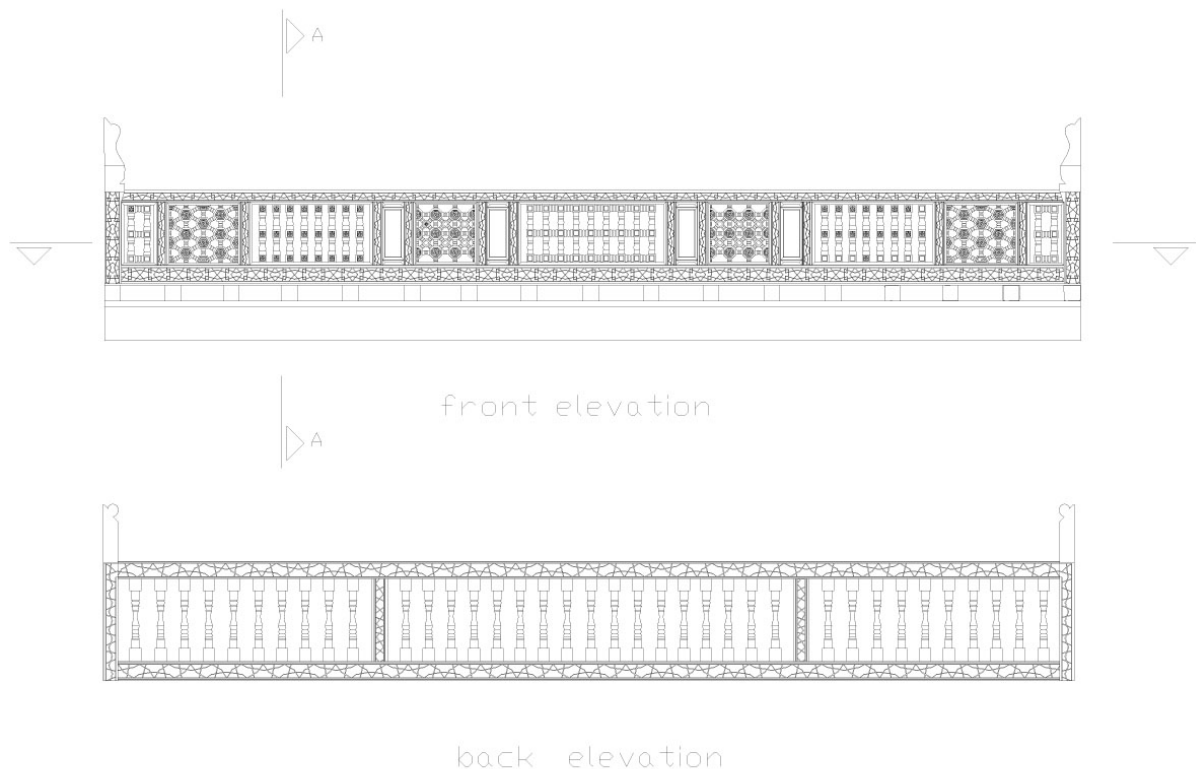
Shop drawings for the missing or damaged wooden elements were produced.

Intervention drawings indicating stone replacement, new wooden elements, etc. started and are in progress.

Currently design drawings are being produced for the ablution area.

A second professional photographic assignment started by Matjaž Kačičnik in December 07 to document the finished items such as the dome and the minaret as well as some of the ongoing activities.

Otherwise, daily photographic documentation is carried out by the site architects.



Front and back elevation drawings of *dīkat al-mobaligh* in the west iwan



## **2. Conservation-restoration work:**

### **Works completed during the period September - December 2007**

#### Exterior facades:

- Northern, Southern and Eastern facades

As mentioned in the previous report, the fine restoration activities on the three façades were completed in September 2007.

The missing crenellations on the south (main) façade were carved, brought up to the roof and installed in place. The missing crenellations on the right side of the west façade were also carved and erected.



*Carving the missing crenellation of the south (main) façade*



*Activities of placing the missing crenellations*





*General view of the South façade*



- Western façades

The fine restoration and cleaning activities were completed on the limestone part of the façade. As for the entrance portal adorned with *muqarnas* and decorated with carved limestone and carved marble, the work is proceeding very well showing nice details and colors of the stones. The cleaning was carried out using different techniques (such as the micro-sand-blaster or poulticing with ammonium carbonate) depending on the type of the stone and the crust on it. The lower part of the entrance portal was in quite a bad condition with a very thick layer of crust; it was cleaned with sand-blasting technique. The remaining activities on the portal will be finalized by mid of January 2008. The wooden elements, repaired and painted, were placed and the scaffolding on the right side of the façade was removed.



*Detail showing the muqarnas on the side entrance portal*



*Activities of marble cleaning on the west façade*





*Stone replacement activities on the lower part of the west façade*



*Views of the west façade after cleaning and inserting the restored wooden elements*

- Shops on the Western facade

All remaining activities in the five shops were finalized; the walls were plastered and the floors were tiled. Some remaining activities of stone replacement and stone cleaning were also finalized.



*Tiling activities of one of the shops on the west façade*



*One of the shops after tiling*



Minaret:

Completed in September 2007.



*Views of the minaret after restoration and before restoration*



*Detail of the minaret's muqarnas after restoration*

### Exterior of the dome

The retouching of the crenellations (made in plaster), the inscription band and its floral decoration was completed. A decision is being studied concerning the completion of the inscription band in the areas where no ceramic tiles are found. The existing gypsum grills with glass on the interior of the mausoleum were cleaned from the outside. As for the exterior gypsum windows (which are missing) designs were proposed to the SCA and discussions are taking place concerning the matter. The scaffolding was dismantled.



*Details of the inscription band on the exterior of the dome before and after intervention*





*Views of the exterior of the dome before and after intervention*



*The exterior façade of the interior gypsum windows with glass (the left one is more historic and the only one remaining; the other ones are recent reconstructions by the Comité)*

*Exterior view of the inscription band and crenellation after intervention*





### Interior of the dome

The erection of the scaffolding in the interior of the dome was completed and the fine restoration activities started from the top of the dome. The inscription on the roundel was cleaned and the blue background was fixed where it was flaking and retouched where it was lost. The gypsum plaster was cleaned mechanically removing a recent limewash layer; this was followed by further cleaning of the plaster. The highest level gypsum grills were cleaned from the interior.

On the lower levels of the mausoleum some gypsum grills and windows were in a very bad condition with numerous missing parts. These are being repaired in-situ. One grill was in a quite bad condition and was dismantled, repaired, cleaned and completed.



*View of the roundel during cleaning*

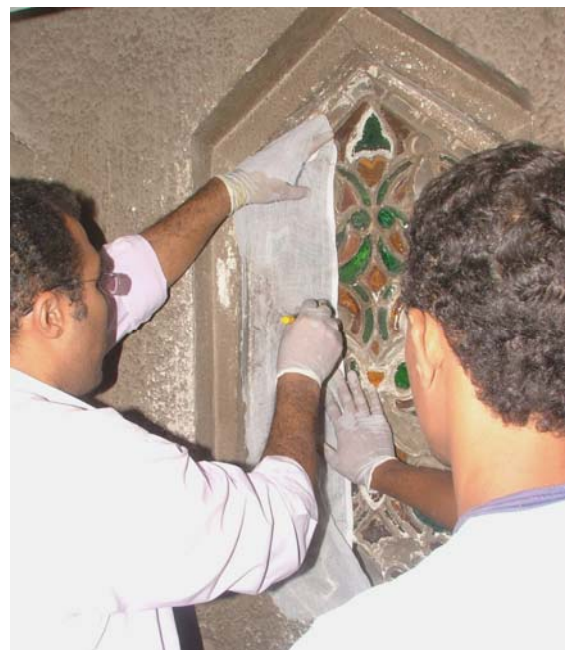


*Activities and details of removing the dust and the recent limewash layer around the first level windows of the mausoleum*





*View of the upper roundel after cleaning and retouching the blue background; below: detail of the roundel*



*Views of repairing and protecting the gypsum decoration in-situ*



### Roofs

The southern and eastern ceilings were insulated; this completes all roofing and insulation activities.



*Insulation activities on the south ceiling and water testing the insulation before applying the upper mortar mix layer*



*The upper insulation layer during application and after hardening*



### Mosque Interior

- Mezzanine, first floor and second floor rooms

Rooms 1.2 and M1: The rooms around the staircase (rooms 1.2 and M1) were completely restored; after the brick repair activities were finalized and the ceilings restored and repaired, plastering and tiling activities started and were completed, as well as the stone cleaning and plaster cleaning.

The stone niches in the rooms, (the one in room 1.2 was dismantled earlier to repair the ceilings and the walls), were repaired restored, replacing the damaged or lost ones and cleaning the existing ones.

Room M2: the brick repair activities in room M2 was finalized, as well as stitching it to the exterior west wall. The ceiling of the room (also the floor of room 1.3) was in quite a bad condition; the damaged beams and shingles were replaced with new ones.

Room 1.3: the brick repair in the room was completed as there was a serious crack between the room and the west iwan. The floor of the room (the ceiling of room M2) was also completed.

G6 (the corridor leading to the ablution area): the brick repair activities in the corridor were completed.



*During erection of the niche in room 1.2*



*Room 1.2 after the niche was installed and during cleaning*



*Wooden ceiling of room M2 (the floor of room 1.3)*



*Tiling of room 1.3*



- Mosque courtyard

The mosque courtyard is decorated with gypsum plaster. It is covered by a *shokhshaykha* erected in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by the *Comité*. Scaffolding was erected everywhere in the courtyard to allow the cleaning and painting of the central *shokhshaykha* and the restoration of the decorated gypsum plaster.

The gypsum plaster was carefully studied and the problems identified. In several areas the plaster is detached from the background brick wall and this needs injection. Also, serious cracks existed and had to be filled. Before the injection activities started, the fine dust covering all the walls was removed with fine brushes. Cleaning tests were also applied to see what kind of method to be applied for cleaning the gypsum. It was decided to use a 2 % ammonium carbonate poultice.

Some of the decorated roundels and lozenges in the courtyard has lost part of its decoration and were re-plastered plainly with no decoration in an earlier restoration intervention. Samples of completing these decorations were carried out.

The wood of the *shokhshaykha* is being cleaned starting by removing the dust with mechanical methods.



*The mosque courtyard during the testing phase*



*Samples of cleaning the gypsum mortar with poultice and with mechanical cleaning*







*Example of the condition of the gypsum plaster in the courtyard showing serious cracks and detachment*



*Activities of completing the gypsum decoration of the roundels and lozenges in the courtyard*



- Mosque Iwans:

Restoration and conservation activities started also in the East (qibla) iwan. The activities started also with the gypsum plaster cleaning similar to that of the courtyard.



*Activities of removing the fine dust from the walls (middle part cleaned; left and right still with fine dust)*



*Activities of removing the fine dust from the decorated gypsum roundel in the qibla iwan*



- Woodwork restoration

As mentioned in the previous report, the woodwork restoration of doors, windows and shutters is currently in progress and will be proceeding during the following months. In general, depending on the state of conservation of the item, carpentry restoration takes place followed by fine cleaning and conservation of the wooden elements.



*Sample of cleaning the wooden shutters of the niches of the qibla ivan*



*Architectural repair of damaged parts in the wooden shutters*



#### Ablution area

It was originally planned to construct the ablution area during 2007; nevertheless it was decided to delay this activity as the ablution area is currently being used as storage. Design and shop drawings are in progress.

#### **Works planned during the period January - March 2008**

##### Exterior facades:

Few stones need to be replaced on the western façade entrance after the removal of the scaffolding.

##### Minaret:

Work completed.

##### Exterior of the dome

All activities are completed. Study the possibility of completing the missing part of the inscription.

##### Interior of the dome

Ongoing work: consolidation, injection and cleaning activities of the interior stucco of the mausoleum.

##### Roof

Work completed.

##### Interior of mosque rooms

Apply the final layer of plaster and limewash in some of the rooms.

Ongoing painting of the wooden ceilings.

##### Interior of the mosque

Continue the conservation and restoration work of the gypsum plaster in the mosque courtyard and iwans.

Finalize the cleaning of the wooden shingles of the *shokhsbaykha*.

Start with the fine restoration of the wooden decorated ceilings of the iwans.

##### Ablution area

Carry out archaeological test pits in the ablution area before the start of the work.

Start demolishing the remains of the old ablution area and start the construction of the ablution area.

This report was prepared by Christophe Bouleau and Dina Bakhoun on 9 January 2008.

