



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

Historic Cities Support Programme



CONSERVATION PROJECT OF THE
ASLAM AL-SILAH DAR MOSQUE

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT
JUNE-AUGUST 2006

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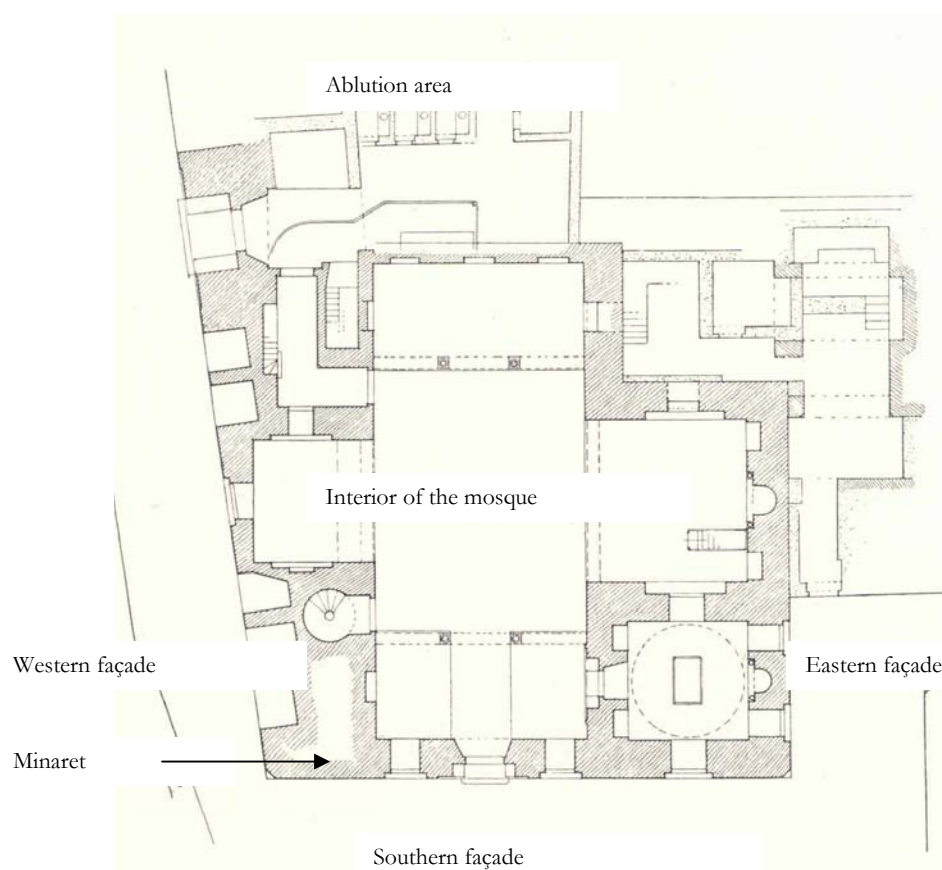
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1. Description of the Project's components

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|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. The exterior elevations: | Southern façade, eastern façade, western facade |
| 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

Architectural and photographic surveys started at end May 2006 and the project was received from the Supreme Council of Antiquities on 25 June 2006 after evacuation of the Waqf belonging and closure of the mosque to the public.

After a global cleaning of the monument's spaces, the mobilization and site organization such as street fence, storage area were performed.

A geo-technical and structural study has been initiated at end June 2006 to assess the soil and foundations capacities and determine the structural condition of the monument.

Consequently, replacement of the damaged stones at the bottom of the elevations was initiated and is currently in progress.

Documentation and design:

Architectural documentation:

Architectural surveys started on 25 May 2006 are currently being finalized. The surveying technique used for elevations is an association of a total station-based grid system with rectified photographs assembled together to be traced later on to an Autocad format.

Photographic documentation:

A pre-conservation photographic coverage including 250-300 shots was performed in the period 13-30 June 2006 in the format of digital pictures.

Engineering studies:

A geo-technical and structural assessment was performed in the period 25 July-30 August 2006. It included 3 12meters-deep boreholes, 5 test pits at the foot of the walls and a comprehensive structural assessment of the monument. The aim of this study is to highlight the structural damages of the monument and propose the treatments to address them.



General view of the Aslam al-Silahdar Mosque from the South prior to conservation (photo M. Kacienik)

Material tests:

Various samples of stone, mortar and stucco were collected on site and sent to a laboratory of analysis to be analyzed.

The objective of such analysis are (1) to document the nature and composition of the mineral materials constituting the monument, (2) to form a reference for replication and/or completion with new materials (stones, mortar, plaster, stucco).

Conservation-restoration work:

Exterior facades:

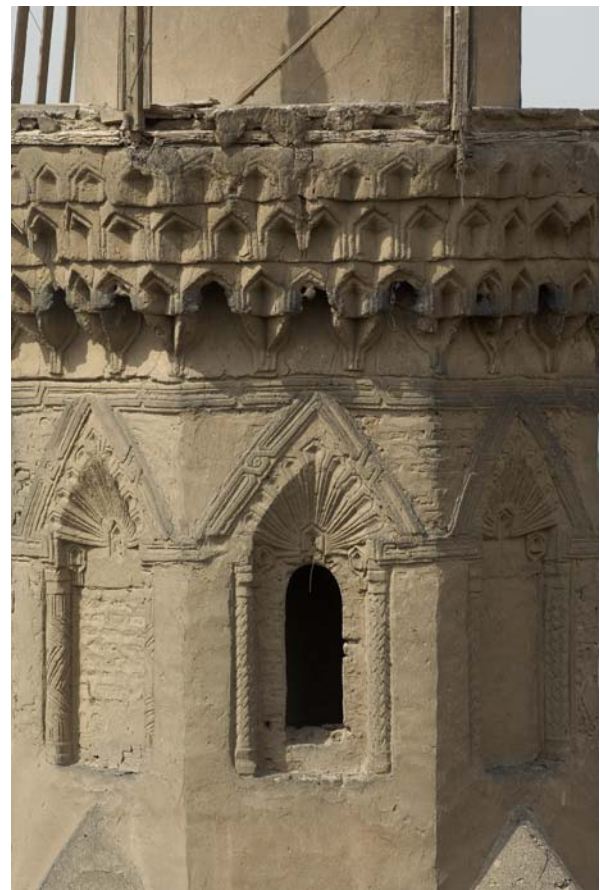
Asphalt layers were removed at the foot of the southern and eastern elevations in order to reach a horizontal level around the monument. An old tiling based on square stone tiles probably dating back from the beginning of 20th century was uncovered and documented.

A campaign of selective stone replacement was carried out at the southern façade.

A vertical steel scaffolding was then erected on the full height of the southern elevation and a temporary sign board was placed.

Minaret:

The assessment of the stability of the minaret is one part of the structural study that was performed. The minaret was found stable but is in an advanced condition of deterioration. The elevations, roof and platforms of the minaret will be subject to global conservation and restoration intervention. The plaster and stucco molding surfaces will be cleaned and injected, while the wooden roof and handrail will be restored. The roofing of the pencil-shape minaret will be made of lead sheets.



The southern elevation of the minaret (general view and detail) (photo M. Kacicnik)

Roof:

A campaign of cleaning and removal of fill was carried out in order to expose the shingles and assess their condition. Part of the structural study was the assessment of the bearing capacity of roof ceilings.

A provision of old recycled wood (azizi), insulation sheets and roofing materials were delivered. The entire surface of roof covering the mosque and the adjacent rooms will be subject to a carpentry and roofing restoration. The shingles will be partially replaced, and insulation sheet made of bitumen will be applied on top of the shingles and a roofing package of mortar screed with additives will be laid. The upper part of the brick walls will be restored in order to provide adequate support to the roof.



The roof of the prayer area prior to conservation work start

Mosque interior:

A campaign of cleaning was carried out in order to be able to survey and assess the condition of surfaces. All mechanical, sound and lighting fittings, carpets and furniture belonging to the Waqf were dismantled and taken away by the Waqf Authority.

The interior spaces of the mosque are not planned to be restored prior to mid 2007. This location may be used as a storing place for materials and equipment till the second quarter of 2007.

Ablution area:

The ablution area was found in an advanced state of deterioration and water leakage proved to be detrimental for the monument's integrity. After documentation, the ablution area was subject to a complete demolition process and the sanitary fittings were dismantled and taken away by the Waqf Authority. Only 3 toilets and a well-controlled water supply tap were maintained to feed the needs of the building site. During the demolition process, remains of a earlier ablution area built by the *Comite de Conservation de l'Art arabe* were found and may be reused in the future reconstruction.

The ablution area will be subject to a complete architectural and utilities replacement. The existing structures will be dismantled and the location may be used as storage till the second quarter of 2007.



The interior space of the mosque prior to conservation (photo M. Kacicnik)

This report was prepared by Christophe Bouleau on 17 September 2006.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Ch. Bouleau".