



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

Historic Cities Programme



CONSERVATION PROJECT OF THE
ASLAM AL-SILAH DAR MOSQUE

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

October – December 2008

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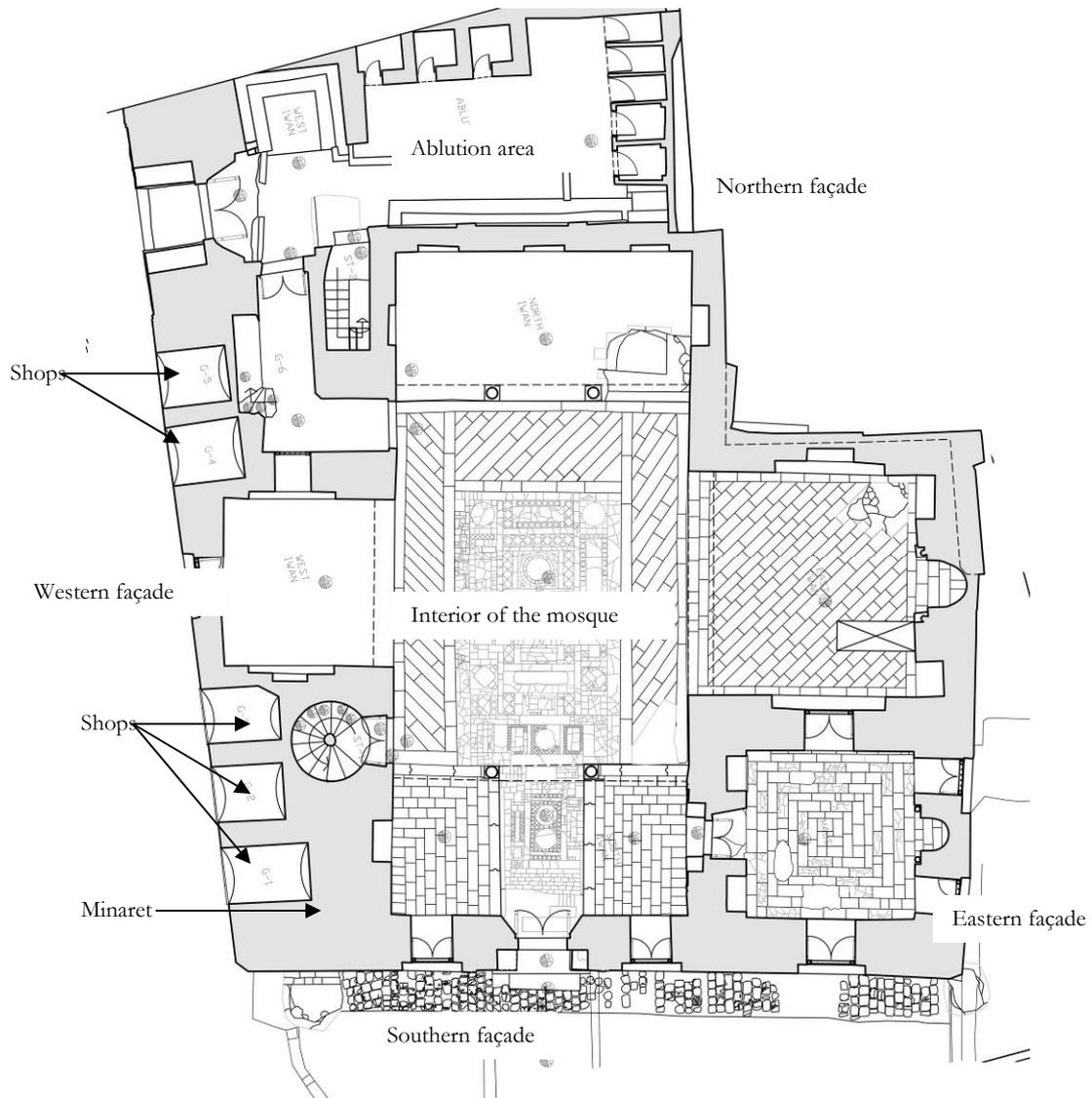
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1. Description of the Project's components

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



2. TECHNICAL REPORT

Summary

Architectural and fine restoration activities are proceeding in the Mosque interior, Mausoleum and the ablution area. Major activities have been completed, and most of the work remaining consists of finishes and other activities that begun after scaffolding dismantling.

More focus is giving currently to finalizing the designs, manufacturing and sample testing of the lighting units and fittings of the project as a whole.

Few scaffolding still remain erected in the mausoleum and mosque interior, however, all mosque facades have been dismantled in order to enable tiling and landscaping work to proceed in Aslam Square. These activities are not within the scope of work and agreement between ARCE and AKCS-E, but are carried out as part of the whole urban treatment activities of AKCS-E's Darb al-Ahmar improvement.

As mentioned in the previous report, a re-use proposal is currently being prepared to present to the SCA in order to explore possibilities of finding suitable functions for a certain number of rooms which would guarantee periodical maintenance of the spaces.



View of the stone tiling proceeding in Aslam square

2.1. THE EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

ASLAFACA

Work achievements during the period October -December 2008

- Northern, Southern, Western and Eastern facades

The scaffoldings of the eastern and western facades have been dismantled. The Western entrance leading to the ablution area has also been designed and executed in parallel with the tiling works proceeding in the square and alleys in order to create a suitable entrance level. Few fine restoration activities and finishes remain in the entrance portal of the western façade.

Lighting tests of the facades have also been done in order to begin installation of the exterior lighting units.

After several debates with the SCA concerning the Facades and dome exterior windows, they have reached a final decision of installing the mesh windows, which date back to the *Comité* period. Attempts are still taking place with the SCA in order to install the gypsum windows, but in parallel, the metal mesh windows are currently being restored in case the attempts to install gypsum grills fails.



Work progress on the Western portal entrance

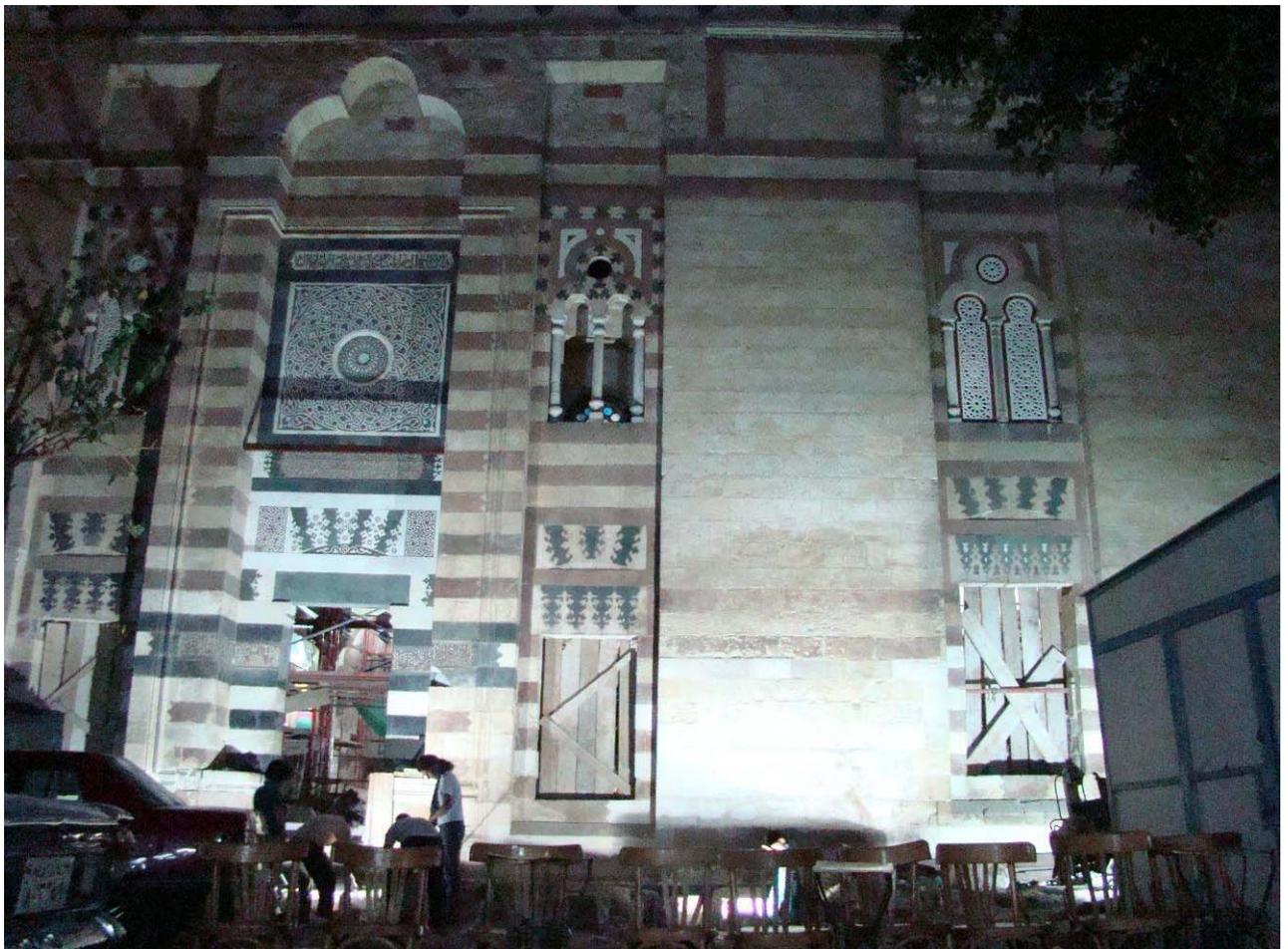




Sample of the proposed gypsum windows



Comite mesh windows



View of the main façade during the lighting tests trials

2.2. THE ROOFS

ASLAROOOF

Work achievements during the period Oct –Sept. 2008

All roofs are insulated and no works are remaining on the roofs.

2.3. THE MINARET

ASLAMIN

Completed in September 2007.

2.4. THE MOSQUE AND MAUSOLEUM INTERIOR

ASLAMOSQUE

Work achievements during the period October -December 2008

Mosque Interior

- Mezzanine, first floor and second floor rooms
 - Plastering and finishes have been finalized in all the mosque rooms and most of the wooden windows, grills and doors have been installed. Room 1.4 will be finalized after the relocation of the site office.
 - After careful studies of several types of lighting fittings, traditional units were chosen for the mosque rooms as they match the character of the building.



Room M1 and 1.2 before and after restoration (photos: Matjaz Kacicnik)



Samples of lighting units

Mosque courtyard

- The scaffoldings were dismantled from all four façades of the mosque courtyard following the finalization of all necessary electric and sound wiring installations. The missing part of the wooden inscription band on the west façade was manufactured and installed. All electric wiring is placed in ducts above the inscription band.
- The cleaning of the four column capitals was finalized.



Northern courtyard façade

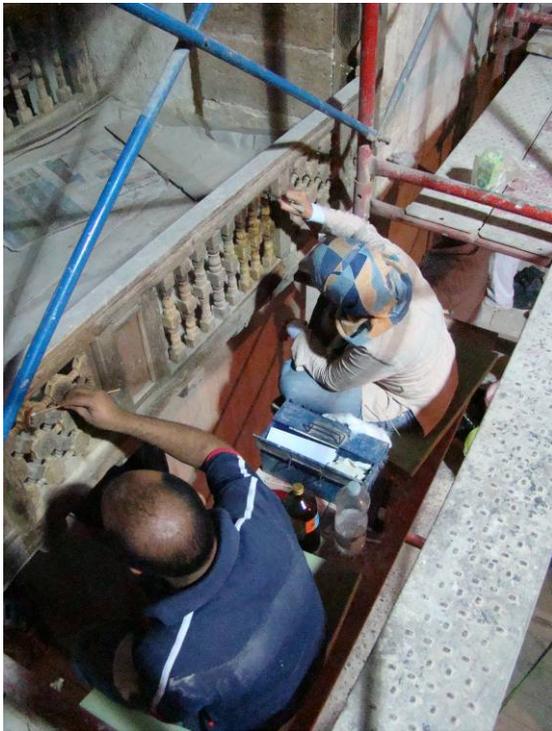


Southern courtyard façade



The courtyard columns capitals during and after the cleaning

- Cleaning of the wooden dikka on the western façade of the courtyard was initiated. A significant section of the dikka was restored during the period of the *Comité* and several wooden parts were replaced. On the other hand, the original parts were found to be in a weak and deteriorated shape. The cleaning proceeded first mechanically to remove a layer of red paint underneath which appeared traces of the original paintings. This was followed by the consolidation and protection of the wood.



Cleaning and consolidation of the wooden Dikka;

- Cleaning and stone replacement of the stone tiles of the mosque courtyard is in progress.

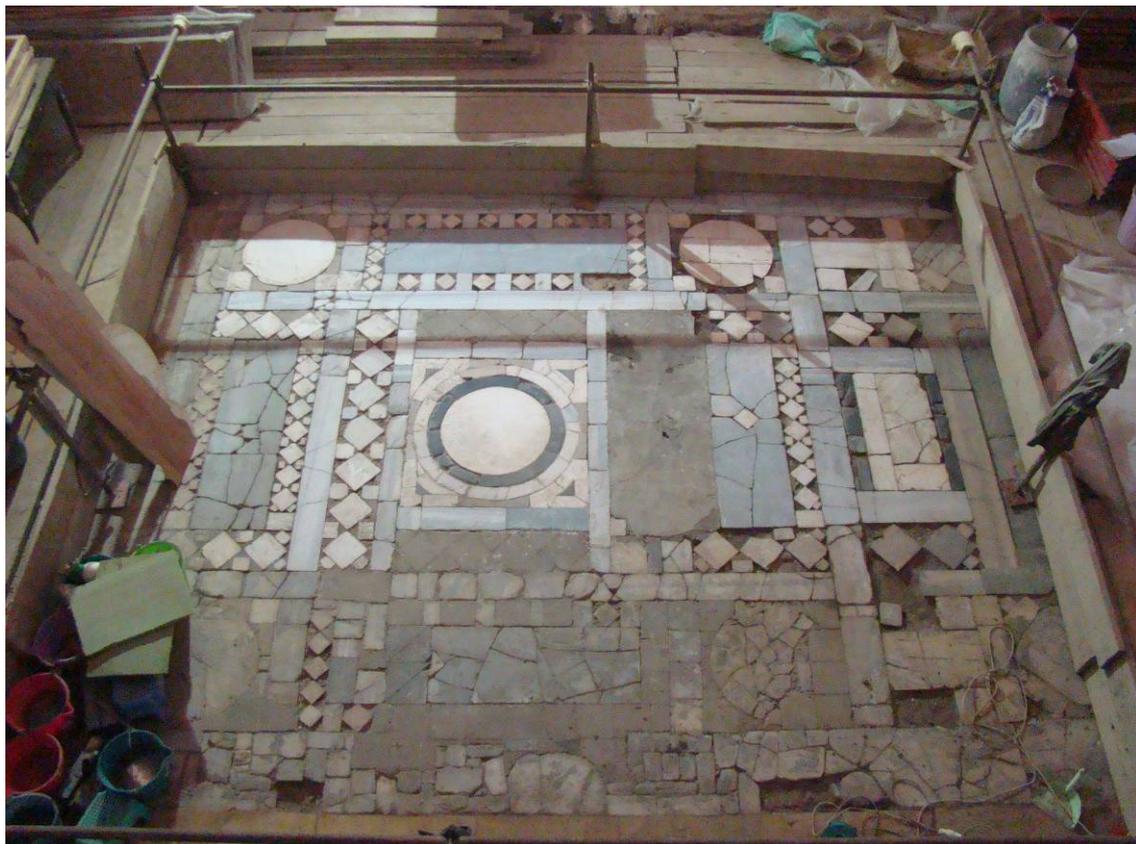


Cleaning Stone replacement activities in the mosque courtyard

- Currently the main focus in the mosque courtyard is on the marble tiling. The first phase begun with the cleaning of the marble tiles using poultices. Meanwhile, the layout and design of the tiling were being studied in order to find the original pattern given that big sections of the marble were replaced at a certain time by cement, mortar or marble tiles, placed in a random manner. Following the removal of mortar and cement tiles, samples of the similar marble (black, red and white) were found in order to complete the missing sections. Filling of the cracks of the original tiles of significant size was completed. The filling consisted of a mixture of epoxy and marble powder.



Cleaning activities of the marble tiling and removal of additional cement tiles and mortar



- Finally, over the past three month, historic research was conducted in order to reach an appropriate design for the interior lighting units (*Tanour & Mishkavat*) based on those placed in the mosques of the same periods. Two *Tanours* are to be placed on the eastern and western Façade, while six of smaller scales are to be installed on the three arches of the southern and northern facades. *Mishkavat* are to be suspended from all the wooden tying beams. The manufacturing of the *tanours* is currently proceeding.

Mosque Iwans:

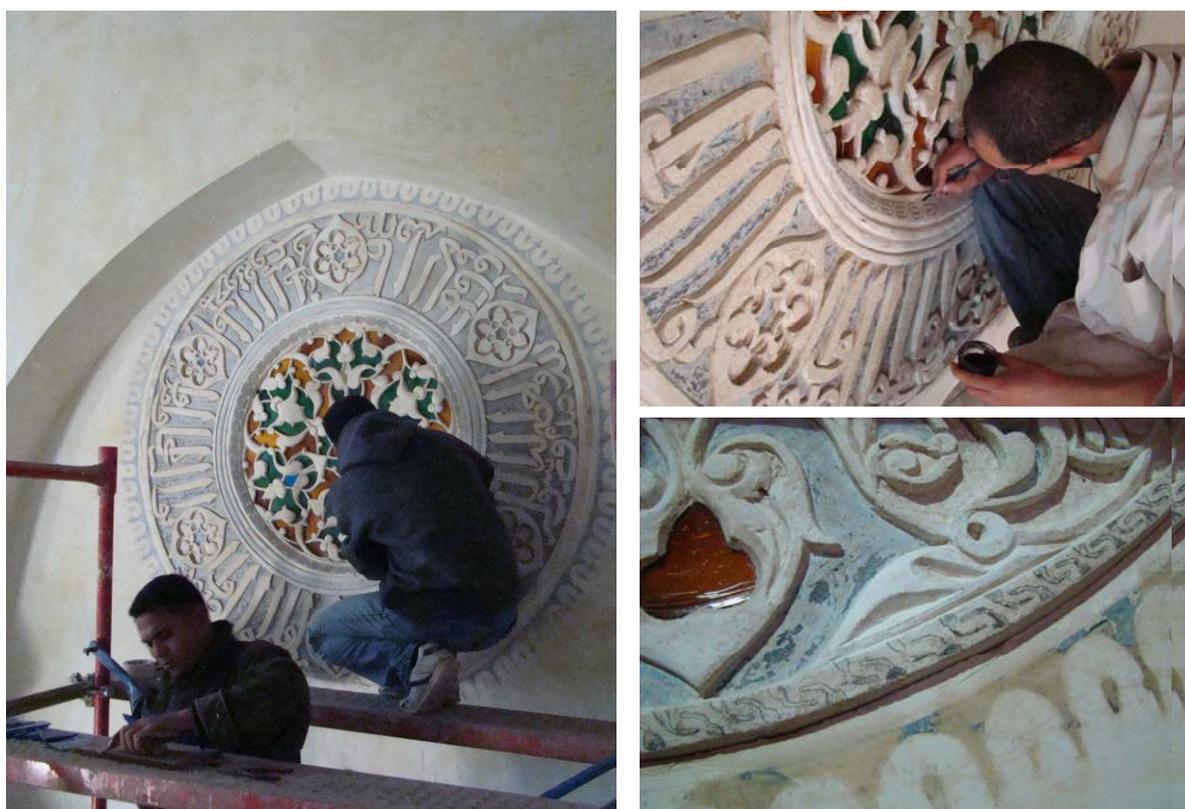
1. West iwan

The main restoration activities in the Western iwan were finalized in September 2008.

However, after the cleaning of the three gypsum roundels on the west, north and south façade, traces of blue paint appeared in the roundel and an outline on the plaster. Retouch of the blue traces was finalized. The site store is planned to be moved from the iwan within the coming month.

2. Qibla iwan

Scaffoldings were dismantled in the Qibla iwan upon the finalization of the restoration of the painted wooden ceiling. The same case of blue traces that were found on the gypsum roundel decorations were found on the three facades of the iwan. After identifying the pattern of the color, the retouch took place and the scaffoldings were dismantled.

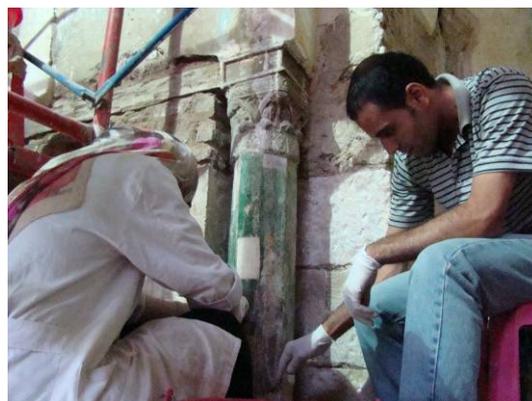


Traces of the original blue paint found underneath the lime layers and the decoration surrounding the gypsum roundel

Cleaning of the mihrab facade and stabilization of the original plaster layers was finalized.

Cleaning of the columns and capitals has taken place. Firstly, a layer of new green paint was removed, underneath which was a layer of lime. Finally, the surface of the marble column and the capitals was found to be in a good condition. Only the two bases were terribly deteriorated and covered in cement and will need to be replaced.

The cleaning of the few marble pieces of the mihrab was finalized. Afterwards, it was necessary to dismantle the pieces given their bad condition and the need to replace some stones in the mihrab itself. Marble pieces were numbered and dismantled and a pattern was found which enabled us to identify the original design of the marble and hence replace the missing pieces and complete the marble pattern.



Cleaning of the marble columns in the qibla and removal of the cement layers covering the base



View of the mihrab before dismantling the marble and during stone replacement



Qibla Iwan after partial scaffolding dismantling

3. South iwan:

Cleaning of the south ceiling was finalized. The new wooden beams installed during the period of the *Comité* which did not have any decorations were painted in order to unify the colors of the whole ceiling. The facades were also finalized and the scaffoldings were dismantled. The two side windows of the iwan contained small painted ceilings. The few traces of color that remained were consolidated and conserved. Stone replacement of the damaged tiles took place.



Mausoleum façade after cleaning & restoration



View of the South iwan ceiling after restoration

4. North iwan:

The cleaning and conservation of the iwan facades was finalized. As for the ceiling, it was found to be in the worst conditions of all four iwans. This is probably due to the fact that the upper room was in a state of collapse (shown in earlier photographs) and hence lack of insulation and leaking from the roofs. Most of the inscriptions and decoration are non-existent. The few remaining are hardly visible, in addition the bad condition of the wooden shingles and beams which have become damp given the constant leakage of water. The restoration work began by mechanical cleaning, followed by the consolidation of the remaining layers of colors and the slight cleaning of the wooden parts containing the inscriptions in order to make them more visible. A large section of the ceiling was restored during the period of the *Comité*. Those beams which do not have any decorations were painted in order to unify the colors of the whole ceiling. The facades were also finalized and the scaffoldings were dismantled.



View of the paint deterioration on the wooden beams



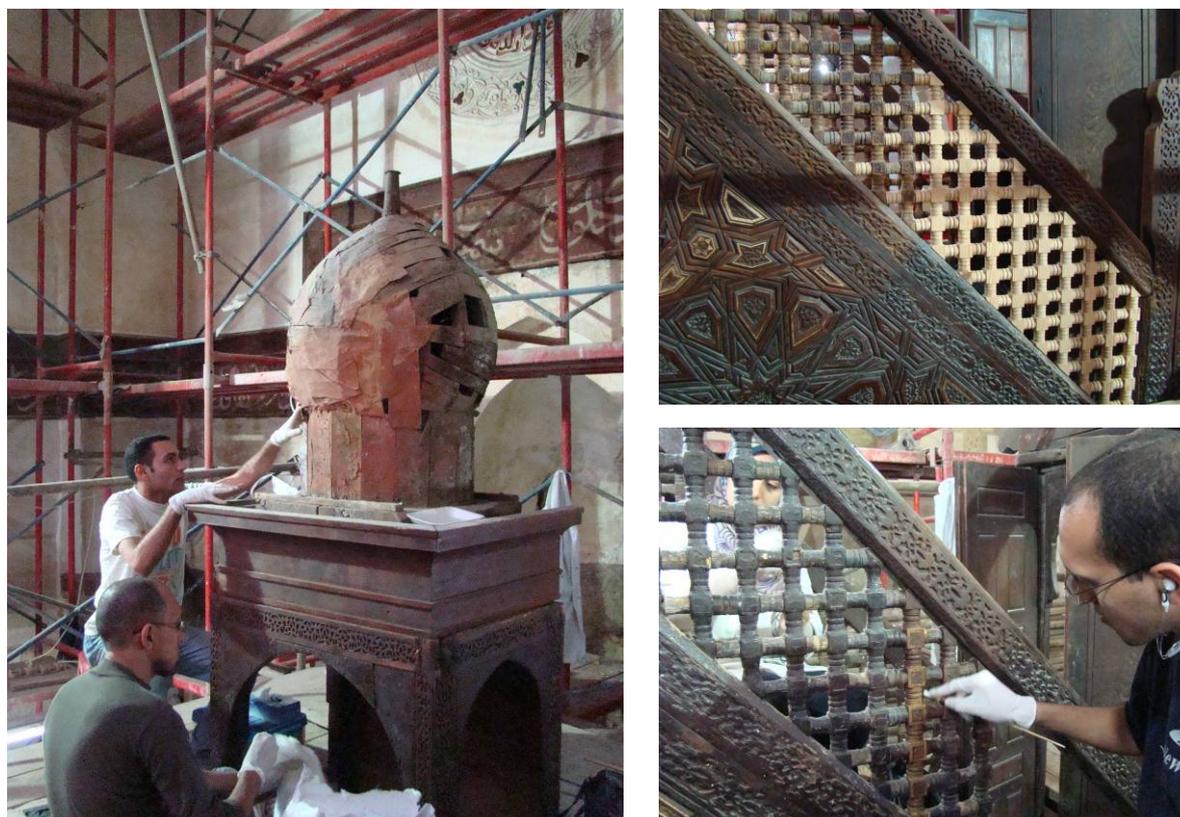
South iwan Ceiling during cleaning

Woodwork restoration

All wooden items (doors windows, metal grills have been cleaned and restored and installation is currently taking place. The only element remaining is the main entrance door which will initiate shortly.

The cleaning of the wooden *minbar* in the qibla iwan is currently in progress. Mechanical cleaning is proceeding while the manufacturing of the missing wooden parts (turned wood & shingles).

The painting and consolidation of the all interior inlaid wood elements by micro crystalline-wax will begin within the coming month.



Cleaning and restoration activities on-going on the woodwork

Electro-mechanical activities and Sound Systems

A long process of researching best options for the sound system of the mosque was taking place consulting different firms and engineers. Several offers were presented and the best offer was chosen. The purchasing and the installation will take place within the coming month.

The purchase of the glass lamps (*mishkawat*) for the mosque interior and the interior of the mausoleum was finalized. Offers are currently being studied to purchase the electric distribution panel to be placed in the staircase in the ablution area.

Dome Interior

The cleaning of the upper gypsum inscription band was completed. After the removal of the thick layer of lime wash and dirt covering the gypsum surface, blue and red colors appeared. In order to protect the gypsum surface and the remains of color, a layer of lime water was applied on the band in order to solidify the powdering surface and preserve the original colors.

Although some traces of red color were found, however, it was not obvious if the red was a color or the base of gold. Hence, it was decided to re-touch the blue color only, given that it makes the inscriptions more visible from a distance.

Consolidation and fixation of the detached parts of the plaster is finished and re-touch of the blue color around the four gypsum roundels was also finalized, as similar traces to those in the mosque were found on the four facades of the mausoleum. The missing inner gypsum window on the southern façade was manufactured in place.

Cleaning of the lower wooden inscription band begun and clear traces of the original inscription and decoration was found underneath a recent layer of red paint applied to the band. Chemical removal of the

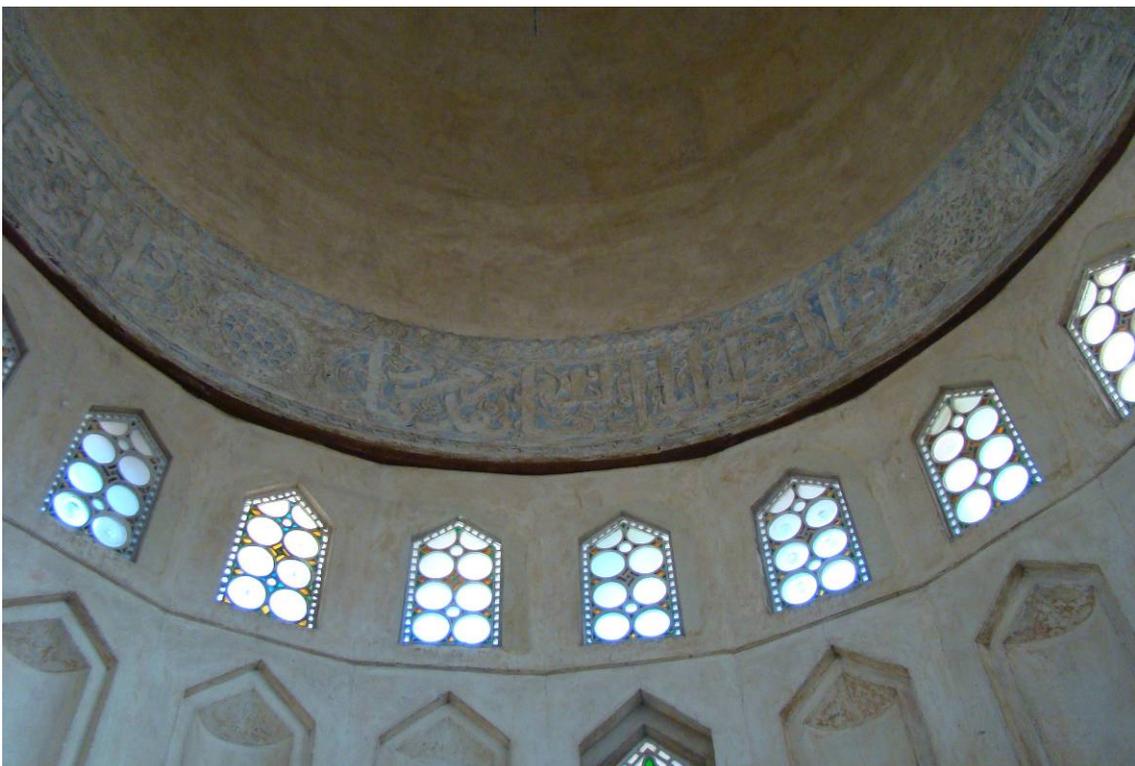
red paint was finalized and allowed us to identify the Qur'anic verse. Also the carpentry work was finalized. Some re-touch activities are currently in progress as well as the cleaning and consolidation of the wooden octagon on which traces of colored decoration were found. The mausoleum scaffoldings were dismantled till the level of the inscription band.

Cleaning the marble columns was also finalized by using poultices given the thick layers of dirt and oils found on their surfaces. This is probably due to the later re-use of the mausoleum spaces as a cooking area during the Ramadan fast for the local community.

Currently the stucco decoration and inscription surrounding the *mibar* is being cleaned.



Cleaning of the gypsum inscription band in the dome interior



The dome inscription band after cleaning



View of the missing gypsum window before and during manufacturing



Re-touch of the blue colors on the gypsum roundels



Cleaning and consolidation of the wooden inscription band



Cleaning of the mausoleum marble columns



Cleaning and of the wooden octagon



The stucco decoration of the mausoleum mihrab during cleaning

Scope of the work in the Mosque and Mausoleum during the period January - March 2009

Interior of mosque rooms

Installation of all lighting fixtures

Interior of the mosque

Complete the restoration of the mosque marble and stone tiling. Finalize the restoration of the wooden minbar, the entrance door and the painting and protection of all other wooden elements.

Purchasing of the mosque carpets. Manufacturing of necessary furniture for the mosque re-use such as shoe-racks, book cupboards, etc...

Installation of *lighting units*: *mishkawat*, *tanours* and sound system.

Removal of all scaffolding.

Interior of the dome

Complete the cleaning and consolidation of the wooden inscription band and octagon. Finalize the cleaning of the stucco on the mihrab. Manufacture of the new bases for the marble columns and install them. Plastering of the lower area and finalizing tile replacement.

Installation of all lighting fixtures and units.

2.5. THE ABLUTION AREA

ASLAMIDA

Work achievements during the period October -December 2008

All major construction electric and sanitary works in the ablution area were completed. Two water tanks were installed on the toilettes roofs after their insulation. A wooden structure was built around them as a protection matter as well as an esthetic aspect. The plaster of vestibule leading to the ablution area was cleaned. Missing wooden parts of the inscription band were completed. The wooden roofing of the vestibule was cleaned and painted. The entrance and vestibule are currently being tiled.

Lighting units for the interior and exterior areas were chosen.

Scope of work during the period January - March 2009

Finalize the final plaster coat. Installation of the lighting units.



Marble tiling of the ablution area



Installation of marble seats



*Insulation of the ablution roof and view of the water tanks during installation
Cleaning of the old plaster at the western entrance portal and painting of the wooden ceiling*





*Wooden restoration of the inscription band
in the vestibule after completion*

Plastering of the vestibule walls



View of the ablution area

2.6. THE SITE SUPERVISION TEAM

ASLASUPER

Work achievements in the period October-December 2008

Regarding the documentation activities, intervention drawings and design proposal are being finalized. The daily site supervision activities are in progress.

Scope of work in the period March 2009

Continue on carrying on site supervision activities of architectural, structural and fine restoration activities.

Initiating the compilation of a full set of drawings of the existing conditions and as built architectural drawings.

Composition of the team and responsibilities at end of March

The Aga-Khan Trust for Culture:

- Christophe Bouleau, Conservation architect – Project Manager
- Dina Bakhom, Engineer - Site manager.
- Lara Iskander, Architect
- Mohamed Lashien, Architect
- Hamdi Sultan, Main Forman
- Walid Omar, Procurement officer
- Mina William, Scaffolding specialist

Consultant (during the reported period)

- Erico Peintner, Conservator
- Matjaz Kacicnik, Photographer

Date: 20 January 2009

Signature: Dina Bakhom

Lara Iskander