



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

Historic Cities Programme



CONSERVATION PROJECT OF THE
ASLAM AL-SILAH DAR MOSQUE

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

January-March 2009

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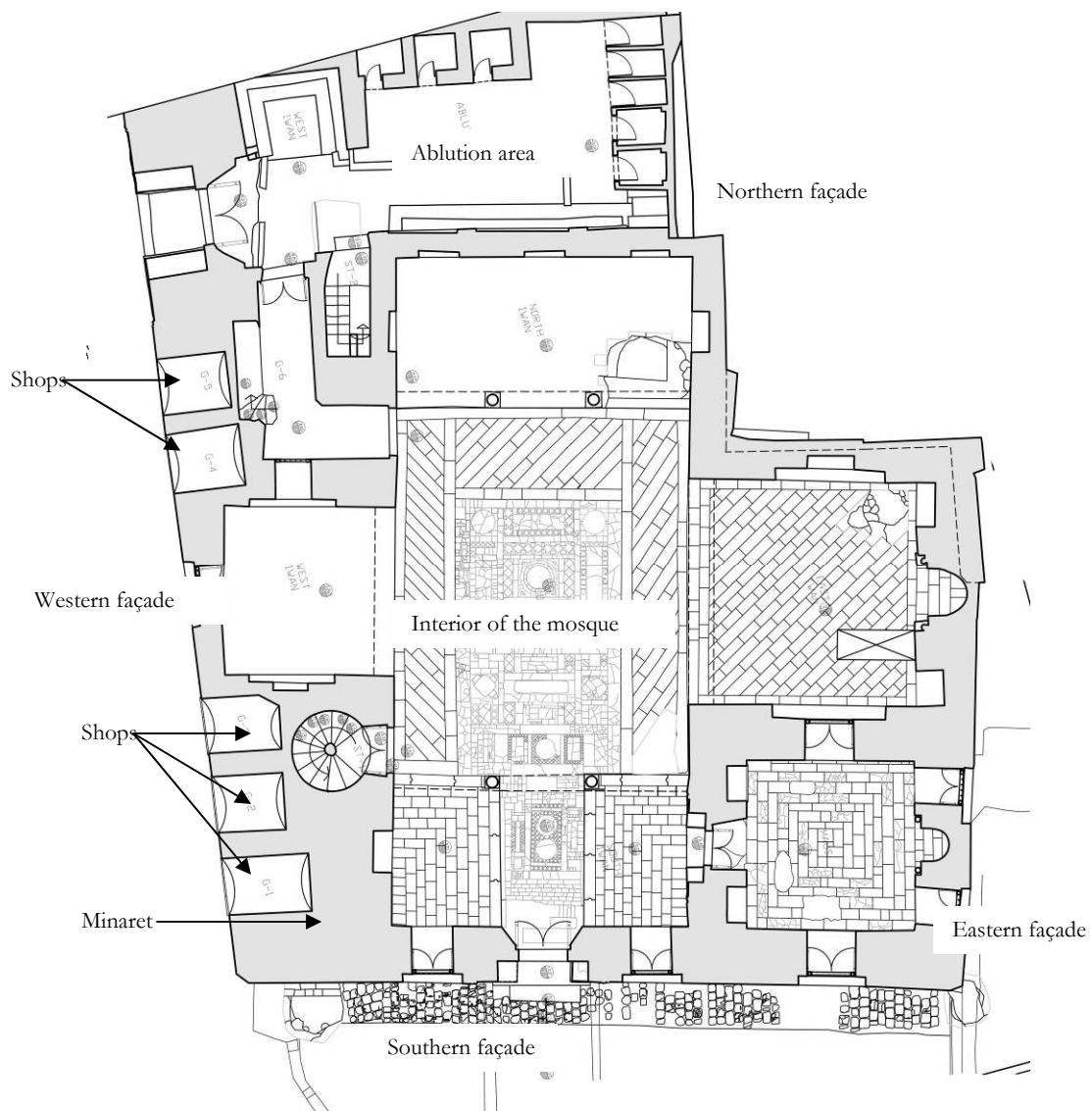
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1. Description of the Project's components

- | | |
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| 1. The exterior elevations: | Southern façade, eastern façade, northern façade, western façade |
| 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 have been completed in the mosque interior.

In parallel, the work during the past three month included cleaning and the final finishes of the mosque exterior and interior in preparation for handing over the mosque to the authorities.

The installation of all interior and exterior lightening units was finalized. Furthermore, the installation and testing of the sound system was completed.

There will be no major activities taking place in the mosque during the month of April apart from the furnishing of the new carpets in the courtyard and iwans and the final photographic documentation.

A Re-use proposal is currently under study. Attached is a plan of the rooms suitable for re-use upon the approval of the SCA.



Proposed spaces and spaces for re-use

2.1. THE EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

ASLAFACA

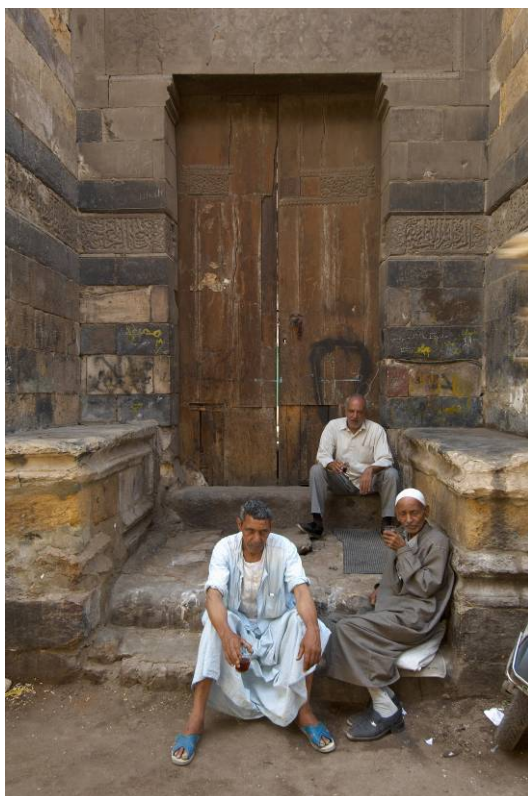
Work achievements during the period Jan. – Mar. 2009

- Northern, Southern, Western and Eastern facades
 - The remaining cleaning and restoration activities on the western façade portal were completed. The installation of a new *Maqsala* stone on the right side of the portal enabled the finishing the stone replacement needed below that level. The construction of the entrance staircase was also finalized.
 - Concerning the facades openings, it was decided to install copper mesh windows on all exterior openings of the three main facades. Some of the old mesh windows which were found in place were cleaned, restored and re-used, while new ones were fabricated for the missing openings.

- The installation of all wooden doors, shutters and windows of the facades has also been completed and both main doors, that of the southern and western façade have been installed in place and are in function.



Replacement of the Maksala stone on the western portal



View of the western façade portal before and after completion



View of the western façade before and after conservation





Cleaning and completion of the missing mesh parts of the façade windows



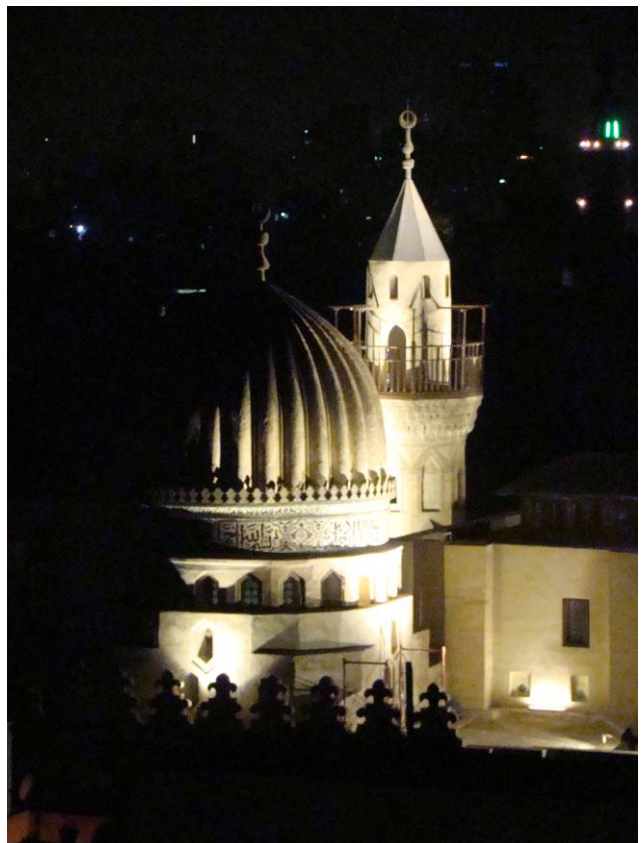
View of the eastern façade after the installation of mesh grills



Main mosque entrance before and after restoration



View of the Southern Facade



Lighting tests of the mosque exterior

2.2. THE ROOFS

Work achievements during the period Jan. – Mar. 2009

All roofs are insulated and all roofs were completed in 2007.

All electric units illuminating the roofs, Dome exterior and Minaret were installed.

ASLAROOF



View of some of the electric units installed on the roofs

2.3. THE MINARET

Completed in September 2007.

Electric fittings and Units were installed on the minaret balconies.

ASLAMIN



Lighting Units installed on the minaret balcony



View of the minaret during lighting tests

2.4. THE MOSQUE AND MAUSOLEUM INTERIOR

ASLAMOSQUE

Work achievements during the period Jan. –Mar. 2009

Mosque Interior

- Mezzanine, first floor and second floor rooms
 - Work in room 1.4 which was previously been used as a temporary site office was completed; this included painting of the wooden ceiling, plastering of the walls and installation of wooden elements such as doors and windows.
 - Tiling replacement activities took place in room M2 on the mezzanine level.
 - Plastering work and finishes were completed in G6, the corridor linking the ablution area to the mosque interior.
 - The installation of the lighting units and fixtures was also completed in all the mosque rooms and interior spaces.
 - Tiling and plastering finishes in the entrance of the secondary staircase leading to the first floor rooms was completed and the main electric panel was installed.



Room M1.4 as a site office



View of the plastering activities



Painting of the wooden ceiling of room 1.4



View of room 1.4 before and after restoration



Stone tiling replacement in M2



View of the M2 after completion



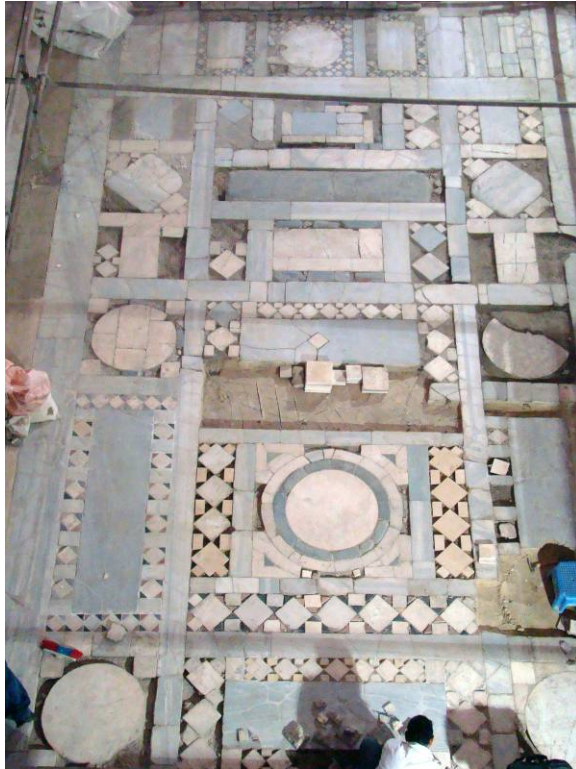
View of the staircase leading up to second floor rooms



Corridor linking mosque to ablution area

Mosque courtyard

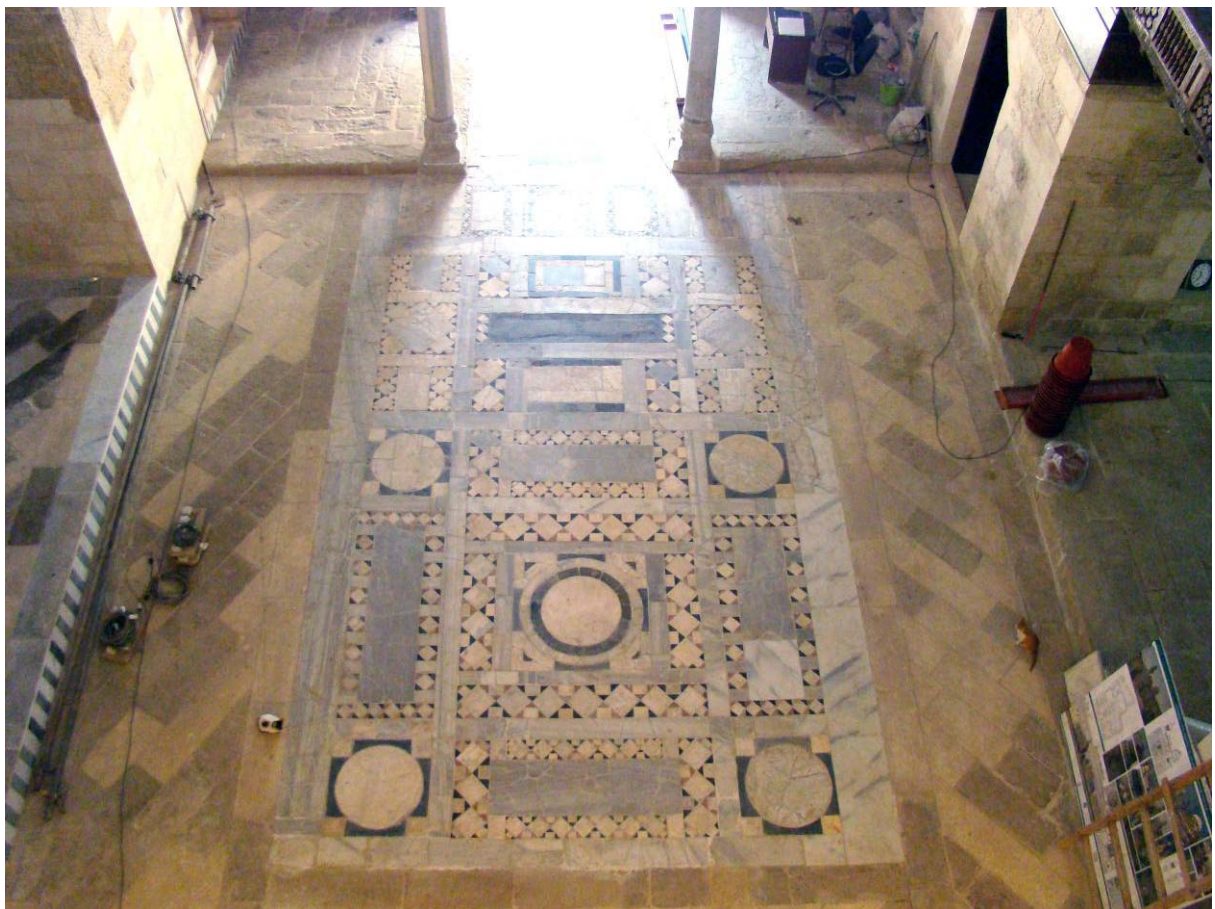
- The replacement and cleaning of stone tiles in the courtyard was completed.
- Conservation and cleaning of the marble tiling was completed. Damaged and missing parts of the marble were replaced following the original pattern.
- The conservation of the wooden *dikka* was finalized. After cleaning, the consolidation of the weak parts of the wooden took place following which the *dikka* was painted with a layer of micro-crystalline wax acting as a protection layer.



General view of the marble tiling in the courtyard during conservation



View of the marble replacement in the courtyard



Mosque courtyard after completion of tiling conservation

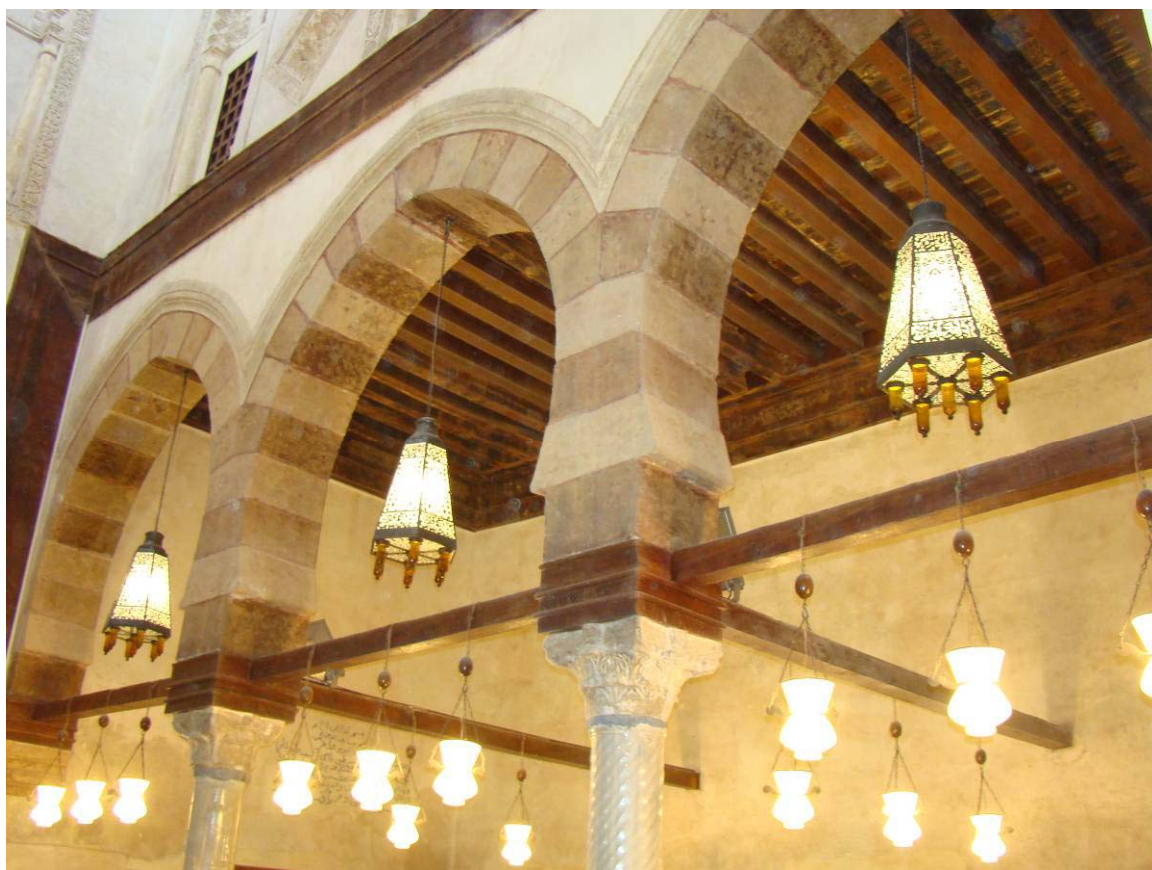
- The manufacturing of the brass and glass lamps (*Tanour & Mishkawat*) were completed and installed in place.



Southern Courtyard Façade



Western Courtyard Façade



Northern Courtyard Façade

Mosque Iwans:

1. West iwan

- During the past three month, the western iwan which was been used as a temporary site store was cleared.
- The replacement of few stone tiles took place, followed by the cleaning and re-pointing of the tiles.
- Re-pointing of the stone joints was completed.
- The lighting units for the illumination of the ceiling were installed.



Re-pointing of joints in the western iwan



Up-lighter illuminating façade and ceiling

2. Qibla iwan

- The tiling of the qibla iwan was in a very bad condition; the surface of the stone tiles was eroded, the levels were uneven due to a certain settlement which was in return filled with cement patches. It was found necessary to dismantle the whole *iwan* tiling in order to re-adjust the levels and install the electric wiring for the lighting and sound system. During the process, damaged stones were replaced when necessary and others were cleaned mechanically and re-used.
- The alternating, black and white tiles on the *qibla* step were cleaned and the missing ones were replaced.



Stone tile replacement activities



Installation of the marble panels on the Qibla step

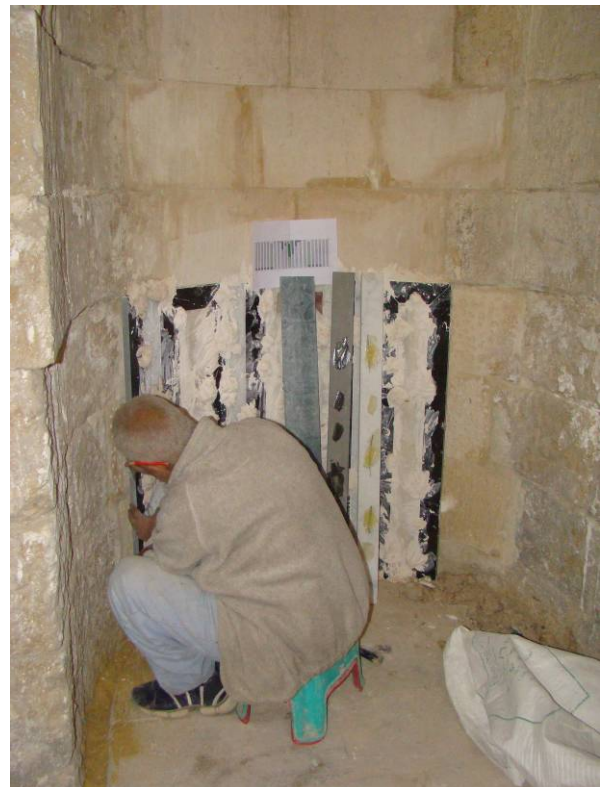


Cleaning of the marble tiles by poultices



View of the tiles after completion

- After research and negotiations with the SCA, it was agreed to complete the missing marble panels in the *mihrab* given that it is the main prayer area. The design followed the old pattern of the marble which was deducted from the remaining pieces, while the new type of marble used was the closest resembling the old pieces.
- The two marble bases of the marble columns in the *mihrab* façade were badly damaged and had to be replaced. The design was done following the shape of the old base.
- The cleaning and conservation of the two marble columns was also finalized. The left column was damaged and badly deteriorated; however, it was decided not to change it given the difficulty of finding a similar type of marble and as a matter of conserving the original column. Therefore, both columns were dismantled in order to change the base and complete the eroded parts.
Completing the eroded octagonal marble column was done on several stages; first, a wooden cast was made surrounding the column to enable completing the column. Following that, each side of the column was filled with epoxy mixed with marble powder which gives the blend a similar color to that of the marble. This was repeated several times giving the mixture time to settle and dry.
- Following those activities, the remaining stone parts of the *mihrab* were plastered as there was evidence of old plaster on the upper stone courses.



Installing the old marble panels in the mihrab



Dismantling the Mihrab marble columns



View of the badly eroded lower section of the column



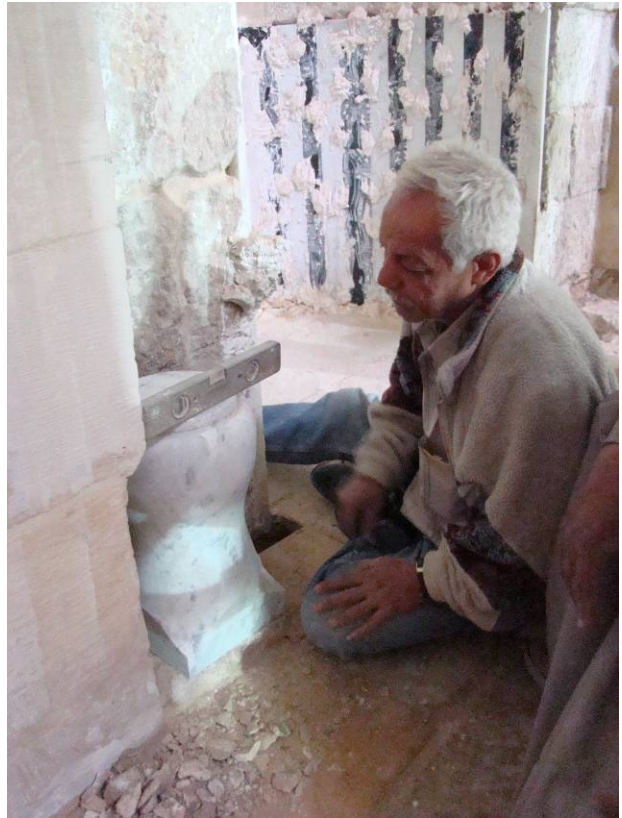
View of the cast surrounding the column



The filling procedure



View of the old marble base of the mihrab



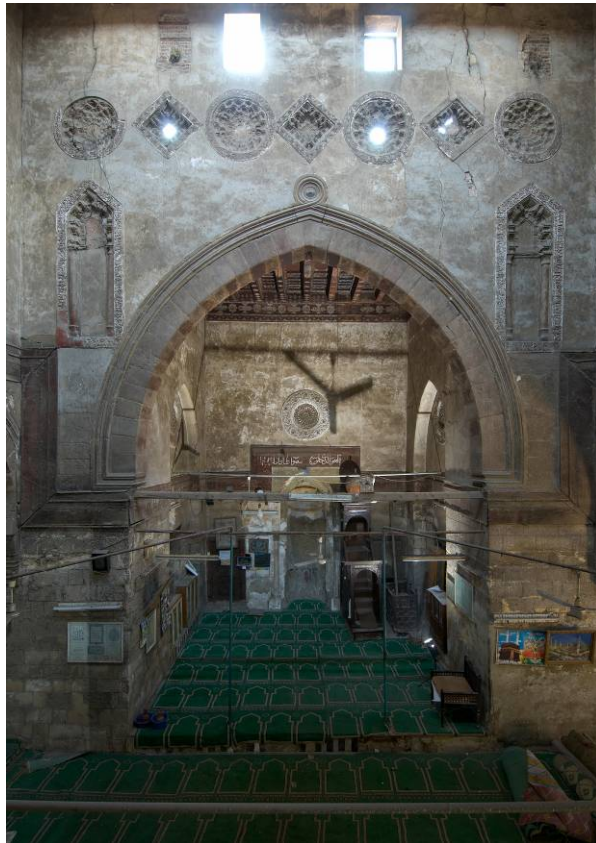
Installing the new marble column base



Stone conservation and re-pointing of joints



View of the Mibrab after restoration



View of the Qibla Iwan before and after conservation

2. South iwan:

- Fine restoration activities were finalized in this iwan.
- Plastering of the cracked and missing parts of the plaster were completed.
- The stone tiles were cleaned and few damaged ones replaced. The alternating black and white marble tiles missing on the step of the entrance to the mausoleum were also replaced.
- Two up lighters illuminating the decorated ceiling were installed as were the glass lamps (*mishkawat*)



Cleaning of the stone and marble tiles



Installation of ceiling up-lighters



View of the South iwan (mausoleum entrance) before and after restoration

4. North iwan:

- Cleaning and conservation of the wooden decorated ceiling was finalized.
- Plastering of the cracked and missing parts of the plaster were completed.
- The stone tiles were cleaned and the damaged ones replaced. Two up lighters illuminating the decorated ceiling were installed as were the glass lamps (*mishkawat*)



Cleaning of stone courses and re-pointing of joints



North Iwan after restoration

Woodwork restoration

- Cleaning and architectural restoration of the two main wooden doors that of the southern entrance and the ablution entrance have been finalized.
- All wooden elements (doors, windows, cupboards and shutters) have been restored, painted and installed.



Ablution door after restoration



Installation of inlaid cupboards

- The restoration of the ivory inlaid wooden cupboards has also been completed. Missing decorated ivory parts were replaced by carved camel bone.
- All inlaid wooden elements were painted with micro crystalline wax having a function of a protection coat.
- The cleaning and wooden architectural restoration of the *minbar* was finalized.

Traces of decorative paintings were found in the inner upper dome. Cleaning and consolidation of the paintings took place. Wooden shingles were manufactured and installed on the rear of the *minbar* as the original parts were missing. On the other hand, a wooden frame was installed on the bottom part of the *minbar*, slightly elevating it from the ground level, in order to protect the lower inlaid parts from future deterioration.



Restoration work on inlaid wooden doors; missing pieces replaced by carved camel bones



Applying micro-crystalline wax protection

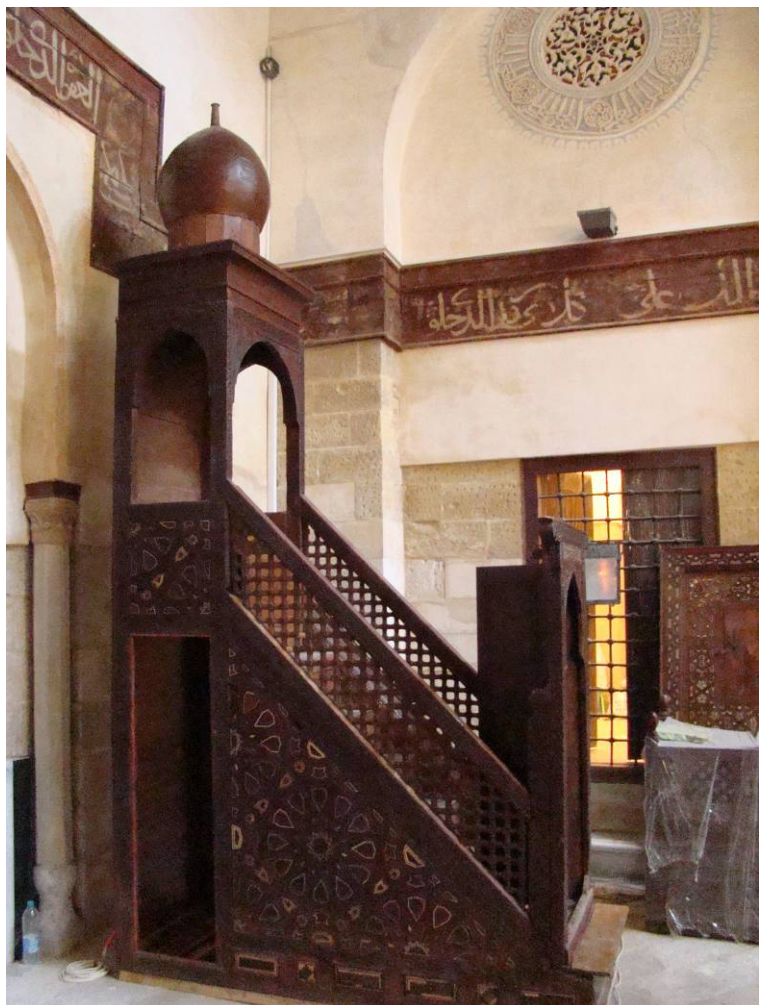


Wooden architectural restoration activities; View of the inner painted decoration found

View of the minbar during restoration



New turned wood replacing missing parts



View of the minbar after restoration

- The cleaning of the mausoleum wooden *shabed* was completed.
The structure was found in several pieces which were in a relatively deteriorated condition. Mechanical cleaning was done first; following architectural wooden restoration took place. Several parts of the *Shabed* and few carved wooden panels were missing. Those were replaced by new ones. The structure was painted, assembled and put in its place in the mausoleum.



View of the shabed before restoration



Mechanical cleaning activities



Restoration of the missing parts of the wooden panels



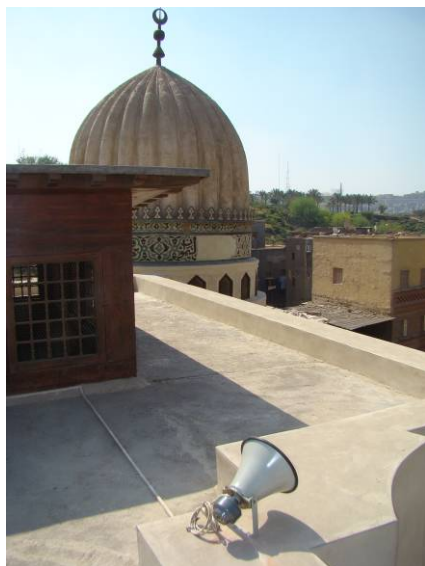
Architectural restoration activities



Assembling the wooden shabed

Electro-mechanical activities and Sound Systems

- The installation of the lighting units, fixtures and ground mounted electric plugs was completed.
- The installation of the sound system and speakers was also completed and tested; the sound system includes a rack holding the stereo and cassette devices, this rack is installed in the *minbar*. Four interior speakers: two in the *qibla* iwan, one in the western and another in the north iwan. Two horns for the exterior, one is installed on the southern roof and the other on the northern roof facing opposite direction. The selection of these brands and number of speakers was based on research and on the basis of the recommendations of a sound engineer consultant.



Horn installed on the roof



Main electric panel installed in the staircase entrance



Ground mounted plugs



Speakers in the qibla iwan

Dome Interior

- Conservation of the lower wooden inscription band has been finalized. Some areas where the traces of the quranic verse were missing were slightly re-touched.
- The consolidation of the paintings on the wooden octagon was finalized.
- Installation of the wooden inlaid cupboards was completed. Due to the recent vandalism of Islamic monuments, it was agreed with the SCA to install the inlaid part of two of the wooden shutters on the eastern and southern façade facing the interior instead of their original location facing the street.
- The tiling of the mausoleum was in a very bad condition due to the thin thickness of the original tiles and to an obvious settlement that had occurred previously. Therefore, it was decided to remove the damaged tiles in order to excavate and check the structural condition of the tombs below. The tomb opening was filled with rubble and dust. After the cleaning, the entrances to two chambers were revealed, having quite a distinguished angular design, each blocked by a large stone (door).

The right chamber was the men's burial tomb; several skeletons were found inside. However, one stone from the vault had fallen on the skeletons and damaged a few of them. Apart from the fallen stone, few other stone from the vault were displaced. This entailed removing the remains in order to restore the structure of the vault as a necessary safety major regarding the stability of the whole dome structure. The stone were put back into place and the joints were filled with mortar to ensure bonding.

The left chamber which was the burial tomb of the women was in a much better shape. The skeletons found were also very well conserved (almost ten were found). The structural condition of the stones and vault was stable. No major intervention was needed apart from the filling of joints and re-pointing which was successfully done without disturbing the order of the skeletons.

Following the stabilization and surveying of both chambers, the stone doors was put in place and two side brick walls were build to support the original stone which was covering the entrance. Blocks of stone were put in place next to the original triangular one in order to block the entrance and avoid it been filled rubble and fill in the future, hence preserving the entrance.



View during excavation in the mausoleum



Entrance to chambers



View of the right side tomb (men) with the fallen stone



Structural consolidation of the vault



View of the left tomb (women)

- Following, the tiling of the mausoleum proceeded. The tiles above the entrance of the tombs were distinguished from the remaining as an indication to its location in the case of a future need to open it.
- The cleaning and consolidation of the *mihrab* stucco decoration panel was completed. Missing and cracked areas were completed.
- The marble found in the *mihrab* area was cleaned and re-installed. It was agreed not to complete the marble panels since the pattern was not clear from the remains. The mihrab was plastered till the level of the marble given the traces of old plaster
- The condition of the columns base were badly deteriorated, hence they were replaced based on the shape of the original ones. The marble columns were then fixed in place.
- Installation of all electric wiring and lighting units (*mishkawat*) was completed. Four up-lighters were installed illuminating the upper part of the dome interior.



View of the brick wall built to support the stone blocks



Stone tiling activities in the mausoleum



Conservation of painted ceiling



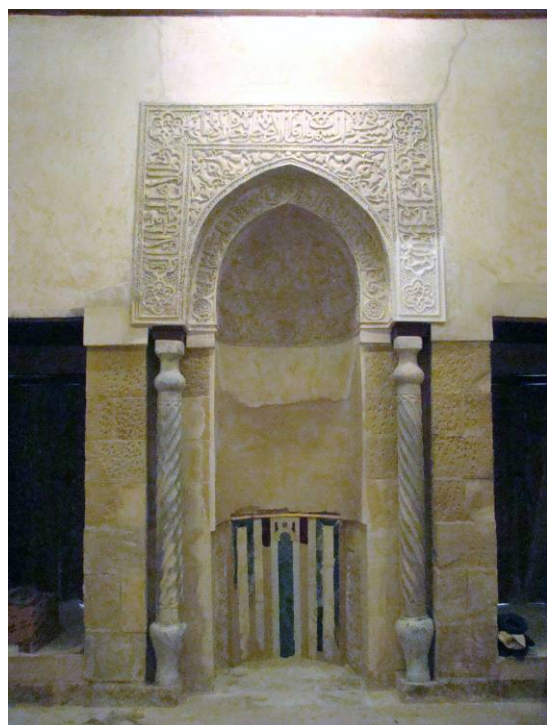
Completing the stucco decoration of the mihrab



Installing the marble panels



Fixing the marble columns



View of the mihrab after conservation



View of the mausoleum interior after conservation

2.5. ABLUTION AREA

aslamida

Work achievements during the period Jan. –Mar. 2009

- Construction of the ablution area and installation of all electro-mechanical/ sanitary wears and fittings were completed in December 2008.
- A water pump was purchased and installed in place.
- The activities which took place during the past three month were mainly tiling and plastering finishes in the entrance and vestibule area.
- All lighting units were installed.



Ablution area entrance



Tiling of the vestibule area



The Vestibule



The toilettes corridor



View of the ablution area

2.6. THE SITE SUPERVISION TEAM

ASLASUPER

Work achievements in the period Jan. –Mar. 2009

Architectural documentation activities and intervention drawings are being finalized.

Scope of work during the month April 2009

- Complete minor and final finishing and cleaning activities of the mosque.
- Complete the missing words of the verses on the dome exterior inscription band creating only the outline.
- Compiling a full set of drawings of the existing conditions and as built architectural drawings.
- Finalize a proposal concerning the re-use of several spaces and rooms in the mosque.
- Proceed with the legal steps concerning handing over the mosque to the antiquities and Waqf.

Composition of the team and responsibilities at end of March

The Aga-Khan Trust for Culture:

- Christophe Bouleau, Conservation architect – Conservation Programme Officer - AKTC
- Dina Bakhoun, Engineer - Site manager, AKCS-E
- Lara Iskander, Architect
- Mohamed Lashien, Architect
- Hamdi Sultan, Main Forman
- Walid Omar, Procurement officer
- Mina William, Scaffolding specialist

Consultant (during the reported period)

- Matjaz Kacicnik, Photographer

Date: 12 April 2009

Signature: Dina Bakhoun

Lara Iskander