

Original Research Article

## An investigation of the changes in tile decorations on the facade of the southern veranda of the Atiq Jame Mosque in Isfahan after the restoration works in the years 1951-1938

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### Abstract

The Atiq Jame Mosque in Isfahan, Iran, is a significant historical architectural site known for its diverse structures and decorations spanning different eras. Often referred to as the encyclopedia of Islamic Architecture in Iran, this mosque is of great importance in terms of its historical interventions. The initial decades of the contemporary history marked a pivotal moment in the restoration and conservation of cultural heritage in Iran. These early years laid the foundation for modern restoration practices that were subsequently emulated. Therefore, it is essential to review these interventions to enhance the current restoration activities with a focus on principles such as minimal intervention and the preservation of authenticity. This study specifically examines the southern veranda of the Atiq Jame Mosque for which no written document of damage or intervention is available. The research aims to address the questions ‘what damages did the veranda incur prior to the interventions from 1938 to 1951?’, ‘how did it transform after the restoration?’, and ‘how do these interventions align with modern principles of restoration and conservation?’ To answer these questions, historical visual documents depicting the elevation of the southern veranda were collected, and the relevant restoration texts were analyzed. The gathered photos were then organized chronologically to compare them with the current state of the veranda. The significant finding through this process included the identification of the inscriptions of Mohammad Reza Imami Isfahani, a renowned calligrapher from the Safavid period. Upon a survey of the interventions, it becomes evident that they exceeded what was necessary and were somewhat personalized. It appears that the interventions were carried out without considering the previous photographs of the original state of the building. Furthermore, fundamental principles such as minimal interventions, documentation, and the preservation of historical evidence were not adequately respected. This article emphasizes the importance of surveying and critically analyzing historical visual documents to enhance restoration interventions while preserving authenticity. It can, thus, be ensured that future restoration efforts comply with the established principles and safeguard the historical significance of architectural treasures like the Atiq Jame Mosque.



## Extended Abstract

### 1. Introduction

The Atiq Jame Mosque in Isfahan, Iran, is a significant historical architectural site known for its diverse structures and decorations spanning different eras. Often referred to as the encyclopedia of the Islamic Architecture in Iran, this mosque is of great importance in terms of its historical interventions. The initial decades of the contemporary history marked a pivotal moment in the restoration and conservation of the cultural heritage in Iran. These early years laid the foundation for modern restoration practices that were subsequently emulated. Therefore, it is essential to review these interventions to enhance the current restoration activities, focusing on principles such as minimal intervention and the preservation of authenticity.

This study specifically examines the southern veranda of the Atiq Jame Mosque for which no written documentation of damages or interventions is available. The research aims to address a few questions including ‘what damages did the veranda incur prior to the interventions from 1938 to 1951?’, ‘how did it transform after the restoration?’, and ‘how do these interventions comply with the modern principles of restoration and conservation?’

### 2. Research Methodology

To answer these questions, the historical visual documents depicting the southern veranda elevation were collected, and the relevant restoration texts were analyzed. The gathered photos were then organized chronologically to compare them with the current state of the veranda.

### 3. Results and discussion

Through this process, the significant result gained was the identification of the calligrapher Mohammad Reza Imami Isfahani, a renowned calligrapher from the Safavid period.

Upon surveying and studying the interventions, it emerged that they exceeded what was necessary and were somewhat personalized. It appears that the interventions were carried out without considering the previous photographs of the original state of the building. Furthermore, fundamental principles such as minimal interventions, documentation, and the preservation of historical evidence were not adequately respected.

### 4. Conclusion

This article emphasizes the importance of surveying and critically analyzing historical visual documents to enhance restoration interventions while preserving authenticity. This helps to ensure that future restoration efforts will comply with the established principles and safeguard the historical significance of architectural treasures like the Atiq Jame Mosque.

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