Dome of the Treasury or Dome of Oil in the Prophet’s Mosque
A Historical and Archaeological Study
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Summary
The Holy Mosque of Medina occupies a place of great importance in the hearts of Muslims worldwide; it is the second of the two holy mosques and the reward of praying in it is equal to that of a thousand prayers in other mosques with the exception of the Holy Mosque in Mecca. Constructed by the seal of the prophets Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and his revered companions, it is where numerous chapters of the Quran were revealed, and between its pillars was designated "al Rawda" a Garden of Paradise. Many of the Prophet's 'hadeeth' (sayings) were narrated within the Mosque where the Prophet would discuss with his companion’s affairs of the religion and the world. Later, the Mosque became the nucleus of the first Islamic State, forming the base for the first battles and conquests of Islamic history. Within its walls, the prophet welcomed the ambassadors of various states and tribes, Arab and otherwise. And finally, it is the final resting place of the Blessed Prophet (PBUH), and next to him are buried his companions Abu Bakr Al Siddique and Omar bin Al Khattab. In view of the Mosque’s significant religious, spiritual and historical status, caliphs, sultans, kings, princes and even common people over the span of fourteen centuries to this day have been deeply invested in its construction, expansion, decoration, cleanliness and service.

This paper is a historical and archaeological study of an architectural phenomenon introduced to the haram piazza of the Prophet’s Mosque in the city of Medina during the Abbasid era known as “Dome of the Treasury” or “Dome of Oil” or “Dome of Wax”. This study deals with the origins of the dome, its function, description, and the most prominent changes brought upon it until its disappearance. To achieve these objectives, the researcher tracked mentions of the dome by historians and travelers in addition to Muslim and foreign geographers. The research also includes an extensive study of some Islamic manuscripts and drawings made by foreign travelers that depicted the most prominent architectural features of the dome. In addition, it presents an account of the most eminent examples of domes of treasury and oil that were erected in the courtyards of various mosques in the Arab world.

The paper begins with an introduction, the central topic of the study, its importance and objectives, then proceeds with research terminology, method of research, previous studies as well as research procedures and ends with an analysis of the most important conclusions drawn by the author of the study.

Introduction:
In the name of God, prayers and peace be upon the best God’s creation, our prophet Mohammed and his reverend, and then:
The Holy Mosque of Medina has received various aspects of care and attention from the caliphs, sultans, governors and even common people of Muslims over the span of Islamic Ages, it has included; the protection of its construction, expansion, restoration and

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cleanliness: that is the benefactors have stopped many of Waqf (Religious Endowments) and charitable buildings in the inside and outside of the Arabic Island, to serve the Prophet’s Mosque, and spend on it and its employees and servants.

This paper is a study of one of architectural phenomenon which was standing in the haram piazza of the Prophet’s Mosque in the city of Medina. The phenomenon was known as “Dome of the Treasury” or “Dome of Oil” or “Dome of Wax”, in the historical sources, the manuscripts pictures, and on the drawings of ceramic tiles ..etc .This Dome was mentioned and its function and figure were shown by historians, travelers, and foreign geographers . Although of the fact that this building was removed in the Ottoman Empire Era, the drawings of travelers and the pictures of manuscripts as well as drawings on the different masterpieces have preserved for us its general figure and its location from Prophet’s Mosque and this is what this study will deal with.

The Problem of the Research:
The problem of the research lies in the absence of a clear and direct information which handle the idea of the research, besides the omission of the references and researches which have dealt with the architecture history of the Prophet’s Mosque to study this architectural phenomenon independently and good enough.

The importance of the Research:
The importance of the research lies on many points:

1- The Haram Piazza has got a distinctive status and holiness by the whole Muslims all over the world, and all what is related with the architecture of the Prophet’s Mosque gaining the specific importance due to its hight location in that pure place.
2- Conducting a historical study for the prominent incidents which are related with the Treasury or the Dome -place of study- throughout the historical sources, foreign geographers, and travelers.
3- Conducting a descriptive archeological for one of the architectural phenomenon that have been established in the Prophet’s Mosque which is attracting the travelers.
4- Based on what the researcher knows: the mentioned topic has not been studied in a scientific, independent, and good enough study before.
5- The Methodology that the researcher depended on: based on studying the topic of the research:(the Dome of the Treasury or the Dome of Oil in the Prophet’s Mosque-historical and archeological study.
6- The study has been attached with many illustrated forms and plates which contribute in enriching the study and explaining its objectives.
7- The researcher has depended on practical method in translating flags and places and documenting the references and sources who has depended on.

The Objectives of the Research:
The research is seeking for achieving a bunch of objectives; some of it:

1- Reading the origin of this architectural phenomenon through tracking what have been mentioned on it in the historical sources, foreign geographers, and travelers.
2- Knowing the location, description, and shape of this Dome through induction the drawings of travelers, the pictures of related Islamic Manuscripts.
3- Knowing the important changes and incidents that have occurred on this architectural phenomenon throughout different historical ages.

**Terminology of the Research:**

1- Prophet’s Mosque: the second of the two holy Mosques, that is where the tomb of the Messenger (PBUH), and it is located in the Prophet’s Dignified City.
2- Medina: its name is Yathrib pre-Islam and it is called the Prophet’s City.
3- The Dome of Treasury or the Dome of Wax: a building has been built in the Haram Piazza, and the main purpose of it to preserve the different tools of the Mosque; stores, mattress and so on, and preserving the means of power such as; Lamps, Saddle and preserving the flammable materials to be far from the place of praying in the Mosque and its sided-lanes as well as the Holy Quran, of the Caliph Rashid Ottoman may God be pleased him, has being preserved in it, and it was covered by the Dome which has been known by it.

**The Method of the Research:**

The researcher has adopted the Induction Method in the historical study of the Monument throughout the related historical sources and references; to conclude the prominent events that have occurred on the architecture of the Store or the Dome -the place of the study-, and he has followed the Descriptive Archeological Method to describe the Dome and to study its architecture, by depending on writings, foreign geographers, and travelers, the pictures of manuscripts the drawings on the masterpieces that have documented the figure of that Dome and its shape.

**The Previous Study:**

Based on what the researcher knows the topic of the research:( the Dome of the Treasury or the Dome of oil in the Prophet’s Mosque- a Historical and Archeological study) has not got an independent and a updated research yet, but the information related to the research topic were shattered in some of different sources and references.

**The Results of the Research:**

This research has come to a bunch of results; we will sum up them as the following:

1- The names which have been called on this architecture phenomenon have varied, whether in the historical sources or in pictures of manuscripts, and it was known with names such as (the Dome of the Treasury), or (the Treasury of Oi) l, or (the Treasury of Wax), or (the Treasury).
2- The Treasury or the Dome of Oil has been built in the Prophet’s Mosque in the year(413H/1022H) and according to what (Ibn Farhun) mentioned and who quoted from the historians, that the first architect was in the year (576H/1180 AD) in the Abbasid Caliph Era (Al-Nnasir Ladayn Allah).
3- The Abbasid Caliph (Al-Mahdi) was the last one who have done the architect for the Prophet's Mosque before the year (413H/1022H) when the Geographer (Al-Bakri) has seen it,
perhaps the Dome was included in that architect, this opinion needs a documented evidence, the historical sources might prove it soon - by God’s Will.

4- The Abbasid Caliph (Al-Nnasir Ladyn Allah). has perhaps reconstructed the Treasury and Dome inside the architect which he has done for the Prophet’s Mosque in the year (576H/1022AD) that is why the Dome was attributed to him.

5- The function of the Treasury or the Dome, before the year (413H/1022H), was not only for storing the tools of the Mosque and the equipments of lighting, but it was a center for monitoring prayer times.

6- The Treasury or the Dome of Oil in the Prophet’s Mosque was a headquarters to memorize the Ottoman’s holy book(Quran) - may God be pleased with him- when the Mosque had burnt for the first time in the year (654 H/1256 AD), the mentioned Dome has protected the holy book(Quran) from burning for being far from the surrounded lanes with the Haram Piazza.

7- The Treasury or the Dome in the Prophet’s Mosque was a headquarters to preserve the currency (coins) and the imprisoned and precious Waqif on the Mosque; such as: the golden and silver Lamps and the other old masterpieces. The historical sources have not overlooked to mention who has broken the Treasury and has lost its precious as well as has attacked on the sanctity of the Prophet’s Dignified Mosque.

8- The historical sources have described the Dome has a big size, has white color, has only one entrance from its eastern side and its location was closest to the northern side of the Haram Piazza of the Prophet’s Mosque.

9- The Treasury or the Dome was removed from the Haram Piazza of the Prophet’s Mosque in the architect of Sultan (Abdul-Majeed khan), the year (1294 H/ 1877 AD), and the level of the Haram Piazza has been reduced from the level of its surrounding lanes.

10- Most of scribes and artists who have drawn the milestones of the Prophet’s Mosque by documenting the Dome whether in the pictures of the manuscripts, or in the drawings of ceramic tiles, and the technical methods have varied concerning those drawings according to the variation of cultures, nations and the regions of its conductors, it has emerged affected by the technical methods that was being followed in the Persian’s country, Anatolia, India and east of Asia and so on.

11- The idea of constructing an independent building in the Haram Piazzas in the mosques was not exclusively for the Prophet’s Mosque, but it has emerged some examples for those domes: Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, the Holy Mosque in Mecca, the Big Mosque in Hama city and the Big Mosque in Sana’a, and those buildings’ functions have varied between being stores for Mosque’s tools or centers for monitoring prayer times.

12- The researcher thinks that the Abbasid Caliph (Al-Mahdi) is most likely the adapter of the idea of building the domes of the treasuries and the domed of monitoring the times (the domes of the hours), in the Haram Piazzas of the whole mosques whether in the Prophet’s Mosque, or the Holy Mosque in Mecca, or Umayyad Mosque in Damascus or in the Big Mosque in Hama city, even if these historical sources have not mentioned it frankly, but all those domes have emerged after restorations and increases that have been conducted on those facilities by the mentioned above Caliph.
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