Drs. Mehmet TÜTÜNCÜ

TOPLU MAKALELER / COLLECTED STUDIES

I. CİLT / VOLUME I

I. Kudüs ve Türkler - Jerusalem and Turks Studies

II. Hollanda Türkiye İlişkilerinin 400. Yılı - Dutch Turkish Relations

III. OSMANLILAR VE HAC - Ottomans and Hajj

IV. EVLİYA ÇELEBİNİN İZİNDE – On the trails of Evliya Çelebi

Toplumakaleler_BNW.indd 1 07-08-17 11:04

SOTA PUBLICATIONS / SOTA YAYINLARI
Series editor: Mehmet Tütüncü
CORPUS OF TURKISH ISLAMIC INSCRIPTIONS /
TÜRK İSLAM KİTABELERİ DİZİSİ

1. Mehmet Tütüncü*, Turkish Jerusalem (1516-1917), Ottoman Inscriptions from Jerusalem and Other Palestinian Cities,* Haarlem, 2006. ISBN 90-807403-4-9
2. Mehmet Tütüncü, *Turkish Palestine (1069-1917) Inscriptions from al-Khalil (Hebron), Nebi Musa and Other Palestinian Cities under Turkish Rule* , Haarlem, 2008. ISBN 978-90-6921-004-9
3. Leyla Yılmaz, *Antalya'da Türk Dönemi Kitabeleri, Haarlem 2009. ISBN* 978-90-6921-005-6
4. Nurcan Boşdurmaz, *Bosna Hersek Mezartaşları*, Haarlem 2011, ISBN 978-90-6921-006-3
5. Mehmet Tütüncü, *Cezayir'de Osmanlı İzleri 314 yıllık Türk Hakimiyetinde Cezayirden Kitabeler. Eserler*, *Portreler,* İstanbul-Haarlem, 2012. ISBN 978-90-6921-000-1
6. Emine Karpuz, *Gaferyad Tarihi, Karaman'ın Kazımkarabekir İlçesinde Tarihi eserler, Kültür ve Kitabeler*, Haarlem 2015, ISBN 978-90-6921-008-7
7. Mehmet Tütüncü, *Corpus of Ottoman Inscriptions from Albania and Montenegro*, Mehmet Tütüncü. Haarlem 2017, ISBN 978-90-6921-010-1
8. Mustafa Hami, *Sevkü'l-askeri'l-cedîd der-ahd-i Sultân Mecîd*, facsimile, transliteration and translation, with an introduction by Mehmet Tütüncü, Cihan Okuyucu and Klaus Kreíser Haarlem 2017 , ISBN 978-90-6921-011-7
9. Mehmet Tütüncü, *Toplu makaleler - Collected Studıes I*. Kudüs ve Türkler, Hollanda Türkiye İlişkiler, Osmanlılar ve Hac ve Evliya Çelebi'nin İzinde Haarlem 2017 474p, ISBN 978-90-6921-012-4
10. Mehmet Tütüncü, *Toplu makaleler II - Collected Studies II*.Kitabe Araştımaları, Cezayir ve Akdeniz, Arnavutluk ve Çeşitli yazılar Haarlem 2017, 465p. ISBN 978-90-6921-013-1
11. M. Zeki İbrahimgil Rodos adasi´nda osmanli mirasi / Ottoman heritage in Rhodes Island, Haarlem, 2018/ ISBN 978-90-6921-007-0
12. Mehmet Tütüncü, Romanya ve Karadeniz çevresinde Osmanlı Kitabeleri, Haarlem 2018

Toplumakaleler_BNW.indd 2 07-08-17 11:04

MEHMET TÜTÜNCÜ

Toplu Makaleler I / Collected Studies I

ISBN 978-90-6921-012-4
CORPUS OF TURKISH ISLAMIC INSCRIPTIONS nr.9
TÜRK İSLAM KİTABELERİ DİZİSİ no:9

I. Kudüs ve Türkler - Turkish Jerusalem Studies

II. Hollanda Türkiye İlişkilerinin 400. Yılı - Dutch Turkish Relations

III. OSMANLILAR VE HAC - Ottomans and Hajj

IV. EVLİYA ÇELEBİNİN İZİNDE – On the trails of Evliya Çelebi

© Copyright 2017, Mehmet Tütüncü
All rights reserved. No part of this book and may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying and recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the publisher and copyright holder.

Publisher:
SOTA / Research Centre for Tukish and Arabic World
Haarlem / Netherlands
Tel: + 31 23 5292883
Email: *sotapublishing@gmail.com*
Web: *www.turkistan.org*

Toplumakaleler_BNW.indd 3 07-08-17 11:04

The Hajj: Collected Essays

Edited by Venetia Porter and Liana Saif

The British Museum

Arts & Humanities Research Council

376

Toplumakaleler_BNW.indd 376 07-08-17 11:10

Chapter 6
Royal Ottoman Inscriptions on the Istanbul to Mecca Pilgrimage Route (*Darb al-Hajj al-Shami*)

Mehmet Tütüncü

Introduction

After the defeat of the Mamluk sultanate in 1517, almost all the lands of the Middle East and Northern Africa were unified under the Ottoman Empire. Subsequently, the holy places – Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem – became part of the Ottoman state. Ottoman sultans, now carrying the honorific title of *Khadim al-Haramayn* (Custodian of the Two Holy Sanctuaries) were also considered to be the only legitimate caliphs and became the protectors of the Hajj routes. The maintenance and the security of these routes were imperial tasks that underlined their religious leadership. Therefore, Ottoman sultans ordered the rebuilding and restoration of the old Hajj route from Damascus to Mecca and extended it to Istanbul. This route was also a part of an old Christian pilgrimage route leading to Jerusalem and was used for the purposes of trade and commerce.

In the northern part of the route from Istanbul to Damascus, the Ottoman sultans ordered the construction of many amenities and large complexes for commercial activities.[1] In the southern parts, they built other facilities with forts and water reservoirs for the travellers and the pilgrims heading to Mecca.[2] In the 20th century, the Ottoman sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) ordered the building of the Hijaz Railroad, which would connect Istanbul with the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

Many inscriptions are found along the Ottoman Hajj route and on its buildings.[3] Although it is likely that all the forts on the Hajj route had inscriptions detailing when and by whom they were built, as well as any subsequent restoration or re-building, unfortunately only a few of these have survived. Currently there are only 19 Ottoman inscriptions to have been discovered on the Hajj route south of Damascus (**Table 1**). The earliest surviving inscriptions are from the year 1531 (at al-Akhdar) some 15 years after the Turkish victory over the Mamluks. The latest inscriptions are from Haifa from the year 1319/1901–2.

In this contribution I will focus on the inscriptions of Ma'an in Jordan, of Tabuk and Qal'at Mu'azzam in Saudi Arabia, and those found near the Hijaz Railway station at Haifa in Palestine. The versions I present here are based on recent photos taken during a trip to Saudi Arabia.

Ma'an

Ma'an in Jordan was one of the last Hajj stations before entering the Arabian Peninsula. The Ottomans built a fort and a water reservoir there. An inscription describing this is preserved in the fort. This inscription was discovered in the 'Darb al-Hajj' survey'[4] by Andrew Petersen and it has been a source of great interest ever since. It was recently published in Arabic,[5] and in 2012 by the present author.[6] The 2011 publication by Rashdan and Sha'ban is useful as it provides a historical background and contains many illuminating images and drawings. However, the reading of the inscription is incorrect in parts and in this article, I would like to present a revised and, in my opinion, more accurate reading.

The famous Ottoman traveller Evliya Çelebi (1611–82) visited Ma'an in 1681. In his *Seyahatname*, he mentions an inscription that gives the date of construction, but he says with regret that he could not copy its content. He wrote:

Toplumakaleler_BNW.indd 377 07-08-17 11:10

Table 1 List of inscriptions from the Damascus Hajj Route (Jaussen 1907 and Ghabban 2012)

Number	Place	Date	Size = lines	Current status	Language used
1	Al-Akhdar – Saudi Arabia	938/1531	40 x 55 = 4	National Museum, Riyadh	Turkish
2	Al-Akhdar	938/1531	1.15 x 53	National Museum, Riyadh	Arabic
3	Ma'an – Jordan	971/1563	4	*in situ*	Turkish
4	Dhat al-Hajj – Saudi Arabia	971/1563	40 x 50 =5	*in situ*	Arabic
5	Mu'azzam – Saudi Arabia	1031/1622	?	*in situ*	Turkish?
6	Mu'azzam	1031/1622	4	*in situ*	Turkish
7	Mu'azzam	1031/1622	4	*in situ*	Turkish
8	Mu'azzam	1031?/1622	6	*in situ*	Turkish
9	Tabuk – Saudi Arabia	1064/1653	8	*in situ*	Arabic
10	Tabuk	1064/1615	3	Destroyed	Arabic
11	Al-Akhdar	1115/1703	7	*in situ*	Arabic
12	Hasa – Jordan	1174/1760	3	Destroyed	Arabic
13	Dab'a – Jordan	1189/1766–7	3	Destroyed	Arabic
14	Fassu'a – Jordan			Destroyed	? Arabic
15	Al-Akhdar	Unknown	4	National Museum, Riyadh	Arabic
16	Tabuk	1260/1844	8	Destroyed	Arabic
17	Dhat al-Hajj	1266/1850	54 x 58 = 9	National Museum, Riyadh	Arabic
18	Tabuk	1319/1901	6	Destroyed	Turkish
19	Haifa – Palestine	1319/1901	6	*in situ*	Arabic/ Turkish

'Above the door, there is a date, but because we were in a hurry, we could not write it down'.[7]

The inscription (**Pl. 1**) is expertly carved onto a marble panel and is divided into eight cartouches in four horizontal bands. The second and third lines are partly destroyed, but from the visible letters we can fill in the blanks. It is inscribed in Turkish and forms one of the most beautiful Ottoman inscriptions in Arabia:

جهانك شاه هفت اقليمي عثمان اوغلينك

ضمير خير انديشينه الهام ابلدى رحمان

[...]قباد پاشا قوليله عسكر شامه

معانده ابلدى بر برج و بركه بايمغي فرمان

(ط.)ريفن (ب)يت معمورك ادوب بحمدالله تعمير

اولب حجاج ايد داعي زهي خير و زهي احسان

بو احقير بنده سي كاتب سكونى ديدى تاريخن

معانده بايدى برج بركه سلطان سليمان

Turkish transcription of the inscription

Cihânın şâh-ı heft-iklîmi Osmânoğlu'nun
Zamîr-i hayr-endîşine ilhâm eyledi Rahmân
… Kubad Paşa kuluyla asker-i Şam'a
Ma'an'da eyledi bir burc u birke yapmağı ferman
Tarîkin beyt-i ma'mûrun edüp ta'mîr bi-hamdillâh
Olup huccâc ebed dâ'î zihî hayr u zihî ihsân
Bu ahkar bendesi kâtib Sukûnî dedi tarîhin
Ma'an'da yapdı burc [u] birkeyi Sultân Süleyman (971)

English translation

The Lord of the world and seven climes, the Ottoman
The merciful ordered them to do beneficence.
[Through] … Kubad Pasha his officer in Syria;
He ordered the building of a fort and a water reservoir in Ma'an.
He repaired – praise to God – the road to the holy site,
The pilgrims prayed: what charity and what benevolence.
Humble slave scribe Sükuni composed its chronogram:
In Ma'an Sultan Süleyman built a fort and a water reservoir
(971)

The date is written in the last line in figures but also in the numerical value of the letters. The chronogram reads as follows:

معانده	بايدى	برج	بركه،	سلطان	سليمان			
170	27	205	227	1	150	191	=	971/1563

The inscription clearly draws attention to the Ottoman's imperial force by describing Sultan Süleyman as the 'ruler of the seven climes and as the one who ordered the construction of the fort and water reservoir. It also gives a

Plate 1 Ottoman Turkish inscription from the fort at Ma'an above the entrance (photo: Andrew Petersen)



Toplumakaleler_BNW.indd 378 07-08-17 11:10



Plate 2 Fort in Tabuk (photo: Sami Saleh 'Abd al-Malik)

good insight into the reasons why the Ottoman sultans decided to carry out these construction developments along the route, namely to do beneficence and receive blessings from the prayers of pilgrims. The people mentioned in the inscription are the scribe Sükuni and the Qubad Pasha the governor of Damascus who was from the Ramazanid dynasty in southern Turkey.

Tabuk

Ottoman inscriptions also appear at the Hajj station of Tabuk which was one of the most important stations on the Hajj route (**Pl. 2**). Here the Ottomans built a fort, which dates back to the rule of Sultan Süleyman I (r. 1520–66). The fort consisted of two storeys: the ground floor contained an open courtyard, a number of rooms, a mosque and a well, with stairs that led to the first floor which in turn contained an open courtyard, a mosque, a number of rooms and stairs leading to the adjoining watchtowers. This fort is one of the most important monuments in the area.

There are four imperial inscriptions in Tabuk. One of them is the inscription of Sultan Mehmed IV (r. 1648–87), which will be described below. Three more inscriptions at Tabuk highlight the importance of the city along the Hajj route. One of these inscriptions is from the rule of Sultan Abdülmecid (r. 1839–61), dating specifically to 1260/1845. It records the repair of the mosque inside the fort. Another dates to 1319/1901 from the rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) and it records the repair of a water reservoir. These royal inscriptions referring to different sultans clearly indicate the importance of Tabuk to the Ottoman sultans as guardians and servants of the pilgrimage route. For discussion in this article, I selected the inscription of Sultan Mehmed IV.

This Arabic inscription at Tabuk is unique as it is inscribed on a series of ceramic tiles set within a rectangular recessed panel above the entrance to the fort. With the exception of this example, all inscriptions were inscribed on stone along the Damascus Hajj route.

Evliya Çelebi mentions this inscription in 1672 in his *Seyahatname*.[8] In Book 9 he transcribes it as follows:

> Simâle nâzır bir demir kapusu vardır. Atebe-i ulyâsı üzre kâsî-i Çîn içre bu târîh (düsürme) tahrîr olunmusdur: (Târîh)
> Fî eyyâmi Mevlânâ es-Sultân Mehemmed Hân ibn İbrâhîm Hân medde zillahu bi-sebebi tamîri Emîn-i Defteri Dimaşk Nâşifzade Mehemmed el Fakîr sene 1062.[9]

Translation

> There is a metal door in the north side of the building. Above this door is written a date with an inscription on tiles. The date is as follows:
> During the times of our Master\Sultan Mehmed Khan son of Ibrahim Khan may Allah prolong his reign till the end of time, the person involved was the treasurer from Damascus Nasifzade poor Mehmed year 1062.

The sultan in question is Sultan Mehmed IV (r. 1648–87). Evliya notes the year as 1062/1651 but this is incorrect as I have read the inscription and it shows the year as 1064/1653. Such an error is easy to make because the digit 4 is written in a way that makes it appear as a 2. Nonetheless, from Evliya's description, we can also figure out the destroyed part of the name in line 7 as follows: *Nâşifzade defterci* (the treasurer or secretary from the Nashifzade family).





Plate 3 (far left) Inscription in front of the fort at Tabuk in 2001 (photo: Mehmet Tütüncü)

Plate 4 (left) Replica inscription in front of the fort at Tabuk in 2012 (photo: Sami Saleh 'Abd al-Malik)

The Turkish writer Söylemezoğlu Süleyman Şefik bin ʻAli Kemâlî who performed the Hajj in 1890 together with his father wrote an extensive description of his travels.[10] He noted in his book that the fort of Tabuk was built by Selim I and later restored by Sultan Mehmed Khan. He described an inscription on its doorway which was installed on green ceramics and dates to 1064/1653. He mentioned with regret that the Arabs had destroyed many parts of this inscription with their bullets and so as a result he had great difficulties in reading the content. There is a picture from 2001 of this inscription (**Pl. 3**) although it is very difficult to read.

A recent photograph of the inscription shows that the original was removed and replaced with a replica. It reads:

أمر بتجديد وتعمير هذه القلعة المباركة

حضرة مولانا السلطان ابن السلطان

السلطان محمد خان ابن السلطان ابراهيم

خان ابن السلطان احمد خان ابن

عثمان خلد الله ملكه الى اخر الزمان

وتشرف بمباشره خدمتها العبد الفقير

الى الله محمد ابن الناشف زاده دفترجي بدمشق

الشام غفر الله له في سنة أربع و ستمين و الف

English translation

The reconstruction and renewal of this blessed fort was ordered by
Our present lord Sultan son of the Sultan
Sultan Mehmed I Khan son of the Sultan Ibrahim
Khan son of the Sultan Ah[med]
Osman, may Allah prolong his reign till the end of times
And this poor servant was honoured for his service to the service of Allah Mehmed ibn al-Nashshifzade Defteri of Damascus
in Syria may Allah pardon him in the year 1064 [1654 AD]

Al-Mu‘azzam

Al-Mu‘azzam fort is located half way between Tabuk and Mada’in Saleh (**Pl. 5**). It was built to guard the water reservoir of al-Mu‘azzam.[11] Three inscriptions are found on the fort, all in Ottoman Turkish. Although Jaussen and Savignac saw the inscriptions, they were, unfortunately, unable to make copies at the time. They published translations based on copies that had been made and sent to them at the École Biblique in Jerusalem made by one of the telegraph operators at al-Mu‘azzam.[12] Ghabban has republished all the inscriptions, with photos.[13] Relying on the photos of Ghabban, I published these inscriptions in 2012.[14] However, due to the poor quality of the photos, my assessment was not conclusive. During a trip in 2013, I was able to visit the fort and take pictures of the inscriptions *in situ*. The following readings are based on these new pictures:

Inscription A (Pl. 6)

بحق كعبة وحنان ومنان	شهنشا هي جهانة سلطان عثمان
منزيل قلعة يابدي راه حجده	معظم بركة سي نامنه عثمان
الهي سلطنلره يرقرار ايت	حبيبك حرمتي هم جار ياران
ولي فكر ايلر ايكن تاريخي	ديدي هاتيف كمالي خير احسان
كتبه يوسف	سنة ١٠٣١

Turkish transliteration

Bi-hakk-ı Kaʻbe ve ve Hannân ve Mennân Şehinşâh-ı cihân Sultan ʻOthman
Menzil-i kalʻa yapdı râh-ı hacda Muazzam birkesi nâmına ʻOthman
İlahi sultanları ber-karâr et Habîbin hürmetine hem câr-ı yârân
Veli fikri eyler iken tarihi Dedi hâtif kemâl-i hayr u ihsân
Ketebehû Yusuf, sene 1031.

English translation

By the Kaʻba, by the Ever Yearning One (*hannan*) and the Benefactor (*mannan*), Sultan of the sultans of the world Sultan Osman,
He built the fortress and resting place of al-Mu‘azzam and excavated this vast cistern fitting for the name of Osman,
May God guard the ruler in his majesty by the intercession of the beloved (Prophet) and his neighbours and family;
The poor Veli Fikri has said its date, the author of this verse states that the benefaction will be complete. Written by Yusuf in 1031.

The last line is an *abjad* date which, when calculated, gives exactly 1031 the same year that is given in numerals:

كمالي خير احسان

130+ 810+101= 1031

Plate 5 General view of the entrance of the fort at al-Mu‘azzam with the author (photo: Laurence Hapiot)



Plate 6 Inscription A from al-Mu‘azzam (photo: Laurence Hapiot)



Toplumakaleler_BNW.indd 380 07-08-17 11:10



Plate 7 Inscription B from al-Mu'azzam (photo: Laurence Hapiot)



Plate 8 Inscription C from al-Mu'azzam (photo: Laurence Hapiot)

Inscription B (Pl. 7)

This consists of four lines (4 x 2 distiches) of Turkish verse written above the entrance gate of the fortress.

خدايا باعث أولا بو باسايه ن	سليمان أغه ايز كور مراده
دخي شام حافظى وزير سليمان	كه أنك أرى در خير ايشه مايه
عنايت ايلسون انلارده سلطان	كركدر أو ستلرينه صالح سايه
غريقي رحمت ايده انى يزدان	أو قيوب فاتخة دوره دعاية

Turkish transliteration

Hudâ'ya bâ'is ola bu besayan Süleyman Ağa er gör murâda
Dahi Şam Hâfızı Vezir Süleyman Ki anın eridir hayr işe mâye
İnâyet eylesin anlara Sultân Gerekdir üstlerine sâlih-sâye
Garîk-i rahmet ede anı Yezdân Okuyup Fatiha dura duâya.

English translation

To the Almighty God this shadowy place, and it fulfills the wishes of Süleyman Agha,
The guardian of Damascus, vizier Süleyman who has done many good works to establish the foundations:
And the Sultan, who came to help, for the master mason needed this rescue,
Let God grant them grace in abundance and for whom one recites the *Fatiha* and pray for him.

Inscription C (Pl. 8)

A seven line inscription on the left wall of the entrance gate, the first five lines is a Turkish poem, while the last two lines contain the names and signatures of the people involved in the renovation of the fort:

مبارك قلعة دياري بولدي حاضر	خسين أغا درا وسته ناظر
بياله بر يلوك سر معتمدر	مرادينه ايره بطان وظاهر
محافظ عثمان أغا شيخ مرشيدي	الهي غل غشدن ايله طاهر
كه كاتب يوسف ولي وقولكدر	أو له رلر رحمتك أمر كه
بيره دروب دعا أيدن عزيز لر	كوجيه أيمان أيله دنيان اخر

امل المعلم علي ابن محمد المعمار باشي بدمشق الشام

المعلم قلعة نقولا ابن الياس

نقشه هلال

Turkish transliteration

Mübârek kal'a diyarı buldu hâzır Hüseyin Ağa'dır usta [vü] nâzır
Piyale bir bölük ser-i mu'temeddir Murâdına ere bâtın u zâhir
Muhâfız 'Othman Ağa Şeyh mürşidi İlahî gıll ü gîşten eyle Tâhir
Ki kâtip Yusuf veli ve kulundur Olurlar rahmetin emrine hâzır
Bize durup duâ eden azîzler Göçe imân ile dünyâdan âhir
Amelü'l-Muallim Ali ibni Mehmed el-Mimârbaşı bi-Dımaşk eş-Şam
El-malûm kal'a-i Nikola ibni İlyas
Nakkaşahû Hilal.

English translation

This blessed fortress has found the rest, the chief Hüseyin Agha is the master and caretaker.
He is the head of the protector of this (holy) road. That God will grant both their inner and outer wishes.
Muhafız [Qur'an reciter] Osman Agha, is the guide of the Sheikhs, May God make clean from all the bad thıngs;
The writer Yusuf Wali is your servant, and is ready to execute the orders that are given to him.
The true pilgrims, who pass on this route pray, let them pass with faith from this world to the other
Made by the famous 'Ali ibn Yahya, the master mason from Damascus of Syria sent to the known fortress Nikola the son of Ilyas and scribe Hilal.

According to the Ottoman writer Hibri who made the pilgrimage in 1632 and left us a pilgrimage route guide, Sultan Osman II intended to visit the Ka'ba and made preparations for his visit giving orders to build and repair the Hajj route fortresses and water reservoirs. The reparation of the Mu'azzam water reservoir and the building of the fortress with orders to his soldiers to guard the fortress and water reservoirs seems to have been a part of his pilgrimage plans.[15] However, before Sultan Osman II could realize his plans, he was murdered by a mutiny of the Yenicheri soldiers in 1622. Another fortress and water reservoir that Osman II had built and repaired is the famous Solomon's Pool (Qal'at Burka) between Hebron and Jerusalem.

Toplumakaleler_BNW.indd 381 07-08-17 11:10





Plate 9 (far left) The Hijaz railway monument in Haifa (photo: Mehmet Tütüncü)

Plate 10 (left) Detail of Haifa's Hijaz Railway monument (photo: Mehmet Tütüncü)

Only Inscription B is dated. The other two are not but based on their style and content they probably date to 1031/1622. All three inscriptions are hierarchically composed and they mention all the individuals who were involved in the construction of the fortress.

Inscription A is an ode to the governor and commander of Damascus, vizier Süleyman, who oversaw the development of the Hajj route. Inscription B is dedicated to the ruling Sultan Osman II, the patron of the fortress. It was inscribed in 1622, the last year of his rule. Inscription C mentions the names of 6 people who were involved in the construction and decoration of the fortress:

1. Hüseyin Agha in his capacity as a caretaker.
2. Muhafiz Osman (the religious person, Qur'an reciter).
3. Katib Yusuf is probably the same person as in inscription B.
4. The architect named is 'Ali Ibn Muhammed Mimarbashi (chief architect) from Damascus. It is notable that, as in the case of the fort at Tabuk, the architect was from Damascus.
5. Nikola son of Ilyas – caretaker or contractor for the construction of the fort. The name is remarkable because this is the first time that a non-Muslim is mentioned in connection with the construction of the forts.
6. A new name is the scribe, Hilal.

Hamidiya Hijaz Railway monument

In 1900, Sultan Abdülhamid II started the construction of a railway that would run from Istanbul to Mecca.[16] Modern railway transport for pilgrimage was used and financed completely by contributions from Muslims all over the world. This was a pan-Islamic project stressing the unity of the Muslim *umma* (community). The construction of the railroad route would also augment the sultan's prestige as it increased the speed of the journey but decreased the cost of pilgrimage. Construction started in May 1900 and was finished by September 1908 when the transportation of pilgrims from Istanbul via Damascus to Medina began. This was a landmark of achievement by the Ottomans in the modern period. The use of the railway lasted until the year 1917 when parts of the railway were bombed in World War I at the time of the Arab revolt, which marked the end of Ottoman domination of the Hijaz. The railway had several branches and it was intended that it would be used by the pilgrims coming from the Mediterranean. The most important branch was that in Haifa, from where passengers could take the train to Dera which would connect them to the main railroad.

The only surviving commemorative monument to the railway is actually not in Istanbul, Damascus or Medina, but in Haifa (**Pl. 9**). Sultan Abdülhamid built a monument with an inscription by Haifa train station. This inscription, which I will look at closely here, gives an excellent insight into the intentions of Sultan Abdülhamid.

Haifa's imposing *Sûtun-u âli* or imperial monument is of great significance. It is decorated with an Ottoman coat of arms, *tughras* and railway symbols all of which have been cut into the marble. It also contains two inscriptions in Arabic and Turkish (**Pl. 10**).

The monument is constructed as a group of four fluted Ionian columns with a square entablature on top, which is an architrave supported by the four columns. Four stone balls crown the entablature; a fifth stone ball is wreathed

Plate 11 Inscription on the Hijaz Railway monument in Haifa (photo: Mehmet Tütüncü)



Toplumakaleler_BNW.indd 382 07-08-17 11:10



Plate 12 Telegraph monument of Damascus (photo Mehmet Tütüncü)

with flowers and supports the crescent. The pedestal has a bas-relief of a steam locomotive with a tender and a flying wheel drive with wings and signs of steam and thunderstorms. On the base of the monument, two inscriptions are carved: one on the southern side is in Arabic and the other on the northern side is in Turkish.[17] The inscriptions tell their own history of how the Haifa Damascus railway road was built as a supply route of the Hijaz Railway from Damascus to Medina. Moreover, it reports that Sultan Abdülhamid ordered the construction of a railway line to be built from Damascus to Medina in order to facilitate the act of pilgrimage (**Pl. 11**).

The Arabic inscription (dated to 1319/1901)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الحمد لله وحده والصلاة والسلام على من لا نبي بعده

ان سيدنا ومولانا امير المؤمنين خليفة سيد المرسلين سلطان البرين وحاقان البحرين السلطان

ابن السلطان السلطان الغازي عبد الحميد خان ابن السلطان الغازي عبد المجيد خان ايد الله ملكه وا

حياته وعمره قد امر ان ينشا من دمشق الشام سكة حديدية تسهل على امة محمد (صلعم) الحج الى

الجباه على روضة رسول الله (صلعم) ثم صدر امره المعظم ادام الله ملكه المفخم ان تمد سكة حديد

حيفا تتصل في السكة الحميدية الحجازية فعلى كل مسلمين حج بيت الله وام روضة رسول الله ان يو

اليه عز شأنه بان يؤيد خلافته الكبرى وان يرفع على هام العالمين يده حرر سنة ١٣١٩

English translation

In the name of the Most Merciful and Compassionate. Praise be to God alone; and prayers and greetings upon the last of the prophets. Our lord and master the Commander of the Faithful and the Sultan of the two continents, and the king of the two seas, the Sultan, son of the Sultan, the warrior, Abdülhamid Khan, son of the Sultan, the warrior, Abdülmecid Khan, may God support his reign and lengthen his life and bless him with long life, as he ordered the construction of a railway line from Damascus [in] al-Sham, to facilitate the pilgrimage of the community of Muhammad to the House of God and to humbly pray on the tomb of the Prophet of God. The Sultan then gave his grand command (may God lengthen his rule) that a railway line should be laid from the city of Haifa to connect with the Hijaz line. Therefore it is the duty of every Muslim who made the pilgrimage to the House of God and visited the grave of the Prophet to pray to God to strengthen and enforce the Sultan's great caliphate and to raise his high hand over the heads of the people. Inscribed in 1319 (1901/1902).

The Turkish inscription (dated 1319/1901)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الحمد لله وحده والصلاة والسلام على من لا نبي بعده

امير المؤمنين وخليفة روي زمين سلطان البرين وحاقان البحرين السلطان ابن السلطان السلطان

الغازي عبد الحميد خان ابن السلطان عبد المجيد خان افندمزحضر تلرينك حجاج مسلمين فريضيا

حجى ادى و روضي عاطري رسالت بناهي زيارت ايله سدى سنيه خلافت كبرانك نصرو ايله تيدنه

دعا ايتملرنه واسطي خيري اولماق اوزره شام شريف شهرندن مكيي مكرميه قدار انشاسنه امر وفرما

بيوردقلرى حميدية حجاز تيمور يولونا شعبه اولماق اوزره تمديدي اردى سنيه جنابى خلافتي بناهي

حوكمى منيفندن اولا (ن) حيفا تمور يوانك خاطريى بركز اريدر سنة ١٣١٩

Turkish transliteration:

Bismillâhi'r-Rahmâni'r-Rahîm el-hamdü lillâhi vahdehû
ve's-salâtü ve's-selâmü alâ-men lâ-nebiyye ba'dehû)
Emiru'l-müminin ve halife-i ruy-i zemin sultanü'l-berreyn ve
hakanü'l-bahreyn es-Sultan ibnü's-sultan es-Sultan
el-Gazi Abdülhamid Han ibni's-Sultan Abdülmecid Han
Efendimiz hazretlerinin hüccâc-ı Müslimînin farîza-i
haccı edâ ve ravza-i mutahhara-i risâlet-penâhîyi ziyaret ile
südde-i seniyye-i hilafet-i kübrânın nasr u te'yîdine
duâ etmelerine vâsıta-i hayriyye olmak üzere Şam-ı şerif
şehrinden Mekke-i Mükerreme'ye kadar inşasını emr u ferman
buyurdukları Hamidiyye Hicaz demiryoluna şube olmak üzere
temdîdi irâde-i seniyye-i cenâb-ı hilâfet-penâhî
hükm-i münîfinden olan Hayfa demiryolunun hâtıra-i
ber-güzârıdır sene 1319. (Miladi 1901/1902)

English translation

In the name of the most Merciful and Compassionate God, praise be to God alone and prayers and peace to the last of the prophets.

Commander of the faithful and the caliph of the earth, the Sultan of two continents, and the king of the two seas, the Sultan, son of the Sultan, the warrior Abdülhamid Khan, son of the Sultan Abdülmecid Khan, as he ordered the construction of a railway from Damascus, to facilitate the pilgrimage of the community of Muhammed to the House of God and to humbly pray on the tomb of the Messenger of God. The Sultan then gave his grand command (may God lengthen his rule) that a railway line should be laid from Haifa to connect with the Hamidiya Hijaz line. This is a monument for remembrance of this works.

Inscribed in 1319 (1901/1902).

The monument at Haifa is an expression of Sultan Abdülhamid II's efforts to modernize the Ottoman Empire by developing transport and communication lines from the Ottoman capital to the Arab provinces. So why did the sultan build this monument in Haifa and not in Istanbul or in Damascus which were more appropriate locations for a monument to the railway? The answer is motivated by

Toplumakaleler_BNW.indd 383 07-08-17 11:10

geopolitics. Palestine was at a junction where many Western foreigners were present. Jaffa was the main gateway for the Christians and Jews who came to Palestine. By making Haifa a gateway for Muslims, Abdülhamid was hoping to make Palestine a hub along the pilgrimage route. He also wanted to display the presence of the Ottoman Empire in Palestine with this modern monument and to convey the message of pan-Islamism and Muslim unity.

A monument comparable to the Haifa is the Damascus telegraph monument, which commemorates the laying of telegraph lines from Istanbul to Damascus (**Pl. 12**).[18] On the top of the monument is a carved miniature of the mosque of Yildiz Hamidiye in Istanbul. This was the principal mosque in Istanbul where the sultan carried out his Friday prayers and receptions. Under the miniature mosque on the column, there are telegraph lines and cables that connect the capital Istanbul with distant Arab provinces.

The Hijaz railway shortened the duration of travel from 40 days to 3 days. Consequently, the more conservative Muslims who took the long route with camels named it the 'women's route' as an indication of the ease of the journey. We wonder then what they would have called the 'airplane' route nowadays, which is the most common way to visit the holy cities in modern times.

Conclusion

The range and content of the inscriptions in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish discussed in this chapter demonstrate the significance of the buildings on which these texts were placed. As imperial buildings, they illustrated and asserted the sultan's authority over the annual pan-Islamic event of Hajj, while at the same time being expressions of piety that connected the authority of the sultan in the major centres of the administration of the Ottoman empire to Mecca, the heart of Islam itself. As we have seen, these inscriptions are not only of documentary and historical value providing the names of patrons and scribes but they often also contain evocative texts in which they implore pilgrims as they journey to the holy cities to remember those involved in the building. The arrival of the railway certainly made things easier for travellers; it shortened the length of the journey and connected the various regions of the empire more effectively. But World War I and the Arab Revolt marked the end of an era in the history of Hajj when the narrative of Hajj-going was grander and more epic, and when the stopping places were more conducive to contemplating the journey, its hardships and the spiritual reward in Mecca and thereafter. And it may be argued that the inscriptions in Ma'an, al-Mu'azzam and other locations mark points of remembrance.

Notes

1 For an overview of Ottoman *khans* and road constructions in Turkey see Müderrisoğlu 1993; for Greater Syria see Sauvaget 1937 and Cytryn-Silverman 2010.
2 For Ottoman activities south of Damascus see Petersen 2012.
3 Arabic inscriptions are mainly published by Sauvaget 1937. Cytryn-Silverman 2010 provides a compilation of the published material. Arabic and Turkish inscriptions are found in Petersen 2012: 155–63.
4 Petersen 2012: 156.
5 Rashdan and Sha'ban 2011.
6 Petersen 2012: 156.
7 Çelebi, 1996, IX: 295–6.
8 Çelebi, 1996, IX: 297.
9 Çelebi 1996, IX: 296–7.
10 Söylemezoğlu 2013.
11 Petersen 2012: 141–2, 160–2.
12 Jaussen and Sauvignac 1997, I: 296–8.
13 Ghabban 2011: 574–80.
14 Petersen 2012: 155–62.
15 See al-Hibri 1975, 126.
16 Nicholson 2005: 188–9.
17 First published by Tütüncü 2006: 230–3, and figures 135–7.
18 The monument and its inscription have not been published before.

Toplumakaleler_BNW.indd 384 07-08-17 11:10