

Drs. Mehmet TÜTÜNCÜ

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11. Arabic and Turkish Inscriptions on the Darb al-Hajj al-Shami

Mehmet Tütüncü and Andrew Petersen
with a contribution by Gotfried Hagen

This chapter provides a summary of the inscriptions found on, or in association with, the Hajj forts in Jordan and Saudi Arabia. In most cases the readings are by Mehmet Tütüncü; provided on the basis of photographs and squeezes.

Although it is likely that all of the Hajj forts would have had inscriptions detailing when and by whom they were built, as well as any subsequent restoration, or re-building, only a few have survived. Thus, a total of 13 inscriptions are known from 8 of the Hajj forts, representing less than a third of the probable original number of inscriptions. Of the 13 known inscriptions, one (Qal'at Fassu'a) has disappeared without being read, whilst some of the others have been published to differing extents. Jaussen and Savignac (1997) recorded 7 inscriptions; giving the Arabic text, as well as, a French translation. These readings were critically reviewed by van Berchem (1978) and the results incorporated into the readings presented below. Moritz (1908) published two inscriptions from Dhat al-Hajj, as well as a version of the Tabuk inscription, also published by Jaussen and Savignac. Brünnow and Domaszewski published two inscriptions, one relating to Qal'at Dab'a and the other to Qal'at al-Hasa (1905, 76 and 18). The only inscription reported here for the first time relates to the fort at Ma'an and had been overlooked by earlier writers. This important inscription has been transcribed and translated for this volume by Mehmet Tütüncü and Gotfried Hagen.

Ghabbani (1998) published a survey of inscriptions found on both Damascus and Egyptian Hajj routes. This work, written in Arabic, incorporated many pictures and new suggestions for the decipherment of the inscriptions. However, none of the readings can be regarded as definitive because the author lacked knowledge of Ottoman Turkish. The editions below are new and fresh readings by Mehmet Tütüncü, who reviewed and revised (where possible) all the former readings.

Qal'at Dab'ah

Four line Arabic inscription transcribed and translated into German by van Berchem and published in Brünnow and Domaszewski (1905, 76).

(Inscription No. 1)

1) *Sura 9, 18 (two lines)*

2) *Restored this blessed place al-Amir al-Hajj the minister*

3) *Othman Pasha [in the year Dhu'l] Hijje 1180 [1766–67]*

The location of this inscription within the fort is not known, though the Quranic verse and the reference to this 'blessed place' indicate that it may have been within a room used as a mosque. It is also possible that this is the inscribed stone found, lying outside the fort, by the North Arabian Desert Expedition (Field 1960, 84–85). In any case the inscription clearly refers to a rebuilding, or renewal of the building and not an original construction.

Qal'at al-Hasa

Arabic verse inscription divided into three lines and 6 decorative cartouches. The inscribed panels were set into the rear wall of the central room (mosque) on the first floor of the south side of the fort. A transcription and German translation of the inscription together with a photograph of the squeeze, were published by Brünnow and Domaszewski (1905, 18, fig. 1572). The text reads as follows:

(Inscription No. 2)

1) *How beautiful temple (worship place) it is dedicated for Allah, For piety has built and set up!*

2) *by a king with the name Mustafa;*

*Our Sultan descendant of Ahmad
3) in paradise for him
there will be a splendid house*

Although this inscription is not specifically dated, it mentions the name of Sultan Mustafa, which, from the context, appears to be Mustafa II (1757–73). Brünnow and Domaszewski, following Mauss, read the chronogram as 1760. The inscription is interesting because it refers to Sultan Mustafa as a descendant of Ahmad. There is a play with words here: Ahmad is the name of the Father of Sultan Mustafa (Ahmad III who governed between 1703–30), but it is also the name of the Prophet Muhammad. In Arabia there was a deep-rooted belief that the Caliph should be a descendant of the Prophet. It is, therefore, significant that the Ottoman Sultan claims here that he is from the house of the Prophet.

Qal'at Ma'an (Mehmet Tütüncü and Gotfried Hagen) (see Plate 97)

This is the only legible, unpublished, inscription discovered during the course of the 'Darb al-Hajj Survey'. The inscription is expertly carved onto a marble panel and is divided into 8 cartouches, in four horizontal bands. This is the earliest Ottoman Turkish inscription in Arabia and one of the earliest in any part of the Ottoman Empire.

(Inscription No. 3)

1. شاه جهاندا هفت اقلیمی عثمان اوغلینک
 2. ضمیر خیر ...؟... امرایلدی رحمان
 3. [broken] قباد باشا قوليله عسکر شامه
 4. معانده ایلدی بر برج و برکه یابمغنه فرمان
 5. (ط)ریقن (ب)یت معمورک ادوب بحمدالله تعمیر
 6. اولب حاجا یدعی زهی خیر و زهی احسان
 7. بو حقیر بنده سی کاتب سکونی دیدی تاریخن
 8. معانده یابدی برج برکه سلطان سلیمان
- 1) *The Lord of the world and seven climates the Ottoman's son...*
 2) *the merciful ordered them to do beneficence.*
 3) *(through)... Kubad Pasha his officer in Syria;*
 4) *He ordered to build a fort and a water reservoir in Ma'an.*
 5) *He repaired – praise to God – the road to the holy site,*
 6) *The pilgrims prayed: what a charity and what a benevolence.*
 7) *humble slave scribe Sükûnî composed its chronogram:*
 8) *Ma'an Sultan Süleyman built a fort and water reservoir (971)*

The last line contains a chronogram, which, when counted, gives exactly the date 971, also written in figures.

Chronogram

معانده یابدی برج برکه سلطان سلیمان
191 150 228 205 27 170 = 971

It is noticeable that although this inscription refers to the Hajj, it is not a particularly religious text, thus there is no Quranic verse. However, the inscription clearly draws attention to the Ottomans as an imperial force and to Sultan Sulayman as the instigator of the fort and water reservoir. The only other person mentioned in the inscription is the scribe, indicating a high status for this personage. Qubad Pasha was originally from Ramazanid's dynasty from Southern Turkey, governors of Damascus.

Qal'at al-Fassu'a (see Plate 101)

(Inscription No. 4)

Directly above the gateway to this fort there is a composite sandstone panel (0.8 m high x 1.5 m wide) bearing an inscription (since 1986 this has been removed and its current location is unknown). The panel comprises a frame, made of 7 or 8 blocks, with two inscribed blocks in the centre. The inscription is set within a horizontal cartouche 0.8 m long and with each end terminating in a rosette. The bottom of the frame is decorated with a design made of 14 tri-lobed leaves. Above the main cartouche there is a smaller cartouche. Unfortunately, it was not possible to take an impression of the inscription and the photographs are not detailed enough to enable the text to be read. However, there appears to be an 'aya from the Quran and the name Allah is visible in several places.

Above the inscribed panel there are two sets of projecting corbels and a large gap in the wall (1.5 m wide and 1.7 m high). It is probable that this was a projecting machicolation which has now disappeared.

Dhat al-Hajj

A.) Five line Arabic *naskhi* inscription above the doorway, published without a translation by Moritz (1908, 433). The following translation is based on Moritz's transcription.

(Inscription No. 5)

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
 2. هذا عمل المعلم محمد الایبر
 3. الفقير المعمار بشي الشام سنة
 4. أحد وسبعين وتسع مائه في شهر صفر
 5. المبارك وكان عمارتها في أربعين يوم
- 1) *In the name of Allah the most merciful.*
 2) *This was made by the famous Muhamad al-Ibar??*

- 3) *The humble head of architects from Damascus in the year*
 4) *Nine hundred and seventy one, in the month Safar*
 5) *the blessed and it was built in forty days.*

The form of the inscription is remarkable. It is shaped as a *Tabula Ansate*; a square where the 5 lines of the inscription are incised and at the left and right ends of the square there are 2 triangles, carved with decoration in the form of a fleur-de-lis. Two points of content are of interest, the first concerns the date of construction, the second is the time taken to build the fort. Jaussen and Savignac (1997, 555, n. 1) incorrectly cite this inscription as giving a date of 961 AH, however, the inscription clearly gives the date of construction as, Safar 971 AH, which is equivalent to September/October 1563 AD. This date fits in with the documentary evidence, which gives 1559 as the date when the order for the construction of the fort was given. This is the same year as Qal'at Ma'an, but the Sultan's (Süleyman) name is not mentioned here. Whether the fleur-de-lis is a reference to Sultan orders, remains a mystery?

The inscription states that the fort was built in 40 days, which is exceptionally fast considering the remote location. The time-scale is comparable with that taken to build the fortress at Akhdhar, which took somewhere between 40 and 70 days.

B.) Eight line Arabic inscription, published by Moritz without a translation (1908, 433–34). A very similar, if not identical, inscription is now in the National Museum of Saudi Arabia (NMSA Object #896a/b) – recording repairs to a fort in 1849. The 9 line inscription is in *naskhi*, on a marble slab (70 cm x 45 cm) the only difference is that this inscription appears to have an extra line between lines 7 and 8.

(Inscription No. 6)

1. تجديد عمارة هذا
2. القلعة وعزال بركتما
3. في عصر مولانا السلطان
4. عبدالمجيد نصره الرب
5. المعين وأيم سعادة أفندي
6. الحاج عثمان باشا وسعادة
7. سردار أمين دركاه عالي
8. السيد أحمد أغا اليوسف
9. كيلار أميني المفخم في محرم سنة ١٢٦٦

- 1) *This building was renewed.*
- 2) *The fort and the attached water cistern;*
- 3) *During the time of our lord the Sultan*
- 4) *'Abd al-Majid victorious whom Allah granted victory*
- 5) *support and days of happiness. The Lord*

- 6) *al-Hajj Othman Pasha and the fortunate*
- 7) *Head of the troops of the High Porte (Palace);*
- 8) *And Sayeed Ahmed Agha Yussuf*
- 9) *The Illustrious head of the depots in Muharram in the year 1266*

The date of this inscription is equivalent to November/December 1849. During this period the Ottomans had regained confidence in Arabia. For example, in April 1849 the Ottomans landed troops in Hodeida (Yemen) and also planned to take Najd from the Saudis (Vassiliev 1998, 183). It was within this context that repairs to Dhat al-Hajj were carried out. The inscription contains, beneath the name of the Sultan Abd al-Majid the names of two personalities: Osman Pasha, Commander of the Troops of the Palace (*Serdar Emin Dergahi Ali*) and Ahmed Agha Yusuf, Trustee of Depots (*Kilar Emni*). These individuals were responsible for the safety and food of pilgrims during the time of the Pilgrimage.

Tabuk

A.) This Arabic inscription is unique, because it is written on a series of ceramic tiles, set within a rectangular recessed panel, above the entrance to the fortress at Tabuk.

The inscriptions on the Hajj Route are generally only on stone – this is an exception. This inscription was noticed by Evliya Çelebi in 1672 (see below). A transcription of 8 lines, without translation, was published by Moritz in 1908. In 1909 Jaussen and Savignac published their own transcription of the inscription, together with a French translation. However, some aspects of the two transcriptions differed, most notably the number of lines. Thus, in Moritz's transcription there were 8 lines, whilst Jaussen and Savignac's version had the same text, but in only 7 lines. Comparison of the two transcriptions, with the ceramic panel visible today, indicates that Moritz's transcription was more accurate and that Jaussen and Savignac had squashed four lines into the first three lines of their transcription. This also calls into question another aspect of Jaussen and Savignac's publication, which describes the inscription as painted in red, on ceramic tiles, above the gate of the fortress – 'Inscription arabe du qala'ah de Tebouk, peinte en rouge au dessus de la porte, sur des carreaux de faïence'. Recent photographs of the inscription show an 8 line inscription in blue, not red, against a white background, within decorative green cartouches (*c.f.* Pierard and Legros 1997, 76). The discrepancy between the description by Jaussen and Savignac and the inscription as seen today, has led some authors to suggest that the present day ceramic panel is the replacement of an earlier one (*c.f.* King 1998, 77 and 227 n. 166). However, taking into account Moritz's earlier transcription, it seems more likely that Jaussen and Savignac's description was in error, in relation to the colour, as well as the number of lines.

(Inscription No. 7)

1. أمر بتجديد وتعمير هذه القلعة المباركة
2. حضرة مولانا السلطان ابن السلطان
3. السلطان محمد خان ابن السلطان ابراهيم
4. خان ابن السلطان [احمد خان ابن]
5. عثمان خلدا لله [ملكه الى اخر] الزمان
6. وتشرف بما شره خدمتها العبد الفقير
7. الى الله محمد ابن الناف [شف زاده دفتر] جي بدمشق
8. الشام غفر الله له في سنة أربع وستين والف 1064

- 1) Ordered the reconstruction and renewal of this blessed fort
- 2) Our present lord Sultan son of the Sultan
- 3) Sultan Mehmed Khan Son of the Sultan Ibrahim
- 4) Khan Son of the Sultan Ah[med ibn]
- 5) Othman, may Allah prolong his reign till the end of times
- 6) and was honoured for his service to him this poor servant
- 7) to Allah Muhammad ibn al-na[shifzade defter] jiy of Damascus
- 8) in Syria may Allah pardon him in the year 1064 AH [1654 AD]

The inscription was also noticed by Evliya Çelebi in his Famous Seyahatname. (Evliya Çelebi, *Seyhatnâmesi* IX, 297). His reading is as follows:

Above the door there is written on tiles a *tarih* (date):
Fî eyyâmi Mevlânâ es-Sultân Mehmed Hân ibn İbrâhîm
Hân medde zillahu bi-sebebi tamîri Emîn-i Defteri Dimaşk Nâşifzade Mehmed el Fakîr sene 1062.

The sultan in question is Sultan Mehmed IV who ruled between the years 1648–87.

Evliya notes the year as 1062, but this is not right; we can read from the inscription the year as 1062. Evliya makes the error because the digit 4 is written in a way that resembles a 2.

From Evliya's note we can further restore the destroyed part of the name in line 7 as follows: *Nâşifzade defterci*.

B.) This three line Arabic inscription is engraved on a stone within one of the rooms of the fort. It is not clear whether this inscription was built into the walls, or was a single stone kept within a room of the fort. The following translation is based on the French translation of Jaussen and Savignac (1997, 293, no. 2).

(Inscription No. 8)

1. وقف
2. هذا بيت الفقير عمر في سنة 1024
3. لأبنا السبيل

1) Waqf [Endowment]

- 2) this house of the poor was built in 1064
- 3) for children of the road (travellers)

It is noticeable that the date of this inscription, 1064 AH (1654 AD) is the same as that above the entrance. Jaussen and Savignac thought that this inscription referred to a separate building, or hospice, outside the fort. On the other hand van Berchem (1978, 619) suggested that the fort was, in fact, more of a khan than a fort and that this was the 'house of the poor' referred to in the inscription. From the design of the fort and comparisons with other forts Jaussen and Savignac's idea of a separate hospice seems more plausible.

C.) This 8 line inscription was fixed on the *mihrab* of the Mosque of Tabuk. It was mentioned, with a picture (fig. 35), by Shaaban in his Masters Thesis in 1988. Ghabbani published the text in 1993 (Ghabbani 1993 II), 154.

(Inscription No. 9)

1. الفاتحة

2. أمر بتجديد وتعمير هذه القلعة المباركة
3. مولانا السلطان عبدالمجيد المجيد خان بن السلطان
4. محمود خان خلافة عثمان خلدا لله
5. ملكهم وتشرف بمباشرة عمارتها الحاج ابراهيم
6. ادهم قبرصلى تحرير افى ٢٢ ذال الحجة
7. يضباشيها من سنة ١٢٦٠ هـ او ضباشي
8. أبى عباس الأمباشي

1) Pray the *fatiha*

- 2) Ordered the reconstruction and renewal of this blessed fort
- 3) Our Lord, Sultan Abdelmajid Khan, Son of Sultan
- 4) Mahmud Khan, Caliph of the Ottomans, may Allah prolong his
- 5) Reign and was honoured to build this building the Pilgrim (Hajj) Ibrahim
- 6) Edhem from Cyprus was written in 22 day of Zulhijje
- 7) By the Subashi in the year 1260 h.
- 8) by Subashi Abu Abbas el-ombashi

This inscription is remarkable because it gives the name of a person from Cyprus as architect. Ibrahim Edhem Kibrisli (The Cypriot) is not known from other sources.

Another name involved is, Subashi Abu Abbas el-ombashi, Commander of the Troops, who was skilled enough to write and carve a beautiful calligraphic inscription. The day of completion, 22 Zulhijje 1260 AH, is equivalent to 2 January 1845 AD. This is the only inscription that gives, exactly, the day the work was completed. An inscription fixed in the mosque's *mihrab* speaks about 'reconstruction and renewal (Tajdid ve tamir) of this blessed fort'.

D.) This 6 line Arabic and Turkish inscription was made on the wall of the main water reservoir, outside the fort (Jaussen and Savignac 1997, 293–94, no. 3).

(Inscription No. 10)

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. ملك البرين والبحرين وخادم الحرمين الشريفين
3. السلطان الغازي عبدالحميد خان ثاني
4. افندمز حضرتلرينك عهد همايون عمران
5. مشحو نلرذده اشبو بركوكر مجددا تعمير ايدلمشدر سنة ١٣١٩

3. Sultân el-gâzi Abdulhamid han-sanî
 4. Efendimiz Hazretlerinin ahd, humayun emran
 5. meşhunleriz(?)de işbu birke(?)ler müceddeden tamir edilmişlerdir sene 1319
- 1) In the name of Allah the compassionate, the merciful
 - 2) King of the two earths and the two seas and servant [protector] of the two sanctuaries [Mecca and Medina],
 - 3) Sultan the warrior Abd al-Hamid Khan the second
 - 4) His majesty the Ottoman Sultans orders and instructions
 - 5) these cisterns have been Renewed and restored and filled (with water) in 1319

The date on this inscription, 1319 AH, corresponds to 1901 and would have been fairly new when seen by Jaussen and Savignac. It is noticeable that the inscription refers to repairs to the water reservoirs and does not claim to be a new construction.

Akhdar

A.) Arabic inscription located above the gate to the fort. The inscription is contained within a cartouche, 1.15 m long and 0.53 m wide. The last line of the inscription is below the cartouche. The inscription has been removed from its original location.

The following translation is based on the French translation of Jaussen and Savignac (1997, 294, no. 4).

(Inscription No. 11)

1. امر بعمارة هذا البرج المبارك مولانا السلطان المالك الملك المظفر سليمان خان ابن سليم خان بن عثمان
2. اعز الله نصره وصار ذلك بنظر امير الامم الكريم مولانا مصطفى ابلق باشا المملكة الشامية عظم الله شأنه
3. وكان الواقف على عمارة ذلك الامير طرباي ابن قراجا امير عرب حارثة دام عزه والامير على العمارة المذكور العلاني
4. على ابن احمد بن طالو والكاتب بها محمد بن علي عفا الله عنهما وكان رأس المعمارية بها المعلم احمد ابن المكاكي
5. وكان ابتداء العمارة في العشرين من شهر شوال سنة ثمان وثلاثين وتسعمائة وانتهاها في شهر الحجة المحرام سنة تاريخه

- 1) Ordered the construction of this blessed tower (burj) our lord the Sultan, King of kings, the victorious Sulayman Khan ibn Selim Khan ibn Othman.
- 2) Victorious through the will of Allah. And that has placed the amir of the noble amirs, our Lord Mustapha Ablaq,

pasha of the Province of Damascus, may the Lord magnify his excellence

3) And the supervisor of this construction was the Amir Turabay ibn Aqrāja amir of the Arabs Haritah- by whom he is honoured – who worked on this important construction

4) Ali ibn Ahmed bin Talu and the scribe for this Muhammad bin Ali- may Allah forgive them both and the chief architect the learned Ahmed ibn al Makaki

5) And this project started in 20th of Shawwal in the year 938 and was completed in the sacred month of Hajj in the same year.

This important inscription is valuable, not only does it give the date of construction, 938 AH (1531 AD), it also lists the names of those involved in the construction process. Max van Berchem (1978, 149–52) suggested that the hierarchical list of names indicates financial responsibilities for both the Pasha of Damascus and the Amir Turabay. The scribe was probably responsible for noting down expenses and costs, while Ahmed ibn al-Makaki (from Mecca) was in charge of the actual construction. The time-scale, of one to two months, is comparable with that recorded for Dhāt al-Hajj (see below) and is remarkably speedy.

B.) This four line inscription was carved into a stone at the side of the main inscription.

The first three lines are in Arabic; the last line is in Turkish.

The following translation is based on the French translation of Jaussen and Savignac (1997, 294, no. 5).

(Inscription No. 12)

1. حضر في هذه القلعة المنصور
 2. مصطفى صوباشي ومعه مئة يك"رى
 3. سنة ثمان وثلاثين وتسامة بوتاريخ
 4. أوقي به دعا أيدنه الله رحمت ايليه
4. Okuyub dua edene Allah rahmet eyleye.

- 1) Was present within this victorious fort
- 2) Mustapha Subasha and a hundred soldiers (Yenicheri)
- 3) in the year 938
- 4) May Allah have mercy upon them who pray and read (Quran).

This is the same date as the main inscription (1538) and is clearly an indication that, a force of 100 soldiers was required to protect the site, during the construction of the fort (see, van Berchem 1978, 152).

C.) This 6 line Arabic inscription was carved into a stone at the small entrance of the Fort. The following reading and translation is based on Ghabbani's (1993, II) sketch and picture. Because the stone has eroded, the reading is difficult, with many deficiencies, especially the last line, where the date should be written.

(Inscription No. 13)

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم والصلوة والسلام علي سيدنا
 2. محمد خاتم الأنبياء والمرسلين وعلى [وصحبه أجمعين]
 3. نصر من الله وفتح قريب عمر هذا البرج المبارك [مولانا]
 4. السلطان ابن السلطان الغازي احمد خان بن محمد
 5. خان ابن ابراهيم خان ايدالله ملكه وكان السا
 6. عي في الخير [ابراهيم باشا] ٠٠٠ عضدالله
- [في سنة]

- 1) In the name of Allah the compassionate, the merciful. And greetings and blessings to Prophet
- 2) Muhammed the (seal) last of the Prophets and the right guided and
- 3) Q 61: 13 'And another (favour will He bestow,) which ye do love, – help from Allah and a speedy victory.' Ordered the construction of this blessed fort Our lord
- 4) Sultan son of the Sultan the warrior Ahmed Han son of Muhammed Khan
- 5) Son of the Sultan Ibrahim, may Allah prolong his reign
- 6) and was honoured for his service to him Ibrahim Pasha
- 7) in the year

The Sultan who ordered the construction of this fort is Sultan Ahmed III, who reigned between 1703–30. This was probably a restoration and not a construction, because, as we have seen, this fort was constructed in 1531 by the orders of Sultan Suleyman.

D.) This inscription was not fixed on the entrance gate, but is in the format of a tombstone placed in front of the fort. This stone is much destroyed and reading many parts of the inscription is impossible. What we have are two photos, Ghabbani (1993, II 161) and Ghabbani (1998, 239). The following reading and translation is based on these pictures.

(Inscription No. 14)

Emir Turkmani Governor of Ajlun

South-western face of the stone (lines broken)

1. هوالمعين
 2. أمر بعمارة وممرات
 3. هذه [القلعة] والبرك
 4. مولانا السلطان
 5.
- 1) On the name of Muin
 - 2) The order to renovate and refurbish
 - 3) this [fort] and cistern is by
 - 4) our lord [Sultan]
 - 5)

South-eastern face of the stone:

1. وكان الواقف
 2. على العمارة الأمير موسى ابن محمد
 3. [ابن حسين التركماني] الحاكم بعجلون
 4. [وكان] ابتداء العمارة
 5. شهر ذي ...
 6.
- 1) And the waqf (endowment)
 - 2) of this building by the commander Musa son of Muhammed
 - 3) [] the governor of Ajlun
 - 4) And before this Building [...]
 - 5) The month of [...]
 - 6)

The only name that is preserved is the name of Musa, son of Mahmud, governor of Ajlun. When, precisely, a governor was undertaking restoration work and endowments, is unknown.

Mu'azzam

There are 3 inscriptions, all in Turkish (Ottoman), in Qal'at al-Mu'azzam. This Fort was built to guard the water reservoir of Muazzam.

Jaussen and Savignac noted the inscriptions on the façade of Qal'at al-Mu'azzam. It is not clear where each inscription was located, though it appears that one was set above the entrance and one was located within the gateway passage. Although the inscriptions were seen by Jaussen and Savignac, they were, unfortunately, unable to make copies at the time. The published translations are based on copies made by one of the telegraph operators at Muazzam and sent to Jaussen and Savignac at the École Biblique, in Jerusalem. Ghabbani has re-published all the inscriptions, with photos, so we can check the accuracy of the readings. The following readings are based on these photos.

A.) Four line (4 × 2 distiches) Turkish inscription, in verse, written above the entrance gate of the fortress.

(Inscription No. 15)

1. خدایا باعث أولا بو باسامان سليمان أغه اير كور مراده
 2. دخی شام حافظی وزیر سليمان كه أنك أرى در خير ايشه مايه
 3. عنایت ایلسون انلارده سلطان كركدر أو ستلرينه صالح سایه
 4. غریقی رحمت ایده انی یزدان أو قیوب فا تخه دوره دعایه
- 1) Hedâye Bağış ola bu basaman Süleymân âğâ er gör murâda
 - 2) Dâhi Şam Muhafızı Vezir Süleymân Ki anın ârâdır hayr iyşa (ihsan) mi'ya
 - 3) Inayet eylesun onlarada Sultân Gerekdir ustalarına salah saye

- 4) Gariki rāhmet ede ana yezdân
Okuyub Fatiha dura du'aya

1) *Let him give presents to this rich Place and fulfill the wishes of Sulayman Agha,*
2) *The guardian of Damascus, Vizier Sulayman who has done many good works as to establish the foundations:*
3) *And the Sultan who came to help, for the master (masons) needed this rescue,*
4) *Let Allah grant them grace in abundance and for whom one recites the Fatiha and pray for him.*

B.) Inscription on the right wall of the entrance gate. Turkish inscription with 6 lines (5 × 2 verses), the last line contains the signature of the scribe and the year.

(Inscription No. 16)

1. بحق كعبة وحنان ومنان شهنشا هي جهانة سلطان عثمان
2. منزلة قلعة يابدي راه حجه¹ معظم بركة سي نامنه عثمان
3. الهى سلطانله يقرر ايت حبيبك حرمتي هم جار باران
5. ولي فكر ابلر ايكري تاريخي ديدي هاتيف كمالي خير احسان
6. كتبه يوسف سنة ١٠٣١

- 1) Bihâk Kâbe ve Henân ve Menân
Şehinşâhî cihâne Sultân Osmân;
2) Menzili Ka'le yapıda hacda
Muazzam Birkesi nâmına Osmân;
3) İlâhî Sultanlara berkarar et
Habîbin hürmeti hem car ve yârân;
4) Veli fikri (ile) dedi? tarihi
Dedi hatif 'Kemali Hayr Ihsân'
5) Ketebe Yusuf sene 1031

1) *By the Ka'aba, by the Henan and Menan (names of Allah); Sultan of the Sultans of the World Sultan Othman,*
2) *He has built the fortress and resting place of Mu'azzam and excavated this vast cistern fitting for the name of Othman,*
3) *May Allah guard the ruler in his majesty by the intercession of his beloved (prophet) and his neighbours and family;*
4) *the poor Veli fikri has said its date, the author of this verse states that the benefaction will be complete.*
5) *Written by Scribe Yusuf in 1031*

Last line is an *abjad* date which, when calculated, gives the year 1031, which is exactly the same date as that given in numerals.

$$\text{كمالي خير احسان} \\ 130+810+101=1031$$

C.) Inscription on the left wall of the entrance gate. Seven line inscription, the first 5 lines are a Turkish poem, 5 × 2 verses, while the last two lines contains the names and signatures of the persons involved in the renovation.

(Inscription No. 17)

1. مبارك قلعة ديار بولدي حاضر خسين أغادر اوسته ناظر
2. بباله بر بلوك سر معتمد مرادينه ايزه بطان وظاهر
3. محافظ عثمان أغا شيخ مرشيدى الهى غل غشدن ايله طاهر
4. كه كاتب يوسف ولي وقولكدر أو له رلر رحمتك امركه حاضر
5. بيره دروب دعا ايدن عزيزلر كوجيه ايمان ايله دنيان اخر
6. امل المعلم علي ابن محمد المعمار باشي بدمشق الشام
7. المعلم قلعة نقولا ابن الياس نقشه هلال

- 1) Mübârek ka'le diyârı buldû huzur
Hüseyin Ağâdır usta nâzir;
2) Boyle bir yolun ser-i mu'temeddîr
Muradına ere bâtin ve zâhîr;
3) Muhâfız Osman ağâ şeyh-i mürşiddir
İlâhî kıl gışdan eyle tâhîr;
4) Ki kâtib Yusuf veli ve kulundur
Olurlar rahmetin emrine hazır;
5) Bura durub du'a eden azîzler
Göçe iman ile dünyadan âhire;
6) Amele el ma'alum 'Ali ibn Muhammed el-mi'mar
bashi bi dimashk el Sham
7) El ma'lum kal'e nakul ibn Ilyas nakkas Halil

1) *This blessed fortress has found the rest, The chief Huseyin Agha is the master and caretaker.*
2) *He is the head of the protector of this (holy) road. That Allah will grant both their inner and outer wishes.*
3) *Muhafiz (Quran reciter) Othman Agha, is the guide of the Sheikhs, May Allah make clean from all the bad things;*
4) *The writer Yusuf Wali, son is your servant, and is ready to execute the orders that are given to him.*
5) *The true pilgrims, who pass on this route pray, let them pass with faith from the this world to the other*
6) *Made by the famous Ali bin Yahya, the head of architects (master mason) from*
7) *Damascus of Syria sent to the known fortress the Son of Ilyas Nakkas Halil*

Comment on Inscriptions 15, 16, 17

Jaussen and Savignac believed that this inscription referred to the original construction of the fort in 1031 AH (1622 AD). However, van Berchem argues that the inscription refers to a refurbishment, or rebuilding, of the fort in the 17th century (1978, 622–23). According to Ottoman writer, Hibri, who made the pilgrimage in 1632 (some 10 years later) and left us a Pilgrimage route guide: Sultan Osman II, intended to visit the Kaba and made preparations to do so, giving orders to build and repair the Hajj route forts and water reservoirs. The reparation of the Muazzam water reservoir and the building of the fort, with orders to his soldiers to guard the fort and water reservoirs, seems to be a part of his pilgrimage plans (see, Hibri 1975, 126). But, before Sultan Osman II could realize his plans, he was murdered by a mutiny of Yenicheri soldiers in 1622. So, we

could assume, with Jaussen and Savignac, that the fort is an Ottoman building. Another fort and water reservoir Osman II had built and repaired, is the famous Solomons Pool

(Qalat Burka) between Hebron and Jerusalem (Tütüncü 2006, 205–06; Hawari, Auld and Hudson 2000; Chapter 6 in this volume).

No.	Name of Building	Location of Inscription	Ottoman Sultan	Foundation or Repair	Language	Date AH / AD	References
1	Dab'a (location unknown)	unknown	Mustafa III	Repair	Arabic	1180 AH 1766/7 AD	Brünnow and Domaszewski -
2	Hasa (mosque in fort)	mosque in fort	Mustafa III	foundation ?	Arabic	1174 AH 1760 AD	Brünnow and Domaszewski
3	Ma'an (above gate)	above gate	Sulayman I	foundation	Turkish	971 AH 1563 AD	Tütüncü and Hagen in this volume
4	Fassu'a (above gate)	above gate	?	foundation	?	C12th AH? C18th AD?	None
5	Dhat al-Hajj (above gate)	Above gate	Sulayman I	foundation	Arabic	971 AH 1563 AD	Moritz , Jaussen & Savignac
6	Dhat al-Hajj (unknown)	Unknown	Abdul Majid	repair	Arabic	1266 AH 1849 AD	Moritz , Jaussen & Savignac
7	Tabuk (above gate)	Above gate	Mehmed IV	repair	Arabic	1064 AH 1654 AD	Moritz, Jaussen & Savignac
8	Tabuk (unknown)	Unknown	Mehmed IV	foundation	Arabic	1064 AH 1654 AD	Jaussen & Savignac, Van Berchem
9	Tabuk (unknown)	Mihrab of the Mosque	Abdul Majid	repair	Arabic	1260 AH 1843 AD	Ghabbani 1993
10	Tabuk (water reservoir)	Wall of the reservoir	Abdul Hamid II	repair	Arabic and Turkish	1319 AH 1901 AD	Jaussen & Savignac
11.	Akhdar (above gate)	Above gate	Sulayman I	foundation	Arabic	938 AH 1531 AD	Jaussen & Savignac, Van Berchem
12.	Akhdar (gateway)	Gateway	Sulayman I	foundation	Arabic and Turkish	938 AH 1531 AD	Jaussen & Savignac
13.	Akhdar	Gateway	Ahmed III	Repair	Arabic	1115-1143 AH 1703-1730 AD	Ghabbani 1993
14.	Akhdar	Front	Unkown	Repair	Arabic	Unknown	Ghabbani 1993
15.	Mu'azzam (fort façade)	Gateway	Osman II	Foundation	Turkish	1031 AH 1622 AD	Jaussen & Savignac
16.	Mu'azzam (above gate)	Gateway	Osman II	Foundation	Turkish	1031 AH 1622 AD	Jaussen & Savignac
17.	Mu'azzam (above gate)	Gateway	Osman II	Foundation	Turkish	1031 AH 1622 AD	Jaussen & Savignac

Table 3 – Hajj fort inscriptions

Only Inscription 16 is dated. The other two are not dated, but are, both in their style and content, surely from the same year, 1031AH/1622AD. All three inscriptions are related, they are hierarchically composed and mention all the persons responsible for the construction of the fort.

The first Inscription (15) is an ode to the Governor and Commander (*Vizier Suleyman*) of Damascus, who was responsible for the Hajj Route.

The second inscription (16) is dedicated to the ruling Sultan of the Ottomans, *Sultan Osman II*, patron of the fortress. The inscription was written in the last year of his rule, 1622.

The last inscription (17) mentions the names of 5 persons involved in the construction works and decoration of the fort:

1. *Huseyin Agha* – caretaker
2. *Muhafiz Osman* – a religious person, reciter of the Quran

3. *Katib Yusuf* – probably the same person as in inscription 16
4. *Ali Ibn Muhammed Mimarbashi* – architect from Damascus. It is notable that, as in the case of Tabuk, the mason was from Damascus, a practice that seems to have been common in the Hajj forts.
5. a new name is the Calligrapher – *Nakkas Halil the son of Ilyas*

Notes

- 1 Ghabbani reads here حجه, which makes no sense, Jaussen reads حجة, which makes it understandable (in pilgrimage). We should read here Hac'da or Hicaz'da (in pilgrimage or in hejaz).
- 2 Ghabbani reads here نزيه this should be menzil (resting place).