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Some Arabic Inscriptions from Medieval Castles of Jordan: Content and Context Analysis

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Abstract

The Ayyubid- Mamluk Muslim rulers built or rebuilt castles in order to defend their borders against the crusaders. During the 12th-13th centuries, they changed hands several times, but were maintained and strengthened mainly by the Muslims, as attested by numerous Arabic inscriptions found incorporated into the buildings. It is important to mention here that Irene A. Bierman's book entitled Writing Signs: The Fatimid Public Text (1998) has been used as a model to carry out the following discussion, in addition to further studies about medieval castles of Jordan which have been used in the catalogue. The researcher intends to discuss aspects of the languages and context of the inscriptions listed in the catalogue. By far the largest type is the group of foundation and restoration texts, put up to show who had ordered the construction and to stake out territory.

Keywords: Castle, Ayyubid, Mamluk, inscriptions.

Arabic was the standard language for writing monumental inscriptions in the Islamic lands. As the language of revelation, it acquired special sanctity and it has always been the most common language for religious texts. These include not only citations from the Qur'an, but also hadith and other pious invocations. Arabic was also the major language for historical inscriptions, the foundation inscriptions surviving inside castles inform us as archaeologists and historians about the record of building, the date of any additions, and restorations occurring during periods of occupation, such as inscriptions 1 (Pl.1), 2, 3 (Pl.2), 4, 5, 6, 9, 12 (Pl.4), 17 (Pl.5), and 21 in the catalogue.

By far the most common type of monumental inscription is the foundation or restoration inscription. This type of inscription contains five basic elements in the following order:

1. The "Basmala" or invocation to God. 2. A verb indicating what was done. 3. The object of the work. 4. The name of the patron. 5. The date of construction.

Most monumental inscriptions, like most actions carried out by devout Muslims, begin by invoking God's name. The most common form is the full basmala, 'In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate' (Gürlu, 2008:52) as we notice in inscription no. 41, but the invocation can be shortened to the first two words or lengthened with other, sometimes rhyming phrases. The form used often depends on the space available, and the short form was common in narrow spaces.

In reading a foundation inscription, it is important to find the 'basmala', for it usually marks the beginning of the text. This is obvious in the inscriptions, 2, 5, 12, 13 (Pl.4), 21, 22, 26 (Pl.8), 27, 28 (Pl.9), 29 (Pl.10), and 32 for instance. The second element of the foundation text is the verb. There are many different verbs in Arabic for building. The simplest is (banā) 'built'. Most foundation inscriptions, however, do not talk about constructing but about ordering construction, and hence the most common word is to 'order', (amara). It could be used alone in this form (he ordered), but more often was compounded with words like the construction, (bi-binā), the making, (bi-'amal), the building, (bi-'imāra), or the establishment, (bi-inshā).

Texts concerned with restoration generally used the same form as foundation texts. Restoration inscriptions can also replace the verb to order, (amara) with renew, (jaddada). The verb in a foundation inscription is usually followed by the object constructed. This can be simply the pronoun (it), leaving it to the reader

to interpret what (it) is. Restoration inscriptions use this generic pronoun. More often, however, the type of work was specified, such as palace, (Qasr), tower, (Burj), castle, (Qal'a), for example.

The nouns used in a foundation text can indicate either a form or a function, and the reader needs to interpret these words such as palace, place, grave, castle, etc., Adjectives were also commonly used to qualify what was built, using words like great, ('Azīm) or blessed, (Mubārak). Such adjectives were not physical descriptors but rhetorical ones. Their function was to make the building acceptable as 'waqf', technically the alienation in perpetuity of property and the revenues from it for the benefit and endowment of a pious foundation, for according to Islamic tradition all religious endowments have to be pleasing to God.

In a typical foundation inscription, far more space was given over to the patron than to what he built; the patron's name was accompanied by titles and eulogies. This part of the foundation inscription developed and was composed of numerous rhyming phrases that intoned the glory of the patron in ringing verse. The Mamluk ruler is called 'our lord and master, the great sultan, the victorious, the fighter, the triumphant, Sword of life and religion, sultan of Islam and Muslims, king of kings and sultans, servant of the two sanctuaries, the creator of the majestic caliphate, the commander of the faithful, owner of both Kiblahs-Jerusalem and Mecca-, and great sultan,' e.g.

Both Islamic nomenclature and Islamic titulature are complicated topics, and in order to compare the different titles and eulogies used in these inscriptions, a few short notes on the composition of Islamic names are useful. Islamic names generally have five elements in a standard order:

1. The honorific title (laqab in Arabic). 2. The patronymic (the kunya in Arabic). 3. The given or personal name (ism in Arabic). 4. The genealogy (the nasab in Arabic). 5. The epithet of origin or affiliation (the nisba in Arabic).

In addition to these standard parts of the name, rulers and other authoritative or important people were often identified by various kinds of titles. The central element is the person's given or personal name (ism), which is included in almost all foundation inscriptions. It was traditionally drawn from a relatively small repertory of personal names sanctioned by Islamic tradition, such as Saladin, Baybars, Aybak, Lajin, etc.).

Two parts of the name follow the given or personal name, (ism). In standard form,

the given name is followed by the genealogy (nasab), with each forebear introduced by the word son, (ibn or bin). When the patron derived authority or legitimacy from his family, then the genealogy could be quite long. In foundation inscriptions, the genealogy is quite short, usually no more than one or two generations. None of the Mamluk foundation inscriptions contains a genealogy, for none of these rulers derived much authority from his family ties. Most of them were manumitted slaves, and hence their paternities were irrelevant, although their descendants derived legitimacy from them.

The epithet of origin or affiliation (nisba in Arabic), the final element in a name, was an epithet denoting the origin or place of residence derived from the name of a tribe, town or country, such as 'Alexandrian' relating to the Egyptian city Alexandria . It could also indicate affiliation to a legal school or religious group or sometimes a profession which appears in some words like 'architect' (me'mar). Some of the Mamluk sultans carry a single epithet, like 'al-Salihi or al-Najmi', meaning that they had received training under and been manumitted by the Ayyubid sultan al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub.

Two parts of the name precede the given or personal name (ism in Arabic). The one just before it is usually the patronymic (the kunya in Arabic), a patronymic usually comprising a compound with Abu; which means 'father'. It was originally composed with the name of the eldest son, but was then constructed with an attribute or quality of the bearer and assumed a metaphoric meaning, like 'Abu-Al-Nasser, (inscriptions no. 31, 34, Pl.12 and 13) and 'Abu'l fateh', (inscription no. 12, Pl.4).

In foundation inscriptions, these four parts (kunya, ism, nasab and nisba) are often quite succinct; much more space is taken up by the titles, which became increasingly flowery. Many titles were awarded or assumed. One of the most important was 'sultan'. The word sultan originally had the abstract sense of power or authority, but it was adopted by the Seljuk, Ayyubid, Mamluk and Ottoman rulers, also some other titles like 'who share leadership with the commander of the faithful' (qasīm amīr al-mu'inīn), this kind of inscription indicates a particular ruler's relationship to the caliph. Part of Baybars's authority, for example, is derived from his nominal position as associate of the commander of the faithful.

What really distinguishes the inscriptions in the medieval castles of Jordan is the extraordinary number of honorific titles (laqab, plural alqāb). The laqab was originally a nickname, such as 'Alexandrian', which refers to the Egyptian city

of Alexandria, 'bahri' which refers to Bahri Mamluk, and 'al-Mansouri' which refers to al-Mansourah, an Egyptian city, but soon became an honorific title. These honorific titles were frequently compound constructions; Sultan Lajin's main honorific, for example, is 'sword of life and religion' (sayf al-dunyā wa'l-din), as we notice in inscriptions no. 12 (Pl.4), 17 (Pls.5 and 6), and 28 (Pl.9).

We can use this kind of inscription to understand some general principles about the composition and arrangement of these compound titles as they proliferated and became more laudatory. The titles were often arranged in rhyming pairs. Thus, Lajin is 'sultan of Islam and Muslims' (sultan al-islām wa'l-muslimīn) and king of kings and sultans (sayyid almulūk wa'l-salātīn), a pair contrasting the same elements of religion and life (din / dunyā), as appears in inscriptions no.4 and 5. The idea of contrast appears in several other compound titles, such as 'the supporter of truth and of creatures' (nasser elhaq mughith elkhalq), which also appear in inscriptions no. 4 and 5.

Many of these compound titles also contain dual attributes. These titles with dual attributes were undoubtedly popular because they made ringing eulogies when composed in pairs that rhymed with the dual ending 'ayn', in Arabic.

Baybars bears such titles with dual attributes, arranged in two or three sets of rhyming pairs. Each dual is compounded: he -Baybars- is 'king of two strands, (malik al-bahrayn), the first phrase refers to the Mediterranean and Red Seas. In the second phrase Baybars is the 'owner of both Kiblahs', (sāhib al-qiblatayn), and in the third he is 'servant of the two sanctuaries' (khādim al-haramayn al-sharīfayn). Both kiblah's refer to the regular direction of prayer towards Mecca and the original kiblah of Jerusalem, while the two sanctuaries were Mecca and Medina; such dual attributes can be noticed in inscriptions no. 4 and 5 (Millwright, 2008: 87).

Most Mamluk Sultans' titles underscore their affiliation to sunnism and act also as eulogies and this can be noticed in inscriptions no. 4, 5, 8, 12, 17, and 19. So the sultan is ' the creator of the majestic caliphate', 'Allah's shadow on the earth', 'the strengthened', 'the triumphant', 'the ground stone of the present life and religion', 'the knower', 'the rightful', 'the struggler', and the advocator, etc.

The benediction following the sultan's name and caliphal title asks God to make the sultan's rule eternal and bless him; the most common benedictions include 'may God immortalize his property', (khalada Allah mulkahu), 'God praised his

companions' (a'azza Allah ansārahu), 'may Allah glorifies his rule'(a'azza Allah sultanahu), 'may Allah immortalize his domination and eternize his days' (khallada Allah mulkahu wa adama ayyamahu), and 'May God Immortalise His Kingship' (khalada Allah mulkahu); these benedictions are noticeable in inscriptions no. 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 24, 25 (Pl.7), 26 (Pl.8), and 27.

If the patron was not the ruler, but one of his viziers, amirs or other subordinates, then the ruler's name is often cited at the beginning of the foundation text following the verb. The ruler usually receives a long string of titles, while the patron, cited later as in inscriptions no. 1, 3, 27, and 38 (Pl.14), is described in exactly the opposite way, with a few modest epithets such as 'poor servant to Allah's Mercy''(al-'abd al-fakeer ela rahmat el-Allah), or 'the poor…' (al-fakeer), etc. The text also tells us that the work was done 'under the governor' (fī wilāyat), 'under tenure' (bi wilāyat), 'under the guidance' and 'under the supervision' (fi mubasharat), which appear clearly in inscriptions no. 6, 10 (Pl.3), 28 (Pl.9), and 38 (Pl.14).

The final element in a standard foundation inscription is the date. Typically this is expressed as 'in the year' (fī sana), as in inscriptions no. 9 (Pl.3) and 28 (Pl.9) or 'in the months of the year' (fī shuhūr sana), with the number of the year written out in units, decades and centuries, such as inscriptions no. 2, 23, 26 (Pl.8), and 27. Sometimes the date is more precise, with a specific month given as 'in the 20th of Sha'aban…' such as inscription no. 3. Usually only one date is given, for the beginning or ending of construction. The typical form uses 'finished in' (farāgh), which appears in inscription no. 6.

Historians and archaeologists are usually glad to find a date and often satisfied with foundation inscriptions because they are dated. But, it is remarkable to note that the symbolic importance of many inscriptions is understood by the fact that some are nearly unreadable and were meant to affirm symbolically the presence of the ruler. Phrases are often omitted, letters misconnected or words misspelled. Sometimes these mistakes may have been the result of blind copying, and the person who drew up the inscription may not have been the same one who executed it.

Archaeology may well offer the 'hard facts' of material remains, which represent what somebody once did, not what some contemporary or later writer says they did. But one is often less interested in what someone did than in why they did it, how, with what consequences, and so on; and for answers to these questions we are in some ways worse off than with literary texts, since we have to supply our own

interpretations rather than evaluate those already given.

Many castles- especially Ajloun, Karak, Shobak, Aqaba and Azraq – see the map* - have carved inscription (Kennedy, 2001:21, 180), which provide valuable primary-source information about them. Inscriptions are always located over the entrances, and follow the same general format. The plain surface over the entrance is usually flat, on which was placed the inscription. The inscriptions are generally located in one of five places:

- Over the entrance of the main portal, gateway, gatehouse, e.g. and this can be noticed in inscriptions 6, 22, 30 (Pl.11) and 38 (Pl.14) in the catalogue.
- On a tower façade, this is obvious in inscriptions 1 (Pl.1), 2, 4, 5, 7, 9 (Pl.3), 10 (Pl.3), 11, 12 (Pl.4), 13 (Pl.4), 14 (Pl.4), 15- 16- 17 (Pls.5 and 6), 18, 19, 20, and 21.
- On the wall, and this can be noticed in inscriptions 3 (Pl.2), 8 and 28 (Pl.9).
- On a threshold, such as in inscription 26 (Pl.8).
- Inside a building, this is clear in inscriptions 31 (Pl.12), 4, 33, 34, 35 and 36 (Pls.12 and 13).

The inscriptions are carved on their own specific piece of flat stone, of better quality than the surrounding building stone. The inscriptions run generally from 2-5 lines, in Arabic, and are in the naskhi script. They are of unequal quality, with the larger fortresses usually having a finer quality of workmanship. The inscriptions that follow a typical formal protocol are invaluable and informative official writings (which would tell useful information about by and for whom the section of building was built), as they tell both historians and archaeologists the names of Sultans, patrons, architects, and most importantly, building dates.

The early thirteenth century saw major developments in military architecture in the Muslims lands, developments which are the more obvious because of the Ayyubids' and Mamluks' helpful practice of leaving dated building inscriptions on their castles (Millwright, 2008: 75, 89; Molin, 1995: 69). This activity does not seem to have been only a response to the crusades, but it may also result from the infighting between members of the Ayyubid dynasty after Saladin's death in 1193, the same practice was followed by the Mamluks (Ellenblum, 2007: 93-111; Michaudel, 2006:106-110).

These inscribed texts were put there by people with power. They were intended to be seen, some by everyone who passed, some by limited groups who sought out the place. The Muslim rulers set up these texts on their buildings to show their power and that they controlled these fortresses, therefore most of the textual Arabic inscriptions which appear on different parts of a castle were mainly considered as official sponsored inscriptions; as most of them carry out the name of the founder of the castle or tower (Myhill, 2006: 5-6).

The official writing communicated meaning to beholders and had three primary dimensions: territorial, referential, and aesthetic. Each of these three dimensions, which could also be called functions, organizes many levels of relationships between official writing and the beholder, and social uses and practices (Bierman 1998: 1-8).

Certainly, these three functions existed simultaneously. That is, the beholder of official writing derived meaning from each of these three sets of relationships at the same time, although each did not communicate meaning equally or in the same manner. At certain times, in certain historical circumstances, one of those functions of writing predominated. The major issues have taken up in these texts reveals how the functions of the officially sponsored writing balanced one another, which one was aimed at a specific group audience, and how the meanings changed within groups and between groups over time (Yasir, 2003: 172; Myhill, 2006:5).

The territorial function refers to the many ways in which officially sponsored writing reinforced and perpetuated to beholders both the solidarity of their group, binding it, and its exclusivity from other groups, bounding it from another or others. By marking, and thus distinguishing for the beholder, one social territory from another, official writing signaled a boundary separating systems of different informational content. Officially sponsored writing as used by various societies or groups in the eastern Mediterranean communicated especially effectively through this dimension because the writing systems (of primary concern here, and to a lesser extent the languages) of many groups within this study were specific to that group (Yasir, 2003: 172-173). What is clear from the actions of various leaders of groups within the medieval Mediterranean is that they recognized the effectiveness of writing as a sign of boundedness of a group, and consciously chose a writing system (what we might call simply an alphabet) because of its differences from, or similarities to, the alphabets of neighboring groups (Bierman, 1998: 14-18).

The second dimension or function of officially sponsored writing is the referential.

This term refers to those networks of meanings derived from the evocational field of the writing; its 'content' or informational base. This base included the oral and written traditions of the society, as well as traditions of social relationships, like the names and titles of honored people within the group, and dates and events of group significance. Writing on the interiors of building spaces, whether they were Muslim, Christian, was taken from group-specific evocational fields. The semantic content of the most visually dominant writing in all building spaces came from socially equivalent texts: the Qur'an. Officially sponsored writing within these spaces also gave donor and patron information that helped to organize and stratify the group within itself (Bierman, 1998: 18-22).

Similarly, the Ayyubid and Mamluk texts placed inside Muslim building spaces were directed to Muslim audiences. However, those texts, displayed on the outside of structures and in processions, addressed a public audience. These texts came from more than one evocational field and spoke to more than one audience. Importantly, the semantic content was accessible to beholders who were not familiar with the Qur'an, who were not Muslim. Thus the public aspects of the text conveyed information germane to subserving the Muslims social order on a larger scale than a sectarian or group-specific one in a mixed society.

The third dimension of meaning of officially sponsored writing, the aesthetic, organizes all those networks of relationships that beholders brought to bear when they saw the form, material, rhythm, (what might be called style) of the officially sponsored writing.

Including the audience in the analysis for written inscriptions gives a historical dimension to the meaning of official writing. Without an anchor in viewer (user) and place, the reconstruction of the meaning of the writing (or any artifact) takes on a historical timelessness. Meaning was not completely contained in the writing itself but was also a function of the relationship of the beholder, the writing and social usage and practices, the meaning of a particular example of writing was situated in a beholder in a specific historical moment: it therefore changes over time and with groups of beholders (Bierman, 1998: 132-139). Thus, the 'same' writing on the medieval castles of Jordan will carry different meanings to a Muslim than to a Christian audience in the same year. These divergent meanings for the beholders were the result of shifting political, economic, geographical, and religious attitudes or circumstances, as well as changes in the composition of the audience and beholder.

In addition to concern about the beholder's role in the construction of the meaning of written inscriptions, this study understands writing practices as subserving the hegemonic interests of officialdom, as defined by the given society. All societies with writing, then as well as now, have some mix of written and oral modes of communication. The uses of writing, whether extensive or limited, the modes and institutions through which writing is taught, and, in particular for the Ayyubid-Mamluk emphasis here, the changes or shifts in the uses of writing within a society are all understood as socially constructed practices subserving the interests of those who institute the changes. That a society used writing to keep ledgers does not in itself supply sufficient reason for that same society eventually to put writing in or on buildings. Seeing writing practices as socially constructed and fully understandable only in terms of the practices of a given society is supported increasingly by the research of sociologists, anthropologists, epigraphers, archaeologists and historians (Myhill, 2006: 6; Kennedy, 2001: 20; Michaudel, 2006: 106; Bierman 1998: 132-133).

Conclusion:

Historians and archaeologists are usually satisfied with foundation inscriptions because they are often dated. But, it is remarkable to note that the symbolic importance of many inscriptions is understood by the fact that some are nearly unreadable and were meant to affirm symbolically the presence of the ruler. Phrases are often omitted, letters misconnected or words misspelled. Sometimes these mistakes may have been the result of blind copying, and the person who drew up the inscription may not have been the same one who executed it.

Having considered what this material – the inscriptions- might be able to tell us, I would like to conclude by emphasising what it cannot tell us. It has been inferred from the relatively limited stock of specifically Muslim concepts present in the inscriptions. However, aside from the fact that the medium imposes severe constraints upon the complexity and variety of a message, these texts were never intended as catechisms of Islamic doctrine. Moreover, to say that "the inscriptions lack typical Islamic expressions" or "exhibit indeterminate monotheism" just because they do not mention the prophets' name "Mohammad" is to misconstrue Islam, which is not primarily Mohammadanism, but rather subordination to an omnipotent and unique God. So the very common formula In the name of Allah, the most gracious the most merciful- bism illāh alrahman alraheem- and Allah: The one and only God - lā ilāha illa Allāh wahdahu lā sharīka lahu, though not incompatible with Judaism or Christianity, can nevertheless be said to be specifically Islamic (Gürlu 2008: 52). Finally, I should point out that not all of the inscriptions are dated, and because very many have remained simple and "un-Mohammedan" in their expression right up until the present day. Archaeology may well offer the "hard facts" of material remains, which ... "represent what somebody once did, not what some contemporary or later writer says they did. But one is often less interested in what someone did than in why they did it, how, with what consequences, and so on; and for answers to these questions we are in some ways worse off than with literary texts, since we have to provide our own interpretations rather than evaluate those already given.

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Appendixes (الملاحق)



* Map of the Medieval Castles of Jordan (By the researcher).

*[1] Catalogue:

Ajloun Castle inscriptions:

جدد في أيام مولانا السلطان الملك الناصر صلاح الدين يوسف/ ابن الملك العزيز بحمدالله خلّد الله ملكه بنظر العبد الفقير محمد بن يزيد صاحب عينتاب.

1. 'It was updated in the days of sultan al-Nasser Saladin Yousef / The son of dear king, may God immortalize his property in the Poor's sight Mohammad Bin Yazid of Eintab' (Combe et al. 1943: 46; Johns 1932: 32).

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم أنشأ هذا البرج المبارك/ أيبك بن عبدالله أستاذ الدار المعظمي في شهور سنة أحد عشر وستمائة.

2. 'In the name of god most merciful this blessed tower was established by/ Aybak Bin Abdullah al-Mo'adami/in the months of the year 611' (Gawanmah 1979: 222).

عُمل في أيام مولانا السلطان الملك الظاهر ركن الدنيا والدين بيبرس بن عبدالله الصالحي/ أعز الله أنصاره بنظر العبد الفقير الراجي عفو الله وغفرانه ملك الأمراء عز الدين / أيبك العلائي بتاريخ العشرين من شعبان سنة تسعٍ وخمسين وستمائة.

3. 'was made in the days of our Sultan the King al-Daher…. /God praised his companions in the sight of the poor…. /Aybak al-Alai' in the 20th of Sha'aban (659)' (Al-Abedi 1972: 110- 111).

1 This catalogue begins by showing the Arabic text and its translation into English language below it, the translation process has been made with much help from the Department of Antiquities of Jordan (Research and Studies Unit), to whom I am so grateful for their assistance in studying and reading the inscriptions. For brevity, only short references giving the author's name and appropriate pages or catalogue number will be included in the text, unless it is the author's reading where no citation is given.

Karak Castle inscriptions:

وعمارتـه مولانـا السـلطان الملـك الظاهـر السـيد الأجـل الكبيـر العالـم العـادل المجاهـد المرابـط المؤيـد المظفـر المنصـور ركـن الدنيـا والديـن سـلطان الإسـلام والمسـلمين سـيد الملـوك والسـلاطين ناصـر الحـق مغيـث الخلـق ملـك البحريـن صاحـب القبلتيـن خـادم الحرميـن الشـريفين محيـي الخلافـة المعظمـة ظـل الله فـي الأرض قسـيم أميـر المؤمنيـن بيبـرس بـن عبـدالله الصالحـي أعـز الله أنصـاره.

4. ‘It is built by our Master, the Sultan, the King, the most victorious, the strengthened, the triumphant, the ground-stone of the present life and religion, Sultan of Islam and Muslims, King of Kings and Sultans, the supporter of truth and of creatures, King of two strands, owner of both Kiblahs-Jerusalem and Mecca-, servant of the two sanctuaries, the creator of majestically caliphate, Allah’s shadow on the earth, who share leadership with the commander of the faithful, Baybars Bin Abdullah Al-Salihi, May Allah support him and his components and proponents’ (Combe et.al 1943: 223-224).

بسـم الله الرحمـن الرحيـم السـلطان الملـك الظاهـر السـيد الأجـل الكبيـر العـادل المجاهـد المرابـط المؤيـد المظفـر ركـن الدنيـا والديـن سـلطان الإسـلام والمسـلمين سـيد الملـوك والسـلاطين قاتـل الكفـرة والمشـركين ناصـر الحـق مغيـث الخلـق ملـك البحريـن صاحـب القبلتيـن خـادم الحرميـن الشـريفين محيـي الخلافـة المعظمـة ظـل الله فـي الأرض قسـيمأمير المؤمنيـن بيبـرس بـن عبـدالله الصالحـي أعـز الله سـلطانه.

5. ‘In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful, our master Sultan, the King Al-Zahir, the most distinguished and privileged judge, the fair, the freedom fighter, the stationed to the victorious, the strengthened, the triumphant, the ground stone of the present life and religion, Sultan of Islam and Muslims, King of the Kings and Sultan of the Sultans, the supporter of truth and of creatures, King of two strands, owner of both Kiblahs-Jerusalem and Mecca-, servant of the two sanctuaries, the creator of majestically caliphate, Allah’s shadow on the earth, who share leadership with the commander of the faithful, Baybars Bin Abdullah Al-Salihi, may Allah glorifies his rule’ (Combe et al. 1943: 223).

بُنـي هـذا البـاب المبـارك فـي عهـد مولانـا السـلطان الملـك المعظـم شـرف الدنيـا والديـن عيسـى بـن الملـك العـادل سـيف الديـن, فـي ولايـة شـمس الديـن سـنقر المعظمـي وكان الفـراغ منـه سـنة 624 هـ 1229م.

6. ‘This gate has been constructed in the reign of … (our master, his majesty the sultan, the honour of the earth and the religion, Isa Bin (King Al-Adil) Saif Al-Din, under the governor Shams Al-Din Sunqur, it has finished in 624/1229’ (Mauss and Sauvaire 1874).

لا اله الا الله, السلطان الملك.

7. 'There is no God but Allah…' '… The sultan, the king…'

الله...الملك السلطان المظفر المؤيد محي الخلافة المعظمة ... ظل الله في الأرض...أعز الله ...

8. 'Allah … the King, the Sultan, the victorious, the supported, the creator of Caliphate … the shade of Allah on earth …Allah glorifies …'

Shobak Castle inscriptions:

لاجين خلّد الله ملكه وأدام أيامه وذلك في سنة سبع وتسعين وستمائة.

9. 'Lajin, may Allah immortalize his domination and eternize his days in the year 697 H.'

في مباشرة الأمير علاء الدين قبرص المنصوري.

10. 'Under the guidance of Prince 'Ala Al-din Qubrus Al- Mansuri' (Brünnow and Domaszewski, 1904:119; Combe et al., 1944: 177).

أمر بإنشائه مولانا ال.../ المؤمنين أيده...

11. 'Established under the orders of our Lord …'/'…The believers, be supported …' (Brünnow and Domaszewski, 1904: 119).

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم لاإله إلا الله محمد رسول الله ان الدين عند الله الاسلام أمر بإنشاء هذه القلعة وتجديدها مولناالسلطان الأعظم الملك المنصور العالم العادل المجاهد المؤيد المظفر حسام الدنيا والدين المنصور أبوالفتح لاجين.

12. 'In the name of Allah; there is no God but Allah, Mohammad is the messenger of Allah; the only religion accepted by Allah is Islam; who orders us to establish this castle and to renew it, is our Lord, the great Sultan, king Al-Mansour, the knower, the rightful, the struggler, the advocator, the triumphal, the sword of the life and religion Al-Mansour Abu'l fateh Lajin' (Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904: 119).

بسم الله/ ... محمد بن عبدالحميد المهندس.

13. 'In the name of Allah/ … Mohammad Ibn Abdul- Hameed, the architect' (Brünnow and Domaszewski, 1904: 119; Combe et al. 1944: 177; Millwright, 2008: 89).

ونمد لو نشاء/ وأعانه بمحمد خاتم الأنبياء.

14. 'We may extend that at our will, supported by Mohammad the last messenger'.

الحق أمانة.

15. 'The right is faithfulness'.

بيبرس بن عبدالله

16. 'Baybars Ibn Abed'l Allah' (Momani1988: 261).

لاإلـه إلا الله محمـد رسـول الله ان الديـن عنـد الله الاسـلام أمـر بإنشـاء هـذه القلعـة وتجديدهـا مولانـا السـلطان الأعظـم الملـك المنصـور العالـم العـادل المجاهـد المؤيـد المنصـور حسـام الدنيـا والديـن لاجيـن وذلـك فـي سـنة سـبع وتسـعين وسـتمائة.

17. 'There is no God but Allah, Mohammad is the messenger of Allah; the only religion accepted by Allah is Islam; this castle is established and renewed under the orders of our Lord, the great Sultan, king Al-Mansour, the knower, the rightful, the struggler, the advocator, the triumphal, Al-Mansour Hussam al-Din Lajin 697 H.' (Pl. 78), (Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904: 119).

سعادته وأيّد نصره.

18. 'His happiness and advocate his victory'.

المجاهد في سبيل الله.

19. 'The struggler for the sake of Allah'

أذّل الله ...

20. 'Allah has humiliated …'.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الرحيم/ أمر بإنشاء هذه القلعة وتجديدها مولانا السلطان الملك المنصور حسام لاجين.

21. 'In the name of Allah the most gracious, the most merciful. This castle has been established and renewed under the orders of our sultan the King Al-Mansou(r) Hussam La (jin)' (Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904: 119; Combe et al. 1944: 178).

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم, مشروطيت عثمانية حريات عدالت مساواة.

22. 'In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most Merciful, the Ottoman Slogans are: Liberty, Justice, and Equality' (Momani 1988: 268).

السلطان الملكي الصالحي النجمي/ السيد الملك الكامل محمد بن أبي بكر بن أيوب خلّد الله ملكه/ العهود المباركة ... وعندما بنى السور وفتح الأبراج/ وذلك في يومين ... ولاية المجلس الشامي الأمير الأجل الكبير عز الدين/ ابن عبدالله المعروف بالإسكندراني الملكي الصالحي البحري وذلك في شهور سنة مائة وأربعين وستمائة.

23. 'Al-Sultani, Al-Malaki, Al-Salihi, Al-Najmi/ The Mister King Al-Kamil Mohammad Ibn Bakr Ibn Ayyub, May God Immortal His Kingship/ Blessed Ages… When he built wall and conquers towers/during two days… Mastership's of Al-Shami Council the great glorious Izz Al-Din/Ibn Abdullah, known by, Alexandrian al-Malaki, Al-Salihi, Al-Bahri/ …In the months of the year 740 H.' (Gawanmah 1979: 205).

السلطان الملك الكامل .../ ... العادل ... خلّد الله ملكه.

24. 'Al-Sultan, Al-Malik Al-Kamil.../... al-Adil…/May God immortal his Kingship'

... الرحمن الرحيم/ ... بأمر مولانا ال .../ خلّد الله ملكه/ المؤيد الأ...

25. '… The Most Merciful/ … Order of Our Lord Al …/ …May God immortal his Kingship/… Al-Muaid Al-A….'

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم عُمّر هذا/ المكان المبارك في أيام مولانا السلطان الملك/ ابن احمد خلّد الله ملكه... وأنفذ أحكامه وذلك .../ جمال الدين قطز في شهور سنة احدى وخمسين وستمائة.

26. 'By the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful/The Place al-Mubarak has been established in the days of our lord the sultan/The King…/

Ibn Ahmad May God immortal his Kingship … Done/His orders on…/Jamal Al-Din Qutuz in the months of the year 651 H.' (Gawanmah 1979: 207).

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم/ السلطان الأعظم العادل الملك الصالح/ نجم الدين أيوب خلّد الله ملكه تطوع لعمارته/ العبد الفقير إلى رحمة الله تعالى الأمير شرف الدين/ وذلك في شهور سنة ست وأربعين وستمائة.

27. ' In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful/ Al-Sultan, the great, the knower, the rightful, the king, al-Salih/Najim Al-Din Ayyub, May Allah immortal his kingship, volunteered/To establish it-the castle- his/ Poor servant to Allah's Mercy Amir Sharaf Al-Din/in the months of year 646 H.'(Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904: 119; Combe et al. 1941: 183-184).

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم أمر بإنشاء هذه القلعة المباركة وتجديدها/ مولانا السلطان الملك المنصور حسام الدنيا والدين لاجين/ وذلك في مباشرة الأمير علاء الدين القبرصي سنة سبع وستين وستمائة.

28. 'In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, order to establish this castle and to renew it/ Our Master the Sultan, the King, Al-Mansour, the sword of life and religion, Lajin/under the supervision of Prince Ala al-Din Qubrusi Al-Mansouri in the year 697 H.'(Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904: 118).

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم كل نفس ذائقة الموت هذا القبر ال.../ إلى رحمة الله تعالى ... فتح الدين .../ سبع ... غفر الله.

29. 'In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, every /Soul is going to die, this tomb is …/to Allah's Mercy…By Allah's power/Seven … Allah forgive'.

Aqaba Castle inscriptions:

مراد بن سليم خان/ لمولانا السلطان الملك الأشرف / عز نصره جدّد هذه القلعة.

30. 'Murad son of Salim Khan/ to our Sultan the honest King/ whose glory is respected, this castle was restored by him'

...المباركة السعيدة مولاناالسلطان المالك الملك الأشرف أبو النصر قانصوه الغوري سلطان الاسلام والمسلمين قاتل....

31. '…Blessed happiness to our Sultan, the King Abu-Al-Nasser Qanswah Al-Ghouri, the Sultan of Islam and Muslims, the fighter…' (Glidden 1952: 117).

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم/ السلطان ... عز نصره في .../ ... الله .../ العزيز ... العاشرة بإشراف المعمار محمود محمد خان.

32. 'In the name of God most merciful most compassionate/The Sultan … his honoured victory in …/ … God …/ the dear … the tenth supervised by the architect Mahmoud Mohammad Khan'

... إلا الله ... أيده ... في ...

33. '… except God …/ …/ …/ Supported him … in …'

محي العدل في العالمين الواقف بمشيئة الله في العقبة السلطان الملك الملك الأشرف أبو النصر قانصوه الغوري أعز الله أنصاره بمحمد وآله وكان بناء هذه القلعة المباركة ذات الأمير خاير بك العلاي المعماري الأجل أمير الطبلخانات بتاريخ ....

34. 'The rightful Sultan, the king Abu-Al-Nasser Qanswah al-Ghouri, may Allah advocate him with Mohammad (the prophet) who ordered Prince Khair Bic Al-Alai to build Aqaba blessed castle on 15…'

جدّد هذه/ القلعة سنة 966 ﻫ لمولانا السلطان/ مراد بن سليم / خان

35. 'To our Sultan/ Murad Bin Salim/Khan who restored this/Castle on the year 996'

لمولانا السلطان/ مراد بن سليم/ عز نصره/ سنة966 ﻫ

36. 'To our Sultan/ Murad Bin Salim/ His honoured victory/ the year 996 hegira', (Zaki 1960: 136).

لمولانا السلطان/ الملك / مراد بن سليم/ عز نصره/ سنة966 ه

37. ‘To our Sultan/ the King/ Murad Bin Salim/ His honoured victory 996 hegira’

Azraq Castle inscription:

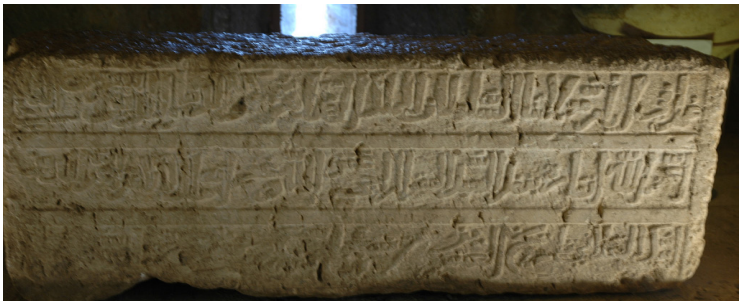
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم أمر بعمارة/ هذا القصر المبارك الفقير إلى الله/ عزالدين أيبك/ بولاية علي بن الحاجب في سنة أربع وثلاثين وستمائة.

38. ‘By the name of Allah, the merciful, the compassionate, the one who order to build/this blessed palace is the poor man the servant of Allah/Izz al-Din Aybak/under the tenure of Ali Bin Al-Hajib in 634H.’, (Combe et al. 1944: 74; Millwright, 2008: 75).

Plates:



Pl. (1): Saladin inscription no.1, Ajloun Castle.



Pl. (2): Sultan Baybars inscription no.3, Ajloun Castle.



Pl. (3): Inscriptions, 9 and 10.



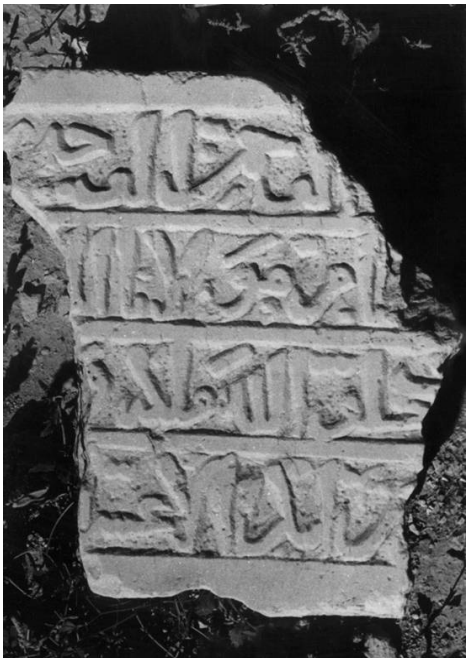
Pl. (4): inscriptions nos. 12, 13 and 14.



Pl. (5): inscriptions nos. 15, 16, and 17.



Pl. (6): Showing inscription no. 18 and the rest of inscription no. 17.



Pl. (7): Inscription no. 25.



Pl. (8): Sultan Qutuz inscription, no. 26.



Pl.(9): Sultan Lajin inscription, no.28.



Pl. (10): Inscription no. 29.



Pl. (11): Arabic inscription which refers to the rule of the Ottoman Sultan Murad the Third in 1587, inscription no. 30.



Pl. (12): Arabic inscriptions inside the outer liwan (1), relating Sultan Qanswah al-Ghouri's construction of the castle, inscription no. 31.



Pl. (13): Arabic inscriptions inside the outer liwan (1), relating the Mamluk Sultan Qanswah al-Ghouri's construction of the castle, and other two inscriptions which indicates later repairs in the castle during the reign of the Ottoman Sultan Murad Bin Salim (inscriptions nos. 34, 35 and 36).



Pl. (14): Arabic inscription which dates the rebuilding of the castle back to the Mamluks (Sultan Aybak reign, inscription no.38).

بعض الكتابات العربية من قلاع القرون الوسطى في الأردن: المحتوى وتحليل السياق

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ملخص

قام الحكام الأيوبيون والمماليك ببناء أو إعادة بناء القلاع من أجل الدفاع عن حدودهم ضد الصليبيين خلال القرنين الثاني والثالث عشر الميلاديَّين، وعلى الرغم من تغير إدارات القلاع في هذه الفترة عدة مرات، إلا أنه تم الحفاظ على مبانيها وتعزيزها بشكل رئيس من لدن المسلمين، كما تشهد العديد من الكتابات العربية التي حملتها القلاع على جدرانها ومبانيها. ومن المهم أن نذكر هنا أن كتاب «كتابة اللافتات: النص الفاطمي العام 1998» لمؤلفه: إيرين أ. بيرمان قد استُخدم نموذجا لتنفيذ المناقشة التالية بالإضافة إلى العديد من الدراسات التي تناولت قلاع القرون الوسطى في الأردن. ويعتزم الباحث مناقشة جوانب اللغة وسياق النقوش المذكورة في النشرة المصورة وهي عبارة عن نقوش تأسيسية وترميمية الهدف منها إظهار أسماء من أمر بالبناء أو الترميم وتبيان المواقع التي خضعت لسلطتهم.

الكلمات الدالة: قلعة, أيوبي, مملوكي, نقوش.