

Diacritical points almost throughout, a few differentiating signs and filling ornaments partly disguised as vowel-signs. Unpublished; cf. Plate XXXII, 4.

(1) بِسْمِ (1) الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي

(2) إِنْ شَاءَ جَعَلَ لَكَ خَيْرًا مِنْ ذَلِكَ جَنَّاتٍ

(3) تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَيَجْعَلُ لَكَ قُصُورًا

(4) أَمْرٌ بِأَنْشَاءِ هَذَا الْخَانَ الْمُبَارَكِ الْعَبْدِ الْفَقِيرِ

(5) إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى الْحَاجِّ الْإِلَّهِ الْمَلِكِ أَحَدِ الْأَمْرَاءِ بِالْأَمْرِ الْمَصْرِيَّةِ

(6) وَذَلِكَ فِي سَنَةِ سَبْعَةِ عَشْرٍ وَسَبْعِمِائَةٍ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَسَلَّمَ

... Qur'ān XXV. 11 ... *Ordered to build this blessed caravanserai the servant yearning for God, the Exalted, the pilgrim Almalik, one of the amirs in the province of Egypt. This was done in the year 717 (began 16 March 1317) ...*

A glance at the ruin shows that the inscription, made to commemorate the erection of a khan, is not in situ. Erected on the top of a mound accessible only by means of a steep path, neither suitable nor wide enough for a caravanserai, the present shrine could never have formed part of such a building, nor could it have been built over the ruins of one. No trace of a khan was found in the village of 'Arāq al-Manshiyyeh, although the latter is situated on the very important road leading from Gaza to Kerak via Bait Jibrin and Hebron. The post stations of this road are well known from various contemporary sources and as 'Arāq al-Manshiyyeh is not mentioned in any one of them I venture to suggest that the above inscription refers to a caravanserai that once existed in the now abandoned Umm al-Laquis, which, in the Middle Ages, was the nearest post station to 'Arāq al-Manshiyyeh.

Our inscription furnishes us with an additional detail of Almalik's biography.¹ It has hitherto always been assumed that he made only one pilgrimage to Mecca, viz. in 728, and van Berchem pointed this out as the reason why Almalik is not called *hājj* in his inscription in Cairo, dated 719. But our present text, written about ten years before Almalik met Ibn Baṭṭūṭa in Mecca, shows that he must have made an earlier pilgrimage prior to the end of the year 716.

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¹ Almalik's biography and the reasons for transcribing his name Almalik and not Yl-malak will be found in my *Saracenic Heraldry*, chap. Armorial Roll, s.v.

A MEDIEVAL ARABIC DESCRIPTION OF THE HARAM OF JERUSALEM

THE first volume of the encyclopaedia *Masālik al-abṣār* by Aḥmad b. Faḍl-Allāh al-'Umarī contains descriptions of many important buildings, religious and otherwise, erected before the middle of the fourteenth century. Among others there is a detailed description of the Haram in Jerusalem, to a great extent copied from the *Silsilat al-'asjad fi ṣifat aṣ-ṣakhra wa-l-masjid*¹ by the vizier Tāj ad-dīn Abu-l-Faḍā'il Aḥmad b. Amīn al-Mulk and added to from his own observations, made either during several journeys from Cairo to Damascus, or, what is more probable, during his 'small' pilgrimage.² As the information contained therein seems to be worthy of being made known to a wider public, an English translation has been attempted, and in order to preserve the character of the original it has been made as literal as possible. All technical terms and words with regard to the translation of which there is any doubt have been accompanied by their Arabic equivalents transcribed within brackets. The translation has been based on Ahmad Zeki Pasha's edition, Cairo, 1924, p. 140 ff., and checked with the manuscript of Oxford (Bodl. MS. Pococke 191).

(140).³ We will begin with the description of the Noble Rock and the structure surrounding it, and say:

The blessed BUILDING stands in a court paved with polished (*maṣḡūl*) flagstones; it is 18 ells in height, and above this rises the tambour (*kursiyy al-qubbah*) 10 and $\frac{1}{4}$ ells high, with a circumference of 103 and $\frac{2}{3}$ ells. The drum wall is pierced with 16 gilded glass windows, covered externally with gratings. (The whole building) is octagonal in shape. Each side of the octagon (*tathmīnah*)⁴ is 29 and $\frac{2}{3}$ ells long. On the outside it is covered with white, veined (*mushajjar*) marble to a height of seven ells. Above it, reaching as far as the rain-water spouts, that is, to a height of seven ells, the entire

¹ Mujīr ad-dīn, *al-Uns al-jalīl*, p. 378, l. 13 ff. quoted it under the slightly different title of *Al-'asjad fi ṣifat al-aḡṣā wa-l-masjid* by Tāj ad-dīn Aḥmad, son of the vizier Amīn ad-dīn Abū Muḥammad 'Abdallāh, the Hanafi. Tāj ad-dīn (†755) was a contemporary of the author of *Masālik*.

² Šafadī, *A'yān* s.v. (MS. Berlin, Codex Wetzstein, II, 298, fo. 20^v, l. 4) mentions that when the plague made its appearance in Damascus, Ibn Faḍl-Allāh intended to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, but changed his mind and went to Jerusalem, where his wife died. In Dhu-l-Ḥijja 745 he visited Hebron, *Masālik*, p. 170, l. 3 from bottom.

³ The numbers indicate the pages of the Cairo edition.

⁴ This word is used *promiscue* for 'octagon', 'side of an octagon', and 'the octagonal space between the wall and first row of columns', or 'between the first and the second rows of columns'.

surface is covered with gilded, veined mosaics of various designs. Each side of the octagon has 7 windows, 2 blind lateral ones, and 5 of glass, provided on the outer side with iron gratings. Above the rain-water spouts rises a (parapet) wall, 4 ells in height, covered with mosaics, as described above. On each side of the octagon are places for 13 niches (*mihrāb*). The building has four doors: the door to the South is 6 and $\frac{1}{4}$ ells high, and 3 and $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{3}$ ells wide. In front of it, outside, is a portico covered with white and veined marbles. It runs in an east-westerly direction, and is 21 and $\frac{1}{2}$ ells long, and 4 wide, and has a flat, painted ceiling. The centre, which faces the door, is spanned by an arch, covered with gilt mosaics and supported by eight marble columns, of which the two at the ends are crow-coloured (*ghurābiyy*), four myrtle-green, and two speckled red and white (*shahm wa-lahm*). Between the crow-coloured and the green column is a MARBLE BASIN,¹ 1 and $\frac{1}{3}$ ells in diameter, decorated on the outside with reliefs. The water drains from the rain-water spouts into this basin.

(141). The doorway mentioned above has two wings plated with yellow copper in relief work. On entering, one walks between wooden railings (*darābzīn*), $\frac{2}{3}$ of an ell high, which are to be found only at the head of the first side of the octagon. The space measured from the inner edge of the threshold of this door and the columns, of which mention will now be made, is eight and $\frac{2}{3}$ ells. Above the columns, at a height of 15 ells, a flat ceiling painted in various colours, is borne on the wall of the Dome of the Rock.² Inside the octagonal walk the columns and the wall are wholly encased in marble, without mosaics, with much (?) carved and gilded marble, about one ell (high).

The ceiling of each of the sides of the octagon is carried on two piers, encased in veined and beautifully coloured marble. Each of these piers measures eleven and $\frac{2}{3}$ ells in circumference and eight and $\frac{2}{3}$ ells in height. The side which faces the Rock has two angles. With each pier are two columns, one speckled red and white, the other myrtle-green. The distance between each pair of columns is five ells, and the girth of each column is two and $\frac{2}{3}$ ells. Its height above the bases of the columns is six and $\frac{1}{2}$ ells; above it there are tie-beams (*basātil*) encased with yellow copper in relief and gilded over the reliefs. Above the tie-beams rise arches with beautifully gilded mosaics.

This first octagon consists of eight pillars and sixteen columns. Of these, ten are white and blue, three myrtle green, and three speckled red and white.

¹ Which has since disappeared.

² The Author, as many others, often uses the word *ṣakhra* (= Rock) for *qubbat aṣ-ṣakhra* (= Dome of the Rock) or *binā' aṣ-ṣakhra* (= the structure surrounding the Rock). This is tacitly put right in the following pages.

The distance from the face of the bases of these columns to the second octagon¹ is ten ells. Thereon rests a ceiling with gilded 'dishes' (*maqālī*). Its height is equal to that of the other ceiling. Because of the dusting of the ceiling the 'dishes' are fixed in place without nails. The roof covered with lead is five ells above the inner ceiling. At the border of this octagon¹ a balustrade² runs round the full extent of the dome. The dome rests on four square piers, which, (142) like the former, are encased in marble. Between each pair of piers there are three columns of speckled red and white, and myrtle-green marbles. Above them rise arches, covered on both sides with gilt mosaics, and on the soffits (*al-bāḥin*) with white and black marble. The dome is carried in all by twelve columns, seven of which are myrtle-green, and five speckled red and white.

He said: I have measured one of these columns; it was speckled red and white. Its girth was three and $\frac{1}{2}$ ells, and its height above the bases of the columns seven and $\frac{2}{3}$ ells.

From the apex of the gilt wooden dome to the outer surface of the Noble Rock it is 47 ells, and from the outer surface of the Rock to the floor of the cave six ells. From the outer surface of the wooden dome to the second lead-covered dome it is one and a half ells.

He said: I have measured the girth of the tambour supporting the dome on columns and piers, and it was 103 ells.

Description of the IRON SCREEN between the columns and piers. It has four doors; the North door is locked, the remaining three are open. The South door is gained by ascending two steps. From the inner edge of the threshold of this door to the face of the Rock the distance is 4 and $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ ells. The part of the Rock on this side is encased in coloured marble to a height of 2 ells. The Rock is enclosed on all sides by a carved wooden railing. Its circumference is 74 ells. At the end of this marble-clad Rock, on the north-western side, there lies a small stone, borne on six small columns. It was said that it was the footprint of the Prophet, may God bless him and give him peace, left on the night of his ascent to heaven. Opposite the said foot (-print) there is a mirror of seven metals, called the 'Buckler of Ḥamza'.³ It is supported on three fine columns, two of which are twisted (*rūḥān fī jasad*).

(143). The height of the iron screen is 4 and $\frac{2}{3}$ ells. Over it stretches a

¹ This is in reality not an octagon, but a circle.

² It is evident from the description that the gallery between the tambour and the dome is meant.

³ This is a very interesting confirmation of Clermont-Ganneau's theory (*Archaeological Researches in Palestine*, I, p. 220), since accepted by everybody, that the 'buckler' was in reality a mirror. On the other hand his statement (*ibid.*, p. 219 n.) that Ibn Baṭṭūṭa was the earliest author to mention the 'buckler' must be revised.

longish panel of painted wood. Above the panelling iron candlesticks are ranged.

The niche in which the prayer-leader of the Dome of the Rock prays lies to the right as one enters from the South gate, on the inside of the wooden railing mentioned above. Opposite the prayer-niche lies the entrance-door to the CAVE of the Noble Rock, spanned by an arch of fine marble, supported on two pillars like wax-candles (*sham'iyy*). Fourteen steps lead down into the Cave, the interior of which measures 10 ells in length east-west, and 7 and $\frac{1}{2}$ ells in width north-south.

The entire floor of the Dome of the Rock and of the Cave is covered with marble flags.

In the interior of the said Cave there are two prayer-niches, one to the right, and one to the left. Each of the prayer-niches is flanked by two fine marble columns. In front of the right-hand prayer-niche there is a bench called 'Place of al-Khiḍr' (i.e. the prophet Elijah). The length of this bench from east to west is 1 and $\frac{3}{8}$ ells, and from south to north 2 and $\frac{1}{4}$ ells. Opposite the bench there is a marble column which reaches to the ceiling, and a diagonally placed column which leans against the wall of the cave. In the northern angle of the cave there is a bench, cut in the rock, called 'Place of the Friend' (i.e. Abraham). Its depth from south to north is 1 and $\frac{1}{2}$ ells; from east to west 1 and $\frac{1}{4}$ ells.

THE EAST GATE of the Dome of the Rock consists of two doors, one within the other. The outer door was made to protect the inner against rain and snow. The doorway is covered with marble. The space between the two doors is 4 and $\frac{1}{4}$ ells in width, and the portico 12 and $\frac{1}{2}$ ells in length.

To the right, as one leaves, there is a room for the gate-keeper; in it is a niche carried by three beautiful columns. To the left, as one leaves, there is a room for the candles, carried on four myrtle-green and blue columns.

(144). The vaulted ceiling between the doors is covered with gilded mosaics. From the threshold of the second door to the columns it is 7 and $\frac{3}{8}$ ells. This gateway carries a flat roof.

From the outer face of the columns to the iron screen there are 11 ells. From the inside of the iron screen to the wooden railing which protects the Rock are 4 and $\frac{1}{4}$ ells. And from the edge of this eastern gate, to the left as one enters, there stand, at a distance of 9 ells, in a southerly direction, two myrtle-green columns. Over them a gilded *duqaisiyy* through which one ascends the roof of the Dome of the Rock, and the dome.

THE NORTH GATE is called the Gate of Paradise. Like the East Gate it has a portico. It is also of the same structure, and shows the same decoration.

Between the two pillars, in front of the gate, inside the gilded wooden railing, there stands a beautiful prayer-niche to indicate the black marble slab at which the people pray. This marble slab was long ago lost and replaced by a slab of green marble. And the people worship and pray there(at).

THE WEST GATE has a portico, like the East gate and the North Gate. The distance between the octagons of the Dome of the Rock from the inside is the same as that from the North Gate (to the Rock), less the distance from the iron screen to the wooden railing of the Dome of the Rock, namely 6 and $\frac{2}{3}$ ells. So much for the description of the Rock and of the octagonal structure surrounding it.

THE COURT surrounding the structure is paved in its entirety with splendid polished flagstones. Its length North and South is 229 ells. Its width East and West is 223 and $\frac{1}{2}$ ells. (145). And the distance between the portico to the South of the South door of the Dome of the Rock and the top step of the flight of steps leading to the Mosque, is 53 ells; and from the top step to the threshold of the Mosque it is 150 and $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ ells.

At the head of this flight of steps there are four ARCHES which are carried on three columns and two masonry piers. Of these, two columns are of red flint,¹ the one in the centre of white marble with a square recess.

History books say that a prayer offered up at this spot is answered.

To the East of these arches, at a distance of 40 ells, there are similar arches with two myrtle-green columns. And between these two arches, at the lower level of the Haram, there is a large platform (*suffah*) called the 'Ramp of the Seven Steps'. This platform is said to be the trysting-place of the pious and the pilgrims by night, who kneel down upon it in prayer.

At the side of the first of the arches mentioned above, there is a painted PRAYER-NICHE flanked on either side by a fine marble column. In its western supporting-pier there are two marble cupolas, one above the other, each of them formed of a single piece, called the 'Dome of the Balance' (*qubbat al-mīzān*), carried on 12 columns of marble speckled red and white, and resting on 'waxen' bases. The cupola thereon resembles the cupola mentioned, 8 and $\frac{2}{3}$ ells in height. The lower column is 2 and $\frac{1}{8}$ ells high, the upper 1 and $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ ells. The cupola is also known under the name of 'Dome of the Secret Discourse.'

In the south-western corner of the Court there is a place known under the name of the MU'AZZAMIYYAH SCHOOL. Its external length is 34 ells, and its width from South to North 7 ells. It has two doors which open to the North.

¹ Mr. E. T. Richmond suggests that here (and also on page 50) *صوان* is a textual error for *الصواني* (= *الاسواني*) i.e. the granite of Assuan.

At both sides of them stand three marble columns, each column consisting of four tiny twisted (*arba'ah fī jasad wāhid*) and ringed (*malfūfah mutha'banah*) columns.¹ Adjoining them are two fine columns. The height of the building measured from the ground of the court of the Dome of the Rock is 9 ells. Through the two above-mentioned doors one enters a hall, whose length is 18 and $\frac{1}{2}$ ells, and the width 6 ells, and which has a gilded Syrian ceiling of 13 square (ells). In its South façade there are three windows which look on to the Haram and the Gates of the Mosque.

On its western side is a domed room on arches. The South, North, and West sides have three windows each. On its eastern² side an entrance-door from the above-mentioned hall, and a window giving on to this hall. On its eastern side there is a domed room more beautiful than the other. It serves as a living-room for the Imām and for the locum tenens, and as a store-room for oil.

Al-Malik al-Mu'azzam provided a single Imām for this school to recite the five prayers. He also provided 25 men from among the students of grammar, and a Shaikh, on condition that they be Hanafis and pupils of his school outside the Haram. For the benefit of this institution he endowed a village, called Bait Liqiā, in the Jerusalem district, as waqf. On its ceiling it is recorded that in the year 608³ he was engaged in erecting the building. In front of the northern window-gratings in the West dome of this hall, at a distance of about 5 ells, there is a vaulted passage with 17 steps, each step 1 ell in width, through which one descends into the lower part of the Haram. In front of the eastern dome of this hall there is a bench with a carved marble slab, which serves as a clock to tell the hours of the day. Its length from east to west is 2 and $\frac{2}{3}$ ells, its depth 1 and $\frac{1}{3}$ ells, and its height 1 and $\frac{1}{2}$ ells.

(147). Opposite this school, in the East corner of the court, there stands a beautiful domed chamber, whitened on the outside as a CELL for one of the PROFESSORS of the Haram. The door of the cell faces north. All three sides have a window each, giving on to the Haram.

At the West and North wall of this court there are TWO PLATFORMS, one of which is spanned by a dome in the West, the other by a dome in the North. Over it, a roof resting on two marble columns on which the prayer-leaders say the five prayers.

¹ Little is left to-day of the original façade of which a photograph had been published by Wilson, *Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem*, Pl. 5b; Courtellemont, *Jérusalem*, p. 48; and a drawing by Max van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, *Jérusalem, Haram*, No. 155, p. 61, fig. 11. Cf. also Schick, *Tempelplatz*, p. 26.

² In the Cairo edition, by mistake: *western*.

³ A.D. 1211-12. In the inscription published by van Berchem l.c., p. 61 ff. a different date is given, namely 604 (1207-8), recorded also by Mujir ad-dīn, l.c., p. 386, l. 5.

From the threshold of the East door to the flight of steps—the end of the paved court of the Dome of the Rock in an easterly direction—it is 76 ells.

At the top of this flight of steps there are five arches spanned over four columns and two pillars, at the south and north sides of which there are two CELLS, intended for the poor who live, pray and meditate in the Haram. The arch of this arcade is 10 ells high, being the same height as the arches over the other (flights of) steps. There remain three arches which are open and through which one reaches the flight of steps called the BURĀQ STEPS. There are 36 steps.

Between the first step of this flight of steps to the east wall it is 156 and $\frac{1}{3}$ ells.

It is 5 and $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ ells from the outer door of the east entrance to the DOME OF THE CHAIN. This dome is carried on 12¹ columns, myrtle-green and speckled red and white. The height of the columns above their bases is 3 and $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{8}$ ells. The height of its roof, which is flat and covered with lead, is 8 ells.

(148). The entire intermediate space between the columns is left open² (*makhrūq*). Between the columns there are supports (*muttakāyah*) of smoothly polished flint, only a hand's breadth (in height). The length of each of these (supporting pieces) is 4 and $\frac{1}{2}$ ells, and the width between the two columns of the prayer-niche 5 ells. The prayer-niche is lined with coloured marble. At both sides of the prayer-niche there are two columns of white marble. Above these columns there are arches covered with gilded and green varicoloured mosaics. The height of these arches is 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ ells, their breadth from the prayer-niche to the end is 18 ells. In the interior of this domed chamber there is a dome, carried on six myrtle-green and red columns flecked with white. The space between the columns is 4 ells, the diameter of the dome 8 and $\frac{1}{2}$ ells. Above the columns rise arches set with mosaics. Their height is 4 and $\frac{1}{2}$ ells, and the wooden dome rises above them.

From the north door of the Dome of the Rock, called the Door of Paradise, to the end of the court which surrounds the Dome of the Rock, that is, to the three arches which rest on the two marble columns and the two piers, it is 108 ells. (149). Through these arcades one goes down eight steps into the Haram. In front of this flight of steps there is a longish flagged walk 5 and $\frac{1}{4}$

¹ In reality there are only eleven.

² In the Arabic original *mahrūq* (burnt down) which does not make sense. The above translation is based on a suggestion made by Omar Eff. Salih al-Barghuti of Jerusalem.

ells wide, which ends in a northerly direction at the Haram gate known under the name of 'The Gate of the Honour of the Prophets'. The length of this walk is 178 ells. This gate, God willing, will be described in the mention of the gates of the Haram.

To the right and to the left of this arcade, at the North end of the court, there are TWO PLATFORMS. Both of them, measured from East to West, are 8 and $\frac{1}{2}$ ells long, and from South to North 2 and $\frac{2}{3}$ ells wide. People pray on both platforms.

Translated by L. A. M.

(To be continued.)

NOTES

The High Commissioner laid the Foundation Stone of the Palestine Archaeological Museum on 19 June 1930.

During the present year excavations have been conducted at the following sites:

Ain Shams (Beth Shemesh) by Dr. Elihu Grant for Haverford College, Pennsylvania.

Baisan (Beth Shean) by Mr. G. M. FitzGerald for the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

Magharat al-Wad (Wadi al-Maghara, near Athlit) (prehistoric cave site) by Miss D. A. E. Garrod for the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem.

Magharet al-Zuttiyyeh and the *Dolmen field* S.E. of Kerazeh, and N. of Tall Hum by Mr. F. Turville-Petre for the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem.

Caves on the *Mount of Olives* and at *al-Isawiyyeh* by Dr. E. L. Sukenik for the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Tall Bait Mersem by Professors W. F. Albright and M. G. Kyle for the Xenia-Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem.

Tall al-Far'a and *Tall al-Ajjul (near Gaza)* by Professor Sir Flinders Petrie, assisted by Mr. Starkey, for the British School of Egyptian Archaeology.

Tall al-Mutasallem (Megiddo) by Mr. P. L. O. Guy for the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

Tall al-Sultan (Old Jericho) by Professor J. Garstang for the Institute of Archaeology, University of Liverpool.

A clearance of the ruins of the Crusaders' Castle at 'Athlit has been begun by the Department of Antiquities, with a view to making records and taking measures for conservation.