A WAQF INSCRIPTION FROM RAMLAH *

BY

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Several years ago (and I was even told, twenty years ago) a marble tablet bearing a long Arabic inscription written in simple Kufi script, was found in the northern part of Ramlah. Nobody remembers today who discovered it and in what circumstances, and nobody seems at that time to have been interested in deciphering it. Attention was drawn to it about three years ago when it was exhibited for several months in the Municipal Museum of Acre. I saw it myself and managed at that time to read its date—301 H. In June 1965 a photograph of the inscription was given to me and I was able to study it.

The marble tablet which bears the inscription is carefully worked. It is oblong and its measurements are: 0.82 x 0.54 x 0.06 m. It is now preserved and exhibited in The Alphabet Museum, which is a part of the Haaretz Museum in Tel-Aviv.

(1) بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم هذا [الفندق] جميع حدوده وحقوقه
(2) وارضه وبناته سفه وطارته ورافته وجمع ما ينسب الى و يعرف به
(3) بما هو فيه منه وقف فاينق الحازم بن عبد الله الصقلي مولى المعتمد على الله و
(4) فقه وحبه وتصدق به طيباً لثواب الله وربى لمفارقه والتناسا لزنقا لديه في صحة
(5) عقبه وبدنه وجوزه امره على ما اوقفه عليه فاينق الحازم ورسمه في كتاب وفقه
(6) ذلك في سبيل مما جعله عليه عند فاضي من قضى المسلمين يجوز حcke ويتخذ قضاه
(7) تصدق به ووقفه وحبه وقفاً عمراً نه عز وجل في حياته وبعد وفاته لا يباع
(8) ولا شيء منه ولا يجب ولا شيء منه ولا يفرض به ولا شيء منه ولا يقاض عليه

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In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful. This inn¹ with all its boundaries (dépendances) and rights² (avec la totalité de ses dépendances et droits).

2. its land and building³, its lower and upper floor⁴, its paths

¹ L’auteur propose, à l’attention des lecteurs français, l’équivalent en français de quelques termes techniques de sa traduction anglaise, suivant la traduction du matériel similaire dans le CIA (N.D.L.R.).

See L. Hautecoeur and G. Wiet, Les mosquées du Caire (Paris 1932), I, p. 108, where they say that funduq is the most ancient word for inn or caravanserai. Until the present inscription was discovered the earliest inscription in which this word appeared dated from the year 577/1181-2. Cf. Répertoire chronologique de l’épigraphie arabe, IX, no 3368.

² The phrase bi-ğami⁵ hūdūdihī wa-huqqiqīhī etc. appears in many proprietary and waqf inscriptions, e.g. Répertoire, III, n° 925-937; VI, n° 2148; Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum (CIA), I, Égypte, n° 18, 19, and pp. 39-41, where Van Berchem explains the translation of the Arabic hūdūd into the French dépendances.

³ On the two words ard wa-buna, cf. Répertoire, III, n° 933; VI, n° 2148 and the French translation there.

⁴ For the expression sūfī wa-‘uluw, see CIA, I, Égypte, n° 19 and pp. 39-40. Van Berchem proves (p. 40, n. 1) that this expression refers to a two-floor building. Cf. also Répertoire, III, n° 931, 933; IV, 1525, 1528.