

ARTĀS

Is. Gr. 168 122



The name of the village is also pronounced Urtās, and by this spelling it was referred to in the *PEF Survey* (SWP 3:161), and the archives of the Department of Antiquities of Mandatory Palestine (PMA). The village was built on the western slope of Wādī Artās, some 3km. south-west of Bethlehem. The valley is very fertile and watered by a spring bearing the same name. (Abel, 1938 1:148) Nāṣir-i-Khusraw mentions the fertile valley and four villages in its vicinity, “two *farsakhs* from Jerusalem.” (Khusraw 40; Le Strange 440; Marmardji 160) Otherwise, there is no mention of the village in any of the Muslim sources and the following two inscriptions are the only evidence of the site, the foundations of which must be very ancient. The inscriptions contain clear evidence of the prosperity of the village, and of the authorities interest in it, in the Fāṭimid as well as in the Mamlūk periods. Its situation on one of the main sources of water of Jerusalem must have added to its importance, in addition to the fertility of its surroundings (hence its name *al-Farādis*—“the gardens”). The village, the valley and the springs were described by Guérin (*Judée*, 3:104-108) and the *SWP*. (*ibid.*, and 3:27)

1

Construction text

After 400/1009

A slab of limestone, 0.32x0.34m., now lost. Six lines; small, monumental, angular Fāṭimid script. The inscription is badly damaged and partly illegible. Letter ends decorated with barbs; some tops of *lāms* bend forward; loops break the monotony of the bottom line of the con-

nected characters. All these decorations, coming together, are common in inscriptions from the late 4th/beginning of 5th century (Fig. 52).

(١) بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٢) وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ
الْأَبْرَارِ (؟) (٣) الطَّاهِرِينَ هَذَا مَا أَمَرَ بَعْمَارَتِهِ وَبَنَاتِهِ ... أَبُو ... الْعَزِيزِيُّ أَطَالَ (٤) اللَّهُ بِقَاءِهِ
و... (٥) ...

Basmalah. Praise be to Allah the Lord of the worlds; and may Allah bless our master Muḥammad and his chaste and pure family. This is what has ordered its building... Abū ...(name) ... al-ʿAzīzī, may Allah extend his life and ...

Ll.2-3: The terminology used in these lines points to a Fāṭimid origin. The blessings offered to the Prophet and his pure family belong to the vocabulary common in inscriptions and documents from that period. L.3: The *nisbah* al-ʿAzīzī signifies that the person who ordered the building (probably of the mosque) was connected in some special way to the Fāṭimid caliph al-ʿAzīz (365/975-386/995).

2

Construction text

15 Dhū al-Qaʿdah, 706/18 May, 1307

A slab of marble, 0.55x0.61m., embedded in the outer wall of the mosque, near its entrance. 6 lines; monumental Mamlūk *nashī* with dividing strips; incised; damaged at the top left side. Not *in situ*, but it came from a water mill, which must have been built on the site of the present mosque. However, it seems very possible that the lower part of the mosque is the original building of the water mill, through which the canal leading the water from the nearby spring of Artās passes to this day. Squeeze: IAA (PAM): S.137 (Fig. 53). Publication: Jaussen, *RB* 33, 1924:246-248; Yadin, 1964:103-4, No. 1; *RCEA* 14, No. 5205.

(١) بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مِنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ [خَيْرٌ مِنْهَا وَهَمٌّ مِنْ فَرْعٍ] (٢) يَوْمَئِذٍ آمَنُونَ أَمْرًا
بِإِنشَاءِ هَذِهِ الطَّاحُونَةِ الْمُبَارَكَةِ [فِي أَيَّامِ مَوْلَانَا السُّلْطَانِ (٣) الْمَلِكِ النَّاصِرِ نَاصِرِ الدُّنْيَا وَالِدِينَ عَزَّ
نَصْرَهُ بِنَظَرِ الْجَنَابِ الْعَالِيِ الْمَوْلِيِّ الْأَمِيرِيِّ] (٤) الْكَبِيرِيِّ السِّيفِيِّ الدِّينِيِّ بُلْغَاقِ اعِزَّ اللَّهُ

انصاره وفقاً على المارستان والرّباط (٥) والطّهارة بمدينة سيدنا الخليل عليه أفضل الصلاة والسلام
وذلك (٦) بتاريخ خامس عشر ذي القعدة سنة ستة (١) وسبعمئة أجره الله تعالى وغفر له.

Basmalah. Whoever comes with a good deed will receive a better than it, and they from terror of that day will be secure. (Q, 27:89) The building of this blessed mill was ordered in the days of our master the Sultān al-Malik an-Nāṣir, Nāṣir ad-Dunyah wa-ad-Dīn, may his victory be strengthened. Under the supervision of the high eminence, the sultan's friend, the grand amīr, the *Sayfi*, Sayf ad-Dīn Bulghāq, may Allah strengthen his victories, and it was made an endowment (*waqf* whose income is dedicated) to the hospital, and the *ribaṭ* and the ablution place in the town of our lord al-Khalil (Hebron), the most noble blessings and prayers be on him; and this (took place) in 15th Dhū al-Qa‘dah, the year 706 (= 18 May 1307).

Ll.1-2: Jausen mistakenly identified the Qurānic verse as Q, 6:160 (161), according to which he reconstructed the damaged part of the lines. His mistake was corrected by Yadin (*ibid.*, 103). The same verse also appears in another inscription commemorating the restoration of the western portico of the Ḥaram in Jerusalem, also ordered by an-Nāṣir Muḥammad (l.3) and supervised by the same Bulghāq (l.4). The inscription from Jerusalem is dated 707/1306-7, and the name of the supervisor comes with the name of his father, Bulghāq b. Jaghān, and with his *nisbah* “Khawārizmī,” which indicates the country of his origin. (*CIA, Ḥaram*, 2:115-7)

L.3: Van Berchem remarked that the word *bi-nazar* used in the inscription from Jerusalem (as well as in this inscription) to indicate the supervision of Bulghāq, means that he held the office of *nāzir al-ḥaramayn ash-sharīfayn*, namely the superintendent of the two sanctuaries in Jerusalem and Hebron, in spite of the fact that his name does not appear in the list of these functionaries in Mujīr ad-Dīn's chronicle. In the biography of Bulghāq in Ibn Ḥajar's *Durar* (1:495, No. 1345), it is indicated that at the end of his life, he was indeed the *nāzir* of the two sanctuaries. He was born in 636/1238-9 and died in Jumāda I, 709/Oct. Nov. 1309, while holding the office. He was remembered as a good and humble man (*kāna mashkūra as-sīrah mutawāḍi‘an*). The only problem is that in the *Durar* and Maqrīzī (*Sulūk* 1:855) he is called Bulghāq b. Kūnjak (Maqrīzī) or Kunjak (*Durar*) and not Ibn Jaghān. It is possible that the written sources probably represent a nickname and the inscriptions the name of the real father (see discussion in Yadin, 1964:104). The best sources for the name of this amīr and his function as *nāzir*

al-ḥaramayn ash-sharīfayn are the legal documents in the archives of the Jerusalem Ḥaram (Little, 1980:189-217). Two documents from 15 Rabi‘ II, 707/14 Oct. 1307, and from 15 Shawwāl 707/8 Apr. 1308, (Little, 1984:249 No.293; 244 No.596) mention Sayf ad-Dīn Bulghāq by this name as holding the office of the *nāzīr* of the two sanctuaries, and describe him taking care of villages, whose income was dedicated to the sanctuaries of Jerusalem and Hebron. In one document, he comes to one of the villages to register the produce of the fields. (*ibid.*, 376, No.763) Other documents indicate that his activity as the *nāzīr* reached Sidon in the north. (*ibid.*, 56, No.307; 251, No.332; Frenkel 1995:29 and notes) From the Ḥaram documents and the two inscriptions it is clear that he held the office of *nāzīr* at least from 706/1306 until his death 33 years later.

Van Berchem remarks (*ibid.*, 117) that at the end of the 7th/13th century there were two emirs who had one of these two names, Sayf ad-Dīn Jaghān and Sayf ad-Dīn Bulghāq. He could not have known about Bulghāq’s biography in the *Durar*. (*cf.* Zetterstéen, 48, 52-53)