

THE DOORS OF SULTAN BARQŪQ AND THEIR INSCRIPTIONS

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Summary

The present study is a step towards establishing the precise relationship between three pairs of door-leaves related to Sultan Barqūq: those exhibited in Cairo Street at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago 1893; the door of Sultan Barqūq in the Tareq Rajab Museum, Kuwait; and the *in situ* door of the Sultan's *madrassa*-mosque in the Coppersmiths' Bazaar, Historic Cairo (henceforth Barqūqiyya). Some other doors connected to the Sultan will also be touched upon. Our investigation was undertaken in the context of research on Cairo Street in Chicago and in response to the appearance of Géza Fehérvári's posthumous book on the door in Kuwait. Here, our focus is on a *philological* analysis of the inscription bands at the top and bottom of the doors. Peter Northover of Oxford has shared with us the results of his physical examination of parts of the door in Kuwait. Admittedly, it has not been possible to answer all pertinent questions. Nevertheless we hope to contribute to their solution in the future. In view of the outstanding rank of the Barqūqiyya and the door-leaves of its main entrance as monuments of Mamluk art and architecture and of the amount of research devoted to Mamluk epigraphy in general, it has been a great surprise to discover that scholarship on the inscriptions of the *in situ* door is nothing but confused and that to date *no accurate reading* of the two inscription bands is available. This regrettable omission will here be corrected.

Sultan Barqūq's Door in Chicago

In 1893 the World's Columbian Exposition was staged at Chicago. Among the foreign displays, Cairo Street was regarded as the most popular and successful enterprise beyond a doubt. One of its major sights was a free replica of Ġamāl al-Dīn al-Ḍahabī's fine Mamluk-style mansion from the Ottoman period (AH 1047/AD 1637). We possess insufficient details regarding its interior, but do have a literary description to hand. It mentions "a heavy bronze door of fabulous age and richness of design" in the hallway upstairs (Burnham, *Clover*, 277). This door also appears in

a report by the noted columnist Teresa Dean in the *Sunday Inter Ocean* on 16 April 1893:

“Wonderful Brass Door in the Street in Cairo. Out in Cairo, or that ‘street in Cairo’, there’s a door on which one of the Arabs has been at work for three years. It is made of brass and is inlaid with gold and silver. It was made expressly for the fair. And that is about all I can tell you about it just now. Though, goodness knows, I tried hard enough, it took me about two hours to learn that much. Manager Pangalo was called out after each word to settle some kind of a disturbance with those Arabs. Orders were very strict about not allowing any one to enter the ‘street’ at present.” No matter how hard she tried, she did not succeed: “When particulars were not forthcoming about the brass door I decided I would go over to the mining building and see the Zulus, who came the other day as a guard to the diamond ore or diamond clay that was sent from Africa.” (Dean, “Chips”).¹

Two months later, on 28 June 1893, a report appeared on a recent addition to the sights of Cairo Street:

“Manager Pangalo of the Cairo Street invited a few of his friends to attend a private view of a new attraction just added to the motley charms of Cairo Street. It is a reproduction of the dwelling of a rich Arab of the seventeenth century, one Gamal El Din El Tahabi by name. Mr. El Tahabi appears to have had far better taste in picking out furniture than names, and his restored dwelling contains art treasures the like of which have never delighted the eyes of westerners before. The entrance is by means of a door marvelously inlaid with mother of pearl through a winding passage and court and up a barbaric stairway suggestive of an Arabian night’s adventure. The entrance hall above boasts one of the chief art treasures of the whole collection, a priceless metal door profusely inlaid with both gold and silver. Its age is something like 500 years, and it was once the property of the Sultan Barkuk.” (“Scribes of Missouri”).

It does not escape our attention that we have at our disposal two contradictory versions here. According to the first version the door was new: “It was made expressly for the fair.” The second report said it was about 500 years old.

¹ Dean published a collection of her writings on the World’s Columbian Exposition in a separate volume, too. The reference to the brass door cannot be found in it. Dean, *Chips*.

A Book Is Born

The door in question seems to be somehow connected to the door of Sultan Barqūq, which is now kept in the Tareq Rajab [Ṭāriq Raġab] Museum in Kuwait (fig. 11).² The history of this last-mentioned door is rather complex, and the exact identity of the artefact remains a mystery to this day. In fact, our story revolves around two, or perhaps three, seemingly identical, or at least very similar, doors.

For almost two decades, Géza Fehérvári conducted painstaking research on the door of Sultan Barqūq in Kuwait, the findings of which he planned to publish in a monograph. Very regrettably, he passed away towards the end of 2012, after a long, incapacitating illness which lasted two years, and his monograph came out posthumously (Fehérvári 2012).³

Sadly, Fehérvári will not be able to react to my remarks and eventual different views on certain matters. However, in view of his wholehearted commitment to scholarly research, there can be no doubt that he would have agreed to the approach adopted here. Examination of some of the more important facts and issues will foster additional research in the hope that the questions surrounding the door will one day be clarified. In addition to our personal discussions, we exchanged e-mail messages and faxes for more than a decade on questions connected with the door, and I believe it will be helpful to quote certain extracts from these e-mail and fax messages, in addition to references to his monograph.

In view of his illness, it is not clear whether Fehérvári was able to put the finishing touches to the text of his book. However, I have not discovered in it anything that would contradict the views expressed in his emails and faxes. On the other hand, he said to me many times that he would show me the text before preparing the final version; in the end, he did not do so. Iman R. Abdulfattah, formerly at the Supreme Council of Antiquities in Cairo, PhD student at Bonn University at present, tells me (2014) that she has no information on the publication of the monograph, notwithstanding the appearance of her name on the title-page. Her contribution to the book consisted of taking photographs of objects in Cairo as well as of checking some archival documents and historical sources for Fehérvári, who shared his time

² I have not seen the Kuwait door myself. The present discussion of its inscriptions is based on four photographs available on the website of the Tareq Rajab Museum on the internet (<http://www.trmkt.com/door.html#>), as well as on another, much better photograph uploaded by the Museum: <https://www.facebook.com/176149305859292/photos/a.176437022497187.43968.176149305859292/178400912300798/?type=1> (both last accessed on 21 September 2014). I am greatly indebted to Mr. Rajab, Chairman of the Tareq Rajab Museum in Kuwait, for granting me permission to use this photograph in my publication. Email message by Mohammad Safdar dated 27 April 2014. I have also relied on the excellent very large-size photograph (96 x 60 cm) of the door in possession of the late Alexander Fodor.

³ I am indebted to Mr. Rajab, Chairman of the Tareq Rajab Museum in Kuwait, for sending me a copy of this rare book.

between Kuwait, London and Budapest, but rarely visited Cairo, where most of the objects were that concerned his research. I am greatly indebted to Iman for putting her extensive email correspondence with Fehérvári at my disposal. The emails wholly correspond to the book's content and confirm the earlier general impression gained from it that Fehérvári did not consult the relevant historical sources although he was fully aware of their existence and even their contents, thanks to repeated friendly communications and warnings by Iman and Doris Behrens-Abouseif.

Fehérvári briefly mentioned the door in his memoirs, which came out in Hungarian in 2008. His brief reference is accompanied by a photograph showing himself standing in front of the door. It is described as the door of Barqūq's mausoleum.⁴

Sultan Barqūq's Door in Kuwait

In 1994, the Tareq Rajab Museum in Kuwait acquired, through Christie's, a large-size (380 × 225 cm) copy of a bronze Mamluk door. It came from New York, where it had belonged to the Hispanic Society of America. In an article accompanied by two photographs, Richard J. H. Gottheil wrote in 1909 that the two wings which comprised it were then installed in the foyer of the Hispanic Museum in New York City (Gottheil 1909:58).

At the turn of 1981–1982, one wing was displayed in the exhibition “The Mamlūk Revival: Metalwork for Religious and Domestic Use” staged at the Jewish Museum in New York from 16 November until 14 March. Estelle Whelan's brief description of it ran as follows:

“Wing of double door, wood, brass, and bronze panels inlaid with silver
 ‘Alī al-Shīshī [*recte*: ‘Alī al-Šiyašī],⁵ Cairo, 1892; Ht. 150½" W. 45¼"
 (3.82 x 1.15 m)
 Anonymous loan” (Whelan 1981:no. 6).

⁴ Fehérvári 2008:421–424, 427–428; 423 (fig. 97).

⁵ The correct name of the artisan ‘Alī al-Šiyašī appears in Herz Pasha's letter to Gottheil. (Gottheil 1909:60 [postscript]). Fehérvári (2012:8) uses the form ‘Alī al-Šiyāšī. The attribution of the latter Arabic name form to Herz in the quotation is wrong; Herz used the correct form ‘Alī al-Šiyašī. Under Fehérvári's influence I also used this – erroneous – form in my book on Herz Pasha. (Ormos 2009:461–462). The name Šiyašī – both “i” and “a” in the middle of the word are short – is derived from the Arabic *šīša*, pl. *šīyaš*, “hubble-bubble”, “water-pipe”, and consequently means a “producer of” or a “dealer in” this artefact. In its turn, *šīša* is a loan-word in Arabic: it is Turkish *şişe*, meaning “a blown glass bottle”, derived from the Turkish *şiş*, “swelling”, on account of the bulging shape of the bottle. Redhouse 1921:1147. Moran 1971:1124–1125. Steingass 1977:775.

The apparent difference in size should not deceive the reader: only one of the two wings was on display in New York.

Fehérvári's book has some additional material on the door from the same exhibition:

“One of several pairs of double doors leading to the Mausoleum of Sultan Hasan in Cairo (c. 1362) was in the Museum of Islamic Art in the 1890s. In 1892, a replica with the substitution of inscriptions in the name of Sultan Barquq (1382–1389, 1390–1399) was commissioned for the Cairo Street at the Chicago World's Fair to be held the following year. Because of a dispute with the craftsman, 'Ali al-Shishi [*sic*], over price, the doors were not sent to Chicago but passed instead into the hands of Elias Hatoun, a leading Cairo antiquities dealer. The right wing of this replica is on exhibit here. A curious detail is the arrangement of the main inscription, which begins at the bottom and continues at the top, the reverse of normal practice. The central knob contains half an inscription referring to the opening of the door.” (Fehérvári 2012:15–16).⁶

The information at the beginning of this entry is most problematic and – as far as I can see – without any foundation. In the first place, there are not “several pairs of double doors leading to the Mausoleum of Sultan Hasan in Cairo” but only two pairs. In the second place, there is nothing to suggest that either pair was in the Museum of Islamic Arts in the 1890s. In 1899 Herz Pasha's monograph on the mosque of Sultan Hasan was published. It describes the mosque prior to the great restoration works he carried out on it in the years before the outbreak of World War I in 1914. It contains a description of all the objects originating from this mosque which were in the Arab Museum at that time; there is no door among them (Herz 1899:7–12). The description is based on Herz's catalogue of the museum, which appeared in 1895. There is nothing to suggest that between 1890 and 1895 a pair of doors was returned to the mosque, which was in a rather bad state of repair. I checked the *Bulletins of the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe* from 1890 until 1895 and there was nothing to substantiate the claim voiced above. Nor does Herz's monograph contain anything that could be interpreted in such a way. In the third place, the mausoleum doors in Sultan Hasan only distantly resemble the “door of Sultan Barquq” in New York and then in Kuwait.⁷

⁶ Fehérvári gives this description from *the* catalogue entry in independent quotation marks, indicating that it comes from a source which is not identical to that of the previous one and which he omits to indicate. It must be a catalogue of the New York exhibition unknown and inaccessible to me. – I.O.

⁷ On the resemblance between the Barquqiyya's main entrance door and the mausoleum doors of Sultan Hasan as well as other doors, see Batanouni 1975:75, 77. I am indebted to the American University in Cairo for providing me with copies of the relevant sections of this thesis for my research.

The door in New York was acquired from the dealer Elias Hatoun [Ilyās Ḥāṭūn]⁸ on Muski Street in the famous Cairo bazaar (see below).

Sultan Barqūq's Door in the Cairo Bazaar

It was around this time that Max van Berchem published the Egypt volume of his magisterial *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, which contained the majority of the historic Arabic inscriptions in Cairo. In the case of the Barqūqiyya, van Berchem proceeded in a most unusual way, without giving any reason for doing so. He described the *madrassa*-mosque's inscriptions, but when it came to the main entrance door, instead of publishing its inscriptions, as he did in every similar case, he published a description of a door that had been for sale at Elias Hatoun's in 1893 (Berchem, *Matériaux* 304–305 [no. 197]).⁹ Two questions arise: 1) Why did van Berchem choose to describe a door for sale in the bazaar instead of the actual door *in situ* in the Barqūqiyya? 2) Did the Hispanic Society acquire the door described by van Berchem?

Van Berchem's action could have been justified had he had sufficient grounds to claim that he was dealing with *the (an?)* original door of the Barqūqiyya. In that case, however, he should also have expressed an opinion about the actual door *in situ* at that time, which he failed to do. Above all, he should have justified his action: why he had passed over the *in situ* door in silence, presenting the inscriptions of a door in the bazaar instead. He was of the view that although the door he saw in the bazaar was heavily damaged and roughly repaired ("*fort endommagée et grossièrement réparée*"), the beautiful workmanship and correct inscription completely eliminated any suspicion of forgery. But then what was his opinion of the actual door *in situ* in the Barqūqiyya? It is also strange that when Herz approached van Berchem on this subject later on and informed him that the door he had described was a fake (see below), van Berchem accepted Herz's opinion without argument, declaring that he could no longer remember the details.¹⁰ Van Berchem's assertion is hardly credible. He should have remembered the details for two reasons: firstly because the case was most unusual, and secondly because the Barqūqiyya was no minor prayer hall of negligible significance but one of the most beautiful mosques

⁸ The original Arabic form of the name appears in Fehérvári 2012:48–49 (fig. 38).

⁹ See Herz Pasha's letter of 6 April 1901 to Ignaz Goldziher. Goldziher Correspondence, Oriental Collection, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest (GIL/16/30/39). Berchem's *Matériaux* was first published in four fascicles with an appendix. The first fascicle came out in 1894, while the fascicle with the inscriptions of the Barqūqiyya appeared in 1901. The whole work became available in a single volume in 1903. Cf. Goldziher's review of Berchem's book. Goldziher 1904.

¹⁰ Berchem, *Matériaux* 770 (*ad p.* 304, no. 197).

in Cairo and indeed the whole Islamic world. In addition, the door in question was a masterwork of Arab-Islamic art. At the same time, there is absolutely no indication that the main door of the Barqūqiyya has ever been removed, and no indication that it was not in the very same place in the 1890s and 1900s (see below).

The door described by van Berchem had bronze cladding and was of beautiful workmanship. Its inscription in two lines ran as follows:

(Bottom)

عَزَّ لِمَوْلَانَا السُّلْطَانِ الْمَلِكِ الظَّاهِرِ سَيْفِ الدُّنْيَا وَالِدِينِ أَبُو سَعِيدِ بَرْقُوقِ سُلْطَانِ الْإِسْلَامِ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ ذَخِرَ

(Top)

الْأَيْتَامِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ كَنْزِ الْغَزَاةِ وَالْمَجَاهِدِينَ وَكَانَ الْفِرَاغُ فِي شَهْرِ رَبِيعِ الْأَوَّلِ سَنَةِ سَبْعِمِائَةٍ وَثَمَانٍ وَثَمَانِينَ

“Glory to our lord, the ruler, the victorious king, the sword of the world and religion, Abū Saʿīd Barqūq, the ruler of Islam and the Muslims, the provider for || orphans and the poor, the treasure of conquerors and warriors. Completed in the month of Rabīʿ al-Awwal in the year 788.”¹¹

It is an odd feature that the inscription begins at the bottom and continues at the top. This is a reversal of normal practice, which follows the basic rule of Arabic script, which is written from right to left and from top to bottom. The door in Kuwait shares this odd feature (figs. 12–13). In 1994, Fehérvári did not comment on this odd feature, treating it as something normal. On the other hand, he declared that the (correct and logical) inscription on the *in situ* door was “reversed” (Fehérvári 1994:153). In his view, the Sultan, out of humility and piety, did not want his own name to appear at the top of the door but had it placed at the bottom instead.¹² In the opinion of the present author, this view cannot be accepted. Rather, this odd feature can be explained by assuming that the inscription-bearing metal plaques, which were produced separately, were affixed to the door by an illiterate or careless artisan, who mounted them in the wrong order.¹³

Fehérvári mentions that this odd feature occurs “on the inner wooden door of his mosque in Cairo as well”. This statement is unfounded. Although Fehérvári’s wording is somewhat vague, there can be no doubt that “*the* inner wooden door” he has in mind [emphasis added] is the beautiful big wooden door connecting the

¹¹ On the interpretation of *zāhir* as “victorious”, see Lane 1980:1926c, 1930b. We render *ʿizz* as “glory”; “power” would be an equally acceptable choice. Cf. Lane 1980:2030c–2032a.

¹² Fehérvári 2012:56, 96. According to an earlier version which appears in three emails by Fehérvári to Iman R. Abdalfattah (11, 20 December 2006, 6 February 2008), the reversed sequence is due to Faraġ, who out of piety retained the door made by his father but preferred to place his father’s name at the bottom, because he considered the complex his own monument and where therefore all inscriptions are in his own name and none in that of his father. It was Doris Behrens-Abouseif who repeatedly reminded Fehérvári that the door’s inscription is not in accord with Faraġ’s complex, where all inscriptions, without exception, are in Faraġ’s name. In actual fact, Fehérvári’s wording is rather short; I have “unfolded” his argumentation here.

¹³ This is a possibility which Fehérvári also considered but rejected. Fehérvári 2012:56.

vestibule behind the main entrance door with the corridor leading to the central courtyard. Fehérvári writes about this door in his monograph that “the inscription is identical to that of the main entrance door’s and the Kuwait door’s text”.¹⁴ This is not true. There are two identical inscriptions on the front side of this door, one at the top and one at the bottom: “عز لمولانا السلطان المالك ا • لملك الظاهر برقوق عز الله نصره” “Glory to our lord, the reigning ruler, the victorious king, Barqūq, may God render his triumph glorious!”

The back of the door is plain, without any decoration or inscription. I have not been able to find any allusion to the alleged unusual feature mentioned by Fehérvári either in van Berchem’s *Corpus* or in Saleh Lamei Mostafa’s monograph (Fehérvári 2012:96).¹⁵ Nor does the state-of-the-art online repertory *The Monumental Inscriptions of Historic Cairo* by Bernard O’Kane mention such a feature.¹⁶ I failed to discover it during repeated visits to the Barqūqiyya, too.

The door described by van Berchem bore an inscription containing the titles of Sultan Barqūq and the date Rabī’ al-Awwal 788, equivalent to April 1386.¹⁷ This date corresponds fully to the date of construction for the Barqūqiyya. According to Maqrīzī (1364–1442), our best authority on the local history and topography of Cairo, construction of the Barqūqiyya was completed on 1 Ġumādā al-Tānī 788 (corresponding to 31 May 1386); the festive inauguration of the complex took place on 12 Raġab 788 (9 August 1386).¹⁸

¹⁴ Fehérvári 2012 V (caption to fig. 16). Cf. *ibid.*, 22 (fig. 16).

¹⁵ The final part of the doxology must be read so. The word *Allāhu* is written above ‘azza, so that in this form the relatively big size *alif* could eventually belong to *both*, resulting in *a’azza* instead. However, such a feature would be quite unusual. In addition, this formula recurs on many doors and window shutters in the mosque, and in many other places it is written so that the *alif* is placed *after* the ‘ayn, so that it can only belong to *Allāhu*. This means that the correct reading here is ‘azza *Allāhu naṣrahu*. (Berchem, *Matériaux* 302, n. 1). In addition to the regular intransitive ‘azza (“he was, or became, mighty, ... powerful, ... glorious”), Lane adduces this verb also as a transitive one (‘azzahu) meaning “He (God) rendered him mighty, ... powerful, ... glorious” Lane 1980:2030c, 2031b [s.v. “2. ‘azzazahu”]. See also n. 20 below.

¹⁶ O’Kane, *Inscriptions* no. 187.2.

¹⁷ Berchem, *Matériaux* 304–305 (no. 197). On the ruler’s titles, see Berchem 1893:98ff.

¹⁸ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, VIII (ġuz’ III / *qism* 2), 546–547 (*sanat* 788). Id., *Mawā’iz* IV/2, 682. See also Ibn Taġrī Birdī, *Nuġūm* XI, 243; cf. *ibid.*, 240 (n. 2). Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’* 1/2, 372. Not counting those on the main entrance door, four inscriptions can be found in the mosque confirming the year given by Maqrīzī and also giving the exact date of the completion of the work as 1 Rabī’ al-Awwal 788 (2 April 1386), using the expression *mustahall* for the first day of the lunar month (Mostafa 1982:77 [no. 3]). I have checked the inscriptions of the original entrance door on the basis of photographs (see below): Berchem, *Matériaux* 298 (no. 192 [= Mostafa 1982:76, no. 1]), 302 (no. 194 [= Mostafa 1982:81, no. 22]), 303 (no. 195 [= Mostafa 1982:81–2, no. 24]), 303–304 (no. 196 [= Mostafa 1982:82, no. 25]). Creswell

In van Berchem's view, the date Rabī' al-Awwal 788 (2 April – 1 May 1386) proves that the door came from the Barqūqiyya. At the same time, he found the order of the numerals in the date unusual and attributed this to "a perhaps maladroit restoration" (see below).

The big entrance door of the Barqūqiyya *in situ* in the Coppersmiths' Bazaar, as it appears at present (fig. 1), has the same inscription, although there are certain differences (fig. 2–7). It runs:

(Top)

عز لمولانا السلطان الملك الظاهر سيف الدنيا والدين ابو سعيد برقوق سلطان الاسلام والمسلمين

(with partly modernized orthography)¹⁹

عز لمولانا السلطان الملك الظاهر سيف الدنيا والدين أبو سعيد برقوق سلطان الإسلام والمسلمين

(Bottom)

نخر الأيتام والمساكين نصره الغزاة والمجاهدين عز نصره وكان الفراغ في مستهل ربيع الأول سنة ثمان
وثمانين وسبعمائه

(with partly modernized orthography)

نخر الأيتام والمساكين نصره الغزاة والمجاهدين عز نصره وكان الفراغ في مستهل ربيع الأول سنة ثمان
وثمانين وسبعمائه

"Glory to our lord, the ruler, the victorious king, the sword of the world and religion, Abū Saīd Barqūq, the ruler of Islam and the Muslims || the provider for orphans and the poor, the support of conquerors and warriors. May his triumph be glorious! Completed on the first of Rabī' al-Awwal in the year 788."

Firstly, the sequence of the lines is reversed as compared to the door in the bazaar: the inscription begins, as it normally should, at the top and ends at the bottom. Secondly, the break in the inscription is logical. It does not occur in the middle of a closely connected genitive structure (construct state) as on the door in Hatoun's shop and in Kuwait, where we read: *duhr* || *al-aytām* (provider for || orphans). It has *nuṣrat al-ḡuzāt* (support of conquerors) instead of *kanz al-ḡuzāt* (treasure of conquerors), as do the doors in Hatoun's store in 1893 and in Kuwait, and it also has 'azza *naṣruhu* ("May his triumph be glorious!") added; this doxology is missing from the door in Hatoun's store and the door in Kuwait, too.²⁰ Also, the word *šahr* ("month") on the

(1919:116) also mentions the four inscriptions. For *mustahall*, cf. n. 35 below. The construction work and the inauguration are conveniently summarized on the basis of additional historical sources in Mostafa 1982:9–11.

¹⁹ Van Berchem and scholarly literature in general use this approach in the presentation of inscriptions. We adduce the inscriptions in a "diplomatic" way, too, i.e. as they actually appear on the doors.

²⁰ The two related doxologies *a'azza Allāhu naṣruhu* and 'azza *Allāhu naṣruhu* ("May God render his triumph glorious!") are also met with in inscriptions on the Barqūqiyya. Cf. n. 15 above. Yet in accordance with the context and in the absence of an explicit reference to God the doxology عز نصره should be read here as 'azza *naṣruhu* and interpreted as "May his triumph be glorious!", with the possessive suffix referring to the Sultan. Cf. Berchem,

doors in Hatoun's store and in Kuwait respectively is replaced by a barely legible *mustahall* ("the first night of the lunar month") (fig. 9). This last word appears in other inscriptions in the Barqūqiyya, too.²¹ And, very importantly, the sequence of the numerals in the date conforms to the general usage of the time, contrary to that found in the inscription on the door in Kuwait and in the inscription described by Max van Berchem.

Sequence of Numerals

When we examine the order of numerals in the date, we find that the form on the main entrance door of the Barqūqiyya (سنة ثمان وثمانين وسبعمائه) is in harmony with all the other dates in the inscriptions of the *madrassa*-mosque, which all display the same ascending sequence: units, tens, hundreds. This is in fact the sequence that can be found in *all* contemporary inscriptions. I have checked all Cairene inscriptions in van Berchem's *Matériaux* from no. 114 to no. 237; these range from AH 719 to 823 (AD 1319 to 1421) and contain seventy-two dates.²² Without exception, all dates conformed to this pattern (units, tens, hundreds), and there was not a single case of the pattern used on the door in the bazaar in 1893 and also on the door in Kuwait (hundreds, units, tens).²³ On the other hand, the latter pattern is the sequence normally used in modern literary Arabic (Modern Standard Arabic), and in the modern dialect of Cairo, too. In classical Arabic, both sequences are possible.²⁴

Matériaux 45. On a different level, this doxology may also have a direct Quranic reference (48:3), as suggested by Montasser 2009:202–203.

²¹ The letter *sīn* is somewhat odd in this word, but corresponds completely to the same letter in *muslimīn*. In other words, our inscription uses two varieties of this letter: the regular one with three vertical lines and another one consisting of a horizontal line only, which may be quite short. — The inscription on the door *in situ* in the Barqūqiyya does not have *hamza* signs: in *mi'a* it displays only the *kursī*, while the door in Kuwait does have the *hamza* sign here. The *tā' marbūtas* do not have diacritical dots in the Barqūqiyya, while the door in Kuwait omits them (in the pausal form?) at the end of the inscription (*hiḡriyya*), but has them in two other places (*guzāt, mi'a*).

²² I left the Barqūqiyya out of consideration, but included the mausoleum of Barqūq (Faraḡ's complex).

²³ Berchem, *Matériaux* 169–342. In fact, there was one exception which showed a metathesis of the tens and units: سنة عشر ثلاث وثمان مائة. In all probability, the artisan omitted the unit, realized his mistake at once, and inserted it after the ten. In its present form, the numeral is absolutely impossible. Berchem, *Matériaux*, 318 (no. 207). Gottheil (1909:59), too, found only cases with the ascending scale in the many hundreds of inscriptions he studied from Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia.

²⁴ Gottheil (1959:59) seems to be unfamiliar with some basic rules of Arabic syntax when writing about this sequence: "The hundreds placed first is not an impossible construction, as compound numbers in Arabic can be expressed either in an ascending or a descending scale.

Accordingly, the idea arises that the numeral may be of later date and perhaps quite modern; van Berchem's suspicion of a "maladroit restoration" is altogether warranted. But how can we explain the genesis of such a mistake? In fact, it is very easy to find a plausible explanation. We have to assume that the patron who ordered the door copied the inscription from the *in situ* door using *figures (symbols)* instead of *spelling out* the number in words in the date. Subsequently, the artisan, unversed in the syntax of historical inscriptions, read and spelled them out in accordance with his knowledge of both Cairene and modern literary Arabic.

The present author cannot accept Fehérvári's version of the date on the door in Kuwait, who reads it in the *ascending* order: "*thaman wa thamānīn wa saba'a mi'a [sic]*". It must be read: سبعمائة ثمان وثمانين, i.e. [*sanat*] *sab'mi'a tamān wa-tamānīn*.²⁵ The omission of the connective *wāw* before *tamān* is also a feature of the modern Cairene dialect, in contradistinction to the classical form.²⁶

The inscription on the Kuwaiti door has a further interesting feature (fig. 12): in the numeral 700, the letter *sīn* is conspicuously vocalized with a *ḍamma* (short *u*): سُبُعْمَائِه *sub'umi'a*, which is in fact the classical form *sab'umi'a* contaminated with the modern dialectal form *sub'umiyya* (Woidich 2006:131). Contamination by dialect forms in the field of numerals is very common in spoken literary Arabic in the whole Arab world.²⁷ Given the vague status of vocal signs in Arabic, it does not possess much weight as a proof; still, it is an interesting feature. Even if this dialectal form were old – we know very little about the actual pronunciation of vowels in earlier periods –, it is rather unlikely that a vocal sign displaying a colloquial form would appear in old inscriptions. Fehérvári interpreted this *ḍamma* sign as the letter *wāw* in his reading *wa saba'a mi'a [sic]*. In the present author's view, this cannot be accepted: the letter *wāw* looks quite different in this inscription. At the same time it

But here the units are placed between the hundred and the decade, which will not do at all." As a matter of fact, the descending scale mentioned by Gottheil and also Mols (2006:87) does not exist: the units always precede the decades. Thus we can speak of a "mixed" scale in the latter case: hundreds, units, decades. Hopkins (1984:119–120) found in his corpus of early papyri (datable to before 300/912) that the *date* of a text is usually given in the ascending scale. In connection with a *counted noun*, however, the order of hundreds, units, decades is rather the norm. The two orders may occur together in one and the same sentence even. Cf. Wright 1971: I, 259D, Vernier 1891: I, 236, Brockelmann 1969:110–111, Ambros 1969:270–271, El-Ayoubi 2001:338–339 (also n. 5 on p. 339). The same mixed sequence with only one connecting *wāw* can be observed in the colloquial dialect of Cairo, too. Cf. Spitta 1880:161, Willmore 1901:95, Abdel-Massih 1978:197, and Fischer, Jastrow 1980:100.

²⁵ Fehérvári 2012:2 (fig. 5), 10. Our inscriptions display features of Cairene Arabic. In the transcription of contaminated ("Middle Arabic") forms we follow the written forms as far as possible.

²⁶ See Spitta 1880:161, Willmore 1901:91, Woidich 2006:132, 134, Reckendorf 1921:206, Wright 1971:I, 259, Brockelmann 1969:110–111, Ambros 1969:270–271.

²⁷ Diem 1972/2006:47–48, El-Ayoubi 2001:338.

must also be mentioned that the *ḍamma* in our inscription is a vowel sign beyond a doubt and certainly not a decorative element serving to fill in the void space, as so often happens in Arabic inscriptions.

The door in the Hispanic Society and later in the Tariq Rajab Museum displays three minor differences in its inscription as compared to van Berchem's description of the door in the Cairo bazaar. First, the door in New York and afterwards in Kuwait has *nuṣrat al-ḡuzāt* ("support of conquerors") instead of van Berchem's *kanz al-ḡuzāt* ("treasure of conquerors"). (The Barqūqiyya door *in situ* has *nuṣrat al-ḡuzāt*.) Second, the door in the Hispanic Society and later in Kuwait has the word *hiḡriyya* added after the date; it is missing in van Berchem's description and does not occur on the Barqūqiyya door either. Third, the date has a *wāw* before the unit in the numeral *sab' mi'a wa-tamān wa-tamānīn* in van Berchem's description, which is missing on the door in Kuwait (according to the present author's reading of the date), as we have just seen. It is interesting to note that in his description of the door in the Hispanic Society and later in Kuwait, Gottheil (1909:58) mistakenly recorded the form *sab' mi'a wa-tamān wa-tamānīn*. He must have done so either under the influence of van Berchem's work, or he inadvertently corrected the numeral in accordance with the rules of classical Arabic.

In his standard monograph on the Barqūqiyya, Saleh Lamei Mostafa proceeded in a most unusual way: he reproduced the door's inscription from van Berchem's *Matériaux* as if the great Swiss epigraphist had published the inscription of the main door *in situ* in the Barqūqiyya. However, he modified the sequence of numerals in conformity with the usage in inscriptions from Barqūq's time. In this way, he produced an inscription which never existed at all.²⁸ In his monograph, Fehérvári (2012:31) declares that "one can hardly read" the inscription in question and reproduces Saleh Lamei Mostafa's version instead, without explicitly saying so. Most of Fehérvári's discussions involving the inscription of the main entrance door *in situ* in the Barqūqiyya are therefore irrelevant and result in confusion. In his celebrated work on the mosques of Cairo, Ḥasan 'Abd al-Wahhāb (1994:194) makes a brief reference to the inscription, summarizing its contents. He seems to have read it correctly; however, he does not think it so important that he should publish it *in extenso*, an approach he adopts with other inscriptions, too. In 1975, Hoda Batanouni submitted her MA thesis on Mamluk doors to the American University in Cairo. Her reading of the inscription of the *in situ* door of the Barqūqiyya contains two mistakes (Batanouni 1975:78). First, she reads *المجاهد* in the singular instead of the correct plural form *المجاهدين*. This reading is syntactically correct: the singular form "warrior [for the cause of Islam]" is here an adjective of the ruler. The correct plural form is, however, "warriors" referring to those who fight for the cause of Islam in general, as appears elsewhere in the ruler's titles. The plural morpheme can indeed be

²⁸ Mostafa 1982:77 (no. 3).

deciphered in the inscription. Second, Batanouni encloses the letter *kāf* in *wa-kāna* within square brackets [ك] ان as if it was missing. However, it is there, although its upper diagonal section has indeed been omitted for reasons of calligraphy, yet the lower semi-circular part is most conspicuous (fig. 10). A *kāf* of identical shape appears in المساكين in the bottom right section of the inscription, too!²⁹ Identical *kāfs* appear in the same context in inscriptions elsewhere on the mosque.³⁰ In actual fact, the script style applied in other relevant inscriptions on the *madrasa*-mosque is identical to those of the main entrance door. Indeed, even the spatial arrangement of the words is nearly completely identical.³¹ When dealing with the door of the Barqūqiyya, the magisterial *Répertoire Chronologique d'Épigraphie Arabe* presents the inscription on the door in the Hispanic Museum as described by Gottheil (no. 788 049), stating explicitly that it was originally in the *madrasa* of Sultan Barqūq. The *Répertoire* presents the inscription on the door in the Hatoun store as published by Max van Berchem (no. 788 050), too. It does not, however, contain the inscription on the door currently *in situ* in the Barqūqiyya. The editors of the *Répertoire Chronologique* worked on the basis of secondary material, namely publications; consequently, they could publish only what they found in their printed sources in 1991.³² The editors do not seem to have been aware that there was a third door, too. (Namely, the *in situ* door.) And they have nothing to say on the relationship between the two doors they actually deal with; they merely advise the reader to compare them! In 2006 Luitgard Mols offered a new reading in her comprehensive thesis on Mamluk metalwork fittings.³³ She seems to have relied on Batanouni, yet modifying her reading in two places. First, Mols reads – correctly – المجاهدين instead of Batanouni's singular form. However, she joins Batanouni in failing to perceive the letter *kāf*, although a *kāf* of identical shape appears in the bottom right section of the inscription, a photograph of which she reproduces in her thesis.³⁴ In contrast to Batanouni, she fails to discover the letter *alif* of *kāna*, too, as is indicated by her rendering: و[ك]ا ن . In addition, she misinterprets the *alif* denoting the vowel *ā* in the middle of الفراغ “completion” as the *lām* of a definite article connected to *mustahall*, thereby producing the form المستهل, which is highly unlikely to occur in this place according to the rules of Arabic syntax. In actual fact, *all* occurrences of this word in van Berchem's *Matériaux* are construed with the genitive in the construct state,

²⁹ Depicted, for instance, in Mols 2006:410 (pl. 82).

³⁰ e.g., O'Kane, *Inscriptions* no. 187.1, photographs 253/5 (مساكين, كنز), 253/8 (وكان); no. 187.3, photograph 426/1 (وكان الفراغ).

³¹ e.g., O'Kane, *Inscriptions* no. 187.3, photograph 426/1 (وكان الفراغ etc.). This feature is a further proof that the inscription on the *in situ* door is original and has not been replaced.

³² Kalus, *Répertoire* 87–88 (no. 788 049), 88 (no. 788 050).

³³ Also accessible online.

³⁴ Mols 2006:410 (pl. 82).

i.e. without the article.³⁵ Thus, Mols's version cannot be regarded as an advancement on previous readings. The state-of-the-art online database "The Monumental Inscriptions of Historic Cairo" by Bernard O'Kane (2012) quotes the inscriptions of the door in Kuwait as if it were an original door from Sultan Barqūq's epoch: the datum of the door appears without question mark. The source is van Berchem. This means that the authors regard the Hatoun door and the Kuwaiti door as identical. However, there is a question mark after Tareq Rajab Museum, Kuwait, indicating certain doubts on the authors' part. No explanation is given concerning the relationship of the door in Kuwait to the *in situ* door. There is no comment as to what happened to the *in situ* door and no reason is given why the inscriptions of the *in situ* door are missing. Apparently they are represented here by those of the door in Kuwait.³⁶

Thus, it appears that we have two readings based on the actual inscriptions at our disposal, but they are inaccurate. On the other hand, *none* of the three authoritative repertories contains the actual inscription on the main entrance door *in situ* in the Barqūqiyya. Nor can it be found in the comprehensive monograph dedicated to this jewel of Mamluk architecture. This is all the more surprising since there is nothing to suggest that this door has ever been moved from its current place. Hence, it must always have been accessible to scholars. My impression is that it was the poor condition of the lower left section of the inscription that prevented even outstanding scholars from reading it. This part containing the date seems to have suffered considerably and is indeed extremely difficult to decipher, albeit not impossibly so (figs. 1, 5–7).³⁷

The present author managed to read it with considerable effort, on the basis of a series of excellent digital photographs made from various angles by Mrs. Rozália Berzsák (figs. 5–7). In fact, this section of the inscription was already in a similarly poor state of repair in the early twentieth century, as is apparent from the photograph of the door published by Herz in 1907 (fig. 8 here).³⁸ It is difficult to guess the cause of the poor condition of this particular part of the door. Bad weather comes to mind, strong *ḥamāsīn* winds full of sand perhaps, yet this explanation fails to convince, as oddly enough only the bottom left plate with the date seems to have suffered heavily, but not the remaining parts of the door including the three inscription panels. In his email message of 10 May 2007 to Iman R. Abdalfattah Fehérvári voiced an interesting idea in this respect: "Actually we have witnessed that people go into the mosque kicking the door with their legs to open it, exactly where the inscription is.

³⁵ Berchem, *Matériaux* 858 (Index *s.v.* *mustahill*). Van Berchem vocalizes *mustahill*; Lane (1980:3044b) reads *mustahall*. All major dictionaries agree with Lane.

³⁶ O'Kane, *Inscriptions* no. 187.

³⁷ Cf. Fehérvári 2012:31. In all probability, the artisan producing the new inscription plates was unable to decipher *mustahall* and used *šahr* instead.

³⁸ Herz 1907b:185 (fig. 208).

That's the reason the left lower side is in such a bad state." This is certainly an interesting idea, yet hardly convincing: the door is so heavy that one can hardly open it simply by kicking it, although the present author must confess he has never tried to do so. In May-June 2014, he visited the Barqūqiyya three times for extended photographing sessions beginning at dawn, in the very early morning, when the door was opened and closed many times by the staff of the State Ministry of Antiquities cleaning the mosque, but he never witnessed what Fehérvári described in this email message. Nobody ever kicked the door; everybody used his hands to open it, and it could be opened with great effort only. The present writer is convinced that kicking the door with the aim of opening it would result in a severe injury of the foot!

Without entering into the details of the moot question of Mamluk calligraphic styles, one may remark that several styles were in use in the Mamluk period and there were individual varieties, too. When we compare the actual door in the Barqūqiyya and the one in Kuwait now, we perceive a great difference in quality between the two inscriptions. The calligraphy of the door *in situ* is incomparably more elegant than that of the inscription in Kuwait: the former has a buoyancy and sweeping professionalism that are absent in the latter. In view of the inscription's high artistic quality on the door *in situ* in the Barqūqiyya, and considering the grammatical problems presented by the inscription on the door in Kuwait, one feels compelled to reject Fehérvári's assumption that the original inscription on the door *in situ* in the Barqūqiyya may have been removed and replaced with a newly made plate in the nineteenth century, which is what we can see today, and that the inscription on the door in Kuwait is original Mamluk calligraphy. (Fehérvári 2012:32). It is true that the door *in situ* in the Barqūqiyya was restored around 1890 but we have no details in this respect. In any case, there is nothing to suggest that the plates with the inscriptions were replaced. We know next to nothing about what happened to the door. On the contrary, the photograph published by Herz in 1907 (fig. 8 here) shows the bottom left section in a condition that closely resembles its present appearance.³⁹ It should have looked quite different around 1907 if it had been newly made around 1890! At the same time, one must confess that there seems to be some difference in calligraphic style between the two plates on the top, as Batanouni observed in her thesis (Batanouni 1975:79). It would be imperative to carry out physical and chemical examinations of Mamluk metal fittings to see what is original and what is late replacement. It is known that the *Comité* carried out extensive restorations and that the *Comité*'s craftsmen produced excellent work in Herz's time. Stanley Lane-Poole pronounced a warning in this respect in 1895: the *Comité*'s workers in metal and wood were so good that their copies could eventually be mistaken for originals. "This merit has the obvious drawback that, unless great care is taken, the details of the monuments (e.g., the bronze bosses and plaques on doors,

³⁹ *Ibid.*

or the wood and ivory carvings and inlay work of doors and *minbars*) may be falsified.” (Lane-Poole 1906:310).⁴⁰

Fehérvári regards the use of a certain type of the letter “h” (he calls it “Persian ‘h’”) on the door in Kuwait as decisive proof of the genuineness of the door because, according to information he received from Doris Behrens-Abouseif, in Mamluk art it was used on metal objects only at the end of the thirteenth century and in the fourteenth century.⁴¹ Fehérvári also found it on a tombstone from Syria from the thirteenth century. I cannot agree with Fehérvári’s view: a letter can also be copied. As a matter of fact, he also found it in a modern inscription executed by the *Comité*; this proves that the *Comité* was well aware of the existence of this letter and used it on occasion, too.⁴² This letter does not appear in the inscription on the *in situ* door of the Barqūqiyya.

Now let us look at the facts which prove that the door *in situ* in the Barqūqiyya now was there in the 1890s and 1900s, too. In his history of Islamic art published in Hungarian in 1907, a few years after van Berchem’s relevant fascicle, Herz expressly mentioned Barqūq’s door when discussing metalwork under the heading “Applied Art under the Mamluk Sultans”, adding a photograph by way of illustration, and the door it depicts is apparently identical with the door *in situ* in the Barqūqiyya now.⁴³ Herz mentions the door in a similar context in the French (1895, 1905) and English (1896, 1907) editions of his catalogue of the Arab Museum.⁴⁴ He writes, for instance: “The folding doors of the mosque of Sultan Barkūk, in the town, with foliage in bronze delicately inlaid with silver, and those of the tomb-mosque of el-Ghūri, belonging respectively to the beginning and end of the period of Circassian Mamluke sultans, show that the craft of metal-working was practised throughout this time with the same skill as in preceding periods.” (Herz 1907a:173). It is hard to believe that Herz would have described the door in these terms had it not been in the Barqūqiyya at the time. In connection with the Barqūqiyya’s restoration around 1890, work on the main entrance door is explicitly mentioned in the *Comité* Bulletins.⁴⁵ On the other

⁴⁰ This report appeared elsewhere, too. Mols refers to these extensive restoration campaigns. Mols 2006:44–45, 87.

⁴¹ This “Persian ‘h’” appears in the top right section in *wa-l-muğāhidīn*, in the top left section at the beginning of *hiğriyya* in our fig. 12, and in *al-zāhir* in the bottom right section in our fig. 13.

⁴² E-mail message of 23 February 2010. Fehérvári 2012:65, 69–72; esp. 69 (n. 18).

⁴³ Herz 1907b:183, 185 (fig. 208 [=fig. 8 here]).

⁴⁴ Herz 1895:43. Id. 1896:21. Id. 1906:173. Id. 1907a:160–161. In all probability, he does so in the Arabic version of the second edition, too, but I do not have access to it at the time of writing.

⁴⁵ On the restoration of the Barqūqiyya, see *Comité Bulletin* 6, 1889, p. 106; 7, 1890, p. 28, 96, 106; 7 [*recte*: 8], 1891, p. 84. Works were carried out on *seven* doors in the Barqūqiyya: in addition to the main entrance door, there were *six* doors opening into the *ṣahn*.

hand, there is no mention of any removal or replacement of this door in the *Bulletins* – I have checked every entry regarding the Barqūqiyya up to the end of 1914. In his summary account of all the conservation works carried out by the *Comité* on the Barqūqiyya up to the year 1950, Saleh Lamei Mostafa (1982:65–70) likewise makes no mention of any removal or replacement of the main entrance door. Nor is there any hint that the door at issue might not be the original one. There is no indication whatsoever that the main entrance door *in situ* in the Barqūqiyya has ever been removed or replaced. This means that the present door *in situ* is most probably the original one and that the same door was there in van Berchem’s and Herz’s time also.

There is one significant difference between the door as depicted in Gottheil’s article of 1909 and the door as it appears in modern photographs taken in Kuwait, namely that in 1909 each wing featured a highly elaborate, artistic knocker which is missing today. The same happened to the *in situ* door in Cairo, too. In Herz’s photograph published in 1907, Barqūq’s original door in the Coppersmiths’ Bazaar had two beautiful knockers (one on each wing); both are now missing.⁴⁶ They were still there in 1949; they appear in the photograph of the door in the splendid publication of the Waqf Ministry, “The Mosques of Egypt”, but were missing by 1975 when Hoda Batanouni wrote her thesis.⁴⁷ In 1997, the David Collection in Copenhagen acquired one of these missing knockers. Fehérvári thought it belonged to the door in Kuwait, which he regarded as an original Mamluk work of art. The curator of the David Collection, Kjeld von Folsach, thinks it is one of the two original knockers of the main entrance door of the Barqūqiyya in Cairo. Mols regards it as one of the original knockers in Cairo, too. It is not known when and how the Copenhagen knocker was removed from its original place.⁴⁸

Having looked at some basic facts, let us now examine some important details.

Sometimes it is not clear which door is meant exactly in a given place. *Comité Bulletin* 6 (1889) 91, 103; 7 (1890) 13, 18, 113, 122, 132; 7 [*recte*: 8] (1891) 25; 13 (1896) 176.

⁴⁶ Herz 1907b:184 (fig. 208) [=fig. 8 in the present work].

⁴⁷ Fehérvári 2012:9 (fig. 7), 16, 19. Batanouni 1975:78.

⁴⁸ Fehérvári’s letter of 21 March 1998 to the present author based on information by Kjeld von Folsach, director of the David Collection. See Fehérvári 2012:16. Folsach 2001:290, 323 (no. 516). A good photo with description is accessible on the museum’s website (<https://www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic/dynasties/mamluks/art/32-1997> [accessed on 13 June 2018]). Mols 2006:230–231 (no. 26/2). Upon the present author’s inquiry as to whether they had carried out physical and chemical analyses on the knocker in the David Collection, Kjeld von Folsach replied in his email of 18 June 2018: “We did not have any reason to doubt the authenticity of our door handle and I believe this was also Geza’s opinion. It is quite different in details from a door handle placed on the door to Manyal Palace from 1903 though the general design is the same. The main reason for suspicion could be the iron spike which has a relatively ‘fresh’ screw thread – but this could be 19th century restoration.”

Glimpses from the History of the Door in Kuwait

According to the records of the Hispanic Society of America, their door was purchased by the founder of the society, Archer Milton Huntington, from the dealer Elias Hatoun in Muski Street, the famous Cairene bazaar.⁴⁹ Huntington was told that it came from the Barqūqiyya. Even so, he seems to have had his doubts, because he did not install it as he had originally planned.⁵⁰ In 1909, Gottheil published an article on the door in New York. He thought that the door came from the Barqūqiyya and that it was of high quality, with instances of only minor restorations that were scarcely visible. Yet he did not venture to pronounce on its authenticity, although at one point he went so far as to declare: “It is also evident that the doors come from the Barkūqiyyah” (Gottheil 1909:59). (Gottheil regularly, but not always, used the plural with reference to “two leaves of a door”.) After some hesitation, Gottheil voiced his suspicions concerning the genuineness of the door in New York, on account of the sequence of the numerals in the year and the use of the word *hiğriyya* in the inscription. As far as the numerals are concerned, we have seen already that the sequence observed on the door described by van Berchem and the sequence on the door in New York in Gottheil’s time are the one commonly used in modern literary Arabic as well as in the modern Cairene dialect.⁵¹

The word *hiğriyya* may be uncommon, yet it is not necessarily problematic. Gottheil considers it “uncommon” in this position: he found only one inscription where it appeared in this form.⁵² This is a view with which I cannot agree. It may be uncommon, but it occurs also in Barqūq’s epitaph on the characteristic oblong, upright tombstone (*šāhid*) in front of his tomb in the complex of his son, Farağ: *sanat ihdā wa-tamānmi’a hiğriyya*.⁵³ As far as I know, it is common in modern literary Arabic and in the modern Egyptian (Cairene) dialect, too, although it is not easy to

⁴⁹ Hatoun does not appear in the 1885 edition of Baedeker’s guidebook; he is listed among “goods agents” in the 1895 edition. These firms are employed by tourists to send home their purchases “in order to avoid customhouse examinations, portorage, and various other items of expense and annoyance”. In the 1898 edition Hatoun (*sic*) is mentioned among sellers of Arabian Woodwork after Giuseppe Parvis. In the 1902 edition his name is spelt Hatoun. In the 1914 and 1929 editions E. Hatoun is listed, in first and second places respectively, among the sellers of Arab(ian) woodwork, inlaid work and ivory carvings. Egypt 1885:236. Id. 1895:32. Id. 1898:28. Id. 1902:29. Baedeker 1908:36. Id. 1914:41. Id. 1929:43.

⁵⁰ Letter of 3 July 1996 by Margaret E. Connors, Museum Department, The Hispanic Society of America, New York, to Géza Fehérvári. I am indebted to Géza Fehérvári for putting this letter at my disposal.

⁵¹ See n. 24 and the corresponding paragraph above.

⁵² In addition to the discussion below, on *hiğriyya* see also Fehérvári 2012:65.

⁵³ See Berchem, *Matériaux* 322 (no. 216). Mostafa 1968:134 (no. 565). The form *tamānmi’a* or rather *tumnumi’a*, a reflex of the dialectal form, belongs to Middle Arabic. Cf. n. 27 and the corresponding paragraph above.

find written examples because most printed sources use abbreviations in these cases. However, right now I happen to have in front of me a book published in Cairo in 1891, i.e. in the period in question, in which the date of publication is indicated on the front page as follows: *sanat 1891 mīlādiyya*. *Mīlādiyya* (= according to the birth [of Christ]) is the equivalent of *hiğriyya* here. In the author's short biography (*tarğama*) at the beginning of the work, the following similar dates can be found with *hiğriyya*, etc., spelt out in each case: *qabla sanat 1270 hiğriyya*; *sanat 1272 hiğriyya*; *sanat 1275 hiğriyya*; *sanat 1284 hiğriyya*; *sanat 1294 hiğriyya*; *sanat 1877 mīlādiyya*; *sanat 1880 mīlādiyya*; and *sanat 1880 masīhiyya* (Bāğūrī, *Durar* 1, 3–4). Another book, an Egyptian edition of Mas'ūdī's *Murūğ al-Dahab* published in AH 1346, came my way recently in which the date is expressed in both volumes as follows: *sanat 1346 hiğriyya*. In colloquial Cairene Arabic even *hiğrī* in the masculine with apparently lacking concord occurs after a date with the feminine noun *sana* in it.⁵⁴ In all probability, what Gottheil finds disturbing here is the morphologically indeterminate construct state with the corresponding indeterminate attribute, although syntactically and semantically the structure is determinate. Indeed, one feels uneasy about this feature, yet it occurs very frequently.⁵⁵

Subsequently, Gottheil also mentioned the door described by van Berchem, adding that it had been on sale in Cairo in Elias Hatoun's shop in 1892. He referred to the difference between the inscription on the door in New York and the inscription described by van Berchem. However, it did not occur to him that the two doors could be identical; he merely thought that they were "very similar". He knew that the door in New York had been acquired in Cairo but seems to have been unaware that it had been bought in the bazaar precisely from Elias Hatoun, who offered for sale the door described by van Berchem, too. At one point, Gottheil received from Max Herz a letter in which the Hungarian architect informed him that the door described by van Berchem had been made in 1892 by an Arab artisan, 'Alī al-Šiyašī, for the Cairo Street of the Midway Plaisance at the World's Columbian Exposition.⁵⁶ However, the artisan had not been able to agree with the managers of the Cairo Street Company on the price, after which the door remained in Cairo and passed into the possession of the dealer (Gottheil 1909:58–60).

Herz mentioned the door described by van Berchem in a letter to Ignaz Goldziher dated 6 April 1901, saying that he had just received the latest issue of van Berchem's *Corpus [=Matériaux]*⁵⁷ and was astonished by van Berchem's inability to distinguish an original Mamluk door from a poor replica which had been made under Herz

⁵⁴ Cf. Spitta 1880:275–276. Willmore 1901:95, 242–246.

⁵⁵ Cf. Reckendorf 1921:209, 213. Id. 1967:285. Hopkins 1984:182–187.

⁵⁶ There is some confusion in the dates in Gottheil's letter. He gives, in a postscript dated 18 August 1908, an account of Herz's letter to him dated 15 July 1909. Most probably Gottheil mixed up the two dates.

⁵⁷ Cf. n. 9 above.

Pasha's very eyes "by a botcher". Herz added that he was going to inform van Berchem of this mistake: "*Van Berchem hat mir seinen letzten Corp. [sic] eingeschickt. Es that mir leid zu bemerken, daß er p. 304 – N^o 197 von einer Thüre spricht als ob sie alt gewesen wäre. Die Thüre wurde unter meinen Augen von einem Pfuscher angefertigt. Ich will ihm davon gelinde Mitteilung machen. Ich kann einen solchen Irrtum von V. B. gar nicht fassen.*" ("Van Berchem has sent me his last *Corpus*. I was sorry to notice that on p. 304 under no. 197 he talks about a door as if it were original. The door was made by a botcher under my own eyes. I want to inform him gently of this. I am totally unable to comprehend such a mistake by Van Berchem.")⁵⁸

Sadly, Herz Pasha's letter to van Berchem has not survived. However, Max van Berchem does acknowledge it in the addenda to his *Matériaux*: "*M. Herz m'écrit que cette porte est un travail moderne, exécuté en 1893, et que ce faux a trompé des juges compétents et provoqué une enquête. S'il est vrai que ce texte a été fabriqué de toutes pièces, et mes souvenirs sur ce point sont trop lointains pour contredire l'opinion très autorisée du savant architecte, le n^o 197 n'a plus de valeur.*" ("Mr. Herz writes to me that this door is a modern work executed in 1893 and that this forgery has misled competent judges and provoked an inquiry. If it is true that this entire text is a forgery throughout – and my recollections on this point are too distant to contradict the authoritative opinion of the erudite architect –, then no. 197 is null and void now.") This remark appears in the section *Additions et Rectifications* at the end of the bulky volume, and therefore escapes the attention of most readers.⁵⁹ It escaped Fehérvári's attention, too.

In the end, Gottheil was reluctant to say that the door in New York and the one described by van Berchem were genuine.

Among the donations of Herz Pasha to the Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest was an inscribed bronze plaque from the mosque of Sultan Barqūq measuring 50 × 19 cm. This plaque is currently missing; its whereabouts can only be traced up to 1962. It is not clear what has happened to it, and where it is now.⁶⁰ We know its inscription from a letter written by Max Herz.⁶¹ On the basis of Herz's drawing and the text of the inscription as recorded by him one may tentatively conclude that it belonged to one of the doors in the *ṣaḥn* of the Barqūqiyya. In a letter to the Museum, Herz quotes the text of the upper band on both wings; only the left half was sent to Budapest. In any case, the plaque seems completely unrelated to the door in Kuwait,

⁵⁸ The letter is preserved in the Correspondence of Ignaz Goldziher. Oriental Collection, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest. Cf. Ormos 2005:180. Goldziher's Correspondence is now accessible online, too.

⁵⁹ Berchem, *Matériaux* 770 (ad 304 [no. 197]).

⁶⁰ Cf. no. 2) in the appendix at the end of the present article.

⁶¹ Ormos 2009:462, 480 (figs. 322–323), 519–520. The present author is planning to subject the inscription of this door as quoted by Herz to a detailed examination in the near future.

as its inscription differed from those discussed above. The type of the door is also different from that of the main entrance door, as clearly appears in Herz's drawing. Fehérvári discovered that similar items had been received by the "Islamic Museum" [*sic*; the present-day *Museum für Islamische Kunst*] in Berlin, too.⁶²

Further Doors of Sultan Barqūq

Fehérvári acquired further items of information about Sultan Barqūq doors in the Manyal palace, at Cairo University (Faculty of Archeology), and in Beirut. However, these doors are not real copies of either the Barqūqiyya or the Kuwait door. The door in the Manyal palace is modelled on the entrance door of the Barqūqiyya and on the door in Kuwait, but its inscription states clearly that it was made for the palace in question. The medallion in its centre is inlaid with gold and silver. The medallion was produced in Mamluk revival style using Mamluk revival technique, and contains Barqūq's name. The door's measurements (263 × 152 cm) differ from those of the Barqūqiyya and the Kuwait doors, too.⁶³ The door at Cairo University closely resembles the Manyal palace door. The medallion at its centre is identical with that of the Manyal palace door. The door's measurements equal those of the Manyal palace door: 263 x 153.5 cm (Fehérvári 2012:41–45).⁶⁴ It must have been produced by the artist of the last-mentioned door. According to data collected by Iman R. Abdalfattah, once upon a time this door was at the French Embassy in Cairo, which presented it to Fu'ād I University (present-day Cairo University) at one point. The name of Uṣṭa Aḥmad Ḥiğāzī appears on it.⁶⁵ The door in Beirut was similar to the

⁶² Fehérvári's e-mail message of 27 November 2006 to the present author.

⁶³ Fehérvári 2012:36–40 (figs. 28–30). These are measurements of the door which the present author received from Fehérvári. The measurements in his monograph are slightly different.

⁶⁴ According to Fehérvári, a photograph of it was published in Muḥammad, *Funūn*, plate (*lawḥa*) 58 a-b-ġ, p. 341. According to the entry, the door is registered under inventory no. (*raqm al-siğill*) 759, but the author does not say where. Size: 250 x 150 cm. The description runs: "Door plated with bronze, inlaid with gold and silver, in the name of Sultan al-Nāṣir al-Manṣūr Qalā'ūn, renewed by Sultan Barqūq in 788 AH." This is identical with the one referred to by Fehérvári in his monograph as the door at Cairo University. In any case, there seems to be some discrepancy in the measurements. The photographs in the copies of Su'ād Māhir Muḥammad's work accessible to me are of very poor quality: among others, the two inscriptions are absolutely illegible in them. Therefore no further conclusions can be drawn from them. The photograph in Su'ād Māhir Muḥammad's work is reproduced as fig. 26 on p. 34 in Fehérvári 2012. The caption (attribution) to this figure appearing on p. V is wrong.

⁶⁵ Iman R. Abdalfattah's email of 30 November 2006 to Fehérvári. On *uṣṭa* "≈ master", see Badawi, Hinds 1986:21. The same name appears on the revival door described by Ḥasan 'Abd al-Wahhāb in his report of 1945, on which see below.

previous doors in shape and measurements. According to the collector's widow, it disappeared during the civil war. However, Fehérvári thought it more likely that the widow sold it after the death of her husband, who used to be the curator of the Nicolas Surssock [*Niqūlā Sursuq*] Museum in Beirut. The curator and collector in question was Ibrahim M. Beyhoum, "an avid collector of artwork" himself. It seems that the door was in his private possession and not part of the museum's collections. A similar door, formerly in a private collection in Beirut, is now in the National Museum in Riyadh. It belongs to the same group of smaller-sized doors. "The right panel measures 245 x 68 cm, while the left one is 245 x 69.5 cm." (Fehérvári 2012:45–46 [fig. 36]).⁶⁶ One wonders whether it is identical to the aforementioned Beirut door. As far back as 1976, Michael Rogers reported on a pair of doors in Beirut which had "pretensions to be the original doors" of the Barqūqiyya. It is most likely that the door he mentioned was identical to the door referred to above in connection with Beirut. However, the door in Riyadh now cannot have had "pretensions to be the original doors" of the Barqūqiyya on account of its much smaller size: 245 x 68/69.5 cm as against 420 x 120 cm (one wing) in the case of the Barqūqiyya. We must assume that Rogers had no possibility of making a careful comparison between the door he saw in Beirut and the *in situ* door of the Barqūqiyya. He also remarked that the door *in situ* had certainly been heavily restored. He thought it possible, even, that two sets of doors had been made, before 1890, incorporating some of the original pieces (Rogers 1976:313).⁶⁷ It must be regarded as a major lack of consistency that in one place Fehérvári ascribes to Rogers the assumption that a metalworker may have made "two or even more pairs of doors" in the nineteenth century by using material from the original door, while on the opposite page we read that "Michael Rogers was correct assuming that more doors were made for Barqūq [in the fourteenth century], more likely *two large doors for his two main buildings* and four smaller ones for the courtyard of his mosque" (Fehérvári 2012:32–33).⁶⁸ These are two completely different assumptions. It must be clearly stated that Michael Rogers voiced the first assumption only; he wrote nothing that amounts to the second assumption. As a matter of fact, Rogers did not carry out a careful analysis nor did he elaborate a theory on this subject; this was merely a sudden idea that flashed through his mind.

In 2008, Christie's put up for auction a similar door of smaller size with a totally different inscription. However, there was a brief notice in Arabic at the bottom

⁶⁶ There is some disturbance in the illustration in question.

⁶⁷ According to Rogers, the door he saw was in the possession of Ibrahim Beyhoum at the time. Mols 2006:166 (n. 172). In actual fact, Ibrahim M. Beyhoum was the first director of the Surssock Museum at its opening in 1961 (Banks 2018). A modern travel website describes him as "an avid collector of artwork". <https://www.ixigo.com/nicolas-surssock-museum-beirut-lebanon-ne-1090812>.

⁶⁸ Emphasis added. – I.O.

stating that it had been produced in the “workshop” (or “shop”) [*maḥall*] of Ilyās Ḥāṭūn [Elias Hatoun] in 1906.⁶⁹ This piece of information is of the utmost importance because it proves that, in addition to selling artistic doors, Elias Hatoun was also involved in their *production*.

Gaston Migeon published a photograph (by G. Lekegian) of yet another door in his *Manuel d'Art Musulman* in 1907 without making any reference to it in the text. He indicated in the caption that it was in the Museum of Arab Art at that time. According to Fehérvári, this door disappeared without trace and its whereabouts were unknown. Fehérvári gave its measurements, too: c. 260 x 150 cm. It is not clear where he obtained this piece of information: the door appears only in a photograph in Migeon's *Manuel* with a brief caption but without the artefact's measurements. It can be stated on the basis of the photograph that the door in question did in fact very closely resemble the main entrance door of the Barqūqiyya and also the door in Kuwait. Migeon, it seems, was unable to read the inscription: he merely stated that it was a mosque door from the fourteenth century in the Arab Museum (“*Porte de mosquée du XIV^e siècle. Musée Arabe du Caire. Cliché Lekegian*”) (Migeon 1907:197 (fig. 170)).⁷⁰ In the revised and enlarged second edition (1927), the reference to the Arab Museum, as well as to the photographer (Lekegian), disappeared and “fourteenth century” was changed to “fifteenth century” in the caption of the illustration, in which the door was depicted upside down, by the way. The caption merely said that it was “a mosque door from the fifteenth century, in Cairo” (“*Porte de mosquée du XV^e siècle, au Caire.*”).⁷¹ The door did not appear in the catalogues of the museum; the second edition was published in English translation in 1907, in the same year as the first edition of Migeon's *Manuel*.⁷² Gottheil, who was familiar with Migeon's *Manuel*, was startled to find that he was unable to trace the door in the museum's latest catalogue.⁷³ Nor did it appear in Max van Berchem's *Matériaux*, published in 1901.⁷⁴ Gottheil produced a reading of the inscription: *‘Izz li-mawlānā l-sultān al-muḡāhid Muḥammad al-nāzīr [sic] sultān al-islām wa-l-muslimīn*. He wrote that it was in the name of “Muhammad al-Nāzīr”, “i.e.” “Nāsīr al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Ḳalā’ūn [sic]”. However, Nāzīr does not make sense here and the titles of the Sultan are not correct in this form, either. What we

⁶⁹ Fehérvári 2012:48–49 (fig. 38), 50.

⁷⁰ My impression is that Fehérvári did not read the inscription. – I.O.

⁷¹ Migeon 1927:II, 83 (fig. 260). Fehérvári does not seem to have been aware of the existence of this edition.

⁷² Herz published the catalogue of the museum in two French editions (1895; 1906). Both were published in English translation (1896; 1907), the second also in Arabic (1909). None of the French and English versions lists the door in question. I have not been able to consult the Arabic translation of the second edition for the present article. – I.O.

⁷³ Gottheil 2012:60.

⁷⁴ Cf. n. 9 above.

actually find is *al-Malik al-Nāṣir Nāṣir al-Dunyā wa-l-Dīn Muḥammad* or simply *al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad*, and always in this sequence, i.e. the title precedes the personal name Muḥammad.⁷⁵ As a matter of fact, Gottheil misread the inscription with regard to its main point. (Interestingly, this inscription appears both at the top and the bottom of the door.) The correct reading runs: *ʿIzz li-mawlānā l-sulṭān al-malik al-nāṣir Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-nāṣir sulṭān al-islām wa-l-muslimīn*.⁷⁶ This means that the inscription is in the name of Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Qalāʿūn, i.e. Sultan Ḥasan, the builder of the famous mosque. Sultan Ḥasan was assassinated in 1361, while Barqūq died in 1399: it is strange to assume that two identical doors should have been made for two different sovereigns with an interval of more than thirty years. The conclusion based on all these observations must be that the authenticity of this door is highly questionable, and it is also very doubtful that it was ever in the Arab Museum.⁷⁷

Fehérvári thought that the small-sized doors mentioned above, or some of them at least, were in fact the four [*sic*] small doors which had originally been in the *ṣaḥn* of the Barqūqīyya, the doors about which “Herz had written that during the restoration work they had been replaced and the originals taken to the museum. ... However, these doors never reached the museum, as Gottheil already indicated and as I have also ascertained from the museum’s directors.”⁷⁸ Fehérvári also claimed that substantial reworking and embellishing had been carried out on them, as was the case with the big door [= the door now in Kuwait], which was, he maintained, original too.⁷⁹

I have never come across any source in which Herz wrote what Fehérvári ascribed to him. I have checked all the *Comité* Bulletins up to the end of 1914, the date of Herz’s enforced retirement and expulsion from Egypt, and there is no mention of the removal and replacement of the *ṣaḥn* doors, of which there have always been *six* and not four. On the contrary, the six “beautiful” doors in the *ṣaḥn*, “the leaves of which are covered with artistically executed bronze [*dont les vantaux sont recouverts de bronze artistiquement travaillé*]”, are repeatedly mentioned in the course of the

⁷⁵ This statement is based on all the relevant places in Berchem’s *Matériaux*.

⁷⁶ The present reading is based on the illustration in the copy of the second edition of Migeon’s *Manuel* (1927) preserved in the Library of the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest. For the first edition of 1907, I consulted the copy at the University of Toronto, downloading it from the Internet Archive in September 2013. The inscription is difficult to decipher in both editions; however, the printed version is to be preferred. The relevant illustration in both editions seems to be based on one and the same photograph. Migeon’s door has knockers closely resembling the object in Copenhagen now.

⁷⁷ Fehérvári 2012:33.

⁷⁸ E-mail message of 27 November 2006. Cf. Fehérvári 2012:14, 20, 51.

⁷⁹ E-mail message of 27 November 2006.

complete restoration of the mosque: they, too, are restored during these operations.⁸⁰ The Bulletins often mention the removal of very small or even broken items and their delivery to the museum. In view of this circumstance, it is hard to believe that they would have remained silent on the removal of such important objets d'art if this had in fact taken place. In his monograph on the Barqūqiyya, Saleh Lamei Mostafa makes no mention of any removal or replacement of the doors in question either. Fehérvári's statement that Gottheil had already indicated that the *ṣaḥn* doors never reached the museum was based on a misunderstanding or misinterpretation: Gottheil merely remarked that he could not find "the door" published by Migeon in the latest catalogue of the Arab Museum (1907). As a matter of fact, the solution to this enigmatic case can be found in an entry in the second edition of Herz Pasha's catalogue of the Arab Museum. Namely, there is one item from Barqūq's *madrassa* in this publication: "*Deux vantaux enlevés d'une des quatre portes de la petite cour qui précède le tombeau de la fille du sultan Barkouk dans la rue en-Nahassyn.*" "Folding doors removed from one of four doorways in the courtyard leading into the tomb of Sultan Barkūk in the street of en-Nahhasin."⁸¹ Fehérvári misinterpreted the entry, thus concluding that Herz had removed all four (!) doors from the big *ṣaḥn* of the Barqūqiyya. However, Herz speaks here of one door only (its two wings), and it is not a door in the big central *ṣaḥn* but one of the four small doors in the small courtyard leading to the mausoleum.⁸²

Concerning Herz, Fehérvári maintains that "it has also been recorded, that he painstakingly tried to remove most of the historical doors from the monuments to the *Musée de l'art arabe*" "in the late 1880 and early '90s" and had them replaced with replicas made of brass.⁸³ Fehérvári fails to adduce his source(s). I have never come

⁸⁰ *Comité Bulletin* 6, 1889, p. 91 [?], 103; 7, 1890, p. 13, 18, 106, 113 [?], 122, 132 [?]; 7 [recte: 8], 1891, p. 25 [?]; 13, 1896, p. 176. The question marks refer to entries when "a" door is mentioned: in these cases it is not clear whether the main entrance door is meant or one in the *ṣaḥn*.

⁸¹ Herz 1906:130 (no. 190). Id. 1907a:121 (no. 190).

⁸² On this courtyard, see Mostafa 1982:31, no. 142. The English translation has "the tomb of Sultan Barqūq", while the French original says "the tomb of Barqūq's daughter". These two designations refer to the same very fine tomb. It was originally constructed for Barqūq, who, however, was buried elsewhere, namely in the mausoleum posthumously erected by his son, Faraḡ, in accordance with his last will. During his lifetime, some members of his family were buried in his original mausoleum constituting part of his *madrassa*-mausoleum in the Coppersmiths' Bazaar. Maqrīzī reports that soon after the Barqūqiyya's completion but before the festive inauguration, on 14 Ġumādā I-Āḥira 788 the remains of the Sultan's five children (*awlād*) and the corpse of his father were transferred to the new monument and buried in the mausoleum (*qubba*) there. Maqrīzī, *Sulūk VIII (ġuz' III / qism 2)*, 546 (*sanat* 788). Id., *Mawā'iẓ IV/2*, 682. Cf. also Ibn Taġrī Birdī, *Manhal III*, 288. Berchem, *Matériaux* 293–295 (esp. 294, [n. 7]), 304 (n. 3), 328–331.

⁸³ Fehérvári 2012:14, 25, 94.

across any piece of information confirming this statement. It is true that there were some mosque doors in the Arab Museum at the time. However, there is nothing to suggest that it was Herz who removed them. Of course, the possibility cannot be excluded that Herz removed a mosque door when it was endangered in one way or another. But I am not aware of replacements with replicas in brass. And there is absolutely nothing to suggest that Herz systematically removed doors of mosques, replacing them with replicas in brass.

The Egyptian National Archives preserve a report dated 22 October 1945 by Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, one of the *Comité*’s best experts, in which that authority gives the findings of his examination of a Sultan Barqūq door on display at the time at the *Galleries Nationales* in Alexandria. He says that the door is of excellent quality, but certainly a fake, because the Sultan’s titles have been mixed up. He adds that there is no doubt that this door and the Sultan Barqūq door at the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (which he had examined in 1940, finding it also to be of excellent quality but evidently a fake for the same reason) must be by the one and the same person, namely Al-Uṣṭa Aḥmad Ḥiḡāzī, who had indicated his name and the date (1323/1905 or 1333/1914) in small, barely decipherable letters at the bottom of the door at the ministry.⁸⁴ The same name appears on the revival door preserved in the museum of the Faculty of Archeology at Cairo University.⁸⁵

One gains the impression that at one point in the decades around 1900 there was an entire workshop in Cairo specializing in the production of Sultan Barqūq doors. It is perhaps not out of place here to quote Stanley Lane-Poole’s high opinion of the *Comité*’s artisans from the report he prepared at the request of Lord Cromer in 1895:

“And I may here observe that the staff of the Commission [= *Comité*] includes workers in metal and wood, who are able to copy the designs so accurately, that it is almost impossible to distinguish them from the originals. (They are not yet successful in stained glass, however.) This merit has the obvious drawback that, unless great care is taken, the details of the monuments (e.g. the bronze bosses and plaques on doors, or the wood and ivory carvings and inlay work of doors and *minbars*) may be falsified.”⁸⁶

Herz’s deputy, Achille Patricolo, also lauded the skills of the *Comité*’s artisans:

“A body of free artisans-specialists, masons, joiners, turners, painters, carvers, workers in marble, has been formed in the *Comité*’s office. By way of a long apprenticeship, having been wisely and passionately directed, these artisans have

⁸⁴ Egyptian National Library and Archives, ‘Abdīn 163, al-Awqāf, Laḡnat Ḥifz al-Āṭār al-Qadīma al-‘Arabiyya [*sic*]. Two photographs are enclosed with the report. Ormos 2009:461–463. At the time of my research in the National Archives I was not yet aware of the other doors of Sultan Barqūq and thus could not compare them with the photographs.

⁸⁵ See n. 65 and the corresponding paragraph above in the present article.

⁸⁶ Lane-Poole 1906:310.

acquired the great perfection necessary for the execution of the most delicate works inherent in the conservation of monuments of Arab art.” (Patricolo 1914:28).⁸⁷

One such free artisan is known by name: Todros Badir [Badīr/Bdēr < Budayr]. In 1896 the *Comité* charged Badir [probably Todros] with the restoration of the bronze door of Abū Bakr ibn Muzhir’s mosque “in view of being a specialist in this field and because he had executed very good work of the kind in question before”. (There were other competitors for the same job. The artisan whose application was also considered was Muḥammad al-Šīmī.⁸⁸ Todros Badir had been trained in the workshop of his uncle, Wahba Badir, with whom his father had also worked. Wahba and Todros excelled in marquetry also. They came from Asyūt in Upper Egypt and, judging from their names, were in all probability Copts (Herz 1911:56 [n. 2]). In 1906 Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, wanted to donate a beautiful hanging lamp “of Saracenic design” to the Taj Mahal mausoleum, to be hung above the cenotaphs of Shah Jahan and his queen, Mumtaz Mahal. Lord Curzon chose as model a gilded bronze lamp from the tomb of Sultan Baybars II from the thirteenth century as depicted in the celebrated work of Prisse d’Avennes.⁸⁹ He turned to Lord Cromer for help. “It was ascertained that there were only two workmen in Egypt capable of carrying out a work of so much delicacy, and finally one of these, Todros Badir, was entrusted with the commission. Two years were occupied in making the lamp, which is of bronze, inlaid throughout with silver and gold. Mr. Richmond, of the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works, has stated his belief that no such lamp has been made since the period of the original, many centuries ago.” We can only guess who the “other” of the “two workmen” referred to was: Muḥammad al-Šīmī in all probability. It must be mentioned that this lamp cannot be regarded as a unique object in Mughal India; similar lamps can be seen above Akbar’s tomb in Sikandra and Sheykh Salīm Čišī’s tomb in the Great Mosque of Fatehpur Sikri, too. It is known that lamps were

⁸⁷ Some very fine specimens of “Mamluk” metalwork produced in this period are depicted in Vernoit 1997:228–239. I am indebted to Doris Behrens-Abouseif for drawing my attention to this publication and to Lord Curzon’s donation (see below). However, beginning in the 1930s, the standard of craftsmanship in Cairo began to decline markedly, thus jeopardizing both construction and restoration projects in general. *Idāra* 1948:49. Sidky 1999:317.

⁸⁸ *Vu que le premier [=sieur Badir] est spécialiste en la matière et qu’il a fourni de très bons travaux du genre en question, la deuxième Commission, à la majorité, lui adjuge le travail. Comité Bulletin* 13 (1896) 133–134. For the Arabic forms of the names, see the Arabic translation of the Bulletin. *Comité Bulletin* 13 (1896) 112 [Arabic]. Cf. *Comité Bulletin* 11 (1894), second edition, 54; 15 (1898) 47. See also *Comité Bulletin* 14 (1897) VI–VII [Appendice, Mosquée Abou-Bakr Mazhar el-Ansāri §7], pl. IV [a photograph of the restored door]. The title used in connection with Badir is *sieur* in the French original and *mu’allim* in the Arabic translation. In our case, this latter Arabic title refers to a foreman, who “directs the labour of others” as the head of a small group of artisans. See Badawi, Hinds 1986:596. On al-Šīmī, cf. *Comité Bulletin* 14 (1897) 138, 141, 153.

⁸⁹ Prisse 1877:III, pl. [CLVIII]. See also Lane-Poole 1886:62 (fig. 76).

suspended above Mumtaz Mahal's cenotaph in Shah Jahan's time, too; their shape is, however, not known.⁹⁰ A drawing of 1851 shows a lamp above Mumtaz Mahal's cenotaph, surrounded by a number of smaller hanging lamps. It is worthwhile remembering here that Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany donated a lamp of solid silver to the tomb of Sultan Saladin as a token of great respect during his visit to Damascus in 1898. The lamp is still there, in contradistinction to the gilt bronze wreath, which was removed by Sharif Fayṣal, leader of the Arab movement, and presented to T. E. Lawrence on their entry to Damascus on 1 October 1918. The latter donated it to the Imperial War Museum, where it is kept now as "Presentation wreath from Saladin's tomb".⁹¹

In the summer of 1998, Géza Fehérvári, then curator of the Tareq Rajab Museum in Kuwait, published a brief account of the history of the door held by that museum. In addition to the door's history, he also presented the findings of physical and chemical analyses performed on the door by his expert colleague, Dr. Peter Northover of Oxford University. Northover said that with regard to the door two distinct periods could be made out. The earlier and original decorative elements were affixed to the covering brass panels by nails made of steel (fourteenth century), while the restored new pieces were affixed using screws. Moreover, the decorative elements were made of early brass (fourteenth century), while some of the silver inlay and patina were modern (nineteenth century). The wooden panels, which were covered with decorative metalwork, were modern (nineteenth century), too.⁹² As a matter of fact, only two small decorative elements were sent to Oxford. One was fixed with screws, the other with nails; the nails were also analyzed, while it was taken for granted that the screws were modern. The analysis found that some of the nails were medieval, while others were modern (Fehérvári 2012:66 [fig. 59]).

It must be stressed that Northover did not carry out a detailed analysis of the door; he merely checked the pieces taken to him by Fehérvári. In fact, he never saw the door and never visited Kuwait. Since he had conducted his analyses long ago, when I was writing the final version of my account of Sultan Barqūq's door I asked him to summarize his earlier findings as he now saw them, from a distance of more than ten years. Having submitted my enquiry to him, I received an answer in September 2013. In it, he writes that he performed work on some copper alloy plaques and some nails

⁹⁰ Ormos 2012:367. *Gift* 1909. Khare 2003. "Lord Curzon a". "Lord Curzon b". Koch 2012:166, 168–169 (fig. 233), 244, 256, 271 (n. 108–109). It seems doubtful, though, that the word *kawkaba* would mean "orbs" in Lahauri's account as quoted by Koch.

⁹¹ Abegg 1954:52. Burns 2009:113. McMeekin 2010:14. See also the web-site of the Imperial War Museums: <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30083872> (accessed on 15 February 2015).

⁹² Fehérvári 1998. In a fax message from Kuwait written in 1997, Fehérvári stressed that the fourteenth-century steel of the nail was in fact the oldest steel in the world. Fehérvári 2012:53, 66.

from the door. He found that the metalwork could be a mixture of original pieces and replacements of various, even late, dates. Certainly, some of the nails were medieval.⁹³ He added that the technology had developed considerably since his first involvement with Sultan Barqūq's door in Kuwait in 1997: "With suitable equipment such as a handheld XRF spectrometer the door could be rapidly surveyed and the plaques and inlays grouped by composition and, given the history of medieval and later brass, those groupings will have some chronological significance."⁹⁴ In 2015 he said he had carried out extensive research on Mamluk revival metalwork produced in Egypt in the second half of the nineteenth century. He pointed out that the brass and the steel used in the Sultan Barqūq pieces he had analyzed were certainly different from the brass and the steel employed in the Mamluk revival pieces he had been involved with. He came to the conclusion that even if the door was a Mamluk revival work, which he thought it was, it cannot have been made for the World's Columbian Exposition around 1890 but must have been executed earlier. At the same time he added that it is not always possible to define the precise date of production with physical and chemical analysis if older brass and steel have been reused.⁹⁵

Luitgard Mols (2006:87) mentions in this context that "the presence of silver-wire inlay, instead of the sheet inlay that was common in Mamluk times, also points to a later date".

In view of this complex situation concerning the eventual extensive reuse of old parts on modern doors and their modern replacement on old objects one acutely misses detailed physical and chemical analyses of Mamluk metalwork fittings. Rogers's idea comes to mind here that eventually two doors might have been produced out of the main entrance door of the Barqūqiyya during its complete restoration around 1890 (Rogers 1976:313).⁹⁶ In this context one is tempted to ask: What is the point of mixing old and new elements as long as they can hardly be distinguished?

Some questions arise in connection with these doors. Since there seem to have been so many, it is difficult to say precisely who saw which. One wonders whether the door seen by Herz in Cairo and "made under his very eyes by a botcher" was the same as that now in Kuwait. Also open to doubt is how this door or these two doors relate to the door described by van Berchem in his *Matériaux*: are the discrepancies due to a momentary oversight by the great scholar – *Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus* – or to the fact that there were actually two slightly different inscriptions on two very similar doors?⁹⁷ The door seen by Herz was not taken to Chicago; he

⁹³ E-mail messages of 26, 27 and 29 September 2013.

⁹⁴ E-mail message of 2 October 2013.

⁹⁵ Personal interview at Southmoor (Oxford) on 22 May 2015.

⁹⁶ Cf. n. 67 and the corresponding paragraph above.

⁹⁷ On the Latin proverb, see Büchmann 1910:417.

states this expressly in his letter to Gottheil quoted above. Since he was there on site and oversaw the final phase of the construction of Cairo Street, he must have known exactly what items were exhibited there. Yet the displaying of a Sultan Barqūq door in Chicago is beyond question.⁹⁸ Which or what door was it? Why was Herz silent concerning it? He must have known of it! Or is it possible that it was installed after Herz's departure for Egypt so that he did not know of it? The chronology of the events connected with the door in Chicago is not sufficiently clear. The first report on it was published on 16 April, but its author had not seen the door herself. On 28 June a report of a "private view of a new attraction just added to the motley charms of Cairo Street" appeared. On this occasion, the door was indeed shown to a group of invited guests. This means that the door must have been presented to the public on 27 or perhaps 26 June, but certainly not before the latter date. What happened between 16 April and 26 June? This is a time span of more than two months! Cairo Street was officially opened on 27 May. We do not know how long Herz stayed in Chicago. He probably attended the official opening and departed for Cairo some time after that event. Thus the possibility cannot be ruled out that Herz did not know of the installation of the door. It is an unlikely possibility, nevertheless it must be counted with. And what happened to the door after the end of the Fair? Was it shipped back to Cairo and returned to Hatoun's store, where The Hispanic Society acquired it later on? There is another discrepancy casting doubt on the identity of the two doors. Namely, the door van Berchem saw was "heavily damaged and roughly repaired" ("*fort endommagée et grossièrement réparée*"), while the door Gottheil saw looked different: "The doors are in a perfect condition; and though it looks as if in one or two places they had been restored, the restoration has been so cleverly done that it is hardly apparent."⁹⁹

In 1994 Fehérvári claimed that the door in Kuwait had originally belonged to Barqūq's "*Khanaqah*, or 'shelter'", which stood – together with his *madrasa*-mosque – in the Coppersmiths' Bazaar.¹⁰⁰ According to his account, due to neglect the building became ruinous and by the second half of the nineteenth century the door disappeared. It surfaced in 1892 in the possession of "Ali al-Shiyashi", who offered it to the organizers of the Egyptian government pavilion at the Chicago Fair as his own product made in imitation of one of the doors of the mosque of Sultan Ḥasan. The Organizing Committee did not buy it because it found the price too high.

⁹⁸ This is mentioned by Fehérvári, too, without a reference. Fehérvári 2012:68. I must have been his source, because I informed Fehérvári of this fact in one of our conversations. However, I cannot have spoken of "*the exhibition catalogue*" in this context because there was no *single* exhibition catalogue: there were many catalogues but none of Cairo Street. I have never come across Barqūq's door in catalogues. - I.O.

⁹⁹ Berchem, *Matériaux* 304 (no. 197). Gottheil 1909:58. With reference to the two wings of a door, Gottheil regularly uses the plural.

¹⁰⁰ Fehérvári did not explain the meaning of "shelter" in this place.

Then the enterprising metalworker artist sold it to E. Hatoun in the bazaar. “It was at this place where the late Max van Berchem, an outstanding Arabist saw it and recorded it. He accepted it as genuine, not as that of the Mosque of Sultan Hasan, but as the inscription states, the original door of the *Khanaqah* of Sultan Barquq.” (Fehérvári 1994:153–154). A *hānqāh*, or convent housing students and Sufi dervishes, had indeed been part of the Barqūqiyya complex once upon a time, but most of it disappeared long ago. In 1889, when the *Comité* examined the Barqūqiyya with the intention of starting a restoration project, there were only some ruins left and next to nothing was known about the history of this part of the complex. It was not even indicated in the ground plan prepared by Herz. (*BC* 1889:104, pl. 1). In 1982, Saleh Lamei Mostafa published a description with tentative ground plans of the two levels of the *hānqāh*. His detailed description was based on the foundation deed (*waqfiyya*), which he had discovered.¹⁰¹ In any case, nothing is known about its door(s) and whether it had any. It is highly unlikely that it should have possessed such an exquisitely ornate door, given its hidden location “behind” the *madrassa*-mosque. In general, the Barqūqiyya is characterized by a clear hierarchy in the placement of doors (Mols 2006:119).

Enter Faraġ

Soon Fehérvári abandoned this idea and developed a new concept. He wrote that the measurements of the door in Kuwait matched perfectly those of the western entrance to Faraġ’s complex; consequently, he thought that the Kuwait door had originally belonged to this monument. However, some serious questions arise in this regard. First of all, the inscription on the door in Kuwait is in harmony with the inscriptions in the Barqūqiyya, but totally alien to the system of inscriptions in the Faraġ complex.¹⁰² It is closely related to, albeit not identical with, the inscription on the main entrance door of the Barqūqiyya. The door in Kuwait is practically identical to the main entrance door of the Barqūqiyya as far as general shape and ornaments are concerned. This means that the door in Kuwait was made with the intention that it should look like the main entrance door of the Barqūqiyya in the Coppersmiths’ Bazaar as much as possible. Yet it cannot have been made with the intention to produce a door which pretended to be *the* original door of the Barqūqiyya because its measurements were different. It would have been even more difficult for anyone to claim to have on sale *the* original main entrance door of the Barqūqiyya while the original door was there *in situ* and accessible for anyone to check the truth of this

¹⁰¹ Mostafa 1982:62–63, 71–73, Tafel 9–10. The relevant parts of the *waqfiyya* were edited and translated by Felicitas Jaritz.

¹⁰² Cf. Mostafa 1968:130–140.

claim. Thus there can be no doubt that the artisan wanted to make an exquisite modern Mamluk revival objet d'art for the art market. What actually happened was that Elias Hatoun sold it to the founder of the Hispanic Society of America, Archer Milton Huntington, as *an* original door of the Barqūqiyya, apparently without specifying which door it was. In view of the odd situation it is no wonder that Huntington had doubts concerning the door's authenticity.¹⁰³

His identification of the door in Kuwait as the main entrance door (western door)¹⁰⁴ to Farağ's complex is something that Fehérvári also claims to support with historical sources. He maintains that it was at the same time in 788/1386 that the Sultan issued orders to erect his *madrasa*-mausoleum in the Coppersmiths' Bazaar and his mausoleum in the Northern Cemetery, and "simultaneously he must have also ordered the two main portal doors". It was on this occasion that he set aside 80,000 dinars for the erection of his new mausoleum in the Northern Cemetery. His sons, after their father's death, fulfilled his wish.¹⁰⁵ Fehérvári's theory was that the door now in Kuwait had been prepared for Farağ's complex, i.e. Barqūq's mausoleum "finished" by Farağ, and that it had been there until the Ottoman conquest in 1517.¹⁰⁶ Subsequently, the building became dilapidated and partially ruinous. At one point, somebody – perhaps a metalworker or a member of his family – appropriated the door, along with the smaller ones from the big central courtyard (*ṣaḥn*) of the Barqūqiyya. He then restored it at the same time that he substantially reworked and redecorated the smaller doors and presented it as his own work.¹⁰⁷ Fehérvári writes that before Herz's involvement with Farağ's mausoleum "[i]t had no door either. Herz ... found no door there".¹⁰⁸ Therefore Herz installed a simple wooden door in 1898.¹⁰⁹ Let us look closely at this hypothesis and see whether this door could have been made for Farağ's complex in the Northern Cemetery, as Fehérvári claimed.

A Cherkess by birth, Sultan Barqūq (738–801/1336–1399) ruled in two phases: 784–791/1382–1389 and 792–801/1390–1399. It is to be assumed that when he began the building of the Barqūqiyya in 786/1384, at the age of forty-eight, he must have thought that he would be buried there, since the complex also included a "splendid, lofty mausoleum especially prepared for the burial of the dead (*qubba ḡalīla šāmiḡa qad u'iddat li-dafn al-amwāt*)". People normally built mausolea for

¹⁰³ See n. 50 and the corresponding paragraph above.

¹⁰⁴ This is the modern main entrance door to Farağ's complex located at the southwest corner. See Mostafa 1968:53, (no. 312), 90–91 (no. 498).

¹⁰⁵ Fehérvári 2012:93. Cf. also id. 1998.

¹⁰⁶ In actual fact, Barqūq's mausoleum was not merely "finished" by Farağ, but it was Farağ who erected it from beginning to end.

¹⁰⁷ E-mail message to the present author dated 27 November 2006. Original in Hungarian. Cf. Fehérvári 2012:32.

¹⁰⁸ *Comité Bulletin* 15 (1898) 46.

¹⁰⁹ Fehérvári 2012:94.

themselves, and – perhaps – for some family members. It sometimes happened that, for some special reason, the builder was buried elsewhere. It also happened that the builder died and his body could not be found, e.g. if he disappeared in battle (Sultan al-Ġūrī) or was assassinated at some unknown place (Sultan Ḥasan).

According to the description in the foundation deed (*waqfiyya*) prepared in 788/1386, i.e. at the time the complex was constructed, there was a marble cenotaph in the middle of the mausoleum with two descents to the burial vault on its eastern side covered with slabs of local marble (*bi-wasaʿ al-qubba al-madkūra ʿarṭh ruḥām bi-manzilayni fi l-ḥadd al-šarqī bi-ṭawābiq ruḥām baladī*). There can be no doubt that this structure – the burial vault and the corresponding cenotaph – was meant to serve the Sultan himself, in addition to other members of his family. Ultimately, various family members, including a son of Sultan Ğaqmaq, were buried in the mausoleum, although Sultan Barqūq was not. The bodies of Barqūq’s father and five children were transferred to this mausoleum soon after its completion.¹¹⁰ The *madrasa*-mosque with its mausoleum was finished and inaugurated two years later, in 788/1386. This all happened during the Sultan’s first period in power, before his ousting and his subsequent return to power eight months and nine days later.¹¹¹

The Sultan died thirteen years after the erection of the *madrasa*-mausoleum. In Muḥarram 801 (13 September–12 October 1398), he fell ill: severe diarrhoea (*ishāl mufriṭ*) confined him to bed for more than twenty days. Then, on Tuesday, 5 Šawwāl 801 (10 June 1399), he fell ill again. At first, nothing serious was suspected, but his condition deteriorated so rapidly that on Saturday rumours of his death began to circulate. On the following Wednesday, he was attacked by erysipelas followed by heavy hiccupping.¹¹² After indisposition lasting ten days in all, he died after midnight on Friday, 15 Šawwāl 801 (20 June 1399). It was only on the day before his death that he gave orders regarding his burial, drawing up a last will and testament in which, among other stipulations, he donated 80,000 dinars for the construction of a tomb, ordering that he be laid to rest at the feet of certain poor devotees of the Lord (sheikhs, *faqīrs*) outside *Bāb al-Naṣr*. According to Maqrīzī’s description, this site seems at the time to have had a reputation as a pious and quite fashionable cemetery. In Islam in general and in Cairo in particular it was not uncommon that people chose to be buried in the vicinity of a celebrated saint in order to enjoy his *baraka* (blessing). For instance, in the year 1909–1910 the Ottoman authorities counted

¹¹⁰ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk VIII* (ḡuz’ III / *qism* 2) 546 (*sanat* 788). Id., *Mawā’iz IV/2*, 682. Ibn Taġrī Birdī, *Manḥal III*, 288. Berchem, *Matériaux* 293–295 (esp. p. 294 [n. 7]), 304 (n. 3), 328–331.

¹¹¹ Maqrīzī, *Mawā’iz III*, 780, line 5–781, line 18; IV/2, 680, lines 10–11 (from the draft; missing from the final copy and the corresponding Būlāq edition). Mostafa 1982:117, 121 (lines 30–31), 141 (lines 30–31). On the structure of Muslim tombs, see Lane 2003:522–524.

¹¹² The ruler’s disease is mentioned by Ibn Iyās (see below). It is not clear on what authority Gaston Wiet (1937:520) speaks of *des suites d’une crise d’épilepsie*.

6,730 corpses which were transported from Iran to Iraq in order to be buried close to the Shiite shrines of the martyrs ‘Alī and al-Ḥusayn in Nağaf and Karbalā (Heimsoth 2014:115). In Europe, too, people wanted to be buried close to a renowned saint, thus partaking of his sainthood and acquiring his blessing and intercession, as in the case of St. Martin’s Basilica at Tours in France, for instance.¹¹³ And, indeed, an area of 10,000 cubits was fenced off. Barqūq was buried on the spot and a *ḥānqāh* was erected later on (803–813/1400–1410) by his son, Farağ, who was about ten years of age when he succeeded his father. Barqūq died in 801/1399, while Farağ started the building work in 803/1400.¹¹⁴ This must have been quite a new idea, because during his lifetime the Sultan took no steps in this direction: he already had a mausoleum in the Barqūqiyya. The historian Ibn Tağrī Birdī points out that the Sultan’s grave was “in the middle of the road (*‘alā qāri’at al-tarīq*)”, i.e. in the open space, not inside a building, because no wall existed at the time of the Sultan’s death, adding that tents were erected *beside* the grave, i.e. for mourning family members at his burial (*wa-ḍuribat al-ḥiyām ‘alā qabrihi*).¹¹⁵ This means that nothing had yet been done regarding construction of a mausoleum; nevertheless, the Sultan was buried on the spot chosen by him for this purpose shortly before he died.¹¹⁶ Under these circumstances, we can state categorically that *the Sultan did not have a door made for this mausoleum thirteen years earlier, i.e. in 788/1386*.¹¹⁷

Fehérvári adduces some of the sources mentioned above as general references, without indicating precise places in the works he is referring to in a given case. His treatment of these sources can be described as extremely liberal: his statements, allegedly based on them, are often simply false. My impression is that he did not

¹¹³ Goldziher 1881:195–206. Berchem, *Matériaux* 304. Behrens-Abouseif 1997:88. Betthausen 2004:130–131.

¹¹⁴ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk VIII (ğuz’ III / qism 2)* 936–937 (*sanat* 801). Id., *Mawā’iz* IV/2, 920, line 15–921, line 8. Ibn Tağrī Birdī, *Nuğūm* XII, 91, 101–105, esp. 103–104. Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’* I/2, 511, 524–525. Cf. Meinecke 1992: II, 295 (26A/1). Creswell 1919:119.

¹¹⁵ Since *ḥiyām* is a plural form meaning “tents”, Popper’s interpretation of the text seems preferable to that offered by Saleh Lamei Mostafa, who thinks that “a tent was pitched *above* the sultan’s grave [emphasis added]”, implying some sort of temporary protective edifice. Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Annals* I, 165, 171. Mostafa 1968:5. On the interpretation of *‘alā qāri’at al-tarīq*, see Schregle 1981–1996: II, 450.

¹¹⁶ The founding document (*waqfiyya/huğğā*) of the Farağ complex is not extant, or rather it has not been found yet. Mostafa 1968:10.

¹¹⁷ It must be admitted, though, that even among Barqūq’s contemporaries some attributed the erection of the mausoleum in the Northern Cemetery to Barqūq. Ibn Tağrī Birdī points out that this is an error. Some late sources do the same. These are secondary, tertiary, etc. sources, which use general formulations, which possess no weight when compared to the well-informed detailed chronicles referred to above. In any case, Fehérvári does not seem to have been familiar with these sources. Berchem, *Matériaux* 329 (n. 6), 330 (n. 3). Mubārak 2004–2007: I, 113; VI, 7.

consult them himself but relied on oral transmission in this respect, memorizing only those pieces of information that served his preconceptions. For instance, concerning the new mausoleum in the Northern Cemetery, he maintains that “work started on it in Barqūq’s life time” and that “Barqūq set aside 80,000 dinars for this building”, as we have seen, and uses this statement in his arguments (Fehérvári 2012:25). However, Fehérvári fails to mention – and to realize – that this happened *on the day before the Sultan’s death*, when he was already dying, and not thirteen years earlier, as Fehérvári seems to believe. Similarly, it was only after the Sultan’s death that work started on the mausoleum. Fehérvári (2012:93) also purports to rely on historical sources in claiming that it was *at the same time* that the Sultan issued orders to erect his *madrassa*-mausoleum in the Copper Smiths’ Bazaar *and* his new mausoleum in the Northern Cemetery, and “simultaneously he must have also ordered the two main portal doors”, as we have seen already. It is odd to see that Doris Behrens-Abouseif did in fact draw his attention to the fact that Barqūq had ordered the erection of the mausoleum in the Northern Cemetery on the day before his death but Fehérvári either forgot it or simply disregarded it because it did not fit into his theory.¹¹⁸ In fact, no source says what he claims. Nor is it plausible to assume that anyone would contemplate building *two* completely different mausolea for himself, one at once and another decades later (!), and order two identical doors for both, but otherwise undertake nothing for the second monument. In one place, Fehérvári admits that the erection of the new mausoleum began only after the Sultan’s death, and tries to solve the ensuing inconsistencies and chronological difficulties affecting his own theory by claiming that Maqrīzī’s statement, according to which the *madrassa*-mausoleum was *completed* in 788/1386, is based on a misunderstanding, because it cannot mean the *completion* of the mosque but must mean the date when the Sultan issued his orders to erect these two monuments, that is, it can only mean the *beginning* of the building activity. This is, incidentally, the date expressly indicated on all three of our doors¹¹⁹ as the date of *completion*: wa-kāna l-*farāğ*..., etc. Fehérvári’s line of argument runs contrary to all known data (Fehérvári 2012:96). His totally absurd

¹¹⁸ Fehérvári’s email message to Iman R. Abdalfattah dated 3 February 2008. In actual fact, Fehérvári wanted to check this piece of information in the SOAS Library but when he got there he found that the “relevant copies” of Maqrīzī were on loan. Maqrīzī treats this question *in extenso* in *Sulūk*; there is only a brief reference to it in *Ḥiṭaṭ*. Iman R. Abdalfattah sent him a photocopy of the relevant page in *Ḥiṭaṭ* (*Mawā’iz* IV/2, 920), where we read about the cemetery below the Citadel and that “when the Sultan fell ill, he decreed in his will that he should be buried at the feet of those holy men of God and that a mausoleum (*turba*) should be erected above his grave (*qabr*) ...”. And so it happened. – It seems that Fehérvári omitted to follow up this question, although it was of crucial importance for him. (In this place there is no difference between Ayman Fu’ād Sayyid’s two editions; of course, Iman R. Abdalfattah made the photocopy from the first edition at that time.)

¹¹⁹ The *in situ* door in the Barqūqiyya, the door described by Berchem and the door in Kuwait.

train of reasoning is rendered even more difficult to follow by his habit of mixing up the Latin expressions *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* in his argumentation.

In one of his efforts to prove that the door in Kuwait is original, Fehérvári uses a startling argument to demonstrate that in the nineteenth century there was “another original Barqūq” door (looking exactly like the main door *in situ* in the Barqūqiyya) in Cairo, to which some people, among them Elias Hatoun, had access. Namely, he is convinced that the Mamluk revival replicas can only have been made by artisans who had *an* original door in front of them. Fehérvári writes: “The next important question is how could the craftsmen in Elias Hatoun workshop [*sic*] copy so closely and carefully Barqūq’s door? *There was no photography at that time, certainly not the technique that we have today.* Did they draw the main portal of the Mosque and use this drawing for their work? That seems very unlikely. Did they have the lithograph of the door to which reference has already been made above. [*sic*] Perhaps, but most likely they had an original one in front of them. A second door which was not coming from the Mosque, but from somewhere else, from a different building of Sultan Barqūq.” (Fehérvári 2012:50–51, 95).¹²⁰ As a matter of fact, photography was highly developed at that time. As one of the main destinations of emerging worldwide tourism, Egypt was very popular with professional photographers, who settled and were active in Egypt, selling their photographs to the continuously growing number of tourists visiting the Cradle of Civilisation. Contemporary photographs were of excellent quality – they were very sharp! – and were produced in formidable quantities because demand was high. (They are offered in great numbers on eBay now.) The *Comité* also used photographs for documentation, employing professional firms to produce them. Some of these excellent photographs were regularly published in the *Comité* Bulletins. The photographic archives of the *Comité*, which are currently preserved by the State Ministry of Antiquities, are a rich treasure house for conservators and historians of art alike.¹²¹ Thus it is easy to realize that acquiring an excellent photograph of the main entrance door of the Barqūqiyya presented no problem whatsoever at that time. Of course, in Fehérvári’s train of reasoning the door in Kuwait is the second original door in question.

At first sight, the date on the door in Kuwait intends to suggest that it was made for the Barqūqiyya. Of course, it is possible in theory that the door was later removed to Farağ’s complex. Such cases are not unknown. The most famous example is the splendid entrance door of Sultan Ḥasan, which was later removed to al-Mu’ayyad

¹²⁰ Emphasis added. – I.O. Fehérvári is referring here to the lithograph in Prisse 1877:II, pl. [XCVII]. See Fehérvári 2012:19, n. 4, where the plate number is wrong.

¹²¹ Cf., e.g. *Le Caire dessiné* 2013. Perez 1988. One hears repeatedly of an utterly important joint project hosted by the Supreme Ministry of Antiquities, the French and German Archeological Institutes, to conserve and digitalize the *Comité*’s invaluable photographic collection.

Šayḥ.¹²² However, in this particular case, the original site of the door, the place from where it is now missing, would need to be pinpointed. This has not yet happened, as far as I am aware: this door is not missing from the Barqūqiyya. At the same time it is hard to imagine that such a splendid and expensive door was made to adorn an inner space. Such doors are made to display the builder's wealth and might to as many people as possible: this door must have been made for the main entrance in order to be visible to the whole community. In actual fact, a clear hierarchy in the placement of doors can be perceived in the Barqūqiyya (Mols 2006:119). Indeed, this door wants to imitate the main entrance door of the Barqūqiyya. Yet its size is smaller: *height* 380 cm, *width* (left wing) 114 cm / (right wing) 111 cm, as against *height* 420 cm, *width* 120 cm (each wing!) in the case of the Barqūqiyya.¹²³ (Fehérvári [2012:53] adds that there is an outer frame on the Kuwaiti door measuring 16 cm on the right, 19 cm on the left and 15 cm at the bottom, while at the top it is 2 cm less, i.e. 13 cm.) It follows from the difference in size that the door cannot have been made with the intention that it should appear as the original *in situ* door.

The present writer is convinced that the inscription on the door in Kuwait is modern. Géza Fehérvári maintained that “the inscription was definitely original”.¹²⁴

Bronze or Brass?

Chemical analyses in the future can clarify the question of the doors' material. This is a moot question. It must be admitted that little work of this nature has been done in this special field of Mamluk archaeology.¹²⁵ With respect to the terms “bronze” and “brass”, we have always followed the usage of our sources. Fehérvári wrote repeatedly that the door in Kuwait was made of bronze, adding in 1994 that genuine Mamluk doors were always made of bronze, while nineteenth century Mamluk revival items were made of brass: “By then bronze was neither available, nor were the metalworkers used to working in that material.” (Fehérvári 1994:154). The truth of this statement is open to doubt. Estelle Whelan spoke of bronze *and* brass in the context of the door in Kuwait now. Peter Northover speaks only of brass. Mols mentions “cast brass plaques” in the description of the *in situ* door of the Barqūqiyya, while she describes the knocker now in Copenhagen as “cast and engraved bronze” (Mols 2006:228, 230). Let us adduce here a statement by Peter Northover, an

¹²² On the removal, see Ibn Taḡrī Birdī, *Nuḡūm* XIV, 43–44.

¹²³ For the size of the main entrance door to the Barqūqiyya, see Batanouni 1976:75. Fehérvári 2012:31.

¹²⁴ E-mail message of 28 March 2010.

¹²⁵ “Even today, the exact composition of Mamluk fittings made of the alloys brass and bronze is still unknown, as a scientific analysis of the composition of these base metals has yet to be conducted” (Mols 2006:146).

authority in historical metallurgy: “*Today*, basically bronze is a binary alloy of copper and tin and brass is a binary alloy of copper and zinc. ... [However,] bronze is used in a number of trade names when no tin is present. ... [T]he usage of the terms bronze and brass is quite modern. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries what is now bronze was often referred to as brass, i.e. a yellow copper alloy.”¹²⁶ Indeed, both laymen and experts (e.g., those of the British Museum) have often used the terms “bronze” and “brass” interchangeably.¹²⁷ A metallurgist by profession with great expertise in Islamic archaeology, who is “also aware of the history, as well as the way archaeologists sometimes abuse the terminology”, Peter Northover advises me: “*On the whole the Islamic world did not do bronze* so stick with brass, leaded brass and gunmetal.” The term “gunmetal” is used for alloys of copper, tin and zinc. “Some Islamic casting alloys are probably most properly called leaded gunmetals, while those with higher zinc contents would be leaded brasses. A rough rule of thumb might be that where tin is the dominant alloying element, call it a bronze, for zinc call it a brass, but where they are more equal, call it a gunmetal.”¹²⁸

Some Tentative Conclusions

It must be stressed that the present conclusions are based mainly on philological arguments, which draw on only one part of the relevant data. On the other hand, they are important factors which must be taken into account in any definitive examination of this complex question. The cumulative results of the present analysis are as follows:

1. There is nothing to suggest that the main entrance door of the Barqūqiyya *in situ* is not original and that it was not there in the 1890s and 1900s. There is nothing to suggest, either, that it has ever been removed. It did undergo restoration, but it is the original door. At the same time, the extent of this restoration is not known at present.

2. It is open to doubt whether the door in Kuwait is identical with the door described by van Berchem. No definite answer can be given to this question yet.

3. There is no connection whatsoever between the door in Kuwait and Barqūq’s mausoleum (the complex of Farāğ) in the Northern Cemetery.

¹²⁶ E-mail message of 27 June 2018 to the present author. Emphasis added. – I.O.

¹²⁷ “bronze and brass have at times been used interchangeably in the old documentation...” “The term ‘copper alloy’” is to be preferred according to the “Scope Note” on “Copper Alloy” of the British Museum collection database (https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/term_details.aspx?scopeType=Terms&scopeId=18864). Accessed on 26 June 2018. See also *Bearings* 1921:29. Neuburger 1981:20.

¹²⁸ Peter Northover to the present author in an e-mail message of 27 June 2018. Emphasis added. – I.O.

4. The door in Kuwait cannot have been made with pretension to be the main entrance door of the Barqūqiyya because the original door was *in situ* at the time. Any prospective buyer could check it and compare the two doors. In addition, the two doors are of different size and thus the door in Kuwait does not fit into the opening on the Barqūqiyya. On the other hand, the door in Kuwait resembles, or rather wants to resemble, the Barqūqiyya door as closely as possible. It follows from this that the artisan's intention was to make an exquisite Mamluk revival objet d'art. He clearly did not make a "fake" Barqūqiyya door with pretension to be the original entrance door.

5. The door in Kuwait contains old and new pieces alike. Their relationship (percentage) is not known. Only detailed physical and chemical analyses could determine which parts are old and which parts new. These would be extremely important for the two plates with the inscription. In view of the modern or dialectal features in the date, the plates with the inscription can hardly be old.¹²⁹

6. Since both doors look practically identical, the question arises: Where do the original pieces on the door in Kuwait come from? Perhaps from the original door of the Barqūqiyya, from which they may have been removed when it underwent restoration by the *Comité*, or even earlier perhaps? We shall recall here the idea voiced by Michael Rogers in 1976 that there is a possibility that at one point two doors were made out of one.¹³⁰ Comparative physical and chemical analyses of both doors could provide an answer to this question.

7. Around 1900, a number of (fake) doors of relatively high quality, some of them in Barqūq's name, were produced in Cairo.¹³¹ Why was Barqūq so popular with artisans?¹³²

¹²⁹ In this context it may be interesting to note that throughout his correspondence with Iman R. Abdalfattah Fehérvári strongly advocated the opinion that the door in Kuwait, or most of it, was original, yet in between, on 14 March 2007, he suddenly declared in London: "I am afraid, after seeing the photographs of those inscriptions you have already checked and sent to me, in spite of the chemical analyses of some of the decorative elements, I feel that our door in Kuwait is a REVIVAL DOOR. Still, it's an interesting story and acc. to Prof. Doris Abou-Seif [*sic*], it still should be published." (Emphasis in the original.) It is also worthwhile noting that originally he wanted to add a subtitle to his book: "I suggested to Mr Rajab that there should be a subtitle of the book: Mamluk or Revival? He is not happy about it." Email message of 20 December 2006 to Iman R. Abdalfattah. This is nothing less than a hint to a certain pressure on the part of Mr. Rajab.

¹³⁰ Rogers 1976:313. Cf. the paragraph corresponding to n. 67 above.

¹³¹ Fehérvári knows of *five* revival doors. In the report quoted above, Ḥasan 'Abd al-Wahhāb mentions *two* fake Barqūq doors of excellent quality, although in his case it is not clear whether the doors he mentions are identical with some of the doors we already know or not. See n. 84.

¹³² It is known that the big entrance door of the Barqūqiyya was one of the last exquisite specimens of Mamluk metalworking art before a decline set in in this field. However, this

8. Migeon's door seems to have been a fake; it was never in the Arab Museum.

9. The six doors in the *ṣaḥn* of the Barqūqiyya were not removed and replaced.

10. "A" Barqūq door was on display at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 at Chicago.¹³³ Nothing more is known about it.

Appendix

Some minor remarks concerning Fehérvári's monograph; they are not connected to the *Conclusions* above.

1) *ad p.* 14. Herz's letter of March, 21, 1892, was addressed to the Keeper of Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest.¹³⁴

2) *ad p.* 14. It is true what Fehérvári relates about our encounter with the General Director of the Museum of Decorative (=Applied) Arts in Budapest. However, as I found out later, the file concerning the fate of this plate could not be found in the museum archives, something the General Director did not wish to tell us. This means that it is very well possible that it was lost during World War II but it is just as possible that something else happened to it. The answer we received from the General Director was a *pia fraus*. In actual fact, the file is definitely lost, as Mrs. Dóra Reichart of the Museum Archives informed me on 21 November 2014.

3) *ad p.* 14-15. The collector in question was Nubar Innes. Notwithstanding his Armenian first name, he was not Armenian but British. He owed his first name to his godfather, Nubar Pasha, the famous minister of Armenian extraction. He was the brother of Walter Innes, physician at Qaṣr al-ʿAynī Medical School.¹³⁵

4) *ad p.* 25. "Apparently the Sultan wanted to be buried near the tombs of Sufis." In fact, Maqrīzī explicitly says so. See above.

5) *ad p.* 31. "That is particularly true to the lower right panel, as is clearly visible on Fig. 11 and 12." Fig. 12 shows the lower *left* panel.

6) *ad p.* 33-34. Fig. 26 is not the Migeon door but the door published by Suʿād Māhir in her *Funūn*.

7) *ad p.* 58, 95. The correct translation of "*Yā mufattiḥ al-abwāb / iftaḥ lanā ḥayr al-bāb*" is not "Oh, Opener of Doors / Open for us the blessing of the door" as given by Fehérvári but "Oh, Opener of doors! / Open for us the best door!", i.e. the "present" door. It is true that the structure *ḥayr al-bāb* is problematic: both in

circumstance does not explain the great popularity of Barqūq's doors towards the end of the nineteenth century and later. Cf. Allan 1984.

¹³³ We have two sources on this door. The first says it was expressly made for the Chicago fair, while the second claims it was made in the fourteenth century. See above the beginning of the present article.

¹³⁴ See Ormos 2009:519.

¹³⁵ Ormos 2009:519-520. Bahgat 1919:4-5. Cachia 1999:41.

classical Arabic and in the colloquial dialect of Cairo it is normally *ḥayr bāb* or *ḥayr al-abwāb*. The structure *ḥayr bāb* is syntactically determinate while it lacks the definite article. Some speakers feel uneasy with such a construction and supply it with the definite article preceding the adjective (!) as a sort of hypercorrection (Spitta 1880:271–272). It is plausible to assume that somebody removed the article from the adjective and affixed it to the noun, once again as a sort of hypercorrection.¹³⁶ This phrase (an “invocation” [*du‘ā*] according to Ġamāl al-Ġīṭānī) appears on many doors in Egypt, both in mosques and elsewhere (e.g. in Qaṣr al-Ġawhara in the Cairo Citadel), but it is also attested on a *hajj* banner from the nineteenth century.¹³⁷

8) *ad p. IX. Plate 7.* The large bronze door on the main entrance to Sultan al-Mu‘ayyad was not in the *qibla-īwān* of Sultan Ḥasan originally but served as the main entrance door to that famous mosque.

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¹³⁶ Blau 1966–1967:362. Id. 1970:93–94.

¹³⁷ See, Porter 2013:203–204 (where, however, the reading is not correct, nor can the phrase be attributed to the Quran). Ġamāl al-Ġīṭānī’s statement can be found under <http://www.alraimedia.com/Articles.aspx?id=18109>; last accessed on 27 June 2015.

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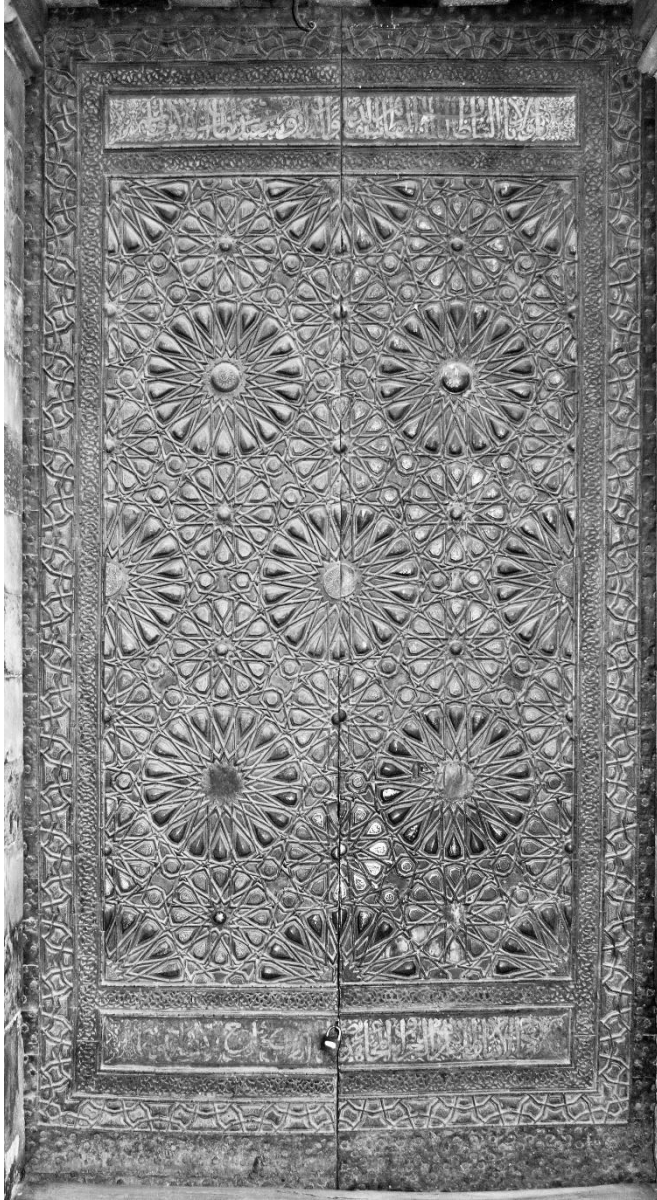


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

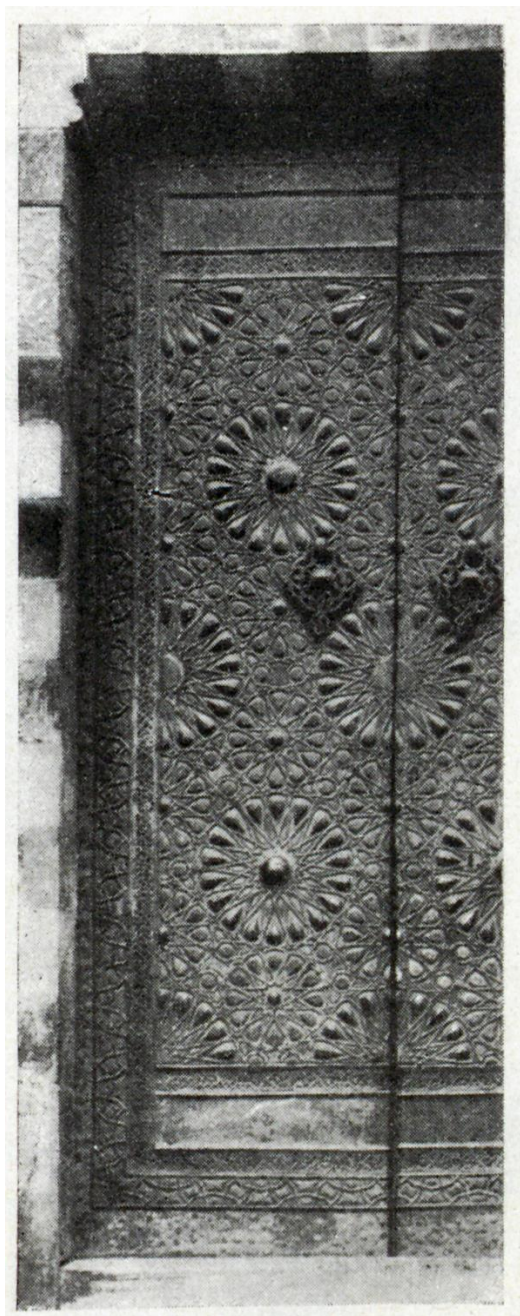


Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

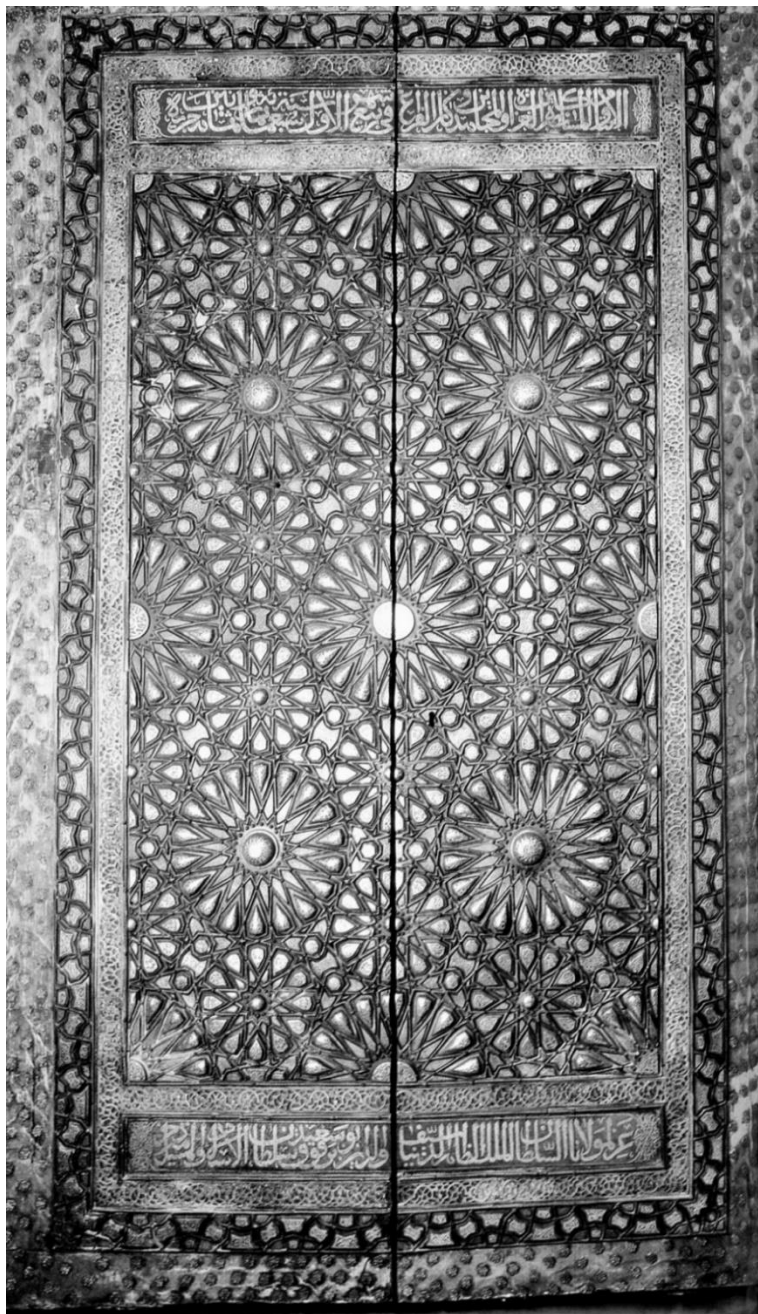


Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13