

## Cairene Cemeteries as Public Loci in Mamluk Egypt

### INTRODUCTION

After the conquest of Egypt, the Arab Muslims located their graveyards in the area beneath the Muqaṭṭam Mountain, stretching outward from the southeast side of their new capital, al-Fuṣṭāṭ. This older and larger cemetery area became known as al-Qarāfah al-Kubrā (the Greater Qarāfah). Subsequently, the cemetery area developed around several famous mausolea, including the mausoleum of Imām al-Shāfi‘ī, extended to the Muqaṭṭam as well, and came to be called al-Qarāfah al-Ṣuḡhrā (the Lesser Qarāfah). Also, outside the Naṣr Gate, there stretched another cemetery area, eventually swallowed by the so-called al-Ṣaḥrā’ that prospered most during the Mamluk period, and had stronger ties with the Mamluk ruling elites. There were several other smaller graveyards, and in this article, I include all cemetery areas in the region surrounding Cairo/Fuṣṭāṭ in the term “Cairene cemeteries,” although al-Qarāfah al-Kubrā preceded the construction of Cairo.

These cemetery areas were primarily sanctuaries where people came to console the souls of the dead, or to seek help for worldly difficulties and pray for entrance into heaven through the fulfillment (*ijābah*) of the *du‘ā’* (supplicatory prayer). Likewise, crowds including women and children went there on excursions, leading to the depiction of these areas by the historian al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) as “the greatest meeting place of the Egyptian people, and their most popular pleasure resort.”<sup>1</sup>

Literature detailing these cemetery areas and the practice of visitation (*ziyārah/ziyārāt*) among Egyptian Muslim society were prominent in the Mamluk era and continued even through the nineteenth century. Yet, in vicissitude of time, these works tended to focus on the *ahl al-bayt* (the Prophet Muḥammad’s holy family), arranging information about them into chapters. Al-Qal‘āwī (d. 1815), al-Shablanjī (d. 1883), and al-Mushkī (published in 1919), for instance, composed treatises of this sort, and al-Nabhānī’s (d. 1931–32) compilation of *karāmāt* (miracles and virtues) achieved by “saints” should be recalled in this regard.<sup>2</sup> Ḥasan Qāsim,

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<sup>1</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Mawā‘iẓ wa-al-I’tibār bi-Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* (Būlāq, 1270 A.H.), 2:444; Tetsuya Ohtoshi, “The Manners, Customs, and Mentality of Pilgrims to the Egyptian City of the Dead: 1100–1500 A.D.,” *Orient* 29 (1993): 19.

<sup>2</sup>Al-Qal‘āwī, “Mashāhid al-Ṣafā fī al-Madfunīn bi-Miṣr min Āl al-Bayt al-Muṣṭafā,” *Dār al-Kutub MS 2136 Tārīkh*; al-Shablanjī, *Nūr al-Aḥsār fī Manāqib Āl Bayt al-Nabī al-Mukhtār* (Cairo,



in addition, listed famous mausolea in 1936.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, scholarly investigations in the Western academy were initiated by A. F. Mehren in the latter half of the nineteenth century,<sup>4</sup> followed by R. Guest and L. Massignon, primarily focusing on topography.<sup>5</sup> Great breakthroughs were made by Yūsuf Rāghib, who, after completing an inventory of *ziyārah* guidebooks of the cemeteries, published many substantial studies on this subject.<sup>6</sup> Since the 1980s, Christopher Taylor and the present author have engaged this subject from social-historical or historical-anthropological perspectives, detailing customs and the social background and trying to reconstruct the social milieu.<sup>7</sup> More recently, new studies seem to be flourishing in this field.

This article is an attempt to reconsider the historical characteristics and illuminate actual conditions of these cemetery areas, where any Muslim could participate in various activities, each in his or her own way, irrespective of their position in the social strata, place of origin, gender, or age.<sup>8</sup> Particularly, primary consideration is focused on the various ways in which people participated, based on their social positions or strata, and the supervision of that area by the Mamluk government.

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1948); al-Mushkī, *Al-‘Adl al-Shahīd fī Taḥqīq al-Mashāhid* (Cairo, n.d.); al-Nabhānī, *Jāmi‘ Karāmāt al-Awliyā’* (Cairo, 1984). For more detail, see Tetsuya Ohtoshi, “A Note on the Disregarded Ottoman Cairene *Ziyāra* Book,” *Mediterranean World* 15 (1998): 75–85.

<sup>3</sup>Hasan Qāsim, *Al-Mazārāt al-Miṣrīyah* (Cairo, 1936). Also Aḥmad Taymūr, *Qabr al-Imām al-Suyūfī: wa-Taḥqīq Mawḍi‘ih* (Cairo, 1927) should be added here.

<sup>4</sup>A. F. Mehren, *Cāhirah og Kerāfat, historiske Studier under et Ophold i Ægypten 1867-68* (Copenhagen, 1869).

<sup>5</sup>R. Guest, “Cairene Topography: El Qarafa according to Ibn Ez Zaiyat,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1925): 57–61; L. Massignon, “La cité des morts au Caire (Qarāfa-Darb al-Aḥmar),” *Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale* 57 (1958): 25–79.

<sup>6</sup>Yūsuf Rāghib, “Essai d’inventaire chronologique des guides à l’usage des pèlerins du Caire,” *Revue des études islamiques* 16 (1973): 259–80; idem, “Sur deux monuments funéraires du cimetière d’al-Qarāfa al-Kubrā au Caire,” *Annales islamologiques* 12 (1974): 67–84; idem, “Sur un groupe de mausolés du cimetière du Caire,” *REI* 40 (1972): 189–95; etc.

<sup>7</sup>Christopher Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous* (Leiden, 1998); Tetsuya Ohtoshi, “Visits to the Holy Tombs in the Egyptian City of the Dead” (in Japanese), *Shigaku Zashshi* (Historical review) 102, no. 10 (1993): 1–49; idem, “The Manners, Customs, and Mentality”; idem, “The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century: Phases of Its Development and Social Function” (in Japanese), *Toyo Gakuho* 75, no. 3/4 (1994): 161–202; idem, “The Egyptian City of the Dead and Visits to Holy Graves: A Case Study from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Centuries” (in Japanese), Ph.D. diss., The University of Tokyo, 1994; idem, “Muslims and Copts as Reflected in the *Ziyāra* Books and *Qarāfas*,” in *Islam in the Middle Eastern Studies: Muslims and Minorities* (Osaka, 2003), 27–51; etc.

<sup>8</sup>The main historical sources of this article have already been referred to orally at the Annual Meeting of the Historical Society of Japan in 1991, also partly published in Japanese as “The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century.”



As a result, I hope to elucidate the various roles that these cemeteries played in the Cairo/Fuṣṭāṭ region, and how the public loci in Islamic Egypt functioned for members of Egyptian society, by reconsidering the relationships between cemetery areas and the people of various strata of society in Cairo, as well as the interactions among those people.<sup>9</sup>

#### CEMETERIES AS RESIDENTIAL AND LEISURE PLACES

Cairene cemeteries, including the two Qarāfahs and al-Ṣaḥrā', were primarily huge areas where the dead of Cairo and al-Fuṣṭāṭ, from sultans to paupers, were entombed. These were graveyards for all Muslims, who probably requisitioned them as their burial land from Coptic Egyptians after the conquest. Copts were allocated a spot near the Ḥabash Lake as their cemetery, although the higher stratum of Copts, such as the pope or some bishops, were buried in churches like al-Mu'allaqah of Old Cairo, or, in some cases, the pope's body was relocated to the monastery of Abū Maqār in Wādī Naṭrūn.<sup>10</sup> The main cemeteries for Jews and Samaritans may have stood next to the Coptic ones beside the Ḥabash Lake, which the 56th Coptic Pope Khā'il III (880–907) sold to them. Perhaps this measure was taken due to the construction of the *maydān* (square) in a new capital, al-Qaṭā'i', by Ibn Ṭūlūn. Other *dhimmi*s interred their dead within churches, such as the Melikites, who also buried their dead in the Quṣayr Monastery on the Muqaṭṭam, the Armenians, and the Nestorians.<sup>11</sup> Thus, Muslim cemeteries were adjacent to *dhimmi* graveyards, although from a shari'ah point of view, they should have been kept separate by great distances.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup>The aim of this article does not lie in social class or stratum analysis; the sectioning of each chapter by headings such as the common people, ulama, or ruling elites, is employed only for arrangement and facilitation of the arguments herein, not for rigid classification of social strata. Through such indices, this article intends to illuminate various aspects of Cairene cemeteries.

<sup>10</sup>Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Armanī (attributed; the true author was Abū al-Makārim), *Tārīkh al-Shaykh Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Armanī* (London, 1969), 54–57; Ibn al-Muqaffa' (attributed), *Kitāb Siyar al-Ābā' al-Baṭārikah* (Cairo, 1948–), 2:3:171, 207, 211, 220, 232, 3:1:7; Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, *Al-Nahj al-Sadīd wa-al-Durr al-Farīd*, *Patrologia Orientalis* 20 (1928): 288, 450, 586; al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:460; Tetsuya Ohtoshi, "Visits and Pilgrimages of Copts in Islamic Egypt" (in Japanese), *Rekishigaku Kenkyū* 755 (2001): 178–87; idem, "Conception of 'Egypt' in the Pre-Modern Period: Preliminary Essay," *Mediterranean World* 16 (2001): 15–33; idem, "Visits, Holy Tombs and Relics in the Medieval Egyptian Muslim Society" (in Japanese), in *Pilgrimage and Popular Faith*, History of the Mediterranean World 4 (Tokyo, 1999), 224–61.

<sup>11</sup>Al-Kindī, *Kitāb al-Wulāh wa-al-Quḍāh* (London, 1912), 215; Ibn Duqmāq, *Al-Intiṣār li-Wāsiṭat 'Iqd al-Amṣār* (Beirut, n.d.), 4:121; Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Armanī (attributed), *Tārīkh*, 55–57; Ohtoshi, "Visits and Pilgrimages of Copts in Islamic Egypt," 181.

<sup>12</sup>Although not written in the Mamluk period, see al-Damanhūrī (d. 1192/1778), *Iqāmat al-Hujjah al-Bāhirah 'alā Hadm Kanā' is Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Berkeley, 1975), 63 (text).



At the same time, since the Cairene cemetery areas were located on the periphery of the Cairo/Fuṣṭāṭ region, they were vulnerable to easy plunder by raiding outsiders. The invasion of the areas of al-Qarāfah or by the Qarmatians and Fatimid Maghribians, and later by the Ottomans, may be recalled in this regard.<sup>13</sup>

People from all across the social stratum, regardless of gender or age, visited the tombs of their acquaintances or "saints"; these activities were termed *ziyārah*.<sup>14</sup> Also, travelers from outside of Egypt came to visit the cemeteries, drawn by such sites as the mausoleum of Imām al-Shāfi'ī.<sup>15</sup> Many of them stopped on their Meccan pilgrimages. While visiting famous mausolea, visitors would often form groups, each led by a shaykh of *al-ziyārah*, an authority and guide, making a circuit of the holy mausolea following their own routes. In 845/1442, for instance, eleven groups went on tours of the two-Qarāfahs simultaneously. The shaykhs of *al-ziyārah*, who might be considered tour leaders, wrote guidebooks for tomb visitation, termed "*kutub al-ziyārah*" (books of visit) as well. These treatises, which are utilized in this article, detailed the customs of visitation, and cited abundant anecdotes about the late saints.<sup>16</sup> The *ziyārah* was made not only by visiting groups (sing. *ṭā'ifah*), but also by individuals or groups with specific motives. For instance, at the tomb of al-Shāṭibī in al-Qarāfah al-Ṣuḡhrā, verses of the deceased and the Quran were recited by shaykhs and their pupils on the first Tuesday of each month.<sup>17</sup>

The sanctity of the Qarāfah cemeteries was assumed to be strengthened by their location beneath the holy Muqaṭṭam Mountain. The word al-Qarāfah is employed interchangeably with *safḥ al-Muqaṭṭam* (the foot of al-Muqaṭṭam Mountain) in historical sources. The Muqaṭṭam itself attracted the reverence of

<sup>13</sup>Ibn Iyās, *Badā' i' al-Zuhūr* (Cairo, 1982–84), 5:154; Ohtoshi, "The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century," 171.

<sup>14</sup>The term "saint" in this article is employed to denote an analytical concept, which is applied to any person who won veneration from others, including those who were called *walī/awliyā'*, *ṣāliḥ/ṣāliḥūn*, etc. Concerning various terminological problems on "saints," see Tetsuya Ohtoshi, "'Saints' and 'the Cult of the Saints'" (in Japanese), in *The Handbook of Islamic Studies* (Tokyo, 1995), 240–48.

<sup>15</sup>Before the Mamluk period, in the middle of the twelfth century, al-Shaykh Ibn al-Ṣābūnī, who was living in Damascus, asked Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, the Zangid ruler, for permission to visit Imām al-Shāfi'ī in al-Qarāfah, and his hope was realized. See Abū Shāmah, *Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn* (Cairo, 1956–62), 2:68.

<sup>16</sup>For more detail on the manners and customs which prevailed in Egyptian cemeteries and their visits, and also on the *shaykh al-ziyārah* and *kutub al-ziyārah*, see Ohtoshi, "The Manners, Customs, and Mentality"; idem, "The Egyptian City of the Dead and Visits to Holy Graves"; and Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*.

<sup>17</sup>Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Qaṣṭallānī, "Al-Faṭḥ al-Mawāhibī fī Tarjamat al-Imām al-Shāṭibī," Dār al-Kutub MS 1766 Tārīkh Taymūr, fols. 90–93.



Egyptians of various religions—Copts cherished their own legendary memory of moving the Muqattam Mountain. A person entombed in this area may have been believed to have escaped Judgment. Muslim literature often depicted al-Muqattam through personification, and every important historical figure was said to have had a relationship with it. Later, the *ziyārah* tract of al-Shu‘aybī (seventeenth century) even illustrated its cosmological position by ranking it with Mount Arafat, the Ka‘bah, and Jerusalem.<sup>18</sup> Al-Muqattam was therefore described as “*al-muqaddas*” (holy) by both Muslim and Coptic literature.<sup>19</sup>

As a result, a *du‘ā’* (supplicatory prayer) performed there was thought more likely to be fulfilled. The fulfillment (*ijābah*) of individual *du‘ā’* constituted a crucial concern of visitors to graveyards, and its content tended to concentrate on worldly affairs or entering heaven.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, mass prayers conducted by rulers were often held there, mainly in the back enclosure of Sultan Barqūq’s religious complex in al-Ṣaḥrā’, seeking the abatement of the plague or the rising of the Nile. People, including Copts and Jews, were urged to go there to pray, and huge amounts of bread, meat, and other items were distributed on those occasions.

After the death of a relative, the bereaved family would stay for long periods at the graveyard to comfort the soul of the deceased.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, visitors from in and out of Cairo/Fuṣṭāṭ came to visit these cemetery areas. As time went on the infrastructure in al-Qarāfah was improved, with numerous walled tomb structures enabling people to live there, and it consequently became inhabited by the common people.

As early as the Tulunid period, histories already suggest the presence of inhabitants, particularly those who enjoyed the benefits of an aqueduct from the Ḥabash Lake to al-Ma‘āfir (al-Qarāfah al-Kubrā), constructed by Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 270/884).<sup>22</sup> In the Ikhshidid period (935–69), the situation seems to have remained

<sup>18</sup>Al-Shu‘aybī, “Kitāb Yashtamil ‘alā Dhikr Man Dufina bi-Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah min al-Muḥaddithīn wa-al-Awliyā’ wa-al-Rijāl wa-al-Nisā’,” Maktabat al-Azhar MS Tārīkh 5105819, fols. 92a–b; Ohtoshi, “A Note on the Disregarded Ottoman Cairene *Ziyāra* Book,” 81.

<sup>19</sup>Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Armanī (attributed), *Tārīkh*, 62; al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:454; al-Kindī, *Kitāb al-Wulāh wa-al-Quḍāh*, 13; Ohtoshi, “Conception of ‘Egypt’ in the Pre-Modern Period: Preliminary Essay,” 22; idem, “Muslims and Copts as Reflected in the *Ziyāra* Books and *Qarāfas*,” 41; cf. Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Al-Kawākib al-Sayyārah fī Tartīb al-Ziyārah fī al-Qarāfatayn al-Kubrā wa-al-Ṣuḥrā* (Cairo, 1325 A.H.), 276.

<sup>20</sup>For a detailed analysis of the content of the *du‘ā’* and the logic of its rewards, see Ohtoshi, “The Manners, Customs, and Mentality,” 30–39.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 23; Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal* (Cairo, 1981), 1:251–53.

<sup>22</sup>Al-Balawī, *Sīrat Aḥmad Ibn Ṭūlūn* (Cairo, n.d.), 345, 350, 353; Ibn ‘Uthmān, “Murshid al-Zuwwār ilā Qubūr al-Abrār,” Dār al-Kutub MS 5139 Tārīkh, fols. 162b, 91a–b; al-Sakhāwī, *Tuḥfat al-Aḥbāb wa-Bughyat al-Ṭullāb fī al-Khīṭaṭ wa-al-Mazārāt wa-al-Tarājim wa-al-Biqā’ al-Mubārakāt* (Cairo, 1937), 180; Ibn Duqmāq, *Al-Intiṣār*, 4:57–58.



the same.<sup>23</sup> From the Arab conquest to the Fatimid period, the development of the al-Qarāfah al-Kubrā area, first as a suburb of al-Fuṣṭāṭ and then as a graveyard area, is evidenced by archeological research as well.<sup>24</sup> When they entered Egypt, the Fatimids were reported to have made al-Qarāfah al-Kubrā a residential area, and they built mosques, large pavilions, monuments, and cisterns, and so many moved there that it eventually became congested.<sup>25</sup> There were, however, also struggles between the Qarāfah resident Egyptians and al-Maghāribah, who came with the Fatimids. Notably, in 363/973, the Maghāribah invaded the Qarāfah district, evicting Egyptians, and plundered or occupied it.<sup>26</sup> In those days, the natives of al-Qarāfah may have been known as al-Qarāfīyah, who went so far as to send robes of honor to a swindler named Shurūṭ, possibly a converted Copt, when the Banū Qurrah of the Arab Bedouins supported him as their caliph.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, the Fatimids later distributed to the Qarāfah residents a great deal of meat and sweets through the mosque, and built a free mill complete with working beasts and fodder.<sup>28</sup> Sufis were reported to seclude themselves in the Muqattam, though the reliability of this passage in the text is uncertain.<sup>29</sup> Although it suffered disasters in al-Mustaṣṣir's reign (427–87/1036–94), and in 564/1168, the area revived in the Ayyubid period, with many new buildings, such as Ribāṭ Fakhr al-Dīn and the *muṣallā* (oratory) of Ibn al-Arsūfī. Most famous of all was the rebuilding of the mausoleum of Imām al-Shāfi'ī in al-Qarāfah al-Ṣuḡhrā with an aqueduct built by Sultan al-Kāmil.<sup>30</sup> The custom of *ziyārah* seems to have been established in this period, as indicated by the appearance of *ziyārah* tracts.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Al-Shu'aybī, "Kitāb Yashtamil 'alā Dhikr Man Dufina bi-Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah," fol. 153a.

<sup>24</sup> R. Gayraud, "Istabl 'Antar (Fostat) 1985: Rapport de fouilles," *Annales islamologiques* 22 (1986): 1–26, idem, "Istabl 'Antar (Fostat) 1986," *Annales islamologiques* 23 (1987): 55–71.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Sakhāwī, *Tuḥfah*, 180.

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr* (Cairo, 1981), 164; al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz al-Ḥunafā' bi-Akhbār al-'Immah al-Fāṭimīyīn al-Khulafā'* (Cairo, 1967–73), 1:113, 131, 139, 143, 145, 148, 2:20–21; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab* (Cairo, 1975–), 28:150, 206.

<sup>27</sup> Ibn al-Muqaffa' (attributed), *Kitāb Siyar al-Ābā' al-Baṭārikah*, 2:2:210; al-Musabbihī, *Akhbār Miṣr*, ed. W. Millward (Cairo, 1980), 174.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2:319–20, 445–46; idem, *Al-Muqaffā al-Kabīr* (Beirut, 1991), 6:493; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 28:208.

<sup>29</sup> Ibn al-Nāsikh, "Miṣbāḥ al-Dayājī wa-Ghawth al-Rājī wa-Kahf al-Lājī," Dār al-Kutub MS 87 Buldān Taymūr, fol. 124.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2:320, 444; idem, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk* (Cairo, 1939–73), 1:1:208; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa-Jāmi' al-Ghurar* (Cairo, 1960–72), 7:170.

<sup>31</sup> Ibn 'Aṭyā (d. 612/1216), for instance, lived in al-Qarāfah al-Kubrā, and wrote a *ziyārah* treatise. Al-Mundhirī, *Al-Takmilah li-Wafayāt al-Nuqilah* (Beirut, 1988), 2:346; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'āh fī Ṭabaqāt al-Lughawīyīn wa-al-Nuḥāh* (Beirut, n.d.), 2:107; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh al-Duwal wa-al-Mulūk* (Beirut, 1932–42), 5:183–84.



Geographical works of this period also confirm the existence of inhabitants in the Qarāfahs.<sup>32</sup>

The Bahri Mamluk period is considered one of the high points of the Qarāfahs; they are thought to have been fully developed to accommodate both sojourners and inhabitants. The residents of Cairene cemeteries were too numerous to be mentioned. According to the sources, accommodations for residents and sojourners included mosques, *khānqāhs*, *zāwiyahs*, *ribāṭs*, *madrasahs* (colleges), *mashhads* (mausolea), *turbahs* (mausolea), *maqbarahs* (graveyards), and *qubbahs* (cupolaed mausolea). This situation was made possible through equipment and development of religious institutions in this period based mainly on the *waqf* (religious endowment) system. Other facilities recorded were a *muṣallá* (oratory), *sūqs*, *furns* (baking ovens), public bathhouses, an aqueduct, and wells. Residents and sojourners consisted of people concerned with religious institutions, Sufis, superintendents and employees of the above-mentioned public facilities, persons related to the cemetery industry such as grave diggers, and so-called "*fuqarā*," assumed to be living with their families.<sup>33</sup> Al-Maqrīzī's description of this situation is widely known: "Then amirs of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's dynasty rebuilt this cemetery area. . . . The soldiers and the rest of the people followed them, and built mausolea, *khānqāhs*, *sūqs*, mills, and public bathhouses as far as the area from al-Ḥabash Lake to al-Qarāfah Gate, and the residential area of Fuṣṭāṭ to Muqāṭṭam Mountain became built up."<sup>34</sup>

Subsequently, as al-Qarāfah also attracted the governing elite of the dynasty, it became inhabited by them, for instance, Vizier Shams al-Dīn Ibn al-Sal'ūs (d. 693/1294), Tāj al-Dīn Ibn Ḥinnā (d. 707/1308), and *qāḍī al-quḍāh* (chief justice) Ibn Bint al-A'azz (d. 695/1295–96). Also, the area began to produce notable scholars of the age, such as Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī (d. 682/1283–84), Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Qarāfī (d. 802/1402), and Ibn al-Hā'im (d. 815/1412).<sup>35</sup> Bearers of

<sup>32</sup> Al-Idrīsī, *Nuzhat al-Mushtāq fī Ikhtilāq al-Āfāq* (Cairo, n.d.), 324; Yāqūt, *Kitāb al-Mushtarak* (Göttingen, 1846), 341.

<sup>33</sup> Ibn 'Uthmān, "Murshid," fols. 90a, 91a, 116b, 131b, 229b–230a; Ibn al-Nāsikh, "Miṣbāḥ," fols. 66, 98; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Al-Kawākib*, 108–9, 154, 175, 227, 244, 254, 257, 280; al-Sakhāwī, *Tuhfah*, 180, 190; al-Ḥalabī, *Al-Qabas al-Ḥawī li-Ghurar Daw' al-Sakhāwī* (Beirut, 1998), 2:131; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfī* (Cairo, 1984– ), 7:77, 133, 190; idem, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1963–72), 7:356; al-Kutubī, *Uyūn al-Tawārīkh* (Baghdad, 1984), 21:46, 166, 314; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'īyah al-Kubrā* (Cairo, 1964), 6:90, 8:321; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 7:112; Ibn 'Imād al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab fī Akhbār Man Dhahab* (Beirut, n.d.), 5:373; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl Mir'āt al-Zamān* (Hyderabad, 1954–61), 3:70, 291; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:3:148; etc.

<sup>34</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭāṭ*, 2:444; cf. Ohtoshi, "The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century," 167; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 20.

<sup>35</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Muqaffá*, 6:207; idem, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:3:760–61, 2:1:41–42; al-Ḥimyarī, *Al-Rawḍ*



the *nisbah* "al-Qarāfī," or "native of al-Qarāfah," were recorded in rather large numbers.<sup>36</sup> It is interesting to note that, before around 844/1440–41, visits to the mausoleum of al-Sayyidah Ruqayyah were hindered because people—including Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Taqā—had taken up residence there.<sup>37</sup> In this manner, the commoners were a driving force for the custom of living in the Qarāfahs, and thereafter the elites of the dynasty followed suit.

As places of residence, the two Qarāfahs, al-Kubrā and al-Ṣuḡhrā, suffered severe devastation due to recurring pestilence, but ironically, at the same time, they expanded as graveyards. In 806/1403–4, the inhabitants were reduced in numbers by a disaster, then in 833/1430 and 864/1460, a huge number of deaths resulted from pestilence reported in the areas included in the two Qarāfahs.<sup>38</sup> Among the dwellers of al-Qarāfah, al-Sūdān al-Takārīrah, who originated in an area which may have stretched from western Sudan to Mali, were well known to have become the greatest victims. According to the sources, only a handful of the three thousand al-Takārīrah survived the pestilence, notwithstanding the fact that they sought refuge in the Muqaṭṭam Mountain.<sup>39</sup> These al-Takārīrah seem mostly to have settled there on their Meccan pilgrimages, as exemplified in the case of the well-known King Mansā Walī, al-Malik Mūsā ibn Abī Bakr, who stopped in Egypt (724/1324) accompanied by a retinue of ten thousand. He enjoyed the hospitality shown there, famously dispersing a large quantity of gold, and stayed in al-Qarāfah al-Ṣuḡhrā.<sup>40</sup>

On the other hand, the Ṣaḡrā' area developed toward the northeast of the

*al-Mi'tār fī Khabar al-Aqtār* (Beirut, 1975), 460–61; al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt* (Beirut, 1974), 2:280; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasssīrīn* (Cairo, 1972), 1:81–82.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Ḥalabī, *Al-Qabas al-Ḥāwī*, 2:99, 113; Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī, *Nayl al-Ibtihāj bi-Taṭrīz al-Dībāj* (Tripoli, 1989), 543; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfī*, 6:36; Ibn al-Nāsikh, "Miṣbāḥ," fol. 203; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 3:3:1025; al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi' li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsi'* (Beirut, 1353–55 A.H.), 6:62, 10:62, 11:220.

<sup>37</sup> Ohtoshi, "The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century," 170–71; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 3:3:1229; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-Kalām fī al-Dhayl 'alā Duwal al-Islām* (Beirut, 1995), 2:570.

<sup>38</sup> The famous account by Leo Africanus, who visited al-Qarāfah in 1526, estimated its population as two thousand families, after the great disaster. Līwūn al-Ifrīqī, *Waṣf Ifrīqīyah* (Rabat, 1980), 2:20; M. Dols, *The Black Death In the Middle East* (Princeton, 1977), 196.

<sup>39</sup> Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs wa-al-Abdān fī Tawārīkh al-Zamān* (Cairo, 1970–94), 3:189; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:2:826; idem, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:320. Ibn al-Nāsikh noted the existence of a graveyard where many al-Takārīrah were buried. See "Miṣbāḥ," fol. 208.

<sup>40</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:320; idem, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:2:648–49; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh fī Ayyām al-Manṣūr wa-Banīh* (Cairo, 1976–86), 2:142–43; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā fī Sinā'at al-Inshā'* (Cairo, 1963), 5:293; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, 30:367. Regarding al-Takrūr in general, see al-'Umarī, *Al-Ta'rīf bi-al-Muṣṭalaḥ al-Sharīf* (Beirut, 1988), 44–46; N. Levtzion, "Mamluk Egypt and Takrūr," in *Studies in History and Civilization* (Jerusalem, 1988), 183–207.





citadel in the Mamluk period, and the graveyard, which appeared in the Fatimid period outside the Naṣr Gate, combined with this area.<sup>41</sup> Although this area was famed for its closeness to the ruling elite, who filled the place with religious complexes, people of all classes began to live there over the course of time. We find, since the Bahri Mamluk period, many ulama bearing the *nisbah* of al-Ṣaḥrāwī, such as ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Ṣaḥrāwī (d. 879/1475) and Muḥammad al-Abūdarrī (d. 844/1440–41). They were born and raised or lived in structures there that included *zāwiyahs*, *turbahs*, and houses.<sup>42</sup>

Qubbat al-Naṣr and al-Raydānīyah must have marked the northeast limits, as indicated by the situation of 749/1349: “Graveyards were filled up lengthwise from the Naṣr Gate to Qubbat al-Naṣr, and to the Muqaṭṭam Mountain breadth-wise. Also the area from the Ḥusaynīyah cemetery to al-Raydānīyah was filled up. . . .”<sup>43</sup> Qubbat al-Naṣr, established in the Fatimid era, originated in a *zāwiyah* where *fuqarā’* (poor, Sufis) abided. Following the reconstruction by Sultan al-Nāṣir, ruling elites of the dynasty, notably the Mamluks, made much use of this Qubbah. The place became an overnight stop for sultans and amirs, and communal supplicatory prayers (*du‘ā’*) were conducted here for rainfall or the abatement of pestilence. Al-Raydānīyah was also associated strongly with the ruling elite, and was frequently utilized by them, mainly after Sultan Barqūq’s reign. Near the *maṣṭabah* there, military exercises, such as polo and horse races, were held. The function and characteristics of these two spots bear much similarity; birds for communication or hunting were bred there, and they also marked places for receiving visitors from the north or seeing them off. Since both places offered a suitable gathering place for members of the army and amirs, they became strategic points for rebels as well as rulers.<sup>44</sup> Possibly due to their strong relationship with the ruling elite of the dynasty, and the alienation felt by the common people, these two places seldom appear in *ziyārah* books, but appear very frequently in the chronicles.

<sup>41</sup>Concerning al-Ṣaḥrā’ area, Qubbat al-Naṣr, and al-Raydānīyah, see Ohtoshi, “The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century,” 168–70; D. Behrens-Abouseif, “The North-Eastern Extensions of Cairo,” *Annales islamologiques* 17 (1981); and H. Hamza, *The Northern Cemetery of Cairo* (Cairo, 2001).

<sup>42</sup>Al-Ḥalabī, *Al-Qabas al-Hāwī*, 1:396, 2:63–64, 2:229, 1:276–277, 1:540; al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw’*, 8:33, 4:209–10, 6:62, 241; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’ al-Ghumr bi-Anbā’ al-‘Umr* (Beirut, n.d.), 7:396; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:386; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, 7:251. H. Hamza listed 14 entries in al-Sakhāwī’s *Al-Ḍaw’*. Hamza, *The Northern Cemetery*, 51.

<sup>43</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 2:3:783.

<sup>44</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2:433; idem, *Al-Sulūk*, 2:1:26, 92, 2:2:311, 373–74, 2:3:570, 576–77, 609, 630–31, 711–12, 846–47, 3:1:153, 280, 332, 384, 1160; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-Laṭāfah* (Cantabrigiae, 1792), 91; al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāzir fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Nāṣir* (Beirut, 1986), 205, 325; Ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il, *Al-Nahj al-Sadīd*, 451–53; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh*, 3:43.



As has been seen, the custom of living in cemeteries has a long history in Egypt, contrary to what is usually believed. Therefore we need to investigate this custom by extending the span of our study, taking the Egyptian view of the hereafter into consideration. In addition, it can be noted that there was a certain interrelationship between the funeral prayers held at Muṣallá Bāb al-Naṣr (Bāb al-Naṣr Oratory) and burials conducted in the Ṣaḥrā' area.<sup>45</sup>

Another important aspect relating to cemeteries, shared by the whole population, was pleasure seeking. Since *ziyārah* books made an effort to situate the visiting of cemeteries within the framework of Islamic pious activities, they never mentioned that visits were often made for pleasure. Yet, if we look at visitors' behavior, we can easily discern the tendency to pursue pleasure. The common populace ('*āmmah*) went on moonlit nights, bringing sweets and drinks, while influential people were fond of enjoying the moonlight of summer nights in the courtyards of mosques in the Qarāfah. In winter, they preferred to stay overnight under the minbar (pulpit). Even women and children could stay out openly until late at night, which was ordinarily quite exceptional.<sup>46</sup> For travelers from outside Cairo the Qarāfahs, which included the mausolea of Imām al-Shāfi'ī and al-Sayyidah Nafīṣah, were the first place to be visited. Egyptians, too, may have ushered travelers there, as in the case of an Ilkhanid mission.<sup>47</sup> Meccan pilgrims who stopped in Egypt made visits there and left accounts of the Cairene cemetery regions. They include Ibn Jubayr, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, al-Tujībī, al-Balawī, al-'Abdarī, and al-Qalṣādī.<sup>48</sup>

The *wā'iz* (religious preacher) preached from pulpits in the City of the Dead, and the *qāṣṣ* (storyteller) narrated Arab heroic epics, such as *Sīrat 'Antar* and *Sīrat Dhāt al-Himmah*, among the graves or near the Qarāfah Gate. Quran reciters recited in singsong tones, creating additions and subtractions, or stresses, arbitrarily.<sup>49</sup> From the following account quoted in *ziyārah* treatises regarding Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn (d. 622/1225), we can well perceive the situation:

One of the *ṣāliḥūn* (pious men) who resided in al-Qarāfah had died, so his comrades had prepared the funeral ceremony (*waqt*,

<sup>45</sup> Al-Ḥalabī, *Al-Qabas al-Hāwī*, 1:295, 360, 2:99, 121, 204, 326; al-Biqā'ī, *Izhār al-'Aṣr li-Asrār Ahl al-'Aṣr* (Riyadh, 1993), 1:187, 206; etc.

<sup>46</sup> Ohtoshi, "The Manners, Customs, and Mentality," 27–28; idem, "Visits to the Holy Tombs in the Egyptian City of the Dead," 19; idem, "The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society," 178–79; al-Sakhāwī, *Tuhfah*, 181; Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Madkhal*, 1:268; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1:486, 2:444.

<sup>47</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 2:2:397.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*; Ibn Jubayr, *Al-Riḥlah* (Beirut, 1980), 20. As for Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, al-Tujībī, al-Balawī, al-'Abdarī, and al-Qalṣādī, see Ohtoshi, "Visits to the Holy Tombs in the Egyptian City of the Dead," 1, 4, 9, 42.

<sup>49</sup> Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Madkhal*, 1:268.



'urs) in the Zāwiyah al-Gharābilī. There a *qawwāl* (religious singer) named al-Faṣīḥ, handsome and preeminent in singing in that era, was engaged. In their hearts, the people assembled there had come to hear him sing. Then the shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn, who was held in awe, was informed of this event, and arrived on the scene with his attendants, urging al-Faṣīḥ to desist. Al-Faṣīḥ fled, fearing the shaykh, and the audiences were practically dying with deep disappointment at the passing of the reason they had gathered [abridged].<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, the ruling elite occasionally enjoyed singing and drinking at the southern border of al-Qarāfah al-Kubrā.<sup>51</sup> Thus the activity of singing and dancing performed in the cemeteries varied from mere entertainment to more religious appearances. In either event, ulama condemned them for the mingling of the sexes and immorality as a sort of *bid'ah* (deviation from correct religious practice).

Celebration feasts for saints' birthdays (sing. *mawlid*, *mawṣim*, *waqt*, etc.) were held in the cemeteries as well, although this is not reflected in *ziyārah* tracts.<sup>52</sup> In the case of the well-known shaykh Muḥammad Wafā' (d. 765/1364), his tomb was "famed for hosting a *waqt* (celebratory occasion), yearly on the twenty-second night of Rabī' II [for commemorating the deceased]. Plenty of money was spent, and crowds flocked there."<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, the *mawlid* of al-Sayyidah Nafīṣah at her mausoleum began in 889/1484, and became known as "*mawlid al-khalīfah*" (the caliph's *mawlid*), since the caliph, who resided close to this mausoleum, took care of it.<sup>54</sup>

#### THE ATTACHMENT OF THE COMMON PEOPLE TO THE CAIRENE CEMETERIES

One way in which the common people involved themselves in the Cairene cemeteries was through the creation/fabrication of tombs of famous persons, or forging/rewriting their names on tombstones. Among the many objects of cemetery visitors, prominent targets were mausolea of the *ahl al-bayt* (the Prophet

<sup>50</sup>Ohtoshi, "The Manners, Customs, and Mentality," 27–28; idem, "The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society," 178–79; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Al-Kawākib*, 109–10; al-Sakhāwī, *Tuḥfah*, 230–31. The original information on this account can be found in Ṣafī al-Dīn ibn Abī al-Manṣūr, *Risālat Ṣafī al-Dīn ibn Abī al-Manṣūr* (Cairo, 1986), 80–81. Cf. al-Mundhirī, *Takmilah*, 3:164–65; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-Awliyā'* (Cairo, 1973), 467.

<sup>51</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 2:2:491–92.

<sup>52</sup>Tetsuya Ohtoshi, "Taṣawwuf as Reflected in Ziyārah Books and the Cairo Cemeteries," in A. Sabra and R. McGregor, *The Development of Sufism in Mamluk Egypt* (forthcoming).

<sup>53</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-'Uqūd al-Farīdah* (Beirut, 2002), 3:414.

<sup>54</sup>Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 3:206.



Muḥammad's family) and *ṣālih/ṣālihūn* (pious figure[s]) who acquired veneration from the masses. Yet, in reality, many popular mausolea which attracted visitors were fake, and the names on tombstones were frequently misattributions. *Ziyārah* treatises repeatedly made accusations of such inventions.<sup>55</sup>

Concerning the invention of holy tombs or mausolea, one premise is that the practice of disinterment may have prevailed in Egyptian society in that period, which is supported by this statement from a *ziyārah* book: "many *ṣālihūn* who were entombed in an Egyptian cemetery were disinterred after several years."<sup>56</sup> People would excavate deserted graves and build new mausolea with purportedly-discovered skulls or relics, such as the robe of the Prophet Muḥammad, with invented anecdotes. Similarly, several mausolea were built based on people's dreams. Mausolea built on the basis of skulls were called *mashāhid al-ru's*, while those based on dreams were known as *mashāhid al-ru'yā*.<sup>57</sup>

The following is the gist of an anecdote concerning the invention of mausolea, which occurred in the first half of the fifteenth century. An old man named Mubārak al-Takrūrī (d. 871/1467) retired from his work as a dough kneader at a baking oven located in Bāb al-Lūq, and began living in al-Qarāfah. Then, removing the soil of a mound little by little, he began to construct holy tombs. Whenever he saw grave posts while walking around through the cemeteries, he brought them back to one of his tombs in progress. His first creation was a tomb named Shukran, and he brought its *sitr* (cover cloth) from the gate of al-Manṣūrī hospital to al-Qarāfah al-Kubrā, in Barsbāy's reign. When the mausoleum of al-Sayyidah Fāṭimah al-Ṣuḡhrā was destroyed by malefactors, he took its tombstone and put it on one of his invented graves, calling it "the tomb of Fāṭimah al-Ṣuḡhrā." Also, he carved stones, naming his tombs whatever he liked. Then he turned to the construction of that area, and as the place of Mubārak's holy tombs gained fame, even Sultan Jaqmaq and his wife were said to have supported Mubārak.<sup>58</sup>

Let us now look at examples of Cairene mausolea, which were built upon skulls, dreams, bodies of the deceased, or even complete fiction. If we focus on the periods of creations/fabrications, it is notable that the Fatimids stand out. Specifically, viziers of the later Fatimids or the caliphs themselves were the main inventors. Yet we need to add that this practice continued to occur beyond the Fatimid era. Second, objects of creation tended to center around the *ahl al-bayt*, chiefly 'Alī's descendants, and also great prophets, such as Moses. Among them,

<sup>55</sup>For a detailed analysis on the creation and rewriting of holy tombs, see Ohtoshi, "Visits, Holy Tombs and Relics in the Medieval Egyptian Muslim Society," 231–51.

<sup>56</sup>Ibn 'Uthmān, "Murshid," fol. 41b.

<sup>57</sup>Ohtoshi, "Visits to the Holy Tombs in the Egyptian City of the Dead," 23–24; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Al-Kawākib*, 184; al-Sakhāwī, *Tuhfah*, 298.

<sup>58</sup>Al-Sakhāwī, *Tuhfah*, 180–81.



we have many traces of Moses in al-Muqaṭṭam and the Qarāfahs, such as the Aqdām mosque, which contained a footprint attributed to Moses.

The reascription of tombstones was another prevailing practice. For instance, someone rewrote the name on a tombstone as al-Mustanşir, the caliph, but in fact it was the tomb of al-Mustatir, the onion merchant. Examples of contrived names on tombstones are: the Umayyad Caliph Yazīd, Mu‘awīyah, Bilāl, the muezzin of the Prophet Muḥammad, one of the famous *ṣaḥābah*, Abū Hurayrah, the Prophet Daniel, the son of the Abbasid Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, etc. The pattern of these reascriptions can be summarized as being based on famous historical figures or even fictitious characters. The former includes the Prophet Muḥammad’s holy family, persons linked to the Prophet Muḥammad like the *ṣaḥābah*, other prophets, “saints,” and historically well-known individuals. The latter category comprises fictitious offspring of famous people, such as Muḥammad ibn Zayn al-‘Ābidīn. Concerning the way names were invented, it often depended on name similarity, but sometimes this was totally irrelevant. Numerous acts of fabrication and mis-transmission resulted in the production of a huge amount of misnaming, where both the tombstones and their supporting legends were false, and the views of *ziyārah* books varied as a result.

Thus seen, the list of invented names of “false” mausolea rather represents the wishes and expectations of commoners, and it is in these falsely attached names that we may perceive their mentality and intentions. Through this method of positive participation in the dynamic life of cemeteries, we see an outburst of energy in the common people engaged in visiting cemeteries or inventing tombs.

Next, as stated above, cemeteries provided inhabitable places for the people, where they could enjoy benefits, or could hope for relief from economic hardships in their daily lives.<sup>59</sup> Large scale banquets, for instance, were held on occasions of celebration for the completion of distinguished buildings or to commemorate recovery from illness. Banquets were also held at communal prayers for the rise of the Nile or the abatement of the plague, at funerals, and feasts, where great quantities of food and money would be dispensed. Moreover, through various religious institutions, both *waqf* income and direct contributions from the state reached Sufis, the needy, and orphans. Numerous visitors to graveyards, needless to say, gave alms and made offerings. Under such circumstances, the masses apparently understood the cemeteries to be a place for sustenance. They could visit cemeteries in times of privation, and were advised to do so. Some of them went even further in order to obtain money or goods from visitors to al-Qarāfah.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>59</sup>The following argument was detailed in Ohtoshi, “The Manners, Customs, and Mentality,” 34–39.

<sup>60</sup>Ibn al-Nāsikh, “Miṣbāḥ,” fol. 68.



Thus, "many people desired to live there, because of . . . the frequency of alms and acts of charity toward the people of al-Qarāfah." It was also recorded that on Fridays, "all the poor of Cairo go there to eat and to receive money which is given to them."<sup>61</sup> I have previously analyzed this situation, and have explained it as a symbiotic relationship, wherein the wealth and good deeds of visitors were exchanged for rewards from Allāh, through the intercession of those who received them.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, this exchange was nicely depicted by Shu'ayb ibn al-Ḥurayfīsh: "The poor man is the rich man's messenger, since when the rich man exercises almsgiving to the poor man with alms on behalf of his [deceased] parents or relatives, it will reach to the deceased; thus the poor man is the rich man's messenger."<sup>63</sup>

Tomb robbery would have been committed primarily by the common people. According to *ziyārah* treatises, *kafan* (the winding sheet for the deceased), *tābūt* (coffin), and tomb poles were stolen, and other sources list silver candlesticks, carpets, *sitr* (cover-cloths of a grave or coffin), copies of the Quran, lumber from a mausoleum's ceiling, and windows. It was in 827/1427 and 918/1512 that the scandal of selling disinterred corpses to Europeans was publicized.<sup>64</sup> As for the plundering of graveyards, there was great unrest in 864/1459, and again in 901/1495, when natives of al-Ṣaḥrā' fled en masse to Cairo, due to plundering by bands of robbers. Some destruction of tombs was carried out as a result of political embroilments or private grudges. In one example, which occurred in 748/1347, a mob opened the grave of Amir Shujā' al-Dīn, stripping off his *kafan*, and burnt his remains.<sup>65</sup> When criminals were apprehended, rulers punished them severely, through methods such as beheading, cutting off their hands, whipping, crucifixion, or flaying of the face.<sup>66</sup>

Since al-Qarāfah comprised large open spaces, it offered refuge in times of emergency. For instance, "in 702/1303, there was a great earthquake in Egypt and

<sup>61</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:444–45; P. H. Dopp, *L'Égypte au commencement quinzième siècle d'après le Traité d'Emmanuel Piloti de Crète* (Cairo, 1950), 34–35; G. Wiet, *Cairo: City of Art and Commerce* (Westport, 1964), 135.

<sup>62</sup> Ohtoshi, "The Manners, Customs, and Mentality," 30–39; idem, "The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society," 180–81.

<sup>63</sup> Shu'ayb ibn al-Ḥurayfīsh, *Rawḍ al-Fā' iq fī al-Mawā'iz wa-al-Raqā' iq* (Cairo, 1949), 67–68.

<sup>64</sup> Ibn al-Nāsikh, "Miṣbāh," fol. 136, Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Al-Kawākib*, 97, 321; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-Laṭāfah*, 75–76; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:2:306, 3:1:222, 4:2:661; Ibn Iyās, *Badā' i'*, 5:159–60, 2:91–92, 3:205, 4:275–76.

<sup>65</sup> Ibn Iyās, *Badā' i'*, 1:1:515; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr fī Madā al-Ayyām wa-al-Shuhūr* (Berkeley, 1930–42), 2:334; idem, *Al-Nujūm*, 10:45, 55–56; al-Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn al-Ṣāliḥī* (Wiesbaden, 1977), 197; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 2:3:599.

<sup>66</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:2:306; Ibn Iyās, *Badā' i'*, 3:391; Y. Rāghib, "Faux morts et enterrés vifs dans l'espace musulman," *Studia Islamica* 44 (1983): 26.



Syria with collapsing houses, and a lot of people died under the debris. A tsunami ensued due to the earthquake, and wrecked many ships. The earthquake lasted for forty days; people fled to al-Qarāfah and pitched tents for themselves. It so affected Alexandria that the sea rose to the middle of the city.”<sup>67</sup> Also, in 699/1300, a large number of troops conscripted by the Mamluk government stayed in the Qarāfah and other places due to a shortage of housing.<sup>68</sup> The stopping place for the aforementioned king of al-Takrūr was al-Qarāfah al-Ṣughrā, and the *wālī* (governor) of al-Qarāfah and Fustāṭ, Amir Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Amīr Ḥājjib took care of him. Similarly, in 783/1338, the daughter of the Marinid ruler Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī, known as al-Ḥurrah, stayed in al-Qarāfah with a group of four hundred Meccan pilgrims. These facts reveal that the cemeteries not only contained open spaces, but also were supplied with sources of water and food.<sup>69</sup>

#### THE ULAMA’S ATTACHMENT TO CEMETERIES

For the ulama, Mamluk society offered more positions in religious institutions than in previous times, and some of them were established in Cairene cemeteries.<sup>70</sup> That is to say, cemetery areas provided places for their employment and education. To take some examples, al-Madrasah al-Nāṣirīyah (or al-Ṣalāḥīyah), near Qubbat al-Imām al-Shāfi‘ī, was of crucial importance, as is shown by the fact that al-Qalqashandī regarded it as one of the positions suitable for high-ranking *mudarrisūn* (professors).<sup>71</sup> *Mudarrisūn* and shaykhs were employed there, as we can see in the historical literature.<sup>72</sup> Names of *khānqāhs* in the Qarāfahs, whose positions for ulama were known, included those of Tuquztamur, Baktamur, al-Karīmīyah, al-Ṭaydamurīyah, (Arghūn al-‘Alā’ī and Najm al-Dīn Maḥmūd), and notably Khānqāh Qawṣūn (near the Qarāfah Gate) which comprised a shaykh and fifty Sufis with abundant *waqfs* at its opening in 736/1335.<sup>73</sup> Also, *khānqāhs* and *turbahs* in al-Ṣaḥrā’

<sup>67</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Kashf al-Silsilah ‘an Waṣf al-Zilzilah* (Medina, 1404 A.H.), 118. Cf. Ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il, *Al-Nahj al-Sadīd*, 592–94.

<sup>68</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:3:898.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:2:447–48; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh*, 2:142–43; Levtzion, “Mamluk Egypt and Takrūr.”

<sup>70</sup> According to the assertion of I. Lapidus, ulama of relevant age included *fuqahā’* (jurists), judges, scholars, teachers, Quran reciters, hadith reciters, Sufis, functionaries of religious institutions, professional witnesses, and so on. Moreover, many ulama were appointed by the state as bureaucrats, or could be part-time merchants. Even workers, craftsmen, or people of lower strata could become ulama. Ira Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1967), 107–15.

<sup>71</sup> Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:256.

<sup>72</sup> Examples are too numerous to be listed, including al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘Uqūd al-Farīd*, 1:377; *Al-Sulūk*, 1:1:302; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasssīrīn*, 2:135; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 4:229; and Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah* (Damascus, 1977), 1:2:174.

<sup>73</sup> K. V. Zetterstéén, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlūkensultāne* (Leiden, 1919), 190–91, 227–28.



included Khānqāh Ṭaybughā al-Ṭawīl, Turbat Khushqadam, and Turbat Barqūq.<sup>74</sup> The shift from a shaykh post in one *khānqāh* to another was a frequent occurrence.<sup>75</sup> Other institutions in these cemeteries, to which appointments are recorded, included Mashhad al-Sayyidah Nafīṣah, *zāwiyahs*, *turbahs*, *ribāṭs*, *jāmi‘*s, etc.<sup>76</sup> In those foundations, ulama found employment in positions such as *shaykh* (leader), *mudarris* (teacher), *nāẓir* (administrator), *khaṭīb* (preacher), hired Sufis, *khādim* (servant), and so forth. Further, other institutions in these cemetery areas might have employed ulama in operating positions, such as Jāmi‘ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, Ribāṭ Fakhr al-Dīn ibn Quzul, Jāmi‘ al-Afram, and Jāmi‘ Ibn al-Labbān.<sup>77</sup>

For ulama as well, Cairene cemeteries were places for visiting tombs, being entombed, and occasionally living, as noted earlier. Even a well-known biographer of the age such as Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282) visited the cemetery frequently, and left eyewitness observations in his *Wafayāt*. In addition, in his chronicle, Ibn al-Furāt (d. 807/1405) repeatedly cites the words of his comrades who visited al-Qarāfah.<sup>78</sup>

Cemetery areas also provided employment for Sufis, as mentioned above, and there were several magnet spots for Sufi practices, centering around certain *zāwiyahs*, such as Zāwiyat Abū al-Su‘ūd and Zāwiyat (or Ribāṭ) Ṣafī al-Dīn Ibn Abī al-Manṣūr, in addition to *khānqāhs*, *turbahs*, and *zāwiyahs* founded by the ruling elite. These examples were strongly related to the *ṭarīq/ṭarīqah* (way) of al-Shādhilīyah. *Zāwiyahs* in the Qarāfahs are thought to have provided places of contact between ulama and visitors to cemeteries, whereby the visitors could participate in the religious gatherings and rituals conducted there. Moreover, ascetic practices in the Muqāṭṭam region and the cemeteries beneath it were conducted by Sufis.<sup>79</sup>

Furthermore, it was significant that ulama intervened in cemetery areas through

Cf. al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ* 2:425; idem, *Al-Sulūk*, 2:1:273, 2:3:688, 698, 748, 755–56, 3:1:194; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 10:45; idem, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, 7:121; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 1:2:104; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 1:2:239; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Durar al-Kāminah* (Cairo, 1966–67), 2:333; Ibn Shāhīn, *Nayl al-Amal fī Dhayl al-Duwal* (Sidon, 2002), 1:150, 2:22, 323; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh*, 2:236.

<sup>74</sup> Al-Ḥalabī, *Al-Qabas al-Ḥāwī*, 1:283; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘Uqūd al-Farīdah*, 1:377.

<sup>75</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 3:3:998.

<sup>76</sup> Concerning Mashhad al-Sayyidah Nafīṣah, see, for instance, Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, 7:135, 189, 403.

<sup>77</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:298, 303, 324, 367. As for the construction activities of the ruling elite, see Chapter 4.

<sup>78</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A’yān* (Beirut, n.d.), 1:171, 174, 218, 318, 349, 2:292, 338, 516, 3:129, 162, 222, 317, 318, 4:72, 192, 462; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 5:33, 70, 158, 185, 190.

<sup>79</sup> For more detail, see Ohtoshi, “*Taṣawwuf* as Reflected in *Ziyāra* Books and the Cairo Cemeteries.” The meaning of the term “Sufi” widened during this period, and many ulama were encompassed by this term, hence I included Sufis in this section.





their juridical and religious functions; for example, they criticized the manners of visiting tombs and the tombs' appearance, judged how to inter the dead, and so forth. Ulama could express their judgments based upon shari'ah (Islamic law), which often took the form of condemning *bid'ah* regularly performed by the people, such as visits by women or their mingling with strangers, *nadhr* (an offering often accompanied with a vow), praying to entombed "saints," leading to their veneration, ostentatious graves, singing and dancing with musical instruments at the cemetery, walking on graves with shoes, etc.<sup>80</sup> Through these accusations, the ulama established their "authority," and retained their sphere of activity. To cite a well-known incident in this regard, al-'Izz Ibn 'Abd al-Salām, the *sulṭān al-'ulamā'* (d. 660/1262), criticized the existence of ostentatious tombs in Cairene cemeteries and activities that took place there, and reportedly succeeded in persuading Sultan Baybars to have all such tombs razed, although it was never enforced.<sup>81</sup>

#### CEMETERIES AND THE DYNASTIC ELITE<sup>82</sup>

In this section, I will attempt to show how the ruling elite interrelated with Cairene cemeteries in ways not connected to their supervision, which will be discussed next. First are the *ziyārah*s of sultans or their entourages, which had a long history among the Muslim rulers of Egypt. From the time of the legendary Ibn Ṭulūn (d. 270/884) and his son Khumarawayh (d. 282/896), and Kāfūr al-Ikhshīdī (d. 357/968), through the Fatimids (al-Ḥākim, al-Āmir, Amīr al-Juyūsh al-Afḍal, Vizier al-Ma'mūn, al-Zāfir, and al-Āḍid), to the Ayyubid sultan Kāmil, rulers and their retainers are said to have engaged in the *ziyārah*.<sup>83</sup> The tradition is assumed to have persisted during the Mamluk period, for Sultan Baybars is portrayed as having followed their example.<sup>84</sup> Even if we confine ourselves to the Burjī Mamluk period, we can see the *ziyārah* of sultans occurred frequently, i.e., Barqūq (786/1384, 796/1394, 797/1395), Faraj (812/1409), Mu'ayyad (*al-du'ā'* at al-Ṣaḥrā' in 822/1419), Barsbāy (841/1438), Jaqmaq (845/1442), Īnāl (865/1461), Aḥmad ibn Īnāl (865/1461), Khushqadam (866/1462, 870/1465, 871/1466, 871/1467),

<sup>80</sup>See Ohtoshi, "The Manners, Customs, and Mentality," 19–44; idem, "The Egyptian City of the Dead and Visits to Holy Graves," Chapter 1.

<sup>81</sup>Ohtoshi, "The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century," 173–74.

<sup>82</sup>Herein, "ruling elites" or "dynastic elites" include sultans, military elites, high-ranking officials, and 'Abbasid caliphs who immigrated to Cairo, etc.

<sup>83</sup>Ibn 'Uthmān, "Murshīd," fols. 91b–92a, 163a; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Al-Kawākib*, 67, 72, 84, 126; al-Musabbihī, *Akhbār Miṣr*, 40–41; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, 4:103–4; Ibn al-Nāsikh, "Miṣbāḥ," fols. 103, 115, 164; al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz al-Ḥunafā'*, 2:102, 3:118; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1:484, 2:461; al-Sakhāwī, *Tuḥfah*, 214; Ibn Ma'mūn, *Akhbār Miṣr* (Cairo, 1983), 42, 64.

<sup>84</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:2:499, 501, 520, Ibn al-Nāsikh, "Miṣbāḥ," fol. 154.



Qāyṭbāy (872/1468, 874/1469, 874/1470, 876/1471, 876/1472, 882/1478, 885/1480, 885/1481, 886/1482), Muḥammad ibn Qāyṭbāy (901/1496), Ghawrī (913/1508, 914/1508, 915/1510, 918/1512, 920/1514, 922/1516), and Tūmān Bāy.<sup>85</sup> Some retainers followed suit on *ziyārah* activities, or even took the initiative, such as Yūnus ibn ‘Umar, who is reported to have visited al-Qarāfah every Friday.<sup>86</sup> Along with these visits, the ruling class performed charitable activities such as distributing *ṣadaqah* (alms) and food. Even when they could not visit the cemeteries personally, they arranged for these distributions. Since these cemetery areas contained the sepulchers of the elites’ relatives, frequent reports of visits to them can also be found.

Further, as mentioned above, members of the ruling elite also competed in the building of architectural works in cemeteries.<sup>87</sup> They constructed madrasahs, mosques, and *khānqāhs* in their names, and *turbahs* for their own entombment. Those buildings and institutions obviously reflect the religious policy or the personal attitude of each member of the ruling elite, and they also can be considered to be closely related to their *ziyārah* activities and the development of the northeast al-Ṣaḥrā’ area.

It is widely known that these religious institutions were administered by the *waqf* system. A large number of tombs in the cemeteries were devastated in the vicissitudes of time, and crumbled into the soil. In order to avoid this, considerable efforts were exerted. The first method taken, under Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ayyūbī, was the government’s direct commitment to the administration of holy sepulchers by nominating managers to live there, paying them stipends (*jirāyāt*), and also making monthly payments to *faqīrs* (poor, Sufis) and *awliyā’* (“saints”), and enabling

<sup>85</sup>Ohtoshi, “The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century,” 184–85; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 3:1:515, 807, 4:1:487–89, 4:2:1028; ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ, *Nuzhat al-Asāṭīn fī Man Waliya Miṣr min al-Salāṭīn* (Cairo, 1987), 119; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 1:383–84, 2:252, 455–56, 3:401; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’ al-Ghumr*, 7:356–58; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’ i’*, 2:45–46, 180, 374, 449, 3:10, 336, 4:126, 133, 169, 253, 382, 5:38; al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān*, ed. ‘A. Qarmūt (Cairo, 1985–), 1:362–63; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 15:91, 16:290; idem, *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr*, 3:542; al-Sakhāwī, *Tuḥfah*, 159; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā’ al-Ḥaṣr bi-Anbā’ al-‘Aṣr* (Cairo, 1970), 136, 148, 150, 327; Ibn Shāhīn, *Nayl al-Amal*, 6:107, 131, 225, 249, 250, 264, 319, 321, 415, 7:16, 201, 250, 262, 294; Ibn Zunbul, *Ākhir al-Mamālīk* (Cairo, n.d.), 144.

<sup>86</sup>Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā’ al-Ḥaṣr*, 468.

<sup>87</sup>Ohtoshi, “The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century,” 185; al-Sakhāwī, *Tuḥfah*, 345; Anon., *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Ḥulā Ḥaḍrat al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1970), 192; ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ, *Nuzhat al-Asāṭīn*, 58, 81, 93, 131, 137, 140, 152; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz*, 7:170, 9:388–89; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh*, 2:236, 3:33–34, 243; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 8:236, 12:103, 15:348, 16:97; idem, *Ḥawādith*, 1:397; Ibn Duqmāq, *Al-Intiṣār*, 4:124; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2:324, 416–18, 425, 428; idem, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:1:86, 2:2:390, 516, 540, 2:1:238, 273, 2:3:688, 698, 706, 748, 755–756, 911; etc.



travelers to stay there.<sup>88</sup> Second, the operations of tomb structures were carried out with *waqf* income. The elite and others endowed their property as *waqf* for the maintenance of tombs, mausolea, or *khānqāhs*, and appointed overseers (*nāzir*, *mutawallī*) of these institutions. *Waqf* endowments were no longer designated exclusively to the public infrastructure, nor to the mausolea of those who had won the veneration of the populace. On the contrary, influential families increasingly administered their own *turbahs* through the *waqf* system, diminishing the social redistribution aspect which this system originally boasted.<sup>89</sup>

Specifically, the list of persons who were recorded as having established *waqfs* included sultans, high-ranking amirs, qadis, ulama, and so-called saints (*awliyā'*). We are able to confirm the sources of *waqf* income as *iqṭā'*s of certain lands, or rent from buildings. Structures founded by *waqfs* included the famous mausolea of Imām al-Shāfi'ī, Ikhwat Yūsuf, and Ibn al-Fāriḍ, *turbahs* of sultans or member of the ruling elite, and the facilities of religious institutions.<sup>90</sup> Sultan Baybars was famed for establishing a *waqf* for the ritual washing, *kafan*, and burial of the dead who had no relatives.<sup>91</sup>

An illustration of tomb management according to the *waqf* system can be found in the mausoleum of Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235). In the days of Sultan Īnāl (r. 857–65/1453–61), Amir Tamur and his descendants managed the operation, building a mausoleum with *waqf* donations, holding a banquet, performing charity works, and paying stipends (*jāmakīyah*) to the *khādim*.<sup>92</sup>

As for the administration of the mausoleum of al-Sayyidah Nafīсах, the Abbasid caliphs, who had immigrated to Cairo due to the Mongol invasion of Baghdad, took charge of it. The first caliph to be buried in al-Qarāfah near al-Sayyidah Nafīсах was al-Ḥākīm (d. 701/1302), and afterwards this became the practice.<sup>93</sup> They began to live near the mausoleum of al-Sayyidah Nafīсах, a holy area suitable for caliphs. This is understandable since she might have been one of the

<sup>88</sup>Ibn Jubayr, *Al-Riḥlah*, 20–24.

<sup>89</sup>Ohtoshi, "The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century," 174. In the case of Turbat al-Šūfiyah, the shaykh of *al-khānqāh* took money from those who wished to be entombed there, in exchange for burial. See al-Sakhāwī, *Tuḥfah*, 31–32.

<sup>90</sup>Ohtoshi, "The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century," 175; Ibn 'Uthmān, "Murshid," fol. 226b; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Al-Kawākib*, 178; Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, *Nahj al-Sadīd*, 134–35; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 147; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-Laṭāfah*, 99; al-Sakhāwī, *Tuḥfah*, 382–83; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:2:638, 2:2:442, 3:2:944–45, 4:1:457.

<sup>91</sup>Ohtoshi, "The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century," 175; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:2:638.

<sup>92</sup>Ohtoshi, "The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century," 175; al-Sakhāwī, *Tuḥfah*, 382–83.

<sup>93</sup>Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Mukhtār al-Akhhbār* (Cairo, 1993), 118; Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, *Nahj al-Sadīd*, 585; al-Sakhāwī, *Tuḥfah*, 136; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn al-Muḥādarah* (Cairo, 1968), 2:62.



most admired people in pre-modern Egypt, and also, in a broad sense, they could be regarded as of the same lineage.<sup>94</sup> Then, after the caliph al-Mu‘taḍid (r. 753–63/1352–62), sultans began to entrust its *nazar* (superintendency, controllership) to successive caliphs instead of appointing administrative officials.<sup>95</sup> Since caliphs stood to benefit a great deal from *nudhūr* (offerings) to this mausoleum, when they were deprived of this post during the years 766–88/1365–87, and after the Ottoman conquest, it caused them a great loss.<sup>96</sup> They benefited from donated objects such as candles and oil, and also from offerings of money placed in the box beneath the head end of al-Sayyidah Nafīṣah’s tomb.<sup>97</sup> Additionally, the *mawlid* of al-Sayyidah Nafīṣah began to be known as “the caliph’s *mawlid*,” as he was a main part of this celebration. It should also be noted that, notwithstanding the fact that caliphs were in charge of the mausoleum, the management of its *waqf* was assigned to the *mustawfī* (accountant), and one of them might have been a Muslim convert from among the Copts. The names of a *khādim* and a *shāhid al-khizānah* employed there are also mentioned in the sources.<sup>98</sup>

Let us now move on to more details of *waqf* operations in Cairene cemeteries. As shown above, expenses for managing mausolea through the *waqf* system included specified items, such as *ṣadaqah*, banquets for the “poor,” and stipends for supervisors and Quran reciters. It should be added that payments were made from *waqf* income to visitors to the Qarāfah, as I have detailed elsewhere.<sup>99</sup> For example, the *waqf* document of Amir Mithqāl mentions stipends of twenty dirhams per month to two reciters at the mausoleum of Ibn Labbān in al-Qarāfah al-Ṣuḡhrā. In the *waqf* document of Sultan Barsbāy, the *waqf* was reserved for a *zāwiyah*, a *sabīl* (public fountain), Quran reciters, etc.<sup>100</sup>

The following case is from the *waqf* document of a leading historian, Ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1470), through which we attempt to trace the details of administration of a mausoleum according to the *waqf* system.<sup>101</sup> This was not a

<sup>94</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, 6:21, 51; ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ, *Nuzhat al-Asāṭīn*, 67; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-Khulafā’* (Beirut, 1988), 551.

<sup>95</sup>Al-Sakhāwī, *Tuhfah*, 136; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 2:3:609, 3:1:76; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9:1:72.

<sup>96</sup>Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:17, 378, 5:192; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-Kalām*, 1:123.

<sup>97</sup>Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 5:192; cf. Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:306; *Al-Sulūk*, 3:1:76; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:587–88.

<sup>98</sup>Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9:1:180; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Muqaffā*, 5:693; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 1:2:644.

<sup>99</sup>Ohtoshi, “The Manners, Customs, and Mentality,” 21; wathīqah waqfīyah, *Sūdūn min Zāda al-Zāhirī*, Dār al-Wathā’iq no. 58, 804 A.H.

<sup>100</sup>M. Meinecke, *Die Restaurierung der Madrasa des Amīrs Sābiq al-Dīn Miṭqāl al-Ānūkī* (Mainz, 1980), 164; *Hujjat Waqf al-Ashraf Barsbāy* (Cairo, 1963), 45–48, 50–52, 58; etc.

<sup>101</sup>‘Abd al-Laṭīf Ibrāhīm, “Waqfīyat Ibn Taghrībirdī,” in *Al-Mu’arrikh Ibn Taghrībirdī* (Cairo, 1974), 183–221. Concerning studies of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Ibrāhīm, see Tetsuya Ohtoshi, “Professor ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Ibrāhīm on Archive Studies,” *Yamagata Daigaku Shigaku Ronshū* 16 (1996): 1–13.



mausoleum of saints, but rather a mausoleum run by an influential family for themselves.

The *waqf* endowments for this mausoleum in al-Ṣaḥrā' consisted of several properties, including buildings in the Barjawān quarter of Cairo and on the Nile shore at Būlāq, and shares from two parcels of land in the Gharbīyah district of the Delta. The structures of this mausoleum described in the *waqf* document were *īwān al-qiblah*, used as a mosque, four *fasāqī* (family vaults) for the endower's four families, a wide *ḥawsh* (courtyard, walled enclosure) for burial, a *qā'ah* (hall) and *riwāq* (portico, apartment), toilets, an *iṣṭabl* (stable), a *maṭbakh* (kitchen), *tibāq* (living units) and *khalāwī* (Sufi cells) for employees of the mausoleum, a *sabīl* (fountain) and a *ṣihrīj* (cistern) under it, and a *maktab* upstairs in the *sabīl* as a place for children to study. All of these were to meet the demands of residents of the mausoleum and visitors, particularly the families of the *waqf* endowers.

Regarding duties and allowances for operating the mausoleum, the following conditions were set in the *waqf* document: 400 (dirhams per month; the same monetary unit is employed hereafter) for the *bawwāb* (gate-keeper); the *muzammalātī*, who was in charge of the *sabīl*, was given 300, also 300 for the water suppliers, 500 for the *farrāsh* (janitor), who would clean up or sweep the mausoleum and prepare the lamps and frankincense, 150 each as scholarships for ten young orphans and sons of needy people, 300 for their teacher, 150 each for two Quran reciters for the tomb of the *waqf* endower; 200 each for the *shādd* (superintendent) of the *waqf* and its buildings, and *khāzin al-kutub* (librarian). The repair and maintenance of the mausoleum cost 200, 500 for the supervisor (*nāzir*) of the mausoleum and its *waqf*, 300 for shaykhs who recited the Quran every morning in shifts at the *īwān* of the mausoleum; also 150 each for nine other Sufis, and so forth. Moreover, stipulations set by the *waqf* endower reveal that, for instance, Sufis and their shaykh in the mausoleum should not leave their posts or neglect their duties, except in cases of illness or the pilgrimage to Mecca. Likewise, the *bawwāb* and other employees should live in the mausoleum.

As seen from this document, the mausoleum of Ibn Taghrībirdī combined various functions including a mosque for prayer, locations for Sufi practices and education, and tombs. Thus, it should be pointed out that the number of religious complexes, which were variously known as *khānqāhs*, *ribāṭs*, *zāwiyahs*, *turbahs*, *qubbahs*, madrasahs, and mosques, expanded in this age. In Cairene cemetery areas the growth of these institutions was widespread, to the point where shaykhs with their disciples, employees, and their families dwelled together, as exemplified in the aforementioned case of the Khānqāh Qawṣūn near the Qarāfah Gate, which comprised a shaykh and fifty Sufis, supported by abundant *waqfs*.

The ruling elite of the Mamluk dynasty would conduct collective prayers in



cemeteries, for the rising of the Nile River, or the abatement of plague.<sup>102</sup> Given that pestilence raged, people in Egypt tended to flee from the land in defiance of *fatwās* telling them to remain, or rely on talismans, yet there was no better plan than to implore Allāh who presides over all things. Some of them, however, not only considered this prevalence of pestilence as the fury of Allāh, but went so far as to destroy places of amusement, alcohol, and hashish, prohibiting women from going out, and attacking Christian quarters, in the name of eradicating corruption.<sup>103</sup> An account of a communal prayer in the Ṣaḥrā' area is described as follows:

[In 822/1419] the pestilence prevailed and sudden death increased so that people began to tremble. Hence, the sultan Mu'ayyad Shaykh proclaimed three days of fasting through the *muḥtasib*. After three days' fasting, people went out to the Ṣaḥrā'. The caliph, *fuqarā'*, ulama, major Sufis, judges, and common people with the vizier and an *ustādār* (steward) marched to the mausoleum of al-Malik al-Zāhir (Barqūq). They lifted a caliph's banner and the Quran, raising invocations to Allāh. Groups of Jews and Christians also attended raising the Torah and the Gospels, respectively. The sultan wore wool like a Sufi; on his horse was a plain cloth. As the sultan arrived at the back enclosure of Barqūq's mausoleum, he prayed tearfully, rubbing his face on the ground. Enormous amounts of food and slaughtered beasts were distributed to the poor. More than thirty thousand pieces of bread were also dispensed, and the people kept on praying [abridged].<sup>104</sup>

Similar events were repeated in 749/1349, 775/1373, 806/1403, 818/1416, 822/1419, 823/1420, 833/1430, and 854/1450, whenever the plague was rampant, or the Nile failed to rise. Al-Ṣaḥrā' and the fringe of al-Qarāfah, al-Raṣad and al-Āthār al-Nabī were spots used for such events.<sup>105</sup> Collective marching and prayer beneath al-

<sup>102</sup>Ohtoshi, "Muslims and Copts as Reflected in the *Ziyāra* Books and *Qarāfas*," 42–43, idem, "Conception of 'Egypt' in the Pre-Modern Period: Preliminary Essay," 23.

<sup>103</sup>Ohtoshi, "The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century," 185–86; H. Ḥabashī, "Al-Iḥtikār al-Mamlūkī wa-'Ilāqatuhu bi-al-Ḥālah al-Ṣiḥḥīyah," *Hawlīyāt Kullīyat al-Ādāb bi-Jāmi'at Ayn Shams* 9 (1964); 133–57; Q. 'A. Qāsim, *Al-Nīl wa-al-Mujtama' al-Miṣrī fī 'Aṣr Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk* (Cairo, 1978), Chapter 2; Tāshkubrī'zādah, *Risālat al-Shifā' li-Adwā' al-Wabā'* (Cairo, 1292 A.H.), 38–39; M. Dols, *The Black Death In the Middle East*, Chapters 4 and 6.

<sup>104</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 4:2:487–89; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 2:455–56; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 16:77–79; al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 1:362–63; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, 7:356; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:45–46.

<sup>105</sup>Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:1:531, 2:128, 282–83; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, 5:134–35,



Muqaṭṭam carried out by a combination of Muslims, Copts, and Jews can be traced back to the Tulunid period, in 270/884.<sup>106</sup> The above quotation brings up at least five points at issue, when collated with other historical sources. The first is that the official character of the Ṣaḥrā' area, and in particular, the back enclosure of the Barqūq mausoleum should be underscored. Collective prayers led by the ruling elite would have been held in this northeast area, whereas most of the common people would pray in the more southern al-Qarāfah area, except perhaps when they were recruited to the northeast. Second, Jews and Copts were mobilized in these official prayers, without fail. This may have been rational, as many Copts were employed in the financial offices of the government, and this mass ritual itself was held by the ruler and his government. Yet, without the entire set of these *dhimmīs*, I have suggested, the total image of "Egypt" would not have been complete, which might have made the ritual less effective.<sup>107</sup> Third, related to the second point, the attendance and support of the masses was vital. Their participation was indispensable for the pious deeds of almsgiving and food distribution to gain merits, whether in the mundane world or the hereafter. Viewed from the point of view of the commoners who were associated with this ritual, what they obtained there could be regarded as wages or remuneration for their attendance. Fourth, rituals performed in times of the Nile's failure to rise and the prevalence of pestilence bore a close resemblance; countermeasures for the plague were considered to be of the same dimension as natural disasters, and all these were believed to be ultimately under the control of Allāh. Fifth, the sultan dressed like a Sufi, expressing himself as sincere and humble; his manner can be interpreted as behaving as an intercessor to Allāh for all the people in the land.

Meanwhile, banquets (*walimah*, *simāt*) on a large scale were often given by the ruling class in the cemetery areas. As stated earlier, rulers and the military elite were ardent in their support of construction activities in cemeteries, and every celebration for the completion of a building such as a *khānqāh*, for the recovery of health, or collective prayers, was marked by this sort of banquet. It was considered more a religious ritual than an amusement, and included recitation of the Quran, almsgiving on a large scale, and the distribution of food and slaughtered

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7:385–86; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 2:3:780–81, 3:1:219, 4:3:749, 822–23; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawāḍith*, 1:90; idem, *Al-Nujūm*, 10:204–5, 14:97–98, 15:424–25; al-'Aynī, *'Iqd al-Jumān*, 1:244, 383; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 3:184; al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Tibr al-Masbūk fī Dhayl al-Sulūk* (Cairo, repr. 1974), 311–12.

<sup>106</sup>Ohtoshi, "Muslims and Copts as Reflected in the *Ziyāra* Books and *Qarāfas*," 42–43.

<sup>107</sup>Additionally, Copts performed communal prayers for the swelling of the Nile yearly in churches, holding festivals along the Nile. All this may have created the impression of Copts as having a special relationship with this river. See Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Armanī (attributed), *Tārīkh*, 75–76, 96; Ibn al-Muqaffā (attributed), *Kitāb Siyar al-Ābā' al-Baṭārikah*, 2:3:213.



beasts. Many people of influence, those connected to religious institutions, and *faqīrs* assembled there.<sup>108</sup> All these factors, including the above-mentioned *ziyārāt* and the construction projects of rulers, lead to the conclusion that Cairene cemeteries formed a legitimate stage for rulers to act justly and generously. Moreover, on this stage one could be sanctified through the solemn atmosphere of the Cairene cemetery areas. At the same time, these places offered points of close contact between the ruling class and the common people, on occasions such as *ziyārah*, *ṣadaqah*, and *walimah*. Through the information networks among people of religious affairs, and hearsay among the commoners, news of the good deeds of the ruling elite may have spread from the cemeteries throughout the domain. If we look at it from the governmental point of view, notwithstanding that they might have sincerely aspired to the fulfillment of their prayers, such banquets could also be taken as a measure to win popularity among the masses.

The *Ṣaḥrā'* area was included in the itineraries of sultans' parades, for the area seems to have played a significant symbolic role in solemnifying the parades. Sultans, in their customary parade of enthronement, would first head for the Qubbat al-Naṣr in al-*Ṣaḥrā'*, then enter Cairo from the northern Naṣr Gate, and after marching through the decorated city, they would go out from the southern Zuwaylah Gate to return to the citadel, traversing a counterclockwise arc. Some of these parades are reported to have included Copts and Jews in their company. The shorter version of this parade, which made a circuit only around the citadel, also attached importance to the parade from the Qarāfah Gate. These courses were proper in a practical sense, but also served to demonstrate dignity, authority, and sanctity.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, in 659/1261, Sultan Baybars held a ceremony of enthronement in the vicinity of al-Qarāfah, which is understandable given the Qarāfah's function as a solemn stage, and its open spaces. Furthermore, in 677/1278, the ceremony of mourning one year after the death of Sultan Baybars was held in al-Qarāfah, and meals were served in tents, and "people of different classes assembled therein."<sup>110</sup> Likewise in 814/1411, Sultan Faraj held an appointment ceremony for a caliph, a qadi, and others at the mausoleum of Barqūq, indicating the official ceremonial characteristics of this area, as well as recognizing the majesty of his late father (Barqūq), and demonstrating legitimacy to his subjects.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 7:41; Ibn Shihnah, *Al-Badr al-Zāhir fī Nuṣrat al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qāyṭbāy* (Beirut, 1983), 52–53; Zetterstéen, *Beiträge*, 190–91, 227–28; Ibn Iyās, *Badā' i'*, 2:333–41; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 2:1:261–62, 2:2:390, 403.

<sup>109</sup> Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 7:41, 8:57, 87, 16:78–79; idem, *Mawrid al-Laṭāfah*, 77; al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāṣir*, 236; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:941–43, 2:2:343, 379; Ibn Iyās, *Badā' i'*, 2:390, 425; Abū Ṣāliḥ (attributed), *Tārīkh*, 75–76, 220.

<sup>110</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:2:648.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 452, 459, 461, 4:1:174–75; Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, *Al-Nahj al-Sadīd*, 424; Ibn al-Dawādārī,





Another important aspect of cemetery areas was military training and the games of horsemen. In the Mamluk period, games combined with military exercises, such as the lancers' exercises (sing. *la' b rammāḥ*), polo, and *qabaq* (a game in which a rider shoots arrows at a standing guitar-shaped target), were put in force as the practice of *furūsīyah* (chivalry), and some of their playing fields (*mayādīn*) were located in the cemetery districts. They included Maydān al-Qabaq in al-Šahrā', Maydān al-Nāširī on the periphery of al-Qarāfah al-Kubrā, and the space in front of the mausoleum of al-Ḥarrār in al-Qarāfah al-Kubrā alongside the Ḥabash Lake.<sup>112</sup> Maydān al-Nāširī was recognized as the playing field for polo, and Maydān al-Qabaq was known, as the name indicates, for the playing of the *qabaq* game. Notably, at circumcision ceremonies for sons of the ruling class, as well as games of *qabaq*, robes of honor were bestowed on principal figures of the dynasty, and a plenitude of goods was dispensed.<sup>113</sup>

Furthermore, lancers' exercises were repeated before the mausoleum of al-Ḥarrār. This custom began being conducted at the time of *dawrān al-maḥmil* (the ceremonial city circuit of the pilgrimage palanquin sent to Mecca), and on the first occasion, which was in the month of Rajab (there were two annually), was carried out in al-Qarāfah. Lancers in red garments and their horses, both armored, took part in mock battles. Young troopers standing on clogs fixed on their horses swung lances in both hands in staged combat. Upper class and common people alike would take pleasure in watching the games.<sup>114</sup> This exercise of lancers during the *dawrān al-maḥmil* became established as an annual observance, and as early as in 822/1419, it served to amuse Cairo/Fuṣṭāṭ inhabitants. Consequently, when it was cancelled, such as in 836/1433, 839/1436, and 848/1444, due to demoralization or military expeditions, the people were greatly disappointed and grew indignant. Conversely, their delight in the revival of this event was all the greater, yet when it resumed in 857/1453 after a ten-year interval, the details had already been forgotten, and, in 910/1505 and 920/1514, it was viewed as an old custom.<sup>115</sup>

*Kanz*, 8:73.

<sup>112</sup>Ohtoshi, "The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century," 188–90; J. Jomier, *Le mahmal et la caravane égyptienne des pèlerins de la Mecque* (Cairo, 1953), 35–42; D. Ayalon, "Notes on the Furūsīyya Exercises and Games in the Mamluk Sultanate," *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 9 (1961): 31–62; A. 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Deux jeux sportifs en Égypte," *Annales islamologiques* 7 (1974): 95–130.

<sup>113</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 8:16; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz*, 8:243–44; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:2:517–18.

<sup>114</sup>Ibn Zahrāh, *Al-Faḍā' il al-Bāhīrah fī Maḥāsīn Miṣr wa-al-Qāhīrah* (Cairo, 1969), 200; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 4:57–58; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:2:517–18. Cf. Al-Aḥḍab, *Al-Furūsīyah wa-al-Manāṣīb al-Ḥarbīyah* (Baghdad, 1984), 138–39; Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Madkhal*, 1:272 ff.

<sup>115</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādīth*, 1:15, 2:180; idem, *Al-Nujūm*, 15:76, 366, 16:68; al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Tibr al-Masbūk*, 95–96; Ibn Iyās, *Badā' i'*, 2:143, 4:72, 391.



During lancers' practices, the *mu'allim* (commander) of the band of lancers, accompanied by four pashas (*bāshāt al-arba'ah*), led the army corps. Qāyrbāy, the amir of one thousand, was noted as a master at this practice; he would always perform this exercise at al-Qarāfah al-Kubrā, aside from the *maḥmil*'s circuits. In addition, he innovated a new ceremony in which the Mamluks, four pashas, and a *mu'allim* would dismount in the order named and kiss the ground in front of the sultan.<sup>116</sup>

These exercises of military training and games denote not only that Cairene cemetery zones contained wide open spaces and were located beneath the citadel, which was the base for the troops, but also that they provided a place for contact with the common populace, as in cases of royal parades and rituals, which served as another measure for cultivating personal popularity and for impressing upon the people the rulers' dignity and legitimacy.

Despite the fact that Cairene graveyards were primarily sanctuaries comprised of sepulchers and religious institutions (as they occupied the area around the citadel, and also contained many open spaces), they became arenas for political actions of the ruling elite, particularly amirs and Mamluks.<sup>117</sup> Accordingly, one of the several gates of the citadel, Bāb al-Qarāfah, became a strategic point of the dynasty, manned by Mamluks and even blockaded if necessary.<sup>118</sup> These political actions can be summarized as follows: First, *turbahs*, *madrasahs*, and a *burj* (tower) in the Qarāfahs were utilized for informal confinement. In 678/1280, for instance, after his dismissal, Vizier Burhān al-Dīn was ordered to confine himself in a *madrasah* in the Qarāfah. Then, in 723/1323, the qadi Karīm al-Dīn was subjected to arrest and confiscation, and was placed under confinement in a mausoleum.<sup>119</sup> Second, during struggles for supremacy or for other reasons, several members of the elite concealed themselves within mausolea, their *fiṣqiyah*, or *zāwiyahs*, in ways that can be interpreted as a demonstration of the asylum aspect of Cairene cemeteries. Amir Lājīn (693/1294), Yashbak (803/1401), and Jarbāsh

<sup>116</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Hawādith*, 3:455–57, 493; idem, *Al-Nujūm*, 16:268; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā' al-Haṣr*, 332.

<sup>117</sup>Ohtoshi, "The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century," 190–92.

<sup>118</sup>Not only the Bāb al-Qarāfah of the citadel, but also the Bāb al-Sirr likely connected the citadel with al-Qarāfah district. Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:2:445, 2:1:229, 2:2:478, 2:3:600, 877, 3:1:274, 383, 3:2:604, 612, 632; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 10:58; idem, *Mawrid al-Laṭāfah*, 77; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz*, 8:360; Zetterstēen, *Beiträge*, 184; al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Aḥṣār* (Beirut, 1986), 144.

<sup>119</sup>Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 7:156; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 7:293; idem, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, 7:345; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz*, 8:310–11; Zetterstēen, *Beiträge*, 173; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 2:1:247–48, 255; al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, 2:383.



(865/1461) typify this aspect, and one of them was besieged and arrested there.<sup>120</sup> Third, examples of assassinations and murders there are too numerous to count. The two Qarāfahs and al-Ṣaḥrā' were advantageous in that corpses could be buried there immediately after a homicide. In 648/1251, 746/1346, and 748/1348, amirs assassinated sultans and entombed them there.<sup>121</sup> Fourth, battles in cemetery sections were best exemplified in the case of 804/1402, whereby a force of Amir Nawrūz took up a position near the Ḥabash Lake, were defeated by Sultan Faraj at the periphery of al-Qarāfah, and some major personnel were captured.<sup>122</sup>

As seen here, Cairene cemetery areas, which had been essentially the sanctuary of Egyptians, took on some aspects of what could be called, in my expression, "the courtyard of the Mamluks," which the military elite frequented as a result of their location (surrounding the citadel and being situated between the two cities of Cairo and Fuṣṭāṭ). Nevertheless, the government made vigorous efforts to supervise graveyard areas, which I will discuss next.

Further, regarding the interrelationships between big merchants and the cemetery districts, they were interred there, visited tombs of acquaintances or mausolea, and might themselves become objects of *ziyārah* if they became venerated by the people. What is more, they dispensed alms, or at least the people hoped that they would, as with the aforementioned merchant who was surrounded by the needy in the cemetery.<sup>123</sup> Some of them might have built religious institutions or shops, yet these sites would not primarily be for profit, but for the spending of profit.

#### GOVERNMENT SUPERVISION OF CEMETERIES<sup>124</sup>

Crime, political activities, the reputation of cemeteries as pleasure resorts where people of both genders and all ages and social strata mixed, and vulnerability to outside invasion: all these characteristics may have led rulers to regard Cairene cemeteries as disquieting and dangerous spaces. In addition, their location just beneath the citadel, the focal point of Mamluk rule, containing tombs of the ruling

<sup>120</sup> Al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd al-Jumān*, 3:239; Ibn Shāhīn, *Nayl al-Amal*, 6:126; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Muqaffá*, 3:516; idem, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:268, 448; idem, *Al-Sulūk*, 3:3:1063; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿīyah*, 8:173; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 2:113; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1:2:628, 2:386, 3:436.

<sup>121</sup> Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz*, 8:18, 381–82; al-Makīn ibn al-ʿAmīd, *Akhbār al-Ayyūbiyyīn*, *Bulletin d'études orientales* 15 (1958): 41, 44; al-ʿAynī, *Sayf al-Muhannad fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Muʿayyad Shaykh al-Mahmūdī* (Cairo, 1966–67), 214; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, 2:313, idem, *Al-Nujūm*, 10:172–173, Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1:1:518, al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 2:3:730, 737, 742–744, 3:1:332, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Durar al-Kāminah*, 2:84–85.

<sup>122</sup> Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 2:140–41; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿUqūd al-Farīdah*, 1:574–81.

<sup>123</sup> See note 60. One of the Kārimī merchants, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Aḥmad (d. 769/1368), built a large *turbah* in al-Qarāfah (al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:369).

<sup>124</sup> Ohtoshi, "The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century," 182–84.



elite themselves and their relatives, made them important. Through the supervision of solemn spaces where people came into contact with holiness, rulers may have endeavored to show their dignity. The Mamluk government, therefore, made strenuous efforts to supervise the cemeteries, and repeatedly took measures such as prohibiting women's visits.

The memorandum (*tadhkirah*) of the amir Kitbughā should be reexamined in this context. Issued in 679/1281 by Sultan Qalāwūn to Vice Sultan Zayn al-Dīn Kitbughā, the memorandum was also directed at all subjects by its being read at each minbar (pulpit). It contained directives regarding the two Qarāfahs, such as "*mujarradūn* (night watches) are to be customarily arranged around both Cairo and Fuṣṭāṭ, as well as in the district of al-Qarāfah. . . . It should not be neglected even for one night, and *mujarradūn* are not to leave their posts except at dawn or in complete daylight," or "on Friday nights, men and women should not assemble at the two Qarāfahs; particularly, women are prohibited from this."<sup>125</sup>

The *muḥtasib* (inspector of markets and public morals) should also inspect graveyards and their moral order, as is reflected in the *ḥisbah* treatises. Namely, he should oversee the selection of burial sites, methods concerning ablution of the dead, burial, visiting of tombs, as well as the shape of tombs, and he should also prevent women from ostentatious lamentation, visiting graves, and following the bier.<sup>126</sup> The ulama of all the schools of law supported enforcing discipline in cemetery areas, or even took the initiative in enforcement. Some of them cooperated with the governing authorities, and undertook to investigate alleged holy tombs outside the mortuary zones, moving them into a cemetery if they were legitimate.<sup>127</sup>

Furthermore, although executions were ordinarily carried out in the citadel and other places, graveyards, too, could function as execution grounds. This should be reinvestigated in relation to the supervision of cemetery regions. Mainly grave robbers were executed therein; however, in 793/1391, some influential amirs, who had been imprisoned, were beheaded in al-Ṣaḥrā'.<sup>128</sup> Yet, a more consistent and systematic measure for supervising cemeteries was created: the establishment of the office of *wālī al-Qarāfah* (governor of al-Qarāfah).<sup>129</sup>

According to al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418), the police districts (*wilāyāt al-*

<sup>125</sup> Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 7:197; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 8:94; Sato Tsugitaka, *State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam* (Leiden, 1997), 105–23.

<sup>126</sup> Ibn al-Ukhūwah, *Ma'ālim al-Qurbah fī Aḥkām al-Ḥisbah* (London, 1938), 46–51; Yaḥyá ibn 'Umar al-Andalusī, *Kitāb Aḥkām al-Sūq* (Cairo, 2004), 68–69.

<sup>127</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 2:3:649; Ohtoshi, "Visits, Holy Tombs and Relics in the Medieval Egyptian Muslim Society," 241–51.

<sup>128</sup> Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 1:331; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:1:515; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:2:306.

<sup>129</sup> Ohtoshi, "The City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the 12th to the 15th Century," 182–84.



*shurṭah*) of Mamluk Cairo and its surroundings were divided into three quarters: *wilāyat al-Qāhirah* (Cairo), *wilāyat Miṣr* (Fusṭāṭ), and *wilāyat al-Qarāfah*. An *amīr ‘asharah* was appointed as the *wālī* of al-Qarāfah under the supervision of the *wālī Miṣr*; nonetheless, at the time *Ṣubḥ* was written, the Qarāfah district was incorporated into the Fusṭāṭ district. After the annexation, the Fusṭāṭ *wālī* was upgraded and the office assumed by an *amīr ṭablkhānah*, still less than the Cairo *wālī*.<sup>130</sup> We will attempt to collate this account with those in other chronicles of the same period that show some discrepancies.

In 786/1385, “the first” (according to al-Maqrīzī) *wālī al-Qarāfah* (a separate position from *wālī Miṣr*) the amir of ten Sulaymān al-Kurdī, was nominated by Sultan Barqūq.<sup>131</sup> Perhaps before this, the governors (*wālī, mutawallī*) of al-Qarāfah were appointed occasionally, as noted in historical sources, such as in the Fatimid period (Ibn Shu‘lah al-Kutāmī), 672/1274, 724/1324 (Amir Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Amīr Ḥājib, who was said to have been *wālī* of al-Qarāfah and Fusṭāṭ), and 737/1336–37 (Ibn ‘Usaylah); yet they might have been in lesser positions, or under the superintendence of other *wālīs*, like the *wālī Miṣr*.<sup>132</sup> Then, in 792/1390, Sulaymān was assigned as *wālī Miṣr*, so there is a possibility that he might have held both positions concurrently.<sup>133</sup> In 801/1399, the two-Qarāfah district was added to the jurisdiction of the *wālī Miṣr*, Amir Ṣārim al-Dīn Ibrāhīm, who took the position of Sulaymān, and also in the month of Rajab in 803/1401, Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad, the *amīr ṭabar* (hatchet), assumed the position of *wālī al-Qarāfah*.<sup>134</sup> Eventually, in the month of Dhū al-Ḥijjah in 803/1401, the Qarāfah district was transferred to the *wālī* of Cairo, Amir Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭablāwī.<sup>135</sup> It is in this way that the Qarāfah *wālī’s* position was separated from or united with that of Fusṭāṭ or Cairo, possibly influenced by the individual situation of persons appointed as *wālī*, or the intention of the ruler.

After 803/1401, accounts regarding *wālī al-Qarāfah* disappear from the chronicles. Instead, the function of *nāzar al-Qarāfah* (supervisorship or controllership of al-Qarāfah), or its supervisor, *nāzir al-Qarāfah*, began to be recorded.<sup>136</sup> In 856/1452, for instance, Abū Bakr al-Muṣāri‘ died; he was “*nāzir* of

<sup>130</sup> Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 4:23.

<sup>131</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 3:2:525; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 1:106; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm*, 11:241. Although Ibn Iyās noted that the Qarāfah district was separate from the Cairo district, this account is not trustworthy. *Badā’i’*, 2:355–56.

<sup>132</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2:319; Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Zāhir* (Wiesbaden, 1983), 77; al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāzir*, 378.

<sup>133</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 3:2:717; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9:1:214.

<sup>134</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 3:2:927, 3:3:1054; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:518, 545, 620.

<sup>135</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 3:3:1069; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:633; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 2:118.

<sup>136</sup> Al-Biqā’ī, *Izhār al-‘Aṣr*, 1:199, 341; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 124, 161; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz*



the Imām al-Shāfi‘ī mausoleum, the Layth mausoleum, and all of al-Qarāfah. And the sultan had bestowed on him the controllership for mausolea of al-Qarāfah.” Abū Bakr al-Muṣāri‘, mentioned here, was originally one of the *awbāsh* (riffraff), but Sultan Jaqmaq promoted him to this position, whereby he was said to have enriched himself. Yūsuf Shāh (d. 876/1471), who was in fact *mu‘allim al-bannā’ in* (the master of royal builders), took over Abū Bakr al-Muṣāri‘’s post of *nazar al-Qarāfah* in 856/1452 and remained until 857/1453 when the sultan’s son-in-law Amir Burdbak seized it. In 892/1487, a qadi was dismissed from the *nazar al-Qarāfatayn*; meanwhile in 897/1492, *anzār* (pl. of *nazar*) and similar offices, such as al-Baybarsīyah, al-Sa‘īdīyah, *waqf al-Šāliḥ*, and al-Qarāfatayn, were under the jurisdiction of the *ustādār* Taghrībirdī, and then were transferred to the *dawādār* Taghrī Barmish. In 901/1495, (qadi) Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 912/1506) was appointed to the position of *nazar al-Qarāfatayn* (the two-Qarāfahs), as well as *nazar* of *waqfs*. If we compare this account side by side with others, we can make the conjecture that the function of this *nazar al-Qarāfah* (or *al-Qarāfatayn*) would be to inspect or administer mausolea and *zāwiyahs* in the two Qarāfahs, including those of Imām al-Shāfi‘ī and Imām Layth. Thus, this position likely concentrated on the administration of mausolea, but its relationship with fiscal duties and control of *waqfs* in each mausoleum remains rather obscure. Yet, seen from other *nāzirs’* duties, *nazar al-Qarāfah* can be assumed to have dealt in some way with *waqf* administration and the financial affairs of mausolea in the Qarāfah.

On the other hand, regarding the Ṣaḥrā’ area, we find only the function of *nazar*, such as *nazar turbat al-Zāhir Barqūq* (superintendency of Barqūq’s mausoleum), but not the *wālī*. In 856/1452, Sultan Jaqmaq nominated al-Shaykh ‘Alī al-Muḥtasib for *nazar turbat al-Zāhir Barqūq*, following the dismissal of al-Muḥibb ibn al-Ashqar, who was its *nāzir* according to the stipulations set by the *waqf* founder. Al-Shaykh ‘Alī (d. 862/1458) had experience as the *muḥtasib* of Fustāt and of Cairo successively, and al-Muḥibb ibn al-Ashqar, who was *kātib al-sirr* (confidential secretary), held the *nazar* of *khānqāh* Siryāqūs after his dismissal from Turbat al-Zāhir Barqūq. The *nazar* of the Ṣaḥrā’ area seems likely to have been concerned with supervising mausolea financially and administratively through the management of *waqfs*, as seen through *waqf* documents as well as chronicles or biographies.<sup>137</sup>

*al-Kalām*, 2:856, 3:1005, 1265; idem, *Al-Ḍaw’*, 11:100–1; idem, *Al-Tibr*, 385; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā’ al-Ḥaṣr*, 469; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 3:317, 4:97.

<sup>137</sup> Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 125, 196, 383; idem, *Al-Nujūm*, 16:194–95; al-Biqā’ī, *Iḏhār al-‘Aṣr*, 1:206, 340, 350, 440, 2:386; al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw’*, 11:185, 6:47. The complexity of who controlled the madrasah of Barqūq, and the share of the *kātib al-sirr* therein, are depicted in J. Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo* (Princeton, 1992), 65–66. Cf. S. L. Mostafa, *Madrasa, Ḥānqāh und Mausoleum des Barqūq in Kairo* (Glückstadt, 1982). Also regarding *nāzir*



To conclude, *nāzirs* of al-Qarāfah and Turbat Barqūq, especially the latter, seem more to be involved in the financial and administrative management of mausolea, in contrast to the *wālī al-Qarāfah*, whose function rather laid stress on the policing and supervision of the districts. The aforementioned *nazar* of al-Sayyidah Nafisah's mausoleum, which was undertaken by caliphs, should be viewed in this respect.

#### WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION WITH CEMETERIES

During the Mamluk period, women's visits to cemeteries can be clearly observed. These visits became a focus of harsh diatribes by ulama and of supervision by *muhtasibs*. Their criticism pertained mainly to the mingling of women and men, and moral laxity.<sup>138</sup> According to Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 737/1336), "on Thursdays they go out to the tombs, and stay there on Fridays, then return home on Saturdays; likewise on the day of 'Āshūrā' (10th of the month of Muḥarram), two Feasts (*īdān*) and the night of mid-Ramaḍān." Moreover, they went out visiting the mausoleum of al-Ḥusayn on Mondays, al-Sayyidah Nafisah on Wednesdays or Saturdays, and on Thursdays and Fridays to Imām al-Shāfi'ī in al-Qarāfah, and also the tombs of their relatives.<sup>139</sup> It should be recalled that al-Tifāshī (d. 651/1253) had already portrayed al-Qarāfah in his compilation of anecdotes as a place where women assembled.<sup>140</sup> The Mamluk government repeatedly proclaimed the prohibition of women's visits to cemeteries, such as in 679/1280, 708/1309, 793/1391, 824/1421, 825/1422, 835/1432, 841/1438, and 864/1460, usually prior to the feast celebrating the end of Ramaḍān. Yet, several records, including frequent criticism and bans on women's *ziyārah*, clearly show that women were integral to visiting customs in Cairene cemeteries.<sup>141</sup>

Furthermore, it is worth noting that women of all classes visited cemeteries, and they could be interred therein, as well. Among them, there must have been women who helped with the fabrication of holy tombs, by carrying soil in their veils for instance, and even women of the ruling elite, who would visit, pray, and pledge ample donations to cemeteries, as in the case of the mothers of Sultan Ismā'īl and Amir Anūk. In fact they acted as the very mediators between the royal elite and the common people by describing the conditions and merits of *ziyārah* to

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*al-waqf*, see L. Fernandes, *The Evolution of a Sufi Institution in Mamluk Egypt: The Khanqah* (Berlin, 1988), 60–63; T. Ito, "Aufsicht und Verwaltung der Stiftungen im mamlukischen Ägypten," *Der Islam* 80 (2003): 46–66.

<sup>138</sup> Ohtoshi, "The Manners, Customs, and Mentality," 29–30.

<sup>139</sup> Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Madkhal*, 1:268, 2:17.

<sup>140</sup> Al-Tifāshī, *Nuzhat al-Albāb fī-mā lā Yūjad fī Kitāb* (London, 1992), 238–40.

<sup>141</sup> Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 7:197; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 2:1:51; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 1:334; Ibn Iyās, *Badā' i'*, 2:84, 142, 186; Ohtoshi, "The Manners, Customs, and Mentality," 29–30.



their husbands or families.<sup>142</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Cairene cemeteries were open to people of all social strata, regardless of ethnic origin, social status, language, gender, age, occupation, disparity in wealth, physical handicap, religion, place of origin, illness, or skin color.<sup>143</sup> Commoners could participate there through frequent visits and the creation or reidentification of tombs, as is well reflected in the guidebooks of *al-ziyārah*. Through *ziyārah* texts, writings on the tombs, and hearsay, people were able to form their own discourses. The ulama also maintained an association with Cairene graveyards through their writings and preachings, while the ruling elite held banquets, communal prayers, or engaged in political struggles there. Everyone could find his own medium through which to relate to the cemeteries, and had the right to visit or be buried there. In this sense, Cairene cemetery areas formed a public locus in which people of any social status participated in their creation or improvement.<sup>144</sup> The public character of al-Qarāfah is well reflected in what al-Shaykh ‘Alī al-Turkī (d. 804/1401–2) was told by Shaykh ‘Umar, while they were walking through al-Qarāfah. “‘Alī, al-Qarāfah is the cemetery for Muslims, and no one individual can possess it, nor is one allowed to take [even] a portion of it for oneself.”<sup>145</sup>

Relationships in the cemeteries did not always depend on hierarchy; rather, equality was emphasized. Personal relationships among visitors to Cairene cemetery

<sup>142</sup>Ohtoshi, “Visits, Holy Tombs and Relics in the Medieval Egyptian Muslim Society,” 241–51; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 2:3:649–50; idem, *Al-Muqaffā*, 2:312; al-Sakhāwī, *Tuhfah*, 181.

<sup>143</sup>This characteristic also held true within the cities of Cairo and Fustāt. According to *ziyārah* treatises, sick persons rushed into cemetery areas to pray for their healing, albeit the *ḥisbah* tract warns against the mingling of hermaphrodites with women in funerals. See Ibn al-Ukhūwah, *Ma‘ālim*, 51.

<sup>144</sup>In general, the definition of “public” can delineate anything official relating to a nation, such as public education or public enterprise; anything common to all people, such as public welfare or public order; or anything open to everyone, such as information or a space from which no one will be rejected. Additionally, “publicness” is usually placed opposite “community,” and the latter is defined as the relationship unconsciously established between persons, before the emergence of individual consciousness, such as family. If “public” is understood as a notion adoptable only for modern bourgeois society derived from the modern West, any efforts to utilize this conception within the context of Cairene cemeteries are rendered inaccurate from the beginning. Likewise, a simple application of Western concepts to Middle Eastern studies should be avoided in general. This article does not employ directly the recent definitions and arguments on the public sphere, but still reflects them to some extent. The employment of the word and conception of “public” as a framework for reference and comparison can be thought of as stimulating to argument, which helps us to discover new aspects of Cairene cemeteries. In this sense, this article is evocative rather than deductive. See J. Saito, *Publicness* (in Japanese) (Tokyo, 2000).

<sup>145</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘Uqūd al-Farīdah*, 2:510.





districts were generally not communal, but rather temporal. Institutions such as *waqf* or shari'ah, then, pervaded the whole of this composition. That is why the government ordered *muhtasibs* to supervise these cemetery areas, and *wālīs* to control them. In addition, they sent their superintendents (*nāzīr*) to oversee mausolea's finances through the *waqf* system, and the government even supported the burial expenditures of commoners through *waqf* income.

The way people related to Cairene cemeteries, however, would have varied according to their religious beliefs, social status or personal situations, gender, and so forth. Particularly, internalized religious attitudes and values might have affected these relationships greatly; hence Sufis, who were devoted to ascetic practices there, differed from rigid scholars, who tried to prohibit people from visiting holy tombs. Thus the involvement of all classes does not mean that their interests and activities there were always in harmony. On the contrary, they were often in conflict with one another; for instance, the ruling elite undertook to supervise the activities of commoners and women. Ulama, too, harshly condemned them. Hence, Cairene cemetery areas were loci where power relationships were acted out.

Was there, then, any category of society who were excluded from visiting Cairene cemetery areas? As I mentioned above, they were open and accessible to all people, from sultans to commoners. It is worth underlining here that women went there to visit famous mausolea and fulfill their prayers through the mediation of the entombed Muslim saints. This habit was often criticized by scholars and sometimes prohibited by the government, yet women were never actually expelled from the cemeteries, and the Qarāfahs retained their fame as a spot for women to assemble. Nor were people from outside Egypt or Cairo excluded, so that it was a tourist spot not only for Muslims, from Andalusian Spain to Central Asia, but seemingly also for European travelers.

As for religious differences, the issue is rather subtle. Generally speaking, visits by non-Muslims to the Qarāfahs and al-Ṣaḥrā' may possibly be presumed to have been avoided by non-Muslims themselves, and not welcomed readily by Muslims. Nonetheless, we should never forget the fact that the communal prayers in Cairene cemetery areas in the Mamluk period always mobilized a band of Copts and Jews. Additionally, as the cemetery of Coptic Christians was situated on the southern border of al-Qarāfah al-Kubrā, and the Jews' cemetery was also located close to the Ḥabash Lake, strictly speaking, their cemeteries were on the edge of the Cairene cemetery zones. And it is possible that they made visits to their own cemeteries by passing through Muslim cemetery areas. Moreover, European non-Muslim travelers possibly traversed them and left accounts of their own visits. Since the Cairene cemeteries were popular pleasure spots for Egyptians, there is a possibility that non-Muslims mingled with Muslims, as is frequently



observed during feasts in Mamluk Egypt. Thus we see a contrast between *ziyārah* to Cairene cemeteries and the Meccan pilgrimage, which prohibits non-Muslims in the holy zone.

Yet people who violated public morals, as expressed in the *ḥisbah* tracts, were the first to be excluded from the cemetery areas, at least in theory. Also, thieves, people of shameless behavior, those who insulted Islamic values, and destroyers of tombs were to be excluded. In reality, however, as mentioned earlier, the Cairene graveyards were famed for their thieves and moral laxity.

Finally, it can be seen that there was a difference in function and character between the two Qarāfahs and al-Ṣaḥrā'. If I may generalize by contrasting them, the Qarāfahs were a burial district for venerated people and commoners, and a visitation site for people of all classes. Meanwhile al-Ṣaḥrā' projected a more official character, where members of the ruling elite preferred to be interred, and for the common people it was usually not a place to visit for fulfillment of their prayers, except in instances when they were mobilized. *Ziyārah* treatises, therefore, seldom depicted tombs of sultans and *khānqāhs* there.

