

MAMILLA CEMETERY

HISTORICAL TOMBSTONES IN ARABIC

THE cemetery of Mamilla lies to the west of the Old City of Jerusalem, some 300 feet from the city wall. It was used as a burial-place by the inhabitants of this town at least since early Byzantine time, when a church to the memory of Sta. Mamilla—hence the name of the cemetery—stood in the middle of it.¹ It is perhaps the Beth Memel of the Talmud.² Eustratius, of the Monastery of Mar Saba, when describing the Persian conquest of Jerusalem in 614 A.D. mentioned 'Mamilli' as one of the cemeteries where part of the Byzantine victims of that well-known massacre were buried.³ In his Chronicle of Jerusalem and Hebron, Mujir ad-Din calls it Mamilla, and mentions another Christian name, Babila, and the Jewish one, Beit Mello.⁴

The centre of this cemetery is occupied by a large pool, which measures 316 feet east and west. The east wall is 218 feet long, the west 200 feet. The average depth of the pool is 19 feet. Thirty-eight feet from the lower end of the pool is a chamber, in which the conduit narrows from 21 inches square to 9 inches square, and can be closed by a stone to regulate the flow of the collected rainwater of this pool to the so-called Pool of Hezekiah or the Pool of the Patriarch's Bath in the Christian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, as well as the north-west tower of the Citadel. There are also three caves to the west of this cemetery.

Mamilla has been the principal Muslim cemetery in Jerusalem since the Ayyubid conquest of the town in 1187 under Saladin, and ceased to be so only after 1928. It has been specially venerated by Muslims because a descendant of the Prophet called Abu 'Abd-illāhi Muḥammad b. 'Ibrāhim b. 'Aḥmad, the Qurashi, the Hashimite, left al-Jazīra-l-Khaḍrā, a town opposite Ceuta in Spanish Morocco, for Jerusalem, where he died in 599 A.H. (1202/3 A.D.) and was buried in Mamilla.⁵ The only mausoleum still existing whose owner lived in the late Ayyubid period and died in the early Mamluk period is the Kubakiya.⁶ Between the years 789 and 800 A.H. (1387-1398 A.D.), as-Sitt Tunshuq al-Mudhaffariya, a charitable woman whose one-time residence in Jerusalem is used now as a Muslim orphanage, built here a dome over the tomb of her brother Bahādur at al-Qalandariya, a Byzantine chapel known as the 'Red Monastery,' converted into a zawiya called al-Qalandariya, after a chief of a group of dervishes named ash-Sheikh Ibrāhīm al-Qalandarī, who stayed here together with his followers, and who was then supported by that benevolent lady. The zawiya collapsed about

¹ C. Clermont-Ganneau, *Archaeological Researches in Palestine*, Vol. I, London, 1899, pp. 242-244.

² C. Warren and C. R. Conder, *The Survey of Western Palestine (Jerusalem)*, London, 1884, p. 375.

³ P. P. Peeters, 'La Prise de Jérusalem par les Perses,' in *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, Beyrouth, Vol. IX (1923), p. 38.

⁴ Mujir ad-Din, II, p. 413.

⁵ Mujir ad-Din, II, p. 488.

⁶ Max van Berchem, *CIA*, Part II, Fasc. I (Jérusalem Ville), Cairo, 1923, no. 68, pp. 204-210.

893 A.H. (1487/8 A.D.),¹ and the modern 'Palace Hotel' occupies the site where the Qalandariya once stood. The road leading to Terra Sancta College and separating the Qalandariya from Mamilla was constructed in Turkish days when 'Umar 'Abdus-Salām Husseini was the Mayor of Jerusalem. Besides this there existed once at the north-east extremity of this cemetery a special wing where the Jerusalem followers of the popular Ṣūfī 'Pole', Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī, were buried.² Only one tomb with a long epitaph of this mausoleum remains.

The tombs of this cemetery were numbered by order of the Supreme Muslim Council, as it had been the intention during the Mandate to have the grounds of the Mamilla Cemetery included in the building zone of the Town Planning Area of Jerusalem.

In July 1946 I had the opportunity to trace the ancient tombs of this cemetery, and I was encouraged to prepare these epitaphs for publication by my teacher, Prof. L. A. Mayer, to whom my thanks are extended for his courtesy in revising this article.

EPITAPH I (Pl. I, no. 2), 697 A.H. (1297/8 A.D.). Slab of hard limestone inset in the W. side of Tomb no. 127/1, 12 m. to the S. of the Kubakiya. Dimensions measured within the frame 45 × 77 cm.; seven of originally eight lines of provincial Mamluk naskhi; many diacritical points and differentiating signs serving as filling ornaments.

- (١)
 (٢) (بسملة). كل من
 (٣) عليها فان ويبقا (sic) و(جه ربك ذو الحلال)
 (٤) والاكرام. هذا قبر الامير صلاح الدين محمد
 (٥) ازدمر السلحدار الناصري^٣ اخو (sic) المقر الأ
 (٦) شرف السيفي سالار^٤ كافل المملله الشريفه
 (٧) توفى (sic) الى رحمة الله تعالى سنة سبعة (sic) وتسعين وستماية
 (٨) رحمه الله ورحم من ترحم عليه وجميع المسلمين.

(1-3) . . . Qur'an LV. 26, 27. . . . (4) This is the tomb of the Amir Ṣalāh ad-Dīn Muhammad (5) Ūzdamur, the Armour-bearer (officer) of (al-Malik) an-Nāṣir, brother of His Most Noble (6) Excellency Seif ad-Dīn Sallār, Viceroy of the noble provinces. (7) He passed into the mercy of God the Exalted in the year 697 (1297/8 A.D.), (8) may God have mercy upon him, and on him who implores mercy on him, and (also) on all Muslims.

¹ Mujir ad-Dīn, II, pp. 413-414.

² *Ibid.*, p. 494.

³ Gaston Wiet, *al-Manhal aṣ-Ṣāfi*, Cairo, 1932, no. 390, p. 57, where this amir is recorded to have died in 696 A.H. (1296/7 A.D.). For correct pronunciation of this name, see L. A. Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, Oxford, 1933, p. 247.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1062, p. 152. Died in prison in 710 A.H. See also L. A. Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, Oxford, 1933, pp. 196-197, and Mujir ad-Dīn, II, p. 493. In Ramadān, 702 A.H. (April, 1303 A.D.), al-Amīr Kaykaldī an-Najmī supervised the building of the entrance door and minaret of the shrine of Sheikh 'Ali al Bakkā in Hebron, by order of al-Amīr Seif ad-Dīn Sallār, then Viceroy and Governor-General of the noble provinces of Egypt and Syria.

It is worthwhile noticing that the word 'brother' on this epitaph seems to be the 'blood-fraternity' (*Blutsbrüderschaft*) of young Mamluks who were members of the same rank (*tabaqa*). A good number of Mamluk firmans used to be issued by the 'brother' (اخوه) of the ruling sultan.

EPITAPH 2 (Pl. I, no. 1), 713 A.H. (1313 A.D.). Slab of hard limestone embedded in the W. side of Tomb no. 703 in the W. extremity of the cemetery beside the tomb of al-Qurashi. Dimensions measured on squeeze within the frame 38 × 45.5 cm.; seven lines of provincial Mamluk naskhi; a few differentiating signs and diacritical points serving mainly as filling ornaments.

- (١) بسملة.
- (٢) ربنا آمنا بما انزلت واتبعنا
- (٣) الرسول فاكتبنا مع الشاهدين
- (٤) هذا قبر الفقير الراجي رحمة الله وغفرانه
- (٥) القاضي شرف الدين منيف¹ الحاكم بالقدس
- (٦) الشريف توفي الى رحمة الله ثالث عشر
- (٧) جمادى الاول (sic) سنة ثلاث عشرة وسبعمائة.

(1-3) . . . *Qur'an* III. 53. . . . (4) *This is the tomb of the one yearning and hoping for the mercy of God and His forgiveness, (5) the Qādī Sharaf ad-Dīn Munīf, ruling in Jerusalem. (6) He passed to the mercy of God on the 13th of (7) Jumada I in the year 713 (September 5th, 1313 A.D.).*

The deceased is Sharaf ad-Dīn Munīf b. Suleimān b. Kāmil as-Sulami, the Shafī'ite Qādī of Jerusalem. Born in Adhru' in Syria on 14th Safar, 643 A.H. (= July 11th, 1245 A.D.), Qādī in Jerusalem in 698 A.H. (= 1298/9 A.D.) and thereafter.

EPITAPH 3 (Pl. I, no. 3), 722 A.H. (1322 A.D.). Slab of hard limestone embedded in the W. side of Tomb no. 253, in the N.E. side of the cemetery and 35 m. to the N. of the Kubakiya. Dimensions measured on squeeze within the frame 63 × 85 cm.; eight lines of elegant Mamluk naskhi, with many diacritical points and differentiating signs, often disguised as ornaments, filling the intervening spaces.

- (١) الله
- (٢) بسم الرحمن الرحيم.
- (٣) يديشهم ربههم برحمة منه ورضوان
- (٤) وجنات لهم فيها نعيم مقيم خالدين فيها ابدا.
- (٥) هذا قبر العبد الفقير الى الله تعالى الشيخ.
- (٦) جلال الدين ابراهيم بن محمد القلانسي رحمه الله.
- (٧) توفي الى رحمة الله تعالى ورضوانه ليلة يسفر صباحها عن
- (٨) يوم الاحد ثالث ذو (sic) القعدة سنة اثنين (sic) وعشرين وسبعمائة.

¹ Mujir ad-Dīn, II, p. 467.

(1) *Allah*. (2) *In the name of the Compassionate, the Merciful*. (3-4) *Qur'an ix. 22 and part of 23*. (5) *This is the tomb of the servant yearning for God, the Exalted, ash-Sheikh* (6) *Jalāl ad-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Qalānisi, may God have mercy upon him*. (7) *He passed into the mercy of God and His forgiveness at a night the morning of which was* (8) *Sunday, 3rd Dhu-l-Qi'da of the year 722*.

The deceased is Jalāl ad-Dīn Abu Is-ḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Zein ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ahmad b. Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad al-'Uqeilī, known as Ibn al-Qalānisi. Born in 654 A.H. and was a man-of-letters in Cairo, where the Mamluk amirs built him a zawiya and visited him. He was deaf. He came to Jerusalem, where he died on Saturday evening, 3rd Dhu-l-Qi'da, 722 A.H., at the age of sixty-eight.¹

Jalal ad-Din is the brother of 'Izz ad-Din Ahmad b. al-Qalanisi, Inspector-General of Police (محتسب) and Treasurer (ناظر الخزانة) in Damascus, who died in Damascus in 736 A.H.²

As a matter of fact, lines 1 and 2 of this epitaph form the Basmala, but the arrangement of the word Allah being out of the line is due to the intention of elevating the Divine name.

EPITAPH 4 (Pl. I, no. 4), 733 A.H. (1332 A.D.). Slab of hard limestone embedded in the W. side of Tomb no. 248, in the N.E. side of the cemetery and 34 m. to the N. of the Kubakiya. Dimensions measured on squeeze within the frame, 38 × 55 cm.; five lines of provincial Mamluk naskhi; many diacritical points and a few differentiating signs, all serving mainly as filling ornaments.

(١) بسملة
 (٢) هذا قبر العبد الفقير الى الله
 (٣) تعالى الشيخ حسام الدين
 (٤) توفي في شهر صفر سنة ثلاثة
 (٥) وثلاثين وسبعماية.

(1) *Basmala*. (2) *This is the tomb of the servant yearning for God*, (3) *be He exalted, ash-Sheikh Husām ad-Dīn*. (4) *He died in the month of Safar in the year* (5) 733.

EPITAPH 5 (Pl. II, no. 5), 736 A.H. (1335 A.D.). Slab of hard limestone embedded in the W. side of Tomb no. 247, N.E. of the cemetery. Dimensions measured on squeeze within the frame, 63 × 33 cm.; five lines of provincial Mamluk naskhi.

(١) بسملة. ان المتقين في جنات و
 (٢) عيون ادخلوها بسلام آمين. هذا قبر العبد
 (٣) الفقير الى الله تعالى الشيخ الزاهد العالم
 (٤) ابو (sic) يعقوب توفي الى رحمة الله آخر ربيع الاول سنة ست وثلاثين
 (٥) وسبعماية.

(1) and part of (2) *Basmala*. *Qur'an*, xv. 46 and 47. (2) *This is the tomb of the servant* (3) *yearning for God, be He exalted, the pious and learned Sheikh* (4) *Abu Ya'qūb*. *He passed into the mercy of God on the last day of Rabi' I in the year* (5) 736.

¹ Mujir ad-Din, II, p. 495, and Abu-l-Mahasin Ibn Taghri Bardi, *al-Manhal aṣ-Ṣāfi*, Vol. I (photostat at the Hebrew University), p. 26 (A).

² al-Hanbali, *Shadharāt adh-Dhahab*, VI, Cairo, 1351 A.H., pp. 56 and 112.

EPITAPHS 6 and 7 (Pl. II, no. 6), 740 A.H. (1339 A.D.) and 749 A.H. (1348 A.D.). Slab of hard limestone to the E. of the Pool. Divided into two parts by a thick perpendicular line to serve for two epitaphs each of four lines of elegant Mamluk naskhi; a few differentiating signs and diacritical points serving mainly as filling ornaments. Dimensions measured on squeeze within the frame, 63 × 35 cm.

Epitaph to the right reads:

- (١) بسملة
 (٢) هذا قبر الشيخ صلاح
 (٣) لدين خليل بن سالم مات ليلة
 (٤) الجمعة العشرين من ربيع الاول سنة اربعين وسبعمية.

(1) *Basmala*. (2) *This is the tomb of ash-Sheikh Ṣalāḥ* (3) *ad Dīn Khalīl b. Sālim*. Died on the night of (4) *Friday, 20th Rabi' I, in the year 740*.

Epitaph to the left reads:

- (١) بسملة.
 (٢) هذا قبر الحاج ابراهيم بن
 (٣) سالم توفي يوم الاربعاء ثاني
 (٤) شهر شوال سنة تسع واربعين وسبعمية.

(1) *Basmala*. (2) *This is the tomb of Hajj Ibrāhīm b.* (3) *Sālim*. Died on *Wednesday, 2nd of the* (4) *month of Shawwāl, in the year 749*.

EPITAPH 8 (Pl. III, no. 8), 761 A.H. (1359 A.D.). Slab of hard limestone inset in the W. side of Tomb no. 310, extreme N. of the cemetery, 80 m. to the N. of the Kubakiya. Dimensions measured on squeeze within the frame, 77 × 111 cm.; eight lines of elegant Mamluk naskhi, with many diacritical points and differentiating signs, all serving mainly as filling ornaments.

- (١) بسملة.
 (٢) للذين احسنوا الحسنى وزيادة ولا يرهق
 (٣) وجوههم قتر ولا ذلة اولئك اصحاب
 (٤) الجنة هم فيها خالدون. هذا قبر القطب الشهير الشيخ
 (٥) الامام العالم العامل مرابي الطالبين مرشد السالكين
 (٦) ولي الله في العالمين الشيخ علي العسني البسطامي¹
 (٧) قدس الله روحه ونور ضريحه توفي عصر يوم الخميس ثاني عشر
 (٨) من شهر صفر سنة احدى وستين وسبع مائة والحمد لله وحده.

(1) *Basmala*. (2-4) *Qur'an* x, 26. (4) *This is the tomb of the famous Pole, the Sheikh, (5) the Imam, the learned, the Governing, The Educator of the (Dervish) students, the Guide of (those) walking*

¹ Mujir ad-Din, II, p. 499, and ad-Durar al-Kāmina, II, p. 259 (no. 2138).

(the Path), (6) *God's Saint on Earth, the Sheikh 'Ali of 'Usfān,*¹ *the Bistāmi.* (7) *May Allah sanctify his soul and enlighten his tomb! Died on the afternoon of Thursday, the 12th. (8) of the month of Safar, in the year 761. Praise be to God, the Unique.*

During his lifetime, the deceased was the head of the Bistāmiya Sufi sect in Jerusalem, whose zawiya still exists in Upper Bab Hutta quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, and who followed then the steps of the Persian Sufi, Abu Yazid al-Bistāmi, who died between 261 and 264 A.H. (875-877/8 A.D.). The well-known Ghūṣein family of er-Ramle are the guardians of the Bistāmi Waqf property.

EPITAPH 9 (Pl. III, no. 9), 948 A.H. (1541/2 A.D.). Marble slab embedded in the W. side of Tomb no. 243, some 15 m. to the N.E. of the pool. Dimensions measured on squeeze within the frame, 41.5 × 70 cm.; six lines of Early Ottoman Thulth, the first two lines of which are of smaller letters. Many diacritical points and a few differentiating signs serving mainly as filling ornaments.

- (١) يرحم الله امرى² (sic) اذا استغفره ودعا لي بالمغفرة
 (٢) هذا قبر العبد الفقير الى الله تعالى
 (٣) السعيد الشهيد المحتاج
 (٤) الى رحمت (sic) الله تعالى علي بن يعقوب
 (٥) المتوفا (sic) صاحب القبر من شهور
 (٦) في سنة ثمانية (sic) واربعين وتسعمائة.

(1) *May God be merciful to a man if he asked Him for forgiveness and prayed for my forgiveness.*
 (2) *This is the tomb of the servant yearning for Allah, may He be exalted, (3) the happy, the martyr, who is in need (4) of God's mercy, may He be exalted, 'Ali b. Ya'qūb, (5) the deceased, the owner of the tomb, in the months (6) of the year 948.*

EPITAPH 10 (Pl. II, no. 7), 965 A.H. (1557/8 A.D.). Marble slab covering the tomb of Abi 'Abd-illāhi-l-Qurashi in the W. extremity of the cemetery near Tomb no. 703. Dimensions measured on squeeze within the frame, 65 × 35 cm.; three lines of poetry in Ottoman Thulth; a few differentiating signs and diacritical points serving mainly as filling ornaments.

- (1) *Sheikh 'Abdullah Qurashi, that is, the centre of miracles,
 Which 'indicate' the time of that chief of saints;*
 (2) *(has) his resting-place in the vicinity of Jerusalem, called Mamilla,
 Where the light of mercy is descending by night and day.*
 (3) *He who restored his shrine in Babilla was that true king.
 The chronogram is, 'In the World the King did beautiful things.'*

A.H. 965 (=began on Sunday, October 24th, 1557)

¹ Near Mecca (cf. *Yāqūt*, III, p. 673).

² For the spelling of 'Amra' = 'imru', see *Islamica*, Vol. I (1925), p. 1.

- (۱) شیخ عبد الله قرشي^۱ یعنی مدارکم اثار^۲
 اصفیا سروراندن اول اثار روزگار
 (۲) مرقد بیت المقدس قریبدر مامله نام
 نور رحمت^۳ نازل اولور لیل ونهار
 (۳) مشهدين تعمير ايدن اول شاه حق^۴ بابلاندا
 قلدي تاريخي جهانده شاه خويباه كار^۵.

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HAMDI NUBANI

¹ Mujir ad-Din, II, p. 488. Sheikh Abu 'Abdillah al-Qurashi belonged to the noblest pre-Islamic Meccan family, the Banū Hāshim, to whom the Prophet belonged. Had he been a Turk, he would have been called a 'sultan,' a title reserved for saints who wielded some 'power' over natural events.

² These 'manifest' miracles were alluded to by Mujir ad-Din himself, once Chief Justice of Jerusalem and Hebron in the late Mamluk period, who testifies that his prayers, offered near the tomb of al-Qurashi and that of ash-Sheikh Arslān near by, were fulfilled.

³ *nūr-i rahmet* (lit.: 'the light pouring down' like rain). *Rahmèt* as rain is first mentioned in Sura VII, verse 56.

⁴ 'That true king,' in contradistinction to the 'spiritual king,' as it were, is the reigning Ottoman Sultan. In both cases, however, the title 'Sultān' is only hinted at.

⁵ It may tentatively be suggested that the year 965 (began October 24th, 1557), and written below the inscription, indicates the second restoration carried out during the reign of the Grand Turk, Suleimān the Magnificent (1520-1566). Mujir ad-Din records the first restoration of the tomb by Sheikh Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣafadi in the months of 722 A.H. (began January 20th, 1322). The chronogram, as it now stands (=68+306+845=1219 A.H.) (=1803/4 A.D.). Therefore, this is the third restoration of the tomb during the reign of Selim III (1789-1809). Hence Turkish is used.

The scanning of these doggerel verses is fifteen syllables to the first and thirteen to the second hemistich of each verse, thus being neither 'Arabic' nor 'Persian' in metre.