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THE PRIVATE LEVANTINE ZENGID, AYYUBID, AND MAMLUK CEMETERIES: A STUDY ACCORDING TO THE ISLAMIC AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Many private tombs have spread in the cities of Levant, such as Damascus, Jerusalem (*Al-Quds*), and Aleppo which belong to sultans, kings, Zengid princes, Ayyubids, Mamluks, and some notables of Levantine society, including worship men and merchants. This study was conducted in order to shed light on these tombs with the aim of showing: the urban elements which composed it, and describing them as urban to indicate whether these buildings are of a modest or luxurious style, with the necessity of clarifying the position of Islamic law on these elements. It also focuses on learning about the customs of the Levantine Community, their impressions towards death and private cemeteries, and what their daily practices are towards them. It also shows whether they left them abandoned to disappear due to the factors of erosion and passage of years, or did they preserve their architecture. In addition to clarifying the true concept of the name of private cemeteries among Levantine people. One of the most important findings of the study is that the word soil (*Turba*) which means private cemetery, has become among Levantines as a synonymous with the word mosque, school, library, and orphanage. So, the concept of private Levantine cemeteries has changed from a deserted place inhabited by the dead, shrouded in sadness and fear, to a bright, filled place with life, inhabited by the living alongside the dead, and a place of joy and a sense of hope. The private Levantine cemeteries contributed in supporting the Islamic scientific movement - with their urban elements - they became an icon embodying the art of Islamic material civilization that was employed to serve Islamic intellectual civilization.

KEYWORDS:

Cemetery; graves; Damascus; school; civilization.

INTRODUCTION

The construction of the private Levantine tombs built by the sultans, kings, and princes of the Zengids, the Ayyubids, the Mamluks, and the rest of the notables of Levantine society is considered the most eloquent witness to the development of Islamic architecture at that time, and it is one of the most important pillars on which the edifice of Islamic urban civilization rests. Some private Damascene tombs have received attention of contemporary researchers [1] [2] [3], who relied in their studies on the descriptive approach only. It also briefly dealt with the study of some of Levantine cemeteries [4]; hence the reason for choosing the title of this study to be a comprehensive study of most of the private Levantine cemeteries, and a description of their constructional elements. These elements are analyzed according to the Islamic and social perspective, and that is what distinguishes this study from the rest of the previous contemporary studies of the construction of private Levantine cemeteries.

The study aims to explain: the religious motives behind the construction of their own tombs by the sultans, Zengid princes, Ayyubids, the Mamluks and notables of society in Levant; what are the urban elements that made up their private tombs, and describe them architecturally to show whether these buildings were modest or luxurious, with the necessity

of stating the position of Islamic law on these graves and their architectural elements.

Other objectives include learning about the customs of the Islamic community and their impressions towards death and private cemeteries, and what their daily practices are towards them. In addition to showing whether they left them abandoned to disappear due to the factors of erosion and passage of years, or were they keen to maintain their architecture, and did the status of the owner of the grave have an impact on the development of the urban style of the constructional elements in the private Levantine cemeteries.

It also focuses on showing the true concept of the name of private cemeteries among Levantines, while explaining the cultural role of these cemeteries, especially the fact that their owners were keen to make them endowment buildings to serve the community, in addition to showing the type of services that these cemeteries provided to members of the Islamic community, including Levantines.

METHODS

The descriptive, analytical, and investigative approach was relied upon in studying the construction of The private Levantine Zengid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk cemeteries, by describing their main constructional elements, the first of which is the grave and its land,

analyzing its location and direction according to the *Qiblah*, as well as describing the constructional elements of the tombstones, the decorations and the writings that they contain, as well as analyzing them according to the Islamic and social perspective. This study also describes the urban elements of the tomb chamber, analyzing the nature of these elements according to the social status of the owner of the grave in it, in addition to describing the urban elements of the tomb's dome, and investigating its historical origins. The views presented in the study were supported by architectural designs, photographs, and tables of the private Levantine cemeteries.

CONTENT\DISCUSSION

The contents of the research were divided into three main sections: the first was devoted to define historically, the Zengid state, the Ayyubid state, and the Mamluk state. The second section was concerned with studying the main urban elements of the private Levantine tombs built by the sultans, kings, Zengid princes, Ayyubids, and Mamluks, as well as the rest of the notables of Levantine society. These elements are the grave ground, the tomb, the tomb chamber, and the tomb dome. While the third section of the study discussed the urban elements attached to private Levantine cemeteries, which are private Levantine cemeteries with mosques and prayer halls, private Levantine cemeteries with schools, private Levantine cemeteries with orphanages, and private Levantine cemeteries with libraries. The study then concluded by presenting the results it reached.

DEFINING THE ZENGID, AYYUBID, AND MAMLUK STATES

THE ZENGID STATE

It is one of the Islamic countries that was established by the leader Imad al-Din Zengi. He was a field commander under the rule of the Seljuk state loyal to the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad. Imad al-Din took control of the city of Mosul and the lands of Al-Jazeera in (521AH/ 1127AD), then he expanded his emirate towards Levant and took control over Aleppo, then his sons shared his kingdom after his death in (541AH/ 1146AD). His sons are Saif al-Din Ghazi who took the city of Mosul. As for Aleppo, it became under the control of his other son, Nur al-Din al-Shahid, whose name was Mahmoud, who was distinguished by political ambition and expansion of his emirate, so he was able to control of Levant and Egypt, and he is considered the founder of the Zengid state which actually ended with his death in (569AH/ 1174AD) [5].

THE AYYUBID STATE

One of the most important Islamic countries whose rule began in Egypt on the ruins of the Fatimid state that fell at the hands of the leader Salah Aldin Yusuf alayyubi (d. 589AH/ 1193AD), the founder of the

Ayyubid state. He was loyal to the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad, and was able to expand the lands of his state towards the Hijaz, Levant, Yemen, the lands of Nubia, and some of the lands of the Islamic Maghreb. His sons and grandchildren continued to assume power after him for a period of (81) years, until the Mamluks were able to overthrow this state in (648 AH / 1250 AD) [6].

THE MAMLUK STATE

Its establishment was announced in Egypt after it overthrew the Ayyubid state in (648AH/ 1250AD). It was also loyal to the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad. Then the Mamluks were able to control the land of the Hijaz and Levant. The Sultan Najm Al-Din Ayyub bin Muhammad (d. 647AH/ 1249AD) is considered the founder of this state, which passed through two eras, the first: the era of the *Bahriyya* Mamluk state, then the era of the Circassian Mamluk state (*Al-Burjiyya*). The rule of the Mamluk state continued until (923AH/ 1517AD), that is, for two and a half centuries, when it fell at the hands of the Ottoman Empire in the Battle of Raydaniya [7].

THE MAIN CONSTRUCTIONAL ELEMENTS OF PRIVATE LEVANTINE CEMETERIES

THE GRAVE AND ITS URBAN ELEMENTS

Grave is a singular noun, and its plural is graves. The word grave has been mentioned in the Holy *Qur'an* eight times in the form of a singular noun, a plural noun, or a verb [8]. The land that contains these graves is called a cemetery, and among its other names is soil (*Turba*), meaning the dead person after his burial becomes a dust [9] [10], this name became famous among the Levantines, while in Egypt the cemetery was known as (*Qarafa*) [11]. There are two types of cemeteries, including general cemeteries for burying dead Muslims of all sects and social levels, and private cemeteries for burying one person, or burying the deads of one family, or a specific tribe, and others [12]. In ancient times – BC – man used to prepare a special cemetery for himself and his family while he was alive [13].

Dozens of cemeteries have been spread in Levant for the burial of sultans, kings, Zengid princes, Ayyubids, Mamluks, and other notables of the country such as clerics and scholars. These people purchase or allocate a specific land to be a private cemetery soil (*Turba*) for them and their families [4]. It has become a custom to buy lands in the Levant and turning them into private cemeteries was a familiar social custom at that time. So, if we want to study this social custom according to the Islamic perspective, we ask a question: is it permissible for a Muslim to buy or allocate land to bury his family? The answer: Yes, he can do that, but it is better for a Muslim to be buried in public cemeteries among Muslims, because he will benefit from the pleads of all Muslims who visit the public cemetery, not just his relatives, which is what the Prophet

Muhammad, did by burying his companions in public Muslim cemeteries such as (Al-Baqi') Cemetery [14].

We note that the widespread phenomenon of buying land by members of Levantine community at that time to be a place for their graves reflects their impression of death, meaning that Levantine individual was thinking about death throughout his life, and was not afraid of it, while we find now that many people are afraid of death, and it never occurs to prepare a grave for themselves to be buried in upon death [15] [16], so, those who do this nowadays think that he is suffering from a psychological disorder [17]. It is also possible to derive another social lesson from this phenomenon, which is that a Levantine individual buying land to be a private cemetery for his family members is merely is an actual application of family ties and pride in relatives, meaning that he wants to be close to them in his death as he was close to them in his life [18].

Instances of private cemeteries in Levant include the Ayyubid *Hisamiyya* Cemetery (Al-Turba Al-*Hisamiyya*) in Damascus. Levant's lady, Fatima Khatun bint Ayyub (d. 616AH/1220AD), the sister of Sultan Salah Al-din Yusuf al-Ayyubi ordered its construction to be a cemetery for her and her family. The cemetery is the grave of her older brother, King Fakhr al-Din Turanshah bin Ayyub, ruler of Baalbek, who died in Alexandria, Egypt in (576AH/ 1180AD). His remains were transported to Damascus to be buried in this cemetery in (582AH/ 1185AD), meaning that his grave was exhumed and his remains were transferred to Damascus six Years after his death, his grave is located on the right (Figure 1, A). The cemetery also contained the grave of her cousin and husband, King Nasser al-Din Muhammad bin Shirkuh al-Ayyubi, the ruler of Homs and al-Rahba, who died in Homs in (581AH/ 1186AD), then the Levant's lady transported him to Damascus, and his grave is located in the middle. The cemetery also contained the grave of her son, Prince Husam al-Din Muhammad bin Omar bin Lajin, who died in (587 AH/1191 AD), and his grave is on the left. Then the lady of Levant, Fatima, died in (d. 616AH/ 1220AD), her remains were buried with the remains of her son Hussam al-Din in the same grave [19]. There is no doubt that she was the one who asked to be buried in her son's grave because of her intense love for him, and to be close to him in her death as she was close to him in her life.

Here, it must be pointed out, that digging the grave of the dead person and transferring his remains to another grave is not permissible according to Islamic law unless there is a legitimate reason for removing the dead person from his grave, which is that the grave is not directed towards the Qiblah, or the owner of the grave is buried in occupied land, or he is buried without washing [20]. The sanctity of the dead person may be violated when transporting him, as his body may be torn apart, or his bones may be broken, and this is not permissible because the Messenger Muhammad said: ((Breaking a dead person's bone is like breaking it while he is alive)) [21], meaning that he feels the pain of the tear or break even if he was dead [12]. It is also not permissible to dig the grave of the dead person and move his remains, even if the dead person himself

recommended doing so, because it violates the legal conditions which was mentioned above [22]. As for the issue of burying two people in one grave, as happened with the lady of Levant, the Khatun Fatima, and her son Hussam al-Din, the jurists differed on this issue. Some of them said that it is not permissible to bury two people in one grave except in cases of necessity, such as times of war, epidemics, and other disasters, and others stated that it is permissible, but it is hated [23].

Another private cemetery in Levant is the Kamiliyya Jawaniyya Cemetery (Al-Turba Al-Kamiliyya Al-Jawaniyya) in Damascus. It was given this name in reference to King Al-Kamil Nasser Al-Din Muhammad bin Al-Adil Al-Ayyubi, who died in (635AH/ 1237AD) and was buried in Damascus Citadel. Then, his three daughters were baptized to buy land and made it a private cemetery for their father, King Al-Kamil, so they moved his remains buried in the castle and buried him again in the aforementioned cemetery [19].

Another example is the Hafidhiyya Cemetery (Al-Turba Al-Hafidhiyya) in Damascus. Its land was an orchard, so Khatun Argwan Ayyubid bought it and built it as a cemetery of her own. When she died in (648AH/ 1250AD), she was buried in it [19]. Here, we can conclude that the custom of buying land in Levant to be a private cemetery was not limited to men only, but also women bought lands and turned them into private cemeteries. This reflects their impression of death, their lack of fear of it, and that they believe in this destiny that is inevitable for them.

As well as the Adiliyah Baraniyya cemetery (Al-Turba Al-Adiliyya Al-Barraniyya) in Damascus, which was established by the ruler of Aleppo, King Al-Adil Zain al-Din Kitibgha, the Mamluk. When he died in Aleppo in (702AH/ 1302AD), his body was transported to Damascus to be buried in his cemetery [19]. As well as, Al-Jaqmaqiyya Cemetery (Al-Turba Al-Jiqmaqiyya) in Damascus which was established by the Mamluk Sultan's deputy, Prince Sayf al-Din Jaqmaq, as a place for his grave. When he died in (824 AH/1421 AD), he was buried there, and his mother was also buried next to him when she died the following year [3] (Figure 1, B).



A. Al-Hisamiyya Cemetery in Damascus



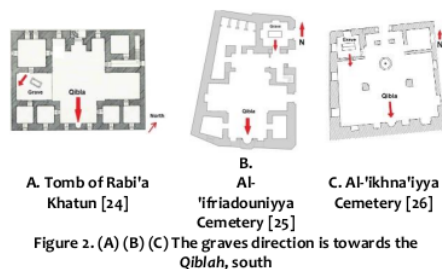
B. Al-Jaqmaqiyya Cemetery in Damascus

Figure 1. (A) (B)

THE DIRECTION OF THE GRAVE TOWARDS THE QIBLAH (THE HOLY KA'BA)

One of the most important conditions for digging a grave according to Islamic law is that it be directed towards the *Qiblah*, based on the Hadiths of the Messenger Muhammad: ((The Sacred House is the

Qiblah of you alive and dead)) [21], meaning that Kaaba is the Qiblah for Muslims to which they face in prayer while they are alive, and their graves should have the same direction when they die. Due to that, people of Levant strictly adhered to this condition when they dug graves in their private cemeteries such as the grave of Rabi'a Khatun (d. 643AH/ 1245AD), the sister of Sultan Salah Al-din Yusuf al-Ayyubi, when she ordered to built her private cemetery in Damascus [19]. It seems that the builders made a mistake in directing the cemetery's construction towards the Qiblah, the correct direction of which is to the south; however, the building deviated towards the southwest. When Rabi'a died in (643AH/ 1245AD), they noticed this error in building the cemetery's architecture, so they directed her grave towards the Qiblah to the south (Figure 2, A). As well as, the Mamluk Al-'Ifriadouniyya Cemetery (Al-Turba Al-'Ifriadouniyya) in Damascus, which was ordered to be built by the merchant Shams Al-Din ifraidoun Al-Ajami, and he was buried there upon his death in (749AH/ 1348AD) [19]. His grave was directed towards the Qiblah to the south (Figure 2, B). Another one is the Mamluk Al-'Ikhna'iyya cemetery (Al-Turba Al-'Ikhna'iyya), which was ordered to be built by Judge Shams al-Din Muhammad bin Muhammad al-'Ikhna'i where he was buried there upon his death in (816AH/ 1413AD) [19]. His grave also was directed towards the Qiblah to the south (Figure 2, C).



GRAVESTONE

It is one of the main urban elements of the private cemetery which means the constructional part that is built above the dead persons grave. One of the conditions that must be implemented when burying a dead Muslim is that the height of his tombstone should not exceed more than an inch (12-16 cm), and some jurists allowed it to be painted with clay material if it was for the purpose of preserving the grave from disappearing due to the effect of erosion factors. It is not permissible to paint it with plaster, dye it with colors, or build it with marble stone, because that is extravagance and wasting money, and a kind of ostentation and bragging about the adornments of this worldly life. Likewise, it is not permissible to write on the grave, such as writing Qur'anic verses, because that would be an insult to the Holy Qur'an since the grave is not the place of the Qur'an, and the Qur'anic verses may be exposed to dirt and impurity. Likewise, it is not

permissible to write supplications and poetic verses, because that would glorify the dead. It is also not permissible to wrap the grave with a piece of cloth because some people will cut off part of this rag in order to seek blessings. Senior Muslim scholars agreed that these actions lead a Muslim to associate others with God Almighty, because the prophet Muhammad, did not undertake these actions nor did his companions after him [12] [27]. The evidence for this is the saying of the companion Jabir: ((The Prophet, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, forbade the plastering of graves, writing on them, building on them, and stepping on foot)) [21]. However, it is permissible to place a stone at the head of the dead person on top of the grave, and some jurists allowed the name of the dead person to be written on this stone in a simple way without engraving or decoration [12], because when the Messenger Muhammad, buried the companion Othman bin Mazun, he placed a large stone at his head only in order to know his grave among the graves near to it [21].

Although scholars warned Muslims to stay away from all these practices that are not permissible in Islam when building a grave, over times Muslims did not adhere to these warnings, so tombstones began to develop in their architecture, and their designs varied in a striking way throughout the Islamic eras up to the present day [28] [29]. In various Islamic countries such as the Islamic Levant, Iraq, Anatolia, Egypt, and Andalusia [30] [31]. Tombstone designs became an integral part of the art of Islamic urban civilization.

The same is true for Levant as the art of architecture and decoration on tombstones in private cemeteries during the Zengid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk eras developed greatly. Although this development was contrary to Islamic law, it became a reality that reflects the art of Islamic architecture in Levant. One of the reasons for the development of the style of tombstone architecture in private Levantine cemeteries is the social status of the deceased, as Levantine people tend to decorate his tombstone if he had a great social status in their souls, such as the grave of Sultan Nur al-Din Mahmud Zaki in Damascus whose tombstone was taken care of. It was built in the form of a box that become just like a stair as it rose, its roof was designed in the shape of a hump, and the height of the tomb is about (185 cm). It is coated with plaster, and floral decorations are engraved on all its sides (Figure 3, A). The tomb and cemetery of Sultan Nur al-Din Zengi have witnessed continuing reconstruction throughout successive Islamic eras until the present day. Levantines held a religious celebration at his grave on the occasion of his reconstruction in our present era, which indicates the great status he enjoys in their souls (Figure 3, B), noting that the custom of holding religious celebrations at shrines was a common custom in Levant at that time till now, especially on religious occasions such as the night of the middle of Sha'ban every year [32] [33], even though these religious celebrations at graves are not permissible according to Islamic law [34].



Figure 3. (A) (B) The tomb of sultan Nur aldin Mahmud Zengi in Damascus

Likewise, the tombstone of Sultan Saladin al-Ayyubi in Damascus received attention throughout the Islamic ages because of the great social status it held in the hearts of Muslims, especially the people of Levant. We notice in the tomb room of Saladin, the presence of two graves, one of which is a box made of ebony wood, which is the real tomb that contains the remains of Salah aldin alayyubi. The four sides of the wooden box were decorated with Islamic geometric decorations, the top of these decorations (*Ayat al-Kursi*) was engraved in the wooded Kufic script, and it was written in a way surrounding the four sides of the grave. The ceiling of the grave is arched towards the top, and on its upper corners, there are four wooden pomegranates [10]. The height of the grave is approximately 185 cm, and the grave was covered with a cover made of glass to protect it from dirt and moisture (Figure 4, A).

As for the second tomb, it is empty and does not contain the remains of Sultan Saladin. It was presented by the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II (d. 1337AH/ 1918AD) as a gift to the tomb of Saladin. This is an evidence of the great status that Saladin enjoys among Muslims. The empty box is made of marble and decorated with beautiful floral decorations on all sides. It is topped with four marble vases that add to its beauty, and its height is as high as the height of a wooden tomb (Figure 4, B). Likewise, the German Kaiser Wilhelm II, or Guillaume II (d. 1360AH/ 1941AD), sent another gift to the grave of Saladin, represented by a golden wreath, with a diameter of (74 cm) written at the bottom: ((God loves those who do good)) and at the top: ((A knight without fearless and blameless, he taught his opponents the true path of horsemanship)) [35]. The wreath was placed between the two graves (Figure 4, C).



Figure 4. (A) (B) (C) The tomb of Sultan Saladin Yusuf alayyubi in Damascus

Likewise, the tombstone of the Mamluk Sultan al-dhahir Baybars al-Bunduqdari (d. 676AH/ 1277AD) and his son, King al-Sa'id Muhammad Baraka Khan (d. 678AH/ 1280AD) in Damascus, who witnessed beautiful urban development [3] [36], as the tombstones of the two tombs were built symmetrically with white alabaster, and their roofs are arched from the top. The two graves are resting on a bench 30 cm high, covered with black and white alabaster with nothing written on the gravestones (Figure 5, A), as if the builder wanted to somewhat adhere to the Islamic conditions in building the two graves, and made the design of the gravestones as a modest design which does not contain any writing or inscriptions. However, the shape of the tombstones did not continue according to this design, and their style was changed completely different. As the two graves were rebuilt with black alabaster in the form of two symmetrical boxes, the four sides of each one were engraved with Islamic decorations in white, and in front of the facades of the two tombs, four cubes of alabaster were built with four pomegranates on top. At the top of the facade of the two graves was written (In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful) in thuluth script, at the bottom were written the names of the two kings and the dates of their deaths (Figure 5, B, C). There is no doubt that because of the status that the two kings enjoyed in the hearts of Levantine society, they decided to change the style of building their tombstones, because they saw that the design of the first building was modest and not befitting their status, so they decided to change it according to the second design, thinking that it will befit the status and value of the two kings. The truth is that the first design is somewhat more correct according to the Islamic perspective, because the second design was built with the motive of honoring the dead, immortalizing his name, engraved Qur'anic inscriptions, decorations, in addition to the construction of the tombstones which was exaggeratedly raised. All of this, is contrary to Islamic law for the reasons mentioned previously.

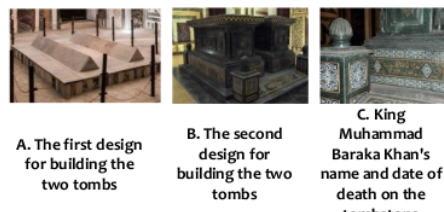


Figure 5. (A) (B) (C) The tomb of King Al-dhahir Baybars and his son King Muhammad Baraka Khan in Damascus

Among the other cemeteries whose tombstones received the attention of Levantine people is the Mamluk Al-Sabuniyya cemetery in Damascus (Al-Turba Al-Sabuniyya), which contains three graves. The first grave belongs to the merchant sheikh Shihab al-Din Ahmad bin Suleiman al-Sabouni [19], who was one of

the scholars of the ninth century AH/fifteenth century AD. He built cemetery for him and his family, the second middle grave is for his brother Muhammad, and the third is for one of his relatives called Bahaa al-Din Ahmad. We note that the three tombstones were built with white marble, decorated with floral decorations, and marble columns on the sides of the grave, in addition to writing some Qur'anic verses from Surat Al-Fajr, and a prayer was written on them ((O Pardoner, O Forgiving, O Merciful)), as well as eight poetic verses, and the graves were decorated with flowers and trees (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Inscriptions and inscriptions on the tombstones of Al-Sabuniyya Cemetery in Damascus

The habit of building tombstones with marble and other things, engraving them with religious, literary symbols and writings, drawing on them with floral decorations, with the motive of glorifying the dead and showing off the adornments of this worldly life, which is a custom alien to Islamic society, especially Levantine society. It was transmitted to them from non-Muslims such as Christians who were accustomed to build tombstones. The graves of their dead were made of marble, engraved with religious symbols such as the cross, floral decorations, and animal drawings such as eagles, peacocks, etc. [37]. We notice in (Figure 7, A) a limestone tombstone in Upper Egypt dating back to the sixth century AD, in the middle of which engraved an eagle carrying a cross in its beak, as well as other decorations that fill the tombstone. We also notice in (Figure 7, B) a Christian tombstone dating back to the seventh century AD, made of stone, and engraved with the symbol of the cross and a floral decoration at the top. The Christians were not satisfied with only engraving their graves with symbols and decorations, but they also did the same on their coffins because this social religious custom was rooted in their souls since the earliest Christian times. We notice in (Figure 7, C) a wooden coffin dating back to the sixth century AD with drawings of peacocks, crosses, and floral decorations [37]. All of these practices are motivated by glorifying the dead, and bragging about the adornments of this worldly life, and they are in violation of Islamic law if applied by Muslims.



- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| A. A limestone tombstone with an image of an eagle carrying a cross in the middle | B. A stone tombstone with a cross symbol and floral decoration | C. A wooden coffin with engravings of peacocks, crosses and floral decorations |
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Figure 7. (A) (B) (C) Inscriptions and symbols on Christian tombstones and sarcophagi in Upper Egypt

Other private cemeteries spread in Levant in which the construction of tombstones was not taken care of, such as the cemetery of Daifa Khatun, daughter of The King Al-Adil Abu Bakr Al-Ayyubi (d. 640AH/1242AD) in Aleppo, which she reconstructed in order to be a cemetery for her and her family [38]. The cemetery included eight graves, some of which were built with a modest design, represented by placing two stones at the head and feet of the dead person. The grave building was raised above the ground with a concrete block reaching a height of (5 cm) (Figure 8, A). Likewise, the Mamluk tomb of Prince Sibay bin Bakhtja (d. 922AH/1516AD) in Damascus, which contains the grave of his wife (Al-saliha), built with stone coated with plaster, its roof arched at the top, and a green stone ball placed at the head of the grave. The tombstone is devoid of writings and inscriptions (Figure 8, B). Her daughter Settita, daughter of Prince Sibay, was buried next to her. A stone was placed at the head of her grave without any writings or inscriptions, and the grave was leveled with the ground (Figure 8, C). It seems that the reason for the lack of care by Levantine people concerning the tombstones mentioned above is the lack of fame of their owners among people, noting that the urban style of the tombstones of the first and third tombs are closest to the provisions of Islamic law.



Figure 8. (A) (B) (C) Tombstones whose architecture was not maintained

THE TOMB'S ROOM AND ITS URBAN ELEMENTS

The tomb's room is considered one of the main constructional elements of private tombs in Levant. It is usually square in shape. The Levantine mastered the construction of tomb rooms for sultans, Zengid kings, Ayyubids and Mamluks, such as the tomb room of Sultan Nur al-Din Zengi in Damascus, which was covered from the inside with marble stone, its walls have recessed shelves for displaying antiques. The most important feature of the room is the curved marble *Mihrab* inside the wall, arched at the top with two marble columns built on either side of it. The Verse of the Throne (*Ayat al-Kursi*) was inscribed on the top of

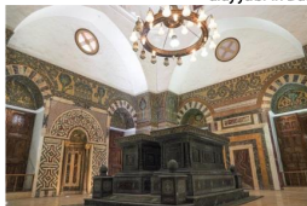
the walls of the room in the form of a belt surrounding all its sides (Figure 9, A). Likewise, a room was built over the tomb of Sultan Salah aldin alayyubi in Damascus and decorated with Islamic decorations along the corners of the room. The walls were covered with colored marble stone in the form of black, white, and yellow horizontal lines (Figure 9, B). As for the room of the Mamluk Sultan al-dhahir Baybars's tomb, it was distinguished by various and very beautiful Islamic decorative styles, including covering the walls with marble in the form of pink, black, green, and white stripes. This style of coloring is called (*Al-Ablaq*), meaning colored. Levantines were famous for decorating buildings as they inherited it from Mamluks. A beautiful *Mihrab* was built in front of the tomb which was also covered with colored marble, and topped with an arched apse decorated with Islamic decorations. Two marble columns were built on either side of the *Mihrab*, next to the two columns there are two symmetrical marble panels, containing beautiful geometric decoration in white, black, green, pink, and some Qur'anic verses from (*Surat Al-Tawbah*) were written above them. The two panels are connected at the top by a semi-circular decorated crown that added to the *Mihrab* a distinctive aesthetic splendor. As for the top of the wall of the room, it was surrounded by a wide belt decorated with mosaic pieces in green and gold, the belt consists of drawings of trees, branches, and flowers [36] (Figure 9, C).



A. The tomb room of Sultan Nur al-Din Zengi in Damascus



B. The tomb room of Sultan Salah aldin alayyubi in Damascus

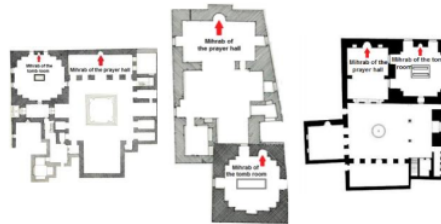


C. The tomb room of the Mamluk King al-dhahir Baybars in Damascus

Figure 9. (A) (B) (C)

The way these rooms were built on the graves of the sultans, the Islamic decorations and Qur'anic writings they carry is considered a cultural architectural masterpiece that Levantine people are proud of, despite the fact that all types of these architectural styles in the rooms are not permissible according to Islamic law because the Prophet Muhammad, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, forbade building on graves, writing on it, decorating it with ornaments, and lighting it with lamps because that is a glorification

of the dead, and it makes the cemetery a place for picnicking and bragging about the adornments of this worldly life, not a place for admonition and remembrance of the afterlife [27] [12]. The most important thing is that Levantines added a new, strange urban element to the grave room, which is the *Mihrab*, which Muslims are accustomed to building only in mosques, it is the place in which the imam prays in congregational prayer in front of the worshippers. So, building the *Mihrab* in the grave room is in violation of the provisions of Islamic law, because the cemetery is not a place for prayer, but rather a burial place for the dead. The reason for Levantine building the *Mihrab* in the grave room was in order to determine the direction of the *Qibla*, and to bury the dead in front of the *Mihrab*, that is, towards the *Qibla* [10], as evidenced by the fact that some private cemeteries in Levant contained two *Mihrabs*, one in the prayer hall, and the other in the grave room, such as the private cemeteries in Damascus, such as the Adiliyya Al-Jawaniyya Cemetery (*Al-Turba Al-Adiliyya*), the Hafidhiyya Cemetery (*Al-Turba Al-Hafidhiyya*), and the Dhahiriyya Cemetery (*Al-Turba Al-dhahiriyya*) (Figure 10, A, B, C).



A. Al-Adiliyya Al-Jawaniyya Cemetery [39]

B. Al-Hafidhiyya Cemetery [40]

C. Al-Dhahiriyya Cemetery [41]

Figure 10. (A) (B) (C) Private Damascene tombs with two *Mihrab*

The tomb room with four walls is considered one of the main constructional elements of private cemeteries in Levant, because they used to bury the dead inside it. However, in the tomb of the Mamluk prince Othman bin Aghlabik (d. 885AH/ 1480AD) in Aleppo, who was buried inside an iwan consisting of only three walls, not a room with four walls [10]. The *Mihrab* was built in the wall of the iwan facing the qibla in front of the tomb of Prince Othman bin Aghlabik (Figure 11, A, B). We conclude from this, that burying the dead in the iwan is considered a new and strange urban style in the private Levantine cemeteries, in which Levantine people are accustomed to bury their dead in their rooms, not in their iwan.



A. Iwan of the tomb of Prince Othman bin Aghlabik



B. The mihrab in the iwan wall

Figure 11. (A) (B) The tomb of Prince Othman bin Aghlabik in Aleppo

THE DOME AND ITS URBAN ELEMENTS

The dome is considered one of the main constructional elements of private Levantine cemeteries, as Levantines used to build a dome over the grave. This type of urban style is not a Levantine Islamic style specific to them, but was transmitted to them through previous ancient civilizations [42], such as the Greek civilization which was famous for building domes over graves [43], as well as the Mesopotamian civilization in Iraq, as the conical dome was known to the Assyrians and Babylonians. The tomb's dome was also found in the Nile Valley civilization in Egypt [44]. As for Arabs, before Islam, they used to build a tent over the grave in which they would receive mourners while they were near the grave, thinking that this would comfort the dead in his grave. Then, the tent would be raised after a period of time, this continued with them even after the advent of Islam [45], which forbade building the tent over the grave, as well as the dome [12], except that Muslims did not adhere to the teachings of the Islamic religion and built domes over the graves. This urban style became an integral part of Islamic urban civilization, so several types of tomb domes were built throughout the Islamic eras in various countries such as Levant [46]. During the Zengid era, the conical dome was built over the tomb of Sultan Nur al-Din Mahmoud Zengi which was distinguished by its unique urban style. It was built in the form of overlapping (*Muqarnas*) that curved outside the dome, rising in four layers, replacing the neck of the dome, and interspersed with a number of windows which are for lighting. Above the *Muqarnas* was built the dome helmet which is known as the dome bowl (*Tasa*) (Figure 12). This urban style was famous among the early Seljuks, and continued until the era of the Zengid [43].



A. The dome from the outside



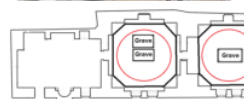
B. The dome from the inside

Figure 12. (A) (B) The dome of the tomb of Sultan Nur al-Din Mahmoud Zengi in Damascus

The dome of the tomb of Princess Turkan Khatun, daughter of Sultan Izz al-Din Mas'oud bin Maudud Zengi (d. 640AH/ 1242AD), and the wife of Sultan al-Ashraf Musa bin al-Adil al-Ayyubi (d. 635AH/1237AD) in the Ayyubid Al-Atabikiyya Cemetery (Al-Turba Al-Atabikiyya) in Damascus. The dome consists of two ribbed necks, in which a number of windows for lighting, and a smooth domed helmet was built above the neck (Figure 13, A). Two symmetrical domes were also built over the three graves in the Ayyubid Al-Jahariksiyya cemetery (Al-Turba Al-Jahariksiyya) in Damascus. Each dome was built on two ribbed necks, containing a number of windows for lighting, and above the neck was built the dome's helmet, which has vertical sides, not smooth (Figure 13, B).



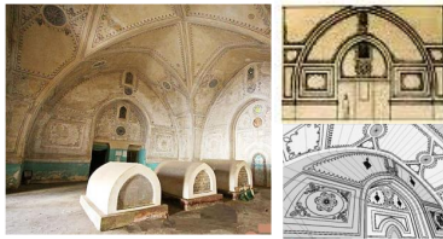
A. The dome of Al-Atabikiyya Cemetery in Damascus



B. The domes of Al-Jahariksiyya Cemetery in Damascus

Figure 13. (A) (B)

As for the Ayyubid Al-Hisamiyya cemetery (Al-Turba Al-Hisamiyya) in Damascus, the construction over its three graves was distinguished by a unique urban style that differed from the style of domes that were built over the graves of private Levantine cemeteries during the Ayyubid era, as a large vault was built over its three graves, somewhat pointed at the top. Its interior walls are decorated with geometric arabesques, symmetrical panels, and bands of inscriptions in Kufic and Naskh scripts (Figure 14, A, B).



A. The vault of Al-Hisamiyya Cemetery from the inside

B. The design of the vault of Al-Hisamiyya cemetery and its decorations

Figure 14. (A)(B) Al-Hisamiyya Ayyubid Cemetery in Damascus

As for the dome of the Mamluk Sultan al-dhahir Baybars' tomb, it is the highest dome built over a tomb in Damascus. It reaches a height of 30 meters. It was built on two necks, each one with eight sides, containing 24 windows for lighting, and above them is the dome helmet [36] (Figure 15, A, B). We deduce from the above, the diversity of the style of domes that were built over the graves of private cemeteries in Levant. In the Zengid era, the dome took on a muqarnas conical shape, which was the style that became famous among the Seljuks until the era of the Zengids [43]. In the Ayyubid era, there were tombs with one dome built over them, and other tombs with two symmetrical domes built over them, in addition to the construction of vault over the graves of the Hisamiyya cemetery. While in the Mamluk era, attention increased to the architecture of domes on graves, and witnessed the construction of the highest dome over a grave in Damascus, which is the dome of the tomb of the Mamluk Sultan Al-dhahir Baybars.



A. The dome from the outside

B. The dome from the inside

Figure 15. (A) (B) The dome of the tomb of Sultan al-dhahir Baybars Mamluk in Damascus

URBAN ELEMENTS ATTACHED TO PRIVATE LEVANTINE CEMETERIES

PRIVATE LEVANTINE CEMETERIES WITH MOSQUES AND PRAYER HALLS

When the sultans, kings, princes of the Zengid, Ayyubid, Mamluk, and some notables in Levant purchased or allocated land to be a private cemetery for them and their families, they decided to make this land an endowment to serve Levantine community, by adding urban service elements attached to their private cemeteries, among these elements was the construction of a mosque or a prayer hall with a

cemetery. Over time, these private cemeteries became called cemeteries or mosques.

If we discuss this behavior on their part according to the Islamic perspective, it seems that their intention to build mosques with their graves is in order to obtain reward and recompense. The question raised here is: is it permissible to build a mosque over a grave or bury a person in a mosque? Muslim scholars answered that it is not permissible because the Prophet Muhammad, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, forbade this. Even when he died, he was buried under the bed on which he died inside his room so that Muslims would not use his grave as a mosque [27]. If the mosque was built and a person was buried in it after a while, his grave must be exhumed and buried far from the mosque. If the dead person is buried and after a while the mosque is built over the grave, it is not permissible to pray in this mosque and it must be abandoned or demolished [47], because with the passage of time, Muslims praying in this mosque may begin to seek blessings from the owner of the grave, believe in him [48], and this is a great act of association with God [49]. An example of private Levantine cemeteries that became mosques is the cemetery of Daifa Khatun, daughter of the king Al-Adil Abu Bakr Al-Ayyubi (d. 640AH/ 1242AD) in Aleppo, which she turned into a cemetery and a mosque, it is now called Al-Firdaws Mosque and Cemetery [38] (Figure 16, A). As well as the Ayyubid Al-Hafidhiyya cemetery (Al-Turba Al-Hafidhiyya) in Damascus, which Khatun Argwan Al-Hafidhiyya (d. 648AH/ 1250AD) made it a cemetery and a mosque [19] (Figure 16, B). As well as the tomb of Prince Tunbuk al-Hasani Mamluk (d. 802AH/ 1399AD), who ordered the construction of his tomb and the mosque which is now known as the (Al-Tinbiyya) Mosque and Cemetery (Figure 16, C). And the Mamluk tomb of Prince Ghars al-Din Khalil bin Yusuf al-Tawrizi (d. 826AH/ 1422AD), who began building his tomb and then the mosque after it, known as the Tauraziyya Cemetery (Al-Turba Al-Tauraziyya) [50] (Figure 16, D).



A. Al-Firdaws Cemetery and Mosque in Aleppo



B. Al-Hafidhiyya Cemetery and Mosque in Damascus



C. Al-Tinbiyya Cemetery and Mosque in Damascus



D. Al-Tauraziyya Cemetery and Mosque in Damascus

Figure 16. (A) (B) (C) (D) The Private Levantine cemeteries with mosques

There are many private cemeteries in Levant in which mosques were not built, but rather additional rooms and halls were built next to the grave room, so one of them was designed as a prayer hall. The question posed here: Is it permissible to pray in this hall next to the graves? Muslim scholars answered that prayer is not permissible if the grave is facing the *Qiblah*, that is, in front of the worshippers. However, if the grave is next to them or behind them, and separated from them by a wall, then it is permissible to pray in this place [49]. The people of Levant took into account this condition in the construction of their private tombs, and placed the grave room next to or behind the prayer hall, not facing the *Qiblah*, as is the case in the Ayyubid Al-Shadhabakhtiyya cemetery (Al-Turba Al-Shadhabakhtiyya) built by Shadbakht, the servant of Sultan Nur al-Din Mahmud Zengi in Aleppo [38]. The tomb room was built behind the prayer hall (Figure 17, A). Likewise, tomb chamber of the Ayyubid Al-Atabikiyya cemetery (Al-Turba Al-Atabikiyya) in Damascus, it was built next to the prayer hall, not in front of it (Figure 17, B). While the tomb chamber of the Mamluk Al-Jaqmaqiyya cemetery (Al-Turba Al-Jaqmaqiyya) in Damascus was built behind the prayer hall (Figure 17, C).

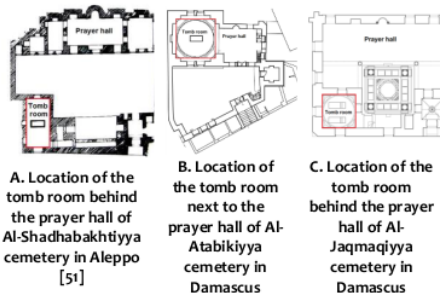


Figure 17. (A) (B) (C) Location of the tomb room in relation to the prayer hall in private Levantine cemeteries

We conclude from the above that the word (Turba) the private cemetery among the Levantines has become synonymous with the word mosque, and that building the mosque in it has given it the quality of holiness. Rather, the matter has gone beyond honoring the owners of the graves in it with religious practices or rituals that reflect the impression of some members of Levantine community who attend these mosques toward these people's graves and belief in their owners [52], as they did with some of the graves of the Firdaws Cemetery and Mosque in Aleppo, where they wrapped them with a green cloth, hung wooden beads on the graves, and placed a head Turban over them (Figure 18, A). They also did the same thing with the graves of the Cemetery and Mosque Al-Tawrizi in Damascus (Figure 18, B). These are the actions that Muslim scholars warned against and forbade, based on the command of the Messenger Muhammad.

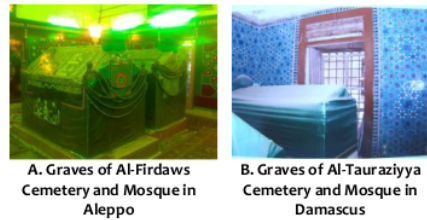


Figure 18. (A) (B) Wrapping the graves of private Levantine cemeteries in green cloth

PRIVATE LEVANTINE CEMETERIES WITH SCHOOLS

Many owners of private Levantine cemeteries were keen to make the architecture of their tombs institutions to support the scientific movement in Levant, so they added rooms and iwans to them to serve as classrooms and housing for teachers and students, such as the Adiliyya Al-Jawaniyya Ayyubid cemetery or school in Damascus, which includes the tomb of Sultan Al-Adil Saif al-Din Abu Bakr Muhammad Al-Ayyubid (d. 615AH/ 1218AD) [19], it became one of the most famous Ayyubid schools in Levant and Damascus, attracting the most prominent Muslim scholars and hundreds of students [53], including the great jurist, grammarian, and historian Shihab al-Din Abdul Rahman bin Isma'il Al-Maqdisi, known as (Abu Shama) (d. 665AH/ 1266AD). He lived in this school, and there he wrote his famous historical book (*Al-Rawdatayn fi Akhbar al-Dawlatayn al-Nuriya wa al-Salihiyya*). Likewise, the great historian and jurist Shams al-Din Ahmad bin Khalikan (d. 681AH/ 1282AD), who lived in this school where he wrote his famous historical book (*Wafayat Al-A'yan wa Aanba' Abna' Al-zaman*). The sciences that were taught in this school were the sciences of the Holy Qur'an, the Noble Hadith, jurisprudence, and grammar (Figure 19, A).

As well as the Mamluk Al-Argthoniyya cemetery and school in Jerusalem (Al-Quds), which includes the tomb of its founder, Prince Mamluk Sayf al-Din Arghon bin Abdullah al-Kamili (d. 758AH/ 1356AD) [54]. It was initially allocated for teaching Islamic sciences such as the sciences of the Holy Qur'an and Hanafi jurisprudence. It played a distinctive role in supporting scientific and administrative activity in Jerusalem during the Mamluk days [55] (Figure 19, B). As well as the Mamluk cemetery and the Sabuniyya School in Damascus, which were designated for teaching the Holy Qur'an and were known as the House of the Holy Qur'an. The sciences of Shafi'i and Hanafi jurisprudence were also taught there. The owner of the cemetery, the merchant Sheikh Shihab al-Din Ahmad bin Suleiman al-Sabouni, built a hall in it for the Imam and his family to live in, and other rooms for ten poor people to live in, to read the Holy Qur'an in the school, he appointed a service employee and a janitor there. He allocated to it many endowments such as farms, orchards, khans, and shops in Beirut, Damascus, and other Levantine cities, in order to provide funds for the cemetery and the school as salaries for its employees, food, furniture, and

others, which would ensure the educational process continues in this school, in addition to that, an employee has been appointed specialized in collecting these funds allocated to the cemetery and the school, and another employee called (*Al-Nadhir*) whose task is to supervise the financial affairs of the cemetery and the school, including expenses and revenues (Figure 19, C).

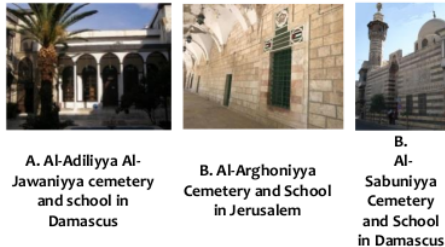


Figure 19. (A) (B) (C) The Levantine private cemeteries with madrasas

We conclude from the above that the word (*Turba*) the private cemetery among Levantine people has become synonymous with the word school, and the evidence for this is when Levantine historians wrote books that dealt with the history of schools in Levant, especially the schools of Jerusalem (*Al-Quds*), Damascus, and Aleppo; They mentioned these cemeteries among the list of schools that were built in these cities at that time, such as the book (*kunooz Al-thahab fi tarikh Halab*) by Sibṭ Ibn al-Ajami (d. 884AH/1480AD), the book (*Al-daris fi tarikh Al-madares*) by al-Naimi (d. 927AH/1521AD) [56], the book (*Al'uns aljalil fi tarikh alquds wal khaliil*) by Mujir aldin al'ulaimi (d. 928AH/1522AD), and the book (*Mundamat Al-Atlal wa musamarat Al-Khayal*) by Ibn Badran (d. 1346AH/1927AD). Another conclusion is that Levantine cemeteries of the Zengid, Ayyubid, and Mamluks were not silent and deserted buildings containing only graves for the dead, and visited by relatives of these dead from time to time, as is the case in our present era. Rather, they became religious and scientific institutions that radiate life and possess an administrative and economically system. It played a great cultural role, its effects are still present till now.

PRIVATE LEVANTINE CEMETERIES WITH ORPHANAGES

The owners of private cemeteries in Levant were not content with turning their cemeteries into schools for educating adult students, but rather they extended a helping hand to another important segment of Levantine society, which is the orphan segment. They decided to expand the architecture of their private cemeteries or designate it as a home to shelter orphans, educate them, spend on them, and to compensate them for their expenses. The deprivation they experienced as a result of the loss of one or both of their parents. Among these special Levantine cemeteries that were designated as orphanages is the

Mamluk Al-kawkaba'iyya Cemetery (*Al-Turba Al-kawkaba'iyya*) in Damascus, which included the grave of Al-Khunda Sittita, daughter of Prince Saif al-Din kawkaba'i, and the wife of the Mamluk Sultan's deputy in Damascus, Prince Saif al-Din Tankaz (d. 730AH/1329AD). She ordered that her private cemetery be a home for orphans, and that sources of spending on them be provided from charity funds [19]. As well as the Mamluk Al-Badriyya Cemetery (*Turba Al-Badriyya*) in Damascus, which contains the grave of its builder, Prince Badr al-Din Hasan (d. 824AH/1421AD), in which he built a house to shelter and educate orphans [19]. As well as the Mamluk Al-Jaqmaqiyya cemetery (*Al-Turba Al-Jaqmaqiyya*) in Damascus, Prince Saif al-Din Jaqmaq made it a home for orphans, and allocated a place for their studies opposite his grave room and his mother's grave [19] (Figure 20).

We notice from the above that making private Levantine cemeteries an orphanage reflects several things: the first of which is the role of these cemeteries in promoting the principle of social solidarity and caring for Levantine orphans, the second thing, is the reflection of the impression of Levantine society towards the dead and cemeteries, as Levantine people are accustomed of living or doing their daily work next to the graves, especially when these children study or live near it, this is a strange social custom in our present era. If something like this happened now, we would hear many horror stories about these cemeteries from the students who are near them.

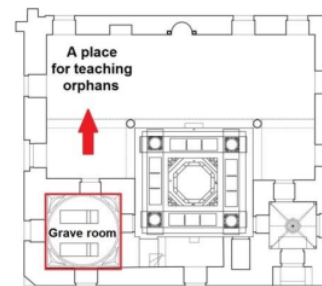


Figure 20. The Jaqmaqiyya cemetery with the orphanage

PRIVATE LEVANTINE CEMETERIES WITH LIBRARIES

When the sultans, princes and notables in Levant were keen to expand the architecture of their private tombs to be schools for teaching sciences, the need arose to add another urban facility and make it a scientific library to provide students with the books they needed in their studies. Among these private tombs that contained libraries was: the cemetery or the Adiliyya Al-Jawaniyyah Al-Ayyubid School in Damascus, in which a special employee was appointed to lend these books to students. Over the years, Levantine people became accustomed to study and read near the tomb located in this school, which is the tomb of Sultan Al-Adil Saif Al-Din Abu Bakr Muhammad Al-Ayyubi (d. 615AH/1218AD). It even went so far as to turn his tomb room

into the library (Figure 21, A). The same applies to the tomb of the Mamluk Sultan al-dhahir Baybars, which turned into the most famous library in Levant and Damascus. Over time, they made the room of Sultan Baybars tomb the library. Rather, they placed book shelves directly above his grave and the grave of his son, King Al-Sa'id (Figure 21, B), and it became a hall of study and reading by teachers and students (Figure 21, C). So, we conclude from this that the concept of the cemetery here also changed, as it was transformed from a dark, deserted place into a place for contemplation, reading, and writing. This social custom among Levantine people is a social custom that is foreign to our customs at the present time. It is unlikely that the grave rooms will now be made into public libraries frequented by people. Likewise, we cannot deny the important role that these libraries played in preserving the Arab-Islamic heritage, as the Dhahiriyya Cemetery library which included about 10,000 Islamic manuscripts that are priceless at the present time. It also remains to ask a question: Is it permissible for a Muslim to build a school, an orphanage, or a library in his private cemetery in order to serve the Islamic community?. The answer: Yes, that is permissible, but it is better for the Muslim to be buried among Muslims in public cemeteries for the reasons mentioned previously.



A. Al-Adiliyya Al-Jawaniyya Ayyubid cemetery's library inside the tomb room



B. Al-Dhahiriyya cemetery's library is inside the tomb room, and the books are placed directly on the graves



C. Teachers and students in Al-Dhahiriyya cemetery's library sitting inside the tomb room

Figure 21. (A) (B) (C) Damascene private cemeteries with libraries

It must be noted that some private Levantine cemeteries collected more than an institution in its building at the same time, such as the khatuniyya cemetery (*Al-turba Al-khatuniyya*) in Damascus, its building was turned into a cemetery, a mosque, and a school. While the architecture of the Ayyubid Bahnasiyya cemetery (*Al-turba Al-Bahnasiyya*) in Damascus was designated as a cemetery, a school, and a library. While the Mamluk Sabuniyya cemetery in Damascus was expanded to become a cemetery, a mosque, and a house for the Holy Qur'an (Figure 19, C). The number of private Levantine cemeteries, with attached urban elements such as mosques, schools, orphanages, and libraries, reached about (41) private cemeteries. It was distributed among (2) Zengid cemeteries (Table 1), (13) Ayyubid cemeteries (Table 2), and (26) Mamluk cemeteries (Table 3).

Table 1. The Private Levantine Zengid cemeteries with schools, orphanages, and libraries

Cemetery name	Mosque	school	Orphanage	library
Al-khatuniyya cemetery	X	X		
Cemetery of Sultan Nur al-Din Mahmoud Zengi		X		

Table 2. The Private Levantine Ayyubid cemeteries with schools, orphanages, and libraries

Cemetery name	Mosque	school	Orphanage	library
Al-Adiliyya Al-Jawaniyya Cemetery	X			X
Al-Amjadiyya Cemetery	X			
Al-Atabikiyya Cemetery	X			
Al-Bahnasiyya Cemetery	X	X		X
Al-Firdaws Cemetery	X	X		
Al-Hafidhiyya Cemetery	X			
Al-Jahariksiyya Cemetery		X		
Al-Malakiyya Al-Ashrafiyya Cemetery	X			X
Al-Sahibiyya Cemetery	X			
Al-Shadhabakhtiyya cemetery	X			
Al-Zawizaniyya cemetery	X			
Cemetery of Sultan Saladin Al-Ayyubi	X			
Umm Al-Saleh Cemetery	X			

Table 3. The Private Levantine Mamluk cemeteries with schools, orphanages, and libraries

Cemetery name	Mosque	school	Orphanage	library
Al-Adiliyya Al-Barraniyya Cemetery	X	X		
Al-Arghoniyya Cemetery		X		
Al-Badriyya Cemetery	X	X	X	
Al-Birsiba'iyya Al-Nasiriyya Cemetery	X			
Al-Bolbaniyya Cemetery		X		
Al-Bussiyya Cemetery	X			
Al-Bzuoriyya Cemetery		X		X
Al-Dhahiriyya Cemetery		X		X
Al-'Ifridiouniyya Cemetery	X	X		
Al-Jaqmaqiyya Cemetery		X	X	
Al-Kamiliyya Al-Barraniyya cemetery		X		
Al-Kamiliyya Al-Salahiyya Al-Barraniyya cemetery		X		
Al-kawkaba'iyya Cemetery	X	X	X	
Al-'Ikhna'iyya Cemetery	X	X		
Al-Mardiniyya Cemetery	X	X		
Al-Mu'ayyadiyya Al-Shaikhhiyya Cemetery		X		
Al-Mukhtariyya Al-Tawashiyya Cemetery	X			
Al-Muraghiyya Cemetery		X		
Al-Rahbiyya Cemetery	X			
Al-Sabuniyya Cemetery	X	X		
Al-Siba'iyya Cemetery		X		
Al-Tauraziyya cemetery	X			
Al-Tikritiyya cemetery		X		
Al-Tinbiyya Cemetery	X			
Al-'Izziyya Al-Badriyya Al-Hamziyya Cemetery		X		X
Al-'Izziyya Cemetery	X			

Conclusion

After a descriptive and analytical journey into the architecture of the private Levantine Zengid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk cemeteries, the results of the study came as follows:

The most important result reached by the study according to the Islamic perspective is that the custom of the sultans, the Zengid princes, the Ayyubids, the Mamluks, and some notables of the Levantine society, purchasing lands and allocating them as private cemeteries for them and their families is permissible according to Islamic law, but it is better for a Muslim to be buried in public cemeteries, and among Muslims. Expanding the construction of their private cemeteries in order to serve as schools, libraries, or orphanages is also permissible according to Islamic law, and there is no doubt that their goal is to obtain reward and recompense for their service to Muslims. However, their conversion of some of their private cemeteries into mosques is not permissible according to Islamic law, and it is necessary to keep the graves away from mosques. Likewise, all the urban elements that they built over the graves of their dead, such as tombstones, chambers, and domes, adding *Mihrab* to them, and decorating their graves with decorations, Quranic writings, supplications, and poetic verses, in order to venerate the graves of their dead, are not permissible according to Islamic law.

The phenomenon of Levantines buying land to be their graves reflected their impression of death, that they are not afraid of it and always think about it, and believe in this much. This was reflected in their daily social customs towards private cemeteries, as if there was a close relationship between the Levantine individual and architecture of these cemeteries, and they began to go about their daily work. There, such as spending the night, studying there, and holding religious parties there. The great social status of some of the owners of private cemeteries, such as sultans and princes, also had an impact on the development of the style of the main urban elements of their cemeteries, such as the development of the style of the architecture of tombstones, grave rooms, the domes that were built above them, and the urban elements attached to their cemeteries, such as mosques, schools, orphanages, and libraries.

The word (*Turba*), the private cemetery among Levantines, became synonymous with the word mosque, school, library, and orphanage, and the concept of private Levantine cemeteries changed from a deserted place inhabited by the dead, shrouded in sadness and fear, to a bright place full of life, inhabited by the living alongside the dead, a place of joy, and a feeling of hope. The word cemetery among Levantines came to mean a religious, scientific, and social institution, with its own scientific, administrative, and economic system. It contributed to serve Levantine community in particular, and the Islamic community in general, because it was the place that sheltered orphans and provided job opportunities for members of the community. He embraced scholars and students, meaning that he contributed to support the Islamic scientific movement, so the private Levantine cemeteries and their urban elements became an icon embodying the art of Islamic material civilization that was employed to serve Islamic intellectual civilization.

References

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