

The *Toraby*: Profession for Life

The fact that the *toraby* inherits this profession for many generations made him the most influential person; the leading figure in the cemetery. He is also the main promoter of organizing, administrating, and supervising the work flow in it. He is the one who controls the relationship between all who are existent within it; residents and workers, to the extent that territories inside the cemetery became identified by the name of the *toraby* in charge. Territories are named after their *mo'alleem toraby*, no need for street addresses, no physical landmark competes. He has direct contact with the authorities.

The cemetery is identified by the names of families of *torabeyya* even postal addresses are written according to the *toraby*; i.e. resident of *Beliha* territory or *Abu-Sibha*...etc. Not only that, but also the monuments locations are referred to in the same way. The *toraby* is not recognized as a sole individual but he is an entire family in charge of a certain territory which is named after his family.

Mo'allemeen Torabeyya in Sidi Galal al-Suyuti Cemetery. The Mo'alleem Toraby is the highest authority and locus of control in his territory. Nothing happens within his territory without his knowledge. He is always there in the cemetery, day and night, decade after decade...



The *toraby* profession; it is not just a job or profession, but it is a code which one lives by. Not only does it shape the social relations and economic level, it also influences the psychological profile, thoughts and ideas; the very vision of the world around. The profession of the *toraby* is exclusive to descendants of the family in charge; the work is inherited from one generation to the next. *Torabbeya* are assisted by *sobyana*. The word *saby* means a boy, however, anyone who

assists a *toraby* is called a *saby* regardless of his age. The *saby* position could be inherited as well but it is not exclusive as the *mo'allem toraby*. Residents of the cemetery can work as *sobyan*, it also includes immigrants from rural areas especially from Upper Egypt, particularly *Beni Sweif* and *al-Fayoum*. According to the residing *trabeyya* families in *Sidi Galal al-Din al-Suyuti* area, their living there has started about seven generations ago. Some families are older than others; it is said that *Abu-Sibha* family is the oldest in the area. A lot of things carry their name such as *waboor Abu-Sibha* and *Abu-Sibha* street. The family itself claims relations to the Ottoman mosque *al-Mesabih* but that is not corroborated historically. The *Megahed* family is also one of the oldest families. The rest of the existing families are more recent. The great-grandfather; *Megahed*, was in the past the sole commander of the whole cemetery, then, he distributed it among his assistants; recent *torabeyya* families, and left his family a portion like any one else. This story was told by a member of the *Megahed* family.

Members of the *toraby* organization differ in the length of residence in the area; the *mo'allemeen torabeyya* and their assistants are the oldest group that exists, but the rest like the *sobyan* and the transient labor appeared around fifty years ago. They are even considered temporary residents. Lifestyle of the *mo'allemeen* and the architecture of their houses differ totally from those of other cemetery residents.

ORAL HISTORY OF THE PROFESSION; THE TORABY

Members of the *toraby* profession claim it started during the Ottoman period, others say it was the *Mamluk* period, one even exaggerated and referred it to the pharos or the period before Christianity with Jewish faith influences. They pointed out that the origin of the “art of burial” was taken from the Jews and then adopted by the pharos who buried their dead in rooms under the ground. It is also well known that the pharos were the first to bury their dead in private rooms as they believed in after life.

Christians differed in their burial rituals; they had their own special beliefs and their dead were buried in coffins. Last but not least, some claimed that the profession of the *toraby* started in Egypt after the arrival of *Amr Ibn Al-'ass* in the first cemetery at the foot of *al-Mokattam* hill, later moving to *al-Saba' Banat* area.

It is evident that people differed widely in their claims, however, the most repeated opinion was that the “burial” profession originated during the Ottoman rule of Egypt. The job developed to become a profession that is inherited by families living inside the cemetery. It is assumed that existing families first settled in the study area seven or eight generations ago. Ancestors are thought to have come from different locations across the country and settled to

live and work in the cemetery, in a profession that was passed down to their descendants. That is how the profession became almost the 'right' or 'property' of a certain family, inherited from one generation to the other. The importance of keeping it within the family is unquestionable; it is the vehicle by which the dignity, status, income, sustainability of the entire extended family is sustained.

Torabbeya stress on the care they received from the government since some times past. They were granted land inside the cemetery to build their own house in order to facilitate their role; to remain in the area day and night so that an eye is always kept on the dead and their tombs. However, they perceive it as unfortunate that they are not allowed ownership of this land, instead they are only allowed the right of usage "حق إنتفاع". This fact reveals a significant motive behind the importance of inheritance of the profession and never letting it go to anyone else outside the family; in fact they are keeping their home!

THE TORABY ORGANIZATION

Hierarchy Structure of the *Toraby* Organization

Despite the apparent simplicity of the hierarchy structure of the *toraby* profession, we find a complex yet well defined social structure governed by deeply rooted norms that everyone abides by.

The hierarchy structure is composed of five categories; each has a certain role that is exclusive and never shared between categories. The *mo'allem toraby*, who has a carnét or special ID-card issued to him by the administration of cemeteries, is the head of the hierarchy structure in his territory. He is the leading figure and is in charge of nearly every single activity; burying, guarding, offering services to visitors, communication with the authorities...etc. These are the public responsibilities of the *mo'allem toraby*, but he has another private set; he has to keep the profession within the family, maintain its internal social structure, sustain its status, and secure its financial stability. Not a single person is allowed to penetrate this system or try to overrule this position and social status or reach the peak of the pyramid of this hierarchy. In rare cases, a *mosa'ed*, who is a member of the same family; either a son of the *mo'allem* or his brother, or even his mother will take over the responsibilities and act as *mo'allem*. For example, in the case of Hany Sa'doun, who is the registered *toraby*, his mother is the actual operator in the cemetery. She says that this is approved by the administration (doubtful) and that she accompanied her son there when he was getting officially employed. There are occasions when close kin replace (unofficially) the *toraby mo'allem*. In this case Om Hany was filling in for her son who was sent one year in prison.

That was the first category, it is followed by the category of *mosa'ed een*, assistants of the *mo'allem*. This position is usually occupied by the eldest son of the *mo'allem*, if not then one of his other sons. By fulfilling this position he is getting prepared to take over when his turn comes. Being an assistant is an official position, i.e. officially registered at the administration of cemeteries and a permit is obtained in order to allow this assistant to practice his role (assistants work using permits while *mo'allemeen* are given ID cards). Sons are preferred by the administration to become assistants due to their familiarity with the profession; it is someone who has been living there since the day he was born, so he is the first choice to take the lead after his father. Assistants are trained since their early years. They are fully capable of supervising the whole process when the *mo'allem* is not at hand.

First and second categories belong to the “formal” side of the organizational structure. Then, the third category appears referred to as the *saby*, or the apprentice. These are usually immigrants from rural areas who have joined this profession out of need more than anything else. It is said that this took place about fifty years ago when immigrants from rural areas came to live in the cemetery, changing their work from agriculture (which was not profitable enough then) and replacing it by joining the *toraby* organization. Consequently, those men brought their families and relatives to live in the cemetery as well and founded their own community. As a result of this snow-ball effect, most *saby(s)* in *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)* cemetery come from one region in Upper Egypt, namely *Beni Sweif*. This category of workers is responsible for the accomplishment of the burial process; i.e. the muscular effort; they dig the grave, prepare it, carry the corpse into the grave, and finally seal it tightly.



Am Gaber and his wife and children live in a one-room hosh. They are from Beni Sweif and were brought to the cemetery by another older saby from Bei Sweif as well.

They live in a *hosh* (singular) usually within the territory of the *mo'allem toraby* who employs them. The *hosh* is one type of private graveyards found in the Egyptian cemetery with an enclosed room or two to receive family members visiting their dead relatives. Typically this *hosh* would be owned by a family with no one on their behalf living inside the cemetery.

Sobyan live in *ahwash* and guard and appropriate them in an informal manner with or without the knowledge of the *hosh* owners. In the past, the *sobyan* were not officially employed by the administration of cemeteries; the administration may even not have an idea about their existence in the cemetery. The *sobyan* also offer their services to visitors of the cemetery (families of the deceased); they clean the place, buy chairs and locks to secure the *hosh*, and water the plants. They depend entirely on this job for a living.

Some *sobyan* have been around for so long that they gain in authority. For example, in the area where young Ezz Abu-Sibha is the official *mo'alleem*, his *saby* Am Ismail is the real person in charge. While Ezz's position is maintained in front of outsiders (signs of respect such as Am Ismail not sitting in the same circle as Ezz and the inquiring researcher are observed), insiders know that Am Ismail is practically like a father to Ezz and that he (Ezz) has never entered a tomb in his life!



Am Ismail and his wife on the mastaba outside their humble home in a hosh in the Abu-Sibha territory. Working as a saby for almost 50 years, Am Ismail has practically raised the current registered mo'alleem toraby Ezz Abu-Sibha and his brothers.

The *saby* category is the end of the formal hierarchy structure of the *toraby* organization. They obtain cards (carnet) from the administration of cemeteries. However, there are two more “informal” categories. The first is assistants to the *sobyan*, they are usually young boys, they assist in everything; furnishing and preparing the place for visitors and in the burial process. Again, they are immigrants from rural areas recruited by the *saby* usually from his original home town and they also live in *ahwash*. They are perceived as temporary labor and a lot of them depend for a living on a few pounds gained from some light services they offer here or there. Generally, their livelihood also depends on the dead and their visitors. The visitor activity is at its peak during certain seasonal events and feasts, consequently, the work and profit is at its peak during these days. Great work pressure accompanies those events which necessitates every single worker in the cemetery to join (sometimes non-working residents also give a hand for a few extra pounds). A lot of money is gained and saved during those ‘boosts’ in business times. These savings form a primary support for them during days when the work (profit) is scarce. They say, “It is like a ‘poverty allowance’ to us; إعانة فقر.”

The last category of contributors in the *toraby* organization is that of the resident women. Their contribution is very small and is almost restricted to feasts and seasons of the visiting activity, i.e. when everybody is joining in to serve the visitors. Women help in cleaning, setting chairs, offering services like tea or bringing something ...etc. They include wives of *soby*an and wives of their assistants.

Table 1: The hierarchy structures of the *toraby* organization.

1	The head; the <i>mo'alle</i> m <i>toraby</i> . He is nominated by his predecessors appointed by the advisor to the administration of cemeteries, where he is registered and issued an ID card (carnet).
2	The assistant; the <i>mosa'ed</i> . He has granted a permit (تصريح) from the administration of cemeteries. He must pass an oral exam in order to get this permit. The exam tests his knowledge of the "burial process" and his ability to memorize verses from the <i>Qur'an</i> . He is most probably one of the sons of the <i>mo'alle</i> m <i>toraby</i> or one of his close relatives.
3	The apprentice; the <i>saby</i> , meaning an assistant but of lower rank than the <i>mosa'ed</i> . Three years ago, the administration of cemeteries made them ID cards in order to keep track of all who form the formal structure of the organization.
4	The informal temporary workers; the <i>sanai'i</i> . They have neither permits nor cards from the administration and therefore not recognized by the formal system. They are chosen by the <i>mo'alle</i> m <i>toraby</i> or the <i>mosa'ed</i> or the <i>saby</i> who is acting in his place.
5	Poor women who live in the cemetery who offer tea to visitors in seasonal celebrations and visitation.

This structure or organization of the *toraby* profession extends to shape the social and spatial structure of the cemetery. The society of the cemetery thus has a particular uniqueness to it that distinguishes it from all other societies in the city. Although connected to the surrounding communities in one way or another, either by partially working outside or by buying supplies and needs, you find the *toraby* is the undisputed and sole ruler in control of every single detail inside the cemetery. No one dares disobey him for fear of losing their livelihood or their home. The spatial implications of this social structure will be addressed in more detail in the following section.

Territorial Claims and Boundary Management

The study showed that every *mo'alle*m *toraby* family has a well defined territory. The administration of cemeteries has records of each *mo'alle*m's territory clearly numbered and well defined and known by every single individual living in the cemetery. Every family is restricted to its territory. Extending the power of any family outside its boundaries is out of the question. This strict observance of territorial domain applies to the extent that holding a

meeting with all of them was impossible because they disagreed where it could be held. This is reinforced by an official action taken by the administration which came in response to the frequent conflicts between families on separating boundaries; “now, there is peace and respect in the cemetery,” one *toraby* expressed. This recent action involves giving a numerical code to the territory of each *toraby* (zone1, zone2,...etc.) a serial number to each grave (*hosh* or cenotaph) in this territory.



Short wall on the left built by one toraby to demarcate the boundary between his territory and the neighbouring one.

When talking with a *torabeyya* (Samia Beliha) about shrines in the territory of adjacent *Sa'doun*, she was interested to see them and said she would ask for permission from the *torabeyya* in charge (Om Hany) to enter her territory and visit the shrine. She explained that it is out of curtesy, “Is it acceptable to enter someone’s home without asking first?” “يصح تدخل بيت حد من غير ما تستأذن؟” This level of territorial control is evident even more when a *hosh* resident (in Om Hany’s territory) reports that she is forbidden to enter the shrine of *Sheikh Rihan* area by the *Torabeyya* in charge (Om Hany) who is on bad terms with her over issues of residency (The resident is an acquaintance of the *hosh* owners and therefore living there by their permission and not by Om Hany’s).

Table (1) shows in detail how the study area of *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)* is distributed among the following major *Torabeyya* families:

- *Abu-Sibha* territory (zone 3,4,5,16)
- *Beliha* territory (zone 6,7,8,9,10)
- *al-Shamma'* and *al-Sebi* territory (zone 1, 2)
- *Sa'doun* territory (it is the smallest)
- *Megahed* territory (zone 15,17,18,19 - outside our study area geographically, but recognized as an integral part)

These are the main families; however there are subordinate families such as the official the *mo'Allem toraby* of zone (1) (*al-Sebi*) who is subordinate to the *mo'Allem toraby* of zone (2) (*al-Shamma'*). There is also lateral branching of families across territories as we saw in the *Beliha* family, where Hussien *Beliha* is officially responsible for zone (7) ,while Ali *Beliha* is officially responsible for zone (6), (8) and (10) to the extent that one of their long-time *saby* who is designated zone (9) speaks and acts as a *mo'Allem toraby*.

Table 2. Territorial distribution of *torabeyya* control sorted by zone number:

Controlling family name	Zone number	Toraby in charge
al-Shamma'	1	Mustafa el-Sebi
	2	Gamal al-Shamma'
Abu-Sibha	3	Muhammad Mustafa
	4	Hassan Hussein
	5	Hassan Hussein
	16	Ezz Saeed Abu-Sebha
Beliha	6	Mustafa Katr
	7	Aly
	8	Hussein
	9	Muhammad Hanafy
	10	(Samia...)
Sa'doun	11	Hany

The respect of the recent distribution of territories and the boundary management was clear when a member of the *Megahed* family was to be buried within the boundary of *Abu-Sibha* family. There was no disruption of the usual routine followed for any other burial process; the *Abu-Sibha* family took charge of all the work to be done and still the *Megahed* family paid the regular price. Nevertheless, a league or *rabtah* of *torabeyya* was founded in order to solve any problems that may arise between the *mo'allemeen*. The current head of the *rabtah* is Mr. Abdel Aziz Saleh. The role of the *rabtah* is to resolve conflicts between *torabeyya* and each other, or between them and the administration of cemeteries, or between them and customers, as well as to assist in the appointment of their sons to become officially appointed by the cemetery administration. They meet on monthly basis and there is an annual fee paid in

order to join the *rabtah*. This *rabtah* headquarters is located in the Mausoleum of *al-Imam al-Shafi'e*.

All these measures almost eliminated any forms of struggle between *torabeyya* especially on territorial claims since their borders are well defined and under strict control and supervision of the authorities. Despite the strong territorial claim that *torabeyya* perceive and exercise inside the cemetery, this claim is hardly recognized by outsiders. For example, during the construction of the *Autostrade* Road, 5m x 7m plots in new cemeteries were given to owners of removed graves as compensation. *Torabeyya* who controlled those areas, however, were not compensated; they are considered merely guards and not beneficiaries affected by the relocation.

TORABY VOCATION: BEING A TORABY

Inheritance and Sustenance of the Profession

The study revealed that there is a system regarding inheritance of the profession that is respected and applied by both the *torabeyya* and the authorities. The profession is inherited by one generation after the other, and is exclusive to certain families who are specialized in this profession and who transfer it to their children. Children; especially, the eldest sons, are prepared since their early years for the responsibility they will be in charge of one day. They are taught that they will be responsible for keeping the profession within the family and that it embodies their identity, dignity, and social status. They keep to it and guard it jealously like a family property passed down from their ancestors; an heirloom, that should never be wasted; "Is it rational that one just squanders his inheritance?!" they wonder, "في حد يفرط في ورثه"

Their keenness often leads to the deprivation of one of the sons from life choices just to be fully dedicated to the job and the responsibility. He spends his days being trained and taught how to take care of every single issue that is related to the cemetery; who are the owners of graves, where is the opening to each grave, where to buy equipment and materials, details and exceptions of the burial process ...etc. Then, he gets recommended by the councilor at the administration of cemeteries, who welcomes this kind of caliber, undergoes an oral exam by a representative from the administration (tests his knowledge of the burial process and memorizing of some verses from the Holy Qur'an) and when he passes the exam, he becomes officially employed to fill the position of *mosa'ed toraby*.



Three generations of Torabeyya from the Megahed family. Megahed, the current Mo'allem Toraby, his son Moustafa, the one in-line to take over his father's position, and young Ahmed who is just 4 years old but hangs out with his father and grandfather in their "Office" setup in a hosh.

"My one and a half year old son gets shocked when he sees me burying someone" Moustafa Megahed.

"I wish my children would have a better life than mine, but what can one do...there is no escape" Moustafa Megahed.

The profession is exclusive to men only and that is according to the law of the administration of cemeteries. The law states that no females are allowed inheritance of the profession or even joining it. The justification of this action includes the perception of women's nature as fragile, physically weak, and unable to enter the grave during the menstrual cycle. In cases when the *toraby* has only daughters, then the position moves on to his brother, a male relative or a son in-law. Also, there were cases where the *mo'allem* passed away leaving behind underage sons, family men take the lead of everything until the boys grow up and become old enough to be in charge. In the *Sidi Galal* cemetery, two cases of women fulfilling this role were Om Hani and Samia Beliha. They are not registered *torabeyya* but they are the ones supervising the workers and dealing with "customers" as they refer to the family of the deceased. Samia is taking charge instead of her husband who inherited the position from her father who had no sons but was now estranged due to marital problems between them. Om Hani is living in the cemetery while Hani lives outside and it seems he is having another job. Anyways, neither Om Hani nor Samia Beliha agreed to call themselves women *torabeyya*, they still insisted that no woman inherits this job. There seems to be that sense of "principle" regardless of reality. Although women help in serving the visitors, but still they claim women do not work in catering to visitors even though they get paid for it.

One reason to keep on working that profession is a sense of familiarity. Some express how the cemetery has become a part of themselves as if it is planted inside them they would say. They

grow up working in the cemetery, it is the only one thing they know and they are good at, that in addition to a well-established social status in the place where they live and work. They think that it is important that the son continue what his father has started; so the son of the engineer becomes an engineer himself, and the same thing with themselves.

A lot of *torabeyya*, usually older ones, perceive their job as respectful as any other job in the world; nothing differentiates them from engineers or doctors. On the contrary, their existence is much more significant than any other profession, "Imagine what the case would be if everyone refused to do this job, then earth will be filled with dead bodies, anyone can be a doctor but very few can become *torabeyya*," one *mosa'ed* retorted. Some of them even see themselves as doing a job that was revered by the Prophet Muhammad himself (more on the *toraby* and his relation with society in a subsequent section on Social Relations and Psychological Dimensions).

Another related reason for the persistence in this profession lies in the rule of sustenance that is followed by all *torabeyya* families and that is the distribution of profit over the entire extended family. One *toraby* explained how his territory which contains some 500+ *hosh* and graves feeds 14 households (the *Megahed* family responsible for territory 15, 17, 18, 19). This monetary tradition puts pressure on members of the family who are in line to be *toraby*. How profitable is it to be a *toraby* remains an unanswered question. Technically, a *toraby* is employed by the administration of the cemeteries yet he is not paid; he does not get a fixed salary from the state, but rather depends for his livelihood on the money paid to him by the families of each *hosh* and grave in his territory. This money is usually paid annually or every few months; it varies from one family to another. Observation revealed minor variation among *torabeyya* families in apparent wealth; their houses are mostly modest and many of them have another occupation to make ends meet; one is a tailor (Ali Beliha), one a marble carver (Ahmed Saleh) and many are construction workers. Besides their income to maintain and protect the *hosh* or graveyard, there is the fee earned for each burial in addition to the charity or generous tips they receive when families visit their deceased, but the latter tradition is becoming less frequent recently.



Torabeyya usually have another job besides. They say, "this job is not enough to feed, a complementary job is a must" and "The piaster of the dead is dead." قيرش الميت ميت

In the back of the house the current registered toraby sets up as marble carving shop; his bread-winning vocation, while his younger brother conducts his toraby responsibilities. The younger brother is a construction worker elsewhere as well.

There are doubts that some *torabeyya* families also make undeclared profit from illicit activity that occurs in the cemetery such as drug dealing and drug consumption. A more founded rumor is that *torabeyya* violate the trust bestowed upon them by grave owners and bury multiple people in single graves or complete strangers in someone's *hosh* besides the money they make renting out a *hosh* here and there as housing!

Because of these practices, the *toraby* profession acquired quite a negative image among the "outsider" society, which made people usually avoid them. They are considered a bad OMEN. The fact that they profit from the dead and from charity given by others, are all reasons that increase the resentment felt towards the cemetery by some member of *toraby* families. Those members of the families refuse their destiny, especially among the young. This category of *torabeyya* community thinks that there is a great difference between their demeaning profession and other respectful profitable professions. Many *torabeyya* hide their job when they meet new people, they even claim they work in the construction business in their ID cards. According to them, working any other profession is better than confessing what they really are. That is why sons of *torabeyya* and their assistants hardly miss a chance to live

outside the cemetery; even though they enter it to visit their parents/family daily or even give a hand every now and then.

Even family members; cousins or brothers who move out to another life, come to visit frequently sometimes everyday, to sit for an hour or two under the shade of the tree, on the mastaba enjoying the cool breeze and the quiet of the peculiar paradise with their torabeyya relatives.



On one occasion, a man didn't mention the name of his famous *toraby* family when introducing himself. He claimed to be an ordinary *hosh* owner who gets really relieved by the staying in the cemetery; it gives him a chance to think reflectively about life and its meaning, he said, "when one looks around here, he remembers, as if a movie shows in one's mind, all those buried people; where were they? And where are they now? Then, one learns to let go of the arrogance..." Afterwards we learnt from another *toraby* belonging to the same family that that man in fact is the registered *toraby* of the territory in which he has his own *hosh* (which justifies spending several nights of the week in the cemetery!) It was said that he tries to hide this fact as much as possible. Others told that tale with a sense of sarcasm; this denial was unacceptable by the *toraby* community. On the other hand, the denying *toraby* maybe seen to have the courage most of the cemetery inhabitants lack; he established an entire life outside the cemetery, he raised educated children, he had a fulltime job in the Ministry of Transport, but, this courage disgraced him among his own. As previously mentioned, the profession of the family is like a mayorship; it is a shame to let it go. Maybe behind this sarcasm lies some envy. In fact, that *toraby* had the best of the two worlds; a complete life outside with a family properly fitting in the society as well as enjoying the benefits of the cemetery while avoiding its disadvantages.

It is clear that whatever the circumstances are, the profession remains within the powers of the family, and this system is respected by the authorities as well which never suggested, or tried to transfer the responsibility of a territory from one family to another.

Responsibilities and Liabilities of the *Mo'allem Toraby*

This section explores the role of the *toraby* in the area of his reign; his responsibilities and his liabilities. His responsibilities include supervising the burial process and the work of assistants; he supervises and does not perform any muscular effort. He keeps record of the “burial permits” that are brought by the family of the deceased. He guards the graves of all the types and makes sure no activity takes place without his knowledge or approval. He takes formal actions in such cases and informs the authorities and an official record with the incident is filed. This formal action is important for many reasons, the most important of which is to protect himself and prove his innocence in front of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, the administration of cemeteries, and/or the police depending on the kind of violation that occurred. Add to his responsibilities, the supervision of building new tombs and fixing of marble cenotaphs (*shawahed*) on the graves. He is a key character in cases of transfer of property from one family to another. He witnesses all the processes, and of course, he is the one to decide where to bury the new coming cases.

This has been a brief summary of the *toraby's* FORMAL role, but an informal role is always taking place in parallel among which the “housing business” takes place. *Torabeyya* are always asked for residence inside the cemetery by poor people who usually have just been faced by a catastrophe and have no place to go; like the physical collapse or demolition of their home or recent immigrants coming from rural areas seeking inexpensive shelter or relatives of people already living in the cemetery. No one can ever be given a place to live inside the cemetery without the permission of the *mo'allem toraby*. He allows them to live in a *hosh* after the approval of its owner (that is what they claim!). The argument is that those residents take responsibilities of the *hosh* as long as they live in it; they guard it, water the plants, keep it clean, but they usually have to leave it when the owners are visiting their dead.



They claim the hosh owner brought them to live in this hosh as guardians. Do they pay to the toraby in charge or not, remains unknown.

But, sometimes individuals are offered a *hosh* behind the back of its owner, in such cases residents must leave the *hosh* and every trace when there is a visit or a seasonal occasion (any family typically informs the *toraby* by phone in advance), anything to keep the owners from finding out the fact that their *hosh* is rented to somebody! Some families on the other hand, are so desperately trying to avoid having any residents in the *hosh*, that one finally decided to knock down the two guest rooms on their plot and leave the *hosh* a bare open space.

Going back to the formal responsibilities in some more detail, the *toraby* is responsible for deciding when is it proper to open a grave and how for he is the one keeping track of recent burials. Opening graves with recently buried corpses should be avoided as much as possible, it is common wisdom shared by all in the profession. That is because bad smells evolve due to body decay which is said to start three days after burial. The *toraby* decides whether to open a grave with a recently buried corpse or not but if the family of the deceased want to open the grave then they do what the family wants. Precautionary steps are then added to the regular burial process to avoid the bad smell (will be elaborated in the Burial Process Section). It is also said that the duration of complete decay differs from one body to another sometimes taking 40 days while others take two to three months. This disparity in duration was attributed to different reasons; some related it to the health of the dead before death; was he/she healthy, weak...etc. Others told us it is relative to his/her deeds; was he/she a good person or a bad one. They mentioned a case where they had to open a grave only three days after a previous burial and they experienced no smell at all. They say it is because he was a good man, others say it was because he was so thin that there was practically no flesh to decay! They also claim that the *awleyaa* do not decay at all and their graves are lit as if there was a lamp. That is how they proved that *Sheikh Abata* is not a *waly*, because when they had to open his grave to bury someone else his body was completely decayed just like any ordinary person. Current *torabeyya* and their staff seem to be unaware of any harmful gases evolving from the decaying body; to them it is just a bad unpleasant smell, it was not even related to the growing size of the body. However, some are convinced that the dust of the cemetery is infectious. With repeated opening of graves the dust from inside comes out to mingle with the dust outside; it comes out with all the diseases contained in a grave. They claim cases of eyes diseases and sinusitis to be caused by their work. The perceived health risks made the *torabeyya* ask for a financial compensation; a salary, from the administration of the cemeteries.

Among the responsibilities of the *toraby* is burying the poor. Within each *toraby* territory, one or two graves are designated for charity. A wealthy family usually owns those charity graves and leaves it under the supervision of the *mo'allem* in order to bury the poor who do not own a grave. If the *mo'allem* does not allow a corpse to be buried in charity tombs then the family of the deceased go to the NGO called "Members of *Sidi Galal* district" to accommodate them.

His liabilities from the security dimension can be summarized in his connections with representatives of the administration of cemeteries as well as those of the Supreme Council of Antiquity which facilitates taking deterrent actions whenever a violation occur in his territory. The *mo'alleem toraby* supervises the work routine that is followed during seasonal events and also has a significant role in solving problems that may arise between family members or between customers.

The *toraby* is also expected to guard his territory from any violations of the law (especially by night) whether committed by insiders or outsiders. All residents of the cemetery; the *mo'alleem*, his assistants and residents share the exposure to those threats and dangers. They fear for themselves and their children from all types of intruders who appear by night in order to commit illicit behavior ranging from consuming drugs, to drug dealing, to prostitution, and more often now robbery; robbing building like cast-iron fences and screens on windows and doors from graveyards; *ahwash* or monuments. According to several *mo'allemeen torabeyya*, any intruder has to have an accomplice form inside the cemetery community.

Some rumors pointed to one of the *saby's* sons, as a key person associated with organizing the leisurely consumption of drugs and prostitution for outside night visitors. Other rumors associated one specific *mo'alleem toraby* to drug dealing; his brother was actually serving time in prison for operating a drug dealing business along the southern edge of *Sidi Galal* cemetery, (*Sook-al-Hamam* Street). However, the main immoral act that *Torabeyya* have indirectly admitted to is the recycling of graves. More often than not neglected graves are opened without permission to bury other non-related people; paying clients who do not own a grave or a *hosh*. From observation of the disparity of names engraved on the same cenotaph or *shahed*, and from comments made by *Torabeyya*, it seems plausible to assume that it is common practice among *Torabeyya* to recycle graves irrespective of ownership. Even Monuments were used as such. An attempt to re-sell a *hosh* in *Megahed* territory was told, but the owners went to the administration with contracts proving their rights and the attempt failed in the end. In addition, in the territory of *Abu-Sibha*, a *toraby* was said to convert a *mastaba* on the outer wall of a *hosh* into a grave. They also accused *torabeyya* of burying people in the shrine of *Sheikh al-Barzi*.

Claiming and reclaiming of burial space... recycling of graves to increase incoming profit

“No Toraby will ever see the doors of Heaven” said one of the Torabeyya with a sarcastic smile....



Some *torabeyya* families and *saby*'s are more involved than others in those illicit behaviors that occur in the cemetery at night and at least one family seems not to be involved at all. The *Beliha* family (the most educated, most refined in their manner, attire and speech and the most resentful of the situation). Also their family house is along the main thoroughfare *al-Qarafa al-Kobra* and therefore considered to be on a frequented route of the cemetery rather than in the more secluded interior spot like the *Abu-Sibha* house.

However, there is still a range of illicit activity that seems to occur in the cemetery outside the *toraby* control or any one else, for that matter, from the cemetery community. This includes groups of young men who would march through armed with iron rods and swords (*senag*) to vandalize and feed their ego. Such groups are feared by everyone. One *saby* was hit on his back with an iron rod when he tried to prevent a couple of young men from stealing the iron ferforgé gate of one of the *ahwash*; “fortunately he was not paralyzed because his injury was very close to his spinal chord” said one of the *toraby* reporting the accident.

Another insecurity that seems to be completely unrelated to the *toraby* or the cemetery community is occasional murders. Actually, there are zones that, although officially within the territory of the *toraby*, are beyond his control. One such area is referred to as the “stencky” area “*al-mante’a al-zefra*”. It is along the *Autostrade* and said to be occasionally used to dump a murdered body. Its name relates to one story about a burnt corpse that was found there detected by the pungent smell it emitted. This and similar areas are seldom mentioned by any *toraby*; as if it is a source of shame that a *toraby* would admit not being in control. The Northern part of the study area (around the Northern Minaret) is such a zone. The state of neglect; broken tombstones, debris, lack of vegetation, and traces of misuse (discarded syringes) speaks for itself. This part of the cemetery, and others like it, where there is an open space with physical access from an extremely public motorway like the *Autostrade* and a

morphology with fewer inhabited structures (whether a *toraby* house or inhabited *hosh*) is a recipe that attracts the worse intruders. To be responsible of the safety and security of the living and the dead and the buildings and even the monuments is the heaviest burden on the shoulder of the *toraby*. Unfortunately, he has to depend only on himself and his resources in implementing this role; i.e. there is no police intervention at any point. *Torabeyya* are usually incapable of facing these kinds of dangers like dealing with hustlers, and robbers or murderers which results in the cemetery being an insecure place at night. However, the *toraby* is the first to be questioned by the police or the Supreme Council of Antiquities when anything is amiss (his responsibility towards monuments and the Supreme Council of Antiquities is discussed in a separate section to come).

*“I don’t earn enough
to risk breaking my back by intruders... after ‘esha’ prayer I go back to my house”*



*The saby disclaims control of the area
around the Nourthern Minaret*



The cemetery community fears the living more than the dead! Accordingly, *torabeyya* restrict their security responsibilities to watch over the graves themselves besides not allowing strangers to freely walk through the cemetery unless his permission is secured or even accompaniment is provided, and of course all that happens during the day ONLY! More than one *mo’allem toraby* demanded the presence of other security authorities whether regular police or special guards employed by the Supreme Council of Antiquities to protect the monuments (more on this issue in the section on *Toraby* Claims to the Monuments).

The fact that *torabeyya* don’t own any kind of property within the boundary of the cemetery and especially their homes, and the fact that their houses are secured as long as the job is, are factors that add to the insecurities they are experiencing. In addition they are restricted

regarding implementing any improvement to their homes. For example, they complain that they cannot add more floors or do a lot of changes to the house (doubtful). Besides they find it difficult to move out of the cemetery as they are attached to it and professionally they must be present in it all day long. There is no escape. Their residence situation is similar to that of company housing. The same with their assistants; they live in *ahwash* on verbal basis; i.e., no lease or contract exists and sometimes they live there without the knowledge of the owner; it is almost impossible to implement any kind of improvements to these places.

In addition to insecurity of tenure, and as mentioned above, the *torabeyya* also suffer from insecurity caused by having to deal with law-breakers, robbers and hustlers who perceive the cemetery as the most appropriate location for their illicit activities. The continuity of the profession within the family and the future and welfare of their children arise as other sources of stress the *torabeyya* suffer from. The low social status they feel makes it really difficult to wish it for their children, also with its relatively low profit when compared with the effort done to accomplish the task and all kinds of risks they are exposed to, is insufficient compensation.

The Burial Process

In order to bury a person, there is a process and a ritual to be followed. First certain tools are used to open a grave, clean it, prepare the exact location for the dead body taking its orientation into consideration, and finally close the grave again tightly. The tools used are simple and manual. The work done is implemented under the supervision of the *mo'allem toraby* or his delegates.

Only the Mo'allem Toraby knows where it is they should dig to find the entrance to the subterranean chambers. Some Mo'allemeen Torabeyya resort to marking the entrance on the tombstone, or shahed to remember.



The burial process starts when the *mo'alleem toraby* is notified (a phone call or a visit) by a member of the deceased person's family. The *mo'alleem* himself should be contacted and no one else, as he is the boss and the member in charge of the whole process. The *mo'alleem* delays any action until he sees the "burial permit". The permit is issued by the family of the deceased even before a death certificate is issued. It must include at least the deceased full name (1st, 2nd and 3rd name), the name of the person who reported the death, and the stamp of the health organization issued from the local branch near the deceased person's address. As previously mentioned, no action is taken (i.e., start opening the grave) until the permit is accurately examined by the *mo'alleem* for fear of any legal suspicions that may expose him to legal accusation. The "burial permit" documents are inspected occasionally by both the police and the administration of cemeteries in order to avoid the burial of murdered persons. The *mo'alleem toraby* keeps records of burial permits issued by health authority for two years and then discards them. He would not bury without it.

After checking the "burial permit," the *mo'alleem* gives his orders to start digging the grave. He would then indicate the entrance to the grave which he knows by heart or uses a sign to remind him. Two boys are needed to remove the layer of dust covering the grave entrance. It is usually 20-30 cm in depth. A *mesht* or comb is used in this process. A *mesht* is similar to a *fas* except that the metal part has the shape of teeth like a comb. One of the two boys digs the dust using the *mesht* while the other one uses *ghala'*; a rubber container used to move the dust. This action takes about half an hour. Beneath the layer of dust a number of rectangular stones appear; they are used to block the grave's opening. One slick stone is called *megdal* (singular), *magadeel* (plural). Due to the removal of the *magadeel* some dust falls onto the stairs leading to the inner part of the grave. A brush is used to clean that dust. A bucket of water is filled from a tap in the nearest *hosh* usually by means of a hose. The water is sprinkled around the grave as a counteraction to the arising dust from the grave opening action.

The underground chamber is almost 2.2 m by 2 m at a depth of 2.6 - 3 m.

The exact location where the corpse is going to be placed is then prepared. It is referred to by different terms; *matrah* or *manamah*. According to the Islamic *Shari'ah* the corpse should be placed in a specific orientation in accordance with the *Qiblah*; i.e. in the direction of *Makka*. Many ways are adopted to prepare the *matrah*; some dig a bit into the ground to form a groove or recess fitting the

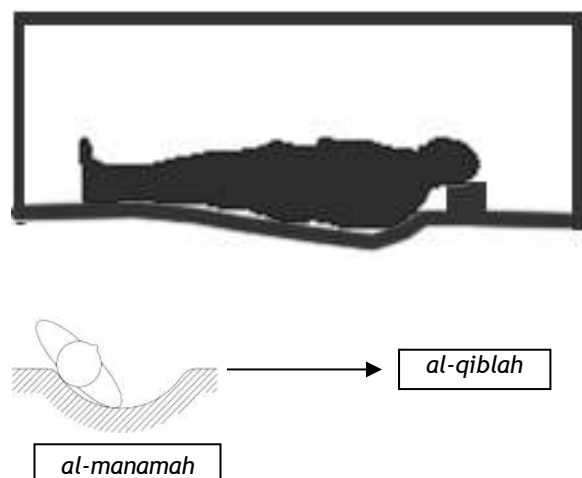


Fig (1). The head of the corpse should be towards the Qiblah.

size of the body and also form a pillow. Others add sand to define the location. Now, the grave is prepared to receive the body.

Wooden chairs are lined around the grave entrance for the funeral members to sit. The *toraby* owns this equipment and they are usually stored in a *hosh* or inside a monument in the *toraby's* territory. Rarely, families ask for padded chairs called *ferasha*. They would be rented from the *Mansheyya* market or *Sook-al-Hamam*. All the mentioned preparations take from 1 to 2 hours at most. After the prayer for the deceased which usually takes place at the nearest famous mosque (in *al-Sayeda Aisha* mosque in our case), the funeral moves on into the cemetery and the actual burial starts. *Torabeyya* workers carry the body, sometimes with the assistance of members of the deceased's family and lead the body down the steps into the grave. The forthcoming rituals differ according to gender. It is simple in the case of women. They just untie the ropes around the neck, waist, and ankles and loosen the fabric wrapping the body. It is called in Arabic *kafan* or *darag*. They are creating a breathing space for the gases that evolve while the body decays. Sometimes, for religious reasons, *mahram*; her husband or brother or father or son or uncle witnesses the process inside the grave. In case of men, they unwrap the three layers of fabric covering the body (the outermost one is *kafan* or *kotneyya*, the middle one is *shash*, the inner one is *bafta* and is perforated), then they remove the cotton covering his face and genitals, clean the face using a piece of cotton, re-wrap the three layers one after the other loosely. The ends of the fabric are folded beneath the head and the feet. The hands are placed on the abdomen the right hand over the left one; the same pause of praying (a woman's body is not revealed as with men because it is *awrah*; forbidden to reveal in front of stranger men).

According to *sunnah* the dead should lay on their right side. *Torabeyya* say that when the body is 90 degrees to the ground they run the risk of turning on the face when the body swells and the gases evolve, so, they place it slightly inclined backwards in order to avoid this disgraceful position. Sometimes they increase the amount of sand on the left side of *matrah* to ensure body support. But, they sometimes face trouble with families who insist on the absolute right-sided placement although it is said to be 'preferable' and not a must. Afterwards, some dust is

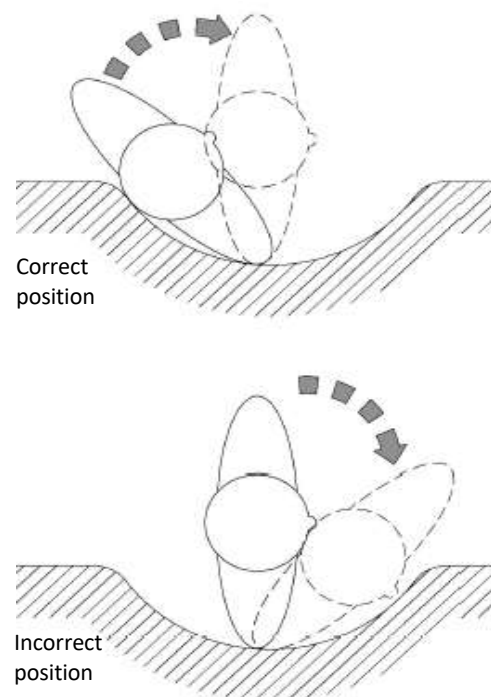


Fig (2). Position of the corps so that it does not turn on its face after swelling during the initial stages of decay.

sprinkled over the body while reciting some verses from the *Qur'an* related to death and praying for the soul to rest in peace and earn heaven. That is called *talqeen*.

Finally, they start closing the grave. Again, two men are needed for the task. The *magadeel* are replaced in their position to close the opening to the underground chamber. Some water is poured in the middle of the pile of dust removed during opening the grave in order to form mud which is then used to fill in the gaps between the stones sometimes some small rocks are used as well to fill those gaps. This is all leveled using the *mesht*, and some water is sprinkled on top to make it all settle. Actual burying; i.e. placing the body inside the grave, and closing it takes from 15 to 30 minutes. *Moqre'een*; *Qur'an* recitors who are temporarily present in the cemetery, recite some verses during and after the burial upon request. These are not members of the *toraby* organization; they are freelancers.

After the burial process is completely done, the family pays the *toraby*, covering any extra expenses like renting padded chairs or lamps in cases of burying after sunset (it is rare) or the *moqre'*. Usually, the *toraby* pays all the costs then takes the total amount from the family in one go. The ordinary process costs around L.E.200. "There is no fixed price, whatever the customer pays." says one *torabeyya* (Om Hany). The money is distributed between the *mo'alleem* and his staff. The cost of burial may vary according to the family's socio-economic level. In case of rich families, the *mo'alleem* implements the best preparations regardless of their request and charges high fees. On the other hand, if the family is poor the *toraby* can waiver his fee entirely and perform burial for free as charity. It is relative.

Opening graves with recent corpses buried in is not desirable and should be avoided as much as possible. They are supposed to keep it unopened until the corpse is fully decayed which takes from 40 days to 2 or 3 months. When opening the grave cannot be avoided, *torabeyya* cover their mouth and nose and resort to initiating an even strong smell that overrides the existing unbearable one evolving from decayed body. A piece of cloth or incense is burned and placed on top of the staircase leading to the inside of the grave for about 5 minutes. *Torabeyya* are not aware that this solution deals with the smell but not the harmful gases. Raising awareness is needed in this issue.

Graves have capacities, usually a limited one. When the rate of burial in the same grave is faster than the rate of complete decay; transfer totally into dust, *torabeyya's* first option is to inform the grave owners that it is full and that there is no room for more corpses just yet.

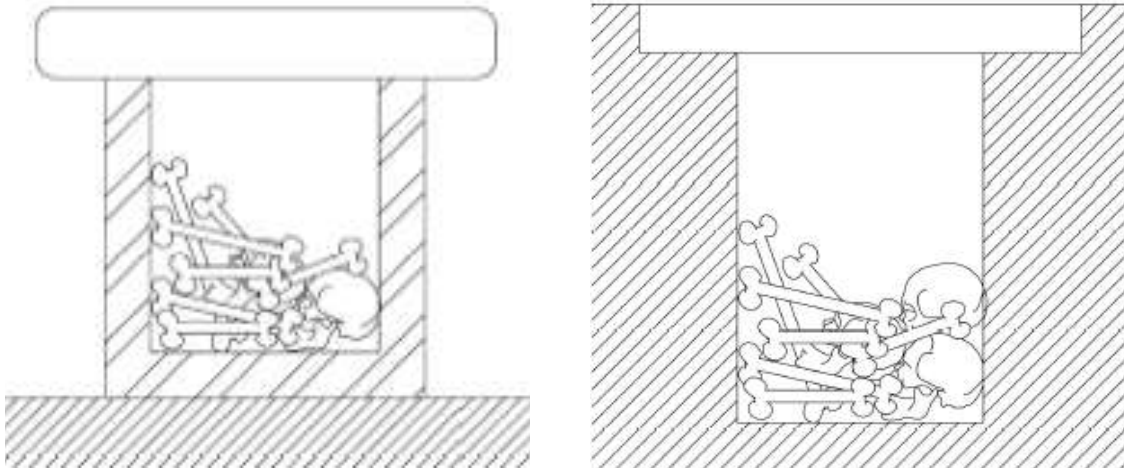


Fig (3). The *ma'damah* (left) and the *qassa'eya* (right) are two variations as to how to dispose of the decomposed skeletons to make room in the grave for new burials.

Alternatively, the *toraby* can build what is called *ma'damah* or bone keeper in the middle of the grave (1m deep and 1.5m in length) with stone wall sides and stone cover where all remaining bones are collected and placed in a pile. A variation to the *ma'damah* is the *qassa'eya* where bones are also collected but they are buried directly in the ground and covered with dirt that is stamped by the workers' in order to level it. *Qassa'eyas* are not reusable like the *ma'damah* and are usually located at a far end of the underground chamber not in the middle like the *ma'damah*. When bones are no more than one year old the *toraby* asks permission from grave owners whether to move them down to the pit or leave them. Now the grave is as good as new. They do that while acknowledging that God does not favor mixing bones of different persons and setting foot on the remains, but they have no other choice; they say, "the cemetery is small with fixed boundaries". A *toraby* mentioned that they try to avoid doing that to the extent that he once buried right in front of the stairs which made him step on the dead person's foot by mistake on entering the grave the following time which caused the skeleton to rise up standing right in front of him!

The *lahd* is said to be the correct *shar'y* method of burial. It is implemented in Upper Egypt but not in our case study cemetery. They say it necessitates a special type of soil that we lack here. It does not include formerly built grave chambers. Instead, on each new burial a grave is dug 1½ m length × ½ m width × 1 m depth. The sides of the *lahd* are sometimes built of stone. The deceased is placed inside the

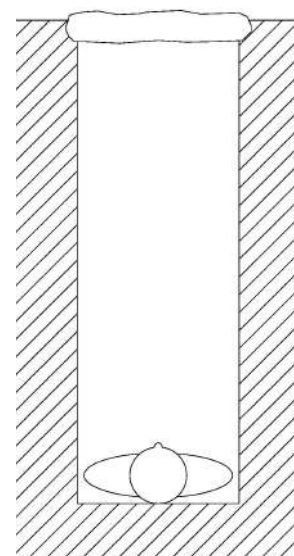


Fig (4). The *lahd*; It is said to be the *shari'a* way of burial.

grave where the loosening of fabric is done which is called *talheed*. At the end, 3-4 longitudinal blocks of stone (*hagar ghasheem*) are used to close the grave and small stones to fill in the gaps then dust is added over. This grave is never re-opened, it happens by time that those graves are filled with earth again and the bodies become dust, then, the ground undergoes *tagreef* and re-used for the same purpose again but after a long period of time. If a *shahed* is to be added, it is located over the head. In Upper Egypt they do not have any kind of ownership of graves, it is an open space and people are buried in order of death.

We also learnt from *torabeyya* that whatever underwent exposure to fire in its manufacturing should not be used in building graves like cement and bricks. This is disregarded in our case study cemetery practice but also the validity of this claim is not verified. We were told that in the case of a graveyard alongside *Ain-al-Seera*, reinforced concrete was used to prevent land erosion. In this case, they bury over the ground; it is a layer of concrete then a layer of dust over it where the deceased is buried.

In general the *torabeyya* reveal a sense of guilt to different degrees. They admit, some more than others, that they violate God's word and that they will all not be exempted from burning in hell! The moving of bones, the defiling of the dead by peeing, defecating, and practicing marital rights (intercourse) in the cemetery because they work and live there is something they bear on their conscience, but claim can do nothing about. They overlook it; life goes on... time for another *shisha*.



Toraby tools and equipment used during burial and visitation are stored in a private hosh within the territorial boundary of toraby's control; the zone.

The tools used are: 2 *mesht*, 1 *ghala'*, 2 buckets, 1 hose two meters long at least, wooden chairs, *magadeel*, 1 brush, sand (optional - a small Suzuki costs L.E.35), and straw mats known as *hosr* or *hassera*. Storage of tools is usually in the *toraby's* on-site office and we have seen a case of storing it inside the monument. Specialized shops for *torabeyya* equipment are found in

al-Sayeda Aisha and *al-Abageyya*. Sometimes shop representatives come to the cemetery to market their goods.

Daily and Seasonal Routines

The daily routine of the *toraby* is mainly concerned with supervising his territory and keeping it clean, and ready for any upcoming visit or burial.

The *toraby* begins his day at 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning by walking through his territory in order to check on everything. Then, he heads for his office which is in fact a *hosh* that is assigned for him by the authorities to serve as an office, some say after taking permission of the owner of the *hosh*. Usually the office consists of a desk and some chairs used to serve the customers and the facility to make tea and other drinks. The water outlet maybe supplied in the same *hosh* or one nearby. The office is the location from which the *toraby* manages his work. This office also works as a meeting place for his friends during and after working hours. They meet, chat, drink tea, cigarettes, and *shishah*. Customers usually call him by phone when there is a burial or just drop by in case of a visit. During the day he sees to it that plants are watered and walkways are swept clean. This is the regular routine of the *mo'alleem toraby*. He then leaves the office at around sunset. Some of them have houses outside the cemetery but most live inside the cemetery.

Burial frequency cannot be measured, sometimes it is twice per week and sometimes twice per month for a toraby, "and there were times when nothing took place for six months", said one toraby.

Exterior and interior views of a toraby office in a hosh.



The daily routine of the *mosa'ed een* and *sobyán* starts earlier than their bosses. They start with sunrise at 6 or 7 a.m. by cleaning the *ahwash* and spaces around them, watering the plants and sprinkling the ground to settle the dust, then they wait. When there is a burial they do all the muscular effort. The workers also are responsible for serving the families of their bosses, they buy them food; vegetables, fruits and grocery on daily basis. Sometimes they accompany women (wives and daughters of *torabeyya*) till the main street and back home again. It is unsafe for women to move through the inner spaces alone; any unexpected harassment may take place (see Dwelling Activities section). *Sobyán* are present in the cemetery almost all day long. They rarely go to a coffee shop outside the cemetery even by night. It is said they don't because of lack of financial luxury, but also because living in a *hosh* they are the ones who afford the most surveillance of the cemetery by night.



By midday all plants would have been watered, all hoshes checked for violations, all spaces in between cenotaphs sprinkled with water to keep the dust down. Not a shred of paper letters the floors. Each toraby takes pride in the tidiness of his territory.



The routine in the cemetery differs greatly when there is a season of visiting as seen during feasts; Eid-al-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha, also the beginning of hijry month of Ragab; known as tal'at Ragab, and the anniversary of Prophet Muhammad's birth al-Maulid al-Nabawi. Those events are considered the most important days throughout the year. Everybody in the cemetery is fully prepared for these days; they earn a supportive livelihood that constitutes most of their yearly earnings. Those seasons are even more crucial for them than the regular burial if measured from the profit point of view. They are not only offered charity money on these

days, but they are also given food and fruits. Each occasion has its special food items (see Dealing with 'Visitors' Section). Bosses get bigger portions of money than their assistants do; this hierarchy is applied to determine the shares of all members of the toraby organization. Other less important seasons like the middle of *hijry* month Sha'ban and Ramadan. Some said that no one comes to visit the dead during Ramadan. If anyone comes then this is for the sake of the people living in the cemetery in an attempt to earn God's satisfaction during the Holy month. "Visiting the dead during feasts days is a way to manifest loyalty towards the dead; that they are still remembered and family members still want to share their happiest moments with them, if not with their physical existence, then with their souls," explains a toraby.

The regular daily routine remains the same, which affects the psychological state of the *torabeyya*, nothing really changes much in their lives or habits.

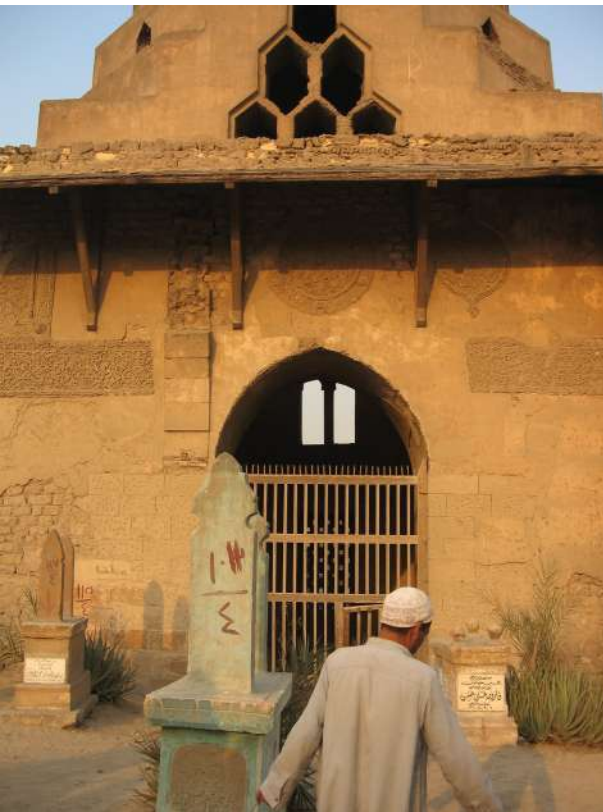
Visitors crying at a cenotaph with a maqre' reciting verses from the Qur'an, while the saby fetches water in a pail to sprinkle water around the grave where the visitors are sitting to settle the dust.



TORABY CLAIMS TO THE MONUMENTS

The presence of the *Mamluk* funerary monuments in the case study area makes the Supreme Council of Antiquities as influential as the administration of cemeteries. No single action can ever be done without a permission from the Supreme Council of Antiquities. The Supreme Council of Antiquities is very alert; "the next day to building a new room beside a monument they came and demolished it," reported one *mosa'ed toraby*. There is frequent presence of Supreme Council of Antiquities representatives in the area.

a nuisance The *mo'allemeen torabeyya* are demanded to notify whenever an unreported action takes place in their area, they would face a lot of trouble if they don't. Permission from the Supreme Council of Antiquities is necessary, to repair an existing grave or cenotaph or open a grave within 25 m of any monument. In that sense, the monuments are like a "thorn" in the *toraby's* throat الأثر كده زي الشوكة في الزور. They cannot build a new grave beside or inside a monument, thus limiting their expansion and income.



Graves and cenotaphs are getting closer and closer to monuments. In this case, photo shows Qusun mausoleum in the Abu-Sibha territory. Dwellers along the periphery of the cemetery say, "the Abu-Sibha's are claiming more land for new graves and cenotaphs to the extent that they are encroaching on their residential street."

The *torabeyya* adopt a very cautious attitude when dealing with Supreme Council of Antiquity representatives lest they would file an official complaint against them if any abuse or violation was detected. We witnessed an incidence when a lady started some digging work in her own grave without the knowledge of the *toraby* in charge. The Supreme Council of Antiquities inspector filed an official complaint against the *mo'alleem toraby* responsible for this territory. An exchange of harsh words took place between the *toraby* and the lady then he headed for the police station and filed an official complaint against her for the incidence. His action was mainly to provide his legal disclaimer, and consequently, the repairs were stopped by the authorities.

pride As for the connection between the *torabeyya* and the physical monuments themselves, *torabeyya* consider themselves honorary guards responsible for keeping them from robberies or any illicit behavior that might take place inside or around them. It is a similar case to guarding

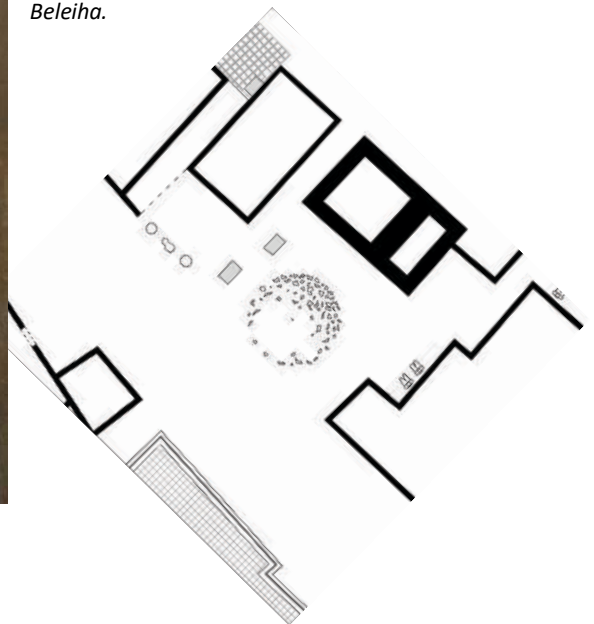
the cemetery by night. Although the *toraby* in fact is nothing more than an ordinary person who happens to work in the cemetery, however, he is responsible for everything and is the one to be blamed in case of any disorder. Generally, they avoid any repair work or rehabilitation that might bring them trouble. However, recently one of the metal crescent on top of one of the monuments had fallen to the ground and so there is a general perception among *torabeyya* that the monuments could be a source of such lethal hazard.

*tenure
guarantee*

On the other hand, *torabeyya* realize that those monuments safeguard them from development projects that may demolish/remove the entire cemetery to replace it with fancy hotels, office buildings or entertainment parks. This had happened to the Megahed family where almost one third of their territory was claimed by the state for the construction of the *Autostrade* overpass and connecting road systems. *Hosh* owners were compensated by giving them other plots elsewhere, but *torabeyya* whose livelihood had shrunk were not considered at all. So as much as having monuments can be an added hassle to *torabeyya* as much as those who do not have any in their territory envy those who do.



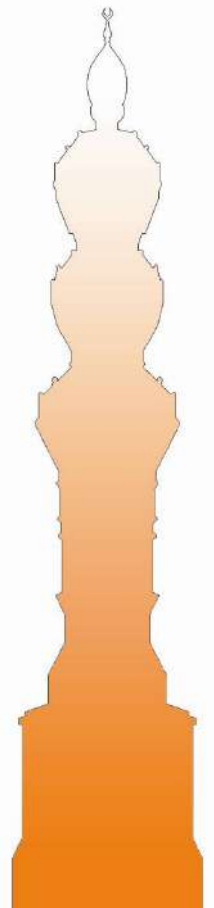
Three mo'allemeen torabeyya gather outside the Beleiha house recounting to the researcher their childhood memories with the Southern memories. "It brings piece to my soul to sit out here and see this magnificent minaret in front of me. It's 'ours' although we all know it is a monument," says Ali Beleiha.



Identity attachment

Finally yet importantly, the *mo'alleem toraby* regards the monuments in their area with both love and pride. They and others particularly consider the minarets in the cemetery like a jewel or brooch on a torn up dress. Childhood memories of playing inside them and around them are cherished, like the Southern Minarets where *Beliha* boys spent much of their play time on top of its massive square base. The sunken platform around *Sawabi* (now filled with garbage) holds precious memories of childhood play and family picnic. One may conclude that *torabeyya* recognize some aesthetic value in the monuments at large and perceive them as added value to their territories. Some monuments have more significance to them than others, but attachment is exclusive to those monuments in their own territory. *Qarafi* in territory (2) is solely significant to its *mo'alleem toraby (al-Shamaa')* who proposed to use its interior as a meeting place when we suggested a focus group interview will all *mo'allemeen torabeyya* (turned out this is impossible because some would never accept going to another's territory to meet). *Qusun's* dome in *Abu-Sibha* territory is totally appropriated by the family to the extent that they bury their family dead inside it.

Burial inside monumental graves is now prohibited by SCA. Heirs of *Sudun* family were compensated with two graves in the open graveyard in front of the monument. However, some *Torabeyya* have abused the heritage value of the historic monuments in other forms. Today the mausoleum of *Sudun* elevation windows are built shut with red bricks because the wrought iron screens were stolen! Hany Sa'doun is said to have spent one year in jail for stealing the iron support beams of *Iwan Rihan*.



One of the younger Abu Sibha torabeyya proudly points out the tomb of their family member buried in the monument of Qusun. He claims they are related to al-Mesabih that they are the oldest toraby family in this cemetery, "we are here for at least 300 years... I have papers to prove it," he says.

All *mo'allemeen torabeyya* have keys to the monuments in their territories, yet they are not supposed to open them without permission or presence of the Supreme Council of Antiquities inspector. This rule is not necessarily strictly observed. The *torabeyya* demand a form of recognition or financial compensation for their role as protectors of the monuments.

liability

Tourists sometimes wonder into the cemetery curious to see “the city of the dead” and take some photos, with no police security provided which adds one more responsibility on the shoulder of *torabeyya*. They open minarets for them (see Visiting Activity section). Most of *torabeyya* would not appreciate the idea of expanding the touristic dimension of the cemetery, because mainly it will be harder to control, strangers won't be easily recognized and would just mean more responsibility and more liabilities.

Table 3. What monuments mean to the *toraby*:

Liability	After prohibiting construction works, monuments have become a ‘thorn in the throat’. I like them and have great memories around but my personal benefit is way more important to me.”
Hazard	“We avoid walking near monuments. The crescent over the ‘Sultaniyya Dome’ once fell down... it is dangerous!”
Nuisance	“Oh! It is a hell of routine to issue a construction permit. Not building at all is much easier.”
Potential income	I don't believe in the ‘Sanaa & Thanaa’ story, they just invented it to earn some money.”
Identity/status	Wow. It has been ages since I last visited ‘Rihan’, I will ask for permission from the <i>toraby</i> in charge to enter and see it again.”

Suggestions by *torabeyya* for monuments:

Generally, some repairs, cleaning and lighting of the monuments would be appropriate. It would make them safe enough to enjoy the nice view of the monuments by night and avoid any unexpected risks. Some *torabeyya* were interested in the history of those monuments; they usually have reached a certain level of education. They asked for signs indicating the name and a brief history to be attached to each monument. Some suggested having kiosk at the entrances to the cemetery that sell books and pamphlets about the history of the area and the historic monuments in it.

The following table shows the suggestions made by *mo'allemeen torabeyya* when asked about the monuments and what can be done about them.

Table 4. Suggestions made by *torabeyya* concerning the monuments in the cemetery:

Building level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Security guards for each monument employed by police or SCA ▪ Repairing the monuments and providing them it with suitable furnishing for visitors. ▪ Multi-media screenspresenting history of buildings and area, may be shown inside monuments. ▪ Building a clean W.C. for the use of tourists, taking its location into consideration so that water won't harm the monuments ▪ Establishing a touristic café on <i>al-Qarafa al-Kobra</i> street.
Area level (cemetery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lighting by night the whole cemetery will solve the problem of safety for everything; will scare away criminals and will reduce the hassle during night time burials. ▪ Police presence in the area like any other part of the city. ▪ Cleaning the monuments and securing them from insects and reptiles. ▪ Beautifying the area and increasing the green areas. ▪ Publishing pamphlets and handbooks to be available in the cemetery for the visitors. ▪ Adding signs to buildings identifying their name and history both in Arabic and English. ▪ Providing the <i>toraby</i> with a map showing the whole district and his area indicating the exact locations of monuments. ▪ Training the <i>torabeyya</i> to be tour guides for tourists and not mere guards of the cemetery, which would in turns open new possibilities for increasing their income.

The previously mentioned suggestions of *torabeyya* aim at broadening the perspective of the cemetery, so that outsiders approach it with less fear and less cautiousness especially those zones with monuments. They believe that these suggestions may improve their livelihood by increasing income generating opportunities. The *torabeyya* realize that the *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)* area's sustainability is mainly because of these monuments; they are not running the risk of relocation to another area as was the case when extending the *Autostrade* highway. So, better attention given to the monuments of the cemetery could mean more security of job and tenure through enhancing the touristic dimension which would increase governmental attention, leading to better services and thus improved living condition.

It is important to include the cemetery community members in whatever plans made in order to guarantee the sustainability of their sense of ownership.

SOCIAL RELATIONS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

The social life of the cemetery community is characterized by “social exclusion”. They are relatively isolated from the surrounding communities while maintaining strong community ties with their kin who live inside or outside the cemetery. This is somewhat related to the pessimistic outlook they are branded with. People living and working outside the cemetery usually fear and avoid them. They are haunted by entrenched beliefs shared by the larger society that they perform magic, witchcraft and sorcery. They are considered a bad Omen able to destroy their happy stable homes if they just bring some of the “cemetery dust” into their homes! The cemetery community is also faced by the accusation of theft which made it really difficult for them to find jobs outside the cemetery. There are social norms that push people of the cemetery to remain inside it. Within the cemetery, they are clearly separated in their residence according to territorial boundaries. Here, norms push families to remain unconnected although living in proximity. The continuous struggle between families on boundaries and territories of control helped deepen the divide between families inside the cemetery. That explains why social interaction is significant mostly among members of the same family creating a sense of solidarity. The relation between different families appears in cases of social courtesies such as when there is a wedding, funeral, or someone falls ill; the visit duty would be fulfilled. Social courtesies are usually found between the bigger, more influential families. They take place during deaths and marriages where *al-mo’allemeen* pay *nokoot* to the bride and groom, drugs and alcohol may appear. Such kinds of courtesies are kept as minimal as possible.

Marriage is one of the issues that show how this community is perceived both internally and externally. They find it hard to get acquainted with or married to families not related to the cemetery. Only one case we learnt about where a man from the cemetery married a woman from Alexandria. He expressed the difficulties he faced with her parents, but luckily succeeded in the end, he even brought her to live in the cemetery! The better chance to associate with a non-*torabeyya* family was to replace it with a family of *hanoutaeyya*; those who wash the deceased and prepare him/her to be buried. That case was mentioned by a *torabeyya* woman (Samia Beliha).

Most probably, marriages occur within the extended family despite the awareness of the health risks that may arise. We heard proverbs like “smoke of a relative blinds”. Marrying from different families comes in the second rank in our case study cemetery. Also, we found cases when *torabeyya* married non-*torabeyya* from the same family (like the case of Samia Beliha who got married to her cousin who lived in the cemetery but was not a *toraby* in the first place. Also, the case of Shahira Muhammad Hanafy who got married to her cousin who lives and works in the 10th of Ramadan city). One of the benefits of marrying among each other is that

they are living the same conditions so there is no room for superiority or inferiority feelings. They are socially compatible.

It was also mentioned that men would fear cemetery girls, they would proclaim that those girls are attached to a jinn or a spirit. Consequently, they prefer to marry from each other and work in the cemetery to not getting married at all. They learned from their lifestyle how to live with the available, that would appear more clearly in the “Living Conditions” section. They have become realistic; they live with the “end of everything” almost on daily basis, what can be worse than Death?

The relation with the outside community may take some simple forms, never cross the line of spending some good time at some nearby coffee shop occasionally. Even though, they often hide their reality and lie about their profession. Those who announce their reality usually talk about themselves with sarcasm; they start it before someone else does. One (Samia Beliha) who used to be a teacher for mentally retarded children, told us that people get shocked when they knew about her roots, she would quickly say “don’t be... you will come to me... no escape,” she followed it with a hysterical laugh and a tear drop. Also, men would say they live in “*Ezbet el-Gamagem*” meaning the estate of skulls.

The *mo’allemeen torabeyya* having residences outside the cemeteries are thought to have better and easier social interaction with the *non-torabeyya* communities.

As for relations between resident *torabeyya* in the cemetery, there is a sense of community but with reservations. For example, regular visiting between residents of the cemetery, i.e. not for a special occasion, is almost non-existent. Some superficial conflicts may arise between families because of children playing and fighting or cursing, but usually the head of the family takes care of such matters. The strongest regulator of social relation within the cemetery is the territoriality of the *mo’allem toraby* zone. For example, when focus group meetings were suggested we discovered that certain *toraby* families may sit together and certain ones won’t. It seems that the *Megahed* and *Abu-Sibha* families who are oldest in the area can meet easily, whereas the *Abu-Sibha*’s would not meet with *al-Shamma*’. The white wall is the only physical territorial marker with entire study area and it demarcates the boundary between those two *toraby* territories. The *Beliha* family is different, less aggressive and more refined in manners and education. They meet with *al-Shamma*’ almost reluctantly to avoid trouble. No one meets with the *Sa’doun*’s.

Solidarity within families is high and this can best be witnessed in the unique experience of one of the first families who came to the area and adopted the profession (the *Megahed* family). They founded an NGO where only family members are allowed to register in and by paying a nominal fee. The NGO is to offer assistance to its members in emergencies; a sort of social

interdependence. Other forms of solidarity included the pooled savings system referred to as *gam'eyya*. A woman becomes in charge of collecting a certain amount of money from each woman on monthly basis and the total monthly sum of money gathered goes to one of the women according to a preset order; the money gathered is considered a support from the wife to her husband and children.

Different persons of the profession living inside the cemetery have mentioned a number of factors repeatedly. It is thought that they suffer to different extents due to the helpless situation they are trapped in. Paradoxically, the life of *torabbeya* lies in the death of people. If no one dies then they will remain without money, food...etc., they say, “wailing over the dead is, for us, ululations, because it means livelihood.”

Permanent insecurities, deprivation of some basic needs in life. They say they haven't seen that kind of childhood that any ordinary child would find anywhere, instead they had to work since they were very young, most of them couldn't have enough clothes or toys or food. Some cases of poor families reached the extent of having only one outfit for going out, when it is washed they would have to wait until it dries in order to go out. They say; “we have not seen what is called childhood.” Whenever they were asked about their childhood, they mention the burials, the wailing in the middle of the night, poverty and inferiority. Difficulties that, for some, persist even when they became older. During their youth, their incapability to move out of the cemetery and finding another field of work and residence in addition to the fear sensed when dealing with others strengthened their sense of isolation.

They also faced rejection and mockery from schoolmates and children living alongside the cemetery, they used to call them “cemetery children”. A proverb says: “it is a profession that would depress a clown” مهنة تخلي المضحكاتي يكتتب. They justify this attitude by people hating the slightest mention of death and consequently anyone related to it.

The effect of this unique childhood appears in their self-esteem and vision of themselves as well as how they perceive other's opinion of them. They say that people disrespect them, and believe they are beggars who live on charity; a significant change from the respect and reverence society felt towards these people in the past.

One *mo'allema toraby's* daughter (Muhammad Hanafy's daughter; Heba) fears the cemetery; she never opens the door when she is home alone even if expecting one of her family members. They must identify themselves first. Her father took an apartment at al-Mokattam and she and her mother moved out, while he stayed in their family house in the cemetery with their second daughter who would not move because she loved it in the cemetery. After a while, even Heba, despite her fears wanted to return to live in cemetery home. Longing for the cemetery especially for its social dimension and peaceful lifestyle and fearing it at the same time reveals

the contradiction in feelings that cemetery people suffer. She wants this kind of dwelling environment and social interaction but elsewhere; in a respectful neighborhood.

Another stressor is the sense of insecurity that accompanies the temporary unofficial residence they are forced to accept. This is more obvious among the poorer members rather than with the powerful members of a *toraby* family; the immediate members of the *mo'alle*; his wife, children, mother, brothers...etc. Yet, it also appears with less powerful families although they are *mo'allemeen* like the case of *Sa'doun*. The small spaces they are bound to, the denied ability to add to improve to their residences, the lack of running water and infrastructure in the deeper parts of the cemetery, many constraints that suffocate and dictate their lives.

On the other hand, they gained new dimensions of strengths; people really fear them, they are capable of dealing with the dead, the thing that almost no one else can do,...“we can even deal with the devil itself”. When talking with *mo'allemeen*, it was obvious that they have a rather positive perspective of their situation. The opinion of people around, even the dissatisfaction their community senses, it does not affect their beliefs that they are doing a great, clean, respectful job, and that they are doing it well. They do what no one else can do; they are superior. More than one *mo'alle* expressed how he can so easily and safely walk through the cemetery after mid-night; thieves are the ones to be afraid of him and not vice versa. They enjoy that feeling of power; “I am capable of doing just anything and everything”. They are commanders of the cemetery through day and night. Even when dealing with outsiders; with customers, they are treated in a well manner because they are in a position of power, no customer will risk the safety of his dead and gain the enmity of the person who will hold him one day to put him in his grave. They are “the untouchables”. The *mo'allemeen torabeyya* are broadly attached to their territories, they think that ones territory is the best, most relaxing and comfortable, cleanest place on the face of the earth.

As for women, most women living in the cemetery, do not go to work, regardless of their social status, even widows who are mothers of half a dozen children; they do not work. We were always met with a surprised reaction whenever we asked about women's work. They say: “No women here work!” . Even though, *torabeyya* do not have a fixed income, their children get full education and get married with all their needs brought and fulfilled. Those widows get financial and in-kind help from outsiders with dignity, it is a way of life and it is non-scandalous.

The case of *torabeyya* wives was much clearer. *Torabeyya* thought it really humiliating to have their wives working because if it happens then that would be outside the cemetery as they have nothing suitable for them to do inside. On the other hand, men are bound by the cemetery all day long, so women go out for work while men stay waiting till women come back

by 4 or 5 p.m. That is unacceptable. Serving the visitors of the cemetery is not perceived by the community as “work,” so if a woman offers a chair or a cup of tea to visitors, it is not considered work especially that these are occasional incidents. There is a minority of women from the better educated *torabeyya* families (e.g. *Beliha*) who do work outside the cemetery, but they are rare cases.

Torabeyya think that death is a relief from life and its sufferings, living among the dead taught them how to think of life and give it its real value. It makes them stronger and much less attached to life; it is a relief. They say: “I live with the dead all the time which gave me a callous heart, and the issue of death is not that big deal.” أنا عايش مع الأموات طول الوقت ده اللي خلا قلبي جامد، وأصبح الموضوع طبيعي عندنا.

They became used to living with the dead that it became sort of a habit; life does not seem complete without them, it is tasteless; the absolute silence of the dead interrupted by occasional screams of grieving relatives. They put an end to this sorrow by the end of a burial. They say, “Death is a glass that moves round, everyone will have his turn”. الموت كاس ودابير علي كل الناس

The familiarity with their underground companions reached the level of having their wedding parties made inside the cemetery, with all its requirements from songs and lights. “If we fear this place, we wouldn’t live in it.” أحنأ لو خايفين من هذا المكان لن نعيش فيه and “Death to us is livelihood, does anyone hate it?” الرزق بالنسبة لنا رزق، في حد يكره الرزق. But, this complete familiarity is missing with cases of children, some of them suffer from epilepsy because of the continuous screams and wailing they hear and the funerals and burials they witness. It is thought to be just a transitional state and are expected to adapt like everybody else.

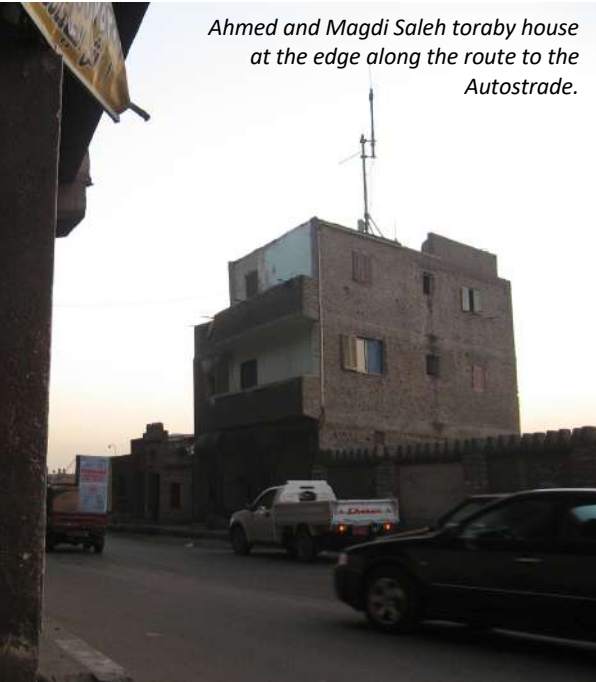
However, this duality or double standard seems to be prominent psych among the *Torabeyya* community in a number of issues. They admit to performing practices that they themselves condemn as unfit and against religion such as mixing of bones to clear a grave for re-use, using building materials that underwent fire during its manufacturing, practicing women *torabeyya*, defiling the sanctity of the dead by living beside them.

LIVING AND DYING IN THE CEMETERY

History reveals that living in the cemetery is not a new phenomenon; it has been initiated at least since the *Mamluks* who built funerary complexes including not just a mausoleum but also other elements such as a garden, a *khankah*” to shelter widows and homeless poor, and even a *sabeel* or a *hammam* occasionally! There were also said to be *Kottabs* in the cemetery as early

as the beginning of the 19th century where boys from villages were sent to learn the *Qur'an*. Like a summer camp, these children resided in the cemetery for a month or more.

Ahmed and Magdi Saleh toraby house at the edge along the route to the Autostrade.



The interior of the mo'alleem toraby house where the 'salon' is the finest room and communicates status to visitors.



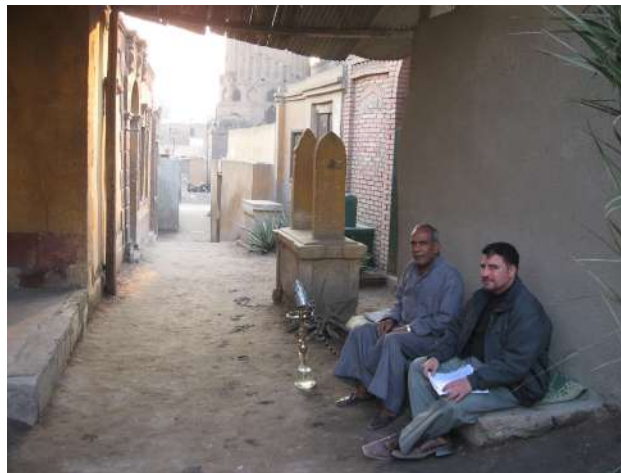
When and how exactly did the *toraby* start living in the cemetery is still unknown. What they report is that the cemetery administration granted each *mo'alleem toraby* a vacant plot of land that was NOT a *hosh* (it never had graves) for him to build two rooms as a rest house. This eventually grew to become a 2-3 storey family house so that each territory would now have a relatively big house consisting of a ground floor and two upper floors where the registered *mo'alleem toraby* lives as well as one or two of his married brothers and sisters with their families. The most evident product of this piece-meal development of the family house can be seen along *al-Qrafa al-Kobra* street (*Beliha* house) where rooms and stairs are added every few years to create a new wing for a new household branching from the family tree.

While *mo'allemeen torabeyya* houses are usually on main roads and therefore got connected to infrastructure networks when they were introduced in the 1980's, the homes of all other members of the *torabeyya* hierarchy are not. From *mosa'ed* to *saby* to workers, they all live in *ahwash* most without water and sewage connections. Some *ahwash* have electricity and water connections because their owners had applied to the authorities and had connections made legally. Other *ahwash* were connected illegally to the infrastructure mains running though *al-Qarafa al-Kobra*, street No.1 and other such axes. This is the case also for all *ahwash* where *torabeyya* set office. (see Fig (5) map for homes and flies of *torabeyya* in the study area).

The *mo'alleem toraby* would choose a *hosh* and with the consent of its owners turn it into his daytime office. Probably *hosh* owners do not mind because this *hosh* will be better kept than any other and because it guarantees no one would use it as a residence.

The office is where the *mo'alleem toraby* spends his day till sunset and occasionally later in summer; “after *'eshaa* prayer I walk home” said Am Muhammad Hanafi. This office would typically have one enclosed space and a shaded open space with a *mastaba* or some chairs. The room would be equipped to prepare tea, coffee and *shishah*. A sink is always found nearby and some have satellite dish transmission to their T.V. sets. Police officers were also seen drinking tea at one of these offices (Khaled Abu-Sibha).

The office of mo'alleem toraby Muhammad Hanafy equipped with overhang and mastaba to receive clients and friends throughout the day and sometimes in the evenings.



The registered *mo'alleem toraby* and his registered *mosa'ed* and the *saby* with the ID card “carnet” have to be present in the cemetery all day. This is the reason why someone like Khaled Abu-Sibha or Magdy Saleh Megahed do not want to be officially recognized as *mosaeedeen* although they are fulfilling all the *mosa'ed's* responsibilities and more. Magdy is the executive *toraby* in reality in territory 16; he digs graves, performs burials, clients call him for preparations, while his brother Ahmed, the registered *mo'alleem toraby*, works as a marble cutter and sculptor.

Magdy however does not want to get an official *mosa'ed* permit because he wants to be free to work outside the cemetery as a construction worker. If he is appointed *mosa'ed* he is physically bound to the cemetery!! Magdy needs to work as a construction worker outside the cemetery as his primary job because relying on *mosa'ed toraby* income would not bring him the L.E. 150 day expenditure that he needs to sustain himself and his family.

This explains why many members of the *toraby* families either have other jobs outside or live in extreme poverty. Even the *mo'alleem toraby* (like Ahmed Saleh mentioned above) has to have another income-generating activity. In the case of Ali Beliha, he has set up a tailor's shop in the *hosh* adjacent to his family house!. Om Hany runs a microbus business. The few

mo'allemeen torabeyya who do not have second job and seem well-off in their homes and attire raise doubts about being involved in other kinds of income-generation activities. The illicit kind (such is the case of Ezz Abu-Sibha).

So the *toraby* is tied to the cemetery, not only as a place of residence and work, but also as a place of death and eternal abode. The *toraby* is allowed officially to bury his family's dead in the cemetery and that acquired right strengthens the bond between *torabeyya* and cemetery beyond any other cemetery dweller. All the *toraby* family bury their dead in the territory they control. Sometimes right adjacent to their family house and sometimes outside in the open grave yards and sometimes inside monuments as in the case of *Qusun*.



The mastaba in front of one of the toraby's houses marks the entrance to a burial chamber he uses to bury his family members.

The workers and other *hosh* dwellers still have other choices. They live there because it is affordable; it offers them better value for cost, but when they die, they are buried in their home-towns in the countryside; they return to Beni Sweif.

The *saby's* situation is a vague one; the lowest rank in the official *toraby* hierarchy, yet not a family member. The *saby's* get attached to the cemetery as well though residence and daily work responsibilities but their place attachment does not have the roots that *toraby* families have, to the extent that the *Abu-Sibha(s)* claim *al-Mesabih* mosque is a relative's mispronounced over time and repeatedly mentioned the *waboor* that carried their name along the railroad tracks that now become *Sook-al-Hamam* street.

One *saby*'s wife (wife of Am Ismail) pointed out to us where she chose to end her days; the spot where she wanted to be buried. She mentioned that with a smile on her face almost with joy. As if a peculiar, feeling of reassurance arises from being so familiar with the place where one's body will reside after death. This favorable feeling was expressed by many dwellers of the cemetery even those on the periphery, but that will be discussed in more detail in the section on The Living and The Dead. So, in short, the right of the *toraby* family to be buried in their territory was extended unofficially to the *saby*, who shares the desire of other cemetery dwellers to be buried close to home!

The *toraby* seems entrapped by the norms of his profession to live and die in the cemetery. They say; "it is our fate we can't help it" هذا هو قدرنا وليس لنا يد فيه

Sometimes the young generations want to break loose from this entrapment. Against the tradition of inheritance, a young heir to the *toraby* profession expresses painfully his attempts to escape his fate. At 19, a drop-out from school, he chooses to work as marble cutter away from home, sometimes for months in far off governorates, but he missed home and comes back to reside always in his grandfather's house in the cemetery. He says he chose not to make friends in the cemetery; that many young men born there would do drugs and he has seen what it does to them. He sticks to a couple of cigarettes no more. He made friends with other young men through the internet. He meets them from far away near the pyramids. They accept him for who he is and he likes that. The internet taught him to read more than the preparatory school at *al-Abageyya*, he dropped out of when his grandfather died. However, having his entire family in the cemetery always brings him back. There is strength in unity. So addictive is the cycle of Life and Death in the cemetery for a *toraby*, that one young cousin of Gamal Al-Shamma' took up the profession of *toraby* in one of the new cities (15th of May). It is said that "wherever you [a *toraby*] go you must come back". روح مطرح ماتروح، لا بد من الرجوع

FUTURE VISION

The study revealed that the future vision of members of the cemetery differs according to their personalities, social levels, age group...etc. If we view it from the organizational point of view, we will find that similarities and dissimilarities are experienced from one individual to the other, also from a group to another, each according to his ambition and vision. Vision of the future will be discussed according to two groups of the organization; 1. *Al-Mo'allem*, 2. *Al-Sobyan* and transient/temporary labor.

The first category believes in the continuation of the profession and the importance of keeping it in the family and inheriting it to the following generation. They appreciate the power and

leadership and the financial profit out of the profession, as well as maintaining the family's name between other families. That is why the issue of leaving everything behind and start over in some other place is undisputable. They don't mind children education or even entering college but in the end they (or at least one of them) must be prepared and ready to take over after his father. They prefer the educated *toraby* more than the uneducated one, but what is more important is to improve the reputation gained among the whole society, in fact it is a clean profession and should be respected. To be an educated *mo'alleem* is thought to develop the profession, in fact he never does any muscular work, he just supervises the flow to work. Education will improve his role and means of accomplishing it. Also, the gap between the insider and outsider communities will reduce. We heard a lot of wishes to have children become doctors, lawyers, policemen, and engineers which proves their desire for an improved societal status and better acceptance from the community.

They are aware of the importance of girls' education, most of cemetery girls have finished high-school plus two extra years in an institute, we call it *diplom*. It makes her aware of her rights and capable of leading her life and raising her children. Rarely, any female enter college, only Wafaa Beliha is a college graduate among all cases we met.

If everyone surrender to that societal rejection and refuse to join this profession, what will happen then?!... They demand radical changes concerning this issue. Some described, when introduced to new people, the look on the face that changes and reflects the rooted cultural opinion they cannot escape.

Within the cemetery, some aim at expanding their boundaries and add more areas under their control. They think of moving to new cities. They want monthly salary from graves' owners in return to their services in addition to the regular burial costs, like the case of new graveyards in New Cities. They say the demand on their district is reducing as people now prefer buying new graves in new cities which already has affected their income, (note that they already have limited numbers of graves at hand; each has around 200 "*hosh*").

Regarding the residence, they all shared the wish to have one outside the boundaries of the cemetery, so that the inclusion to the cemetery and its habitants would be broken. A lot of them need more space which is impossible under recent conditions. Bitterness was experienced from those longing for an outside residence but lack the financial capabilities, especially with the continuous increase in prices, which make it almost a dream. *Ahwash* are usually small in size and they live in big numbers in them and they lack privacy. They feel inhuman for living in spaces designed for the dead and not for the alive; these are inappropriate spaces. The lack of infrastructure, they need bathrooms.

Different ambitions were experienced from the second category; the less important members of the cemetery. They see none of the benefits their bosses enjoy, they are bound to the cemetery unintentionally and will waste no chance to escape. They do not wish their children remain as is and encourage them to learn another craft; like building construction. They have no chance to improve in the cemetery, they started as labor and shall remain the same ever after, unlike other jobs.

Regarding education, they have similar opinion like the first group; they wish for university degrees. The motive changes here, they want it for improved economical level and not a social one.

A general notice was the youth of the cemetery, regardless their family/rank within the cemetery or the sub-cultural groups they belong to, most of them succeeded in making friendships outside the cemetery and aim to get married to non-cemetery families and live and work outside it boundaries. Some even think of working outside Cairo; like in *Sharm-el-Sheikh*, they even left for a few months. Remarkably, they all expressed a nostalgia for the cemetery and they did come back. They represent the proverb: “Don’t like it and can’t stand living without it.” لا أحبه ولا أقدر علي بعده

Living with The Dead in the Cairene Cemetery

SIDI GALAL AL-DIN (AL-SUYUTI) AREA

Our case study area is a part of the cemetery of *Sidi Galal al-Din (al-Suyuti)*. Named after the Islamic thinker and writer *Sheikh Galal al-Din*. They say he built himself a grave in the area but was buried in the governorate of *Assiut* which extracted its name from his. Visitors, especially from Eastern Asia, come to visit his shrine regularly. The case study area is defined by *Salah Salem* road from the West, route to the *Autostrade* elevated highway from the West, *Sook-al-Hamam* street from the South East (previously a railroad track), and *Shari' Nemra wahed* from the North East (an internal unpaved vehicular access road that separates the study area from the rest of the cemetery).

Entrance from Souq al-Hamam street showing the stone cutters and the famous 'koshary' food cart.



From *Sook-al-Hamam* street or "pigeons' market" one enters the main street of this cemetery known as *Shari' al-Qarafa al-Kobra*; it is both a major vehicular and pedestrian route. *Sook-al-Hamam* street contains various workshops and shops specialized in power tools. On the other side of the street is a neighbourhood called *al-kharta*. A temporary market is set up along *Sook-al-Hamam* street every Friday and Sunday attracting crowds and causing congestion. The entrance of the cemetery from that side is flanked by stone cutters who carve the grinding

stone used in making *falafel*. Also there are those who make the marble ‘plaques’ to be mounted on grave headstones. This entrance also branches off into a pedestrian only path leading to one of the inner parts of the cemetery (mostly open graveyards). (see Fig (5), Point A)

There are two entrances from the route to the *Autostrade*; one vehicular and pedestrian; *Shari’ Nemra Wahed*. The pedestrian access leads to a path on an elevated plateau from which you can overlook the entire study area. It is a main path in a portion of the study area that is subdivided into large ‘*ahwash*’ with relatively regular access paths and no open graveyards.

The second entrance from the route to the *Autostrade* is considered the main vehicular entrance of the cemetery. This elevated highway was built around 1980 at the expense of a large part of the cemetery (in the *Megahed* family territory 15 outside the study area). *Shari’ Nemra Wahed* branches from the route to the *Autostrade* and leads to *al-Qarafa al-Kobra* at the other end.

A less direct entrance to the study area is from *Salah Salem* road next to *al-Mesabih* mosque. (see Fig (5), Point D)

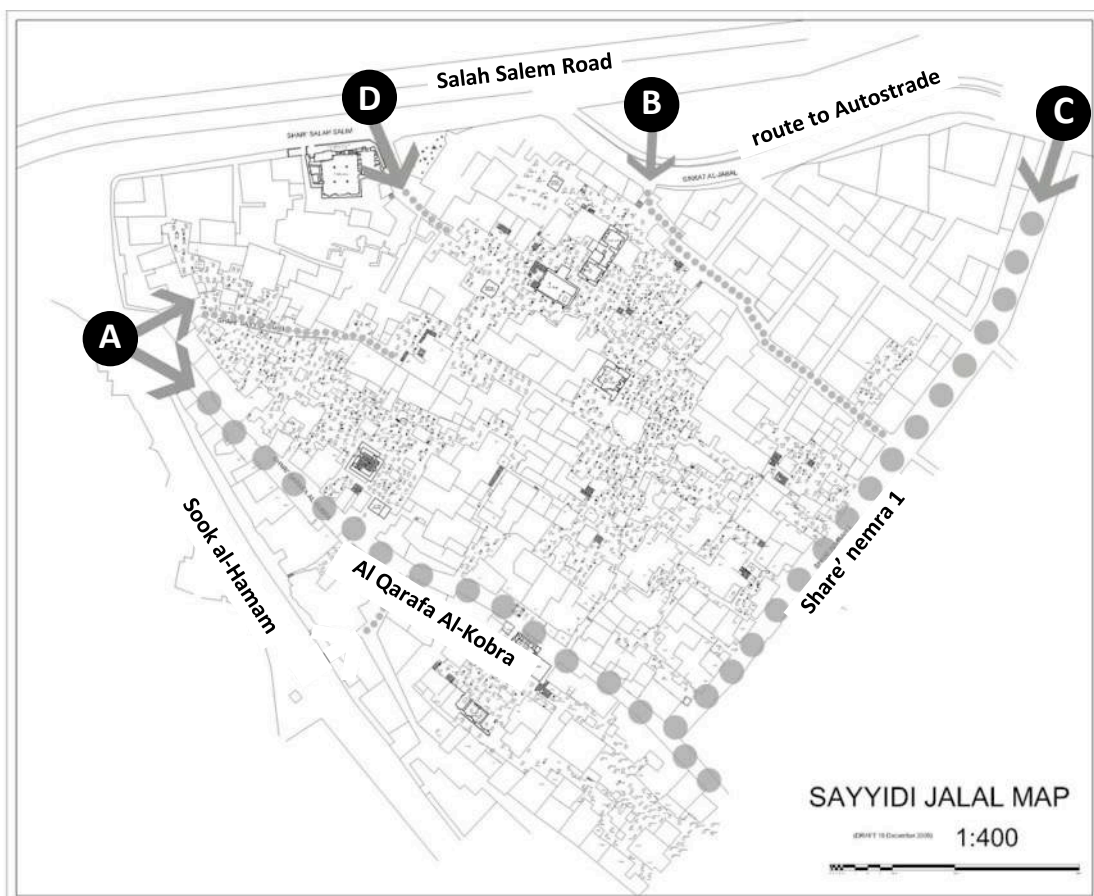


Fig (5). Study area boundaries, entrances and main inner routes.

It is a considerably wide entrance but for a short distance. Soon it narrows to a footpath entrance leading to an inner open graveyard where vehicles cannot access. Outsiders' cars are repeatedly parked in this space. Residents say they belong to coffee shop customers (this was around 11 a.m.!) or people coming to shop in *Sook-al-Hamam* market.

The *Autostrade* separates the study area from *al-Abageyya* area where residents go for some services like schools, food market, health services, and the Youth Centre. The *Abageyya* underpass also leads to *Sakr Koreesh* area where some residents of the cemetery have jobs in construction and marble carving. The separating road is one of the access routes to the highway; very dangerous for pedestrians to cross. It is a serious source of threat for women and children forced to cross it on the way to schools and markets. During the study, Several residents suggested a pedestrian bridge to overcome the problem.

On the other hand, the *Sook-al-Hamam* entrance leads to *al-Sayeda Aisha* square which has an important public bus station and private micro-bus station. The square also leads to the *mansheyya* market; the primary destination for all domestic needs, shopping and a number of primary schools. This entrance connects the cemetery to *al-Qal'a* district and the city of Cairo in general.

All routes inside the study area are unpaved, they are all of compacted earth covered with a layer of dust, even though *al-Qarafa al-Kobra* and *Nemra wahedallow* car access and they are supplied with infrastructure. There is no car access and no infrastructure in the inner spaces of the cemetery. These spaces are mainly open graveyards flanked with *ahwash*. Along *al-Qarafa al-Kobra*, there are a lot of houses of *torabeyya*, and residents in *ahwash*, and even a few small apartment buildings. It also has a modern mosque and a stone carving workshop, besides its close location to main streets. Depression in street level of *al-Qarafa al-Kobra* was witnessed more than once, especially the section in front of the *Southern Minaret*. They fill it with dirt to retain its level, but this re-occur after a while.

WHO LIVES THERE?

The cemetery community, although seemingly a small and limited one, includes a diverse collection of socio-cultural groups that makes it quite difficult to categorize. Circumstance and choice, alternatives and chance creates this unusual community; "How did it happen that you became a cemetery resident?" was the question that shed the most light on the potentials of the cemetery. It revealed the different motives that brought the people to the cemetery and in turn reflects the different potentials of this particular setting. Families of *torabeyya* were born in the cemetery. Their great-grand fathers were the first to come to the area about 100-300

years back. Those families are given official residence by the administration of cemeteries. A plot of land is granted to build a rest house upon, and tenure in this house is tied to the job. Due to the system of profession inheritance followed by those families, the descendants found themselves, without choice, members of the cemetery community. They are bound to the place due to job obligations. It is not a matter of willingness or appropriateness, it is a matter of duty. (see section *Toraby Organization*)

Most of the other cemetery inhabitants have their roots in rural areas, especially from Upper Egypt; namely the governorates of *Beni Sweif*, *Assiut* and *al-Fayoum*. They left farming because of its limited revenue, or escaped from a vendetta or from the police. Usually, they come to their relatives in Cairo who, in this case, were living in the cemetery. Such former farmers often work as construction workers when they come to the city and so their expertise comes in handy for the *toraby* profession. They start by doing little tasks in the cemetery as temporary labour. Some of them remain in this state and keep doing a lot of secondary jobs while others focus more on the cemetery as their main income source as well as their shelter and home. They get married and become permanent labour and may even become officially employed by the authorities and have an official permit or “carnet” to become a *saby toraby*.

This sub-cultural group may also pass down this position to younger generations, but it is not as obligatory or deeply rooted as the case of the *torabeyya* families. They live in private *ahwash* primarily built for the dead. Approval of the *mo’allem toraby* and *hosh* owner must be secured before allowing anyone to live in a *hosh*. Usually, residence is in return for guarding and upkeeping the *hosh*.

The rate of immigration from rural areas to Cairo and the increased rate of living in cemeteries was most evident during 60’s and 70’s and 80’s of the last century. The biggest proportion of cemetery inhabitants who live and often work in it now (other than the *mo’allem toraby* or the *mosa’ed een*) are the first generation of immigrants who came to Cairo some 30-40 years ago.

The above mentioned groups of residents are related to the cemetery primarily for economic reasons. It is their livelihood. Cases of mere residence were usually because of a cataclysmic change in dwelling conditions; the most widespread reason is the collapse of their home. The first choice of emergency shelter is their family-owned *hosh*, if they have one. Sometimes, they have other relations to the owner of a *hosh*; such as being a former employee of the *hosh* owning family; a nurse or a domestic servant. Only a small portion go there without any former relationship.

In effect, residing in the cemetery is inexpensive since with no services like electricity or water, residents save utility expenses and there is always the culture of charity that translates into a source of income to different degrees.

Types of *hosh* residents also includes the transient laborer who lives in the cemetery in return for helping the *torabeyya* and the *saby*'s in their work. Some of those hired hands sleep in the cemetery, yet they do not bring much belongings and do not reside in families; they only need a bed. All day long they work outside the cemetery, most commonly in nearby areas like *al-Sayeda Aisha* and are on call to help in burials.

All types of *hosh* residents are responsible for its cleanliness as a primary condition to guarantee their continuity. They reside without contracts, they are bound to the will of individuals who are in control whether it be the *torabeyya* or the *hosh* owners.

Residing or dwelling in the cemetery always takes place through *the toraby* in charge of the territory except for a few cases where *ahwash* owners assigned them directly to individuals to live in; residents could be from the poor branch of the owning family, or some sort of family acquaintance. This overlooking of the *toraby*'s authority often annoys the *torabeyya* and causes tension between them and this type of imposed residents.

"Om Hany won't let me visit Sheikh Rihan,(arches in the back) I am not on good terms with her. Since the death of my mother, she wants to kick me out of the hosh and re-let it for L.E.80,000" key money.



Many households are big families composed of 6-7 members. The rate of crowding can also be high (cases of up to 5 persons/room). The reasons behind this could be referred to their rural roots where large sized families are still appreciated. Preference of males to females may also help underlie this increase in number of children. These reasons combined with the limited number of rooms in a *hosh*, leads to this crowding situation.

As much as there are cemetery-born individuals who were married and moved out of the area, others remained in it, establishing a new life in another *hosh*. Sometimes they added some limited, 'allowed,' improvements, in an attempt to appropriate the space and adjusted it to meet their needs. However, this activity is rather limited now. There are areas where all possible residential spaces are occupied with no capacity to receive any more residents (as is the case of *Abu-Sibha* territory).

New laws restrict any sorts of improvements like adding floors to existing buildings, even rebuilding collapsed ones. Lack of infrastructure facilities and disapproval of *hosh* owners are factors that led to the freezing of the recent of the area. People expressed the difficulty of establishing new residence in the cemetery by saying, "Is he looking for residence in *Zamalek*?"
هو رايج يدور علي سكن في الزمالك.

Recently, new comers are almost restricted to relatives of existing residents or workers in nearby areas looking for a bed to spend the night, and they stay most frequently without owner permission, only the *toraby* allows them. There is hardly a stranger coming on his own. An intermediary is always there to introduce him/her to his new world and its authorities, mainly the *toraby*.

At the periphery of the study area are two clusters of self-built residential buildings; one runs along *Sook-al-Hamam* street starting at the entrance where it branches into *al-Qarafa al-Kobra*, and the other is located around el-Mesabih Mosque extending *Salah Salem* entrance till it meets the beginning of the inner open graveyard space. These residents are called *ahaly*. On one side, they originated as squatters along the train tracks that used to be in *Souk el Hamam* street. When those tracks were removed by the authorities, the squatters were compensated by plots at the edge of the cemetery. However, not all of those *ahaly* currently have contracts proving their ownership, or securing their tenure. On the Mesabeh Mosque side, it is less clear how they originated, but most came due to relocation first when *Salah Salem* road was constructed in the 1960;s and then again in the 1980's when *al-Sayeda Aisha* bridge was constructed.

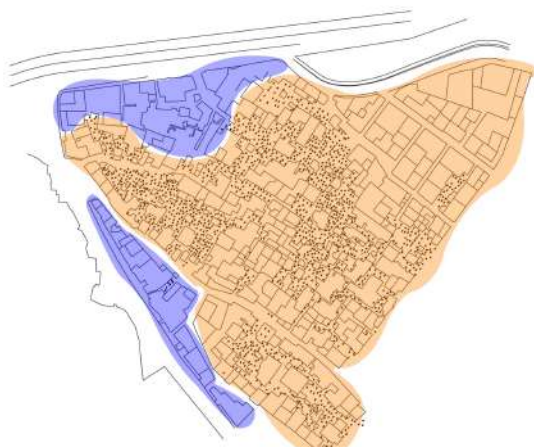
More than one woman of the *ahaly* have moved into the area by marriage. The average length of residence is 30 years. They came from other districts of the city such as *Shobra*, *Arab al-Yasar*, *Darb al-Megra*. It is noticeable that they remained after the death of their husbands and would not consider leaving the area even after the departure of their children who got married and lived in newer areas like *al-Basateen* and *al-Moqattam* most probably in informal areas.

A financially comfortable woman who came by marriage to the area when she was 16 years old, now is a widow and although her married children live outside the cemetery, she expressed her feeling of attachment to the area, "At *al-Moqattam* where my daughter lives, people are so

isolated and conservative”. When her son invites her, she refuses to go and insists that they would come to her. She appreciates her neighbors a lot, and asks where else can she find similar people who care for each other like they do, she says: “Our soul lies here” الحنة هنا روحنا and “the area here is a ‘popular’ area” (‘popular’ in a positive sense) الحنة هنا شعبية. She mentioned the proximity to diverse services and public transportation connecting her to everywhere in the city. One landlady proudly pointed at her ducks and said she would never leave this location; close to services yet quite and breezy away from the hassle of congested neighborhoods.

The high sense of solidarity so appreciated was witnessed in several instances, for example, on the occasion where one woman was accompanying her neighbour’s daughter to school to solve a problem the girl had. More on this issue will be discussed later in this section.

Residents of the peripheral housing fabric; the *ahaly* do not consider themselves cemetery dwellers. However, spatially, they do relate to it so that those living beside *al-Mesabih* mosque cut-through the cemetery’s open graveyards to walk to *Sook-al-Hamam*’s markets. And those living along *Sook-al-Hamam* would spend leisure time in the cemetery’s open spaces and may, bury their dead in a *hosh* opposite their home (Om Nada’s father). Those *ahaly* do not work in the cemetery, nor are they relatives of someone living inside it. They consider themselves unconnected to it, and therefore do not feel the entrapment some cemetery dwellers experience. Their attachment to their home environment is like any other’s based on the advantages they perceive in their environment compared to the alternatives they can afford. The following section elaborates on the living conditions of the different dwellers in the study area and the potentials afforded by the physical environment and the activity of everyday life.



Legalized squatters at the edge of Galal al-Din al-Suyuti cemetery (blue) sprung there as a result of city planning actions: Salah Salem road to the north and the removal of the railroad line to the south-west.



People who have settled at the periphery of the cemetery some fifty years ago have strong attachment to the place in life and death; Om Nada explains “my father sat here... died here... and was buried here...”

HOMES ABOVE, HOMES BELOW: LIVING CONDITIONS

As an outsider one may wonder, have life choices become so tight to the extent that makes the cemetery a desirable place to become ones “home”? Taking into consideration that it is a fabric not planned for that reason in the first place. As early as the Mamluk times, cemeteries around Cairo were no longer exclusive to the dead; the living have jostled themselves in, sharing the environment and appropriating it to fulfill their needs. Death, grief, departure of the beloved, screams and cries have become ordinary scenes experienced frequently by those living there.

Beside the dead, inhabitants of the cemetery lead a normal life without fear or concern, naturally, raising a lot of wonder and exclamations. Above the deadly silent graves we find large families leaning against headstones watching T.V. placed on another headstone, and using a third one to hang their laundry, and maybe a fourth one as a dining table. Now, in the cemetery, you may attend a funeral by day and a wedding by night! Thus, the establishment of the dead has become a home for the living, regardless of the risks, inappropriateness, disgrace...etc. Residents acknowledge advantages in the area they could not have in other dwelling alternatives; it is quiet, not crowded and spacious, with a view of the citadel, proximity to city centers, and above all inexpensive. Still all these advantages stand up against the one main disadvantage of living there, especially among the youth and the children and that is, living among the dead. Despite everything favorable in the cemetery, many youngsters do not want it, they dream of an alternative that is identical to the cemetery’s physical and social environment, yet without the presence of the dead.



Hosh dwellers appointed by the hosh owners as guards and keepers of their family graves.

PATTERNS OF RESIDENCE

As previously mentioned, *torabeyya* are allowed official residence inside the cemetery by the authorities. Empty plots of land which they developed over time, resulted in three storey buildings housing more than one nuclear family. Improvements and additions were implemented incrementally when it was still allowed. This is most evident in the *Beliha* family house, where the grandfather used to add a room whenever a new couple is formed in the family. Only minor improvements are allowed now such as; painting interior walls with 'plastic' paint instead of the existing lime, tiling the floor, replacing the existing wooden ceiling with a reinforced one, or adding cold and hot water fixtures. These houses are supplied with water, electricity and sanitation, because they are always located on main streets and routes even the unpaved ones inside the study area such as *Shari' Nemra Wahed (al-Qarafa al-kobra* in our case). These houses are either organized as apartment buildings with a typical floor staircase, while others are organized as an extended family house with one or more internal stairs. *Toraby* houses are personalized self-built houses taking various shapes and forms. They are constructed on land that was not designated for burial. However, one of the *torabeyya* families did bury their family members along the wall of their house.



Toraby houses stand out as the only multi-storey buildings in the cemetery.



Another pattern of residence built for housing is the *ahaly* self-built structures along the periphery of the cemetery. Those along Salah Salem road are mostly apartment buildings 3 - 4 storeys high few single-family houses. All of the apartment buildings are linked to the city

infrastructure networks, except for a few single family houses adjoining *al-Mesabih* Mosque, that do not have water connections and depend instead, on a public water tap located in the clearance considered the entrance to the cemetery from Salah Salem side. Residents share use and maintenance of this tap. They mentioned its repeated break down; during an interview, one of the residents used a wrench to open it for a girl who brought a number of empty bottles to fill. Another girl said, “The tap always gets broken because everyone here uses it, also, during summer the kids wet themselves a lot while playing”. Those residents also share the usage of an empty lot that they assigned for the hanging and drying of clothes. Suggestions of transforming it into a garden were totally disregarded by residents. A horse-drawn cart filled with ‘butagas’ containers parks there to supply buyers from inside the cemetery.

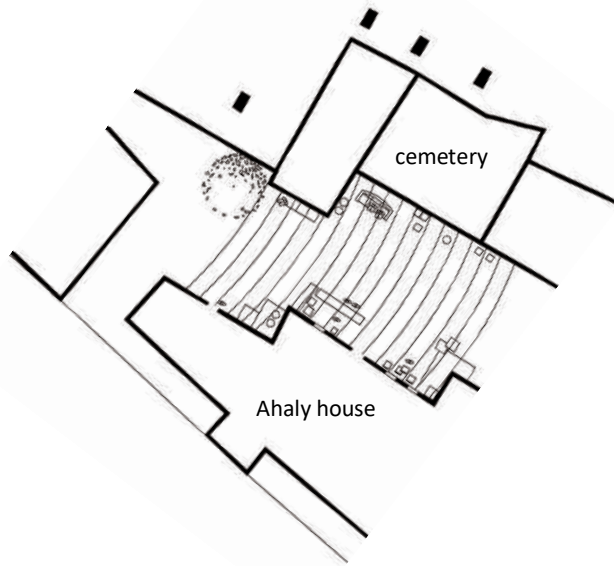


Water tap at the entrance from Salah Salem road. 'Ahaly' living in dwellings near al-Mesabih mosque use it daily. They have also appropriated part of the space to hang their laundry fencing it to protect it from being overtaken by parking.

Residents of this area range from landholders to tenants in the apartment buildings to one-room dwellers with no water or sewage in the few one-storey houses.

The other group of peripheral housing lies along *Sook-al-Hamam* Street. According to the residents, much of it is informal housing that started as squatter shacks along the railway track that used to exist there prior to the street. When the tracks were removed, the government removed the shacks and plots of land along the new street were granted as compensation to some of those residents. Om Nada gained tenure and a license to open her *falafel* shop on such a plot. However, her house and her brother's house, both overlooking the case study area of the cemetery but not on land for burial, are not licensed buildings. They are connected to city networks (electricity, water and sewage) but do not abide by building codes or regulations, very much like other forms of informal development areas. This community of rural migrants from the 1950's constitutes most of the residents of this periphery. Like most informal areas, the dwellings designs here are creative and directly reflect dweller's needs and priorities within the economic constraints and the opportunities they perceive in the physical environment at hand.

View of Sudun and Sawabi from balcony of peripheral housing. View includes the citadel (not showing in this shot).



Appropriation of space at the periphery of the cemetery. Extensions of 'ahaly' self-built housing onto highly controlled outdoor space.

The two above described patterns are basically constructed for the living to live in. Homes may not be big enough or lack some facilities but in the end it is housing. The debate actually lies in living in spaces designated originally for the dead. The *ahwash*; a prototype of funerary architecture, the only one which has high walls and sometimes a roofed room or two, affords the potential to form a shelter that can be used as a dwelling, but not necessarily an appropriate one. Diverse settings of *ahwash* were detected in the cemetery. Basically, all of them are surrounded by high walls constructed of masonry or stone and metal grills. The *hosh* has a wooden or metal door for an entrance and sometimes other openings, like windows with metal grills along the wall. According to the available area of the open space and family size, the capacity of graves is decided, and each grave may have one or two underground spaces (روح

واحدة أو روحين).

The open space of the hosh, where the burial chamber entrances are located, is used by the resident saby and his wife to hang laundry and relieve themselves (as w.c.).



Above the ground, the *hosh* often has a super structure consisting of a wooden shed or a masonry structure with contain a room or two. Chances of living in a *hosh* having one enclosed room and circulation space is the highest. Sometimes a smaller room is dedicated as a toilet and is supplied with a pit in the ground and a shovel. And sometimes this does not exist and the open space with graves under is their only outlet! Appropriating the space to accommodate the living is essential in such cases. Separating the space of burial (graves) from the space of living by constructing a wall has been seen in many cases. In some cases, where residents are part of the *hosh* owner family, the open space graveyard was roofed and incorporated into the dwelling. No apparent activity occurred in that space: some said they tread cautiously around marked graves and others just live on unheading them.

Entrances to burial chambers are incorporated into the home of a hosh dweller. They claim that they do not use this space or walk above the marked entrances.



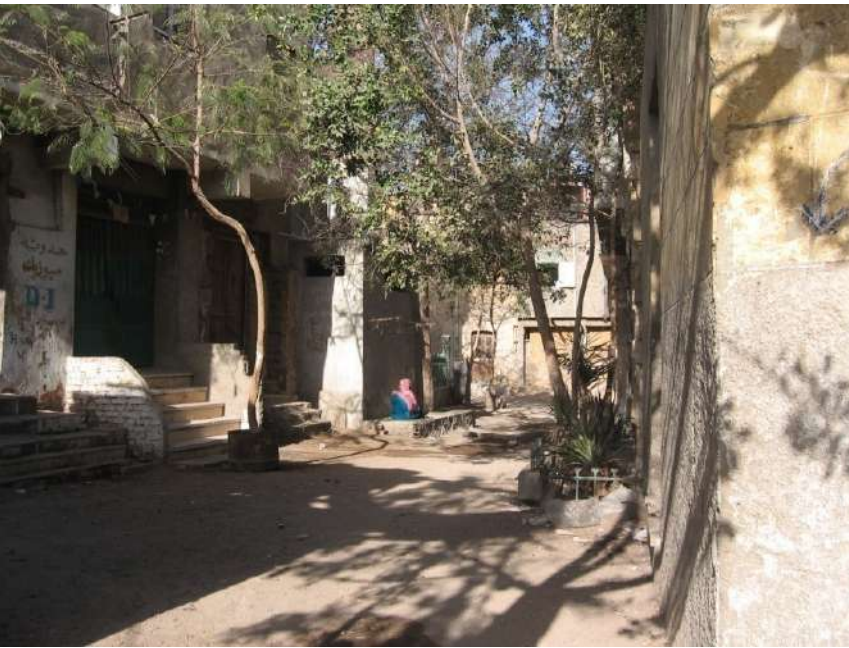
As mentioned earlier the cemetery is not supplied by infrastructure (water, sewage and electricity) except along main access routes and that was implemented in the 1980's. A few public taps exist along the peripheries and some *hosh* owners had applied and acquired water connections in their plots. Accordingly, some *hosh* residents may enjoy a water source, or bring water from a neighboring *hosh* either by connecting the hose or carrying water to fill plastic reservoirs on daily basis. Those living near public taps or close to the main access routes often construct unauthorized connections to these sources on their private expense. However, as *hosh* dwellers in inner parts of the cemetery away from the main access roads suffer water scarcity; this can affect personal hygiene and home cleanliness. As for electricity, few *ahwa sh* have legal electricity meter introduced because of their owner's application, however, applying for electricity connections is not allowed anymore and many *hosh* dwellers steal power by extending wires from cables or lamp posts on main access routes.



Hosh resident showing off a newly added w.c. and kitchenette sink. Water connections were installed easily due to proximity to the edge of the cemetery along Sook al-Hamam.

Residents who do not have a bathroom use their neighbour's or they would relieve themselves in the outdoor space. Sometimes residents add new bathrooms not connected to the public sanitation networks, and use a pit-latrine also referred to as '*transh*', then they use large cans to transport solid waste to a truck that passes by periodically.

Many expressed feelings of guilt that would accompany them in their daily life; they would say: "We sit above dead people throwing washing and bathing waste water over their graves, and we pee on them, as well...This is forbidden by God 60 times" ده حرام وستين حرام and "Our life here is a blasphemy because we defile the sanctity of the cemetery and we step on graves with our slippers". They would express that "Visiting graveyards is a duty; it is recommended while living in it is sinful".



"When I sit in front of my house with my neighbours, It is a magnificent view of the citadel and the air is so refreshing."

In conclusion, we can deduce that the 'hosh' dwellers are fully aware of the dubiousness of their position but helplessly submitting to this fate. Although lack of utilities is perceived as a shortcoming in basic needs, cemetery inhabitants see the other face of the coin; it is an inexpensive peaceful way of life. An advantage stronger than any repellent factor, "To wish for a better life and neighborhood is an understandable feeling, but the challenge lies in acquiring in that place with the strong advantages enjoyed in the cemetery; living here almost costs nothing, besides having all domestic needs available inexpensively just across the street... and all this space".



It is quite common to add a mastabah outside the house and in some cases a wooden shed to create some shade for outdoor seating).



Beyond the private dwelling the cemetery offers open spaces where low density, low rise structures, and spaciousness affords a setting that is peaceful and quiet most of the day. Sunny, breezy, and discouraging the infiltration of strangers and traffic. The cemetery offers a near-home environment that very few other neighborhoods can offer. Particularly to economically modest communities. At night time the situation is controversial. There are those who express the sublime pleasure of sitting outside in the cool summer breeze (e.g. near *Sheikh Rihan* shrine) reflecting on the serenity and peacefulness of the moment; some were said to have lost their sanity when removed from living in the cemetery and had to return to be sane again. While, others say women and children would not venture out after dark, and would complain from illicit behavior occurring in the open graveyards, this is in contradiction with those who mention nights of social gatherings in Ramadan in those open spaces.

The result is that the cemetery is not one homogeneous fabric. Its built environment and social composition offers some common affordances for good or evil; some potential opportunities very particular to this controversial context. However, it is crucial to understand that whether those potentials are perceived and utilized positively or negatively depends on a number of factors. Most important of these factors is the space management; the *toraby* in charge. It is he who sets the rules that controls accessibility of outsiders; the no-good doers can never gain access without insider assistance. It is dependent on him, who lives there as '*hosh*' dwellers. If her, or someone of his family, is involved in drug-dealing or drug consumption there will be such incidents associated with his territory.

The upkeep, the maintenance, the care are all messages to outsiders about his level of control and his moral standards. Another important point to note is that living in the cemetery is an inherited tradition known since the Mamluk compounds that often included around the mausoleum, a '*bimaristan*' (a hospital shelter) for the poor; a public hammam (a bath house) and gardens. Shelter housing for widows was mentioned as well as schools run by residing '*sheikhs*' to teach children the *Qur'an*.

In Ottoman time, large *Waqf* areas in the cemetery (Charity endowment to the benefit of a certain family or the poor) included housing and learning environments. Residence was offered to those who were employed to manage the *Waqf* and those who taught (religious teachings) in those premises.

These activities were within the cemetery boundary but on land that was not used for burial. With time, and when these activities and associated buildings disappeared, leaving only Mausoleums and Minarets, burial was extended and practiced on those lands, but the tradition of offering charity housing for the poor was still sustained by families.

That offers one explanation why living in the cemetery is such as unique Cairene phenomenon and is acceptable to a certain degree. Although, the accurate historic facts are unknown to many, the inherited tradition lives on to our modern days.

Any reform to the patterns of residence in the cemetery or the qualities of the open spaces should be planned and orchestrated with the *toraby* community.

Solving some of their problems, rewarding them and assisting them in fulfilling their big responsibility would remedy much of the negative aspects currently perceived in living in the cemetery.

The following section sketches some everyday life activities so as to get a closer look at the life of people living in this controversial setting.

DWELLING ACTIVITIES

Shopping

The nearest least expensive and biggest market is the *mansheyya* market located behind *al-Khaleefa* police station across *al-Sayeda Aisha* square. It is around 15 minutes walking distance from the study area. Everyone walks to this market regardless of the amounts of goods bought. They may use sort of push a cart on two wheels; a *baraweeta* (برويطة) to carry the goods but they do not need to take any means of transportation. Even a woman who had recently underwent a surgical operation was buying her needs on foot from there. The *Abageyya* market is never walked to. Crossing the *Autostrade* is dangerous; they would even take a taxi rather than go on foot. Some families buy their needs once per week, and others every other day. Women go to the market only during the day, otherwise, a man must go. This is because *Sook-al-Hamam* street becomes the meeting place of young men from the three surrounding districts to consume drugs; the hangout place and a market for all drugs. *Al-Kharta* market or “pigeon market” is not used much by anyone. It is a limited market specialized in bird food and power tools. *Sobyan* of *torbeyya* are responsible for buying all domestic needs for their bosses’ families. The *saby* would buy bread and animal food and pass it by all houses of members of the family he works for. Some rural women occasionally come to the cemetery from their villages to sell some home-made food and goods, but more influential cemetery dwellers do not buy from them; “they think because we live in a cemetery we are isolated, but they don’t know that we get all our home-made goods from our rural home towns,” said one *saby*’s wife. In the cemetery itself there are hardly any stores, except for a few home establishments selling dry packaged biscuits and chips to children in the neighbourhood. Closer to the

entrances to the cemetery are a few shops the famous *Koshary* cart at the entrance of *al-Qarafa al-Kobra* road near *Salah Salem* street. Another minor activity takes place during seasons when some young men sell T-shirts and pants bought from *al-Ataba* or *al-Mosky* in neighbouring markets or in front of graves during high seasons. Having such a small population and hardly any passers by, the cemetery is a setting with weak potential for much commercial activity; there is hardly any “purchasing power” that would encourage such a business.

Young man selling chips and biscuits in front of his home.



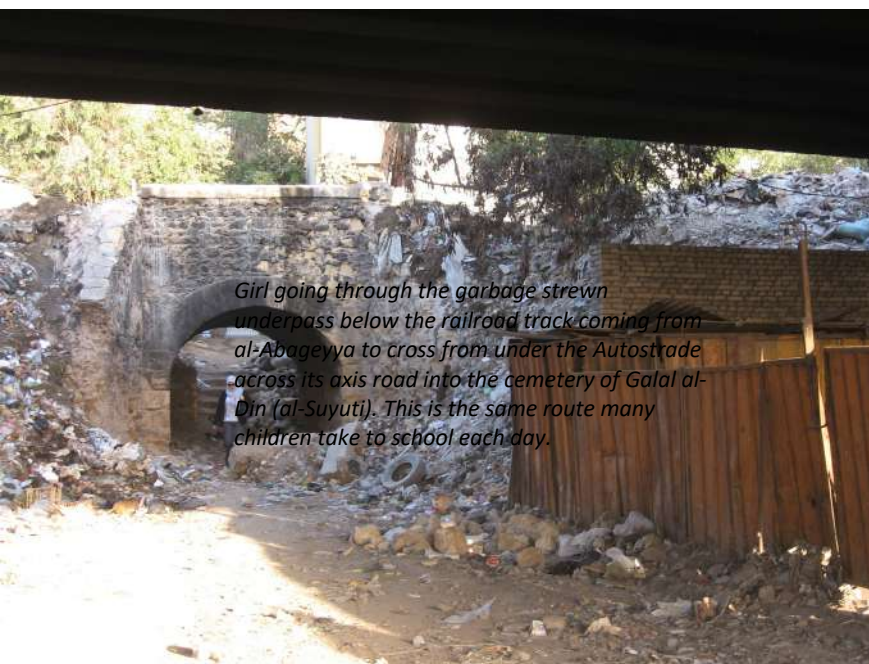
Education

Two nearby locations provide kindergarten, primary and preparatory schools. Across *Salah Salem* and on the way to *al-Qal'a* district lies a kindergarten located in *Aramedan* street beside a dispensary, a primary mixed-gender school called *al-Sayeda Aisha*, and a preparatory school called *Salah al-Din*.

“Everything is available at a very good price at the market just across the street behind the police station... It is so close we all go on foot.”



Students go to these schools on foot, even the young ones completely oblivious to the dangers of crossing *Salah Salem* road. Another set of schools is in *al-Abageyya* area, they are a kindergarten, a primary school and a preparatory school (*'Mostafa Kamel'*). Students also go on foot to this set of facilities running the risk of accidents while crossing the *Autostrade* highway. While construction of the *Autostrade* helped improve city traffic, it threatens the security of the people living in the cemetery, as it is a highway with speeding cars causing many accidents. This danger is coupled by an underpass under a railway track, so that children going to school in *Abageyya* have to cross the highway, walk through piles of garbage dumped by trucks under the elevated road and climb through a deteriorated archway under the tracks!! Secondary schools are all in more distant areas. Students use mass transportation means, mainly the microbus to reach them. Reported schools were in *al-Helmeyya* and *al-Sayeda Zeinab* (General Secondary - Industrial - Commercial), *al-Mansheyya* (Industrial), *al-Darb al-Ahmar* (Commercial), and one in *al-Tunsi* (not specified). Diverse levels of education are achieved by the cemetery residents. There are the uneducated or school drop-outs who preferred to work, in case of boys or stay at home in case of girls. There are those who finished high school and did two more years in an institute to earn a *diploma*; (mid-level education) and there are university graduates who represent the smallest percentage of all. Boys who were interested more in muscular jobs preferred to leave schools early and start their vocational career.



Girl going through the garbage strewn underpass below the railroad track coming from al-Abageyya to cross from under the Autostrade across its axis road into the cemetery of Galal al-Din (al-Suyuti). This is the same route many children take to school each day.

Education is not the issue here but ‘earning a living’ is. The financial situation and ambition of the person, or his parents, are the variables upon which those decisions are made. To be an uneducated individual in the cemetery community does not disgrace a person or decrease his chances to become a suitable husband.

Mobility

One of the most important advantages of the cemetery is its central location within Cairo especially with the hub of bus stations located at *al-Sayeda Aisha* square. Buses, minibuses and microbuses leading to all districts in such a short period of time are available at all hours of the day or night. However, traveling within the cemetery is strictly on foot.

Walking through the cemetery is safe during daytime for all members of the cemetery community; children walk to school unattended by adults; women and girls from the *ahaly* along the periphery cut through the open graveyards with no worries as long as it is still daylight. After sunset, young women would not venture out alone unattended by a man. There is consistent talk about visitors to the cemetery who come seeking different forms of immoral activities.

“Isolated? It is called here ‘the center of the city’, by means of the bus station located in the square right outside the cemetery one can quickly easily go anywhere.”



Leisure (for all age groups)

Ways of spending leisure time differs according to gender and age group. Children play freely within the cemetery between headstones. This only happens during daylight due to dangers lurking in the darkness. They play catch, football, and fly kites. Any wide space serves the purpose, often on the main street *al-Qarafa al-Kobra* in front of the new mosque.

Memories of childhood play attached to certain monuments reveal the potentials of the built environment and its perceived value to the people living within it and around it. Many stories

mention the sunken space behind *Sawabi* dome, where little girls used to hide from the rain and children played hide and seek. A woman said: “The trench is shallow but when we get inside no one can see us”. Boys used to play football in the street and when the ball falls into the trench, they would pile some stones on top of each other making steps in order to bring the ball. One said, with a pleasant smile, “I once fell inside it, شقاوة عيال”. A neighbouring district resident said, “In old times, Friday football games in the cemetery were sacred. We were a group of friends, a mix between cemetery residents and my street-*harah*-neighbours. Those games were held in front of *iwan Rihan* or along the street leading to *al-Abageyya*”. It seems this ritual is also among the heritage of the cemetery. A 19 year old male mentioned the same activity. He says he stopped now but until a few years ago he was a regular participant in this Friday football game. There is also a Youth Center below *al-Abageyya* bridge where young men and teen boys spend a lot of time.



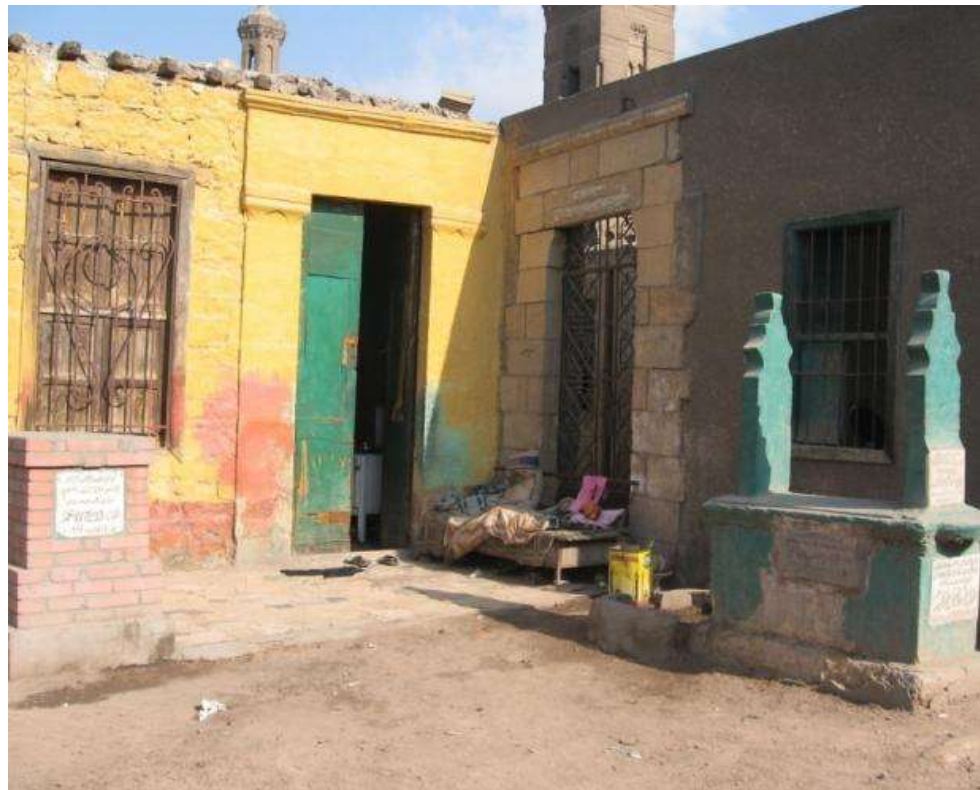
“football games in the cemetery were always a big event...”

Men would stay up late chatting and having *shishah* at one *toraby's* office. Others would go to a coffee shop along *Salah Salem* to play domino and chat with acquaintances. Some stay at home watching T.V.; they say that it is not safe to leave women and children alone by night, that the cemetery becomes dangerous by that time. Seldom do they visit each others.

Women - unless busy with domestic chores - sit in front of their houses on a *mastaba*; a built-in seating ledge designed specifically for such a use, or on the steps leading up to an entranceway. They chat with each other, watch the activity in the cemetery or offer a cup of

tea to a visitor. They also take children for picnics outside the cemetery; they go to neighboring parks, like *al-fostat* garden and *al-Qal'a'* garden.

“After we settled down in this hosh, we built a wall to separate the living space from the burial one.”



A girl in her early twenties living in *al-Harah al-Sharkeyya* across *Sook-al-Hamam* street from the cemetery entrance said they would not go to parks on *Eid al-Fitr* (the feast at the end of the Holy month of Ramadan) instead she and her relatives (girls of her age, sometimes with their mothers too) would go for a picnic inside the cemetery. A favourite spot is behind *Sawabi* near the metal fence. They would spread straw mats known as *hassira* and eat salted herrings celebrating the occasion. Now that the location (behind *Sawabi* dome) has turned into a garbage dump no one can go there to have fun anymore. They would avoid going there as much as possible because of the disgusting appearance. It hurts the feelings of people attached to it. They want to have it cleaned to regain its former beauty. Residents claim that some *torabeyya* intentionally want it to remain in this state as a cover up for illegal trade (of drugs).

The easy going manner in which neighboring residents talk about and interact with the cemetery deserves a stand. It sheds light on unexpected perceptions of the cemetery and its inhabitants from an outsiders' point of view. Those people build up friendships with cemetery residents. They celebrate the feast inside the cemetery, and spend the weekly holidays inside it. Non-resident women picnic there and cross it to reach main streets on the other side instead of walking outside which means they feel it safe inside. Maybe this is because they are spared the hassle and the crowd of the male dominant streets outside. This positive perception of the

spatial dimension of the cemetery maybe due to that these people are spared the feeling of being trapped within the cemetery. They have the freedom to either to connect or disconnect themselves to the cemetery unlike the others who were born there, and who do not have this choice.

DEALING WITH 'VISITORS'

A diverse profile of people appear every day in the cemetery for a variety of reasons. Who comes? When do they come? And why? decides how insiders are going to act. The cemetery community is expected to offer services to the incoming strangers, and it is something the community looks forward to do. Visitor activity was thought better to be discussed separately in order to portray the different types of visitors, seasons, preparations done by the community, how they feel about each, their expectations, and the traditions accompanying each event.

During feasts and special seasons, visitors usually come on fixed dates and start coming by 11 a.m. Visiting seasons (and they vary in degree of importance) are *Eid al-Fitr*, *Eid al-Adha*, the beginning of *hijry* month *Ragab* commonly known as *tal'at Ragab* and Prophet Muhammed's birth anniversary *al-Moulid al-Nabawi*. The two first feasts are the most crowded events in which visitors come from various places especially from rural areas. Workers of the cemetery perform a lot of preparations for the event several days in advance in order to waste no time or profit when it starts, beside it would be so difficult then because of the crowds. *Torabeyya* clean up the cemetery, sprinkle water, line up chairs, spread straw mats and make tea. Visitors, in return, pay them money and/or give them food.

Eid al-Fitr is the best season from *torabeyya's* point of view because of the rewarding types of visitors and amounts of donations; *eideyya*. Visitors would pay from L.E.20 to L.E.50 to *torabeyya* and from L.E.5 to L.E.10 to each *saby*. Visitors who don't come on any other occasion pay L.E.100 to the *toraby* and L.E.10 per each *saby*. *Ahwash* owners pay more than owners of graves in the open graveyard. If in winter, visitors would bring baked pastries (*shoreik* and *oras*) and dates. Rich families add Oranges and bananas. While during summer they bring white cheese, cucumber, black olives and summer fruits. Anything that is given is considered to convey mercy and light on a dead person's soul "رحمة ونور علي الميت".

Eid al-Adha is slightly different for visitors come on the second day of the feast, because slaughtering the sheep usually takes place on the first. They don't give money, instead, they distribute bread and meat. Generally, a special bag of food is specified for the *toraby* then the

rest is distributed randomly among the rest. Some residents run after visitors begging for money or food, they are thought to be undignified by the rest of the cemetery community " because they didn't work and so they don't deserve it. وشهم عريان "

Lately, the rate of visiting and numbers of visitors have both declined. Some suggested that the cost of the visit became a burden on many visitors. Others explain that few visitors are mostly coming from rural areas and upper Egypt, they say: "Cairenes do not come because they realized it is a fad, while others still consider it a tradition. They read *al-Fatiha* for their dead and put palm fronds and bamboo on their graves, and give some money and food to *torabeyya* and others.

Similar rituals but on smaller scale take place during the beginning of *Ragab* and the Prophet's birth anniversary; Al-Moulid Al-Nabawi. Ramadan and mid Sha'ban witness scarce activity; people are too busy preparing for the month of fasting besides the date is so close to *Eid al-Fitr*. This may also explain why *Eid al-Fitr* gains in importance; it has been so long since they visited the cemetery. A few may pay a visit on the last Friday of *Sha'ban*; as if it is a sort of goodbye between the living and the dead till they meet again after Ramadan.

Torabeya avoid any kinds of conflict especially with visitors during high seasons. Many of them assure, it is the most profitable days of all the year and earnings made then are the actual savings they rely on till the next season.

In old times, visitors used to spend the night in the cemetery (which explains rooms in *ahwash*), but this is no longer possible due to increased control prohibiting such practices. The visitors themselves are no longer free to waste a few days in a cemetery, besides it is not perceived to be as safe as it used to be to spend the night, and it has become more expensive over time.

Toraby staff express that although they wait from year to year for these seasons, they also worry about the uncomfortable situation where they have to move out of their living spaces sometimes with all their belongings in order to make room for its owners to sit inside and visit their dead. This is very tiring especially with the amount of work and effort done on these days.

Weekend visits on Thursdays and Fridays are much less practiced or abided by. Nominal amounts of money are given and nominal services are offered. These amounts are regarded as charity and not *eideyya*; cemetery residents would say, "In visitors' eyes, we deserve their charity" إحننا في نظرهم نستحق الصدقة. However, Friday visits can still result in observing a small crowd here and there; people usually arrive after the Friday prayer. Another type of Friday visit relates to recent deaths. There is a tradition of visiting the newly buried family member three

consecutive Fridays just after his or her burial. Fourth Friday is skipped, then they come on the 40th day after death not necessarily a Friday (this maybe related to the stages of body decaying). Special preparations for this day are done especially by rich families. They hire four *Qur'an* reciters '*moqre'een*' and give money and food for the sake of the deceased soul. The *sobyan* clean up the *hosh* and prepare it for the event; they say, "It is a day of sorrow to them, and a day of joy to us". Some families organize a family gathering at home on the 40th day instead of going to visit the grave. These traditions are not adopted by all Cariene Muslims. The more educated groups of society would visit their dead much less frequently but they would still pass to pay the *toraby*. In general, the decrease in numbers of visitors affects the cemetery community negatively, they say: "We become happy when customers come because it benefits every one here".

The visitor business also attracts other groups who do not particularly live in the cemetery. One such group includes the reciters of *Qu'ran* who wander through the cemetery in case anyone would ask for their services. They do not have a fixed wage, they take whatever people pay. They are neither cemetery residents nor members of *the toraby* organization but most of them are regulars and some have strong ties to a *saby* or two, always appearing in the *toraby's* office. Another group involves sellers of *torabeyya* equipment like chairs also come into the cemetery to market their goods.

The cemetery is above all a sacred place. Even when residents are forced to dishonor it and commit inappropriate vital activities, they still bare in mind that it is sacred and that what they are doing will never be perceived as acceptable by others and more importantly by God. Visitors who seem not to realize this sanctity and do not show enough respect annoy the insider community. The community would criticize visitors who come with an attitude of disregard and preparations for a picnic; "They let their children play and eat around graves...women wear make-up, and above all they do not treat us (*torabeyya*) well...their attitude bothers us...they are not visiting a cemetery, they are going for a picnic". Many of these picnickers do not inform the *toraby* of their visit and do not seek his services. They spread a sheet on the ground under any shaded spot and spend a few hours eating and chatting loudly; their children running and playing around the sanotaffs.

Another type of unwelcome visitors are opportunistic individuals who infiltrate the cemetery in an attempt to trick, or intimidate other grave visitors into paying them some money. The *torabeyya* do not stand up to those people or drive them away. They just watch them conveying a message as if to curb the degree of harassment they exercise. These unwelcome visitors are met during day while during nighttime delinquents and often some criminals may appear. Robberies, prostitution, consumption of drugs and dealing in them are all possible activities that occasionally take place in the cemetery's inner open graveyards for there it is

dark and unseen and no police presence exists. Traces of beer bottles and syringes are found in the morning. This category of visitors are avoided by the residents. Even *torabeyya* adopt a similar strategy for in the end they are ordinary people not qualified to face such dangers.

A question arises here, how do *torabeyya* who boasted their familiarity with the cemetery by night as well as during day deal with night dangers? Some claim that criminals hide from them and that they are the stronger. How would that be? Do *torabeyya* have arms? Or do they lie about it? Or, maybe, they are themselves involved in an untold illegal business... However, the latter is far fetched because no residents hinted to any such accusation even those having serious problems with *torabeyya*. The worst accusation associated with a *toraby* involved robbery (one *toraby* spent one year in prison for stealing iron bars from a monument) greed, and burying in other people's graves. When asked about police presence, the residents said that the police occasionally come into the cemetery and arrest some members of the cemetery community for interrogation and treat them badly.

Historic monuments and shrines are attractants of other types of visitors. The shrines attract a special kind of visitors; historians, religion scholars. Among those shrines in the study area, only *sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)* is an acknowledged religious thinker and writer. Although not buried there, people come to visit his shrine mostly from Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, Syria they are mostly theology students. They seek his shrine just to read *al-Fatiha* and leave without entering it. A few residents mentioned that *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)* is not buried in his shrine while the majority does not believe that the mausoleum is empty and that an empty shrine attracts visitors worldwide. It was reported that many years ago (up to 10 years) there used to be a *moulid* festivity for *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)*, a little before *moulid* of *al-Sayeda Aisha*, but this celebration stopped without knowing why or by who's authority?

Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti) was a religious thinker and writer. The case study area is named after him. His shrine lies in the *Abu-Sibha* territory. No one is allowed to enter the shrine. Only a man from Nigeria was allowed. He painted the interior walls, cleaned it up, and even brought the mausoleum a new *keswah*. There are two keys to this shrine; one with the person in charge from the *toraby's* staff and the other is kept in the Ministry of *Awkaf*. The shrine of *sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)* is said to be one of the important landmarks in the case study cemetery; that almost everyone there recognizes it and knows its location, they say, "you will be able to reach your direction easily if you refer it to the shrine of *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)*."

The most remarkable *moulid* in the study area cemetery was the *moulid* of *Sheikh Abata*, because it was still taking place until 2-3 years ago. Besides, it attracts a lot of people to the cemetery. Some said it used to take place during summer, "it takes places a little after our return from the summer vacation," while another said it is a while before *Ramdan*. It lasts for a

week. *Al-Qarafa al-Kobra* street witnesses a lot of action and pleasure during this event, for the tradition of *moulid* includes singers' performances and a lot of food and drink. It enlivens the cemetery. Even though, this specific *moulid* attracts an unaccepted portion of the society. A resident (male) said, "this event attracts beggars and delinquent groups, on the other hand, *al-Sayeda Aisha* celebration is something else; it is respectable." Another resident (female) said, "I don't accept the custom of this *moulid*, there is a lot of mingling between men and women, and they sit and eat together... But, *el-Hagga Faykah* is a very good singer who stays for 3 days". We were told that residents complained about this *moulid* because of the types of people it attracts and consequently the unacceptable activities that take place. Again, we don't know who filed such complaint and to whom, but, this *moulid* has been prohibited ever since.

The shrine of *Sheikh al-Barzi* lies directly on the *Autostrade* highway. Not everyone mentioned that it also has a *moulid* festivity and interviewees were not accurate about its time; some said during winter while others said it takes place on the 29th of *Sha'ban*; on appearance of the crescent of *Ramadan*. One explanation maybe that this event takes place outside the study area or on its periphery, so that residents are aware of it but they are not involved. When talking about the shrine of *Sheikh al-Barzi* with residents, it appeared that they were concerned more with the random visiting activity it attracts like the case of the shrine of *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)*. This shrine is known for its good deeds and fulfilling people's wishes. *Sheikh al-Barzi* keeps candles lit despite the strong wind. The *hennah* that visitors cover his tombstone with becomes immediately wet without adding water. Residents of the case study cemetery repeatedly mentioned their disbelief in the capability of shrines to affect their lives in any way; good or bad, even though, some of them couldn't help seeking the powers of *Sheikh al-Barzi* on certain occasions. A woman said, "Although I disbelief in that, I thought I should try it, maybe it turns out to be true and he can help," while another resident refused this attitude and said that she neither lit a candle nor put *hennah*, she just read him *al-Fatiha*". عند البارزي لا

تخط حنه ولا تولع شمع... فقط تقرأ الفاتحة

Another famous shrine in the case study cemetery is the shrine of *Sheikh Rihan*. It lies in *Sa'doun* territory. The shrine of *Sheikh Rihan* is famous for curing children, people say *Sheikh Rihan* cures children suffering hopeless nervous diseases. The child would be locked inside the shrine during the Friday Prayer for three successive Fridays after which he becomes totally cured, or, the child would die after the second Friday. The family of the cured child would give the guard yellow lentils. Several residents claimed witnessing this happening more than once. People stopped seeking *Sheikh Rihan* five to six years ago for no declared reasons. The *toraby* in charge said that people mistakenly call it the shrine of *Sheikh Rihan* where, in fact, it is the shrine of *Sidi Azzam*; like other shrines, he was a good man with a lot of good deeds, *karamat*,

and when his grave was opened afterwards, people did not find his body.

A man who is said to be a member of an Islamic expedition (he traces the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad) came to the cemetery a short time ago and said that he proved that *Thanaa* and *Sanaa*; grandchildren of *al-Hussein*, were buried inside the shrine of *Sheikh Rihan*. This newly discovered piece of information was disseminated by hanging a paper inside *al-Sayeda Aisha* mosque and resulted in attracting a different group of visitors mainly coming from the Arab Gulf area. A resident living next to this shrine doubts the claim of *Thanaa* and *Sanaa*, she said “We do not believe in the *Thanaa* and *Sanaa* story because the *toraby* family sold this *hosh* to around 3000 person”.

Every now and then some foreign tourists would come to visit the historic graves; “The City of the Dead” as they call it. No police protection is provided which makes it the *toraby*’s responsibility to keep them safe from harm or harassment. *Torabeyya* would unlock minarets for them to enter. *Torabeyya* and residents located in inner parts and living on *al-Qarafa al-Kobra* welcome those tourists although none of them pay anything. A more conservative attitude was expressed by residents on the periphery; the *ahaly*. A woman denounced letting a foreigner enter graves of *Muslims*, she says that it is forbidden and that in rural areas graves are protected with doors; one must take off his shoes or slippers before entering; “The sanctity of the place must be observed”. But what happens here is that they let them in to walk through and take photos, it is fine to let them take photos but only from the outside. Another young girl in her early twenties working and living across *Sook-al-Hamam* street said, “I dislike the presence of tourists, they see you when you are poorly dressed or sweeping the floor, we run to hide so as not to be photographed. I feel they are inspecting us”.

The study area was actually once chosen as the location for filming the American movie “The Mummy III”. Residents were excited and were helping in preparing the location until the producer brought his own staff. They thought they would have earned some money except that the project was cancelled for military security reasons.

SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

As mentioned earlier, residents of the cemetery, come from every walk of life motivated by a wide spectrum of reasons, but in the end they all ended up in the cemetery. Forgetting about the origins, they merge into the new setting, forging a new society in which the cemetery is the most dominant component. We hear them say: “The cemetery has become a part of me. Is it possible to go on living without a part of yourself?”

Like any existing community and despite its small size (population of study area hardly exceeds a few hundreds) all is found in the community of the cemetery. The powerful and leading group is manifested in the *torabeyya* families, which, among each other, differ in their authority, authenticity and wealth. Any leader must have assistants and individuals working under his command; they are the implementers. In our case, they are the *mosa'ed een* and the *sobyan*. Also, those leading characters must have some business to lead which is the “business of the dead”. But, their authority is not exclusive to this business alone; they expanded their control above the ground. Above the ground is not just empty lots that lead underground; people live there. In the end, *torabeyya* became more like mayors, each having a specific boundary set and agreed upon, responsibilities towards the dead, the living and the monuments. The map of social ranks and geographical distribution is what really determines the relationships between all who exist in the cemetery. Now, it is not anymore about where you came from or who you used to be, instead, it is about who you are now here inside the cemetery; where exactly do you live? and, what you do?

The major factor that differentiates our study area community from others is its inability to evolve further than a certain limit. The community evolved because of the dead; the presence of the dead justifies the presence of the living. Therefore, this community witnesses advancement, nevertheless, it will never reach the extent of getting rid of the dead. If the dead go, then the living will also go. This puts an end to the desire of wanting the cemetery as it physically is for a home environment but without the dead. This can never happen.

Sections of the cemetery where no burials take place; the periphery that hosts individuals who do not consider themselves related to the cemetery; the *ahaly*, as they call themselves, are living peacefully. Those people resided in it by their free will. They do not lack facilities nor do they have problems of identity that negatively affect with their feelings of content. Their territory is very well defined by *al-Mesabih* and the beginning of the cemetery along *Sook-al-Hamam* street. Owners of buildings live among the tenants. They know each other well. A high sense of solidarity is witnessed among them. Despite the varying financial status, they live in relative harmony. Even the poorest among them would take action towards strangers in an attempt to protect their neighbours and their neighbourhood.

People living inside the cemetery; those who live very close to the dead in areas where burials occur, they are usually distributed according to the control of *torabeyya*. Their social relations are shaped by their position in the *torabeyya* hierarchy each within their *toraby* structure (see section on *toraby* organization). Social relations among *torabeyya* families are formal and they socially keep their interaction as minimal as possible.

In general, residents of the cemetery would rarely start a conversation with strangers, they only reply briefly when addressed. They are very attentive to any peculiar movement happening in the cemetery, they watch, then they make themselves available for communication like opening the window, they would stand there or sit in front of their doorstep for a long while doing nothing, watching, waiting. One gets an unspoken message that it is acceptable, if you want, to start talking but not think I will ever start it. Then, when the interaction starts they would treat you politely but still in a reserved manner and they would shower you with questions in order to fully understand what brought you to them and accordingly they decide how to deal with you; either to follow a welcoming and respectful attitude or to be hostile with no hesitation.

Generally speaking, entering the cemetery, one has to know that he/she is in vulnerable situation. Unless the protection of the *toraby* is gained, one has to know that he/she has become 'fair game'. Threats are often evident in their words and actions; deflating the wheels of car just because it was parked in an unwelcome location is an easily fulfilled threat. The point is that as 'custom' of the cemetery goes insiders' community (*torabeyya* or non-*torabeyya*) have the right to harass any intruder; either by stealing (mobile phone or the camera) or by frightening them, or by begging, or by extorting money, or any other way they may choose. Lack of presence of police endorses such powers. Whether they did harass intruders or not, the possibility in itself boasts their ego and their sense of power and strength especially the *torabeyya*; it is our territory and we set the rules here. Several *torabeyya* boasted about their fearlessness. They are masters of a place where all others fear or in the least tread with apprehension. This maybe one of the *torabeyya* compensate for the loss of society's respect and dignified position a *torady* had in past times.

Generally, inhabitants of the cemetery seem to be satisfied with their recent situation; their life is acceptable as is, no apparent aspiration for a better, cleaner, or more respectable neighbourhood seems to cross their minds. This may incorrectly suggest that they are a lazy group of people who would rather live on charity than work. It is not so. The findings reveal most of them are engaged in more than one job in order to secure their families reasonable, stable, sources of livelihood.

Mainly responsible members of *torabeyya* families are the ones who do more than one job, as they are responsible for the entire family not only the wife and children. While ordinary people usually are, much less active if compared to the *torabeyya*. Acceptance of their lifestyle is apparent in their attitudes where no one took up any income-generating activity in order to have a better life. The only investment is in education, and not everyone is keen about it. It is investment in the future of their children and not in theirs. They say that they guard the *ahwash* while in fact they merely live in them. This group of cemetery dwellers does not work

yet still they do not suffer destitute. They do not beg, and they hardly feel inferior, they are all living under the same conditions. Retired men, men unable to work because of permanent disabilities, widows (women) having half a dozen children (ranging from 1 month to 15 years old) and still no one worked, they do not have to. They get regular payments from someone, they do not pay for infrastructure and they get all their needs from a neighbouring inexpensive market which they go to on foot. They are clean in their body and their clothes are clean and ironed. Their homes are noticeably clean, and moreover well equipped. A *hosh* of a divorced woman living with her three children in the age of primary school (under 10 years old) possessed a 17" flat screen T.V., a two-door refrigerator, ceiling fan, oven, half-automatic washing machine, all utensils were glimmering as if newly bought. She has extra chairs (wooden and plastic) that she uses when visitors come. All that are taking into consideration that she lives in the cemetery only since 2001, and that she does not work and no relative or husband gives her any money. Her income is mainly from charity associated in the being in the cemetery. In her case, she says she would not take whatever that is offered to her; instead, she would choose and take only what she needs. She even feels free to ask for something she lacks. It is neither embarrassing nor humiliating. It is a way of life. These cases of residents, if they worked outside the cemetery, would have been servants or car drivers or doormen or any other, low-paid, low-ranked job. Staying at the cemetery spares them the hard work and relieves them from the frequent control of somebody else for here they are under the occasional control of the *hosh* owners and the *torabeyya*. This, however, is not the most common situation among residents. Even some *torabeyya* relatives do not live so lavishly.



"I used to work, but now I have a permanent disability and no longer capable of doing any effort."

On the other hand, those who have aspiration to become better if granted the chance to live outside the cemetery, they regret everyday they waste inside it holding them back from achieving their dreams.

Nevertheless, ambitions for leaving this whole life behind and starting over somewhere else, doing something else, was not a dominant idea among the residents. Only a few cases hoped for such radical change and seemed to have major problems accepting their current situation. This is most evident among the youth. They long for an improved life. They are educated and thus had the chance to mingle with the society and see how it is to be a non-cemetery resident. Due to changes in social standards, those young people find acceptance in the outer world. They are not faced by the same harsh rejection their forefathers suffered from. They are torn between two strong opposite poles; to stay, to leave. Continuity of the profession (in case of *torabeyya* descendants) is the last of those few concern or at least that is what they claim.

The elderly on the other hand, prefer living in the cemetery, they say: “The remaining time will never be as much as the past. It is relieving for them to spend their last years beside the dead in order to always remember and never forget what and where they will soon be. They have finished all their duties, worked till retirement or became incapable of working, raised the children and educated them and helped them get married and settle down in their own homes. Now, it was time for the end to come.

Everyone must have experienced “death” whether in their family or circle of friends. The incidence motivates the human-being to think about “the after-life” and the meaning of our lives and the goal of living it. Many questions are triggered by a single incident that unexpectedly crosses ones life and disrupts one’s routines. However, ordinary people do not share in the preparations that end up by settling down a body into a grave, they only see a coffin that is moved from one place to another. Afterwards, everyone is expected to go on with their lives leaving it all behind.

The frequency of dealing with the dead experienced by residents of the cemetery and the depth of impact of the whole situation is difficult to imagine. This impact is thought to have affected every single individual in or around the cemetery, young or old. It appears on their faces when mentioning those influential moments; when a message is received and a lesson is learnt. A girl in her early twenties said, “I love the cemetery, it makes me stand up to people because when I see someone buried I realize that I will meet the same end,” explaining how little else would be a threat. An old *toraby* said, “When I bury a man, then after two weeks I re-open the same grave in order to bury another who was - two weeks earlier - standing here beside me attending the former burial, I can’t take it, and my hands start shaking”. Another

older man said, “I love to come and stay here a lot because when one looks around here, one remembers, as if a complete movie is shown inside my mind, where did they all come from? And where are they now? It teaches one not to feel pride”.

In the face of death, people become equal; it is no longer about ranks or wealth or education. Instead, it has become an issue between human beings and their fate. It helps in deciding how to live ones life. The decision is built on an aware insightful recognition of life and its worth. Many cemetery dwellers expressed that, especially among the *torabeyya*.

Inhabitants of the cemetery are one step forward than regular society. They succeeded in transcending the barrier separating the living from the dead; that barrier that associates cemeteries to the world of spirits and darkness and the unknown. That is mostly witnessed with the *torabeyya* who boast their fearlessness and super abilities. In fact, they are the group who enjoys the greatest amount of indulgence with the underground world. They are gifted with what everyone else lacks even other residents of the cemetery. A man once explaining the inquiries his sons and daughters receives from the outer society, he says, “people ask them how you could live in there. Aren’t you afraid? Are there any ghosts that show up in the darkness?”

In the end, they are ordinary human beings who come and go and socialize and eat and drink and get married and have children, but they live under certain conditions that give them some uniqueness and difficulties as well as exclusive advantages and insight about life.

Monuments and Shrines

The pilot study area of *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)* cemetery markedly contains not a few significant buildings; eight of them are registered monuments at the Supreme Council of Antiquities, beside seven shrines that vary in their degree of fame.

Understanding the claims to such a unique setting that combines historic buildings and mausoleums of revered social figures with ordinary people living around and others buried underneath is complex. After exploring the behavioral dimension of this claim through patterns of dwelling discussed in earlier section and to complete our understanding of the relation between cemetery community and monuments in the area we explored the cognitive and meaning dimensions of this relationship; how they perceive them, what they know about them, and what those buildings signify to them. This investigation was conducted through a photo-based questionnaire applied to a maximum variation sample of 15 respondents who were chosen to cover the different groups, living and working in and around the case study cemetery (*torabeyya* as their staff, *hosh* dwellers, periphery dwellers '*ahaly*'...) (see Annex 2 for questionnaire). The questionnaire contained a number of closed questions mostly applying the Likert scale to measure cognition and place attachment to the monuments and shrines. Ranking questions were incorporated to measure relative significance and perceived value of these buildings. An additional question explored what the cemetery community thinks should be done about them. Parallel to the questionnaire, qualitative data was also collected to shed light on the quantitative results of the questionnaire.

COGNITION OF MONUMENTS AND SHRINES **AMONG THE CEMETERY COMMUNITY**

Respondents were shown a photo album with unlabelled photograph for each monument and shrine present in the study area and they were asked to identify each one of them. This question aimed at measuring their cognition of the investigated building; whether they could recognize them at all and what attributes or qualifiers they knew them by.

The results revealed that the majority of residents have a fair knowledge of all the monuments and shrines present in the cemetery. It is even more evident in cases when they live right beside or in front of one of those buildings. They know bits and pieces of their history, types of visitors that would come specifically for each and the rituals of each visit. Knowledge about monuments and shrines in the case study cemetery differs among residents; some know the

location, while some know them by name. Others have childhood memories attached to certain monuments and various myths and stories to tell about the shrines.

More than 70% of the sample identified the monuments correctly; however they did not always know them by the “name of the monument”. Many respondents used other qualifiers to identify the monuments such as its spatial location or attribution to a *toraby* or a territorial zone; “this dome is at Abu Sibha's”. If correct, this identification by attribution was considered a measure of positive cognition, (more discussion on “Ranking of Qualifiers” later in this section).¹ Fig (6) shows that the highest percentage of respondents recognized the mosque of *al-Mesabih* (86.7%) while the least percentage of respondents could recognize *Sawabi* (33.3%). The rest of monuments were recognized by about 70% of the respondents. The high legibility of *al-Mesabih* mosque is thought to be because it is a functioning mosque that is at the edge of the cemetery accessed and seen from a busy city artery; Salah Salem street. Many respondents mentioned they pray there during Ramadan. They expressed their feelings when praying inside it and how big it is and its details; “I feel like the mosque is embracing us,” a resident said. Only two respondents could not recognize *al-Mesabih*'s photo; one justified that by explaining that if it was the photo of its doorway she would have recognized it, while the other respondent said that the photo is at *al-Sayeda Aisha* near *al-Mesabih* mosque. On the other hand, *Sawabi* scored low probably because it was shown to respondents in isolation from its adjacent monument, the *Sudun* mausoleum. When seen together *Sawabi* was known as much as the other monument.

We also notice in Fig (6) that recognition of monuments by attribution prevailed. Only one respondent recognized *iwan* Rihan by its name while the majority recognized *al-Mesabih* mosque by its name. In case of *iwan* Rihan, it has such strong associations as a shrine that people would refer to it using other names and attributes rather than its formal name.

¹ Some photos captured buildings top views (domes only without doorways) and not street level views which people are more used to.

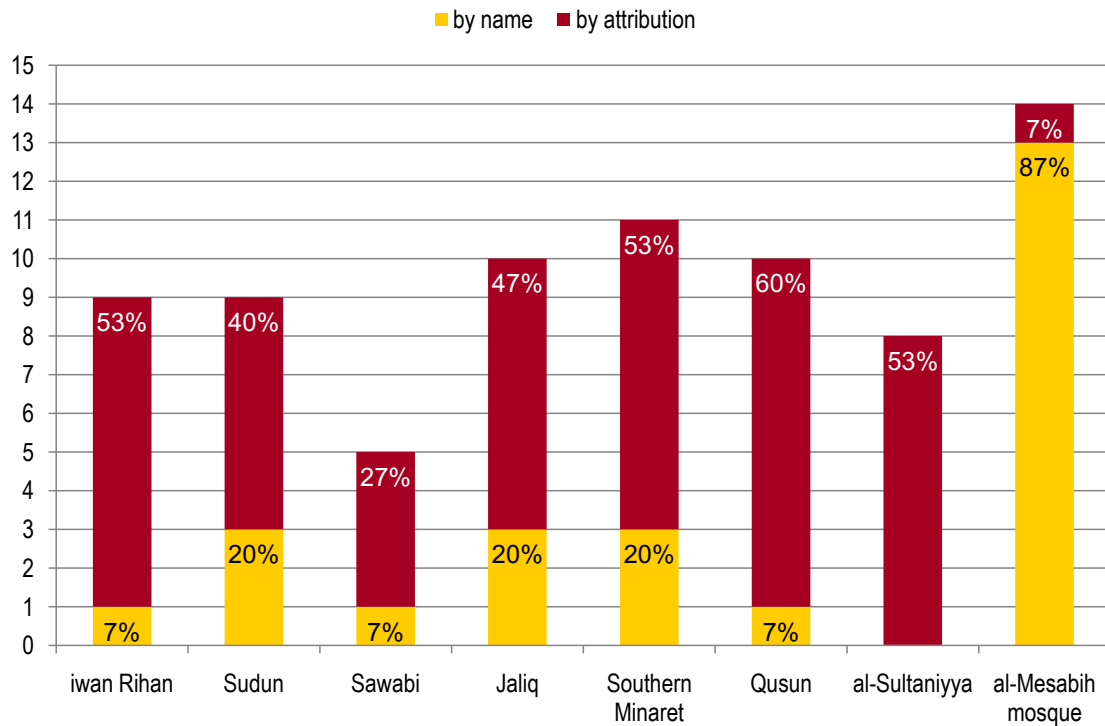


Fig (6). The degree to which cemetery community cognize the monuments in the case study area.

As for shrines, the study reveals that cemetery residents are aware of the shrines around them but to different degrees; they may tell long stories about one shrine, while hardly mention the name of another. Residents stated that there are six shrines in the case study cemetery completely overlooking the shrine of *Sidi Ibrahim*. The most recognized shrines were the shrine of *Sheikh al-Barzi* (60% of respondents), followed by the shrine of *Sheikh Rihan* (53.3%), then the shrine of *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)* (46.7%). It must be noted that the shrine of *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)* was entirely painted white only 10 days before the implementation of the questionnaire giving it quite a new appearance, which may have made it hard to recognize by some respondents. The remaining shrines were recognized significantly less; *Sheikh Abata* by 26.7%, *Sidi Mansour al-Baz* only 13.3%, and *Sidi Abdel'al (al-Jeeni)* was recognized by only one respondent.

Unlike monuments, shrines were mostly recognized by their names, except for the shrine of *Sheikh Rihan* and the shrine of *Sidi Mansour al-Baz*. Those were recognized more by the deeds attributed to each sheikh. The fact that the names of shrines are modern names compared to names of monuments and relatively significant in meaning to contemporary people may explain this difference between monuments and shrines.



Left: The shrine of *Sheikh al-Barzi*. Right: The shrine of *Sidi Galal al-Din (al-Suyuti)*.

However, recognition of monuments was higher than recognition of shrines. This could be because some residents of the cemetery consider the shrines as less significant, rather like ordinary graves, or it maybe because they are less visually prominent.

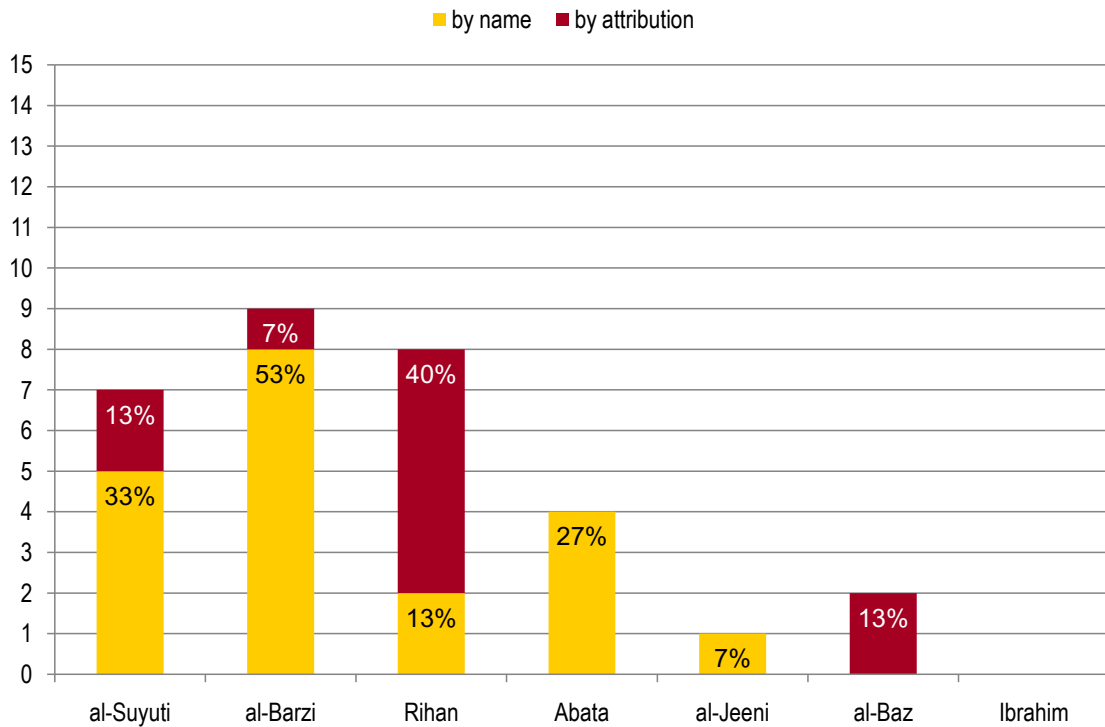


Fig (7). The degree to which cemetery community cognize the shrines in the case study area.

Ranking of Qualifiers

The following is a brief overview of the types of qualifiers that respondents used during the questionnaire to identify monuments and shrines. The following demonstrates the qualifiers grouped in categories and organized by the most used to the least used: sometimes a

respondent used two qualifiers at a time to identify a building. This analysis sheds light on the kinds of associations people make to those buildings.

1- *Torabeyya* name

The results showed that the **name of the *toraby*** is the most widely used qualifier among all categories of respondents. Analyzing responses of each respondent individually gave some significant indications. Only one *toraby* (Om Hany) used numbers in parallel with the names. As the numbering system was only recently applied to clearly identify each *toraby's* boundary. This attribution to the controlling *toraby* almost as owner of the monument is expressed overtly in the frequent usage of the term 'ours' whenever a *toraby* was identifying a building that lies within his or her family's control. Generally, all working *torabeyya* (except for Samia Beliha who took charge of the job only a year ago, before which she was married outside the area for 20 years at least) could correctly refer buildings to their controlling *torabeyya*.

2- Name of Monument/shrine

The majority of respondents referred to shrines by their name, but less so in the case of monuments. Except for *al-Mesabih* mosque, respondents' confidence in the name of the monument was rather shaky, sometimes because photos of monuments shown were top views of domes and minarets and not street level views. However, despite that, identifying a monument and shrine by name ranked second.

Referring to monuments and shrines by an acquired alternative name rather than the historic name applied in a couple of cases. They referred to the shrine of *Sheikh Rihan* by *Sidi Azzam* claiming that the honorable deceased that is buried inside this shrine is called *Azzam* and not *Rihan*. They sometimes refer to the same shrine by *Thanaa* and *Sanaa*, and this is due to a recent publication indicating that they are descendants of the Prophet Muhammad and they are buried inside the same shrine. Sometimes, it was called *al-Rihani*. The monument of *al-Sultaniyya* also had a number of names; the dome of *Sultan Hassan's* mother "*Qobbat Om al-Sultan*" and "*al-harameen*".

3- People as landmarks

Almost half the respondents referred to monuments by a nearby well-known person, not necessarily the *toraby* in charge, this person could be a resident or an owner of a nearby business. Respondents referred to various monuments by "it is at Am Ali," "beside Elewa *el-samkary* and Nousa". A resident beside *al-Mesabih* mosque referred to *Qusun* by "at Am Housny" and *Jaliq* by "at Ibrahim *bok'a* and Elewa *el-samkary*".

4- Spatial cognition

Peripheral residents more than others, expressed their cognition of the investigated monuments and shrines by either describing their location or the route leading to them. A respondent correctly described the routes leading to *Sudun* and *al-Sultaniyya*. Others referred to *Qusun* and *Sawabi* by “it lies on the main street of the cemetery at *al-Qarafa al-Kobra*”. Residents beside *al-Mesabih* referred to *Jaliq* by the one “nearby *al-Khartah*”. Another respondent referred to the shrine of *Sidi Mansour al-Baz* by saying that it lies beside the entrance from *al-Sayeda Aisha*”; one respondent recognized the same shrine because of the electric supply overhanging wires in the photograph *علي الشارع عشان سلك الكهربيا*.

5- Events and related activities

Sometimes respondents referred to monuments and shrines by telling a story related to this specific building, they said about *Qusun* “the dome where they used to hang people” and “the gate where prosecuted people were hanged,” and about *Jaliq* they said, “the army leader used to sit beneath it”.

6- Zone number

The recently used numbering system of *torabeyya* territories was made use of by some of the respondents, but they were often mistaken; some of them mixed between building number and territory number. They said that *Qusun* lies in zone 4 while it is actually in zone 15. One said that the shrine of *Sidi Ibrahim* is in zone 1, while another said it is in zone 13. The confusion is understandable, as this numbering system would mainly be known by the active *torabeyya* to demarcate their territorial limits and is relatively new in application.

7- Pointing at it:

In cases where the investigated monuments and shrines were nearby where the interview took place, respondents sometimes simply pointed at the building, this action sometimes was followed by telling the name of the buildings. A *toraby* referred to *Jaliq* by “the monument in front of us,” she did not mention its name. The majority of resident respondents, especially those living behind *al-Mesabih* mosque, pointed at the *Southern Minaret* and said “it is the minaret in front of us,” or “it is our minaret”. Pointing at the investigated building was never used in case of shrines because none of them was visible from interview locations.

In addition to the above list of qualifiers, the qualitative analysis of the in-depth interviews, “Monuments are domes and minarets like the dome of *Sudun* and *al-Monofy* and the minaret of *Jaliq*... there are a lot of domes I cannot remember their names”.

Architectural form:

A few respondents referred to the architectural characteristics of the monuments around in one way or another reveals another significant qualifier and that is the architectural form and elements of the building. A resident respondent said she differentiates between minarets by the geometry of their cross-section; square, circle, octagon. She also expressed the beauty she finds in the lattice woodcarving of their fences; they sometimes have patterns with crescents and sometimes stars. Several other respondents referred to monuments by the shape and details of their dome. They mentioned the “ribbed dome” القبة المسننة beside the other dome on the octagonal drum and square base, (this is most probably *Sawabi* and *Sudun*). A resident even noticed a similarity between the dome of *Sudun* and another dome in the cemetery of *al-Darrasa* district.

A resident described *al-Sultaniyya*, he said, “the dome of the *Sultan* is composed of two domes; each has a separate entrance, linked by a stone wall. Beneath the domes there is a space distributed into a number of graves. Individuals buried in *al-Sultaniyya* were buried there too long ago. Their descendants serve at respectable positions in the government; one of them was a former director of security. Because of their social rank, they are allowed to enter the monument”.

Patterns of Cognition

The community of the cemetery can be divided into two categories regarding the cognition of the monuments and shrines; working *torabeyya* who are the more knowledgeable among cemetery residents, and other residents.

Table 5. Classification of the community of the cemetery:

<i>Category</i>	<i>Nature of Cognition</i>
<i>Torabeyya</i> organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ they are accurate.▪ they know monuments and shrines in their own territory as well as in other <i>torabeyya</i> areas.
Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ varies according to diverse factors:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- proximity of monument/shrine to home.- degree of exposure of monument/shrine.- location of monument/shrine on daily route.- birthplace and childhood memories of respondents.

The *Torabeyya*:

All *torabeyya* recognized the monument of *Sudun*, followed by *Qusun* and *Jaliq* and *al-Mesabih* mosque, while the least recognized monuments were *Sawabi*, the *Southern Minaret* and *al-Sultaniyya*. Generally, the majority of *torabeyya* recognized buildings by both *toraby* name and building name.

The entire sample of *torabeyya* respondents gave answers when asked to identify monuments shown in the photo album. None of them admitted not knowing any of the investigated monument. Most of *torabeyya* responses were correct, only a few were confused and mixed between monuments.

It was noticed that the few women *torabeyya* knew the monuments less accurately than men did; their knowledge limited to their home and work territory. The precision of men *torabeyya* was evident. The only occasional confusion was between the Southern Minaret and the Northern one. However, it should be taken into consideration that the photo of the Southern Minaret showed its body and top and not its base which may have made it more difficult for them to recognize.

Generally speaking, the cognition of shrines among *torabeyya* is weaker than the cognition of monuments. While *torabeyya* responded positively about all investigated monuments, they admitted their ignorance about a number of shrines. None of them knew the shrines of *Sheikh Sidi Abdel'al (al-Jeeni)* and *Sidi Ibrahim* and *Sidi Mansour al-Baz*. The most recognized shrine was the shrine of *Sheikh Rihan*, followed by the shrine of *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)*, then the shrine of *Sheikh Abata*. Only one respondent recognized the shrine of *Sheikh al-Barzi*, saying, "This is *Sheikh al-Barzi*. I am the one who built its walls" "ده البارزي انا اللي باني الحيطه بتاعته".

The *torabeyya* attribute more significance to monuments than they do to shrines. This can partially be explained by the assignment of *torabeyya* by the Supreme Council of Antiquities as keepers of monuments that lie within their territorial zones (see section on *Toraby* Claims to the Monuments). Many of them also believe that these shrines are nothing more than ordinary graves and of no religious significance as other people would claim.

The category of *torabeyya* respondents is characterized by correct cognition of monuments and shrines within their territorial domains. They showed interest, and more knowledge, in talking about monuments and shrines territories of families they are on good terms with, and showed more reserve in talking about those in territories of non-friendly families. It seems that social relations have an influence on their scope of knowledge. This can be explained by the role of

social relations in determining accessibility across boundaries. As previously mentioned, only families, who are on good terms with each other, can freely cross each other's territories, and consequently their families. This indicates that social relations are a significant determinant of routes which consequently increases exposure to the buildings that lie on those routes; i.e. increases the opportunity to recognize them.

Regarding the qualifiers used by *torabeyya* respondents to investigated monuments and shrines, they mostly used the name of the *toraby* sometimes coupled by another qualifier such as the zone number or the name of the building.

The Residents:

Residents' patterns of cognition differed from those of the *torabeyya*. *Sudun* and *Sawabi* seemed to confuse residents when seen separately, and *al-Sultaniyya* gains more recognition from residents than from *torabeyya*.

While *torabeyya* always gave an answer about the investigated monuments, it was noticed that all residents were more keen to be accurate than to show that they know them; they only answer when they know the monument/shrine, otherwise, they simply say that they do not know. A number of monuments and shrines were unknown to them.

Among the resident respondents, the nature of cognition differed widely. Factors influencing their cognition were either spatial factors such as proximity to home or exposure to habitual routes, or social factors such as birthplace and childhood memories. Sometimes two factors would combine.

Usually the monuments and shrines closer to their residence were better known; one resident knew all monuments and shrines (*Sheikh Rihan* shrine, *Sudun*, *Jaliq*) located beside her home. Residents living beside *al-Mesabih* mosque recognized the shrine of *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)* which is the nearest to them; a resident said, "this photo is *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)* because it is nearby", they said about *al-Mesabih* mosque, "it is our *al-Mesabih*" or "it is our mosque" "دا الجامع بتاعنا" "المسيح بتاعنا". They also recognized *al-Sultaniyya* because it was visible from their daily route across the cemetery. The same applies to a peripheral resident who recognized buildings within the closest *toraby* domain (in this case Hany Sa'doun).

Residents born in the cemetery were more knowledgeable than those not born in it regardless of their length of residence or location. A woman got married and came to the periphery of the cemetery 30-35 years ago (beside *al-Mesabih* mosque), but she could hardly recognize any of the monuments and shrines. She dealt with the cemetery and its components as if it is somewhere else that she is not related to; she used expressions like 'I have got no idea, I don't

go there,' 'I didn't study the cemetery,' 'ask the *torabeyya*, they are more knowledgeable'. Whereas another peripheral resident recognized all monuments lying on *al-Qarafa al-Kobra* and explained it by stating that he used to play there when he was a little boy. It is deduced that "place of birth" and "early childhood memories" are influencing factors in cognition. Childhood memories and their role in nurturing feelings of place attachment reflect in the knowledge residents have about certain monuments, even those they are not usually exposed to.

Within resident respondents, non-working members of *torabeyya* families are more knowledgeable about monuments and shrines within their family's domains. They may even mention the names of those buildings correctly and would also talk about them with a high sense of ownership and belonging. A daughter of a working *toraby/saby* knew all the buildings surrounding her father's territory. She said about *Jaliq*, "it lies beside my father's office" عند "ابويا في الشارع", and about *al-Sultaniyya*, "more deeper into the cemetery, beyond my father a bit" "جوه القرافة تحت ابويا بشوية", and about *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)*, "in the big cemetery, behind my father" "في القرافة الكبيرة ورا ابويا". This category of residents differs in their degree of knowledge of the rest of the buildings. It was noticed that they can better recognize buildings belonging to families who are on good terms with theirs while they have absolutely no idea about the rest.

The factor of exposure to the buildings seemed to have an influence on the extent of knowledge residents have of monuments and shrines. On the one hand, respondents could recognize some of the buildings lying on frequently used routes, while they were completely ignorant about the rest. On the other hand, neighbors of the shrine of *Sheikh Rihan* as well as a peripheral resident who have strong childhood memories inside the cemetery recognized it despite its hidden position from all walking routes.

Exposure

Exposure to monument and shrines was explored to investigate whether it influences people's cognition of those buildings. *Sudun*, *Jaliq*, and *Sheikh al-Barzi* all lie on main streets while *al-Sultaniyya*, *Sidi Mansour al-Baz*, and *Sidi Ibrahim* are completely hidden which necessitates some guidance in order to reach them. The frequency of seeing the former set may nurture fertile imagination. *Sheikh Rihan* would be an exception because it is not directly located on the main street, but we were told that before the current *toraby* control over the territory, youth used to play football in front of it, which implies its accessibility in the past to the public and therefore had more exposure.

Respondents were asked about the frequency of visiting the buildings; I visit this place periodically/I do not visit this place at all. The respondents objected to the term 'visit' because they never go for a certain building driven by the motive of 'visiting' it, they changed the question from 'visit' to 'pass by' meaning passing in front of the building on their way to

and from work, home, market, or school. This modification in the question also reveals the most used routes they take and landmarks they cognize in their daily life. The highest rank in building exposure (i.e. passed by monument/shrine) was *al-Mesabih* mosque (60%). Many pass by its strategic location on *Salah Salem* road, whenever they cross over into the city or take public transportation outside the area. It lies in front of the main bus station; it is where they cross the road to the *mansheyya* market and to schools. The group of monuments located on *al-Qarafa al-Kobra* street comes next; *Jaliq*, the *Southern Minaret* (46.7%), *Sudun* and *Sawabi* (33.3%), *al-Qarafi* (26.7%). The least rating of *al-Qarafi* maybe because it is not so “eye catching” from *al-Qarafa al-Kobra*, it is accessed back from the main street, and it is smaller. Many residents who use it as a landmark when describing their address to customers or new comers, on the other hand mention the Southern Minaret; they say, “The tallest minaret when you are standing in *al-Qarafa al-Kobra*”. What is interesting is the comparison between *Sudun*, *Sawabi* and *Jaliq*. These monuments lie right in front of each other. Although *Sudun* and *Sawabi* are much bigger than *Jaliq*, *Jaliq* stands out almost in the middle of the street which makes it more noticeable than the other two.

Regarding the shrines, exposure to *Sheikh al-Barzi* was 26.7%. It is the only shrine with visual exposure to a commonly used route; the *Autostrade*. If compared with the previously mentioned list, it ranks relatively lower. The *Autostrade* is a dangerous highway especially for pedestrians, people would avoid walking there as much as possible, but it is the only way heading to the *Abageyya* district, so it is seen on the way there. This may also imply that the cemetery community dependence on services located in *al-Qal'a* is more than on services in the *Abageyya*.

In conclusion, it is deduced that cognition of monuments and shrines among the cemetery community depends on a combination of spatial, personal and behavioral factors such as monument proximity to their home/work location, birthplace, exposure from lying on work route or market route, or attachment to childhood memories. The sample size does not allow measuring the effect of the different factors, but rather serves to identify those influencing factors; the results are simply indicative. Further research is needed to pursue such patterns of influence.

How Much People Know About Monuments and Shrines

This part of the investigation aimed at exploring how much the cemetery community knew about the monuments and shrines in their area. According to the cemetery community, in the past, the case study cemetery was called *hosh Qusun* later changed into the cemetery of *Sidi Gala al-Dinl (al-Suyuti)* when the shrine of *Sidi Galal al-Din (al-Suyuti)* was built in the

cemetery. The cemetery was a historical *Mamluk* owned area; they built monuments that fell into ruins later on and was replaced by the existing cemetery.

A quantitative scale measure was applied to specify the buildings people knew most about; I am knowledgeable about this place/I do not know anything at all about this place. Results of this question indicated that people knew very little about the monuments; at least this was what they thought. For example, no one reported knowing anything at all about *al-Sultaniyya*, followed by *Qusun*. Only a few respondents said they are knowledgeable about *Sudun* and *Jaliq*. However, the results of the unstructured interviews with the same respondents revealed that while the resident community considers historic facts to be the 'knowledge' they admit they lack, many among them had another kind of 'knowledge' which was actually tales associated to the monuments. As an example, the tale of *Jaliq* about a hidden treasure that would only appear if the rooster that will appear standing on the monument is caught was well known by most respondents. They also say there is a dagger in it that drags people deeper inside because whenever someone tries to catch it, it moves away. A former *toraby* of *Sa'doun* family (Farag Sa'doun) is said to have entered it. People also claim the presence of a tunnel that starts from *Sudun* and passes by *Jaliq* leading to the citadel. In the case of *Sudun*, their knowledge concerns the descendants of this family who still visit the cemetery and used to bury their dead inside the monument until it was prohibited by the SCA where they were compensated two graves in the open graveyard in front of it.

The same applies to shrines, where the few who claimed knowledge about *Sheikh Rihan* and *Sheikh al-Barzi*, it was mainly knowledge about their good deeds (mentioned in previous section Dealing with 'Visitors'). In the case of *Sheikh Abata* shrine, which no one claimed knowledge about, the majority of respondents reported that he was nothing but an ordinary train driver who lived in *Bab-al-Bahr* street near *Ramsis* square. Others said he was originally from *Boulaq*, and his grave was later thought to be a shrine extracting its name from the fact that he was an idiot; *abeet*. They think that some people invented the story of his reverence in order to celebrate his *moulid*. They reported the *Sheikh Abata's moulid* attracted a group of people who in fact commit illicit actions during this festivity to the extent that residents informed the police and now this *moulid* no longer take place. They justify their claim by the fact that his body is decaying unlike revered religious figures whose bodies they believe do not decompose. A *toraby* said, "I once attended a burial in his grave; his body was only bones covered with gravel".

Similarly, the shrine of *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)*, which also rated 0% regarding knowledge about it, it was known to the community in the sense that the cemetery was named after him and that he was a great Islamic thinker and writer. They also say that he is not buried inside the cemetery; but that he is buried in *Assuit*, which is named after him.

In-depth interviews revealed additional resident community knowledge of the cemetery and a few monuments. People say that the whole cemetery extends from *al-Imam al-Shafie* till the citadel. In the past, the deceased from the jail of the citadel were buried inside the monuments of the case study cemetery. Some residents expressed how strong and beautiful the monuments are; they said; “these monuments seem to be ancient and precious and rare, they are either domes or minarets,” “the last earthquake could not affect any of these monuments, they are built on strong foundations,” “having such architecture of domes and minarets during that old period of time is rare because people had no schools of architecture then even though they were able to produce such unique architecture, no consultant or architect can built something like that now”.

Several stories were told about the monuments. They said that a well exists beside *Jaliq* and that people thought that it belonged to the British but later on it was discovered that it belonged to the Pharaohs. A resident said, “Prince *Jaliq* used to ride his horse here, and that this area was a desert then. They built him this shade (the monument) to rest under it and to have a lookout at the wide space in front”. Some said that *al-Sultan Hassan* had too many domes that he “lent” his mother one creating the double domed monument of *al-Sultaniyya*. The Supreme Council of Antiquities representatives call its minaret “the minaret of *Abu-Sibha*,” and it holds the number 2. They say there is another nearby minaret, which belongs to one of the *Mamluks*, and that this *Mamluk* owns a dome that is set on edges. Four or five ahwash separate his minaret from his dome. They know from the Supreme Council of Antiquities inspector that a fence once encompassed the minaret and the dome, but it deteriorated over time.

A resident mentioned old attempts by a lady architect regarding one of the domes. He said, “There was a grave under the dome in the time of the French invasion. From the inside, it was built with rose stone, then there was a stone door where the family was buried. The burial space of this grave looked like a mosque and not a grave”.

Al-Mesabih; residents say that in the past the area was officially called *al-Meseheyya* now it changed to *al-Mesabih*. This is evident in their ID cards. A resident was concerned about those who are still using the former version of IDs, i.e. registered as *al-Meseheyya* resident which, in fact, does not exist anymore. Different stories were told about the origin of the name and its transformation; some said that a Christian woman rehabilitated the mosque; others thought that the owner of the mosque must have been a Christian who converted to Islam the various explanations reveal the keenness of the community to guess what was the reason behind such a transformation. Some did not believe that the mosque used to be called ‘the mosque of *Meseeh Pasha*’. They denied any relation between the former and recent name of the area and the name of the mosque. They mix between the religious (Islamic) identity of the mosque and the

meaning of the word *meseheyya*; which means Christian. Some residents also denied any relation between the name of the area or the mosque *al-Mesabih* and the *Abu-Sibha* family.

PERCEIVED SIGNIFICANCE TO OUTSIDERS

Significance of monuments and shrines was explored through an open question where each respondent was asked to rank three monuments and three shrines according to their importance to outsiders. In the case of shrines, the measure of importance seemed to be related to the ability to attract outsiders, which resulted in *Sheikh Abata* ranking highest, followed by the shrine of *Sheikh al-Barzi* which also has its *moulid* event. *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)* shrine and *Sheikh Rihan* come in third place; they too attract foreign visitors.

In the case of monuments, half the sample indicated the insignificance of any of the monuments to outsiders (see Fig (8)), especially those inside the cemetery; “those buildings are nothing but graves”. The respondents thoughts that there are more important monuments and shrines more than theirs, except for *al-Mesabih* mosque. It is worth mentioning that all who adopted this opinion are *torabeyya* or *torabeyya* family members. It maybe similar to the case of shrines that the number of outside visitors is perceived as a measure of importance; hardly any visitors come to see those monuments. The other half of the sample chose according to size or beauty of the building which gave *Sudun* the highest rank (see Fig (10)).

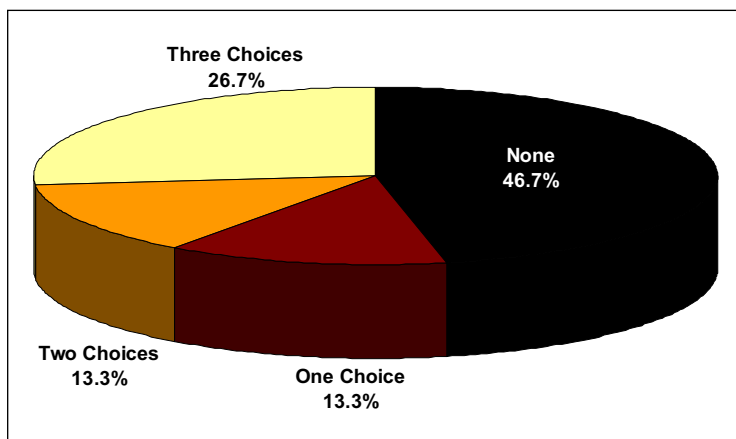


Fig (8). Perceived monument significance.

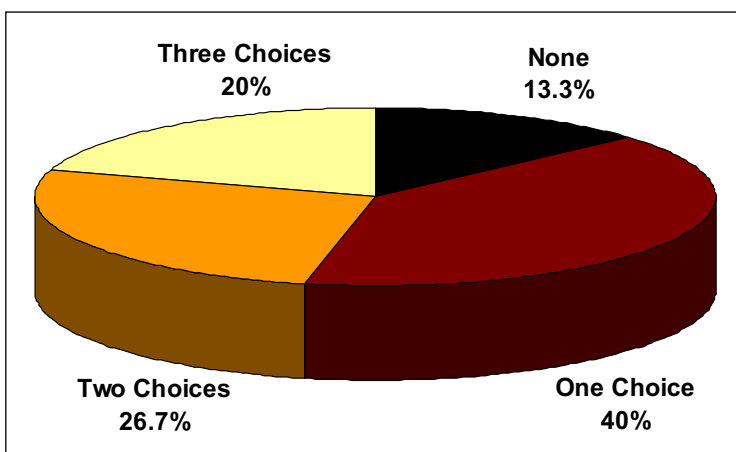


Fig (9). Perceived shrine significance.

Respondents showed great interest in the questionnaire; they were curious to know about the monuments they consider their own. They enjoyed seeing the photos; they exclaimed “Is that how these buildings look from a distance?” *Torabeyya*, in particular, showed a thirst to know about the historic significance of the monuments; as if what adds value to their locality and territory of control immediately reflects on their person, and adds “value” to them. It maybe that owning something of significance increased their self-esteem. They seemed pleased to hear it from outsiders because not so many individuals of credible opinion like tourists, scholars, scientists show real interest in anything they have or do; in their entire existence. During the interview with one *torabeyya* (Samia Beliha), she had to go meet a customer, when she came back she said that she went to have a look at the Southern Minaret which we were talking about. She was so enthusiastic; she even said that she will seek the permission from (Om Hany) to enter her territory and visit the shrine of *Sheikh Rihan* because she heard a lot about it but did not see it closely.

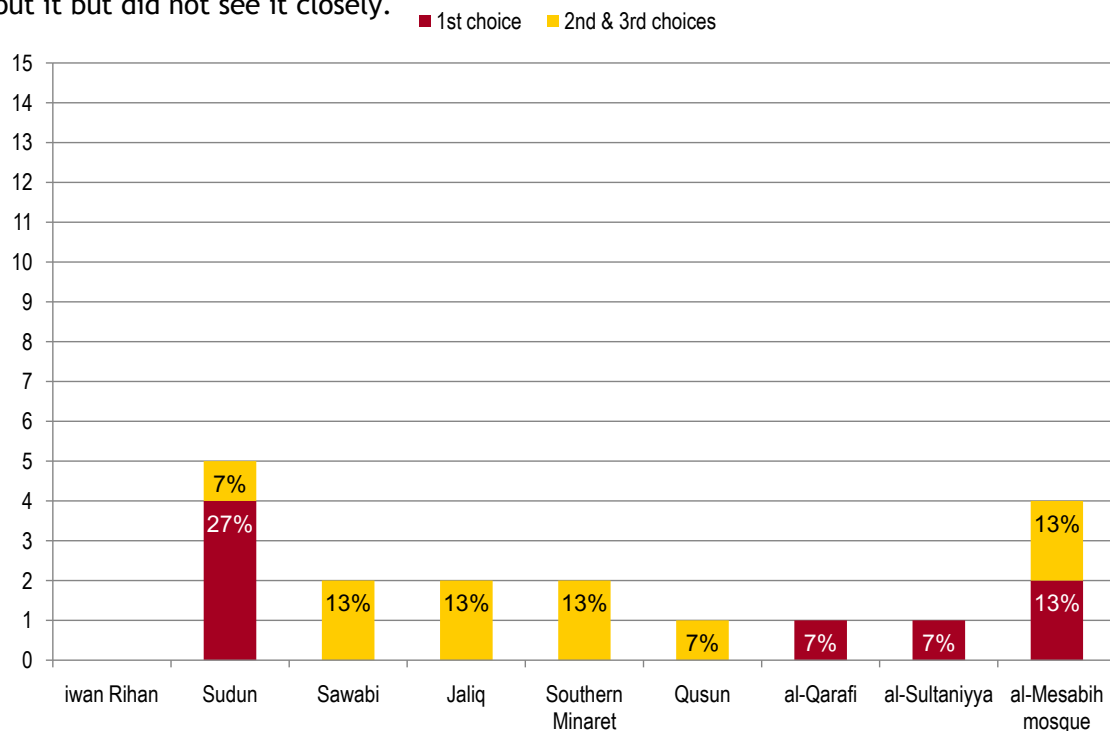


FIG (10). Comparative graph showing community's most significant monuments.

The comparison between shrines reflects very clearly the criteria respondents used to answer this ranking question; the amount of outsiders seen visiting the shrine.

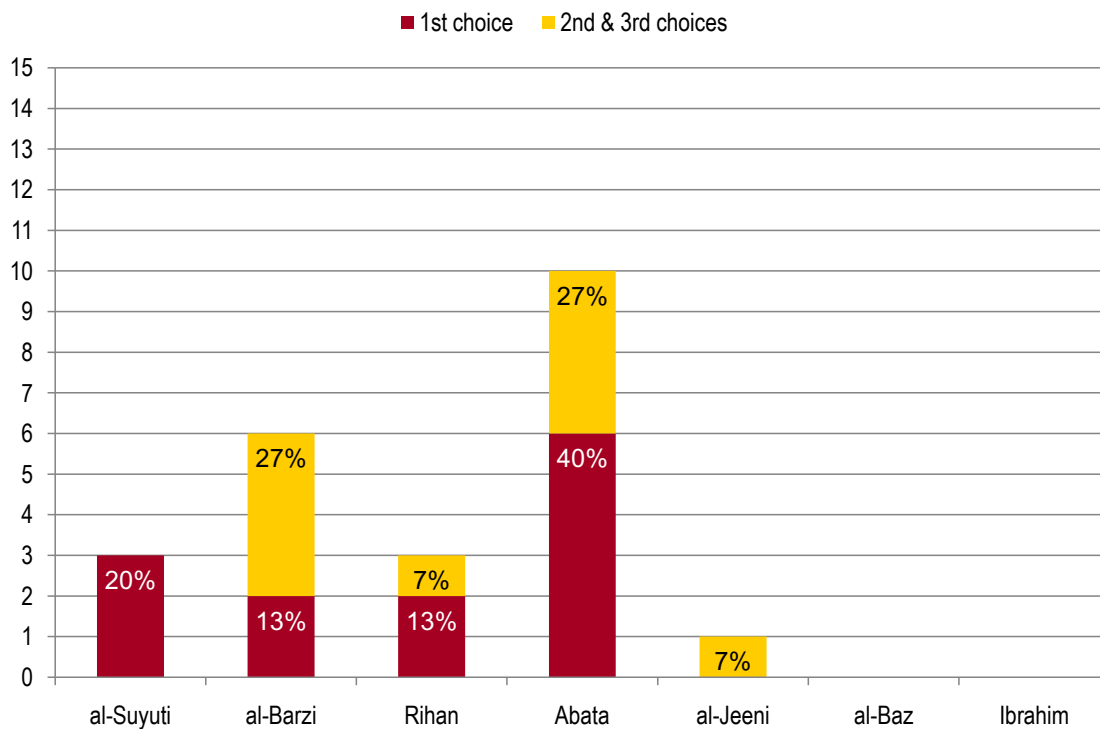


FIG (11). Comparative graph showing community's most significant shrines.

The following section on place attachment reveals that these same buildings have more value to the cemetery community than what they believe outsiders see in them.

PLACE ATTACHMENT

A third dimension to the "sense of place" is the effective dimension, also termed 'place attachment'. Several questions were designed to capture the emotional attachment to monuments and shrines; what the different groups within the cemetery community felt towards them. Complementary to how much people know about monuments, which was discussed in the previous section, and how significant they think these buildings are to others, this section explores each individual's feelings towards each monument and shrine.

The results show some patterns of variation so that certain monuments are dearer than others. They also show people's "perceived sense of ownership" towards these monuments and shrines. Together with the results discussed in the earlier section, one can draw a comprehensive picture of the cemetery's community CLAIM on those buildings; the cognitive, behavioral and emotional claim that ties these residents to those forgotten remnants of the past.

Attachment to the Monuments and Shrines

Place attachment to each monument and shrine was measured by a group of questions using again the likert scale between two opposite semantic differential poles. Responses to those questions were compiled and an average score for place attachment was calculated and tabulated for each building (see Annex 4). The advantage of using six indicators of attachment (apparently repetitive) is to increase the possibility that some of them would capture the person's feelings towards the building. Indeed, there were one or two respondents who would give the same answer to one indicator across all monuments or all shrines. The results concerning exposure to each building is repeated to explore whether familiarity with the building (due to frequent exposure) has a strong association with place attachment. Further research is needed to rate all factors that influence people's emotional attachment to the buildings.

al-Qarafi

Findings reveal that on average around 65% of the respondents feel no attachment to *al-Qarafi*, while 23% ensured strong emotional attachment to it. The main reason expressed by the latter was childhood memories, "عشان كنا بنلعب مع العيال وراها". Respondents expressed different forms of attachment and said it is one of the monuments they will not be able to live without. "دي حاجات" "اخذت عليها من وانا صغيره". Also, they have a high sense of ownership towards it as well as happiness upon seeing it. There are also sad feelings attached to *al-Qarafi*. A *toraby* wife said this is because "in the past, they used to hang those people sentenced to death here, then bury them underneath" "المكان ده كانوا بيشفقوا عليه المحكوم عليهم بالاعدام ويدفنوهم تحته". Those who had positive feelings of attachment to this monument were those living around it and from the *toraby* family in control of it. Only 50% of the respondents admitted to passing by *al-Qarafi* on regular basis, as it is on the main thorough fare, *al-Qarafa al-Kobra* street.

No religious significance was reported by the sample. Its value is summarized in the habit of having it around and some childhood memories of playing around it. The *toraby* in charge of *al-Qarafi* (not included in the questionnaire) expressed very strong attachment to the monument and kept on repeating that he owns this monument; and explained how it fills him with peace just to sit beside it or inside it. He even suggested during the study to hold the meeting with other *torabeyya* inside *al-Qarafi* emphasizing his control over such a worthy place to hold such an important event.

Qusun

The majority of respondents do not feel any attachment towards *Qusun*; on average 82% of respondents said they do not miss it and do not feel it is special to them, as well as perceiving other monuments as more important to them. Those who expressed positive emotional

attachment to *Qusun*, expressed the same feelings regarding the rest of monuments in the case study cemetery. As for its exposure, only one respondent admits to passing by the monument regularly while 33% report that they pass by it off and on.

Sudun

Sudun is one of the monuments that ranked highest in “place attachment” measures. Around 50% of the respondents expressed different forms of strong emotional attachment to *Sudun*. 47% of respondents feel happiness being around it, and 47% of respondents reported how special *Sudun* is to them. These respondents are mostly residents living around it, or residents who pass by it, or *torabeyya* who control zones beside it.

Those who felt emotional attachment to *Sudun* did not mention childhood memories of playing in its vicinity such as the case with *al-Qarafi* except for one outsider who entered the cemetery as a youngster mainly to play. Physical proximity of dwelling seems to be strongly associated with positive feelings of attachment in this case, although same as *al-Qarafi*, 53% reported not passing by it at all. Also, *Sudun* was singled out as having a high aesthetic value. "لأنه تحفة معمارية" "صعب تنفذ في الوقت الحاضر".

All respondents perceived no religious significance associated to this monument, except for one respondent who pointed out the *Qura'nic* verses written on its walls. "عليه كتابات اسلاميه وقران".

Most insiders born in the cemetery, expressed strong emotional attachment to this monument which was explained by its unique architecture and central location which increases its cognition. Mostly, those who had no attachment to *Sudun* were peripheral dwellers and those who moved to the cemetery by marriage.

Sawabi

Attachment to *Sawabi* is similar to that of *Sudun* or maybe a little bit less. The juxtaposition of the two monuments was dominant in this respect. But, the difference in their volume seems to have settled this argument for the benefit of *Sudun* which is obviously bigger than *Sawabi*. Despite, the various childhood memories of play and feast celebrations mentioned in relation to the pit around *Sawabi*. It was not enough to strengthen the attachment to the monument compared to its bigger neighbor *Sudun*.

No religious significance of *Sawabi* was reported except by only one respondent who said it looked Islamic.

Jaliq

While approximately 61% of respondents reported NOT being attached to *Jaliq*, around 30% of the respondents expressed strong attachment to this quaint monument. Some respondents, especially those living around *Jaliq*, had a high sense of attachment to it. Like all other monuments it is not perceived to have any religious value, except again for the aesthetic value of the Islamic style, as expressed by a resident living in front of it. "عشان الشكل الاسلامي".

74% of respondents pass by *Jaliq* (regularly or on and off) because it is located on *al-Qarafa al-Kobra*, making it the most cognized monument along this route.

Southern Minaret

The *Southern Minaret* is another monument that scored high in emotional attachment (53% of respondents reported they would miss it if they do not see it for a while to the extent that it would sadden them). What is special about it is that it is equally important for insiders as well as those living outside the cemetery because of its high visibility and value as a landmark. An outside resident said he will miss the Southern Minaret more than any other monument found in the case study cemetery, he said, "once I see this Minaret, I know I have reached home" "عشان جنبني واول ما اشوفها اعرف حتتي".

The aesthetic value of the minaret was perceived by other respondents as well and has been discussed in the previous section of cognition by architectural element. Some respondents (33%) expressed their happiness when being around it. A *toraby*, interested in architecture, said that the Southern Minaret is architecturally invaluable تحفة معمارية.

A slight religious value was attached to this monument where respondents explained that a minaret reminds one of a mosque and the call for prayers "*Athaan*".

It has high exposure confirmed by 67% of respondents which is highest among the monuments along *al-Qarafa al-Kobra* path.

al-Mesabih Mosque

More than 50% of respondents felt strong emotional attachment to *al-Mesabih* mosque; 60% said they cannot live in the area without it and 53% said they feel they own it. It is noteworthy to point out that respondents who expressed sadness for not visiting the mosque were all females (47% of respondents), and the majority of them are residents of the cemetery.

It is the monument perceived to have the highest religious value. Only 20% did not perceive it as having high religious significance; were all men including two *torabeyya*.

It is also perceived to have high exposure as 73% of the respondents reported passing by it.

It is deduced that the strong attachment towards *al-Mesabih* mosque is due to its religious significance. This attachment was stronger with residents who are neither working *torabeyya* nor members of *torabeyya* families.

al-Sultaniyya

The monument known as *al-Sultaniyya*, or *Om al-Sultan* was the least one respondents were attached to. On average, 76% expressed absolutely no attachment to *al-Sultaniyya*. The very few who expressed their attachment to this monument, expressed the same feelings towards the rest of the monuments and did not differentiate between *al-Sultaniyya* and any other monument. One resident said that not visiting *al-Sultaniyya* saddens her. She explained that it invokes memories of her passing by it with her mother who is deceased now. "عشان كنت بعدي عليها مع والدتي الله يرحمها"

Once again, no religious significance was attached to this monument. Only one respondent associated religious significance to the form of domes, he also made the same association to the majority of monuments.

It is also a monument that not many people pass by about 60% of respondents reported never to pass by it.

Iwan Rihan

Only 18% on average have strong emotional attachment to *iwan Rihan*, mostly the *torabeyya* its controlling family and people living around it who had childhood memories attached to it. The private location this monument enjoys had the upper hand in shaping residents' feelings towards it. The portion of the community who have strong emotional attachment to *iwan Rihan* are those who pass by it. Others in the community are unaware of it.

A resident explained how special *iwan Rihan* is to him despite the fact that he did not believe there was really a "Sheikh" buried there. Residents living right beside this monument said that the monument is correctly known as *iwan Rihan* while the shrine belonged to *sidi Azzam* and not *Sheikh Rihan* as everyone else claimed.

37% of respondents reported a high sense of attachment (sense of ownership and inability to live without it) towards *iwan Rihan*. However, these respondents expressed similar affective responses towards all the monuments found in the case study cemetery.

Comparing the monuments:

A ranking question reveals the relative status of monuments concerning respondents' affective response to them. Each resident was asked to rank the three monuments he/she likes most in

the study area. As shown in Fig (12), *Sudun* was ranked first by 33% of the respondents followed by al-Mesabih mosque and the Southern Minaret. The Southern Minaret should also be singled out as the monument that scored highest among the three most significant monuments by the majority of the sample (a total of 53%).

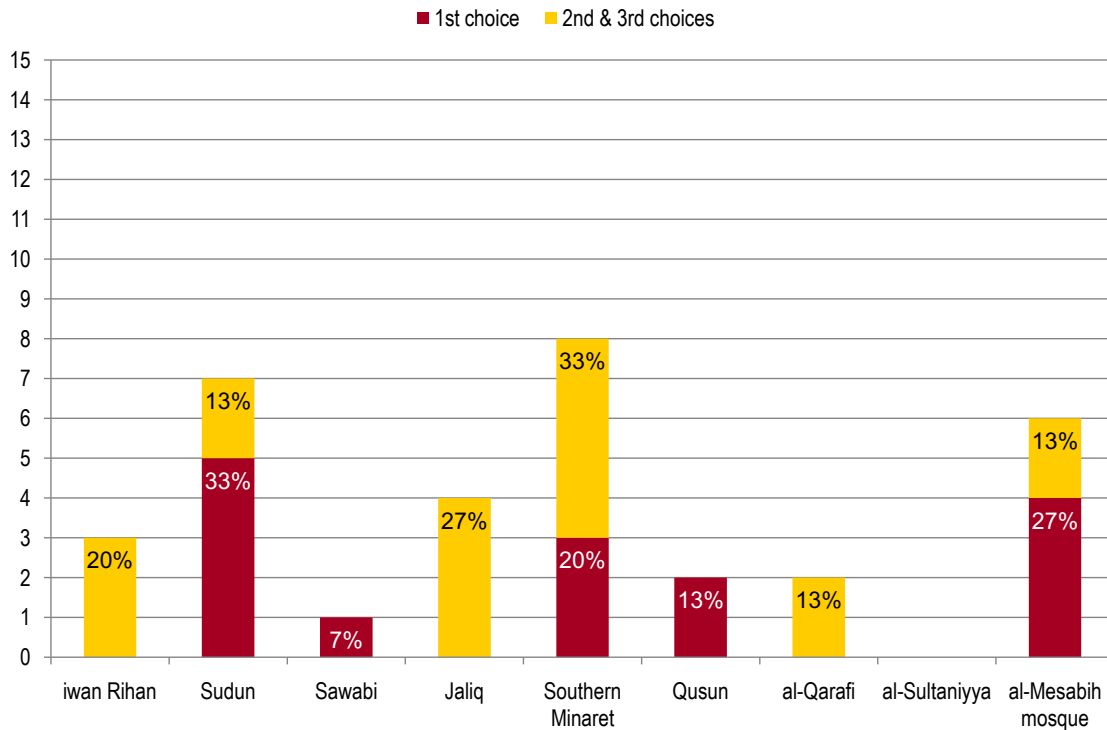


FIG (12). Comparative graph showing community's most favorite monuments.

The shrine of Rihan

Similar to the case of *iwan Rihan*, only 13% pass by the shrine of *Sheikh Rihan* because of its sheltered location. Residents living around it and the *toraby* family controlling it or controlling a neighbouring territory were strongly attached to it. On average, 25% of respondents had strong emotional attachment to the shrine of *Sheikh Rihan*. It attracted more neighbours than *iwan Rihan* which may indicate higher emotional significance of shrines than monuments or it may only be because of the good deeds this shrine has been famous for (curing helpless children) or it may simply be due to childhood memories and exposure and the belief in its owner's religious rank.

Only one respondent thought it is of religious significance because it belongs to a man who taught Islamic religion. "ده شيخ كان بيديرس دين اسلامي".

The shrine of *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)*

No strong emotional attachment to the shrine of *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)* was reported by the sample. Similar to *Sheikh Rihan*, the religious significance of this shrine depended on the

identity of its owner; one respondent reported that this shrine is of high religious significance because *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)* wrote books in science and books. "اصلہ راجل عامل كتب في العلم والدين".

Only 20% of respondents reported attachment to this shrine (those respondents expressed the same for the rest of the monuments and shrines in the area). One respondent said he had childhood memories there.

Although 40% of respondents pass by this shrine (regularly and on and off), this did not seem to nurture emotional attachment.

Residents among the *ahaly* living behind *al-Mesabih* mosque reported substantial feelings toward this shrine, felt so happy for being around it. A respondent commented that their kids used to play beside it a lot, "كل ولادنا ياما لعبوا جنب سيدي جلال".

The fact that the cemetery is named after the owner of this shrine initiated feelings of pride. That was expressed by a respondent to the extent that she cannot live in the area without it, she said, "because our home and cemetery is named after him". "عشان بيتنا والمنطقه باسمه". they sometimes refer to their home as the one near the shrine of *Sidi Galal (al-Suyuti)* "اللي عند سيدي جلال".

The shrine of *Sheikh al-Barzi*

Although, attachment to the shrine of *Sheikh al-Barzi* did not exceed 27% on average, but it is the only shrine that was associated with feelings of relief and "kindness" to people around. Regarding exposure 53% reported passing by it, even though, individuals from all over the case study cemetery reported attachment to it for different reasons. A woman sought it when she was pregnant. Another felt happiness because he had *karamat*, "عشان له كرامات" and "بحس فيه براحه". One thought it had high religious significance, he says this *sheikh* has something from God in him... "عشان فيه حاجه لله".

It is noteworthy to mention that all reported attachment were expressed by female respondents. Only one male respondent liked it because he participated in building its fence.

The shrine of *Sidi Abdel'al (al-Jeeni)*

The community of the case study cemetery felt very low emotional attachment to the shrine of *Sidi Abdel'al (al-Jeeni)*.

Only the respondent who is a member of the *toraby* family controlling this shrine expressed positive feelings towards it. She explained it by her childhood playing memories, and the frequent passing by (it is adjacent to her grandmother's *hosh*).

The two respondents who expressed their sense of ownership and inability to live in the cemetery without it said the same about every other investigated monument and shrine. Similarly, two respondents (13%) felt unhappy for being at the shrine of *Sidi Abdel'al (al-Jeeni)* as they felt toward the rest of shrines.

The shrine of *Sidi Ibrahim*

No special emotional attachment was reported in association to this shrine. Residents do not pass by it. Those who do not want to lose felt the same towards the rest of monuments and shrines, as well as those who felt sadness for being around it, expressed the same feeling towards the rest of the monuments.

The shrine of *Sidi Mansour al-Baz*

Similar to the case of the shrine of *Sidi Ibrahim*, no special emotional attachment was reported for this shrine. Only one respondent felt all positive feelings towards this shrine including a high religious significance without justifying this feeling.

Although the shrine of *Sidi Mansour al-Baz* lies beside the *Sook-al-Hamam* entrance, which is widely used by the case study community, 87% of the respondents reported NOT passing by it at all which may indicate that the community is not really aware of its existence.

The shrine of *Sheikh Abata*

The shrine of *Sheikh Abata* has no significant emotional attachment reported by the sample. Even its *moulid* festivity that used to be held till 3-4 years ago could not help in building strong emotional attachment to it.

Only two respondents reported positive feelings; one because of childhood memories and the other because of stories told by her husband about the shrine.

Comparing the Shrines:

A ranking question reveals the relative status of shrines concerning respondents' affective response to them. Each resident was asked to rank the three shrines he/she likes most in the study area. The shrine of *Galal al-Din (al-Suyuti)* ranked highest as the residents' first favorite shrine (27%), whereas the shrine of *Sheikh Abata* ranked highest as among the three most favorite shrines. The score given to the shrine of *Sheikh Rihan* does not reflect the amount of interest and enthusiasm expressed by the respondents regarding his good deeds.

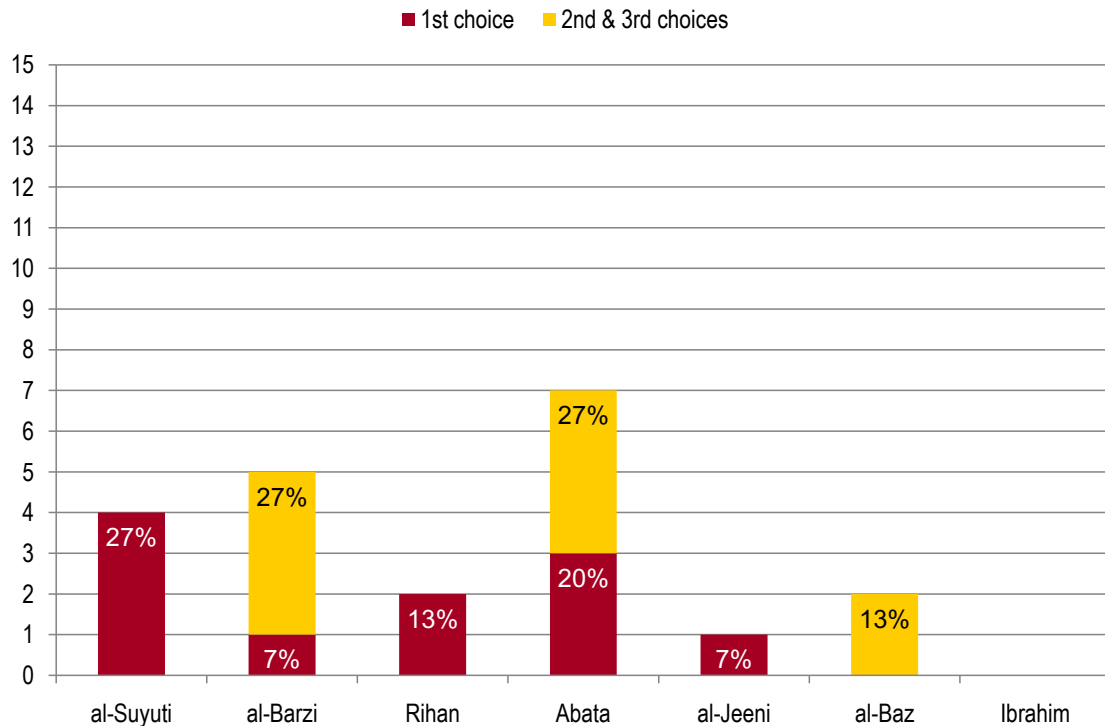


FIG (13). Comparative graph showing community's most favorite shrines.

The measure of results of not missing any of the monuments and shrines was contradicted by the respondents by their reply to "I can't live in the cemetery without this building". Enthusiasm was expressed; higher place attachment to ALL the monuments and shrines was revealed than that reported earlier. From the previous comparison, it is deduced that people are substantially attached to all monuments and shrines in the case study cemetery, regardless of their importance to outsiders or identity or any other practical motive. They are simply attached to them, but they vary in their awareness of this attachment; they recognize more their attachment to *Sudun*, *Jaliq* and the *Southern Minaret*, which justifies the equal ratings they all had on both questions, while the rest of buildings have hidden appreciation that people are not really aware of, they claim they slightly miss them but reluctance becomes so obvious when it comes to the physical disappearance of these buildings.

The inconsistency between ratings is more obvious in the case of shrines more than monuments; people felt attached to shrines they had rated as having 0% significance, an explanation maybe the 'sense of ownership' they feel towards them. A general high sense of ownership prevents people from letting what they have despite its perceived value. When they were asked; I feel I'm the owner of this place/this building means nothing to me. Their responses fluctuated along the whole scale (1-5); as if they couldn't really tell whether they feel like owners of these monuments and shrines or not, at least this question proves that they do not have a clear well-defined vision describing their emotional state.

Future Vision

A question was included at the end of the questionnaire exploring different actions to be taken towards the monuments in the area. All residents refused the choice of leaving them as they are, prone to deterioration. Even the *toraby* who claimed that monuments were a 'thorn in the throat' hindering the expansion of his business on their sites, chose to keep the monuments surrounding his zone of control. Although only a few expressed their appreciation of their architecture, most respondents encouraged some positive action towards maintaining them and improving their current condition.

Many among the respondents chose "rehabilitation and usage" and the rest chose "cleaning and lighting". The necessity to at least clean them and light the monuments was clear regarding all the monuments except al-Misabeh mosque. This is because al-Misabeh was recently renovated.

A general concern from the community about the monuments was sensed every now and then during the interviews with the community, they said, "Using the monuments will harm them," "شالوق منفعه وقتت" "Jaliq is already used to shelter people when it rains" "في حال استخدام الأثار "حتبوز" المطر... "الناس تداري تحتيه". Cleaning the spaces surrounding the monuments was requested by a lot of respondents. They were also concerned about 'Jaliq' they say every year part of its columns sunk more into the ground (several mention that part of *al-Qarafa al-Kobra* street had repeatedly sunken a few centimeters. Some suggested that the SCA should put up signs on each monument stating its name and history.

Neither monuments nor shrines are considered a source of income to the *toraby* organization. They unanimously agreed upon this opinion. It was different in the case of shrines. Some of them still attract some visitors and they may still hold remnants of what 'used-to-be'; mouldid festivities that attracted visitors into the cemetery, consequently, resulting in profit.

The responses of the case study cemetery community differed widely regarding the cemetery as a 'touristic' area. Some thought that whatever improvements made to buildings here, it will never be a touristic place because, in the end, the buildings are graves more than they are monuments. We have a few monuments that attract a few tourists and the business is not supported by any commercial activity.

Two years ago, the SCA rehabilitated some monuments and added lighting to them, but these fixtures deteriorated with time due to lack of maintenance. Many residents expressed how beautiful the cemetery was then with all the lit up monuments. They do not believe that anyone from the community resented this condition or contributed to its decline.

Attachment to the Cemetery

Although the general qualitative results of attachment towards monuments and shrines tends to be low side (below 50%), the qualitative data showed much higher levels of attachment. Respondents overtly expressed strong attachment to the cemetery as a whole and the people living in it. Only two respondents denied their attachment to the cemetery; one of them was neutral, neither attached nor detached. This strong feeling of attachment to the cemetery and the community within it can be explained by the particularities of the setting and daily life within it. Even those who had shown resentment like the young men and women from *toraby* families, they still admitted strong emotional attachment to the place and suffered when they tried living away from it. Emotional attachment is a different dimension than rational assessment of quality. Yet, even that had yielded some surprisingly positive responses. When respondents were asked 'do you agree that the cemetery is an ideal place to live in?' one third thought it was not ideal; and the last third could not make up their mind. A similar result was obtained regarding their assessment of living conditions, where only 25% of the sample perceived their living condition as unacceptable and would ...

The qualitative data help us better understand this complex situation of a community that has such a strong and unique binding feature; living and working with the dead.

The place also has unique characteristics and resembles no other place in the city. Familiarity with this place and relative exclusion of outsiders reinforces the "sense of place" harbored by the cemetery community.

Against the odds, these people feel a very strong claim towards this place. They guard it jealously for it contributed to their identity. The advantages and disadvantages of being associated to this setting are perceived, yet the advantages in most cases outweigh the disadvantages, especially for those living within it.

For those living on the periphery, it is a different matter. The attachment to the cemetery is a luxury; it's main perceived value being one of leisure, the free open space so near to home. It is a more dispensible kind of attachment, yet valued for the freedom it allows them to appropriate the space-in-between with no rivalry from the neighbors across the road.

In conclusion, one may confidently say that the community of the cemetery including those living at its periphery has significant claim on the cemetery of *Galal al-Din al-Suyuti* and the monuments within it. More importance is their propensity to participate in future plans for the area and its monuments. The *toraby* community and the charity-linked inhabitants are part of the heritage in the Islamic cemeteries of Cairo.

Overlooking the traditional role of the *toraby* and the charity dimension of cemetery dwellers will take away heritage value from this complex site. Disassociating them would be detracting from the value of those monuments and what they represent.

There are issues to be addressed and changes to be made but solutions should only be derived on a solid basis of understanding all tangible and intangible aspects of the cemetery and through working with the people living there.