

Ottoman views of Cairene cemeteries and funerals

As a specialist of death and cemeteries from a different (if somewhat comparable) cultural context, I am a “misfit” in this project with little to contribute to the central issue of the history of the cemetery under study. As an outsider I will therefore stick to my role, and look at Cairo and its cemeteries from outside, namely from Istanbul, through the use of Ottoman descriptions of the cemeteries of Cairo and of observations concerning funerary practices and culture.

The list of my sources is not exhaustive, but claims to be somewhat representative. As such, I have selected three Ottoman authors from Istanbul, practically the *only* three who have written on Cairo across a period of some three centuries: Mustafa Âli (1599), Evliya Çelebi (*ca* 1675) and Halid Ziyaeddin (1909), each reflecting their perception of what they considered to be different, strange, admirable, or reprehensible in Cairene cemeteries and funerals. Moreover, I have also made selections within the works of some of these authors, particularly Evliya Çelebi, whose prolific prose can sometimes get out of control and exceed any useful purpose. My selections were based on a number of simple criteria, whenever applicable: specific references to the “Suyuti” cemetery or more generally to the toponym of “Karafa”; specific mention of one or more of the individuals whose monument or grave is known to be in this cemetery; general descriptions of the physical outlook of Cairo cemeteries; general references to funerary practices among Egyptians; passages that suggest an interest of the author due to significant differences between their cultural environment — Istanbul, Rumelia, Anatolia — and that of Egypt at large and Cairo in particular.

The following pages will give a general assessment of my reading of the sources. It is followed by three appendices containing each a full-length transcription of the Ottoman text (in italics), and a full-length translation into English. Some words and expressions in the Ottoman text, which I have found to be potentially interesting from the perspective of a comparative terminology, have been maintained in the translated text, at least between brackets.

I. Mustafa Âli (1599):

Much in keeping with the age-old rhetoric of pros and cons, good and bad, Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli structures his description of Egypt on the binary opposition between the remarkable and the reprehensible. Death rituals and funerary practices thus fall into the category of an aspect of local life that can be viewed from both perspectives. Starting with the “remarkable and praiseworthy features of the Land of Egypt” the author reaches the seventh point where he mentions as a remarkable and praiseworthy custom the tendency of the locals to engage in frequent visits to the cemeteries:

And every Friday, starting at the time of the morning prayer a countless multitude of people, walking or riding, appearing in the direction of the cemeteries, take the road

toward Karafa. After having visited the graves of his sanctity the Imam Shafii — may God’s mercy be upon him! — and of Imam Abu’l-Laith they arrive at the grave of Sitt Nafisa — may God be pleased with her! When the women go to the graves of their relatives they always take some green plants and flowers along with them, they visit the tombs of the dead with fragrant herbs (*reyhan*). But the sheikhs go with banners and chanting litanies. They visit the graves and mausoleums which are considered to insure the acceptance of prayers with this crowd and then return after having implicitly recited this verse:

Having cast a glance at the tombs with an eagerly comprehending eye
Many of them were pressing their hearts with stones putting their face in the dust.

Two points seem to be worthy of notice in this short passage: the specific mention of Karafa as a toponym, obviously describing the vicinity of Imam Shafii, Sitti Nafisa and Abu’l-Laith, and the description of the funerary processions and practices, especially that of fragrant herbs being brought to the graveside, a fact observed also by Evliya Çelebi almost a century later.

However, visits and women were also listed among the “improper and blameworthy behavior and acts of the people of Egypt. Most prominently, he seems to have been shocked by the use of professional wailers, something that was absent from the Ottoman tradition, at least in Istanbul:

There are among the women special mourners. When there is a funeral, they are hired. It is quite a sight to see them all put black aprons over their heads and chant dirges, shedding false tears. Whoever hears their screams and lamentation thinks that each one of them is overcome by grief, sadness, and mourning.

One should remember that such wailing and signs of despair had been frequent in the early times of the Ottoman Empire (the funeral of Mehmed II in 1481 is a case in point), but that rising orthodoxy had somehow curbed this practice, at least in Istanbul. Mustafa Âli’s reaction has therefore probably to be perceived in this context of a certain degree of self-consciousness. Moreover, it is quite interesting that all this criticism of wailing, apparently absent from Evliya Çelebi’s narrative, will resurface in 1909 under the pen of a “modern” Ottoman. The context, however, will be slightly different as we will try to show.

A second complaint about improper behavior in Cairo cemeteries had to do with their being used as a place of prostitution:

On Fridays when people go to visit the graves of the dead that rest in Karafa and in particular the blessed graves of the Imam Abu’l-Laith, the Imam Shafii and of Sitt Nafisa, their women usually meet there with the soldiers (*jundis*) who are not afraid of a bullying strong-man. Those who found no opportunity or cannot afford making the preparations for intercourse at least [use this visit] at the sacred places for making the arrangements [for a rendez-vous]. Then they go to the usual places of sin and adultery. Although it is

the duty of the ruling governor to stop this, they won't do it. Even if this were brought to their attention, they would not listen with an ear of acceptance.

Considering that the association of cemeteries, or for that matter, any “gray” urban area, with prostitution, one can wonder to what extent this remark by Mustafa Âli is significant from the perspective of Cairene cemeteries and funerary practices. Moreover, rather than conveying any firsthand observation, he was probably relaying local hearsay. Nevertheless, I do think that his remarks should also be viewed in conjunction with Evliya Çelebi's remarks about the “independence” of women, who can go wherever they please, including cemeteries, without having to obtain permission from their husbands. There seems to be a gendered dimension of visits to the graves and cemeteries here, that seems to have been of significance to both these observers from the center of the Empire...

Finally, Mustafa Âli, who had praised so much the natural propensity of the inhabitants of Cairo to make frequent visits to the cemeteries and graves, nevertheless seemed to have some misgivings as to the appropriateness of the ways in which these visits and rituals were performed. In many ways, it seems that his reprehension stemmed mostly from basic differences between his own culture and whatever he witnessed in Cairo:

They do not carry their dead [to their graves] with the procedure and symbols that are customary in *Rum*. In their way it may not be easy to tell whether [the deceased] is a man or a woman. It is strange to see them walk in front [of the coffin] reciting now a litany of praise of God, now the formula of ritual worship, and behind [the coffin] the clamor and lamentations in the voices of the hired wailing women, and as soon as the funeral prayer is completed to see all the people that had come with [the procession] disperse, so that the corpse remains alone with a few close relatives, and is taken to be buried with only a few blind men stumbling after it up to the grave itself.

However, that depending on their fortune, one or two bulls are paraded in front of the funeral of certain rich people, and that behind them on covered trays bread and dates and a platter of salt are carried along up to the grave; that when the corpse is lowered into the grave the sacrificial animals are slaughtered, cut up and distributed to the poor together with the bread and salt that have been brought there on the trays; and that thereafter the dates, those God-made sweets, are also handed out to the poor and needy, — these are indeed reasonable acts.

In short, it seems that Mustafa Âli was particularly sensitive to the “disorderly” manner in which funerals were carried out in Egypt. The distinction of gender was well established in the Ottoman tradition, thanks mostly to the placing of headgear on the coffin during the funeral, which would then be carved out on the tombstone. It was therefore possible at first glance to tell whether the deceased was a man or a woman, from the start of the funeral down to the monuments in cemeteries. Documents from the period also show that Ottoman funerals were carried out in a relatively orderly way with the coffin always preceding the family, relatives and whoever was

participating. Finally, it was very much among the local practice that the whole ceremony was to be shared by as large a number of people, neighbors, passersby, and in fact, pretty much everybody on the path of the funeral. It seems that Mustafa Âli valued this communal sharing and did not find it to be a major feature of Cairene funerals. The second paragraph also describes practices and customs that were clearly not followed in Istanbul and the central lands; however, this time, instead of finding them reprehensible, he seems to find that they fulfilled a major social function, much in line with the Islamic discourse of solidarity and support.

II. Evliya Çelebi (ca 1675)

Writing almost a century after Mustafa Âli, the famous Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi, devoted a whole volume of his *Book of Travels* to Egypt (ca 1672-1680). Evliya Çelebi lived most of the last years of his life in Egypt, and as such, was very familiar with local customs and traditions. Then again, one should not forget that he was a ‘professional’ traveler with a taste for difference and a keen sense of observation. Therefore, despite any sense of familiarity he may have had with the local environment, Evliya Çelebi can be trusted to come up with some observations related to what he considers to be curious, interesting, remarkable or simply different from his still dominantly Istanbulite norms.

By any standard, Evliya Çelebi seems to have been a fervent admirer of Cairo and of its cemeteries. His general description of cemeteries funerary practices typically includes a wide array of information, from factual to anecdotal, and from anthropological to historical:

A praiseworthy feature of the people of Egypt is certainly also that on Friday nights hundreds of thousands of men and women riding donkeys will go to the twelve cemeteries (*karafe*) and, forming a human tide, visit them while reciting the Koran, the Yasin, and giving alms to the poor. And all their graves are basements built underground which they call *fiskiyye*, and each one of them is a place of storage. They [each] have a separate door. They are sealed with earth. They open them whenever needed for a burial. They bury [up to] one or two hundred corpses in one single *fiskiyye*, but they do not cover them with earth. They just place them there in their shrouds. Some rot away, some become skeletons. They then seal the entrance in Khorasan mortar and brickwork. For there are many shroud thieves in Egypt. During the times of Janpuladzade Hussein Pasha, they even impaled some of these thieves with the shrouds they had stolen around their necks on Rumeli Square for the betterment of the world. They inscribe in a sophisticated and decorated way the date on the tombstones. And they build rows of open domes. They pour water and wheat for the birds. And at the head of each grave they place roses and flowers and myrtle (*mersin*) and fragrant herbs (*reyhan*). And on those days, the women need not take permission from their husbands to go visit the Karafe and their husbands cannot ask them “Where have you been?” for this is how their marriage contract has been

established. The husbands in Egypt cannot ask “Where have you been” in other matters either, for the Saint of Egypt was so submitted to Zuleiha. Ever since those times, the husbands of Egypt are still subservient to their women. In short, this is the law of Egypt. Such care they show for the dead in the graves cannot be [seen] in other places.

This description, as we have suggested earlier, bears a number of similarities with the comments by his predecessor of about a century earlier, Mustafa Âli. The notion of praise — again this obsessive desire to bring a normative dichotomy to the description of the acts and customs of people — appears in very much the same manner as in Mustafa Âli’s admiration for the willingness of the inhabitants to visit the cemeteries in great numbers and on a regular basis. The fact that both these Ottoman authors concur on this point and are struck by the same weekly and massive ritual should probably be taken seriously, at least from the perspective of its implications about Ottoman funerary culture, where such ‘festivals of the dead’ were certainly infrequent, in fact totally absent.

Evliya Çelebi’s narrative is interesting from the perspective of its rather concrete references to some elements of the physical environment of the cemeteries in Cairo. First of all, it is interesting to note that contrary to Mustafa Âli who used the term *Karafa* with a specific reference to one particular cemetery of the city, Evliya Çelebi seems to use the word as a common and generic name, a synonym for cemetery. This appears to be the case when he refers to people visiting the “twelve *karafes*” of the city and, even more so, in the title of his sixty-third chapter, where he talks about the tombs (*makabir*) located in the cemeteries (*karafeler*) of Cairo. The explicit use of the plural in this formulation clearly indicates this understanding of the word, which may well have been derived from his familiarity with local practice and jargon.

Clearly the peculiarity of Cairene cemeteries which struck him most was the *howsh*, which he names *fiskiyye*. The word has only one meaning in Ottoman Turkish, that of a water spurt or spray, so I find it difficult to relate that to these funerary constructions. Typical of the author is his care to describe the uses to which these “funerary basements” are put, with possible exaggerations — 100-200 corpses per vault... — and, of course, a digression into the discussion of shroud thieves and their punishment. He also notes that bodies are thus not really buried, but just placed in these structures, which may be in contravention of the Islamic principles, especially from the perspective of Istanbul and Anatolia. Yet, he does not comment on that aspect of the question and moves on to his digression on the fate of thieves.

Interestingly also, following his discussion of what are evidently *howshes*, he suddenly describes tombstones and their inscriptions, finally leading to the description of the water and grains left for the birds and the plants surrounding the grave. Once again, as in Mustafa Âli, *reyhan* or fragrant herbs appear to be a standard feature of cemeteries and graves. What is strange, however, is that there is no reference to the possible differences between burial in *howshes*, obviously different from the ‘Turkish’ practice, and open-air graves with inscribed tombstones, much closer to Evliya’s cultural background...

Finally, as evoked earlier when dealing with Mustafa Âli's description, Evliya Çelebi has a long comment on the power relations between Egyptian men and women, triggered by his observation that women need not ask for permission to go to visit the cemeteries, and ending up with the general statement that women in Egypt are able to impose their will on men. What he may be referring to is unclear, but may be understandable to a specialist of seventeenth-century Egyptian society. At any rate it seems to me that there is something here that needs to be taken up in terms of a gendered discourse and, possibly, be considered together with Mustafa Âli's statements about the 'loose conduct' of women in cemeteries.

Other passages on death and cemeteries in Evliya Çelebi's narrative are much more laconic and fall into the category of 'landmarks' to be enumerated when describing a place, something that he did more or less systematically for every city or town he visited. Yet, what is striking in the case of Cairo, is that Evliya Çelebi seems to have been in awe of the amazing number of tombs honoring the great names of Islam, to which he devotes a full section of his volume. This is more than just an enumeration, it is almost an incantation, from the 17,000 companions of the Prophet allegedly buried in Mukattam down to the modest saintly figures he finds in practically every corner of the city. One senses a sort of jealousy, an implicit comparison with Istanbul, which is also a great city of the dead, with its large cemeteries lying outside the walls, an impressive number of smaller graveyards within the city, in quite different fashion from Cairo, and hundreds of imperial and other mausolea, which contrary to the Cairene example, are not located in the outer cemeteries but deeply embedded in the urban texture. So, if Cairo is a city of the dead, so is Istanbul; but the difference is not in numbers, but in quality: apart from a few 'invented' shrines, such as that of Eba Ayyub al-Ansari, Istanbul cemeteries lack the sanctity that accrues Cairo after centuries of Islamic culture. Visiting and naming the dead in Cairo sounds to his ear like reciting the history of Islam, while the same exercise in Istanbul would have to be almost secular, a list of great men who have served the Empire and with a background of a mere two centuries against the millennium of Cairo. Nowhere does Evliya Çelebi spell out this comparison, but I do think that this is one of the major underlying themes of his long description of the Islamic hagiography of Cairo.

As I said, this is something that spills over from the sixty-third chapter devoted to the *carafes* of the city, and one finds occasional references to tombs and mausolea throughout the text, depending on the topographical or historical twists of his narrative. Interestingly it is at such a juncture that the closest reference ever to 'our' cemetery is made in these Ottoman narratives: the point where he refers, in passing, to Suyuti and his works, locating approximately his tomb and indicating that it was already a target of veneration and pilgrimage.

A 'modern' Ottoman: Halid Ziyaeddin Bey (1909)

Our final observer, Halid Ziyaeddin, collected his impressions of Egypt during a visit made in 1909, only months after the Young Turk Revolution of July 1908. Not surprisingly, his observations are deeply influenced by a modernist discourse that turns him into a much harsher critic than his predecessors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ideally, one would have wanted to include one more author on the list, possibly from the mid-nineteenth century, so as to obtain a greater degree of continuity in the evolution of impressions and perceptions. Unfortunately I have not been able to locate such a 'missing link,' and we will therefore have to do with a sudden leap into a very different mental and cultural environment.

The most striking aspect of Halid Ziyaeddin's perception of Egypt is the influence one feels of a European discourse. In other words, while Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi spoke from the cultural distance imposed by their own background located in the lands of *Rum*, and, most particularly, Istanbul, they still functioned within an Islamic conception of the world according to which there were obvious (or rather taken for granted) commonalities between their world and the one they were observed. While some of this still remains in Halid Ziyaeddin's "Memories of Egypt" one feels that a lot of what he sees, says, and thinks is heavily influenced by western sources. Unfortunately, it may be difficult, even impossible to ascertain what these sources of information may have been, but for all practical purposes it is possible, even likely, that these were rather simple and superficial readings, perhaps even the current Baedeker or Murray's edition of a guidebook to Egypt.

Typical of this fact is that his attention is drawn by what he considers to be the influence of Ancient Egypt on local customs. What exactly he may have in mind is not clear; it may have been what Evliya Çelebi passed under silence, that is, the use of vaults where the shrouded corpses were deposited without being buried in earth. His general criticism, however, seems to focus, like Evliya Çelebi's, on the disorderly nature of funerals. One may wonder what this may have had in common with Egypt, or how Halid Ziyaeddin Bey may have come to the conclusion that there was some kind of a link to the Pharaonic past in this. Yet on the other hand, it is not difficult to guess that the observation of disorderliness may have been triggered by the fact that Ottoman funerals, especially under the influence of westernization and the introduction of parade-like elements into state and military funerals, had by then become quite 'orderly':

The funerals are carried out with invocations and prayers and sometimes with the reading out of a printed dirge; every funeral procession includes some form of a strange innovation inherited from the time of the ancient Egyptians.

Interestingly enough, much like Mustafa Âli over three centuries before him, Halid Ziyaeddin was highly critical of the custom of making use of professional wailing women, which he deemed incompatible with proper religious behavior:

Thus, according to the affluence of the deceased, every funeral procession is followed by a professional female mourner called "*nüddâbe*" and by all the women of the neighborhood, who show fake expressions of grief and sorrow. They join in heart-

rendering wails and cries that speak of the wisdom, capacity, compassion and wealth of men, of the virtues and beauties of women, and, whenever the deceased is young, they pronounce ornate sentences describing how he has not lived his life to the full, has not enjoyed the taste of this world, and has abandoned his family and children. Sometimes the sight of the closest relatives of the deceased mourning him by painting their faces black, by pretending to wipe their tears with handkerchiefs, by showing great agitation, and by tearing their clothing apart is not only incompatible with Islamic practice, but even with humanity.

It is interesting to note that this criticism from within Islam ends with a universalistic note. Rather typically for the period, Halid Ziyaeddin finds the use of the word humanity to be much stronger and legitimate than that of Islam. This is a way of putting things that echoes the modernist Ottoman discourse about civilization, the buzz word of the time.

What Halid Ziyaeddin Bey may not have been conscious of, is that the shock he felt at these vocal expressions of sorrow, was partly due to the fact that in his culture centered in Istanbul, such feelings and cries of grief had been transferred from funerals to tombstones and the Ottoman epitaph had become a very rich and talkative medium that replaced to a large extent the role of open lamentations in the public space.

The rather particular way in which Ottoman tombstones and cemeteries have developed in the nineteenth century is probably also one of the main causes behind Halid Ziyaeddin's rather negative appraisal of cemeteries in Cairo. This is especially true with respect to his understanding of the architectural worth of tombstones. As an inhabitant of Istanbul exposed to the ever-increasing monumentality of Ottoman tombstones, his assessment of the more modest nature of Cairene graves become understandable:

Architecturally speaking the cemeteries are of no interest, and while I have not been able to see any cornice, decoration, or cenotaph, in most cases the graves do not even have a tombstone. Only the powerful families have, in public cemeteries, private chambers, domed mausolea, or houses including several rooms above and below the ground. Because of these private tombs, a visitor unaware of local custom, could easily mistake these houses with graves in them for abandoned houses and neighborhoods.

The baroque and rococo follies of Istanbul cemeteries are almost nowhere to be seen in Cairo, nor are the most basic decorative form that cemeteries acquire with their multitude of ornate tombstones. Instead, he immediately notes the existence of *howshes*, which he identifies as a format reserved to the powerful, thus answering the question that Evliya Çelebi did not even ask. As to his remark about these cemeteries being like 'ghost towns,' it may well have been borrowed from his western readings.

Finally, his description of the major cemeteries of the city seems again to echo western guide books, especially when it comes to using such terms as *mekabir-i Khulefa ve Memalik*, a rather

typical transfer of the terms “Tombeaux des Califes” and “Tombeaux des Mamelouks” so frequently found in French-language guidebooks and postcards.

A final remark will have to do with the rather negative assessment he gives of the Khedivial burial grounds. More than a sense of scorn or rivalry from an Ottoman subject commenting on a former vassal, his remarks seem to have been inspired by an aesthetic comparison between the monumental and very visible mausolea of the Ottoman dynasty in Istanbul with these obviously less showy examples of funerary architecture. An interesting addendum to this discussion of Cairene cemeteries is his lament about the state of abandonment of the mausoleum of Sinan Pasha, depicted as a sort of ‘Turkish’ hero in the eyes of ‘patriots.’ This interesting passage is a perfect illustration of the gradual shift of the cult of the dead in the late Ottoman Empire, from a purely religious to a growingly militaristic and nationalist context:

The tomb of Sinan Pasha the martyr and conqueror of Egypt is in the cemetery lying to the north-east of the mosque of Timurtash in Abbasiye, but in a state of disrepair that saddens all patriots. Although some such people have requested and begged that a grand mausoleum be built at this place, unfortunately this plea has gone unheeded.

I. Mustafa Âli, 1599

*Fasl-ı Evvel ki Vilayet-i Mısırın halat-ı muhassenatı beyanındadır*¹

First Chapter, on the remarkable and praiseworthy features of the Land of Egypt²

[...]

Yedinci: Ve her Cum'a günü-ki vaki' olur sabah namazından başlayub halk-ı bi-şümar piyade vü süvar mezarata tođrı aşikar olub Karafeye tođrılırlar. Hazret-i İmam-ı Şafi'i 'aleyhi'r-rahmenin ve İmam Ebu'l-Leysin ziyaretinden sonra Sitti Nefisenin radiya'llahu 'anha merkadlarına vusul bulurlar. Amma zümre-i zenan ve ta'ife-i nisvan-ki akrabalarının makabirine varurlar elbette bir mikdar nebatat-ı hazr u ezhar kısmından bilece alurlar, mevtanın makabirini reyhan-ıla ziyaret kılurlar. Şeyhler ise bayraklar kaldurub zikru'llah-ile giderler, mazann-ı icabet-i de'avat olan merakid ü meşahidi ol cem'iyet-ile ziyaret éderler ve lisan-ı hal-ile

li-mü'ellifihî

*'İbret göziyle bir nazar étdük makabire
Bađrına taş basub niçeler yüz komuş yere*

*matla'ını okudukdan sonra giderler.*³

Seventhly: And every Friday, starting at the time of the morning prayer a countless multitude of people, walking or riding, appearing in the direction of the cemeteries, take the road toward Karafa. After having visited the graves of his sanctity the Imam Shafii — may God's mercy be upon him! — and of Imam Abu'l-Laith they arrive at the grave of Sitt Nafisa — may God be pleased with her! When the women go to the graves of their relatives they always take some green plants and flowers along with them, they visit the tombs of the dead with fragrant herbs (*reyhan*). But the sheikhs go with banners and chanting litanies. They visit the graves and mausoleums which are considered to insure the acceptance of prayers with this crowd and then return after having implicitly recited this verse:

¹ Andreas Tietze, *Mustafa 'Âli's Description of Cairo of 1599*, Vienna, Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975, p. 96.

² Andreas Tietze, *Mustafa 'Âli's Description of Cairo of 1599*, Vienna, Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975, p. 29.

³ Andreas Tietze, *Mustafa 'Âli's Description of Cairo of 1599*, Vienna, Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975, pp. 102-103.

Having cast a glance at the tombs with an eagerly comprehending eye
Many of them were pressing their hearts with stones putting their face in the dust.⁴

*Fasl-ı Sani Mısır halkının na-seza yerleri ve na-şayeste evza'-ı kabiheleri beyanındadır*⁵

Second Chapter, on the improper and blameworthy behavior and acts of the people of Egypt⁶

[...]

Hamisen: Zenan zümresinden başka hunyagerler olub bir meyyit vaki' oldukda ücret-ile tutulub cümle başlarına birer siyah futa örtünüb sağı sağmaları ve ca'li ağlamaları garib kıssadır. Feryad ü vaveylalarını işiden şöyle sanur-ki her biri mübtela-yı matem u mağmum ü pür-guşşadur.

Sadisen: Ruz-ı Cum'ada-ki Karafede asude olan mevtanın hususa İmam Ebu'l-Leys ve İmam-ı Şafi'i ve Sitti Nefise hazretlerinin mezarat-ı müteberrikesi ziyaretine varurlar, zenleri 'avan ta'ifesinden havf étmeyen cündiler ile ekseriya anda buluşurlar. Fursat düşürmeyüb mukaddemat-ı mu'ameleye kadir olmadıkları takdirce bari kavlı kararı ol makamat-ı şerifede éderler ba'deh" mahall-i mu'tad olan fesadat u zina menziline giderler.

*Hükkam-ı rûzgara men'i lazım iken étmezler
Faraza-ki i'lam olunsa da guş-ı kabul işitmezler*

Sabi'an: Meyyitlerini Rumdaki gibi vaz' u 'alamet-ile götürmeyüb nümayişde faraza-ki er ü 'avrat degmede ma'lum olmayub gah önince zikr"ıllah ile ve gah salavat ile ve ardınca hunyager 'avratlar sadasından feryad ü vaveylaya müte'allik halat-ile geçürmeleri ve namazı kılındığı gibi bile gelenler münteşir olub meyyit bir kac havassı ile تنها kalub defn étmege götürmeleri ve ardlarınca ba'z' körlerin ta gura varınca yelüb yüpürmeleri garib kıssadır. Fe'amma ba'z' agniyanın mevtasının önlerince kudretine göre bir iki sığır kurbanı yedilmesi ve anın ardınca üzerleri örtülü siniler ile etmek ve hurma ve bir tebsi tuz mezara varınca bile uydurulması ve meyyit kenar-ı kabre inmek sadedinde kurbanlar kesilüb vasle vasle kılınub ol siniler ile götürilmiş nan ü nemek ile fukaraya üleşdirilmesi 'akabince helva, ahir hōrend mazmunı kasdına

⁴ Andreas Tietze, *Mustafa 'Āli's Description of Cairo of 1599*, Vienna, Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975, p. 33.

⁵ Andreas Tietze, *Mustafa 'Āli's Description of Cairo of 1599*, Vienna, Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975, p. 111.

⁶ Andreas Tietze, *Mustafa 'Āli's Description of Cairo of 1599*, Vienna, Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975, p. 39.

*kudret helvası olan hurmaların yine ol zu'afa vü muhtacine ulaştırulması hakk budur-ki vaz'-ı ma'kuldür, belki Molla Husrev vasiyetindeki bakar kurbanı kıssasından me'huz u medluldür.*⁷

Fifthly: There are among the women special mourners. When there is a funeral, they are hired. It is quite a sight to see them all put black aprons over their heads and chant dirges, shedding false tears. Whoever hears their screams and lamentation thinks that each one of them is overcome by grief, sadness, and mourning.

Sixthly: On Fridays when people go to visit the graves of the dead that rest in Karafa and in particular the blessed graves of the Imam Abu'l-Laith, the Imam Shafii and of Sitt Nafisa, their women usually meet there with the soldiers (*jundis*) who are not afraid of a bullying strong-man. Those who found no opportunity or cannot afford making the preparations for intercourse at least [use this visit] at the sacred places for making the arrangements [for a rendez-vous]. Then they go to the usual places of sin and adultery. Although it is the duty of the ruling governor to stop this, they won't do it. Even if this were brought to their attention, they would not listen with an ear of acceptance.

Seventhly: They do not carry their dead [to their graves] with the procedure and symbols that are customary in *Rum*. In their way it may not be easy to tell whether [the deceased] is a man or a woman. It is strange to see them walk in front [of the coffin] reciting now a litany of praise of God, now the formula of ritual worship, and behind [the coffin] the clamor and lamentations in the voices of the hired wailing women, and as soon as the funeral prayer is completed to see all the people that had come with [the procession] disperse, so that the corpse remains alone with a few close relatives, and is taken to be buried with only a few blind men stumbling after it up to the grave itself.

However, that depending on their fortune, one or two bulls are paraded in front of the funeral of certain rich people, and that behind them on covered trays bread and dates and a platter of salt are carried along up to the grave; that when the corpse is lowered into the grave the sacrificial animals are slaughtered, cut up and distributed to the poor together with the bread and salt that have been brought there on the trays; and that thereafter the dates, those God-made sweets, are also handed out to the poor and needy, — these are indeed reasonable acts.⁸

⁷ Andreas Tietze, *Mustafa 'Ali's Description of Cairo of 1599*, Vienna, Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975, pp. 114-115.

⁸ Andreas Tietze, *Mustafa 'Ali's Description of Cairo of 1599*, Vienna, Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975, pp. 41-42.

II. Evliya Çelebi, ca 1675

Diger haseniyyat-ı ehl-i Mısır

Ehl-i Mısır'ın bir âyin-i latîfleri dahi elbetde her Cuma gecesi nice yüz bin har-süvar merdan ü nisvan on iki Karafeye gidüb adem deryası olub hatm-i şerif ve yasin-i şerif tilavet olunub cümle fukaraya tasadduklar verilüb ziyaret ederler Ve cümle merkadleri kârgir bina ile mebni fiskiyye tabir etdikleri zir-i zeminde mahazinlerdir kim her biri beytü 'l-hazenlerdir Başka kapuları vardır Toprak ile mesduddur Hin-i mahalde açub defn ederler Yüz iki yüz meyyiti bir fiskiyyeye defn ederler amma toprak ile örtmezler Hemen kefen ile şöyle korlar Kimi çürür ve kimi kadid olur Badehu kapusun Horasanî kirec ve cibs ile mesdud ederler Zira Mısır'da kefen hırsızı gayet çokdur Hatta Canpuladzade Hüseyin Paşa asrında bir kaçı ahz olunub ıslah-ı âlem için Rumeli Meydanında boğazında uğurladığı kefenile alaca kazığa urdular Badehu her mezarın hece taşlarında tarih-i musanna ve müzehhebler kazarlar Ve günagün açık kubbeler düzerler Ve hus-u tuyur için sular ve buğdaylar dökerler Ve her bir kabrin başı ucuna gül gülistan mersin ve reyhan korlar Ve bu günlerde bir hatun asla ehlinde mezun olmayub Karafe ziyaretine gider Ehli dahi kanda idin deyü sual etmeğe kadir olamaz Zira nikâh böyle münakid olmuşdur Gayri hususda dahi ehl-i Mısır kande idin deyü sual edemez zira Aziz-i Mısır Züleyha'ya nice mağlub idi Hala ehl-i Mısır ol zamandan berü avretlerine mağlubdurlar Hasıl-ı kelim kanun-ı Mısri böyledir Ehl-i kubura etdikleri muhabbet bir diyarda olmaz.⁹

Other praiseworthy deeds of the people of Egypt

A praiseworthy feature of the people of Egypt is certainly also that on Friday nights hundreds of thousands of men and women riding donkeys will go to the twelve cemeteries (Karafe) and, forming a human tide, visit them while reciting the Koran, the Yasin, and giving alms to the poor. And all their graves are basements built underground which they call *fiskiyye*, and each one of them is a place of storage. They [each] have a separate door. They are sealed with earth. They open them whenever needed for a burial. They bury [up to] one or two hundred corpses in one single *fiskiyye*, but they do not cover them with earth. They just place them there in their shrouds. Some rot away, some become skeletons. They then seal the entrance in Khorasan mortar and brickwork. For there are many shroud thieves in Egypt. During the times of Janpuladzade Hussein Pasha, they even impaled some of these thieves with the shrouds they had stolen around their necks on Rumeli Square for the betterment of the world. They inscribe in a sophisticated and decorated way the date on the tombstones. And they build rows of open domes. They pour water and wheat for the birds. And at the head of each grave they place roses and flowers and myrtle (*mersin*) and fragrant herbs (*reyhan*). And on those days, the women need not take

⁹ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, vol. X, *Mısır, Sudan, Habeş (1672-1680)*, Istanbul, Devlet Basımevi, 1938, p. 523-524.

permission from their husbands to go visit the Karafe and their husbands cannot ask them “Where have you been?” for this is how their marriage contract has been established. The husbands in Egypt cannot ask “Where have you been?” in other matters either, for the Saint of Egypt was so submitted to Zuleiha. Ever since those times, the husbands of Egypt are still subservient to their women. In short, this is the law of Egypt. Such care they show for the dead in the graves cannot be [seen] in other places.¹⁰

*El faslu's-salis ve sittin. Mısır'ın karafelerinde civar-ı rahmete vasıl olan selatin-i mazi ve ulema ve meşayih kadı ve kibar-ı evliyanın İrcii ilâ Rabbeke emrine razı olan sahabe-i kiramın ve eyimme-i müctehidinın merakid-i pür-envarların beyan eder*¹¹

Sixty-third chapter, which exposes the tombs in the cemeteries (*karafeler*) of Cairo full of divine light of the sultans of the past and of the learned men (*ulema*) and sheiks and kadıs and great saints (*evliya*) who have reached the vicinity of the compassion of God and of the great companions (*sahabe*) of the Prophet and interpreting (*mujtahid*) imams who have accepted the order of “Return to your Lord”¹²

*Mukattam (Cuşî Dağı) – 17.000 sahabe: Ebu Abdullah Amr ibnü'l-As; Ebu Nasru'l-Gaffari; Abdullah bin Haris bin Hürri'r-Rüşdi; Yusuf karındaşı ibni Yamen ibni Yakub; Abdullah bin Halametü's-Selma; Ukbe ibni Amirü'l-Cüheyri*¹³

Mukattam (Jushi Mountain): 17,000 companions of the Prophet; Ebu Abdullah Amr ibnü'l-As; Ebu Nasru'l-Gaffari; Abdullah bin Haris bin Hurru'r-Rushdi; ibni Yamen ibni Yakub, brother of Yusuf; Abdullah bin Halametu's-Selma; Ukbe ibni Amiru'l-Juheyri¹⁴

Meşhed-i hazret-i Sitti Nefise: Seyyid Yahya ibni Zeyd ibnü'l-Hasan ibni Ali ibni Ebi Talib; Seyyid Kasım ibni İbrahim Tabataba ibni İsmail; Ebu Muhammed Yahya ibni Kasım; meşhed-i re's-i Zeyd ibni Ali ibnü'l-Hasan ibni Ali ibni Ebi Talib; meşhed-i re's-i İbrahim bin Abdullah

¹⁰ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, vol. X, *Mısır, Sudan, Habeş (1672-1680)*, İstanbul, Devlet Basımevi, 1938, p. 523-524.

¹¹ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, vol. X, *Mısır, Sudan, Habeş (1672-1680)*, İstanbul, Devlet Basımevi, 1938, p. 547-551.

¹² Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, vol. X, *Mısır, Sudan, Habeş (1672-1680)*, İstanbul, Devlet Basımevi, 1938, p. 547-551.

¹³ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, vol. X, *Mısır, Sudan, Habeş (1672-1680)*, İstanbul, Devlet Basımevi, 1938, p. 547-551.

¹⁴ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, vol. X, *Mısır, Sudan, Habeş (1672-1680)*, İstanbul, Devlet Basımevi, 1938, p. 547-551.

*bin Hasan ibnü'l-Hüseyin ibni Ali ibni Ebi Talib; meşhed-i re's-i Muhammed bin Ebubekir; meşhed-i Sultan İmam Zeynelabidin ibni İmam Hüseyin ibni Ali ibni Ebi Talib*¹⁵

Sacred tomb of Sitti Nefise: Seyyid Yahya ibni Zeyd ibnu'l-Hasan ibni Ali ibni Ebi Talib; Seyyid Kasım ibni İbrahim Tabataba ibni İsmail; Ebu Muhammed Yahya ibni Kasım; tomb of the head of Zeyd ibni Ali ibnu'l-Hasan ibni Ali ibni Ebi Talib; tomb of the head of İbrahim bin Abdullah bin Hasan ibnü'l-Hüseyin ibni Ali ibni Ebi Talib; tomb of the head of Muhammed bin Ebubekir; tomb of Sultan İmam Zeynelabidin ibni İmam Hüseyin ibni Ali ibni Ebi Talib¹⁶

*Meşhed-i hazret-i İmam-ı Şafii*¹⁷

Tomb of İmam-ı Şafii¹⁸

*Kabr-i hazret-i İmam Ebü'l-leys bin Seyyid Abdurrahman Ebu'l-Haris*¹⁹

Tomb of İmam Ebu'l-leyth bin Seyyid Abdurrahman Ebu'l-Haris²⁰

*Ve Ebü'l-leys ile İmamü'ş-Şafii'ye karib ziyaret-i e'ş-Şeyh Celâlü'd-din-i Süyuti kuddise sirruhu'l-aziz Said-i Ali'de sahil-i Nil'de İsyut nam mecma-ı fukaha ve müfessirin kânu olan şehr-i müzeyyende mütevellid olmuşdur Yedi yüz mücellid telifat-ı meşhuru âfâk ve muteberdir Hala ziyaretgâh-ı hâss u 'âmdir*²¹

And close to Ebu'l-leyth and Imam a'sh-Shafii is the pilgrimage [spot to the grave of] Sheikh Celalu'd-din Suyuti may God bless his saintly earth. He was born in the beautiful city by the name of Isyut by the Nile, which is a place of gathering for *fuqaha* and *mufassirin* (specialists of

¹⁵ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, vol. X, *Mısır, Sudan, Habeş (1672-1680)*, İstanbul, Devlet Basımevi, 1938, p. 551-554.

¹⁶ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, vol. X, *Mısır, Sudan, Habeş (1672-1680)*, İstanbul, Devlet Basımevi, 1938, p. 551-554.

¹⁷ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, vol. X, *Mısır, Sudan, Habeş (1672-1680)*, İstanbul, Devlet Basımevi, 1938, p. 560-562.

¹⁸ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, vol. X, *Mısır, Sudan, Habeş (1672-1680)*, İstanbul, Devlet Basımevi, 1938, p. 560-562.

¹⁹ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, vol. X, *Mısır, Sudan, Habeş (1672-1680)*, İstanbul, Devlet Basımevi, 1938, p. 563-568.

²⁰ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, vol. X, *Mısır, Sudan, Habeş (1672-1680)*, İstanbul, Devlet Basımevi, 1938, p. 563-568.

²¹ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, vol. X, *Mısır, Sudan, Habeş (1672-1680)*, İstanbul, Devlet Basımevi, 1938, p. 579.

fiqh and *tafsir*). Seven hundred volumes of his known works have gained recognition and respect. [This place] is today a place of visit/pilgrimage for both the elite and the people.²²

²² Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, vol. X, *Mısır, Sudan, Habeş (1672-1680)*, Istanbul, Devlet Basımevi, 1938, p. 579.

III. Halid Ziyaeddin Bey, 1909

Kabristan

Mısırda mezarlıklar dahi bir garabet-i mahsusayı ha'izdir. Mısırın biri şimalinde 'Abbasiyede Témürtaş Cami'i civarında ve diğeri cenubunda Karafede "İmam-ı Şafi'i" hazretlerinin cami'-i şerif ve türbe-i 'alileri etrafında, üçüncüsü de Kuburⁱⁱ'l-Hulefa dênilen Halife ve Memalik mezarları medfun bulunan "El-Mukattam" tağının şarki-i şimali eteginde olmak üzere "El-Mücvahirin" nam mezarlıklar vardır. Mezarlarda tarz-ı inşa cihetiyle nazar-ı dikkati calib bir şe'y olmadığı ve 'umumiyet i'tibariyle hiç bir mezarda pervaz, pehle, sandukaya tesadüf olunamadığı gibi 'al'e'l-ekser seng-i mezar bile yokdur. Ancak ma'ruf familyaların 'umumi mezarlıklarda hususi ota veya kubbeli türbe veya fevkani tahtani bir kaç otayı muhtevi haneleri vardır. Hususi mezarlardan tolayı 'adat-ı mahalliyeyi bilmeyen bir za'ir, derunlarında birer mezar olan bu haneleri sükenadan hali haneler, mahalleler zann étmekte ma'zurdur.

İ'yad-ı Müslimin ziyaret-i kubur için birer yevm-i mahsus olduğundan 'arefe gününü kamil^{en} mezarlıklarda, te'sis olunan bu hanelerde imrar étmek 'adet imiş! Müluk-ı Çerakiseden ba'zıları i'mar-kerdeleri olan cami' ve hayrat-haneleri derununda medfundur. 'Á'ile-i Hıdiviyenin ceddi olan Mehmed 'Ali Paşa²³ kal'ede namına mensub cami'-i şerifde ve mahdumu İbrahim Paşa ile 'Abbas ve Sa'id Paşalar ve 'Abbas Paşa-zade İlhami Paşa²⁴ ki pek genc vefat eylemiş idi (Valide-i Hıdivi Hanım-efendi hazretlerinin pederleridir) İmam-ı Şafi'i hazretlerinin türbe-i mübarekeleri civarında 'a'ile-i Hıdiviyeye mahsus olan türbede medfundurlar. Bu medfenlerde birbiri üzerine üç dört sanduka 'ilavesinden ve İbrahim Paşa kabrinin seng-i mezarına "Senkülâh" namında bir hattat-ı meşhur-ı İrani tarafından yazılan yazıların iki santimetroyu müteceviz derecede müstakimen mütebariz olarak hakk édilmiş olmasından başka nazar-ı dikkati calib bir şe'y görülemez. Hıdiv-i esbak İsmâ'il Paşa merhum kal'e civarında (derununda muzannadan Şeyh Şebak hazretlerinin medfun olub İsmâ'il Paşanın valideleri tarafından buraya gayet cesim bir cami'-i şerif inşasına mübaderetle na-tamam kalmış olan) mahalde medfun olub bu günlerde²⁵ cami'-i şerif-i mezkurun itmamına çalışılmakta bulunmuşdur. Hıdiv-i sabık Teyfik Paşa merhum "El-Mukattam" eteginde Kuburu'l-Hulefa civarında suret-i mahsusada inşa olunan ve tezyinine devam olunan türbe-i mahsusada medfundur.

²³ Evahir-i 'ömründe muhtelⁱⁱ'ş-şu'ur olarak taht-ı tedavide bulunan Mehmed 'Ali Paşa atibba tavsiyesiyle İskenderiyeye nakl olunmuş ise de icra olunan müdavatın fa'ide ve te'siri olmadığından 265 senesi Ramazan-ı Şerifinin on üçüncü Pençsenbe günü İskenderiyede vefat étmış, cenazesi İskenderiyeden Mısır'a getirilerek vasiyeti mucebince ol-ta'rihde na-tamam olan cami'ine defn édilmiştir.

²⁴ Damad-ı şehriyari idi, Valide-i Hıdivi Hanım-efendi hazretleri merhum-ı müşar^{ün} ileyhın şeref-ı sıhriyet-i seniyyeye mazhariyetinden evvel tevellüd étmışlerdir.

²⁵ Hatıratın zaman-ı tahriri üç-yüz yigirmi dört senesi Kanun-ı Sani ve Şubatına musadıfır.

Fatih-i Mısır Sinan Paşa-yı şehidin mezarı 'Abbasiyede Témürtaş Cami'-i şerifinin şark-ı şimalisindeki makbere dahilinde olub erbab-ı hamiyeti müte'essif ve dil-hun édecek bir hal-i harabidedir. Buraya bir türbe-i 'aliye inşası ba'zı erbab-ı hamiyet tarafından istid'a ve istirham olunmuş ise de ma'-t-te'essüf semeresi görilememiştir.

Cenaze Merasimi

Cenazeler zikr ü tehlil ile ve ba'zen matbu' mersiye kira'atiyle nakl ve her cenazede kudema-yı Misriyyun zamanından kalma bir bid'at-ı garibe mutlak tatbik olunur.

Şöyle ki her cenazeyi sa'a-i haline nazaran ücretle tutulan ve "nüddabe" namı verilmiş olan matemci kadın ile mahallenin 'umum komşu kadınları ta' kib édüb ca'li hüzn ü keder izhar étmekte, mü'essir nağmeler meytin fazilet, ehliyet, merhamet ve sahasından; kadın ise mehasin ve hüsn-i ahlakından; genc ise 'ömrine toymamış, leza'iz-i hayatiyeden nasibini almamış, evlad ü 'iyalini bi-kes ve yetim bırakmış olduğına da'ir müretteb cümleler, yek-avaz dil-hıraş nağmelerle vaveylalarda bulunarak, hele ba'zen meytin en yakın akrabası yüzlerini siyaha boyayarak, ellerindeki mendillerle guya gözlerini silerek, çırpınarak, üstlerini başlarını yırtarak icra-yı matem édişleri adab-ı İslamiyeye kat'iyen tevafuk étmeyen gibi insaniyeten de münasib bir şe'y degildir. Zira "nüddabe" dénilen matemci kadınların ücretle tutulduğu ma'lum olduktan-başka ağlaşarak giden bu kadınları almak üzere "karo" ta'bir olunan yük 'arabaları ta' kib étmekte ve 'avdetlerinde yine bu 'arabalarla dönüşleri nazar-ı kerahatla görülmektedir.

Cenaze çıkan hanede üç géce sıra ile Kur'an-ı Kerim okunur ve resm-i ta'ziye icra olunur. Cenazeye yetişemeyen, yevm-i vuku'undan haberdar olamayan evidda ve ahibba ta'ziyeye gelürler. Sene-i devriyelerde ihtifal namıyla merasim-i mahsusa ifa ve i'yadde yevm-i mahsus-ı ziyaret-i kubur vardır.

Kabristan bahsinde ta'rif olunacağı vechile, ihtifalatda mekabirin bulunduğu hane derece-i servetine göre şallarla, çiçeklerle donadılub kadınlar serapa siyah matem elbiseleriyle ta'ziyeye gelenleri düğün tarzında kabul, tatlılar şerbetler ve hattà yemeklerle i'zaz ü ikram éderler imiş!

Cenaze çıkan hanede efrad-ı 'a'ile bir sene matem elbisesi giyerler, Erkekler matem işaretli siyah kenarlı kart vizit, mektub zarf kullanmak ve bir sene tiyatroya gitmemek suretiyle matem tutarlar.

Cemeteries

Cemeteries in Egypt possess a very particular strangeness. There are in Cairo cemeteries known as *al-Mujavirin*, one of them to the North, in Abbasiya, in the vicinity of the mosque of Temurtash, the other to the South, in Karafa, around the mosque and mausoleum of Imam Shafii, and the third, which is called the graves of the caliphs and where the caliphs and Mamluks are buried, at the north-eastern foot of al-Mukattam mountain. Architecturally speaking the cemeteries are of no interest, and while I have not been able to see any cornice, decoration, or cenotaph, in most cases the graves do not even have a tombstone. Only the powerful families have, in public cemeteries, private chambers, domed mausolea, or houses including several rooms above and below the ground. Because of these private tombs, a visitor unaware of local custom, could easily mistake these houses with graves in them for abandoned houses and neighborhoods.

As the Muslim festivals are special days for the visit of tombs, they say that it is their custom to spend all of the eve of these days in these houses! Some of the Circassian rulers are buried inside the mosques or other pious works they have erected. Mehmed Ali Pasha,²⁶ who is the ancestor of the Khedivial family is buried within the citadel in the mosque that bears his name, and his sons Ibrahim Pasha, Abbas Pasha and Said Pasha, and Abbas Pasha's son Ilhami Pasha,²⁷ who died quite young (he is the father of Her Highness the mother of the [present] Khedive) are buried in a mausoleum reserved to the Khedivial family, located in the vicinity of the saintly mausoleum of Imam Shafii. There is nothing worthy of attention in these burial places, apart from the fact that they include three or four cenotaphs piled on top of each other, and that Ibrahim Pasha's tombstone was inscribed by a famous Iranian calligrapher by the name of "Senkulah" in lettering that was carved with a relief exceeding two centimeters. The former Khedive the late Ismail Pasha is buried close to the citadel in a place where His Sanctity Sheikh Shebak was buried and where the mother of Ismail Pasha had started but had left unfinished the construction a very large mosque, and has been trying to finish the said mosque these very days.²⁸ The former Khedive the late Tefvik Pasha is buried at the foot of el-Mukattam, near the Graves of the Caliphs, in a mausoleum specially built for this purpose and the decoration of which is presently continuing.

The tomb of Sinan Pasha the martyr and conqueror of Egypt is in the cemetery lying to the north-east of the mosque of Timurtash in Abbasiye, but in a state of disrepair that saddens all patriots.

²⁶ Although Mehmed Ali Pasha was taken to Alexandria following the advice of physicians under whose treatment he was towards the end of his days because of mental trouble, the medication that was administered to him was of no help and had no effect, he died in Alexandria on Thursday, the thirteenth day of Ramadan of the year 265, and his body was taken from Alexandria to Cairo to be buried according to his will in the then still unfinished mosque.

²⁷ He was an Imperial son-in-law, but Her Highness the mother of the Khedive was born before he was honored with this alliance with the Sultan.

²⁸ These recollections were written in January and February of the year 324.

Although some such people have requested and begged that a grand mausoleum be built at this place, unfortunately this plea has gone unheeded.

Funerals

The funerals are carried out with invocations and prayers and sometimes with the reading out of a printed dirge; every funeral procession includes some form of a strange innovation inherited from the time of the ancient Egyptians.

Thus, according to the affluence of the deceased, every funeral procession is followed by a professional female mourner called “*nüddâbe*” and by all the women of the neighborhood, who show fake expressions of grief and sorrow. They join in heart-rendering wails and cries that speak of the wisdom, capacity, compassion and wealth of men, of the virtues and beauties of women, and, whenever the deceased is young, they pronounce ornate sentences describing how he has not lived his life to the full, has not enjoyed the taste of this world, and has abandoned his family and children. Sometimes the sight of the closest relatives of the deceased mourning him by painting their faces black, by pretending to wipe their tears with handkerchiefs, by showing great agitation, and by tearing their clothing apart is not only incompatible with Islamic practice, but even with humanity. For one sees with great disgust that apart from being paid for their services, these wailing women called “*nüddâbe*” are followed by carts known as “*karo*” that will take them back after the funeral.

In those houses where a funeral has taken place, the Koran is for three nights taking turns, and a ceremony of condolences is organized. Friends and relatives who were unable to come to the funeral in time or were not informed of the day it would take place come to present their condolences. On anniversary days, a special ceremony by the name of *ikhtifal* is performed and on religious festivals there is a special day for visiting the graves.

They say that during the celebrations of the deceased, the houses in which the graves are located are decorated, according to wealth, with shawls and flowers, and the women dressed entirely in black will accept the condolences of visitors as in a wedding, and greet and honor them with sweets and even meals!

The members of a family having lost a kin wear mourning clothes for a year. The men mourn by using calling cards and stationery lined with black and by not going to the theater for a full year.²⁹

²⁹ Halid Ziya'e'd-din, *Musavver Mısır Hatırası*, Istanbul, Agob Matosyan Matbaası, 1326, pp. 176-178.