

**Meccan Female Society (3rd-4th /9th-10th centuries)
in the Light of Kufic Inscriptions from the al-Ma'laḥ
Cemetery, Mecca: An Epigraphic and Historical
Study**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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Abstract

This study focuses on inscribed Islamic tombstones from al-Ma'ālāh Cemetery in Mecca that were transported to the Museum of Ḥuzām Palace in Jeddah for preservation. While the collection contains hundreds of tombstones of deceased men and women, this work specifically studies 59 inscriptions related to 3rd/9th and 4th/10th-century women to understand their familial origins and place in Meccan society.

To achieve this, the contents of these inscriptions are studied and analysed. The names of the deceased women are identified and their prevalence among Arabic historical sources are discussed, as are the attribution of each deceased woman, whether to their tribe, family origins or masters who emancipated them from slavery. Based on the inscriptions, the women are placed in one of three categories:

1. Those with deep Meccan ancestral roots, either attributed to the Qurayš tribe, their allies or the common people of Mecca.
2. Enslaved maids who were brought to Mecca and lived with their masters. Many acquired their freedom by emancipation but others served as concubines and had their masters' children. Accordingly, these concubines acquired their freedom by being mothers of free-born sons (*ʿUmmuhāt al-ʿawlād*).
3. Descendants of migrant ancestors who moved to Mecca either from within the Arabian Peninsula or from elsewhere. They mostly migrated as pilgrims but then settled, discontinuing their relationships with their homelands. Their female descendants became part of the female community.

Finally, to add to the literature of early Islamic inscriptions, the characteristics of each tombstone's inscription are analysed, including the shapes of the letters, the methods of their execution (e.g. incised Kufic or carved in relief), their aesthetics and decoration, if any, and the forms and decoration of frames surrounding the text. When no dates are given, these characteristics are compared to other previously published inscriptions to assess an approximate date.

Keywords:

Women in Meccan society, early Islamic society, Arabian migration, concubines in early Islam, emancipation in Islam, Islamic tombstones, al-Ma^ʿlāh cemetery, Kufic calligraphy, Islamic art

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Transliteration scheme

Arabic letters	Transliteration	Names of letters
ا	ā	<i>ʿalif</i>
ب	b	<i>bāʾ</i>
ت	t	<i>tāʾ</i>
ث	<u>t</u>	<i><u>t</u>āʾ</i>
ج	ǧ	<i>ǧāʾ</i>
ح	ḥ	<i>ḥāʾ</i>
خ	ḫ	<i>ḫāʾ</i>
د	d	<i>dāl</i>
ذ	<u>d</u>	<i><u>d</u>āl</i>
ر	r	<i>rāʾ</i>
ز	z	<i>zāʾ</i>
س	s	<i>sīn</i>
ش	š	<i>šīn</i>
ص	ṣ	<i>ṣād</i>
ض	ḍ	<i>ḍād</i>
ط	ṭ	<i>ṭāʾ</i>
ظ	ẓ	<i>ẓāʾ</i>
ع	ʿ	<i>ʿayn</i>
غ	ġ	<i>ġyn</i>
ف	f	<i>fāʾ</i>
ق	q	<i>qāf</i>
ك	k	<i>kāf</i>
ل	l	<i>lām</i>

م	m	<i>mīm</i>
ن	n	<i>nūn</i>
هـ	h	<i>hāʾ</i>
و	w	<i>wāw</i>
ي	y	<i>yāʾ</i>
ء	◌	<i>hamzah</i>
ة	ah	<i>tāʾ marbūṭah</i>
لا	lā	<i>lām-ʾalif</i>

Short vowels	a	i	u
Long vowels	ā	ī	ū

Diphthongs

و –	aw
ي –	ay

Abbreviations

- [] These brackets surround missing words from a source. The word or words within them are the assessed word(s) based on context or other sources.
- [.....] Each dot between the square brackets represents a missing word in a source that cannot be assessed.

Glossary of technical terms

Ascender line – Imaginary line that the vertical shaft of a letter raises to.

Asnān al-Mušṭ – Toothlike risers of the letters of *sīn* and *šīn*.

ʿAtīqah (Maʿtūqah) – Freed slave girl.

Baseline – line on which the letters rest.

Banū Šaybah or **sadanat al-Kaʿbah** – A clan of the *Qurayš* tribe who have served as the custodians or gatekeepers of the Holy *Kaʿbah*, successively passing the keys and role from pre-Islamic days to today.

Bowl (al-Taqwīr) – The rounding of letters, such as the bowl of the letters *nūn* and *yāʾ* and the end of the letters *sīn*, *šīn*, *ṣād* and *dād*.

Crotchets (Ḥabkat al-Hāʾ) – The crochet of the initial letter of *hāʾ*.

Denticle – Toothlike projections (from letters).

Descender Line – An imaginary line to which descending letters descend.

Flatting or wedge-shaped (al-Taffīḥ) – The spreading out or broadening of the apex of letters.

Ġāriyah – Slave girl.

al-Ḥadīṯ (Hadīth) – Statements of the Prophet Muḥammad.

Head – The apex of letters.

(Ruʿūs al-ʿAḥruf al-Qāʾimah) – An arrowhead the apex of letters

Knot (ʿUqdah) – A loop in a letter.

Kunyah (surname) – Consisting of *ʿAbū* or *ʿUmm* followed by the name of the son or daughter.

Laqab - (plural: *ʿAlqāb*) Nickname or title.

Layyin – The softness of a letter or script in curved form.

Leaves, Feathers, or Hairline (Tašʿīrāt) – Thin strokes on letters.

Al-Mašq – The extension or elongation of some horizontal medial letters.

Mawālī (sing. *mawlā* for male and *mawlāt* for female) – A slave who was manumitted or gained his/her own freedom, but kept his/her loyalty to those whom he/she served.

Muğannah – Winged form, like a bird flapping its wings.

Mulk al-Yamīn – Possession of the right hand.

Mustawladah – A slave girl kept by her master for production of children.

Nisbah – Attribution (relating to a tribe, country or craft).

Qaynah – A slave girl.

Qurayš al-Biṭāḥ – Those of the *Qurayš* tribe who lived in the centre of Mecca around the Holy *Ka'bah* and worked in trade and providing services to pilgrims.

Qurayš al-Zawāhir – Those of the *Qurayš* tribe who lived in the suburbs of Mecca and worked in agriculture and livestock.

Sarārīat – A slave girl (concubinage).

Shaft – Vertical stem in the letters or stroke.

Al-Sidānat – Service of the Holy *Ka'bah* and maintaining the keys to its door.

Sūq al-Naḥāsah – Slave market.

Tail – The stroke at the lower part of a letter.

Terminal or **Termination** – The end of a vertical horizontal letter.

ʿUmm Walad – The mother of a free-born son.

X-line – The line that the top of horizontal serif letters rise toward.

Yubūсах, Yābis – The right-angled form of a letter, often described as dry dryness and stiffness.

Introduction

Great efforts have been made to study Arabic Islamic calligraphy in the past century. Much of this work focused on identifying and classifying styles of this artform. Further, some of these studies have looked at the content of calligraphic writings and inscriptions to understand historical and social contexts of early Islam; however, there has been a lack of focus on the women of early Islam.

The aims of this study are two-fold. First, it analyses the inscriptions of 59 tombstone inscriptions of Meccan women – natives, migrants, slaves, and freed women – to understand their status in and connection to Mecca. Second, this study analyses the calligraphic style used in the inscriptions to gain a better understanding of the prevalence of the Kufic style in the Hijaz region at the time of the inscriptions. To achieve this end, this introduction will first present a historical overview of Mecca, the origin of Arabic calligraphy and its importance and characteristics, and scholarly research into Kufic calligraphy. This introduction will then present the source of this study, al-Ma'ālāh Cemetery, the context of the sample set, and how this study will proceed.

All dates are Common Era unless otherwise noted. Arab and Islamic words that are common in English are spelt in the common English form (such as Mecca, Medina and Amir), Otherwise, non-standard Arabic and Islamic terms and personalities are spelt using the transliteration guidelines of transliteration scheme of the *Journal of Semitic Studies*.

Historical overview

Mecca needs no introduction. It is the site where the Quran was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad, and where He started His message. It is the *qiblah* of all Muslims around the world, the direction they face during their prayers five times per day or more. It is also a destination of pilgrimage, to which every Muslim should go at least once in their life if they have the means. Mecca was home to various noble houses that were descendants of Prophet Mohammad. These descendants continued to assume power

from the 4th/10th century until it came under the Saudi domain in 1343/1924.¹ Henceforth, it became part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia² and one of the main regions in the western part of the Kingdom (illustrations 1 and 2).

Before Islam, Mecca was a prominent centre on the international trade route between Yemen and Syria, and the famous Qurayš tribe held dominion over it. Other inhabitants of Mecca at this time included Qurayši's slaves and allies from other tribes.³ The families of the Qurayš controlled the trade with Yemen and Ethiopia, known as the journey of the winter, and trade with Syria, known as the journey of the summer. Both journeys are referenced in the Holy Quran: '[Allah did this] to make the Qurayš feel secure, secure in their winter and summer journeys'.⁴

Some clans of the Qurayš lived in the centre of the city of Mecca around the Holy Ka'bah and were known as Qurayš al-Biṭāḥ. Others lived in the suburbs of Mecca and were known as Qurayš al-Zawāhir. Each section of the tribes of Qurayš had its role in the Meccan society. Qurayš al-Biṭāḥ carried out trade while Qurayš al-Zawāhir carried out farming and cattle raising.⁵ Some families of the Qurayš had specific jobs, e.g. serving pilgrims and maintaining the holy sites.

With the emergence of Islam and the increasing harassment by the Qurayš against the Prophet Muḥammad and his followers, the Prophet – along with many Muslims from the Qurayš and their allies – migrated to Medina. This resulted in a decrease in the population of Mecca until it was conquered by the Muslims in 8/630.

Even though many Meccans had already migrated to Medina in the eight years following the Prophet's migration, the Prophet prohibited further emigration after the conquest of Mecca, declaring 'there will be no migration, only struggle and good will'.⁶ Thus, Mecca preserved what remained of its inhabitants. When the Quran prescribed the pilgrimage to Mecca and the Ka'bah, Mecca became an important city once more, leading to economic development and Muslim immigration. Many

¹ Al-Sibā'ī, *Tārīḥ Makkah*, I, 191ff.

² Al-Sibā'ī, *Tārīḥ Makkah*, II, 640–653.

³ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Al-Munammaq*, 232–248; al-Bābṭayn, *Al-Ḥayāt*, 40–49

⁴ Quran 106:1–2 (*Sūrat Qurayš*)

⁵ Ibn Ḥaldūn, *Al-'Ibar*, II, 289ff; al-Bābṭayn, *Al-Ḥayāt*, 23–25.

⁶ Abī Dā'ūd, *Sunan 'Abī Dā'ūd*, III, 4

Muslims were attracted to the Kaʿbah, preferring its proximity for worship and for seeking religious knowledge throughout their lives. These immigrants and faithful adherents thus became a part of Meccan society.⁷

Mecca's importance regarding the rights of real estate ownership became even more prominent after the Umayyad dynasty (41-132/661-750) overtook the rule of Muslims. The capital of the caliphate state moved to Damascus, and the descendants of the first immigrants had a chance to move back to Mecca. Umayyad caliphs showered Meccans with gifts and riches, leading to improved economic conditions and the flowering of singing, literature, and fine arts.⁸

One of the most prominent of the fine arts was Arabic calligraphy, most notably in the Kufic script form that was prevalent at the time of this study.

Arabic calligraphy

Origins and derivation

Before addressing the importance of Arabic calligraphy in this study, including its types and the Meccans' use of it, a brief background on the origins of Arabic calligraphy and its derivations will be discussed.

A review of the historical sources reveals various schools of thought in respect to the origins of Arabic calligraphy. Some of these sources consider it as 'divine',⁹ i.e. not man-made, but representing what God had taught some of His prophets. Other schools believe Arabic calligraphy was influenced by the Syriac alphabet.¹⁰ Some schools of thought believe that the Arabic alphabet was transferred from modern-day Anbar Province, Iraq, to the Hijaz region of modern-day Saudi Arabia by way of Haira or al-Ḥīrah in, Iraq, and Dawmat al-Ġandal, which is presently known as al-Jawf, Saudi Arabia.¹¹

⁷ Al-Zaylaʿī, *Makkah*, 137–151; al-Bābṭayn, *Al-Ḥayāt*, 86–87.

⁸ Al-Bābṭayn, *Al-Ḥayāt*, 187–188, 198–202.

⁹ Al-Qalqaṣandī, *Ṣubḥ al-ʿAṣā*, III, 7–9.

¹⁰ Al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, 453; al-Munaġġid, *Dirasāt fī Tārīḥ al-Ḥaṭṭ al-ʿArabī*, 12.

¹¹ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist*, 8; Ibn Ḥaldūn, *al-Muqaddimah*, 418; al-Munaġġid, *Dirāsah fī Tārīḥ al-Ḥaṭṭ al-ʿArabī*, 12.

Some theories regarding Arabic alphabet believe it originated from Himyarite Musnad, an ancient South Arabian script that was prevalent in Yemen before Islam, and had become the al-Jazm script.¹² These theories argue that the Arabic alphabet was introduced by Marāmir b. Murrah, ʿAslam b. Sidrah and ʿĀmir b. Ğadarah, all of the Būlān clan of the Ṭayy tribe who compared the Arabic alphabet to the Syrian alphabet.¹³

These traditional theories are from the past and outdated, accordingly they cannot be accepted. On the other hand, most modern researchers hold an opposing view to these theories, arguing that Arabic script originated from Nabataean alphabet,¹⁴ with some arguing that Arabic calligraphy, which existed in Hijaz before Islam, was the final form of Nabataean script.¹⁵ The researcher fully agrees with this point of view. It is worth noting that the Nabataeans were Arabs who had a state in the southern Levant and northern part of the Arabian Peninsula. Their most famous cities were Pusra in modern-day Syria, Betra in modern-day Jordan and Hegra or Madāʿin Šālīḥ in northern modern-day Saudi Arabia.

The Nabataeans had strong commercial relationships with the Hijazi region before Islam.¹⁶ Pre-Islamic Nabataean inscriptions that closely resemble Arabic script forms have been found at sites in modern-day Syria, including the Umm al-Jimāl inscription in Syria (dated 106), the Namāra inscription in Syria too (dated 328), the Zebed inscription in (dated 512), and the Harran inscription in Syria (dated 536). The Harran inscription is an almost original form of the prevalent and known Arabic script before

¹² Ibn Ḥaldūn, *Al-Muqaddimah*, 418; al-Munaġġid, 12; al-Fiʿr, 119–120 .

¹³ Al-Qalqašandī, *Šubḥ al-ʿAšā*, III, 8; al-Ġubūrī, *ʿAṣl al-Ḥaṭṭ al-ʿArabī*, 12; George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, 26.

¹⁴ Cf. Abbott, *The Rise of the North Arabic script*, 2, 4, 5; Healey and Smith, *The Arabic Alphabet*, 74, 78; Jaussen, “Savignac 17 – The Earliest Dated Arabic Document (A.D. 267)” in *ʿAṭlāl*, vol. 12, 82; Ğumʿah, *Dirāsah fī Taṭawwur al-Kitābāt al-Kūfuyyah*, 17–19; ʿAlī, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, VIII, 174–178; George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, 27; Macdonald, *Ancient Arabic*, 21.

¹⁵ Al-Munaġġid, 19; al-Fiʿr, *Taṭawwur al-Kitābāt Wa ʿI-Nuqūš*, 134–142; al-Murayḥī, “Naqš Ruqūš bi-ʿIḤiġr”, 758.

¹⁶ Al-Fiʿr, *Taṭawwur al-Kitābāt Wa ʿI-Nuqūš*, 130–140.

the advent of Islam,¹⁷ yet Nabataean influence continued in some Arabic letters for several centuries in early Islam.¹⁸

Some historical sources state that Arabic writing was widespread in Mecca before Islam and that some men and women were well versed in reading and writing.¹⁹ Indeed, Hijazi cities had forms of Arabic scripts before Islam, but there is no evidence that the Arabic alphabet was used in them before the rise of Islam.

In Yathrib, named Medina after the prophet's migration, al-Balādurī states that upon the advent of Islam, only about a dozen people from the al-ʿAws and al-Khazraj tribes who make up the ʿAnṣār could write well, including Saʿd b. ʿUbādah, leader of al-Ḥazraġ tribe, and Zayd b. Tābit. Both Saʿd and Zayd were companions of the Prophet Muḥammad in Yathrib.²⁰

The importance of Islamic Arabic calligraphy

It is important to state that Arabic calligraphy is one of the finest of the Islamic arts, if not the undisputable purest Islamic art. The word calligraphy relates to a letter's imagery, stylised drawing, and form in writing. It adds an elegant, artistic touch to the visual representation of audible words lodged deep within the human psyche. Writing is the second order of linguistic signification, a property that distinguishes humans from the other animals, and it is a noble craft.²¹ This is made clear from God's own words, 'You never recited any scripture before we revealed this to you; you never wrote one down with your hand'.²²

¹⁷ For more information about these inscriptions, see Healey and Smith, *The Arabic Alphabet*, 74–76; al-Munaġġid, *Dirāsāh fī Tārīḥ al-Ḥaṭṭ al-ʿArabī*, 20–22; al-Ġubūrī, *ʿAṣl al-Ḥaṭṭ al-ʿArabī*, 20–24; Ġumʿah, *Dirāsah fī Taṭawwur al-Kitābāt al-Kūfuyyah*, 52–53.

¹⁸ Al-Fīr, *Taṭawwur al-Kitābāt Wa ʿI-Nuqūš*, 164, 172, 200 ff.

¹⁹ Al-Munaġġid, *Dirāsāh fī Tārīḥ al-Ḥaṭṭ al-ʿArabī*, 24; Ḥammūdah, *Drasāt fī ʿIlm al-Kitābāt al-ʿArabīyyah*, 42; al-Ġubūrī, *ʿAṣl al-Ḥaṭṭ al-ʿArabī*, 28.

²⁰ Al-Balādurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, 455; see also ʿAlī, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, VIII, 160.

²¹ Ibn Ḥaldūn, *al-Muqadimah*, 14–17; Muḥammad, "al-Qiyam al-Ġamāliyyah li ʿl-Ḥaṭṭ al-ʿArabī", *Maġallat al-ʿUsūr*, M.I., II, 54.

²² Quran 29:48 (*al-ʿAnkabūt*).

The pen is the best-known tool for writing: ‘By the pen! By all they write!’²³ and ‘Read! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One who taught by [means of] the pen’.²⁴ These verses make clear the importance of writing. Since it was used to record the revelation made to the holy Quran and was also used in recording the traditions of the Prophet – the Hadith – and the recording of Arabic sciences. During the caliphates, Islamic Arabic calligraphy was used for daily transactions.²⁵

It is reported that following the Battle of Badr (2/625), the Prophet allowed Meccan prisoners without financial means to be ransomed to teach 10 Medinan boys how to read and write in exchange for their release,²⁶ new sentence This demonstrates the Prophet’s own interest in the instruction of these skills.

At that period, Meccan and Medinan scripts were indistinguishable and widespread. Regardless of any noted attribution of origin, whether Mecca or Medina, both are pure Hijazi scripts. This style is mentioned in the known sources from, especially in Ibn al-Nadīm’s book *al-Fihrist*, which says: ‘The Meccan and Medinan scripts have their *ʿalifs* curved towards the right hand and upper fingers. There is slight reclining position in their form’.²⁷ This description of the sloping or slanting script, *māʿil*, has led some modern scholars to consider Hijazi calligraphy as the precedent to the angular, making it ‘the forerunner of Kufic’.²⁸ This assessment is also supported by some early written Quranic texts.²⁹

With the Islamic conquests of the 1st/7th century, the Hijazi script spread into the conquered territories. One such conquered area, Kufa, located in modern-day southern Iraq, was established in 17/638. It became the capital of its region and remained so until the Abbasid Caliph ʿAbū Ğaʿfar al-Manṣūr made Baghdad the capital in

²³ Quran 68:01 (*al-Qalam*).

²⁴ Quran 96:03–04 (*al-ʿAlaq*).

²⁵ Hammūdah, *Drasāt fī ʿIlm al-Kitābah*, 43–44.

²⁶ Al-ʿAlī, *al-Dawlah fī ʿAhd al-Rasūl*, 222.

²⁷ Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 9; cf. George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, 31.

²⁸ Healey and Smith, *The Arabic Alphabet*, 85.

²⁹ Healey and Smith, *The Arabic Alphabet*, 85, 86 (illustration 13).

145/762.³⁰ In Kufa's use of Hijazi script, it might come to adopt distinguishable angles and rigidity or stiffness, leading to a new style known as Kufic script.

This style spread to various Islamic cities, including Mecca, where scribes worked on its perfection and development. In time, this developed form of Kufic style became prominent, and it became common as it spread from Mecca throughout the Muslim world.³¹ Kufic was primarily used in memorial inscriptions and in transcriptions of the Holy Quran before the adoption of naskh, thuluth, Persian nastaliq and other styles.³²

For the purposes of this study, only the Kufic script will be addressed going forward.

Kufic calligraphy

As Kufic took form from Hijazi during the spread of Islam, it developed into three forms: *mudawwar*, *muṭallat* and *al-taym*.³³ Al-Fi'r describes *mudawwar* as cursive, while *muṭallat* was angular or square.³⁴ As for *al-taym*, Ğum'ah believes it was a combination of *mudawwar* and *muṭallat*, not too cursive and not too angular or square.³⁵ Application of these forms can be put into two categories based on their purpose: monumental and and Quranic manuscript.

Monumental Kufic eternalise great events, either on large structures like the foundation stones of building facades and corners or on smaller forms like wood, coins and tombstones. Monumental Kufic is meant to perpetuate the event and to be public so people can see. Monumental Kufic is angular and stiff, but it is distinct, and it often attracted the eye of the reader for its difficulty in reading, lack of diacritics, connectedness and excessive decoration.³⁶

³⁰ Yaqūt, *Muġam al-Buldān*, IV, 491, 494; Ibn al-ʿAṭīr, *al-Kāmil*, V, 14–15.

³¹ For more information about the spread of Meccan calligraphy abroad, see Ğum'ah, *Dirāsah fī Taṭawwur al-Kitābāt al-Kūfuyyah*, 169–176; al-Zayla'ī “Al-Ḥaṭṭāt al-Makkī”, 248–252, 256, 258.

³² Al-Bahnasī, *Fann al-Ḥaṭṭ al-ʿArabī*, 54–59; *al-Ḥaṭṭ al-ʿArabī min Hilāl al-Maḥṭūṭāt*, 21–24.

³³ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist*, 9.

³⁴ Al-Fi'r, *Taṭawwur al-Kitābāt Wa ʿI-Nuqūš*, 94.

³⁵ Ğum'ah, *Dirāsah fī Taṭawwur al-Kitābāt al-Kūfuyyah*, 18.

³⁶ Ğum'ah, *Dirāsah fī Taṭawwur al-Kitābāt al-Kūfuyyah*, 28.

The Kufic used in Quranic manuscripts combines the cursive and angular/square forms, mixing them in a balanced fashion. Kufic was used for this purpose for the first three centuries of Islam until it was replaced by the *naskh* style.³⁷

This study is interested only in monumental Kufic and its characteristics as used in their inscriptions.

Characteristics of monumental Kufic

Monumental Kufic has attracted the attention of Western scholars since the early 20th century. While noting the general angular and stiff form of the letters, certain characteristics of the inscriptions have been identified and classified as follows: simple, foliated, and floriated.

Simple Kufic

Simple Kufic, as its name suggests, refers to inscriptions that have no floriation, beautification or knotting – its focus is the pure word. It is an original form and has been widely used in the eastern and western Islamic world. Examples of this category include the Saiysad dam inscription in al-Ṭāʾif (dated 58/677), The Dome on the Roch inscription in Jerusalem (date 72/691) the Grand Mosque of Mecca inscriptions (dated 167/782).³⁸ This classification of simple Kufic will be seen in the vast majority of the collection in this study. Except for a few examples, the characterisation of ‘simple’ does not mean a work not mean it has no aesthetic appeal since this form carries its own beauty and clarity. The characterisation of ‘simple’ only serves to differentiate it from the other two categories laden with ornamentation.

Foliated Kufic

Foliated Kufic bears leaflike decorations, often attached to the shaft and horizontal letter, and gives the writing a fine, natural appearance. This foliation flourished during the 3rd/9th century, and its examples include the inscription of Mubārak al-Makkī in

³⁷ Ğumʿah, *Dirāsah fī Taṭawwur al-Kitābāt al-Kūfuyyah*, 28.

³⁸ Al-Fiʿr, *Taṭawwur al-Kitābāt Wa ʿI-Nuqūš*, 46, 38; George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, 32–33, figures 12, 60–63; Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 85–6, figure 3.3, see fig. 21 below.

Egypt (dated 243/857)³⁹ and the °Aḥmad al-Ḥaffār inscription from the village of °Ašm in modern-day Saudi Arabia (dated 262/876).⁴⁰

Floriated Kufic

Like foliated Kufic, floriated Kufic is adorned with natural-looking motifs, but with floral forms, tendrils and scrolls arising from the letters.⁴¹ Floriated Kufic was attested in Hijaz since the 3rd/9th century, and it flourished in Egypt during the Fatimid caliphate in the 4th/10th century. Its most famous examples are in the mosque of the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākim bi-°amr Allāh and Sulṭān Hasan's school, both of which are in Cairo.⁴²

Efforts of European scholars and their followers in caring for Kufic writings on tombstones

Funerary inscriptions are important for the study of local history throughout the Islamic world. They are important in this context for the study of the history of Mecca. Kufic-inscribed tombstones serve as reliable sources for the days of early Islam, documenting historical and cultural information of significance and offering artistic and aesthetic styles of the day. But these recordings are not only important to scholars today – they were important to ancient historians and those inscribing them.

Today's scholars take great interest in collecting, preserving and studying these tombstones. Ancient scribes carefully inscribed their words to record and preserve information about the people. In time, ancient historians relied upon these inscriptions 'as source material to write their histories and biographies, e.g. Meccan historian Taqīyy al-Dīn Muḥammad b. °Aḥmad al-Ḥasanī al-Fāsī (d. 832/1428), who wrote *al-°Iqd al-Ṭamīn fī Tārīḥ al-Balad al-°Amīn*,⁴³ and his contemporary Ḡamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. °Alī al-°Abdarī al-Šaybī (d. 837/1433), who wrote *al-Šaraf al-°Alā fī*

³⁹ Ḡum°ah, *Dirāsah fī Taṭawwur al-Kitābāt al-Kūfuyyah*, 170.

⁴⁰ Al-Faqīh, *Miḥlāf °Ašm*, 239, no. 47.

⁴¹ Healey and Smith, *The Arabic Alphabet*, 89; Arif, *Arabic Lapidary Kufic*, 24.

⁴² Al-Fīr, *Taṭawwur al-Kitābāt Wa °I-Nuqūš*, 46.

⁴³ Published by Mu°assasat al-Risālah, Beirut, 1406/1989 (8 vols).

Dikr Qubūr Bāb al-Maʿlā.⁴⁴ In both books, there are a large number of biographies of the characters that were taken from texts inscribed on their tombstones.

In more recent times, Western scholars, especially Europeans, have led the charge in studying memorial Kufic writings. Perhaps the first of these pioneers was Swiss epigrapher and historian Max Van Berchem (d. March 1921), who facilitated the rise of scientific research of Kufic writings by collecting a large number of Arabic Islamic texts from Egypt and the Levant. Aided by his students, including the French scholar Gaston Wiet (d. April 1971), he published this collection in a large volume entitled *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum* in Paris in 1894.⁴⁵ Wiet went on to offer a great service to the scholarship of Kufic-inscribed tombstones by publishing a 10-volume catalogue of inscribed tombstones, which has been preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo.⁴⁶ Further, Wiet, together with J. Sauvaget (d. March 1950) and Et. Combe (d. 1962), authored a 16-volume catalogue, *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe*, in which they arranged the inscriptions in a systematic historical order.⁴⁷

Samuel Flury (d. January 1935), an assistant of Max Van Berchem, was unable to travel to monument sights in much of the Islamic world, so he studied photographs of inscriptions with aesthetic decoration, such as those in al-ʿAzhar and al-Ḥākim Mosques in Cairo as well as those in ʿĀmid (modern-day Diyarbakir, Turkey), the Nain Mosque in Iran, and the Qayrawān Mosque in Tunisia. Flury is said to have developed the approach of categorising Kufic script into simple, foliated, floriated, plated, braided and geometric, and he is credited with developing palaeographic criteria for undated monuments using style and decoration as guides.

French historian Georges Marçais (d. May 1962) studied collections of Islamic writings from Andalusia and North Africa, treating Kufic as a type of Islamic decoration. He argued that the art of decorative writing matured more in the eastern

⁴⁴ Ed. Mansūr ʿAbū Rayyāš, Mecca, 2000.

⁴⁵ Al-Zahrānī, *Kitābat ʿIslamiyyah*, 10.

⁴⁶ Published by L'Institut Français D'Archéologie Orientale Du Caire under the title *Catalogue Général du Musée du Caire, Stèles Funéraires*, Le Caire 1932–42 (10 vols).

⁴⁷ Published by de L'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, Caire, 1931–34.

Islamic world.⁴⁸ Additionally, French historian Évariste Lévi-Provençal (d. March 1956) collected and studied tombstone inscriptions from various cities of ancient Andalusia and provided a fine description of the Kufic of them.⁴⁹

Epigrapher Jean David-Weill (d. May 1972) studied calligraphic decorations inscribed on wood within the Mosque of Ibn Ṭulūn in Cairo. He concluded that the mosque's inscriptions were influenced by the artistic styles used in the city of Samarra, in modern-day Iraq. It is worth noting that ʿAḥmad b. Tulūn was from Samarra, and the mosque minaret attributed to him in Egypt is influenced by the minaret of al-Malwiyyah Mosque in Samarra.⁵⁰

Austrian Arabist and Semitist Adolf Grohmann (d. September 1977) is well known for his efforts in publishing the Egyptian papyri and is credited with studying the Philby Rychmans- Lippens materials that were collected during their times in the Arabian Peninsula.

He published them in 1962 in a book entitled *Expédition Philby-Ryckmans-Lippens en Arabie 1951–1952*,⁵¹ and he has a study published in the famous journal *Ars Orientalis* in 1957. His work added much scientific value to the classification of decorative Kufic.⁵²

George Miles (d. 1972), an American Islamic scholar, wrote several studies on Arab and Islamic writings from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, some of which focused on Kufic inscriptions. One such inscription was dated 304/916 during the reign of the Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir bī Allāh (d. 320/932), which was related to reforming the pilgrimage route to Mecca.⁵³ In another work, he studied a collection of early Islamic

⁴⁸ *Manuel d' Art Musulman*, I, Paris, 1928; Al-Zahrānī, *Kitābāt ʿIslamiyyah*, 11.

⁴⁹ *Inscriptions Arabes d'Espangne, Texte et planches*, Leyde, Paris, 1931; Ğumʿah, *Dirāsah fī Taṭawwur al-Kitābāt al-Kūfiyyah*, 37–39.

⁵⁰ Al-Rifāʿī, *Tārīḥ al-Fann ʿInd al-ʿArab waʿl-Muslimīn*, 74.

⁵¹ Published by Leuven University, Belgium.

⁵² The title of the study is “The Origin and Early Development of Floriated Kufic”; cf. Arif, *Arabic Lapidary Kūfic*, 23.

⁵³ Cf. ʿAlī b. ʿIsāʿs, “Pilgrim Road an Inscription of year 304H”.

writings brought from Egypt. This work is preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art in Boston, Massachusetts.⁵⁴

Additional Western scholarship

Since these initial pioneers in the scholarship of Kufic writing, the field of study has drawn additional Western attention. Italian scholar Giovanni Oman made a remarkable contribution in his studies of tombstone inscriptions in Dahlak Island, the Red Sea and part of modern-day Eritrea, and published them in three small volumes.⁵⁵ French Scholar Madeleine Schneider also studied the Dahlak Island collection and published her findings in two volumes.⁵⁶ Furthermore, she made a valuable study of the Mubārak al-Makkī inscription in Mecca and studied a selection of Egyptian tombstones in Egypt that Ğumʿah believes al-Makkī had inscribed in Hijazi style.⁵⁷

There have also been some recent European efforts in studying Islamic Arabic calligraphy, especially Sheila Blair in *Islamic Calligraphy*⁵⁸ and Alain George in *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*.⁵⁹ The former book is important in its field since it contains writing from the Quran from its earliest beginnings until the dawn of modern times, yet it contains a useful chapter on the development of Arabic script.⁶⁰ In George's book, a chapter outlines the birth of the Kufic,⁶¹ which is useful although it does not focus much on Kufic writing on stones, except for the few examples that she chose to cite. Some Arab scholars have benefited and been influenced by the efforts of Western scholars in the field of Kufic writings.

Perhaps the first to emerge was Egyptian scholar Ḥasan al-Hawwārī, who published two scientific articles on Islamic tombstones, 'The Most Ancient Islamic Monument Dated 31/652', about a famous Aswan inscription, and 'The Second Oldest Islamic

⁵⁴ The title of the study is "Early Islamic tombstones from Egypt in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston", translated by Ahmad al-Zaylaʿī and published in *al-ʿUṣūr*, vol. 2, July 1987, 243–262.

⁵⁵ Published by the University of Napoli, Italia, 1976 and 1986.

⁵⁶ Published by Institut Français D'Archéologie Orientale, Du Caire, 1983.

⁵⁷ Ğumʿah, *Dirāsah fī Taṭawwur al-Kitābāt al-Kūfuyyah*, 171.

⁵⁸ Edinburgh University Press 2006 and reprinted 2028.

⁵⁹ London, 2020.

⁶⁰ Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 77 FF.

⁶¹ George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, 55 FF.

Monuments Known Dated 71/691'. Both articles were published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* in April 1930 and April 1932, respectively. Al-Hawwārī conducted some of his studies alongside Gaston Wiet, the aforementioned French scholar.⁶²

Aida Aref, another Arab scholar, studied a collection of Kufic writings on stones from North Africa, which was published by Luzac & Company in London in 1967.⁶³

Ibrāhīm Ğum'ah was an Egyptian pioneer who specialised in this field and was awarded a doctorate from Cairo University in 1943. His thesis was published in 1969 in a book entitled *Dirāsah fī Taṭṭawwur al-Kitabāt 'alā al-ʿAḡḡār fī Miṣr fī al-Qurūn al-Ḥamsah al-ʿAūwlā Li-ʿI-Hiḡrah*. ʿAbd al-Raḡmān Muḡammad, ʿAbd al-Tawwāb and Solange Ory studied a collection of tombstones in Aswan, Egypt. He published his study in the three-volume *Stèles Islamiques de la nécropole d'Assouan*.⁶⁴

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the study of Kufic inscriptions on tombstones began relatively late, despite the pioneering work of the Meccan historian, Taqī ʿl-Dīn al-Fāsī (d.832/1428) and his contemporary, Ğamāl al Dīn al-Šaybī (d.837/1433). Perhaps the first study, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, is that by Ḥasan al-Bāšā from the University of Riyadh (currently King Saud University) entitled 'ʿAhamiyyat Šawāhid al-Qubūr Ka-Mašdar Li-Tārīḡ al-Ĝazīrah al-ʿArabiyyah Fi ʿI-ʿAṣr al-ʿIslāmī maʿa Maḡmūʿat al-šawāhid bi-ʿI-Muḡhaf al-ʿAṭarī bi-Kulliyat al-ʿĀdāb - Ğāmiʿat al-Riyād', which was originally a paper presented in the first symposium on the history of the Arabian Peninsula. The deliberations of the symposium were published in a book entitled *Mašādir Tārīḡ al-Ĝazīrah al-ʿArabiyyah*.⁶⁵

Ḥasan al-Bāšā's work was followed by Muḡammad al-Fi'r who was awarded a master's degree from ʿUmm al-Qūrā University in Mecca on the subject of lapidary Kufic inscriptions, and his thesis was published in a book entitled *Taṭṭawwur al-*

⁶² Cf. El-Hawary et Wiet, "Inscriptions et Monuments de la mecque: Ḥaram et Ka'ba", *Publications de l'Institut français d'Archéologie orientale*, du Caire, Quatrième partie arabe, Cairo, 1985.

⁶³ Arif. *Arabic Lapidary Kūfic in Africa*. London: Luzac and Company Ltd., 1967

⁶⁴ Published by Institut Français D'Archéologie Orientale Du Caire, 1986.

⁶⁵ Published by King Saud University, Riyadh, 1399/1979.

*Kitābāt wa-ʿI-Nuqūš fī-ʿI-Ḥiğāz muḍu Fağr al-ʿIslām ḥattā Muntaşaf al-Qarn al-Sabiʿ al-Ḥiğrī.*⁶⁶

Muḥammad al-Fiʿr was followed by Saʿad al-Rāšid, who studied two tombstones inscribed in beautiful Kufic calligraphy that dated back to the late 3rd/9th and early 4th/10th centuries, i.e. the period to which the collection in this research dates back. They were published in *King ʿAbdulazīz University’s Journal* in 1991,⁶⁷ and we have not ruled out that they are from al-Mʿalā Cemetery due to the close similarity between both sets of inscriptions.

Mūḍī al-Buqamī was awarded a master’s degree from the Department of Archaeology at King Saud University, and her thesis was published in a book entitled *Nuqūš ʿIslāmiyyah Šāhidiyyah bī-Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭaniyyah.*⁶⁸ She was followed by her colleague, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAlī al-Zahrānī, who was awarded a doctorate also from the Department of Archaeology at King Saud University, and his thesis was published in a book entitled *Kitābāt ʿIslāmiyyah min Makkah al-Mukarramah.*⁶⁹ This collection, which has been studied by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Zahrānī, belongs to the inscriptions in al-Maʿlāh’s Cemetery, which is preserved in the Ḥuzām Palace Museum in Jeddah. There are 100 of them, and it is the first collection of al-Maʿlāh Cemetery inscriptions to be published, to the best of my knowledge.

ʿAhmad b. ʿUmar al-Zaylaʿī studied lapidary Kufic inscriptions, and some of his works are as follows:

1. Šawādid al-Qubūr al-ʿIslāmiyyah fī Dār al-ʿĀṭār al-ʿIslāmiyyah fī ʿl-Kuwayt – was translated into English by Dr Venetia Porter of the British Museum, and it was published by the Ministry of Information in Kuwait in 1989.
2. Nuqūš ʿIslāmiyyah min Ḥamḍanah bī-Wādī ʿUlyab – published by King Fahd National Library in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
3. Al-Ḥuluf wa-ʿI-Ḥalīf: Āṭāru-humā wa-Nuqūšu-humā al-ʿIslāmiyyah – published by El-khaled offset in Riyadh in 1997.

⁶⁶ Published by Tihāmah Company, Jeddah, 1984.

⁶⁷ Al-Rāšid, “Naqšān Islāmiyyah Min Mağmūʿat al-Šayḥ al-ʿUbikān”, 59–81.

⁶⁸ Published by Maktabat al-Malik Fahad al-Waṭaniyyah, 1999.

⁶⁹ Published by the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies, 2003.

4. Aḥmad al-Zaylaʿī has other research published in the Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies under the title ‘Calligraphy and Calligraphers in ʿAšm’, which deals with the works of four inscribers who left their fingerprints on a collection of inscriptions found in the Islamic City of ʿAšm, dependent of the Emirate of Mecca, about 300 km to the south of Mecca itself. Aḥmad al-Zaylaʿī attributed a school for each of these inscribers with its own remarkable and independent style of writing and ornament, which includes:

- School of Moḥammad b. al-Ṭufayl (1st/2nd/7th/8th centuries).
- School of Aḥmad al-Ḥaffār (3rd/9th century).
- School of Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn (3rd/9th century).
- School of Yaʿlā b. Mūsā (5th/11th century).

Each school is distinguished by its own characteristics in terms of writing style and decoration⁷⁰. Al-Zaylaʿī’s other research is listed in the sources and references in the bibliography.

More Saudi scholars have studied lapidary inscriptions, but their attention focused on what is known as personal memories. These are graffiti and the like that are scattered on the mountains throughout the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and are abundant. They are texts that might have been written by shepherds or travellers and are mixed texts with few lines and scarce contents, and most of them date to either the 1st/7th century or the 2nd/8th century. The most prominent scholars who have studied study these writings are Saʿad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Rašid,⁷¹ Nāṣir b. ʿAlī al-Ḥārīṭī⁷² and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al- Ṭunayyān.⁷³

Carine Juvin has very useful research published in English in the book *Roads of Arabia*, which was translated into Arabic and entitled ‘Tombstones of al-Mʿalāh Cemetery in Mecca’. It includes 16 inscribed tombstones, of which 10 are inscribed in

⁷⁰ al-Zaylaʿī, “Calligraphy and Calligraphers in ʿAšm-Saudi Arabia”, 243–255.

⁷¹ Al-Rašid was a professor in Islamic Archaeology and worked in the Department of Archaeology at King Saud University. He then became Deputy Minister of Antiquities and Museum, under the Ministry of Education in Riyadh and worked as a consultant in the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities.

⁷² Al-Ḥārīṭī was a professor in the Department of History at ʿUmm al-Qurā University in Mecca until his death in 2014.

⁷³ Al-Tunayyān is a professor in the Department of Archaeology at King Saud University.

Kufic calligraphy that is closely related to the inscriptions of the collection at hand in time and place.⁷⁴ The details in Juvin's study are very useful for this research as we agree about the lack of tombstone inscriptions in al-M[°]alāh Cemetery dated during the study period and that the first inscription dated from Mecca included in the book *Aḥḡār al-M[°]alāh Šāhidīyyah* is inscription no. 201, dated 304/916.⁷⁵ However, there is another dated inscription that Juvin did not note, which is inscription no. 112 in the same book and no. 38 in my collection, and its date is 291/ 903–904.⁷⁶ Juvin also agrees with me in the uniqueness of the inscriptions found in the Islamic city of [°]Ašm, located 300 km south of Mecca, and their similarity to the al-M[°]alāh inscriptions but not in terms of their early dates, which are 262/875, 285/898 and 289/902, respectively, nor the inscribers' signatures, which is a preliminary statistic as they are four inscriptions.⁷⁷

It can be deduced from reviewing Juvin's study that my collection, which relates to the 3rd/4th and 9th/10th centuries, precede the period in which the inscriptions of al-M[°]alāh Cemetery overlaps with the inscriptions of the Fāṭimīd Egypt, identified by Juvin as the periods of 432–478/1040–1085, i.e. the 5th/11th century.⁷⁸ The remaining inscriptions in Juvin's study, published in the book *Roads of Arabia*, are in *Naskhi* or *Thuluth* calligraphy, and they are not related to the collection in this research in terms of writing styles or being affected by the pilgrimage certificates dated 594/1198.⁷⁹

The Rock inscriptions

Whoever traces the locations of the rock inscriptions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will note that they are so numerous and widespread that you rarely travel around without encountering a large number of them in the mountains, on the edges of valleys, on fixed rocks near the fountains and the ancient road stations. Several studies address these rock inscriptions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Perhaps the earliest of these

⁷⁴ Juvin, "Tombstones of al-Ma[°]la Cemetery", 502–13.

⁷⁵ Juvin, "Tombstones of al-Ma[°]la Cemetery", 497; Cf. Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *Aḥḡār al-Ma[°]lāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 234.

⁷⁶ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *Aḥḡār al-Ma[°]lāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 142.

⁷⁷ Juvin, "Tombstones of al-Ma[°]la Cemetery", 497.

⁷⁸ Juvin, "Tombstones of al-Ma[°]la Cemetery", 498.

⁷⁹ Juvin, "Tombstones of al-Ma[°]la Cemetery", 498, 515–521.

is by Muḥammad Ḥamidullah who collected inscriptions from Sal^c mountain in Medina during his visit in February 1939. He wrote about the inscriptions in a distinguished paper that he presented at Oxford University on May 11 of the same year, and it was published in the *Islamic Culture* journal,⁸⁰ which is one of the most reliable sources for studying Arabic calligraphy and its development in Hijaz, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.⁸¹ Muḥammad Ḥamidullah collected and published rock inscriptions from Hijaz, and this work was followed by ʿUṭmān Rustum who studied inscriptions from the Ranuna valley near Medina as well as other inscriptions close to Bīr ʿUrwah and al-Furayš in Medina, which he published in Egypt in 1948⁸².

Aḥmad Ḥusayn Šaraf al-Dīn studied rock inscriptions collected from different sites on the well-known Zubaydah road between Baghdād and Mecca and published them in the *ʿAṭlāl* periodical, which is issued by the Department of Antiquities and Museums at the Ministry of Education.⁸³ Subsequently, studying these types of inscriptions continued until dozens of studies were completed that dealt with hundreds or even thousands of rock inscriptions scattered in different parts of the Kingdom.

The most prominent of these studies was by Saʿad al-Rāšid who collected rock inscriptions from the site of Rawāwah, near Medina. He collected 55 rock inscriptions dating back to the 1st and 2nd/7th and 8th centuries and published them in a book entitled *Kitābat Islāmiyyah Ġayr Manšūrah min Rawāwah bi-ʿI-Medīnah al-Munawwarah*.⁸⁴ They included 47 inscriptions with the names of the owners inscribed, all of whom were males, which was deduced by the places the rocks were inscribed and indicated that the men might have been shepherds, travellers, hunters, recreationists or others.

⁸⁰ Hamidullah, “Some Arabic Inscriptions of Madinah of the Early years of Hijra”, 427–439, see fig. 18 below.

⁸¹ Al-Rāšid, *Kitābat Islāmiyyah*, 1.

⁸² Rustem, “Rock Inscriptions in Hegaz”, 1–29.

⁸³ Šaraf al-Dīn, “al-Nuqūš al-Islāmiyyah bi-Darb Zubaydah”, 73–74.

⁸⁴ Published by Dār al-Waṭan Lī-ʿI-Našr wa-ʿI-ʿIām, Riyadh, 1313/1993, see fig. 22 below.

It was also noted that eight of them had their names were inscribed after the words *wakatab* (he wrote),⁸⁵ and some of the names were related to senior companions of the Prophet, including ʿUmar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb (d. 24/644).⁸⁶

Saʿad al-Rāšid also studied 60 rock inscriptions collected from villages around Mecca, and they were published in a book entitled *Kitābāt Islāmiyyah min Makkah al-Mukarramah*.⁸⁷ They are related to the inscriptions of the 1st and 2nd / 7th and 8th centuries, and all of them bear the names of men except for one inscription, no. 39, that bears the name ʿUmm ʿAbd Allāh bint Ḥudāš. Four are dated from the Umayyad era and only one inscription is dated in the Abbasid era, i.e. 189/805. In this last study,⁸⁸ Saʿad al-Rāšid concluded that ‘All the inscriptions, the subject of this study, constitute important scientific material to study the development of Arabic calligraphy on one hand, and the civilizational settlement and cultural position on the other hand in the first and second centuries, especially since the geographical location of these inscriptions is in Mecca region which is of the religious and scientific status’.⁸⁹

One of the most prominent efforts in the study of rock inscriptions is by the comprehensive archaeological survey team at the Department of Antiquities and Museums at the Ministry of Education in 1410/1989. They surveyed rock inscriptions in Bīšah valley in the ʿAsīr region, photographing and documenting 128 rock inscriptions that were published in the *Aṭlāl* periodical, which was issued by the Department of Antiquities and Museums itself in 1990⁹⁰.

Našir al-Ḥārīṭī conducted a survey of the rock inscriptions in the Taif Mountains, near the city of Taif, the regional capital of the province. He counted 118 rock inscriptions scattered over several places within the province, most of which date back to the 1st/7th century and a few of them to the 2nd and 3rd/8th and 9th centuries. al-Ḥārīṭī studied and

⁸⁵ Al-Rāšid, *Kitābāt Islāmiyyah*, the page is not numbered cf. The introduction of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿAnṣārī.

⁸⁶ Al-Rāšid, *Kitābāt Islāmiyyah*, 123.

⁸⁷ Riyadh, 1416/1995.

⁸⁸ Al-Rāšid, *Kitābāt Islāmiyyah min Makkah al-Mukarramah*, 1696, 172.

⁸⁹ Al-Rāšid, *Kitābāt Islāmiyyah min Makkah al-Mukarramah*, 172.

⁹⁰ Kabāwī et al., “Taqrīr Mabḍʿī ʿAn Maṣḥ al-Rusūm al-Ṣaḥriyyah”, 41–51.

photographed the inscriptions, and they were published in a book entitled *al-Nuqūš al-ʿArabiyyah al-Mubakkirah bi-Manṭiqat al-Taʿif*.⁹¹

In an important step for researchers in the field of early Islamic rock writings and inscriptions, Muḥammad al-Tunayyān selected 30 dated rock inscriptions from hundreds of inscriptions that had previously been studied and published in multiple books and periodicals, especially those dating back to the 1st/7th century, to put them in one place so that it was easy for students to refer to them as necessary. He then published them in a book entitled *Nuqūš al-Qarn al-ʿAwwal al-Hiġrī (al-Qarn al-Sābiʿ al-Milādī al-Muʿarraḥah fi-ʿI-Mamlakah al-ʿArabiyyah al-Suʿūdiyyah (Dirāsah Taḥlīliyyah Ġadīdah)*,⁹² which is a very useful book and one of the most important sources of ancient dated rock inscriptions from the century that is easy to refer to when comparing the inscriptions published in this book and new rock inscriptions that will be found to determine the approximate date of the period to which they belong.

One of the inscriptions that al-Tunayyān included in his book is the famous Zuhair inscription,⁹³ which is the oldest rock inscription dated in the year 24/644 and has been circulated by scholars within and outside the Kingdom as an important document that gives a view of Hijazi calligraphy in its early beginnings.⁹⁴ However, the Zuhair inscription is no longer the oldest dated document as it has been preceded by the Salamah inscription dated in the year 23/643–644, which was found by the Japanese mission at the al-Muṭallaṭ site, 50 km to the northwest of the City of Yanbuʿ al-Naḥl in the Medina region.⁹⁵

This last inscription is preceded by another rock inscription studied by Muṣallih al-Muryḥī in research that he contributed to a seminar at the Saudi Society for Archaeological Studies in the Ḥāʿil region in the north of Saudi Arabia in 2020 and will be published in the seminar’s proceedings. This inscription dates from one of the battles of the Prophet Muḥammad, known as Ḍāt al-Salāsīl, which took place in the year 8/629 and featured ʿAbū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (d. 13/634) who became the first caliph

⁹¹ Al-Taʿif, *al-Laġnah al-ʿUlyā – li-ʿI Tanšīṭ al-Siyāhī*, 1415/1994.

⁹² Riyadh, Maṭābiʿ al-Ḥālid, 2015.

⁹³ Al-Tunayyān, *Nuqūš al-Qarn al-Hiġrī al-ʿAwwal*, 45–46, Pl. 2; see also al-Murayḥī, *ʿAṣl al-Ḥaṭṭ al-ʿArabī*, 105, see fig. 20 below.

⁹⁴ Al-Tunayyān, *Nuqūš al-Qarn al-Hiġrī al-ʿAwwal*, 46.

⁹⁵ Al-Murayḥī, *Aṣl al-Ḥaṭṭ al-ʿArabī*, 103, see fig. 19 below.

after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad and ʿUmar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb (d. 24/644), the second caliph after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad.⁹⁶

Despite the importance of the study of the rock inscriptions and their use as evidence of the form of writing and its development in the dates in which they were inscribed, there is no way to compare the writing on the tombstones and the rock inscriptions that are scattered on the mountainsides in many regions of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The inscription or writing on tombstones is carried out by professional calligraphers who have their own writing styles that are performed according to generally accepted professional rules. They also use their own sharp tools to write on selected stones brought from the mountains that have smooth surfaces suitable for writing.⁹⁷

Rock writing is mostly carried out by shepherds, farmers and travellers on the mountainsides on rough, rocky surfaces that may not be suitable to write on. It is usually performed in narrow spaces with previously inscribed texts that may overlap and mix with each other so that it is difficult to differentiate between old texts and relatively recent texts. The texts themselves are short and succinct; some consist of two or three words, some do not exceed five words, and you rarely find a large text that contains anything of significant historical value. The texts also often only bear the names of men; the presence of women is an exception because it was not in their nature to move between mountains and valleys to graze, plough or hunt as these were occupations rarely practised by women. Furthermore, learning to read and write was not a popular pastime with women at that time. In terms of the date of the Islamic rock inscriptions, most of those who inscribed their names on the rocks were common people, and they did not put the date when they inscribed the rocks unless they were associated with certain events, such as the death of Caliph ʿUmar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb in the case of the Zuhair inscription.

Al-Maʿlāh Cemetery

Mecca has many old cemeteries, such as al-ʿUlyā Cemetery, also known as al-Ḥurmāniyyah, due to being adjacent to the Garden of Ḥurmān. This cemetery existed

⁹⁶ Ibn al-ʿAṭīr, *al-Kāmil fī ʿI-Tārīḥ*, II, 154.

⁹⁷ Al-Rāšid, *Kitābāt Islāmiyyah*, 126.

before the days of the Prophet and is near the modern-day al-Ma^ʿābidah Quarter. The tomb of ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb (d. 74/693), the honoured companion of the Prophet, is also found there.⁹⁸ Other famous cemeteries include the Cemetery of the Immigrants in al-Ḥaṣḥās, which is situated close to the Quarter of al-Kuḥl in the direction of the quarter of al-Zāhir. It is currently closed; no more burials are allowed there.⁹⁹ Another famous cemetery is al-Šubaykah Cemetery, also known as al-ʿAḥlāf Cemetery, named by al-Fākihī (d. 272/885).¹⁰⁰

But of all the cemeteries in Mecca, al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery is considered the oldest and most sacred for the residents, and it serves as the sample base for this research. Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery, also referred to as the Cemetery of the People of Mecca and al-Muṭayyibīn Cemetery, is situated at about one kilometre to the northeast of the Holy Mosque, precisely at the base of al-Ḥuḡūn Mountain. It is a highly esteemed Cemetery, which the Prophet Muḥammad described as ‘a fine Cemetery’¹⁰¹. (see illustrations nos. 3, 4, 5 and 6).

Some of the great companions of the Prophet Muḥammad were buried there, most prominently Lady Ḥadiḡah, the first wife of the Prophet Muḥammad and the mother of his children. The children of the companions of the Prophet and the followers of the companions were also buried there.

All different classes of Mecca were buried there, even the sharifs or emirs of Mecca who ruled there for 11 centuries. The pilgrims who die in Mecca are buried there as well. Some Muslims leaders have requested to be carried to Mecca after their deaths and buried in al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery to obtain the blessings of that cemetery. An example is al-Ḥurrah ʿAlam, mother of Maṣṣūr b. Ḡayyāš b. Naḡāḥ, who died in Zabīd, the capital of the state of B. Naḡāḥ in modern-day Yemen in the Islamic month of Ramaḍān 546/1152.¹⁰² Her body was moved to be buried in this sacred cemetery. Another is al-Dāʿī ʿUmrān b. Sabaʿ, the ruler of the state of B. Zurayʿ in modern-day Aden who died in his capital city in the month of Rabīʿ I 561/February 1166. His

⁹⁸ Al-ʿAzraqī, *ʿAḥbār Makkah*, II:109–110; al-Zahrānī, *Kitābāt Islāmiyyah*, 30.

⁹⁹ Al-Zahrānī, *Kitābāt Islāmiyyah*, 31.

¹⁰⁰ Al-Fākihī, *ʿAḥbār Makkah*, IV, 62.

¹⁰¹ Al-ʿAzraqī, *ʿAḥbār Makkah*, II, 211; al-Fākihī, *ʿAḥbār Makkah*, IV, 50.

¹⁰² Al-Šaybī, *Al-Šaraf al-ʿA^ʿlā*, 68–70.

remains were moved to Mecca to be buried in that famous cemetery.¹⁰³ Burials continue in this cemetery even today.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery is considered one of the most famous cemeteries for its plentiful tombstones, the number of historical facts recorded on them and the beautiful artwork of the inscriptions. At some time, the age of the inscriptions at al-Ma^ʿlāh was lost due to the tombstones being moved, either to other locations or for use in buildings and well linings¹⁰⁴. Some tombstones were broken down or had their writings erased due to being used as grinding stones for medical herbs and seeds. What remains now is thanks to the efforts of the Ministry of Antiquities and Museums, as well as the Ministry of Education, who saved these great treasures from damage and loss.

Stones provision and writing technique

It is known that all the stones inscribed thereon and used as tombstones in the al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery were brought from Mecca's nearby mountains. They were mostly basalt stones, which are abundant in those mountains, some of which were large, some small, but they mostly had flat surfaces suitable for writing and decorating. Animals carried the suitable stones from the mountains to the inscribers' shops to be written on.

As well as determining the number of lines to be written, the inscriber would begin to write using materials that were suitable for use, such as coal, ink or any liquid material in a colour that distinguished it from the colour of the stone. When the writing was complete, the inscriber would engrave the stone with a chisel, according to Grohmann.¹⁰⁵ There were two methods of engraving: deep engraving or project engraving. Deep engraving was excavating or cutting letters into the stone, and projecting engraving was engraving on the surface of the stone, leaving the letters protruding. This was a much more difficult method as it required patience, accuracy and skill. The first method was characterised by the accuracy and agility of the letters, whereas the second method was characterised by broad letters and the distance between lines and words in the same line. In this sample of inscriptions, nos. 1, 3–9,

¹⁰³ Al-Šaybī, *Al-Šaraf al-ʿAlā*, 63–66.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. figures 12–15 in the appendices below.

¹⁰⁵ Grohmann, *Expédition*, 20.

11–14, 16–28, 30–34, 36–37, 39–40, 43–51 and 53–59 represent tombstones inscribed by deep engraving. Projecting inscription is represented by numbers 2, 10, 15, 29, 35, 38, 41–42 and 52.

Prior determination of the area to be engraved on the surface of the stone was needed so that some parts of a word were written on one line and the other parts were written on another line. It is noteworthy that the names of the deceased were sometimes wide, enlarged and covered a larger area despite the small number of words. In contrast, when there were more words, the letters were usually tiny and stacked in a narrower space on the stone. The explanation for this is that the inscribers displayed pre-prepared tombstones in their shops, where *al-basmala* verses (in the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful) or the opening supplications were inscribed and a blank space was left in the middle to write the name of the deceased person. A prayer for the Prophet Muḥammad and other familiar verses were inscribed at the end. When someone came to purchase a tombstone, the inscriber would add the name of the deceased person and use appropriate lettering to suit the length and breadth of the space in the middle. Examples of this type of writing can be seen in many inscriptions, for instance, no. 42 in this collection, numbers 263, 278, 311, 381, 393, 446, 497b and 398 of al-Ma^ʿlāh's inscriptions,¹⁰⁶ numbers 37–39 of al-Sirrayn inscriptions¹⁰⁷ and numbers uv3, uv13, uv19 and uv29 of Dahlak inscriptions.¹⁰⁸

The date of death was not often considered for the pre-prepared tombstones, but it was sometimes written in smaller letters outside the text.¹⁰⁹ This type of pre-inscribed tombstone can still be seen today in some of the specialist shops in some Islamic cities, such as the historic city of Fez in the Kingdom of Morocco. However, there are also fully inscribed, coordinated tombstones that include the date, which is often written at the end of the text. These inscriptions are estimated to be for deceased people who settled in the city and whose tombstones were inscribed at the request of the heirs after their death and then erected on their graves days or weeks after their burial.

¹⁰⁶ Āl-Ḥalīfah et al., *Aḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlah al-Šahidiyyah*, 298, 313, 346, 417, 543–544.

¹⁰⁷ Al-Zayla^ʿī, “The Southern Area of the Emirate of Makkah”, 449–450.

¹⁰⁸ Oman, *La Necropoli Islamic Di Dahlak*, I, 68, 70–72, 75; II, 12; III, 7, 22–23, 32–33, 46.

¹⁰⁹ Juvīn, “Tombstones of al-Ma^ʿla Cemetery in Mecca”, 497.

Al-Ma'ālāh Cemetery inscription infiltration

Al-Ma'ālāh Cemetery is open to anyone who would like to enter, which has resulted in some of the inscribed tombstones being taken by some irresponsible individuals in the antiquities departments, either to be kept in their own collections or to be sold to the amateurs of antiques and artefacts acquisition.

The cemetery has also been expanded several times by the municipality of Mecca, and in each expansion, funeral inscriptions that have been found in ancient graves have usually been collected by municipal workers in the presence of specialists from the Mecca Antiquities Authority. After extracting two collections of inscribed tombstones from al-Ma'ālāh Cemetery and depositing them in the Museum of Antiquities and Heritage in Mecca, Nasir al-Ḥārīṭī published them in two books, one in 2005 and the second in 2007. When celebrating the inauguration of the National Museum in Riyadh, a collection of tombstones from al-Ma'ālāh Cemetery was transported to the museum in 1419/1999 for a display.

However, the collection in this study was collected 1404/1984 and transported to the Palace of Ḥuzām Museum in Jeddah for display in the museum's galleries while the rest were preserved in the Palace's warehouse.

Documentation and preservation

The Deputy Ministry of Antiquities and Museums has transferred al-Ma'ālāh Cemetery's inscriptions from Mecca to Jeddah and preserved and documented the collections in two ways. The first was by producing a catalogue (entitled °Aḥḡār al-Ma'ālāh al-Šahidiyyah bi-Makkah al-Mukarramah) though without any analytical study of the inscriptions) removing them from the cemetery and displaying them in public museums. In the case of printing, the Deputy Ministry of Antiquities and Museums has had the collection photographed and reproduced by tracings and made them available to scholars and researchers so they could conduct specialised studies regarding the description and analysis of the collection's historical contents, the artistic and aesthetic value of the contents and the calligraphic and decorative characteristics of the inscriptions.

The task of preparing the catalogue was undertaken by a team headed by Ḥalīfah al-Ḥalīfah, one of the principal researchers in the agency, under the supervision of

Professor Saʿad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Rāšīd, who was then the deputy head of the Ministry of Antiquities and Museums. The team included a painter and a photographer, and the task of the team – as stipulated in the introduction to the catalogue – was restricted to recording, documenting, photographing and transcribing all the tombstones. The inscriptions on the tombstones were copied on tracing paper, which facilitated the readability, ease and clarity of the letters and their inscribed decorations. The means by which the tombstones were preserved made them authentic documents that are reliable for archaeological, historical, cultural, social, studies.

According to the list of contents, the catalogue included 591 inscribed tombstones distributed over eight centuries, from the 2nd/8th to the 9th/15th centuries, most of which are inscribed in Kufic. Others were inscribed in cursive *nash* and *tuluṭ*. The number of tombstone inscriptions pertaining to women is 244, some of whom were of local origin, while others were from families that migrated to Mecca and settled there, becoming part of its social fabric. From this number, 59 were chosen as the sample set for this study.

As for the second method of preservation, many of the tombstones were moved and displayed in public museums. Some of these were on display in the National Museum in Riyadh, which was inaugurated on Šawwāl 5, 1419/January 22, 1999, and others were put in storerooms or displayed in the Ḥuzām Palace Museum in Jeddah.

Ḥuzām Palace in Jeddah

The historical Ḥuzām Palace is located in al-Nuzlah al-Yamāniyyah District, which is one of the old districts of Jeddah, the main port of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the eastern coast of the Red Sea. The palace was built in 1928 during the reign of King ʿAbd-ʿAlzīz (d. 1373/1953), the founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and then inaugurated in 1932, five years after construction began¹¹⁰ (see illustration no. 7). It is called Ḥuzām Palace due to the abundance of lavender, *ḥuzāmā*, surrounding the building.¹¹¹ At the time of its construction, it was the largest and most luxurious building in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

¹¹⁰ Al-Rāšīd et al., *Āṭār Manṭiqat Makkah al-Mukarramah*, 218.

¹¹¹ Tawfīq Waṭaṣṣīl Bawwābatay Qaṣr Ḥuzām, 4.

The palace consists of two floors and has building annexes on the southern and western sides, and it is surrounded by a three-metre-high wall.¹¹² The palace has a main entrance, which is a high gate consisting of two opposite towers that are similar in architectural and decorative design, each with a height of 24.88 metres. The gate opening is topped by an 18.5-metre-long arched bridge, and this opening is closed by a movable door made of iron wrought with geometric decorations (see illustration no.8). The gate door consists of three sections: a middle section of two 1.5-metre-wide door leaves and two 60-centimetre-wide end sections. On the two central sides of the gate, there are two wrought-iron lanterns. A picture of the main gate was printed on the Saudi riyal in 1955.¹¹³ (see illustration no.9). The palace also has a smaller gate, 31 metres wide and 10 metres high. This gate has two entrances with two pointed arches placed on four circular columns.¹¹⁴ (see illustration no. 10).

The palace was built with a stone known locally as *al-manqabī*, which is a crushed limestone from private quarries near the Red Sea. This stone was used along with cement, and wood. From the north, the palace overlooks Eid's prayer courtyard, and from the south, it overlooks al-Nuzlah al-Yamāniyyah.¹¹⁵

The palace was the residence of King ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and was used to receive state guests, senior officials and the public. It witnessed the signing of several agreements between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other countries, most notably the signing of the concession agreement for oil exploration between the Kingdom's government and Standard Oil of California. Other agreements with Britain, Kuwait, Egypt, Syria and Pakistan were also signed at the palace.¹¹⁶ After the death of King ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz in 1373/1953, his successor, King Saʿūd b. Abd al-ʿAzīz (d. 1384/1969), made it a premises for himself and his government until 1963.

In 1980, King Fahd b. Abd al-ʿAzīz (d. 1426/2005) converted it into a museum and transferred its administration to the Ministry of Antiquities and Museums, which

¹¹² Al-Rāšid, *Āṭār Manṭiqat Makkah al-Mukarramah*, 218.

¹¹³ 'Qaṣr Ḥuzām (Jeddah)', 4; *Muthaf al-ʿUmulāt*, 284, iṣāl Ḥağğ no. I.

¹¹⁴ Tawḥīq Waṭasğīl Bawwābatay Qaṣr Ḥuzām, 5–8.

¹¹⁵ Al-Rāšid, *Āṭār Manṭiqat Makkah al-Mukarramah*, 218; 'Qaṣr Ḥuzām (Jeddah)', 5.

¹¹⁶ 'Qaṣr Ḥuzām (Jeddah)', 4.

worked to restore part of the front of the palace. It was reinaugurated in March 1415/1995.¹¹⁷

The Ḥuzām Palace Museum is one of the most prominent regional museums in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and it includes six main halls based on the dates of their contents, from antiquity, through the Islamic ages, and up to modern times. This study is interested in the Islamic Ages Hall, which is located on the second floor and includes various exhibits from the beginning of Islam to modern times. It displays depictions of the spread of Islam, the holy places in Mecca, the pilgrimage routes to Mecca, ʿUmar Mosque in al-Ġawf (in northern Saudi Arabia), and several pottery and glass vessels. It also displays samples of Islamic coins in addition to the inscribed tombstones brought from al-Maʿlāh Cemetery, the subject of this study.¹¹⁸

The other five halls are incidentally the Prehistoric Hall, the Jeddah Hall, the King Abd al-ʿAzīz Hall, the King Saʿūd Hall, the Folklore Hall. In the museum's courtyard, there is a group of large rocks with rock art inscriptions brought from the northern outskirts of Jeddah, an area known as ʿUbḥur al-Šamāliyyah. These rock art inscriptions date to the Stone Age.¹¹⁹

Written in stone: Kufic epigraphy in Mecca and its schools

With the scholarship and collections addressed, we can now look at what we have come to understand about Kufic funerary inscriptions in Mecca. As mentioned, Mecca was famous for Arabic calligraphy and its perfection of the craft. Mecca became an important centre for Kufic funerary inscriptions, leading to an artistic heritage. This heritage is exemplified in the discovery and storage of hundreds of tombstones inscribed in Kufic outside those in the catalogue or stored and displayed in the Ḥuzām Palace Museum. There are others on display in local private museums, such as ʿAbd al-Raʿūf Ḥalīl in Jeddah or preserved in warehouses (illustration no. 11). Others have been smuggled outside Mecca, according to trustworthy narrators. News reports often

¹¹⁷ ‘Qaṣr Ḥuzām (Jeddah)’, 6.

¹¹⁸ ‘Qaṣr Ḥuzām (Jeddah)’, 7.

¹¹⁹ ‘Qaṣr Ḥuzām (Jeddah)’, 7–8.

inform us of the discovery of inscribed tombstones in Mecca, especially following every new expansion that takes place in and around al-Maʿlāh Cemetery.

A factor that may have helped increase the numbers of tombstones in Mecca was the availability of raw materials at the time they were inscribed, including the volcanic rocks from the mountains surrounding the city and in the area adjacent to the Holy Mosque.¹²⁰ These areas contained stone quarries or deposits of rock, including basalt, sandstone and soapstone steatite, suitable for building houses, inscription stones and other purposes. Another factor for the continued flourishing of tombstone inscriptions was their very popularity in Mecca. Indeed, some pilgrims even requested such tombstones and carried them back to the graves of their relatives in far countries in exchange for fees.¹²¹

The fame of Arabic epigraphic artists started in Mecca, and their skills were handed down through the generations. The craft was a speciality of the people of Mecca, along with cutting and trading in stones, as highlighted by the historian al-Kurdī: ‘The people of Mecca had amazing skills in carving raw stones in any form they needed. There were rough, smooth, round, rectangular, cylindrical, conical, tall, short and thick ones, and they all could be decorated or plain’.¹²²

Meccan calligraphers

It was that professional mobility and the inherited technical expertise which had the greatest impact on the emergence of several professional calligraphers or scribes in Mecca who mastered the art of writing on stones, mastered their intonation and decoration, and signed their names on some of the tombstones that they inscribed. Although the inscriptions attributed to Mecca, generally, constitute one school, some differences distinguish one calligrapher from another, who may have his own school, including other scribes, who may have their own unique school.

The following list presents the scribes who were identified either by their personal signatures or their distinct art styles. Their works are from the 3rd/9th century, which

¹²⁰ Al-Zahrānī, *Kitābāt Islāmiyyah*, 25.

¹²¹ Al-Zaylaʿī, “Al-Ḥaṭṭāt, al-Makkī”, 241–277.

¹²² Al-Kurdī, *Al-Tārīḥ, al-Qawīm*, 262–265.

became known as the era of the greatest refinement of the Kufic script, according to Ğumʿah.¹²³

1. Ibrāhīm

The name of this calligrapher appears on tombstone number 194 of al-Maʿlāh Cemetery, which belonged to the deceased Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad b. ʿInabah b. al-Ḥasan. The inscription of this tombstone is beautiful and was decorated with a *miḥrāb*-shaped frame and half palmate tree shapes.¹²⁴

2. Ibn Yaḥyā

This name was written on tombstone number 451 of al-Maʿlāh Cemetery, which belonged to the deceased ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Nāsiḥ. This is unique and one of the most beautiful inscriptions in the collection, with distinguished care in both the lettering and decoration. It had a *miḥrāb*-shaped frame crowned by plant-like decorations.¹²⁵

3. ʿAḥmad b. Qurrah

The name of this calligrapher appeared twice in the inscriptions of al-Maʿlāh Cemetery. The first appearance is on the bottom of tombstone number 258, which belonged to the deceased Fāṭimah bint ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Maḥzūmiyyah, whose inscription is part of the collection under study.¹²⁶ The second appearance is on the top of tombstone number 448, which belonged to the late al-Qāsim b. al-ʿAzhar b. al-Qāsim.¹²⁷ Both of these inscriptions are beautiful with certain unique characteristics.

4. ʿAḥmad b. ʿIshāq

This name was found on two tombstones in al-Maʿlāh Cemetery: number 220, belonging to the deceased Yaʿqūb b. ʿIshāq b. Ismāʿīl al-Baṣrī,¹²⁸ and number 230, belonging to the late Maḥmūdah bint Muḥammad b. ʿUṭmān, who is also one of the

¹²³ Ğumʿah, *Dirāsah fī Taṭawwur*, 183.

¹²⁴ Āl-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 227, see fig. 16 below.

¹²⁵ Āl-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 496.

¹²⁶ Āl-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 293.

¹²⁷ Āl-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 493.

¹²⁸ Āl-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 254.

deceased women included in this study. The inscriptions by °Aḥmad b. °Ishāq are characterised by their beauty and neatness. One of its special characteristics is how the letter *mīm* is inscribed to appear like a shining sun or a sunflower, as will be discussed later.

5. Ḥammād

The name of this calligrapher appeared on tombstone number 468, which is thought to be a special mass-group grave for the family of B. al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm b. Ismāʿīl b. Ibrāhīm b. Ismāʿīl b. Ibrāhīm b. Ḥasan b. Ḥasan b. °Alī b. °Abī-Ṭālib. This scribe's methods were beautiful in both the letters and decoration.¹²⁹

6. B. °Abī Ḥaramī

During a later period of 3rd/9th century, the name of the Meccan calligrapher °Abd al-Raḥmān b. °Abī Ḥaramī (d. 645/1247) appeared on multiple inscriptions in Mecca and the Dahlak Island along with his son °Aḥmad and his nephew Muḥammad b. Barakāt. Their names appeared in different forms, and these inscriptions are solid evidence that tombstones were made to order for the pilgrims and then exported outside Mecca to Dahlak Island.¹³⁰

7. The calligraphers of °Ašm Region

There were four distinguished calligraphers in the region of °Ašm, in Mecca Province. The first is Muḥammad b. al-Ṭufayl, who wrote inscription number 1 belonging to the late °Umm Muḥammad b. °Abd al-Raḥmān. This is one of the earlier inscriptions in the Mecca region.¹³¹ The second is °Aḥmad al-Ḥaffār, whose name appeared on inscription number 2, which dates to the year 262/875–876 and belonged to the late °Abd Allāh b. Dāʿūd b. Saʿīd. This inscription is one of the finest Kufic writings in Hijaz from the 3rd/9th century.¹³²

The third is °Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn, whose name appeared on inscriptions number 3 and 4. Number 3 dates to the year 285/898 and carries the name of the late Maryam bint

¹²⁹ Āl-Ḥalīfah et al., *°Aḥḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 513.

¹³⁰ Al-Zaylaʿī, “Al-Ḥattāt, al-Makkī”, 241–277, see fig. 17 below.

¹³¹ Al-Zaylaʿī, “Calligraphy and Calligraphers in °Ašm, Saudi Arabia”, 30, 243–246, Fig. 5.

¹³² Al-Zaylaʿī, “Calligraphy”, 247–248, fig. 6.

Ibrāhīm b. °Abī °Umrān, and number 4 dates to the year 289/901 and bears the name of the late Muḥammad b. Ḥafṣ b. al-Mu°tamir. Both inscriptions are very well executed when compared to the works of that century.¹³³ The fourth writer is Ya°lā b. Mūsā, whose name appeared on two foundation stones, numbers 6 and 7, of a mosque, the former dating to 414/1023.¹³⁴ Ya°lā's name appeared on an earlier inscription belonging to the late Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Ġābir b. °Alī al-Sunnī in the city of al-Ḥuluf, 70 kilometres northeast of °Ašm, which was also in Mecca Province. This inscription dates to 406/1015.¹³⁵

The styles of all four are extremely similar to the works in Mecca and might be considered identical to them. This means they might have all been part of the large school of Kufic known as the Hijaz school.

8. Maḥmūd b. Mubārak al-Naqqāš

This scribe's name appeared on a tombstone in al-Ġuḥfah, in the modern-day governorate of Rābiġ, 90 kilometres northwest of the city of Mecca. The inscription dates to Ramaḍān 280 /November-December 894 and belonged to the late °Aḥmad b. Yūsuf b. Ġa°far b. Ibrāhīm, a descendant of Ġa°far b. °Abī Ṭālib.¹³⁶ This is a very beautiful inscription with the characteristic Kufic of the 3rd/9th century. According to al-Ġazīrī, it is not farfetched to say that the scribe was from Mecca and that he wrote on this tombstone in Mecca by order of the deceased's heirs, who then moved it to where the deceased was buried in their homeland.¹³⁷ It is also not an exaggeration to say that this scribe is the son of another scribe, Mubārak al-Makkī, whose name was found on tombstones in Egypt containing Meccan and Hijaz characteristics, as discussed in this study.

9. Mubārak-al-Makkī

This scribe's name and decorations were inscribed on two tombstones in Egypt. Both are dated in 243/857 and preserved in the records of the Museum of Islamic Arts in

¹³³ Al-Zayla°ī, "Calligraphy", 249–252, figs. 7 and 8.

¹³⁴ Al-Zayla°ī, "Calligraphy", 252–254, figs. 10 and 11.

¹³⁵ Al-Zayla°ī, "Calligraphy", 251–252, fig. 9.

¹³⁶ Al-Zaya°ī, "Naqshān Kufiyyān", 316–318, no. I.

¹³⁷ Al-Ġazīrī, *al-Durr al-Farā°id*, II, 1447.

Cairo, nos. 9820 and 3904. These are two of the most beautifully inscribed tombstones known of their time, in terms of both letters and decorations.¹³⁸ Ibrāhīm Ğumʿah comments that the writing of al-Makkī is considered different from the writing of Egypt of that time'.¹³⁹ He also offers two theories about their origins: either 1) they were made in Mecca then moved to Egypt, or 2) the writer himself moved from Mecca to Egypt and wrote them according to his own style with the characteristics of Meccan writing.¹⁴⁰ The first theory seems most plausible, that the inscriptions were written in Mecca and then moved to Egypt. This would be like the Dahlak Island inscriptions by Abd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbī Ḥaramī, his son ʿAḥmad and his nephew Muḥammad b. Barakāt. There is also at least one example of Dahlak Island's inscriptions in the British Museum, signed by Meccan scribe ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbī Harmī al-Makki.¹⁴¹

Final note on Meccan Kufic calligraphy

The Hijaz region, Mecca in particular, had famous scribes who signed their own names on their inscribed tombstones, as it stated above. This signing of works is a different approach from that taken by scribes from other countries, like Egypt, who were also famous for their plentiful inscriptions comma but left no signatures. As Ibrāhīm Ğumʿah comments:

"Unfortunately, we cannot find the name of any Arab calligraphers on any of their works, while we do find the names of Persian scribes on their own works. This may be due to the humility of the Arab scribes and their lack of desire for recognition or immortalizing their names. We do not have any signed Arab inscriptions except those signed by Mubārak al-Makkī, which came to Egypt from Mecca, according to Ibrāhīm Ğumʿah.¹⁴²

This is a testimony that artists of Mecca were aware of the importance of signing their magnificent works.

¹³⁸ Ğumʿah, *Dirāsah Fī Taṭawwur*, 169–175.

¹³⁹ Ğumʿah, *Dirāsah Fī Taṭawwur*, 169.

¹⁴⁰ Ğumʿah, *Dirāsah Fī Taṭawwur*, 169.

¹⁴¹ Akbarnia et al., *The Islamic World: A History in Objects*, 37.

¹⁴² Ğumʿah, *Dirāsah Fī Taṭawwur*, 156 –157.

Objectives of the study

This study aims at the following:

1. Establish the importance of the funerary inscriptions as reliable sources of historical writing;
2. Draw attention to the study of the contents on inscribed tombstones and the information that these texts can add to human knowledge that may not otherwise be available;
3. Highlight the capabilities of Meccan calligraphers and their striving for perfection in Arabic calligraphy;
4. Identify what can be called schools of calligraphy based on their signatures or patterns within the inscriptions and assess whether they are from Mecca or the regions near it;
5. Gain knowledge regarding the social structure of Meccan female society through the tombstones of deceased women of Mecca who are buried in al-Ma'lah Cemetery;
6. Identify the countries which the families of the deceased woman came and understand their settlement in Mecca;
7. Assess the reasons and factors leading to migration to Mecca and settlement there;
8. Understand the acquisition of slaves by the people of Mecca, concubinage and release from slavery based on childbirth.

Sample selection, study methodology and other notes

As stated, there are 591 tombstone inscriptions collected from al-Ma'lah Cemetery, 244 of which bear the names of deceased women. In this study, 59 inscribed tombstones of deceased women are studied in detail and assessed for their artistic, archaeological and historical value. Inscriptions of women have been chosen to maintain consistency in the material and to compensate for the lack of research on the history of women in Meccan society – especially in funerary and monumental inscriptions. This choice was made to make this an unprecedented work and to pave the way for subsequent research.

Further, the 59 inscribed tombstones were chosen for what information they could provide about women and the general population of Mecca. From the inscriptions, we can deduce the following information: titles, family trees, relations to different tribes and families, social positions and standing, and the origin of their fathers and husbands as well as whether the families were nobles, slaves, immigrants or commoners.

The selection of these inscribed tombstones was not based on the beauty of their artwork, but rather, the emphasis was on the content of the tombstone and the abundance of details recorded about the deceased women. The selection is limited to the Kufic inscriptions, which mainly to the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries, with some dated to the 2nd/8th century based on the style of writing that may represent a transition period.

The dates are determined either by the date recorded on the inscriptions or by analysing the style of the writing to estimate a date. That said, the slight differences among the styles make these estimations based on analysis and assumptions and are not to be treated as accurate proof. However, most of the chosen inscriptions belonged to the 3rd/9th century, which is the most distinguishable and easily recognisable era of Islamic inscriptions in the whole Islamic world, not only in Mecca. As stated earlier, Ibrāhīm Ğuma^ˆah called that century the era of the greatest refinement compared to the earlier and later centuries.¹⁴³

For the inscriptions on the tombstones, it is noted that they do not deviate from the prevailing pattern in many similar funerary inscriptions. The inscriptions in this collection begin with the *basmalah*, followed by one or more verses from the Quran or by other traditional invocations inspired by the Quran or the Ḥadīṭ of the Prophet Muḥammad. The name of the deceased woman then follows, with a prayer for her for mercy and forgiveness and for her to join her Prophet Muḥammad, making her among his companions in paradise. Most of the inscriptions are closed with prayers and peace upon the Prophet Muḥammad, his family and his companions. Some these inscriptions are dated, mostly at the end of the text. Some of them bear the date in the form of day/month/year, some only by month and year, and some only by year.

¹⁴³ See footnote 86.

Some of the tombstones include additional verses from the Quran, either at the bottom or framing the main text of the inscription. It has been noted that the names of the deceased are composed of long lineage chains, some containing ten names or more, especially those names that are associated with the family of the Prophet Muḥammad and his famous companions.

This research will present a description of each tombstone, where it is being preserved, its condition, the style of the writing, the dimensions of the inscribed area of the tombstone, the height of the letter *ʿalif* and the presence or absence of decorations, such as frames. Additionally, the presence of a specific date on the tombstone or its estimated date of origin will be noted, measured by centuries, half centuries or a transition period between two centuries.

For each inscription, the original Arabic text and an English translation will be provided. This will be followed by historical and palaeographic observations regarding the text, including the identification of the deceased woman, the linguistic origin of her name, whether it was a common name among Meccans or Arabs in general and whether the woman was mentioned in other historical sources. For undated inscriptions, characteristics of those inscriptions and their decorations will be compared to other date-specified or previously studied tombstones to assess their date. Finally, a general discussion will be presented regarding details of the text itself, with spelling being a key concern.

This work will present the spelling of these inscriptions as they have been found on the tombstones which are in general similar to spelling of Quran, like using the letter *tā' marbūṭah* (ة) in place of the letter *tā' maftūḥah* (ت) at the end of words, e.g. *ibnat* → *ibnah* or *imra'at* → *imra'ah*. These spellings will be accepted as is, without note or correction. Likewise, the word *ibn* and *bin*, either at the beginning or in the middle of the name, will be abbreviated as 'b.' Further, the words that were inscribed without the long vowels, like the letter *ʿalif*, in the middle of the words will also be kept in the same form as in the Quran, which was supposed to be based on the common spelling of these words in that period. Dots on the letters will be presented as they are in modern times, and we will not draw attention in respect of spelling corrections, except for what is necessary without redundancy.

For translating Quranic verses and Quranic usage in prayers to English, I depend upon two works by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem:

1. The Quran (English translation).
2. *Arabic–English Dictionary of Qurʾānic Usage*, co-authored with Elsaïd M. Badawi.

The date and ratio of dated inscriptions to undated ones

Another question that relates to the lack of inscriptions dated in this sample, which does not exceed five dated tombstones, is: does this number of dated inscriptions represent the selected collection of 59 inscribed tombstones? By referring to the total number of dated Kufic inscriptions in the said book, over six centuries, we did not find more than 42, and by dividing them by the total tombstones, we note that the ratio of dated inscriptions to the undated ones is 1:12. This ratio makes the five dated inscriptions in this sample fairly representative compared to the undated inscriptions

An abundance of inscriptions for deceased women

Perhaps what is noteworthy in this collection's inscriptions attributed to al-Ma'īh Cemetery is the abundance of tombstone inscriptions bearing the names of deceased women (244). There is no explanation for this, except what I have heard from some of my teachers, that women mostly settled in cities and villages and lived there until their deaths. Therefore, they would be buried where they lived, and their graves decorated with tombstones inscribed with quality and mastery. In contrast, men would travel either to participate in war or seek a living, and many of them died and were buried as strangers outside their homeland or even in deserts and wasteland.

This abundance of tombstones for women has been observed in many Muslim countries other than Mecca; for example, some of them are at cemeteries in Aswān,¹⁴⁴ the Arab Republic of Egypt, as well as Dahlk Island in the Republic of Eritrea.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, women's tombstones are usually of higher quality and more care is taken

¹⁴⁴ ʿAbd al-Tawwāb and Solange Ory, *Stèles Islamiques De La Nécropole D' Assouan*, I, II, III, Passim; Bauden, "Tombstone Inscriptions and their Potential As Textual sources for Social History", 12–14.

¹⁴⁵ Schneider, *Stèles Funéraires Musulmanes De Îles Dahlak* I, II, Passim; Oman, *La Necropoli Islamica Di Dahlak Kebir*, I, II, III, Passim.

with them than men's tombstones, perhaps because women like beautiful and expensive things, so it is not surprising that feminine qualities is reflected in their tombstones.

Calligraphy and decoration

Some of the calligraphy and decoration in the inscriptions of this sample are of high quality and some are of moderate quality. The focus seems to have been on the intonation of writing and on adopting the generally accepted rule of Kufic writing; however, some of them do not have decorations either emanating from the letters, scattered between lines or adorning the frames.

From this point of view, the sample's inscriptions can be classified into simple Kufic calligraphy, which is predominant in the sample, foliated Kufic calligraphy, which is represented by inscriptions nos. 8, 12, 13, 18, 46 and 52, and floriated Kufic calligraphy, represented by inscriptions nos. 5, 9, 10, 11, 42, 53 and 58. The frames that surround the texts on three sides range from simply decorated with floral and geometric shapes and some are framed with Quranic verses, especially the *sūrat-al-ʾIhlās* (the Purity), as in inscription no. 38 or verse 185 of *Āl-ʿUmrān*, as in inscription no. 52. Some are in a form of arched niches (*mihrāb*) as in inscriptions nos. 14, 18, 30 and 45 or pointed niches (*mihrāb*) as in inscriptions nos. 9, 11 and 22. Some of them are flat from the top and decorated with floral and geometric ornaments, as in inscriptions nos. 6, 35, 38, 52 and 53.

It is noteworthy that the pointed niches were known in the Mecca region before appearing in Fāṭimīd Egypt, and the oldest evidence has been found in the inscriptions of the Islamic city of ʿAšm, dating back to 262/875–876.¹⁴⁶

The decoration of the frames in some of the inscriptions in this sample is characterised by its luxurious intonation; no similar frame decoration appeared until relatively late in some Quranic manuscripts,¹⁴⁷ which means that the decoration of the frames that surround the funeral texts on the tombstones preceded the identical ones that surround the pages of some Quran manuscripts. ʿAbdullah Al-Munīf, Dean of the Faculty of

¹⁴⁶ Al-Zaylāʿī, “Calligraphy and Calligraphers in ʿAšm”, 247–248.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 199, figure 6.3.

Tourism and Antiquities and the expert in the study of manuscripts, mentioned that control of the Abbasid caliphate by the Turkish Seljuk began in 447/1055 by the founder, Sultan Tagharel Bek (d. 456/1063).¹⁴⁸ Attributed to the Mecca region, the three oldest inscriptions decorated with frames surrounding their texts on three sides, namely, those found in the Islamic city of ʿAšm, are dated 262/875–6, 285/898 and 289/902, respectively.¹⁴⁹

Quranic and supplication formulas

The opening formulas or phrases with which the inscribed texts on the tombstones of this sample begin are distributed between Quranic formulas, which include one or more verses of the Holy Quran, and supplication formulas, which are mostly aphoristic supplications inspired by the Holy Quran or noble Prophetic traditions. The third type of inscription does not begin with any religious formulas but mentions the owner of the tomb preceded by the phrase: This is the tomb of (the deceased's name).

The Quran formulas centre around *sūrat al-ʾIhlās* (the Purity), and there are 16 inscriptions in this collection with this beginning: nos. 1, 5, 13, 15, 17, 19, 25, 29, 30, 38, 41, 44–46 and 57. In terms of the number of citations, this is followed by the Throne verse, which is cited three times on inscription nos. 2, 7 and 11. The remaining six verses, in addition to the entire *sūrat al-Qadr* (the Night Decree–97) are distributed among the collection of tombstones as follows:

1. Verse no. 21 of *sūrat al-Aḥzāb* (the Confederates–33), cited three times on tombstones no. 32, 52 and 54.
2. Verse no. 185 of *sūrat Āl-ʿUmrān* (the Family of ʿUmrān–3), cited twice on tombstones no. 28 and 52.
3. Verse no. 67 of *sūrat Ṣād*–83, cited only once on inscription no. 50.
4. Verses 1–5 of *sūrat al-Qadr* (the Night Decree–97), cited only once on tombstone no. 42.

¹⁴⁸ Ibn al-ʿAḫīr, *al-Kamil fī al-Tārīḥ*, 8, 70–71 ff; for more information about the decoration of frames surrounding some papers in the qurʿān, see Blair *Islamic Calligraphy*, 199, figure 6.3, 204, figure 6.6, 320, figure 8.1, 322, figure 8.2, 374, figure 9.3, 387, figure 9.8.

¹⁴⁹ Al-Zaylī, “Calligraphy and Calligraphers in ʿAšm”, 247–251.

Supplication formulas were provided at the beginning of 31 tombstone inscriptions: 3–5, 8–10, 12–13 and 18. As for the inscriptions that did not begin with either the Quranic formulas or the supplication formulas but started directly by mentioning the name of the owner of the tomb, there are only three inscriptions: 17, 27 and 47.

Thus, we note that *sūrat t al-ʿIhlās* was one of the most cited verses at the beginning of the texts inscribed on the tombstones of this sample, because of the virtue in that verse as it was stated in the prophet tradition that it is equivalent to a third of the Quran.¹⁵⁰

From the same collection of Ḥuzām Palace, we have previously mentioned that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Zahrānī has studied one hundred inscriptions selected by him, and he has been awarded the doctorate degree from the Department of Archeology at King Saud University, and later published in a book entitled: *Islamic Inscriptions from Makkah*.

The names of the deceased women on these tombstones are divided into three categories, which will make up the three chapters of this study:

- The first category includes women from Qurayš, from the general populace of Mecca and those women who cannot be placed in the following second and third categories.
- The second category includes slaves, freed slaves (*mawlāt*) and those slaves who became mothers of a free-born child of Meccans, who gained freedom because of the principle of *ʿummahāt al-ʿawlād*.
- The third category includes women whose fathers or grandfathers migrated to Mecca and became part of the population in Mecca while keeping the *nisbah* of their original countries or tribes.

Each one of these categories will form an independent chapter with an introduction, a conclusion that includes the most notable observations and a summary of the samples. The deceased women under study will be presented in alphabetical order in their respective chapters.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Wensinck, *Concordance et Indices De la Tradition Musulmane*, II, 296.

The research contents are as follows:

Chapter 1: The free women of Mecca from the Qurayş, their allies and the common populace of the city.

Chapter 2: The women of Mecca who were slaves, freed slaves *mawālī* and those who mothered children of free men and gained freedom *ʿummahāt al-ʿawlād*.

Chapter 3: The women of Mecca who came from other countries or tribes outside Mecca

Illustrations



Figure 1: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Figure 2: The region of Mecca

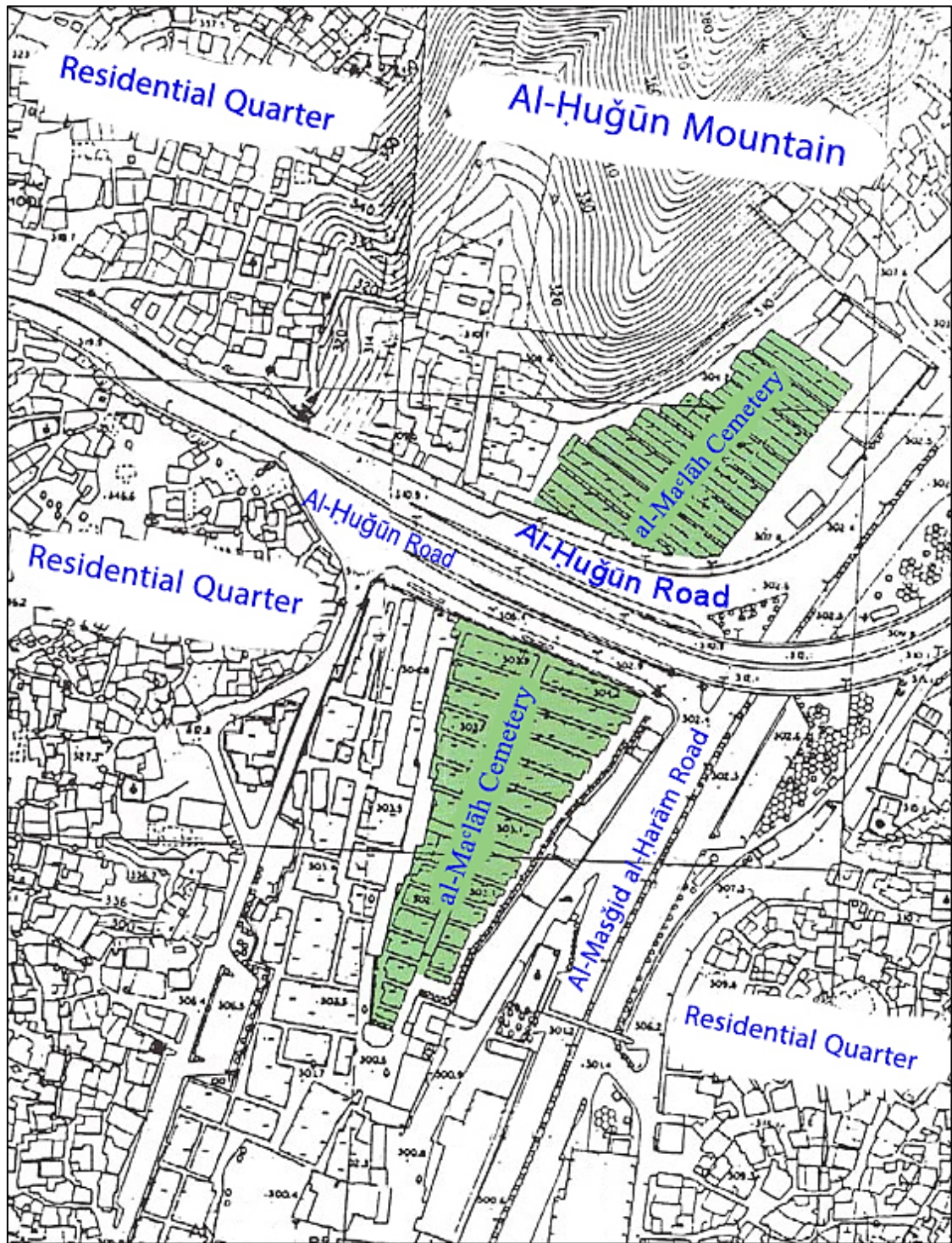


Figure 3: The location of al-Ma'lah Cemetery in modern-day Mecca

(Scale – 1:50,000)



Figure 4: One of the signs on the wall of Ma'lah Cemetery bearing the number 1



Figure 5: An aerial view of a part of Ma'lah Cemetery from the north



Figure 6: An aerial view of a part of Ma'lāh Cemetery

In the centre of the image, the clock tower overlooks the Grand Mosque from the south.



Figure 7: The southern entrance to the Huzām Palace

The palace is topped with two signs written in Arabic and English, one of which bears the name of the Antiquities office in Jeddah and the other, the Huzām Palace Museum.



Figure 8: The main gate of Huzam Palace in Jeddah



Figure 9: A commemorative illustration of the main gate of Huzam Palace on the first paper currency (one Saudi riyal)



Figure 10: The southeast gate of Huzam Palace in Jeddah



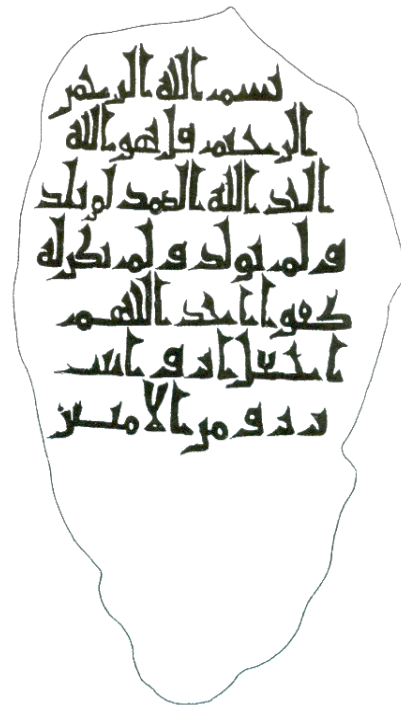
Figure 11: Inscribed tombstones collected from Ma'lah Cemetery and stored in the warehouses of the al-Zahir Palace Museum in Mecca

Chapter 1: The free women of Mecca from the Qurayš, their Allies and the common populace of the city

No. 1 / Museum no. 5



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt, broken upper and lower right side.

Seven lines with very clear and simple incised Kufic.

No date, probably 2nd/8th century.

Deceased name: ^ʿArwā bint Rizq.

Museum no. 5, ^ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh (plate no. 1ab).

Measurements: 22 x 27 cm.

Height of *alif*: 3.8 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن
2. الرحيم قل هو الله
3. الحد الله الصمد لم يلد
4. ولم يولد ولم يكن له
5. كفوا احد اللهم
6. اجعل اروا بنت
7. رزق من الامنين

Translation

1. In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy
2. the Giver of Mercy. Say, 'He is God
3. the One, God the Eternal. He begot no
4. one nor was He begotten. No one is
5. comparable to Him.' O God,
6. assign *Arwā* bint
7. Rizq among those who are secure.

Lines 2–5 are from Quran 112 (*Sūrat al-Iḥlās*).

Note: line 3, *al-ḥad* for *al-aḥad* and *alif al-madd* in the name *Arwā* in line 6.

Observations

This tombstone is for the deceased woman *Arwā* bint Rizq, who was presumably from Mecca since she is not associated in the text to any country or tribe outside of it. The inscribed text on the tombstone shows only her and her father's names. Her name *Arwā* is derived from the root verb *rawiya*, meaning 'to drink one's fill'.¹

¹ Muṣṭafā et al., *Al-Muḡam al-Wasīt*, I, 285.

It is the name of a number of well-known women, among whom included ʿArwā bint ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, the Prophet’s aunt.² Bint ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib was a poet who lived in the paganism al-Ġāhilyyah and Islam. She became a Muslim, migrated to Medina, and died there in 15/636.³ Also, there was ʿArwā bint Aḥmad al-Ṣulayḥī, who ruled Yemen after the death of her husband, ʿAḥmad al-Ṣulayḥī, and died in 532/1138.⁴

Rizq, the name of the father of this tombstone’s ʿArwā, is a common Arabic name.⁵ One cannot tell if he held political or social significance since his name was mentioned alone, i.e. with no ancestors or attribution to a family or tribe.

As for the calligraphic characteristics of the inscription, it is well-executed Kufic script: rigid with right angles and a slight tilt to the left, as illustrated in *Allāh* (line 1) and *Allāhum* (line 5) with the second instance of the letter *lām* and letter *hāʾ*. Both *lāms* adjacent to the letter *hāʾ* tend to become shorter from right to left in this inscription (lines 1, 2, 3, 5).

This is Hijaz Kufic. Note the medial open ʿayn, as in the word *iğʿal* (line 6), and that the medial *fāʾ* is drawn in the shape of an eye in the word *kufuwan* (line 5). Note also the triangular-shaped, flattened top of the shaft letters wherever they appear in the text. This inscription is similar to many of those associated with Hijaz during the same era, some of which are from the Meccan area. For example, both inscription no. 6, with the name of ʿUmāmah bint ʿAbd Allāh b. Musāfiʿ al-Ḥaḡabiyah,⁶ and inscription no. 18 from ʿAṣm, with the name of ʿAlī b. Ġallād b. Muḥlid, contain similarities with this inscription and are 3rd/9th-century inscriptions,⁷ leading to the opinion that this inscription is from the 3rd/9th century as well.

² Ibn Saʿd, *Al-Ṭabāt*, I, 93.

³ Badawī et al., *Muġam ʿAsmāʾ al-ʿArab*, I, 67.

⁴ Umārah, *Tārīḥ al-Yaman*, 113ff. Same other sources called her al-Sayyidah bint ʿAḥmad, see Ibn

al-Daybaʿ, *Qurrat al-ʿUyūn*, I, 261; Ibn al-Ḥusayn, *Ġāyat al-ʿAmānī*, I, 295.

⁵ Badawī et al., *Muġam ʿAsmāʾ al-ʿArab*, I, 659–660.

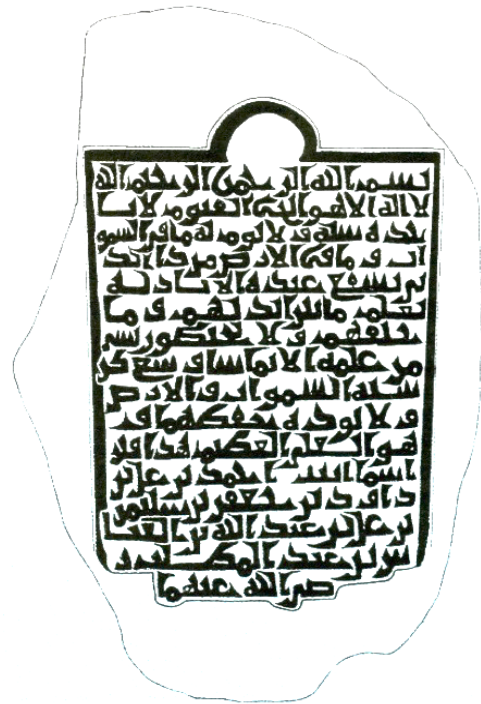
⁶ Mūdi, *Nuqūṣ Islāmiyyah*, 6.

⁷ Al-Zaylaʿī, ‘The Southern Area’, 444, no. 18.

No. 2 / Museum no. 260



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt,

Sixteen lines of simple Kufic carved in relief, with a rectangular border and with a dome-shape at the top.

No date, 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: °Asmā° bint Aḥmad b. °Alī b. Dāwud b.

Ja°far b. Sulaymān b. °Alī b. °Abd Allāh b. al-°Abbās b. °Abd al-Muṭṭalib.

Museum no. 260, °Aḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh (plate no. 2ab).

Measurements: 36 x 50 cm.

Height of °alif: 2.9 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الله

2. لا اله الا هو الحي القيوم لاتا
3. خذه سنة ولا نوم له ما في السمو
4. ات وما في الارض من ذا الذ
5. ي يشفع عنده الا باذنه
6. يعلم ما بين ايديهم وما
7. خلفهم ولا يحيطون بشى
8. من علمه الا بما شا وسع كر
9. سبه السموات والأرض
10. ولا يوده حفظهما و
11. هو العلي العظيم هذا قبر
12. اسما ابنت احمد بن علي بن
13. داود بن جعفر بن سليمان
14. بن علي بن عبدالله بن العبا
15. س بن عبد المطلب
16. رضي الله عنهما

Translation

1. In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy. God,
2. there is no god but Him, the Ever Living, the Ever-
3. Watchful, neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. All that is in the heavens
4. and on the earth belongs to Him. Who is there that can
5. intercede with Him except by His leave?
6. He knows what is before them and what
7. is behind them, but they do not comprehend
8. any of His knowledge except what He wills. His throne extends
9. over the heavens and the earth;
10. it does not weary Him to preserve them both.
11. He is the Most High, the Tremendous. This is the tomb of
12. °Asmā° ibnat °Aḥmad b. °Alī b.
13. Dāwud b. Ğa°far b. Sulaymān
14. b. °Alī b. °Abd °Allāh b. al-°Abbas
15. b. °Abd al-Muṭṭalib
16. May God bless both of them.

Lines 1–11 are from Quran 2:254–255 (*Sūrat al-Baqarah*).

Observations

This tombstone is for the diseased woman ʾAsmāʾ bint. Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Dāʾūd from the Qurayš, the original residents of Mecca. As shown in Figure 12, her ancestors go back to al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, the Prophet’s uncle and the great grandfather of the Caliph ʾAbū al-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ (the Assassin) (d. 136/749), the first of the ʿAbbāsīd caliphs, who had ruled for more than five centuries until their state was conquered by the Mongols in 656/1258.⁸ Asmāʾ is related to ʾAbū al-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ via their common grandfather ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib.⁹

Asmāʾ is a common in Arabic. Women sharing this name includes ʾAsmāʾ bint ʾAbī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, the daughter of the first orthodox caliphs, and the mother of ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr, the Meccan rebel (d.73/692),¹⁰ and ʾAsmāʾ bint Šihāb al-Ṣulayḥī, the wife of ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī, the founder of the Sulayhid State in Yemen, and the mother of his son ʾAḥmad al-Mukarram.¹¹

As for the calligraphic characteristics of the inscription, it is distinguished by its accuracy and skilfulness. It is distinguished Kufic with nicely and closely drawn letters and words, which shows the proficiency of the inscriber. It contains no flaws except that the letter *yāʾ* that comes at the end of the name ʿAlī (lines 12 and 14) is not clear. The scribe tends to swing the final stroke of the final *nūn* over to the right above the other letters in the word *al-Raḥmān* (line 1), as well as with the ending *yāʾ* in the words *al-Ḥayy* (line 2) and *fī* (line 4). However, the *nūn* is drawn in an angular way in the other words of the inscription except in the word *yuhīṭūna* (line 7), where it is inscribed like the letter *rāʾ*. As for the medial and final letter *ʿayn* in this inscription, it is drawn in a triangular shape. There are no decorative letters in the text, with the exception of the top of the shaft letters, which have a slight decoration on the right and left sides and are similar, to some extent, to the small triangular shapes in inscription no. 5 below.

⁸ Ibn al-ʿAṭīr, *al-Kāmil*, IV, 322ff; Ḥasan, *Tārīḥ al-ʿIslām*, IV, 154–162.

⁹ Ḥasan, *Tārīḥ al-ʿIslām*, II, 20.

¹⁰ Ibn al-ʿAṭīr, *al-Kāmil*, IV, 2; al-Fāsī, *al-Iqd al-Ṭamīn*, VIII, 177–179.

¹¹ ʿUmārah, *Tārīḥ al-Yaman*, 100 and 106–110.

This tombstone has a simple three-sided frame surrounding the text, with a dome on the top side and no decoration. This form of frame is unlike similar frames, which have decorative sextuple stars, as in tombstone no. 33 from al-Sirrayn, or have a quintuple leaf, as in tombstone no. 34 from al-Sirrayn¹² and tombstone no. 2a from Ḥamdānah, wādī ʿUlayb.¹³

Based on the similarity between this inscriptions, tombstone no. 2, and the inscriptions mentioned in the previous paragraph, along with calculating the periods of the generations between the diseased and her great grandfather, al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib (d. 32/653), it is assessed that this inscription dates to the end of the 3rd/9th century.

¹² Al-Faqīh, *Madīnat al-Sirrayn*, 147–156.

¹³ Al-Zaylaʿi, ‘A Kufic inscription’, 262, Fig. 2ab.

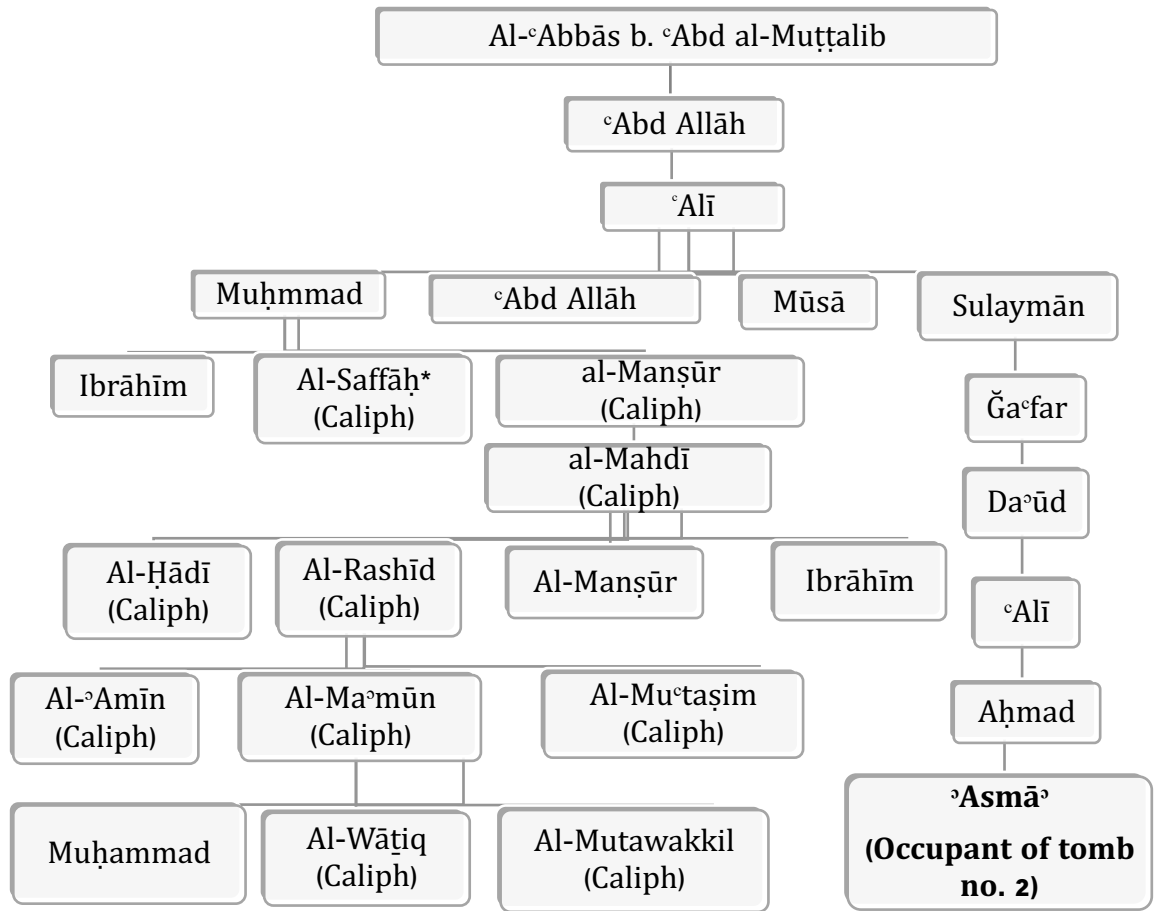


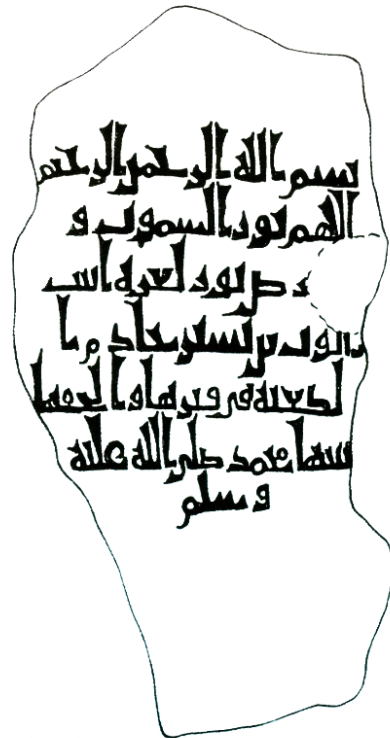
Figure 12: The family tree of the deceased ʿAsmāʾ

*First Abbasid caliph

No. 3 / Museum no. 296



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt, broken on the left side.

Seven lines of simple incised Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: ʿAzzah bint ʿAyyūb b. Bašīr.

Museum no. 296, ʿAḡḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh (plate no. 3ab).

Measurements: 27 x 34 cm.

Height of ʿalif: 4.5 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

2. اللهم نور السموت و

3. [الارض نور لعزة ابنت
 4. ايوب بن بشير خادم ا
 5. لكعبة في قبرها والحقها
 6. بنبيها محمد صلى الله عليه
 7. وسلم

Translation

1. In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy
2. O God, light of the heavens and
3. the earth, shed light on °Azzah bint
4. °Ayyūb b. Bašīr, servant of the
5. Ka°bah, in her tomb and unite
6. her with her Prophet Muḥammad, may God bless Him
7. and grant Him peace.

Note: °*alif al-madd* in *al-samawāt* in line 2.

Observations

This tombstone is very important as it belongs to °Azzah bint Ayyūb b. Bašīr, a granddaughter of a Ka°bah servant. This tombstone contains the first Ka°bah-related position referenced in an archaeological source. This gives the tombstone important historic value, and it serves as an addition to our knowledge about Ka°bah-related positions. This position may be different from that of of Banī. Šaybah, who specialised in caring for the Ka°bah, maintaining its keys and opening the gate when needs. However, as far as the researcher is aware, none of the available sources mentions Bašīr, °Azzah's grandfather,¹⁴ or his work in serving the Ka°bah. His service is assessed to have been different from B. °Abd al-Dār's or B. Šaybah's duties in caring for the Ka°bah, an honour these servants passed from the generation to the next before the spread of Islam. The Prophet approved of the Ka°bah-related positions, based on

¹⁴ This man and his job differ from Banī Šaybah; for more information about Banī Šaybah, see Al-Šaybī, °I°lām al-°Anām Bi-Tārīḥ bayt Allāh al-Ḥarām, 249 ff.

the verse ‘God commands you [people] to return things entrusted to you to their rightful owners’.¹⁵

As for the name °Azzah, it is a common name, particularly in Mecca and generally in Hijaz. A notable woman with the name °Azzah was: °Azzah of Kuṭayyir the famous poet (d. 105/690). Kuṭayyir was also identified as ‘°Azzah’s beloved’.¹⁶

The inscription for tombstone no. 3 was made in pure Kufic with no decorations. It is clear, though, that the inscriber did not take great care to deepen the engravings on of the letters the tombstone; rather, are shallow, weak and easily distorted or erased if in contact with a solid surface. This is observable with the end of letter *mīm* at the end of several words (lines 1, 2, 4), in which only the knot of the *mīm* can be seen while the tail can hardly be seen. Similarly, other words appear to be blurred, as in *Allāhum* (line 2), °*Ayyūb* (line 4) and *nabiyyuhā* (line 6). And by consistently drawing the word *Allāh* with two *lāms*, gradually shortened toward the letter *hā* (lines 1, 6). In some respects, this inscription is similar to inscription no. 545 of al-Ma‘lāh Cemetery, which is dated to the 3rd/9th century,¹⁷ making the most probable date for this inscription in the same era.

¹⁵ Quran 2:58 (*Sūrat al-Nisā*).

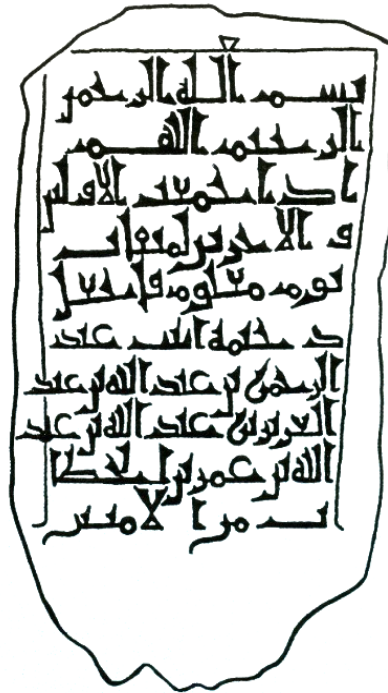
¹⁶ Kaḥḥālah, °*A‘lām al-Nisā*, III, 269–274.

¹⁷ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *Aḥḡār al-Ma‘lāh*, 592.

No. 4 / Museum no. 100



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt, broken centre-right portion.

Ten lines with simple incised Kufic and a simple three-sided border.

No date, 3rd/ 9th century.

Deceased name: Duḥaymah ibnat ʿAbd al-Raḥman b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb.

Museum no. 100, *ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 4ab).

Measurements: 24 x 37 cm.

Height of ʿalif: 3.2 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن

2. الرحيم اللهم

3. اذا جمعت الاولين
 4. والآخرين لميقات
 5. يوم معلوم فاجعل
 6. دحيمة ابنت عبد
 7. الرحمن بن عبد الله بن عبد
 8. العزيز بن عبد الله بن عبد
 9. الله بن عمر بن الخطا
 10. ب من الامنين

Translation

1. In the name of God, the lord of mercy,
2. the giver of mercy. O God,
3. when you gather together the first
4. and the last for the appointment of
5. a day determined, assign
6. Duḥaymah ibnat °Abd
7. al-Raḥman b. °Abd al-Allāh b. °Abd
8. al-°Azīz b. °Abd al-Allāh b. °Abd
9. al-Allāh b. °Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb
10. to be among those who are secure.

Note: *tā*° of *ibnat* in line 6. This feature was not uncommon at that time.

Observations

This tombstone is that of the diseased Duḥaymah ibnat °Abd al-Raḥman, whose ancestors go back to the Caliph °Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb (d. 23/643), as shown below in Figure 13. She was a Meccan and a member of B. °Udayy b. Ka°b, a clan of the well-known Qurayš. Her great grandfather was °Abd Allāh b. °Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb (d. 73/692), and her ancestors can be traced uninterruptedly. Among those ancestors was her grandfather's brother, °Abd al-°Azīz b. °Abd Allāh b. °Abd Allāh b. °Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb, who was the Emir of Medina during the years of the °Abbasid Caliph al-Hādī (d. 170/786). Her father, °Abd al-Raḥman b. °Abd Allāh al-Nāsik (the Hermit), was

the judge of Medina before becoming its ruler under the Caliph al-Maʿmūn b. Hārūn al-Rašīd (d. 218/833).¹⁸

The name Duḥaymah is a diminutive, derived from the root verb *daḥama*, which means ‘to push strongly’. The male form, Duḥaym, is common, unlike the female form.¹⁹

The script of the inscription is clear and adheres to the original Kufic form, with no noticeable decorations or ornaments. However, the inscription has many of the characteristics outlined in the Introduction to this study and discussed later in more detail. Noteworthy features include the gradual shortening of the consecutive appearance of the letter *lām* toward the letter *hāʾ* in *Allāh* and *Allāhum* (lines 2, 7, 8, 9) as well as the letter *nūn* written with four forms: 1) with an upright angle, 2) with a curl to the right, 3) with an arrow-shaped tip and 4) pointed and curved. These forms of *nūn* are apparent in lines 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10. The medial *ʿayn* is written with an open cup shape, which the scribe uses once in lines 3 and 8 and twice in line 5. The inscription is framed on three sides by a simple line ending on top with a shape similar to an inverted triangle.

The date of this inscription, and of the date of death of the deceased, appears easy to estimate by calculating the generations from Caliph ʿUmar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb’s death (23/643) or from the death of his son, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar (73/692).²⁰ One could also estimate this based on her father, ʿAbd al-Raḥman, who was the judge then ruler of Medina c. 218/833. Thus, the estimated date of this inscription is the first half of the 3rd/9th century.

¹⁸ Ibn Ḥazm, *Ġamharah ʿAnsāb al-ʿArab*, 152–153.

¹⁹ Badawī et al., *Muġam al-ʿAnsāb*, I, 569.

²⁰ Al-Fāsī, *al-ʿIqd al-Ṭamīn*, V, 216–217.

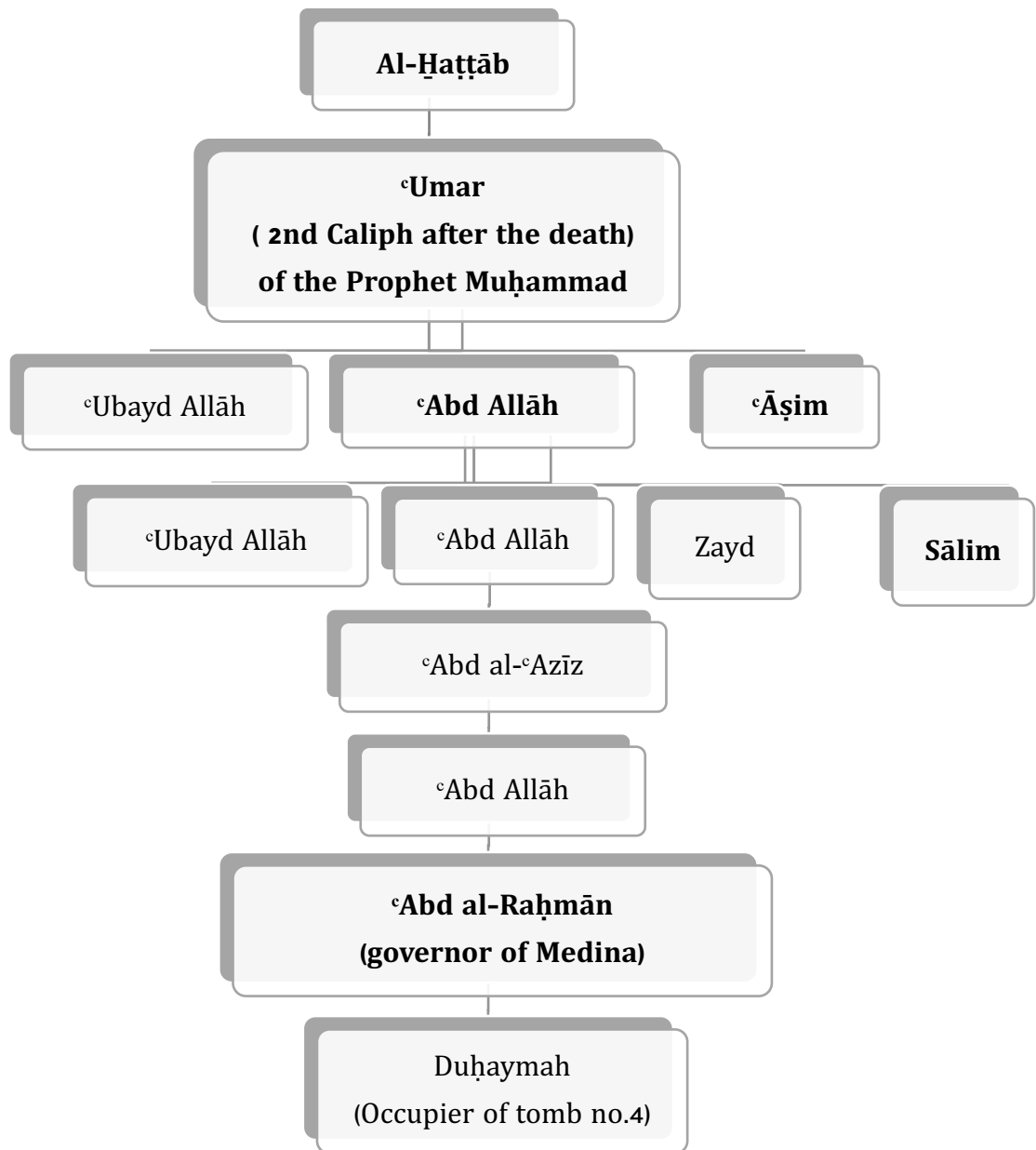
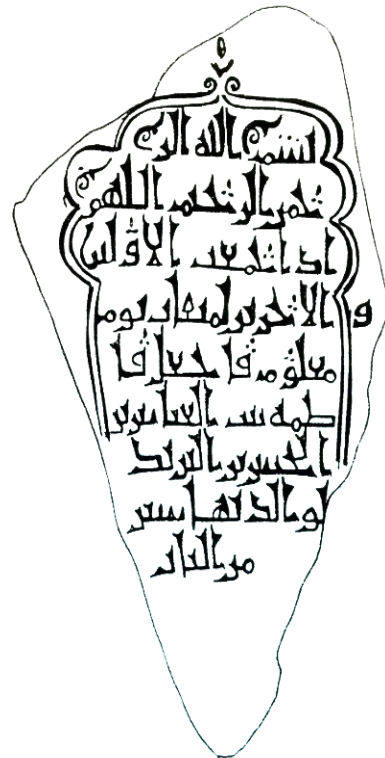


Figure 13: The family tree of the deceased Duḥaymah

No. 5 / Museum no. 193



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt

Nine lines with beautiful, elaborate incised floriated Kufic with a partially foliated design as well as a simple three-sided *miḥrāb*-shaped border

No date, probably 4th/10th century.

Deceased Name: Fāṭimah bint al-^ʿAbbās b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Yazīd.

Museum no. 193, *ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 5ab).

Measurements: 19 x 31 cm.

Height of ^ʿ*alif*: 3.3 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الر
2. حمن الرحيم. اللهم
3. اذا جمعت الاولين
4. والآخرين لميقات يوم
5. معلوم. فاجعل فا
6. طمة بنت العباس بن
7. الحسين بن اليزيد
8. لوالديها ستر
9. من النار

Translation

1. In the name of God the
2. Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy. O God,
3. if you gather together the first
4. and the last for the appointment of a day
5. determined, assign
6. Fāṭimah bint al-°Abbās b.
7. al-Ḥasan b. al-Yazīd to
8. to be a protection for her parents
9. from Hell.

Note: the letter *wāw* outside the right border on line 4.

Observations

This tombstone is for the diseased Fāṭimah bint al-°Abbās b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Yazīd. From the prayer written at the end of the tombstone inscription, reading ‘to be a protection for her parents from Hell’, one can conclude that when she died, her parents were still alive and that she could have died young.²¹ Therefore, we cannot expect to find her mentioned in the available sources. Even her father and grandfather were not found in Meccan sources.

²¹ Cf. al-Faqīh, *Madīnat al-Sirrayn*, 88 and 151, no. 14.

Her family was perhaps from the common people of Mecca, despite the care taken in beautifying her tombstone. The inscription of this tombstone is distinguished by its beauty, quality and large, symmetrical letters, in addition to the decorations on some of them. For example, there are three half-palmate trees shown: on the letter *mīm* in the word *b-ism* (line 1); on the letter *rāʾ* in the word *al-Raḥīm* (line 1); and on the letter *mīm* in the word *Allāhum* (line 2). The same decorations, though in a smaller size, appear on top of the second *lām* in the word *Allāhum* (line 2), the atop letter *ḥāʾ* in the name *al-Ḥasan* (line 7), and the crochet of letter *hāʾ* in the word *wālidayhā* (line 8). It is apparent that the scribe omitted the letter *wāw* before the word *al-āḥarīn* (line 4) inside the frame, and when he remembered it, he wrote it outside the frame.

This inscription is distinguished by the dots in decorating the spaces between the lines. Some are single, like the ones seen on the teeth of the letter *sīn* in the word *b-ism* (line 1), while others are in threes and can easily be found in the spaces of the first five lines of the text. The text is surrounded on three sides by double lines forming a quintuple architectural arch, with a triple-leaf decoration on the top.

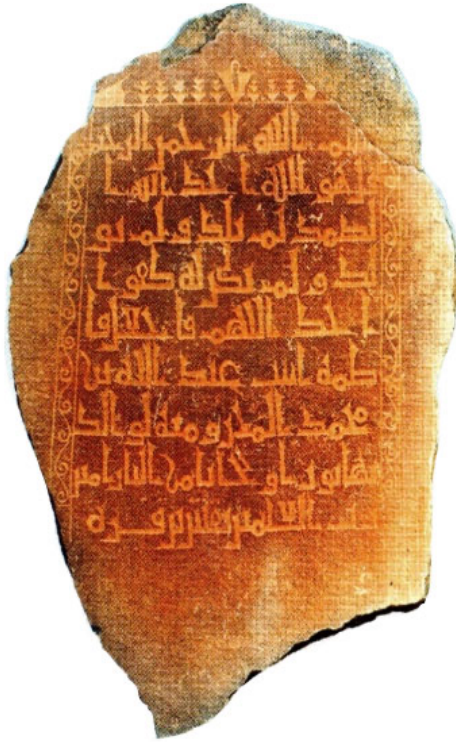
This use of dots is similar to the decorations observed in the following: the inscription of tombstone no. 22 from Mecca, dating to the 3rd/9th century;²² the inscription of tombstone no. 186, from the Cemetery of al-Maʿlāh,²³ and the inscription of tombstone no. 15, from the inscriptions of Miḥlāf Aṣm and dated 262/875-876.²⁴ This leads to the conclusion that this inscription dates from the 3rd/9th century.

²² Al-Zahrānī, *Kitābāt Islāmiyyah*, 516, no. 22 ab.

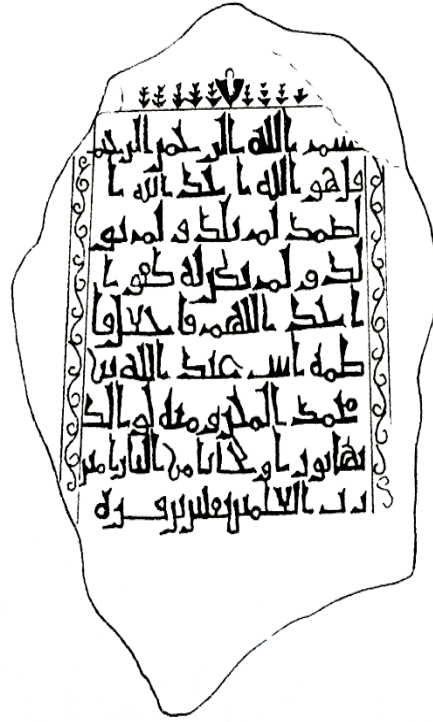
²³ Āl-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 219, no. 186.

²⁴ Al-Zaylaʿi, 'The Southern Area', 443, no. 15

No. 6 / Museum no. 258



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt, broken upper right side.

Nine lines with incised legible, simple incised Kufic and a three-sided ornamental border.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: Fāṭimah ibnat ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Maḥzūmiyyah

Museum no. 258, *ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 6ab).

Measurements: 30 x 37 cm.

Height of ʿalif: 3.6 cm.

Text

1. [ب]سم الله الرحمن الرحيم

2. قل هو الله احد. الله ا

3. لصمد. لم يلد ولم يو
 4. لد. ولم يكن له كفوا
 5. احد اللهم فاجعل فا
 6. طمة ابنت عبد الله بن
 7. محمد المخزومية لوالد
 8. يها نورا وحجابا من النار امين
 9. رب العالمين. نقش بن قررة

Translation

1. In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy
2. Say, ‘He is God the One, God
3. the eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten.
4. No one is comparable
5. to Him’. O God, make
6. Fāṭimah bint ʿAbd Allāh b.
7. Muḥammad al-Maḥzūmiyyah for her parents
8. a light and barrier against Hell. Amen,
9. Lord of the Universe. Inscription of Ibn Qurrah.

Lines 2–5 and from Quran 112:1–4 (*Sūrat al-Iḥlās*).

Note: *ibnat* in line 6 and *bin* line 9.

Observations

The name on this tombstone is Fāṭimah bint Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Maḥzūmiyyah. As with the previous tombstone (no. 5), from the prayer ending the tombstone inscription, reading, ‘for her parents a light and barrier against Hell’, one can conclude that when she died, her parents were still alive. However, her attribution to B. Maḥzūm, a clan of the Qurayš, indicates that she was originally Meccan.²⁵

The tombstone was made by the Meccan scribe/calligrapher Ibn Qurrah, who wrote his name on the last line of the text. This scribe’s name was identified as Aḥmad b.

²⁵ For more information about B. Maḥzūm, see Ibn Ḥazm, *Ġamharat ʿAnsāb al-ʿArab*, 141–145.

Qurrah on tombstone inscription no. 448 of the *al-Ma'ālāh* Cemetery collection, belonging to the diseased al-Qāsim b. al-ʿAzhar b. al-Qāsim.²⁶

The letters have been generally inscribed at consistent angles, except for the letter *nūn* at the end of two words, *bin* (line 6) and *min* (line 8), in which the *nūn* has an uprising tail and a tilt to the left. The curve in the knot of letter *mīm*, which is aligned with the writing level wherever it is found in the text, with an arrow-like tip. All the tips of the upright and horizontal letters end with slight splinters, some of which are like a wide triangle. The letter *hā* in *Allāh* (lines 2 and 6) and *Allāhuma* (line 5) has a long upright arm almost as long its neighbouring letter to the right, the *lām*. The crochet of the initial and medial letter *hā* is perfectly spiral, as in the words *huwa* (line 2), *Allāhum* (line 5) and *wālidayhā* (line 8).

The text is surrounded on three sides by a frame containing a decorative stripe on the sides. The top of the frame is a thin line with plant-like images and a larger object in the middle.

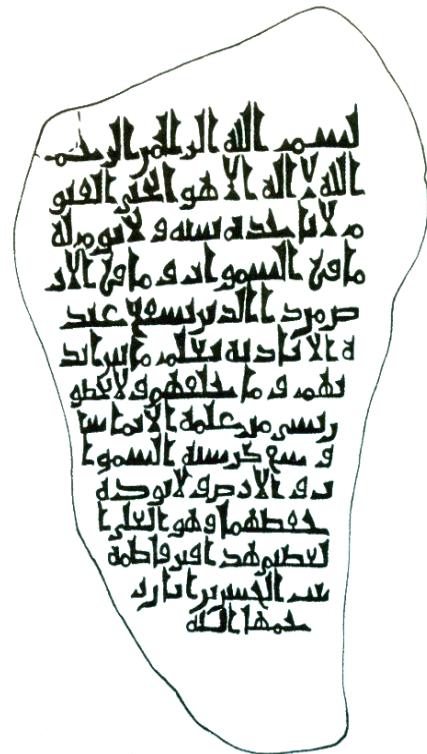
This tombstone can probably be dated to the 2nd/8th century. However, another inscription by the same scribe (inscription no. 448, mentioned a few paragraphs above) has been categorised among the 3rd/9th century inscriptions. From this, one can conclude that this inscription may represent the era between the end of the 2nd/8th century and the beginning of the 3rd/9th century.

²⁶ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *Aḡḡār al-Ma'ālāh*, 493.

No. 7 / Museum no. 452



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape

Al-Ma'lāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt

Fourteen lines with simple incised Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: Fāṭimah bint al-Ḥusayn b. °Abān.

Museum no. 452, °Aḥḡār al-Ma'lāh (plate no. 7ab).

Measurements: 33 x 54 cm.

Height of °alif: 4.2 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. الله لا اله الا هو الحي القيوم

3. م لا تاخذہ سنة ولا نوم له
 4. ما في السموات وما في الار
 5. ض من ذا الذي يشفع عند
 6. له الا باذنه يعلم ما بين ايد
 7. يهم وما خلفهم ولا يحيطو
 8. ن بشئ من علمه الا بما شا
 9. وسع كرسيه السموا
 10. ت والارض ولا يوده
 11. حفظهما وهو العلي ا
 12. لعظيم. هذا قبر فاطمة
 13. بنت الحسين بن ابان ر
 14. حمها الله

Translation

1. In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy
2. God, there is no god but Him, the Ever-Living, the Ever-Watchful
3. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. All that
4. is in the heavens and in the earth
5. belongs to Him. Who is there that can intercede with
6. Him except by His leave? He knows what is before them
7. and what is behind them, but they do not
8. comprehend any of His knowledge except what He wills.
9. His throne extends over the heavens
10. and the earth; it does not weary
11. Him to preserve them both. He is the Most High,
12. the Tremendous. This is the tomb of Fātimah
13. bint al-Husayn b. °Abān.
14. May God have mercy upon her.

Lines 2–12 are from Quran 2:254–255 (*Sūrat al-Baqrah*).

Note: *šay*° and *šā*° in line 8 are without the *hamzah*. This feature was not uncommon at that time.

Observations

This inscription is for the diseased Fāṭimah bint al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAbān, who it can be assumed, was a Meccan common person or perhaps from a Qurayš clan since her grandfather's name, ʿAbān, was common among Qurayš. Among famous Qurašīs was ʿAbān b. ʿUḥayḥah b. Saʿīd b. ʿUmayyah (d. 13/634).²⁷

As for the style, it is noted that the scribe had an excellent level of proficiency that enabled him to make this inscription according to beautiful Kufic forms even though it has no decorations. Presumably, the long text forced the scribe to write the words close to each other, leaving minimum space between the lines in order to maintain the beauty of the inscription. It is similar to tombstone inscription no. 5 of this collection (see above). Additionally, it is observed that the tip and brow of the letter *ḥāʾ* in the word *al-Raḥmān* (line 1) were lengthened in order to be equal with the upright letters *ʿalif* and *lām* in the same line and with same features at the top. Similarly, the final *yāʾ* was lengthened in the word *fī* twice in line 4.

The conjoined letters *lām-ʿalif* are short and tilt to the left in the word *lā* (line 3) so as to avoid contact with into the letter *yāʾ* in the word *al-ḥayy* (line 2). The same conjoined letters are similarly short and tilt to the left (line 8) to avoid contact with the letter *mīm* in the word above it, *ḥalfahum* (line 7). However, the word *lāʾ* (line 2), which consists of only the conjoined letters *lām-ʿalif*, is drawn like a cup, like that in inscription no. 10 of this collection (see below), which belongs to the 3rd/9th century. Additionally, in line 10, it is bold and looks like a lotus. For the same reasons, the curve at the end of the letter *ʿayn* in the words *yašfaʿu* (line 5) and *wasiʿa* (line 9) is short and stunted to avoid contact with the letters in the words below them.

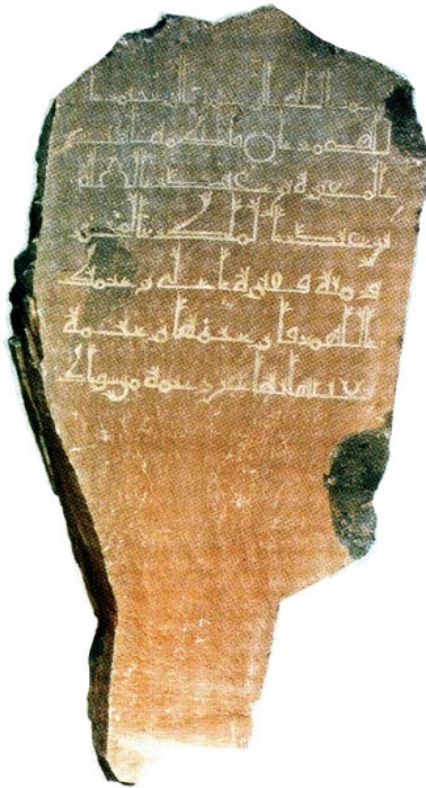
This inscription is also distinguished by having the vowel letter *ʿalif* dip lower than the line in some words where it is raised up. For examples, see the words *taḥūduhu* (line 3), *mā* (four times in lines 4, 6 and 7), *bi-ʿidniḥī* (line 6), *bi-mā šāʿa* (line 8), *ḥifzuḥumā* (line 11), *fāṭimah* (line 12) and *ʿabān* (line 13). In some respects, this

²⁷ Al-Fāsī, *al-ʿIqd al-Ṭamīn*, III, 197–200.

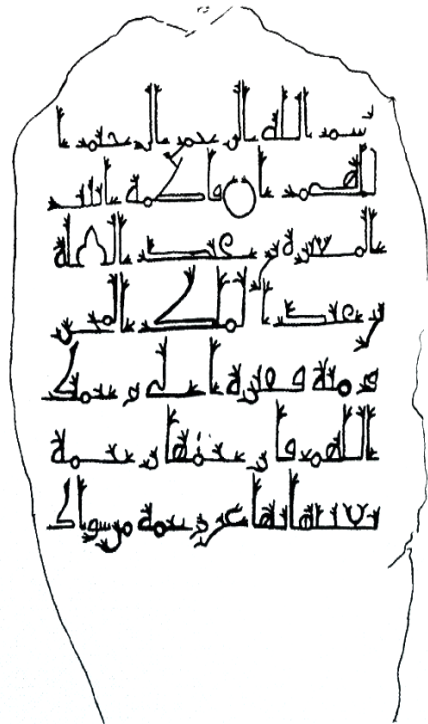
inscription is similar to inscription no. 14, attested to date from the 3rd/9th century,²⁸ the same era as this inscription.

²⁸ Al-Salook, 'Analitical', 70, no. 14.

No. 8 / Museum no. 234



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt, broken upper and lower right side.

Seven lines with incised foliated Kufic.

No date, probably 2nd/8th century.

Deceased Name: Fāṭimah ibnat al-Mughīrah b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Malik al-Maḥzūmiyyah

Museum no. 234, *ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 8ab).

Measurements: 30 x 28 cm.

Height of ʿalif: 4 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ا
2. اللهم ان فاطمة ابنت
3. المغيرة بن عبد الله
4. بن عبد الملك المخز
5. ومية فقيرة الى رحمتك
6. اللهم فارحمها رحمة
7. تغنيها عن رحمة من سواك

Translation

8. In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy
9. O God, Fāṭimah ibnat
10. al-Muḡīrah b. °Abd Allāh
11. b. °Abd al-Malik al-Maḥzūmiyyah
12. is in need of your mercy.
13. O God, have mercy upon her and spare
14. her from needing the mercy of anyone other than You.

Note: *tā*° *maftūḥa* of *ibnat* in line 2 and *b.* in line 4.

Observations

The name on this inscription is Fāṭimah bint al-Muḡīrah b. °Abd Allāh b. °Abd al-Malik al-Maḥzūmiyyah. Like the deceased woman discussed previously in inscription no. 258, she is from B. Maḥzūm of the Qurayš, the original residents of Mecca. However, neither she nor her father °Abd al-Malik are mentioned in the available Meccan sources.

The text is written in an elegant Kufic, with fine letters, beautifully lengthened and decorated with thin lines similar to small feathers on top of all the rising letters and final letters *hā*°, *kaf* and *mīm* (lines 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7). The feather designs form the shape of a half-palmette fan in the single letters and a full palmette fan in the attached letters – for example, the letters °*alif* and *lām* in the words *Allāh* and *Allāhum* throughout the inscription as well as *al-Muḡīrah* in line 3. Moreover, the final letter *nūn* in the word *bin* (line 3) extends downward and is decorated in form with the letter °*alif*, adjacent to its the right in line 4, as a sort of palmette-shaped fan.

For dating this inscription, the final letter *nūn* in the word *inn* (line 2) takes a circular shape, which is similar to other inscriptions from the 2nd/8th century, e.g. inscription no. 27 from Miḥlāf ʿAšm.²⁹ This inscription and the next two inscriptions, namely nos. 28 and 29 in the same reference³⁰ are similar to the inscription in question in many aspect of style. This supports the opinion that this inscription belongs to the same period, i.e. 2nd/8th century.

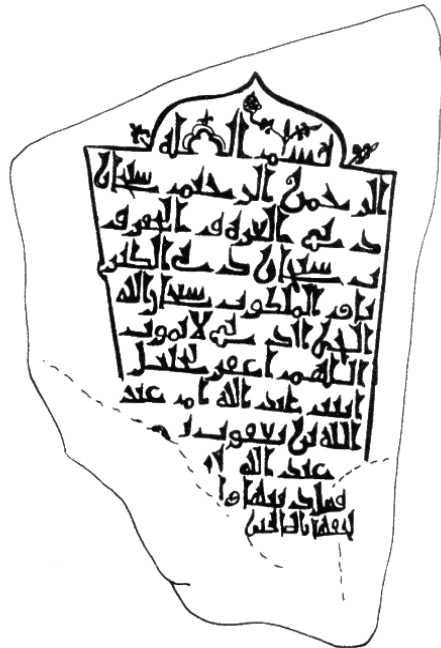
²⁹ Al-Faqīh, *Miḥlāf ʿAšm*, 224–225, nos. 27, 28 and 29.

³⁰ Al-Faqīh, *Miḥlāf ʿAšm*, 224–225, nos. 27, 28 and 29.

No. 9 / Museum no. 423



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt, broken on the lower left side.

Twelve lines with elaborate incised foliated Kufic and a simple three-sided *mihrāb*-shaped border and dome at the top.

No date, 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: Ġalīl ibnat ʿAbd Allāh ʿUmm ibn Yaʿqūb ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Qunbul.

Museum no. 423, ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh (plate no. 9ab).

Measurements: 30 x 41 cm.

Height of ʿalif: 3.7 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله
2. الرحمن الرحيم سبحان
3. ذي العزة والجبرو

4. ت سبحان ذي الكبر
5. يا والملكوت سبحان الله
6. الحي الذي لا يموت
7. اللهم اغفر لجليل
8. ابنت عبد الله أم عبد
9. الله بن يعقوب اب [بن]
10. عبد الله اب [بن ...]
11. قنبل ذنبها و ا [....]
12. لحقها بالصالحين [.....]

Translation

1. In the Name of God
2. the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy. Glory to
3. the Lord of Honour and Power.
4. Glory to the Lord of Majesty
5. and Royalty. Glory to God,
6. who lives and dies not.
7. O, God forgive Ġalīl
8. ibnat °Abd Allāh °Umm °Abd
9. Allāh b. Ya°qūb ibn ...
10. °Abd Allāh ibn
11. Qunbul her sin and
12. unite her with the righteous.

Note: *tā° maftūḥa* of *ibnat* in line 8.

Observations

This inscription is for the deceased Ġalīl [Ġalīlah] bint °Abd Allāh; her *laqab* is °Umm °Abd Allāh, the son of Y°aqūb b. ... °Abd Allāh ... Qunbul. This genealogy is not hers, rather her son's, °Abd Allāh, whose genealogical chain goes back to °Abd Allāh b. Qunbul, who was the *muftī* of Mecca in the 3rd/9th century, as mentioned by the contemporary author al-Fākihī.³¹ This means that this was a family famed for its

³¹ Al-Fākihī, °*Aḥbār Makkah*, IV, 57; see also al-Fāsī, *al-°Iqd al-Ṭamīn*, V, 231.

religious studies. The name Ġalīl is derived from the root verb *ġalala*, which means ‘to be of prestige and great rank’; *ġalīl* in art, for example, is what exceeds the limit in beauty.³² Other women named Ġalīlah include: Ġalīlah bint Murrah al-Shaybāniyyah, one of the sisters of Ġassās, the pre-Islamic poet; Ġalīlah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Quṣayriyyah, a *Hadith* narrator (d. 541/1146); and Ġalīlah bint ʿAlī al-Šaġarī (d. 485/1192).³³

The style is clear and beautiful. It combines foliated and floriated Kufic calligraphy, especially in the first line of the text where beautiful branches rise from several letters, some of which are above the *basmalah* under the niche curve (*miḥrāb*) and others at the bottom of the two bases above the simple line surrounding the text on three sides. It has two opposing branches on the right and the left of the dome. In between the lines, there are scattered rosettes, so little that their petals can hardly be distinguished. Some of these rosettes are similar to those in the Miḥlāf ʿAšm inscription, inscribed by Aḥmad al-Ḥaffār (262/875-876),³⁴ as well as tombstone inscription no. 220 of Mecca, the work of the Meccan calligrapher ʿAḥmad b. Ishāq.

This inscription for Ġalīl is assessed to have been made by ʿAḥmad b. Ishāq or at least by a scribe from the same school since the designs on this inscription are apparent on a number of the inscriptions from this school, especially during the period from the second half of the 3rd/9th century to the first half of the fourth/tenth century.³⁵ What strengthens the possibility that this inscription belongs to the above period is that her husband’s father, ʿAbd Allāh b. Qunbul, the *mufīī* of Mecca, was a contemporary of the historian of Mecca, ʿAbū ʿAbd Allāh al-Fākihī, who lived c. 272/885-886, i.e. there was one generation between them.

³² Badawī et al., *Muġam ʿAsmāʿ al-ʿArab*, I, 331.

³³ Badawī et al., *Muġam ʿAsmāʿ al-ʿArab*, I, 331–332.

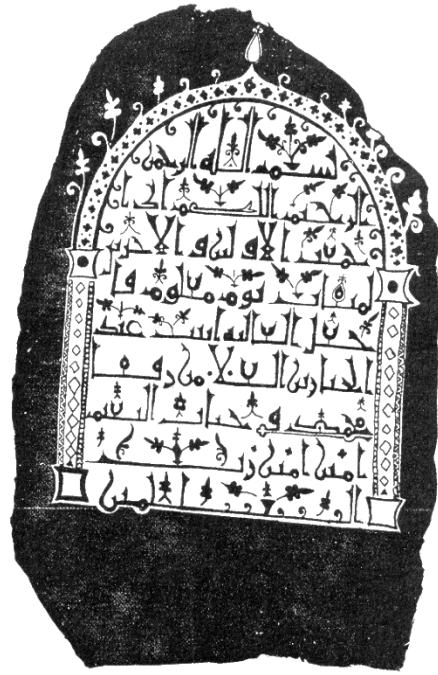
³⁴ Al-Zaylaʿī, ‘Calligraphy’, 247, fig. 6.

³⁵ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥġār al-Maʿlāh*, 252–264, nos. 220 and 230.

No. 10 / Museum no. 497



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma'ālāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Nine lines with beautiful, elaborate, floriated Kufic carved in relief, with an ornamental three-sided *mihrāb*-shaped border.

No date, 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: al-Ġāliyah ibnat °Abd al-Jabbār b. al-°Alā'.

Museum no. 497, °Aḡḡār al-Ma'ālāh (plate no. 10ab).

Measurements: 29 x 39 cm.

Height of °alif: 5.2 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن

2. الرحيم. اللهم اذا

3. جمعت الاولين والآخرين
 4. لميقات يوم معلوم، فا
 5. جعل الغالية ابنت عبد
 6. الجبار بن العلا من رفقا
 7. محمد في جنات النعيم
 8. امين امين رب
 9. العلمين

Translation

1. In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy
2. the Giver of Mercy. O God, when you
3. gather together the first and the last
4. for the appointment of a day determined
5. assign al-Ġāliyah ibnat °Abd
6. al-Ġabbār bin al-°Alā to be among the companions of
7. Muḥammad in the Gardens of Bliss
8. Amen. Amen. Lord of
9. the Universe.

Note: *ibnat* in line 5 and *rufaḡā* without *hamzah* line 6.

Observations

This inscription is for the deceased al-Ġāliyah bint °Abd al-Ġabbār b. al-°Alā. It is of great importance due to the beauty of its style and ornamentation as well as to its historical value. °Abd al-Ġabbār b. al-°Alā was one of the prominent *hadith* scholars in Mecca (d. Ġumādā I, 248/862).³⁶ The name al-Ġāliyah or Ġāliyah is derived from the root verb *ġlw*, meaning ‘to harden’ or ‘to go beyond the limit’. Among the meanings of the form *Ġāliyah* are mixtures of perfume, ‘musk’ and ‘amber’.

Ġāliyah is a common Arabic name. Notable women with this name include Ġāliyah bint Muḥammad, a *hadith* narrator from Isfahan,³⁷ and Ġāliyah al-Wahhābiyyah or al-

³⁶ Al-Fāsī, *al-°Iqd al-°Tamīn*, V, 325.

³⁷ Badawī et al., *Mu°ġam °Asmā° al-°Arab*, II, 1258.

Buqamiyyah (d. 1229/1814), a strong woman who fought against the Turks in the time of the first Saudi state.³⁸

The calligraphy in this inscription could be the most and beautiful among those discovered in al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery. It is distinguished by the good hand, the fine symmetry of the letters and the botanical ornaments that are beautiful, minute, and perfectly drawn. Moreover, among its lines, and rising from some of its letters, are embellishments of little branches and rosettes. Thus, one can say it is a type of floriated Kufic. Among the characteristics of this inscription are:

1. The lengthening of the shaft letters, among them the ^ʿ*alif* and *lām*, ornamented at their tops with full palmettes. Half palmettes crown the neighbouring ^ʿ*alif* and *lām* letters and the single *lām* letters in *Allāh* as well as on the letter *bā*^ʿ in the word *b-ism* (line 1). The tips of the other rising letters throughout the text are flattened.
2. On the third line, the conjoined letters *lām-ʿalif* appear two times in two styles. The first is in the word *al-ʿawwalīn*, in which the letters are inscribed with a triangular base, a rhombus-like shape in the middle and two upright lines, making the letters like a cup. The other style appears in the word *al-ʿāharīn*, with two diagonal lines from the bottom, meeting just above the base to form a tongue-like shape.
3. In five places, the medial ^ʿ*ayn* and *ḡayn* letters are inscribed with the crown opened from the top (lines 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7). However, in the word *al-ʿālamīn* (line 9), it is inscribed like a triangle.
4. The letter *dāl* includes an extended arch in the word *Muḥammad* (line 7). This is similar to an extension (*Al-Mašq*)³⁹ used in inscription no. 11 of Miḥlāf ^ʿAšm, dated 239/853, for the deceased ^ʿUmm Muḥammad.⁴⁰ This extension is also similar to one in inscription no. 8 of the same collection of Mecca, dated to the 3rd/9th century, belonging to ^ʿAbū ^ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Nawfal al-Hāšimī.⁴¹

³⁸ Kaḥḥālah, *ʿAlām al-Nisā*, IV, 4–5.

³⁹ For more information about *mašq* see al-Qalqašandī, *Ṣubḥ al-ʿAšā*, III, 140–143.

⁴⁰ Al-Zayla^ʿī, ‘The Southern Area’, 441, 1.22.

⁴¹ Al-Salook, ‘Analitical’, 48, no. 8.

5. The crochet of the medial *hāʾ* in the word *Allāhum* (line 2) is adorned with two leaves above the line, connected to the letter *mīm* with a shape like an inverted letter *yāʾ*. This manner of writing the medial *hāʾ* crochet can be observed in a number of inscriptions, among which include inscription no. 448 of Mecca, inscribed by the Meccan calligrapher Aḥmad b. Qurrah;⁴² inscription no. 451, also of Mecca, by the calligrapher Ibn Yaḥyā;⁴³ and inscription no. 59 from the ʿAšm area of Mecca by calligrapher Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn on the tombstone of Muḥammad b. Ḥafṣ b. al-Muʿtamir, dated 289/902.⁴⁴

This tombstone is distinguished by its numerous ornaments, be it those connected to the letters, or those scattered between the lines. They are so many that it is difficult to cover them all in this study. However, one can say that they are all botanical drawings, with branches and two or three vine leaves. They can be seen above the words *b-ism* (line 1), *Allāhum* (line 2), *mīqāt* and *yawm* (line 4), *ibnat* and *ʿAbd* (line 5) and *rabb* (line 8) These contain two opposing half palmettes on top, embracing a branch with three five-petal vine leaves, in addition to other beautifying aspects.

The text is framed on three sides with a niche-shaped arch (*miḥrāb*), the curve of which is ornamented with botanical figures, with a pine leaf in the middle of them, on top of the arch. This looks like an architectural figure with three parts: a base, a body, and a crown with a pearl inlaid in the middle. Pearls are also seen on both sides of the column, with geometric ornaments of a repeated rhombus shape. The niche curve is ornamented with four-petal flowers, as well as pearls scattered in the spaces among the flowers.

Among other observations is the repetition of the word *āmīn* (line 8).⁴⁵

Among the Meccan and non-Meccan inscriptions studied, there is no inscription that is as fine as this one, with the exception of inscription no. 451 of al-Maʿlāh Cemetery.⁴⁶ To a limited extent, there are some tombstones that are similar to it in some aspects:

⁴² Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 492.

⁴³ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 496.

⁴⁴ Al-Zaylaʿī, 'The Southern Area', 446, 1.26.

⁴⁵ Al-Zahrānī, *Kitābāt Islāmiyyah*, 506, 1 no. 12ab and 509, no. 15ab.

⁴⁶ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 492.

tombstones no. 12 and no. 15 of al-Zahrānī and tombstones no. 220 and no. 336 of al-Maʿlāh Cemetery in Mecca.

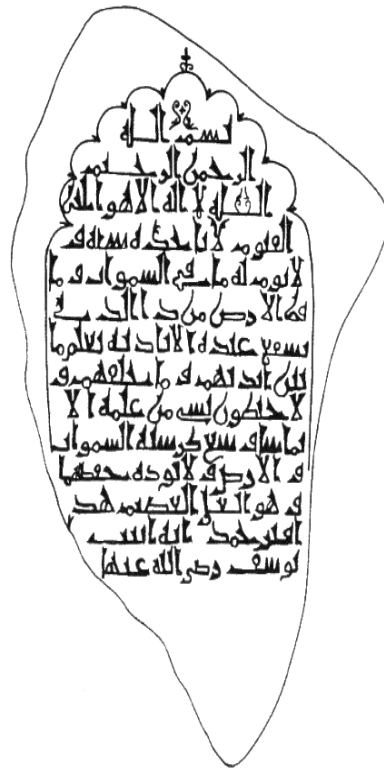
As for the date of the inscription, and the date of al-Ġāliyah's death, it could date from the 3rd /9th century when compared with the dates of some inscriptions discussed above. Also, the date of the death of her above-mentioned father (248/862) indicates that she could have lived only one generation after that.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *Aḥḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 254 and 370.

No. 11 / Museum no. 334



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt, weather-worn so that certain letters are far from clear.

Fourteen lines with incised simple Kufic and a simple three-sided *miḥrāb*-shaped border.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased name: Ḥamdānah Ibnat Yūsuf,

Museum no. 334, ^ʿ*Aḥḡār* al-Ma^ʿlāh (plate no. 11ab).

Measurements: 38 x 53 cm.

Height of ^ʿ*alif*: 4 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله
2. الرحمن الرحيم
3. الله لا اله الا هو الحي
4. القيوم لا تاخذه سنة و
5. لا نوم له ما في السموات وما
6. في الارض من ذا الذي
7. يشفع عنده الا باذنه يعلم ما
8. بين ايديهم وما خلفهم و
9. لا يحيطون بشئ من علمه الا
10. بما شا وسع كرسيه السموات
11. والارض ولا يوده حفظهما
12. وهو العلي العظيم هذ
13. اقبر حمدانة ابنت
14. يوسف رضي الله عنها

Translation

1. In the Name of God,
2. the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.
3. God, there is no god but Him, the Ever-Living,
4. the Ever Watchful.
5. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. All that is in the heavens and
6. the earth belongs to Him. Who is there that
7. can intercede with Him except by His leave? He knows what
8. is before them and what is behind them,
9. but they do not comprehend any of His knowledge except
10. what He wills. His throne extends over the heavens
11. and the earth; it does not weary Him to preserve them both.
12. He is the Most High, the Tremendous. This is the
13. tomb of Ḥamdānah bint
14. Yūsuf, may God be pleased with her.

Lines 3–12 are from Quran2:254–255 (*Sūrat al-Baqarah*).

Note: *šay*^o in line 9 and *šā*^o and *ibnat* in line 13.

Observations

This tombstone is for Ḥamdānah Ibnat Yūsuf. It is a binary name, with no relation to a tribe or a country. This makes it difficult to identify her, but she is presumed to be from Mecca and one of the common people.

As for the style, it is a beautiful Kufic form with fine letters and ornaments, which is common with Meccan calligraphers. In this inscription, these ornaments are beautiful and not too many to overwhelm the letters. The observer of the inscription would notice that the palmettes are turned above the letter *mīm* of the word *b-ism* (line 1), appearing like two opposite swans. Between the two *lāms* of the word *Allāh* (line 3), the leaves are face to face; however, the letter *lām* in the word *lā* (line 4) is inscribed with palmettes like an inverted lotus-like base. Finally, the observer would notice there is a half-palmette above the letter *dāl* in the word *taḥḥuduhu* (line 4).

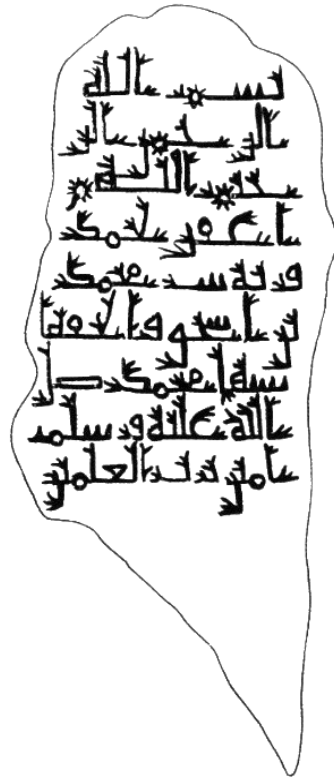
The text is framed on three sides with a line that turns into an eight-petal *miḥrāb* shape, on top of which, in the middle, is a little five-branchlet tree. Ḡālib notes that the five or more-petal knot design is originally Eastern, specifically from Persia. It spread from there to Iraq and Hijaz, then from there to Morocco and Andalu.⁴⁸

The characteristics of this inscription make it appear to be from the school of the Meccan calligrapher Ibrāhīm, which spread in Mecca in the 3rd/9th century. This school is represented by inscription no. 31 of Mecca, the first inscription with the name of this calligrapher. This makes it possible that the inscription in question belongs to the same period.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Ḡālib, *Mawsūʿat al-ʿImārah*, 282.

⁴⁹ Al-Zahrānī, *Kitābāt Islāmiyyah*, 165, 525, 1, no. 31ab.

No. 12 / Museum no. 144



A B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma[°]lāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt, in good condition.

Nine lines with incised foliated Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: Ḥamdūnah bint Muḥammad b. °Ishāq.

Museum no.144, °Aḥḡār al-Ma[°]lāh (plate no. 12ab).

Measurements: 16 x 53 cm.

Height of °alif: 3.2 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله
2. الرحمن الرحيم
3. حيم اللهم
4. اغفر لحمد
5. وانه بنت محمد
6. بن اسحق والحقها
7. بنبيها محمد صلى
8. الله عليه وسلم
9. امين رب العالمين

Translation

1. In the Name of God,
2. the Lord of Mercy, the
3. Giver of Mercy. O God,
4. forgive Ḥamdūnah
5. bint Muḥammad
6. b. ʾIshāq and unite her
7. with the prophet Muḥammad, may God bless
8. Him and grant Him peace.
9. Amen, Lord of the Universe.

Note: *bin* at the beginning of line 6.

Observations

The deceased woman on this tombstone is Ḥamdūnah bint Muḥammad b. ʾIshāq. Like the previous woman on tombstone no. 11 (above)⁵⁰ it difficult to identify her as there is no mention of her tribal name, a family, or a country. She is perhaps one of the common people of Mecca.

As for style, it is a 3rd/9th century inscription that is distinguished by the ornaments extending from the upright and horizontal letters in floral-like shapes. As observed four times in the first three lines of the inscription, the medial and final instances of

⁵⁰ See page 84 of this dissertation.

the letter *mīm* are radiating or star-like, similar to a daisy, camomile flower or sunflower.

However, three-branched lines, like simple leaves or feathers, so to speak, can be observed in most of the initial and final letters. This includes the letter *rāʾ* in the word *rabb* (line 9), which has ‘leaves’ at both ends (its upper area and lower tail), so its middle looks like an oval figure. Leaves are also observed at the bottom of the letter *ʿalif* descending below the line in the word *nabiyyuhā* (line 7).

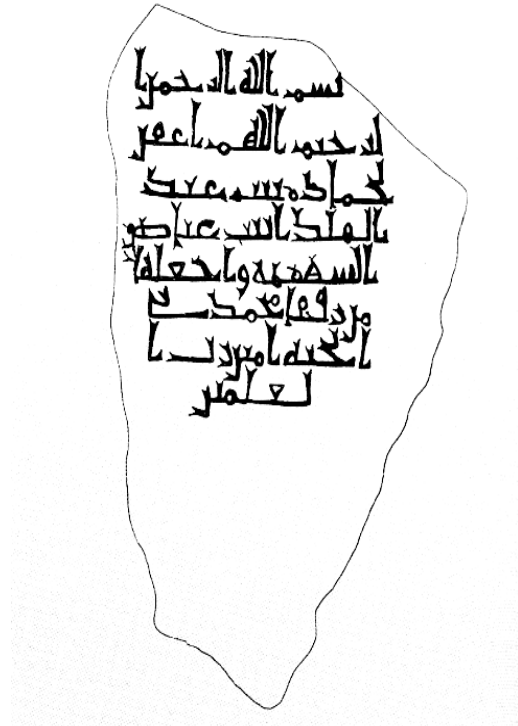
It is probable that this inscription belongs to the school of the Meccan calligrapher Aḥmad b. ʿIshāq, whose name was found on inscriptions no. 220 and 230 of al-Maʿlāh Cemetery.⁵¹

⁵¹ Āl-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 254 and 264.

No. 13 / Museum no. 10



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt, the last two lines in the inscription are not clear.

Eight lines of simple incised Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased name: Ḥammādah ibnat ʿAbd al-Malik ibnat ʿIyāḍ al-Sahmiyyah.

Museum no. 10, *ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 13ab).

Measurements: 22 x 26 cm.

Height of ʿalif: 3.2 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن ا
2. لرحيم اللهم اغفر
3. لحمادة بنت عبد

4. الملك ابنت عياض
 5. السهميه واجعلها
 6. من رفقا محمد في
 7. الجنة امين رب ا
 8. العلمين

Translation

1. In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy,
2. the Giver of Mercy. O God, forgive
3. Ḥammādah bint ʿAbd
4. al-Malik ibnat ʿIyād
5. al-Sahmiyyah and assign her
6. among the companions of Muḥammad in
7. Paradise. Āmīn. Lord
8. of the universe

Note: *Ibnat* in line 4 and *rufaḳāʿ* line 6.

Observations

This inscription bears the name of Ḥammādah bint ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿIyād al-Sahmiyyah, whose genealogy is attributed to B. Sahm b. ʿAmr b. Haṣīṣ. a clan of Qurayš. This is the same clan of ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ (d. 43/664), governor of Egypt during both the caliphates of ʿUmar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb (d.23/623) and Muʿāwiyah b. ʿAbī Sufyān. (d. 60/680).⁵²

This tombstone combines many of the features of the inscriptions so far discussed. For instance, in the word *Allāh* (lines 1 and 2), the elongation of the first letter *lām* and the subsequent shortening of the second towards the vertical final *hāʿ*. Additionally, the extending of the letter *ʿalif* below the line, as in the words *ʿIyād* (line 4) and *wa-ʿiḡʿalḥā* (line 5). This has been early cited in inscription no. 73 from the Cemetery of al-Maʿlāh and inscription no. 9 (above).⁵³ This inscription differs from the inscription nos. 73

⁵² Ibn Ḥazm, *Ġamharah*, 163ff; Kaḥḥālah, *Muḡam*, II, 560.

⁵³ See page 76 of this dissertation, as for inscription no. 73, see Āl-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḡḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 102.

and 9 in respect to the form of the letter *rāʾ* in the words *al-Raḥmān* (line 1) and *al-Raḥīm* (line 2), which here is dwarfed. The *rāʾ* ends parallel to the beginning of the adjacent letter *ḥaʾ*, on the line without descending below (which would be the normal case when writing of the letter *rāʾ*). This inscription also differs from nos. 73 and 9 in respect to the style of the final *nūn*. In the words *al-Raḥmān* (line 1), *min* (line 6) and *al-ʿālamīn* (line 8), the tail of the *nūn* is inscribed as long and vertical with a two-lobed leaf at both ends (above and below the line). This *nūn* resembles the letter *rāʾ* in the word *iḡfir* (line 2), which is shaped like a square and is significantly different from the two *rāʾ*'s in the words *al-Raḥmān* (line 1) and *al-Raḥīm* (line 2).

These features of the letters *rāʾ* and *nūn* are similar in style with inscription no. 31 from ʿAšm, dated Ramadān 233/848, which bears the name of the deceased ʿAʿīšah bint Sulaymān b. Dāʿūd. Therefore, this inscription is believed to belong to the same period.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Al-Faqīh, *Madīnat al-Sirrayn*, 226.

No. 14 / Museum no. 244



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt, broken upper and lower right sides.

Ten lines with beautiful and elegant incised simple Kufic and a simple three-sided *mihrāb*-shaped border and dome at the top.

No date, 3rd/9th century.

Deceased name: Ḥadīḡah ibnat al-Ḥusayn b. °Alī b. °Ubayd Allāh b. al-Husayn b. °Ubayd Allah b. al-°Abbās b. °Alī b. °Abī Tālib.

Museum no. 244, °Aḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh (plate no. 14ab).

Measurements: 29 x 31 cm.

Height of °alif: 3.2 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله
2. الرحمن الرحيم
3. قل هو الله احد الله الصمد
4. لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن
5. له كفوا احد اللهم
6. اجعل خديجة ابنت الحسين
7. بن علي بن عبيد الله بن [بن] الحسين
8. بن عبيد الله بن العباس بن
9. علي بن ابي طالب من رفقنا
10. [ج]دها محمد عليه السلام

Translation

1. In the Name of God
2. the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.
3. Say, 'He is God, the One, God the eternal.
4. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one
5. is comparable to Him.' O God,
6. assign Ḥadīġah ibnat al-Ḥusayn
7. b. °Alī b. °Ubayd Allāh b. al-Ḥusayn
8. b. °Ubayd Allāh b. al-°Abbās b.
9. °Alī b. °Abī Ṭālib to be among the companions of her
10. ancestor Muḥammad, peace be upon him.

Lines 2–5 are from Quran 112 :1-4 (*Surat al-Iḥlās*).

Note: *Ibnat* in line 6 and *bin* in lines 7 and 8.

Observations

This inscription bears the name Ḥadīġah bint al-Ḥusayn b. °Alī b. °Ubayd Allāh etc., whose genealogy goes back to al-°Aḥḥās b. °Alī b. °Abī Ṭālib. She is Hashimite Quraṣī, whose great grandfather was killed along with his brother al-Ḥusayn b. °Alī b. °Abī Ṭālib at the famous Battle of Karbala in 61/680.⁵⁵ Her genealogy (see Figure 14) is

⁵⁵ °Abū al-Fidā, *Al-Muḥtaṣar*, I, 191.

cited by certain genealogists and descent of Āl ʿAbī Ṭālib, as far as her ancestor ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, her other grandfather, ʿUbayd Allāh b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-ʿAḅḅās, was a governor of Mecca and Medina, as well as in charge of the judiciary and pilgrimage, from 204/819 to 208/823, during the reign of the Abbasid Caliph al-Maʿmūn b. Hārūn al-Rašīd (d. 218/833).⁵⁷

In terms of style, it is one of the most beautiful inscriptions of the 3rd/9th century. It combines the open medial ʿayn in the form of a goblet, as in the word *iğʿal* (line 9), and the closed one in the form of a miniature image of a lotus flower, as in the word *al-ʿAbbās* (line 8). The *wāw* in the word *huwa* (line 3) has a snipped tail, whereas in the word *wa-lam* (twice in the line 3), the tail of the *wāw* is pointed like an arrowhead. Additionally, in the word *yūlad* (line 4) and the word *kufuwan* (line 5), the tails of the *wāws* end slightly downward, tapered and twisted. These differing *wāws* are observed in several inscriptions from this collection, including inscription no. 20 below.⁵⁸

The text is surrounded on three sides with a simple frame and a pointed *miḥrāb* shape at the top. Two half-palmette fan shapes protrude from sides of *miḥrāb*, with damage to the right fan and the left fan remaining intact. From the niche of the *miḥrāb* hangs a decorative element consisting of two halves of a palmette-shaped perforated fan and a small rosette. A similar rosette feature is observed between the two *lāms* of the word *Allāh* (line 1) and above the word *al-Raḥīm* (line 2).

For the date of this inscription, it may be dated to 3rd/9th century based on palaeographic analysis. Further, this opinion is based the computation of generations between the deceased, Ḥadīḡah, and her grandfather, al-ʿAḅḅās b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbī Ṭālib – mentioned above as having been killed in Karbala in 61/680.

⁵⁶ Ibn ʿInabah, *ʿUmdat al-Ṭālib*, 394–398.

⁵⁷ Al-Fāsī, *al-ʿIqd al-Ṭamīn*, V, 305.

⁵⁸ See page 113 of this dissertation.

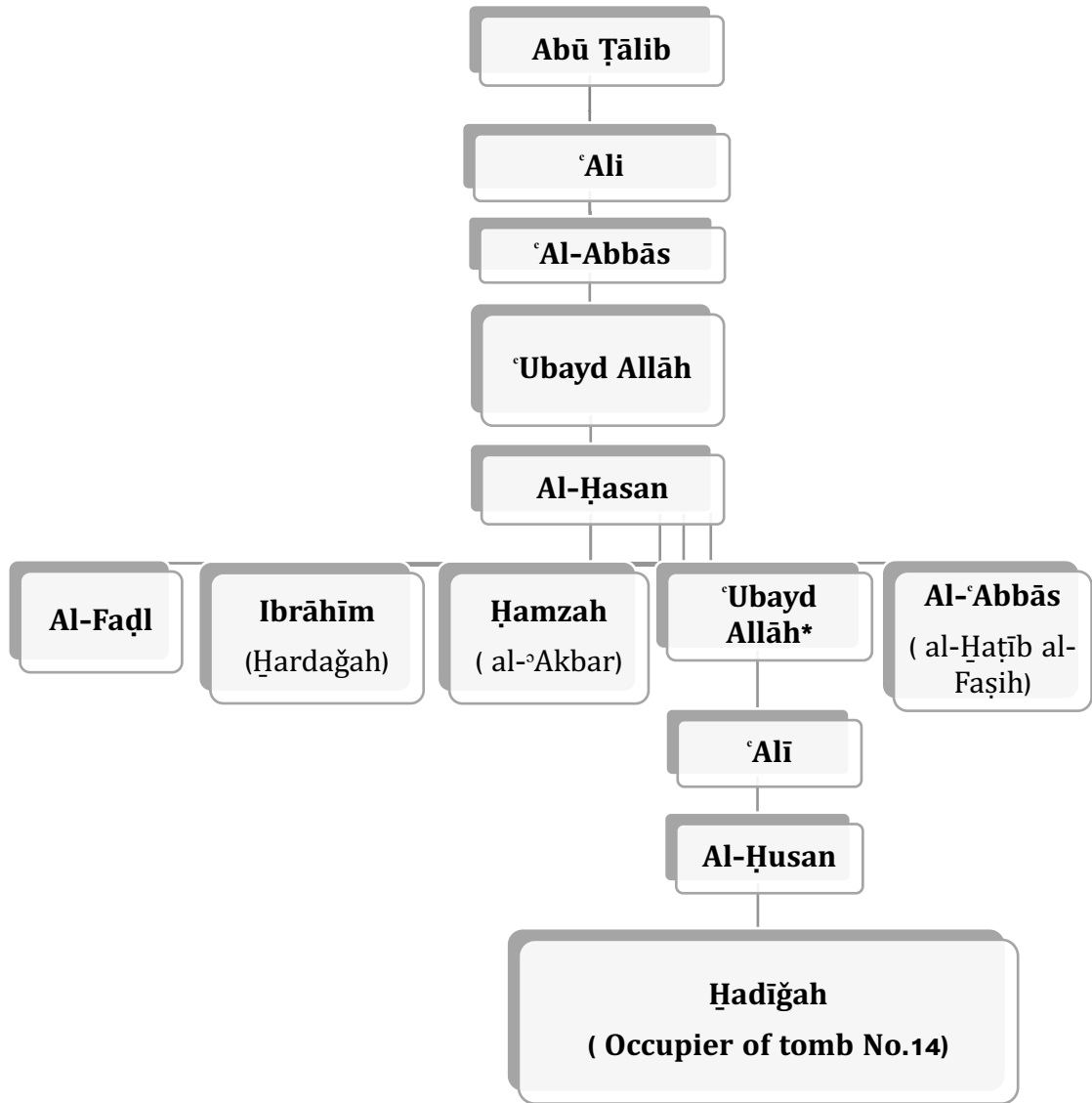


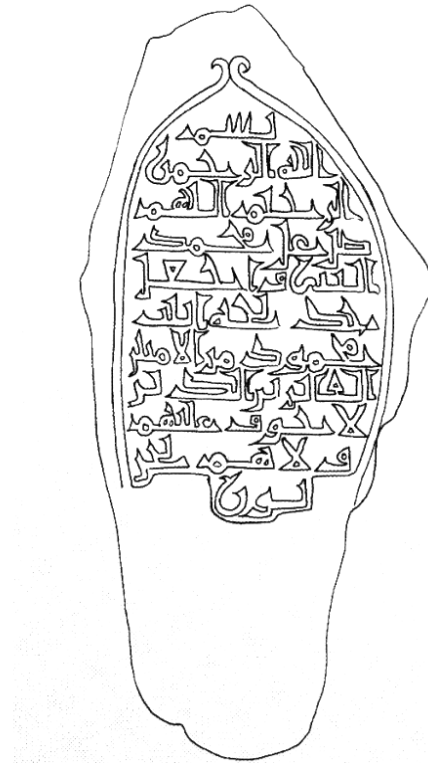
Figure 14: The family tree of Ḥadīğah

*Governor and Judge of the Two Holy Mosques

No. 15 / Museum no. 154



A



B

Description

Tombstone nearly egg shaped.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt, possibly broken upper and lower right side of the stone

Eleven lines with elaborate, legible simple Kufic, carved in relief with a simple three-sided border.

No date, probably 4th/10th century.

Deceased Name: Ḥadīġah ibnat Maḥmūd.

Museum no. 154, ²*Aḥġār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 15ab).

Measurements: 22 x 36 cm.

Height of ^ʿ*alif*: 3.5 cm.

Text

1. بسم
2. الله الرحمن
3. الرحيم اللهم
4. صل على محمد
5. النبي و اجعل
6. خديجة ابنت
7. محمود من الامنين
8. الفانزين. الذين
9. لاخوف عليهم
10. ولا هم يحز
11. نون

Translation

1. In the Name of
2. God, the Lord of Mercy
3. the Giver of Mercy. O God,
4. bless Muḥammad
5. the Prophet and assign
6. Ḥadīḡah ibnat
7. Maḥmūd to be among those who are secure
8. and those who will triumph.
9. There will be no fear for them,
10. nor will they
11. grieve.

Note: *Ibnat* in line 6.

Observations

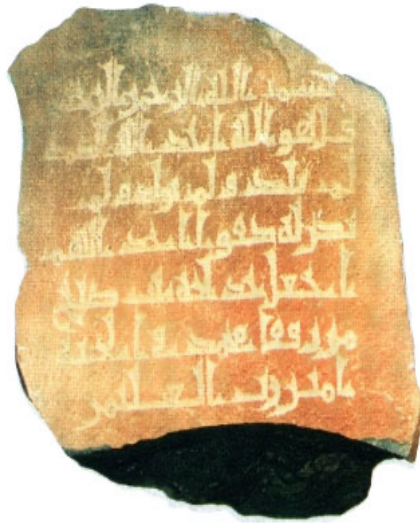
This inscription bears the name of the deceased Ḥadīḡah bint Maḥmūd. Like some of her predecessors, she is unknown in the historical sources.

Regarding the style of this inscription, it is noted that the inscription focuses on the proficiency of the rules of Kufic epigraphy. Free of all forms of decorative enhancements, the letters are written in angular or perfect Kufic. All beginnings and

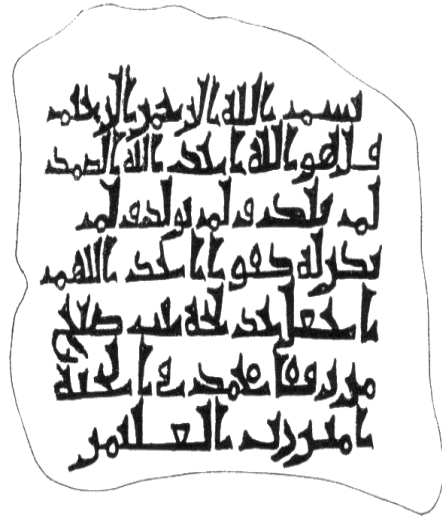
terminations of letters are flat, similar in shape, and are capped with small triangles. Throughout the inscription, the knot of the initial, medial, and final forms of the letter *mīm* are inscribed as circle. In the case of the words *al-Raḥmān* (line 2) and *yaḥzanūn* (line 10), the terminal letter *nūn* extends in a circular form and upwards, whereas the *nūn* is inscribed vertically in the word *min* (line 7) and the words *wa-^ol-fā^oizīn* and *wa-^ol-laḍīna* (line 8).

The inscription is encircled on three sides with two undecorated lines. One of the lines is a protruding external line, completely cut from the stone, while the other line is engraved with its curls at the upper ends. The inscription is similar to the earlier examined inscription no. 262 in terms of its calligraphic features, which was dated to the 3rd/9th century based on known generational calculations. The similarities support the opinion that this inscription, no. 154, is dated to the same period.

No. 16 / Museum no. 107



A



B

Description

Tombstone of a rough rectangular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Seven lines with simple incised Kufic.

No date, probably 2nd/8th century

Deceased name: Ḥadīḡah bint Ṣubḡ.

Museum no.107, *ʿAḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 16ab).

Measurements: 31 x 26 cm.

Height of *ʿalif*: 4 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. قل هو الله احد الله الصمد
3. لم يلد ولم يولد ولم
4. يكن له كفوا احد اللهم
5. اجعل خديجة بنت صبح
6. من رفقا محمد في الجنة

Translation

1. In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.
2. Say, ‘He is God, the One, God the Eternal.
3. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No
4. one is comparable to Him.’ O God,
5. assign Ḥadīġah bint Şubḥ to be among the
6. the companions of Muḥammad in Paradise.
7. Amen Lord of the Universe.

Lines 2–4 are from Quran 112 (*Surat al-Iḥlās*).

Note: *rufaḳāʿ* in line 6.

Observations

This tombstone belongs to the deceased Ḥadīġah bint Şubḥ, who may be of the common people of Mecca since her name does not carry any *nisbah* relating to a tribe or a place identifying her.

As for the style, although it has been inscribed according to the norms of Kufic calligraphy, it does not contain embellishments like some of the previous inscriptions or those which follow below. The letters are dwarfed and close due to the tight spacing within the lines and between words of the same line. In reviewing the *ʿalifs*, it is noted that they turn to the right at the bottom, a characteristic of early Arabic calligraphy like the model cited in the manuscript *Kitāb al-Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm (preserved in the Chester Beatty Library in Ireland).⁵⁹

It is worth mentioning that the letters here are similar to each other in form. For example, the letter *dāl* in the words *ʿAḥad*, *al-Şamad*, *yaliḍ*, *Aḥad*, *Ḥadīġah* and *Muḥammad* (line 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, respectively), the letter *kāf* in the words *yakun* and *kufuwan* (line 2), and the initial *şād* in the word *Şubḥ*, in which all these letters are inscribed flat on the line, with a rectangular arm ending at the apex and slightly tilting to the right. This style is reflected on a foundation stone discovered in a cylinder at the

⁵⁹ Ğumʿah, *Dirāsah fī taṭawwur*, 18.

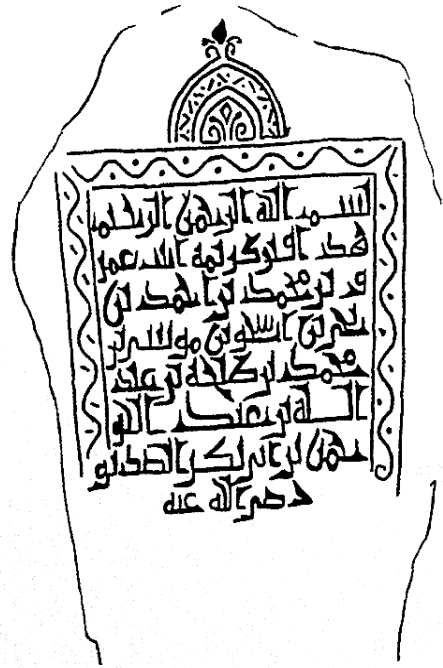
Grand Mosque in Mecca and is dated 167/783. The foundation stone was laid by an ordinance issued by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdī (d.169/785). This leads to the opinion that this inscription, no. 107, dates to the 2nd /8th century.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Al-Fīr, *Tatawwur al-Kitābāt*, 386, pls. 30 and 31.

No. 17 / Museum no. 221



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

al-Ma^lāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt. Some damage can be seen on the face of the stone.

Eight lines of incised, simple Kufic, with a three-sided ornamental border and dome at the top.

No date, 4th/10th century.

Deceased's Name: Karīmah bint ʿAmr b. Muḥammad b. ʿAḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Ishāq b. Mūsā b. Muḥammad b. Ṭalḥah b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq.

Museum no. 221, ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^lāh (plate no. 17ab).

Measurements: 27 x 25 cm.

Height of ʿalif: 2.5 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

2. هذا قبر كريمة ابنت عمر
3. و بن محمد بن احمد بن
4. يحي بن اسحق بن موسى بن
5. محمد بن طلحة بن عبد
6. الله بن عبد الر
7. حمن بن ابي بكر الصديق
8. رضي الله عنه

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.
2. This is the tomb of Karīmah ibnat °Amr
3. B. Muḥammad b. °Aḥmad b.
4. Yaḥyā b. Ishāq b. Mūsā b.
5. Muḥammad b. Ṭalḥah b. °Abd
6. Allāh b. °Abd
7. al-Raḥmān b. °Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddiq.
8. May God have mercy upon him.

Note: The superfluous °*alif* before the *rā*° in the words *al-Raḥmān* (line 6) and *ibnat* (line 2).

Observations

This inscription bears the name of Karīmah bint °Amr, a descendant of °Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, the first caliph in the history of Islam (d. 13/634). °Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq belonged to B. Taym b. Murrah from the Qurayš tribe. As shown in Figure 15, Her ancestor Ṭalḥah was the great grandson of °Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq.⁶¹

This inscription is characterised by elongated letters that are designed to be the same height as the °*alif* in the same word or line. For example, on the first line, the letter *bā*° in the word *b-ism* and the *ḥa*° letters in the phrase *al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* are equal in length to the letters °*alif* and *lām*. The same case is noted in the second line of the text, where the shaft of the *ha*° in the word *hādā*, the loop of the letter *qāf* in the word *qabr*, the arm of the *kāf* in the word *Karīmah*, and the shaft of the *nūn* in the word *ibnat* are

⁶¹ Ibn Ḥazm, *Ġamharah*, 126–127.

equal in height to the two *ʿalifs* in the same line. This pattern is continued throughout the text.

Another feature is the flattening seen at the apexes of certain letters. These flattened apexes are like blurred triangles. On the shaft letters, this flattening includes elongation to the right or left, appearing like flags at the top of these letters.

The text is surrounded on three sides by a border in the shape of a decorative strip consisting of two parallel lines, between which are wavy lines with tiny rosettes.

A dome-like, semi-circular feature rests above the top border and contains a floral decoration at its core. The wall of this feature is a strip comprising geometrical decorations, all of which is topped by a decorative three-leaf element.

This inscription is similar in its calligraphic and ornamental stylistic features to other inscriptions, including inscription no. 211 from the Cemetery of al-Maʿlāh⁶² and inscription no. 9 of the al-Sirrayn inscriptions.⁶³ The inscription is also similar to inscription no. 65 of Dahlak Island, dated 326/938, and inscription no. 66, dated 326/938.⁶⁴ These similarities lead to the assessment that this inscription may be attributed to the 4th/10th century as well. This assessment is supported by the ten generations that span between Karīmah and ʿAbū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (d. 53/672).⁶⁵

⁶² Āl-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 244, no. 211.

⁶³ Al-Faqīh, *Madinat al-Sirrayn*, 147, no. 9.

⁶⁴ Schneider, *Steles*, II, l. LI, nos. 65 and 66.

⁶⁵ Al-Fāsī, *al-ʿIqd al-Ṭamīn*, V, 370–375.

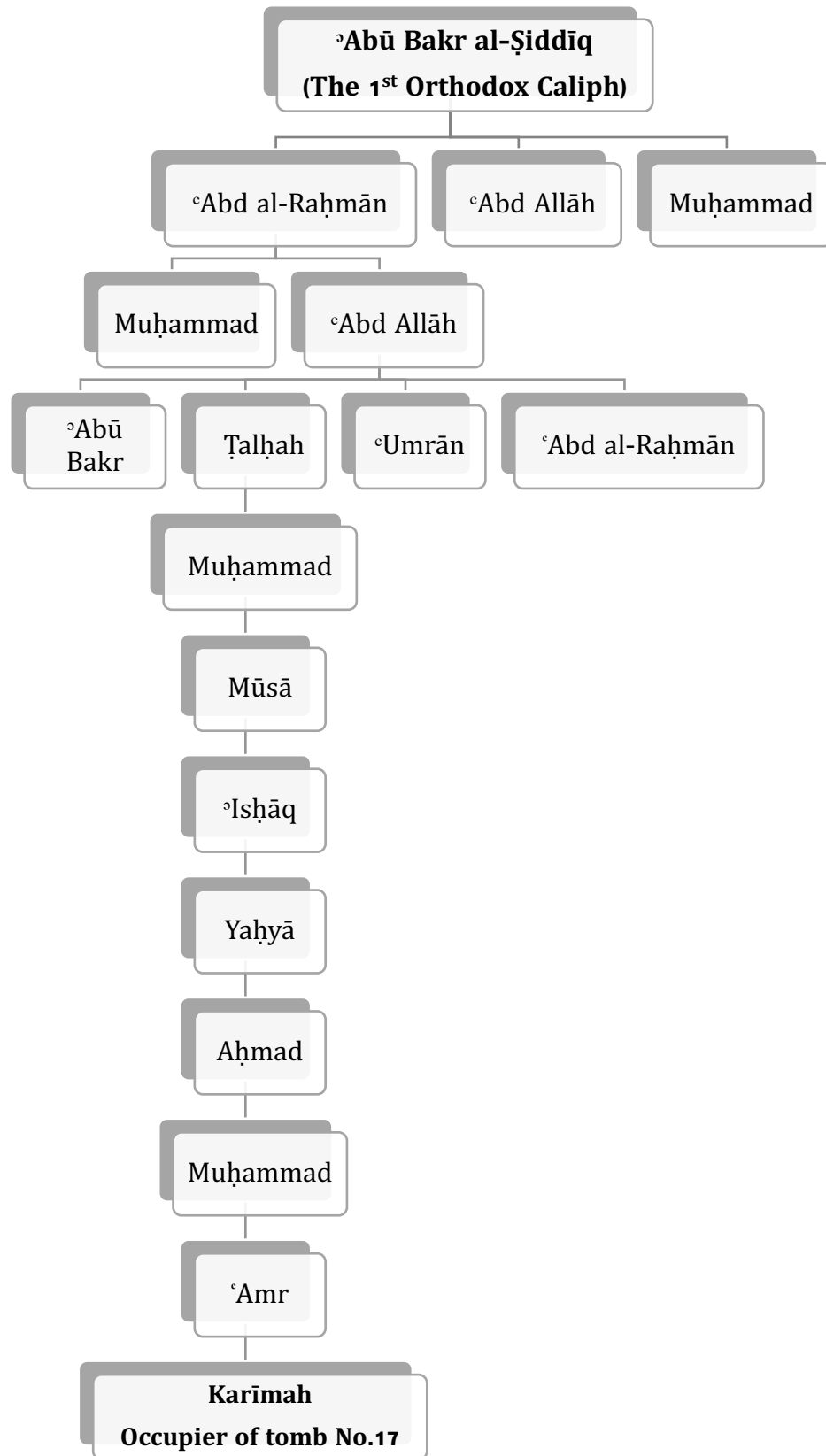
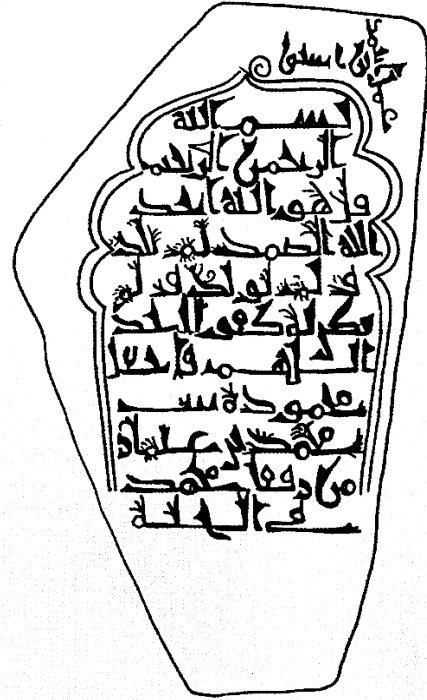


Figure 15: The family tree of Karimah

No. 18 / Museum no. 230



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

One plus 11 lines of incised foliated Kufic with a simple three-sided *mihrāb*-shaped border.

No date, probably 3rd/10th century.

Deceased's Name: Maḥmūdah bint Muḥammad b. °Uṭmān.

Museum no. 230, *ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 18ab).

Measurements: 21 x 32 cm.

Height of ^ʿ*alif*: 2.5 cm.

Text

Above the frame:

عمل احمد بن اسحاق

Within the frame:

1. بسم الله
2. الرحمن الرحيم.
3. قل هو الله احد.
4. الله الصمد. لم يلد
5. ولم يولد. ولم
6. يكن له كفوا احد
7. اللهم واجعل
8. محمودة بنت
9. محمد بن عثمان
10. من رفقا محمد
11. في الجنة

Translation

Above the frame:

The work of ʿAḥmad b. Ishāq

Within the frame:

1. In the name of God,
2. the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.
3. Say, 'He is God, the One
4. God, the Eternal. He begot no
5. one, nor was He begotten. No one
6. is comparable to Him'.
7. O God, include
8. Maḥmūdah bint
9. Muḥammad b. ʿUthiman
10. among the companions of Muḥammad
11. in Paradise.

Lines 3–6 are from Quran 112:1–4 (*Sūrat al-Ihlās*)

Note: *rufqā* in line 10.

Observations

This inscription was for Maḥmūdah bint Muḥammad b. ʿUṭmān. She was not famous, nor was her father mentioned in the available historical sources. She is believed to be one of common people of Mecca.

This inscription is distinctive in that it bears the name of the calligrapher, ʿAḥmad b. ʿIshāq. He represents a school of tombstone inscriptions in Mecca at his time. His school is characterised by the usage of the triple or trefoil decoration, as seen in this tombstone. This is reflected in certain initial and terminal letters, exemplified in letter apexes or at the ends in three limb-like branches or sprigs, appearing as if they are half-palmettes for single letters and fan-like palmettes in the adjacent letters – especially the ʿalif with the *lām*. The feathering that the inscriber is keen to execute is remarkably reflected on the loop of the *mīm*, emanating what resembles sun rays or sunflower petals. This feathering of the *mīm* can be seen in the word *lam* (lines 4 and 5) and the name ʿUṭmān (line 9).

This inscription is surrounded on three sides by a *miḥrāb*-like border, made up of two parallel lines formed into five-lobed arc, culminating in two loops at the top. This arc is like the arc in inscription no. 5 of this collection.⁶⁶

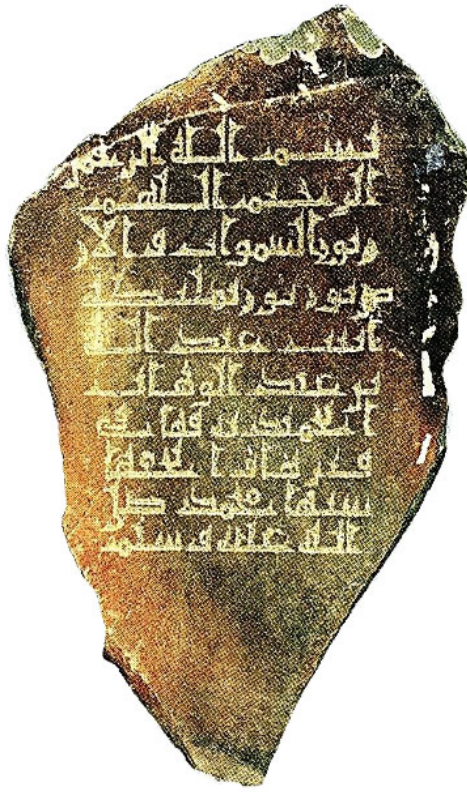
Aḥmad b. ʿIshāq’s school was similar to the contemporary school in ʿAšm, known as the school of Aḥmad al-Ḥaffār. Examples from this school are found in inscriptions no. 15, dated 262/877–876, and no. 17, which is believed to have been inscribed by Aḥmad al-Ḥaffār.⁶⁷ Representations of these schools found in al-Maʿlāh Cemetery include inscriptions nos. 144, 195, 212 and 220 – the last one being executed by Aḥmad b. ʿIshāq himself.⁶⁸ By comparing this inscription to the inscriptions of Aḥmad al-Ḥaffār’s school in ʿAšm and to the other similar inscriptions from Mecca mentioned above, it seems likely that this inscription dates to the 3rd/9th century.

⁶⁶ See page 63 of this dissertation.

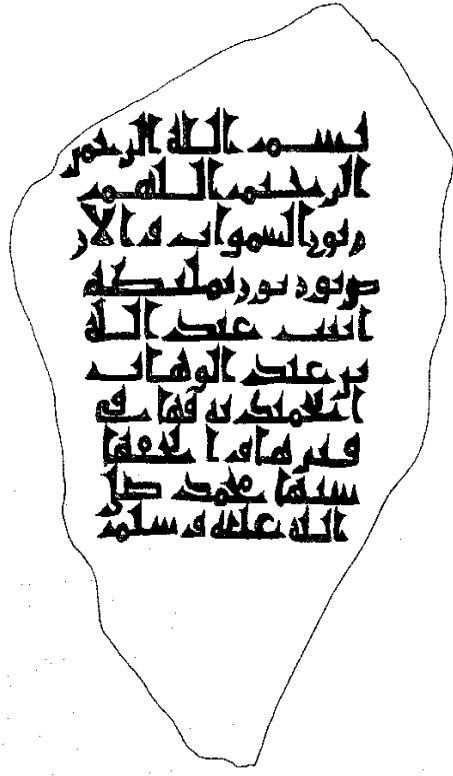
⁶⁷ Al-Zaylaʿī, ‘The Southern Area’, 443, pl. 23, no. 15.

⁶⁸ Āl-Ḥalīfahet al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 175, 228 and 254.

No. 19 / Museum no. 82



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Ten lines of incised simple Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased's Name: Malīkah bint °Abd Allāh b. °Abd al-Wahhāb al-Ḥumaydiyyah.

Museum no. 82, °Aḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh (plate no. 19ab).

Measurements: 28 x 36 cm.

Height of °alif: 3.2 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن

2. الرحيم اللهم

3. و نور السموات والار
 4. ض نور نور لمليكة
 5. ابنت عبد الله
 6. بن عبد الوهاب
 7. الحميدية فها في
 8. قبرها والحقها
 9. بنبيها محمد صلى
 10. الله عليه وسلم

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy,
2. the Giver of Mercy. O God, light of
3. the Heavens and Earth,
4. shed light on Malīkah
5. ibant °Abd Allāh
6. b. °Abd al-Wahhāb
7. al-Ḥumaydiyyah in
8. her tomb and
9. let her meet her Prophet Muḥammad,
10. May God bless him and give him peace.

Note: *ibnat* in line 5, *bin* in line 6 and the *fhā* or *qhā* in line 7 is presumably a scribal error, cornered by the following *fī*, *nur* was repeated in line 4, a scribal error isolated *rā* or *wāw* in line 3

Observations

This inscription was made for Malīkah bint °Abd Allāh b. °Abd al-Wahhāb al-Ḥumaydiyyah. She was of al-Ḥumaydāt, of B. °Asad b. °Abd al-°Uzzā, a clan of Qurayš tribe, some of them were al-Zubayr b. al-°Awwām and lady Ḥadīġah bint Ḥuwaylid, the first spouse of the Prophet Muḥammad.⁶⁹ Therefore, she is Meccan, specifically of the Qurayš tribe. As for the name Malīkah, it is a common name for Arab women.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Ibn Ḥazm, *Ġamharah*, 117–120; al-Sam°ānī, *al-°Ansāb*, II, 268–269.

⁷⁰ Kaḥḥālah, *Muġam*, V, 107–109.

This inscription is unique in that its calligrapher focused on simple calligraphy without exaggerating decorations. The calligrapher's commitment is shown in the rule line at which most of the shaft letters end, with a triangular flattening form. The horizontal letters end in a similar form, appearing like arrowheads. This is noted in the final *mīm* in the words *b-ism*, *al-Rahīm*, *Allāhumma* and *wa-sallam* (lines 1, 2, 10) as well as in the final *tāʾ* in the words *al-samawāt* (line 3) and *ibnat* (line 5), in the *bāʾ* in the word *al-Wahhāb* (line 6), and in the final *dāl* in lines 5, 6, 7 and 8.

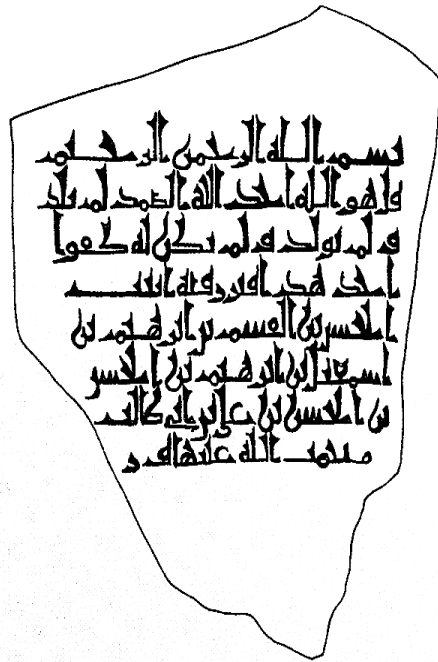
One of the most striking features of this inscription is the calligrapher's commitment to an elongated base between the adjacent *lām* letters in the name *Allāh* (line 1 and 5) and the phrase *Allāhumma* (line 2). This commitment is rarely found in such style in the inscriptions known to the researcher. Known inscriptions with a similar style include nos. 29, 34, 121 and 160 of al-Maʿlāh Cemetery.⁷¹ They are undated, and along with this inscription in question, they are assessed to date to the end of the 2nd/8th century or to the early 3rd/9th century.

⁷¹ Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 58, 92 and 151.

No. 20 / Museum no. 40



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Eight lines of incised simple Kufic.

No date, 3rd/9th century.

Deceased's Name: Ruqayyah bint al-Ḥasan b. al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm b. ʿIsmāʿīl b. ʿIbrāhīm b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbī Ṭālib.

Museum no. 40, *ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 20ab).

Measurements: 41 x 32 cm.

Height of ʿalif: 4 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

2. قل هو الله احد الله الصمد لم يلد

3. ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا
 4. احد هذا قبر رقية ابنت
 5. الحسن بن القاسم بن ابراهيم بن
 6. اسماعيل بن ابراهيم بن الحسن
 7. بن الحسن بن علي بن ابي طالب
 8. [رحمت الله عليها و [رضوانه]

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.
2. Say, ‘He is God, the One God, the Eternal. He begot no one
3. nor was He begotten. No one is
4. comparable to Him.’ This is the tomb of Ruqayyah ibnat
5. al-Ḥasan b. al-Qāsim b. ʿIbrāhīm b.
6. ʿImāʿīl b. ʿIbrāhīm b. al-Ḥasan
7. b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbī Ṭālib.
8. May God’s Mercy be upon her and His approval.

Lines 2–4 are from Quran, 112:1-4 (*Sūrat al-Ihlāṣ*).

Note: *tāʿ maftūḥah*, not *tāʿ marbūṭah* (line 4) and the absence of ʿImāʿīl and ʿIbrāhīm ʿalif *al-madd* in the name: *al-Qāsim* line 5.

Observations

This tombstone bears the name of Ruqayyah bint al-Ḥasan b. al-Qāsim, known as al-Rassī, from the mountain near Medina called al-Rass. Her genealogy goes back to al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbī Ṭālib. (see Figure 16) She is Qurayṣī and Hashimite and is from a well-known family. All the names stated in her lineage, including her father, an Emir of Medina, are well known, as stated by Ibn ʿInabah.⁷² Her grandfather, al-Qāsim al-Rassī (d. 246/860), was the forebearer or ancestor of the Zaydī imāms, who ruled Yemen from 284/897 until their downfall in 1382/1962.⁷³

This is one of the most beautiful inscriptions and is written in graceful and decorative letters. The letters have a few aesthetic touches, such as the ornamental shaft of the

⁷² Ibn ʿInabah, *ʿUmdat al-Ṭālib*, 201.

⁷³ Sharaf al-Dīn, *al-Yaman ʿAbr al-Tārīḥ*, 245ff.

initial *bā* in the word *b-ism* (line 1), and loop of the *wāw* in the word *wa-lam* (line 3), and the crochet of the initial and medial *hā* (lines 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8). The flattening of the shaft letters is visible wherever they occur in the text. As for the final *nūn*, it is extended in certain words, ending in snake-like heads, such as in the words *yakun* (line 3) and *ibn* (lines 5, 6 and 7). The final *nūn* the medial *kāf* are similar in the word *yakun* (line 3). The writing of this inscription is similar to inscription no. 14 (above) of this collection.⁷⁴ In many aspects. no. 14 is attributed to Ḥadīḡah bint al-Ḥusayn and initially appears as if it was inscribed by the same scribe; however, the decorations that differentiate Ḥadīḡah's inscription from that of Ruqayyah's make this unlikely.

⁷⁴ See page 93 of this dissertation.

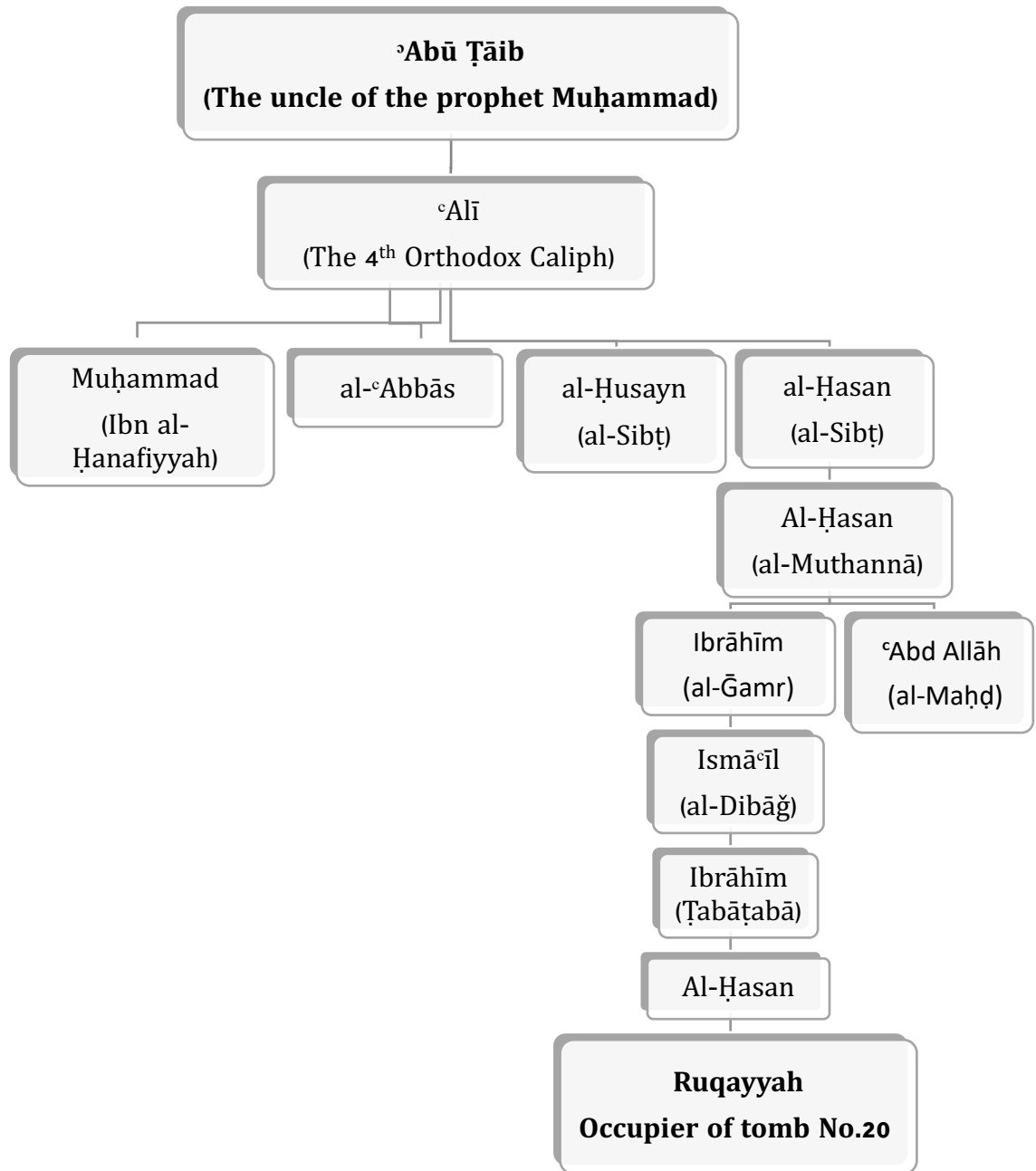


Figure 16: The family tree of the deceased Ruqayyah

Table 1: Summary of the sample of Chapter 1

No.	Date	Full name	Family	Title of woman	Engraver	Quranic verse	Publication	Location
1	n.d.	<i>ʿArwā bint Rizq</i>				112 (all)	<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 1ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 5)
2	n.d.	<i>ʿAsmāʾ bint Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Dāwud b. Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib</i>				2:254–255	<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 2ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 260)
3	n.d.	<i>ʿAzzah bint ʿAyyūb b. Baṣīr</i>					<i>Aḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 3ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 100)
4	n.d.	<i>Duḥaymah ibnat ʿAbd al-Raḥman b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb</i>					<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 4ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 4)
5	n.d.	<i>Fāṭimah bint al-ʿAbbās b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Yazīd</i>					<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 5ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 193)
6	n.d.	<i>Fāṭima ibnat ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Maḥzūmiyyah</i>	<i>Al-Maḥzūmiyyah</i>		Ibn Qurrah	112 (all)	<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 6ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 258)
7	n.d.	<i>Fāṭimah bint al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAbān</i>				2:254–255	<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 7ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 452)
8	n.d.	<i>Fāṭimah ibnat al-Muḡhīrah b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Malik al-Maḥzūmiyyah</i>	<i>Al-Maḥzūmiyyah</i>				<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 8ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 234)
9	n.d.	<i>Ġalīl ibnat ʿAbd Allāh ʿUmm ibn Yaʿqūb ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Qunbul.</i>		<i>ʿUmm ibn Yaʿqūb</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 9ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 423)
10	n.d.	<i>Ġāliyah ibnat ʿAbd al-Jabbār b. al-ʿAlāʾ</i>					<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 10ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 497)
11	n.d.	<i>Ḥamdānah Ibnat Yūsuf,</i>				2:254–255	<i>ʿAḥḡār</i>	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 334)

							<i>al-Ma^clāh</i> (plate no. 11ab)	
12	n.d.	<i>Ḥamdūnah bint Muḥammad b. ʿIshāq</i>					<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^clāh</i> (plate no. 12ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no.144)
13	n.d.	<i>Ḥammādah ibnat ʿAbd al-Malik ibnat ʿIyāḍ al-Sahmiyyah</i>	<i>Al-Sahmiyyah.</i>				<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^clāh</i> (plate no. 13ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 10)
14	n.d.	<i>Ḥadīḡah ibnat al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. ʿUbayd Allāh b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿUbayd Allāh b. al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbī Tālib</i>				112 (all)	<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^clāh</i> (plate no. 4ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 244)
15	n.d.	<i>Ḥadīḡah ibnat Maḥmūd</i>					<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^clāh</i> (plate no. 15ab).	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 154)
16	n.d.	<i>Ḥadīḡah bint Ṣubḥ</i>				112 (all)	<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^clāh</i> (plate no. 16ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no.107)
17	n.d.	<i>Karīmah bint ʿAmr b. Muḥammad b. ʿAḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Ishāq b. Mūsā b. Muḥammad b. Ṭalḥah b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq</i>					<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^clāh</i> (plate no. 17ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 221)
18	n.d.	<i>Maḥmūdah bint Muḥammad b. ʿUṭmān</i>				<i>ʿAḥmad b. Ishāq</i>	112 (all) <i>ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^clāh</i> (plate no. 18ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 230)
19	n.d.	<i>Malīkah bint ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Waḥḥāb al-Ḥumaydiyyah</i>	<i>Al-Ḥumaydiyyah</i>				<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^clāh</i> (plate no. 19ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 82)
20	n.d.	<i>Ruqayyah bint al-Ḥasan b. al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm b. ʿIsmāʿīl b. ʿIbrāhīm b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbī Ṭālib</i>				112 (all)	<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^clāh</i> (plate no. 20ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 40)

Chapter 2: The women of Mecca who were slaves, freed slaves, *Mawālī*, and those who mothered children of free men and gained freedom, *Ummahāt al-awlād*

Introduction

The Arabs' history of slavery started even before Islam, and one of its most important sources of slaves was the wars between the Arabs themselves or between them and their neighbours. The Arab tribes invaded each other, and the victorious enslaved those who were defeated, enslaving both men and women. The slave markets in Mecca, where even slaves of Arab origin were sold along with black and white slaves, were some of the most famous of slaves markets in Hijaz.⁷⁵ As an indication of the level of slavery in early Islam Mecca, Ḥakīm b. Ḥizām (d. 54/674) manumitted 100 of his slaves, and Hind bint ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib manumitted 40 of her slaves.⁷⁶

The most famous slaves at the advent of Islam included Zayd b. Ḥārīṭah (d. 8/629), an Arab from the well-known Arab tribe of Quḍāʿah;⁷⁷ Bilal b. Rabāḥ (d. 20/641), an Ethiopian;⁷⁸ Salmān al-Fārsī (d. 36/656), a Persian as the attribution indicates;⁷⁹ and Ṣuhayb (d. 38/659), a Byzantine who was nicknamed al-Rūmī.⁸⁰ Additionally, there is Sīrīn, an Egyptian Coptic slave girl, who was granted by the Prophet Muḥammad to the poet Ḥassān b. Tābit (d. 54/674). She bore Ḥassān's son, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥassān (d. 104/722).⁸¹

While men and women were enslaved, this study is primarily interested in the latter since many had an impact on female community in Mecca. This study includes a

⁷⁵ Al-Bābṭain, *al-Ḥayāt al-ʾIḡtimāʿyyah*, 64–65.

⁷⁶ Al-Bābṭīn, *al-Ḥayāt al-ʾIḡtimāʿyyah*, 61.

⁷⁷ Ibn Ḥaḡar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-ʾIṣābah*, I, 563.

⁷⁸ Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, III, 222–239; al-Diyār Bakrī, *Tārīḥ al-Ḥamīs*, II, 245.

⁷⁹ Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 75–93; al-Ziriklī, *al-ʾIlām*, III, 169–302.

⁸⁰ Ibn Ḥaḡar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-ʾIṣābah*, II, 195–196; al-Ziriklī, III, 302.

⁸¹ Ibn Ḥaḡar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdīb al-Tahdīb*, VII, 162.

sample of 21 women who are assessed to have originally been slave girls that gained their freedom before their deaths. This assessment is based on their social status at the time of their deaths, *mawālī* or *ʿummaḥāt al-ʿawlād*, both to be discussed later.

Slavery in Islam

Although the Islamic religion did not encourage slavery or the enslavement of humans, it encouraged the emancipation of slaves and made that an expiation for many sins and one of the gifts from God.⁸² However, after the advent of Islam and the spread of the conquering Muslims to neighbouring countries, the number of slaves from conquered countries increased. They were of diverse nationalities and complexions. Al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām (d. 36/656), one of the senior companions of the prophet Muḥammad and an extremely rich man, was said to have possessed 1,000 slaves and 1,000 bondwomen.⁸³ Slavery had become a profitable trade in Mecca and in countries that were subject to the authority of the Islamic caliphate; their markets were many.

Slaves were separated by colour: black and white. The most important markets for the former were in Egypt, southern Arabia and North Africa.⁸⁴ Black slaves were transported by caravan to those markets from black Africa and Abyssinia and were exported to the markets of Yemen and the Hijaz region until a relatively recent time.⁸⁵

The latter, the white slaves, were mainly Turks, Sicilians, Armenians and Greeks. The most famous market was that of Samarqand, to which slaves were brought from Turkestan and Transoxiana as well as from Bulgaria and Eastern Europe. Slaves from the latter parts first passed through Germany, Italy and France en route to Andalusia, then travelled eastward to different Arab-Islamic cities, including Mecca.⁸⁶ White slave were more expensive than black slaves for many reasons detailed in the Arab sources, with one author describing the white slave as the aristocrat of slaves.⁸⁷

⁸² For more information about ethical side of slavery, see Brown, *Slavery and Islam*, 70–75, 205.

⁸³ ʿAmīn, *Fağr al-ʿIslām*, 88.

⁸⁴ ʿAmīn, *Ḍuḥā al-ʿIslām*, 85.

⁸⁵ Metz, *al-Ḥaḍarah al-ʿIslāmiyyah*, I, 296–297; al-Rayḥānī, *Mulūk al-ʿArab*, 368–370.

⁸⁶ ʿAmīn, *Ḍuḥā al-ʿIslām*, 85; Metz, *al-Ḥaḍarah al-ʿIslāmiyyah*, I, 300–302.

⁸⁷ Metz, *al-Ḥaḍarah al-ʿIslāmiyyah*, II, 298.

Slaves were considered the property of their masters, and the masters disposed of slaves by sale or gift. While bondwomen were required to gratify their master, Islam obliged the good treatment of slaves and encouraged their manumission, often being portrayed as an atonement of sins. It was also a righteous and laudable custom for a master to recommend the manumission of some of the slaves he owned before his death.⁸⁸ For example, it has been recorded that the Abbasid Caliph al-Muṭaṣim bi-Allāh recommended the manumission of 800 of his slaves at the time of his death in 227/842.⁸⁹

Slaves of all colours and from all origins carried out many different tasks; some of them performed industrial and commercial work for their masters, some were eunuchs (*aḡawāt*) who served at homes and mingled with women⁹⁰ and others were soldiers and military leaders. Many reached the highest positions of state, such as Muṣnis al-Ḥādīm (d. 321 /933) in Iraq,⁹¹ Kāfūr al-ʿIḥšīdī (d. 57/968) in Egypt,⁹² Ḡawhar al-Ṣiqillī (d. 81/992) in Egypt and Morocco,⁹³ and Naḡāḥ (d. 452 /1060), the founder of the Banī Naḡāḥ dynasty in Yemen until the end of the dynasty in d. 554/1159.⁹⁴

Women enslaved: Roles and emancipation

For women, some were domestic slave girls and others reached a high status, including female singers and mothers of free-born sons and (*Mā malakat ʿaymānu-kum*) ‘their slaves’,⁹⁵ with whom palaces were filled, having an impact on social life. There was an increase in the number of slave girls; intermarriage became common, resulting in most caliphs being descendants of concubines (*sarārī*). ʿAḥmad ʿAmīn quotes Ibn Ḥazm as saying, ‘The caliphate in the first era of Islam was not occupied by a caliph whose mother was not a free bondwoman, save Yazīd and Ibrāhīm, sons of al-Walīd.

⁸⁸ ʿAmīn, *Faḡr al-ʿIslām*, 88–89.

⁸⁹ Metz, *al-Ḥaḍarah al-ʿIslāmiyyah*, I, 308.

⁹⁰ Cf. Brown, *Slavery and Islam*, 137; Ḥamdān, *Ḥarat al-ʿAḡawāt*, 22–25, see fig. 23 below.

⁹¹ Ibn Taḡrī Bardī, *al-Nuḡūm al-Zāhirah*, III, 239.

⁹² Ibn Ḥallikān, *Wafayāt al-ʿAyān*, IV, 99–105; Ibn Taḡrī Bardī, IV, 1–10; Brown, *Slavery and Islam*, 141.

⁹³ Ibn Ḥallikān, *Wafayāt al-ʿAyān*, IV, 375–380.

⁹⁴ ʿUmārah, *Tārīḥ al-Yaman*, 76–77, 98 and 188.

⁹⁵ Quran 23:6 (*Sūrat al-Muʿminūn*); for singing girls (*qiyān*), see al-Ḡāḥiẓ, *Rasāʿil al-Ḡāḥiẓ*, II, 141ff, “kitāb al-Qiyān.”

It was not occupied by Abbasids whose mother was a free bondwoman, save al-Saffāh, al-Mahdī and al-ʿAmīn'.⁹⁶ From this quote, it is clear that the people's passion, particularly the well-off and high-status people during that period and in later, was to accept marriage or concubinage with bondwoman. Of the 37 Abbasid caliphs, none of them was born of a free woman except for three, those mentioned above. As for the Umayyad caliphs in Andalusia, all their mothers were bondwomen.⁹⁷

There are those who explain the preferences of the high-status people for slave girls rather than for free women as follows: '[T]here was no way to polygamy except through slave girls for sexual pleasure. All the caliphs of the fourth/tenth century had mothers who were slave girls of Sicilian origin; therefore, they were rarely married to free women.'⁹⁸ Some writers explain the preference as the man, before possessing the slave girl, having known everything about her, as opposed not knowing everything about a free woman with expensive dowries. Therefore, he would accept her purchase after falling in love with her. For a free woman, information concerning her beauty will be sought through other women, and women rarely capture the beauty of women as men do. A woman sees only the surface beauty, while she does not know the characteristics sought after by men.⁹⁹

Among the most famous Abbasid caliphs who were not born to free women but were born to slave girl of different origins were ʿAbū Ğaʿfar al-Manṣūr (d. 158/775), whose mother was a Barbarian slave girl named Salāmah;¹⁰⁰ Harūn al-Rashīd (d. 193/809), whose mother was a Yemeni named al-Ḥayzurān;¹⁰¹ al-Maʿmūn (d. 218/833), whose mother was a Persian named Marāḡil;¹⁰² al-Muʿtasim (d. 227/842), whose mother was a Turk named Māridah;¹⁰³ al-Wāthiq (d. 232/847), whose mother was a Byzantine slave girl named Qarāṭīs;¹⁰⁴ and al-Mutawakkil (d. 246/861), whose mother was a

⁹⁶ ʿAmīn, *Zuhr al-ʿIslām*, I, 124.

⁹⁷ ʿAmīn, *Zuhr al-ʿIslām*, I, 124.

⁹⁸ Metz, *al-Ḥaḍārah al-ʿIslāmiyyah*, I, 180.

⁹⁹ Metz, *al-Ḥaḍārah al-ʿIslāmiyyah*, I, 180.

¹⁰⁰ Ibn al-Ĝawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, VII, 334.

¹⁰¹ Al-Baġdādī, *Tārīḥ Baġdād*, XIV, 5–6; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīḥ al-Ḥulafāʾ*, 453; Brown, *Slavery and Islam*, 131.

¹⁰² Al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīḥ al-Ḥulafāʾ*, 289.

¹⁰³ Ibn al-Ĝawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, XI, 24; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīḥ al-Ḥulafāʾ*, 531.

¹⁰⁴ Al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīḥ al-Ḥulafāʾ*, 542.

Khwārizmi. It was said that al-Mutawakkil's mother was a Turk named Suḡā^c, whom al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baḡdādī described as 'the most outstanding mistress in terms of generosity and bounty'.¹⁰⁵

The role of ethnicity

Ibn Buṭlān wrote a treatise on the slave trade, as did others,¹⁰⁶ in which he mentioned the ethnicities of slaves worldwide, including the features of each race, the outstanding features of slave girls and their faults, and the slave traders' tricks and fraud in how they hid faults.¹⁰⁷ The discourse in Ibn Buṭlān's book, in respect of slave girls, their characteristics, races and the features of each race, is spelt out in great detail, but restricts the mention of nationalities or races of the domestic slave girls, especially those in the houses of the rich and high-status people. Ibn Butlan writes that they are grouped into Indians, Sindis, Meccans, Madinans, Sudanese, Abyssinians, Turks, Romanians, Armenians, Sicilians and barbarians.¹⁰⁸ °Aḥmad °Amīn mentions that some people would order a slave from slave traders by type, using the colours of doves: Sicilians were white doves and black Africans were black doves.¹⁰⁹

In respect of these types, one is interested in the descriptions of slave girls attributed to Mecca, and we propose that they were a mixture of those races due to the openness of Mecca to all the countries of the Islamic world. As they were brought up in Mecca, they acquired the traits of Meccan women and intermarried with local men. Thus, there emerged a distinctive mixture with unique characteristics, especially those of mixed race. °Aḥmad °Amīn describes those born in Mecca as follows: 'The Mecca-born slave girls were famous for their fitness of their wrists and joints and for their sleepy eyes.'¹¹⁰ Ibn Buṭlān describes them as 'hermaphrodites, feminine, of soft wrists, their white skin tanned, with good postures, their bodies are round, their kisses are pure and cold,

¹⁰⁵ Al-Baḡdādī, *Tārīḥ Baḡdād*, VII, 166.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn Buṭlān was followed by Muḥammad al-Ġazālī in his treatise *Hadiyyat al-Murayd fī Taqlīb al-°Abīd*, ed. °Abd al-Salām Hārūn, in *Nawādir al-Maḥṭuṭāt* Cairo, 1954, 410–591.

¹⁰⁷ *Risālah fī Šarī al-Raqīq*, 354–389.

¹⁰⁸ Ibn Buṭlān, *Risālah fī Šarī al-Raqīq*, 371–378.

¹⁰⁹ °Amīn, *Duḥā al-°Islām*, 87.

¹¹⁰ °Amīn, *Duḥā al-°Islām*, 86.

their hair is curled and with slumbering eyes'.¹¹¹ It is difficult to believe that Ibn Buṭlān's description of those who were born in Mecca having tanned white skin is appropriate because the majority of Meccan slave girls were from Abyssinia, and the Abyssinians have dark skin. As for their hair, it is indeed curly, as Ibn Buṭlān notes.¹¹²

Concubines

Concubinage in Mecca was common among the wealthy and high-status people as well as among the powerful in pre-modern Islam and subsequent periods because they were most able to buy slave girls. Therefore, we are not surprised that most of the sons of Meccan nobles or Mecca's rulers were born of slave girls who were of Abyssinian origin due to its proximity to Mecca and the fact that many slaves were smuggled from there to the Mecca.¹¹³ One of the most famous examples of an emir of Mecca whose mother was Abyssinian is ʿAbū Saʿd al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Qutādah (d. 651/1253). His mother was an Abyssinian slave girl.¹¹⁴ Additionally, Muṣallaiḥ al-Murayḥī published an inscribed tombstone bearing the name of Suʿād the Abyssinian, mother of a freeborn son to al-Šarīf Muḥammad b. Barakāt (d. 903/1497), the emir of Mecca. In fact, she was the concubine of her master, the above-mentioned Muḥammad b. Barakāt.¹¹⁵ She gave birth to a son named Ḥumaḍah. Her description, as recorded on her tombstone, reads, 'The blessed, dear woman of chastity and religion, who excelled over her peers'.¹¹⁶

It seems that the title of *mustawldāt* (a slave girl kept for bearing children) was common in Mecca, and the number of those who carried this title in Mecca has been traced to sixty-three in one corpus of funerary inscriptions.¹¹⁷ Others who held the title of slave girl (*ġāriyah*) or manumitted slave girl (*ʿatīqah*) are also found in great numbers.¹¹⁸

¹¹¹ Ibn Buṭlān, *Risālah fi Šarī al-Raqīq*, 375.

¹¹² Ibn Buṭlān, *Risālah fi Šarī al-Raqīq*, 375.

¹¹³ Al-Bābtayn, *al-Ḥayāt al-Iġtimāʿyyah*, 65; Ibn Buṭlān, *Risālah fi Šarī al-Raqīq*, 341.

¹¹⁴ Al-ʿIṣāmī, *al-Simṭ al-Ġālī al-Ṭaman*, IV, 219.

¹¹⁵ Al-Murayḥī, *Šāhid Qabr Suʿād*, 131.

¹¹⁶ Al-Murayḥī, 'Šāhid Qabr Suʿād', 134, 137 and 144.

¹¹⁷ Al-Murayḥī, 'Šāhid Qabr Suʿād', 134, 137 and 144.

¹¹⁸ Al-ʿIzz Ibn Fahad, *Bulūġ al-Marām*, II, 599–600.

Al-Šarīf Muḥammad b. Barakāt had four Abyssinian *mustawldāt* other than Suʿād, the slave girl. The mothers of his children include Munāyah, the mother of Hazzāʿ; Ḥaṣal al-Murād, mother of Rāğih, Shumaylah, Qāyatabay and Rumayṭah, Dām al-Surūr ʿAbū al-Ġayth, Qāsim and Nāhid; and Qammārī, mother of ʿAbū Duʿayğ. There are many other examples.¹¹⁹

Marriage vs concubinage

Before reviewing the chosen samples from the collection of tombstones of slave girls and mothers of freeborn sons that formed a segment of the women's society during the time of this study, we will explain briefly that a man may either marry his slave girl or maintain her as his concubine. The marriage of the slave woman is like that with a free woman by marriage contract. The man then is not permitted more than four wives, and only then if he can exercise justice between them. There is no legal limit on the number of concubines a man might possess, even if he is married to four women before them. As Allāh says, ‘If you fear that you will not deal fairly with orphan girls, you may marry whichever [other] women seem good to you, two, three, or four. If you fear that you cannot be equitable [to them], then marry only one, or your slaves: that is more likely to make you avoid bias’.¹²⁰ Elsewhere, Allāh says, ‘Who guard their chastity except with their spouses or their slaves with these they are not to blame’.¹²¹ Further, ‘Whoever owns a slave girl may have her as a concubine and she is not prohibited for him whether he is married or unmarried, and whether he is married to one or four, he may own slave girl as concubines, and it is not matter how many of them’.¹²²

As said before, Arabs practiced slavery since before Islam, and that its most important sources were prisoners of war. When the Arab conquerors spread throughout the conquered territories, they possessed more slaves; slaves were divided among the conquerors as booty. As enslavement decreased over time, the theft and abduction of

¹¹⁹ ʿIzz al-Dīn Ibn Fahad, *Bulūğ al-Qirā*, II, 599–600.

¹²⁰ Quran, 3:3 (*Sūrat al-Nisāʿ*).

¹²¹ Quran 23:6 (*Surat al-Muʾminūn*).

¹²² Amīn, *Ḍuhā al-ʿIslām*, 81. It is said that the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakil (d. 247/861) had 4,000 slave girls (maids) of different races.

young people and the sale of some non-Muslim families with their young children became the most important source of slavery.

Mawālī

The term *mawālī* is for those women who were manumitted or gained their own freedom, providing that they kept their loyalty to those who manumitted them, as narrated in the tradition: ‘loyalty is for he who manumitted them’.¹²³ Therefore, they remained loyal to their masters while they were released from ‘the possession of the right hand’.* The manumitted slave girl may even remain in her former master’s household. There are 11 women in this study who are called *mawālīth*.

ʿUmmahāt al-ʿawlād

The term *ummahāt al-awlād* is for the mothers of freeborn sons, of which there are nine in this study. These women are considered free women because once a slave girl gives birth to her master’s child, she can no longer be sold; her child is not a slave, and the child carries the lineage of their father. When her master dies, the slave becomes free, as noted above.

All members of this sample follow in the alphabetically arranged pages.

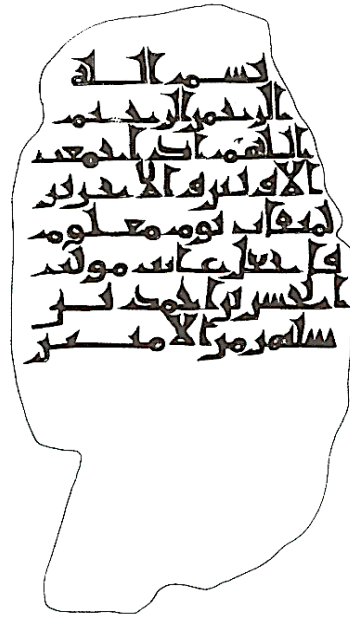
¹²³ This is perfect Hadith (narration) in all Books of the Hadith of the Prophet Muḥammad.cf. Wensinck, Concordance et indices De la tradition Musulmane, IV, 122, *ʿataqa*.

* Note: The Arabic term is *mulk al-yamin*, like real possession of the right hand.

No. 21 / Museum no. 121



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Eight lines of incised elaborate simple Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: °Ātib, client [*mawlāt*] of al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. Sulaymān.

Museum no. 121, °Aḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh (plate no. 21ab).

Measurements: 15 X 20 cm.

Height of °*alif*: 2.6 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله
2. الرحمن الرحيم
3. اللهم اذا جمعت
4. الاولين والآخرين

5. لميقات يوم معلوم
 6. فاجعل عاتب مولت (Sic)
 7. الحسن بن أحمد بن
 8. سليمان من الأمنين

Translation

1. In the Name of God,
2. the Lord of mercy, the Giver of Mercy.
3. O God, when you gather together
4. the first and the last
5. for the appointment of a day determined,
6. assign °Ātib, client [*mawlāt*] ¹²⁴ of
7. al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad bin
8. Sulaymān, to be among those who are secure.

Observations

This inscription is for °Ātib, client (*mawlāt*) of al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. Sulaymān. Her name is associated with °*atab*, meaning ‘blame’,¹²⁵ which is not a common name to the best of knowledge of the researcher. Her master, al-Ḥasan b. °Aḥmad b. Sulaymān, is not known in available Meccan sources.

As for the inscription’s calligraphic characteristics, it is inscribed in the Kufic style prevalent in the Hijaz region during the 3rd/9th century. This style was dominated by dryness (*yubūṣah*) and inscribed at right angles. It is noteworthy that this inscription incorporates both the open °*ayn* in the word *iğ°al* (line 6) and the closed °*ayn* in the words *ğama°at* (line 3) and *ma°lūm* (line 5). Further noteworthy features are the roundness of the letter *mīm* and its balanced form on the base line, as well as the *qāf* loop, like that gracefully inscribed in the word *mīqāt* (line 5), which differs from its

¹²⁴ Note: *Mawlāt* is inscribed in Arabic texts in three ways: 1. مولت; 2. مولات; 3. مولاة, and all of them give the same sound, but the first is wrong in writing either in deleting the letter °*alif* from the medial letter of *lām* or writing the letter *tā°* *maftūḥah* instead of the correct *tā* *marbūtah*. Therefore, I have added the word (Sic) between two brackets in front of the wrong word in the Arabic texts.

¹²⁵ Maṣṭfā et al, *al-Mu°ğam al-Wasīt*, I, 587.

sister letter *fāʿ*, as is in the word *fa-ğʿal* (line 5), inscribed in a form of geometrical shape similar to a rhombus. The joint letter *lām–ʿalif* has been inscribed in two places on a triangular base, except that their arms differ in each; in the first place, it is written in a divergent form, as in the word *al-ʿawwalīn* (line 4), and in the second, it is written in a non-divergent, clip-like form, as in the word *al-ʿāḥirīn* (line 4). The elongation stretching (*mašq*)¹²⁶ among adjacent letters is very clear in this inscription, such as that the elongation between the two *lāms* in the name *Allāh* (line 1), between the letters *ʿayn* and *lām* in the word *maʿlūm* (line 5), and between the letters *nūn* and *yāʿ* the word *al-ʿāminīn* (line 8). *Mašq* is required to fill the gap in text, although, it has been recorded that the Caliph ʿUmar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb said ‘elongation/stretching is the evil of writing [*šarr al-kitābah al-mašq*]’.¹²⁷

This inscription, with its calligraphic features, is similar to many other forms of Hijazi inscription that belong to the 3rd/9th century, such as inscription no. 4 from al-Sirrayn,¹²⁸ inscription nos. 2 and 73 from al-Maʿlāh Cemetery in Mecca¹²⁹ and inscription no. 47 at the Archaeological and Heritage Museum in Mecca.¹³⁰ This supports the opinion that this inscription is also attributable to the 3rd/9th century.

¹²⁶ Arif, *Arabic Lapidary Kufic*, 49–55.

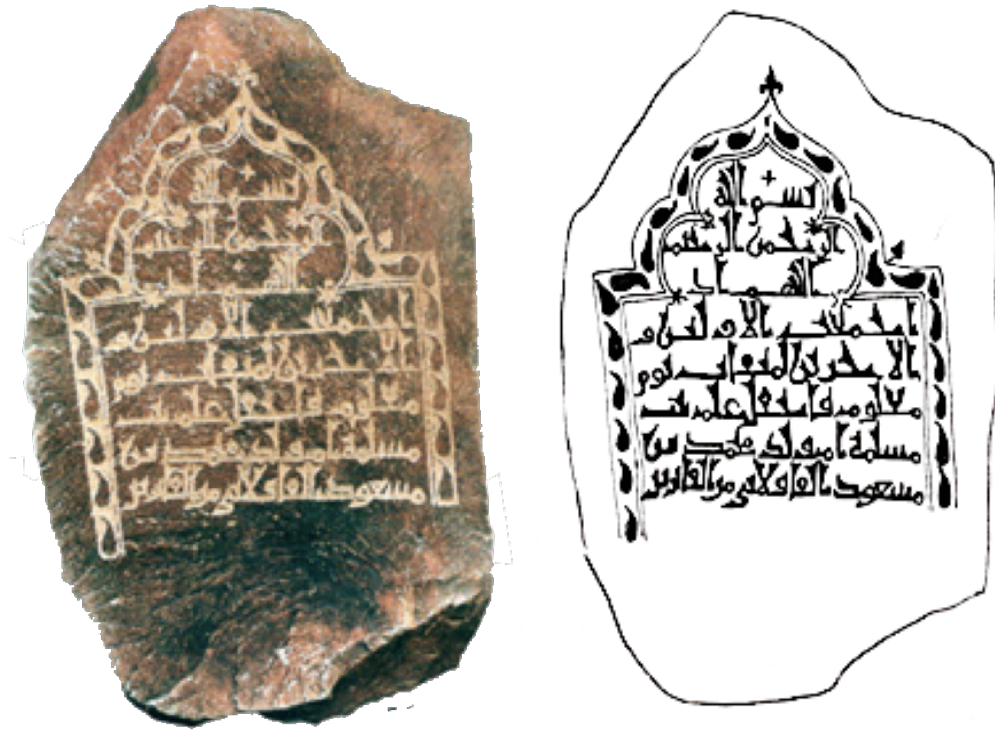
¹²⁷ Al-Šūlī, *ʿAdab al-Kuttāb*, 55–56, quoted in Arif, *Arabic Lapidary Kufic*, 49

¹²⁸ Al-Faqīh, *Madīnat al-Sirrayn*, 139, no. 4.

¹²⁹ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlah*, 58, 195, nos. 29 and 73.

¹³⁰ Al-Ḥarīṭī, *ʿAḡār Šāhidīyyah*, 61, no. 47.

No. 22 / Museum no. 305



A

B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Eight lines of incised simple Kufic with an ornamental *mihrāb*-shaped border.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased's Name: ʿAlam bint Maslamah, *umm walad* of Muḥammad b. Masʿūd al-Qāfilāni.

Museum no. 305, *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh* (plate no. 22ab).

Measurements: 33 x 32 cm.

Height of *ʿalif*: 3.9 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله
2. الرحمن الرحيم

3. اللهم اذا
 4. جمعت الاولين و
 5. الاخرين لميقات يوم
 6. معلوم فاجعل علم بنت
 7. مسلمة ام ولد محمد بن
 8. مسعود القافلاني من الفانزين

Translation

9. In the Name of God
 10. the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy
 11. O God, if you
 12. gather the first and
 13. the last for the appointment of a day
 14. determined, assign °Alam bint
 15. Maslamah, °umm walad of Muḥammad b.
 16. Mas°ūd, among those who will triumph.

Observations

This inscription is one of the most beautiful of this collection and belongs to °Alam bint Maslamah, °umm walad of her master, Muḥammad b. Mas°ūd Al-Qāfilānī. °Alam is a common name among women, specifically, the slaving is (*al-ġawārī*). Women who bear this name include °Alam al-Āmiriyyah, wife of the Faṭimīd Caliph al-Āmir bi-°Aḥkām Allāh (d. 524/1130),¹³¹ °Alam, the slave of the Abbāsīd Caliph al-Wāṭiq Bi-Allāh (d. 232/847),¹³² and °Alam, mother of Fātik b. Maṣṣūr, a governor of the B. Naġāḥ state in Yemen (d. 531/1136).¹³³ As for her master's *nisbah*, al-Qāfilānī, this refers to professionals who sell wood, tar and locks for ships. Many are known by this *nisbah*, such as al-Ḥasan b. Idrīs b. Muḥammad b. Šādān al-Qāfilānī (d. 309/921)¹³⁴ and Ġa°far b. Aḥmad al-Walīd al-Qāfilānī (d. 320/932).¹³⁵

¹³¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Mawā°iz, wa-°l-°I°tibār*, II, 446.

¹³² Kaḥāllah, *A°lām al-Nisā°*, III, 329.

¹³³ °Umārah, *al-Nukat al-°Ašriyyah*, 24–26; Kaḥāllah, *A°lām al-Nisā°*, 330.

¹³⁴ Al-Sam°ānī, *al-°Ansāb*, IV, 433–434.

¹³⁵ Al-Sam°ānī, *al-°Ansāb*, IV, 434.

The style of this inscription does not depart from the normal characteristics of 3rd/9th-century inscriptions, particularly in the circling of the final *nūn* (line 2) and the upward extension of its tail so as to be equal in length to the corresponding initial *ʿalif* in the same words. Note slope of the two letters of *lāms* in the word *Allāh* (line 1) and *Allāhumma* (line 3), and its gradual shortness towards the shaft letter of *hāʿ* after them. Also note the shape of open *ʿayn*, as in the words *ḡamʿata* (line 4) and *maʿlūm* (line 6). But the medial *ʿayn* in the word *iḡʿal* (line 6) is closed and in the form of a rhombus, which is different from the *qāf* and *fāʿ* circular loop forms in the words *al-Qāfilānī* and *al-fāʿizīn* (both in line 8). The *lām-ʿalif* (lines 4 and 5) are inscribed in an agile and refined form, similar to a goblet. The text is surrounded on three-sides by a beautiful, decorative border. This border mainly consists of a recurring floral leaf pattern, and the leaves are symmetrically similar to leaves of a similar pattern found in the frame of tombstone no. 14 of the Riyadh Museum, which is attributed to the 3rd/9th century.¹³⁶ As for the top of the frame in this inscription, it forms a closed niche with a floret atop.

This inscription similar to the following inscriptions in terms of style:

1. Inscription no. 38 from Mecca, which is dated to the 3rd/9th century;¹³⁷
2. Inscription no. 7, preserved at the King Fahd Library in Riyadh;¹³⁸
3. Inscription no. 35 from Dahlak Island, dated Shaʿbān 229/April 912.¹³⁹

These similarities make this inscription likely attributable to the 3rd/9th century.

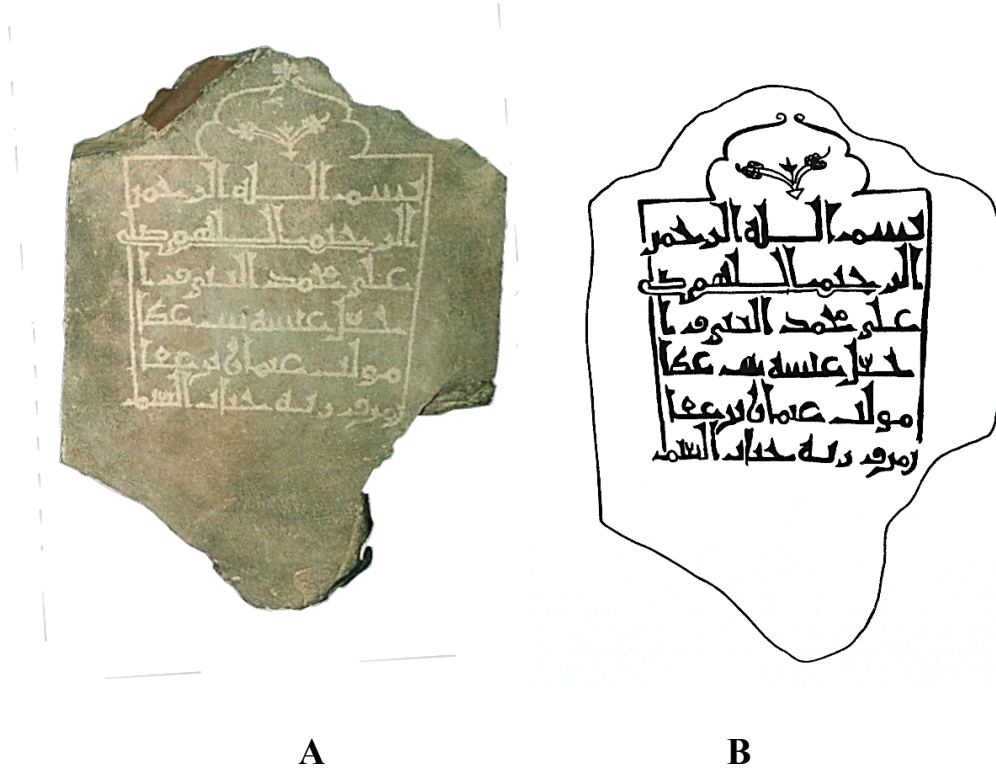
¹³⁶ Al-Salook, *Analytical*, 70, no. 14.

¹³⁷ Al-Zahrānī, *Kitābāt Islāmiyyah*, 532, no. 38ab.

¹³⁸ Al-Buqumī, *Nuqūš Islāmiyyah*, 215, no. 7.

¹³⁹ Oman, *La Necropoli*, II, 40, no. 35.

No. 23 / Museum no. 449



A

B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt; broken lower-right side.

Six lines of incised simple Kufic.

No date, probably 2nd/8th century.

Deceased's Name: °Ayshah bint °Atā°, *mawlāt* of °Uthmān b. °Affān

Museum no. 449, *Aḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 23ab).

Measurements: 33 x 32 cm.

Height of °*alif*: 3.9 cm.

Text

1. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ
2. الرَّحِيمِ. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ
3. عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ وَآلِهِ
4. جَعَلْ عَيْشَةَ بِنْتَ عَطَا

5. مولت (Sic) عثمان بن عفا

6. ن من ورثة جنات النعيم

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy,
2. the Giver of Mercy. O God, bless
3. Muḥammad the Prophet
4. and assign °Ayshah bint °Aṭā°,
5. client (*mawlāt*) of °Uṭmān b. °Affān,
6. among the inheritors of the gardens of bliss

Observations

This inscription belongs to °Ayṣah or °Ā°iṣah bint °Aṭā, *mawlāt* of °Uṭmān b. °Affān. Both the deceased's and her father's names are common and still used today.¹⁴⁰ Further, her master's name, °Uṭmān b. °Affān, is a well-known name; however, it is unlikely to be that of Caliph °Uṭmān b. °Affān (d. 35/656) due to the time lapse between his death and the palaeographic features that are clearly shown on this inscription (assessed to date to the second half of the 2nd/8th century or the first half of the 3rd/9th century). The deceased would thus have lived for 60 years (two generations) after the Caliph °Uṭmān b. °Affān's death. Therefore, the deceased's master should perhaps be attributed to another °Uṭmān, likely from Mecca's common people.

The outstanding feature of this inscription is the concision of the text. It does not exceed 21 words, and conciseness of the moreover, are not at all overcrowded in any one line. There is clarity in the letters and stretching within some words, i.e. *Allāh* (line 1) and *Allāhumma* (line 2).

The final *yā°*, °*alif maqṣūrah*, in the word *ṣallī* (for *ṣalli*; line 2), retreats it to the right, wrapping beneath several previous words. This feature of writing the retreating *yā°* has been noted in a number of inscriptions found in the province of °Ašm, which date back to the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Badawī et al., *Muḡam °Asmā° al-°Arab*, II, 1179 and 1250.

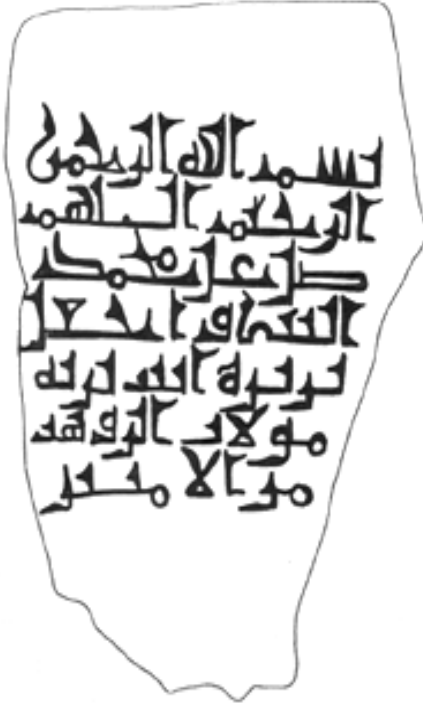
¹⁴¹ Al-Faḡīh, *Mihlāf °Ašm*, 210, 212, 219, 229, nos. 8, 10, 20 and 31. The latter inscription is dated 233/847–848.

Also note the elongation of the shaft letters and the flat heads of their ends, made with two strokes, as in the second *lām* of *Allāhumma* (line 2). These strokes became widespread in the inscription of the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries in Mecca. In this inscription, the outstanding feature is that the shaft letters end in a base descending below the line level, e.g. in the word °Aṭā (line 4), °Affān (line 5) and ḡannāt (line 6). This feature has been noted in the writing of similar letters in an inscription dated 239/853–854 from °Ašm,¹⁴² which supports the opinion that this inscription represents a transitional phase between the 2nd/8th century and the 3rd/9th century.

The text is surrounded on three sides by a border made of a simple line ending at the top with a double-dome arch topped by foliation. Enclosed within the dome structure is a plant-like features.

¹⁴² Al-Zayla'ī, 'The Southern Area', 442, no. 11.

No. 24 / Museum no. 114



A

B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Seven lines of incised simple Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased's Name: Burayrah bint Burayh, client [*mawlāt*] of ibn Wahb.

Museum no. 114, *ʿAḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 24ab).

Measurements: 24 x 23 cm.

Height of *ʿalif*: 3.4 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن

2. الرحيم. اللهم

3. صلى على محمد
 4. النبي واجعل
 5. بريرة ابنت بريه
 6. مولات (Sic) ابن وهب
 7. من الامنين

Translation

1. In the name of God, the Lord of mercy,
2. the Giver of Mercy. O God,
3. bless Muḥammad
4. the Prophet and assign
5. Burayrah ibnat Burayh,
6. client [*mawlāt*] of ibn Wahb,
7. among those who are secure.

Note: °*alā* without °*alif maqṣūrah* in line 3.

Observations

This tombstone is that of to the deceased Burayrah bint Burayah, client (*mawlāh*) of Ibn Wahb. Her name may be derived from the diminish of *birr* (charity) or *burr* (wheat), the product from which white flour is made. Her name may also be derived from *barbarah* which (talkative).¹⁴³ As for her father's name, Burayh, it may be derived from *barahi* (fat). This name is also borne by Burayh b. Muḥammad b. Burayh, who lived in the 3rd/9th century and was a famous Muḥaddiṭ, an authority on the prophetic tradition.¹⁴⁴ As for Burayrah, one of the most famous women bearing this name is Burayrah, *mawlāt* of °Ā'īṣah bint Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, wife of the Prophet Muḥammad, noted by the Umayyad Caliph °Abd al-Malik b. Marwān.¹⁴⁵

The outstanding feature of this inscription is that it is closely related to the inscriptions found at the al-Sirrayn cemetery, about 240 km to the south of Mecca dating back to the 3rd/9th century. It is characterised by its clarity and symmetry in terms of the length

¹⁴³ Muṣṭafā et al., *al-Muḡam al-Waṣīt*, I, 48.

¹⁴⁴ Badawī et al., °*Asmā' al-°Arab*, I, 177.

¹⁴⁵ Kaḥḥālah, °*Alām al-Nisā*, I, 129.

of the extension and vertical letters and the spacing between the letters within words and in adjacent words, whether on the same line or elsewhere in the text. Most of the letters are inscribed with a distinct right angle.

The outstanding characteristic of this inscription is the form of the medial *ʿayn*, which has a flat-topped, upside-down triangle, as seen in the word *iġʿal* (line 4). The design of the end *ʿalif*, wherever it appears in the text, has a tail extending slightly at a right angle to the right. The joint *lām-ʿalif* appears twice (lines 6 and 7), both with a triangle at the base and two obtuse arms.

This inscription has a clear style similar to a number of inscriptions that date back to the 3rd/9th century, including:

1. Inscription nos. 4 and 7 from al-Sirrayn;¹⁴⁶
2. Inscription no. 17 from the Mecca;¹⁴⁷
3. Inscription no. 17 from Dahlak island.¹⁴⁸

This similarity leads to the opinion that this inscription may be dated to the 3rd/9th century as well.

¹⁴⁶ Al-Faqīh, *Madīnat al-Sirrayn*, 139, 143, nos. 4 and 7.

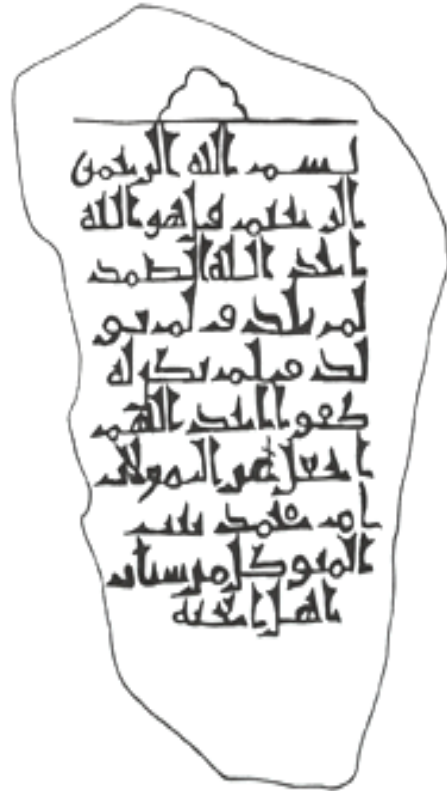
¹⁴⁷ Al-Zahrānī, *Kitābāt Islāmiyyah*, 511, no. 17ab.

¹⁴⁸ Oman, *La Necropoli*, II, 20, no. 17.

No. 25 / Museum no. 327



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt; broken left side.

Ten lines of incised simple Kufic with a dome at the top.

No date, 3rd/9th century.

Deceased's Name: Ġazāl, *mawlāt* of ʿUmm Muḥammad bint al-Mutawakkil.

Museum no. 327, *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh* (plate no. 25ab).

Measurements: 33 x 20 cm.

Height of ʿ*alif*: 3.7 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن
2. الرحيم. قل هو الله
3. احد. الله الصمد.
4. لم يلد ولم يو
5. لد. ولم يكن له
6. كفوا احد. اللهم
7. اجعل غزال مولات (Sic)
8. ام محمد بنت
9. المتوكل من شباب
10. اهل الجنة

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy,
2. the Giver of Mercy. Say, 'He is God,
3. the One, God the Eternal,
4. He begot no one nor was He begotten.
5. No one is
6. comparable to Him.' O God,
7. assign Ġazāl, *mawlāt* of
8. Umm Muḥammad bint
9. al-Mutawkkil, among the Youth of
10. the People of Paradise

Lines 2–6 are from Quran 112:1–4 (*Sūrat al-ʾIhlās*).

Observations

This inscription is not very clear, perhaps due to erosion, but its contents are legible. This inscription is important due to the uniqueness of the name Ġazāl, which is not mentioned on known tombstones found in Mecca or, indeed, in Hijaz in general. From the final invocation for Ġazāl, it can be understood that she died young, which is an important addition.

More important is that the mistress of the deceased was the granddaughter of Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakkil ʿalā Allāh (d. 247/958), whose given name was Ġaʿfar b.

Muḥammad b. Hārūn al-Rašīd. This caliph is known for his good deeds in Mecca, such as building the Holy Mosque, the al-Ḥhayf mosque in the shrine of Minā, the Kaʿbah *kiswah* and Ibrāhim’s standing place within the Holy Mosque.¹⁴⁹

As for the style of this tombstone, it is a standard Kufic inscription of 3rd/9th-century Hijaz. This is characterised by the final *mīm*, which is a round loop with a cut end, similar to a head of an arrow or a pen point, which can be seen in lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8.

The inscription maintains the open-top medial *ʿayn* shape, as in the word *iğʿal* (line 7). The reader will note the method of writing the isolate *ʿalif* wherever it appears in the text, which hooks to right.

Including the following, this inscription is similar to many inscriptions that date to the 3rd/9th century:

1. Inscription nos. 228, 347 and 387 of al-Maʿāh Cemetery;¹⁵⁰
2. Inscription no. 5 of the Riyadh Museum;¹⁵¹
3. Inscription no. 39 of the Mecca Museum.¹⁵²

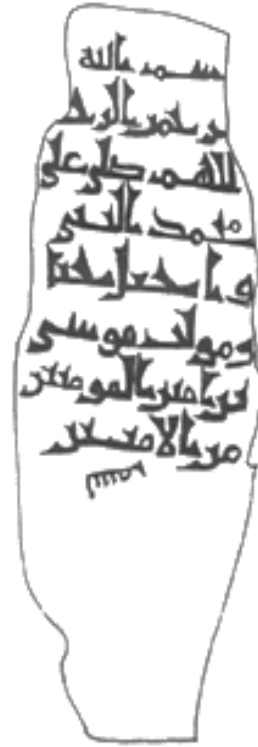
The possibility that this inscription belongs to the 3rd/9th century is confirmed by the fact that the above-mentioned al-Mutawakkil is Abbasid Caliph Ğaʿfar al-Mutawakkil, who died in 247/958, i.e. in the first half of the 3rd/9th century.

¹⁴⁹ Al-Fāsī, *Al-Iqd al-Tamīn*, III, 432.

¹⁵⁰ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḡḡār al-Maʿlāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 262, 384, 414, nos. 228, 348 and 387.

¹⁵¹ Al-Salook, *Analytical*, 32, no. 5.

¹⁵² Al-Ḥarīṭī, *ʿAḡḡār Sāhidīyyah*, 53, no. 39.

No. 26 / Museum no. 522**A****B****Description**

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma'ālāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt; broken right side and upper-left side.

Eight lines of incised simple Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased's Name: Ḥanān, *mawlāt* of Mūsā b. ʿAmīr al-Muʾminīn.

Museum no. 522, ʿAḡḡār al-Maʿālāh (plate no. 26ab).

Measurements: 40 x 59 cm.

Height of ʿalif: 3.4 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله
2. [ال]رحمن الرحـ[يم]
3. [ا]للهم صلى على
4. محمد النبي
5. واجعل حنا
6. ن مولات (Sic) موسى
7. بن امير المؤمنين
8. من الامنين

Translation

1. In the name of God,
2. the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.
3. O God, bless
4. Muḥammad the Prophet
5. and assign Ḥanān,
6. *mawlāt* of Mūsā
7. b. °Amīr al-Mu°minīn,
8. among those who are secure.

Note: *ṣallā* in line 3; the upside-down *b-ism* below the last line of the text.

Observations

This inscription refers to Ḥanān or Ġinān, both used as female names in Arabic.¹⁵³ She was a *mawlāt* of Mūsā, the son of °Amīr al-Mu°minīn (meaning Commander of the Faithful). As it is known, °Amīr al-Mu°minīn is a compound title reserved only for the caliph.¹⁵⁴ With regard to the historical period in question, there were two Mūsās who were the sons of the caliph, namely Mūsā al-Nāṭiq bi-°l-Ḥaqq, son of the Caliph Muḥammad al-°Amīn b. Hārūn al-Rašhīd, and Mūsā al-°Aḥḍab, son of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil °alā Allāh.¹⁵⁵ Mūsā al-Nāṭiq was appointed by his father al-°Amīn as

¹⁵³ Badawī et al., *Mu°ğam °Aamā° al-°Arab*, I, 346 and 469; Kaḥḥālah, *°Alam Al-Nisā°*, I, 215.

¹⁵⁴ Al-°Umarī, *al-Ta°rīf*, 17–18; al-Bāšā, *al-°Alqāb al-°Islāmiyyah*, 194–197.

¹⁵⁵ Ibn Ṭbātabā, *al-Faḥrī Fī-°I-°Ādāb al-Sulṭāniyyah*, 205; Ibn Ḥazm, *Ġamharat °Ansāb al-°Arab*, 24 and 26.

successor when he was young but was ousted by his brother, al-Maʿmūn the latter (al-Maʿmūn), waged war against his brother, al-ʿAmīn, which ended in the death of the al-ʿAmīn in the year 198/813.¹⁵⁶ Mūsā al-Nāṭiq bi-ʿl-Ḥaqq, alived after his father's death and died at the age of 14 at beginning of the 3rd/9th century.¹⁵⁷ As for the other, Mūsā al-ʿAḥḍab, son of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil ʿalā Allāh, he must have lived in the 3rd/9th century.

If Ḥanān or Ğinān was a *mawlāt* of one of these two Mūsās, then this inscription would appear to date to the same period, particularly the first half of the 3rd/9th century.

The style combines the characteristics of the second half of the 2nd/8th century and that of the first half of the 3rd/9th century. This is reflected in the shortness of the letter *rāʿ* in the two words *al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* (line 2) and in the loop of the letter *mīm*, which is written parallel to the baseline in the first four lines above the x-line in the final four lines. It has been noted that this style has a short *rāʿ* and the loop of the letter *mīm* in many cases. The closest parallel is inscription no. 34 from the Mecca Museum.¹⁵⁸

The final *nūn* in *al-Raḥmān* (line 2), *ibn* (line 7), *al-muʿminīn* (line 7) and the adjacent words *mīn al-ʿāminīn* (both in line 8) are inscribed in a similar style to the letter *rāʿ* in the word ʿ*Amīr* (line 7) as well as in similar words in inscription no. 16 (above), which has been studied previously within this collection.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Ibn Ṭbāṭabā, *al-Faḥrī Fī-ʿI-Ādāb al-Sulṭāniyyah*, 206.

¹⁵⁷ Ibn Ḥazm, *Ġamharat ʿAnsāb al-ʿArab*, 24.

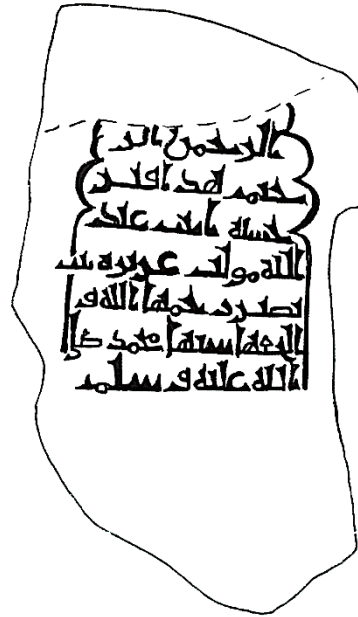
¹⁵⁸ Al-Ḥarīṭī, *ʿAḥḡār Šāhidiyyah*, 48, no. 34.

¹⁵⁹ See page 100 of this dissertation.

No. 27 / Museum no. 374



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt; broken on the upper side.

Seven lines of incised simple Kufic with a simple *mihrāb*-shaped border.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased's Name: Ḥasanah bint ʿAbd Allāh, *mawlāt* of ʿAzīzah bint Naṣr.

Museum no. 374, *ʿAḡḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 27ab).

Measurements: 21 x 19 cm.

Height of *ʿalif*: 3.3 cm.

Text

[بِسْمِ اللَّهِ]

1. الرحمن الر
2. حيم. هذا قبر
3. حسنة ابنت عبد

4. الله مولات (Sic) عزيزة بنت

5. نصر. رحمها الله و

6. الحقها بنبيها محمد صلى

7. الله عليه وسلم

Translation

[In the name of God],

1. the Lord of Mercy, the
2. Giver of Mercy. This is the tomb of
3. Ḥasanah ibnat ʿAbd
4. Allāh, *mawlāt* of ʿAzīzah bint
5. Naṣr. May God have mercy upon her and
6. let her meet her Prophet Muḥammad,
7. may God bless him and grant him peace.

Observations

Unfortunately, this tombstone is broken at the top, which causes part of the *basmalah* to be missing, yet fortunately, the deceased’s name is still fully inscribed on its surface: Ḥasanah bint ʿAbd Allāh, *mawlāt* of ʿAzīzah bint Naṣr. Ḥasanah’s name and her master’s name are well-known in the Arabic sources,¹⁶⁰ although the deceased and her master are not known in available Meccan sources, which probably means that they are from the general Meccan society.

This Kufic inscription is a familiar 3rd/9th century inscription in terms of style. This inscription is noteworthy because of its fine workmanship, beautiful writing and consistency in all its letters. These letters culminate in flattened ends, whether in the shaft or horizontal letters, including the tip of the letter *ḥā* in the words *al-Raḥmān* (line 1), *al-Raḥīm* (line 2), Ḥasanah (line 3), *raḥima-hā* (line 5) and *ʿalḥiq-hā* (line 6). Some of the latter endings are not free from strokes, such as the shaft of the letter *hā* in the words *hādā* (line 2) and *raḥima-hā* (line 5), the adjacent words *ʿalḥiq-hā bi-nabiyyi-hā* (line 6), and the word *ʿalayhi* (line 7).

¹⁶⁰ Badawī et al., *Muʿğam ʿAsmāʿ al-ʿArab*, II, 1163 and 1760; Kaḥḥālah, *Muʿğam al-Nisāʿ*, I, 264; II, 280–282.

The text is surrounded on three sides by a simple border, which seems to descend from above to form a multi-lobed arch, culminating in the shape of a *miḥrāb*. Similar shapes that appear in the following inscriptions:

1. Inscription nos. 161 and 372 from al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery;¹⁶¹
2. Inscription no. 4 from the Archaeological and Heritage Museum in Mecca;¹⁶²
3. Inscription nos. 34 and 46 from ^ʿAšm;¹⁶³
4. Inscription no. 9 from the library of King Fahd in Riyadh.¹⁶⁴

This inscription is closely related in form to inscriptions nos. 34, 56 and 84 from al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery, each of which dates to about the 3rd/9th century. This leads to the opinion that this inscription is dated to the same century.

¹⁶¹ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlah*, 193, 408, nos. 161 and 372.

¹⁶² Al-Ḥārītī, *ʿAḥḡār Šāhidīyyah*, 18, no. 4.

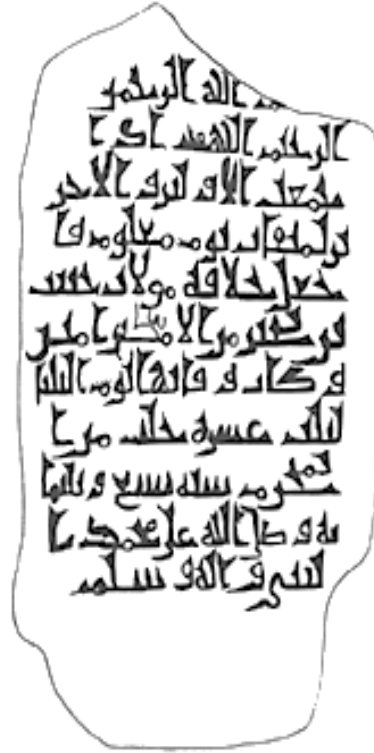
¹⁶³ Al-Buqamī, *Nuqūš ʿIslāmiyyah*, 217, no. 9.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlah*, 63, 85, 113, nos. 34, 56 and 84.

No. 28 / Museum no. 403



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt; broken upper- and lower-right side.

Eleven lines of incised simple Kufic.

Dated the 13th of al-Muḥḥram 307 (13 June 919).

Deceased's Name: Ḥallāfah, *mawlāt* of Ḥabīb b. Buḥayr.

Museum no. 403, *ʿAḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 28ab).

Measurements: 45 x 30 cm.

Height of *ʿalif*: 3.9 cm.

Text

1. [يسم]م الله الرحمن
2. الرحيم. اللهم اذا
3. جمعت الاولين والآخر
4. بين لميقات يوم معلوم فا
5. جعل خلافة مولات (Sic) حبيب
6. بن بحير من الامنين امين
7. وكان وفاتها يوم الثلاثاء
8. لثلاث عشرة خلت من ا
9. لمحرم سنة سبع وثلثما
10. به وصلى الله على محمد ا
11. لنبي واله وسلم

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy,
2. the Giver of Mercy. O God, when you gather together
3. the first and the last
4. for the appointment of a day determined, assign
5. Ḥallāfah, *mawlāt* of Ḥabīb
6. b. Buḥayr, among those who are secure. Amen.
7. She passed away on
8. Tuesday, 13th of
9. al-Muḥḥram 307 [13 June 919].
10. May God bless Muḥammad
11. the Prophet and his family and give them peace.

Observations

This inscription was for Ḥallāfah, *mawlāt* of Ḥabīb b. Buḥayr or Baḥīr. The name Ḥallāfah derives from the root ḥalāfa (to succeed) or (come subsequently), and from this root is derived *ḥilāfah* (caliphate). The masculine of Ḥallāfah is Ḥallāf, which is a well-known yet uncommon Arabic name.¹⁶⁵ Whereas her master's name Ḥabīb and

¹⁶⁵ Badawī et al., *Muḡam ʿAsmāʾ al-ʿArab*, I, 531 and 532.

the name of his father Baḥīr or Buḥayr, are well known in Mecca, although they are not common.¹⁶⁶ The available sources do not contain any reference to either Ḥallāfah or her master, Ḥabīb b. Baḥīr/Buḥayr; thus, they are thought to be from the common people of Mecca.

This inscription is one of the most beautiful despite its exposure to tampering through abrasion with a sharp tool or stone or due to carelessness during its transportation, which subjected it to friction. Its style does not depart from those adopted during the 3rd/9th century, but it is an extension to that style. This is clear from the form of the second *lām* in both *Allāh* and *Allāhumma* (lines 1, 2 and 10), which is written shorter than the first *lām* in each word and slopes towards the shaft of the following letter *hāʿ*, providing an aesthetic element.

Additionally, the form of the medial *ʿayn* is styled as an upside-down triangle in the word *ḡamaʿta* (line 3), but then has an open head in the words *maʿlūm* (line 4) and *iḡʿal* (line 5) as well as in its final form in the word *sabʿ* (line 9). This is a style of Kufic noted in previous inscriptions attributed to the 3rd/9th century, such as the shape of the letter *lām*–*ʿalif* abase similar to a small goblet.

Further, it is worth noting that the isolated *hāʿ* in the word *ʿašarah* (line 8) has a shaft developing into in the form of a spiral and is similar to the form of the isolated *hāʿ* observed in an inscription no. 29 at ʿAšm of Mecca, which dates to 289/902.¹⁶⁷

Finally, the flattening of the letters, particularly in the endings but also in the shaft letters and the those seated on the base line, have the form of small triangles or arrowheads. This style is similar to the majority of above inscriptions in this chapter and the previous chapter attributed to the 3rd/9th century. Attention must be given to the continuity of artistic and decorative characteristics in relation to not only centuries but also the calligrapher’s life span, which may overlap from the end of one century and the beginning of another.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Al-Fāsī, *Al-ʿIqd al-Ṭamīn*, III, 353–354; IV, 48–51.

¹⁶⁷ Al-Zaylaʿī, ‘The Southern Area’, 447, pl. 27, no. 29.

¹⁶⁸ Al-Zahrānī, *Kitābāt ʿIslāmiyyah*, 224.

No. 29 / Museum no. 123



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma'ālāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Twelve lines of simple Kufic, weather beaten so that certain letters are far from clear, with an ornamental three-sided border, with a dome at the top.

No date, 4th/10th century.

Deceased's Name: Ma'īn, *mawlāt* of Fāṭimah bint ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Qāsim b. al-Ḥasan b. Zayd b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib.

Museum no. 123, *ʿAḥḡār al-Ma'ālāh* (plate no. 29ab).

Measurements: 23 x 38 cm.

Height of *ʿalif*: 3 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

2. قل هو الله احد. الله

3. الصمد. لم يلد ولم
4. يولد. ولم يكن له
5. كفوا احد هذا
6. قبر معين مولاة فاطمة
7. ابنت عبد الله ابن
8. عبد الرحمن ابن القا
9. سم ابن الحسن ابن زيد
10. ابن الحسن ابن علي ابن
11. ابي طالب رضي
12. الله عنهما ورحمهما

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.
2. Say, ‘He is God, God
3. the One, God the Eternal. He begot no one nor was
4. He begotten. No one is
5. Comparable to Him’. This is
6. the tomb of Ma[‘]īn, *mawlāt* of Fāṭimah
7. ibnat [‘]Abd Allāh b.
8. b. [‘]Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Qāsim
9. b. al-Ḥasan b. Zayd
10. b. al-Ḥasan b. [‘]Ali b.
11. [‘]Abī Ṭālib. May God be pleased
12. with both of them and give them His mercy

Lines 2–6 are from Quran 112:1–4 (*Sūrat al-‘Ihlās*).

Observations

This tombstone is one of the most beautiful tombstones in this collection, although it has been affected by a layer of a clay on its surface that has calcified and precipitated over time, resulting in blurred words and decorations – especially in the upper part of the inscription. It bears the name Ma[‘]īn or Mu[‘]īn, the first meaning ‘pure water’ and the second, ‘supporter’. The first is appropriate for a woman’s name, particularly

female clients, for whom, normally, beautiful and affectionate names are chosen.¹⁶⁹ She is a *mawlāt* of her mistress, Fāṭimah bint ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Qāsim b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Zayd b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbī Ṭālib, Quraishite and Hashimite, belonging to the Prophet’s clan.

The ancestor Zayd b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbī Ṭālib died in 120/738 at the age of 90, 95 or 100 years.¹⁷⁰ Al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Zayd b. al-Ḥasan, who is one of Fāṭimah’s most famous ancestors, governed Medina during the time of the Abbasid caliph ʿAbū Ğaʿfar al-Manṣūr, who died in 168/784 at the age of 85 years.¹⁷¹ For her other ancestors, although they were mentioned by the genealogist Ibn ʿInabah, he did not include their full biography.¹⁷²

As for the style of this inscription, it is one of the elaborate Kufic styles that flourished in Mecca and its neighbourhood during the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries, particularly during the transitional phase between these two centuries. Similar inscriptions from al-Maʿlāh Cemetery that are currently preserved at Ḥuzām Palace and studied in this dissertation include inscriptions no. 24 and also no. 28, which bear the names of Burayrah bint Burayah¹⁷³ and Ḥallāfah, *mawlāt* of Ḥabīb b. Baḥīr or Buḥayr, respectively.¹⁷⁴ Also note the similarities in the following inscriptions:

1. Inscription no. 38 with the name ʿUmm ʿAbd Allāh and ʿAbū Bakr, which will be mentioned below;¹⁷⁵
2. inscription no. 32 from al-Sirrayn, which bears the name of Ḥadīḡah bint Aḥmad b. Muḥsin and is dated 332/944;¹⁷⁶
3. Inscription no. 7 from Ḥamdānah. near al-Sirrayn, bearing the name Qumriyyah, slave girl of Saʿd, *mawlāt* of Ibrāhīm b. Ziyād.¹⁷⁷

¹⁶⁹ Badawī et al., *Muġam ʿAsmāʾ al-ʿArab*, II, 1644; Muṣṭafā et al., *al-Muġam al-Waṣīṭ*, II, 656.

¹⁷⁰ Ibn ʿInabah, *ʿUmdat al-Ṭālib*, 89.

¹⁷¹ Al-Sahāwī, *al-Tuhfah al-laṭīfah*, II, 301.

¹⁷² Ibn ʿInabah, *ʿUmdat al-Ṭālib*, 91ff.

¹⁷³ See page 136 of this dissertation.

¹⁷⁴ See page 148 of this dissertation.

¹⁷⁵ See page 185 of this dissertation.

¹⁷⁶ Al-Zaylaʿī, ‘The Southern Area’, 447, pl. 27, no. 32.

¹⁷⁷ Al-Zaylaʿī, *Nuqūṣ ʿIslāmiyyah*, 54, pl. 7ab).

The text is surrounded on three sides with a wavy decorative strip, with small decorative elements embedded – possibly floral – and a decorative geometric dome above the frame in an image of a semicircle, within which are a two small trees – possibly palms.

This pattern of framing is well known and common in the inscriptions found in Mecca and its outskirts dating to the same period as this tombstone, including:

1. Inscription no. 211 from al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery, bearing the name ^ʿUmm al-Qāsim bint ^ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and no. 17 (above), bearing the name of Karīmah bint ^ʿAmr, respectively,¹⁷⁸
2. Inscription no. 56 of the Mecca Museum for Archaeology and Heritage, bearing the name Ġazāl, slave girl of Muḥammad b. ^ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan;¹⁷⁹
3. Inscription no. 13 from al-Sirrayn, bearing the name Wahb b. Mūsā b. Rizq.¹⁸⁰

The assessed date of this tombstone is supported by calculating the generations since the date of death of the nearest grandfather of Fāṭimah bint ^ʿAbd Allāh (the deceased's mistress): al-Ḥasan b. Zayd b. ^ʿAbī Ṭālib. Al-Ḥasan's death was in 168/784, especially, that the deceased grandfathers live for a long period of time, her grandfather Zayd b. al-Ḥasan lived about one hundred years and his son al-Ḥasan b. Zayd, lived 80 years as mentioned above.

¹⁷⁸ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *Aḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh*, 244, 255, nos. 211 and 221; see page 103 of this dissertation.

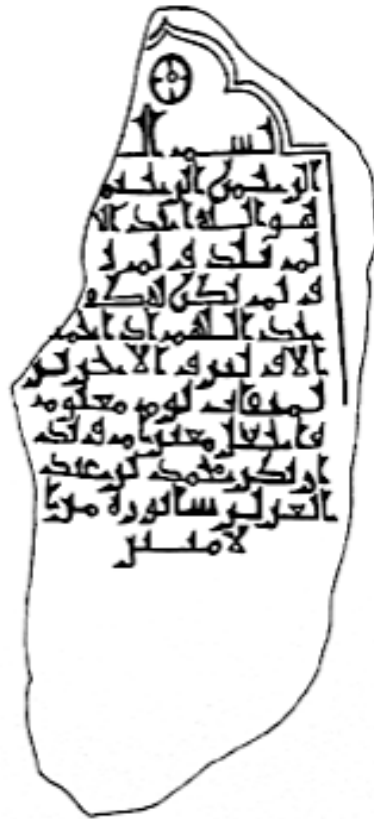
¹⁷⁹ Al-Ḥarīfī, *Aḥḡār Šāhidīyyah*, 70, no. 56.

¹⁸⁰ Al-Faqīh, *Madīnat al-Sirrayn*, 15, no. 13.

No. 30 / Museum no. 338



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt; broken upper left side.

Twelve lines of incised simple Kufic with a *mihrāb*-shaped border.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased's Name: Ma^ʿīn, *umm walad* of ʿArbakr Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sābūrah/Šabūrah.

Museum no. 338, *Aḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 30ab).

Measurements: 30 x 42 cm.

Height of ʿ*alif*: 3.7 cm.

Text

1. بسم ال [له]
2. الرحمن الرحيم [قل]
3. هو الله أحد الل [ه الصمد].
4. لم يلد ولم ي [ولد].
5. ولم يكن له كف [وا ا]
6. حد اللهم اذا جمع [نت]
7. الاولين والآخرين
8. لميقات يوم معلوم
9. فاجعل معين ام ولد
10. اربكر محمد بن عبد
11. العزيز شابورة من ا
12. لامنين

Translation

1. In the Name of God,
2. the Lord of Mercy, The Giver of Mercy. Say,
3. 'He is God the One, God the Eternal.
4. He begot no one nor was He begotten.
5. No one is comparable to
6. Him'. O God, when you gather together
7. the first and the last
8. for the appointment of a day determined,
9. assign Ma^cīn, *umm walad* of
10. °Arbakr Muḥammad b. °Abd
11. al-°Azīz Sābūrah/Šabūrah, to be
12. among those who are secure.

Lines 2–6 are from Quran 112:1–4 (*Sūrat al-°Iḥlās*).

Observations

This inscription belongs to Ma^cīn, whose name is identical to her predecessor in inscription no. 29 (above), of this collection.¹⁸¹ She *cumm walad* to ^oArbakr Muḥammad b. ^cAbd al-^cAzīz Šābūrah. It appears that this first name consists of two names, ^oArbakr and Muḥammad. Šābūrah will be mentioned in inscription no. 38 (below)¹⁸² of this collection and perhaps relates to Šābūrah, a town in al-Buḥayrah Province, Egypt with the *nisbah* Šābūrī.

The script is one of real beauty, characterised by clearness, elongation of shaft letters and extension of the horizontal letters, such as between the adjacent *lāms* in *Allāh* (line 3) and *Allāhumma* (line 6), and the first *nūn* before the *yā^o* in the word *al-^oāminīn* (line 12).

Along with the noted elongation of letters, the tail of the *nūn* extends upwards from the descender line until it becomes the same in length as the letters *alif* and *lām* adjacent to it in the same word, or in the same line as in the *nūn* in the word *al-Raḥmān* (line 2) and the word *yakun* (line 5). Also, note the extension of the initial *bā^o* in the word *b-ism* (line 1) and the end of the initial *hā^o* in the adjacent words *al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* (line 2).

This inscription is characterised by the letter twist at the end of the *hā^o* shaft in a beautiful formulation, as in the *Allāh* (line 3), the word *lāhu* (line 5) and the *Allāhumma* (line 6). This style of writing the *hā^o* was noted in inscription no. 28 (above),¹⁸³ dating to the year 307/919, related to Ḥallāfah bint Baḥīr or Buḥayr.

It is clear in this inscription that the flattening of the shaft-letter heads appears to form an image of foliation. This is especially noted at the heads of the adjacent letters *alif* and *lām*, as in *Allāh* (line 1, 2) the adjacent *al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* (line 2) and *Allāhumma* (line 6), which appear to form a palmette.

This inscription contains some fine decorative touches, particularly the triple foliation that appears in the final *dāl* in the word *yalid* (line 4) and the shaft of the medial *hā^o*

¹⁸¹ See page 151 of this dissertation.

¹⁸² See page 185 of this dissertation.

¹⁸³ See page 148 of this dissertation.

in the word *Allāhumma* (line 6). Further, the inscription is framed on the right by a simple line. The upper frame has two lines that end in a three-looped curvature, containing within it a four-lobed rosette in the centre.

This inscription is similar to many others, including others mentioned in this collection:

1. Inscription no. 20 (above), belonging to Ruqayyah bint al-Ḥasan;¹⁸⁴
2. Inscription no. 57 from the Mecca Museum for Archaeology and Heritage, bearing the name Nā'im, mawlāt of Muḥammad b. Ḥātīm al-Sabtī;¹⁸⁵
3. Inscription no. 4 from the Dahlak inscriptions, which bears the name Yaḥyā b. °Uṣmān b. °Abd Allah and is dated Sha°bān 299 [April 912].¹⁸⁶

These similarities lead to the opinion that this inscription dates to the late 3rd/9th century or early 4th/10th century.

¹⁸⁴ See page 113 of this dissertation.

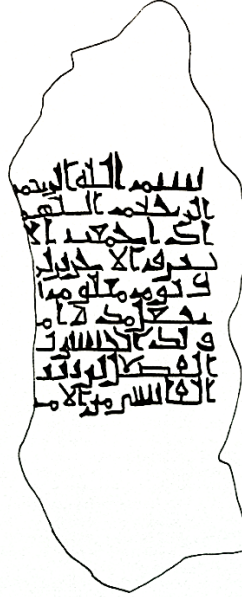
¹⁸⁵ Al-Ḥarīfī, *°Aḥḡār Šāhidiyyah*, 71, no. 57.

¹⁸⁶ Oman, *La Necropoli*, II, 6, no. 4.

No. 31 / Museum no. 141



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt; broken left side.

Nine lines of incised simple Kufic that is weather beaten so that the first four lines of the text are unclear.

No date, probably 4th/10th century.

Deceased's Name: Maddah, *umm walad* of al-Ḥusayn b. al-Faḍl b. Zurayq al-Fāṣī.

Museum no. 141, *Aḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 31ab).

Measurements: 23 x 32 cm.

Height of *ʿalif*: 4 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن

2. الرحيم. اللهم

3. اذا جمعت الا[و]
4. لين والآخرين لم[يقفا]
5. ت يوم معلوم [ا]
6. جعل مدة ام
7. ولد الحسين ب[ن]
8. الفضل بن رزيق[ق]
9. الفاسي من الامن[ين]

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy,
2. the Giver of mercy. O God,
3. if you gather together the
4. first and the last for the appointment of a day
5. determined upon,
6. assign Maddah, *umm*
7. *walad* of al-Ḥusayn b.
8. al-Faḍl b. Ruzayq
9. al-Fāsī, among those who are secure.

Observations

This inscription is less legible, perhaps due to weakness of the crust that covers the surface of the tombstone, which prevented deep engraving of the letters. Therefore, they are weak, superficial and subject to wear. This tombstone belongs to Maddah, *umm walad* of al-Ḥusayn b. al-Faḍl b. Ruzayq al-Fāsī. This inscription has been selected despite its lack of clarity because the name of the deceased is a common name in Tihāmah of Mecca, even now. Names in Tihāmah are commonly influenced by the names in Mecca, the capital and the mother city. On the other hand, the master of the deceased, al-Ḥusayn b. al-Faḍl, is attributed to Fās, in Morocco, which was established in 192/808 by ʿIdrīs II b. Idrīs the I b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbī Ṭālib, the second emir of the ʿIdrīsī State in Morocco.¹⁸⁷ This attribution is

¹⁸⁷ Ḥasan, *Tāriḥ al-ʿIslām*, II, 141–142 and 386–394.

evidence that Mecca's society attracted various people from different parts of the world for pilgrimage and settlement near the Grand Mosque.

As for the style, despite the lack of clarity, the letters are not free of elegance and beauty, and they are a good example of the Kufic found in Mecca and in Hijaz in general. This is clearly reflected in the elongation of the shaft letters and in the form of the *ʿayn*, appearing as an overturned-triangle, as in the words *ḡamʿata* (line 3) and *maʿlūm* (line 5), they are similar, to some extent, to the way of writing the medial *ʿayn* in some inscriptions found in al-Sirrayn, 240 km south of Mecca, which belong to the same period as this inscription.¹⁸⁸ Also note how the loop of the letter *fāʾ* resembles a lamp, as in the words *al-Faḍl* (line 8) and *al-Fāsī* (line 9), as well as the broadening of the heads of some shaft and horizontal letters in different words throughout the text. In terms of the date of this inscription, the researcher agrees with the opinion of Saʿd al-Rāshid and his team that this inscription dates to the 3rd/9th century.¹⁸⁹

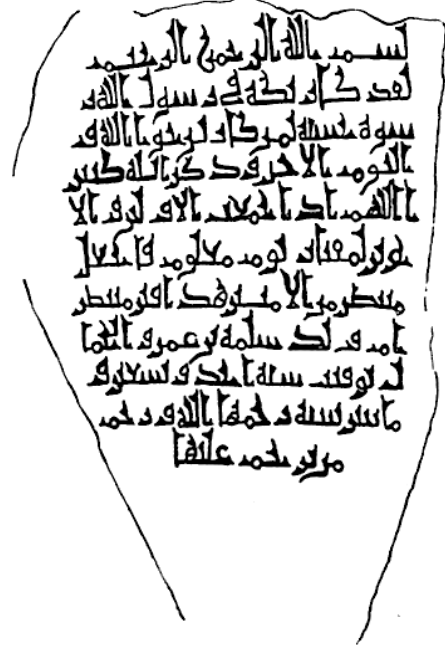
¹⁸⁸ Al-Faqīh, *Madīnat al-Sirrayn*, 139, no. 4.

¹⁸⁹ Āl-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḡḡār al-Maʿlah*, 172, no. 141.

No. 32 / Museum no. 112



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Eleven lines of incised elegant simple Kufic.

Dated 291 (903–904).

Deceased's Name: Muntazar, *umm walad* of Salāmah b. ʿAmr al-Jammāl.

Museum no. 112, *Aḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 32ab).

Measurements: 32 x 36 cm.

Height of *ʿalif*: 4.6 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. لقد كان لكم في رسول الله ا
3. سوة حسنة لمن كان يرجوا الله و

4. اليوم الاخر وذكر الله كثير
 5. ا. اللهم إذا جمعت الاولين والا
 6. خرين لميقات يوم معلوم فاجعل
 7. منتظر من الامنين. هذا قبر منتظر
 8. ام ولد سلمة بن عمر الجما
 9. ل. توفيت سنة احد وتسعين و
 10. مانتين سنة رحمها الله ورحم
 11. من ترحم عليها

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.
2. The Messenger of God is
3. an excellent model for those of you who put your hope in God
4. and the Last Day and remember Him often.
5. God, when you gather together the first and the
6. last for the appointment of a day which has been determined upon, assign
Muntaẓar
7. to be among those who are secure. This is the tomb of Muntazar,
8. *umm walad* of Salamah b. °Amr al-Jammāl.
9. She passed away in the year 291 [903–904] year.
10. May God have mercy upon her and upon anyone asks
11. God to have mercy upon her.

Lines 2–4 are from Quran33:21 (*Sūrat al-°Aḥzāb*).

Note: *°ahad* for *°iḥdā* in line 9.

Observations

This inscription belongs to Muntazar or Muntazir. In the first case, it means the person who is expected to arrive, while in the second case, it means the person who is waiting for an arrival. It is without a doubt an Arabic word.¹⁹⁰ Incidentally, al-Muntazar is also a section of the Gāmid tribe, in the district of al-Bāḥah in southwestern Saudi

¹⁹⁰ Badawī et al., *Mu°gam °Asmā° al-°Arab*, II, 1675.

Arabia.¹⁹¹ However, this name does not appear to be a common woman's name and it is not found in the historical or epigraphic sources available.

The name of her master, Salamah b. ʿAmr al-Ġammāl, is a common name, and his *nisbah*, al-Ġammāl (meaning cameleer), may be due to his work or the work of his father or one of his ancestors who kept camels and rented them to people for traveling from one country to another.¹⁹² Many people are attributed to this profession whom al-Samʿānī mentions in his work al-ʿ*Ansāb*, too many to mention.¹⁹³

Since the text in this inscription is of some length and the available space for it on the face of the stone is limited', most of the letters are inscribed close together, making the words crowded with no spaces between them on one hand, and to are no extent between one line and the next on the other hand. Most of the letters are short and without elegance. Evidence of this can be seen in the word *la-kum* (line 2), in which the shaft of the *lām* is remarkably short. Also, the final *mīm* in the same word is extraordinary, resembling the final *hāʾ* in the adjacent words *ʿuswat ḥasanah* (line 3), in *Allāh* (lines 1, 2, 4 and 10) and in the word *salamah* (line 8).

The initial *ʿalif* in the word *ʿuswat* (line 2–3) is inscribed in a strange way, dissimilar to the style of *ʿalifs* found in known similar inscriptions. Here, it resembles the final *nūn* in the word *kāna* (twice, in lines 2 and 3), the final *tāʾ* in *li-mīqāt* (line 6), the isolate *rāʾ* in the word *Rasūl* (line 2), and the words *raḥima-hā* and *wa-raḥima* (line 10).

This inscription maintains some of the features of the preceding inscriptions in terms of the open medial *ʿayn*, as in the word *ġamʿat* (line 5), *maʿlūm* and *iġʿal* (both in line 6), and *tisʿīn* (line 9). Additionally, this inscription maintains the form of a triangle at the base of the joint *lām-ʿalif*, as in *al-āḥar* (line 4), *al-awwalīn* and *al-āḥarīn* (both in line 5), and *al-āminīn* (line 7). However, in the joint *lām-ʿalif* of *al-awwalīn* (line 5), the left arm is short due to the descent of the letter *rāʾ* above in the word *wa-dakara* in the preceding line.

¹⁹¹ Kaḥḥālah, *Muʿġam Qabāʾil al-ʿArab*, III, 1144.

¹⁹² Al-Samʿānī, *al-ʿAnsāb*, II, 82.

¹⁹³ Ibn Mākūlā, *al-ʿIkmāl*, III, 27–30; al-Samʿānī, *al-ʿAnsāb*, II, 82–84.

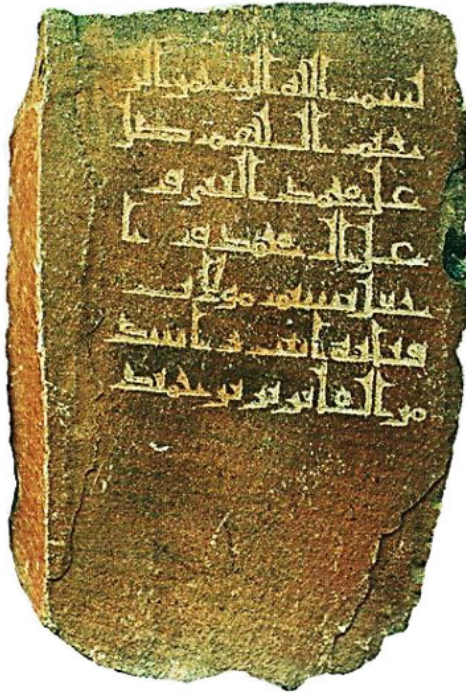
The outstanding feature of this inscription is the foliation that highlights the tops of some letters in the form of the head of a snake, as seen in the shaft of the letter *kāf* in *kāna* and *la-kum* (both in line 2) as well as the shaft of the *hāʾ* in *hāḍā* (line 7). This is noted also in the end of final *nūn* of *al-Raḥmān* (line 1).

The prevalence of this style is evident in many inscriptions attributed to North Africa.¹⁹⁴ The letters of the first line are closely similar to its predecessors in inscription no. 7 (above),¹⁹⁵ especially in the elongation of the shaft letters and the decoration at the top of each ascending shaft in a manner similar to a half-palmette fan.

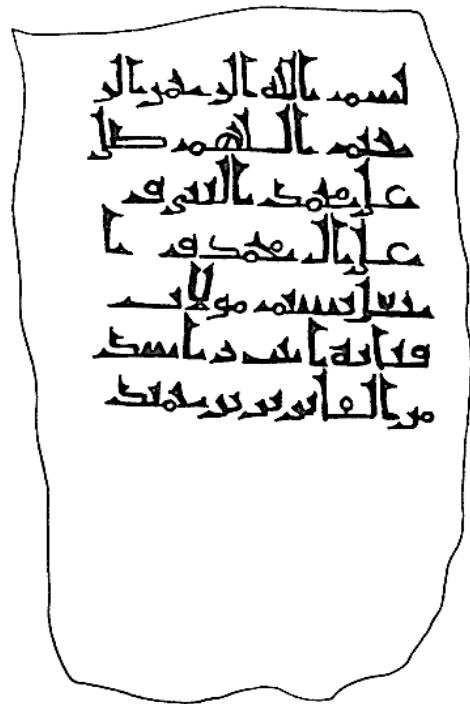
¹⁹⁴ Arif, *Arabic Lapidary Kūfīc*, 14–36.

¹⁹⁵ See page 69 of this dissertation.

No. 33 / Museum no. 42



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt; in good condition.

Seven lines of incised simple Kufic.

No date, probably 4th/10th century.

Deceased's Name: Nasīm, *mawlāt* of Fattānah/Fannānah bint Rāshid.

Museum no. 42, *ʿAḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 33ab).

Measurements: 25 x 34 cm.

Height of *ʿalif*: 4.2 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الر
2. حيم. اللهم صلي
3. على محمد النبي و

4. على ال محمد وا
 5. جعل نسيم مولات (Sic)
 6. فتانة ابنت راشد
 7. من الفازين برحمتك

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the
2. the Giver of Mercy. O God, bless
3. Muḥammad the Prophet and
4. the family of (the Prophet) Muḥammad and
5. assign Nasīm, *mawlāt* of
6. Fattānah/Fannānah ibnat Rāshid, to be
7. among those who will triumph by your mercy.

Observations

This tombstone belongs to Nasīm, *mawlāt* of Fattānah/Fannānah bint Rashīd. Nasīm is a beautiful and beloved name, denoting a zephyr, a nice soft wind that does not disturb trees and does not wipe out a trace.¹⁹⁶ Notable women bearing this name include the following:

1. Nasīm, slave girl of ʿAḥmad b. Yūsuf, who was a poet and lamented her master in her poetry;¹⁹⁷
2. Nasīm bint Muḥammad b. ʿAḥmad al-Ṭabariyyah al-Makkiyyah, who died in Mecca in 827/1424 and was buried in al-Maʿlāh Cemetery;¹⁹⁸
3. Nasīm al-Ḥabašiyah, who died in Mecca in 859/1455 and was buried in al-Maʿlāh cemetery as well.¹⁹⁹

Nasim's master's name, either Fattānah or Fannānah, carries a lot of meanings, including admiration and infatuation with all that is beautiful. The name may be read, Fattānah, meaning the straight branch of a tree but may also mean someone with

¹⁹⁶ Muṣṭafā et al., *al-Muḡam al-Waṣīṭ*, II, 927.

¹⁹⁷ Kaḥḥālah, *Muḡam al-Nisāʾ*, V, 175

¹⁹⁸ Al-Ṣaḥāwī, *al-Dawʿ al-Lāmiʿ*, XII, 129.

¹⁹⁹ Ibn Fahd, *al-Durr al-Kamīn*, III, 1555.

artistic talent and beauty.²⁰⁰ Neither Nasīm nor her master, Fattānah/Fannānah, are mentioned in the available Meccan sources, thus they would appear to have been common people of Mecca.

In regard to the calligraphic style of this inscription, it is a beautiful, traditional Kufic style and closely similar to the calligraphic style on a number of Meccan tombstones dating to the 3rd/9th century, including:

1. Inscription no. 1 (above), studied earlier in this collection and bearing the name °Arwā bint Rizq;²⁰¹
2. Inscription no. 37 (below), which will be studied later in this work and which bears the name of Salsabīl;²⁰²
3. Inscription no. 41, from the Cemetery of al-Ma°lāh which bears the name Wasan;²⁰³
4. Inscription no. 12 from al-Ma°lāh Cemetery, which bears the name Sa°d mawlā (client) Muḥammad b. °Īsā and is dated to the 3rd/9th century;²⁰⁴
5. Inscription no. 16, which bears the name of °Abd Allāh al-Hamdānī.²⁰⁵

All of these inscriptions are characterised by a short text with few words, their clarity, the agility and regularity of the letters, and their light decoration, all of which can be observed at the top of some of the shaft letters as well as on the ascenders of flat and horizontal letters between the baseline and x-line.

This inscription has a consistent and precise roundness of the *mīm* loop throughout the text. It also displays the letters *zāy*, *nūn* and *rā°* as identical in the words *al-fā°izīn*, *min* and *bi-rahmatika* (all in line 7). The text uses the open form of the letter °ayn, but in a different shape from previous inscriptions. It appears in the word *mawlāt* (line 5) in the form of a lowercase U, similar to a *lām*-°alif, with its arms nearly parallel and mounted on a triangular base, reassembling a clip.

²⁰⁰ Badawī et al., *Mu°ḡam °Asmā al-°Arab*, II, 1, 345.

²⁰¹ See page 48 of this dissertation.

²⁰² See page 181 of this dissertation.

²⁰³ Āl-Ḥalīfah et al., *°Aḡār al-Ma°lah*, 85, no. 56.

²⁰⁴ Āl-Ḥalīfah, *Aḡār al-Ma°lah*, 41, no. 12.

²⁰⁵ Al-Zahrānī, *Kitābāt °Islāmiyyah*, 124.

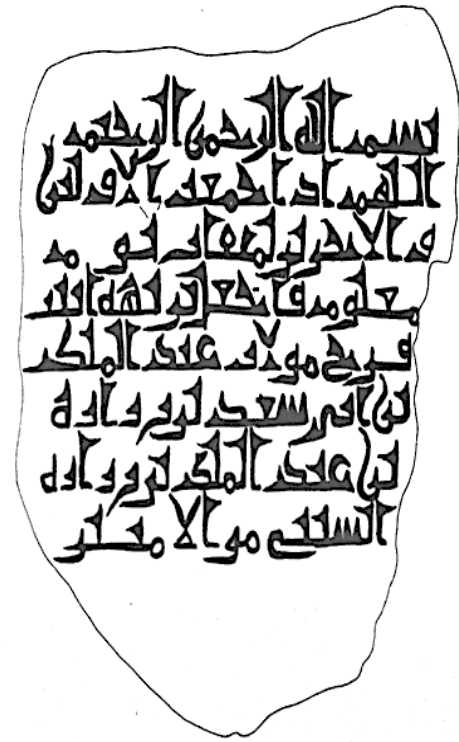
Two other outstanding features of this style are the forms of the final *yāʾ* and the *ʿalif maqṣūrah*, both of which lack roundness and are inscribed with a slight protrusion that barely distinguishes them from the letter to which they are connected, as noted in the words *ṣallā* (line 2) and *ʿalā* (twice, in lines 3 and 4).

Because this inscription, bears similar features to earlier inscriptions dating to the 3rd/9th century, it is assessed to date to the same century.

No. 34 / Museum no. 60



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma'lah Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Eight lines of incised, legible simple Kufic.

No date probably 4th/10th century.

Deceased's Name: Nazīhah bint Faraḡ, *mawlāt* of °Abd al-Malik b. °Abī Sa'd b. Zirārah b. °Abd al-Malik b. Zirārah al-Šaybī.

Museum no. 60, °Aḡār al-Ma'lah (plate no. 34ab).

Measurements: 32 x 30 cm.

Height of °alif: 3.9 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. اللهم اذا جمعت الاولين

3. والآخرين لميقات يوم
 4. معلوم. فاجعل نزيهة ابنت
 5. فرج مولات عبد الملك
 6. بن ابي سعد بن زرارة
 7. بن عبد الملك بن زرارة
 8. الشيبى من الأمنين

Translation

1. In the Name of God the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy
2. God, when you gather together the first
3. and the last for the appointment of a day
4. determined, assign Nazīhah ibnat
5. Faraġ, *mawlāt* of
6. °Abd al-Malik b. °Abī Sa°d b. Zirārah
7. b. °Abd al-Malik b. Zirārah
8. al-Šaybī, to be among those who are secure.

Observations

This inscription is attributed to Nazīhah bint Faraġ, *mawlāt* of °Abd al-Malik b. °Abī Sa°d b. Zirārah b. °Abd al-Malik b. Zirārah al-Šaybī. The *nisbah*, al-Šaybī, relates to their great-grandfather, the companion Šhaybah b. °Uṭmān b. °Abī Ṭalḥah from the sons of °Abd al-Dār of Qurayš,²⁰⁶ who were the custodians or gatekeepers of the Ka°bah and who have successively passed its keys throughout history to date.²⁰⁷ While many of them have emerged as famous in Mecca over the ages,²⁰⁸ °Abd al-Malik, master of Nazīhah, has no mention in known Meccan sources.

The writing of this inscription is standard Kufic, characterised by stiffness, except for the softness (*layyin*) shown in the manner of inscribing the final *nūn* in the words *al-Raḥmān* (line 1) and *al-°awwalīn* (line 2) as well as in the second instance of *bin* in line 6 and the first instance of *bin* in line 7. In each of these instances, the *nūn* was

²⁰⁶ Ibn Ḥazm, *Ġamhrat °Ansāb al-°Arab*, 127; al-Ḥayṭamī, °Usrat banī Šaybah’, 16 ff.

²⁰⁷ Al-Fāsī, *Šifā° al-Ġarām*, II, 240–241.

²⁰⁸ Al-Ḥayṭamī, °Usrat banī Šaybah’, 16–22.

inscribed with an arched end extending above the x-line and drawn upwards with a slope towards the left in a style that is frequently adopted in some soft (*līn*) styles.

At the same time, elsewhere, the *nūn* has retained its dry or stiff form in typical Kufic, descending below the baseline with a vertical angle, such as in the word *al-ʿāḥirīn* (line 3) as well as in the first instance of *bin* in line 6 and the second instance of *bin* in line 7.

In contrast, the final *yāʾ* in the *nisbah* al-Šaybī is inscribed with a retreating tail and a pointed tip, while in the word *ʿabī* (line 6), it appears in a traditional style with a flattened end. Such variation can also be observed in the form of the final *hāʾ*, in which the shaft has been made pointed in the name *Zirārah* line 7, while in the first name *Zirārah* line 6 is broadened and twisted at the letter end. This last form of the final *hāʾ* is repeated in Kufic inscriptions attributed to Mecca and its districts. Interestingly, the style of the *zāy*, inscribed twice in the name *Zirārah* (lines 6 and 7), appears in a form different from its sister letter *rāʾ* in the same word.

The medial *ʿayn* is inscribed like an inverted triangle but either hollowed in the middle, such as in the words *ġamaʿat*, (line 2), *maʿlūm* (line 4) and *fā-iġʿal* (line 4), or filled it in, like in the name *Saʿd* (line 6). As for the *lām-ʿalif* (lines 2, 3, 5 and 8), it has been inscribed with a small triangular base and two divergent arms, together forming what appears like a cup, which differs from the *lām-ʿalif* in the previously studied inscription no. 33 (above),²⁰⁹ which is close to the image of a clip.

In sum, the calligraphic features of this inscription may indicate that this inscription is from the 3rd/9th century. This possibility is supported by the findings from previous studies regarding the following similar inscriptions that belong to the same century:

1. Inscription no. 47 of the Museum of Archaeology and Heritage in Mecca, which bears the name Muḥammad b. ʿIsmāʿīl al-Hamdānī;²¹⁰
2. Inscription no. 4 from al-Sirrayn, Mecca district, which bears the name Muḥammad b. ʿUṭmān;²¹¹

²⁰⁹ See page 166 of this dissertation.

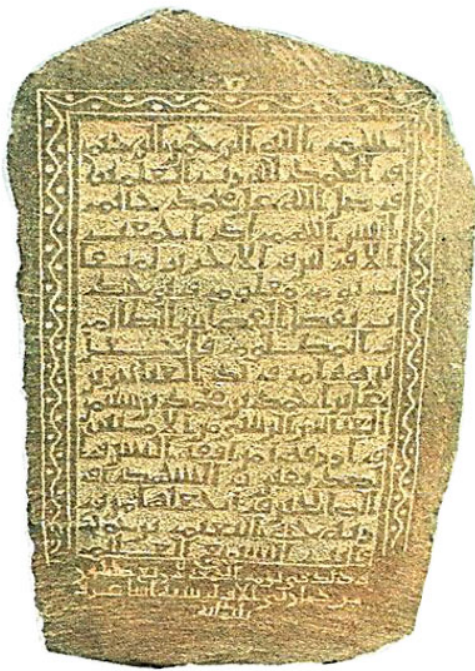
²¹⁰ Al-Ḥarīṭi, *ʿAḥḡār Šahidiyyah*, 61, no. 47.

²¹¹ Al-Faqīh, *Madīnat al-Sirrayn*, 139, no 4.

3. Inscription no. 17 of Dahlak Island, which bears the name Yūsuf b. ʿIsmāʿīl.²¹²

²¹² Oman, *La Necropoli Islamica*, II, 21, no. 17.

No. 35 / Museum no. 394



A



B

Description

Tombstone of somewhat rectangular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Nineteen lines of simple Kufic, sixteen carved in relief with three incised additional lines, with an ornamental three-sided border.

Dated, 4th of Jumādā I 321/August 924.

Deceased's Name: Nuzhah, *umm walad* of al-^ʿAbbās b. ^ʿAlī b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-^ʿAbbāsī al-Rassī.

Museum no. 394, *Aḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 35ab).

Measurements: not measured.

Height of *ʿalif*: not measured.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. والحمد لله رب العالمين

3. وصلّى الله على محمد خاتم
4. النبيّن. اللهم اذا جمعت
5. الاولين والآخرين لميقات
6. ت يوم معلوم وتوحد
7. ت بفصل القضا بين الظالم
8. والمظلوم فاجعل
9. نزهة ام ولد العباس بن
10. علي بن احمد بن محمد بن سليمان
11. العباسي الرسي من الامنين
12. وارزقها مرافقة النبي وا
13. لصديقين والشهدا و
14. الصالحين واجعلها من و
15. رثة جنة النعيم. برحمتك
16. فانت السميع العليم
17. وذلك في يوم الجمعة لاربع خلون
18. من جمادى الاول سنة اثنتا عشر و
19. ثلثمائة

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.
2. And praise belongs to God, Lord of all the worlds,
3. and may God bless Muḥammad, the last
4. Prophet. O God, when you gather together
5. the first and the last for the appointment
6. of a day determined, and You are the Only One
7. to Judge between the wrong doer
8. and the wronged, assign
9. Nuzhah, *umm walad* of al-°Abbās b.
10. °Ali b. °Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān
11. al-°Abbāsī al-Rassī, to be among those who are secure,
12. and bestow upon her the company of the Prophet,
13. the sincere, the martyrs and
14. the righteous, and assign her among

15. the heirs of the Garden of Bliss by your mercy,
16. for thou art the all-hearing the all-knowing.
17. That was on Friday 4th of
18. Jumādā I
19. 312 [August 924].

Observations

This inscription belongs to Nuzhah, *umm walad* of al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAlī b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-ʿAbbāsī. The name Nuzhah means outdoor recreation for the leisure and enjoyment of the beauty of nature. It also means self-protection and keeping oneself from depravity.²¹³ Women who bear this name include Nuzhah al-Wahbiyyah, who was slave girl (*qaynah*) of ʿAbū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥimyarī. She is described as the most wonderful of slave girls in terms of intelligence, mood, beauty and amusement. She recited poetry and told stories and ‘Arab days’.²¹⁴

As for this inscription’s Nuzhah, her master, al-ʿAbbās, he is descended from al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib b. Hāšim, the uncle of the Prophet Muḥammad, i.e who was an origins inhabitants of pre-Islamic of Mecca.²¹⁵ Al-ʿAbbās’s ancestor, Sulaymān, was a governor of Mecca in 214/829, during Caliph al-Maʿmūn’s reign, and his grandfather, Muḥammad b. Sulaymān b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-ʿImām, b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-ʿAbbās, was the governor of Mecca and the pilgrimage emir from 246 to 249/860 to 863.²¹⁶ Al-Rassī is a *nisbah* attributed to Mount al-Rass, which is approximately 60 km to the south-east of Medinah, Saudi Arabia. Members of the Alids used to live at this mount, one of which was al-Qāsim al-Rassī (d. 246/860), the Founder of the Zaydī Imamate in Yemen.²¹⁷

In general, this inscription is one of the most beautiful. However, the length of the text and its narrow space affects the letters; some of them are short, thin, tiny and less clear.

²¹³ Muṣṭafā et al., *al-Muʿjam al-Waṣīṭ*, II, 923.

²¹⁴ Kaḥḥālah, *ʿAlām al-Nisāʿ*, 167.

²¹⁵ Al-Kalbī, *Ġamharat al-Nasab*, 28, 31–34.

²¹⁶ Al-Fāsī, *al-ʿIqd al-Ṭamīn*, II, 22–23.

²¹⁷ Al-Samʿāni *al-ʿAnsāb*, III, 66; Ibn al-Ḥusayn, *Ġāyat al-ʿAmānī*, I, 150, 159; al-Zirikly, *al-ʿAlām*, VI, 5.

In terms of characteristics, it is similar to inscription no. 38 of this collection,²¹⁸ which will be studied below. The difference, however, is that the text in this inscription is crowded while the text in inscription no. 38 is scattered. Yet, the inscription under study is characterised by the initial *bāʿ*, as in the word *b-ism* (line 1), and the identical letters of *sīn* and *šīn*, *tāʿ* and *tāʿ*, *nūn* and *yāʿ* extending close to the height of *ʿalif* and the *lām*. This could be seen in most lines of the text.

The outstanding feature of this inscription is that all medial *ʿayns* are in the form of an upside-down triangle, as opposed to the open *ʿayns* seen in many Kufic inscriptions in general. Further, it is duly noted that the final *yāʿ* and the *ʿalif maqṣūrah* are removed from all words that end in these letters, such as in *ṣallā* (line 3), *ʿalā* (line 3) and *ʿAlī* (line 10). Further, this is the first time that an instance of the loop of the letter *fāʿ* shows an insignificant difference from the loop of the letter *qāf*. Compare the *fāʿ* in *bi-faṣl* (line 7) with the *qāf* in the words *al-qadāʿ* (line 7), *al-siddiqīn* (line 13) and *murāfaqat* (line 12), where the *fāʿ* is in a form of a rhomboid and the *qāf* almost in a form of a circle.

The last three lines were inscribed outside the established frame. However, they are accurately inscribed and follow the same style as the rest of the text. This includes the triangular *ʿayn* in *ʿarbaʿ* (line 17). The main text within the frame was made in relief, whereas the final three lines and the frame itself are inscribed as in inscription no. 52 (below).²¹⁹ With regard to the frame, it surrounds the text on three sides with a beautiful decoration, like a strap as in inscription no. 17 (above).²²⁰

²¹⁸ See page 185 of this dissertation.

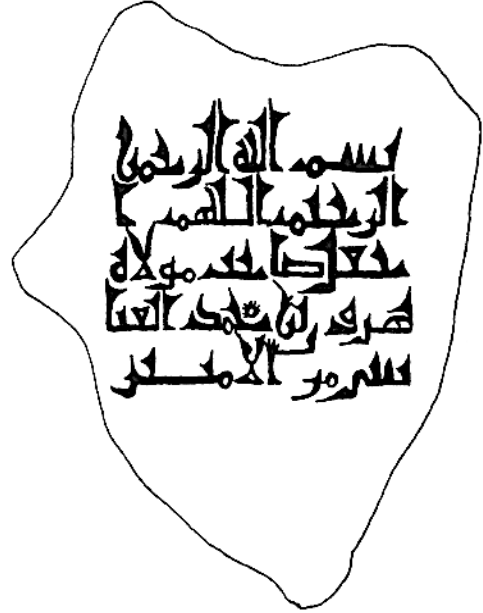
²¹⁹ See page 242 of this dissertation.

²²⁰ See page 103 of this dissertation.

No. 36 / Museum no. 222



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt; possibly broken on the upper side.

Five lines of incised simple Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased's Name: Ṣāḥib, *mawlāt* of Harūn b. Muḥammad al-^ʿAbbāsī.

Museum no. 222, *ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh* (plate no. 36ab).

Measurements: 36 x 21 cm.

Height of ^ʿ*alif*: 4.5 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن
2. الرحيم. اللهم ا
3. جعل صاحب مولاة
4. هرون بن محمد العبا

Translation

1. In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy,
2. the Giver of Mercy. O God,
3. assign Ṣāhib, *mawlāt* of
4. Hārūn b. Muḥammad al-ʿAbbāsī,
5. to be among those who are secure.

Observations

This inscription belongs to Ṣāhib, *mawlāt* of Hārūn b. Muḥammad al-ʿAbbāsī. The word *ṣāhib* means ‘companion’, ‘owner’, ‘keep company’,²²¹ As for the name Ṣāhib, this is normally used for men, as far as available sources seem to indicate; the feminine form of this name would normally be Ṣāhibah.²²² Whether, this name was used for the men or women in Meccan society at that time, specifically among the slaves who were brought from non-Arab countries, cannot be determined at this time. Her master, Hārūn b. Muḥammad al-ʿAbbāsī, may well have been of B. al-ʿAbbās, i.e. of the Abbasid family descended from the Prophet’s uncle, al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib of the Qurayš tribe, the original people of Mecca.²²³

As for the inscription, it is characterised as having only a few words on each line; no line contains more than three words. Twice, words run over from one line to the next (see lines 2–3 and 4–5). Furthermore, the characteristic feature of this inscription is clearness of all its letters, with full intonation. One of the outstanding characteristics of this inscription is the elongation of the shaft letters and the coordination of adjacent triangle heads, which are prominent and have ornamental features that form palmette fans. This is noted in the adjacent *ʿalif* and *lām* letters in the words *Allāh* and *al-Raḥmān* (both on line 1) and *al-Raḥīm* and *Allāhumma* (both on line 2).

The inscription maintains the angular *nūn*, as seen in the word *Hārūn* (line 4) and twice in the word *al-āminīn* (line 5). Note how the hollow *nūn* is inscribed with a beautiful

²²¹ Badawī et al., *Muḡam ʿAsmāʿ al-ʿArab*, II, 984.

²²² Muṣṭafā et al., *al-Muḡam al-Waṣīf*, I, 509–510.

²²³ Al-Qalqašandī, *Nihāyat al-ʿArab*, 138–139.

tale extending upward with a slope to the left, as in the words *al-Raḥmān* (line 1) and *bin.* (line 4). The *lām*–*ʿalif* (lines 3 and 5) are inscribed in goblet form and in the same style as inscription no. 34 (Nazīhah bint Faraj above).²²⁴ It is also similar to the previous inscription in many aspects, including the writing style of the medial *ʿayn*, which is inscribed in a form of an upside-down triangle, as in the words *iğʿal* (line 3) and *al-ʿAbbās* (line 4). In addition to similarities with inscription no. 34/60, this inscription is similar to other inscriptions that belong to the 3rd/9th century, including inscription no. 4 from the al-Sirrayn, which belongs to Muḥammad b. ʿUṭmān,²²⁵ as well as inscription no. 9 of the Riyadh Museum, which bears the name of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ziyād.²²⁶ These similarities would seem to place this inscription to the 3rd/9th century as well.

²²⁴ See page 170 of this dissertation.

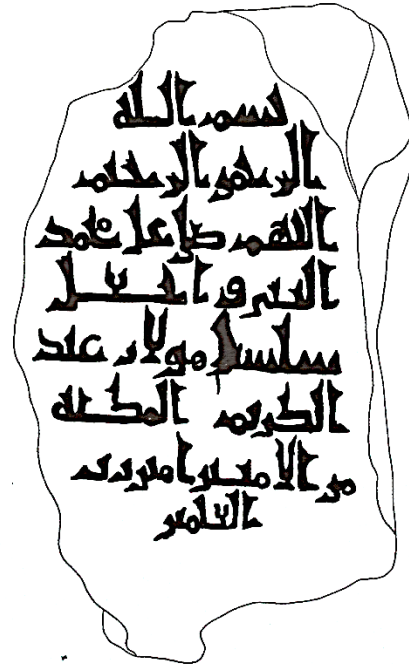
²²⁵ Al-Faqīh, *Madīnat al-Sirrayn*, 139, no. 4.

²²⁶ Al-Salook, ‘Analytical’, 51, no. 9.

No. 37 / Museum no. 26



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma'lah Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt; possibly broken along the upper-right side.

Eight lines of incised simple Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased's Name: Salsabīl, *mawlāt* of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Makkiyyah

Museum no. 26, *ʿAḡār al-Ma'lah* (plate no. 6).

Measurements: 28 x 51 cm.

Height of *ʿalif*: 4 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله
2. الرحمن الرحيم
3. اللهم صلى على محمد

4. النبي واجعل
 5. سلسبيل مولات (Sic) عبد
 6. الكريم المكبية
 7. من الامنين امين رب
 8. العلمين

Translation

1. In the name of God,
2. the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy!
3. O God, bless Muḥammad
4. the Prophet and assign
5. Salsabīl, *mawlāt* of ʿAbd
6. al-Karīm al-Makkiyyah,
7. among those who are secure. Amen. Lord of
8. the Universe.

Note: *ʿalif maqṣūrah* in *ṣallā* in line 3 and the *tāʾ maftūḥah* in *mawlāt* in line 5.

Observations

This tombstone belongs to Salsabīl, *mawlāt* of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Makkiyyah, a pleasing name that means ‘the easy passing of wares through the throat due to its purity’.²²⁷ Salsabīl is a spring in the paradise as God, be He exalted, said, ‘from a spring called *Salsabil*’,²²⁸ and it is a description for every pure and swift-flowing spring.²²⁹ As for al-Makkiyyah, it is an attribution to Mecca, which leads us to believe that she was a common person in terms of birth, residence and death.

As for the style of this inscription, despite the broadening of the letters, this inscription is well executed, and the words of the text are well distributed on each line. The text starts with two words centred on the first line and ends with only one word centred on the final line to help produce excellent centred balance throughout. The text has 20 words distributed over 8 lines: line 1 has two words; line 2, two words; line 3, four

²²⁷ Muṣṭafā et al., *al-Muḡam al-Waṣīf*, I, 455.

²²⁸ Quran 76:18 (*Sūrat al-ʿInsān*).

²²⁹ Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, II, 182.

words; line 4, two words; line 5, three words; line 6, two words; line 7, four words; and line 8, one word.

One of the aesthetic elements of this inscription is the accurate balance among adjacent letters, especially the shaft letters; however, an elegant point of this inscription is the graduated shortening of the two adjacent *lāms* to the medial *hāʿ* shaft in the word *Allāhumma* (line 3). Further, note that the *ʿalifs* adjacent to the *lāms* in the first and the second lines as well as the shaft of the medial *yāʿ* adjacent to the final *hāʿ*, as in the word *al-Makkiyyah* (line 6), end in broadened heads to simulate palmette-shaped fans. Additionally, the way of inscribing the letter *yāʿ* in the word *al-Makkiyyah* is similar to an instance of *yāʿ* noted in a similar inscription found at al-Ġuḥfah site in Rābiġ Province (in the Mecca region) that is dated to Ramaḍān 280/494.²³⁰

As for the joint letters *lām–ʿalif*, they have been elegantly written with two parallel arms emerging from its triangular base and their heads end inward strokes. This form of writing the *lām–ʿalif* has been noted in a number of inscriptions that date back to the 3rd/9th century, such as inscription nos. 16 and 42 from al-Maʿlāh Cemetery in Mecca,²³¹ as well as inscription no. 53 from ʿAšm Islamic City, which belongs to ʿAlī b. Ġallād b. Muḥli and dates to the 3rd/9th century.²³²

We note that the open medial *ʿayn* is unique and similar in shape to the *lām–ʿalif*, leaning on the line with a thin and small line or stroke. This form of the open *ʿayn* has also been noted in the aforementioned inscription no. 53 from ʿAšm,²³³ as well as in inscription no. 8 from the collection of King Fahd Library in Riyadh, both of which date to the 3rd/9th century.²³⁴

Further, we note that this form of the open *ʿayn* appears in other inscriptions from al-Maʿlāh Cemetery, including inscription nos. 13 and 97,²³⁵ the latter of which is closely

²³⁰ Al-Zaylaʿī, ‘Naqšān Kufiyyān’, 216, no. 1.

²³¹ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḡḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 45, 71, nos. 16 and 42.

²³² Al-Zaylaʿī, ‘The Southern Area’, 444, pl. 24, no. 18.

²³³ Al-Zaylaʿī, ‘The Southern Area’, 444, pl. 24, no. 18.

²³⁴ Al-Buqamī, *Nuqūš ʿIslāmiyyah*, 214, 216, nos. 6 and 8.

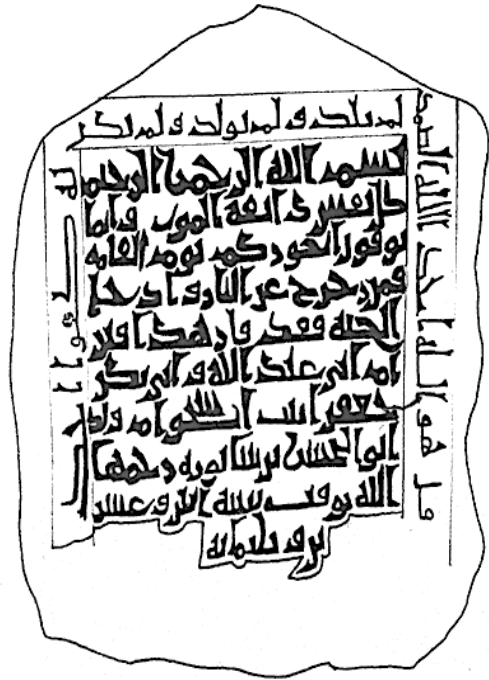
²³⁵ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḡḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 42, 126, nos. 13 and 97.

similar to the present inscription, suggesting that they may have been written by the same calligrapher.

No. 38 / Museum no. 245



A



B

Description

Tombstone of nearly rectangular shape.

Al-Maʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Ten lines carved in relief and three borders of incised simple Kufic.

Dated 322 (934).

Deceased's Name: °Umm °Abd Allāh and °Abī Bakr Ġaʿfar bint Ishāq,

°umm walad (mother of a free-born son) of °Abū al-Ḥusayn °Abī Sābūrah/ Šābūrah.

Museum no. 245, °Aḡḡār al-Maʿlāh (plate no. 38ab).

Measurements: 31 x 34 cm.

Height of °alif: 3.3 cm.

Text

Frame text (right, top, then left)

1. قل هو الله احد. الله الصمد

2. لم يلد ولم يولد. ولم يكن
3. له كفوا احد

Main text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. كل نفس ذائقة الموت وانما
3. توفون اجروركم يوم القيامة
4. فمن زحزح عن النار وادخل
5. الجنة فقد فاز. هذا قبر
6. ام ابي عبد الله وابي بكر
7. جعفر ابنت اسحق ام ولد
8. ابو الحسين سابورة رحمها
9. الله. توفيت سنة اثنين وعشر
10. . بين وثلاثمائة

Translation

Frame text (right, top, then left)

1. Say, 'He is God the One. God the Eternal,
2. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is
3. comparable to Him'.

Main text

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.
2. Every person will taste death, and you will be
3. paid in full only on the day of resurrection.
4. Whoever is pushed away from the fire and admitted
5. to the Garden will have triumphed. This is the tomb of
6. °Umm °Abī °Abd Allāh and °Abī Bakr
7. Ğa°far ibnat Ishāq, mother of free-burn son [*°umm walad*]
8. °Abū al-Ḥusayn Sabūrah. May God have mercy upon her.
9. She passed away in the year
10. 322 [934].

Lines 1–3 are from Quran 112:1–4 (*Sūrat al-ʾIhlāṣ*), and lines 2–5 are from Quran 3:185 (*Sūrat Āl-ʿImrān*).

Observations

This inscription belongs to a woman who is not known by her first name; rather, she is known only by her *kunya* (that is, by her paedonymic, or a name given based on one’s own child), which consists of the names of her sons: ʾAbī ʿAbd Allāh and ʾAbī Bakr Ğaʿfar. As indicated by the name description in the inscription, she gave birth to a free-born son of a man named ʾAbū al-Ḥasan b. Šābūrah or Sābūrah. This name is not common in the Meccan sources, but there are those who bear the *nisbah* al-Šābūrī, attributed to a town in Egypt called Šābūrah.²³⁶

This is an important Meccan inscription because it is dated and because it bears text carved in relief in the frame, whereas other inscriptions and the three lines outside the frame are engraved. Such inscribing in relief is more difficult for the scribe; much more effort would have been applied compared with engraved inscriptions.²³⁷ Otherwise, this inscription lacks any decoration, and most of the characters are without any artistic touch.

Note the word *Allāh* (lines 1 and 6) is graded, shortening towards the left, with its second *lām* sloping leftward towards the shaft of the final *hāʾ*. Most of the shaft letters are topped by the shape of a small triangle (e.g. *hāʾ* and *bāʾ*), as often the case with the final letters as well (e.g. *mīm*). The final *nūn* carries three different forms: the first is a curved ending in a simple foliation, as in the word *al-Raḥmān* (line 1) and the name al-Ḥasan (line 8); the second is inscribed in a rectangular shape, as in the words *tufūn* (line 3), *fa-min* (line 4), *ʿan* (line 4), *bin* (line 8) and *ʿiṣrīn* (lines 9 and 10); and the third form is illustrated by the word *ʿiṭnayn* (line 9), which is inscribed in a similar fashion to the letter *rāʾ* in the word Ğaʿfar (line 8). The teeth of the letter *sīn* and its sister, *šīn*, are inscribed regularly and identical in all the words of the text.

This inscription is surrounded on three sides by a simple frame, within which the entire *Sūrat al-ʾIhlāṣ* is inscribed in a simple Kufic. This tombstone’s calligraphic

²³⁶ Badawī et al., *Muḡam ʾAsmāʾ al-ʿArab*, I, 880.

²³⁷ Ğumʿah, *Dirāṣah fī Taṭawwur*, 85. CF inscription (no. 35) above 157.

characteristics are similar to a number of its contemporaries from the area of Mecca, including two tombstones from the town of al-Sirrayn, one which bears the name Ḥadīġah bint ʿAḥmad b. Muḥammad dated 331 / 942 and another bearing the name Maṣṣūr b. Nāsir b. Maṣṣūr.²³⁸ It also shares characteristics with a tombstone from Ḥamdānah in Wādī ʿUlayab, which bears the name Qumriyyah, the slave girl [*ġāriyyah*] of Saʿd, *mawlā* (client) the Amir Ibrāhīm b. Ziyād.²³⁹ With regard to Meccan inscriptions, this inscription is similar to inscription no. 58 of the Archaeological and Heritage Museum in Mecca, which bears the name of Fāṭimah Bint ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥurayġī.²⁴⁰ All of these similar tombstones date back to the 4th/10th century, to which this inscription also belongs.

²³⁸ Al-Faqīh, *Madīnat al-Sirrayn*, 148, 154, nos. 11 and 17.

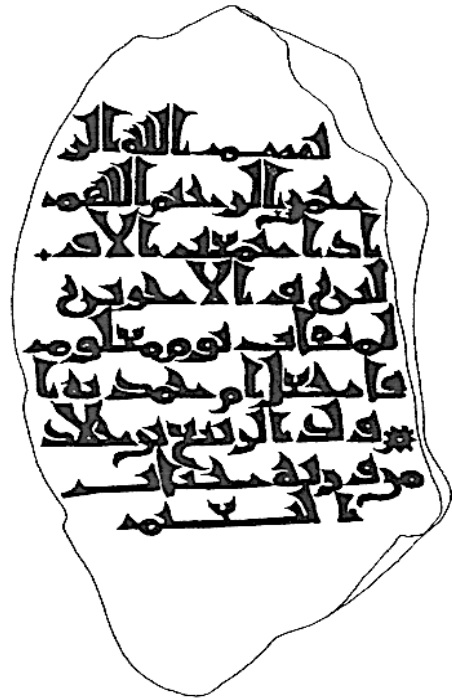
²³⁹ Al-Zaylaʿī, 'A Kufic Inscription from Ḥamdānah', 262–263, Fig. 2AB.

²⁴⁰ Al-Hārītī, *ʿAḥḡār Šāhidīyyah*, 72 (no. 58).

No. 39 / Museum no. 207



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Nine lines of incised simple Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased's Name: °Umm Ḥamdiyyah, °umm walad of al-Rabī^ʿ b. Ḡallād.

Museum no. 207, °Aḡḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh (plate no. 40ab).

Measurements: 21 x 31 cm.

Height of °alif: 3.3 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الر
2. حمن الرحيم اللهم
3. اذا جمعت الاو

4. لين والآخرين لميقات
 5. لميقات يوم معلوم
 6. فاجعل ام حمدية ام
 7. م ولد الربيع بن جلااد
 8. من ورثة جنات
 9. النعيم

Translation

1. In the Name of God the Lord of mercy,
2. the Giver of Mercy. O God, when
3. you gather together the first
4. and the last for the appointment of
5. a day determined,
6. assign °Umm Ḥamdiyyah, °umm
7. *walad* of al-Rabī° b. Ğallād to be
8. among the inheritors of the Gardens
9. of Bliss.

Observations

This inscription, as with no. 38 (above), bears the name of a deceased woman known only by her *kunyah*, °Umm Ḥamdiyyah. She gave birth to a free-born son of a person named al-Rabī° b. Ğallād. Neither the deceased nor her master are mentioned in the available sources, and therefore, they may have been ordinary Meccan people.

The inscription is characterised by accuracy, clarity and sophistication in the writing of the letters, which are executed in a perfect and balanced manner in both long and short words. It lacks decoration except for the letter *mīm* in the word °umm (line 7), the loop of which resembling a sunflower, which is distinct from the other instances of *mīm* observed in the previous inscriptions of this study. It also bears a mark resembling a plus sign (+) or a simplified rosette after the *wāw* in the word *al-awwalīn* (lines 3 and 4). This mark is observed in a number of the Hijazi inscriptions.

As for the rest of the letters, they are free of decoration except for flattened heads and ends, most of which appear in the form of small triangles, others bevelled and similar to arrow heads, especially at the end of the letter *mīm* in the words *b-ism* (line 1),

ma^clūm (line 5), and *al-na^cīm* (line 9). These are different from the final *mīm* in the words *al-Raḥīm* (line 2), *yawm* (line 5), and *umm* (line 6), which are pointed, descending from the line level with a slight curvature towards the left. The final *nūn* is retained in bowl form, with a lengthening in its tail ending in an early-type Kufic foliation, as in the two words of the phrase *al-awwalīn, wa-^l-āḥirīn* (line 4). Along with its usual shape in the Kufic script, but with a curvature ending in a pointed tail from descender line, as in *al-Raḥmān* (line 2) and *min* (line 8).

The inscription also retains the open medial and the final *ayn*, as in the words *ḡama^cat* (line 3), *ma^clūm* (line 5), *iḡ^cal* (line 6) and *al-rabī^c* (line 7), which is one of the characteristics of Hijazi Kufic of the 3rd/9th century, supporting the opinion that this inscription also belongs to the same century. Other inscriptions with this characteristic include:

1. Inscription no. 1 mentioned in chapter 1 belonging to ^oArwā bint Rizq.
2. Inscription no. 6 from the Museum of the King Fahd Library in Riyadh, bearing the name ^oUmāmah bint ^cAbd Allāh b. Musfi^c al-Ḥaḡabiyyah;²⁴¹
3. Meccan inscription no. 97, bearing the name of ^oUmm ^oAbī-hā Bint ^cAbd Allāh;²⁴²
4. Inscription no. 18 from ^cAšm, in the district of Mecca, bearing the name ^cAlī b. Ḡallād b. Muḥlid,²⁴³ which belongs to the 3rd/9th century.

²⁴¹ Al-Buqumī, *Nuqūš ^oIslāmiyyah Šāhidiyyah*, 214, no. 6.

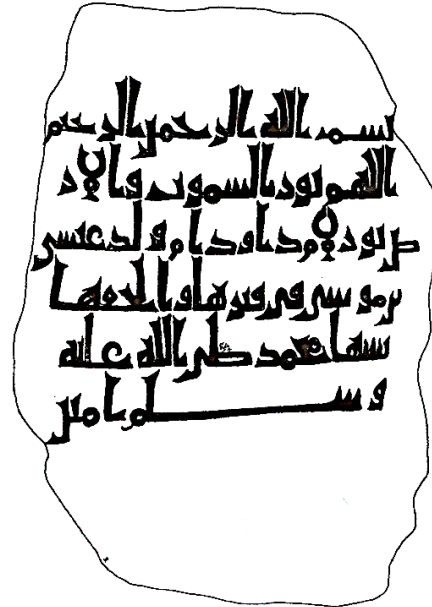
²⁴² Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *^oAḡār al-Ma^clāh*, 126, no. 97.

²⁴³ Al-Zayla^cī, 'The Southern Area', 444, pl. 24, no. 18.

No. 40 / Museum no. 64



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Seven lines of incised simple Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/4th century.

Deceased's Name: ʿUmm Dāʿūd, *umm walad* of ʿIsā b. Mūsā

Museum no. 64, *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh* (plate no. 40ab).

Measurements: 40 x 57 cm.

Height of ʿalif: 5 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. اللهم نور السموت والار
3. ض نور لام داود ام ولد عيسى
4. بن موسى في قبرها والحقها

5. بنبيها محمد صلى الله عليه

6. وسلم امين

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. O God, Light of the Heavens and
3. Earth, give light on °Umm Dā°ūd, °umm walad of °Isā
4. b. Mūsā, in her tomb and unite her with
5. her Prophet Muḥammad, may God bless him
6. and grant him peace. Amen.

Note: *al-Samawāt* in line 2 and *bin* in line 4.

Observations

This inscription bears the name of °Umm Dā°ūd, °umm walad of °Isā b. Mūsā. She was known by her *kunya*, °Umm Dā°ūd, and not by her first name or by the name of her father, as per usual practice in naming some of so-called °Ummahāt al-°Awlād on their tombstones. Nothing is known about her life, but her son, Dā°ūd is probably Dā°ūd b. °Isā b. Mūsā the °Abbāsīd, who was a governor of Mecca during the reigns of the Caliph al-°Amīn (d. 198/813) and Caliph al-Ma°mūn (d. 218/833), who combined Mecca and Medina as one governorship.²⁴⁴ The date of death of Dā°ūd is not known, but he was alive in the year 199/814-815.²⁴⁵ Furthermore, we do not know the date of °Umm Dā°ūd's death. If the assumption that her son was the governor is correct, then her death in Mecca was perhaps in the early 3rd/9th century.

In respect of the inscription, one notes that great attention has been exercised in the calligraphy. The clarity of the letters and the presentation of pure Kufic workmanship is in accordance with the standard rules. This can be noticed in most shaft and horizontal letters, and it is noteworthy that the form of the *nūn* in the words *al-Raḥmān* (line 1), *bin* (line 4) and °ā°mīn (line 6) is inscribed with a right angle. The final letter *ḍād* in the word *al-°arḍ* (line 3) has been inscribed in the same way as the final *nūn*.

²⁴⁴ Al-Fāsī, *Al-°Iqd al-°Tamīn*, V, 358.

²⁴⁵ Ibn al-°Aḫḫār, *Al-Kāmil*, V, 175–176.

It is noted that the final and isolated *mīm* is inscribed with small tail descending from the base line in the word *Allāhumma* (line 2) as well as in the words *li-ʿumm* and *ʿumm* (line 3). This is also noted in isolated *mīm* in the word *wa-sallam* (line 6).

The *lām-ʿalif* form is very notable in this inscription. It has been twisted or interlaced in the middle in the form of a goblet, as in the word *al-ʿarḍ* (line 2), and written in the form of an incomplete circle in the word *li-ʿumm* (line 3).

All these aspects that we have indicated in the depiction of the above letters are represented in a number of inscriptions from the same period, such as in the following:

1. Inscription no. 4 from the collection of the King Fahd Library in Riyadh;²⁴⁶
2. Inscriptions nos. 31 and 35 from ʿAšm Islamic City, dated 233/847–848 and 239/853–854, respectively;²⁴⁷
3. Inscription nos. 68 and 236 from al-Maʿlāh Cemetery in Mecca.²⁴⁸

These last two inscriptions above are from the 3rd/9th century, which supports the theory that this inscription also dates to the same century.

²⁴⁶ Al-Buqamī, *Nuqūš ʿIslāmiyyah*, 212, no. 4.

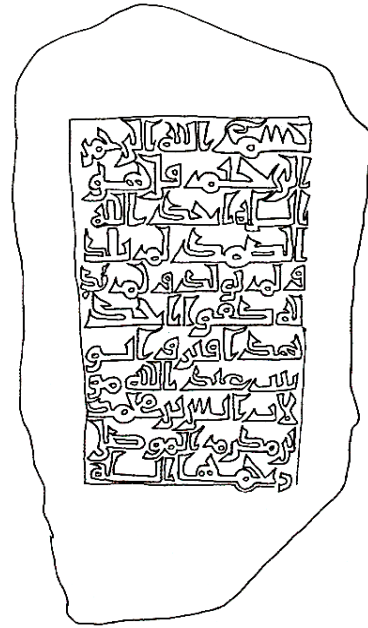
²⁴⁷ Al-Faḳīh, *Mihlāf ʿAšm*, 229, 232, nos. 35 and 31.

²⁴⁸ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh*, 97 no. 68 and 270 no. 236.

No. 41 / Museum no. 104



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape. al-Ma'ālāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Eleven lines of legible simple Kufic carved in relief.

No date, probably 4th/10th century.

Deceased's Name: Wāṭiq bint ʿAbd Allāh, *mawlāt* of ʿAnas b. Muḥammad b. Mukarram al-Mawṣilī.

Museum no. 104, ʿAḥḡār al-Ma'ālāh (plate no. 41 ab).

Measurements: not measured.

Height of ʿalif: not measured.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن
2. الرحيم قل هو
3. الله احد الله
4. الصمد لم يلد

5. ولم يولد ولم يكن
 6. له كفوا احد
 7. هذا قبر واثق
 8. بنت عبد الله مو
 9. لات (Sic) انس بن محمد
 10. بن مكرم الموصلي
 11. رحمها الله

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy,
2. the Giver of Mercy. Say, ‘He is
3. God the One, God
4. the Eternal, He begot no one
5. nor was He begotten. No one is.
6. comparable to him’.
7. This is the tomb of Wāṭiq
8. bint °Abd Allāh,
9. *mawlāt* of °Anas b. Muḥammad
10. b. Mukarram al-Mawṣilī.
11. May God have Mercy upon her

Observations

This inscription bears the name Wāṭiq bint °Abd Allāh, *mawlāt* of °Anas b. Muḥammad b. Mukarram or Mukram al-Mawṣilī. This name, Wāṭiq, is not a widely used Arabic name. It is derived from *wuṭūq* (credibility, i.e. to trust another person),²⁴⁹ and it appears to be used for both females and males. The *nisbah* al-Mawṣilī can be attributed to al-Mawṣil, the well-known city in northern Iraq.²⁵⁰ This attribution is evidence that Meccan society attracted people from different parts of the world for pilgrimage, who then to settle in Mecca near the Grand Mosque.

²⁴⁹ Maṣṭafā et al., *al-Muḡam al-Wasīṭ*, II, 1022.

²⁵⁰ Al-Sam°ānī, *al-°Ansāb*, VI, 407–408.

This inscription is one of the most outstanding Kufic inscriptions in this collection. It is carved in relief, and this method, as has been noted above, is more difficult compared the method incising, the method used in most of the tombstones mentioned in this collection. However, this inscription is characterised by fine calligraphy, clarity and excellent word distribution.

It is free of noteworthy decorations except a beautiful instance of foliation emerging from the end of the *mīm* in the word *b-ism* (line 1) like a half-palmette fan. Also note the protrusions from some of the heads of the shaft letters, extending them to the right and left as if they are flags. This characteristic is seen on other carved-in-relief tombstones in the Mecca district, such as an inscription from al-Sirrayn dated to the month of Šawwāl in 331/943,²⁵¹ and another inscription from Ḥamdānah in Wādī °Ulayb, which is not dated but contains the same features as the aforementioned al-Sirraynī inscription.²⁵² There are similar inscriptions from the 4th/10th century:

1. Inscription no. 59 of the Archaeological and Heritage Museum in Mecca,²⁵³
2. Inscription no. 98 from al-Ma°lāh Cemetery, which bears the name Sulaymān b. Maymūn al-Madīnī,²⁵⁴
3. Inscription no. 38 (above), which was studied earlier in this chapter and bears the kunyah °Umm °Abī °Abd Allāh and °Abī Bakr Ğa°far ibnat °Ishāq (dated to the year 322/934);²⁵⁵
4. Inscription no. 253 from al-Ma°lāh Cemetery, which bears the name Muḥammad b. Ğa°far al-Ḥamdānī al-Šarrāf,²⁵⁶
5. Inscription no. 506 from al-Ma°lāh Cemetery, which bears the name al-°Abbās b. Muḥammad al-Ḥuzā°ī al-Wakīl and dates to the 4th/10th century.²⁵⁷

It is notable that the final *qāf* in the name *Wāṭiq* (line 7) is written in similar form to the medial and final *wāws* in this inscription, such as in *huwa* (line 2), *yūlad* (line 5),

²⁵¹ Al-Zayla°ī, ‘the Southern Area’, 447, pl. 27, no. 32.

²⁵² Al-Zayla°ī, *Nuqūš °Islāmiyyah*, 54, pl. 7ab.

²⁵³ Al-Ḥārītī, *°Aḡār Šāhidiyyah*, 73, no. 59.

²⁵⁴ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *°Aḡār al-Ma°lāh*, 127, no. 98.

²⁵⁵ See page 185 of this dissertation.

²⁵⁶ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *°Aḡār al-Ma°lāh*, 288, no. 253.

²⁵⁷ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *°Aḡār al-Ma°lāh*, 552, no. 506.

kufwan (line 6), *mawlāt* (line 8) and *al-Mawṣilī* (line 10). This form of the letter *qāf* is also noted in some inscriptions from the archaeological site of al-Sirrayn, most notably nos. 33 and 34, both of which date to the 4th/10th century.²⁵⁸ All this leads to the opinion that this inscription dates to the same century as well.

²⁵⁸ Al-Zaylaʿī, 'The Southern Area', 448, pl. 28, nos. 33 and 34.

Table 2: Summary of the sample of Chapter 2

No	Date	Full name	Family	Title of woman	Engraver	Quranic verse	Publication	Location
21	n.d.	<i>ʿĀtib mawlāt of al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. Sulaymān</i>		<i>mawlāt</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 21ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 121)
22	n.d.	<i>ʿAlam bint Maslamah, ʿumm walad of Muḥammad b. Masʿūd al-Qāfilāni</i>	<i>Al-Qāfilāni.</i>	<i>ʿumm walad</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 22ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 305)
23	n.d.	<i>ʿAyshah bint ʿAtāʾ, mawlāt of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān</i>		<i>mawlāt</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 23ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 449)
24	n.d.	<i>Burayrah bint Burayh, mawlāt of ibn Wahb</i>		<i>mawlāt</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 24ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 114)
25	n.d.	<i>Ġazāl, mawlāt of ʿUmm Muḥammad bint al-Mutawakkil</i>		<i>mawlāt</i>		112 (all)	<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 25ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 327)
26	n.d.	<i>Ḥanān, mawlāt of Mūsā b. ʿAmīr al-Muʾminīn</i>		<i>mawlāt</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 26ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 522)
27	n.d.	<i>Ḥasanah bint ʿAbd Allāh, mawlāt of ʿAzīzah bint Naṣr</i>		<i>mawlāt</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 27ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 374)
28	13 th of al-Muḥarram 307 (13 June 919).	<i>Ḥallāfah, mawlāt of Ḥabīb b. Buḥayr</i>		<i>mawlāt</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 28ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 403)
29	n.d.	<i>Maʿīn, mawlāt of Fāṭimah bint ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Qāsim b. al-Ḥasan b. Zayd b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib</i>		<i>mawlāt</i>		112 (all)	<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 29ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 123)

30	n.d.	<i>Maʿīn, ʿumm walad of ʿArbakr Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sābūrah/Šabūrah</i>	<i>Sābūrah/Šabūrah</i>	<i>ʿumm walad</i>		112 (all)	<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 30ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 338)
31	n.d.	<i>Maddah, ʿumm walad of al-Ḥusayn b. al-Faḍl b. Zurayq al-Fāsī</i>	<i>Al-Fāsī.</i>	<i>ʿumm walad</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 31ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 141)
32	291 (903–904).	<i>Muntaẓar, ʿumm walad of Salāmah b. ʿAmr al-Jammāl</i>		<i>ʿumm walad</i>		33:21	<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 32ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 112)
33	n.d.	<i>Nasīm, mawlāt of Fattānah/Fannānah bint Rāshid</i>		<i>mawlāt</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 33ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 42)
34	n.d.	<i>Nazīhah bint Faraḡ, mawlāt of ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAbī Saʿd b. Zirārah b. ʿAbd al-Malik b. Zirārah al-Šaybī</i>	<i>Al-Šaybī.</i>	<i>mawlāt</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 34ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 60)
35	4 th of Jumādā I 321/August 924	<i>Nuzhah, ʿumm walad of al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAlī b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-ʿAbbāsī al-Rassī</i>	<i>Al-Rassī.</i>	<i>ʿumm walad</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 35ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 394)
36	n.d.	<i>Šāhib, mawlāt of Harūn b. Muḥammad al-ʿAbbāsī</i>	<i>Al-ʿAbbāsī</i>	<i>mawlāt</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 36ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 222)
37	n.d.	<i>Salsabīl, mawlāt of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Makkiyyah</i>	<i>Al-Makkiyyah</i>	<i>mawlāt</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 6)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 26)
38	322 (934).	<i>ʿUmm ʿAbd Allāh and ʿAbī Bakr Ġaʿfar bint Ishāq, ʿumm walad (mother of a free-born son) of ʿAbū al-Ḥusayn ʿAbī Sābūrah/Šabūrah</i>	<i>Sābūrah/Šabūrah.</i>	<i>ʿumm walad</i>		112 (all) 3:185	<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 38ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 245)
39	n.d.	<i>ʿUmm Ḥamdiyyah, ʿumm walad of al-Rabīʿ b. Ġallād</i>		<i>ʿumm walad</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 40ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 207)

40	n.d.	<i>ʿUmm Dāʿūd, ʿumm walad of ʿIsā b. Mūsā</i>		<i>ʿumm walad</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 40ab).	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 64)
41	n.d.	<i>Wāṭiq bint ʿAbd Allāh, mawlāt of ʿAnas b. Muḥammad b. Mukarram al- Mawṣilī</i>	<i>Al- Mawṣilī.</i>	<i>mawlāt</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 41ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 104)

Chapter 3: The women of Mecca who came from other countries or tribes outside Mecca

Introduction

Those who know of Mecca, even in recent times, know of an ethnically diverse environment comprised of people who have come to Mecca from the various countries of the near and far Islamic world for the purposes of Hajj (pilgrimage) and *ʿumrah* (lesser pilgrimage). Throughout Islamic history, many of these pilgrims either could not return to their lands or simply found accommodation and residence in Mecca; thus, they remained in Mecca and assimilated with the Meccan people and the other immigrants who preceded them. This coexistence and intimacy may not be found in any part of the world other than in Mecca.

When reading about historical Meccans figures in the abundant biographies and histories, contemplation about the tribal, ethnic, and country attributions in the names will reveal the large number of men and women who had arrived from various parts of the ancient world. Thousands have come to Mecca throughout its history, with many preferring to settle and integrate with Meccan society. These immigrants formed a unique community within Mecca, a community that changes constantly in its demographic fabric. This community attracts the attention of all who visit.

Observers of Mecca

Perhaps the most notable of those who have taken note this dynamic fabric in Mecca was the Egyptian writer Muḥammad Labīb al-Batanūnī, who accompanied Khedive ʿAbbās Pāshā Ḥilmī (d.1363 /1944), the king of Egypt at that time, to Mecca as a pilgrim in 1327/1909. During this journey, al-Batanūnī wrote about the inhabitants of Mecca and their racial distribution/percentages. He concluded,¹

“From the mixing of these races with each other, by marriage and companionship, the majority of the people of Mecca have become a mixture in their own making, a mixture

¹ Al-Batanūnī, *Al-Riḥlah al-Ḥiḡāziyyah*, 42.

in their ethnicity. They have brought together their traits: Anatolian mildness, Turkish greatness, Gawi [Indonesian] submissiveness,² Persian pride, Egyptian tenderness, Sharkasi solidarity, Chinese calmness, Moroccan nervousness, Indian simplicity, Yemeni cunningness, Syrian activity, the Zanj laziness and Abyssinian colour”.

This demographic fabric has been examined by many researchers who have studied the history of Mecca or have visited the city and recorded their observations about it.³ The questions are, what is the motivation behind this migration to and settlement in Mecca, and how did this wonderful society in Mecca become formed throughout the ages? The answer to these questions is simply what is known in some historical Meccan sources as ‘neighbourhood’ or ‘neighbourliness’ in (Arabic *ḡiwar*), meaning that mankind spends a period of spiritual purity in the vicinity of the Grand Mosque (i.e. the Holy Kaʿbah) and in pure Mecca. Hence, this is what has become known in Islamic history as the ‘neighbourhood’ (Arabic *muḡāwarah*), and the people are often referred to as *muḡāwirūn*.⁴

The neighbours

This tradition of *neighbourhood* is based on Islamic heritage concerning Mecca’s virtue and residence in the town. According to the Hadith, the Prophet Muhammad said, ‘In the name of Allah, you are the best land of Allāh and the most beloved land to Allāh. If I had not been expelled therefrom, I would not have left you’.⁵ It was also narrated that Lady ʿĀišah, wife of the Prophet Muḡammad, stated, ‘If there was no immigration, I would have resided in Mecca. I have not seen the sky so close to a place

² The Indonesian people at that time, especially the Javanese (al-Ḡāwah), formed the vast majority who lived in Mecca or who frequently used to come to it for Hajj and ʿUmrah. They were under the auspices of the Dutch Consulate in Jeddah because Indonesia was a dependent of the Netherlands. The Dutch Arabist, Snouk C. Hurgronje, devoted a detailed report to Java (Ḡāwah) in his book *Mekka in the later part of the 19th century*, which was translated into Arabic and printed by the Mecca Cultural Literary Club in 1990. See the report in this book, 320 ff and passim and in the translated copy 364 ff and passim.

³ Al-Batanūnī, *al-Riḡlah al-Ḥiḡāziyyah*, 40; al-Sibāʿī, *Tārīḡ Makkah*, I, 565–571; al-Sulaymān, *al-ʿAlāqāt al-Miṡriyyah al-Ḥiḡāziyyah*, 209; Raḡab, *al-Mudun al-Ḥiḡāziyyah*, 78; Hurgronje, *Mekka*, 3, 215.

⁴ Al-ʿAzraqī, *ʿAḡbār Makkah*, II, 155; ʿAllān, *Muṡīr Ṣawq al-Ḡarām*, MS. 25; al-Fāsī, *al-Zuhūr al-Muqtaṡfah*, 52–53.

⁵ Narrated by ʿAhmad and al-Nisāʿī and Ibn Mājah and corrected by al-Tirmadī.

as to Mecca, and I have never felt reassured at a place other than Mecca, and I have not seen the moon better at any place other than Mecca'.⁶ The *neighbourhood* in Mecca is desirable to some scholars, and it is said that fifty-four of the Prophet's companions became *neighbours* there after his death in Mecca.⁷ The most prominent of these were °Abdallāh b. °Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb (d. 73/692), Ğāber b. °Abdallāh b. °Amr b. Ḥarām al-°Anṣārī (d. 78/697), and °Abdallāh b. °Abbās b. °Abd al-Muṭṭalib (d. 68/687), the Prophet's cousin. The latter did not leave Mecca until he was injured during the revolution of °Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr (d.73/692), declaring himself Caliph of Mecca. Ibn °Abbās has been quoted as saying, 'Stay in Mecca, even as you eat from its thorn bush'.⁸

Reviewing the history of the *neighbourhood* and the people who were *neighbouring* in Mecca during the period of focus in this study, it is clear that most of them came to Mecca for Hajj and *°umrah* from foreign lands. Most were from the places that were under the Abbasid caliphate – from Iraq and lands to the east and from Morocco, Andalusia, Egypt, and Syria – and most remained in Mecca until their death, leaving a clear mark on the demographics of Mecca. Some of those who *neighboured* in Mecca for many years did return to their own country, particularly those coming from the Arabian Peninsula, including Yemen.⁹ Perhaps this is due to the proximity of their countries to Mecca and the ease of their frequent coming and going.

It is also evident that most of the *neighbours* were Ṣufīs, or scholars.¹⁰ Some were able to attain important religious ranks in Mecca, while some even reached the position Imam of the Holy Mosque in Mecca. Several of them called prayer (azan) and taught in the Holy Mosque. Other rose to the judiciary and issued fatwas.¹¹

The *neighbours* in Mecca were not isolated from public life; some interacted with it and had a clear impact on the religious, cultural, social and even political life. The latter manifested in the *neighbours*' opposition to some of the policies of the emirs of

⁶ Al-Fāsī, *Šifā° al-Ġarām*, I, 135; al-Zayla°ī, *Makkah*, 137.

⁷ Al-Muḥibbī, *al-Qurā*, 662.

⁸ Al-Fāsī, *Šifā° al-Ġarām*, I, 137 (Original: 'أقم بمكة وإن أكلت بها العظاءة أي السم').

⁹ Al-Zayla°ī, *Makkah*, 138.

¹⁰ For more information about their interests, see al-Zayla°ī, *Makkah*, 137–148.

¹¹ Al-Fāsī, *al-°Iqd al-Ṭamīn*, IV, 480, V, 507.

Mecca at the time and their opposition against some of the practices political and religious they saw as contrary to the religion.¹²

Notable individuals who lived in Mecca as *neighbours* during the period in focus of this study include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Muḥammad b. °Alī b. Ğa°far al-Baġdādī, who travelled to Mecca from Baghdad and remained there until his death in 322/934. Muḥammad was a Šūfī Šayḥ, noble and virtuous, and was nicknamed ‘the lamp of the Holy Mosque’. It is said that he frequently read the Quran during the circumambulation (*tawāf*) and even completed the Qur°ān twelve times during twelve circumambulations.¹³
2. °Abū al-Ḥasan °Alī b. Muḥammad al-Baġdādī, known as al-Muzayyin. He travelled from Baghdad and lived in Mecca until his death in 328/939–940. He was known for his piety, so much so that he was considered one of the best shaykhs (narrators of *Ḥadīṯ*). He has traditional sayings preserved in some sources providing his biography.¹⁴
3. °Abū Sa°id Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Zayd al-Bašrī. He went to Mecca and stayed until his death in 340/951–952. He was described as a proven imam who acquired much knowledge. At the time, he was a great worshiper and the shaykh of al-Ḥaram, famed for his knowledge and austerity.¹⁵
4. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Nīsābūrī (d. 348/959–960). He went to Mecca as a pilgrim and remained, becoming a respected shaykh. It is said that he was so diligent in worship that he performed the Hajj approximately sixty times.¹⁶
5. °Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. °Abdallāh al-Baġdādī al-°Āġūrī. Al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baġdādī wrote a biography about °Abū Bakr Muḥammad and described him as ‘truly trustful and pious and [with] many books’. Ibn Ḥallikān described him as ‘a

¹² For more information about the opposition of neighbouring people to the policies of the °Amīrs of Mecca at their time, cf. al-Ġazīrī, *Durar al-Fawā°id*, 252; al-Fāsī, *al-°Iqd al-Ṭamīn*, VII, 354–355; al-Zayla°ī, *Makkah*, 147–149.

¹³ Al-Baġdādī, *Tārīḥ Baġdād*, III, 74; al-Fāsī, *al-°Iqd al-Ṭamīn*, II, 149.

¹⁴ Ibn al-Ġawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, VI, 304; al-Fāsī, *al-°Iqd al-Ṭamīn*, VI, 254–255.

¹⁵ Al-Fāsī, *al-°Iqd al-Ṭamīn*, III, 137–138; Ibn Taġrī Bardī, *al-Nuġūm al-Zāhirah*, III, 306–307.

¹⁶ Al-Fāsī, *al-°Iqd al-Ṭamīn*, I, 408–409; °Allān, *Muṭīr Šawq al-Ġarām*, MS. 48.

- good jurist and a worshiper, having many books; he liked Mecca, having stated, ‘May God give me a year to live there, but he stayed there for 30 years.’ °Abū Bakr Muḥammad died on the first Friday of the holy month of Muḥarram in 360/970.¹⁷
6. °Abū °Utmān Sa°īd b. Sallām al-Maġribī (d. 373/983–984) went to Mecca from al-Qayrawān, the well-known Islamic city in today’s Tunisia. He is described as the pious one of his time, proud and patient for solitude.¹⁸
 7. °Abū Muḥammad Abdallāh b. Sa°īd b. Labbāġ al-Andalusī travelled to Mecca as a pilgrim in 931/1000 and remained. He was a good man who fasted often, and during his residence, he performed Hajj 35 times.¹⁹
 8. °Abū-°I-Futūḥ Yaḥyā b. °Īsā b. °Ismā°īl b. Mulāmis (d.42/1030).²⁰ He was one of the greatest scholars and a wealthy man. He was said to have made the pilgrimage to Mecca and remained. During his stay, he married 60 women.²¹ When °Abū-°I-Futūḥ’s son intended to become a *neighbour* in Mecca and asked for permission to do so, °Abū-°I-Futūḥ permitted it only on the condition that his son would not marry a woman from Mecca unless she was a virgin because he could not ensure that his son would marry a woman that he had not previously married her.²²

These are just a few examples of the many who migrated to Mecca and chose to become *neighbours*. They interacted with the public life in Mecca, mixed with Mecca’s people and married Meccan women.

Thus, it is shown that the pilgrimage to Mecca and the preference to stay there as a *neighbour* to its Holy Mosque and its venerable Ka°bah had brought many people from different countries and from remote areas throughout the ages. Many retained their affiliation with the countries from which their parents and grandparents came. Many had large families emerge from them – generations who engaged in learning, assumed the judiciary, and issued fatwas in the state councils. These included the generations of al-Ṭabariyyūn, al-Nuwayriyyūn, al-Fāsiyyūn (attributed to the well-known city of

¹⁷ Ibn al-Ġawzī, *al-Muntazam*, VII, 55; al-Baġdādī, *Tāriḥ Baġdād*, II, 243; Ibn Ḥallikan, *Wafayāt al-°A°Ayān*, IV, 292.

¹⁸ Al-Fāsī, *al-°Iqd al-Ṭamīn*, IV, 567.

¹⁹ Al-Fāsī, *al-°Iqd al-Ṭamīn*, IV, 480, V, 507; al-Zayla°ī, *Makkah*, 142.

²⁰ Al-Ġa°dī, *Ṭabaqāt Fuqahā° al-Yaman*, 92.

²¹ Al-Ġa°dī, *Ṭabaqāt Fuqahā° al-Yaman*, 92; al-Fāsī, *al-°Iqd al-Ṭamīn*, VII, 444.

²² Al-Ġa°dī, *Ṭabaqāt Fuqahā° al-Yaman*, 92.

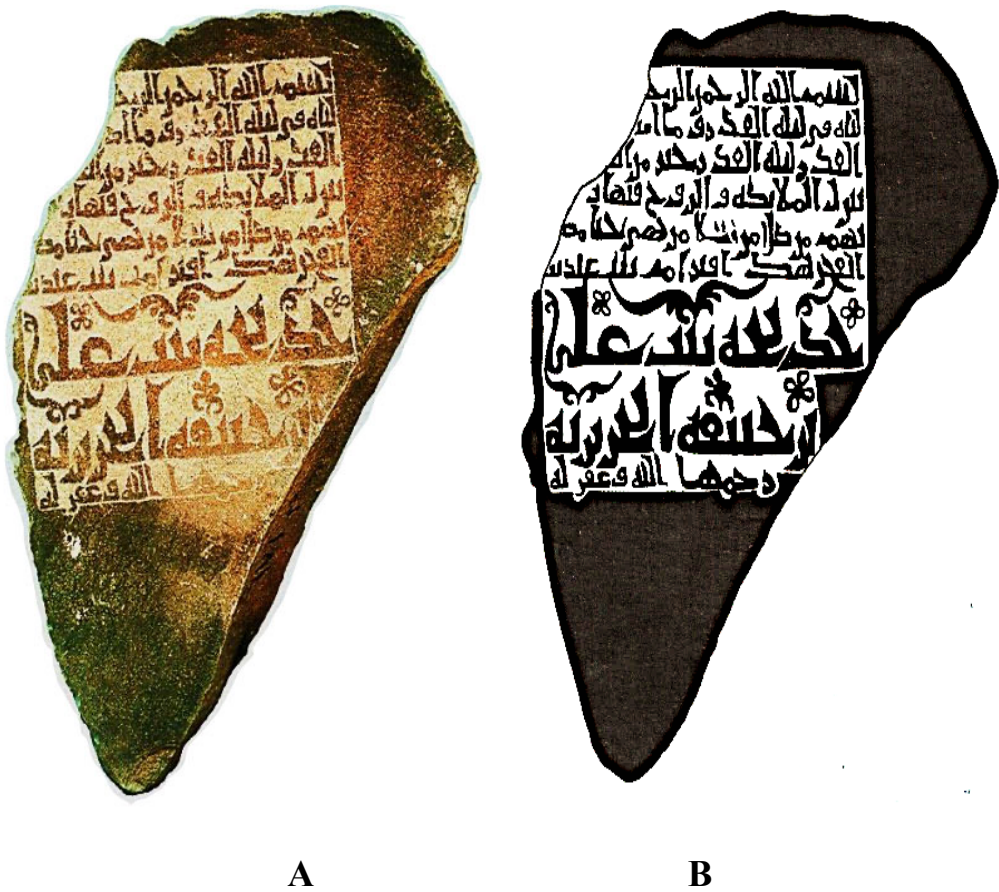
Fās, currently in the kingdom of Morocco), and many others from different eras in Mecca.

Women migrants of Mecca in focus

This chapter studies eighteen tombstones of women who died in Mecca and were buried in al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery, all of whom are attributed to countries, tribes or peoples from outside Mecca; their parents or grandparents may have migrated to Mecca in the years before their death. Four are attributed to tribes or cities not far from Mecca. The remaining are attributed to places outside the Arabian Peninsula: twelve are attributed to places in Iraq and eastward, including Iran, Transoxiana or Turkestan, and two are attributed to places in North Africa and Andalusia.

In the following pages, the contents of these tombstones are arranged in alphabetical order of their names.

No. 42 / Museum no. 482

**Description**

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace - Jeddah.

Bazalt, broken upper left so that some words and letters are lost.

9 lines, floriated Kufic with elaborate floral motifs, carved in relief.

No date, probably 3rd /9th century.

Deceased Name: °Amat bint °Īd b. [...] Ḥadīġah bint °Alī b. Ḥanīfah al-Gazīriyyah /al-Ḥariziyyah / al-Ḥarīriyyah.

Museum No 482, °Aḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh, (plate no.42ab).

Measurements: 34 x 39 cms.

Height of °alif:4,8 cms.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم [يم انا انز]

2. لناه في ليلة القدر. وما ادراك ما ليلة [
3. القدر. ليلة القدر خير من ال[ف شهر]
4. تنزل الملائكة والروح فيها ب[اذن ر]
5. بهم من كل امر سلامن هي حتا مط[لع]
6. الفجر. هذا قبر امة بنت عيد ب[ن] [.]
7. خديجة بنت علي
8. بن حنيفة الحريرية/ الحريرية/ الجزيرية
9. رحمها الله وغفر له[ا]

Translation

1. In the Name of God the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy. We
2. sent it
3. down on the Night of Glory. What
4. will explain to you what that Night of Glory is? The Night of
5. Glory is better than a thousand of months.
6. On that Night the Angels and the Spirit descend again and again
7. with their Lord's permission on every task. This until the rise of
8. Peace it is until the rising of the dawn. This is the
9. tomb of °Amat bint °Īd b. [.]
10. Ḥadiyğah bint °Alī
11. b. Ḥanīfah al-Ġazīriyyah / al-Ḥarīziyyah / al-Ḥarīriyyah
12. May God have mercy upon her and forgive her.

Line 1–6, are from Quran, 97: 1-5 (*Sūrat al-Qadr*).

Note: *salāman* and *hattā* in line 5; °Amat: with *tā° maftūḥah* instead of *tā° marbūṭah* in line 6.

Observations

This inscription relates to the deceased woman °Amat bint °Īd [.....] Ḥadiyğah bint °Alī b. Ḥanīfah, al-Ġazīriyyah. She is from Mecca where she lived and died, and was then buried in its well-known cemetery 'al-Ma°lāh'. Due to her origins or roots however, she is considered to be from one of the migrating families to Mecca. Her *nisbah al-Ġazīriyyah* (masculine: *al-Ġazīrī*) refers to the Green Island (*al-Ġazīrah al-Ḥadrā°*) in Andalusia. One of the celebrities who is known to come from this island is

°Abū Marwān °Abd al-Malik b. °Idrīs, known as b. Ibn al-Ġazīrī. He was well versed in rhetoric and poetry. °Abd al-Raḥmān, b. Sa'īd al-Tamīmī al-Ġazīrī is also known to come from the Green Island. He was a narrator of the Prophet's tradition and died in 265/878.²³

The word *al-Ġazīriyyah* may be read as *al-Ḥarīziyyah* (masculine: *al-Ḥarīzī*), which refers to an island in Yemen, from which Yazīd b. Muslim al-Ḥarīzī came from, who was also a narrator of the Prophet's tradition according to al-Sam'ānī.²⁴

This *nisbah* may be *al-Ḥarīriyyah* (masculine: *al-Ḥarīrī*) which means the seller of silk cloth. The most famous person who had this *nisbah* (*al-Ḥarīrī*) is al-Ḥarīrī, al-Qāsim b. °Alī. He is known for his *Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī*.²⁵

The first name of the deceased woman, °Amat, which means 'maid' or 'slave girl', is usually followed by one of the names of Allāh (God's names) such as: °Amat Allāh, °Amat al-°Alīm, °Amat al-Ġabbār, °Amat al-Ḥāliq, °Amat al-Ḥakīm etc.²⁶

The first five lines of the calligraphy inscribed on the tombstone are in a simple Kufic style, which was common during the 3rd/9th century.

However, the last four lines are inscribed in a foliated or floriated Kufic, with the seventh and eighth lines especially so. It seems evident that these lines retain the floral ornaments and leaves that come from some letters and are scattered between the two lines, along with three quadruple-lobed rosettes.²⁷ The enlargement of the letters in the said lines is due to an established tradition. The inscribers had shops in the market where they would present their inscription after inscribing familiar lines such as the *basmalah*, some verses of the Quran, supplications and so on, but leaving a space for the name of the deceased. The deceased's family would then come to a shop to have their deceased's name inscribed on one of the previously prepared stones in the shop. If the name was long and the available space did not accommodate it, the letters would

²³ Ibn Mākūlā, *al-°Ikmāl*, II, 212-213.

²⁴ Al-Sam'ānī, *al-°Ansāb*, II, 210.

²⁵ Al-Sam'ānī, *al-°Ansāb*, II, 208-209.

²⁶ Badawī, et al, *Muġam °Asmā° al-°Arab*, I, 104.

²⁷ For more information about foliated and floriated Kufic, see Arif, *Arabic Lapidary Kufic*, 23; Healey and Smith, *The Arabic Alphabet*, 89 and see the introduction of this dissertation.

be tiny, whereas if the name was short and the space was wide, the letters would be scattered, thick or broadened. This style has been noted in a number of inscriptions in Mecca and al-Sirrayn and on Dahlak Island.²⁸

This inscription is similar in its calligraphic features to others mentioned above, e.g. to the inscription no. 102A of al-Ma^clāh cemetery dealt with above.²⁹

As for the letter *ġīm*, it can be described as winged (*muġannah*), so to speak, due to the similarity between it and a bird flapping its wings which can be noted in the word *al-faġr* (line 6). This form is similar to the letter *ġīm* and its sisters the letters *hā^o* and *hā^o* in various inscriptions observed in many examples, including inscription no. 11 from King Fahd library collection³⁰ and inscription no. 10 of ^cAšm, dated to 262/876.³¹ Also, this inscription is closely similar to a number of others found in the same place,³² all of them going back to the 3rd/9th century to which the calligraphic and decorative characteristics of this inscription are attributed.

²⁸ Al-Ḥalifah, et al, *ʿAḥġār al-Ma^clāh al-Šahidiyyah*, 543, 569, 577, 604, 608, 612, 614, nos. 497, 521, 530, 556, 560, 563, 565; al-Zayla^cī, ‘The Southern Area’, 449–450, nos. 37–39; Oman, La Necropolī, I, 36, 40, 42–43, nos. 30, 33–34 II, 14, 35, nos. 12,31, III, 7,22, 33, 46, nos. uv13, uv19, uv29.

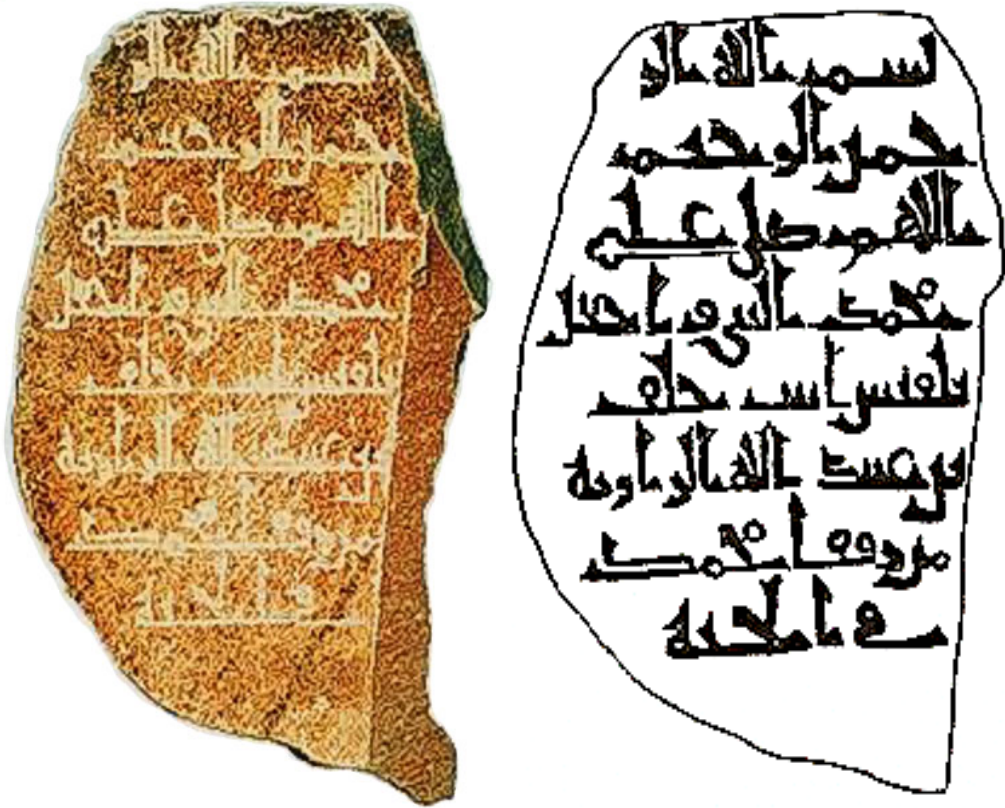
²⁹ Al-Ḥalifah, et al, *ʿAḥġār al-Ma^clāh al-Šahidiyyah*, 31, no. 102a.

³⁰ al-Buġumī, *Nuqūš Islāmiyyah*, 247, no. 11.

³¹ Al-Zayla^cī, ‘The Southern Area’, 443, pl. 23, no. 15.

³² Cf. for example al-Zahrānī *Kitābāt islāmiyyah*, 509, 514, 518, pls. 15ab, 20ab, 24ab; al-Faqīh, *Miḥlāf^c Ašm*, 240, no.49; al-Zayla^cī, ‘The Southern Area’, 449, nos. 37 and 38.

No. 43 / Museum no. 120



A

B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace – Jeddah.

Bazalt.

Eight lines, incised, simple Kufic. Some of its letters are not clear enough.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased name: Balqīs bint Ḥalaf b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Rāziyyah

Museum no.120, ʿAḡḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh, (plate no. 43ab).

Measurements: 18 x 26 cms.

Height of ʿalif: 3.3 cms.

Text

1. بسم الله الر
2. حمن الرحيم

- .3 اللهم صلى على
 .4 محمد النبي واجعل
 .5 بلقيس ابنت خلف
 .6 بن عبيد الله الرازية
 .7 من رفقا محمد
 .8 في الجنة

Translation

1. In the Name of God the Lord of Mercy,
2. the Giver of Mercy.
3. O God, bless
4. Muḥammad the Prophet and include
5. Balqīs bint Ḥalaf
6. b. °Ubayd Allāh al-Rāziyyah to be
7. among the companions of Muḥammad
8. in Paradise.

Note: Line 3 *ṣallī*.

Observations

This tombstone relates to the deceased woman Balqīs bint Ḥalaf b. °Ubayd Allāh al-Rāziyyah (masculine: al-Rāzī), who lived in Mecca and was buried in the famous al-Maʿlāh Cemetery. As is evident from the *nisbah* her tombstone her country of origin is not Mecca. Her family may have migrated from the famous city of al-Rayy in the Marw (Merv) region of Iran and settled in Mecca, and from their progeny the deceased woman was called Bilqīs al-Rāziyyah. al-Samʿānī states that many are attributed to it and has calculated 30 such, the most famous of whom is the chemist, physician and philosopher Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Zakariyyā al-Rāzī, who died on the month of Šaʿbān 313/October 925³³ Whereas with regards to ‘Bilqīs’, the most eminent person with this name is the great per-Islamic Yemeni queen, holder of the

³³ Al-Samʿānī, *al-ʿAnsāb*, III, 23–35.

famous throne (*ʿarš Bilqīs*)³⁴ It is a common name in different regions of Arabia, Yemen, in particular, even up this present day.

This tombstone is inscribed in simple Kufic, combining dryness and softness. The dryness element is manifest in the *nūn* letters at the end of the word ‘*al-rahmān*’ (line 2), the word ‘*bin*’ (line 6), ‘*min*’ (line 7), and the *lām* in the word ‘*iğʿal*’ (line 4), where each of these letters ends in right angle. The softness is in the letter of *ʿalif al-maqṣūrah*, as in the word ‘*sallā*’ (line 3) and the letter *yāʾ* in the word ‘*al-nabiy*’ (line 4). Softness is also evident in the letter *rāʾ* in the two words ‘*al-rahmān al-rahīm*’ (line 1, 2), the word ‘*al-rāziyyah*’ (line 6), the word ‘*rufaḳāʾ*’ (line 7). Like the *rāʾ* is the letter *zay* in the word ‘*al-rāziyyah*’ (line 6). This inscription is one of those inscriptions that represent the transitional phase between the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries. It is closely related to similar inscriptions dating back to the late 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries, including inscription no. 47 of al-Maʿlāh Cemetery,³⁵ the two inscriptions — no.9 and no.46 — from the Archaeology and Heritage Museum in Mecca,³⁶ and inscription no.46 from ʿAšm.³⁷ Also, the latter is dated 233/847-848, which leads us to believe that the date of this inscription may belong to the early 3rd/9th century.

³⁴ Kaḥḥālah, *ʿAlām al-Nisāʾ*, I, 141–148.

³⁵ Al-Ḥalifah, et al, *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 76, no. 47.

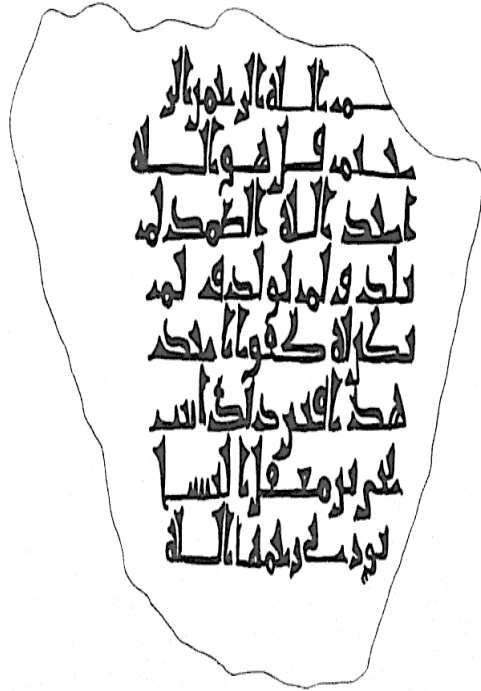
³⁶ Al-Ḥārīṭī, *ʿAḥḡār Šāhidīyyah*, 22, 60, nos. 9 and 46.

³⁷ Al-Faḳīh, *Miḥlāf ʿAšm*, 238, no. 46

No. 44 / Museum no. 67



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt, broken upper right and lower left sides.

8 lines, incised, simple Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: Dabak bint Yaḥyā b. Ma^ʿqal al-Nīsābūrī.

Museum no.67, *ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh*, (plate no. 44ab).

Measurements: 36 x 44 cms.

Height of *ʿalif*: 2 cms.

Text

1. [ب]سم الله الرحمن الر

2. حليم. قل هو الله
3. احد. الله الصمد. لم
4. يلد. ولم يولد ولم
5. يكن له كفوا احد.
6. هذا قبر دبك ابنت
7. يحيى بن معقل النيسا
8. بوري رحمها الله

Translation

1. In the Name of God the Lord of Mercy, the Giver
2. of Mercy. Say, He is
3. God, the One, God the Eternal. He
4. begot no one nor was He begotten.
5. No one is comparable to Him.
6. Assign Dabak ibnat
7. Yaḥyā b. Ma^cqal al-Nīsāburī
8. May God have Mercy upon her

Lines 2–5 are from Quran, 112: 1–4 (*Sūrat al-ʾIhlās*).

Observations

This inscription belongs to Dabak or Dalak bint Yaḥyā b. Ma^cqal as far as I am able to ascertain, this name – if properly read – is a unique name in the available sources that deal with names; such as: al-ʾAsmā^o Wa-ʾI-Kunā wa-ʾI-ʾAlqāb for al-Dulābī, Raf^c al-ʾIrtiyāb ʿan al-Mu^talif fī ʾI-ʾAsmā^o wa-ʾI-Kunā wa-ʾI-ʾAlqāb for Ibn Makūlā and al-Mu^talif wa-ʾI-Muḥtalif for al-Dārquṭnī; however, my relatives have verbally confirmed that they had a neighbour named Dabak, who passed away before I could confirm the name. This reflects the existence of the name, although it is not common.

The *nisbah*, al-Nīsāburī, is related to Nisāpūr a town in Khurāsān in modern-day Iran. Al-Sam^cānī states that people attributed to this place are so numerous that a book which has been written in respect of their scholars consists of eight large volumes.³⁸

³⁸ Al-Sam^cānī, *al-ʾAnsāb*, V, 550.

It is believed that the deceased's family migrated from Nīsāpūr to Mecca, where she preferred to stay. Further, she may have had children who lived and died in Mecca and who are buried the deceased in its famous, al-Ma'ālāh Cemetery.

The writing of this inscription is characterised by the beauty of its letters in all the lines – their consistency, alignment and uncrowded quality. It is similar to many inscriptions of this collection, in which shaft letters and many terminals of the horizontal letters retain a broadening, or simple flattening end and top. Some of them are in the form of a triangle, and others cracked at the centre, so that they form semi-palmette fans, specifically in the adjacent the letters *ʿalif* and *lām* as in the word *Allāh* (lines 1, 2, 3, 8) and the two words *al-rahmān al-rahīm* (line 1). It is noteworthy in this inscription that the form of the final *lām* in the words *qul* (line 2) and *ma'qal* (line 7), as well as the medial *ʿalif* in the word al-Nīsāpūrī (line 7), are all inscribed in an elegant style, which is unique in similar inscriptions.

The extension, flattening or extending (*mašq*) is common within certain adjacent letters, as in the case of the extending between the two *lāms* of the word *Allāh* (lines 1, 2, 8), between the *qāf* and the *lām* in the word *qul* (line 1) and between the letters *ʿayn* and *qāf* in the word *ma'qal* (line 7).

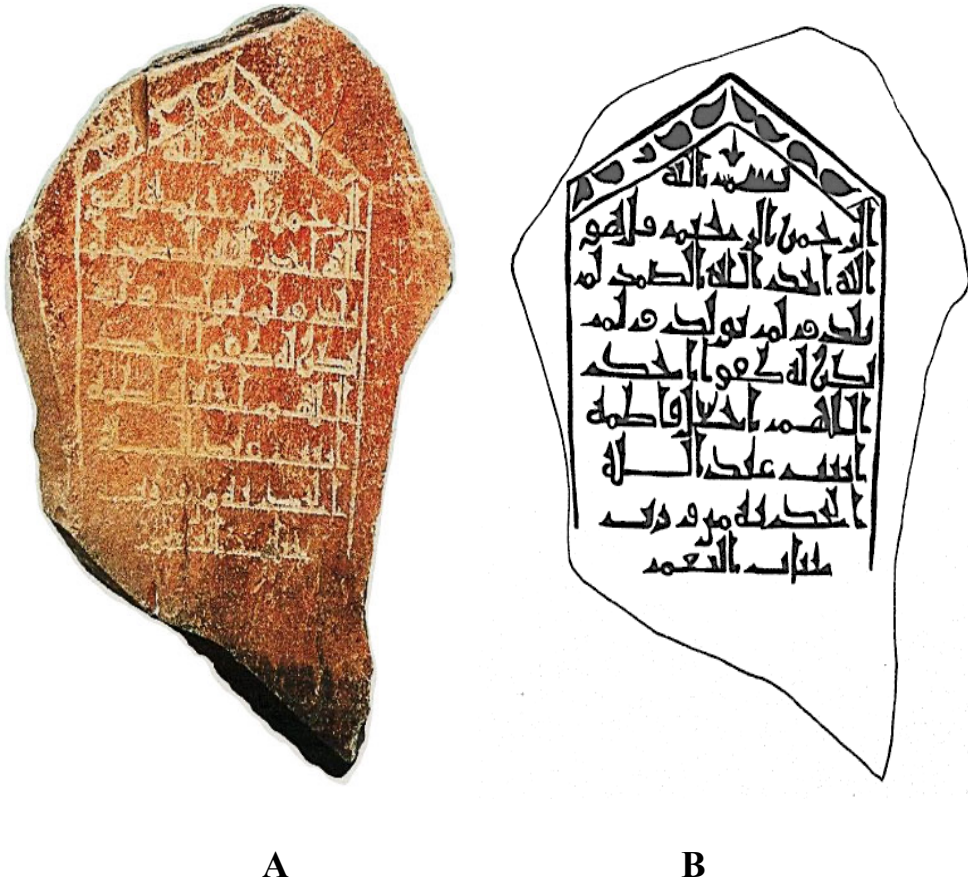
The way of writing the letter *bāʾ* and its neighbour, *nūn*, in the word *ibnat* (line 6) is similar in form to two adjacent letters, *yāʾ* and *tāʾ marbūṭah*, in the word *al-makkiyyah* in inscription no. 26 of al-Ma'ālāh Cemetery.³⁹ The letters are also similar to the adjacent letters, medial *yāʾ* and neighbouring medial *tāʾ* in the word *ḥaṭṭiyatih* [حَطَّيْتِه] in another inscription on a tombstone from al-ḡuḥfah in Rābiḡ province, Mecca district, dated 29 Ramaḍān 280/5 December 893.⁴⁰ Further, the previous inscription is like other similar inscriptions from the 3rd/9th century, including inscriptions no. 34, 82, 120 and 160 from al-Ma'ālāh Cemetery in Mecca,⁴¹ supporting the assessment that this inscription belongs to the 3rd/9th century.

³⁹ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḡḡār al-Ma'ālāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 55, no. 26.

⁴⁰ Al-Zayla'ī, 'Naqšān Kūfiyyān', 316, no. 1.

⁴¹ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḡḡār al-Ma'ālāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 63, 111, 150, 193, nos. 34, 82 and 120.

No. 45 / Museum no. 486



A

B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace – split from the top of the stone towards the bottom.

9 lines, incised, simple Kufic of difficult legibility.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: Fāṭimah bint ʿAbd Allāh al-Ġuddiyyah or al- Ġiddiyyah

Museum no. 486, *ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh*, (plate no. 45ab).

Measurements: 33 x 33 cms.

Height of ʿalif: 3.5 cms.

Text

1. بسم الله
2. الرحمن الرحيم. قل هو

3. الله احد. الله الصمد لم
4. يلد ولم يولد ولم
5. يكن له كفوا احد
6. اللهم اجعل فاطمة
7. ابنت عبد الله
8. الجديّة من ورثة
9. جنات النعيم

Translation

1. In the Name of God,
2. the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy. Say, He is
3. God, the One, God the Eternal. He
4. begot no one, nor was He
5. begotten. No one is comparable to Him.
6. O God, assign Fāṭimah
7. bint ʿAbd Allāh
8. al-Ġuddiyah / al- Ġiddiyah to be among the inheritors of
9. the Gardens of Bliss.

Line 2–6 are from Quran 112: 1–4 (*Sūrat al-ʾIhlās*).

Observations

This inscription relates to a deceased woman named Fāṭimah bint ʿAbd Allāh al-Ġuddiyah or al-Ġiddiyah (masculine: al-Ġuddī or al-Ġiddī). The *nisbah* is related to Jeddah, located 75 km to the west of Mecca. Despite the affiliation with Jeddah, she was an immigrant and resident in Mecca. This is the only inscription among the hundreds of inscriptions that attributes (*nisbah*) Jeddah to the deceased,⁴² and from this fact stems the importance of studying this inscription despite the poor quality of the tombstone surface and lack of clarity in the writing. This defect may be due to the rough nature of the stone or to the fact that it was not adequately levelled

⁴² Two ancient famous men associated with Jeddah were 1) Ġabir b. Marzūq al-Ġuddī, who was a well-known shaiḥ of Jeddah, lived in Mecca, and was a narrator of the Prophet tradition and 2) Ḥafṣ b. ʿUmar al-Ġuddī, who also was a narrator of the Prophetic traditions and described as a trustworthy. Cf. Al-Samʿānī, *al-ʾAnsāb*, II, 32.

before the inscription was made. Nevertheless, this inscription is one of good calligraphic style that belongs the 3rd/9th century, comparable to that forms executed by that the Meccan scribe °Aḥmad b. °Iṣḥāq, whose name appears on two inscriptions, no. 220 and no. 230, of al-Ma°lāh Cemetery.⁴³

This inscription is one of the Hijazi inscriptions that contain a frame on three sides (top, right and left) which end at a point centred at the top. The top portion consists of double lines, between which are repeated small leaves. Below the point are either the two words *b-ism allāh* or *bism*. The remaining words of the text are well distributed over the stone. This arrangement has been observed on a number of tombstones found in Mecca, °Ašm and other Hijazi sites.⁴⁴

The instances of the letter *mīm* are notable throughout this inscription for their roundness and evenness on the lines. Further, the unique terminal *mīm* in the word *b-ism* (line 1) is notable for its radiant form, such that it emanates from what resembles the sun's rays or a sunflower. This is similar to the *mīm* that was observed in the above-mentioned inscription of the Meccan scribe Aḥmad b. °Iṣḥāq (no. 230).

The inscription maintains the spiral *wāw*, as in the word *wa-lam* (twice in line 3), and the terminal *nūn* is stretched, extending upward then to the left, as in the word *al-rahmān* (line 2) and the word *yakun* (line 5). It is also characterised by the descent of the second *lām* from the line level in the two words *Allāh* and *Allāhumma* (lines 6 and 7, respectively). This way of writing the second *lām* has been noted in various inscriptions from al-Ma°lāh Cemetery as dating back to the 3rd/9th century, such as in inscriptions nos. 197, 244, 249 and 357,⁴⁵ as well as from the °Ašm site in inscriptions nos. 54 and 56.⁴⁶

⁴³ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., °*Aḥḡār al-Ma°lāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 264, 254, nos. 220 and 230.

⁴⁴ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., °*Aḥḡār al-Ma°lāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 212, 289, 551, 561, nos. 179, 254, 505 and 515; al-Faqīh, *Miḥlāf °Ašm*, 238–239, 242, nos. 46, 47 and 51.

⁴⁵ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., °*Aḥḡār al-Ma°lāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 230, 278, 283, 353, nos. 197, 244, 249, 357.

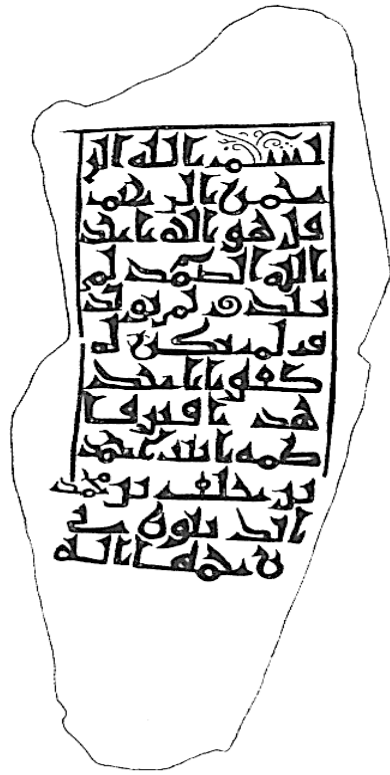
⁴⁶ Al-Faqīh, *Miḥlāf °Ašm*, 245–246, nos. 54–56.

This remarkable similarity with the other inscriptions mentioned above in terms of calligraphic features supports the opinion view that this inscription date back to the 3rd/9th century.

No. 46 / Museum no. 93



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

12 lines, incised, partially floriated Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: Fāṭimah bint Aḥmad b. Ḥalaf b. Muḥammad al-Dīnawarī.

Museum no.93, ^ʿAḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh, (plate no. 46ab).

Measurements: 19 x 42 cms.

Height of ^ʿalif: 3.5 cms.

Text

1. بسم الله الر
2. حمن الرحيم
3. قل هو الله أحد
4. الله الصمد. لم
5. يلد ولم يولد
6. ولم يكن له
7. كفوا احد
8. هذا قبر فا
9. طمة ابنت احمد
10. بن خلف بن محمد
11. الدينوري
12. رحمها الله

Translation

1. In the Name of God,
2. the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.
3. Say, He is God, the One,
4. God the Eternal. He
5. begot no one, nor was He begotten.
6. No one is
7. comparable to Him.
8. This is the tomb of
9. Fāṭimah ibnat Aḥmad
10. b. Ḥalaf b. Muḥammad
11. al-Dīnawarī
12. May God have mercy upon her.

Line 2–7 are from Quran (*Sūrat al-ʿIhlāṣ*) 112: 1–4.

Observations

This inscription is for the deceased Fāṭimah ʿAḥmad b. Ḥalaf b. Muḥammad al-Dīnawarī. As evident from her *nisbah*, she is from a family that immigrated to Mecca. The *nisbah* of her grandfather, al-Dīnawarī is attributed to al-Dīnawar, which is

Dīnavar an important town in western Persia. Al-Samʿānī states that Dīnavar was a home of the most famous shaikhs of Ḥadīṭ narrators such as ʿAbū bakr b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan al-Dīnawarī (c. 300/920).⁴⁷

As for the inscription, it is a fine example of Kufic calligraphy combining dryness and softness. Most of its letters were inscribed in similar angled form except for the final *nūn* in the words *al-raḥmān* (line 2) and *yakun* (line 6), in which cases the *nūns* were written with a curved end going upwards and ending in a shape similar to a snake's head with open mouth. The curves of the medial *rāʾ* in the word *al-Dīnawarī* (line 11) and the initial *rāʾ* in the word *raḥim-hā* (line 12) are similar to the curved *nūn* letters. This style of writing the letter *rāʾ* is very rare in general and rarely found on the inscribed tombstones.

It has been noted that most of the shaft and horizontal letters end with hair-like shapes at their heads, some in a form of snake head opening its mouth as shown in the initial *ḥāʾ* in the word *al-raḥmān* (line 2), the word *aḥad* (line 3) the initial *rāʾ* in the word *raḥima-hā* (line 12).

This inscription is characterised with the curved spiral *wāw*, whose its tail ends with three *tašʿīrāt* as in the word *wa-lam* (line 5), which is similar to the letter *wāw* noted in a number of al-Maʿlāh Cemetery inscriptions, such as the inscription no. 249 and no. 347, and with an end similar to an arrow head and not in three *tašʿīrāt* as in this inscription.⁴⁸ As for the other *wāws*, their knots inscribed in a shape similar to the initial *qāf* in the same inscription, such as the *wāw* that in the word *wa-lam* (line 6)

We suggest 'Note the initial *qaf* in the words *qul* (line 3) and *qabr* (line 8) with the knot shape, and the initial *fāʾ* in 'Fatimah (line 8). But when the *fāʾ* is medial or final connected to a preceding letter, it is shown as a circle connected to the line by a thin line, as in the two words *kufiwan* (line 7) and *ḥalaḥ* (line 10).

The inscription has two ornamental floral units, one is over the word *bism*, one of which represents a palmette fan and the other over the letter *mīm* of the word *al-ṣamad* (line 4), a half-palmette fan. The text is flanked on three sides with a simple line, within

⁴⁷ Al-Samʿānī, *al-ʿAnsāb*, II, 531.

⁴⁸ Al-Ḥalīfah, et al, *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 283, 383, nos. 249 and 347.

which are the first seven lines and the remaining lines are outside; on the top of the text there is a small tree with three branches.

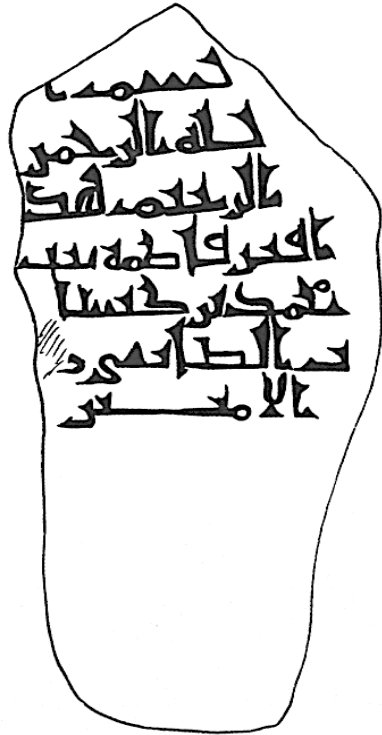
This inscription is very similar to a three of the inscriptions found in al-Ma'lah Cemetery, all of them, inscriptions 194, 249 and 347, in addition to this inscription, date back to the third /ninth century.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Al-Ḥalīfah, et al, *ʿAḥḡār al-Ma'lah al-Šāhidiyyah*, 227, 283, 383, nos. 194, 249 and 347.

No. 47 / Museum no. 469



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt, weather beaten so that some of its letters are unclear.

Seven lines, incised, simple Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad b. Kasbān al-Ṭāʾifī

Museum no.469, ^o*Aḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh*, (plate no. 47ab).

Measurements: 18 x 24 cms.

Height of ^o*alif*: 4 cms.

Text

1. بسم ا
2. لله الرحمن

3. الرحيم. هذ
 4. ا قبر فاطمة بنت
 5. محمد بن كسبا
 6. ن الطائفي م-[ن]
 7. الامنين

Translation

1. In the Name of
2. God, the Lord of Mercy,
3. the Giver of Mercy. This is
4. the tomb of Fāṭimah bint
5. Muḥammad b. Kasbān
6. al-Ṭāʿifī of those who are
7. secure.

Observations

While this inscription has a certain calligraphic quality, it is badly preserved, perhaps due to the effect of the weather, specifically at the top of the stone and on the left side. Nevertheless, it is legible and the weathering did not prevent etc this did not prevent its study within this collection. The importance of its contents lies in the *nisbah* of the deceased Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad b. Kasbān (or Kušnān) al-Ṭāʿifī – al-Ṭāʿif which lies 85km to the east of Mecca. The deceased is like her contemporary, Fāṭimah al-Ġuddiyyah (described earlier in inscription no. 486), in that she is the only person who is associated with al-Ṭāʿif from the hundreds of inscriptions found at al-Maʿlāh Cemetery. However, the *nisbah* al-Taʿifī. Has been found on a number of tombstone inscriptions found at the archaeological sites of al-Sirrayn and ʿAšm, which previously and still belong to the Mecca principality.⁵⁰ Also, a number of notable personalities are attributed with al-Ṭāʿif, as noted by al-Samʿānī.⁵¹ On the other hand, this word al-Ṭāʿifī may be read al-Ṭābiqī, attributed to al-Ṭābiq, a place in Bagdad, Iraq. A narrator

⁵⁰ al-Zaylaʿī, 'The Southern Area', 445, pl. 25, no. 21.

⁵¹ Al-Samʿānī, *al-ʿAnsāb*, IV, 34.

of the Prophet's traditions, Aḥmad b. al-ʿAbbās al-Ṭābiqī, is associated with al-Ṭābiq, according to al-Samʿānī.⁵² However, in the context, it is more likely to be al-Taʿfiʿ.

As for the calligraphy of this inscription, despite the poor quality of the stone, it is good and may be classified as simple Kufic. If one traces its letters, it will be noted that the inscription has been accurately drawn according to the rules of simple Kufic by preserving broadening or flattening at the tops of certain letters. This can be noted at the tops of the shaft letters and on certain terminals of the horizontal letters. Furthermore, some of the improvement can be noted in the way of writing the letter *dāl* in the word *Muḥammad* (line 5), the *ṭāʿ* in the two words *Fāṭimah* (line 4) and *al-Ṭāʿifī* (line 6), and the *mīm* knot, which is inscribed in a round shape and level with the lines wherever it is found in the text.

Also noted in this inscription are the quality and elegance of the *lām-ʿalif*, which is inscribed on a triangular base and therefrom rises as two parallel arms. This letter combination appears similar to the shape of tweezers.

Furthermore, noted is the descending character of the extension letters with the *ʿalif*, slightly below the writing level as in the word *Fāṭimah* (line 4) and the word *al-Ṭāʿifī* (line 6). In addition, the presence of *mašq* (or extending) is noted among certain letters, such as the extension of the letter *nūn* in the word *al-āminīn* in the last line of the text.

This inscription, in its calligraphic features, is similar to inscriptions no. 26 and no. 97 from al-Maʿlāh Cemetery⁵³ and inscriptions no. 9 and no. 19 from the Archaeology and Heritage Museum in Mecca.⁵⁴ All the calligraphic features of these cited inscriptions are dated approximately to the 3rd/9th century, indicating this inscription may be as well.

⁵² Al-Samʿānī, *al-ʿAnsāb*, IV, 25.

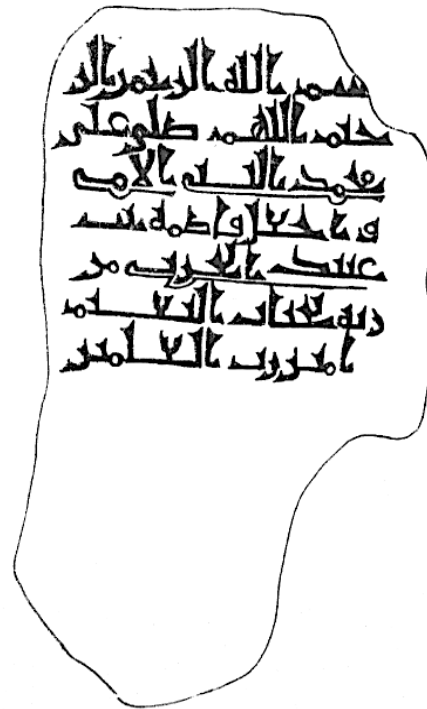
⁵³ Al-Ḥalīfah, et al, *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 55, 126, nos. 26 and 97.

⁵⁴ Al-Ḥārītī, *ʿAḥḡār al-Šāhidīyyah*, 23, 33, nos. 9 and 19.

No. 48 / Museum no. 377



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

7 lines, incised, very clear simple Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: Fāṭimah bint ʿUbayd al-Ḥarbī.

Museum no.377, ʿAḡḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh, (plate no. 48ab).

Measurements: 27 x 28 cms.

Height of ʿalif: 4 cms.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الر
2. حيم. اللهم صلي على

3. محمد النبي الامي
 4. واجعل فاطمة بنت
 5. عبيد الحربي من [و]
 6. رثة جنات النعيم
 7. امين رب العالمين

Translation

1. In the Name of God the Lord of Mercy, the
2. Giver of Mercy. O, God, bless
3. Muḥammad the Prophet
4. and assign Fāṭimah bint
5. °Ubayd al-Ḥarbī among the
6. inheritors of the Gardens of Bliss.
7. Amen. Lord of the Universe.

Note: line 2, *Ṣallī* for *Ṣalli*.

Observations

This inscription belongs to the deceased Fāṭimah bint °Ubayd al-Ḥarbī, who is not of Meccan origins, as evidenced by her *nisbah* al-Ḥarbī, but of immigrant origins from outside of Mecca. Her family *nisbah* may be associated with a district of Bagdad, based on al-Sam°ānī's attribution of it to many religious scholars and famous prophet's traditions narrators.⁵⁵ Among the most famous of those scholars who bear this (*nisbah*) is °Abū °Ishāq b. °Ishāq b. °Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī, who died in 285/898, and the author of the important *Kitāb al-Manāsik wa-°Amākin Ṭuruq al-Ḥaġġ*.⁵⁶

This *nisbah* of Fāṭimah may be associated with the well-known Ḥarb tribe, a Qaḥṭānī Yemeni tribe, a clan of the Hawlan tribe that migrated from Ṣa°dah in 131/748-749. This tribe settled around Medina and has many clans in Hejaz and Najd to this day.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Al-Sam°ānī, *al-°Ansāb*, II, 197–198.

⁵⁶ Cf. the introduction of the book by its editor and publisher Ḥamad al-Ġāsir, 15; see also al-Bagdādī, *Tārīḥ Bagdādī*, VI, 28.

⁵⁷ Al-Bilādī, *Nasab Ḥarb*, 14.

The writing of this inscription is accurate and clear. Such due care has been exercised on it to the extent that its letters and words are obvious to those who see it from a distance. It is a model of the script of the 3rd/9th century, specifically in Mecca and in Hijaz in general.

Almost all the words of the text are level on their respective lines; however, the word *ʿubayd* (line 5) is written slightly higher than the level of the line, and the extension of the *dāl* in *ʿubayd* is noticeably higher than its counterpart in the word *Muḥammad* (line 3). *Masq* is noted on the *nūn* in the word *al-nabī* (line 3), the *mīm* in the word *al-ʿummī* (line 3), and the *ʿayn* in the words *al-naʿīm* (line 6) and *al-ʿāminīn* (line 7).

Further, the writing on this tombstone is characterised by an abundance of the retreating *yāʾ*, ‘retreating’ in that it surrounds the same word, or several words after it. Examples of the retreating *yāʾ* in this text include the two words *al-nabī* and *al-ʿummī* (line 3) and the word *al-ḥarbī* (line 5). This retreating *yāʾ* is most commonly found in the inscriptions from the 3rd/9th century, including from the site of ʿAšm, inscriptions nos. 14–16, nos. 20–21 and no. 31 – the latter dated in 233/847-848.⁵⁸

The open *ʿayn* in this inscription is clearly visible and some have more expansion than the others, as can be observed in the word *ʾiḡʿal* (line 4), followed by the opening expansion that appears in the word *al-naʿīm* (line 6) and the word *al-ʿāminīn* (line 7).

This inscription is not free from the calligraphic characteristics that have repeatedly been referred to in previous inscriptions (and will continue to be referred to in subsequent inscriptions), such as flattening of the tops of the shaft letters and some ends of the horizontal letters in many places of the inscribed text.

In many of its calligraphic characteristics, this inscription resembles similar inscriptions, including those from al-Maʿlāh Cemetery, inscription nos. 13, 14, 64, 107,⁵⁹ and from the Museum of Antiquities and Heritage in Mecca, inscriptions no. 29 and no. 55 (dated 244/858.)⁶⁰ The dating of the latter leads to the opinion that the period of the work of this tombstone dates back to the 3rd/9th century.

⁵⁸ Al-Faqīh, *Miḥlāf ʿAšm*, 215–216, 219–220, 229, nos. 15–16, 20–21, 31.

⁵⁹ Al-Ḥalīfah et al, *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 42–43, 93, 137, nos. 13–14, 64 and 107.

⁶⁰ Al-Ḥārītī, *ʿAḥḡār Šāhidīyyah*, 43–68, nos. 29–55.

No. 49 / Museum no. 215

**Description**

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

10 lines, simple Kufic. incised simple Kufic with *mihrāb*-shaped border.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: Ḥabbūbah bint Mḥammād al-Kūfi.

Museum no. 215, *ʿAḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh*, (plate no. 49ab).

Measurements: 17 x 25 cms.

Height of *ʿalif*: 3 cms.

Text

1. بسم
2. الله الرحمن الرحيم
3. اللهم صل على
4. على محمد النبي
5. المصطفى
6. واجعل حبوبة
7. ابنت حماد ا
8. لكوفي من الامنين
9. برحمتك امين
10. رب العالمين

Translation

1. In the Name of
2. God the Lord of Mercy, the
3. Giver of Mercy. O, God, bless
4. Muḥammad the Prophet
5. the chosen one
6. and assign Ḥabbūbah
7. bint Ḥammād
8. al-Kūfi among those who are secure
9. with your Mercy. Amen
10. Lord of the Universe.

Note: line 3, *Ṣalli* for *Ṣallī*.

Observations

This inscription belongs to the deceased Ḥabbūbah bint Ḥammād al-Kūfi. The *nisbah* is associated with the famous town of Kufa in Iraq, which was mentioned earlier as being founded during the reign of the Caliph ʿUmar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb in 17/638y.

Kufa is one of the most famous centres of learning. Regarding the scholars and narrators of the prophet's traditions attributed to Al-Kūfah, al-Samʿānī says 'they have

fame, we dispense of mentioning them due to their fame'.⁶¹ Among those scholars who are attributed to al-Kūfah is ʿAḥmad b. ʿAṭam al-Kūfī, the author of the well-known history *al-Futūḥ*.⁶²

Thus, it is clear that the deceased Ḥabbūbah was not originally from Mecca. She may have belonged to a family that migrated from al-Kūfah to Mecca, where she established residence. The family must have become part of the population of Mecca.

As for the writing on the tombstone, it is a simple Kufic type. However, it is inscribed in the common style of Hijaz. This is especially true in the formation of the retreating *yāʿ*, which at the beginning of its turn takes a decorative form resembling clover leaves. The tail of the retreating *yāʿ* extends partially or entirely under the words that precede it, such as the word *ṣallā* (line 3), the two words *ʿalā* and *al-nabī* (line 4) and the word *al-muṣṭafā* (line 5). This image of the retreating *yāʿ* is common in a number of similar inscriptions in the tombs of the Islamic Miḥlaf of ʿAṣm, including inscription no. 34, dated 236/850-851,⁶³ and inscription nos. 45 and 55, which are not dated but their calligraphic characteristics associate them with inscription no. 34.⁶⁴ This retreating form also appears on a number of inscriptions of al-Maʿlāh Cemetery in Mecca, including inscription nos. 312, 250, 232, 214 and 195, all dating to the 3rd/9th century,⁶⁵ and it clearly appears in the inscription of Mubārak al-Makkī, which is preserved at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo and dated Ğumādā II 243/858.⁶⁶

In addition, this inscription is closely related to those inscriptions belonging to calligraphic school of the scribe ʿAḥmad b. ʿIṣḥāq, and it may have been worked by him. The similarity between it and the two inscriptions signed in his name – inscription nos. 220 and 230 – is very close, even in the form of the radiant *mīm*, appearing like a

⁶¹ Al-Samʿānī, *al-ʿAnsāb*, V, 109; see also Yāqūt, *Muḡam al-Buldān*, IV, 490–494.

⁶² Yāqūt, *Muḡam al-Buldān*, I, 308; Al-Zirikī, *al-ʿAlām*, I, 96.

⁶³ al-Faqīh, *Miḥlaf ʿAṣm*, 231, 238, and 245, nos. 34, 45 and 55.

⁶⁴ al-Faqīh, *Miḥlaf ʿAṣm*, 231, no. 34.

⁶⁵ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *Aḡḡār al-Maʿlāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 228, 247, 266, 284, and 347, nos. 195, 214, 232, 250 and 312.

⁶⁶ Ğumʿah, *Dirāsah Fī Taṭawwūr al-Kitābāt al-Kūfīyyah*, 170, no. 19.

sunflower flower, as in the word *al-muṣṭafā* (line 5). Even the knot of the letter *fā*³ in the same word, *al-muṣṭafā*, is very similar to the radiant sunflower.⁶⁷

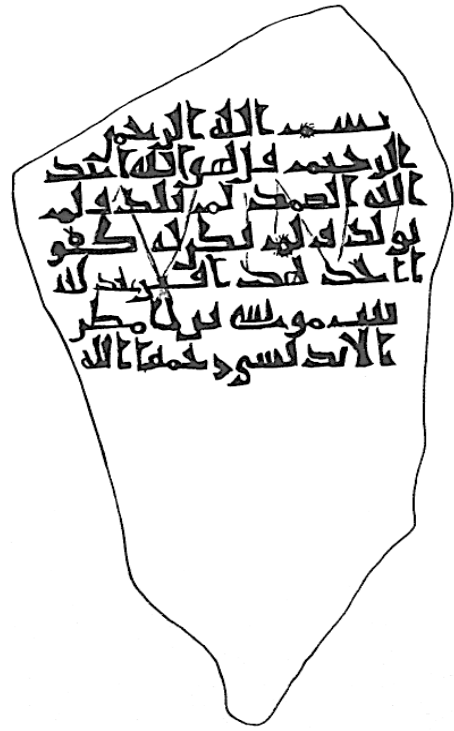
The inscription is enclosed on three sides by a simple line in a form of a pointed niche (*miḥrāb*) above, and the word *b-ism* (line 1) is inscribed separately under the curvature of the pointed niche. This is a characteristic that is observed in many of the Hijazi inscriptions that we have referred to, including in the inscription of Fāṭimah al-Ġudīyyah, no. 45, above. All of the referenced inscriptions are dated to the 3rd/9th Century, which leads to the opinion that this inscription belongs to the same century.

⁶⁷ Cf. al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, nos. 253–264.

No. 50 / Museum no. 325



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt. The text on this stone has been exposed to tampering, which have left impact marks on some of the letters.

7 lines, incised, simple Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: Ḥadīḡah bint Mūsā b. °Abī Maṭar al-°Andalusī.

Museum no. 325, °Aḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh, (plate no. 50ab).

Measurements: 20 x 25 cms.

Height of °alif: 3 cms.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن
2. الرحيم. قل هو الله أحد
3. الله الصمد. لم يلد ولم
4. يولد. ولم يكن له كفو
5. احد. هذا قبر خديجة
6. بنت موسى بن ابي مطر
7. الاندلسي رحمها الله

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy,
2. the Giver of Mercy. Say, He is God, the One
3. God the Eternal, He begot no one nor was
4. He begotten. No one is
5. Comparable to Him. This is the tomb of Ḥadīḡah
6. bint Mūsā b. °Abī Maṭar
7. al-°Andalusī. May God have Mercy upon her.

Line 2–4 are from Quran 112: 1–4 (*Sūrat al-°Ihlās*).

Observations

This inscription belongs to the deceased Ḥadīḡah bint Mūsā b. °Abī Maṭar al-°Andalusī. The *nisbah* is associated with al-Andalus (Andalusia), known today within the borders of the Kingdom of Spain. It was ruled by Muslims (711–1492 AD), and the capital was the historic city Cordoba. A large group of scholars, imams and those well-versed in various branches of knowledge came from Andalusia.⁶⁸ The deceased's family must have migrated to Mecca, settled there, and became part of its population.

This tombstone is important for those who study the society of Mecca of that time because of the possibility that the family of the deceased woman might have migrated from al-Andalus. However, unfortunately, this tombstone has been tampered with and

⁶⁸ Al-Sam°ānī, *al-°Ansāb*, I, 218; Yāqūt, *Mu°ḡam al-Buldān*, I, 262–264.

is distorted, perhaps by a sharp instrument or by something similar with a pointed edge. When the stone was tampered with its surface was defaced in a wavy pattern covering a large part of the mid-section. Fortunately, however, the engraved text can easily be read.

Reflecting on the style, it is clear that it is very similar to those inscriptions that belong to the calligraphic school of the Meccan scribe ʿAḥmad b. ʿIshāq. Examples from his school have been referred to, particularly regarding the sunflower-like form of the *mīm* observed in the words *b-ism* (line 1) and *lām* (line 4).

Also, the scribe of this inscription used a style similar to the retreating *yāʿ* when inscribing the *ʿalif maqṣūrah*. In the word *mūsā* (line 6), the *ʿalif maqṣūrah* retreats backward but without the clover flower-like decoration seen in inscription no. 8 above, and without extending it under the adjacent words on the right.

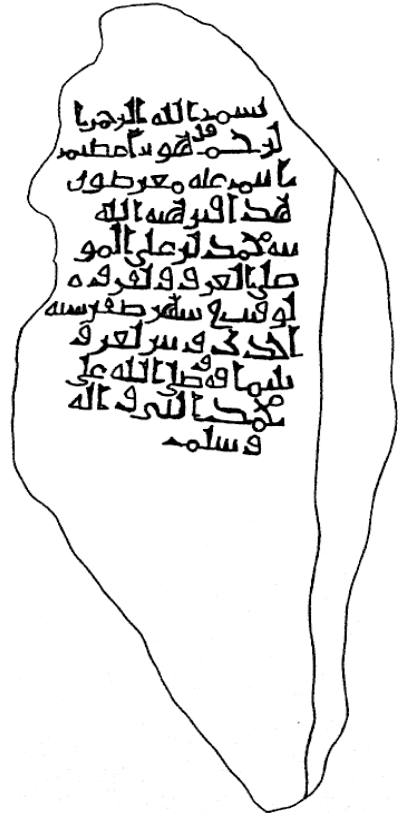
The rest of the letters are similar to familiar inscriptions of the 3rd/9th century. There is little else noteworthy except for the final *ʿalif* in the word *raḥima-hā* (line 7) and the initial *ʿalif* in the word *Allāh* (same line), in which both tops are clearly cracked and in a way that makes them appear as primitive foliation. This makes the inscription similar to the inscriptions attributed to the school of the inscribe ʿAḥmad b. ʿIshāq, which dates back to the 3rd/9th century.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Cf. al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 254–264.

No. 51 / Museum no. 44



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma'ālāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt. Broken left side and weather-beaten.

11 lines, incised. Fine, simple Kufic. Dated in the month of Ṣafar 371/August 983.

Deceased Name: Hibat Allāh bint Muḥammad b. °Alī al-Mawṣilī, known as Farwah.

Museum no.44, °Aḡār al-Ma'ālāh, (plate no. 51ab).

Measurements: 21 x 35 cms.

Height of °alif: 3 cms.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن ا
2. لرحيم. قل هو نبا عظيم

3. انتم عنه معرضون
4. هذا قبر هبة الله ا
5. بنة محمد بن علي المو
6. صلي المعروف بفروة
7. توفيت في شهر صفر سنة
8. احدى وسبعين و
9. ثلثما[نة] و صلى الله على
10. محمد النبي واله
11. وسلم

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy,
2. the Giver of Mercy. Say, this message is a mighty one,
3. yet you ignore it.
4. This is the tomb of Hibat Allāh
5. ibnat Muḥammad b. °Alī
6. al-Mawṣilī, known as Farwah.
7. She passed away in the month of Ṣafar of the year
8. 371 [August 983].
9. May God bless
10. Muḥammad the Prophet and his family
11. and grant them peace.

Line 2–3 are from Quran 38: 67–68 (*Sūrat Ṣād*).

Observations

This tombstone belongs to Hibit Allāh bint Muḥammad b. °Alī al-Muṣilī, known as Farwah. It is clear that she is not of Meccan origin, but originally from Mosul (al-Mawṣilī), known today in northern Iraq, to which many artistic notables are attributed, as al-Sam°ānī mentions.⁷⁰ Her family may have migrated to Mecca and settled there.

Although this inscription is nearly a century or later than the previous examples of the 3rd/9th-century inscriptions, it is of less good quality. This is not too surprising since

⁷⁰ Al-Sam°ānī, *al-°Ansāb*, V, 408–408; Yāqūt, *Mu°ğam al-Buldān*, V, 223–224.

the 3rd/9th century was a golden age of Kufic inscriptions. Moreover, the scribe who carried out this inscription may have lacked skill in his profession, as evidenced by the following:

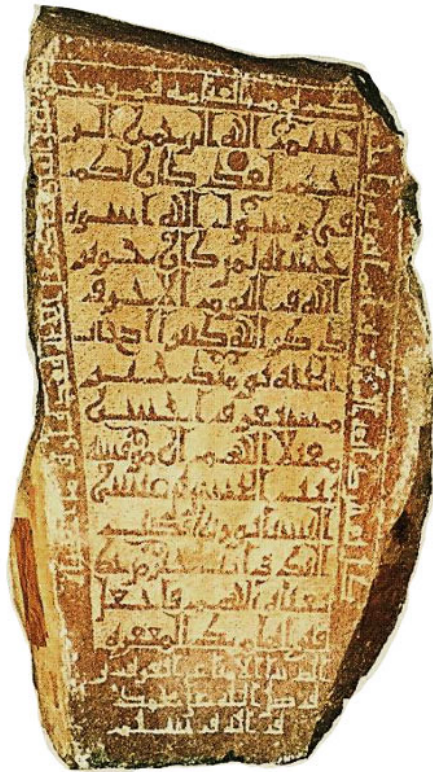
1. The lack of justification at the end of the lines.
2. The apparent urgency of the execution, as evidenced by the omission of some words and letters, which seem to have been corrected later by inscribing them over the lines from which they were omitted. Examples include the omission of the word *qul* (line 2) and the omission of the conjunction *wāw* that precedes the word *ṣallā* (line 9). It seems that the scribe forgot to write the base of the *hamzah* and the closed *tāʾ* in the word *talātumiʿah* (line 9).
3. The omission of the *mīm* from the word *al-maʿrūf* (line 6).
4. The letter *sīn* was not connected with the rest of the letters in the word *sabʿīn* (line 8).

In this inscription, it is noted that the elongation of the initial and middle *hāʾ* is equal in length to the *lām ʿalif* in all lines, as in the word *huwa* (line 2), the two words *hāzā* and *hibah* (line 4) and the word *šahr* (line 7). This *hāʾ* in the last word contains a simple decoration consisting of three blisters. They appear like the beginning of half a palmetto fan, but not well done. It is also noted that the retreating *yāʾ* in the word *fi* (line 7) is nothing more than a thin line broken at a right angle on the right.

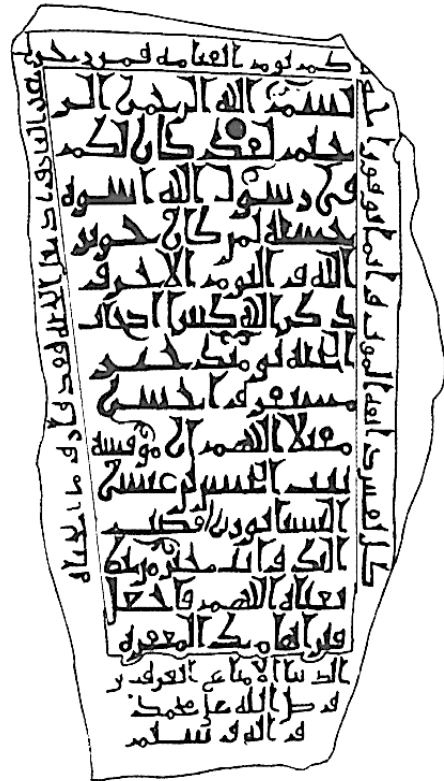
This inscription resembles another inscription from al-Sirrayn cemetery, dated 379/990⁷¹ (eight years after this inscription). The difference is that the letters and words of the al-Sirrayn inscription are and legible not crowded, while the letters and words in this inscription are thin, dwarfed and crowded.

⁷¹ al-Zaylaʿī, 'The Southern Area', 451, pl. 31, no. 46.

No. 52 / Museum no. 346a



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Contains 14 lines carved in relief + 6 incised lines of floriated Kufic.

No date, probably 4th/10th century.

Deceased Name: Mūqasah bint al-Ḥasan b. ʿIsā al-Nisāburiyyah

Museum no. 346a, *ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh*, (plate no. 52ab).

Measurements: not measured.

Height of *ʿalif*: not measured.

Text

Frame text (right, top, left, then bottom)

1. كل نفس ذائقة الموت وانما توفون اجور
2. كم يوم القيامة فمن زحزح
3. عن النار وادخل الجنة فقد فاز وما الحياة
4. الدنيا الا متاع الغرور
5. وصلى الله على محمد
6. واله وسلم

Main text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الر
2. حيم. لقد كان لكم
3. في رسول الله اسوة
4. حسنة لمن كان جوير
5. الله واليوم الاخر و
6. ذكر الله كثيرا. أصحاب
7. الجنة يومئذ خير
8. مستقرا واحسن
9. مقبلا. اللهم ان موقسة
10. بنت الحسن بن عيسى
11. النيسا بورية افضت
12. اليك وانت خير من خط
13. لقياه. اللهم فاجعل
14. قبرها منك المغفرة

Translation

Frame text (right, top, left, then bottom)

1. Every person will taste death and you will be paid in full only
2. on the day of Resurrection. Whoever is pushed away
3. from the fire and admitted to the Garden will have triumphed. The present world is
4. only an illusory pleasure.
5. May God bless Muḥammad,

6. his family and grant them. Peace.

Main text

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy,
2. the Giver of Mercy. The Messenger of God
3. is an excellent model for those of
4. you who put your hope in
5. God and the last day and
6. Remember Him often. The companions in
7. the Garden will have a better home on
8. that day and a fairer
9. place to rest. O, God this is Mūqasah
10. bint al-Ḥasan b. ʿIsā
11. al-Naysābūriyyah has gone
12. to You and You are the best One to decide
13. Your meeting. O, God, make her
14. meeting You forgiveness.

In the main text: line 2–9, Quran, *Sūrat al-ʿAḥzāb*, 33:21; *Sūrat al-Furqān*, 25:24.

Out of the main text: line 1–3, Quran, *Sūrat Āl-ʿImrān*, 2:185.

Note: *Ġuwayr* for *yargū* in line 4 and *Qubrāhā* for *Qab-hā* in line 14.

Observations

This tombstone belongs to the deceased woman Mūqasah bint al-Ḥasan b. ʿIsā al-Nīsābūriyyah (masculine: al-Nīsābūrī). No similar name has been found in the Arab sources as attested in no. 44 above and to the best of knowledge of the researcher. Her *nisbah* is associated with Nīsāpūr, which as described earlier, was a city in Ḥurāsān, known today in Iran. Personalities associated with it are huge in number, so much so that al-Samʿānī states that they are incalculable. It is stated that al-Ḥākīm ʿAbū ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥāfiẓ has compiled the history of its scholars in eight huge volumes.⁷²

⁷²Al-Samʿānī, *al-ʿAnsāb*, V, 550–551; Yāqūt, *Muġam al-Buldān*, V, 331–333.

This inscription was made in Kufic form carved in the relief, except for the frame, which was made in the style of incised simple Kufic. Its words and letters are clear, obvious and uncrowded, and the only fault or defect was that the scribe was unfocused and misread or misspelled some words. Examples of this include the words *ḡuwayr* (line 3) instead of *yarḡū* and the word *qrābāhā* (line 14) instead of *qabru-hā*.

Otherwise, this inscription is a beautiful one. It is characterised by the combination of the dryness and the softness that is evident in many of its letters, including the letter *nūn*, which is inscribed in two forms. The first form is engraved with a tail extending to the top and then with a straight end to the left, with a slight foliation at its end, such as the letter *nūn* in the word *al-rahmān* (line 1), the word *kāna* (twice, in lines 2 and 4), the word *ʿaḥsan* (line 8) and the word *inna* (line 9). In the same form, we note the final *yāʾ*, as in the words *fī* (line 3) and *ʿisā* (line 10).

The second form of the final *nūn* is inscribed at a right angle, which is the traditional form in Kufic calligraphy. Examples of the right angle *nūn* is the word *li-man* (line 4) and the word *mīn* (line 4), compare the right angle *nūn* form, the *lām* as in the word *rasūl* (line 3), and the word *ʿiḡʿal* (line 13).

The inscription retains the round *mīm*, and the roundness is also observed in two other letters, the medial *qāf* and *fāʾ*, such as in the words *laqad* (line 2), *mustaqarran* (line 8), *maqilā* (line 9) and *al-maḡfirah* (line 14). The initial *fāʾ* and *qāf* are similar to the initial *wāw*, and this can be observed within the text.

The text retains some floral decorations, some in the form of palmette fans, including those above the *mīm* in the word *b-ism* (line 1), the *wāw* in the word *Rasūl* (line 3), the base of the *hamzah* in the word *yawmaʿidīn* (line 7), the *mīm* in the word *Mūqasah* (line 9), and the *yāʾ* in the word *ḥayr* (line 12).

The text, which is carved in relief, is surrounded on three sides by a strip containing a Quranic text of the verse no. 185 of *āl-Umrān*, as mentioned earlier.

This inscription resembles a number of similar inscriptions, including that from al-Maʿlāh Cemetery, inscription no. 365, dated 319/931, and inscription no. 394, dated 312/924, as well as other undated inscriptions. These undated inscriptions may date

approximately to the same period during which this inscription was inscribed, including the inscriptions no. 473, no. 493, and no. 511.⁷³

This inscription currently under study is similar to the inscriptions of al-Sirrayn, nos. 32, 33, 34 and 35, the first of which is dated 331/943.⁷⁴ It is also similar to the inscriptions of Dahlak Island, inscription no. uv1, which is dated 326/938, and the inscription no. uv24, also dated 322/934.⁷⁵ This leads to the opinion that this inscription dates back to the first half of the 4th/10th century.

⁷³ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 401, 431, 518, 538 and 557, nos. 365, 394, 473, 493 and 511.

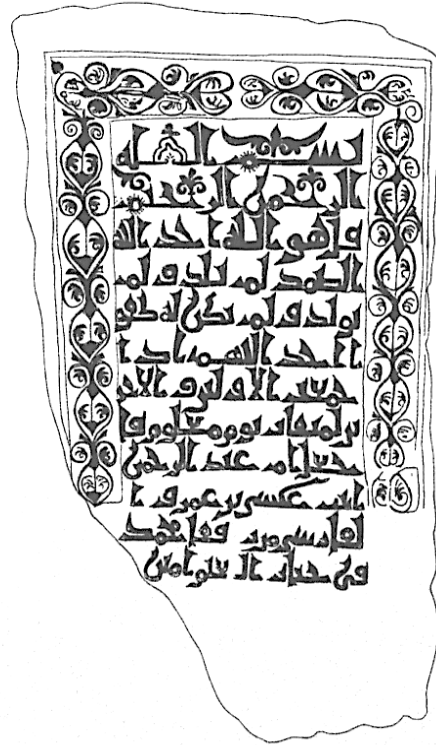
⁷⁴ Al-Zaylaʿī, 'The Southern Area', 447–448, Pls. 27–28, nos. 32–35.

⁷⁵ Oman, *La Necropoli*, III, 4, 41, nos. u1, uv24.

No. 53 / Museum no. 155



A



B

Description

Tombstone of nearly rectangular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt, it has got small fracture and broken lower left side.

12 lines, incised, simple Kufic with elaborate floral motifs.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: °Umm °Abd al-Raḥmān bint °Īsā b. °Amr al-Fārisī.

Museum no.155, °Aḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh, (plate no. 53ab).

Measurements: 27 x 52 cms.

Height of °alif: 4 cms.

Text

1. بسم الله
2. الرحمن الرحيم

3. قل هو الله احد الله
4. الصمد لم يلد ولم
5. يولد ولم يكن له كفو
6. احد. اللهم اذا
7. جمعت الاولين والآخر
8. بين لميقات يوم معلوم فا
9. جعل ام عبد الرحمن
10. ابنت عيسى بن عمرو
11. الفارسي من رفقا محمد
12. في جنات النعيم. امين

Translation

1. In the Name of God
2. the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.
3. Say, He is God, the One, God
4. the Eternal, He begot no one nor
5. was He begotten. No one is comparable
6. to Him. O, God if
7. you gather together the first and the
8. last for a day determined upon,
9. include °Umm °Abd al-Raḥmān
10. bint °Īsā b. °Amr
11. al-Fārisī to be among the companions of Muḥammad [the Prophet]
12. in the Gardens of Bliss. Amen
13. Line 3–6 are from Quran 112: 1–4 (*Sūrat al-°Iḥlās*).

Observations

This tombstone belongs to the deceased woman °Umm °Abd al-Raḥmān bint °Īsā b. °Amr al-Fārisī, and she is not defined by her name in this tombstone, but is defined by her *kunya* °Umm °Abd al-Raḥmān, (line9), she is of Persian origin according to her *nisbah al-fārsī* (line11), which is given to those from Persia, then subject to the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad at the time this tombstone was written, and throughout

its Islamic history many well-known scholars are attributed to it in every field of human knowledge.⁷⁶

As for the inscription, it is one of the most beautiful inscriptions in this collection, executed in foliated Kufic, and great care has been taken in its creation, both in the calligraphy and the decoration. It is of great aesthetic impact.

Those who reflect on the characteristics of this inscription will realise beyond any doubt, that it is from the calligraphic school of ʿAḥmad b. ʿIshāq, represented by inscriptions no. 230 and no. 220 of the inscriptions of al-Maʿlāh Cemetery, referred to earlier, where the name of this calligrapher or scribe appear on the side of each.

The influence of this school is evident in the form of the letter *mīm*, which is written with a wide know, tightly round, with a small point at its centre, so that what emerges from it looks like the rays of a sunflower which can be noted in the word *b-ism* (line1), and the two words *al-raḥmān al-raḥīm* (line2). But in the following lines, the *mīm* node appears broadened and tightly round, but without that little lines that make it look like sun rays.

The influences of the ʿAḥmad b. ʿIshāq school also appear in the form of the medial *ʿayn*, which is open, but in the form of a cup as in the word *maʿlūm* (line8) and the word *igʿal* (line9), which differs from the open *ʿayn* in the other *igʿal* (line7) which, is not in the form of a cup like previous examples.

Note that the same applies to the *lām ʿalif*, which is in a form of a cup in the word *al-awwalīn* (line7) and in the word *al-ʿāḥirīn* in the same line is in the form of a brazier.

In this inscription, we note the use of extending, as in the letter *sīn*, on which is based a decoration in the form of a palmette fan, as in the word *b-ism* (line 1), as well as the word *allāh* in the same line in which the extending takes the form of a three-lobed arch above a small five-branch bush. Compare this to another three-branch bush based on the two letters of the *ḥāʾ* in the two words *al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* (line 2) in addition to another decorative element in the form of a half-palmette fan emanating from the letter *ḥāʾ* in the word *al-raḥīm* in the same line. The text is surrounded on three sides by a decorative bar consisting of two small double lines from the outside, and a small single

⁷⁶ Al-Samʿānī, *al-ʿAnsāb*, IV, 332–333; Yāqūt, *Muḡam al-Buldān*, IV, 226–228.

line from within, and between them are innovative decorations of recurrent cup forms, within which are palmette and half-palmette fans, some of which are facing each other, and some are back-to-back.

This inscription shares some of its calligraphic and decorative features with inscriptions attributed to the ʿAḥmad b. ʿIshāq School, inscriptions nos. 20- 23, 27,31 from Mecca,⁷⁷ inscriptions nos. 15, 17-18 of the inscriptions of the Islamic City of ʿAšm, the first of which is dated 362/972-973,⁷⁸ and the inscriptions of Mubārak al-Makkī preserved at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, dated 243/858-859,⁷⁹ all of which leads to the belief that this inscription dates back to the 3rd/9th century.

⁷⁷ Al-Zahrānī, *Kitābāt Islāmiyyah*, 514–517, 521, 525, nos. 20–23ab, 27ab and 31ab.

⁷⁸ al-Zaylaʿī, ‘The Southern Area’, 443, 446–447, pls. 23–24, 26–27, nos. 15, 17–18, 27 and 31.

⁷⁹ Ğumʿah, *Dirāsah fī Taṭawwur al-Kitābāt al-Kūfiyyah*, 169-175, nos. 19–21, pls. 13 and 14; al-Fiʿr, *Taṭawwur al-Kitābāt wa-ʿl-Nuqūš*, 392–393, pls. 37–39.

No. 54 / Museum no. 3

**Description**

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace -, Jeddah.

Basalt and in good condition.

Eight lines, incised, and written in simple Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: ʾUmm ʾAbū Yaḥyā Kulṭūm bint Saʿīd al-ʿĀzibī.

Museum no. 3, ʾAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh (plate no. 54ab).

Measurements: 18 x 30 cm.

Height of ʾalif: 4.5 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله
2. الرحمن الرحيم
3. اللهم صلى على
4. محمد النبي واجعل
5. ام ابو يحيي كلثم
6. ابنت سعيد ا
7. لعازبي من الا
8. منين

Translation

1. In the Name of God,
2. the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.
3. O God, bless
4. Muḥammad, the Prophet, and assign
5. °Umm °Abū Yaḥyā Kulṭūm
6. ibnat Sa°īd
7. al-°Āzibī among those
8. who are secure.

Note: *ṣallī* line 3 and °Abū line 5.

Observations

This inscription is attributed to °Umm °Abū Yaḥyā Kulṭūm bint Sa°īd Al-°Āzibī, who is associated with a place called °Āzib. °Āzib is a port on the east coast of the Red Sea, within the emirate of Ḥalī, located about 400 km south of Mecca. °Āzib is located at the estuary of Wādī Ḥalī in Tihāmah. Wādī Ḥalī had strong a relationship with Mecca because Mecca relied on its export of many agricultural crops. An outcome of this relationship is the presence of Ḥalawīs who settled in Mecca and died there.⁸⁰ Perhaps the inscription's owner was a member of those families who migrated from Ḥalī and

⁸⁰ Al-Fāsī, *Al-°Iqd al-Ṭamīn*, II, 227–228; III, 20 and 185; Al-Maqrīzī, *°Iḡāṭat al-°Ummah*, 34–35; for more information about the Emirate of Ḥalī, see al-Zayla'i, 'Banū Ḥarām Ḥukkām Ḥalī', 101–129.

settled in Mecca. No matter how she arrived in Mecca, she lived there until she died and was buried in its famous al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

The writing of this inscription is characterised by accuracy and clarity. It is inscribed exactly according to the rules of simple Kufic calligraphy, and there is no foliation or floriation attached to its bare letters. The scribe focused on the aesthetics of the letters in each word of this inscription so that they are balanced and consistent in their rise and descent from the line level.

With a closer look at some of the words and letters in this inscription, the reader will note that the second *lāms* in the words *Allāh* (line 1) and *Allāhuma* (line 3) are shorter in length than the first *lāms* of the same words. Further, these second *lāms* have a slight slope towards the left, bending over the shaft of the *hāʿs* attached to them. This characteristic is seen in the preceding texts of this collection – nos. 21, 22, 23, 25 and 39, described above.

This inscription preserves the form of the open *ʿayn*, which appears like a goblet. This form is written similar to the *ʿayn* found in some of the inscriptions discovered in ^ʿAšm, located about 300 km south of Mecca. These similar inscriptions include those belonging to the ^ʿAḥmad al-Ḥaffār School in ^ʿAšm, such as inscription no. 15, dated 262/875–876,⁸¹ and the Maktabat al-Malik Fahd collection, such as inscription no. 6, which is undated, but al-Buqumī suggests that it dates to the 3rd/9th century.⁸²

Most noteworthy about the style of writing of this inscription is that all the terminal *nūn* and *yāʿ* letters end with pointed heads, such as in *al-Raḥmān* (line 1), *ṣallā* and *ʿalā* (line 3), *al-Nabī* (line 4), *Yaḥyā* (line 5), *al-ʿAzībī* (line 7), and *al-āminīn* (line 8), whereas the terminal *mīm* letters in the text end with a bevelled or broadened tail in a form similar to the broadening and flattening tops of all shaft letters of this inscription.

It is also worth noting that the initial *yāʿ* in the name *Yaḥyā* (line 5) is inscribed in a small form, fixed atop of the left-adjacent *hāʿ*, and attached to its terminal from above. This characteristic can be observed in a number of inscriptions from the 3rd/9th century, including nos. 293, 297, and 561b from al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.⁸³ Further, this method of

⁸¹ Al-Zayla^ʿī, ‘The Southern Area’, 443, pl. 23, no. 15.

⁸² Al-Buqumī, *Nuqūṣ ʿIslāmiyyah Ṣāḥidiyyah*, 214, no. 6.

⁸³ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh al-Ṣāḥidiyyah*, 302, 328, 610, nos. 293, 297 and 561b.

writing *yā* with *ḥā* may be found in some 4th/10th-century inscriptions, such as in inscription no. 76 from ʿAšm⁸⁴ and inscription no. 26 from the inscriptions of Dahlak Island.⁸⁵

By comparing the calligraphic characteristics of this inscription to the aforementioned similar 3rd/9th-century inscriptions, it is possible to suggest that this inscription dates to the same period. Further support for this opinion comes from comparing this inscription with the following:

1. Inscription no. 16 from al-Maʿlāh Cemetery, memorialising ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Hamdānī;⁸⁶
2. Inscription no. 26 from al-Maʿlāh Cemetery, memorialising Salsabīl, client of ʿAbd al-Karīm;⁸⁷
3. Inscription no. 19 from the Museum of Antiquities and Heritage in Mecca, memorialising Mūsā b. Ḥammād;⁸⁸
4. Inscription no. 39 from the Museum of Antiquities and Heritage in Mecca, memorialising Maryam bint ʿAḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Yūnus.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Al-Faqīh, *Mihlāf ʿAšm*, 264, no. 76. See also al-Ḥuṭaymī, ‘ʿUsrat bani Šaybah’, 110, pl. 4, fig. 4.

⁸⁵ Oman, *La Necropole*, II, 30, no. 20.

⁸⁶ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 45, no. 16.

⁸⁷ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 55, no. 26.

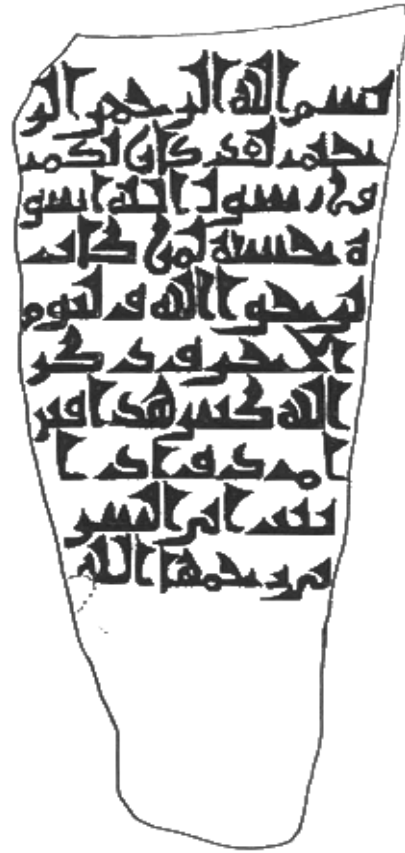
⁸⁸ Al-Ḥārīṭī, *ʿAḥḡār Šāhidīyyah Ġayr Manqūšah*, 33, no. 19.

⁸⁹ Al-Ḥārīṭī, *ʿAḥḡār Šāhidīyyah*, 53, no. 39.

No. 55 / Museum no. 116



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^lāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Ten lines incised elegant Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: °Umm Dā°ūd Ibnat °Abī al-Surtī.

Museum no. 116, °Aḡār al-Ma^lāh (plate no. 55ab).

Measurements: 22 x 36 cm.

Height of °alif: 5 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الر
2. حيم. لقد كان لكم
3. في رسول الله اسو
4. ة حسنة لمن كان
5. يرجوا الله وليوم
6. الاخر، وذكر
7. الله كثير. هذا قبر
8. ام دواد ا
9. بنت ابي السُر
10. تي رحمها الله

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the
2. Giver of Mercy. The Messenger of God is,
3. an excellent model for those of you
4. who put your hope in God and the Last Day
5. and remember
6. Him often. This is the tomb of
7. °Umm Dā°ūd
8. Ibnat °Abī al-Surtī.
9. May God have mercy upon her.

Lines 2–6 are from Quran 33:21 (*Sūrat al-°Aḥzāb*).

Note: *al-yawm* without °*alif* in line 5; *Kaṭīran* for *Kaṭīr* in line 7.

Observations

This inscription is in the name of for °Umm Dā°ūd, the daughter of °Abū al-Surtī. She is not identified in this inscription by her name but by her *kunya*, °Umm Dā°ūd, as is her father, identified by what is believed to be his *nisbah* to the well-known city of Surt on the Mediterranean coast, between Barqah and Tripoli in modern-day Libya.⁹⁰ However, this *nisbah* may also be to Surtah, a town in al-Andalus (the modern-day

⁹⁰ Yāqūt, *Mu°ğam al-Buldān*, III, 206–207.

region of Andalusia, Spain) located to the east of Qurṭubah (the modern-day city of Córdoba, Spain). This *nisbah* is shared with two narrators of the hadith of the Prophet Muḥammad, Qāsim b. ʿAbī Šujāʿ al-Surtī and ʿAbū al-Qāsim ʿAbd Allāh b. Faṭḥ b. ʿAbī Ḥāmid al-Surtī. Unfortunately, their *nisbahs* are cannot be assigned definitely to either. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī states, ‘I do not know whether they are attributed to that in Andalusia or in Africa’.⁹¹

The writing of this inscription is distinguished by the fact that due care was exerted on flattening the letters and deepening their inscription on the surface of the stone. The letters appear clearly, so that it is easy to see and read from a distance, much like the style followed by Hijazi scribes – Meccan scribes in particular.

In this inscription, the method of writing the name *Allāh* is similar to the method mentioned in the inscription no. 54 above, in which the second *lām* is shortened, compared to the first *lām* in the same word, and curves to the left over the shaft of the letter *hāʾ* (lines 1, 5 and 7). Further, its similarity to inscription no. 54 is noted at the end of the reclining letters that end with pointed heads, especially with the letter *rāʾ* in the words *al-Raḥmān* (line 1), *yarġū* (line 5), *al-āḥir* (line 6), and *kaṭīrā* (line 7). This is also seen in the letters *nūn*, as in the word *al-Raḥmān* (line 1), *wāw*, as in the words *rasūl* (line 3) and *yarġū* (line 5), and in the terminal *yāʾ*, as in word ʿ*abī* and words ʿ*Abī* (line 9) and *al-Surtī* (line 10).

It is also noted that the long-shaft letters, i.e. ʿ*alif* and *lām*, and the short-shaft initial letters, e.g. *bāʾ*, are similar throughout this inscription, in that their heads end in an exaggerated or excessive flattening or broadening fashion. This can be seen with the shafts of the initial letter *bāʾ* in word *b-ism* (line 1), the initial letter *hāʾ* in the word *hādā* (line 7) and letter *lām* in *laqad*. These latter two letters and their respective words examples are also quite similar. The *lām* has been extended to the left to rise above the left-adjacent letter *qāf*, much like the shaft of the *hāʾ* in word *hādā*, which has been extended to the left to surround the rest of the letters, appearing as a spiral.

The images in the previous paragraph is noted to be significantly similar to inscription no. 34 (above),⁹² leading to the assessment that they came from the same scribe or that

⁹¹ Yāqūt, *Muʿğam al-Buldān*, III, 207.

⁹² See page 170 of this dissertation.

the scribes for this inscription and inscription no. 34 are from the same scribal school. Additionally note the way of writing the *lām ʿalif*, engraved here on a triangular base with two obtuse arms that form a goblet-like shape.⁹³ Inscription no. 47 from the Museum of Archaeology and Heritage in Mecca, which is dated to 3rd/9th century, also shares similar characteristics to those just described.⁹⁴

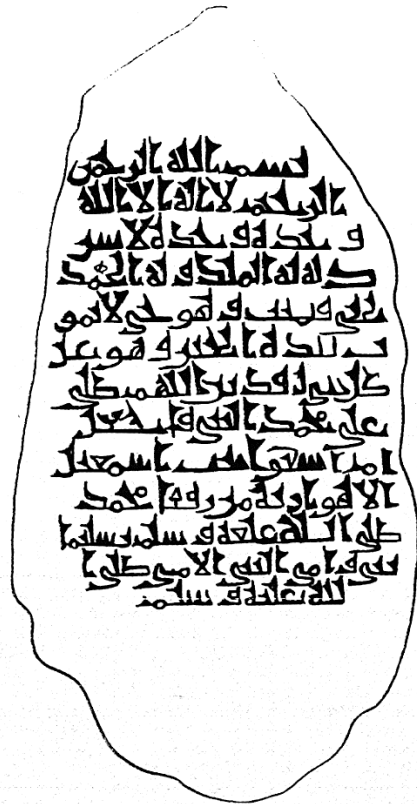
⁹³ Al-Ḥuṭaymī, ‘ʿUsrat banī Šaybah’, p. 111, pl. 5, fig. 5.

⁹⁴ Al-Ḥārīṭī, *ʿAḥḡār Šāhidīyyah*, 61, no. 47.

No. 56 / Museum no. 111



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma'lah Cemetery.

Preserved in Huzam Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Thirteen lines, incised, simple Kufic.

No date, probably 4th/10th century.

Deceased name: °Umm °Ishāq Ibnat °Ismā'īl al-°Ahwāziyyah

Museum no. 111, °Ahḡār al-Ma'lah (plate no. 56ab).

Measurements: 29 x 45 cm.

Height of °alif: 3.5 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن

2. الرحيم. لا اله الا الله
3. وحده وحده لاشر
4. يك له له الملك وله الحمد
5. يحيي ويميت وهو حي لايمو
6. ت بيده الخير وهو على
7. كل شي قدير. اللهم صلي
8. على محمد النبي واجعل
9. ام اسحق ابنت اسمعيل
10. الالهوازية من رفقا محمد
11. صلى الله عليه وسلم تسليما
12. بابي وامي النبي الامي صلى ا
13. الله عليه وسلم

Translation

1. In the Name of God the Lord of Mercy.
2. the Giver of Mercy, there is no God but Allāh,
3. Alone, no partner
4. has He. To Him belongs Dominion and to Him belongs praise.
5. He who gives life and death, and He who lives and dies not.
6. And in His hand, all good, and He has
7. Power over all things. O God, bless
8. Muḥammad the Prophet and assign
9. Umm ʿIshāq bint ʿIsmāʿīl
10. Al-ʿAhwāziyyah to be among the companions of Muḥammad,
11. May God bless him and grant him peace.
12. I am sacrificing by my father and my mother for the sake of the unlettered
Prophet, may God bless
13. him and grant him peace.

Note: the repeated word *waḥda-hu waḥda-hu* in line 3; *ṣallī* for *ṣall* in line 7.

Observations

This tombstone belongs to ʿUmm ʿIshāq bint Ismāʿīl al-ʿAhwāziyyah, which, like inscription no. 55, does not present the first name of the deceased but shows only her

kunyah, °Umm °Ishāq. It seems that °Umm °Ishāq and her father, Ismā‘īl, were not important or famous Meccans since the available sources do not include a biography of either of them. °Umm °Ishāq’s *nisbah*, al-°Ahwāziyyah (masculine: al-°Ahwāzī), reveals that her origins are from al-°Ahwāz, which is a town in modern-day Khuzestan province in western Iran, near Basra in southern Iraq. Many famous scholars have been attributed to al-°Ahwāz, including al-Ḍahḥāk b. Zayd al-°Ahwāzī and °Abū al-Tayyib Muḥammad b. °Aḥmad b. Mūsā b. Hārūn b. al-Ṣalt al-°Ahwāzī (d. 352/963), both of whom were narrators of the Prophet’s tradition.⁹⁵ °Umm °Ishāq’s father, or perhaps one of her grandfathers, may have immigrated to Mecca and integrated into Meccan society.

This inscription is not as clear as most of those previously discussed dating from the 3rd/9th century, nor is it similar in terms of the quality of writing, and letters or maintaining of spaces between words; however, it is noted that its scribe included a long list of supplications, which he crammed into a narrow area of the stone surface so that the letters are weak and tiny. The words of the supplication are almost contiguous because of the narrow spacing between them. This and other inscriptions from the 4th/10th century, from which many inscriptions have come and will be discussed shortly, were not inscribed with the same level of quality characterised in the 3rd/9th century inscriptions discussed earlier.

Perhaps the most important thing to note in this inscription is that the writing of the terminal *yā’* does not follow the general rule of Kufic calligraphy. It has been inscribed with a curve, beginning from the letter attached to it, and then slopes downwards, forming an end that is difficult to categorise with known Kufic calligraphic forms.

This form of the *yā’* is a feature shared with other 4th/10th century inscriptions, including:

1. Inscription no. 44 from al-Ma‘lāh Cemetery, dated Ṣafar 371/August 981;⁹⁶
2. Inscription no. 540, which is not dated but is estimated to be from the 4th/10th century by the Antiquities Authority of Saudi Arabia;⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Al-Sam‘ānī, *Al-°Ansāb*, I, 231–232.

⁹⁶ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *°Aḥḡār al-Ma‘lāh al-Ṣāhidīyyah*, 73, no. 44.

⁹⁷ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *°Aḥḡār al-Ma‘lāh al-Ṣāhidīyyah*, 587, no. 540.

3. Inscription no. 40 from the city of al-Sirrayn, 240 km to the south of Mecca, dated Rabī' I 384/April 994;⁹⁸
4. Inscription no. 86 from °Ašm, dated Šafar 385/March 995;⁹⁹
5. Inscription no. 99, from °Ašm, dated Ğumādā I 397/February 1007;¹⁰⁰
6. Inscription no. XLI from Dahlak Island, dated Ša'ebān 351/September 962;¹⁰¹
7. Inscription no. XLII from Dahlak Island, dated Raġab 369/February 980.¹⁰²

The shared features with these 4th/10th-century inscriptions lead to the opinion that this inscription also dates to the 4th/10th-century.

⁹⁸ Al-Faqīh, *Madīnat al-Sirrayn*, 183, no. 40.

⁹⁹ Al-Faqīh, *Miḥlāf °Ašm*, 274, no. 86.

¹⁰⁰ Al-Faqīh, *Miḥlāf °Ašm*, 285, no. 99.

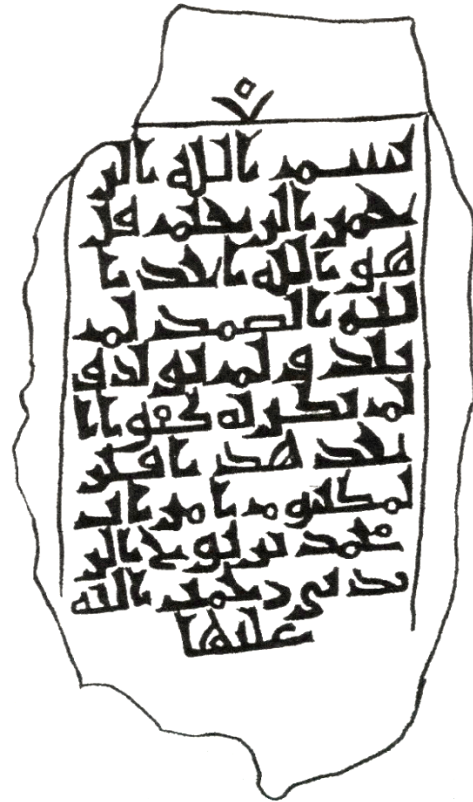
¹⁰¹ Oman, *La Necropoli*, I, 49–50, no. XLI.

¹⁰² Oman, *La Necropoli*, I, 50–51, no. XLII.

No. 57 / Museum no. 237



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma'lah Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt.

Eleven lines of incised, simple Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: °Umm Kulṭūm, wife of Muḥammad b. Nūḥ al-Zandanī.

Museum no. 237, °Aḡār al-Ma'lah (plate no. 57ab).

Measurements: 19 x 35 cm.

Height of °alif: 3.5 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الر

2. حمن الرحيم قل
3. هو الله احد ا
4. الله الصمد لم
5. يلد ولم يولد و
6. ولم يكن له كفوا ا
7. حد. هذا قبر
8. ام كلثوم امرات
9. محمد بن نوح الز
10. ندني رحمت الله
11. عليها

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the
2. Lord of Mercy the Giver of Mercy. Say,
3. He is God, the One,
4. God the Eternal,
5. He begot no one, nor was He begotten, and
6. no one is comparable to
7. Him. This is the tomb of
8. °Umm Kulṭūm, wife of
9. Muḥammad b. Nūḥ
10. al-Zandanī, may the Mercy of God
11. be upon her.

Lines 3–8 are from Quran 112:1–4 (*Surat al-°Iḥlās*).

Note: *tā° marbūṭah* for *imra°at* in line 8 and *raḥmat* in line 10

Observations

This inscription was made for °Umm Kulṭūm, wife of Muḥammad b. Nūḥ al-Zandanī. To the best of my knowledge, °Umm Kulṭūm is the first woman on a tombstone attributed to her husband. This is contrary to established custom which has the majority of women attributed to their father, if they are free, or to their master, if they are slave girls or mothers of free-born sons (*°umm walad*) (see chapter 2 above). who were already discussed in detail in the second chapter. Hence, we come to two possible

conclusions: ʿUmm Kulṭūm may have been a free woman, not a slave girl or mother of free-born sons. The other possibility is that her husband was a dignitary or nobleman and she has thus been attributed to him, as is the modern practice, e.g. the wife of the minister (*ḥaram al-wazīr*) or wife of the prince (*ḥaram al-ʿamīr*).

ʿUmm Kulṭūm may not be an immigrant, given that the *nisbah*, al-Zandanī, is not hers, but that of her husband, Muḥammad b. Nūḥ al-Zandanī. Zandanah, is a village of the town of Buḥārā (in modern-day Uzbekistan),¹⁰³ the town from which the Imām Muḥammad b. ʿIsmaʿīl al-Buḥārī (d. 256/870), the author of the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Buḥārī* come.¹⁰⁴ Among the most famous people attributed to Zandanah are ʿAbū Ğaʿfar Muḥammad b. Saʿīd b. ʿAṭīyyah al-Zandanī (d. 320/932) and ʿAbū Sādiq ʿAḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Zandanī (d. 490/1096), who was a narrator of hadith and a preacher at the mosque of Zandanah.¹⁰⁵

The style of this inscription is a popular form of writing in the 3rd/9th century. A characteristic feature of this style is the descent of the second *lām* below the level of the line in the name *Allāh* (lines 1 and 3) and the shrinking of some of the horizontal letters, compared to the shaft letters for which the scribe assigned enough length – except for the ʿ*alif* in word *Allāh* (line 3) because of the *nūn* in word *al-Raḥmān* (line 2) above it. The shrunken letters include the following:

1. The *rāʾs* in the phrase *al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* (lines 1 and 2) and in the words *qabr* (line 7) and *imraʿat* (line 8);
2. The final *nūn* in the words *al-Raḥmān* (line 2), *yakun* (line 6) and *bin* (line 9);
3. All final *mīms*, wherever they appear in the text.

The initial and medial forms of *hāʾ* were aesthetically engraved, with a right angle in the word *huwa* (line 3) and a slight inward slope in the words *hādā* (line 7) and ʿ*alay-hā* (line 11), forming a sharp angle.

The text is surrounded on three sides by a fine line topped by simple decorative foliation that is similar to a lotus flower. This type of foliation has been noted with

¹⁰³ Al-Samʿānī, *Al-ʿAnsāb*, III, 172.

¹⁰⁴ Al-Baghdadi, *Tārīḥ Baġdād*, II, 4–36; Al-Ziriklī, *Al-ʿAlām*, VI, 258–259.

¹⁰⁵ Al-Samʿānī, *Al-ʿAnsāb*, III, 172.

varying shapes in some of the al-Maʿlāh Cemetery inscriptions, including inscription nos. 199, 211, 232 and 263.¹⁰⁶

Some of its characteristics of this inscription resemble other inscriptions from both within and outside of Mecca, including:

1. Inscription nos. 18 and 30 at the Museum of Antiquities and Heritage in Mecca; ^{107,108}
2. Inscription no. 120 from al-Maʿlāh Cemetery;¹⁰⁹
3. Inscription no. 56 from ʿAšm.¹¹⁰

Each of these inscriptions date to the 3rd/9th century, supporting the opinion that this inscription is attributed to the same century.

¹⁰⁶ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh al-Šāhidiyyah*, 232, 244, 266, 298, nos. 199, 211, 232 and 263.

¹⁰⁷ Al-Ḥārītī, *ʿAḥḡār Šāhidiyyah Ġayr Manqūšah*, 63, no. 18.

¹⁰⁸ Al-Ḥārītī, *ʿAḥḡār Šāhidiyyah*, 44 no. 30.

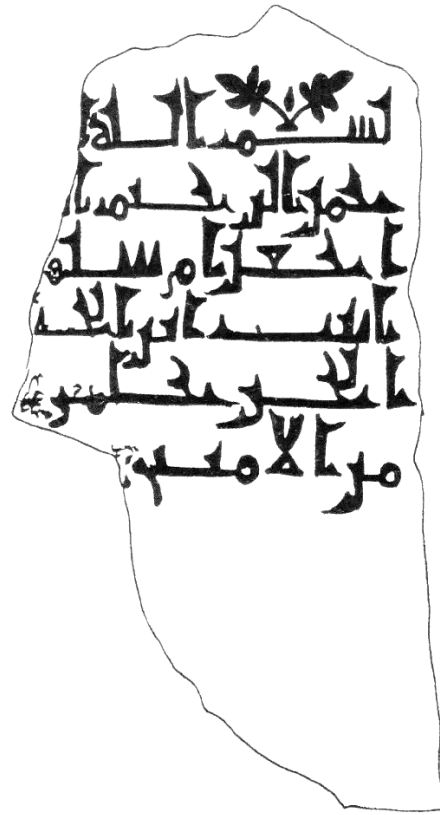
¹⁰⁹ Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh al-Šāhidiyyah*, 150 and 120.

¹¹⁰ Al-Faqīh, *Miḥlāf ʿAšm*, 246, no. 56.

No. 58 / Museum no. 233



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt, broken left side.

Six lines of incised, clear, simple Kufic.

No date, probably 3rd/9th century.

Deceased Name: ^ʿUmm Salamah bint b. al-Ḥasan al-Ġurġānī.

Museum no. 233, ^ʿAḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh (plate no. 58ab).

Measurements: 19 x 20 cm.

Height of ^ʿalif: 3.2 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله [الر]
2. حمد الرحيم [الله]
3. اجعل ام سلمة [ة]
4. ابنت ابن الحسن [ن]
5. الجرحاني
6. من الامنين

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the
2. Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy. O God,
3. assign °Umm Salamah
4. ibnat ibn al-Ḥasan
5. al-Ġurġānī to be
6. among those who are secure.

Observations

This inscription belongs to °Umm Salamah al-Ġurġāniyyah, whose *nisbah* was based on Ġurġān, at the time a large region between Tabaristan and Khorasa in modern-day Iran. Notable persons originating from Ġarġān include al-Ġunayd b. Bahārm al-Ġarġānī, a narrator of hadith, and °Abū °Alī al-Ḥusayn b. °Abī al-Rabī° Yaḥyā al-Ġarġānī, also a narrator of the Prophet’s traditions who died in Ġumādā I 263/February 877.¹¹¹

It is regrettable that this inscription, despite the beauty of its calligraphy and its clarity and accuracy, was handed down through the ages broken on its left side and Some of its words missing. Additionally, some of the letters along the edge of the break are Damaged or erased, making it difficult to read. However, it is a beautiful inscription and is an example of pure Kufic writing.

Note the stretching or separation of letters. For example, in the first line, the distance between the *sīn* and the *mīm* in word *b-ism* is considerable, as is the distance between

¹¹¹ Al-Sam°ānī, *Al-°Ansāb*, II, 40–41; Yāqūt, *Mu°ġam al-Buldān*, 119–122.

the two *lāms* in word *Allāh*, and in the fifth line, the same is seen twice in the word *al-Ġarġānī*, between the first *ġīm* and the *rā* and the second *ġīm* and the *ʿalif al-madd*.

It seems that the reason for the prevalence of *mašq* in this inscription is the lack of words that make up the text; with the deleted words, there are no more than fourteen words. The scribe was able to skilfully distribute the words on the six lines of this inscription. It is devoid of decoration, except for two foliated branches that are above the *sīn* of word *b-ism* (line 1).

This inscription resembles a number of Islamic inscriptions dating back to the time in which it was engraved, including:

1. Inscription nos. 11, 29, 121 and 160 from al-Maʿlāh Cemetery;¹¹²
2. Inscription no. 47 from the Museum of Antiquities and Heritage in Mecca;¹¹³
3. Inscription no. 23 from the port of al-Sirrayn, 240 km south of Mecca.¹¹⁴

All of these inscriptions are assessed to date to the 3rd/9th century, according to the records of museum, supporting the opinion that this inscription likewise dates to the same century.

¹¹² Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 40, 58, 151, 192, nos. 11, 26, 121 and 160.

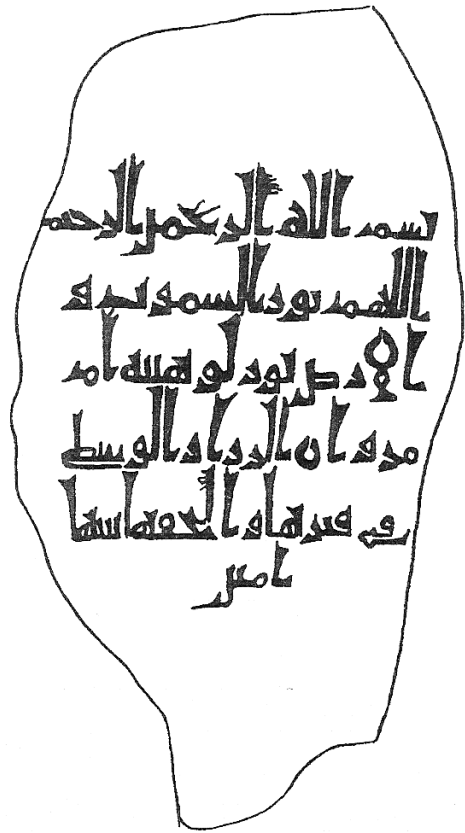
¹¹³ Al-Ḥarīfī, *ʿAḥḡār Šāhidīyyah*, 61, no. 47.

¹¹⁴ Al-Zaylaʿī, 'The Southern Area', 443, pl. 25, no. 23.

No. 59 / Museum no. 236



A



B

Description

Tombstone of irregular shape.

Al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery.

Preserved in Ḥuzām Palace, Jeddah.

Basalt and broken left side.

Five lines of incised, simple Kufic.

No date, probably 2nd-3rd/8th-9th century.

Deceased Name: Wahībah ʾUmm Marwān al-Razzāz al-Wāsiṭī.

Museum no. 236, ʾAḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh (plate no. 59ab).

Measurements: 24 x 30 cm.

Height of ʾalif: 4.1 cm.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. اللهم نور السموات و
3. الارض نور لوهيبة ام
4. مروان الرزاز الواسطي
5. في قبرها، والحقها بنبيها
6. امين

Translation

1. In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.
2. O God, Light of the Heavens and
3. Earth, shed light on Wahībah ʾUmm
4. Marwān al-Razzāz al-Wāsiṭī
5. in her tomb and let her meet her Prophet.
6. Amen.

Observations

This inscription bears the name of Wahībah bint Marwān al-Razzāz al-Wāsiṭī'. Her name is a common name derived from the verb *wahaba*, which means to give.¹¹⁵ Her father, Marwān, has two attributions. The first is al-Razzāz, which means the seller of rice,¹¹⁶ which was present everywhere and at any time and does not concern our subject matter – the second is his *nisbah*. al-Wāsiṭī, which is significant regarding the origin of Wahībah's family and their immigration to Mecca. This *nisbah* relates to five places. The closest to Mecca, and perhaps most famous, is Wāsiṭ Qaşab, which was founded in Iraq in 83/702 by al-Ḥaġġāġ b. Yūsuf al-Ṭaqafī (d. 95/714) The governor of Iraq during the time of the Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik b. Marwān.¹¹⁷

Wahībah's family must have come to Mecca and Wahībah was part of Meccan society until she died and was buried the al-Maʿlāh Cemetery. This is supported by the fact that her father, Marwān, was a *razzāz*, i.e a rice seller, as al-Samʿānī says. Wāsiṭ lies

¹¹⁵ Badawī et al., *Muġam Ansāb al-ʿArab*, II, 1882.

¹¹⁶ Al-Samʿānī, *Al-ʿAnsāb*, III, 57; cf. Baġdādī, *Tārīḥ Baġdād*, II, 339.

¹¹⁷ Al-Samʿānī, *Al-ʿAnsāb*, V, 561–562; Yāqūt, *Muġam al-Buldān*, V, 247–250.

in the most fertile area in Iraq, which is famous for rice cultivation and marketing since early times.

The writing is a beautiful style and is in pure Kufic. The scribe adhered, with deviating, to the strict rules and plan of Kufic calligraphy in every word from the first to the last, top to bottom.

This inscription represents a transitional calligraphic model from the 2nd/8th to the 3rd/9th centuries. The most characteristic feature of the style in this inscription is the lengthening of shaft letters, especially the *ʿalif* and *lām*, making them of equal length wherever they are found in the text, whether they are initial, medial or final.

Another characteristic feature is the shrinking of the horizontal letters, such as the letter *rāʾ*, wherever it appears in all the first five lines, and the letter *zāy*, as presented twice in word *al-Razzāz* (line 4). Additionally, the scribe shrank the terminal *mīm*, as in words *b-ism* (line 1), *Allāhuma* (line 2) and *ʿumm* (line 3). However, one of the most important things to be noted in this inscription is the rounding of the letter *nūn*, as in the name *Marwān* (line 4), and the rounding and interlacing of the base and arms of *lām-ʿalif* in word *al-ʿard* (line 3).

The rounding of the letter *nūn* mentioned above appears in many inscriptions, including inscription no. 3 from the Library of King Fahd collection, which is dated to the 3rd/9th century.¹¹⁸ Further, inscription no. 3 is somewhat similar to this inscription, in terms of the lengthening of the shafts of ascending letters and the shrinking of the horizontal letters.

Other inscriptions that resemble this inscription include:

1. Inscription nos. 11 and 32 from the Museum of Antiquities and Heritage in Mecca, dating to the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries, respectively;^{119,120}
2. Inscription no. 4 from the National Museum in Riyadh;¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Al-Buqumī, *Nuqūš ʿIslāmiyyah Šāhidiyyah*, 211, pl. 3.

¹¹⁹ Al-Hārītī, *ʿAḥḡār Šāhidiyyah Ġayr Manšūrah*, 49, no. 11.

¹²⁰ Al-Hārītī, *ʿAḥḡār Šāhidiyyah*, 46, no. 32.

¹²¹ Al-Salook, ‘Analytical and palaeographic study’, 28, no. 4.

From al-Ma^ʿlāh Cemetery in Mecca, the rounding of the *nūn* and the interlacing of the letter *lām*–*ʿalif* can be seen in a number of inscriptions, including inscription nos. 64, 68, 150 and 236, all of which are dated to the 3rd/9th century.¹²² This suggests that this inscription may belong to the inscriptions of the same century, especially the first half.

¹²² Al-Ḥalīfah et al., *ʿAḥḡār al-Ma^ʿlāh al-Šāhidīyyah*, 93, 181, 270, nos. 64, 68, 150 and 236.

Table 3: Summary of the sample of Chapter 3

No	Date	Full name	Family	Title of woman	Engraver	Quranic verse	Publication	Location
42	n.d.	<i>ʿAmat bint ʿĪd b. [...] Ḥadīġah bint ʿAlī b. Ḥanīfah al-Gazīriyyah / al-Ḥariziyyah / al-Ḥarīriyyah</i>	<i>Al-Gazīriyyah / al-Ḥariziyyah / al-Ḥarīriyyah</i>			97:1–5	<i>ʿAḡġār al-Maʿlāh,</i> (plate no. 42ab)	Ḥuzām Palace (no. 482)
43	n.d.	<i>Balqīs bint Ḥalaf b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Rāziyyah</i>	<i>Al-Rāziyyah</i>				<i>ʿAḡġār al-Maʿlāh,</i> (plate no. 43ab)	Ḥuzām Palace no. 120
44	n.d.	<i>Dabak bint Yahyā b. Maʿqal al-Nīsābūrī</i>	<i>Nīsābūrī</i>			112 (all)	<i>ʿAḡġār al-Maʿlāh,</i> (plate no. 44ab)	Ḥuzām Palace no. 67
45	n.d.	<i>Fṭīmah bint ʿAbd Allāh al-Ġuddiyyah or al-Ġiddiyyah</i>	<i>Al-Ġuddiyyah / al-Ġiddiyyah</i>			112 (all)	<i>ʿAḡġār Al-Maʿlāh,</i> (plate no. 45ab)	Ḥuzām Palace no. 486
46	n.d.	<i>Fāṭimah bint Aḥmad b. Ḥalaf b. Muḥammad al-Dīnawarī</i>	<i>Al-Dīnawarī</i>			112 (all)	<i>ʿAḡġār al-Maʿlāh,</i> (plate no. 46ab)	Ḥuzām Palace no. 93
47	n.d.	<i>Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad b. Kasbān al-Ṭāʿifī</i>	<i>Al-Ṭāʿifī</i>				<i>ʿAḡġār al-Maʿlāh,</i> (plate no. 47ab)	Ḥuzām Palace no. 469
48	n.d.	<i>Fāṭimah bint ʿUbayd al-Ḥarbī</i>	<i>Ḥarbī</i>				<i>ʿAḡġār al-Maʿlāh,</i> (plate no. 48ab)	Ḥuzām Palace no. 377
49	n.d.	<i>Ḥabbūbah bint Mḥammād al-Kūfi</i>	<i>Al-Kūfi</i>				<i>ʿAḡġār al-Maʿlāh,</i> (plate no. 49ab)	Ḥuzām Palace no. 215
50	n.d.	<i>Ḥadīġah bint Mūsā b. ʿAbī Maṭar al-ʿAndalusī</i>	<i>al-ʿAndalusī</i>			112 (all)	<i>ʿAḡġār al-Maʿlāh,</i> (plate no. 50ab)	Ḥuzām Palace no. 325
51	Šafar 371/August 983.	<i>Hibat Allāh bint Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Mawṣilī, known as Farwah</i>	<i>Al-Mawṣilī</i>			38:67–68	<i>ʿAḡġār al-Maʿlāh,</i> (plate no. 51ab)	Ḥuzām Palace no. 44

52	n.d.	<i>Mūqasah bint al-Ḥasan b. ʿIsā al-Nisāburiyyah</i>	<i>Al-Nisāburiyyah</i>			33:21, 25:24, 2:185.	<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> , (plate no. 52ab)	Ḥuzām Palace no. 346a
53	n.d.	<i>ʿUmm ʿAbd al-Raḥmān bint ʿIsā b. ʿAmr al-Fārisī</i>	<i>Al-Fārisī</i>	<i>ʿUmm ʿAbd al-Raḥmān</i>		112 (all)	<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> , (plate no. 53ab)	Ḥuzām Palace no. 155
54	n.d.	<i>ʿUmm ʿAbū Yaḥyā Kulṭūm bint Saʿīd al-ʿĀzibī</i>	<i>Al-ʿĀzibī</i>	<i>ʿUmm ʿAbū Yaḥyā</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 54ab)	Ḥuzām Palace no. 3
55	n.d.	<i>ʿUmm Dāʿūd Ibnat ʿAbī al-Surtī</i>	<i>Al-Surtī</i>	<i>ʿUmm Dāʿūd</i>		33:21	<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 55ab)	Ḥuzām Palace no. 116
56	n.d.	<i>ʿUmm ʿIshāq Ibnat ʿIsmāʿīl al-Ahwāziyyah</i>	<i>Al-Ahwāziyyah</i>	<i>ʿUmm ʿIshāq</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 56ab)	Ḥuzām Palace no. 111
57	n.d.	<i>ʿUmm Kulṭūm, wife of Muḥammad b. Nūḥ al-Zandanī</i>	<i>Al-Zandanī</i>	<i>ʿUmm Kulṭūm</i>		112 (all)	<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 57ab)	Ḥuzām Palace no. 237
58	n.d.	<i>ʿUmm Salamah bint al-Ḥasan al-Ġurġānī</i>	<i>Al-Ġurġānī</i>	<i>ʿUmm Salamah</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 58ab)	Ḥuzām Palace no. 233
59	n.d.	<i>Wahībah ʿUmm Marwān al-Razzāz al-Wāsiṭī</i>	<i>Al-Wāsiṭī</i>	<i>ʿUmm Marwān</i>			<i>ʿAḥḡār al-Maʿlāh</i> (plate no. 59ab)	Ḥuzām Palace no. 236

Conclusion

The importance of studying inscribed tombstones to identify the diverse communities that lived in Mecca is made clear from this review of 59 inscribed tombstones from al-Maʿlāh Cemetery. In this study, though the selected tombstones focused on women in Meccan society, the review revealed a remarkable diversity in Mecca's population, consisting of three components: native families, migrant families and slaves.

The makeup of Meccan society

Of the native families, the primary tribe was the Qurayš, which had sovereignty over Mecca since before Islam well into the Islamic era. Most of the governors who ruled over Mecca were from the Qurayš, including from the clan of the Prophet Muḥammad, Banū Hāšim, and the Ḥasanid Šarīfs, named after al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbī Ṭālib, who autonomously ruled Mecca and its surrounding regions since the middle of the 4th/10th century.

Of the migrant families, they are comprised of those who migrated from distant regions as pilgrims, either because they could not return to their homelands or because they chose to find a residence in Mecca and become *neighbours*. When settled, these migrants began to socialise with the Meccan people and became part of its society, ultimately passing and becoming buried at al-Maʿlāh Cemetery.

These local tribal and migrant components are mixed with the third component: those brought from remote places as slaves who then lived with their masters in Mecca. Some of these slaves acquired their freedom by emancipation or other means, as shown by their titles or kunyas, such as *ʿummahāt al-ʿawlād*.

From all the three population components, analysis of the tombstones of women who lived in Mecca and who were buried in al-Maʿlāh Cemetery revealed the nature of the female community in Mecca. This analysis reveals the importance of studying inscribed tombstones in countries to gain knowledge of their past demographic structure, if such inscriptions are discovered.

Tombstone analysis for greater knowledge

From the sample of 59 Islamic Kufic inscriptions selected in this study, it was possible to assess the female community of Mecca during the period from the 3rd/9th to the

4th/10th century. For example, families could be identified along with their origins and their descendents' loyalties (*al-mawālī*) and allies (*al-ʿahlāf*). From these origins, immigrants and settlers who mixed with the Meccan population were identified, along with their birth, upbringing, loyalties and alliances. Many from these groups were buried in al-Maʿlāh Cemetery, indicating their integration into Mecca's society and the level of diversity that Mecca's female community gained.

Calligraphic analysis and the scribes

The Kufic calligraphy used on the tombstones of this collection generally dates to the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries. This sample represents the most beautiful patterns bearing the names of deceased females, especially in terms of the calligraphic perfection in which all inscriptions were performed in accordance with an accurate plot or plan and adhered to the generally accepted Kufic calligraphy rules. It seems these rules were the foremost focus of the scribes who inscribed these tombstones because many did not seem interested in decoration; their interest was in following the Kufic calligraphy rules.

Among the 59 inscribed tombstones, only nine can be described as decorated Kufic calligraphy: three tombstones are inscribed in foliated Kufic calligraphy and six are inscribed in floriated Kufic calligraphy. The remaining 50 tombstones are all inscribed in simple Kufic calligraphy, but done so in perfect script, inscribed according to the rules of Kufic calligraphy. A few of these inscriptions were described as imperfect, generally due to the poor quality of the stones or due to weathering factors.

This collection only has five dated inscriptions nos.28,32,35,38 and 51, one dating to the 3rd/9th century (specifically, in the year 291/903–904) and the remaining four dating to the 4th/10th century. The remaining 54 inscriptions are undated, but this study assessed that they may date to the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries based either on presumptions concerning the life and dates of the fathers and other famous ancestors of some of the deceased women or on comparisons with similar inscriptions. Details about some of the women or their ancestors were found in historical sources, and from these sources, inscription dates can be estimated based generations in the lineage sequencing. Some of these lineages tie back to the famous companions of the Prophet Muḥammad.

With the comparison method, the calligraphic styles and properties of undated inscriptions in this collection were compared to dated inscriptions with similar styles and properties, dated either by a date in the inscription or through previously published studies have concluded an approximate date of production. Many of these similar inscriptions were produced from the same calligraphic schools, of which there were several. One such school was the Miḥlāf ʿAšm School, which belonged to the Mecca region, the region 300 kilometres south of Mecca, and the city of al-Sirrayn, also located about 240 kilometres in the same direction. This study noted that some early 3rd/9th century inscriptions may represent a transitional phase between this century and the 2nd/8th century preceding it.

Nineteen of these tombstones were decorated with three-sided frames around the text, several of which form niche-like bends (*miḥrāb*) or arches that end at the top with a single arch. Others have multi-arches, some of which amount to eight or nine arches, while others are simple and do not exceed one or two fine lines topped by a small shrub.

Some of these arch designs are immersed in decoration, some with various geometric or floral forms and some combining the two features together, wherein we note the floral decoration along with the geometric decoration in the same frame within the same inscription.

This contrast, which we note in the decoration and beautification of the arches, is clearly noted in the stands of the frames that surround the inscription text on the right and left sides. Some of the frames are simple, while others consist of recurring decorative units, mostly surrounded by two fine lines. Some are in the form of a wave, with rosettes or shapes like pearl beads scattered in its space, while other frames have no pointed tops, but rather form a decorative straight line topped with a curve that resembles a horseshoe, within which a decoration in the form of a shrub appears. Also, there are some inscriptions with frames containing one or more Quranic verses, which is an added value to the rich content of the inscriptions of this collection.

Only the beginning

While this study strove to tell the story of early-Islamic female society in Mecca, there is more work to be conducted. More inscriptions will be found and preserved, and new

historical sources will be discovered that will add to our knowledge. This work achieved its goal to initiate this area of study by studying 59 tombstone inscriptions of native, migrant, and enslaved/freed women to learn of their place in society and history, all the while noting the Kufic inscription forms in use at the time.

Appendices

Palaeographic tables

Table 4: 3rd/9th-century inscriptions: nos. 32, 2, 4 and 9

Year		291 (903/904)	No date	No date	No date
Inscription		No. 32	No. 2	No. 4	No. 9
ā	ا				
b	ب				
t	ت				
ṭ	ث				
ǧ	ج				
h	ح				
ḥ	خ				
d	د				
ḍ	ذ				
r	ر				
z	ز				
s	س				
š	ش				
ṣ	ص				
ḍ	ض				
ṭ	ط				
ẓ	ظ				
°	ع				
ǧ̣	غ				
f	ف				
q	ق				
k	ك				

Table 5: 3rd/9th-century inscriptions: nos. 10, 14, 20 and 25

Year		No date	No date	No date	No date
Inscription		No. 10	No. 14	No. 20	No. 25
ā	ا	ا	ا	ا	ا
b	ب	ب	ب	ب	ب
t	ت	ت	ت	ت	ت
ṭ	ث				
ǧ	ج	ج	ج		
ḥ	ح	ح	ح	ح	ح
ḫ	خ	خ	خ		
d	د	د	د	د	د
ḍ	ذ	ذ			
r	ر	ر	ر	ر	ر
z	ز				ز
s	س	س	س	س	س
š	ش				ش
ṣ	ص		ص	ص	ص
ḍ	ض				
ṭ	ط		ط	ط	
ẓ	ظ				
ʿ	ع	ع	ع	ع	ع
ǧ̄	غ	غ			غ
f	ف	ف	ف	ف	ف
q	ق	ق	ق	ق	ق
k	ك		ك	ك	ك
l	ل	ل	ل	ل	ل
m	م	م	م	م	م
n	ن	ن	ن	ن	ن
h	ه	ه	ه	ه	ه

w	و				
y	ي				
lā	لا				

Table 6: 4th/10th-century inscriptions: nos. 28, 35 and 38

Year		307–919	321–924	322–934
Inscription		No. 28	No. 35	No. 38
ā	ا	ا	ا	ا
b	ب	ب	ب	ب
t	ت	ت	ت	ت
ṭ	ث	ث		ث
ǧ	ج	ج	ج	ج
ḥ	ح	ح	ح	ح
ḫ	خ	خ	خ	خ
d	د	د	د	
ḏ	ذ	ذ	ذ	ذ
r	ر	ر	ر	ر
z	ز		ز	ز
s	س	س	س	س
š	ش		ش	ش
ṣ	ص	ص	ص	
ḍ	ض		ض	
ṭ	ط			
ẓ	ظ		ظ	
ʿ	ع	ع	ع	ع
ǧ	غ			
f	ف	ف	ف	ف
q	ق	ق	ق	ق
k	ك	ك	ك	ك
l	ل	ل	ل	ل
m	م	م	م	م

n	ن	ن ن ن ن ن ن ن	ن ن ن ن ن ن ن ن	ن ن ن ن ن ن ن
h	هـ	هـ هـ هـ هـ هـ هـ	هـ هـ هـ هـ هـ	هـ هـ هـ هـ هـ هـ
w	و	و و و و و و و و	و و و و و و و و	و و و و و و و و
y	ي	ي ي ي ي ي ي ي ي	ي ي ي ي ي ي ي ي	ي ي ي ي ي ي ي ي
lā	لا	لا لا لا لا لا لا لا لا	لا لا لا لا لا لا لا لا	

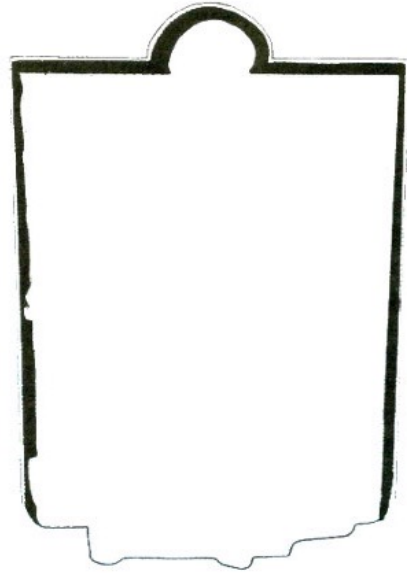
Table 7: 4th/10th-century inscriptions: nos. 51, 17 and 29

Year		371–983	No date	No date
Inscription		No. 51	No. 17	No. 29
ā	ا	ا		ا
b	ب	ب	ب	ب
t	ت	ت	ت	ت
ṭ	ث			
ǧ	ج			ج
h	ح	ح	ح	ح
ḥ	خ			
d	د	د	د	د
ḍ	ذ			
r	ر	ر	ر	ر
z	ز			
s	س	س	س	س
š	ش	ش		
ṣ	ص	ص	ص	ص
ḍ	ض	ض	ض	ض
ṭ	ط		ط	ط
ẓ	ظ	ظ		
ʿ	ع	ع	ع	ع
ǧ̄	غ			
f	ف	ف	ف	ف
q	ق	ق	ق	ق
k	ك	ك	ك	ك
l	ل	ل	ل	ل
m	م	م	م	م
n	ن	ن	ن	ن
h	ه	ه	ه	ه
w	و	و	و	و
y	ي	ي	ي	ي
lā	لا			لا

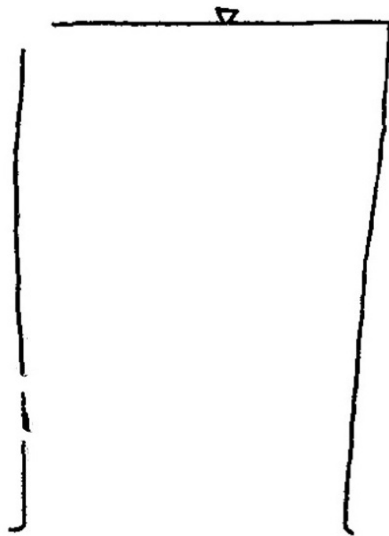
Different types of border shapes 3rd/9th century



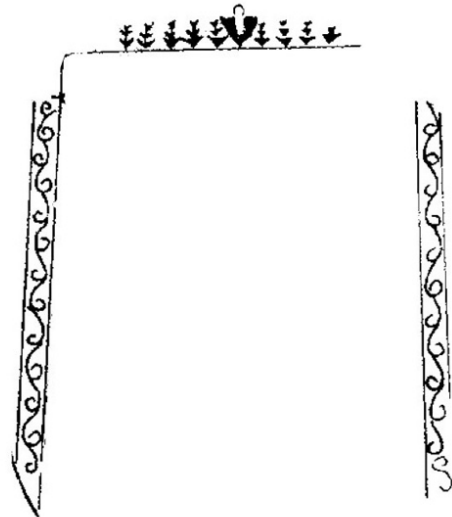
No. 23 / No date



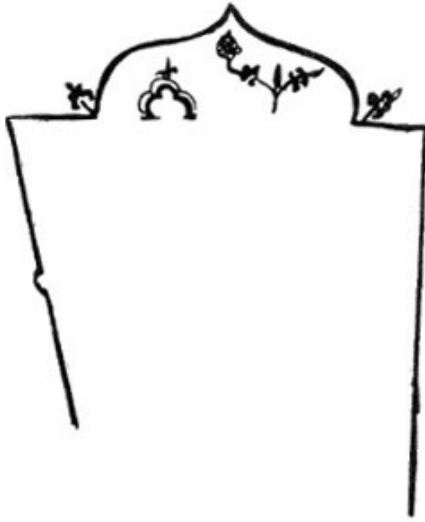
No. 2 / No date



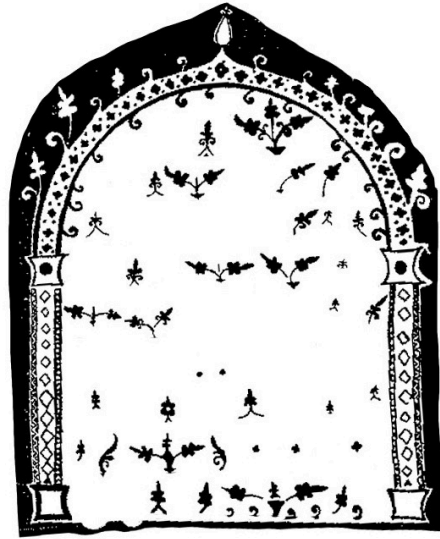
No. 4 / No date



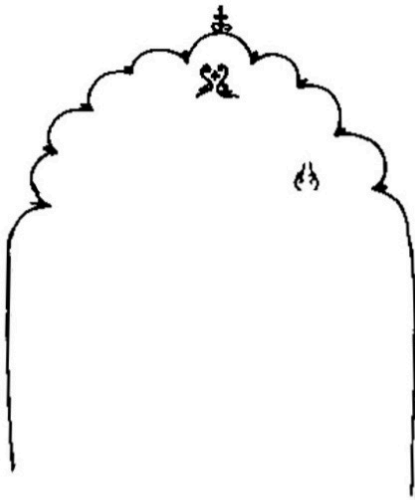
No. 6 / No date



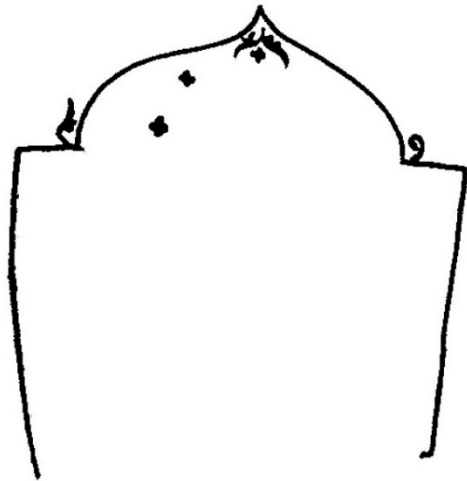
No. 9 / No date



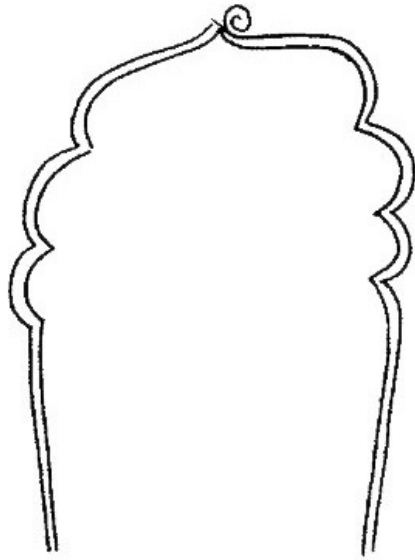
No. 10 / No date



No. 11 / No date



No. 14 / No date



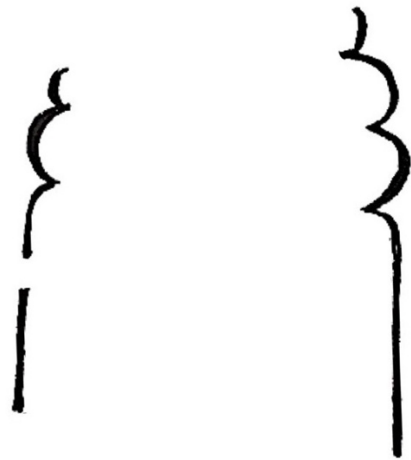
No. 18 / No date



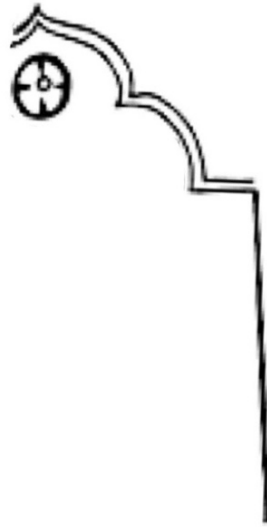
No. 22 / No date



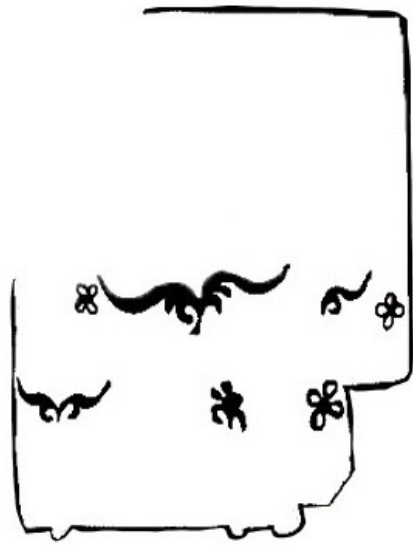
No. 25 / No date



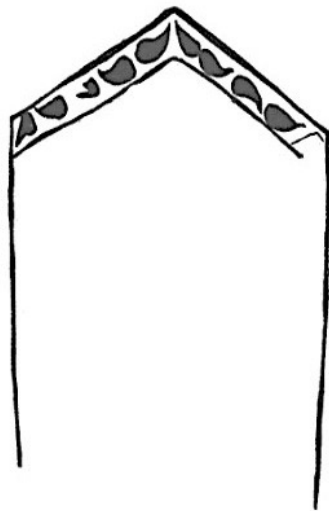
No. 27 / No date



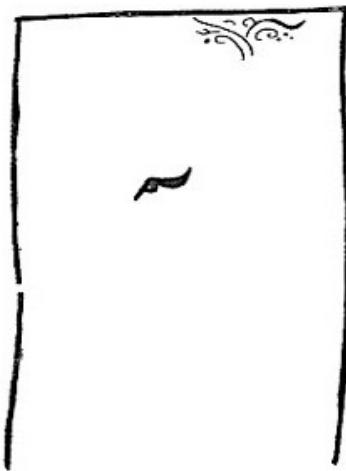
No. 30 / No date



No. 42 / No date



No. 45 / No date



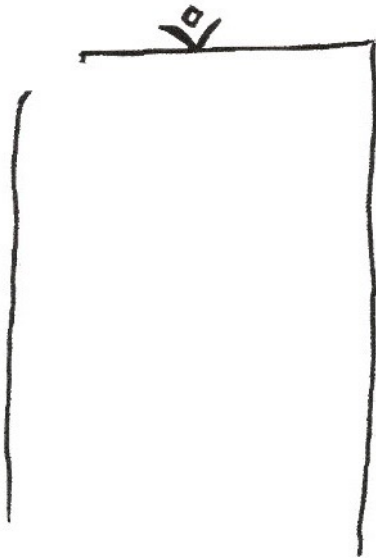
No. 46 / No date



No. 49 / No date



No. 53 / No date



No. 57 / No date

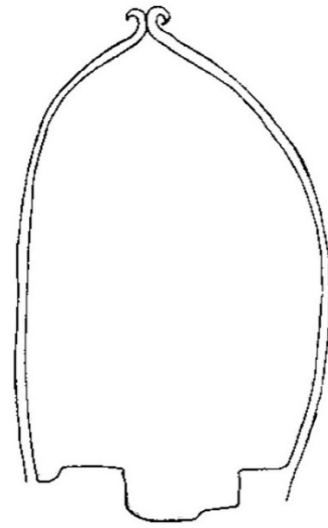


No. 58 / No date

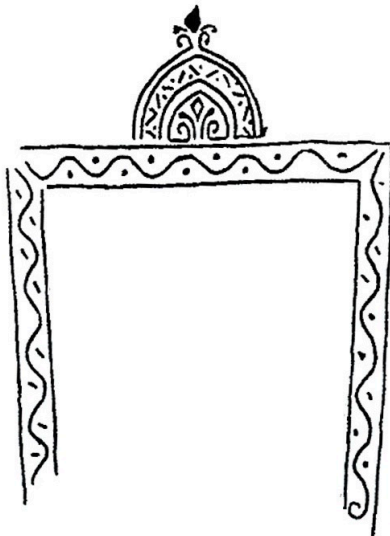
Different types of border shapes 4th/10th century



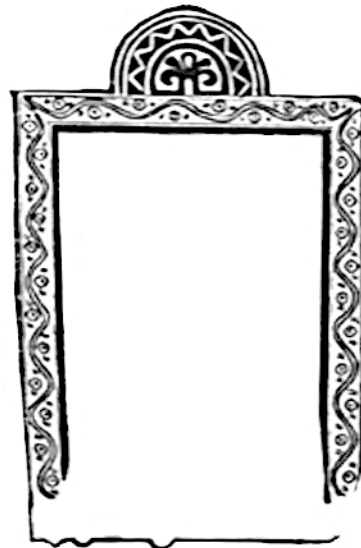
No. 5 / No date



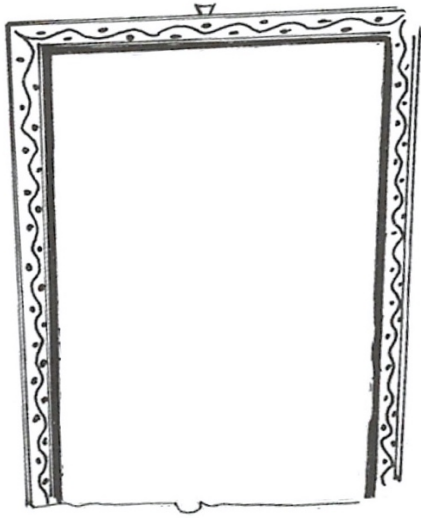
No. 15 / No date



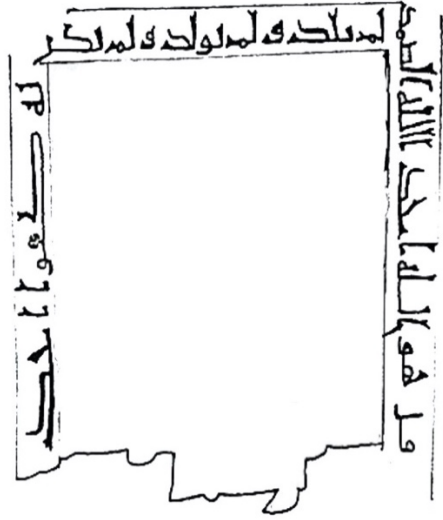
No. 17 / No date



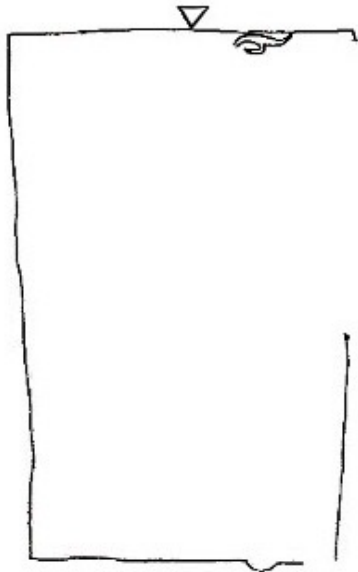
No. 29 / No date



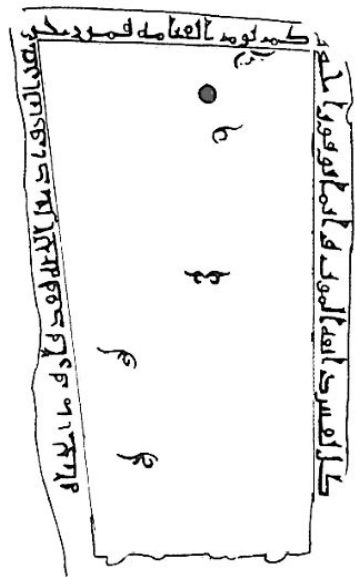
No. 35 / Dated Jumādā I 321/August 924



No. 38 / Dated 322 (934)











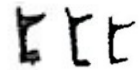



No. 41 / No date



No. 52 / No date

Description of palaeography table

Letter	Description	Illustration
Ā)	
	The shaft is flattened at the apex (wedge-shaped).	
	The base is a well-executed right angle, and the shaft tilts slightly to the left.	
	The apex has slight splintering, some of which are like a wide triangle.	
	The base of the shaft extends below the baseline.	
	The base of the shaft extends slightly below the baseline.	
	The apex with three branches, simple leaves/feathers.	
	There are leaves at the bottom and top of the shaft, with half-palmette shapes.	
	The shaft extends below the baseline, with foliation both above and below the line.	
	The apex is flat and like small triangles	
	The base has a right turn.	
	The apex and shaft are elongated and filled-in, with flattening on the right.	
	There are fan-like palmette shapes at the apex.	

Triangle form of a triangle, end in a similar from to an arrowhead.



The base descends slightly below the baseline.



The base has a tail extending slightly to the right at a right angle.



The base hooks to right.



The apex is flattened, appearing here in an image of foliation.



Elongation and broadening at the apex.



The shaft is remarkably short and inelegant.



Shaped like the letter *dāl*.



The apex is elongated, like a half-palmette fan.



The apex is elongated at the apex, with prominent triangle heads forming ornamental features like palmette fans.



The apex bears a leftward triangle.



The apex has a flag-like extension to the right.



The apex bears palmetto-like fans/ triangles



The apex is curved or bowl-like.



The apex extends leftward like a flag.



The apex ends in an exaggerated or excessive flattening or broadening fashion.



Shrunken shaft.



Elongated shaft with an apex appearing like a two-lobed leaf.



B

ۛ

The apex is flattened.



Thin lines on the apex appearing like small feathers.



The apex is shaped like a half-palmette.



The apex bears branches or simple leaves/feathers.



An elongated tail at the apex that is equal in length to the other letters.



The ends each form a triangle like an arrowhead.



The shaft is ornamented when used as an initial letter.



The shaft is extended when used as an initial letter.



The shaft bears palmetto fans.





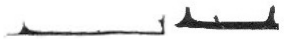











The shaft is short and ends with in exaggerated or excessive flattened or broadened fashion.



T

ۛ

		The right end forms a triangle like an arrowhead.	
		Like the letter <i>dāl</i> .	
		The left end forms a triangle like an arrowhead	
		The ends appear as palmetto fans.	
		<i>Al-mašq</i> appears between the ends.	
		Appears as a curved tooth and like the letter <i>rāʾ</i> .	
		Appears as a square tooth.	
Ṭ	ط		
		Angular and similar to the letter <i>dāl</i> .	
Ġ	ج		
		Winged.	
		<i>Al-mašq</i> appears along the shoulder of the letter.	
		The letter has <i>al-mašq</i> along the shoulder and bears ornamental features at the end, like that of a snake opening its mouth.	
Ḥ	ح		
		The tip and brow are lengthened to be equal to the other upright letters.	
		Bears a double shoulder.	
		The ends are ornamented with three branches or simple leaves/feathers.	

Winged and bowel end with an ornamental feature.



Elongated letters, equal in length to the other letters.



The ends with hair-like shapes at their apexes, similar to the shape of a snake with its mouth open.



Al-mašq appears along the connecting portion of the initial letter.



Simple leaves or feathers on the angled rise.



Shrunken, short, and bowled.



H

ح

Elongated and equal in length to the other letters.



Flattened and the apex of the angled rise.



Al-mašq appears along the connecting portion of the initial letter.



Wide-angle rise with a two-lobed leaf at the end.



D

د

The curved rise extends leftward with an arch.



A half-palmette sits above the letter, at the end of the curved rise.



Both leftward ends contain branches or simple leaves/feathers.



Flat and similar in shape to small triangles.



Flat along the baseline with a rectangular angled arm that is slightly tilted to the right at the apex.



The leftward ends bearing three loops/branches.



A triangular form at the lower left end, appearing as an arrowhead.



Triple foliation at the lower left end.



The apex is adorned with a triangle/ornamented head.



The curved rise ends with a snake-like head.



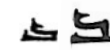
Al-mašq appears on the base and curved rise.



D

ذ

Broadening or flattening at the apex on certain letters and *al-mašq* used on the base and rise.



The base ends with a snake-like head.



Shrunken form.



Rightward hook at the apex.




















Right-angled hook at the apex, with a triangle.



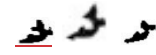
Hook-like rise.



		Extended rise with a snake-like head.	
R	ر	Angular form.	
		The middle has an oval figure.	
		Shrunken form.	
		Right-angle form and broadening of the ends.	
		Small form.	
		Broadening of the ends.	
		Similar to the letter <i>dāl</i> .	
		Right-angled form.	
		Curved, hook form.	
		Curved and appears like the letter <i>nūn</i> .	
		A reclined appearance, with the leftward end coming to a point.	
		Shrunken form.	
Z	ز	Ends with slight rise, some of which appear like a wide triangle.	
		Curved top.	
		Curved end.	
		Shrunken form.	

S ع

Curved form.



Right-angled form.



Denticles rising from the baseline, either coming closer or spreading at the top.



Regular and identical denticles rising above the baseline.



Three triangular denticles followed by *al-mašq*, appearing overall like brush.



Distance *al-mašq*.



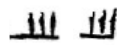
Regular and identical denticle forms.



Uneven denticles.



Extended denticles.



Curved, pointed tail.



As an initial, this is inscribed in a small form and placed above the left-adjacent letter, and in its terminal form, it is placed above the preceding letter.



Tail curvature towards the left and pointed.



Tail curvature towards the left and broadened at the end.



The first denticle rises above the others, and the tail ends in a leftward right angle.








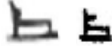

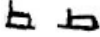







S ع



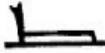











The first denticle rises above the others.



Extended denticles.



		The middle denticle rises higher than the others.	
S	س	Flat along the baseline with a rectangular arm ending at the apex and tilted slightly to the right.	
		Extended and appearing like an eye.	
		Appearing as an angular eye.	
		Denticle on top of the form, tilting to the right.	
		Denticle on top of the form, ending with simple leaf-like forms.	
		Denticle on top of the form, with a curved top.	
		Appearing like a wide, open eye, with a denticle on top.	
		No denticle, and parallel form.	
D	ض	Leftward right-angled tail and denticle above.	
		Thick form with a leftward right-angled tail, ending in the form of an arrowhead.	
		Slight denticle above the loop.	
		Thin form, leftward right-angled tail, ending in the form of an arrowhead.	
		Parallel form, no tail.	
		No denticle.	

		Slight denticle.	
T	ط		
		Broadening <i>al-mašq</i> at the top of certain letters.	
		Extended eye.	
		A rising shaft with a slight tilt to the left, ending with simple leaf-like forms.	
		Well executed eye with right angles, and a rising shaft with a slight tilt to the right.	
		Broadened shaft, with a split apex on the shaft.	
		The shaft falls to the right, becoming parallel to eye line, then rising at the end with an ornament.	
		The shaft apex ends with a snake-like head.	
		The shaft leans to the right.	
Z	ظ		
		The shaft leans to right.	
		Well executed eye with right angles, and the shaft has a slightly right tilt.	
		The shaft leans to the left.	
		Extended eye.	
		Square eye and a short shaft.	
c	ع		

Open knot at the top.



Open knot in the form of a cup.



Triangular, closed knot.



Thin lines with small, feathers-like features on top.



Inscribed with a crown and an open knot on top.



Ornamental knot.



Rightward tips end with three branches or simple leaves/feathers.



Open knot in the form of a goblet.



Closed knot in the form of a lotus flower.



Closed knot in the form of a rhombus.



Closed knot like an upside-down triangle.



Closed knot with slight extensions on the sides of the knot.



Closed knot like an elongated upside-down triangle.



Open knot like the letter U balancing on the line with a thin, short line or stroke.



Closed knot.











Al-mašq following the knot.





Curved *al-mašq* of the open knot.









Open knot with extending arms.	
Open knot with a triangular base and two uneven arms; the right arm extends leftward.	
Closed, sealed knot.	
Square knot.	
Curved, open knot and a base ending with a snake-like head.	
Open knot with <i>al-mašq</i> within the knot.	
Short bowl curved to the left then right.	
Bowl extending to the right, ending at a point.	

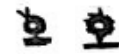
G̃ **غ**

Open knot like the letter U.	
Open knot like a crown with an ornamented top.	

F **ف**

An eye-like loop.	
A circular loop.	
A lamp-like loop.	
A rhomboid loop.	
an initial letter form with a leftward loop from a rising shaft.	
Drawn as a circle and connected to the baseline by a thin stroke.	

Radiating or star-like loop, resembling a daisy, chamomile flower or sunflower.



Elongation shaft with a pointed head.



Q

ق

Elongation shaft with a pointed head.



A circular loop.



Circular loop with a clipped tail.



A gracefully inscribed loop.



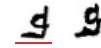
A circular loop connected to the baseline by a thin line on the right side of the loop.



A circular loop connected to the baseline by a thin stroke.



A pointed head and leftward tail.



A rhomboid loop.



K

ك

Feather-like forms on top of the shaft.



Flat along the baseline, with a leftward angled rise from the base followed by a right-angled apex leaning to the right.





Shaft rising from the leftward angled rise with flattening or broadening at the apex.





Shaft rising from the leftward angled rise, with a snake-like head at the apex.

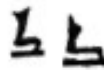



Angular hook rising from the leftward angled rise. 

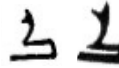
Angular hook rising from the leftward angled rise. 

Curved hook rising from the leftward angled rise. 

Pointed shaft rising from the leftward angled rise. 


Extended step rising from the leftward angled rise. 

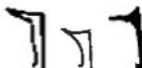
Shrunken form with an angular hook rising from the leftward angled rise. 


Extended shaft rising from the leftward angled rise with a snake-like head at the apex. 


L


J


Splintered apex, some of which in the form of a wide triangle. 

The apex bears an elongated, flag-like head pointing left. 

The apex resembles solar rays or sunflowers. 

The apex bears an elongated, flag-like head pointing right. 

The apex bears a triangular form similar to an arrowhead. 

The apex ends with a flat head, with two strokes. 

Elongated shafts.



Elongation shaft with half-palmette fan apex.



Elongated shaft at the same height of adjacent letters, bearing a triangular head at the apex.



Tail extending below the baseline and tilting slightly rightward.



Leftward *al-mašq* stretching to the left from the base of the shaft.



Leftward right-angled tail below the baseline.



Agile style.



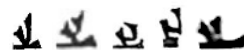
Extends slightly below the baseline.



The second *lam* descends below the baseline.



As an initial, this is inscribed in a small form and placed above the left-adjacent letter and in its terminal form, it is placed above the preceding letter.



As an initial, this is inscribed in a long form and placed above the left-adjacent letter and in its terminal form, it is placed above the preceding letter.



Leftward, right-angle turn in the tail.



Long shaft letter with the apex flattening or broadening in an exaggerated or excessive fashion.



Ornamented apex.



The second *lām* is shorter than the first *lām* in the same word and curves to the left over the shaft of the letter *hā*².



M

م

Circular knot aligned with the baseline.



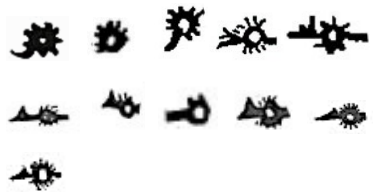
Arrow-like, triangular tail.



Feather-like tail.



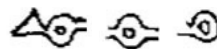
Radiating or star-like loop, resembling a daisy, chamomile flower or sunflower.



A wide, tight or perfectly round loop with a small point at its center, without lines.



Circular loop.



Arrow-like, triangular tail.



Ornamented loop.



Circular loop with an arrow-like, triangular tail.



Loop parallel to the baseline.



Loop placed above the baseline.



In the form of the isolated *hāʾ*.



Broadened at the apex of the shaft.



Consistent, precise roundness of the loop.



Pointed tail descending below the baseline with a slight curve to the left.



Short tail descending below the baseline.



Circular loop and parallel on the baseline.



As an initial, this is inscribed in a small form and placed above the left-adjacent letter and in its terminal form, it is placed above the preceding letter.



Circular loop and even with the baseline.



Circular loop and level with the baseline.



Al-mašq stretching leftward from the loop.



Shrunken form with arrow-like tail.



N

ن

The final stroke swings up and to the right.



The final stroke curls over to the right then up.



Arrow-like tip at the end of the stroke.



Right-angled final stroke.



Angular, broadening final stroke.



Downward curving and pointed final stroke.



Upward curve on the final stroke, rising to the left.



Circular shape, almost forming a complete circle.



Right-angled final stroke with a two-lobed leaf at the end.



Upward curve on the final stroke, rising to the right and terminating upward.



Vertical shaft and angled final stroke.



Triple or trefoil decoration on the shaft's apex or ending in three loops.



Upward curve on the final stroke, rising to the right then upward with a snake-like head at the apex.



Upward curve on the final stroke and rising to be equal in length with the initial letter of the same word.



Similar to the letter *rā*².



Ornamented on both ends.



Upward curve on the final stroke, rising to the right then terminating leftward like the head of a snake.



Upward curve on the final stroke, rising in an elongated fashion and ending with a point.



Descending below the baseline and terminating with a leftward right angle.



Leftward angular tail.



Beautiful upward curve on the final stroke, extending upward with a slope to the left.



Upward curve on the final stroke, ending in a simple foliation at the apex.



Curve at the end.



Bowl-shaped form with upward rise in the final stroke.



Downward curve on the final stroke, ending at a point.



Al-mašq (extension) following the shaft.



Dryness/Leftward right-angled turn following the shaft.



Upward curve on the final stroke with a sharp leftward reverse at the apex.



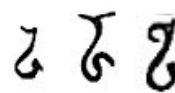
Upward curve on the final stroke, ending in the shape of a snake head.



Right-angled tail following the shaft.



Upward curve on the final stroke with a flat top at the apex.



Short final stroke with a pointed head at the end.



A reclined appearance, with the leftward end coming to a point.



Shrunken form.



H

h

Shrunk with a tightly curved final stroke.



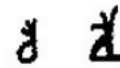
Crochet, perfectly spiral.



Shaft ending in the form of a triangle.



Feather- or leaf-like adornment at the apex of the shaft.

Shaped like an inverted $\gamma\bar{a}$ returning to the right.

Elongation and flattening at the apex of the shaft, with the flag-like form tilting leftward.



Triple or trefoil decoration atop the apex or ending in three loops.



Horizontal double loop against an angled shaft, which ends with an arrow-like apex.



Extended and ornamented shaft in the initial form of the letter.



Shaft med terminals that are not free from strokes.



Convolution of the shaft on its end in formulation,



Broadened and twisted apex of the shaft.



Double loops against a curved shaft with a snake-like apex.



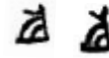
Pointed shaft.



Shaft ending in a broadening head like a palmette-shaped fan.



Elongation of the shaft, equaling other letters in all lines of the inscription.



Three branches from the apex of the shaft.



Apex of the shaft ends with a reclining or pointed head.



The shaft extends to the left to surround the rest of the letter, appearing like a spiral.



Angled and sloped inward from the shaft like a sharp angle.



Triangular shape.



W

و

With three branches or simple leaves/feathers at the end of the tail.



Clipped tail.



Tail ending in the form of an arrowhead.



Soft /Slightly downward and tapering tail



Right-angled tail.



Dryness / Right-angled tail from below the loop.



Slightly downward and tapering tail that is adorned with a double foliation.



Spiral form.



Curved spiral which its tail ends with two
taš'irāt.



Circular loop attached to a thin, short shaft.



Reclined form with a pointed tail.



Pointed head and vertical tail.



Y

س

Final stroke swings over to the right.



Final stroke ends upward with a triangle-
like apex.



The beginning of the retreating final stroke
takes a decorative form resembling clover
leaves.



The beginning of the retreating final stroke
takes a decorative form resembling clover
leaves, then the stroke extends far
rightward.



Triple /trefoil decoration / three loops.



Inscribed with a retreating tail and a pointed
tip.













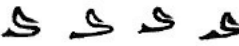


Simple leaves or feathers off of the rising
final stroke.



Lacking roundness but is inscribed with a
light protrusion.



- Flattened tail on the final downward stroke. 
- Deleted final curve. 
- Ends with terminal upward stroke bearing a broadened head like a palmette-shaped fan. 
- Horizontal S-like curve, followed by an upward final stroke equaling the height of the first letter of the word. 
- Vertical final stroke. 
- Soft final stroke. 
- Upward retreating tail with a pointed tip. 
- Elongated and slightly retreating tail with a terminal upstroke ending in an arrow-shaped apex. 
- Slightly retreating upstroke with a split at the apex. 
- S-like curve with pointed end. 
- As an initial, this is inscribed in a small form and placed above the left-adjacent *ḥā'* and in its terminal form, it is placed above the preceding letter. 
- A slight upward hump followed by a flat, pointed end. 
- S-like shape, sloping downward ending below the baseline. 

Short and tilts to the left.



Goblet-shaped.



Lotus-like form atop a triangle.



Triangular base with a rhomboid crown and topped with two upright lines, making the form of a cup.



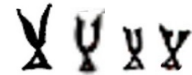
Dual-triangular base with two diagonal lines rising above.



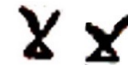
Palmettes extending from the rising arms atop a triangular base.



Goblet-like form.



Triangular base and two lines rising at an obtuse angle.



Maintains the form of a triangle-base.



Right arm rising higher than the left.



Triangular base and resembling a clip.



Two parallel arms emerging from a triangular base with their apexes ending in inward strokes.



Twisting or interlacing arms in the middle, forming a goblet.



Twisting or interlacing arms in the middle, almost forming a complete circle.



Triangular base with divergent arms.



Triangular base and parallel arms in a clip-like form.



Triangular base and parallel arms in a tweezer-like form.



Censer-like form.



Triangular base with two obtuse arms that form a goblet-like shape.



Twisting and interlacing arms atop a triangular base.



Triangular base and parallel arms in a clip-like form with flat end.

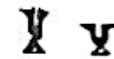




Figure 17: Inscribed tombstone built into a house wall

al-Zaylaī, *Nadwat al-Atār*, 1, 103, Figure 1



Figure 18: Another inscribed tombstone that was built into a house wall

al-Zaylaī, “The Southern Area”, 496, Pl, 44, no. 80



Figure 19: Tombstone inscriptions scattered in a cowshed
 al-Zaylāī, *Nadwat al-ʿĀtār*, I, 107, Figure 9



Figure 20: A number of tombstone inscriptions on and around the neck of a well
 Al-Zayilī, *Nadwat al-ʿĀtār*, I, 105, Figure 5

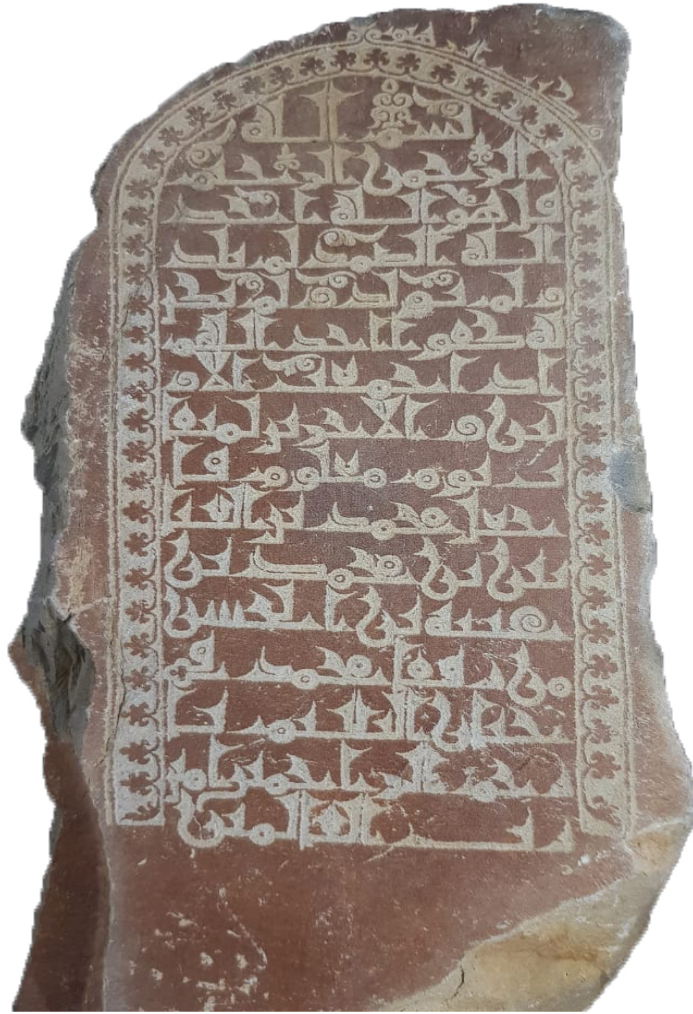


Figure 21: Inscribed tombstone bears the name of the calligrapher, Ibrāhīm

Juvin, Roads of Arabia, 511



Figure 22: Inscribed tombstone carries the name of calligrapher, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Ḥaramī

Akbarnia et al., *The Islamic World: A History in Objects*, 37

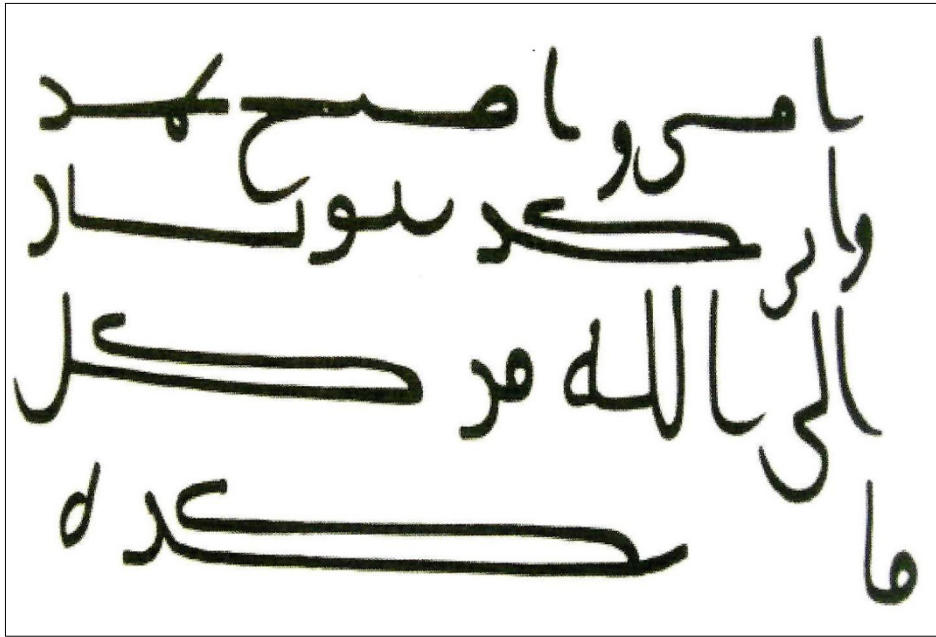


Figure 23: The most ancient undated rock inscriptions found in the Sal^c Mount in Medina goes back to Ġazwat al-Ĥandaq (trench battle) in 5/627

al-Ṭinayyan, *Nuqūš al-Qarn al-^oAwwal*, 110 Pl. 1, Figure 1

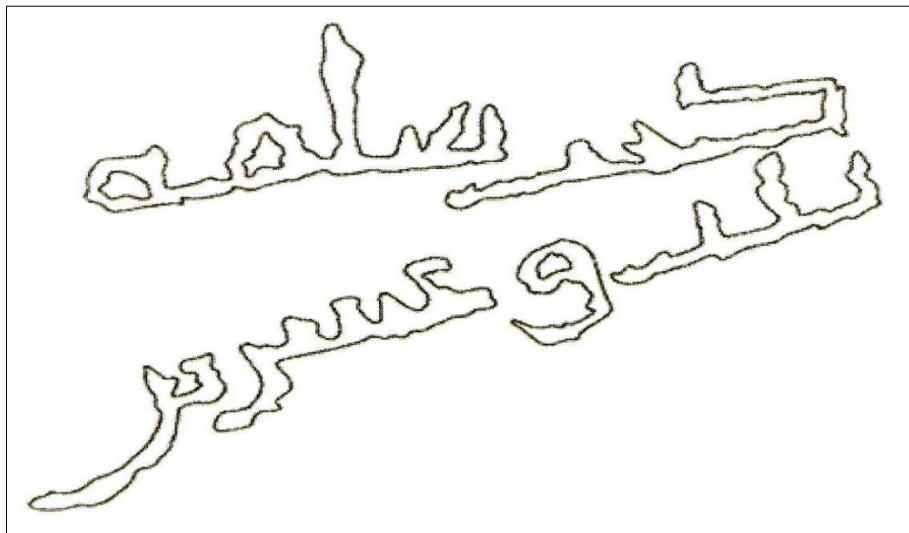


Figure 24: The oldest Islamic rock inscriptions in Saudi Arabia dated 23/643

al-Ṭinayyan *Nuqūš al-Qarn al-^oAwwal*, 110 Pl.1, Figure 2

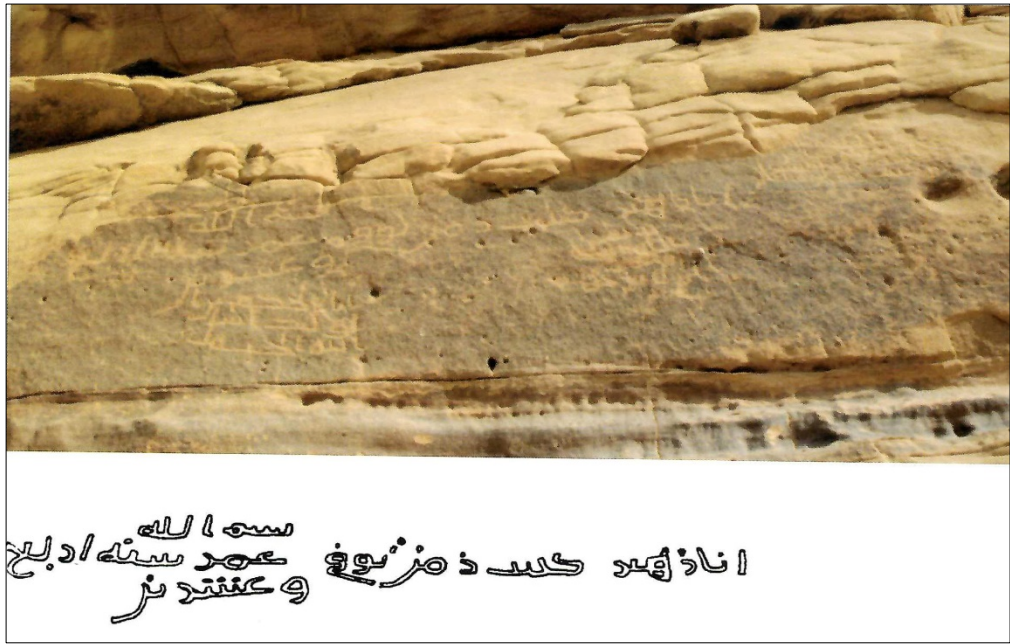


Figure 25: The second oldest Islamic rock inscription known in Saudi Arabia dated 24/644

George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, 29, no. 9

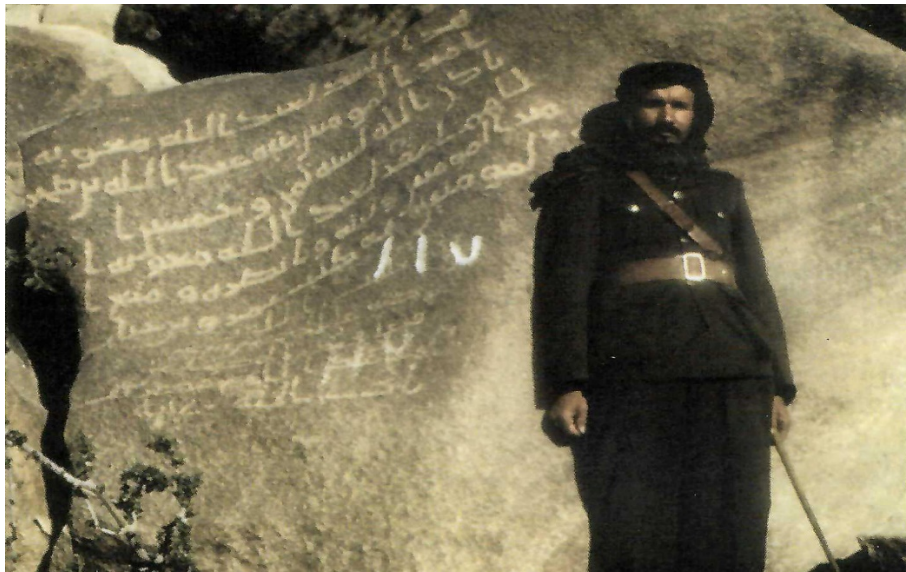


Figure 26: Foundation inscriptions commemorate the construction of a dam by the Umayyad caliph in 58/677-8

Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 86, Figure 3.3



Figure 27: Dr Sa'ad al-Rāšid contemplates a number of Islamic rock inscriptions in Rwāwah, near al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah

al-Rāšid, *Kitābāt Islamiyyah Ġayr Manšūrah*, 3, Pl. 1



Figure 28: Photo of one of the Aḡawāt (eunuch) of Medina, Saudi Arabia

Akbarnia et al., *The Islamic World: A History in Objects*, 67.

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