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KUḤFIC TOMBSTONES IN BRITISH COLLECTIONS

by

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Part I

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of Islāmic stelae in British Collections. The first part of the study is an examination of these stelae so that it was possible to give a full description of their shape, material, lettering and place of origin. This has been followed by comparisons between them and representative stelae from other parts of the Islāmic world. On reading the formulae and Qur'ānic verses found on them, it became clear that they all followed a common pattern. Thus the Qur'ānic verses are found on most of the stones, they are concerned with death, the hope of everlasting life in Paradise for the deceased and the Oneness and the eternity of God. On examining the stelae, especially concentrating on the name of the deceased, it was discovered that most of them were the descendants of Arab tribesmen who had come from Hijāz and Yaman and settled in Egypt. This is an historical point of great indication.

The second part of the study is a publication of the stelae themselves, where a translation of each is given together with a detailed commentary. Besides, some specific notes on their kufic script are made and it was possible thereby to make a comparison between these stelae and other known examples of kufic lettering.

Following this is a Chapter on epigraphic analysis and theories that have been held about it by Western scholars and Arab traditionalists. Stelae were divided from the epigraphic point of view and showed the whole range of development from the early primitive to mature writing. The mashq and its complicated rules have been fully discussed.

The last part comprises tables of the various alphabetical groups selected from our specimens and other stelae from North Africa and Sūdān.

After drawing these tables, it was possible for me to make my conclusions regarding the development of the kūfīc script in Africa during the period covered by those specimens.



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ABBREVIATIONS

A.O.	Ars Orientalis
C.I.A. Eg. I	Berchem, Max van. <u>Materiaux pour un corpus inscriptionum Arabicarum I ptie, Egypt (MMF XIX).</u>
C.I.A. Eg. 2	Wiet, Gaston. <u>Materiaux pour un corpus inscriptionum Arabicarum, 1 ptie, Egypt 2 (MIFAOL II).</u>
C.I.A. Jer. I.3	Berchem, Max van. <u>Materiaux pour un corpus inscriptionum Arabicarum, 2 ptie. Syrie du Sud. Jerusalem (MIFAO XLIII-XLV).</u>
J.R.A.S.	Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.
M.P.A.W.	Prussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin, Monatberichte.
O.L.Z.	Orientalistische Literatur Zeitung.
R.E.I.	Revue des Etudes Islamique, 1940-46.
"Stud-Sin" XII	Lewis, A.S., and Gibson, M.D. <u>Forty-one Facsimiles of dated Christian Arabic Manuscripts</u> (Cambridge, 1907)
Z.A.	Zeitschrift für Assyriologie.
Z.D.M.G.	<u>Deutsche morgenländische Gesellschaft.</u> Zeitschrift (Leipzig, 1836- ).







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 and Ḥusayn Rāshid  
 Houdas, O. et Basset, R.  
 Ibn Durustūwayh, ‘Abd Allāh  
 Ibn Ja‘far  
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TRANSLITERATION

a	ا	gh	غ
b	ب	f	ف
t	ت	q	ق
<u>th</u>	ث	k	ك
j	ج	l	ل
h	ه	m	م
<u>kh</u>	خ	n	ن
d	د	h	ح
<u>dh</u>	ذ	w	و
r	ر	y	ي
z	ز	a	نقطة
s	س	u	ضمة
<u>sh</u>	ش	i	كسرة
s	ص	ay	أبي
d	ض	aw	أو
t	ط	ī	بي
z	ظ	ū	و
‘	ع	ā	آ
		’	منزة

CHAPTER I

The Shāhids from Aswān



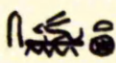
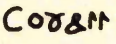
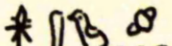
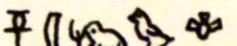
CHAPTER IINTRODUCTIONThe Shāhids from Aswān

Death is that inevitable break in life which all living things must experience as a prelude to eternal life. This being so, we find in ancient times that people paid more attention to the construction of their large and costly tombs than to the ordinary things of their every day lives. We find that in ancient Egypt the kings raised the Pyramids to guard and preserve the mummified bodies of their dead. In Mesopotamia they buried the deceased in their own houses but later they built special tombs and set up stones to mark the burial places.

Our subject is confined to the Arabic tombstones in the British Collections. Most of them came from Upper Egypt (Aswān). They belong to people of both sexes from the lower classes, such as potters, goldsmiths, bakers, dyers and the like, and from the higher classes as well. In addition to that one notices that the quality of the shāhid depended upon the wealth or poverty of the deceased, the richer she or he was the better his tombstone. The shāhids Nos. 8, 36, are a proof of this. They put their gravestones on their tombs as witnesses of their death. I have classified these tombstones chronologically and divided them into three groups. The first group consists of five tombstones from the third century after the Hijra/the ninth century A.D.; the second group of six tombstones from the fourth century A.H./the tenth century A.D., and the third from the fifth century A.H./eleventh century A.D.



All these tombstones except three, Nos. 6, 8, 9, which are in relief, are incised, and all of them are of limestone or sandstone except three, which are of marble, and one, No. 9, of granite. Wiet had noticed after compiling a table that the tombstones which were made of limestone increased in number after the rise of the Fāṭimid dynasty, while those made of marble became fewer.<sup>1</sup> However, he added that this should not be taken as final because most of the tombstones of the Fāṭimid period had not yet been discovered; and that those known came from only two localities, 'Ayn al-Ṣīra in the south of Caīro where most of the Egyptian Muslims used to build their tombs, and Aswān where the most ancient and important stone quarries were to be found. As we have mentioned Aswān let us see what the historians said about that place through the ages. The place they came from.

Aswān or Uswn, the southern limit of Egypt proper, 583 miles from Caīro, on the east bank of the river, called in Egyptian  Coptic  Uswn called by the Greeks Seyne, which stood on the slope of a hill to the south west of the present town. Properly speaking Seyne was the island of Elephantine. In the earliest Egyptian inscriptions it is called  or 

i.e. "the district of the elephants", and it formed the metropolis of the Ptolemies, the name Sunnu, i.e., the town of the east bank of the Nile,

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<sup>1</sup>Gaston Wiet, Journal Asiatique, Vol. ccxi (1952), pp. 243-297.



from whence comes the Arabic name Aswān, takes the place of Abu. The town obtained great notoriety among the ancients from the fact that Eratosthenes and Ptolemy considered it to be on the tropic of Cancer, and to be the most northerly point where at the time of the summer solstice the sun's rays fell vertically; as a matter of fact, however, the town lies 0°37'23" north of the tropic of Cancer. There was a famous well there into which the sun was said to shine at the summer solstice, and to illuminate it in every part. During the Romans' time the town was of considerable importance. Arabic writers describe it as a flourishing town and relate that a plague once swept off 20,000 of its inhabitants. Aswān was famous for its wine in Ptolemaic times. The town has suffered greatly at the hands of the Persians, Arabs and Turks. The oldest ruins in the town are those of a Ptolemaic temple which are still visible.

In Aswān the Nile becomes paler and more full of light. It is broken up again and again by huge sculptured groups of black rocks, after leaving these the Nile turns round on itself before continuing on its way, approaches them, turns around and then passes. The desert begins at once when approaching the west bank of the Nile, near the shore of the dead, where the ancient Egyptians chose to be buried, as stated above, so that, like the sun, who died there every night, they might be resurrected, as it was, every morning.

Aswān was as famous for its granite, as al-Silsilah was for its sandstone. The Egyptian kings were in the habit of sending to Aswān for granite to make sarcophagi, temples, obelisks, etc.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Budge, W., The Nile, London-Cairo (1912), pp. 332-336.



Near the quarries are two ancient Arabic cemeteries in which are a number of sandstone, limestone shāhids. In Aswān there are tombstones which belong to al-Anṣār, such as the tombstone of 'Abd Allah al-Ḥijāzī al-Anṣārī and that of 'Abd Shams al-Ṭā'ifī al-Anṣārī. One can also find some inscriptions mention Khalid b. al-Walīd, the unsheathed sword of God,

سيف الله المسلول Along the way from Aswān to Fiala island there are tombs of Muslims which go back to the khalifate 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb on the right side while on the left there were some minarets which have been replaced by some modern tombs.<sup>1</sup> Al-Maqrīzī in his Khiṭat<sup>2</sup> gives some details on Aswān. He said that the name Aswān derives from the verb أسى become sad, and مرسياه is a sad man. He stated that "Aswān is one of the most important countries in Upper Egypt, a part which links Nūbah with Egypt. There are many Arabs who live there and most of them are from Qaḥṭān, Nizār, Muḍar. Most of these tribes are from Ḥijāz. On the east of the city lies the marble mountain from where the Egyptians used to have their columns quarried. In the year 344 A.H. /956 A.D., the King of Nūba conquered the city and killed many of the Muslims. Al-Ilkhshīd sent

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<sup>1</sup>Ugo Monneret de Villard, La Necropoli Musulmana di Aswan (le Caire, 1930), p.2; J. Bruce, Voyage en Nubie et en Abyssinie, I, Pusigi, 1790, pp.169-170; F.L.Narden, Voyage d'Egypte et du Nubie, (London 1822), p. 4; M.A. Lancet, description de l'ile de Philae, descript de l'Egypte. I. (Paris 1809), p.2.

<sup>2</sup>p.197.



his leader Muḥammad al-Khāzin who defeated the king and returned to Egypt with many of the war captives. Banū al-Kanz settled there and the poet al-Faḍil from the tribe of Rabī'a praised them in his poems. When Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn established his Ayyūbīd dynasty, the Banū al-Kanz deserted the city. The Ayyūbīd soldiers, after conquering the city of Aswān, found the poems which praised this tribe on the walls. (Al-Maqrīzī, Kitāb al-Mawā'iz wal I'tibār etc.) It is worthwhile noticing too that at Aswān and at the same site, the shore of the dead, another famous Ismā'īlī spritual leader, Aghā Khān, chose his burial place built like a small mosque similar to that of the Fāṭimid mausoleums. And it was built of neat rectangular blocks of limestone of different colours, oatmeal, pink, bloom purple with a slightly stripy surface. Thus his followers of Ismā'ilya sect will make their pilgrimage up there on the hill where the Aghā's tomb stands.

The fact that they come for Aswān and 'Ayn al-Ṣīra is of special importance. 'Ayn al-Ṣīra was a Sunnī centre, and thus the tombstones coming from this place have the Sunnī formulae.

Aswān on the other hand seemed to have been a centre for Shī'ism and Shī'ite propaganda. In fact, all the tombstones coming from Upper Egypt, and especially from Aswān, have the Shī'ite formulae. This is true all through the Fāṭimid rule in Egypt. The majority of these tombstones under consideration are rectangular except two (Nos. 8, 32) dated 381A.H./981 A.D. and 455 A.H./1063 A.D. which are square. The shāhids in general take several forms. The most ancient shape for the shāhid is the rectangular. The rectangle in almost all these shāhids lost one of its four



angles or two of its four corners vanished, while sometimes parts of its vertical or horizontal sides were broken, and these shāhids were meant to be fixed on the head of the tomb to form the shāhid or witness.<sup>1</sup>

### The Definition

The word شاهد is a noun of the verb شهد to witness or attend, shāhid means earth, gravestone, sometimes it is called بركة النبع the balāta of the mausoleum. شهد One of God's names. Shāhid = a'ālim who shows what he knows and the verse شهد الله أنه لا اله الا هو<sup>2</sup>

The witness said what he saw in the court = he disclosed the facts he knew. Shāhid = one who witnesses the truth. Shāhid = present. The Qur'ānic verse انا انزلناك بالبينات والمرسلات = we sent you to your nation with the Qur'an. Another meaning of al-shāhid is the star. The ṣalāt al-shāhid is ṣalāt al-fajr because the traveller prays it like others who are not. Others stated that the ṣalāt al-shāhid is given to both al-maghrib and al-fajr.<sup>3</sup> The shāhid can be, as well, equivalent to al-lisān = tongue. Thus the expression لشيرة شاهد = x has a beautiful tongue = good words. Shāhid = ملك = king. Abu Bakr the Caliph said ما لشيرة راء من شاهد i.e. he does not look beautiful and he is not eloquent.<sup>4</sup> It is worthwhile noticing when speak-

<sup>1</sup>E. Levi Provencal. Inscriptions Arabes d'Espagne, p. xxiv.

<sup>2</sup>Lisān al'Arab, p. 238.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p. 240.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 243.



ing of the shāhid the different names given to it by writers in English and French. The French translation of the word shāhid is usually one of the following, stele, dalle, epitaphe, while the English use: gravestone, shāhid, epitaph and tombstone. We find them scattered all in the eastern as well as the western part of the Islamic world and in Spain. (In Persia the types of buildings on which the inscriptions occur are, first, the towers, either minarets or tomb towers, the latter called mashhad (place of martyrdom), or maqad "place of rest". The tomb itself is called more specifically in Persia rawda, "garden", in memory of tradition "his tomb is one of the gardens of Paradise".)

Other shapes of the shāhids besides the rectangular can be traced.

E. Levi Provençal<sup>1</sup> divided the tombstones from Spain into:

1. the rectangular tombstones with kufic inscriptions in relief.
2. rectangular tombstones with incised kufic inscriptions.
3. the pillars.
4. steles almerienne.
5. prismatic tombstones which are called in the dialectal Morocco "Maqqbariyya".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> p.xxi.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. Bull, Inscriptions Arabes de Fes, p.13, note 2; H. Basset et al. Levi Provençal, chella: une necropole merinide, p.11, note 5 and 130 seq.



The marble pillar<sup>1</sup> was used instead of the rectangular shāhid if we consider the pillar of the mystic Dhul Nūn who died 245 H./860 A.D.<sup>2</sup> is considered as an isolated case, the first example of using the pillar to replace the gravestone in Egypt goes back to 405 H./1015 A.D., modelled on their use in Tunis and also in Spain.

We find also the shāhids which are known as<sup>3</sup> "La stele almerienne", which Provencal thought a better expression for that sort of funeral stone. Provencal stated that the tombstones from the west of the Islamic area follow the same system of writing; the lower part is always left blank. Sometimes we find within the frieze of the balāṭa an arch mounting two pillars framing the epigraph. Between them there is incised writing in a rectangular frame which in general has two lines of inscriptions at the beginning of the text. The composed unit always has decorations and floriated designs. This type of tombstone is found also in Sicily and in Africa. It reminds us of the niche of the mihrāb<sup>4</sup> and that is why it is sometimes called "dalles a arc symbolique". Examples of the same can be traced in Egypt.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Wiet, Journal Asiatique, vol. ccxi, p. 274.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p.274; Repertoire, II, No. 440.

<sup>3</sup>Levi-Provencal, inscr. p. xxv.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p.xxiv.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Wiet Steles funeraires, Vol. 2, Nos. 8589 dated 2472872, 338015 dated 2482862.



Sometimes these shāhids are surrounded by a wide or narrow border or margin. This margin is simple, incised or in relief. Examples of the first kind can be seen on the shāhids Nos. 14, 19, 23, 32; the second sort is on the rest of the shāhids. The shāhids Nos. 33 and 34 are provided with Qur'ānic verses on the margin. Among the shāhids now being studied, two have spiral decorations, while the shāhid No. 36 is surrounded with a margin decorated with three palm leaves. Coptic influences are quite apparent in these margins. It is noticed that this margin has<sup>1</sup> nothing to do with the inscriptions inside.

### The Inscriptions.

The texts are engraved in a simple kufic. In style they fall into two main groups: carved in relief and incised. Each of these two kinds has two types. The incised tombstones were used earlier than the one in relief because of the ease. In the beginning they used a sharp instrument like the cunei to carve the stone. Thus the shallow undisciplined and irregular writing was produced. That was the first kind of engraving. After that they thought of tidying it and making it more perfect. They began to smooth the surface of the stone and drew horizontal lines for keeping

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<sup>1</sup>G.C.Miles, "Early Islamic Tombstones from Egypt in the Museum of Fine Arts", Boston, 1956, in A.O., p.216; Ḥasan, Hawwārī and Ḥusayn Rāshid, Steles Funeraires, Vol. I, Catalogue General du Musee Arabe du Cairo, Cairo (1952) No. 1193.



equal spaces. Such horizontal lines can be seen on the shāhids Nos. 3, 5, 14, 20, 21, 29, 31, 34.

Later they wrote the inscriptions with black ink then incised it with sharp instruments and in this way the writing became accurate. This treatment helped much to fill the spaces with ornaments and designs, and even the inscription itself could be decorated. That is the second stage of writing. The oldest slab in which this method had been used is the Shāhid of 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Khayr al Hijrī which is dated 31 H./652 A.D.<sup>1</sup> The second balāṭa was a shāhid dated 81 H./701 A.D., No. 4. After that the engraver began to provide the heads of the shafts of the alifs with apices pointing to the left. Yet the oldest example of the carving in relief was the Nilometer in Rōḍah dated 91 H./710 A.D.<sup>2</sup> The most ancient shāhids having inscriptions in relief are dated 203/81 H./710 A.D.<sup>3</sup> This way of writing was used at the beginning of the third century because the incised inscriptions are easier to make than those in relief. In the first kind the engraver only carved the writing whereas in the second, he had to engrave the whole slab, thus the script remained in relief. This way of writing is a greater help to filling the spaces with more decorations.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hasan, Hawwārī and Ḥusayn Rāshid, Steles Funeraires. Vol. I. Catalogue General du Musee Arabe du Cairo, Cairo (1952) No. 1.

<sup>2</sup>S.Flury, Islamische Schriftbänder. Amida -Dyar Bakr, Basel, Paris 1920, Pl.1.

<sup>3</sup>Steles, Cairo, Vol. I, No. 39.

<sup>4</sup>Cairo Steles, Vol. I, pp. 6 - 8.



When the engraver had to deal with hard stone or marble, he met the difficulty by using the simple relief and by tapping lightly in the empty spaces. This is the second phase of the relief script. The earliest shāhid prepared by this method was a tombstone dated 426/1035 A.D.<sup>1</sup>

Our specimens show that the inscriptions on them are incised except the shāhids Nos. 8, 9, which are in relief. The inscriptions mentioned above are sometimes called nuqūsh. This writing, as we have already said, was incised with great difficulty, and in spite of the lining we can easily see that the inscriptions are not regular and the distances between the words are not the same. In only one case has the tiredness<sup>2</sup> of the engraver exhausted his patience when finishing. This phenomenon is seen in the last three lines of the majority of these inscriptions.

We rarely find a very beautiful calligraphy and sometimes the kufic script looks like the cursive form, as is clear in the shāhids Nos. 7, 12, 26, 35. Wiet thinks that these incised shāhids help only a little in playing any important part in the evolution and development of the Arabic epigraphy. It is interesting to note the two controversial opinions of Wiet and Miles as to the importance of these inscriptions in the study of some tombstones kept in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. I should think that it is unwise to follow either of these extreme views. They are but simple

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<sup>1</sup>Cairo Steles, No. 2977.

<sup>2</sup>Wiet, J.A., p. 274; and Steles Funeraires, Vol. I, pl. II.



monuments as a memorial to unknown Egyptian Muslims just to ask for the mercy of God for the deceased and to ask the passer by to do the same for the deceased.

The construction of the letters as well as the contents of the text is simple. While the first is far from being a masterpiece in drawing, the second is still further from eloquence. The decorations on the shāhids are Islamic and show marked Coptic influences. They remained so till they developed their own special characteristics. The differences between the Islamic and Coptic decorations can be easily recognised. We can easily trace them in the lobed palmettes, the depth of the inscriptions and in this they differ from Coptic art. These ornaments on the shāhid, though scanty, can be considered the most ancient Islamic dated decorations.<sup>1</sup>

#### Qur'ānic verses and formulae

Most of our specimens have the Shī'ite formulae: "O God bless Muhammad the Prophet and his family the pure", and they can be seen on the shāhids from No. 13 dated 392 H./1002 A.D., until the shāhid No. 35 dated 462 H./1071 A.D., while the shāhid No. 3 dated 252 H./887 A.D., the shāhid No. 4 dated 256 H./870 A.D., the shāhid No. 5 dated 291 H./904 A.D. the shāhid no. 6 dated ?? the shāhid No. 7 dated 300 H./913 A.D. and No. 8 dated 381 H./991 A.D. have the Qur'ānic verses mentioning

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Stèles funéraires, Vol. I, p.8.



the name of the deceased and after that comes the date of his death.<sup>1</sup> The shāhid No. 36 dated 554 H./1160 A.D. has the Sunnite formula as well as the Shī'ite. Thus the Sunnite formulae can be traced before, and after and even during the Fāṭimid rule in Egypt.<sup>2</sup> The Fāṭimids encouraged the cursing of the first three Khalīfas and certainly other "Companions", for they were regarded as 'Alī's enemies, and inscriptions were made on the coins and on the walls of the mosques emphasising the prerogatives of 'Alī and his successors. As ibn Zūlāq states, the "Companions" were cursed by the Khalīfas on the pulpits throughout Egypt. The whole community of Egyptian officials had to pass judgment in accordance with the Fāṭimids' cannon law. The desire for office seems to have led to the conversion of some Sunnī as well as some non-Muslims to the Shī'ite sect. The cursing of the "Companions" and the Sunnī in general was a legacy of al-Mu'izz to his successors and severe punishment was inflicted on any person who referred to the merits of the Orthodox khalīfas.<sup>3</sup> Yet the Shī'ite formulae disappeared after the fall of the Fāṭimid dynasty and the Sunnite

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<sup>1</sup>Repertoire, iv. Nos. 1262, 1302, 1378, 1381, 1392, 1421, 1437, 1461, 1462, 1464, 1467, 1479, 1488, 1492, 1496, 1549, 1554, v, No. 1626, 1628, 1634, 1652, 1653, 1655, 1657. Steles, v, Nos. 1648, 1712, 1717, 1728, 1729, 1733, 1792, 1793, 1494, 1800, 1809, 1815, 1827, 1840.

<sup>2</sup>Wiet, J.A., p. 278.

<sup>3</sup>C.f. Ibn Muyassar, D. 677 A.H./1278 A.D. Ta'rikh Miṣr, Cairo, 1919, p.32; Al-Maqrīzī, Vol. 2, p. 340; Ibn Khellikān, Vol. 2, p. 442.



formulae replaced them. Between the years 364-537 A.H./974-1143 A.D. the Qur'ānic verses and the "Sunnite" formulae were not made use of and the "Shī'ite" replaced them. The Sunnite formulae which were commonly used are, "...testification that there is no God but He, the Mighty, the wise. There is no partner with Him and that Muḥammad is his servant and his messenger, may God bless him and give him peace, and that paradise is truth and the fire and resurrection are truth, and that God will rise up those in the graves."<sup>1</sup> "...verily in God there is consolation for every adversity and compassion for all that perishes, and understanding for what has passed."<sup>2</sup> We can find this formula on many shāhids whether from Egypt or North Africa, "and verily the greatest of adversities is the adversity (of the death) of the Prophet Muḥammad, may God bless him and give him peace."... "Praise be to God who has written mercy for himself and death for his creatures and resurrection at his decision and the final reckoning at his sanction..." Between the years 71 A.H./691 A.D. and 349 A.H./961 A.D. only two shāhids have the Shī'ite formulae. In 'Ayn al-Ṣira the two formulae, the "Sunnite" as well as the Shī'ite can be seen. This is not strange because on one of the tombstones, which are published by Roy et Poinssot the deceased in spite of the existence of the Fāṭimid rule, was

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<sup>1</sup>Part of Sura XXII:VII.

<sup>2</sup>P. Jouon, Recherches de science religieuse, XXV, pp. 513-530.

<sup>3</sup>George Miles, Nos. 5, 12, 13; Bernard Roy et Paul Poinssot, Inscriptions Arabes de Kairouan. Vol. 2, steles Nos. 92, 93, 102.



believing in Islām, Sunna and Gamā'a.<sup>1</sup>

ما على الإسلام دينه والجماعة

All the texts on the shāhids begin with the basmala, بسم الله, except No. 8, which begins with بسم, then two or sometimes more, verses from the Qur'ān, except the shāhids Nos. 3, 9, where we find that the formula, "...this is the grave of..." comes exactly after the basmala and the same order occurs on the shāhid no. 4. The shāhid No. 6 has that formula which we frequently see on tombstones before the rise of the Fātimid dynasty "...the paradise is true, the fire is true, the resurrection is true, and God will rise up those in the graves".

One can notice that all the formulae, whether the Sunnite or the Shī'ite, from Egypt or from North Africa and even in Spain, are articles without titles. The texts contained in these tombstones have a sort of religious feeling. Wiet mentioned during the publication of the steles kept in the Museum of Islamic Art that the formulae came into being, gained popularity, and at last declined.<sup>2</sup> That means that the majority of the

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<sup>1</sup>Poinsot, inscr., Steles Nos. 137 p.249, on a tombstone of Laṭīf al 'Attār who insisted on mentioning that he died على الإسلام a Muslim, والدين traditionalist and والجماعة of al-jamā'a = the Orthodoxy.

<sup>2</sup>c.f. Wiet, p. 276; Mme. V.A.Khratchkowskaya, The Arab Tombstones in the Museum of Topographic in the Academy of Science, U.S.S.R. Leningrad (1929), pp. 114, seq. stated that there are three permanent parts for almost all the tombstones: (1) al-basmala, (2) the name of the deceased, (3) his profession; in addition to that there are other accidental statements: (1) the date, (2) Qur'ānic verses and moral religious sentences which she called "eulogie a report", (3) benediction of the Prophet, (4) other formulae for mercy.



people were ignorant and the epitaphic language which concerns the deceased people was dictated by specialists. The inscriptions are far from being the literature of highly skilled artists or even original. They are formulae already known to the engraver and families, as nowadays, had to choose the expressions that expressed their sadness. To prove this a shāhid of an unknown person was discovered having the formula

هذا ماتت بـ نادرة " ابنه نادرة قيلة نادرة نادرى  
x..... ibnat x..... of x tribe...." On the shāhid No. 3 I noticed this formula more than that on the shāhid No. 6 of "Sitt al-Fakher". Her family insisted on mentioning her name, her father's name, her grandfather's name, and the tribe she came from. Thus the shāhid is complete about all that concerned the deceased.

Most of the shāhids affirm the eternity and oneness of God and the transience of life; that He has no partner and He is everlasting, and Muḥammad was his servant and messenger. Even the Angels and men imbued with knowledge and established in righteousness proclaim that there is no God but He the Mighty, the Wise. The majority of the shāhids have the formulae of the benediction of Muḥammad, the Prophet.

Phraseology of death and thinking of the second life shows an extensive usage of Qur'ānic verses, traditions, and Arabic poetry. From the Qur'ān we find the following verses: "Praise be to God who has written mercy for Himself and death for his creatures". "Every one that is upon earth perishes, but the (face) person of Your Lord abideth, the possessor of glory and honour".

And from the traditions we have "In this world we live as travellers passing over a passage and everyone must consider himself one of those who



live in the grave".<sup>1</sup> Abul 'Atahia wrote on a silk textile some poems now in Turkish possession - "Death is a door through which all people must pass", or "You have no guarantee against death which comes quickly, in the twinkling of an eye or the drawing of a breath and you will meet the Angels and keepers of paradise or hell".

In the stelae under consideration, we find that the shāhids Nos. 14, 16 and 34 have the verses "Verily those who say Our Lord is God and then walk uprightly, upon them shall Angels descend (saying) 'Fear thee not neither be thou sad, but rejoice thee in the paradise which thou hast been promised'".<sup>2</sup> While the shāhids Nos. 12, 31 and 32 have the verses: "Everyone that upon it (the earth) perisheth, but the person (literally face) of the Lord abideth, the possessor of glory and honour".<sup>3</sup> The shāhids Nos. 5, 13, 22, 24, 25, 26, 30, 32 and 35 have the surat al-Ikhlās, which we frequently find on most of the steles whether from Aswān or 'Ayn al-Şīra, "Say He is the one God, He is the refuge of all, He begetteth not and he is not begotten, and there is none like unto him". On the shāhids Nos. 19 and 36 we find: "Their God send them glad tidings of mercy from himself and of good will, and of gardens wherein lasting pleasure shall be theirs, abiding therein for ever; verily with God is a great reward".<sup>4</sup> The shāhids nos. 10, 11, 21 and 29 have the: "Every soul

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<sup>1</sup>c.f. Wiet, Soieries persanes, p. 33; Dermenchem, les plus beaux textes Arabes, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup>Sūra xii. 30.

<sup>3</sup>Sūra iv. 26, 27.

<sup>4</sup>Sūra. IX 21, 22.

<sup>5</sup>Sūra xxv.



shall taste of death; and to us you will give resurrection". On the shāhids Nos. 3, 7 and 9 we find the formula: "This is the tomb of", such formula precedes the name of the deceased and is accompanied by the verb shāhida. We can trace this formula till the year 246 A.H./361 A.D.<sup>1</sup> In the shāhid No. 1 we find the formula, "The mercy of God be upon him and His forgiveness and His favour be upon him", but in shāhid No. 3 we find the formula, "His favour be upon him", comes after the name of the deceased, and at the same time the formula, "He testifies that there is no partner to God", is also stated in the shāhid (lines 7 and 8).

The other shāhids have different verses. On the shāhid No. 4, we find quotations from the Qur'ān followed by the formula, "This is the tomb of..." then the Shahāda that God is one, at the end of the shāhid (lines 7, 8, 9) we find the verses, "That death, the resurrection, the fire and the paradise are all true", "and that God will raise up those in the graves". On the shāhid No. 6 after the basmala there is, "This is what testifies...", but after the name of the deceased comes the Shahāda and at last the verses of (Sūr. 22:7). On the shāhid No. 15 we find: "This is a sufficient announcement for men; and that they may be warned there by, and that they may know that He is one God, and that the discreet may remember".<sup>2</sup> On the shāhid No. 23 we find: "Hasten thee to forgiveness from Thy Lord and to a paradise the width where of is as the heavens and the earth, which is provided for the God-fearing".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Poinssot, inscr. No. 151. Wiet, J.A. p. 287.

<sup>2</sup>Sūr. XIV. 52.

<sup>3</sup>Sūr. iii. 127.



It is not unusual to find two or more shāhids having the same formulae or Qur'ānic verses because we can prove this on the majority of steles kept in the Museum of Islamic Arts.<sup>1</sup>

On the shāhids Nos. 12, 15, 19, 23, 25, 29, before the name of the deceased we find, "O God have mercy upon Thy servant that hath need of Thy mercy...", on steles Nos. 8, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36, all of them for women, have the formulae, "...and have mercy on Thy handmaiden who hath need of Thy mercy", or the formulae, "...have mercy upon Thy servant that hath need of Thy mercy..." This formula is found on tombstones from the year 358 A.H./969 A.D., but in the year 312 A.H./925 A.D. the simpler expression "your servant", is frequently used.

#### Nomination.

It was the habit of almost all the shāhids to mention the name of the deceased. The most interesting point in these shāhids is the nisbah of the deceased. Most of it refers to Arab tribes who came to live in Egypt during the Arab conquest. Some of the nisbahs go back to the home, this prevailed after the year 200 A.H./816 A.D. The nisbah, which refers to the tribes can also be traced. The nisbah, whether it refers to the home or the tribe, comes after the Qur'ānic verses. On some shāhids the name of the deceased is accompanied by his job such as shāhids Nos. 7, 13, 5, 32, 33. In addition to that if he or she had been a mawlah or mawlat or umm walad مولى. مولات. أم ولد free man or handmaiden, a slave wife to anyone, that must be mentioned (shāhids Nos. 1, 5, 10.21.)<sup>2</sup>. Rarely it

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<sup>1</sup>Wiet, J.A. p. 278.

<sup>2</sup>Wiet, Journal Asiatique, 240, page 282, gave a list containing names of some independents who were under protection of rich people or of high ranks.



happened to have al-Mukannā (nicknamed) as we find on shāhid No. 13

بركات المكنى أبو الحسيه of Barakāt al Mukannā Abū al-Ḥusayn. This expression is not frequently used whether on tombstones from Egypt or North Africa or Sūdān.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand we find the word المروف al Ma'rūf mentioned on shāhids Nos. 23, 31, the former belongs to a man while the latter to a woman. On the shāhids of the female, whether from North Africa, Egypt, Sūdān, which I have had examined I could not find any having the expression المروفه al Ma'rūfah. The above mentioned expression is unique, I found it only on shāhid No. 31.

The shāhids Nos. 26 and 32 have Christian names. That means that during the Fāṭimid reign the non-Muslims whether Christians or Jews were fairly treated. This tallies with what the historians relate about this. Another thing which proves that Shī'ism was prevailing more in the south of Egypt where most of the Christians live than the North is the fact that these tombstones found in Aswān all have the Shī'ite formula for people who have Christian names, but on the contrary the Sunnite formulae can be easily traced on tombstones from the North during the Fāṭimid rule. We can add that these shāhids clearly show that many Christians and Jews were converted into Islām and kept their Christian names as well as their family names.

The Christians and the Jews were treated with consideration under the Fāṭimids, and the persecutions of al-Ḥākim were but a part of the

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<sup>1</sup>See Poinssot, stele No. 244 belongs to a man named 'Abd al-Rahmān al Mukannā Abū al-Qāsim.



tyranny which fell upon the Egyptians as a whole. Indeed, on more than one occasion members of the two religions weretreated with marked favouritism.<sup>1</sup> Under the Khalifa al Mustanşir (427-487 A.H. = 1035-1095 A.D.) and his successors they occupied most of the financial places in the government and even the office of the Wizārah. For example Ya'qūb b. Killis who played a major part in the flourishing of the Fātimid civilization had his authority during the time of al-'Azīz and al-Hākim.<sup>2</sup>

Among the shāhids under consideration I found three having similar names. They belong to the same family. Shāhid No. 11 dated 408 A.H./1017 A.D. belongs to the grandfather Ishaq b. Ya'qūb b. Ishaq b. of Ibrāhīm. The Shāhid no. 16 dated 420 A.H./1029 A.D. to one of the two brothers Ibrāhīm, the other shāhid No. 23 dated 431 A.H./1040 A.D. belongs to his brother Ismā'īl. To find one or more shāhids belonging to one family is not unusual for we can see the same thing on tombstones from Egypt and North Africa.<sup>3</sup> Our specimens contain another two groups

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<sup>1</sup>Abu Ṣāliḥ, Kanā'is Waadyerat Mişr, B.T.A. Evetts, Oxford, 1895, pp. 32, 43, 44, 77, 78.

<sup>2</sup>c.f. Ibn Khillikān, Wafiyāt al A'yān, Vol. 2, p.441; Al-Ṣayrafī 'Alī, Kitāb al Ishārah, p. 23; Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, The Fātimids in Egypt, Cairo, 1932, p. 259; Zakī Ḥasan, Kunūz al Fatimyyīn, Cairo, 1937, p.330; Margoliouth, Cairo, Jerusalem and Damascus, p. 27; Mann, J, The Jews in Egypt and in Palestine under the Fātimid Caliphs, Oxford, 1920, pp. 19,20.

<sup>3</sup>See, Wiet, J.A., p. 288, Repertoire: II, No. 761; III, Nos. 812, 834, 963, 1008, 1011, 1061, 1077; IV, Nos. 301, 1354, 1387, 1389, 1425, 1466, 1469, 1504, 1505; steles IV, Nos.1595., V., No. 1627, 1642, 1654, 1714, 1730,1735.



and each group belongs to one family. The shāhids No. 15 of Ja'far dated 418 A.H./1027 A.D., No. 16 of Mubāraka dated 421 A.H./1030 A.D.; No. 19 of Yahyā dated 422 A.H./1031 A.D., No. 24 of Qāsim dated 432 A.H./1040 A.D. belong to 'Abd al-Samad's family. The shāhids Nos. 15, 19, belong to two brothers Ja'far and Yahyā sons of Ahmad. The shāhid No. 17 belongs to Mubāraka the daughter of Ibrāhīm, third son of Ahmad. The second group contains the shāhids Nos. 16 dated 420 A.H./1029 A.D. and 23 dated 431 A.H./1040 A.D. The two were brothers and members of Ishāq's family. In spite of this each of the slabs of the two groups seems to have been engraved by different engravers because the kufic script differs greatly. On the shāhid No. 30 we can find another important notice, the name of the deceased is followed by "Itāqat (emancipation) Ja'far". This word إتاقاة 'Itāqat has not occurred on any of the shāhids whether from Egypt, North Africa, or Sūdān hitherto published and seen by me.

From these thirty six tombstones we can collect that fifteen belong to women (Nos. 4, 10, 13, 14, 17, 20, 22, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 35 and 36). This means that nearly half of the steles belong to females. Most of the shāhids for the women are taller, more elegant, tidy and more carefully incised than those for the other sex.<sup>1</sup> The shāhid No. 36 of Sitt al-Fakhr can be taken as a clear witness of what I say, even its kufic letters are

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<sup>1</sup>c.f. P. Loun, Recherches de science religieuse, XXV, p. 513-530; Ibid, p. 514. Rouet Poinssot, p. 157, Levi Provencal, Inscr. p. XX.



floriated. I can find no explanation of this better than nature.<sup>1</sup>

This tallies with Wiet's calculation of the "Steles Funeraires" in the above mentioned Museum of Cairo, where he states that out of 3776, 1966 belong to men and 1800 belong to women; i.e. both sexes have almost the same number of stelae. Poinssot and Provencal in North Africa and Spain state that the male numbers are by far larger than female, in Tunis 24 epitaphs for women from 101 steles.

On female shāhids some have the proper name, while others the word سِتّ sitt followed by different kunyas. Such case can be seen on the shāhid No. 36 of سِتّ الفخر Sitt al Fakhr or Fajr, daughter of al-Qāsim. This is not an exceptional case because we can find the same treatment on female shāhids from North Africa. The word سِتّ sitt is an oriental alteration of the word سَيِّدَة Sayyida or lady with the sense of the respected lady or the mistress of the house who always has the upper hand at home. On some shāhids we find سِتّ الدار sitt al Dār (the first lady at home) سِتّ الكل sitt al-kull (the most great lady of all), etc.... One can ask whether this kunya is given to the eldest lady in the house as a matter of respect?<sup>2</sup> Sometimes we find

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<sup>1</sup>Wiet in his article in J.A. stated that from 22 stelae there were twelve epitaphs for females.

<sup>2</sup>Poinssot, on stele No. 279 the name of the deceased is Sayyidat al-Jami',

سَيِّدَة الجميع No. 258, sitt al-ahl is the deceased's name etc....



أُمُّ الْعَزِيزِ amat al 'Azīz, أُمُّ الْحَقِّ amat al Haqq etc. Is it a matter of giving real names to those dependants or only for euphony to let her forget that she is really a slave? Another characteristic of one inscription which does not agree with Howard<sup>1</sup> and Rāshid is that all the dating comes at the end. The answer may be difficult. It seems that the answer to the question is that the latter assumption is more reasonable. There is a last remark concerning this matter. It is a common practice still in many parts of the Arab world not to mention the proper names of the wife or the daughter for men as they consider it indelicate.<sup>1</sup> It seems to me also that the qualities as sitt al-Dār, sitt al-Fakhr, etc. took the place of the Christian names so as to express respect to certain ladies of the family. Among other kunyas that deserve special notice is umm walad.<sup>2</sup>

All the shāhids end with the date of death preceded by توفى tuwuffiya for male and توفيت tuw uffiyat for the female. On the shāhids Nos. 16, 23, the date is preceded by قاضى نهبه qaḍā nahḥbahu while the shāhid No. 4 has كانت وفاته wakanat wafātuḥa. Ḥasan Hawwārī and Ḥusayn Rāshid<sup>3</sup> noticed that the dating of decease runs as follows:

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<sup>1</sup>S. M. Zbiss, Inscriptions Arabes de Tripoli, Vol. XIII, Tom. 1<sup>er</sup>, Tunis, 1955, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup>See note on umm walad, Stele No. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Vol. I, p. 8.



first comes the month, the day follows next, and the year comes last. I followed in arranging the shāhids Nos. 24 and 25, 32 and 33 of one date what Ḥasan Hawwārī and Ḥusayn Rāshid suggested at the alphabetical order. Thus shāhid No. 24 is placed before shāhid No. 25 and No. 32 before No. 33. Ḥasan Hawwārī and Ḥusayn Rāshid again noticed that on the stone shāhids the dating comes in the middle of the text while on the marble ones it occurs at the end.

As to their first notice on the dating in my inscriptions this arrangement is different. In fact only one inscription, No. 4 in my collection, follows theirs. Two shāhids Nos. 4, 8, lack the date of death.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes we find on tombstones that the deceased was killed and thus he became a shāhid,<sup>2</sup> while it is mentioned on the remaining thirty four.

The name of the months, particularly Jumādā, whether the former or the latter (awwal, ākhir) is treated as masculine as we see on the shāhids Nos. 10, 11, 13. An exception to this rule is the shāhid No. 3, where the month of Jumādā is treated correctly as feminine. Yet feminine

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<sup>1</sup>Poinssot, Inscr. Arabes de Kairouan. Vol. 2 (1950), p. 192, mentioned that the inscriptions of Qayrawān contain the ages of the deceased, whether he was almost a child, Nos. 277, 235, or a youth Nos. 273, 317, 337, 541, 593, or aged men who lived more than eighty years, Nos. 275, 521 and 598. In Spain as well as in Qayrawān the age of the deceased is mentioned. Cf. Provencal, inscr. Arabes d'Espagne, P. XXI, Nos. 2, 22, 119, 179.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Ibid, No. 201.



treatment of Jumādā can be traced on other tombstones from Egypt and North Africa. Another thing which we can notice is that the months dhū al-Qa'dah, and dhū al-Hijja keep always the article as already seen on the shāhids Nos. 12, 17, 24, 31 and 36. The same notice applies to to the month Muharram where on most of the shāhids the article is omitted while on my shāhids the article is already mentioned, Nos. 4, 8, 15, 26, 27. The other shāhids have different months such as Rabī' al-Awwal, Nos. 7, 14, 22, others have Sha'bān, Nos. 5, 21, 33 and 35. Ramaḍān followed by Shahr occurs on Shāhids Nos. 8, 25, 28, 29. The question now is how did the Arabes arrange their ع-ل- ta'rikh?

'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb was the first Khalīfah who fixed the ta'rikh in months and days for the Muslims. He did so when he was told that the Persians had theirs. The matter was discussed with the "Companions".

Some of them preferred the Prophet's despatch as the beginning of the

ع-ل- ta'rikh but they all agreed to take the date of the Hijra as their reckoning point. According to a tradition the ta'rikh began at al-Muharram and this is also the month when pilgrims used to leave Makka for their homes. Tradition has it that the Arabs ignored the solar months and used the lunar instead. Others deny this statement. In addition to that they stated that this is not altogether true because the Arabs for two hundred years previous to the Hijra, when Qusayy was their chief, deferred ل-ع (nassa'u) their lunar year which is shorter than the solar year by eleven days and added to theirs one extra month every three years, so as to equal the solar year and so that the pilgrimage might take place at the same season every year. Then they arranged the months in a way that indicated the stable seasons of the weather such as Ṣafar = vacuity,



Jumādā = congeal, Ramaḍān = ebullition (it is said that Ramaḍān is one of God's names). They kept that system until Muḥammad stopped the defer النسي when the verse was delivered to him and went back to the system previous to Quṣayy.<sup>1</sup> And for the leap and solar year.<sup>2</sup>

If the date happens at the first night of the lunar month it is written متهراستهر mustahall or istihlāl. Sometimes this expression is replaced by غرة ghurra (the white crescent on the forehead of the horse). On the tombstones we used to find the date incised as: one or two or three nights passed. The latter statement means that each night with its day passed. If the days and nights are equal there will be no need to state each of them separately. As a rule when fifteen days of the lunar month has passed one cannot say that fifteen days will remain because one is not sure of the number of days in the month. On the other hand one can safely say when fourteen days remain of the month because every lunar month must have at least twenty nine days.<sup>3</sup>

On tombstones Nos. 11, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26 we find that the numbers are incised without stating whether they are for nights or days.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 80. See also commentary on the same on page 107; Al-Ṣūlī, Vol. 2, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. W. Wright, Fasc. of M, and Inscr. Pl. LXXVI.

<sup>3</sup>Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 91; al-Ṣūlī, p. 180 stated that the Arabs preferred the nights to days. رجعوا إلى الليالي على الأيام



In such cases it means days if the number is masculine and nights if it is feminine. Thus the shāhids Nos. 23, 24 must be calculated by days and the others, Nos. 17, 22, 16, 11, 25, 26, by nights. It is worth while noting that the dating on some stelae is in the Coptic month<sup>1</sup> and the Hijrī years.

All the months are treated as masculine except Jumādā, as a rule one can add month only for Rabi' whether the former or the latter and Ramaḍān because they are not considered nouns or adjectives as the rest of the months.<sup>2</sup> Šāfar is spelt once with the sīn as one the shāhid No. 7 and with šad on shāhid No. 32. Only one shāhid No. 23 gives Rajab as the month of the death.

The year usually comes at the end of the date. All the shāhids under consideration have the word ~~سنا~~ sana and not a single one has ām instead. Provencal<sup>3</sup> noticed that the usage of the word ām instead of sana took place at the beginning of the fourth century. Yet though these shāhids are later than the fourth century, not one has ām.

The story of the arrival of most of these tombstones to the British Museum was given in detail by W. Budge. It runs in short as follows.

One day the sky became covered with dense grey clouds which were rarely seen in Aswān and for three days there was no bright sunshine, but

<sup>1</sup>Ibn

<sup>1</sup>Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Cairo Steles, Vol. 5, Nos. 1506/427, 2721/1065, 2721/690.

<sup>3</sup>Inscr. d'Espagne, p. xdiv.



only a subdued misty grey light which was very pleasant. In the afternoon rain began to fall, and the natives were happy, but the rain continued to come down and when evening came it fell in torrents. The natives were in despair and the tropical rain began. The scene in the town was strange indeed. On the low hills close to the town, where the modern inhabitants buried their dead, bare human bodies were exposed, for the rain had washed away the sand and pebbles which covered them. Some of the tombs were the oldest known Muhammadan sepulchres in Upper Egypt, and belonged to the earliest centuries of the Hijrah, when Aswān was an authorized place of pilgrimage, and was regarded as a holy site. For the dwellers in the remote south the pilgrimage to Aswān was considered as meritorious as a pilgrimage to Makka and the bodies of the illustrious dead were brought there from all parts of Egypt, and buried there. These tombs were all built of mud and some had pillars and friezes which suggested that they were copies of Byzantine originals, also made of mud. At the head of every tomb of an important man was set up a large rectangular tablet of sandstone on which were cut in kufic characters the name of the deceased, a passage from the Qur'ān and the date of his death. As many of these memorial stones dated from the third and fourth century of the Hijrah, their importance both historically and palaeographically is evident.

When the notables pointed out the terrible damage to the tombs which the rain had done. It had melted the Qubbās and pillars and the mud and plaster decorations, and the mud-brick backings of the inscribed tablets in their proper places above the graves, and they would assuredly be stolen and used for building purposes. At that time there were only



one or two poor examples of kufic tombstones in the British Museum and he was very anxious to obtain a selection of those which he saw there. The notables were quite willing to let Budge have as many as he wanted, and to take them out of Egypt to a place where they would be preserved and respected, and he selected fourteen of the oldest and best of them without delay. That evening one of the officers and Budge accompanying him went out with camels and brought them into the camp and on the following morning packed them in strong wooden boxes, and stored them in the hut. So through the rainstorm he obtained a welcome addition to his little collection.

There is an interesting sequel to his acquisition of these kufic gravestones. When the representative of the Bulāq Museum heard of it, he came and claimed them for his Museum as by right, and when his claim was refused to surrender them he offered to buy them; and when his offer was declined he went, according to rumour, into the town to the ma'mūr (governor) and called upon him to seize the stones and tried to stir up mischief among the natives. The ma'mūr said when he came to see what had happened soon afterwards that he was thankful to know that the British had taken possession of the stones. He then suggested six other kufic gravestones which he had in a shed near his house could be acquired and he asked for a very moderate price. The representative of the Bulāq Museum reported the action to his chief in Cairo and received orders from him to take possession of all the kufic gravestones he could find in Aswān and to despatch them to him in Cairo on the steamer belonging to the service of antiquities. The representative collected men and went out with



them to the modern cemeteries of the town and began removing from the graves the tombstones of men whose descendants were still living!

The result was a big row in the town. He paid no heed to the remonstrances made to him, but he had the gravestones carried down to the river, and loaded into the steamer that had been set up for them. In due course he set out with his load for Cairo, and all went well until the steamer began to take the bend of the river near Kōm Ombo. Then, either through the failure of the steering gear, or through the direct action of the Ra'is (Captain) the heavy boat, which drew four or five feet of water when unloaded, drove straight on to the great sand bank there and stuck so firmly that no efforts of her Captain and crew could move her. There she stayed the whole summer through, and her crew grew water melons in the sand on each side of her. The natives, of course, asserted that it was the power of the dead shaykhs that drove her on to the bank, and that it was their hands which held her there.<sup>1</sup>

This power of the dead shaykhs is reflected in the formulae on the shāhids. It was taken as a locket said to protect the deceased. These formulae used in various places differ in their phraseology. The following are examples of them:

"O God, console his loneliness in the cemetery and take up with compassion his solitude." Such form was frequently used on stelae between

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Budge, By Nile and Tigris, London, 1920, pp. 97-98.



192 A.H. and 306 A.H. One may also find the formula: "Take up with mercy his exile". This last word is equal to the Arabic غربة ghurba and which also meant "his death was far away from his fatherland".<sup>1</sup> These formulae include the marble as well as the stone stelae.<sup>2</sup> However, they all were supposed to give the same effect, namely to protect the deceased in his tomb.

It is worthwhile to mention what Pezard stated concerning these formulae. At the beginning of Islām certain epigraphic formulae appeared not only for the use on ceramics but also for any inscription on any material. He thinks that these formulae were originally Semetic and it is probable that the term of such Semetic origin was very ancient and must have been known to the Arab tribes before the beginning of their Islamic conquests. He goes on to say that in the Qur'ānic language "benediction of God" has a religious and magic feeling and thus it became familiar to the new Muslims.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to that the formula ترک (Pezard suggested it for برک) "trust" which appeared frequently on the archaic ceramics gives the meaning of "apasta" which is inscribed on the coins and statues of the Persian

<sup>1</sup> Rep. I, No. 225; III, No. 322.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Niet, J.A., pp. 284-285.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Pezard, La Ceramique Archaïque de l'Islam, Paris (1920), p. 80; Flury, Une formule epigraphique, Paris (1924), p. 54.



Emperors.<sup>1</sup> And it was stated that the formular البي alyunn has a considerable place, more than بركة and Marcais pointed to the importance of this formula on the ceramics of Qal'a of Banī Hammād.<sup>2</sup>

On the whole the main idea behind the shāhid through all the Islamic world was to point out the place where the deceased was buried; and thus they were fixed at the head of the tomb. They all followed the same technique in craft. The fact that they start with the basmala shows that they wanted to ward off fear and keep away Satan.

Let us now turn to our main subject, kufic tombstones in British collections.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Pezard, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Marcais, Les poteries et fiances de la Qal'a des Banī Hammād, p. 23 and Pl. XV; Flury, p. 63.



CHAPTER IIStelae



Stele No. 1.

Limestone, dated Rajab 235 A.H. = 850 A.D. Rectangular  
38.75 x 46.25 cm. Six lines of incised plain kufic. Presented  
by Egypt Exploration Fund 1891. 91-7-11-I is its registration  
number. It is exhibited in the Asiatic Saloon, British Museum.

Text

١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ هَذَا
٢. مَا تَشْهَدُ بِهِ أُمُّ مُحَمَّدٍ أُمُّ وَلَدِ اللَّهِ
٣. بِهِ صَاعِدُ الْبُرْجِ تَشْهَدُ الرَّاهِلَةَ الرَّاهِلَةَ
٤. وَهَذِهِ لِأَسْرِيَةٍ لَهُ دَاهٍ مُحَمَّدٌ عَبْدُهُ
٥. رَسُولُهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَوَضَّعَتْ فِي
٦. رَجَبِ سَنَةِ فَمَسَى دَلْمَتِيهِ دُمَائِدَتِيهِ






Translation

1. In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful. This
2. is what has been testified by umm Muḥammad umm Walad  
al-'Alā'
3. son of Ṣā'id al-Barmakī. She testifies that there is no God  
but God alone,
4. with no partner unto Him, and that Muḥammad is his servant
5. and his messenger, may God bless him and give him peace.  
She died in,
6. Rajab in the year five and thirty and two hundreds.


Commentary: A rectangular shāhid, the two horizontal sides are taller than the vertical ones. The slab is framed on the top and on the left and right side by an intermittent guilloche border similar to that on No. 4, yet lacking the dots. Such border, with or without dots, occurs on many stelae from Egypt (see below Stele No. 4). The stone has been damaged in the course of time. The lines of the script are meticulously straight, especially at the beginning. This is particularly remarkable as there are no traces of blind-tooled lines to divide the space.

The kūfic is plain yet legible and beautiful. The summits of the verticals are floriated. The alif is incised in two different shapes: the first is wedge shaped, pointing to the right and the lower end of the alif turns to the right; the second is foliated. The wedge shape apexes show decoration of the alif which



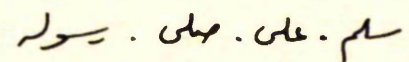

can be traced back to cursive or manuscript writing. Thus the wedge shape can be found on papyrus and on stones. (For more details see below, p. 266 ). The partition or trifoliated tops of the other alifs in the text have a decisive influence on the development of the floriated kufic. This trifoliate is not limited to initial alifs but is found on the medial as well in ls. 2, 3 in the words  and , and in the final alifs as in l.1 in the word . The stroke of the bā' in the word bism l.1 is long, yet it is shorter than the strokes of the alif and the two lāms of Allāh, contrary to the followed rule. Šulī says that the bismillāh should be written from the beginning of the line, not in the middle, and between the basmala and the blessing no space is needed. (cf. Šulī, p. 36; Arthur Pope, A Survey of Persian Art, p. 1713; see below, Stele No. 3). In incising the bā' the mason followed the rule of engraving its stroke a little taller than the teeth of the sin. The upper part of letters group jīm have thorn like shapes while the bases end in fin-shapes. The letters evolved from this group emerge from the middle as in ls. 2, 4. The similarity between the letters group dāl and kāf is very striking, especially in ls. 1, 2, 3, 4, and the heads of the two groups are web-shaped. The letters group rā' in ls. 3, 4, 5 look similar to the letter nūn, with a wedge shaped head and a serpent tail. The letters group sin are incised in two styles: wedged in ls. 1, 2, 3 and combed in ls. 5,



6. The teeth of the sin are of the same length. The letters group ṣād are rectangular. In l. 3 in the word Ṣa'id a tiny tooth follows the rectangle. This tooth becomes taller in l. 5 in the word  and ends in a thorn-like shape. The initial 'ayn is mulawwaza as Qalqashandī calls it, or maftuh mahdhuf, as Ibn Durustuwayh describes it (cf. Subh al-A'sha, p. 79; Kitāb al-Kuttāb, p. 66). The medial 'ayn in the word al-'Alā, l. 2 is "v" shaped and resembles two leaves seated on the base line without any stem. Such open 'ayns are found on many tombstones from Egypt and North Africa (cf. Wiet, Stèles funéraires. Cairo, Vols. 1 - 10; George Miles, A.O., Vol. 2, 1957; early Islamic tombstones from Egypt, Nos. 1, 2, Plts. 1, 3; Poinssot Inscriptions Arabes du Qaireuan, Vol. 2, Pls. 1 ---- etc; Rossi, Inscr. Arabes di Tripoli, Nos. 1, 2, 3, Pls. 1, 2; G. Marcais mentioned that "the 'v' or crescent shaped 'ayn which is seen on inscriptions from Andalus and Maghrib is found in Egypt in the 9th C. on a stele No. 343/827; in Syria, Cf. Flury, ap Syria, 1921, Pl. XXIV; and in Jerusalem in the 7th C. on the milestone of 'Abd al-Malik, cf. Van Berchem MPCI, No. 1."; cf. G. Marcais, Manuel d'art Musulman, p. 269, Note I. for further details of open 'ayn see below, epigraphic analysis, p. 266 ). All the loops in the letters group fā' are round. In l. 3 in the word al-Barmakī the mason succeeded in differentiating between the kāf and the dāl by making the neck of the kāf foliated. This foliated elegant neck is very unusual. Just a few examples can be found. (cf. Stèles funéraires, Vol. 2, no. 2721/77 dated



248/362 Pl. XXXVII; Miles, Figs. 9, 13, Pl. 5, 6.). The apex of the lām looks exactly the same as that of the alif.

So the apexes of the lāms in the words  1.5 are foliated in the same manner. This treatment of the lām is seen on some tombstones from Egypt and Tripoli. (cf. Miles, Fig. 13, Pl. 6; Rossi, No. 1, Pl. 1). All the mīms are rounded except that in umm, which is oval and ending with a hammer tail. The distinction between the rā' and the nūn is sharp; the first is larger in size than the latter. In the word  the stroke of the nūn is higher than the teeth of the sīn. The final hā' in the word Allāh, 1.1 resembles a tiny arch. In other places the hā' has a long stroke ending in a wedge shape. The loops of all the wāws are round with fin shaped tails. The lāmālif takes various forms: three different varieties in 1. 2 (square, incurving and multiple branched), such imaginative treatment of lāmālif begins early in the third century (c.f. Steles, Cairo, Vol. I, no. 1506/581 Pl. 15 and 3003 Pl. 25 dated 205 and 213 A.H. respectively; Vol. 2, No. 8621, Pl. 3, 241 H; Miles, No. 1, Fig. 1, Pl. 1). The final yā' is incised in two forms: the first is retroverted while the other is mu'arraqa. (For the rules of the final yā' see below, p. 169). The final yā' in the word Barmakī, 1.3, is peculiar. It is the only yā' in our specimens that ends with a foliated tail. Indeed one can hardly find in any contemporary inscriptions any similar yā'. The only yā' I could trace that slightly resembles the present yā' comes from Egypt (c.f.



Miles. A.O., No. 1, Pl. 1, Fig. I.). One may conclude that sporadic ornamented letters, half-palmettes and symmetrical sprigs such as these on the slab first appear in the epigraph of Egypt towards the end of the second century of the Hijra (cf. Steles, Cairo, Vol. I, no. 1506/46, Pl 7, 192 A.). Quite similar occur on two stones dated seventeen years earlier than our specimen (Ibid, No. 3380/4, Pl. 30; A.O., No. 1, Fig. 1). The inscription is very well done. The characters are very clear and carefully incised. The summit of the stalks and the terminations of some letters are ornamented.

This is the common formula of this period. The shahid begins, as usual, with the basmala. Following that, the name of the deceased, then the shahāda and the tagliya and at last comes the date of decease.



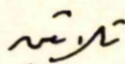
The Christian name of the deceased, a woman, is not mentioned, and instead we find umm Muhammad. Very many inscriptions belong to women whose names are not mentioned. To give illustrations we find that the lady is naturally called sayyidah سيدة or sitt ست ; the Turkish lady is called khātūn خاتره while the Persian, khawādah خورنده ; khanūm خانم appeared only once. (C.I.A., Jerusalem, I, no. 97). For sayyidah (op.cit. 2, No. 44; Amador de Los Rois, Sevilla, p. 106, 263; Recueil Schefer, No. 470; Une Epitaph du Musee Arabe du Caire, Salle I, no. 65 (Catalogue, pp. 28-29; epitaphe of a wife of the Ayubīyd Malik al-'Adil I, Catalogue, p. 86; C.I.A. Egypte I, No. 221). As for



sitt (Recueil Schefer, Nos. 450, 458 (= Sawaire, Description de Damas, J.A. 1894, 11, p. 304), 496, 497, 569; Mayer, Inscr. Guzza, Journ. Pal. or Soc. IV, p. 76; C.I.A. Egypte, I, nos. 184, 372; Combe, Notes d'archeol. musulmane, B.I.F. XV, p. 219; C.I.A. Jerusalem I, No. 97; Asie Mineure, I, No. 28; Loytved, Konia, No. 72; Note the form Sitt: Comite, 11, p. 23; XXVII, p. 133; sitt 2 van Berchem, Epigr. des Danishmendides, Z.A., XXVII, p. 90). It always happens that the personality of a lady is sunk in her quality of "mother of someone", umm <sup>أم</sup> or wālidah <sup>والدة</sup> (cf. C.I.A. Egypt I, Jerusalem I, Nos. 77, 78; See II, p. 8. cf; Wiet, M.C.I. Part I, Egypte 2, 1-2, Cairo, 1929-30, pp. 199-203. For other details see above.) We also notice that the name of the deceased is followed by the expression umm walad. Umm walad is a slave girl who has born her master a child. It is the master's right to take his slave girl as a concubine recognized by Muhammad in continuation of a general practice of Arab paganism. That umm al-Walad should become free ipsoiure on the death of her master, and no longer liable to be sold or given was first ordained by the Caliph 'Umar (al'Ainī on al-Bukhārī, 'Itk, bāb 8 at the end) gives illustrations). The master may release her for money; she may be sold without restriction; the master may sell her at any time during his life time. Her children are to some degree but not to the same extent free as those children of her master. (cf. Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol. 4 (1934), pp. 1012-1015).



The nisbah al-Barmakī refers to a Persian family which produced the first Persian ministers of the Caliphate. "Barmak" was not a personal name but denoted the rank of hereditary chief priest in the temple of Nawabhar in Balkh. The lands belonging to the temple were also in the hands of the family. In the reign of 'Abd al-Malik in 86 A.H. = 725/726 the Barmak had gone from their home to the Caliph's court. Ja'far became renowned in legend for his beautiful writing, his eloquence and his knowledge of astronomy and he is also mentioned as a leader of fashion. He was several times appointed governor of large provinces by his princely patron. The only trace of his name appears on the coins of the Caliph. Yet in 173 A.H. = 790 A.D. the Caliph Hārūn al-Rāshīd deprived him of the seal which he carried and entrusted a great part of his business to Faḍl b. al-Rabī', later opponent and successor of the Barmakides. In Ṣafar, 187 A.H. = 29th January, 803, the fall of the Barmakides took place. Ja'far was slain by command of the Caliph Hārūn and Yahyā and his three sons were thrown into prison. (cf. op.cit., Vol. I, part 2, 1913, pp. 663-666). Thus it is worth mentioning that 48 years after their disaster fell the name of this family again appeared in Egypt.

- 1.2. for 
- 1.4. for 
- 1.6. for 

Another shāhid that has the same names, the date of decease, and which Wiet gives in Stèles funéraires, Vol. IX, no. 3453, p.150, Repertoire I, No. 339 comes from 'Ayn al-Ṣira, Egypt.



Stele No. 2.

Limestone, dated dhi al-Qa'da 244 A.H. = 859 A.D. Rectangular, 51.25 x 41.25 cm. Twelve lines of plain incised kufic. Presented by Egypt Exploration Fund 1891. 91-7-11-2 is its registration number. It is exhibited in the Asiatic Saloon, British Museum.

Text



١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
٢. اِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ فِي الْكِتَابِ وَ
٣. خَلَقَ لَهُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَرَزَقَهُ
٤. مَا يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْغَنِيُّ
٥. الْمُسْتَعِیْنُ بِابْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ
٦. عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا يَشَاءُ بِهِ
٧. لِقُرْبٍ بِهِ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يَشْهَدُ لَهُ
٨. اَللهُ اَلدِّیْنُ وَهُوَ اَلشَّهِيدُ لَهُ
٩. وَرَأَى مُحَمَّدًا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
١٠. صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَزْفِي
١١. صَمَةً اَللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فِي ذِي الْعَقَدَةِ
١٢. سَنَةِ اَلْبَحْرِ وَارْبَعِيَّةٍ دَهَائِيَّةٍ



Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. verily in God there is consolation for every adversity and
3. compensation for all that perishes, and understanding for
4. what has passed. And verily the greatest of adversities
5. is the adversity (of the death) of the Prophet Muḥammad may
- God bless him
6. and give him peace. This is what testifies
7. Ya'qūb son of 'Abd Allah; he testifies that
8. there is no God but God alone there is no partner with him
9. and that Muḥammad is his servant and his messenger
10. may God bless him and give him peace. He died
11. God's mercy upon him on dhi al-Qa'da,
12. in the year four and forty and two hundreds.




Commentary: The stone is damaged and lacks its margin. Only one incised line can be traced at the beginning of the inscription. Yet the spaces are equal and the lines run parallel in the remaining text.

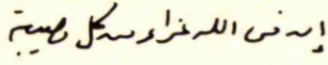
The kufic is neat and legible. The apexes of the alifs are thorn like and the bases at the lower end of the shafts turn to the right. The only exceptions to the first point is in the word  1s. 2, 4 and the word  1. 12, where the apexes are wedge shaped and point to the left. The wedge stroke of the bā' in bism reaches the level of the vertical strokes in



1.1. The final tā' in the word نَات 1.3, the final bā' is elongated (cf. Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 66; Qalqashandī, p. 65). All the heads of this last group are wedge shaped except in the word تاسم 1.2, where it ends in a thorn pointing to the right. The letters group jīm end in open mouth shapes and the off shoot letters الحروف المعلقة emerge from the middle as in the previous inscription. The letters dāl and kāf are typical and both letters are mashkūla سكر (cf. Ibid). The necks of the two letters point to the left, except for the kāf in the word درك where it is upright. The usual resemblance between the rā' and the nūn is lacking in this inscription mainly because the rā' is exceedingly small, while the letter zayn in the word عزاد 1.2 looks similar to the nūn. The teeth of the letters group sīn are either comb shaped or thornlike and they are level with one another. The letter ṣād is incised in an elongated form. This elongation is very distinct in the word الحبيب 1.3 and الحسية 1.4. For the extension and elongation of letters (cf. Epigraphic analysis, p. 270 ). The medial and final 'ayns are open and the whole group is similar to the same group in the previous inscription. The open 'ayn exists on coins (cf. John Walker, A Catalogue of the Muhammadan Coins, London, 1956, no. 18 cii). The letters fā' are bud shaped, seated on the base line with no stem. The heads of the shafts of the lām are thorn like, pointing towards the left. Once only in the word



1.5. it points to the right. The final lām in the word is mutlaqa  (cf. Qalqashandī, p. 35). The mīm is like the mīm in the previous inscription, round with a rail which, in the finals, looks like a hammer. The nūn ends with a small hook which looks similar to the nūns of some inscriptions from Tripoli. The initial and medial hā's are fan shaped with an upright tooth. The loops of the wāws are elegant and the tails of the letters are finshaped. The letter wāw in the word  1.2 attracts the attention for its foliated elegant tail. I could not trace any wāw similar to this in any tombstone from Qayrawān, Sūdān and Tripoli. Only a nūn of the word al-Rahmān on a tombstone dated 3rd C. H. = 9th C. A.D. (cf. Steles Cairo, Vol. 10, no. 8986 Pl. V.) and a mīm on a tombstone in Boston, M. (cf. Miles, A.O. Figs. 5, Pl. 3). The lāmālifs in this inscription are tong shaped. The final yā' in the word  1.10 is retroverted. The mashq and the division of the words between two lines is common in this inscription, contrary to the previous one. No ligature can be traced.

Common formulae of Qur'an 22:7 quoted in 1.2 - the first part of 1.5. The stele begins with the maxim  which had been used on Islamic tombstones in Egypt before the Fāṭimids from 71 - 349 A.H. (cf. Wiet, Journal Asiatique, p. 279; Steles V, no. 1825; IX, no. 3201). Only two examples have been found under the Fāṭimids in 364 and 432 H. (Rep. 5, no. 1884; VII,



no. 2482).

The slab of stone was incised before death and a blank space was left for the name of the deceased. Thus, when anyone died, this blank space was filled up with his name. This blank space is known as wasal, cf. Ibn al-A'rābī:

وَصَلَّتْ الْكُتَابُ صَدْرَ الْإِلَهِ

وَصَلَّتْ رَأْسَ رَأْسِ نَهْدِ نَهْدِ

Abu al-'Abbās explained:

فِي لَوْحِ الْقَبْرِ يُنْقَرُ وَيُذَكَّرُ فِيهِ مَوْضِعٌ  
لِلْمَيِّتِ (قَوْلُهُ مَوْضِعٌ تَلَمَّحْتُ لَعَلَّهُ رَأْسُ مَيِّتٍ) بَيَاضًا نِازِلًا مَاتَ  
الْبَشَرُ وَصَلَتْ نَفْسُ الْمَوْضِعِ بِاسْمِهِ

(cf. Lisān al-'Arab, Vol. II, pp. 728-9).

This sometimes leaves little room for other words covering the date, especially if the name of the deceased is very long.

1.7 for

إِلَهِ

1.9 for

مُحَمَّدًا



Stele No. 3.

Limestone, dated 25 Jumādā I, 252 A.H. = 13th June 807 A.D.  
 Rectangular 35 x 17.5 cm. Thirteen lines of incised plain kufic.  
 Purchased by Budge at Aswān 1887. It has the following numbers.  
 Sculpture 1023, exhibition 673, registration 1434. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian & Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental Department in 1958.

Text

١. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
٢. هذا قبر أنصر
٣. به عبد الله
٤. به اسمه به تاسم
٥. رحمت الله
٦. دفنتموه ودفنوا
٧. علم توفى
٨. يوم الخميس
٩. خمس ليل بقية
١٠. به مبارس الأولى
١١. سنة
١٢. انتبه وضميه
١٣. دما ثارة



Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. This is the grave of Azhar,
3. Son of 'Abd al-Salām,
4. Son of Ishāq, son of Qāsim.
5. The Mercy of God.
6. and his forgiveness and His favour.
7. be upon him. He died,
8. on Thursday,
9. when five nights remained,
10. of Jumādā I,
11. in the year,
12. two and fifty,
13. and two hundreds.

Commentary: A narrow shāhid with a plain border engraved at the top, the right and left sides. The border is incised to avoid using the outer fringers (cf. E. Levi-Provencal, Inscriptions Arabes d'Espagne, Paris, 1931, p. xxiii). An empty line at the end of the inscription shows how the engraver used such lines to make sure that the distances between the lines of the inscription ran parallel to each other.

The alifs in the text turn to the right and flare out towards the top of their shafts in a triangular shape. This is a development of a hook or a barb (cf. A. Grohmann, "The



Origin and Early Development of Floriated Kufic" in Ars Orientalis, Vol. 2, 1959, p. 194). A more unusual feature in this text is the open 'aīn in l. 6. The open 'aīn appears on tombstones from Egypt (cf. G. Miles, "Early Islamic Tombstones from Egypt in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston" in Ars Orientalis, Vol. 2, 1957, p. 194, Pl. I, l. 3, 9.) The style of the inscription can be described as plain kufic. And if we make a comparison between the writing on this tombstone and those of the milestone of khān al-Hathrūrāh dated 86 A.H., 705 A.D., we find obvious similarities, especially in the squat strokes (After M.V.B. CIA, Jer., Ville, p. I, 21, Fig. 1, Rep. No. 14, RCEA, III, Pl. XIII, Rep. No. 9). The final yās in l. 7 have long retreating tails and extend beneath two words to dip below the projecting letters. The initial mīms look like hammers and the final ones have a triangular form. For the triangular mīm (cf. J. Sauvaget, "Glances Epigraphiques" in REI, 14-15, 1940-46, p. 20, No. 13, Pl. I). The trapezoid dād is not very high and lacks the small stroke (tooth) rising up from its body which we find in most scripts.

The text presents the usual formulae for this period. It begins with the basmala crowded into the first line like a chapter heading. In the tombstones in a large ductus the basmala seems to have received early and special attention, which shows itself in extended letters and in generally more careful execution; for the latter feature forgiveness of sins was promised as a reward. Zayd ibn Thābit and 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ disliked the bism without the sīn;



'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz wished al-Rahmān extended; Ibn Sīrīn even specified that in the bism the letter extended should be the sīn and not the bā' (cf. e.g. Qalqashandī Subḥ al'Ashā, vol. 3, pp. 133-42 also gives illustrations; Suyūṭī, Kitāb al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qurān, Vol. 2, Cairo 1360 A.H. = 1941 A.D., p.178).

The basmla in non-Qur'ānic manuscripts also received special attention. Some writers considered the basmla to be a Qur'ānic verse which God sent to act as a separation between the Qur'ānic sūras. This was the interpretation accepted by the Prophet and his Companions. It was distasteful not to use the basmla as a beginning or to write the word Allāh in small letters. A tradition handed down by Ja'far b. Muḥammad explained that the basmla was considered as tījān al-kutub. تيجان الكتب "crowns of books". It was said that al-Sha'bī mentioned that the Arabs before Islām and even in the first decade used to begin their writing with "O! God, in Your Name" باسمك اللهم and the Prophet used this expression until the verse باسم الله بحرا "in the name of God she sails" was revealed to him. Then God sent him قل ادعوا الله ادعوا الرحمة "say, bless upon God, or bless upon the Merciful". He used بسم الله الرحمة "In the name of God the Merciful" and when God was made known to Him انه سليمان وابنه بسم الله برحمة الرحيم "It goes back to Solomon and should read in the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate", he henceforth used this basmla (cf.



Ibn Durustuwayh, Kitāb al-Kuttāb, p. 76. f., Ṣulī, Adab al-Kuttāb, Baghdad, 1341 A.H./1922 A.D., Vol. 1, p. 30.)

After the basmla comes the formula هذا قبر "this is the grave of" followed by the name of the deceased and at the end of the text comes the date of the death. On this tombstone Jumādā is treated correctly as a feminine. This treatment is rarely found on Islamic tombstones. We notice here the elongation of some letters, e.g. in the word سنة in l.11, in order to fill the spaces. This characteristic feature is called mashq in Arabic writing which means to extend some letters in order to avoid writing the word in two lines. The words are extended if they occur either at the beginning, middle or end of the lines. The earliest account which we have of mashq سنة is that of Ibn Durustūwayh (258-347 A.H. = 811-958 A.D.), in his Kitāb al-Kuttāb, p. 70. He refers to it as madd and Matt سنة. Though disliked by some, it was nevertheless permitted especially at the end of the line in order to avoid, if possible, the division of a word between two successive lines. Once admitted, the practice seemed soon to have become popular for we find it in Fāṭimid times recognized as a means of beautifying and dignifying writing. (Ṣulī, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 55; Qalqashandī, Vol. III, p.151; N. Abbot, The Rise of the North Arabic Script, Chicago, 1949, p. 25; A. Grohmann, From the World of Arabic Papyri, Cairo, 1952, p.8.) We also notice that the extension of some letters appeared on some epitaphs from Egypt, especially in the letter ṣād and kāf. (cf.



Cairo steles, Vol. 4, Nos. 1214, Pl. III, 2721/564 Pl. IV, 2721/441 Pl IV, 1220, 2721 Pl XXXVI; Vol. 5, 2721/328 Pl XI, 2721/353 Pl XII, 2721/566 Pl. XXIII, 1286 Pl. XXIX, 1234 Pl XXXVI, 2847 Pl. XXXVII, 1238 Pl. XL, 1506/455 Pl XLIII; Vol. 6 2721/571, 2721/306 Pl X, 315/136 Pl. XII, 1506/284 Pl. XV, 3150/97 Pl. XVII, 2721/460 Pl. XXIII, 1248 Pl. XXIV etc.).

1.3 for اسم

1.4 for كتاب



Stele No. 4.

Marble tombstone, dated al-Muharram, 256 A.H. =

Rectangular 58 x 40 cm. Eleven lines of incised foliated kufic.

Presented by Mr. F. W. Green, 1914. E.57 is its registration number.

It is exhibited in the Greek and Egyptian antiquities department in Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Text

١. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم أنا أشر
٢. الله ندمت على ما فعلته سبحانه وتعالى
٣. عما يشركونه هذا ما تشهد به
٤. محبة ابنت عبد الرحمن القريش
٥. كانت تشهد الإله الواحد الله
٦. وهذه لوستريد له واه محمد
٧. عبده ورسوله وتشهد انه ا
٨. لموت والسبب والخبرة والنا
٩. هو واه الله هو الحق الحبيب وكا
١٠. نت وفاتى فى الحرم سنة
١١. سنة وخمسة ومائتين



Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, God's  
command comes;
2. So seek not to hasten it, glory be to Him.
3. High be He exalted above that, they associate with Him!  
To this testifies.
4. Hijja daughter of 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Qurashī,
5. She testified that there is no God but God,
6. Alone, with no partner, and that Muḥammad,
7. is His servant, and His apostle; and she testifies that
8. Death and the Resurrection and Paradise and Hell
9. are true, and that God is the manifest truth. She
10. died in al-Muḥarram of the year,
11. six and fifty and two hundreds.

Commentary: A rectangular shāhid framed on the top and on the left and right sides by an intermittent guilloche border with the addition of dots. Such a margin is found on an epitaph of Naylah ibnat Bishr (269 A.H. = 883 A.D., Pl. 5, Fig. 9) and another one of Zainah ibnat 'Uthmān dated 218 A.H. = 833 A.D., (Pl. 1, Fig. 1, published by Miles). For a similar rope border cf. Ḥasan Hawwārī and Husayn Rāshid, Steles Funeraires, Vol. I (Catalogue General du Musée Arabe du Caire, Cairo, 1932, Nos., 2721/96, 1193; Wiet, Steles Funeraires, Vol. 7, Nos. 1506/410, 1500/882, 1506/778; Ibid, Vol. 8, Nos. 8475, Ibid, Vol. 10, Nos. 8526, 8852, 8642, 11191, 1193, 8860;



Ibid., Vol. 9, Nos. 9461, 13441, 95, 43, 11192, 11303). For analysis and discussion of borders and other elements of decoration on Arabic tombstones from Egypt see J. Strzygowski, Ornamente altarabisher Grabsteine in Kairo. der Islām, Vol. 2 (1911), pp. 305-336. In general such intermittent guilloche borders with or without dots are common on Egyptian tombstones as early as 191 A.H. = 808 A.D. On the lower corner of the left side the stone, in the course of time, is broken. There is no trace of incised horizontal lines. Yet in spite of that the spaces are almost equal and the writing is nicely done.

The kufic writing is open and very clear and legible. This inscription is very closely similar to that published by Rossi (cf. Inscriptions Arabes di Tripoli, 1953). The most important feature is the hooks of the tops of the letters, not only in the initial ones but also the medials and even the finals. These hooks which resemble three lobed palmettes have a decisive influence on the development of the floriated kufic (cf. A. Grohmann A.O., Vol. 2, 1957, pp. 203-204; J. Sauvaget in REI, 14, 15, 1940-46, No. 1, Pl. I). This decoration is first to be seen in Egypt in 192 A.H. = 808 A.D. and yet an important fact there seems to be an obvious connection between the letters and the margin. In l. 8 we find the only rā' provided with a tail climbing up the top. The medial 'ayn has a triangular shape while the initial ones are adorned with a half-palmette. The mason tried successfully to differentiate between the letters dāl, kāf, the former has a long stroke while the



latter is more angular. The word القرشي al-Qurashī in 1.4. the kāf has a lozenge form while the yā' is provided with a re-treating split tail which seems very strange. The letter mīm assumes two shapes: the rounded shape and the triangular form as it is clearly seen in the last three lines (the same mīm exists on a tombstone, cf. Strzygowski, p. 83). For the first time we can easily notice that the arch which appears between the two lāms of الله Allāh is found here after the letter bā' in 1.3 in the word ب, after the letter sīn in 1.10, and after the letter yā' in 1.11. The same treatment can be seen on a tombstone published by Wiet, Steles Funeraires. Vol. 6, No. 272/474 and it is dated 445/1054 Pl. XXV. The quirk appeared in 1.5 in an epitaph No. 1506/747 Pl. I in the word Allah (Cairo, Stelae, Vol. I). In the word الله it was treated as الله Ibid, No. 1193. In addition to that an epitaph No. 2721/56 dated 200 A.H. = 815 A.D. one notices that almost all the letters are provided with a quirk (Ibid). The two lāms of the word Allāh are disjoined with a quirk taking this floral shape الله (Ibid, No. 2721/461 Pl. XIII).

The Qur'ānic verses (first part in ls. 1 - 3) are common and the end of the text is inspired by Qur'an (Sur. XXII, 7). It contains the customary affirmation of the Muslim's belief in Death, Paradise, Hell and Resurrection. For al-Haqq al-Mubīn (1.8) (cf. Miles, A.O., Vol. 2, 1957, Nos. 7, 8, pp. 221-222).

The name of the deceased may be هجرة, Hujja = the year or the one. It can also be هجة Hujja = argument (cf. Ibn



Durayd, Kitāb al-Ishtiqāq, p. 123). The nisbah al-Qurashī refers to the tribe of Quaraysh, one of the most important tribes in Arabia. It played an important part before and after Islām. The traditionalists and historians as well differed in their explanation of the name. Jawharī, al-Ṣaḥāḥ, Vol. I, p. 495, says that the name is derived from al-Qursh = earning money; al-Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-Arab, Vol. 22, p. 360, one reads that al-taqrīsh means al-taftīsh i.e. when Fihir ibn Mālīk used to look for the poor and help them. They used to carry merchandise during their journeys in summer and winter. The ancestor of Quaraysh was one of the nephews of Nizār from whom the Prophet descends; most of this tribe emigrated to Qayrawān (cf. Poinssot, Inscriptions Arabes du Kairouan, Vol. 2, p. 131).

- |     |    |     |          |
|-----|----|-----|----------|
| P.1 | a: | for | أَنَّى   |
| 1.2 | a: | for | رَمَالِي |
| 1.4 | a: | for | ابْنَةِ  |



Stele No. 5.

Limestone dated 29th Sha' bān 291 A.H. = 16th July 904 A.D.

Rectangular 33 x 15 cm. Twelve lines of incised plain kufic. Purchased by Budge at Aswān 1887. It has the following numbers: sculpture 1024, exhibition 672, registration 1455. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
٢. الرحمن الرحيم
٣. هو الله احد
٤. الله الصمد لم
٥. يلد ولم يولد
٦. ولم يكن له كف
٧. احد هذا قبر
٨. محمد بن صباح مولى
٩. عبد المجيد توفى
١٠. سنة سبع
١١. سنة احدى وتسعين
١٢. وما تكتبه



Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate,
2. the Merciful  $\Delta$  a, say,
3. He is God, one God,
4. the everlasting refuge, who has not,
5. begotten, and has not begotten,
6. and equal to Him is not,
7. anyone. This is the grave of,
8. Muḥammad son of Ṣabāḥ, the freedman
9. of Ḥasan al Mudlijī. He died
10. on the last night of Shā'bān,
11. in the year one and ninety,
12. and two hundreds.

Commentary: A tall narrow rectangular shāhid surrounded by an incised simple frame. It has been damaged in the course of time at the top and on the left side. Incised horizontal lines are used to keep the spaces equal and the writing tidy. The mason took great pains with the first seven lines of his script but the five lines at the end are not straight and the words are crowded. The fringe which is incised to avoid using the outer part (cf. Provencal, p. xxiii) is used 3 times on ls. 1 - 5 and 11.

The vertical strokes in this text are a little longer than those in Nos. 1, 2. The writing in the first seven lines is open and legible and the kufic characters are straight while at the end



of the text the writing becomes illegible and can only be read with difficulty. Thus the words are crowded and it seems as if the engraver was in a hurry for he failed to keep regular distances. The heads of the shafts of the alifs end in a fork shape pointed to the right. This form represents a strong impulse for the decoration of the apexes. And they appeared on tombstones as early as 191 A.H. = 807 A.D. We notice on this shāhid the influence of such a form on almost all the strokes, الاصابع al-aṣābi'. This forked apex is to be found as far as the Fāṭimid period. No ligatures at all are found on this shāhid and the mason preferred the extended strokes even in two letter words. The letter mīm assumes three shapes, triangular, circular and square. The word al-Raḥmān is completed in 1.2, and such treatment seems very unusual on the tombstones I am studying. It seems to me, for the same purpose the mason incised this punctuation which resembles a triangle to separate the basmala from the remaining text. Such stop-sign is found after the basmala in PER Inv. Chart. Ar. 7033, 25750, Grohmann, From the World of Arabic Papyri, Cairo, 1952, p.91.

The text begins as usual with the common formula, five verses from the Qur'ān, cxiii f. 2-6 and the beginning of 1.7.

The deceased is a freed-man of Ḥasan al-Mudliji (al-Mudliji of the tribe of Mudlij and the nisbah may be one of: 1) a section of the Bu-Sha'bān, a tribe which lives in Dir al-Zor (Syria). They number about 150 families. 2) Section of Ḥaddān from Lakhm of Qaḥṭān, their residence extended from the Monastery of al-Jimeza to



the lake of Ṣulī in Egypt (cf. al-Maqrizī al-Bayān wal-i'rāb, p.61).

3) Clan of Kinana of al-'Adnanīa, specialized in retracing genealogy, (cf. 'Umar Riḍākahhāla, Mu'jam Qabā'il al-'Arab, Vol. 3, (1949), p. 1061. The name comes from إدلاج iddalaja,

Idlāja = when one walks after sunset; أدلاج Adlaja,

Idlāja = one walks at dawn; الدراج = one <sup>مكوك</sup> carries the bucket

from the well, (Ibn Durayd, p. 195; al-Zabīdī, Tāj al-'Arūs, Vol. 2,

pp. 33-43). 1.6 a: the letters wāw, alif in the word كنرا

are omitted. It is worthwhile adding that in the traditions, when-

ever you want to travel remember always the dulaja عليكم بالرجبة

'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib's verse: اصبر على سير وبرد ليلتي فداكسر

ونال السراخ على الحاجات وديكسر

(cf. Ibn Manẓūr, Vol. 2, p. 272). See also 'Antara's verse

لا رماضهم أشلاء بئر لحي فداكسر مدحج خذود

Al-mudliḡ as well is the hedgehog because it keeps awake and moving all through the night (Ibid, p. 273).



Stele No. 6.

Marblestone, date lacking, probably 3rd century A.H. = 9th century A.D. Rectangular 65 x 42 cm. Thirteen lines of plain kufic incised in relief. Presented by F.W.Green in 1914. E.60 is its registration number. It is exhibited in the Greek and Egyptian antiquities department in Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Text.

١. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
٢. هذا ما يشهد عليه
٣. محمد بن محمد بن محمد
٤. بن جبارة العيني يشهد له
٥. الله الله وعده لا شريك
٦. له ولا معه عبد
٧. رسول الله عليه
٨. وسلم ويشهد له
٩. الموت والبعث هو و
١٠. الجنة والنار هو والله
١١. يبعث من في القبر على
١٢. زلفه هي وعليه مات
١٣. وعليه يبعث الله ما الله



Translation.

1. In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. this is what has been testified by,
3. Sa'īd son of Muḥammad son of Sa'd
4. son of Jubāra al-Yamanī. He testifies,
5. that there is no God, but God alone, with no partner unto,
6. Him and that Muḥammad is His servant,
7. and his messenger, may God bless him,
8. and give him peace, and he also testifies that,
9. Death and Resurrection are true, and
10. that Paradise and Hell are true, and that God
11. will resurrect those in the graves. In
12. this faith he lived and in it he died,
13. and in it he will be resurrected, God willing.

Commentary: The shāhid is very damaged so that its shape looks irregular. The words and lines run together so that there is scarcely a space. There is no trace of horizontal lines but in spite of this the writing is straight. The margin on the right side is not regular but the mason succeeded in finishing the work without using the left side at all. The kufic is incised in relief. The ancient shāhid having the inscription in relief is dated 203 A.H. = 819 A.D. (Stèles Funéraires, Vol. I, p. 7.) Using this way the mason had to engrave the whole slab so that the script stood out in relief.



The kufic characters are open and legible and apart from the wedge shaped terminations, are for the most part unadorned. The type of epigraphy in relief, without ornamental flourishes which this tomb exhibits appears to have been introduced about the beginning of the third century of the Hijra. The earliest example, in the very large collection of tombstones in the Arab Museum in Cairo, is dated 203 A.H. = 819 A.D. (see H. Hawwārī and H. Rāshid, Vol. I, p. 2). The wedge shape of the alif is to be seen in papyrus going back to the first century of the Hijra. It also appears in stone inscriptions in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo dated 71 H. = 690 A.D. (PER Inv. Ar. Pap. No. 1003). We find great similarity between the letters dāl and kāf. The letters group sīn vary in shape; in ls. 1, 2, 3, 13 they resemble the comb-teeth while in ls. 3, 5, they end in wedge shapes and differ in length. The letter ‘ayn has a triangular form with a tiny triangle in the middle. The medial hā’, ls. 2, 4 and 8, takes several forms, in l.2 it has two holes while the remaining get only one hole. Qalqashandī, p. 96 calls the hā’ with the two holes wajh al-hirp (cat's face). But the strangest letter in the text is that retreating long yā’ in l.12. It proves that the engraver had treated its elegant tail successfully, so that it forms one unit with the tail of the letter wāw in l.13. The reversed retreating yā’ is considered the equivalent of an extension and has several rules of its own. The reversed yā’ should follow fā’ and permissible after the



letters group ba' but must not at any time be extensive in length. After the final letters which are known as المروف المرتبة al-hurūl-al-mu'arraqa such as the letters group sīn, ṣād, 'ayn, fā' and the letters lām and yā', and nūn; the final yā' must be مرتبة mu'arraqa and not reverse رجعة. While after the letters tā'ḍal, alifs which are not mu'arraqa the reversed yā' is allowed. (cf. Ibn Durustuwayh, Kitāb al-kuttāb, p. 73).

The text represents the common formulae for this period, Qur'ānic verses (end of 1.2 and through the rest of the lines 5, 6, 7...). The shahāda, then the Taṣlyā and at last comes the verses concerning the belief of the deceased in the resurrection of the dead, the Paradise and Hell.

The name of the great grand-father of the deceased may be Jubāra جبارة although it might possibly be Jayyāra جبارة. The nisbah of the deceased appears to be al-Yamanī, he appears to have come from Yaman.

To omit the date of decease is not a strange case for it happened on many of the tombstones from various places in the Islamic centuries. If we try to assign a date therefore, we can say that as it is in relief, simple, and lacks the Shi'ite formulae, then it may go back to the third century.

1.4 The word هو is omitted.



Stele No. 7.

Limestone, dated Monday, the last night of Rabi' I, 300 A.H. = Monday, 27th December 913 A.D. Irregular shape. Eight lines of incised plain kufic. Presented by Sir J. Bowering 1846. It has the following numbers: exhibition 671, registration 770. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
٢. هذا قبر اسرة به عبد الرحمن
٣. به اسرة الفال رضوانه الله
٤. علم توفى يوم الاثنين سلع
٥. شهد ببيع الثول سنة
٦. ثمانمائة سنة
٧. وهو يشهد الدالة الد
٨. الله وعده لشره له



Translation.

1. In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. This is the grave of Ishāq son of 'Abd al-Rahmān,
3. son of Ishāq al-Ghassāl, may God be pleased
4. with him. He died on Monday the last night,
5. of the month Rabi' al-awal in the year,
6. three hundred year,
7. while he testifies that there is no God but,
8. God alone, with no partner unto with Him.

Commentary: A shāhid narrowest at the top. It reminds us of the tombstones from the Sūdān. The stone is damaged at the bottom and mended with other stone. The mason used horizontal incised lines to keep equal spaces. All the lines are straight except the last, on this the words are sloping. At first the engraver successfully regulated both the lines and words, but after 1.5 he failed even to complete the end of the text.

The inscription is entirely unadorned, and the kufic uncrowded, undistinguished and somewhat clumsy. Because of the irregular shape of the stone the last line slants upward and the final words are squeezed into a very restricted space. Such treatment can be found on a tombstone from Egypt in the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston).

The alifs have forked apices which point to the right but some of them point to the left. The forked apex appearing already



in 195 A.H. = 807 A.D. on the tombstones Nos. 1193 and 2721 in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (Hawwārī and Rāshid, Steles funeraires, Vol. I, Pl. 6, p. 16; Pl. 8, p. 21; two further examples are furnished by two tombstones dated 256 A.H. = 870 A.D. and 272 A.H. = 880 A.D.; Salmon, Notes d'epigraphie Arabe, BIFAO, Vol. 2 (1902), Nos. 6, 13, pp. 8, 13). This forked apex is to be found down to the Fāṭimid period on textiles from the sixth century (R. Guest, Notice of some Arabic inscriptions on textiles at the South Kensington Museum, JRAS, 1906, Pl. 2, No. 5, Victoria and Albert Museum Inv., No. 1381-1388.). In the following third century this ornament is transformed into an artistic half palmette. (In two epitaphs in the Musée de la Municipalité in Alexandria published by E. Combe, dated 271 H. = 832 A.D. and 246 A.H. = 860 A.D., Inscriptions Arabes du Musée d'Alexandrie, Bull. de la Société d'Archeologie d'Alexandrie, No. 30 (1936), Nos. 4, 7, 8. We notice that not only the alifs, lāms and even initial and final letters have forked apices.

The mason in this inscription did not succeed in making the dāl and kāf similar which is clear in most of the other inscriptions. The teeth of the sīn are of the same length. The shape of the ṣād is quite unusual, it is of a prolonged trapezoid. It is the first time that the letter ʿayn takes a floral shape. The initial and medial lām ends with dragon heads while the final ones are extended. The letter mīm also takes two shapes, a square and a triangular. The first is quite unusual in these inscriptions



and is Nabataean Arabic in origin (cf. Flor. de Vog<sup>u</sup>ne, p. 386; EI, art "Arabia", Pl I; N. Abbot, Pl. V.). The second is usual and can be traced on tombstones as early as the first century A.H. The usual circular fan of the final hā' is not followed in this inscription instead we have quite an unusual form, namely a triangle. The lām-alif takes the shape of a nut cracker.

Though this inscription looks as a whole dull and clumsy, as we mentioned above, yet careful examination of the separate letters shows quite unusual types and shapes of letters appearing for the first time in this inscription under consideration.

Because of the absence of the diacritical points the name of the deceased may be 'Assāl "honeyseller", or al-Ghassāl, "the undertaker". In North Africa the undertaker may be the Imām who holds many responsibilities: he distributes alms to those who deserve it, and he has to look after the kalālīb of the village. His assistant superintends the funeral toilette but if the deceased is an important personality the Imām himself takes the charge, (cf. Poinssot, Vol. 2, p. 208 says that the undertaker holds all the above mentioned jobs. i.e. he has the duties of the Imām, while Mr. M. Al-Sa'danī, Charges d'Affaires of the Moroccan Embassy told me that the Imām is not the undertaker).

1.2 for

1.3 for



Stele No. 8.

Soft stone dated al-Muharram 381 A.H. = March 991 A. D. A large fragment of a tomb 47.5 x 162.5 x 42.5 cm. Floriated kufic surrounding two sides and a small part of a third side. No registration number, kept in the cellar of the British Museum.

Text.

A

السلام اليه عبدك عبد الرحمن بن محمد ... رحمه الله ...  
 لعل هو انني لقل رسولك وقاتلك وانني لاني عبد ... حامد

B

دوستی لعل حبیبی بندہ حبیبی توفی ابوعلی رحمۃ اللہ فی المحرم سنۃ ۱۳۷۱  
رقانیہ ریاضیہ .



Translation.

A. O God, your slave 'Abd al-Rahmān son of Hamda may God have mercy upon him...

To a slave that we are to your Messenger (Prophet) and saying that I am a slave to the Prophet ... .. coming back one day in....

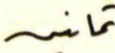
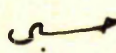


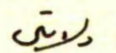
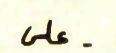
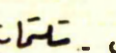

B. I owe my sainthood to 'Alī that suffices me. Abū 'Alī died, may the mercy of God be upon him in al-Muharram in the year one and eighty and three hundreds.

Commentary: Two large sides of a tomb and very small fragment of other two sides. The floriated kufic can be traced on the first two sides. The writing is incised in relief, with an incised border surrounding it.

This is the first epitaph among our stelae where the elements of floriated kufic clearly appear. The extremities of the letters generally terminate in horizontal leaflets and lobed flowers. This epitaph is "en avance". The slender characters are elegantly elongated. Nevertheless care has been taken to keep the simplicity of their form. The end of the letters terminate in upright leaf bracts with the leaf terminals sometimes pointing to the right and sometimes to the left. The characters are of magnificent style and of great elegance.

The alif is wedge shape with its lower end turning to the right. In fragment "B" a horizontal leaflet decoration spreads from the apex of the letter to the right. The stroke of the bā'



in fragment "A" is wedgeshape with its lower 'arraga dipped beneath the base line. An elegant palmette crowns the tooth of the letter thā' in the word  and it is joined to the letter by a thin stalk. A horizontal leaflet branches from the bā' in the word . From the base of the hā' and the tail of the dāl grow a tendril. A leaflet branches from the rā' in fragment "A". The teeth of the sīn are of equal length and they all end in a thorn like shape. In fragment "B" there are two bracts climbing up the second down stroke of the letter in the word . The medial 'ayn in fragment "B" is floral and seated on the line without a neck. In the word  the medial 'ayn looks like a pomegranate with a tiny stem. The letters group fā' have slim curved loops. The kāf is mashkūla in fragment "B", a thorn and leaves growing from the upper end of its base. The apexes of the group lām look similar to those of the alifs in fragment "B" in the word . . .  a magnificent bunch of leaves and scrolls grow from their apexes. Thorns and leaves are hanging from the wedge of the isolated or final hā'. I think that the mason gave the letter wāw his utmost care. Thorns, stalks, growing leaves have a parasol shape emerging from both the loops and tails of the letter. The final yā' is reversed with a leaf springing from its tail and pointing downwards.

It is important to note in this inscription that all these beautiful floral motifs, unlike those coming from North Africa, do



not form an essential part of the letters which they adorn  
(cf. Poinssot, Nos. 12, 13, 159, 161, 215, Pls. 3, 18, 19, 24,  
37). And so if they are removed they leave plain kufic letters.

The formulae here, strangely enough, combine both the Sunī  
and the Shī'ite formulae and yet the Shī'ite formulae

... *هو اتنا لزل بسوت ونائر* is of a peculiar type quite different  
from the formulae we met in our inscriptions, such as *اسم على بن محمد بن زاهر*  
*الطاهريه*.

The formula *رائى للنبي ع* is of special im-  
portance as it is uncommon to find that the formulae of humility  
are as exaggerated in the qualifications of officials and master  
builders as in those of princes. This characteristic is peculiar  
to Persia and quite unknown elsewhere in the Islamic empire. Every-  
where they are called slaves of God 'abd; but in Persia they call  
themselves also sinners, *mudhnibīn*, or use the superlative form  
*agall* *اقل* or *aq'af* *اخصف* the least or the meanest of  
the slaves of God.

The name Hamda is popular in Egypt. *Hamdatu al-nar* *سنة النار*  
= the noise caused by the flames (*Tāj al-'Arūs*, Vol. 2, p. 339;  
*Lisān al-'Arab*, Vol. 3, p. 158). Al-Hamda is one of the famous  
tribes in Sūdān settling around the white and blue Nile. (*Riḍā*  
*Kaḥḥala*, Vol. I, p. 298; *Na'ūm Shuḡayr*, Vol. I, p. 56). Al-  
Humada is a fraction of 'Anas from *Thaqīf* of the Yaman (*Fu'ād*  
*Hamza*, p. 135). Al-Ḥumada also is a clan of Banī Malik from  
Juhayna, a tribe of Hījāz.



Although the origin of this inscription is not stated in the record of the British Museum it can be inferred from certain signs that it is of Egyptian origin (cf. Cairo Steles, Vol. 5, No. 9201, pl. XLVI, Vol. 10, No. 8986 Pl. 5). The name Hamda is familiar in Egypt, the style of the kufic is similar to the inscription of al-Hakim's mosque. In fact, the date of the inscription 381 A.H. = 10th century A.D. is contemporary with the rule of al-Hakim (cf. Flury, Die Ornamente der Hakim und Azher Moschee, pls. 1 - 5). It is worthy to note that the fourth band of the northern minaret of the Hakim's mosque is decorated with magnificent kufic inscription set between borders of small leaves springing from an undulating stalk (cf. Creswel, p. 93, pl. 25d). Flury considered this band to be one of the most beautiful that Muslim art has produced in its own special field, 'epigraphic decoration', and adds: "the harmonious combination of writing and tendrils and the sureness of the space filling that goes with it justify the conclusion that a long series of attempts must have preceeded the making of this band of inscription". (Flury, pp. 45-46 pl XXVI; Creswel, Early Muslim Architecture, p. 96).



Stele No. 2.

Granite black stone dated Ramaḍān 387 A.H. = 998 A.D.  
 Square  $22\frac{1}{2}$  x  $22\frac{1}{2}$  cm. Five lines of in relief foliated kufic. It  
 is kept in the basement of the Oriental department in the British  
 Museum.

Text.

١. بسم الله ... من الر...
٢. هذا قبر زينة م. ابه ك...
٣. ماتت في شهر رجب ...
٤. سنة سبع وثمانين ...
٥. في مائة واربعة ...



Translation.




1. In the name of God the ... ..
2. this is the tomb of Zaban son ... ..
3. he died on Ramaḍān
4. in the year seven and eight ... ..
5. ... hundreds and he testifies ... ..

**Commentary:** A square granite slab surrounded by an incised border. It is damaged at the top, the left side and at the left bottom corner. No trace of incised horizontal lines are seen yet the spaces and lines run parallel completely over the stone.

The kufic is incised in relief. This is the first time in relief in the kufic inscriptions in our specimens that we find the climbing up above the lines tails sweeping up till they are level with the vertical strokes. The apexes of the alifs are wedge shape. This use of wedge shaped apexes with their ends pointing to the right occurs on papyrus, manuscript writing, stone, textiles and pottery. The shafts at the lower end turn to the right. The bā' in the basmala is taller than the teeth of the sīn and level in height with the strokes.

The final tā' in the word māt, 1.3, is tiny and similar to the dāl. The dhāl in turn is small and looks rather like the only kāf at the end of 1.2. The mason seems to have had special interest in the letter rā' for he incised it elegantly with a serpent tail sweeping up the base line. It looks like the final nūn



and it is unnecessarily incised after the rā' of al-Rahmān, 1.1, and after ibn in 1.2. And thus makes it difficult to read the name of the deceased. The teeth of the sīn approach each other closely in the word bism but on other occasions they do not; in all cases they are of equal length. Luckily enough the elegant letter dād with the palmette in the word Ramadān 1.3, escaped damage. A dād similar to this can be traced on a tombstone from Egypt (cf. Steles Cairo, Vol. 7, No. 1566, 831). The final 'ayn in the word  1.4 is lozenge shape and its 'arraga extends to dip beneath the base line. The fā' is elegant and in 1.2 in the word  the loop which has an elevated peak gives a half-palmette shape. The mīm is drawn in two different forms. In bism, 1.1, it is round and ends with a climbing up above the line tail while in 1.3 in the word  it is half-ogee. Such half-ogee mīm occurs in a table of Arabic alphabet. (cf. Survey of Persian Art, p. 1721, Fig. 585). The initial and medial hā' are of the type called by Qalqashandī mashquqa or cat's face. The three hā's in this inscription are supplied with split palmettes stemming from the centre of the letter. The same hā' is found on the mosque of al-Azhar in the Qibla wall (cf. S. Flury, Die ornamente der Hakim und Ashar-Moschee, pl. XIII). It also occurs on a tombstone from Egypt (cf. Steles Cairo, Vol. 7, No. 1240). The final or isolated hā' ends with an exaggerated upright stroke. The same hā' can be seen on stelae from Qayrawān (cf. Poinssot,



Inscr. Arabes, Nos. 188 Pl. 30, 248 Pl. 43). The only final yā' in the inscription, in the word ي 1.3, is retroverted, preceded by an extra tooth. On the whole the mason did his best to make the inscription look elegant by adding split palm-ettes and sweeping tails adorning the letters rā', wāw, and nūn. Such rising tails play a conspicuous part in the rhythmic composition of the epigraphic border. Without their curving terminations there would be large gaps between the few vertical shafts.

The text begins as usual with the basmala. Then comes the name of the deceased and lastly the date of death.

The name of the deceased is not easy to read because the mason fixed rising tails to different letters which makes them look alike, especially in the second line where the name of the deceased is incised. The name, therefore, can be:

1. Dindin دند = dried parts of the tree, and ibn Dindin is of Khuza'ah (cf. Ibn Durayd, p. 475). In this I read the first and third letters of the name of the deceased as dāl. The rā' and dāl resemble each other usually in plain kufic and in cursive. Therefore a foliated dāl resembles a rā' and may not be strange to read this name as Dindin and not Rinrin as there is no such name as the last.
2. Zayn, a Yamanī tribe (cf. Riḍā Kaḥḥala, Vol. 2, p. 460). This reading omits the last letter which may be considered extra. Other extra letters can be seen at the end of 1.1.



3. Zaban = pushing. Zaban is a division of al-Subāih of the Banī Khālīd tribe settled on the coast of the Persian Gulf. (cf. Ibid., p. 463).
4. Rayn a Yamānī tribe (Ibid., p. 460).
5. Zīr is a nickname of Jassās b. Murra (Ibn Durayd, p. 338).
6. Raythān from rayth = slowness. Raythān from Ghatafān tribe. (Ibid., p. 275).

It is not easy to identify this stele. First of all it has no registration number, nor description of how it found its way to the British Museum. There is no formula in it to help identify it. However, from some main features of this inscription one may guess that it may have originally come from Persia or 'Irāq because of its heavy letters which resemble the letters on Persian pottery. (cf. A Survey of Persian Art, pp. 1753, 1765, figs. 613, 614, 619). Other similar characteristics that can be seen between the present shāhid and the shāhid from Egypt (cf. Cairo Steles, Vol. 5, No. 9201 dated 382/992 Pl. XLVI); both of them are small marble slabs, the letters group fā' are typical in both, the dates are almost the same. There is one year difference in the dating of the stelae and they both begin alike with the basmala followed by the name.



Stele No. 10.

Limestone, dated Friday the middle of Jumādā I 392 A.H. =  
 Thursday, 2nd of April, 1001 A.D. Rectangular 55 x 44 cm. Nine lines  
 of plain incised kufic. Presented by Sir S. Bowering 1846. It has the  
 following numbers: exhibition 670 and registration 771 C. It was trans-  
 ferred from the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the  
 Oriental Department in 1958.

Text

١. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
٢. تبارك الله انه ساجد من غيره
٣. من حبات تجرى من تحت الشجرة
٤. من جعل من قلوبهم على علم محمد
٥. النبي وآله الطاهرين دأبهم ز
٦. نيب انبت يوتف مولد النفل
٧. العباس توفيت يوم الحجة
٨. النصف من جوارى الثور
٩. سنة اثنين وتسعين



Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate,
2. blessed be He who shall assign to thee better than that,
3. gardens underneath which rivers flow,
4. and He shall assign to thee palaces. O God bless Muḥammad
5. the Prophet and his family the pure; and have mercy
6. upon Zaynab daughter of Yusuf bondmaid of al-Faḍl
7. al-'Abbāsī. She died on Friday,
8. middle of Jumādā al-awwal in
9. the year two and ninety and three hundreds.

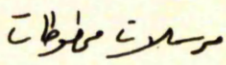
Commentary: A rectangular shāhid with a plain incised border bordering it at the top, right and left sides. The stone is damaged at the left side and at the bottom. The mason incised horizontal lines to keep equal spaces. By this means the lines are kept straight and the words are nicely finished. The margin is used four times ls. 3, 4, 5, 8 for completing some words.

The kufic letters given in this text have a stiff and angular appearance. We have here the same technique, but the letters have a different aspect. Here is the beginning of a new style. The alifs end with hook shapes at the top of their shafts while at the lower end they bend to the right. The letters group bā' end with the same hook shapes. The letter bā' in the word bism, l.1, and the tā' in the word tas'īn l. 9 are longer than the teeth of the sīn they precede. The letter dāl is cursive once in l.2 and besides



this it is angular and rectangular. The rā' and final nūn have almost the same shape and the similarity between them is strong in l.5 in the word al-ṭahirīn. The letters group ṣād in ls. 4, 6 are square. The first trace of the climbing up above the line tails in all the incised inscriptions under consideration appear in this stele. This form can be traced in l.1 in the words bism and al-Raḥīm, l.4 in the word Allahumma, l.5 in the word Irham and in l. 7 in the word yawm. Earlier climbing up above the lines tails in inscriptions from Egypt go back to the year. 246 A.H. = 860 A.D. (Weit, Vol. 2, No. 2953, Pl. XXVI). Above the letter hā' and nūn of the word al-Raḥmān, l.1 we find a simple decoration lying above the word. This decoration shows the first step towards floriated kufic. Sometimes we find it joined to the letter nūn and resembles the climbing tail of the mīm in the basmala. So many examples of this simple ornament and the climbing up above the lines tails existed on the tombstones in the large collection published by Wiet. (cf. Wiet, Vol. 5, Nos. 1231 Pl. XIX, 3150/124, Pl. XXIII, 2842, 3150/76, Pl. XXIV, 3150/208 Pl. XXVI, 2721/189 Pl. XXXI, 2721/504 Pl. XXXI, 2721/314 Pl. XXXII, 1506/185 Pl. XXXII, 11397 Pl. XXXIV, 3150/194 Pl. XXXV, 2721/432 Pl. XXXVII, 1238 Pl. XL, 2721/559 Pl. XLI, 2721/450 Pl. XLI, 1506/234, 3150/115 Pl. XLV; Vol. 6, Nos. 9563, 3150/209, 2721/330 Pl. I, 2721/336 Pl. II, 2721/367 Pl. IV.... etc.). The loops of the letters group fā' are cursive and they have a short tail appearing



as a thorn at their end. The medial 'ayn takes two shapes - ls. 2, 4, 7 it takes a triangular form while, at the end of l.7 it is open having "V" shape. Open 'ayns such as this appeared in the inscriptions of Egyptian tombstones very early. The first example to illustrate this is the tombstone of 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Khayr al-Hijrī 31 A.H. = 652 A.D., No. 5, Pl. I. Yet this is not the first example where it is possible to find the "V" shape 'ayn, it occurred on other inscriptions whether ceramics, textiles, coins and papyrus from all the Islamic provinces. This open 'ayn, having the "V" shape, was first found on Nabataean inscriptions between 1st - 3rd centuries A.D. then on Arabic inscriptions as well (cf. E.I. art. "Arabia", Pl. I; N. Abbot, Pl. V; Provençal, p. XXXIII stated that the "V" shaped 'ayn shows a Semitic influence.) The base of the kāf is rather long and the end of its neck, which usually forms a right angle with the base, here forms an acute angle. The medial lāms end with fork and dragon shapes, while the final ones are mūrsalāt mamṭūṭāt  especially in l.8 in the word al-awal. The letter mīm is incised in three various ways: oval in ls. 4, 5, bud shape l. 3, and triangular in ls. 6, 7, 8. The tail of the letter wāw ends in a fin shape. Flury called this kind of final shape "le crochet final", (cf. S. Flury, Une formule épigraphique, p. 55, Pl. XXI). The final yā' is what Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 66, called mu'arraga mursalā. The extension of some five or more letter words can be traced in this inscription.



Here are seen the usual Qur'ānic verse ls. 2, 3 and the first half of l. 4 XXV.10. This is the first time on these tombstones the Shi'ite formula صلى الله على سيد النبي وآله الطاهرين has been discovered. The shi'ism was more widely prevalent in the south of Egypt than the north. It was first to be found on a tombstone dated 279 A.H. = 883 A.D. (Wiet, JA, p. 288, note 3 and 4.). That means about eighty four years before the Fāṭimīd established their dynasty in Egypt. In the year 324 A.H. = 936 A.D. appeared the essential qualification which is put for the honour of the Fāṭimīd and is required to fix the formula "the pure family of Muḥammad". Besides this Wiet stated the formula صلى الله على سيد النبي وآله الطاهرين "God's blessing be upon Muḥammad the Prophet and his family the pure" can be traced on the tombstone of Yahyā al-Shabīh. This tombstone is one of a group of five traced back to the Ṭulūnīd period and which are dated 361-363 A.H. = 972-974 A.D. Three of these tombstones belong to three of the descendants of the Calif 'Ali. The whole group is known under the name of the Mausoleum of Sidī Shabīh in the south of Cairo. It was called so because of the resemblance between Yahyā ibn Qāsim, one of the descendants and the Prophet Muḥammad. (cf. Max Van Berchem, CIA, Vol. I, Egypt, 1903). In addition to that it was stated that the above formula was changed to the formula آل محمد "Muḥammad's family". And both the formulae can be traced on most of the inscriptions of the Fāṭimīd period. (ibid., p. 27; Casanova, Catalogue de pieces de verre, t.vi, 3 fasc. p. 347; Grohmann, AO, Vol. 2, Inscriptions



from the mosque of al-Ḥākim Bi Amrī-Ellah, Cairo, Nos. 2638; 6730; 9: 2639; 7; 2640, Fig. 20, p. VII. This requires a brief history on Shī'ism.

It was under the next Caliph ('Umar) that the spectacular victories of the early Arab territorial expansion were won. Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Persia, in all these countries the sword of Islam prevailed. Mesopotamia (modern 'Irāq), (cf. John Walker, A Catalogue of the Arab-Sassanian Coins, p. xxi). 'Ali, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, had married Muḥammad's daughter Faṭīma, an event which was to have lasting historical significance, had each time failed to be elected Caliph, much to the chagrin of himself and his partisans; and for long afterwards the 'Alīd supporters were destined to upset the equilibrium of the ruling power whether Umayyad or, afterwards, 'Abbāsīd (ibid, p. xxii).

Syria is the heritage of Byzantine culture. The Shi'a (or Party) of 'Alī became even more antagonistic to the newly established dynasty than were the Kharijites (separatists with their clarion 'There is no judgement except Allah [لا حكم الا لله] a slogan which issued on coins). They never forgave the Umayyads for the disastrous massacre at Kabela in 61 A.H. 2 650 A.D. of 'Alī's son Ḥusayn and his handful of followers by the soldiers of the Umayyad Governor 'Ubaydallāh ibn Ziyād.

الخلفاء الراشدين = Orthodox Califs. The Shi'a naturally disputed this and regarded 'Alī as the rightful Caliph. In contra-



diction to Shā'at 'Alī the orthodox (or Sanrī) Muḥammadans maintained that the first three Caliphs of Islam were:

11-13 = 632-634      عمر      13-23 = 634-644;      عقابه      23-35 = 644-656 (ibid, pp. xxii, xxiii).

The deceased is a bondmaid of al-Faḍl al-'Abbāsī who may have been a descendant of al-'Abbās, the Prophet's uncle. By his name the 'Abbāsīd dynasty is called (132 A.H. - 656 A.H. = 749 - 1258 A.D.). Besides this, the name al-'Abbās comes from al'ubūs

البؤس contrary of bīshr بشر = looking cheerful.

Al'abbs is also a plant. (See Ibn Durayd, Vol. I, p. 44, Vol. 2, p. 563). The word mawlat is spelt correctly. Because it is a feminine in the possessive case it is incised with the tā' almaftuḥa

ت not with the tā' almarbūṭuh ة (cf. Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 49); al-'Abbāsī also occurred on tombstones from Egypt (cf. Wiet and Hawwārī, Vol. 3, No. 1168; Wiet, Vol. 6, No. 2152).

The day of death happened on Thursday, not on Friday. In such cases there may be some possibilities: the table of concordance may be wrong, or the day of decease was Thursday night and the burial day was on Friday, as is the custom in Egypt.

1. 6      a = for      ابنة

1. 8      a = for      الزبدى



Stele No. 11.

Lime tombstone, dated Sunday, five nights remained of Jumādā II, 408 A.H. = Sunday, 17th November 1017 A.D. Rectangular 50 x 22.5 cm. Twelve lines of incised foliated kufic. Purchased by Budge at Aswān, 1887. It has the following numbers: sculpture 1025, exhibition 669, registration 1436. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
٢. تبارك الذي له ما جيل من
٣. خيرا من ذلك خبات تجري
٤. من تحت الأرض ويحيى
٥. من أمواتهم اللهم صل على
٦. محمد النبي وآله الطاهرين
٧. صرية وارحم عبدك
٨. أحمد بن يعقوب بن أحمد
٩. بن إبراهيم توفي يوم
١٠. الأحد لخمس بقية من
١١. محرم سنة الف وستمائة
١٢. ثمانية وأربع مائة



Translation.

1. In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. blessed be He who will assign to thee,
3. better than that, gardens underneath which,
4. rivers flow, and He shall assign to thee,
5. palaces. O God! bless
6. Muḥammad the Prophet and his family,
7. the pure; and have mercy upon your servant,
8. Ishāq, son of Ya'qūb, son of Ishāq,
9. son of Ibrāhīm. He died on
10. Sunday, when five remained from,
11. Jumādā the latter in the year,
12. eight and four hundreds.

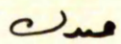

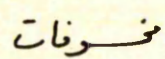
Commentary: A tall rectangular shāhid with a plain in relief border at the top, right and left sides. It is badly damaged and chips of stone are missing, leaving holes. Horizontal incised lines were used to keep the spaces between the lines equal and the words regular. Sometimes the mason crowded the words together. Only twice is the border used to finish a word in ls. 1, 4.

The kufic is neat and, at the same time, legible and, for the most part, relatively plain but there are a number of leafy characters. The alifs are given half-palmettes which in turn represent arrow heads substituted for the palmettes. In some rare cases this shape of the alif is already occurring on papyri of the



second to the third century A.H. On tombstones from Jerusalem dated 395 A.H. = 1005 A.D. and from Thabad (Yaman) dated 540 A.H. = 1146 A.D. (cf. Grohmann, AO, Vol. 2, p. 191). The decoration of the alif affects other letters whether initial, medial or final, as we have already seen in the inscription. The initial bā' in the word bism 1.1 is exceedingly tall and reaches the level of the other strokes and ends in a half-palmette. The hanging letters joined on to the letters group jīm emerge from the middle. The lower strokes of the hanging letters in ls. 3, 4, 10, instead of being straight, are spreading. The letter dāl is mafsūl as Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 66, calls it, or muthalath 'alā zawiyah wāhida as Qalqashandi, p. 79 says. No differences can be noticed between the letter rā' and nūn. All the teeth of all the sīns are on the same level. A tiny, upright tail is found on the letter ṭā' which in turn is a trapezoid. It is the first time, but not the only time in this inscription that we meet with a medial 'ayn having a lozenge form in close contact with the base line and without any stem, as it is in lines 2, 4, 8. Lozenge 'ayns can be traced on tombstones from Egypt (cf. Wiet, Vol. 5, No. 5, 9569 dated 408/1017 A.D. [the same date as our inscription], Pl. XI, 1225 dated 414 A.H. = 1023 A.D.; J. Sauvaget, glanes epigraphiques, REI, No. 12, p. 29, Pl. II). The only, and the first, mīm in the word allāhum 1.5, bears the only double-tailed mīm in this inscription. This double-tailed mīm exists for the first time on an epitaph 1.1



in the word al-Raḥīm, in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, (Wiet, Vol. 6, No. 12725 dated 414 A.H. = 1023 A.D., Pl. XVI). Then it is frequently used (*Ibid*, No. 2721/301, Pl. XVIII, 3150/125 Pl. XV, 1506/368 Pl. XXIII, 3150/159 Pl. XXIV, 3150/91 Pl. XXIV, 67/8 Pl. XXIX, 3150/83 Pl. XXXI). The lower part of the two horizontal strokes of the letter kāf is longer than the upper one in 1.7 in the word 'abḍaka . This kāf, with its neck, resembles a kāf in the word baraka on a fragment of ceramic. (cf. S. Flury, *Une formule épigraphique*, Fig. 7B, p.63). He calls it "col a cygne" which means the swan's neck. The final lām in the word ja'ala 1.2 is mu'arraqa as Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 66, calls it, or mursala as Qalqashandī, p. 85, describes it. The final wāw and the final qāf take the same form batrā'  (Qalqashandī, p. 99.). Almost all the final yā's take the form makhṣufāt  (plural of makhṣufa, *Ibid*, p. 131.). The lāmālif takes various forms but, on the whole, it has no sharp differences. The same lāmālif existed on an epitaph No. 7230, dated 204 A.H. = 820 A.D. Pl. XIII (cf. Wiet, Vol. 4.).

Qur'ānic verses XXV.10, 1s. 1, 2, 3, 4 and the first part of 1.5 are found. The shi'ite formula as well.

The deceased is a member of Ishāq's family. The surname Ishāq is a clan of banī abu-Bakr al-Ṣidīq pertained to banī Ṭalḥa, son of 'Abd Allah son of 'Abd al-Raḥmān son of Abī Bakr. They settled in al Shmunayn (*Al-Maqrizī al Bayān wal i'rāb*, p. 46;



Riḍākahhala, Mu'jam Qaba'il al-'arab, Vol. I, p. 20.).

- 1.3. a: ذاس ancient orthographic for ذس  
 1.9. a: for ابرصيم  
 1.12 a: for الافرّة



Stele No. 12.

Lime tombstone, dated Monday, when twenty-one nights passed from dhū al Hijja 410 A.H. = Tuesday, 19th of April 1020 A.D. Rectangular 50 x 35 cm. Ten lines of very incised plain kufic. Presented by Budge at Aswān, 1889. It has the following numbers: sculpture 1089, exhibition 668, registration 1. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
٢. كُلُّ نَفْسٍ حَتَّى تَمُوتَ وَتَبْقَى رَجُلٌ رَجُلٌ
٣. ذُرِّيَّةُ الْجَنَّةِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ
٤. مَهْلِي عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ وَعَلَى آلِهِ الطَّاهِرِ
٥. سَيِّدِ دَارِ عَمِّ عَبْدِ الْغَفِيرِ الْهَشَرِيِّ
٦. عَمْرِو بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ
٧. مُحَمَّدَ بْنَ قَاسِمٍ تَوَفَّى يَوْمَ الْاِثْنَيْنِ لَزْهَدٍ وَشَرِيهِ
٨. لَيْلَةِ خَلَّتْ فِي ذِي الْحِجَّةِ سِتَّةً
٩. عِشْرَ رَابِعِ مِائَةٍ
١٠. رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ وَغُفِرَ لَهُ




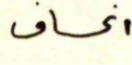
Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. all that dwells upon the earth is perishing, Yet still  
abides the face of Thy God,
3. Majestic, Splendid, O God,
4. bless Muḥammad the prophet and his family the pure,
5. and have mercy upon your servant that has need of Thy mercy,
6. 'Isā, son of 'Abd Allah, son of Aḥmad, son of 'Alī son
7. of Muḥammad, son of Qāsim. He died on Monday when twenty one
8. nights were past of dhy al-Ḥijja in the year,
9. ten and four hundreds,
10. the mercy of God and His forgiveness be upon him.

Commentary: A rectangular shahid with a plain in relief border at the top, right and left side. There is damage at the top, the corners and at the left side. In spite of the horizontal incised lines the mason did not manage to keep the spaces equal, the words are crowded and he had to complete the day of decease in the blank space between l.s 6 and 7. The same treatment can be seen on an epitaph in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (cf. Wiet, Vol. 5, No. 2721/389 Pl.VI.). The last three words at the bottom of the stone are cramped. The margin is used twice to finish the words at the ends of ls. 4, 8.

The inscription is far from being beautiful calligraphy and the writing on the whole appears more or less cursive. For such



clumsy inscription see Wiet, Vol. 6, No. 13637 Pl. IV. The heads of the shafts of the alif are sometimes thorn shapes while others are dragon heads and they all point to the left. No lower ends turn to the right except in 1.9 in the word  where the apex of the alif turns to the left while its angular lower end turns to the right. The initial bā' in the word bism 1.1. reaches the level of the vertical strokes alaṣābi' and it is the only letter whose head ends with a fork shape. Qalqashandī gives illustrations of the treatment of the basmla. He stated that it was agreed that the bā' in bism should be taller than any other bā' in the inscriptions. It takes this length instead of the omitted alif between it and the following sīn. In the basmla there are five strokes which take the same level: i.e. the initial alif in the word Allāh, the alif and lām in al-Raḥmān and the same with al-Raḥīm. The two hā's in al-Raḥmān and al-Raḥīm are respectively of the same size. Four letters have the same treatment in the extension, the mīm in bism, the rā' in al-Raḥmān and the rā' and the mīm in al-Raḥīm. The two lāms in Allāh are on the same level with the bā' but the second lām should be lower than the first. Collapse space  inkhisāf between the first lām and the second in Allāh is preferable and the same with the second hā'. The letters group jīm are murakaba (Qalqashandī, p. 69) and in the words al-Raḥmān, al-Raḥīm, 1.1, and irḥam 1.5 the upper end of the tooth of this group is provided with dragon heads. The



hung letters الحروف المعلقة al-ḥurūf al-mu'allāqa which belong to this group take the shape of vertical strokes emerging from the lower end in l.8 and from the middle in l.3. The letters group dāl are what Qalqashandī, p. 70 calls muthalth 'alazawya wāhida مَثَلثٌ وَاحِدَةٌ. A tiny tooth emerges from a cursive ṣād. The tā' is trapezoid and its tooth has a vertical stroke. The initial kufic 'ayn can be called maftuha maḥdhufa مفتوحة محذوفة (Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 66), and mulawwaza ملونة (Qalqashandī, p. 79). The letter kāf is mashkūla without any noticeable curving. Yet in l.4 the mason seems to have made a mistake in drawing the kāf, for it looks like a square ṣād; to mend his mistake he added a small bow. The final lām in the word al-jalāl سید جلّال is mursala mamṭūṭa. The majority of the mīms are of triangular shape and the letters are drawn usually above the base line, except once in l.10 in rahimahu, where the triangle comes under the base line. For the triangle mīm (cf. Kuhnel, Islamische Schrifte Kunst, p. 12; Joseph Strzygowski, Altai Ikan und Volkerwanderung, p. 83; Hawwārī and Rāshid, Vol. I, Nos. 1506, 4521; Epigrafika Vostoka, IX, per.34, on a piece of coin from the days of al-Mutaqī 330 A.H. = 941 A.D., p.15 and in an alphabetic Arabic table, p. 48). The medial hā' is rectangular and split from the middle, sometimes the division is level with the base line, as in ls. 2, 4. Yet in l.2 the splitting line comes above the base line. This shape of the hā' is quite old, it can be traced for the first time in inscriptions from Egypt 31 A.H. = 652 A.D. Also



in Nabataean inscription in E.I., art. "Arabia", Pl. I. The loops of the letters group fā' take a round shape but, in 1.5 the medial fā' and qāf in the word alfaqīr in 1.2 in the word yabqā and in 1.10 in the word ghufrānuhu resemble two triangles without any neck lying on the line.

1.2 a: for يَقِي

1.7 a: for اَمَرِي

1.10 a: the alif of the word غُفْرَانُهُ is omitted.



Stele No. 13.

Limestone, dated Sunday the first of Jumādā II, 412 A.H. = 12th September, 1021 A.D. Rectangular 45 x 30 cm. Eight lines of incised foliated kufic. Purchased by Budge at Aswān 1887. It has the following numbers: sculpture 1026, exhibition 667, registration 1437. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
٢. قل هو الله احد الله الصمد
٣. لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له
٤. كفوا حد اللهم صلى على محمد
٥. النبي وآله واصحابه فاطمة ابنت
٦. حفص بن محمد الصديق كرم الله وجهه
٧. م الشهد من قبل عباس
٨. لا عرشا اثني عشرة وأ
٩. بع مائة



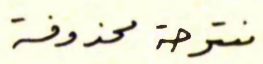
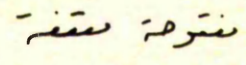
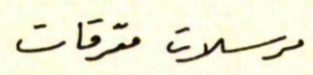
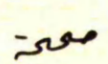
Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. Say, He is God, One God, the Everlasting Refuge,
3. who has not begotten and has not begotten and
4. equal to Him is not anyone. O God bless Muḥammad
5. the Prophet and his family and have mercy upon Fāṭima
- daughter of
6. Ga'far, son of Muḥammad al-Ṣabbāgh. She died,
7. on Sunday, the first of Jumādā,
8. 2, in the year two and ten and
9. four hundreds.

Commentary: Broad rectangular shāhid framed at the top, right and the left side by a plain in relief moulding. Some holes and damage is at the top and the bottom. There is no trace of incised horizontal lines but, in spite of that, the kufic is tidy and the spaces are equal. The margin is used once on the left side to finish the word at the end of l.5. The mason took care with his work and finished it perfectly.

The kufic is open and very clean and entirely unadorned. This inscription recalls the plain elegant kufic of the Umayyad period, such as the milestone of Bāb al-Wādī, 80. A.H. after CIA Jer. I. 1-2, Fig. 2, and Ṣakhra building inscription, 72 A.H., Ibid, Pl. XIII). Many letters are given half-palmettes at the termination of the shafts. The exception is some of the apices of



the alifs, which are thorn shaped. A hook shape points to the right at the lower ends of the alifs. The bā' of bism is tall and provided with an artistic half-palmette. The letters group hā' differ somewhat in size and have a tiny triangle on the base angle. The hung letters are joined to this group from the middle and it is worth while to notice that the mīm in Muhammad ls. 4, 6. is a bud shape with its slanting stem. The dāl 1.2 is the only dāl which resembles the kāf, ls. 3, 4, yet the neck of the kāf, 1.4., ends with a split palmette. No differences can be seen between the group rā' and the nūn. All the teeth of all the sīns are equal and end in half-palmettes. The letter 'ayn takes three forms: initial is maftūḥa mahdhufa , one medial 1.6 and one final 1.9 are lozenge, and final one 1.6 is maftūḥa mu'qafa  = aquiline as Ibn Durustuwayh calls it (cf. Kitāb al-Kuttāb, p. 66) or musbala = drawn as Qalqashandī names it. (Subḥ al-A'shā, p. 81). All the loops of the group fā' are round. The initial lāms are without exception provided, at their heads, with half-palmettes, while the final ones 1.2 in the word qul and 1.7 in the word mustahallī are mursalat mu'arraḡāt , mursala as Qalqashandī, p. 85, calls it, mu'arraḡa as Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 66 describes it. The mīms are round and end in tiny hammer shapes, yet only one mīm in the word bism 1.1 is double-tailed, one is only small but the other climbs up above the line. The final hā' is ṣaḥiḥa 



= perfect (Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 66) or mu'arāh = (Qalqashandī, p. 93). The medial ones are fan shaped. The tails of the wāws assume three shapes, half-palmette ls. 2, 3, 8, webbed 1. 5 and fin 3 in the word نوردر and 1.5 in the word

دارم. The horizontal strokes of the two lāmālifs ls. 7 and 8 are both upright and bowed. All the final yā's are mu'arraḡat makhsufāt مَرَقَاتُ مَخْصُوفَاتٍ. Extension of four or six letter words exists in the text, once in 1.1 in the word al-Rahmān and secondly in 1.9 in the word mī'a. It seems that the drawing out of the second word is to fillspace.

The shāhid contains the usual formulae, Qur'ānic verses cxii, ls. 2, 3 and the beginning of 1.4. Then comes the Shi'ite formula, the essential qualification of which is for the honour of the Prophet and his family during the Fāṭimid reign.

The nisbah of the deceased, al-Ṣabbāgh, is a common designation for dyer but is also frequently used as a nisbah probably without specific reference to the profession. For this nisbah (cf. Hawwarī and Rāshid, Vol. I, Nos. 155, 381) Ṣabbāgh comes from

صبغ = to tint, it can also mean صبغ يده في الماء = dip his hand in the water. The Christians call this dipping of their children in the water sabghān, i.e. Baptism. Ṣabbāgh, one who dyes or a liar, fulān yaṣbigh al-Kalam فُلَانٌ يَصْبِغُ الْكَلَامَ = decorates it; aṣibāgh al-ta'am أَصْبَاغُ الطَّعَامِ = its variety (cf. al-Zabidī, tāj al-'arūs, Vol. 6, p. 19, Beirūt, 1956).



1.2. a: the word صر is omitted.

1.4 a: the letter alif of the word كنرا is neglected.

1.5 a: for الجنة

1.8 a: for الزفرة

1.9 a: the letter waw is extra.



Stele No. 14.

Lime stone, dated Saturday, when ten days remained of the month  
 Rabī' I, 415 A.H. = Sunday, 31st May 1024 A.D. Rectangular 50 x 40 cm.  
 Eleven lines of incised foliated kufic. <sup>Purchased</sup> Presented by Budge at Aswan, 1889.  
 It has the following numbers: sculpture 1096, exhibition 666, registration  
 7. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian antiquities to the  
 Oriental department in 1958.

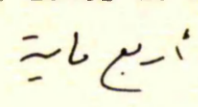
Text

١. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
٢. ان النبي قالوا ربنا الله ثم ا
٣. ستقاموا تنزل عليهم الملائكة
٤. تلكم الاغافوا ولستم نوا
٥. والسبروا بالحجة التي كنتم
٦. توعدهم اللهم صلى على محمد
٧. النبي وعلى آله الطاهرين وارحمهم
٨. أنتى فاهمة ابنت محمد به
٩. محمد به أهد به عمر به عقمه ؟ بر
١٠. م السبت لعرق أيام بقمه به
١١. ربيع الثول سنة فحة عرق
١٢. واربع مائة



Translation:

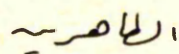

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. those who have said, Our Lord is God, then
3. have gone straight, upon them the angels,
4. descend, saying. "Fear not neither sorrow,
5. rejoice in Paradise that you were
6. promised. O God! bless Muḥammad
7. the Prophet and his family the pure and have Thy mercy
8. upon your handmaiden Fāṭima, daughter of Muḥammad son of
9. Muḥammad son of Aḥmad, son of 'Umar, son of 'Uthmān,
10. She died on Saturday when ten days remained of,
11. Rabi' I in the year fifteen
12. and four hundreds.

Commentary: a rectangular shāhid completely surrounded by a narrow in relief border. Incised lines are seen clearly but the mason did not use them. Only at the beginning of the text are the spaces equal but in the rest of the inscription the lines do not run parallel. At the bottom the two words  are not crooked.

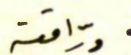
In the first two lines the kufic letters are larger than the letters in the rest of the inscription.

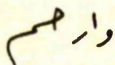
One can notice clearly in the basmala that the word bism covers almost one third of the line. (For the basmala, see above, Steles Nos. 1, p. 2; 9, p.2). The letter alif ends with a hook that



turns to the right while the bend at the lower end points to the left. It seems as if the mason incised the apex to the left then he changed his mind and added to the alifs heads from the right, which is quite clear in the first three lines of the inscription. In the rest of the inscription the heads of the alifs turn to the right. The letter bā' 1.1 in the word bism has a vertical angular stroke not cursive as is usual and all the rest end in a thorn shape. The hung letters of the jīm group start with the strokes and these hung letters are tiny such as in the word takhāfūn in 1.4. To discriminate between the letters nūn and rā' the mason incised the first smaller and he supplied it at the same time with a rising tail above the line, as in ls. 6, 8. The teeth of the letter sīn are of equal length. In the word bism, 1.1., the distance between these teeth is unusually wide when compared with what is customary in incising the letter sīn. (Qalqashandī, p. 75, stated that the famous calligrapher, Abi al-Ḥasan ibn al-Bawwāb, in drawing the letter sīn, preferred to see the distance between the second and the third tooth wider than that between it and the first. The letter tā' is drawn in both forms of the angular kufic, 1.7 in the word  and cursive in 1.8 in the word . The tooth of the angular tā' is shorter than that in the cursive and both end with open mouth shape. The final 'ayn is triangular and mu'cafa. The letter mīm is circular. The medial bā' is split vertically and is heart shaped. The lām alif is incised in two ways, the first resembles a



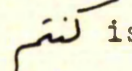
nutcracker, the second is an acute angled triangle to which is fixed a "U" shape (Qalqashandī, p. 102, calls it wuraqiya  .


All the loops of the wāws are round except one, 1.7 in the word wa'irham  which is provided with an artistic leaf growing out of its loop. It gives the loop an elegant shape and fills the space between the loop and the ya's streak here above it.

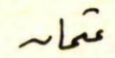
This is the first time one meets this ornament.

Common formulae, the basmala: (Qur'ānic verses XLI. 30, 1.2 - the first part of 1.6).


1.1 a: the letter mīm of the word al-Rahīm is neglected.



1.5 a: the letter tā' in the word  is omitted.

1.8 a: for 

1.9 a: ancient orthographic for , thus because 'Uthmān is a name of a famous Calif, and is frequently used, the alif is done away with. (cf.

Miles, AQ, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 216, Pl. I, fig. I.)

b: The last two letters of the word  are omitted.

1.10 a: The letters  of the word  are neglected.

The day of death corresponded to Sunday and not Saturday.



Stele No. 15.

Limestone, dated Thursday, 6th of Muharram 418 A.H. = Thursday, 16th February, 1027 A.D. Oblong 19 x 16 ins. Eleven lines of incised floriated kufic. Purchased by Budge at Aswān 4.2.1887. It has the following numbers: sculpture 1027, exhibition 665, and registration 1436. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
٢. هَذَا بِمَرْغٍ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِنُذَرُوا بِهِ
٣. وَلِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ مَا هُوَ إِلَهُ رَاحِدٍ
٤. وَلِنُذَكِّرَ آلَ الْاَلْبَابِ اللَّهُمَّ
٥. صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ وَآلِهِ أَوْ (سَلِّمْ) ؟ (تَلِيْمًا) وَ
٦. صَلِّ عَلَى عَبْدِكَ النَّقِيِّ إِلَى هَيْئَتِكَ هَيْئَتِهِ
٧. أَهْمَدُ بِهِ عَلَى بِهِ مُحَمَّدُ بِهِ تَاسِمُ بِهِ عَبْدُ
٨. الصِّدِّيقِ يَوْمَ الْخَمِيْسِ لَيْلَةَ أُيَا
٩. مَ غُلُوْمِهِ بِهِ الْحَمْدُ لَيْلَةَ ثَمَانِيَةِ عَشَرَ
١٠. وَأَرْبَعِ مَائَةِ هَمْدُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَ
١١. رَفِيقَانِهِ



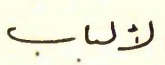
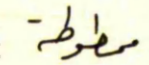
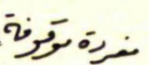
Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. this is a sufficient announcement for me, and (it is revealed)  
that they may be warned thereby,
3. and that they may know that He is one God,
4. and that the discreet may remember. (Sūr. xiv. 52).
5. O God, bless Muḥammad the Prophet and his family and save them
6. and have mercy upon your servant who has need of your mercy  
Ja'far son
7. of Aḥmad son of 'Alī son of Qāsim, son of 'Abd
8. as-Ṣamad. He died on Thursday six days after the beginning of
9. al-Muḥarram in the year eight and ten
10. and four hundreds may the mercy of God
11. and his favour be upon him.


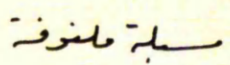
Commentary: A rectangular shāhid framed in a plain in relief border at the top, right and left side. The stone is damaged on the top, at the left side and on the bottom. The ends of ls. 3, 4, 5 and 6 are rubbed and the words are obscured. The border is used twice, first on the left side then on the right side, which is the first time this has occurred. This was done to incise the word "have mercy" which the mason had omitted. There is no trace of incised horizontal lines. Yet, in spite of that, the spaces are almost equal and the writing is well done.



The kufic is legible and there are unusual characters.

We have here the same technique as in the preceeding inscription but, as already mentioned, the letters have different characteristics. In spite of some damage, the beginning of a new style can be discerned. The apices of the alif which point sometimes to the right, as can be followed in ls. 1, 2, 5, 10, and others to the left, in ls. 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, are thorn-like. The bā' in bism is tall and it is incised only twice with a pen nib head in ls. 1, 2. The final bā' in l.4 in the word al-albāb  is mamṭuṭah  = extended as Ibn Durustuwayh calls it or mūfrada mawqūfa  2 partly separated as Qalqashandī described it. (cf. Kitāb al-Kuttāb, p.66; Ṣubḥ al A'shā, p. 65). The hung letters stem from group jīm from the upper third in ls. 5, 7 and from the middle in l.8. No resemblance can be traced between the dāl and the kāf. The former is approximately a triangle in ls. 2, 5, while in ls. 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, it is a square. In ls. 7, 9, 10, 11 there is no difference between the rā' and the nūn. Yet in ls. 1, 2, 3, 4, the climbing up above the line tail is the only feature which characterises the rā' and the nūn. It is very strange to find for the only time in these inscriptions that the 'arraqa of the final sīn, l.2, ends in a climbing returning tail. The ṣād contains two shapes, a square, l.5, and rectangle, ls. 8, 11. The letter 'ayn is comprised of four shapes: the initial is almond mulawwaza (Qalqashandī, p. 79), and supplied with a half-palmette at its opening; the medial is lozenge



in 1.3 and in 1.10 is a triangle; the final one, 1.2, is maftuḥa mu'qafa (Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 66) or mursala as Qalqashandī, p. 81, calls it. The loops of the fā' are sometimes round while others are triangular. The kāf 1.6 is the most artistic of all the kāfs, its neck is crowned by a half-palmette scrolled from the inner part. All the mīms are rounded and the most peculiar mīm is the final one in the word  on the right side of the margin which is musbala malfufa  mulawwaza (cf. Qalqashandī, p. 115). The medial hā' is fan shaped. A special peculiarity of this inscription is the extensive use of the half-palmette which sometimes resembles an open mouth. These half-palmettes are used in various places; at the heads of the letters and at their tails, as well. Another noticeable remark in this inscription is the frequent use of the climbing up above the line tails. Yet the main characteristic feature is the tail in the final nūn of al-Raḥmān, 1.1, which really crowned the word. It ends with an exaggerated long tail which reaches the letter hā' then turns to the left and ends in a fin shape. This floral motive became a part of the word al-Raḥmān in an epitaph No. 272/419, dated 401 A.H. = 1011 A.D. 1.1, Pl. V, (cf. Steles Funeraires, Vol.6, Yet it appeared for the first time on a tombstone 387 A.H. = 997 A.D. Ibid).

The usual formulae are used with some variations such as "Wasālim taslimā" 1.5 and asking for the mercy of God at the end of the text. Verses from the Qur'ān in 1. 1 - 4. The formula


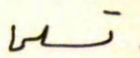




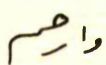
wasalim taslīmā

وسلما

appeared on the inscriptions under consideration for the first time. Such formulae which concern the benediction of the Prophet can be seen on nonfuneral texts in Qayrawān (cf. Poinssot, Nos. 3, 6...). It also occurs on many epitaphs both from Egypt and Qarawān. Sometimes we find this taṣlyā at the beginning of the inscriptions, following by the basmala. At other times it can be traced at the end of the shahāda. Many forms of the taṣlyā can be found, as: "God bless him every morning and every night", "that God sends him benedictions and peace on our master Muḥammad", "O God bless Muḥammad in the beginning of times till the end", and others. These different forms of the taṣlyā kept the customary formula of the shahadatayn "Bless Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad as you have blessed Ibrāhīm and the family of Ibrāhīm". The formula wasalim taslīmā can be traced on some epitaphs in Qayrawān (cf. Ibid, Nos. 178, 188, 190, 197, 202, 205, 215, 221; see also p. 105, note 6).

1.4 a: the second part of the line is rather indistinct.

1.5 a: perhaps the engraver wanted to carve the word which complete the Shi'ite formula al-tāhirīn but stopped short at the alif which he neglected to erase. This word  should be .

b: the letters ... , at the end of the line and  at the beginning of the text making up the word , are outside the boundary line. They were evidently omitted by the engraver and inserted



afterwards.

1.9 a: تَمَانِيَسِر incorrectly for تَمَانِيَعِسِر.



Stele No. 16.

Limestone, dated Saturday, eight days before the end of Rabi' II 420 A.H. = Saturday, 10th May 1029 A.D. The shahid is neither rectangular nor square. It narrows at the base. 55, 35, top 40 cm. Purchased by Budge at Aswān, 1887. It has the following numbers: registration 1439, sculpture 1028, exhibition 664. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

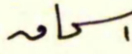
Text

١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
٢. اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَتُوبُ اِلَيْكَ
٣. اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ
٤. اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَتُوبُ اِلَيْكَ
٥. اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ
٦. اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَتُوبُ اِلَيْكَ
٧. اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ
٨. اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَتُوبُ اِلَيْكَ
٩. اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ
١٠. اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَتُوبُ اِلَيْكَ
١١. اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ
١٢. اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَتُوبُ اِلَيْكَ




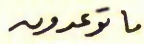

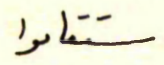

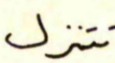
Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful
2. They are true, those who say Our Lord is God and,
3. then walk uprightly, upon them
4. shall the angels descend, saying "Fear not neither
5. sorrow", rejoice in Paradise that
6. you were promised. O God! bless
7. Muḥammad the Prophet and his family the pure
8. and give Him peace. He died, Ibrāhīm son
9. of al-Ḥusayn son of Ishāq son of Ya'qūb son of Ishāq
10. on Saturday when eight (nights) remained of
11. Rabī' II in the year twenty and
12. four hundreds.


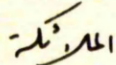
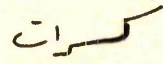
Commentary: A shāhid narrowing at the bottom. It has a plain in relief border framing the stone at the top, right and left sides. There are holes and scratches at the bottom. No trace of horizontal incised lines but, in spite of that, the spaces are equal, the lines run parallel and the work is gracefully finished. The border is used only once to finish the word  at the end of 1.9. In my opinion this shāhid has one of the most elegant of the inscriptions.

The kufic is neat, legible and it seems that the engraver was more successful than at any other time in incising his letters. The alif has a wedge shape with its end pointing to the right.

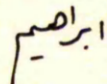


The bā' in the basmala is taller than the other bā's in the inscription. The hanging letters are fixed from the middle of the lettersgroup jīm and they look quite small in ls. 5, 6, 8, 9. The mason made a special difference in the drawing of the letters group rā' and nūn in ls. 2, 6, in the words  and . The letters group dāl are cursive all through the inscription and there is no obvious similarity between the dāl and the kāf. The teeth of the letter sīn slope down from the right to the left in the word bism 1.1 and the word  1.8, but in ls. 5, 9, 10, 11 the teeth are level. In l. 5 in the word , the teeth slope down from the left to the right, contrary to bism. In addition the stoke of the letter tā' in this word is longer than the teeth of the sīn in the same word. The letter ṣād is a low arch as is seen in ls. 6, 8. The tooth of the tā' is incised in half-palmette shape with a little bend to the left. The medial 'ayn in the word Ya'qūb is lozenge form. All the loops of all the group fā' plus those loops of the wāws are round. The neck of the kāf ends in a half-palmette and it stands with the body of the letter on the same level. It seems that the mason, after finishing his work, inserted a small final lām of the word  and let its tail in the middle of the initial 'ayn of the word followed by . The final hā' is incised without a buckle. Flury mentioned that this hā' without any buckle existed on the ancient inscriptions (cf. Flury, Une Formule Epigraphique, p. 68.).



The climbing up the line tail is found ten times in this inscription. Yet the double tailed mīm can be seen once in the word  1.3 and not in the basmala as we usually find in the previous inscriptions. Only one ligature is used in the word  1.4. These ligatures are called by Ibn Durustuwayh  kasrāt (cf. Kitāb al Kuttāb, p. 69). They can be seen on some of the tombstones from Egypt (cf. Wiet, Vol. 6, Nos. 2721/468 Pl XXVI, 6118 Pl. XXX; Vol. 7, Nos. 1240 Pl. XII, 1264 Pl. XIII). The two strokes of lāmālifs which form a triangle at their bases ~~leave~~ it at the top to face each other and form a crescent shape.

1.1 and the first part of 1.6 are Qur'ānic verses. The deceased is a member of Ishāq's family. The same spelling of Ishāq without the alif exists many times on tombstones.

1.8 a: ancient orthographic for 



Stele No. 17.

Lime tombstone, dated Thursday six days from the beginning of dhu al-Qa'dah 421 A.H. = Thursday, 6th November 1030 A.D. Rectangular 50 x 30 cm. Eleven lines of foliated incised kufic. Presented by Budge at Aswan, 1889. It has the following numbers: sculpture 1091, exhibition 683, registration 3. It was transferred from the Egyptian antiquities department to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
٢. اَمَّا اللَّهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ
٣. اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ
٤. اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ
٥. اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ
٦. اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ
٧. اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ
٨. اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ
٩. اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ
١٠. اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَللّٰهُمَّ
١١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ





Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful
2. God is with those who are godfearing,
3. and those who are good doers, O God!
4. bless Muḥammad the Prophet and his family,
5. and have mercy upon Mubāraka, daughter of
6. Ibrāhīm son of Aḥmad, son of 'Alī, son
7. of Muḥammad, son of Qāsim, son of 'Abd,
8. al-Ṣamad. She died on Thursday,
9. six days from the beginning of dhū al'Qa'dah
10. in the year one and twenty and
11. four hundreds.

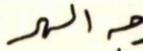
Commentary: A rectangular tall shāhid with a border in relief framing it on all sides, except the bottom. The stone is damaged and scratched at the bottom. In the first half of the inscription the spaces are equal and the writing is perfect but at the bottom, because of the absence of the horizontal lines, the writing is not straight and the words are crowded and badly incised. The left side of the border is used several times to finish some words in ls. 1, 3, 8, 9, 10.

The kufic characters are legible and, apart from the triangles which terminate the tops of the shafts of the alifs and some other letters, are for the most part unadorned. The triangle shape was a development of a hook or barb. We can see such ter-




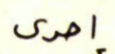


minations on textiles as well as epitaphs and ceramics. This evolution of the decoration of the alifs is not confined to Egypt but also appears on a copper plate of the eleventh century A.D. and a similar one of the tenth century A.D., both of which were made in Persia. But Egypt had developed it in a very artistic way during the Fāṭimid period, as demonstrated by ceramics of the eleventh century A.D. The bā' in the basmala is shorter than we used to find in almost all the previous inscriptions. The group jīm is drawn much bigger especially in l.1 in the word al-Rahmān, l.3 in the word muḥsinūn, l.5 in the word Muḥammad and ls. 5, 8, 10. The mason succeeded this time in distinguishing between the group tā' and nūn. The letter dāl takes two shapes, angular in l.3 while, in ls. 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 we notice that the dāl takes nearly the same form as the kāf except in l.8 where the mason exaggerated the returning neck of the final dāl. The teeth of the group ṣīn are comb shaped but sometimes differ in length. The letter ṣād is cursive in the word  l.4 and angular in l.8 in the word al-Ṣamad. The medial and final 'ayn take the triangular shape. The loops of the group fā' assume two forms: round as in ls. 7, 8, 9, and candle flamed in l.2 in the word itaqū. The lām is treated in the same way as in the previous inscription, namely sometimes angular and sometimes cursive. The letter nūn looks similar to the rā' except in l.9 in the word khalawna where the nūn is very peculiar; it resembles a square bracket  . The initial and medial hā' take the form



of a cat's face  (cf. Qalqashandī, p. 97). All the final mīms end in hammer tails. There is only one ligature in 1.5 in the word Mubāraka. Three peculiarities can be noted in this inscription: the final yā' in 1.4 in the word al-Nabbiyy, where it takes a returning "S" shape; the alif of the word Allah takes the shape of a spherical triangle; while the loop of the wāw is plain. The hook like top or barb of the head of the alif and lām, which is concerned with the late Nabataean form of alif in Sinaitic inscriptions, is a development of the plain loop. This is seen in an epitaph in Sicily 579 A.D. = 1183, where it had developed into a fully looped head in ceramics from Samargand. Finally, the tops took the form of human heads as is seen in an inscription from Sicily dating from the thirteenth century A.D. (cf. A. Grohmann, AQ, Vol. 2, pp. 198-200; N. Abbot, Rise of North Arabic Script, p. 17).

What do we expect! the same funeral formulae, two verses from the Qur'ān, then the Shi'ite formula lacked the blessing of Muhammad's family.

- 1.5 a: for   
 1.8 a: the mīm in the word  is omitted.  
 1.9 a: for   
 1.10 a: for 



Stele No. 18.

Limestone, undated, probably late fourth C. A.H. = tenth C. A.D.  
 Six lines of incised partly ornamented kufic. Damaged at the bottom  
 but repaired. Rectangular 32.5 x 30 cm. Presented by Sir J. Bowering,  
 1646. It has the following numbers: exhibition 686, registration 771A.  
 It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities  
 to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

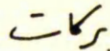
١. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
٢. الحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا الذي كنا لنهتدي لولا أن هدانا الله
٣. والحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا الذي كنا لنهتدي لولا أن هدانا الله
٤. محمد النبي وآله وأصحابه
٥. ... كاتبة الملكة أبي الحبيب ...
٦. ... أمة إبراهيم ...




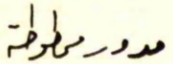
Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. Surely with God's friends no fear be on them
3. neither shall they sorrow; O God! bless
4. Muḥammad the Prophet and his family, and have mercy  
upon your servant:
5. Barakāt al-Mukannā abī al-Ḥusayn son of Ḥusayn
6. ... son of Ibrāhīm son of ...

Commentary: The shāhid has been broken and a large piece of the bottom lost. This has been replaced by a blank stone slab. Thus the surname of the deceased and the date of death are missing. There is no trace of incised horizontal lines yet, in spite of this, the work is well done.

The kufic characters are open and legible and have thorn-like terminations. In ls. 1, 3, 4, the apices of the alifs point to the right while in ls. 2, 5 and the remaining part of l. 6 they point to the left. Yet all the apices are thorn-shaped. The bā' in the basmala is tall but not as tall as we used to find in the previous inscriptions. The final tā' in the word  1.5 is manṭuṭah, as Ibn Durustuwayh calls it, or mufradanawṭah, as it is called by Qalqashandī (cf. Kitāb al-Kuttāb, p. 67; Subḥ al-A'shā, p. 65). The letter hā' in l. 1 ends in a wide open mouth shape. The offshoot letters protrude from the upper third in ls. 4, 5 while in group jīm in l. 3 from the middle. The only difference one can




notice between the dāl and the kāf is that the neck of the former is taller than that of the latter, especially in l. 4 in the word Muḥammad. The mason differentiated between the rā' and the nūn by incising the nūn in a larger type than that of the rā'. The teeth of the ṣīn comprises two shapes: in l. 1 in the word bism they take a comb shape and in l. 5 in the word al-Ḥusayn they graduate in length from the left to the right. Ibn Muqlah preferred the teeth to be of the same level (cf. Qalqashandī, p. 31). The only ḡād in the inscription takes the shape of a tiny square. The initial 'ayn takes an almond shape  and its opening has an open mouth shape. Such a feature seems strange as it is not customary in the previous inscriptions. The only remaining final fā' is round and, as Ibn Durustuwayh calls it, mudawar <sup>w</sup>mamṭuṭah or mawqufah  as Qalqashandī describes it (Ibid, p. 66; p. 83.). It ends in a tail that is split. The lām includes two shapes: cursive as in ls. 1 in the second lām of Allāh, 3 in Allāhumma, 4 in Allāh; and angular in the remaining text. A horse-shoe quirk separates the two lāms of Allāh in l. 1. All the mīms, as in the previous inscription, include a circular shape. The initial and medial hā' are fan-shaped, but in l. 3 the mason added another short stroke which divides the hā' in two. The loop of the wāw is elegant and it proves that such a loop resembles a development of a thorn shape. The lāmālīf is tong-shaped. The climbing up above the line tails are serpent-shape, ending in open mouths. Flury



stated that the Fāṭimid preferred these plain tails to the complicated ones.

The inscription is composed of the usual formulae as in Qur'ānic verses X.62, 1.2 and the first half of 1.3. Then follows the Shi'ite formula.

This is the only shahid which has the word al-Mukannā = nickname.

It is curious that the epitaph which follows the usual pattern during the course of time missed its date. Yet, as it includes the Shi'ite formula, has climbing up the line tails, an independent element appears above the word , the elegance of drawing the lines, the artistic loops; all these features help to date the inscription between the 4th and 5th century A.H. = 10th - 11th A.D.

The name of the deceased is followed by al-Mukannā. Al-Kunya is used in three places, first for a bad thing we avoid mentioning, secondly when calling a man by a certain name, Kunya, to show respect to him. The third instance is where the Kunya takes the place of the original name of a man and he is called by it. Thus he is X or the father of X. (cf. Lisān al-'Arab. Vol. 15, p.200).



Stele No. 19.

Limestone, dated Monday when three days remained of Šafar,  
422 A.H. = Monday, 22nd February, 1031 A.D. Rectangular 40 x 52.5 cm.  
Eleven lines of foliated, incised kufic. Purchased by Budge at Aswān  
1887. It has the following numbers: sculpture 1030, exhibition 682,  
registration 1449. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian  
and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
٢. يَجْتَرِصُمُ رَهْمَ بَرَهْمَةِ نَضَ
٣. وَرَهْمَوَاهُ رَهْمَاتِ لَهْمِ نَضَ
٤. نَفِيمِ مَقِيمِ عَالِيَةِ نَيْكَةِ أُبَ
٥. اِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ اجْرُ عَظِيمِ اللَّهُمَّ
٦. صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ وَعَلَى آلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ
٧. وَارْحَمْ عَبْدَ الْفَقِيرِ الرَّحْمَتِ
٨. مُحَمَّدَ بْنَ أَحْمَدَ بْنَ عَلِيٍّ بْنِ مُحَمَّدَ بْنَ قَاسِمٍ
٩. بْنِ عَبْدِ الصَّامِدِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ بَدْرِ تَوْفَى يَوْمَ
١٠. مِ الثَّانِيَةِ لِمَوْلِدَةِ أَيَّامِ بَقِيَةِ هَرَسَفَرِ
١١. سَنَةِ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ وَارْبَعِ مِائَةٍ




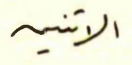
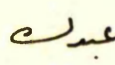
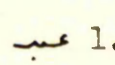
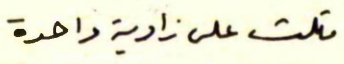

Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. their God given them good tidings of mercy from Him,
3. and good pleasure; for them await gardens
4. where in lasting bliss, there in to dwell forever and ever;
5. surely with God is a mighty wage. O God!
6. bless Muḥammad the Prophet and his family the pure,
7. and have mercy upon your servant who has need of your mercy
8. Yaḥyā, son of Aḥmad, son of 'Alī, son of Muḥammad son of Qāsim,
9. son of 'Abd al-Ṣamad, son of Yaḥyā son of Badr. He died
10. on Monday, when three days remained of Ṣafar,
11. in the year two and twenty and four hundreds.

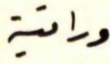
Commentary: A rectangular shāhid with a plain moulding surrounding it at the top, right and left-sides. A handle called "die tabula ansata" emerges from the upper part of the moulding. Such handles appeared on Egyptian tombstones as early as the end of the second century (191 A.H. = 807 A.D.). After that it developed varying forms more ornamented and complicated (cf. Cairo, Steles, Vol. I, No. 1193; 11192 Pl. VI, 11303, 3634, 9461 Pl. III, 9848; op.cit., Vol. 8, No. 3475 Pl. II, 1245 Pl. XVIII). There are holes and damages at the upper corner and at the bottom of the stone. No trace of incised horizontal lines so as to keep equal spaces can be seen. The margin is used only once in l.6 to finish the word

الطاهر .



The alifs in ls. 3, 4, the beginning of 5, the word  in 6, al-Ṣamad in 9, 10 are thorn-shaped, pointing to the right. Yet in l.10 in the word , the alif ends in a dragon but points to the left. The bā' in the basmala is angular and takes the same length as the bā' in the previous inscription. But the bā' in the word  1.7 and  1.9 are cursive and drop beneath the base line. The letters group hā' are of the same size but they differ in shape. The final tā' 1.2 is extended. The dāl on the whole is what Qalqashandī calls muthalath 'alāzaweya wāhidah  (cf. Subḥ al a'shā, p. 71); while in ls. 5, 9 it looks similar to the kāf and the two are what Flury called "le col de cygne" (cf. Une formule epigraphique, p. 62). A remarkable similarity is found between the rā' and the nūn except in ls. 1, 2, 3 where the mason distinguished between them. The rā' in the mentioned lines are provided with climbing up above the line tails. Some of the teeth of the sīn end in half palmettes while others are comb shaped. In l.11 in the word sana the mason alternated between the teeth of the sīn and the nūn. The letters group ṣād take a rectangular shape. The letter tā' takes the shape of a trapezoid and its tooth ends in a half-palmette bending to the right. The mason illustrated the letters group 'ayn. The initial is what Qalqashandī calls na'liyva  p.80; while the medial and final ones are lozenge forms with an upright neck reclined on the base line. It is quite remarkable in this inscription to find that the lozenge form is illustrated for two



letter groups; the medial and final 'ayn and the fā'. This feature can be traced on a tombstone in the Museum of Islamic Art. (cf. Cairo, steles, Vol. 4, No. 1228 dated 320 A.H. = 932 A.D. Pl. IV). The remaining loops of the group fā' are round. The lām includes two styles: cursive and angular. All the mīms are drawn in circular forms. The mīms ls. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 are double tailed mīms. The initial and medial ha' are of different sizes while comprising one form; the fan-shaped. A tiny thorn rises above the loops of the wāw while their tails are crochet. The lāmālif is waraqiyya  = foliage. A low circular arch separates the two lāms of the word Allāh in l.1. Five ligatures originate in this inscription, ls. 6, 7, 8, 9, 11. Some words are divided between two lines, ls. 4, 9. The tear limb from limb of the word is frequently used in the decorated epigraphic in remarkable consequences. In this way because of the absence of the diacritical points, the scribe, when copying inscriptions, failed to understand the meaning and treated the two halves of one word as two different words, in combination with the others. That is why we always meet with so many inscriptions which do not make sense and are less valuable for study (cf. Flury, Une formule epigraphique de la ceramique archaïque, p. 55). On the whole the text is readable and the writing is neat and tidy.

It contains the customary formulae, Qur'ānic verses IX, 21, l.1 - the first part of l.5.

The deceased is a member of 'Abd al-Šamad's family.



1.3 a: the letter yā' of the word فدى is omitted.

1.5 a: for أمر ، علم

1.10 a: for بقي ; the word ~ and the letter ~ are omitted.

b: the same spelling for Ṣafar can be traced on tombstones from North Africa (cf. B. Roy and P. Poinsot, Inscriptions Arabes de Kairouan, Nos. 221, p. 329; 224, p. 352; 251, p. 380; 266, p. 391. Zbiss, Inscr. Arabe du Tunisie, Vol. I, No. 27, p. 62, E. Levi Provençal, Inscr. Arabes d'Espagne, Nos. 21, 121, 133, p. XXVII).



Stele No. 20.

Limestone, dated 1st of Shawwāl, 423 A.H. = 10th of September, 1032 A.D. Rectangular 40 x 35 cm. Eight lines of foliated incised kufic. Purchased by Budge at Aswān 1837. It has the following numbers: sculpture 1031, exhibition 681, registration 1442. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ...
٢. أَصْحَابُ الْحَقِّ يُؤْتِيهِمْ خَيْرًا ..
٣. وَأُحْسِنُ تَقْوَى اللَّهِ صِلَى عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ
٤. النَّبِيِّ وَآلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ وَارْحَمِهِمْ ...
٥. أَمِنْتُ عَلَى بِهِ أَصْدَبَهُ عِبِيدَ اللَّهِ ..
٦. الْقَرِيبِينَ الدُّنْيَا تَوْفِيقَ
٧. مَنْ مَتَّلَ تَوَالٍ مِنْهُ
٨. تَمُوتُ دُكْرِيَّةً دَائِبُ مَا يَهْ



Translation.

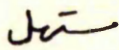

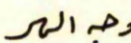


1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. the inmates of Paradise on that day shall have the best abode,
3. and fairest resting place. O God! bless Muḥammad
4. the Prophet and his family the pure, and have mercy upon Ḥabībah,
5. daughter of 'Alī son of Aḥmad son of 'Ubayd Allah
6. al-Qarmīsi al-Edfuwī. She died,
7. in the first of Shawwāl in the year .
8. three and twenty and four hundreds.

Commentary: A rectangular shāhid with a plain in relief border framing it at the top, right and left side. The stone is damaged in the left upper corner. The strange feature is the blank space left at the bottom. Incised horizontal lines are used more than once to keep the spaces equal and the writing tidy. The border is used three times to finish the series of the last words, ls. 2, 3, 4.

All the alifs have thorn like apices pointing to the right, except in 1.5 where the mason changed to the dragon heads yet pointing to the left. The bā' in the basmala is too short, shorter than any bā' of the bā's in the previous inscriptions. The final tā' 1.2 is mufradamawqufa مفردة موقوفة (cf. Qalqashandī, p. 65).

The hung letters branched from the letters group jīm emerge from their middle. The mason incised the hā' in al-Raḥmān bigger than any of the other hā's. A floral element emerged from the opening



of the hā' resembling a lying down S. It is difficult to differentiate between the rā' and the nūn. The teeth of the sīn are comb-shaped and in 1.7 in the word mustahall  the tā' is on the same level as the sīn's teeth. Yet in 1.1 in the word bism the bā' is a little taller than the sīn's teeth but not as tall as usual. The sād is square. The group fā' includes two forms: round in ls. 6, 7 and oval with a tiny stem resting on the base line in ls. 3, 7. In 1.1 a horseshoe element separates the two lāms of the word Allāh. All the mīms are round except in 1.8 in the word  the mīm takes an oval shape. Some of the lāms end in dragon heads, others in triangles, but all the heads point to the left. The stroke of the final hā' ends in a dragon head yet the initial and medial ones include two shapes: Cat's face , in 1.3 and fan-form in ls. 4, 7. The loops of the wāw contain two forms: round and muthalath mabdhūf. As for the round, a tiny tail elevates their loops. Such a tail resembles a hook or thorn which proves that the loop is a development of that hook. (see the previous inscription). In 1.8 it seems that the wāw of wa'ishrīn was omitted then added just above the opening of the 'ayn after finishing the work. The same as in the previous inscription. The lāmālīf is tongue-shaped. The final yā' in 1.7 is less collapsed than that in 1.3 in the word . Just above the word , 1.2 appears an independent element recalling those in Nos. 21, 22. (see below Nos. 17, 18.). The climbing up above the line tails appears only in 1.1 in the



final mīm of bism and medial rā' of al-Raḥmān. On the whole the inscription is rather crowded and somewhat clumsy.

The usual formulae with Qur'ān XXV 26, 1.1 - 1.3 are there.

The name of the deceased is Ḥabībah although it might possibly be Ḥusnah. Alqarmūs منقعة واسعة للخبز ضيقة الرأس = القرموس

= a hole with a wide bottom but narrow end. It may also be al-

Qarmūsh القرموش = المجمع من الناس a group of people.

It comes from قارش (الخبز) qarmasha = صبره = to make

(crisp) = to grind عصيه قومه = short bread. The nisbah al-

Edfuwī refers to Edfū = a place in the south of Egypt. It was a habit of inhabitants from Edfū to send their deceased to be buried in Aswān (cf. Budge, The Nile, p. 337.)

1.2. The word مستقرا is omitted.

1.4 The name of the deceased may be Ḥasma or Ḥabībah.



Stele No. 21.

Limestone dated Sunday, 1st of Sha'ban 424 A.H. = Monday  
2nd July, 1033 A.D. Rectangular 45 x 35 cm. Eight lines of foliated  
incised kufic. Purchased by Budge at Aswān 1887. It has the follow-  
ing numbers: sculpture 1032, exhibition 679, registration 1/43. It  
was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian anti-  
quities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
٢. تبارك الذي انا جعل لك خيرا من ذلك
٣. جنات تجري من تحتها الانهار - ويجعل
٤. لك فيها كل الثمرات على عهد النبي و
٥. على آله الطاهرين وارضى عبدك به خيرا
٦. صدق تبارك موسى عليه السلام به خيرا
٧. صبرا توفي يوم النحر
٨. سببا (؟) - فاعبى دهره وارضى ما به



Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. blessed be He who shall assign to thee better than that,
3. Gardens underneath which rivers flow and He shall assign
4. to the palaces. O God! bless Muḥammad the Prophet
5. and his family the pure and have mercy upon your servant son
- of 'Ubayd,
6. Ḥasan son of Qabāl, the freedman of Ḥasan son of Ḥusayn son
7. of Hubayra. He died on Sunday, the first of
8. Sha'bān in the year four and twenty and four hundreds.

Commentary: A rectangular shāhid with a plain in relief border. There are holes in the stone at the top. This shāhid has the same blank space at the bottom as was found on No. 22. Across the blank space runs an incised line. Such a line proves that the mason used the border five times to finish his words on ls. 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8.

The kufic is fairly open, more legible than the preceding inscription. We have here the same technique as in No. 20 but the letters have different aspect. The apices of the alifs are thorn shaped and point to the right. Yet in l. 8 in the word أربع the apex ends in dragon head but pointed to the left. The bā' in the basma takes the same length as the bā' in No. 20. The final tā' in l. 3 in the word حيات is mufrada mawqūfa نمرة موقوفة.



initial or medial, is fanshaped. The wāw bears resemblance to the wāw in the previous stele. Most of the lāmālifs are tong shapes. There is only one double tailed mīm in 1.1 in the word bism. The ligature is applied only once in 1.7 in the word الزمر. The neglected letters 1.8 in دسره are managed in the same way as in Stele No. 20. Thus one can recognize the obvious likeness between this inscription and the previous one.

The usual funeral formulae are found.

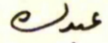



The surname of the deceased is Qabbāl: Qabbāl is a collector of taxes. This word represents the new form of words or significations not listed in Arabic dictionaries and contributed by Arabic papyri to the stock of words in existence (cf. A. Grohman, from The World of Arabic Papyri, Cairo, 1957, p. 97). One may add to that that Qabbāl قبال = زمام Zimām = reins. It can also be قبال Qayyāl = صاحب سراج king and from it Aqyāl al-Yaman. (Ibn Durāyed, Vol. 2, p. 430). The deceased is also a bondsman to Hubaiyra. Hubaiyra is a name of a tribe settled in Egypt. Hubaiyra from banī Sa'd son of Zaiyd son of Tamim, (Ibn Durāyed, Vol. I, p. 245); a fraction of banī Sālim from Ḥarb settled in Najd and al-Hubaiyra called al-Habaiyrāt (cf. al-Zabidī, tāj al'arūs, Vol. 2, p. 356; Riḍā Kaḥala, Vol. 3, p. 1208); Hubaiyra is a diminutive of Habara هبرة which means a piece, (Ibn Durāyed, Vol. I, p. 152. For Hubaiyra cf. Steles Coubique d'Egypte et du Sudān, No. 14, p. 291).



The letters group īm differ in size and the biggest of them all are the hā's in al-Rahmān and al-Rahīm l.1. Yet all the group end in open mouth shapes. The lying element which we find in the preceding stele appears here in the same place with the same treatment. The resemblance between the dāl and the kāf, especially in ls. 2, 5, which was missing in stele No. 20 comes back again in this inscription. This characteristic appears on tombstones from Egypt (cf. Cairo steles, Vol. 3, Nos. 3380/17 Pl. XXX, 2721/249 Pl. XXX, 1506/78 Pl. XXXI, 1506/564 Pl. XXXI, 2721/249, 1506/78 Pl. XLI, 9537 Pl. XLV, 3380/11 Pl. LIV, 1506/617 Pl. LVI, 7297 Pl. LIX, 2721/62 Pl. XIV; op.cit., Vol. 4, Nos. 1228 Pl. IV, 1206/50 Pl. II, 1506/495 Pl. III, 2721/564 Pl. IV, 11030 Pl. VIII, 2721/383 Pl. XXX, 2721/196 Pl. XLVIII; op.cit., Vol. 6, 2721/182 Pl. III, 1223 Pl. IV, 2721/308 Pl. XVI, 1506/459 Pl. XXI; op.cit., Vol. 7, 9563 Pl. I).

The teeth of the sīn l.1 in the word bism and in l.6 in the word Hasan graduate in length from right to left. But in ls. 6, 8, the teeth are equidistant while in l.8 in the word Sha'ban and sana we find that the first tooth is longer than the other two. The stroke of the tā' in the word الطاهر is even with the alif followed by it. The loops of the group fā' are like those loops in Stele No. 20. The horseshoe element which comes in between the two lāms of the word Allah l.1 resembles that in the previous inscription. The letter mīm is treated as in Stele No. 20 also in the word ٢٦ l.8 the mīm is oval. The hā', whether



1.5 a: The word  seems to be clear, the engraver probably forgot to place the name of the deceased before the word  . Thus the word which comes after  can be read  in spite of the cut in the middle of its letters.

1.8 a: The month seems as if the engraver mistook and confused between Rajab which he stated at the beginning, then converted it into Sha'bān. Yet the jīm of Rajab is still visible.



Stele No. 22.

Lime stone, dated ten nights remained of Rabī' I, 427 A.H. = 23 January 1036 A.D. Rectangular 50 x 40 cm. Nine lines of foliated incised kufic. Purchased by Budge at Aswān 1897. It has the following numbers: sculpture 1033, exhibition 678, registration 1444. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
٢. قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ
٣. لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ
٤. كُنُفٌ أَوْ مَآءٌ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ
٥. وَعَلَى آلِ الطَّاهِرِينَ وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ
٦. عَلَيَّ يَا أَحَدٌ يَا أَحَدٌ تَوَسَّلْ
٧. لِمَنْ بَقِيَ مِنْ رِبْعِ الْوَلَدِ
٨. مِنْ سِتَّةِ سَبْعٍ وَخَمْسِينَ
٩. وَارْبَعِ مِائَةٍ .





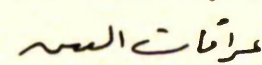
Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. Say, He is God, One God, the everlasting refuge,
3. who has not begotten and has not begotten and
4. equal to Him is not anyone. O God bless Muḥammad the Prophet,
5. and his family the pure and have mercy upon Monā daughter
6. of 'Alī, son of Aḥmad, son of Ishāq. She died,
7. ten (nights) remained of Rabī' I,
8. of the year seven and twenty
9. and four hundreds.

Commentary: A rectangular shāhid framed with a plain in relief border fringing the stone on three sides, the top, right and left. On the left side the stone is broken and not vertical and holes can be seen at the bottom. The mason used his chisel to line the stone and thus the spaces are almost equal. A blank space has been left at the bottom. The margin is used only once in 1.7 to finish the word الرحمن at the end of the line.

The engraver began his work successfully, the kufic is legible and fairly open, then the words became crowded and, at the end of the inscription, he began to elongate the words just to fill spaces. Thorn like apices point to the right supply the heads of the alifs and a tiny stroke turns to the right at the lower end. The ba' in hism is long but it does not reach the level of the vertical strokes. The mason distinguished between



the size of the hā's. In 1.1 they are drawn much bigger than the other hā's in the remaining kufic. The hung letters branch from the upper third in this group. The letter group dāl includes two shapes: angular which resembles a square as in ls. 2, 3, 4; "col de cygne" in ls. 2, 6. In this latter form it looks similar to the kāf in the same inscriptions, there is just a trifling difference between the necks of the two letters which appears in the word al-Samad 1.2. An obvious resemblance can be traced between the drawing of the nūn and the rā', even the climbing up above the line tails. Combshaped teeth are found in all the sīn except in 1.8 in the words  and  where the mason treated the teeth as in the inscription No. 20 (see above Stele No. 20). The sād takes the shape of a tiny square. The stroke of the tā' is incised in the same way as in Nos. 20, 21. The tails of the final 'ayn in  of ls. 6, 7 are much bigger than the triangles. The loops of the group fā' are of two forms: oval as in Nos. 20, 21, 25, 28, 31 and round. The oval or candleflamed shape of the letters group fā' appear very frequently in tombstones from Egypt. (cf. Cairo Steles, Vol. 4. Nos. 3051 Pl. XVI, 2721/60 Pl. XVI, 2721/66 Pl. XXI; op.cit., Vol. 5, Nos. 1216 Pl. IX, 1506/101 Pl. XV, 8629 Pl. XVIII, op.cit., Vol. 6, Nos. 2721/644 Pl. VI, 1506/308 Pl. VIII). The final lām in the word alawal is mursala = extended. If we compare the elegant loops of the wāws with those in Nos. 17, 19, 20, 21 we



find obvious similarities. Yet their tails end in finshapes. All the final yā's are collapsed. Two different quirks separate the two lāms of the word Allāh ls. 1, 2 - the first is horseshoe arch while the second is semicircular. Three ligatures in ls. 2, 4, 9 are drawn without any regard for the rule. The mason extended some of the kūfic first for elegance and second for filling in spaces. The elements which resemble the Chinese clouds (strata) are repeated in this inscription more than once, especially in the last two lines of the text. For the Chinese clouds (cf. Zakī Ḥasan, Fuṣūḥ al-Islām, Cairo, 1948, p. 110). Above the word al-Raḥmān l.1, quite detached from the word, we find an independent ornament. The earliest illustrated examples of such independent ornaments on Egyptian tombstones go back to the first half of the third century (cf. Cairo Steles, Vol. 2, Nos. 2721/209 Pl. XIII, 1261 Pl. XIV, others dated 244 A.H. = 858 A.D. No. 1506/24 Pl. XVII). We consider these independent ornamentations as preliminary steps to the floriated kūfic.

Qur'ānic verses l.1 till the first part of l.4 cxii are given in full; the surat al-Ikhlāṣ...

Because of the lack of the diacritical points on the monumental kūfic the name of the deceased, a woman, is probably منى Munā or منا Manā. Munā or manā = نأه الله = made him able. Al-Manī = the able . cf. the verse of al-Juhārī

لَا تَبْرَهُ لَسْتُ سَوْفَ أَفْلَهُ

عَنْ تَمَرِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ



It should be written with the yā' not with the alif as it is incised in the inscription. منى munā = qaṣd = a place near Makka. The arabs used to name their meeting place munā. The word miniā مينيا which is given to a town in Egypt is given to many other villages there.

These must have been places where those corns were sold (cf. taj al-'Arus, Vol. 10, p. 347).

1.5 a: for ابنة

1.6 a: ancient orthographic for سحابة

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William Wright, who translated some of these inscriptions read this name wrongly Maiya. (cf. Proceedings of the Society. Biblical Archaeology, Vol. IX, 1886-87, pp. 329-349).



Stele No. 23.

Lime stone, dated Monday, 22 days passed Rajab 431 A.H. = Tuesday 8th of April 1040 A.D. Rectangular 57.5 x 40 cm. Fourteen lines of foliated incised kufic. Purchased by Budge at Aswān 1887. It has the following numbers: sculpture 1034, exhibition 677, registration 1445. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
٢. سَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْكَ يَا رَبِّمُ
٣. حَبِطَ عَرْشُكَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
٤. أَتَيْتَ الْمُتَّقِينَ تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي لَا
٥. يَجْعَلُ لَكَ فَرْجًا مِنْ دُونِ غَنَاتِ نَجْمٍ
٦. يَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ وَنَحْمِلُكَ
٧. قَصْرَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ
٨. وَآلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ وَرَحِمَهُمُ
٩. عَبْدُ الْقَبِيلَةِ الْمُحْتَمِلِ
١٠. بِهَ الْحَيِّ بِهَ الْكَوْنِ بِهَ الْقَبُولِ بِهَ الْكَوْنِ
١١. قَضَا نَجْمُ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لِقَائِهِ وَتَرْتِيبِهِ
١٢. فَخْلُومِهِ مِنْ رَحْبَةِ سِتْرِ إِعْدَادِهِ وَتَأْوِيلِهِ
١٣. وَارْبَعُ مَا بِهِ رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَ
١٤. نَفْسُهُ وَرَضْوَانُهُ عَلَيْهِ .



Translation.







1. In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful
2. Hasten unto forgiveness from your God and
3. that a Paradise the size where of is as wide as the earth,
4. which is prepared for the God fearing. Blessed He who
5. shall assign to thee better than that gardens
6. under which rivers flow; and He shall assign to thee
7. Palaces. O God bless Muḥammad the Prophet,
8. and his family the pure, and have mercy
9. upon your servant that hath need of Thy mercy Ismā'īl,
10. son of al-Ḥusayn, son of Ishāq, son of Ya'qūb, son of Ishāq
11. he died on Monday when twenty and two were
12. passed of Rajab, in the year one and thirty
13. and four hundreds. The mercy of God be upon him,
14. and His forgiveness and His favour.

Commentary: A rectangular shahid with a plain, vertical moulding surrounding it at the top, right and left sides. This simple moulding is somewhat like that on Stelae Nos. 13, 19. There are cracks and holes and damage on the right side and also on the bottom. In the first three lines at the beginning of the inscription, the spaces are equal and the words are perfect. But the rest of the kufic is crowded and crushed. The margin is used more than once to finish the series of words.



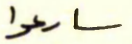
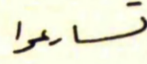
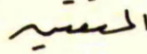
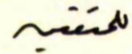


Two shapes include the apices of the alif, thorn shaped and half-palmettes and they all point to the right. Yet in ls. 3, in the word السورة, 11 in the word الرحمة and in 12 in the word إحدى they also end with half-palmettes but point to the left. The tall bā' in the basmala 1.1 which reaches the level of vertical strokes came back again in this inscription. The size of the letters group jīm looks bigger than the other letters of the group in the remaining kufic. The hung letters diverge from the middle except in the word Ishāq, 1.10 it branches from the upper third. The much used dāl takes the angular form, except in 1.8 in the word Muhammad it looks similar to the kāf. The mason did not distinguish between the group rā' and the nūn only in 1.1 in the word al-Rahmān and al-Rahīm, where he succeeded in adding to the rā's a climbing up above the line tails. In this latter case there is no similarity between the two. The teeth of the group sīn 1.1 in the word bism are equal and end in half-palmettes. Yet in the other teeth of the group they are comb-shaped. The group sād is closer to the cursive than the angular. The final dād 1.3 in the word الرحمة is mutrafa mabsuta طرفه مبركة as Qalqashandī calls it or mu'arraga مترقة as Ibn Durustuwayh describes it (cf. Subh al A'shā, p. 110; Kitāb al-Kuttāb, 1.67). The letter tā' is trapezoid and its tooth bends to the left. The initial 'ayn seems balanced because of the two thorns which are suspended from its opening. The medial 'ayn has a candle flame shape. This shape is found in the letter group



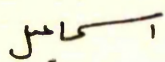
fā' as well. In addition to that a small stem is attached to the candle flame shape with the base line. The final lām 1.5 is as Qalqashandī calls it, mutlaqa  (cf. Subḥ al-'Ashā, p. 110). The mīm is oval and in the word bism and al-Rahmān 1.1 are double tailed mīm. It is worth while to notice that if the mīm is inverted it will have the same shape as the medial 'ayn and the group fā'. The lāmālif takes several shapes: plain in 1.12, plain incurving 1.6, 11, and more foliate 1.3. This last one resembles the gracious form of the lāmālif in these tombstones. Its style can be traced on a tombstone from Egypt in the large collection in the Arab museum in Cairo dated 495 A.H. = 1102 A.D. (cf. Cairo Steles, Vol. 6, No. 6716/Pl. XXX). There are five ligatures in this kufic. They occurred in ls. 3 in the word  12, in the word , and , 13 in the word  and 14, in the word . The last two lines of the text are crowded and it seems as if they have been engraved with difficulty.

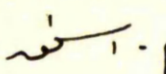
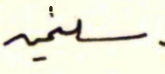
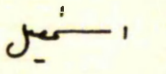
The long inscription is composed of a number of funeral formulae, yet they are all common Qur'ānic verses iii 127, xxv 11.

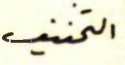
The deceased is a member of Ishāq's family.

- 1.2 a: the letter sīn of the word  has four teeth instead of three. Yet the fourth tooth has been partly obliterated, leaving 
- 1.4 a: originally  but it has been engraved 
- 1.5 a:  for , the alif is omitted.



1.9 a: the small vertical stroke over the min in the word  represents an omitted alif.

Thus Ibrāhīm, Ishāq, Sulaymān, etc.... are omitted as follows  -  - .

The omission of the alif was affected for the fame such names had acquired after famous Prophets. Another reason is for al-takhfif  = lighten. (cf. Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 44). The same spelling can be traced on tombstones from Qayrawān, (cf. Poinssot, Inscr. Arab. Nos. 78, 92, pp. 154 and 180.).



Stele No. 24.

Lime tombstone dated Wednesday, when fifteen (days) had passed from dhu al-Hijja 432 A.H. = Monday? August, 1041 A.D. Rectangular 50 x 35 cm. Ten lines of foliated incised kufic. <sup>Purchased</sup> Presented by Budge at Aswan 1889. It has the following numbers: sculpture 1092, exhibition 676, registration 4. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
٢. قل هو الله احد الله الصمد
٣. لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له
٤. كفرا احد اللهم صل على محمد
٥. النبي وعلى آله الطاهرين وارحمهم
٦. تاسم به عيسى به عبد الله به احمد
٧. به علي به محمد به تاسم به عبد الصمد
٨. به يحيى به بدر توفى يوم الاربعا لخمس
٩. عشرين خلوة من ذى الحجة من سنة اثنى
١٠. عشر مائة واربع مائة



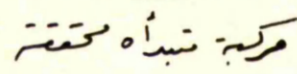
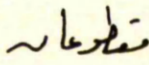
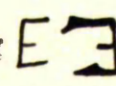
Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. say, He is God, One God, the Everlasting Refuge.
3. who has not begotten and has not begotten and equal to Him
4. is not anyone. O God bless Muḥammad,
5. the Prophet and his family the pure, and have mercy upon
6. Qāsim, son of 'Isā, son of 'Abd Allah, son of Aḥmad,
7. son of 'Alī, son of Muḥammad, son of Qāsim son of 'Abd al-Ṣamad,
8. son of Yahyā, son of Badīr. He died on Wednesday,
9. when fifteen (days) has passed of dhy al-Ḥijja in the year two
10. and thirty and four hundreds.

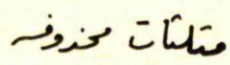
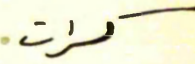
Commentary: A shāhid with an irregular shape, a plain incised border framing it on three sides, the top, right and left. The stone is damaged at the bottom, the top and the left side. Nearly all the upper half of the kufic is nicely done, but in the rest of the inscription the lines and spaces are not equal. More so at the left but even the right side of the margin has been used to finish the kufic, the left side for completing the words of the four lines at the bottom while the right side is used to complete the date of decease. To finish the work on the margin is not an isolated case because we find the same treatment on tombstones in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (Hawwārī and Rāghid, Vol. I, No. 7231 Pl. XXXIX; Wiet, Vol. 2, No. 7947, Pl. XXII, 2721/389 Pl. VI, 8088 Pl. XII, where the mason finished his work using the



sides of the margin.). As a whole the mason has shown his failure.

The alif assumes three forms, thorn like apices with turning to the right at the lower end, the medial ones end in bifurcations and others have triangular form. Such form resembles a development of the hook or barb which in turn is taken from the Nabataean inscriptions. (See EI, art. "Arabia", Pl. I). The letter bā' in the word bism l. 1 is taller than the other bā's in the inscription but it does not reach the level of the remaining murakaba mubtadi'a muhaqqqa  
~~ing strokes in the same line.~~ The group jīm are of the type murakaba mubtadi'a muhaqqqa  (cf. Qalqa-shandī, p. 69). In the word al-Hijja they are of the type maqtu'an  
 (Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 66). The same treatment of these two letters jīm and bā' with the hanging lām can be traced on an epitaph No. 12, Pl. 3 (see Corpus inscriptionum Arabicarum, Part 2, Syrie Du Sud 1 - 2, le Caire (1920)). The hanging letters are correctly joined to this group in the middle. In the word Muhammad, l. 7 the letter dāl looks strange, it resembles a returning  and ends in an open mouth shape. This open mouth shape can be traced on ceramics where the neck of the letter kāf in the word baraka ends with a wide open mouth. (cf. S. Flury, Une Formule Epigraphique de la Ceramique Archaïque de l'Islām, extrait de la revue Syria, Paris, 1924, Fig. 7B, p. 63). The letters group sīn look similar to the comb. The letter ṣād is sometimes sloping, as



in l.4, and others rectangular, ls. 2, 7. The tooth of the letter fā' is squatty and bends to the left. The medial 'avn l.8 takes the form of a candle flame and resembles that on the Stelae Nos. 23, 31, 36. For this candle flame shape (see Ibid, epitaph Nos. 7, Pl. 3; William Wright called this form while commenting on the letter fā' having this candle flame form "the form of the fā' l. 5, Pl. V, is peculiar and exaggerated". Wright, the Palaeographical Society, Facsimiles, London, 1875-1883). Some of the loops of the letters group fā' and the wāw are developed from the thorn shapes while others are muthalathat mahdhoufa . The letter mīm has a bud shape. The climbing up above the line tails are used many times and the tails down under the base lines take the fin shape. Three ligatures can be seen in this inscription, ls. 2, 4, 9. These ligatures  existed on some tombstones in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo. (cf. Wiet, Vol. 6, Nos. 2721/408 Pl. XXVI, 6118 Pl. XXX; op.cit. Vol. 7, Nos. 1240 Pl. XII, 1264 Pl. XIII).

The deceased is a member of 'Abd al-Ṣamad's family. The surname Badr is a fraction of al-Fāṭima from the tribe of Yaman (cf. Fu'ad Ḥamza, Qaba'il Jazirat al-'Arab, p. 204). It may also be a part of al-Zubayr ibn al'Awwām, from Banī Azd from 'Adnaneyh, they have settled in al-Ashmunayn in the south of Egypt, Riḡā Kaḥḥāla, Vol. I, p. 63.

The date of decease seems to be wrong. If the death happened as it is already stated on the shāhid when fifteen days



passed of dhu al-Hijja the day of decease must be Monday and not Wednesday. In such case there are two possibilities.

1) the table of concordance may be wrong. 2) the engraver instead of engraving days or nights after the number five, placed ten. In this latter case the day of decease would have been correct.



Stele No. 25.

Lime tombstone, dated Monday, eight (nights) passed of the month of Ramaḍān in 432 A.H. = Tuesday, 12th May 1041 A.D. Rectangular 20, x 13.5 cm. Ten lines of incised foliated kufic. Purchased by Budge at Aswān 1887. It has the following numbers: sculpture 1035, exhibition 675, registration 1446. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
٢. قل هو الله أحد الله الصمد
٣. لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له
٤. له كفوا أحد اللهم صل على
٥. محمد النبي وعلى آله الطاهر
٦. يه وآلهم عبدك النبي إلى
٧. هتفت صوته به جبرائيل
٨. به حماد عرساير لرفقير
٩. م الرقية لتمام فلهه ... شهر رمضان
١٠. ه نقة انضية دة رقية وابع مائة



Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. say, He is God, one God, the everlasting refuge,
3. who has not begotten and has not begotten and,
4. equal to Him is not anyone. O God! bless,
5. Muḥammad the Prophet and his family the pure,
6. and have mercy upon your servant,
7. that has need of your mercy. Hārūn, son of Baḥr, the goldsmith,
8. son of Najjāw, son of 'Urayṣnā, he died,
9. on Monday, when eight (nights) were passed of the month of  
Ramaḍān
10. in the year thirty two and four hundreds.

Commentary: A rectangular shāhid which has lost a piece of stone from the bottom left corner. The right side also is damaged along nearly half its length. A plain incised stone fring frames it on all sides except the bottom. The border at the top seems broader than the other two sides. The upper part is tidy and perfect and horizontal incised lines helped to keep spaces equal and words nicely finished. It is not extraordinary to find the beginning of the inscription perfectly done. The fringe is used only once in 1.9 to complete the word Ramaḍān.

The style of kūfic very closely resembles that of No. 24 above dated 432 A.H. = 1040 A.D. In fact the two stones might have been incised by the same hand (the tombstone under consider-



ation till the seventh line), certainly the two have the same date. Not only the thorn apices at the ends of the alifs' shafts but even the climbing up tails, the doubled tailed mīm and the floral shape of the letters group fā' and 'ayn are alike. The letter mīm in both tombstones has the same oval shape.

The usual formulae, 1.1 till the first part of 1.5 contain five Qur'ānic verses in full cxiii.

For the absence of the diacritical points the deceased's grandfather's name may be either al-Ṣayigh or al-Ṣami'. The former al-Ṣā'igh is a common designation for goldsmith, while the latter, labourman exists frequently in the Islamic area. The surname is completely obscure and the following names suggest themselves:

themselves: نَجَّار Najaw comes from النَّجَّار al-Najjā' = lofty land; it can also be بَجَار Bajān from بَج baj = cut open; نَحَّار Nahāw from نَحْر naḥw = towards or have recourse to (cf. Ibn Durayd, al-Ishtiqāq, pp. 199, 268, 512).

'Ara'ishā is the plural of 'arisha = canopy or عَرِيشَات hawdaj

'Ireisha عَرِيشَات = vine is trained upon a trellis; 'Iryysa



عَرِيشَات = lair; 'Adabbas son of Mālik ibn Dhu'r who pulled the Prophet Joseph out of the well. It was said that Mālik who had twenty four sons is a descendant of the Prophet Ibrāhim (ibid.

عَرِيشَات 'arasha al-bi'r = surrounded it by stone. 'Urshān as a name of a man 'arshūn = a name of a town in the Yaman under the foot of Jabal al-Tāakkur. whence al-Qadī Ṣafyy al-Dīn b. Abī Bokr al-'Arshānī. Abū 'Arīshī is a town in the Yaman neighbouring Ḥijāz.



And from it came the traditionalist 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Muḥammad al-Ash'arī al-'Arīshī. Al-'Ara'ish, a town in Morocco (Tāj al'Arūs, Vol. 4, p. 322).

The shāhid under consideration and the previous one have the same date 432 A.H. = 1041 A.D. This frequently happened on tombstones. To arrange such tombstones is to fix the chronological number according to the Arabic alphabetic order. Thus the shāhid of Qāsim comes before that of Hārūn. (cf. H. Hawwārī and H. Rāshid, Vol. I (1932), pp. 6, 7, 8.).

On looking at this inscription, one notices how tidy the first seven lines look and how untidy the remaining three are. It seems that the engraver discovered too late that the remaining space would not be enough for the wording of the three last lines and thus he stuck the words very close together and to make up for space he dropped some letters (e.g. the word mīm of the word ) and used the margin once to add a letter nūn 1.9. Yet for some reasons which cannot be ascertained he doubled other letters (1.9 the letters ) and a double nūn for the final letter of the word Ramaḍān one in 1.9, the other in 1.10.



Stele No. 26.

Limestone tomb dated Thursday, eight (nights) passed at al-Muharram in 438 A.H. = Wednesday, 16th July 1046 A.D. Rectangular 21½ x 12 in. Twelve lines of incised foliated kufic. Presented by Budge 1889. It has the following numbers: sculpture 1093, exhibition 674, registration 5. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
٢. قل هو الله احد الله
٣. الصمد لم يلد .. ولم يولد
٤. له ولم يكن له كفو احد ..
٥. محمد اللهم صل على
٦. محمد النبي وآله الطاهرين
٧. يه وارضهم عبد الرحمن
٨. به عليه به ابراهيم به
٩. عليه ابراهيم به اصفرت
١٠. في يوم الخميس تمامه خلوة به
١١. المحرم سنة تمامه دهرتية وار
١٢. بع مائة



Translation

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. say, He is God, one God, the
3. Everlasting refuge, who has not begotten and has not
4. begotten and equal to Him is not
5. anyone. O God! bless
6. Muḥammad the Prophet and his family the pure,
7. and have mercy upon 'Abd al-Aḥd,
8. son of al-Ḥusayn, son of Abrahām son,
9. of al-Ḥusayn Abrahām, son of Aṣfar.
10. He died on Thursday, eight (nights) were passed of,
11. al-Muḥarram in the year thirty eight and
12. four hundreds.

Commentary: A rectangular shāhid with a plain raised (in relief)


border framing the inscription at the top, right and left side.

It is damaged at the corner of the right side and at the bottom, a part of the stone is missing. The spaces are not the same and in spite of the incised lines which can be seen only in the last quarter of the inscription, the words are crowded and the script untidy.

Only one alif in l.1 turns to the right at the lower end.

The alifs are provided at the end of their shafts with split arrow heads. Most of the letters group hā' are cursive. There is no difference when comparing the letter rā' with the nūn. The



teeth of the letter sīn are equal and each tooth ends with a broken rectangle similar to the apexes of the alif ls. 7, 9. This isolated peculiar form of this ornamented apex which somewhat recalls "architectural kufic" is shown by two tirāz inscriptions. One, in Musée de Benaki No. 144, made in Tinnīs in 309 A.H. = 921-922 A.D., exhibits a rectangular broken top of the alif and lām, the other, Inv. No. 8164 in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, tenth century, shows the heads of the shafts bulging out and intentionally stylized and so recalling simplified dragon heads. (A. Grohmann A.O., Vol. 2, 1957 pp. 190-191). The letter qāf 1.9 seems very strange, it resembles half of a circle or a bud with a stem joined to the base line. The remaining letters of this group and the wāw as well are muthalathāt maḥdhūfat. The letter kāf 1.4 is unusual, it has a straight squat stroke giving the letter a degrading shape. Most of the lāms are cursive. There is only one climbing up the line tail in 1.1 and it is what we called the doubled tailed mīm. The mason extended the word  me'a in two letters just to fill space. The letter hā' takes two forms, the former a triangle with two curves missed the elegant tail which we used to find frequently, on the other inscriptions, the latter resembles a circle with a line in the middle dividing it into two halves. This hā' ibn Durustuwayh, p. 66, calls al-hā' al-mashqūqa and it is found on the tombstone of al-Hijrī as well.



The deceased has a Jewish name. His surname may probably be Aṣfar أصفر while it might possibly be أصغر Aṣghar. If the former it means vacant or to dye to yellow and for the latter it means younger than. The surname Aṣfar can also be traced on one of the tombstones in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, (Hawwārī and Rāshid, Vol. 2, No. 2627).

1.3 a: the word يرل is omitted.

1.4 a: for كنوا



Stele No. 27.

Sandstone dated at the beginning of al-Muharram 441 A.H. =  
 5th of June, 1049 A.D. Rectangular 51 x 35 cm. Nine lines of  
 foliated incised kufic. Presented by executors, 1854, of Professor  
 W. H. Mill, D.D. Trinity College. E.1. is its registration number.  
 It is exhibited in the Greek and Egyptian antiquities department in  
 Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Text.

١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
٢. كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ثُمَّ
٣. لِنَا تَرْجُوهُ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى
٤. مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ وَآلِهِ وَارْحَمْ
٥. سَيِّدَتِي زَيْنَةَ ابْنَتِهَا بِه عَابَسِي
٦. بِه اِبْرَاهِيمَ بِه عَابَسِي بِه اِبْرَاهِيمَ
٧. نَسَبَتْ فِي مَقَرِّ الْحَرَمِ
٨. اَصْرًا وَارْبَعِيه وَارْبَعًا
٩. بِه



Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. every soul shall taste of death, then unto us,
3. you shall be returned. O God! bless
4. Muḥammad, the Prophet and his family and have mercy,
5. upon your handmaiden Zayn daughter of Ḥasan son of 'Abbās,
6. son of Ibrāhīm, son of Ḥasan son of Rābi',
7. She died on the first of Muḥarram in the year,
8. forty one and four
9. hundreds.

Commentary: A rectangular shāhid surrounded with an incised plain border. On the top, right side and at the bottom are holes and some damage has been done. At the bottom the border is broader than on the other sides. There is no trace of incised horizontal lines and thus the spaces between the lines are not equal. The mason used the left border to finish some words at the ends of ls. 1, 5. 7. The bottom is used to complete the word Ma'a.

Only the initial alif of the word Allāh 1.1 ends with a hook turning to the right at the lower end contrary to the ordinary shape where no turning exists. The apexes of the remaining alifs have a triangular form. The bā' in the basmala is of the ordinary length that can be traced in the other inscriptions but in 1.5 it looses some of its length till it levels with the medial nūn and the final tā' in the word ibnat, 1.5. The mason exaggerated the



medial hā' in the word Muhammad and the initial mīm which is supposed to be adjoined to it stands alone. The letter dāl varies in shape, in 1.2 it is cursive while in ls. 4, 8 it is angular. The teeth of the letter sīn end in a fork shape while in other letters they take triangular shapes. Most of the loops of the letters group fā' and the wāw as well are cursive. The double tailed mīm occurs once in 1.1 in this inscription. An intermediate horse shoe element (quirk) separates the two facing lāms of the word Allah 1.1.

No unusual feature, Qur'ānic verses and the Shī'ite formula lacks the word al-tahirīn.

The nisbah Rābī' refers to one of the tribes who emigrated to Egypt. These Rabāyi' tribes are the descendants of 'Arab al-Hijāz'. In the year 1883 A.D. it was considered as one of the important tribes in Asyūt in the south of Egypt. (Na' 'ūm Shuqayr, The History of Sīnā', p. 725; Aḥmad Luṭfi al-Sayyid, The Arab Tribes in Egypt, Vol. I, p. 14; Riḍā Kaḥhala, Vol. 2, p. 416.)

When one says: رابى على رابى'un 'alayhā = steady and unchanging (Līsan al 'Arab, Vol. 8, p. 108.)

1.1 a: for الرصم

1.6 a: الرصم the same spelling without the alif is paralleled in a tombstone dated 3rd century A.H. = 9th century A.D. (Miles A.O., Vol. 2, 1957, No. 13, p. 6.)



Stele No. 28.

Limestone, dated 22 of Ramaḍān 443 A.H. = Monday, 27th of January, 1052 A.D. Rectangular 52.5 x 41 cm. Ten lines of floriated kufic. Purchased by Budge at Aswān 1887. It has the following numbers: sculpture 1036, exhibition 693, registration 1447. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.


Text

١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
٢. كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّا تَرَوْنَ
٣. فَهَهُ أَهْوَائَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْهُ
٤. نَزْجِي عَنْ النَّارِ وَادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ
٥. دِمَا الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا الرَّشَاقُ الْفُرُورُ اللَّهُمَّ
٦. صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ وَآلِهِ وَارْحَمْ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ الْفَقِيرِ
٧. هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الْغَفُورُ فَاضِلَةُ ابْنَةِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ
٨. بِنْتُ عَلِيٍّ الْمَعْرُوفِ بِالْوَالِدِ تَوَضَّعَتْ مِنَ الْيَوْمِ
٩. لثَانِي وَالْعَشْرَةِ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَجَبٍ سَنَةِ ثَلَاثِ
١٠. وَارْبَعِ مِائَةٍ



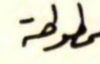
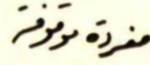
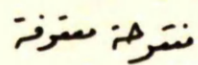
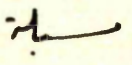
Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. every soul shall taste of death; and you shall receive,
3. your recompense only on the day of resurrection and who,
4. then is moved away from the fire (of hell) and made to enter  
Paradise, has obtained salvation.
5. and the life of this world is nought but deceitful wares, O God!
6. bless Muḥammad the Prophet and his family, and have mercy on  
your handmaiden that has need,
7. of your mercy, Faḍilah daughter of Muḥammad son of 'Abd Allah,
8. son of 'Alī, known by (the name of) al-Wādī. She died on
9. the twenty second of the month of Ramaḍān in the year three
10. and forty and four hundreds.

Commentary: A rectangular shāhid with a plain in relief margin bordering the inscription on three sides, the top, the right and the left. The stone looks tidy. It has some holes at the top only and the right side is chipped. Horizontal lines are incised for keeping equal spaces and regular writing. The mason did not use the left side of the margin to finish his words as has been found on other tombstones. The word  at the end of the text is extended for about half of the line to fill the rest of the space.

The heads of the alifs end with thorn like apices turning to the right except one in l.8 which points to the left. The letter bā' in the word bism l.1 is cursive while in the remainder of the




text is angular. The letter tā' in the word al-mawt in l.2 is extended (Ibn Durustuwayh p. 66 calls it  mamṭūṭa while Qalqashandī, p. 65 calls the same tā'  mufrada mawqūfa. The letter hā' in the word al-Rahmān l.1 is extended and detached from it there is a sprig lying elegantly in an open mouthed serpent shape. Most of the initial hanging letters are joined at the lower third of the letter group jīm as it occurs in ls. 4, 5, while the remaining in ls. 6, 7 are joined in the middle. The tooth of the letters dāl and kāf ls. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 looks similar but they have different bodies. The former is cursive but the latter is angular. The third tooth of the letter sīn in the word bism l.1 is cursive and the final sīn in the word nafs is mu'arraqa. The letters group sād come under two shapes, one is rectangular, ls. 6, 7 and the other, l.8 is trapezoid. The initial 'ayn ls. 4, 6, begins with a small spiral while the medial and final ones, ls. 5, 8, 9, 10, have triangular form. Only a final 'ayn, l.5, is maftūha mu'qafa  as Ibn Durustuwayh calls it, or  musbala as it is called by Qalqashandī. The letters group fā' vary in shape between the candle flame and the pear, and the muthallath mahdhuf is looped. The double tailed mīm occurs in this inscription twice, once in the word bism and the second in the word al-Rahīm, l.1. Such double tailed mīm can be traced on the shāhids Nos. 13, 17, 27, and we shall see later on Nos. 33, 34, 36 that it is still existant. The final mīm ls. 4, 7, has an oval shape with a tiny little tail dragged from below forward.



This mīm comes in this inscription, not at the end of the lines as we used to see in some previous inscriptions where the mason might have thought of it as a means to overcome the division of the words or to avoid using the margin for finishing his work. The climbing up the lines tails take two forms, one form resembles a question mark with an open mouth head, the other is a vertical stroke with a thorn like turning to the left.

The text begins with the usual pattern, the basmala, Qur'anic verses iii 182 and the Shī'ite formula without al-tāhrīn.

The surname of the deceased is followed by the expression al-ma'rūf (known). Such expression is frequently used on tombstones from Qayrawān. (cf. B. Roy and P. Poinssot, Inscr. Arabes de Kaurouan, Vol. 2, 1950, Nos. 79, p. 156, 113, p. 216, 147, p. 261, 148, p. 263, 158, p. 279, 167, p. 289, 171, p. 289, 177, p. 297, 202, p. 331, 233, p. 363, 237, p. 367, 265, p. 392). The nisbah al-Wādī may be those tribes who are still settled in Syria or it can be a fraction of al-Misī'id  which goes back to the tribe of 'Abbada of Shammar al-Qaṭṭānī (Wasfī Zakariyya, 'Ashā'ir al-Shām Vol. 2, p. 246; al'Azzawī, 'Ashā'ir al-'Irāq, p. 226; 'Umar Riḍa-Kaḥḥala, Mu'jam Qabā'il al-'Arab, Vol. 3, p. 1241). Al-Wādī may also refer to Wādī al-Qurā near Makka which seems to have been famous for dates. Ibn Durayd states, Vol. 2, p. 407, that 'Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr appointed al-Zubayr b. al-Ḥuṣayn as Wālī of Wādī al Qurā who plundered its dates and that was why Ibn al-Zubayr beat him with the stick saying: you ate my dates and refused to



obey my orders      *أطاعتني وعلقت أئري* . Al-Wādī is  
 also mentioned in the Qur'ān in surat al-Fajr verse nine  
 " *الذين جابوا اليمر بالراي* " . "Those who cut stones in the  
 valley."

The word      *تلت* 1.9 contrary to modern literary Arabic  
 spelling, is written without the alif. This is however one of  
 the other places where it is permissible to omit the alif, for  
 a similar omission to this, see Qalqasḥandī, Vol. 3, p. 188.



Stele No. 29.

Limestone, dated Monday, Ramaḍān, 445 A.H. = 1054 A.D.

Rectangular 55 x 38.75 cm. Nine lines of foliated kufic. Purchased by Budge at Aswān 1887. It has the following numbers: sculpture 1037, exhibition 692, registration 1448. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
٢. تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي مَتَّعَنَا هَذَا
٣. مَهْدًا وَنَفَعَ خَلْقًا تَجَرَّوْا سَهْقًا
٤. نَحْرًا وَيَجْعَلُ لَكَ طَهْرًا اللَّهُمَّ
٥. صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الْأَخْيَرِ
٦. وَأَرْحَمْ عَبْدَكَ الْفَقِيرَ الْهَيْفَ
٧. مُحَمَّدٌ بِكَ عَبِيدُ اللَّهِ بِكَ
٨. عِبَادُ اللَّهِ بِكَ عِبِيدُ اللَّهِ بِكَ
٩. عِبَادُ اللَّهِ بِكَ عِبِيدُ اللَّهِ بِكَ



Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. blessed be He who will assign to thee, better,
3. than that, Gardens underneath which,
4. rivers flow, and He shall assign to thee Palaces, O God!
5. bless Muḥammad the Prophet and his family the pure,
6. and have mercy upon your servant that has need of your mercy,
7. Muḥammad son of 'Ubayd Allah son of Mūsā, son of 'Ubayd Allah,
8. son of 'Ubayd. He died on Monday,.....? of the month of  
Ramaḍān.
9. in the year five and forty and four hundreds.

Commentary: A rectangular shāhid with a plain border in relief surrounding it on the top, right and left sides. All the borders have holes in them and show signs of damage. The mason used horizontal incised lines to keep the spaces equal. The letters were deeply incised and so they appear to be too dark. At the end of the shāhid, in spite of the incised lines, the words are crowded and irregular.

The script looks more cursive. The ends of the alifs' shafts are provided with split arrow heads turning to the left. Some of these alifs have half-palmettes. In 1.1 in the word bism the initial bā' is exaggerated in length, perhaps the mason wanted to match it with the other vertical strokes (al-asābi'). In the letters group jīm the angles of the strokes are unusually acute. The mason graduated the teeth of the sin



from the left to the right instead of the usual graduation from right to left. The final nūn, the final yā' and the rā' resemble each other noticeably. The usual resemblance comes between the rā' and the final nūn and not the final yā'. This is the only inscription in the specimens where the resemblance between all three letters occurs. The letters group ṣād are cursive and look like a petal. The tooth of the letter tā' is, contrary to the bent form, straight. The loops of the letters group fā' are sometimes of the muthalh maḥdhūf shape (ls. 4, 6) and sometimes have a round form (l. 8). The tooth of the kāf looks like the duck's webbed feet. The initial lām is stuck to the letters without any extension while the final ones are mutlaqa. In the word Allāh ls. 1 and 7 the two lāms face each other with their thorn like shape and the pointed intermediate element comes in between them. The final hā' has a triangular shape while the initial and medial ones are split (mashqūqa 'ardān). The sweeping up the lines tails occurred in this inscription five times, ls. 1 twice, 4, 5 and 6.

The usual funeral formulae, Qur'ānic verses, xxv. II l. 1-4 and the Shi'ite formulae.

The words at the end of the text are so crowded that the date of death is very difficult to be fixed. Thus there are two possibilities for such case:

1. the mason confused and incised the number 40 after the day of decease.
2. The tooth of the letter tā' after the initial lām preceeding the day of death is omitted. In this case the



date may be read as follows: ثلاث بقية when

three days remained and this will easily agree with  
Monday in the year 445 in the month of Ramaḍān.



Stele No. 30.

Limestone, dated Sha'ban, in the year 447 A.H. = 1055 A.D.

Rectangular 37.5 x 31.5 cm. Nine lines of incised foliated kufic.

Presented by Budge 1889. It has the following numbers: sculpture 1049, exhibition 691, registration 6. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
٢. قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ
٣. لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَلَمْ لَهُ كُنُفًا أَحَدٌ
٤. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ وَآلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ
٥. صِرِّي وَارْحَمِ عِبْرَةَ عَقَابَةِ هَافِصِي
٦. مُحَمَّدٍ بَنِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بَنِي مُحَمَّدٍ بَنِي ...
٧. عَبْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ تَوَفَّى فِي شَعْبَانَ
٨. سَنَةِ سَبْعٍ وَارْبَعِينَ وَارْبَعِ مِائَةٍ
٩. هـ



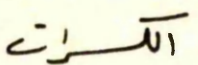
Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. say, He is God, one God, the everlasting refuge,
3. who has not begotten and has not begotten and equal to Him is  
not anyone,
4. O God! bless Muḥammad the Prophet and his family the
5. pure, and have mercy upon 'Anbar, 'Itaqat Ga'fer, son of
6. Muḥammad, son of 'Ubayd Allah son of Muḥammad, son of H..., son of,
7. 'Abd al-Raḥmān. He died in Sha'bān,
8. in the year seven and forty and four
9. hundreds.


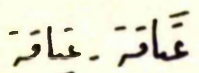
Commentary: A rectangular shahid with a plain incised border in relief fringes the stone at the top and both the right and left sides. Some damage with marks of erasion is seen. The mason incised horizontal lines to keep the writing tidy and perfect. He used the left side of the margin twice to finish his words. The bottom of the stone is used to complete the word

The kufic is open and the epigraphic is legible. The heads of the shafts of the letters alif have a thorn like apex turned to the right. The letters hā' in the words al-Raḥmān and al-Raḥīm seem strange, they are larger than the other group and provided with small curves beneath the line. The teeth of the letter sīn are on the same level and sometimes end in an open mouth shape. The initial 'ayn has a small half-palmette. In this inscription, some of the alifs turn to the right at the lower end,



the loops are mostly triangular, there are very few round ones, the ligatures  are numerous and round, and the medial 'ayns are triangular, resting on the base line without stems. This mixture of the characteristics of the Arab script, Makkī, Madanī, kufic clearly shows that it is impossible to draw a sharp line between the various aqlām (see the chapter on epigraphic analysis below, p. 238). The letters mīm contain two forms, the round ones, and the oval looking like hammers. The second lām and hā' in the word Allāh 1.1 have a simple foliate, lean to the left and form an organic unit. The final yā' takes two forms, the mu'arraga and the retreating. The latter is used only once, in 1.4, in the word al-Nabiyy where it has a tiny retreating tail. The extension can be traced here in the two hā's of the words al-Rahmān and al-Rahīm and after the first lām of the word Allāh in the second line.

The text begins as usual with surat al-Ikhlās in full, ls. 1 - 3. Then comes the Shī'ite formula.

Because of the lack of the diacritical points the name of the deceased may be read 'Anbar and 'Antar. 'Anbar from ambergris which has a good smell or the shield which in turn is called 'ambar. 'Antar comes from 'antar which means sacrifice and 'atira  is a slaughtered goat and in the tradition "أنت على كل مسلم ذكوة" (Ibn. Durustawayh, Vols. I and 2, pp. 211 and 280). We notice that the name of the deceased is followed by the word 'itaqat or 'ataqat . This word means that the deceased was



a slave and emancipated by his master 'Ga'far, son of Muḥammad.

It can also mean beauty and from it

عَتَاة

comes

السَّيْرِ

which in turn means handsome and it was

said that Abu Bakr was called

عَتِي

'atīq because of his

good looks. (See Ibn Durayid, Vol. 1, pp. 49 and 50). The word

'Itaqat has not occurred on any of the tombstones whether from

Qayrawān, Egypt and Sudān, hitherto published.



Stele No. 31.

Limestone, dated Sunday, 9th dhy al-Qa'dah, 451 A.H. =  
 Saturday, 18th December, 1059 A.D. Rectangular 100 x 30 cm. Twelve  
 lines of foliated incised kufic. It was transferred from the depart-  
 ment of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department  
 in 1958.

Text

١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
٢. كُلُّ مَنْ عَلِمَ فَاوَهُ وَبَيَّنَّا وَجْهَ ر
٣. بَعْدَ ذِي الْحِجَلِ وَالْكَوْكَبِ
٤. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ
٥. وَآلِهِ الْأَصْرَةِ وَارْحَمْ عَبْدَ
٦. تَعَالَى الْقَبْرِ إِلَى رَحْمَتِهِ بَارِ
٧. كَرَّمَ الْمُصْرَفَةَ بِأَمْرِ الرَّكْبَةِ ابْنَتِ
٨. نَهْدِيهِ عَلَى بَيْتِ الْفَرْهِ بِهْ عَلَى بَيْتِ
٩. لِحْيَاهُ الْقَبْرِ تَرْفِيهِ بِرَمِّ
١٠. الرَّحْمَةِ الْتَامِعِ سَ ذِي الْقَدَةِ
١١. سَ سَفَةِ أَصْرِي وَفَضِيلِهِ وَأَرْبَعِ
١٢. مَاتَ



Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. all that dwells upon the earth is perishing, yet still abides  
the face
3. of Thy God, Majestic, Splendid.
4. O God! bless Muḥammad the Prophet,
5. and his family the pure and have mercy upon,
6. your handmaiden who has need of your mercy,
7. Mubāraka, known by, Umm al-Rakīn daughter of,
8. Fahd, son of 'Alī, son of al-Fahd, son of 'Alī son
9. of Sulaymān al-Waysī. She died on
10. Sunday, the ninth of dhu al-Qa'da in
11. the year one and fifty and four,
12. hundreds.

Commentary: A rectangular shāhid surrounded by a plain border in relief.

It is heavily damaged on the left side and other holes can be seen at the top and bottom. A crack beginning at the middle of the left side extends to the lower quarter of the right side. Incised horizontal lines are seen and thus the spaces are equal and the words are regular. The bottom is used to finish the date of decease.

In spite of the crack and the pieces of the left side erased, the kufic is open and legible. And when we read the script we feel that the lines are tidy and the spaces between the kufic words are equal. The mason did not make the mistake of graving a word or



even a letter outside the boundary line as we have found in almost all the previous inscriptions. The letter alif is provided with a thorn-like apex turned to the right in some words and to the left in others. Only one alif in the text 1.1 has a small stroke at the lower end turned to the right. The hanging initial letters المحرف المعلقة are attached to the letters group jīm at their lower third. If we compare the letters group rā' with the final nūn we find great resemblance. The teeth of the letters group sīn are on the same level and end in a fork shape. The only ṣād in the text, 1.4, has a rectangular form. The initial 'ayns have graceful half-palmette heads while the medial and final ones are triangles resting on the line without any stem. The loops of the letters group fā' take two forms, the first which is shared by other inscriptions is candle shaped, with a stem resting on the base line similar to that on the tombstones Nos. 19, 20 and 21, and the second which is of triangular shape is specific of this inscription. The latter is called ثلث مخزوف (see Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 66). The former can be traced as early as 512 A.D. and 568 A.D. on the inscriptions of Zabad and Harrān respectively (EI, art. "Arabia", Pl. 1, N. Abbot, Pl. 5). The two apexes of the two lāms in the word Allah 1.1 and in the word al-tāsi' 1.10, face each other. This feature can be seen on the previous tombstones Nos. 23, 24, 25, and on the tombstone No. 29 as well. It can also be traced on tombstones from Egypt and Qayrawān (Poinssot, Nos. 52, Pl. 6, 70, Pl. 8, 76, Pl. 9,



No. 136, Pl. 12, 188, Pl. 30, 229, Pl. 39, 290, Pl. 46; Wiet, Vol. 10, No. 8860, Pl. xiv.). The final lām in 1.3 lacks the extension which we usually find in these inscriptions. The final yā' in 1.4 has a small tail retreating beneath the base line. Ten ligatures existed in this inscription without any regard to the rule. So many letters are extended to fill spaces and, sometimes, to avoid the division of the words between two lines.

The usual funeral formulae, Qur'anic verses, ls. 1 - 3 then comes the Shi'ite formula.

The name of the deceased is followed by the expression al-Ma'rū-fa المروفة. Such word seems to be unique on tombstones. The deceased was known as أم الركن = the mother of Rakīn. The word rakīn comes from ركن rakn which means, side رجل ركن means he is serious, sober and clement. Thus أم الركن means the mother of serious and clement. (Ibn Durayd Vol. 1, p. 87). Rakina, rakana and yarkann = inclined to and had confidence in something, rakana bi al-manzil = stayed at home, rukṇ = corner but usually the strongest corner of a thing. Rukn = 'ashīra, i.e. tribal division. (cf. the Qur'an فروا له من قومه (لأنه له بهم قوة وأولوا له فيه شريه). Rukn min qawmihi = one of their notables, جبل ركن = a mountain having high corners (Lisān al-'Arab, Vol. 13, p. 185). The nisbah al-Qaysī refers to the great tribe of Qays, one of the most important



confederations of the ancient Arab of the North. This nisbah can be traced on tombstones from Qayrawān and Egypt as well (Ibid, Vol. I, p. 108, Vol. 2, p. 262; cf. Hawwārī and Rāshid, Vol. 2, No. 2547; Poinssot, Nos. 57, 105, 278).

The date of death happened on Saturday and not on Sunday.

1.2 a: for سبق



Stele No. 32.

Limestone, dated Ṣafar, 455 A.H. = February, 1063 A.D.

Rectangular 52 x 32.5 cm. Twelve lines of floriated incised kufic.

Purchased by Budge at Aswān 1887. It has the following numbers:

sculpture 1038, exhibition 690, registration 1445. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
٢. قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ
٣. لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ
٤. كُنُوزٌ أَوْ كُنُوزٌ عَلَيْهِ عَلَى
٥. سَعْدِ النَّبِيِّ وَآلِهِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَار
٦. هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ الْفَقِيرَةَ إِلَى رَحْمَتِهِ
٧. بَرَكَةُ ابْنِ حَبِيبٍ بِهِ رَزَقَهُ اللَّهُ ..
٨. عَلَيْهِ بِه حَبِيبٍ بِهِ دَاوُدُ الْهَائِجُ تَر
٩. فَيَتَبَرَّكُ ... د ... فَيَلَدُ
١٠. ... .. وَفِيهِ
١١. فَبِهِ وَارْبَعُ
١٢. مَاتَ



Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. Say, He is God, one God, the everlasting refuge,
3. who has not begotten and has not begotten and
4. equal to Him is not anyone. O God! bless
5. Muhammad the Prophet and his family the pure, and have
6. mercy upon your handmaiden that has need of your mercy,
7. Barakah, daughter of Husayen son of Rizq Allah,
8. son of 'Alī, son of Husayn<sup>a</sup>, son of Dāwūd, al-Ṣāyeḡh.
9. She died on the day ... .. ,
10. of Ṣafar in the year five and fifty and four
11. hundreds.

On the margin we read as follows, beginning at the upper right hand corner:

وهي تشهد ان لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له وتشهد انه محمد عبده ورسوله  
 اسلمه بالهدى ودينه الحق ليظهر على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون .

and she testified that there is no God but God alone, He has no companion;

and she testified that Muhammad is His servant and His apostle;

He has sent him with the guidance,

and the true religion, that he may make it prevail over every other religion, averse though the polytheists may be.

Commentary: A rectangular shahid with a plain border in relief surrounding it on the top and at the right and left sides. About



a quarter of the stone at the end is rubbed off. Thus the words are obscure and it is difficult to decipher the last three lines of the epitaph. Incised horizontal lines are used to keep both words and spaces regular. The margin for the first, but not the only time in our specimens is used not for ornamentation but to incise Sunnī formulae. This is not an extraordinary case because similar border treatment exists on Islamic tombstones. (cf. Wiet, Steles Funeraires, Vol. 6, Nos. 8088, Pl. xii, 1247, 1250, Pl. xxvi, 62, Pl. xxviii, 6716, Pl. xxx). On a stele (Ibid, No. 6716 dated 495 A.H. = 1102 A.D. Pl. xxx) the four sides of the margin are used for kufic script. On the whole for some reason it seems that the kufic on the margin was added later.

The kufic is legible, open and uncrowded. The alifs end with thorn like apices turned to the right. These thorn like apices influenced the letters group bā'. The initial letter mīm in l. 5, and on the left side of the margin with its bud shape which

springs out of the lower third, the letter hā' with a bending stem, compose an ornamented unit. The letter dāl assumes more than one shape. In ls. 2, 3, 4, 5, it takes a triangular shape with one angle. While in l. 8 the mason added a vertical stroke similar to the alif to the dāl as existed in the above mentioned lines, thus it takes number (5) five shape. On the margin the letter dāl takes a cursive form resembling a horseshoe arch turned to the left. No difference can be noticed between the letters group



sād and letters group tā', except the tooth added to the latter group. The letters group 'ayn take two forms, the initial, as existed in 1.4 and on the left side of the margin, has a scroll while the final one is triangular. The letter yā' in this inscription is treated in several ways. In 1.3 it is mu'arraqa as Ibn Durustuwayh called it, or mabsuṭa as Qalqashandī describes it (Kitāb al-Kuttāb, p. 66; Subḥ al-A'sha, Vol. 3, p. 102). While on the right side of the margin it is retreating. Nine ligatures are used whether on the surface of the slab or on the margin. Extension of three or more letter words can be noticed in the inscription. The mason treated the climbing up the lines tails skilfully. At one time they are upright tails ending with half-palmettes, as in 1.7, another time they resemble a returning "S" with an open mouth shape. The word Allah twice (1.2 and at the top of the margin) has an intermediate element between the two lāms of the word, in one case it takes a semi-circular shape, in the other it has a lozenge form.

The usual formulae with some variations, such as the shahāda which is incised on the margin is not followed by Qur'ānic verses as we used to find on tombstones from Qayrawān. Yet the Shi'ite formula is mentioned on the slab and added to it the Sunni formula on the margin.

The name of the deceased contains names which are unusual in Egyptian Muslim names. The surname of the deceased (goldsmith)



الصالح - الصالح is a Christian name and can also be found in Palestine, Syria, 'Irāq as well. In addition to that no one can deny the important part the Christians played and how their artists dedicated their efforts in the promotion of the Islamic Art. (Wiet, Precis de l'Histoire d'Egypte, pp. 173, 181, 205, 215; Zaki Hassan, Kunuzal-Fatimyin, Cairo, 1937, pp. 80, 203).

The date of death is erased and missing. Yet we may fix a day in which the decease probably happened. The letters alif and lām-alif in 1.9 are preceded by the word يوم. Thus the day may be Monday or Wednesday or Sunday because each of them begins with alif and lām-alif as well. But because of the existence of the left wing of the lām-alif before the word ملوك (passed) so it is more correct to offer Wednesday when three (nights) passed of Šafar. In addition to that the word سنة the letters khā' and mīm of the number five, and the first part of the word أربع all, are rubbed out.

1.2 a: for السر

The top of the margin: the letter hā' of the word ومر is omitted.



Stele No. 33.

Limestone, dated Saturday, when two nights passed of Sha'ban  
 455 A.H. = Saturday 2nd August, 1063 A.D. Rectangular 37 x 30 cm.  
 Nine lines of clumsy poor incised kufic. <sup>Purchased</sup> ~~Presented~~ by Budge, 1889.  
 It has the following numbers: exhibition 689, registration 7,  
 sculpture 695. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian  
 and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
٢. كُلِّ سَاعَةٍ عَلَيْكَ نَاوَهُ وَنَيْتَانَا وَهَمِّ
٣. رَبِّهِ زِيَارَةُ الْجَمْعِ وَالْمَكْرَمِ اللَّهُمَّ
٤. صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ وَآلِهِ الْأَصْحَابِ
٥. وَأَعِزِّ عِبَادَتَكَ الْفَقِيرَ إِلَى
٦. رَحْمَتِكَ نَعِيمِ أَنْتَ أَصْدَقُ مُحَمَّدٍ
٧. بِهِ هَمِّهِ بِهِ مَوْسَى الْخَبَّازِ لَوْفَتِ
٨. بِرَمِّ السَّيْفِ لِقَانًا خَلَوَهُ بِهِ سَعَابَهُ
٩. نَتَّ فَمِّهِ وَهَمِّهِ وَارْبَعُ مَائَةٍ



Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. all that dwells upon the earth is perishing, yet still abides  
the face
3. of Thy God, Majestic, Splendid, O God,
4. bless Muḥammad the Prophet and his family the pure,
5. and have mercy upon your handmaiden who has need of Your
6. mercy, Nabiyy daughter of Aḥmad son of Muḥammad,
7. son of Ḥumayd, son of Musā al-Khabbāz. She died
8. on Saturday when two (nights) passed of Shā'ban
9. in the year five and fifty and four hundreds.

Commentary: A square shāhid, surrounded at the top, right and left side by a plain moulding and for the same pattern compare Nos. 13, 19, 23. It seems that the mason used a cunei and not a chisel to incise his words. This is the ancient way of incising Islamic tombstones in Egypt (Steles funéraires, Vol. I, p. 6). No lines are used to keep equal spaces which results in irregular writing. The mason used the left side of the margin to finish his work in the last four lines.

The script is clumsy and considered as poor kūfic. It is very strange to find that the kūfic on the shāhid goes back to the fifth century A.H. But if we consider the class which the deceased came from, this will make the matter easy. This also proves the theory explaining that the quality of the shāhid depended upon



the wealth or poverty of the deceased. The richer he or she was, the better his or her tombstone. If a comparison between the kufic on this shāhid with that of 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Khayr al-Hijrī dated 31 A.H. = 652 A.D. is made we find much resemblance. And to give further examples we find that: the medial hā', sometimes round and other times having a triangular shape, is divided into two halves, the kāf al mashkūla in the two shāhids are also the same; and the letter qāf resembling a turning arch is also the same in both shāhids. The diacritical points in the monumental kufic is rarely indicated. Yet on this shāhid the letter khā' 1.7 is pointed. Undoubtedly to avoid confusion between that letter and the rest of its group. Another exceptional case similar to this can be traced on a tombstone from Qayrawān (cf. Poinssot, No. 68, p. 141, Note 68). Also the diacritical points, as well as the differential signs, vowels and stops, mainly found in literary texts, are very helpful in determining the age of a script. Although it was believed for a certain time, according to the statements made by Arab writers, that the invention of the so-called diacritical dots did not take place before the second half of the 1st century A.H. - Yahyā ibn Ya'mur (d. 90 A.H. = 709 A.D.) is credited therewith during the reign of the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marawān (d. 86 A.H. = 705 A.D.) - it is a fact that already the oldest papyrus-document dated 22 A.H. = 643 A.D. PERF No. 558, shows diacritical dots above the letters ح - ز - ن - م; furthermore



the inscription of the year 58 A.H. = 678 A.D. found near al Tā'if is frequently provided with diacritical dots, while silver and gold coins minted between 85 and 88 A.H. show very sparingly dotted letters. Also in papyri of the 1st century A.H. diacritical dots occur still very seldom. This reluctance in the use of diacritical dots proves to some extent their rejection in certain circles of intellectual people. For the opinion concerning the admissibility of usefulness of diacritical dots was by no means uniform. Ṣulī (d. 338 A.H. = 949/50 A.D.) mentioned that the insertion of diacritical dots was even regarded as an insult to the intelligence of the reader, although it is admitted their omission often led to misunderstanding (cf. A. Grohmann, From the World of Arabic papyri, pp. 82-83).

In addition to that three dated letters occur on a piece of ceramics published by Pezard who mentioned that: it is for the first time in archaic Muslim ceramics to find written characters supplied with diacritical points which did not resemble beside this simple ornament. More than that, the writing mingling the kufic and the naskh<sup>r</sup>, and the style of characters and even the language, are Persian (cf. Pezard, p. 188, Pl. CXXXVI, Fig. 4).

I think that there is a mistake in the date of death. If it happened on Saturday, as is already incised, there must be four nights passed from Sha'bān. But if it occurred when only two days had passed, as the lāmālif may prove it, the day of death should be Thursday and not Saturday.



Stele No. 34.

Limestone dated Tuesday, in the middle of the month of Rabi' 2, 459 A.H. = Monday, 5th March 1067 A.D. Rectangular 55 x 30 cm. Twelve lines of floriated kufic. It was presented by Major D.R. Skirving, C. and T. Staff, Egypt 1888. It has the following numbers: exhibition 538, registration 1, sculpture 1044. It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text.

١. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
٢. انه الذي قالوا ربنا الله نعم
٣. استقاموا تنزل عليهم المائدة
٤. ملكة السحرة وروغزوا
٥. والسيرة بالحفة التكتنم
٦. توعده الله صلى على
٧. محمد النبي وعلى آله واصم
٨. محمد به عيسى به احمد به يعقوب
٩. به عيسى به طريف توفى يوم
١٠. اللتانى الضيف به شد
١١. بيع التضر به سنة تسع دا
١٢. فحميه وايبع مائة



Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. they are true, those who have said Our Lord is God and,
3. have gone straight, upon them,
4. the Angels descend, saying: Fear not neither sorrow
5. rejoice in Paradise that you were
6. promised. O God! bless
7. Muḥammad the Prophet and his family and have mercy
8. upon Muḥammad son of Ḥusayn son of Aḥmad son of Ya'qūb,
9. son of 'Isā son of Ṭarīf. He died on
10. Tuesday, in the middle of the month
11. Rabi' 2, in the year nine
12. and fifty and four hundreds.

On the margin we read as follows beginning at the upper right hand corner

.. وهو يشهد انه لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له يشهد الله انه لا اله الا الله  
 هو، الخ  
 قل - والله اعلم تأمنا بالقول (اله) الله هو العزيز (العليم)

and he testifies that there is no God, but God alone, He has no companion.

God has testified that there is no God but He, and the angels and men endowed with knowledge stablished in righteous (proclaim), that there is no God but He, the mighty the wise.



Commentary: A rectangular shāhid with plain marginal stone fringes in relief at the top and both sides. These have scratches and holes in them. At the bottom and the right side of the margin some words have been erased. The margin is used to incise Sunni formulae as is stated in shāhid No. 32. No trace of incised lines but in spite of that the spaces are equal and the kūfic is regular.

A "seal of Solomon", without pellets or dots, crowned the two letters (mīm, wāw) of the word سَمَرًا 1.3. This symbol with or without dots occurs quite frequently on tombstones whether from Egypt, Qayrawān and Sūdān. (Steles funeraires, Vol. 1, Nos. 1506/687 (185 A.H. = 801 A.D.), 4522 (190 A.H. = 806 A.D.) 2721/25 (191 A.H. = 806 A.D.) 2721/56 (200 A.H. = 815 A.D.), 1506/32 (236 A.H. = 851 A.D.) etc; Poinssot, Inscr. Arabes du Kairouan, Vol. 2, No. 97 (306 A.H. = 918 A.D.); Wiet, Journal Asiatique, 240 (1952), No. 20 (277 A.H. = 896 A.D.). See also Strzygowski, op.cit., p. 319, for a discussion of this ornament). The style of kūfic resembles that of No. 29 but the script under consideration seems more elegant. Above some lines (3, 6, 8,9), and quite detached from the letters are ornaments: an ornament may look heart shaped or be a seven-lobed rosette, a geometrical design and a small palm tree. Such independant examples are dated about two hundred and fifteen years before the present one. Yet a tombstone dated only twenty five years after our tombstone, shows this scattered ornamentation (Steles funeraires, Vol. 2, No. 2721/209, Pl. 13 and No. 1261, Pl.14 dated 243 A.H. = 858 A.D. Another



dated 244 A.H. = 859 A.D. is No. 1506/24 (pl. 17), Ibid, Vol. 2, No. 3150/159 dated 443 A.H. = 1052 A.D; Wiet and Hawwārī, Vol. 3, No. 7290 Pl. XVIII dated 244 A.H. 2 858 A.D.). We mentioned that in the independant ornaments is a small tree. This decoration is frequently found restricted to some letters, the alifs at the beginning, then in other letters (mīm, lām, nūn, bā', dāl, etc.) as it existed on epitaphs in the Museum of Islamic Arts in Cairo (Hawwārī and Rāshid, Vol. 1, Nos. 1506/171, Pl. 21, pp. 63-64, 2721/117, Pl. 41, p. 152). This form of floral decoration is borrowed from coptic patterns of fifty-sixth century A.D. occurring on textiles representing the tree of life (homa) or even from the marginal decoration of Greek manuscripts of the fourth-fifth century A.D. (M. S. Dimand, Coptic tunics in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum Studies, Vol. 2, No. 2 (New York 1930), p. 251, fig. 19 (text fig. 20); Kendrick, Catalogue of textiles from burying grounds in Egypt, Vol. 2, Nos. 354, 370, pp. 30, 34, Pl. 19 (text fig. 21)). A textile probably made in Antinoe in the sixth-seventh century A.D. (Ibid, Vol. 3, London 1922 Pl. 30. No. 838, p. 87) shows a tendril with palmettes and trees in an arabesque like arrangement. For the motif of the homa (cf. G. Lechler, The tree of life in Indo-European and Islamic Culture, Ars Islamica, Vol. 4 (1937), p. 382, fig. 28). The letters group jīm end at the upper part with half-palmettes and the initial letters joined to them الحروف الحقة are incised on the lower third of the group not in the middle as Ibn Durustuwayh stated (Kitāb al-Kuttāb,



p. 74). The teeth of letters group sīn lose length from right to left so as not to look like the letters group bā'. The letter ṣād has a rectangular shape with sloping sides. The letters group 'ayn assume three forms. The initial ones are provided with half-palmettes sometimes with a scroll. Such treatment of initial 'ayns can be traced on tombstones from Qayrawān (cf. Poinssot, Vol. 2, Nos. 197 and 202 dated 406 A.H. and 407 A.H. = 1016 A.D. and 1017 A.D.). While the medial and final ones have a triangular form 1.12 and "V" shape as well, as ls. 8, 11. No resemblance can be noticed on the latter kāf whether final or medial and the letter dāl. The former is mashkūla with a tooth looking like a question mark with an open mouth but the latter dāl is only a triangle with a tiny opening. The letter mīm ls. 1, 2, 3 and the letters nūn, ls. 6, 8, the letters group rā', ls. 3, 5, 10, the letter wāw, 1.7, have elegant sweeping tails climbing up above the lines and they end in an artistic half-palmette. The ligatures الـرات are used in this inscription twice, the first time in 1.5 joining the medial nūn with the final hā', and the second time in 1.12 between the letter yā' and final hā' and twice in both left and right sides of the margin. The mason treated the finishing of the lines skillfully which is not unusual in the tombstones I am studying.

The customary formulae, Qur'ānic verses 1.1 till the first part of 1.6 xli, 30. The Shi'ite formula in the text following the Qur'ānic and on the margin, the top and both right and left sides the Sunnite formula as well. This is an extra example proving



the presence of the Shi'ite formula and the Sunnī existing side by side in spite of the Faṭīmid dynasty and the encouragement of their cursing towards the Sunnī.

Because of the absence of the diacritical points nice, although of the deceased is probably Ṣarīf طریف = nice, although it might possibly be Ṭarīf or Ṭurayf لمریف . طریف = newly acquired. Ṭarīf refers to an Arab tribe which is a clan of Judhām who settled in Syria. Ṭurayf in turn is a section of Banī' Aṣim from Qaḥṭān of Najd (Ibn Durayd, Vol. 2, pp. 215, 563; Qalqashandī, Nihayat al-Arab, Vol. 9, p. 135; Fu'ād Ḥamzah, Qalb Jazīrat al-'Arab, pp. 189, 197).

The date of death occurred on Monday and not on Tuesday. The month of decease is treated correctly because it is preceded by the word month.

- 1.11 a: the mason incised at the end of the line  
two extra letters.



Stele No. 35.

Limestone, dated the end of Sha'ban 463 A.H. = Wednesday,  
1st June 1071 A.D. Rectangular 60 x 35 cm. Eleven lines of plain  
foliated kufic. Presented by Budge 1889. It has the following  
numbers: exhibition 687, registration 8, sculpture 1096. It was  
transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities  
to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text

١. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
٢. قل هو الله احد الله الصمد
٣. لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له له
٤. احد اللهم صلى على محمد النبي
٥. وآله الطاهرين وارحمهم أنت
٦. الفتية المصطفى فاطمة ابنة
٧. ابراهيم بن عبد الله بن ابراهيم بن ابراهيم
٨. همد بن سعد بن سعد بن سعد الله
٩. ومفقرة عليه تونق في
١٠. على سماعة سنة ثمان مائة
١١. وابع مائة .



Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. say, He is God, one God, the everlasting refuge,
3. who has not begotten and He is not begotten and equal to  
9 Him is not,
4. anyone. O God bless Muḥammad the Prophet
5. and his family the pure and have mercy upon your handmaiden
6. that has need of your mercy, Fāṭima daughter of
7. Ibrāhīm, son of Jubayir, son of Ibrāhīm, son of
8. Aṣfar, son of Sadūs. God's mercy,
9. and His forgiveness be upon her. She died at the end of
10. Sha'bān in the year three and sixty,
11. and four hundreds.

Commentary: A rectangular shāhid with a plain margin in relief bordering it on the top, right and left sides. A large piece of the stone on the left side is worn down. The mason did not smooth his slab before starting the work. There is no trace of incised horizontal lines and so the spaces between the lines are not equal and the kufic is irregular.

The kufic in the middle of the text is illegible. The apexes of the alifs and the strokes al-aṣābi' as well are provided with fork shapes which sometimes resemble cuneiform pointing to the left. Only two letters, mīm and nūn, in l.1 end in climbing up the line tails. The former tail looks like a curve while the latter takes the serpent form with its open mouth turned to the



left. The mason did not differentiate between the letters dāl and kāf and the two letters take the form of the kāf al-mashkūla. The letter ṣād takes two forms, once with a tiny tooth, 1.4, and the second time it has a rectangular shape. The letter fā' looks like a square especially in 1.8 while in other lines it has a tiny narrow loop. The letter nīm issues in many shapes, round, triangular, rectangular and the final ones end in hammer tails. The initial and medial hā' has the shape of what is called وجه السر = cat's face (Qalqashandī, p. 85).

Lines 1 - to the first part of 1.5, Qur'ānic verses cxii. Then follows the Shī'ite formula. The name Asfar is not unusual in Egypt yet it might possibly be Asghar and if so, it can be related to Persian Shī'ite names. The surname of the deceased may be Baydūs who can always be found on stone tombs and not marble (Wiet, Journal Asiatique, 240, p. 286; Repertoire V. No. 1951; Steles funeraires, Vol. 2. No. 480; Vol. 5 No. 1872, 1992; Vol. 7 No. 2653; Vol. 8 No. 3058; Vol. X No. 3631; Steles Coufique d'Egypte et du Sudān, 1952, no. 11). It can also be Sadūs = al ṭaylasān = green mantle اللباس and Banī Sadūs are tribes from Ṭayyi'. Banī Sadūs (or Sudūs) occur in this verse by Imru' al-Qays: (Ibn Durayd, pp. 351 and 396)

أنا كنت نقرًا قفاً  
بيت شيب بن سدر

One may add that Sadūs is the name of a man and sudūs is the green gown = ṭaylasān originally Persian dress worn by 'Ulamā'



(cf. Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-‘Arab, Vol. 6, p. 104). Sadūs is also the name of a small village in the ‘Arīḍ in Najd. It is famous for the antiquities lying there. Its population in 1935, according to Ḥafiz Wahba were almost one thousand (see Jazīrat al-‘Arab fi al-qarn al-‘Ishrīn, Cairo, 1935, p. 58).

- 1.2 a: the mason omitted the letter fā’ and alif  
of the word كُنَّا
- 1.6 a: for اِخْتَرَا
- 1.7 a: the ancient spelling of اَلْبَصِيم
- 1.10 a: for لَانِ



Stele No. 36.

Marblestone, dated Saturday, 14th dhi al-Hijja, 554 A.H. =  
 Sunday, 27th December 1159 A.D. Rectangular 50 x 20 cm. Sixteen  
 lines of floriated kufic. Purchased by R. S. May, Esq. in 19  
 It has the following numbers: exhibition 685, registration 432.  
 It was transferred from the department of Egyptian and Assyrian  
 antiquities to the Oriental department in 1958.

Text.

١. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
٢. يَجْتَرِصُم - بِحَمْدِ بَرَكَةِ مَنْ وَرَ
٣. ضَرَاهُ رَحْنَاتِ لَحْمِ فَيْكِ نَعِيمِ
٤. نَعِيمِ فَهَالِكِيهِ فَيْكِ اَبْدَانِ اللَّهِ
٥. عِنْدَهُ اَجْرًا عَظِيمِ اللَّهُمَّ
٦. صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَارْحَمْ
٧. أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ الْفَقِيهِ الْوَحِيدِ
٨. الْفَخْرَانِيَّةِ اَبِي الْقَاسِمِ بِهِ لَنَا
٩. بِهِ عَوْنُهُ بِهِ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بِهِ مُحَمَّدُ بِهِ
١٠. مُحَمَّدُ بِهِ اَبُو يُونُسَ بِهِ عَبْدُ
١١. الْمَلِكِ بِهِ بَيَّاسُ بِهِ كَسَلُ بِهِ كَلْبُ
١٢. بِهِ تَوَطَّاهُ بِهِ حَفَنَةُ الْفَانِي
١٣. تَوْفِيَّتِ يَرْحَمُ السَّبْعَ الرَّابِعِ عَشَرَ
١٤. سَهْدِ الْحَجَّةِ سَنَةِ اَرْبَعِ رَفْعِيهِ
١٥. رَفْعِي مَاتِيهِ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ وَرَحْمَتُهُ
١٦. عَلَيْهِ .



Translation.

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
2. their God gives them glad tidings of mercy from Him and,
3. good pleasure for them await gardens where in lasting bliss,
4. there in to dwell forever and ever; surely with God,
5. is a mighty wage. O God!
6. bless Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad, and have mercy
7. upon your handmaiden who has need of your mercy, Sitt,
8. al-Fakhr, daughter of Abū al-Qāsim, son of Sulafān,
9. son of 'Awn, son of 'Abd Allah son of Muḥammad son of,
10. Ma'bad, son of Abū Yūsuf son of 'Abd,
11. al-Malik, son of Bayān, son of Kahl', son of Kilāb,
12. son of Qaḥṭān, son of Jafna, al-Gḥassānī.
13. She died on Saturday, the fourteen of dhī al-Ḥijja in the
- year four and fifty,
15. and five hundreds. The mercy of God and His favour
16. be upon her.

**Commentary:** A narrow rectangular shāhid framed at the right and left sides with a running spiral margin represents a branch from which ramify split palmettes and this floral fringe is limited by two vertical incised lines. The top of the shāhid is crowned by symmetrical designs containing a crescent amidst two and a half bosses, all in one line. A similar running spiral with its decorative motives is found on a tombstone from Ḥijāz dated



250 A.H. = 864 A.D. (A. Grohmann, A.O. text Fig. 27, p. 209).

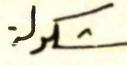
And as for the bosses at the top, they existed on the church of Ḥadra in Deyr es Surjanī and in Samarra on Balkuwara palace. (cf. Joseph Strzygowski, Altai-Iran and Volkerwanderung, pp. 94 and 97). It also occurs on a dish made of ceramic dated 14th century A.D., in the Victoria and Albert Museum (cf. Arthur Lane, Later Islamic Pottery, London, p. 13, 13). It can also be traced on pottery from Syria and Mesopotamia as well (Jean Sauvaget, Poteries Syro-Mesopotamiennes, Paris, 1932, No. I, pl. 111, 17, Pl. 5; planche 9, No. 36; planche 11, No. 47; planche 13, No. 49; planche 20, Nos. 67, 71, 69; planche 23, Nos. 82, 83; Pl. 24, Nos. 93, 85; planche 32, No. 114, 109; planche 35, Nos. 120, 161, 123; planche No. 14; Pl. 40 No. 134). The stone is missing some pieces at the top, especially in the corners and nearly all the outer right side of the fringe. The mason used incised horizontal lines to regulate spaces and thus he finished his work nicely. The bottom is used to finish what is called "eulogie a report".

The kufic is legible, neat and there are floriated characters. The apexes of the alifs resemble thorns. These thorn like apices show much more variety in the decoration of the apex on the right side of the terminals of the shafts. It begins with a hook or barb, obviously taken over from the late Nabataean form of alif in Sinai inscriptions but appearing as a thorn or split arrow head only as early as the second half of the second century



of the Hijra in the lapidary style. The last dated examples of this form of the alif are offered by a tombstone from Tashkend dated 541/1146. This did not mean that it stopped at this year because we still find it on the tombstone we are studying which is dated 554 A.H. (A. Grohmann, A.O., Vol. 2, 1957, p.199). The mason exaggerated the initial ba' in the word bism l.1 so as to reach the level of the other strokes. The initial mims joined on the upper third of the letters group jim are attached to them without stems. The teeth of the letters group sin are on the same level, sometimes they ended with half-palmettes, while others are simple. The letters group sad have a trapezoid body with a maṣṭaba shape resembling that on the shahid No. 35. The initial 'ayns (ls. 5, 6, 9, 10, 16) are provided with an artistic half-palmette. The half-palmette is generally used as a decorative adornment of the tops of the shafts and terminations of the letters. The first illustrated examples of the palmette ornamented letters occurred on inscriptions that go back to the third century of the Hijra. These are the most beautifully incised letters in this inscription or in all the inscriptions I have been studying, the medial 'ayn ls. 10, 12 and the final ones, ls. 13, 14. It looks like a rose and has a three lobed foil. The same 'ayn can be seen on a tombstone published by Miles who described it "final 'ayn which bears a simple cap" (Miles, A.O., Vol. 2, 1957, No. 8, Pl. 4, p. 221). The climbing up tail occurs here in l.1 twice, ls. 5, 7, 9, once. But the most elegant artistic



tail of these climbing up above the lines tails is that in 1.1 in the final mīm of the word bism and ends with a split half palmette. The word Allah in 1.1 has an intermediate element or quirk separating the two lāms of the word. This time it takes the shape of a lobed arch and such lobed arches occurred on tombstones from North Africa as well. It seems strange in this inscription to find that the letter mīm takes the same shape as the loop of the letter fā' in 1.7 and the two take a bud shape. The kāf  almashkūla is angular and its tooth, resembling a question mark, ends with a tiny half-palmette, and if a line is drawn from that upper tooth to the lower extension al maṭa alsufla they all run on the same vertical level (Qal-qashandī, p. 84; Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 66).

The text begins as usual with Qur'ānic verses ix, 21, 22, 1.1-5. We notice on that shāhid that the Shī'ite formulae which we used to find on the previous tombstones have disappeared and are replaced by the Sunnī formulae. This shāhid is thirteen years earlier than the fall of the Fāṭimid dynasty. (The Fāṭimids invaded Egypt in 358 A.H. = 969 A.D. and fell in 567 A.H. = 1171, Ibn Khillikān, Wafyāt al A'yān, Vol. 1, p. 149; Yahyā Ibn Sa'īd, al-Ta'rikh al Majmū' 'Ala al-Taḥqīq wal Taṣḍīq, Vol. 1, p. 132, 133, Ḥasan Ibrahīm Ḥasan al-Fāṭimīūm fi Miṣr, Cairo, 1932). This tallies with what Wiet noticed that the Shī'ite formulae were commonly used between the years 364 A.H. = 974 A.D. and 537 A.H. = 1142 A.D. (Journal Asiatique, steles Confique d'Egynt et du Sūdān,



240 (1952), p. 278). On the other hand this shahid proves that the Sunrite formulae were in use even during the Fāṭimid rule in Egypt.

The name of the deceased Sitt al-Fakhir = ست الفخر lady of pride, may probably be al-Fajr = ست الفجر lady of dawn. However I am inclined to think that sitt al-Fakhr is a kunya. Al-fajar = hospitality and generosity. It means also dawn light ضوء الفجر which looks like the redness of the sun reflected in the darkness of the night. Abu Dhu'ayb wrote in a verse:

مقام للضيف حميد بنا  
شم الذوق كثير الفجر

describing the people as very hospitable. While afjar al-rajulu أنجر الرجل = earned a lot of money. Afiara means told a lie or disobeyed God and thus arostated كفر (Lisān al-'Arab, Vol. 4, p. 49). On tombstones from North Africa and Spain it frequently happened that the names of the deceased, if females, were probably omitted and replaced by a kunya, e.g. Zayn al-Dar, Sitt or al-Sitt, Sitt al-Hibatayyn etc. (Poinssot, Inscr. Arabes du Kairouan, Vol. 2 (1950), p. 342; E. Levi Provençal, Inscr. Arabes d'Espagne, Nos. 30, 32, 102; Zbiss, Inscr. Arabes du Tunisie, Vol. 1, p. 71). The geneology of the deceased shows distinctly that she is of pure Arabian descent. The proof of this is the following nisba: Sulafān: comes from Sulaf = plural of salafid = predecessor, they derived from Qaḥṭān. (Al-



Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-Arab, Vol. 2, p. 294; al-Zabīdī, Tāj al-  
'Arūs, Vol. 6, p. 143; al-Fairūzabādī, al-Qamūs, Vol. 3, p. 154).  
'Awn, from the tribes who settled in the North of Egypt and go  
back to the Arabs of Hijāz, (Na'ūm Shuqayr, Tārīkh Sinā, p. 724).  
Ma'bad from al 'Abad = الْبَنَف alanaf = to abstain out of  
modesty, (Ibn Durayd, p. 10), a clan from al 'Abbās son of 'Abd  
al-Muttalib from Quraysh (al-Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-Arab, Vol. 2,  
p. 360). Kahl = a very old age, Kahlān is an important people  
derived from Saba' from Qahtān. They shared the kingdom of Saba'  
with banī Himmyar. Many important tribes derive from Kahlān and  
of them Kinda and Azd. The former were kings in Hijāz and Yaman  
while the latter scattered and settled in Syria. (Ibn Durayd, Vol.  
I, p. 179; Vol. 2, p. 362). Kilāb = from kalab = to suffer;  
kilāb an important tribe from 'Adnān used to live in al-Madīna  
al Munawwara in Hijāz. A clan of them lived in al-Fayyūm in  
Egypt while others settled in Syria and Mesopotamia (Ibn Durayd,  
Vol. 1, p. 20; Riḍākahhala, Mu'jam Qabā'il al 'Arab, Vol. 3,  
p. 989). Qahtān from Qaht = to be rainless or drought, the  
most ancient tribes in Arabia, they lived between Najrān and 'Asīr.  
The nassābūn differed in their nisba, some said they were clans  
from Arām son of Sām son of Nūḥ but others said that Qahtān came  
from Isma'il son of Ibrāhīm. (Ibn Durayd, Vol. 2, p. 361; Riḍā-  
kahhala, Vol. 3, p. 939). Jafna Al-Ghassānī, al Jafn means vine  
or sword, al-Ghassānī from alghūsan which means bunch of hair  
and alghassānī, the most beautiful. They were called Jafna  
Ghassān after their settlement near a well beside the dam of Ma'rab



in Yaman and anyone who drank from this well was called ghasān. They were kings of Syria after Jurm but they were under the influence of the Roman empire to defend the boundaries from the essential Persian aggressors. (Ibn Durayd, Vol. 2, pp. 435, 485; Riḍā Kaḥḥālā, Vol. 3, p. 844). One may also add that ghayssān al-shabāb = the good part of youth, or while young. Ḥassān b. Thābit says of Banī Ghassān: (cf. Lisān al'Arab, Vol. 13, p. 312)

إما كنت نازلاً من رجب      الذي رتبنا رجباً غساناً

1.4      a: the mason incised one alif for both words

and ~

1.5      a: for غساناً

1.6      a: for رجباً

1.13    a: the day of death happened on Sunday and not on Saturday.

This shāhid of Sitt al-Fakhr proves the theory which states that the shāhids belonging to women are taller, more elegant, tidy and more carefully incised than those of men.



CHAPTER III

Epigraphic Analysis



Epigraphic Analysis

The tombstones under consideration are arranged in four groups:

- 1) Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 dated 3rd century A.H./  
ninth A.D., represent plain k̄ufic.
- 2) Nos. 9, 10 dated 4th century, mostly illustrate  
foliated k̄ufic.
- 3) Nos. 8, 15, 36 show floriated k̄ufic.

This means that our groups are contemporary with the k̄ufic in its first centuries, then, when it developed, at last, in the eleventh-twelfth centuries it reached its ripest stage. This calligraphic style came into use when claims for more elaborated and decorated books appeared and was called after the city of K̄ufa, the new settlement of the conquerors and a cultural centre of Islām.<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of 'Alī and Abū al-Aswad, the 'Irāqīs were soon going their own way in the writing of the Qur'ān, even to the extent of introducing new practices in vocalization, punctuation and perhaps also ornamentation. The K̄ufans not only kept their own interpretation but, with the rapid growth of their great city to fame, their script was soon to rival the Makkan and take the leadership in Qur'ānic scripts, so much so that in later centuries the phrase "k̄ufic script" became almost synonymous with Qur'ānic script.<sup>2</sup> The evolution and development of the k̄ufic represents a


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<sup>1</sup>Kühnel, p. 16; N. Abbot, p. 22.

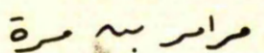
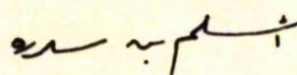
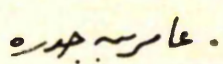
<sup>2</sup>N. Abbot, p. 22.



problem, such as once faced the evolution and development of the Arabic writing. Thus one is tempted to look on the second problem as a combination between this problem and that of the kūfic, not only plain kūfic but also the so-called floriated kūfic.

In the Arabic writing from the very beginning the traditionalists, the contemporaries of Islām, differed greatly in stating when and where the Arabic writing rose and developed. Did it first exist in Hīra and Anbār, or take its first steps in Hījāz or in Yaman, where it was stated that the Qur'ān was delivered to Muḥammad in what was called  al-musnad and that Ḥimyar used it before Islām?

It is worthwhile to mention that the Arabic writers who dealt with the subject wholly agreed to some facts and gave as well separate ideas concerning the subject. The following remarks state their general agreements:

- 1) The writing was first delivered to Ādam who, in turn, recorded it on clay and baked it. After the inundation each nation produced their own book.<sup>1</sup>
- 2) Three men from Būlān (a tribe of Ṭay') settled in al-Anbār and these men were: Murāmīr b. Murra , Aslam b. Sidra , and 'Āmir b. Jadara . Together they considered single and joined letters and judged them on the basis of Syriac. This writing was transferred to Makka

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<sup>1</sup>Qalqashandī, Vol. 3, p. 10; Ṣūlī, p. 30; Ibn al-Nadīm, p. 6.



where the people were made acquainted with it. Murāmīr seems to have been the leader of the trio of Ṭay' since several of the sources give him all or most of the credit for whatever was done with the Arabic of his day.<sup>1</sup>

- 3) Abjad, Hawwaz, Ḥuṭy, Kalamun, Sa'faṣ, Qarashat stayed at 'Adnān and composed writing and letters based on their names. Then it was transferred to Ḥirah and Anbār.<sup>2</sup>
- 4) To Ismā'īl, whom the Arabs relate was the first to speak Arabic.<sup>3</sup>
- 5) The language of the Qur'ān was that which Ḥimyar used.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to that Qalqashandī, p. 17, mentioned that Ibn Hishām stated that Nafīsa نفسا, Tayma تاما and Dawma دوما, sons of Ismā'īl composed one book in one line with all its letters combined.

ووضعوا كتابا واحدا وعبأوه الحاء واحدا مرصول الحروف كلهم غير متفرقة  
 then came Nabī نبت, Hamīsa' هميمع, and Qaydhār قنذار who decided on its similarities and then separated it. وفترعوا الحروف فعبأوا برشابه بنظائر  
 Qalqashandī also thought the Arabic writing was first found in Makka where Ḥarb, son of Umayya, learned it from one who came from Yaman and who in

<sup>1</sup> al-Nadīm, p. 7; Qalqashandī, p. 10; Balādhurī, pp. 571-74; since the names Murra, Sidrah and Jadara each have the same number of syllables and the same final syllables, then they may be artificial inventions rather than names of real people, Khalīl Yahyā Nāmī, Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Vol. 3 Arabic, p. 3; N. Abott, p. 6, note 36. Cf. Fihrist, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Qalqashandī, p. 13; Ibn al-Nadīm, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Sūlī, p. 31; Qalqashandī, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, p. 7; Qalqashandī, p. 12.



turn had had it from Hūd. It was also said that the Anbārian Bishr, son of 'Abd al-Malik, proficient in writing as practised in the famed court of Hīrah, was welcomed in Makka by some of its leaders - Sufyān or Ḥarb - and there he married al-Ṣahbā' <sup>السحرية</sup> daughter of Ḥarb, who learned the art of writing which Quraysh in turn taught.<sup>1</sup> Ibn Durayd gives an account regarding Bishr's activities.

...بشیر بن عبد الملك الذي علمنا هذا أصل النونا بكاء اسم الجزم وقد تعلم منه كثير من علم

Yet the account is much briefer than Balādhurī's and there is a great probability not only that some of the original text is missing, but that the order of the present text is incorrect, for we find the highly improbable statements that Bishr taught the Arabic writing to the people of Anbār and that Bishr was also named Jazm, which is the name for the early Arabic script itself. Wustenfeld, who in his index identifies Bishr with Jazm, worked from one manuscript only.<sup>2</sup>

This is a brief introduction to the many suggestions and the second part of the question now arises: where did the Arabic writing first exist? Did it first occur in Hīrah and Anbār; or in Hījāz or in Yaman? If we make a comparison between the Nabataean inscriptions of Namarah, 328 A.D. and Umm al-Jimāl, 250 A.D. on the one hand and the inscription of Zabad, 512 A.D. and those of 'Ulā, Madāy' in Sālīh (Hijr) on the other, we find similar characteristics. In addition to that, the

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Qalqashandī, p. 4; N. Abbot, pp. 10-12.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. N. Abbot, p. 7; al-Ishtiqāq, p. 372.



identification of Northern Hījāz with the southern part of the Nabataean Kingdom, the Nabataean inscriptions from that region, and the continued contact between it and southern Syria, we find all are factors in the favourable development of Arabic writing in that region. Furthermore, the course of political and commercial opportunities worked to the advantage of Makka and Madīnah; in addition too, the commercial and religious activities from 350 A.D. and onwards. All these prove that there is a great possibility that Hījāz played as important a role in the evolution of the Arabic writing as that of Hīrah and Anbār.<sup>1</sup> As for Yaman, it suffered military and political defeat at the hands of Abyssinia and its trade was cut at the heart when the Greeks and Romans understood the season of the monsoon and established a sea trade with the far east. For these reasons Yaman was, by the middle of the 4th century, on the decline.<sup>2</sup> In addition to that Qalqashandī mentioned that Ḥimyar ibn Saba' taught the Arabic and before that the Yamanites had their musnad.<sup>3</sup>

One can say that there is a lack of inscriptions of the 4th century A.D. and the 6th as well. Perhaps if we apply these same questions to the time of Muḥammad and to the first half of the first century of Islām, we can see our way to the answer for the cases, so far as extant

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<sup>1</sup>Mr. Nāmī in his article Bull., Vol. 3, pp. 102-6, proves that Hījāz was the home of the birth of and evolution of the Arabic script. cf.

N. Abbot, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Kammerer, pp. 34-43; Montgomery, p. 71; N. Abbot, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Qalqashandī, p. 13.



specimens are concerned, are similar. It cannot be that the writing itself declined, for everything points to the contrary, especially in the early Islāmic period concerned. To assume loss and destruction is the only alternative, an alternative that gains weight when we consider not only the historical and geographic factors but also social and economic conditions. And an even more potent cause of destruction is the deplorable practice, indulged in from those early days to the present, by the inhabitants, especially the poorer ones, of carrying away from ruins stones, whether inscribed or not, for use in current building. Tombstones were in common use among the Arabs from pre-Islāmic days, yet but few survived from the hazard of re-use. Again, commercial records of the Arabs and the Jews on the eve of Islām, whatever they were written on, were seldom intended for any long duration and with the unfavourable climatic conditions they must have perished early.<sup>1</sup>

This brief introduction on the origin and development of the Arabic script can serve as a basis for our study of the origin and development of the floriated kufic. The floriated kufic faced very many problems and discussions when search was made for its origin and development. They suggest ways by which the so-called kufic took its first steps and developed until it reached its highest stage in the twelfth century A.D. It is well known that the first Qur'ānic manuscripts were

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<sup>1</sup>N. Abbot, p. 13.



written in the traditional improvised commercial letters but soon there was call for more elaborate books and also decorated books which gave the anplexes of today's holy books. So came a special calligraphic method into use which placed the words in heavy rows on the parchment and which was called after the city of Kūfa, the new settlement of the conquerors, and a cultural centre of Islām. One can say that its use was easier for the stone cutter working with a chisel, or for a writer using a reed pen. It is fact that kūfic was generally used in the architecture, on tombstones, manuscripts, coins, textiles and metal works, only the technique of the writing was a little different on the various materials.<sup>1</sup> The kūfic began plain in its shapes and forms. The earliest monumental calligrapher known is Sa'īd. He wrote Qur'āns, poetry, and episodes for al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, and it was he who incised the inscription in gold on the Qibla wall of the mosque of the Prophet at Madīna.<sup>2</sup> It is said that 'Umar b. 'Abd al'Azīz asked him to write a Qur'an in the same style that he had used in the mural inscription, and he did so; but though 'Umar found it very beautiful, the price seemed to him too high, so he did not acquire it.

By some it is stated that the term kūfic is considered to be the first Arabic script from which all the other scripts developed in the

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<sup>1</sup>Kühnel, pp. 10 - 13.

<sup>2</sup>Survey of Persian Art, p. 1711 gives the text of the Qur'an from the ninety-first Sūra to the end.



first half of the second century after the Hijra.<sup>1</sup> Qalqashandī brands as a mistake the idea that the then current pens originated with Ibn Muqla, since "non-kūfic manuscripts are found that are earlier than the year 200".<sup>2</sup> We can no longer draw a chronological demarcation line between what are commonly termed the kūfic and the naskhī scripts, nor can we consider the latter as a development of the former. This fact has so far been suspected by only a few, but it demands more general recognition. "There were two tendencies at work simultaneously, both of them natural ones. The appearance of the cursive script certainly does not represent a stage in a transformation of kūfic script into cursive script. It is by now a well established fact that no such transformation ever took place. Cursive Arabic writing is at least as old as lapidary kūfic style. Both styles followed parallel development, mutually influencing one another."<sup>3</sup> Yet the first was to give us a monumental, the other a manuscript, style of writing. The monumental was modelled after the more or less Nabataean characters. Because it was executed as we mentioned above on metal and stone. Because of these factors it acquired an angular, severe and stately character which, in well executed groups, is not void of that beauty which frequently goes

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<sup>1</sup> Qalqashandī, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> See Ibid, p. 15; cf. N. Abbot, p. 16, note 92; D. S. Rice, The Unique Ibn a'-Bawwāb Manuscript, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Ibid.



with simplicity.

The manuscript style was, on the contrary, used on softer and more yielding materials. Like all handwriting it showed a tendency to round out and finally developed into a rounded cursive script most suitable for general use. Yet features of both styles in the Namāra, 328 A.D., inscription can be seen; though some of its letters are separate and angular, others are joined into syllables and even words, while curvilinear strokes are not wanting. This is not surprising since all three features are to be readily found in Nabataean inscriptions.

The inscription and the Qur'ānic manuscripts of early Islāmic times show the monumental style while the contemporary state documents present the more cursive script.<sup>1</sup>

Each of these scripts has its own features which distinguish it from the other but this cannot prevent similarity between the two because of their original source.

We mentioned that the term kūfic was called after the city of Kūfa. One adds that Kūfa and Baṣra did not start their careers as Muslim cities until the second decade of Islām. Yet these two cities were located close to Anbār and Hīra in 'Irāq and we stated above the im-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. N. Abbot, p. 17; Kühnel, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Balādhurī, pp. 275-77; E.I., arts. on Kūfa and Baṣra; Yaqūt, I., 636 and 461 f; II, p. 375, w.p. 322 f; Qalqashandī, IV, pp. 333-335.



portant role the two places played in the evolution of the Arabic writing.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest Arabic authors pointed to the similarity one can find between the early Arabic script and the Syriac, namely the estrangalo,<sup>2</sup> and they were unaware, for the most part, of the Nabataean origins. Such similarity could not be applied, with few exceptions, to the individual letter forms but is limited largely to the general appearance of the scripts. It is a similarity of stiffness, angularity, and comparatively short vertical strokes that tend to give a certain squareness to the scripts.

These features of the estrangalo Syria script are to be found in the early Arabic inscriptions of Zabad, Ḥarrān and Umm al-Jimāl, all of which are more or less square and angular and have short vertical strokes.<sup>3</sup> The conclusion is that the Syriac estrangalo was undeniably influenced not only by the kufic but also by the adoption of the diacritical points and orthographic signs. One adds that a study of a Christian Arabic manuscript shows the interesting fact that some of the earliest of these come the nearest to showing an estrangalo influence, though indirectly

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<sup>1</sup>See above, p.

<sup>2</sup>Qalqashandī, Vol. 3, p. 12; Ḥajjī Khalīfa, Vol. 2, p. 355; Balādhurī, p. 471; N. Abbot, p. 17; Van Berchem, M.C.I.A., p. 15.

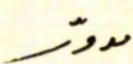
<sup>3</sup>Cf. Arabic inscriptions of Ḥarrān 568 A.D. after Schroeder in ZDMG XXXVIII (1884), Pl. facing p. 530, Ref. No. 3; N. Abbot, Pl. I after Edward Sachau in 1881, Pl. facing p. 190, Ref. No. 2.



through the Nestorian, in the general appearance of the script which is firm and inclined to squareness.<sup>1</sup> From the tenth century on, the Christian Arabic script begins gradually to lose its similarity to the Syriac on the one hand and to become more and more like the current Muslim Arabic scripts on the other hand, until eventually it becomes very difficult to distinguish the one type from the other.<sup>2</sup>

An interesting cycle of events shows the Arabs at the beginning were the borrowers, but at the end the Suryān were borrowing their writing from the ruling Arabs.

Ibn al-Nadīm listed the Arabic script as follows: Makkī, Madanī, Baṣrī and Kufī. And the question now rises: Is there any resemblance between these four scripts? The characteristics of the Makkī are: the alifs bend to the right at the lower end, the extended vertical strokes al-aṣābi' - alif, lām, lāmālif, the stroke of the tā', and kāf are high and the script has a moderate slant to the right.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to that there were three varieties of the Madanī; the round  mudawwar-loops of wāw, fā', qāf, mīm, final hā' and ghayn; the triangle when the approach the form of a triangle. The kufic inscription

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. eg. "Stud. sin." XII xviii and Pl. II, the earliest dated Christian Arabic ms. (876 A.H. = 1471 A.D.), Wright, Facs. Pl. XCV, a ms. of the 9th century; Fleischer, Kleinere Schriften III, Pl. I and Pl. II, with estrangalo and Nestorian mss. as are reproduced in Wright, Facs. Pls. LXVI and XCIX and in Wright, Syr. Cat. III, Pl. X-XII.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. N. Abbot, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Fihrist, p. 8; N. Abbot, p. 18.



may possibly lack one or more of the above mentioned features but the earliest Muslim inscription, the tombstone of 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Khayr al-Ḥijrī, dated 31 A.H. = 652 A.D. lacks the bend of the alif to the right at the lower ends of the shafts, has but a few slanting strokes and, though it starts with long vertical strokes, ends up with decidedly shorter ones, yet it is angular and square. These few slanting strokes were there possibly because of the cunei which the mason used to incise his kufic.<sup>1</sup>

Thus one is led to believe that the heavy, thick, frequently short, comparatively angular, and more or less square script represents the earliest monumental Ḥīra-kufic type; that the alif with the bend to the right, though not consistently used in the early kufic, was a feature common to it and the early Makkī; that the regular long slanting stroke of the aṣābi' in the Makkī contrasted with the frequently short vertical one in the early kufic; and finally that gradually the length of the vertical stroke became immaterial in both, so that the moderately slanting stroke of the Makkī and the vertical stroke of the kufic remained as their most distinctive feature.<sup>2</sup>

Qalqashandī stated that the variety of kufic scripts derive from two main types: one is equated with the ṭumār which is described as: mabsūt with nothing mustadīr in it; the other with the ghubār al-Ḥilya

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Cairo Steles Vol. I; see above, p.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. N. Abbot, p. 21.



(sometimes mentioned as al-halaba<sup>1</sup>), which is described as mustadīr with nothing mustaqīm. The muḥaqqaq is given as a sample of the mabsūt and the thulth and riḍ'a as varieties of the latter.<sup>2</sup> Mentioning the muḥaqqaq it is worthy to give some details concerning this script. We find the term muḥaqqaq used in a general way to indicate a standard of excellence resulting from giving to each individual letter, in any particular script, its full due both in the form of the letter itself and the relationship of the letter to letter, thus avoiding undue crowding and the misuse of ligature. Ibn al-Nadīm tells that in the early days of 'Abbāsids "there developed a new script called the 'Irāqī which is the muḥaqqaq called the warrāqī."<sup>3</sup> A warrāq was either a copyist or a stationer, or both. Ibn al-Nadīm himself was a warrāq, bibliophile and book-seller.<sup>4</sup>

By wirāqa was meant the copying of books, correcting binding and selling books. It was the business of the warrāq to select the papers for the wirāqa to copy the book or to have it copied under his supervision. This profession flourished during Ibn al-Nadīm's life-time.

Let us now look for the muḥaqqaq. Al-ḥaqq is the opposite of al-bāṭil = vanity. Ḥaqq al-qawl = became fixed = أُحِقَّتِ الرِّسَالَةُ = put it right. thawbun muḥaqqaqun = very well woven or embroidered in the shape of ḥuqaq (circles). Kalāmun muḥaqqaqun كَلَامٌ حَقِيقٌ = eloquent.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibn al-Nadīm, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. qalqashandī, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Fihrist, p. īlīm, N. Abbot, p. 29.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. D. S. Rice, The Unique ibn al-Bawwāb manuscript, p. 2, Dublin, 1955.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Lisān al-'Arab, Vol. 10, pp. 49-52.



Whatever is true of the word speech is true of the script. To clarify this Qalqashandī draws a comparison between writing and speech. Thus, according to him, the speech and the script share the virtue of eloquence for the script leads to the understanding of the speech and the speech conveys or includes the imagination. And because both the script and the speech shared this characteristic, much similarity is shared in common. But the speech is mobile while the script is stationary. But in spite of being stationary the latter has the same effect as the first in conveying the ideas. Another clear point of similarity between the two is the elegance both have; for while the speech has some serenity and incantation, the inscription sometimes reflects tidy and most pleasant pictures. The speech also can reach a big degree of eloquence when used by great orators and poets and sometimes it becomes degraded when used by ordinary people; in the same manner the script can be tidy and beautifully drawn such as that used in the divānī letters and important manuscripts. It can be of an ordinary form when used by ordinary people in their daily correspondence.

Another feature common to both is the deformation of the first by grammatical mistakes and the latter in dictation. In the same manner, if the speech is sweet it can make even a low standard meaning look higher than it is and if it is on the contrary abominable and weak, it can degrade good meaning and place it far away from appreciation. The same is applicable to the script, for if it is nice and neat it encourages people to read it although it may not be of a great use. And if it is clumsy it will not in any way encourage anybody to read it, in spite of the fact that



it may be of a great use to a reader.

These similarities between the speech and the script can be noticed also through the similarity which is apparent in two instruments used in expressing both of them. The instrument of speech is the tongue, while the instrument of the script is the qalam قلم قلم and both of them work for one end, which is the clarification of meanings behind them. And because speech is something that nature developed, its instrument was made by nature again, but the script, because it is of an artificial indication, its instrument was made by art too. And because both of the two instruments share in the question of identification, each of them came to be used as an identification for the other and thus it was said: al-aqalam are the tongues of the brains اللسان, and came to share the same name and thus it is said: al-qalam is one of the two tongues

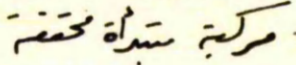
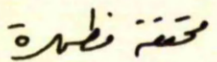
القلم أحد لسانين

Beside this we find that the word muhaggaq also occurs in Qal-qashandī as the kufic script was written by several aqlāms which originally started from the main qalams:

1. the mugawwar = rounded with its 'arraqaṭ = bendings down the base line as al-thuluth and al-riq'a.
2. The so-called mabsūt lacking the bends of the former which is al-muhaggaq.

In addition to that the scribes divided the Arabic script into al-muhaggaq and al-mutlaq. By the muhaggaq is meant the script in which the letters of all the words are upright because they are treated as if they are written separately. The script which is used for superior affairs. The mutlaq



on the other hand is said to have derived from al-muḥaqqaq. The special characteristics of al-muḥaqqaq are: its letters are interwoven with each other. It is advisable to use each script separately without mixing both the letters of both scripts. Qalqashandī describes the letter jīm,<sup>1</sup> as murakkaba muḥtada'a muḥaqqaq  the sin,<sup>2</sup> muḥaqqaq muḥhara  and the mīm<sup>3</sup> as muḥtada'a muḥaqqaq.

Thus the term muḥaqqaq is applied to any script that is written after deliberate planning which thus limits the usage of al-muḥaqqaq to certain important occasions.<sup>4</sup>

In the same meaning Ṣulī (d. 325 A.H.) adds: "It is much to the credit of a beautiful handwriting that it summons the observer to read it, though the words may be base and the meaning obscure. And sometimes an ugly script may contain eloquence and much of beauty and interest, but the observer disregards these benefits, though he may have need of them, because of the repulsiveness and ugliness of the writing."<sup>5</sup>

It must not be supposed that the early kufic became fixed and unchangeable. We find short and long vertical strokes indiscriminately and in later monumental kufic the alif became exceedingly high.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Qalqashandī, pp. 9, 10, 26, 52, 54.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Ṣulī, p. 41; A survey of Persian Art, p. 1712.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Flury in Syria II (1921) pp. 230-34.



Let us now turn to our main subject, the monumental kufic after showing the origin and main characteristics of the kufic script.

The problem which faced the origin and development of Arabic writing and which has received from time to time considerable attention at the hands of German and French workers is the same problem, given the same attention, which faced the monumental kufic.

Few are those who deal with the monumental kufic, but a greater number has treated the kufic on papyrus. However, it is clear that all those who studied the kufic script, whether monumental or not, agree with the fact that there is a sharp distinction between the former and the latter. As we mentioned above the oldest characters on papyrus have a round shape while the documents and inscriptions incised on metal or stone seem more angular, tiny and squarer. Grohmann, in his book From the World of Arabic Papyri<sup>1</sup>, stated that the characteristic forms of the letters which are found in the most ancient Arabic papyri are very closely connected with those in the epitaph of al-Hijrī dated 31 A.H. = 652 A.D.; or those of the building inscription from the dam near al-Ta'if dated 58 A.H. = 678 A.D. In addition to that, he mentioned in A.O., p. 185, that in the investigation made about the floriated kufic extending to the decorated apices and the development of the foliated kufic, the influence of the manuscript style on the lapidary script has been completely neglected, although J. von Karabacek pointed out this important

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<sup>1</sup> p. 82.



phenomenon as early as 1874,<sup>1</sup> saying that a clear division into book script and documentary writing on the one hand, and a lapidary style used only or preferably in inscriptions on the other, as can be traced in the history of Greek and Latin scripts, has no exact parallel in Arabic writing. This is due to the fact that the main characters of Arabic writing developed rather independently from the actual writing material. N. Abbot,<sup>2</sup> stated that the Makkī can be considered as kufic of the earliest centuries; yet when comparing the Makkī script with the inscription of al-Hijrī she stated that the latter can be considered as poor kufic.

I may add that in almost all the stelae I have already studied, when studying the majority of the letters, great resemblance can be traced between this lapidary style and the descriptions of the various aqām given by both Ibn Durustuwayh and Qalqashandī.<sup>3</sup> Almost no examples of these multiple scripts have survived from the early Islāmic centuries, either in manuscripts or in monumental epigraphy in any of the Islāmic countries. One cursive monumental inscription is known, in graffito on the window frame of one of the Persepolis buildings, with the name of 'Abdūd al-Dawla, presumably the Buwayhid (324-27 A.H. = 936-39 A.D.).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Beiträge zur Geschichte der Maziaditen, Leipzig 1877, pp. 16, 51-53, 56, 61-65.

<sup>2</sup>p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>See above commentaries on Stelae.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. E. Combe, J. Sauvaget, G. Wiet, Rep. chronologique d'epigraphie Arabe, VI, Cairo, 1935, pp. 42-3 where the script is described as 'simple kufic'; A Survey of Persian Art, p. 1717.



In the early numismatic inscriptions, cursive and k̄ufic elements are combined, showing the development of the more stylized epigraphic script from the ordinary current writing. Thus, on the dirham of Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf,<sup>1</sup> ibn and Yūsuf are cursive, whereas al-Ḥajjāj reveals a movement towards k̄ufic forms.

The inscriptions on coins and monuments made their first appearance on the monuments and coins of the Umayyids, namely during the rule of the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik (65/86 A.H. = 684/705 A.D.). But no one is yet sure of the place where this script originated. Late theories that were formed about its origin go back to the beginning of the twentieth century. Even these theorists differ greatly when treating the origin and development of the k̄ufic script, especially the floriated. However, Qalqashandī,<sup>2</sup> who dealt with the Arabic and k̄ufic, has not touched the problem of the origin and development of the monumental k̄ufic. However, we have plenty of reliable documents upon which we may trace the line of its evolution. First of all the always dated silver and gold are very important, which from the end of the 7th century were minted in various places of the Arab empire. They are fairly helpful in dating the early Qur'ānic fragments. The incitement for novelty came from those masters who opened Qur'ānic copies schools, and it is a pity that from these beautiful pages we do not know anything about the

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<sup>1</sup>Pl. 1480 B.

<sup>2</sup>p. 15.



writers' personalities who had an important profession at that time. Some of these writings were made by the famous Qutba, or by 'Ustadh Ahwal, who, at the beginning of the 9th century, wrote a long thesis about the rules and prescriptions of calligraphy.<sup>1</sup>

The monumental k̄ufic script has been used on a large scale by the Muslim artist to avoid the horror vacui. The use of monumental scripts gave them a means of expression limited in the figural field by the strictures of the theologians. The Muslim artist therefore found innumerable variations of the k̄ufic script until it reached its full maturity by the eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>2</sup> One can add that the unity of Islāmic art in all the whole area conquered by the Muslims, manifests itself not only in the decoration but also in epigraphy.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the k̄ufic script became one of the great unifying factors of Islāmic art.

Professor Grohmann in his article on the origin and development of the floriated k̄ufic divided it into the following:

1. plain or primitive k̄ufic;
2. k̄ufic with elaborated apices;

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Kühnel, pp. 10-11.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Georges Marcais, M. d'art Musul, p. 71.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Flury, Une formule epigraphique de la ceramique archaïque de l'Islam, p. 53.



3. foliated k̄ufic;
4. floriated k̄ufic;
5. plaited or interlaced k̄ufic;
6. bordered k̄ufic;
7. architectural k̄ufic;
8. rectangular k̄ufic.<sup>1</sup>

He believed that the floriated k̄ufic is the most attractive and showed how that kind of k̄ufic came to be known to Western scholars only through Chardin at the first quarter of the eighteenth century when two k̄ufic inscriptions dated 348 A.H. = 959 A.D. and 392 = 1001 A.D. found in Persia were taken to the west.<sup>2</sup> Yet these two inscriptions did not attract any special attention at that time. Professor Grohmann touched on a delicate matter when he tried to distinguish between the foliated and floriated k̄ufic. Thus to him the foliated k̄ufic was characterized by the decoration of the apices of the letters consisting of half-palmettes and two or three lobed leaves and the bifurcation of the ending of letters which might extend even to initial and final letters. Floriated k̄ufic shows the same decoration but in addition has floral motifs, tendrils and scrolls growing from the terminations, or even from the medial form of

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Grohmann, A.O. Vol. 2, p. 183. It is worthy to add that Flury mentioned that one may distinguish at least six different varieties of k̄ufic scripts existing in various provinces of medieval Persia (Cf. Flury in Survey of Persian art, p. 1743).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Voyage en Perse, Amsterdam 1711, Vol. 3, Pl. beside p. 118.



the letters. These tendrils are of course to be distinguished from those growing from the upper edge of the band of writing, or forming the floral background of the inscription, for the essential characteristics of "coufique fleuri" is that the tendrils and perfect arabesques form an organic unit with the letters from which they grow.<sup>1</sup> Though it is not easy to define the kufic script one should notice certain types of it. Provencal, W. and G. Marcais, Marcel, J. G. Adler called the floriated kufic carmatian (qaramatique, carmatique) an indication of its Fāṭimid origin.<sup>2</sup>

One question to consider is in which place did this floriated kufic originate, and how can one distinguish between the floriated and foliated kufic? There is no distinction between the two styles for the term "kufic fleuri" is employed for both of them. For example, M. van Berchem called the inscription of Jami' al-'Atṭārīn in Alexandria "coufique fleuri" though it is foliated,<sup>3</sup> the same is the case with another inscription,<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Flury Ornamental Kufic Inscriptions on Pottery; E. Herzfeld, Review of Max van Berchem and Strzygowski, Amida, Heidelberg, 1910 in OLZ, Vol. 14 (1911); Flury, Die Ornamente der Ḥakim und Azhar Moschee, Heidelberg, 1912, p. 10 f; A. Grohmann A.O., p. 183.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. E. Levi Provencal, Inscriptions Arabes d'Espagne, p. XXXIII; W. and G. Marcais, Les monuments Arabes de Tlemcen, p. 87; J. J. Marcel, Paleographie Arabe, Paris 1828, p. 10; M. van Berchem, L'epigraphie Musulmane en Algerie, Revue Africaine, No. 257 (1905), p. 185; N. de Khanikoff, Memoire sur l'inscriptions Musulmane du Caucase, Journal Asiatique, Ser. 5, Vol. 20 (1862), pp. 129-30 ("coufique enchevetre,



of Badr al-Jamālī of 480 A.H. (Bab al-Futūḥ) showing a tendril with three lobed leaf in rā' and designated as "coufique fleuri a. rinceaux".<sup>1</sup> Wiet, in his description of the script on one of the tombstones in the museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, No. 4288 dated 243 A.H. = 827 A.D. mentions that it is simple kufic in spite of its foliated style.

The problem of the origin of the floriated kufic was first discussed, as we mentioned above, by W. and G. Marcais. Both of them stated that the angular floriated character known as Karmatian appeared for the first time in Tunisia in 341 A.H. and then made its way to Egypt, perhaps with the Fāṭimids. Marcais added that the Tunisian inscriptions usually show types which are very fine and on the whole the floriated kufic is more delicate than any other.<sup>3</sup> At first van Berchem shared the same view

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(cont.) improprement nomme karmatique"). Cf. C.I.A. 1/4 Egypt, M.M.A.F. Vol. 19, 1903, p. 701.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, No. 48, p. 79, Pl. 18, No. 3 and No. 45, p. 74.

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<sup>1</sup>C.I.A.I., No. 36, Pl. 18; Grohmann A.O., p. 184.

<sup>2</sup>The epitaph from the Qubbah of Sīdi Ribāḥ in Qaiyrawān, O. Hondas and R. Basset, Epigraphie Tunisienne, No. 16, Bulletin de Correspondence Africaine, Vol. 4 (Algier, 1882), p. 126, Pl. 3; A. Grohmann A.O., Pl. I, fig. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. G. Marcais, Manuel d'Art Musulman, Paris, 1903.



in 1905 but after the discovery of the famous Stele of Tashkend dated 230 A.H. = 844 A.D., changed his opinion.<sup>1</sup> though he expressed serious doubts about the correctness of the date and said the Tashkend Stele undoubtedly was engraved later. Martin Hartmann, who discovered this Stele on the occasion of his journey to Kurkestan in the museum of Tashkend declared that it represented the pre-eminent example of the new style of writing which manifests its existence in the Fatimid inscriptions of 470 A.H. in Cairo and concluded his theory that the floriated kufic ("Blumenstil") has come from the east to Egypt.<sup>2</sup> J. Strzygowski followed the same theory of Hartmann and even suggested that the kufic palmette and the ornamentation of the Arabic tombstones in Cairo came also from the east to Egypt and were related to the patterns of Persian textiles.

Various objections soon came from J. von Karabacheck and Herzfeld, and both agreed that the Tashkend Stele is only a copy of a stone originally dated 230 A.H. and is contemporaneous with a second tombstone published by Hartmann from the same museum and dated 541 A.H. = 1146 A.D.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. "L'epigraphie Musulmane en Algerie", Revue Africaine, No. 257 (1905), p. 185; Amida, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Archaeologisches aus Russische-Turkestan, III OLZ, Vol. 9 (1906), Cols. 71-73; A. Grohmann A.O., Pl. I, fig. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Zur orientalische Altertumskunde problem oder phantom, Sitzungsberichte Akademi D. Wissen schaften, Wien, Vol. 178/5 (1906), p. 45; Review of Max van Berchem, J. Strzygowski, Amida, OLZ, Vol. 14 (1911) Col. 433; A. Grohmann, A.O., p. 185.



Flury stated that both Amida and Egypt give little information about the sudden appearance of the k̄ufic decorative writing, though he mentioned that the successful contents of the vigorous letters and the ornamentation, more refined and leafy (bushy), leaves no vacuum in the ground work in preparation for the particular charm in the last product of the Fāṭimid era.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, when comparing the tombstone of Tashkend dated 230 A.H. = 844 A.D. and the tombstone of Qayrawān dated 341 A.H. = 952 A.D. with the tombstone kept in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo No. 4288 and which is dated 243 A.H. = 858 A.D. it is clearly seen that there is a frequent use of lobed terminations to the letters, whether initial, medial or final. It shows full decoration of the apices with three-four lobed leaves and full palmettes, as well as tendrils growing up from the letters and filling in the blank spaces with motifs which correspond to the palmettes of the marginal frame.<sup>2</sup> In addition to that, on an epitaph dated 265 A.H. = 878 A.D. the text includes floriated k̄ufic but less elegant than that of 243 A.H.<sup>3</sup>

Both Karabacek and Herzfeld were right because on the Stele of Tashkend the inscriptions look more cursive than k̄ufic and there are less characteristic features of the floriated k̄ufic, just split palmettes terminating the heads of the shafts and the tails of the final letters. I

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Flury, Une formule epigraphie de la ceramique archaïque de l'Islam, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. A. Grohmann, A.O., Pl. I, figs. 1, 2, 3.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. J. Sauvaget in R.E.I., No. 3, Pl. I.



also offer this suggestion that the Arabs conquered Mesopotamia, Persia, Syria, Egypt and North Africa simultaneously. We can assume that the kufic script developed in all these countries more or less at the same time, following the pattern of the Sasanian, Byzantine, Hellenistic and Coptic arts which could be found in all these countries and in the kufic script as well. Yet in every country above mentioned the script continued to develop almost in isolation, being little influenced by developments in any neighbour state. In addition to that, it must not be supposed that the development of these general principles was the work of one man or one generation, or even one century nor even that, when once formulated, these rules became rigid and their adoption constant and universal. And as writing is considered an art, then like all arts it is always fluid.

Prof. Grohmann is inclined to believe that it was in Egypt that the first steps to the highest perfection of this style were made as it already existed in the mosque of al-Ḥakīm, 393 A.H. = 1003 A.D. and al-Azhar 361 A.H. = 972 A.D. Yet for the next period this initial phase of floriated kufic is not able to impose itself fully, not even in Egypt. But further steps in this evolution certainly took place in the neighbouring countries which thus have the major role in decisively forwarding the evolution of the floriated kufic. For example, in Palestine an inscription of the time of al-Muqtadir Billah dating between 301-304 A.H. = 913-917 A.D. shows a rather more developed decorated kufic. In Ḥijāz a tombstone dated 256 A.H. = 864 A.D. incised by Mubārak al-Makkī shows floral motives scattered in the spaces between the letters and genuine tendrils growing up from the terminations of the letters (tā', mīm, nūn,



kāf, wāw).<sup>1</sup> In North Africa is its most beautiful evolution in the inscriptions of Bāb Tūnis in Qayrawān, dated 437 A.H. = 1045 A.D.<sup>2</sup> Here as well as in the inscriptions of the sanctuary of the mosque of Sidī 'Uqba' dated 406-453 A.H. = 1015-1116 A.D. the tendrils are apparently connected with the shafts and terminations of the letters.<sup>3</sup> As for Mesopotamia<sup>4</sup> the kūfic developed as in North Africa as well. In addition to what Grohmann mentioned that it was in Egypt that the first steps of the floriated kūfic style started, Kühnel stated that there was another interesting method which was used first in Egypt at the end of the 10th century and it was the so-called "flowering" kūfic where they filled the empty places with flowers and these came out with the same strength as the letters and added a richly ornamented frame which was harmoniously connected with the text.<sup>5</sup> More than that, Flury said that Egypt during the centuries became one of the very important centres of

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. A. Grohmann, A.O., No. 3904 Pl. 8, fig. 21, p. 208 text fig. 27.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Houdas-Basset, Epigraphique Tunisienne, Pl. 9; A. Grohmann, A.O., p. 209, Pl. 10, fig. 23.

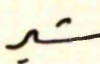
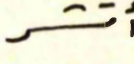
<sup>3</sup>Cf. Saladin, Les monuments historiques de la Tunisie, Vol. 2, Paris 1899, Pls. 23 - 25; E. Herzfeld, Eine Bauinschrift von Nizām al-Mulk, Islam, Vol. 12 (1922), p. 99; A. Grohmann, A.O., p. 209.

<sup>4</sup>Flury, Islamische Schriftbänder Amida-Diarbekr, p. 10, fig. I, Pl. 2...seq.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Kühnel, Islamische Schrift, p. 14, figs. 13, 14, 19.



arts in the Muslim world.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, Flury mentioned that the stele of Mecquois (the reading is al-'Abbās b. al-Ḥarth al-Qushayrī. The nisbah al-Qushayrī comes from  qushayr, diminutive of , uqashiru or qishr = to peel, al-qishr is also the dress one puts on.<sup>2</sup>) dated 243 A.H. represents decorated elements which are obviously plainer than those he is studying: the crochets of the hā' terminated with half foliage and the letters adorned with palmettes, the nūn and the yā' expanding with arabesque and with polylobed roses which sometimes decorate the epigraphic space. It is true that the terminations of the letters rā' and wāw do not ascend above the base lines of the script and it is reported that the floriated kufic of Fig. 3, p. 58 is more developed than that of Mecquois. It is the same with the inscriptions of the mosque of Ibn Ṭulūn dated the second half of the 9th century which represent very simple floriated kufic. He added that he dare not say that the floriated kufic existed at the end of the 7th century and he is not more certain that the basin of the fountain

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Une formule epigraphique, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup>Ibn Durayd, pp. 299 and 438; Qushayr is a chief of a tribe and banū Qushayr from Qays; Lisān al-'Arab, Vol. 5, pp. 92-94; it may also be al-Qusbarī = strong, cf. ibid, p. 92; A.O. Pl. I, fig. 3.



of Rei constitutes one of the most ancient documents of this style of writing. And it seems to him more and more certain that the departure of this writing came from the Oriental boundary of the Islāmic area. It was spread from Afghanistān one judges from the first epigraphic document which M. Godard had very recently sent from Ghaznah.<sup>1</sup> Yet one may say that the fragment of ceramic, fig. 3, is undated while the stele of Qushayrī has the date 243 A.H.

Judging by the above standard of comparison between the plain, foliated and floriated styles, the former of the first centuries of the Hijra was considered by some the most beautiful of kufic. Some of the inscriptions I am studying are plain, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 10, 12, 35, while Nos. 13, 4, 7, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31 are foliated and the rest, Nos. 8, 15, 28, 32, 34, 36, are floriated.

#### Numeration of the letters

1 = ا;	2 = ث ت ب ;	3 = خ ع ه ;
4 = ز ر	5 = ز ر	6 = ش س
7 = ض ص	8 = ط ظ	9 = غ ع
10 = ق ف	11 = ك	12 = ل
13 = م	14 = ن	15 = ه
16 = و	17 = لا	18 = ي
	19 = الله <sup>2</sup>	

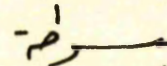

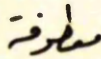
<sup>1</sup>Cf. Flury, Une formule epigraphique, pp. 58-9.

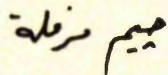
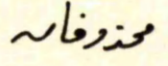
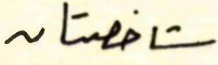
<sup>2</sup>Provencal, p. XXVII, Qalqashandī, p. 23.



It is worth while adding an extra division of the Arabic alphabet as suggested by Qalqashandī. In order to diminish the nineteen groups to five it takes the following numeration:

1 = alif; 2 = jīm; 3 = rā'; 3 = nūn; 5 = mīm.

The group alif (1) includes eleven shapes of vertical alif. This means one alif and seven dilation alifs  which are the bā', tā', thā', kāf, lām, yā', fā'. In addition to that two prostrated alifs  which are the ṭā', ẓā'; one bent alif  which is the lām alif.

In group jīm (2) one finds seven sweeping jīms  and they are jīm, ḥā', kḥā'; two deducted jīms  which are dāl, dhāl; and two rising up jīms  the 'ayn and ghayn. Group rā' (3) includes three forms, rā', zayn and wāw. In the group nūn (4) there are six shapes, the nūn, sīn, shīn, ṣād, ḍād, qāf. The last group, namely the mīm (5) - this ought to be before group (4) - there are the mīm and final ḥā'.<sup>1</sup>

We find on the shāhids Nos. 5, 7 that the tops of the shafts of the letter alif are given a fork shape. This form represents a strong impulse for the decoration of the apex of the alif. Such fork shaped top appeared already in 191 A.H. = 807 A.D. and 196/812 on the tombstones Nos. 1193 and 2721/128 in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, where almost all the letters show forked apices.<sup>2</sup> Two further examples are furnished

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Qalqashandī, pp. 23 - 24.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Steles, Cairo, Vol. I, pl. 6, p. 16, pl. 8, p. 21 f.



by two tombstones dated 256 A.H. = 870 A.D. and 272 A.H. = 886 A.D., published by Salmon.<sup>1</sup> This forked apex is to be found as far as the Fāṭimid period. Namely, in the Arab Museum on a textile that goes back to al-Ḥāki, where all the alifs, the vertical strokes of the lām, the tails of the mīm, rā', all have fork shapes,<sup>2</sup> and on a textile in Victoria and Albert Museum<sup>3</sup> from the time of al-Mustansirbillah (427-487 A.H.);<sup>4</sup> and on a rock crystal seal in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo.<sup>5</sup> In the following centuries this simple ornament was transformed into an artistic half-palmette in two epitaphs published by E. Combe dated 217 A.H. = 832 A.D. and 246 A.H. = 860 A.D.<sup>6</sup> It further occurs in the inscription on the marble panelling of the mihrāb of the great mosque in Qayrawān dated 248 A.H. = 862 A.D.<sup>7</sup>

While on the shāhids Nos. 10, 12, 14, 18, 19, 22, 24, 28, 30, 31, 32, the shafts of the alifs represent thorn like growths on the right side of the tops of the letter. Such form can be traced in the lapidary style on the epitaph Inv. No. 801 in the Kunsthistorische Museum in Wien and on

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<sup>1</sup> See Notes d'Epigraphie Arabe, Bull. de l'Institut Francais d'Archaeologie Orientale du Caire, Vol. 2 (1902), No. 6, 13 (pp. 8, 13).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kühnel, p. 15, Pl. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Inv. No. 1381 - 1888.

<sup>4</sup> Guest, J.R.A.S. (1906).

<sup>5</sup> Inv. No. 14555.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Inscriptions Arabes du Musee d'Alexandrie, Bull. de la Societe d'archeologie d'Alexandrie, No. 30/1936, Nos. 4, 7 - 8.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. K.A.C. Creswell, Early Muslim Architecture, Vol. 2, Oxford, 1940, Pl. 88.



the stucco cover of the wall of Mazār shāh Faḍl at Ṣafid Buland (middle of 12th century A.D.) near Qāzān in the northern part of Farghāna Turkestan.<sup>1</sup>

On the shāhid 26 dated 438 A.H. the alifs at the top of their shafts are given split arrow heads. Much more variety is shown in the decoration of the alif. It begins with a barb or hook, obviously taken from the Nabataean form of the alif in Sinai inscriptions, but appears as a thorn or split arrow head only as early as the second half of the second century of the Hījra in the lapidary style.<sup>2</sup> It also occurs in Qur'ānic kūfic manuscript from Irān in the 2nd century in Staatliche Museum, Berlin.<sup>3</sup> The last dated examples of this form of the alif can be seen on a tombstone from Tashkend dated 541 A.H. = 1146 A.D. and in the inscription on the mīhrāb of the mosque of al-Qaṣaba in Marrākeṣh, 591 A.H. = 1195 A.D. indicating the very wide area over which this decoration was used. Yet it existed as late as the eighth century A.H. in Qur'ānic manuscript of the Mamlūk period in Egypt.<sup>4</sup>

On the shāhids Nos. 3, 17, 27 the heads of the alif include triangular forms. Such a form represents the transition of the hook into a

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<sup>1</sup>See Hartmann, *Archäologisches aus Russische-Turkistan*, OLZ, Vol. 9 (1906), col. 235.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Euting, *Sinaitische Inschriften*, No. 329, Pl., 18, 33.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Kühnel, p. 16, Pl. 12.

<sup>4</sup>The Qur'an dated 776 A.H. = 1374-75 in the Egyptian National Library.



triangle. This triangle shape can be traced in lapidary style as well as on textiles, e.g. in ṭirāz inscriptions of the textile woven in Yaman dated 311 A.H. = 923 A.D. and on an epitaph from Abyssinia.<sup>1</sup> It also occurs on ceramics found in Sāmarrā and North Africa.<sup>2</sup>

On the undated shāhids Nos. 6, 8, 9, the tops of the alifs represent wedge shapes. Such wedge shaped tops show another decoration of the alif which is to be traced back to cursive or manuscript writing. In using a qalam with a nib cut slightly from upper right to lower left the top of the alif is naturally formed sloping in the same direction. This wedge shape can be found on papyrus and also on stone. It is found on papyrus discovered at Khirbat Mird (No. 4, 1st century A.H.) while on stone it appears on inscriptions on the epitaph No. 9291 in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo dated 71 A.H. = 690 A.D. It is perhaps already indicated in the stone of 'Abd al-Malik (65-86 A.H.) in Ch. Clermont Ganneau, *Recueil d'archeologie orientale*, Vol. I, Paris 1888, p. 214, Pl. 11 and in the inscription of Antinoe (117 A.H.) in B. Mortiz, *Arabic paleography*, Cairo, 1905, pls. 110 - 113. It occurs further in inscriptions on ceramics of the Umayyad and 'Abbāsīd periods on a bowl probably made in Syria yet discovered in Susa (8th century A.D.),<sup>3</sup> in the inscription of al-Mahdī at 'Asqalān (115 A.H. = 772 A.D.). The alifs of the inscription of the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Wiet, Tissus et Tapisseries du Musee Arabe du Cairo, Syria, Vol. 16. (1935), Pl. 48; E. Littman, Arabische Inschriften aus Abessinien Zeitschrift fur Semitistik, Vol. 3 (1924), p. 245, No. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. F. Sarre, E. Herzfeld, Die Ausgrabungen von Samarra, teil II, Pl. 10; G. Marcais, Les Poteries et faïences de la cal'a des Banī Hammād (XI<sup>e</sup> siècle). Constantine (1913) pl. 156.



Nilometer in al-Rōda, 247 A.H. include this mentioned wedge shape.<sup>1</sup>

In the epitaph of Munisa, 278 A.H. we find that not only the alif has that shape, but almost all the letters have it.<sup>2</sup> It is worth while mentioning that this wedge shape apex occurs less frequently on the left side of the alif than on the right side and is to be found as late as the 15th century A.D.<sup>3</sup>

In shāhids Nos. 11, 29, 36 the letters, whether initials, medials, or finals, have half-palmette apices. The arrow head apex and the forked top which we found on some of our specimens are a step in the evolution of the half-palmette. In the 3rd century A.H. these apices were transformed into an elegant half-palmette as we can already see in two epitaphs in the Museum of Municipality in Alexandria dated 217 A.H. = 832 A.D. and 246 A.H. = 860 A.D. It also occurs in the inscriptions of the marble

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<sup>3</sup>Cf. A. Lane, Early Islamic Pottery, London, 1947, Pl. 4, c, and p. 8;

<sup>4</sup>C.G.op.cit., p. 214, Pl. 11 left. s.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. A. Creswell, Vol. II, p. 293, fig. 22-

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Kühnel, p. 9, Pl. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. A. Grohmann, A.O., pp. 189 - 190.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. E. Combe, Inscr. Arabes du M. d'Alex., No. 30, Nos. 4, 7 - 8.



panelling of the mihrab of the great mosque in Qayrawān dated 248 A.H. = 862 A.D.; in the inscription of Masjid Nayīn dated 276 A.H. = 900 A.D., and especially in the building inscription of the Caliph al-Mu'tadir in Amida dated 297 A.H. = 910 A.D.; here the heads of the shafts, as well as the terminals end in half-palmette.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps even more important than the half-palmette is the partition or trifoliated tops of the alif and lām which has a decisive influence on the development of the floriated kufic.<sup>2</sup> Such form can be seen on shāhids Nos. 1, 4, dated 234 A.H., 256 A.H., where not only the alifs but also the lāms show the trifoliated form. Almost all the initials, medials and even the final letters are similar in form to those above mentioned. This ornament is first to be seen in Egypt in 192 A.H. = 808 A.D., yet its importance comes from its obvious connection with the decoration of the margin on the same shāhids. Strzygowski has exhaustively dealt with this decoration without perceiving its obvious connection with the script, while Herzfeld immediately detected that this palmette

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. K.A.Creswell, Early Muslim Architecture, Vol. 2, Pl. 88; S. Flury, Le decor de la mosque de Nayīn. Syria, Vol. 2 (1921), Pl. 45; Max van Berchem in M.V.Oppenheim Inschriften aus Syrien, Mesopotamien und Kleinnassien. Beiträge zur Assyriologie und Semitischen Sprachwissenschaft, Vol. 7 (Leipzig, 1909) Nos. 114, fig. 11, p. 77 and 120.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. A. Grohmann, A.O., p. 207.



like apex was a preparation for the development of the floriated kufic.<sup>1</sup> Strzygowski insisted on believing that the ornament on the epitaphs from old Cairo is related to the patterns of Persian textiles and received its individuality through the hand of an Arabic calligrapher. Grohmann stated that if a comparison is made between the ornamentation on the Coptic tombstone No. 8609 in the Coptic Museum, with Arabic epitaph No. 1265 in the Museum of Islamic Art, there is quite a convincing resemblance. Thus it is proved that the Coptic influence played a major part in the ornamentation of the margin on the Arab epitaphs. It is worth while adding that on an epitaph, No. 11464 dated 3rd century A.H., in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, at the top of the margin on the right and left corners there are four decorated elements which look similar to the alif with the trifoliated apices.<sup>2</sup> And it is quite clear that these two elements look very similar to the ornamentation on the margin of the epitaph in the Coptic Museum.<sup>3</sup>

We mentioned that in the above shāhids almost all the letters are provided with that partition form. This is not an unusual case for we can find many examples on epitaphs from Egypt.<sup>4</sup> The year 205 A.H. is of

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Die Ornamente altarabischer Grabstein in Kairo, Islam, Vol. 2 (1911), pp. 304 - 336.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Steles Cairo, Vol. X, Pl. V; Ibid, Vol. 9, no. 13441 dated 246 A.H. Pl. X.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Grohmann, A.O., Pl. 3, Fig. 9, epitaph No. 8609.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. op.cit., Vol. I, Nos. 1506/581 Pl. 15, p. 44, 1268 Pl. 45, p. 164 (229 A.H. = 844 A.D.); 1201 Pl. 49 p. 175 (231 A.H. = 845 A.D.).



great importance because it was then that the decoration of the three lobed palmette was extended to other letters, e.g. bā', hā', sīn and mīm.

At a comparatively early date the decoration of the apex of the alif affected other letters. To prove this theory we find on shāhid No. 17 that the alifs are provided with triangle terminations and the group bā' has the same apex. This can be applied to almost all the shāhids under consideration, and traced in the inscription of maqām 'Alī on the Euphrates (10th century A.D.), on a carpet fragment from al-Fustāt and in various tirāz inscriptions and on a Seljuk incense burner in Metropolitan Museum (577 A.H. = 1181-2 A.D.)<sup>1</sup>

The letters group jīm have nearly the same form, namely a curve varying in size, ending at the upper side with a head similar to that of the alif. On the lower side it resembles a tiny triangle. On the shāhids Nos. 18, 19, 23, 24, 28, 30, 31, 32, 34 the group jīm ends in a dragon head. This dragon head occurs on the apices of the alifs. A displaced stone of Kharput Gate in Diarbakr includes this form. The same form occurs on an epitaph in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo. It is worth while noticing that the medials of this group are more curved than the initials and this can be noticed on our specimens. The hung letters joined

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Grohmann, A.O., p. 198; 'Alī Bahjāt and A. Gabriel, Fouilles d'al-Fustāt, Paris 1921, Pl. 31; M. S. Dimand, A Seljuk Incense Burner, Bull. of M.M., Vol. 10 (1951-52) p. 15.



to this group are very small.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes we find the letters group dāl have two strokes and if we draw a line joining the two strokes it resembles a triangle, as we find on shāhids Nos. 6, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29, 33, 34, 36. If we compare the final letters of this group with the group kāf we find obvious similarity. This characteristic feature can be traced on shāhids Nos. 2, 3, 5, 13, 17, 28, 32, 35.

If we consider the letters in group rā' we notice that it is difficult to differentiate between them and the letters group nūn. Such resemblance can be traced on almost all the shāhids. Even if the letters in group rā' are plain, the letters in group nūn look the same as we notice on Nos. 5, 11, 12, 13, 17, 23, 30, 33 and 26. On the shāhids Nos. 8, 15, 21, 22, 28, 33, 35 and 14, each of the two letters is provided with an elegant climbing tail which ends with a serpent's mouth. These climbing tails, which Flury called "trace en arc", are less complicated in Egypt during the Fāṭimid period.<sup>2</sup> On the shāhids Nos. 25, 16 and 12 the group rā' lacks this climbing tail.

The letters group sīn sometimes include the combed teeth and if a straight line is drawn touching the strokes of the letters we find them on almost the same level. This can be noticed on the shāhids Nos. 2, 4, 13, 17, 18, 22, 24, 25, 30, 31, 26. This can also be traced on a marble

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<sup>1</sup>For the hung letters al-hurūf al-mu'alaga see above, Stelae Nos. 15, 17, 31, 33, 36.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Flury, Une formule epigraphique, p. 61.



slab dated 3rd century;<sup>1</sup> and on an epitaph from al-Fuṣṭāṭ dated 421 A.H. published by Sauvaget.<sup>2</sup> On the shāhids Nos. 11, 13, 14, 16, 21, 26, 29, 32, 33 the teeth of the letters in group sīn take the same form of the apex of the alif. In almost all the shāhids it is noticeable that the letter bā' in the word bism is taller than any of the other teeth of the sīn.

On the shāhids Nos. 18, 20, 28, 26 the letters group ṣād resemble a tiny square. On an epitaph from al-Fuṣṭāṭ the letters ṣād are rectangular.<sup>3</sup> On the majority of these inscriptions the letter ṣād is rectangular.<sup>4</sup> On the shāhids Nos. 12, 17, 32 the letters group ṣād look more naskhī. The trapezoid ṣād can be traced on shāhids Nos. 35, 36. This trapezoid shape of the ṣād existed in literary papyri (book-hand). It had a striking resemblance to the Maghribī script.<sup>5</sup>

The letters group ṭā' take nearly the same shape; the trapezoid with a tooth, sometimes squat as in Nos. 3, while in Nos. 16, 22, 21, 24, 25, 30, 32, 35, it reaches the level of the following stroke. It is worth while noticing that this tooth is upright as in Nos. 11, 13, 26,

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Kühnel, p. 18, Pl. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. J. Sauvaget in R.E.I., No. 12, Pl. II.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, Pl. 2, No. 12.

<sup>4</sup>See above, shāhids Nos. 2, 5, 6, 9, 13, 14, 15, 17, 21, 24, 25, 29.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. A. Grohmann, From the World of Arabic Papyri, p. 80.



32, 29, while in Nos. 10, 14, 19, 25, 28, the tooth bends to the left. It also happens that the tooth ends in an apex similar to that of the alif.

As for the group 'ayn, it is remarkable that it takes more than one shape. The initials are likely to be naskhī, yet sometimes a half-palmette is added to its upper opening as in Nos. 15, 30, 32, 34, 36. The medials and finals look nearly the same. In Nos. 1, 12, 10, 35 the medial 'ayn is "V" shaped. Yet in Nos. 4, 10, 18, 20, 22, 27, 28, it is triangular, while in Nos. 13, 15, 19, it takes a lozenge shape with a stem resting on the base line. It sometimes happens in these inscriptions that the medial 'ayn takes almost the same shape of the letters group fā'. Sometimes we find that the inscription assumes more than one shape of this group. This is not strange for we can trace the same in an epitaph from Egypt where the 'ayn takes three shapes. Only twice, on the shāhids Nos. 8, 36, the medial and final 'ayn takes the form of a flower. This floral 'ayn can be found on an inscription on the wooden door of Uljaytī Muḥammad Khudabandah in Bistān, beginning of the 14th century.<sup>2</sup>

The loops of the letters group fā' vary in shape. Sometimes they are round, as in Nos. 5, 6, 7, 15, 22, 26, 33, 34, while in Nos. 12, 19,

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<sup>1</sup>A. Grohmann, From the World of Arabic Papyrus. Pl. II, no. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. E. Herzfeld in his MS. Arabische Inschriften, fasc. 11, pp. 31, 31a.

A. Grohmann, A.O., p. 200, fig. 15.



29, 30, they are triangles. We mentioned that it happened in No. 19 that the group fā' and the medial 'ayn take the same shape, namely the candle flame. Yet stranger than that is the similarity between the open 'ayn and the fā' in No. 33. In Nos. 17, 20, 25, 31, 32, this group takes an oval shape. This oval shape is seen on an epitaph from Qayrawān dated 341 A.H. = 952 A.D.<sup>1</sup>

We mentioned that the kāf looks so similar to the dāl that in some inscriptions we find it very difficult to distinguish between the two. Pezard mentioned that there is no difference between the dāl and kāf in both Arabic and Pehlevi script.<sup>2</sup> Some found that there is similarity between the kāf and lām. I think that this mostly happened on manuscript writing more than in the lapidary style.<sup>3</sup>

As for the letters group lām we find in almost all our inscriptions that it is not easy to differentiate between this group and the letters group bā', especially in the basmala. Sometimes we find a quirk or an arch separating the two lāms of the word Allāh. This quirk includes, in Nos. 17, 18, 21, 22, a horse shoe arch. Yet in No. 36 it is lobed. We

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Houdus-Basset, *Epigraphic Tunisienne* No. 16. Bull. de Corres. Afric. Vol. 4, Pl. 3; A. Grohmann, A.O., Pl. I, fig. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Pezard, p. 181.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Wright, *The Palaographical Society Fascimiles of Manus. and Insc.* Oriental series, London, 1875-1883, Pl. XCVI.



find in No. 4 that this element contains the bā' and the yā'. We can trace this quirk on a large scale on tombstones from Egypt. This element has developed and been converted into an artistic floral motif. The two lāms of the word Allāh in Nos. 27, 28, 29, 31, face each other.

The round, oval and triangular are all shapes found in the letter mīm. Nos. 16, 11, 13, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 30, 35, the mīm is round. In Nos. 23, 24, 25, 28, 31, 32, 34, 36, the letter takes an oval shape. In Nos. 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 28, 32, 34, 36, the final mīm is double tailed.

No remarkable differences can be seen between the rā' and the nūn in Nos. 7, 12, 11, 13, 24, 29, 30.

It is worth while noticing that the letters, whether initials, medials, or finals, of group hā' are treated in nearly the same way, just an extra curve is added to the initials and the medials. One must therefore take into consideration that, of the letter hā', six hundred different forms have been found.<sup>1</sup> One can suggest that, in the group jīm, are seen the initial and medial hā', but with the exclusion of the two curves.

Sweeping, elegant tails are added to the letters group wāw, as is seen in Nos. 8, 14, 15, 16, 19, 23, 33, 34. Sometimes this group end in a tiny tail which has a fin shape, as in Nos. 10, 20, 24, 25, 30, 31, 36. In Nos. 18, 19, 24, 34, the loops of this group prove that they are really a development of a thorn. In No. 8 an elegant leafy flower is

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. A. Grohmann, From the World of A. Papyri, p. 72.



added to the wāw.

The lāmālif is the most attractive letter because it is given many variations. Sometimes it resembles a tong shape, at others nut crackers. But in almost all the tombstones, the lāmālif begins with a triangle then ends in right and left hand limbs facing each other as in Nos. 15, 16, 17, 21, 22.<sup>1</sup> In No. 23 the lāmālif takes the shape of an inverted crenellation. The mosque of Ibn Ṭulūn includes one which looks similar to our specimens.<sup>2</sup>

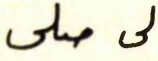
The initial and medial yā' look similar to the initial and medial bā' and nūn. Yet the final ones on the whole look more cursive, as in Nos. 7, 13, 26, 27, 29, 33. In Nos. 3, 6, 8, 9, 30, the yā' is retroverted, or as we used to call it, retreating. This reversed (retroverted or retreating) yā' is considered the equivalent of the extension and has specific rules of its own. For the yā' to follow the fā' is permissible and also after the letters group bā'. But it must not at any time be of excessive length. After the letters known as mu'arraqa, such as the finals of group bā', 'ayn, fā', sīn, lām, nūn and yā', the yā' itself must be mu'arraqa and not in reverse. While, after the non-mu'arraqa letters,

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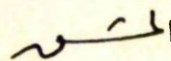
<sup>1</sup>See Qalqashandī, p. 101, for the lāmālif called a'-waraqiyya.

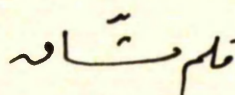
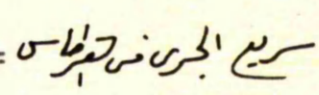
<sup>2</sup>Cf. Flury, Die Ornamente der Ḥākim and Azhar Mosche, Pl. XV.



the retroverted yā' is allowed.<sup>1</sup> This statement leads us to say that this retroverted yā' existed on a large scale in kufic script, whether on manuscripts, Qur'ān, textiles, coins, stone and even on glass weights. In addition to that, one may say that if it occurs that two yā's come together in two words, as  the retreating yā' is found only in the second. Yet the two may be mu'rraqatān as Ibn Muqla preferred them.<sup>2</sup>

In some stelae we find that there are letters which are extended and filling spaces. This leads us to have a general look at the so-called

 "al-Mashq".

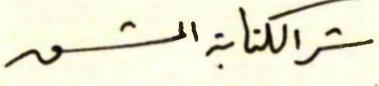
When one says  qalamun mashshāq =   
= easily running on paper. Thus the general characteristic of the mashq appears to be horizontal elongation at the expense of general height, consequently there must be closer spacing of lines, and moderate and specific use of the extended stroke itself. Excessive and haphazard extension is considered abhorrent. Ṣulī (d. 335 A.H. = 946 A.D.) describes experiences common to most of us when he states that there are two diametrically opposed situations which result in hurried, faulty writing. The first of these is when mind and body are both alert and the hand is eager to keep pace with the rapid flow of thought. The second is when

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 73; N. Abbot, p. 27; Qalqashandī, III, p. 149.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Qalqashandī, p. 149.



mind and body are both weary and tired fingers fail to function well and effectively. As deficiencies of hurried writing he mentions in addition to the extended stroke, the crowding of some letters, misuse of ligature and finally, failure to lengthen or depress letters, whether above the base line or below it. These are all natural to writer and copyist as well. Yet still the extended strokes are common. Though such writing is disliked and regarded with disgust and hatred, therefore to find so many examples of horizontal extended strokes is surprising. In the early days of Islam the mashq, especially in Qur'anic writing, received disapproval and condemnation. "The evil of writing is the mashq"  was the well known saying of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.<sup>1</sup>

The fundamental rules of mashq are numerous and complicated. These rules are sometimes contradictory and thus the scribe is free to use his own judgement. It was mentioned that the people of Anbar practised the mashq.<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm in his book al-Fihrist,<sup>3</sup> listed the mashq among his great four types.

The mashq is disliked at the beginning of lines but can be used at the end; yet the best use of it is in the middle of the section.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ṣulī, pp. 55-56; N. Abbot, pp. 24-25.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Qalqashandī, p. 144 and his source was Abu Ja'far al-Naḥḥās d. 338/950, Cf. Bjorkman, p. 76.


<sup>3</sup> al-Fihrist, p. 6.

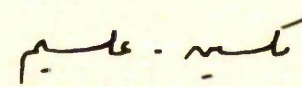
<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 69; Ṣulī, p. 55 added that

if sometimes the qalam overruns the line and causes confusion.

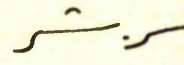

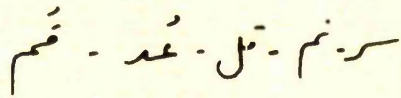
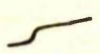
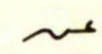


Flury mentioned because of this usage that in treatment of the division of words it helped to consider two halves of one word as two different words.<sup>1</sup> The mashq must not be used in two letter words.<sup>2</sup>

Three letter words may have extension according to the rules. In words where both initial and final heavy letters occur, extension is to take place between the second and third letters, as in  3

In four letter words which are considered the key word in the mashq script, the extension should take place after the first letter. It is distasteful to extend some four letter words after the first two letters. Such words have lām or kāf as in . Thus the extension takes place after both first and second letters. In addition, on the final yā', dāl and kāf, the extension is not allowed. Words of

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Flury Une formule epigraphique, p. 55.


<sup>2</sup>Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 72; Qalqashandī gives more illustrations. He divided the two letter words into two groups: 1. nouns as  when it is preferable not to extend them except in  because the letter sīn is considered as three letters; 2. with verbs, as  the extension could be only in  as is the case with the two nouns; 3. when forming prepositions the extension is disliked, especially with  which must not be extended, whether at the beginning or at the end of the word; Sūlī, p. 55 seems to limit this to some two letter words beginning with am In.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 72; Qalqashandī, p. 146 stated that three letter words must not be extended because they cannot be divided into two. Yet if such a word occurs at the end of the line, extension in such case is wanted. And if so, the extension should take place after the first two letters.



more than four letters are to be treated when possible as though they are three or four letter words.<sup>1</sup>

The "spreading out" of letters is so frequently found in Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup> This scribal peculiarity began also in papyrus texts in the last quarter of the 1st century, was especially characteristic of the protocol-script, and was used more and more commonly in the 2nd century.<sup>2</sup> It also appeared on coins dated 32 A.H.<sup>3</sup>

The treatment of the word Allāh is interesting. No essential rules regarding the word as such as given. If we consider only connected letters as a word for extension purposes, the alif drops out of consideration. Thus we have to deal with a three letter word which in itself is not permitted to extend. One may add that the word has an initial and medial lām, both of which are not extensible and thus remains the lām preceding the final hā', which may be extended. Following the rule, we shall have . But this last form of the word gives it unbalanced division, especially with the preceding alif written close.<sup>4</sup>

Let us now turn our attention to our stelae to see how far the mason regarded his inscriptions in regard to the observance of the above mentioned rules. It seems that he used his own taste to deal with such rules and thus we find so many examples where the words were divided be-

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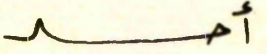

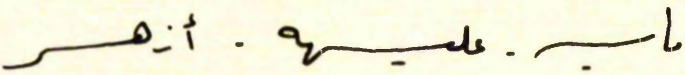

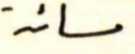
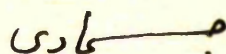
<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Qalqashandī, p. 147, gives more illustrations.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Grohmann, From the World of Arabic Papyri, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. J. Walker, Catal. of the Arab-Byz. and Post Reform Ummayyad Coins, No. 10, Pl. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Qalqashandī, p. 148; Ibn Durustawayh, p. 76; N. Abbot, p. 27.







tween the lines at their ends as in Nos. 4, 6, 12, 11, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 35. Dividing words between two lines appeared on the tombstone of 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Khayr al-Hijrī.<sup>1</sup> As for the two letter word, the extension comes in No. 5 after the first letter in the word . The word is a verb, a two letter word and thus the rule is broken. In the three letter word the extension happened directly after the first letters  as in Nos. 3, 7.<sup>2</sup> In Nos. 5, 22, 25, 32, 33, the extension came after the first two letters . In four letter words the extension happened after the first letter  as in Nos. 11, 13, 32. while in Nos. 12, 14, 19, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 34, 36 the extension occurred twice, once after the first letter, and again in the third letter. In Nos. 5, 7, 12, the extension happened after the first two letters . Although the mashq at the end of the lines is disliked, we find it in No. 5 already there in the word . Thus the mason conformed to the rules in his first treatment of the word  and also in his second treatment, if we consider what Qalqashandī stated, that the extension must take place after the first two letters. In No. 10, in the five letter words the extension occurred once after the first letter  while in No. 15

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Steles. Cairo, Vol. I, No. 1, and on the maṣāḥif during the days of 'Uthmān, Qalqashandī, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> This tallies with what Qalqashandī discovered, p. 146; 'Imād al-Dīn ibn al-'Afīf who stated that in three letter words the extension should come directly after the letters group iim, tā', sīn and 'ayn.

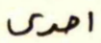



we find it occurred after the first four letters . The extension in six letter words happened after the first three letters in the word  in Nos. 10, 13, 15, 16, 20, 21 and in No. 2. This last treatment tallies with Qalqashandī's view about the six letter words. It happened only once that the extension of the six letter words occurred in the last letter of the word  in No. 23.


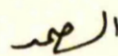
As for the word  the mason preferred to treat it as a word of four letters replacing the usual extension by an element sometimes called a quirk, at others an arch. Only two times the horizontal extension happened after the second lām of the word in Nos. 31, 34.

To conclude such numerous and complicated rules one notices that in monumental kufic the extension of the words is considered as a variety of ornamental elements without any regard to the so many rules of the mashq. Beside this one cannot forget the many examples of the division of words between two lines, whether in Qur'ān, papyri, coins, monuments or manuscripts.<sup>1</sup>

The usage of ligatures is common in our specimens. Examples of this can be traced on the following stelae:

No. 8 in the word  after the dāl in fragment "B".

No. 9 in the word  between the nūn and the hā' 1.4.

No. 15 in the words  and  ls. 7, 8.



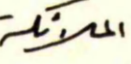
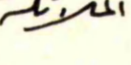
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

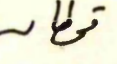
<sup>1</sup>Cf. A. Grohmann, From the World of Arabic Papyri, p. 80.



- No. 16 1.3 in the word المسكنة after the kāf,  
1.5 in تعدده after the ‘ayn.
- No. 17 1.5 in سبابة after the kāf.
- No. 19 1.6 in محمد after the mīm, in أحمد 1.8 after the mīm in الحمد 1.9 after the mīm.
- No. 22 in أحمد 1.2 after the mīm, in أحمد 1.4 after the hā’ and in the word مايه 1.9 after the yā’.
- No. 23 1.3 in the word مريضك after the qād, in مايه after the yā’ 1.14.
- No. 24 in أحمد 1.4 after the hā’, in الحجة after the jīm 1.9.
- No. 25 in أحمد ls. 2, 3 after the hā’ and مايه 1.10 after the yā’.
- No. 27 in محمد 1.4 after the mīm, in إمري 1.8 after the hā’; in مايه 1.9 after the yā’.
- No. 28 in رائقة 1.2 after the qāf, in التباينة after the mīm 1.3, in نقد 1.4 after the qāf and in مايه 1.10 after the yā’.
- No. 30 in أحمد 1.2 after the hā’, in محمد 1.4 after the hā’ and مايه 1.9 after the yā’.
- No. 31 in دبر 1.2 after the jīm, in محمد 1.4 after the mīm, in سبابة 1.7 after the kāf and in نهد 1.7 after the hā’ and in مايه 1.12 after the yā’.



No. 34 in  1.5 after the jīm, in  1.12 after the yā',— in  1.12 after the yā'-and  on the left side of the margin after the kāf.

No. 36 in  1.2 after the mīm, in  after the khā' 1.4, in  1.11 after the hā' 1.12.

These ligatures, like the mashq have their own rules:

The letters ṣād, ḍād, ṭā', zā', dāl and dhāl should be preceded by ligatures when joined to previous letter in the same word.<sup>1</sup>

The mason in our specimens did not keep strictly to this rule except in the case of the dāl.

In conclusion one can safely say that the kūfic script was used to the full by the Muslim artist as an essential element of ornamentation. What helped the Muslim artists in thus using the kūfic script is the fact that the Arabic letters help in the way they are drawn (with the long stems in many letters) to serve the purpose of the artist. These stems affect elasticity and elegance when used for ornamental purposes. Yet the artist was confronted with some difficulty when drawing these tall and elegant strokes like the alif and lām because he had to think of a way to fill the spaces between these letters with some form of drawing. And the Arabic script is by its very nature well adapted to decorative developments. Whereas the letters of the Roman alphabet are for the most part integrated constructions, built in substantial and self-contained units, the Arabic letters are formed chiefly of combinations of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibn Durustuwayh, p. 74.



verticals and horizontals in a continuous design and so lend themselves to abstract decoration in combination both with each other and with other ornamental motifs. The vertical provide structure and rhythm, the horizontals impart balance and continuity. Moreover, the necessity of joining certain letters promotes the tendency towards the creation of complex traceries and the special forms that some of the letters must assume when they terminate the word gives scope for varied invention.

Moreover, the kufic script remained plain till the 3rd century, i.e. it was not primarily used for ornamental purposes but by the end of the fourth century the artist made use of script above all for its ornamental qualities. This fact led to the development from plain to foliated kufic and then to floriated kufic which looked more pleasing to most eyes. In the course of the Islamic long history writing has been repeatedly modified, new forms being invented, and each style has gone through a succession of variations, yet with but few exceptions the basic principles have been maintained practically unchanged. At the same time the calligraphers filled the spaces between the letters with vegetable arabesque. Thus the endings of the letters were decorated with trifolys or sometimes they were drawn out at their tops in the shape of the nib of a reed.<sup>1</sup> In addition to that, one may find that there were artists whose letters and decorations were in complete harmony. That is the experience of the arabesque which appears here as a

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Zakī Ḥasan, Kunūz al-Fatīmīn, p. 88 and pp. 252-254.



development of epigraphy. Masons, stonecutters, metal-workers, weavers were eager to use the floriated kufic on their work. There is a unique example from Persia where the arabesque and writing are completely interwoven.<sup>1</sup> But there was a danger in this method: the reading of the text became more and more difficult. There is a Fāṭimid cloth from Egypt where it seems as if the weaver did everything possible to make the reading very difficult.

The arabesque became an important element of the text to fill the empty places but at the same time the writing remained finely articulated because the artists wanted to find a proper picture in them. Yet later the framing became more and more important and the background as well became more and more elaborated like i.e. the stucco freize of Ḥaydariya at Qazwīn.<sup>2</sup> The similar method was used in Irān in the 10th-11th century on Qur'ānic texts where this style was developed to a very elegant form.

It is worth while noticing that the latest way of filling the empty places was with the so-called "woven kufic". It resulted in very complicated stems and was used first of all with double letters like lāmālif. This form resulted in a quite different style from the middle of the 11th century and became afterwards general in the Islāmic world

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kühnel, fig. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, fig. 17.



from India to Spain. A similar "woven kufic" was used on a bronze vessel.<sup>1</sup> Iranian, Egyptian and Andalusian craftsmen found an acceptable solution and sometimes their work was unreadable.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes they were so clever that the upper and the lower lines were connected with each other, and the interweaving of the stems made the desirable balance,<sup>3</sup> but many times they combined the lines together and so they confused the text. In a few cases the frame had a strong geometrical decoration so that it was almost impossible to read the text at the first glance.

Another variation of the written kufic was the human or dragon headed letters. This was frequently used on bronze in Irān and Spain. The filling of the background with vegetable arabesques and flowers is one of the most important points of this style.<sup>4</sup>

Thus the evolution of the interwoven and richly decorated style spelt the end of kufic writing. From the 12th century naskhī style was used generally on manuscripts.

When the Ayyūbīds conquered Egypt in 567 A.H. = 1171 A.D. they obliterated the Fāṭimid faith creed, namely Shi'ism, and their monuments as well. They encouraged the spreading of the naskhī script.<sup>5</sup> This pheno-

<sup>1</sup>Kühnel, fig. 35.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, figs. 18, 27.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, fig. 27.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, pp. 15-17, figs. 21, 28, 29.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Zakī Ḥasan, Kunūz, p. 202; G. Marcais, p. 88.



menon appeared in North Africa nearly in the same period.<sup>1</sup> The k̄ufic remained only as a decorative element of architecture, pious sentences and eulogies down to the 14th century.<sup>2</sup>

In some cases they used only one word but its repetition resulted in beautiful decoration. Sometimes craftsmen were illiterate and therefore the writing did not give any meaning.<sup>3</sup> It was common at this time that the headlines of chapters were written in k̄ufic and the background was richly decorated. We have to mention a geometric and square k̄ufic which was used generally in Iran and was executed in the brick construction.<sup>4</sup> It is worthwhile to mention that the rectangular k̄ufic, being the last offspring of the unadorned k̄ufic script, is distinguished from its predecessors by the strictly rectangular form of all its letters, which gives the script the aspect of a regular geometrical design. Its origin is still obscure. Since it first appears on ornamental panels of brick or terra cotta in mosque architecture at a time when Chinese influence was especially strong, it is probable that some Chinese script, most probably the Chinese rectangular script, contributed its part to forming this new style of epigraphic decoration, which suited brick work better than any other material.<sup>5</sup> In addition one may notice that k̄ufic con-

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<sup>1</sup>G. Marcais, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup>Kühnel, p. 20; Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Flury, Une formule enigraphique, p. 55.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Kühnel, p. 12, figs. 30, 31.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. A. Pope, An introduction to Persian Art. p. 1748, fig. 603, a, b.



tinued to be in use in Persia for monumental inscriptions into the nineteenth century and for such purposes well characterized and handsome alphabets were drawn; but from the twelfth century on, cursive styles were increasingly important, both for manuscripts and for decorative inscriptions. The first major type to stand out as pre-eminent at this time was the naskhi, the exact relation of which to earlier cursive forms unfortunately cannot be traced.<sup>1</sup> It is also worthy to mention that the thirteenth century Qur'ān were not written entirely in naskhī by any means, kūfīc being used with naskhī in every possible combination. If the text was in one, the titles might be in the other, though either might be used for both text and title. Moreover, the combinations vary on different pages of the same book. Kūfīc was also used to mark the beginning of Sūras or every tenth verse, or to inscribe the opening invocation (bismillāh).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Survey of Persian Art, p. 1725.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 1730.



CONCLUSION



Conclusions

The study is divided into two sections:

- a: inscriptions found on tombstones in British collections.
- b: a comparative study of these with those on tombstones from North Africa and Sudan.

We find that the tombstones from Fitzwilliam and British Museums, except three that are of marble, are of stone. With three exceptions they are rectangular. Two of these are square, the third is a fragment of an actual tomb. All the tombstones have great similarity of pattern, they all begin with the basmala with the exception of the fragment of tomb. Similar stones have been found in many areas both east and west of the Islāmic world. Verses from the Qur'ān follow the basmala. If the tombstone is of the Tūlnid period the Sūnī formulae follow, but if from the Fāṭimid period the Shi'ite formulae are used. Of the Qur'ānic verses the surat al-Ikhlāṣ is most often used. The verses which speak of universal death, resurrection and judgement are frequently incised. The usual form of the Shi'ite formulae was used on all the tombstones except one, in this case an exaggerated usage of the formulae is found. During the Fāṭimid period the Shi'ite and Sūnite formulae were used simultaneously but when the Fāṭimid dynasty fell and was replaced by the Ayyubid, the Shi'ite formulae were abandoned and their place taken by Sūnī formulae.

The historical value of these tombstones is:

- a: that they provide evidence that the Fāṭimids were rulers of Egypt.
- b: they formed indisputable evidence of the origins of the floriated kufic.



Next on the tombstones comes the full name and titles of the deceased. This enables us to say that in Egyptian society there were two classes. Firstly the important people in rank and wealth whose tombstones were incised with care and beauty and secondly the poorer labouring classes who were content with a rougher, clumsier and less beautiful memorial. Because of this wide variety of tombstones if, for any reason they are undated, we have extreme difficulty in giving them a date.

The names on the tombstones tell us that here were buried people of Arab origin who had come from Hijāz and Yaman and settled in Egypt, not only in the North - some had penetrated as far South as Aswān; we know this because of the shāhids which come from this place. Some of these tombstones bear the names of converts to Islām from Christianity and Judaism who, in spite of their conversion, have still kept their original names. They demonstrate that at that time there was no discrimination between men and women. In fact the women's shāhids are more elegant and beautiful than those of the men. It was the custom in some cases to indicate a lady's dignity by omitting her Christian name and substituting a nickname or reference to her as the mother of her sons. One of the tombstones bears the name of Barmakī, though this family had lost their importance many years before.

Last on the tombstones is the date of death, sometimes the day, month and year, sometimes only the month and year. In some cases the date of death is indicated by the number of days left or passed in the month in which the death took place. When these dates are checked with



the concord table some are found to be quite correct but some are not. Mistakes were chiefly made because of the practice in the Muslim world of beginning a new day at sunset. Something the same appertains in this day. A death in the morning would be followed by immediately burial but, if death took place at the end of the day, the body would be kept in the home until the following morning. There are two reasons for this, first the fear that if the departed one was buried late in the day he would spend the time until the day of judgement in perpetual darkness; secondly to make sure the death had really taken place. On the other hand in Hijāz and some other parts of the Islāmic world their interpretation of the Sunna was to make burial compulsory as soon after death as possible.

On a few of the tombstones is a plea for mercy on behalf of the departed.

The general pattern of the tombstones' shape, inscriptions and all over design is common over a wide area of the Islāmic world.

Now let us consider the writing which often fills the whole surface and did not leave any spaces. Most of the writing is plain kūfic nevertheless it is often very beautiful. Yet sometimes it seems to have been more scratched on than incised. The mason took the letter alif as a base for his decorations and spent more care on it than on any of the other letters. He looked for ways to make the cutting of his letters easy. One way to achieve this was to incise two letters in the same way. All the strokes were similar to the apex of the alif. And we find no difference between the ra' and mīn. And the two letters dāl and kāf are



so similar that it is impossible to differentiate between them.

The loops of the fā', qāf and wāw are alike and the 'ayn is sometimes like them both. The open 'ayn is found on early and late inscriptions alike making it impossible to use this letter as an indication of the age of the inscription. It is often wrongly thought that the open 'ayn indicates an early inscription but it has been found on tombstones as late as the fifth century A.H. It would be wrong to ascribe clumsy writing to an early century, this kind of writing has been found nearly always every century. It should be noticed that the mason added two extra curves to the letter hā' to differentiate between it and the jīm. He would elongate the letters keeping the rules of the so-called mashq in one place and then, in the same inscription, fail to do so more than once. Many times words are divided between two lines making reading difficult. The writing of these tombstones matches that found on manuscripts and shows a link between them that cannot be denied. The mason was an artist who used things he saw in the world around him to help in beautifying his work which could never have been easy.

Now we come to the comparative study of these tombstones from North Africa and Sūdān. The plates prove adequately the saying of G. Marcais "The most beautiful inscriptions of Qayrawān are those on the tombstones." The detailed study of the individual letters and their ornamentation has enabled us to establish their age and history so that a comparison can be made between them.



G. alif 3rd C. The foliated alif on inscriptions from Egypt bears a marked similarity with those of Tripoli. On tombstones from Egypt and Qayrawān the half-palmette and the thorn like apexes are similar.

4th C. In Qayrawān the half-palmettes are frequently found but in Egypt the floral decoration branching from the heads of the alif has appeared.

5th C. This century shows little change in either Egypt, Sūdān or North Africa but we find however that the alif's head turns sometimes left and sometimes to the right.

G. bā' 3rd C. There is no change, the stroke takes the same shape as the alif.

4th C. In Qayrawān the letter developed very much, the top was gracious rolling up or trifoil decoration which made it an elegant letter.

5th C. In this century the Muslim artist progressed towards the floriated kufic. Sometimes the decoration was attached to the letter, sometimes placed above it.

G. jīm 3rd C. No difference is seen in the writings from Egypt or Sūdān or North Africa.

4th C. This letter followed the same development as the bā' in the same century.

5th C. Except in Qayrawān where the letter was given lobes there is nothing added to it.



G. dāl 3rd C. In Egypt many are cursive but in North Africa all are angular. The necks are sometimes upright, sometimes bent at an angle.

4th C. In Egypt and Sūdān there is no change but in Qayrawān the tails are given half-palmettes and trilobed flowers.

5th C. No change except that the neck of the letter is vertically elongated and split into three.

G. rā' 3rd C. All the writing is cursive with trifoliated tails and heads.

4th C. We find the climbing up the lines stalks for the first time, sometimes the tail is vertical, sometimes of an "S" shape which can turn either to the left or the right.

5th C. In Qayrawān the letter is split polo stick shape but in Egypt and Sūdān it took two, both forms cursive and climbing up the line.

G. sīn 3rd C. All countries used the same form.

4th C. In Egypt leaves emerge from the second tooth of the letter. While in Qayrawān heart shapes and trifoil leaves are placed above the letter.

5th C. The leaves used in Egypt in 381 A.H. are developed in Qayrawān into a small tree and recrusiting leaves looking like "ajoure" emerge from the first or second tooth.

G. ṣād 3rd C. No change.

4th C. All countries added elegant "fioritures" and palmettes to the letter.



5th C. In Qayrawān thorn like projections and split trifoil leaves were added to the stems.

G. 'ayn 3rd C. Either cursive or open 'ayn in Egypt and North Africa.

4th C. No change except in Qayrawān where the initial ending is given sometimes a scroll shape, sometimes a tree shape branching from the base. The open 'ayn took a new shape: a small arch down the base line gushes out a flower bounded with two leaves.

5th C. These North African additions were developed further so that the scroll shape became shamrock shaped and the tree shape was given more branches or turned into parsol shape.

G. fā' 3rd C. Sometimes the loops, either triangular or round, are fastened to the base.

4th C. Towards the end of the 4th C. in Qayrawān the lozenge shape had received a leaf-like attachment. This persisted to the 5th C.

G. kāf 3rd C. In North Africa this was simple but elsewhere it was split into a trifoil.

4th C. In Egypt and North Africa the neck is vertically elongated and widened at the end, this widening sometimes being given a half-palmette.

G. lām 3rd - 5th C. This letter showed little change until in 427 in Sūdān a horizontal artistic floral element was added.

G. mīm 3rd C. Round in all countries.



4th C. Towards the end of the century in Egypt the climbing up the line tails were given half-palmettes or trifolys. In Qayrawān the same forms are found but an additional strokes makes them more floral.

5th C. This century saw a return to simplicity but lobed and floral motives were still used in Qayrawān, kufic tresse were first seen.

G. nūn 3rd C., 4th C. This letter followed a similar development to the ra', even in climbing tails where it was terminated with an elegant trilobed flower which for this date is exceptional.

5th C. In Egypt and Sūdān there was little change but in Qayrawān it developed toward the plaited kufic.

G. ha' 3rd C. When occurring in an initial or medial position it took the shape of a cat's face.

4th C. In Egypt and North Africa it developed, became more floral and split half-palmettes branched from its middle. The end of the century saw the first try of the plaited kufic.

5th C. This century saw the floral elements becoming more complicated.

G. wāw 3rd C. The loops are similar to those of the fā'.

4th C. The climbing tails take a half-palmette sometimes vertical, sometimes bending and the "buckle" in Qayrawān remained open.

5th C. The letter became more artistic by the addition of floral elements and lobes.



G. lāmālif Through the centuries this letter was used by Muslim artists to express individuality and decoration. Its construction made it suitable for the addition of decorations from many sources.

G. yā' 3rd C. Some are cursive, others are reversed.  
4th C. An extra stroke added to the letter made it more elegant.

5th C. The letter was made more elegant by floral elements of floral decoration.

The word Allāh. Though the letters forming this word are simple, the artist always took great attention to decorate it to the best of his ability and imagination. The space between the two lāms often gave him opportunity to do this.

As regards elegance, it is true that our specimens, when compared with elegant kufic inscriptions, prove inferior. Yet a word may be said in this respect. The degree of elegance in our specimens depends largely on the social position of the deceased. This was the case, even in the more elegant tombstones from Qayrawān where the best among those which come from al-Janāh al-Alkhdar cemetery for example, belonged to people of high social standing.

Nevertheless our specimens have an undeniable historical and social significance which no doubt adds to the advantage of a historian who studies the Fāṭimid period in Egypt.