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Sergio Carro Martín

P.Cair.EgLib. 513: A Certificate for a ziyāra to the Prophet's Tomb in Medina (16th century)

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P.Cair.EgLib. 513

A Certificate for a *ziyāra* to the Prophet's Tomb in Medina (16th century)**

♦ ABSTRACT

This article presents a hitherto unpublished document preserved at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya (Cairo) under inventory number P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513. The document extols the holy city of Medina and contains a diagrammatic representation of the Prophet's mosque (*al-masğid al-nabawī*) comparable to other illustrated scrolls dated to the sixteenth century. The material, textual and iconographic characteristics of this document raise the possibility that it could be the draft of a *ziyāra* certificate attesting to a pious visit to the tomb of Muḥammad in Medina.

Keywords: certificates, illustrations, Medina, islamic pilgrimage, *ziyāra*

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I want to thank Khaled Younes for his valuable help with this manuscript. The papyrological abbreviations used in this paper follow "The Checklist of Arabic Documents", available online at <<http://www.naher-osten.lmu.de/isapchecklist>> (accessed May 17, 2020).

♦ RÉSUMÉ

Un certificat pour un ziyāra au tombeau du Prophète à Médine (xvi^e siècle)

Cet article présente l'édition d'un document non publié, conservé à Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya (Le Caire) sous le numéro d'inventaire P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513. Le document vante la ville sainte de Médine et contient une représentation schématique de la mosquée du Prophète (*al-masğid al-nabawī*) comparable à d'autres rouleaux illustrés datant du xvi^e siècle. Les caractéristiques matérielles, textuelles et iconographiques de ce document soulèvent la possibilité qu'il s'agit d'un projet de certificat de ziyāra attestant une visite pieuse au tombeau de Muḥammad à Médine.

Mots-clés : certificats, illustrations, Médine, pèlerinage islamique, ziyāra

♦ ملخص

الوثيقة P.Cair.EgLib. 513 : شهادة تفيد إتمام زيارة لقبر النبي في المدينة المنورة (القرن السادس عشر) يقدم هذا المقال وثيقة لم يسبق نشرها حتى اليوم محفوظة في دار الكتب المصرية (القاهرة) تحت رقم P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513. وتُشيد الوثيقة بالمدينة المنورة وتحتوي على تمثيل تخطيطي للمسجد النبوي مماثل لمخطوطات مصورة أخرى تعود إلى القرن السادس عشر. والخصائص المادية والنصية والتصويرية للوثيقة ترحح إمكانية أن تكون مسودة لشهادة زيارة تفيد أن الشخص المعني قد أتم زيارة ورعة لقبر النبي في المدينة المنورة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: شهادات، رسوم توضيحية، المدينة المنورة، الحج الإسلامي، زيارة

* * *

SECONDARY pilgrimages (*ziyarāt*) to important sanctuaries in the Islamic world are well documented in the Arabic literature,¹ but documents attesting to this practice are particularly scarce in modern collections. Some examples on paper describing visits by proxy to sanctuaries in medieval Syria have recently been published,² and these are consistent with the widely-documented practice of proxy pilgrimages to Mecca attested in the certificates dated between the 11th and 14th centuries and preserved in Istanbul at the Türk ve İslam Eserleri

1. For an overview on the visitation of tombs in Islam and its treatment in the Arabic literature, see Diem, Schöller, 2004, pp. 11–44 and 295–313.

2. Mouton, Sourdel-Tomine, 2018a, pp. 507–523. On the visitations of tombs and cemeteries in Islam, including the Prophet's tomb, see Diem, Schöller, 2004, pp. 11–82. On the holy places in Syria, see al-Harawī, *Kitāb al-iṣārāt ilā ma'rifat al-ziyārāt*, 1953; *Guide des lieux de pèlerinage*, 1957; Meri, 2002.

Müzesi (TIEM).³ However, visits to the Prophet's mosque in Medina (*al-masğid al-nabawī*)⁴ do not seem to have materialised in certificates until the early 16th century, when the figure of the Prophet and his tomb became the object of increasing veneration and a growing number of visits by Muslim pilgrims.⁵

The scroll P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513 (fig. 1), preserved in the collection of the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya (Cairo) is one of the few documents of this type known to us from this period. It was briefly described by Said Meghawry and Abdel Rauf Saleh in the catalogue of Arabic papyri published by the National Library of Egypt in 2008,⁶ where it was catalogued under the generic label “religious verses”, and dated to the 8th–9th centuries. However, the detailed study of this document allows us to confirm that it is framed in a different typology and time. Beyond praising the city of Medina, this document responds to the demand of Muslim pilgrims to obtain documents certifying their visits to this place, as had happened previously with the certificates of pilgrimage to Mecca. The main difference in the study of both types of documents lies in the unequal treatment that the pilgrimage to Medina and the veneration of the Prophet received in the Islamic tradition, questioned almost from its beginnings.

According to Munt, the practice itself had already been adopted by caliphs and governors centuries before, which demonstrates that these visits had been undertaken right from the death of the prophet, at least as part of their personal leadership of the *ḥağğ*.⁷ However, sources from the 9th–10th centuries are the first to encourage the pilgrimage to the mosque of Medina and other significant places such as the Baqī' al-Ġarqad or the Masğid Qubā'.⁸ This could have triggered an increase in visits that progressively forced the protection of the sanctuary, as we can deduce from the presence of eunuchs in the burial chamber, documented from

3. Sourdel, Sourdel-Thomine, 1964, pp. 1–25; 1965a, pp. 164–185; 1965b, pp. 73–85; 1983, pp. 167–273; 2001, pp. 212–233; 2006; Mouton, Sourdel-Thomine, 2018b, pp. 3–29. For an overview of this discovery and the *Qubbat al-ḥazna*, see Radiciotti, D'Ottone, 2008, pp. 45–74; D'Ottone, 2013, pp. 63–88; Déroche, 2018, pp. 311–325; Carro Martín, 2019a, pp. 145–157 and D'Ottone, Hirschler, Vollandt (eds.), 2020.

4. Winder, 1986, pp. 994–1007.

5. On the visitation of the Prophet's tomb in Medina, see Diem, Schöller, 2004, pp. 45–82. Cf. Munt, 2014, pp. 123–147. Apart from P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513 and the documents mentioned in this article, visits to the Prophet's tomb are only expressly mentioned in a certificate held at the British Library, BL Add. 27566 (836/1433), see Reinaud, 1828, p. 321. Cf. MS 267.1998 (837/1433), see Chekhab, Couvrat, Roxburgh, 2016, pp. 384–399. By contrast, from the beginning of the Mamluk Sultanate (1250–1517) representations of Medina in the certificates are quite frequent (see *infra* footnote 22).

6. *Al-Bardīyāt al-'arabiya bi-dār al-kutub al-miṣriyya* = *Arabic papyri, National Library of Egypt*, 2008, ID no. 4383 (inv. 513). The collection consists of 3739 documents on papyrus, paper and parchment from different periods. According to the introduction, B. Moritiz began collecting those documents, and later the collection grew with new finds from excavations and donations. However, there is no additional information on the context in which this and other documents were found.

7. Munt, 2014, pp. 137–144. On the contrary, it will be necessary to wait until the 11th century to document the *ziyāra* to Medina in the personal narratives of (well-known) pilgrims.

8. Munt, 2014, pp. 124–127. Some of these places are mentioned in the certificates of *ziyāra* P.Khalili. inv. 1079 and MS.14.2006, see *infra* “Study and edition”.

the 12th century.⁹ From that time, the *ziyāra* to Medina received more attention by Muslim scholars,¹⁰ who discussed and added to this debate the transmission of certain traditions around the prophet's intercession after visiting his tomb. One of these hadiths appears in the manuscript under discussion, which gives this study an added value in the face of the scarcity of private documents attesting this practice. Moreover, it highlights the role of these traditions in the establishment of Medina as a venerated place.

To shed light on this document, I shall present the study of P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513 by analysing its material, textual and iconographic features. This will allow me to place this document in the context of Islamic pilgrimages and to date it more accurately to the 16th century.

1. Study and edition

Document P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513 (fig. 1) is composed as a description of the virtues of the city of Medina, which is illustrated in the upper half of the scroll. The text is divided into two paragraphs (ll. 1–6 and 7–10). The first paragraph begins with the *ḥamdala* (l. 1), as is the case in all certificates of pilgrimage to Mecca,¹¹ and continues by extolling the city of Medina, which is called *Ṭayba* (l. 3), and the Prophet Muḥammad, who is referred to by the names *Yasīn* and *Ṭaha* (l. 5).

The second paragraph (ll. 7–10), which begins with the sentence *ammā ba'du fa-qad zāra...* ("after this (he) has visited"), introduces the subject of the document, that is, the visit itself. However, after this formula, there is a striking blank space. The structure of this line indicates that this space should have been filled in with the name of the pilgrim who visited Medina, following the example of some *ḥaḡḡ* certificates where the name of the pilgrim and the beneficiary are written in a second hand, which demonstrates the standardised formulation of the text. Since there are no traces of ink in this space, we posit that P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513 could have been the draft of a *ziyāra* certificate that was never used as such by a pilgrim.¹² As the text does not mention a proxy, usually introduced by the formula '*an farḍ*' ("in the name of"), it seems obvious that it concerns a personal pilgrimage to Medina.

The text ends with a hadith according to which the Prophet himself will intercede on behalf of the pilgrim on the Day of Resurrection (*man zāra qabrī waḡabat lahu šafā'atī*, ll. 7–10). Different sources (particularly historiographical and legal sources), collected similar versions of this hadith towards the end of the 9th century.¹³ It seems to emphasize the faith of Muslims

9. Marmon, 1995, pp. 31–43.

10. Fierro, 2000, pp. 186.

11. See the certificates in the TIEM Collection and later scrolls, such as BL Add. 27566 (836/1433), MS 267.1998 (837/1433); TSL H. 1812 (950/1544); P.PalauRib.Arab. inv. 1041 (16th c.), and AKM 528 (18th c.).

12. An error in the formulation of the *šahāda* (l. 6) would have caused this copy to be discarded. See *infra* edition.

13. On the hadiths concerning the visit to the Prophet's tomb, see Munt, 2014, pp. 129–137. For a discussion of the subject in later sources, see Reichmuth, 2017, pp. 135–141.

on this day and highlights the emotional connection of the individuals with the Prophet. Islamic tradition usually justifies the prayer at the graves of prophets in the belief that they are alive in their graves, so that the prayer here would be meritorious.¹⁴ From a devotional perspective, the mention of this hadith in this document is relevant since it would explain the personal visit of the pilgrim for eschatological purposes.

Despite its uniqueness, this is not the only document attesting to a pious visit to Medina that includes this hadith. We currently know of at least four other illustrated scrolls with similar material and iconographic characteristics: P.Khalili.inv.1079 (Khalili Collection, London); MS.14.2006 (Museum of Islamic Art, Doha), and P.PalauRib.Arab.inv. 1042 and inv. 1047 (Palau-Ribes Collection, Barcelona).¹⁵ In addition, the five documents share a large part of the text, which again points to a standardised formulation for such documents. Both typologies (certificates for pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina) contain, for example, a preamble with the *basmala*, the *ḥamdala*, and a description of the rituals performed by the pilgrim.¹⁶ However, the main difference between these documents and certificates of pilgrimage to Mecca lies in the absence of a specific formula that mentions the witnesses of the *ziyāra*, whose signatures seem to have been unnecessary in P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513, owing to the nature of this document (uncompleted) and the visit itself (recommended but not mandatory). Moreover, P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513 records what appears to have been a personal visit that was therefore not subject to legal constraints, unlike pilgrimages by proxy to Mecca.¹⁷

The same can be said of P.Khalili.inv. 1079 and MS.14.2006, the layout of which is shared by P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513. Both documents contain a similar sentence followed by a large blank space for the name of the pilgrim: *ammā ba‘du fa-qad ansā’ hāḍihi al-ziyāra al-mubāraka*¹⁸ (blank) *wa-lam yazal muṣallā minhā*¹⁹ ‘*alā ḥayr al-anām...*’ (“after this (blank) has undertaken this blessed *ziyāra* and continued praying on it to the best of humans...”). The last sentence in MS.14.2006 (l. 12) reinforces the purpose of this blank space: *wa-da‘ā al-maḍkūr bi-l-maḡfira amīn* (“The (above) mentioned pleaded (with God) for forgiveness, Amen”) and clearly indicates that the pilgrim undertook a pious visit to the tomb of the Prophet Muḥammad in Medina. Both documents contain a longer version of the visit including: prayers to the prophet, Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, Fāṭima, Ḥamza, and the visits to the cemetery, the mosque of Qubā’ and the mosque

14. Al-Bakrī, 1319/1901, pp. 277–278; Pareja, 1975, pp. 197–200. Attention should be drawn, however to another hadith in which the Prophet condemns the fact that tombs become mosques. See Wensinck, 1992, V, p. 230. See also Marmon, 1995, pp. 85–86.

15. For a complete study of these documents see Carro Martín, 2019b; and 2021. P.Khalili. inv. 1079 will also be published in Carro Martín, “A Pilgrimage Scroll with a Diagrammatic Representation of the Prophet’s Mosque”, *Hajj and The Arts of Pilgrimage*, Khalili Family Trust (in press).

16. For example P.Khalili. inv. 1079 (ll. 5–6) and MS 14.2006 (ll. 5–6) mentions that the pilgrims arrive at the sanctuary by way of the *bāb al-salām* and pass through the prophet’s tomb, where they complete two sequences of prayer. On the indications to pray in this space, see al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*, 1356/1357–1937/1938, p. 471.

17. For an overview of Islamic jurisprudence in this regard, see Ibn Ruṣd, *Bidāyat al-muḡtahid wa-nihāyat al-muqtaṣid*, 1302/1982, pp. 319–321, and Gaudefroy-Demombynes, 1929, pp. 318–319.

18. This word only in MS 14.2006.

19. This word only in P.Khalili. inv. 1079.

al-Qiblatayn.²⁰ This would mean that P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513 and scrolls P.PalauRib.Arab. inv. 1042 and inv. 1047 could be shortened or incomplete versions of these *ziyāra* certificates.

In any case, a new documentary typology emerged to certify visits to the Prophet's tomb, emulating the pilgrimage certificates issued centuries earlier. The only other plausible hypothesis would be that these documents could have been part of a longer certificate in which there was a first section devoted to Mecca and a second to Medina, thus following the order of previous certificates.²¹ However, the iconography in this document differs in style from those representations, which are usually decorated with vivid colours and sometimes illuminated with gold.

The illustrations in P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513 take up most of the upper half of the document and represent the mosque of the Prophet in Medina, which would have favoured their preservation as a document endowed with sanctity (*baraka*). Brown pigments were used to outline the drawings and colour them in. The different elements represented are arranged in a diagrammatic style composed of four sections (fig. 2), among which we can identify the courtyard of the mosque, represented in section 1, with two minarets (a), the *bi'r* (b) or well for ablutions; Fatima's garden (c), represented by a palm tree, and the *Qubbat al-zayt* (d). An internal view of the mosque is shown in section 2, with hanging oil lamps (a), the *Aṣḥāb al-ṣuffa* platform (b), used by Muḥammad to spend time with his companions who migrated from Mecca, and the *Minbar* or pulpit (c). Section 3 contains a representation of the main pillars inside the mosque (a, b, c, d, e), as well as the Prophet's *miḥrāb* (f). Section 4 includes other interior spaces of the mosque (d), and the sacred chamber (*al-rawḍa*) of the Prophet, with the tombs of Muḥammad (e), Abū Bakr (f), 'Umar (g) and Fāṭima (h). Above these spaces we can identify two domes (b, c), and three minarets (a). All elements (with the exception of the tombs) are shown frontally.

Finally, the date proposed by Said Meghawry and Abdel Rauf Saleh in the catalogue of the Arabic papyri (2nd–3rd/8th–9th) does not correspond to any palaeographic or material criteria. There is also no reference to the place where this document was drawn up. However, the features that this document shares with the aforementioned manuscripts allows us to date it to the first half of the 16th century.²² With this in mind, we should consider two main aspects: the type of paper and the illustrations. First, the separation of the laid lines (1 mm)²³ suggests that the paper was produced in Europe after the 14th century. This is also the

20. For a description of the visit to these places, see Ibn Ḡubayr, *A través del Oriente*, 1988, pp. 235–236; Al-Harawī, *Kitāb al-iṣārāt ilā ma'rifat al-ziyārāt*, 1953, pp. 247–251. Cf. Al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, 1356/1357–1937/1938, pp. 470–472.

21. For example P.CertificatsPelerinage 38 (602/1206), P.CertificatsPelerinage 40 (608/1212), TIEM 22 (684/1286) Sourdél, Sourdél-Thomine, 2001, no. 2, plate I; BL Add. 27566 (836/1433); MS 267.1998 (837/1433) and H. 1812 (950/1544). This hypothesis is based on the material study of the certificate of pilgrimage to Mecca P.PalauRib.Arab.inv. 1041 (Palau-Ribes Collection, Barcelona) where a second piece of paper (with similar dimensions to these scrolls) is attached to the bottom of the scroll. On this document, see Carro Martín, 2021.

22. Cf. al-Bardiyyāt al-'arabiyya bi-Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya = Arabic papyri, National Library of Egypt, ID no. 4383 (inv. 513); Flood, 2012, pp. 249–250; and Munt, 2014, p. 124, no. 2.

23. Measurement verified through transmitted light photography.

case of the aforementioned documents, among which we can also identify a watermark with what appears to be the Latin capital letters SNM.²⁴ Second, the construction of the five minarets illustrated in the manuscript (two in section 1 and three in section 4) is only documented as far back as the 16th century, as confirmed by illustrations of the sanctuary prior to this date. According to Rachel Milstein, the number of minarets of this sanctuary increased from four to five between 891/1544–1545 and 967/1560,²⁵ and we should therefore not date it to before this century.

We can also not ignore the fact that, at this time, new literary and eschatological compositions surrounding Medina (also illustrated) took on a greater role in Islamic pilgrimages. The same can be said about the development of certain hadiths that encouraged visits to the prophet's tomb.²⁶ In this context, new documentary forms like P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513 could have emerged to attest to pious visits to his mosque. Considering other modern certificates of *ziyāra* to Medina in which the same hadith on the Day of Resurrection is documented,²⁷ it seems likely that this documentary typology has remained to this day.

The document has been drawn up on brown laid paper (lines 1 mm apart) without a watermark. It has a vertical scroll format and holes distributed over the surface but there are no apparent folds.

Fig. 1. P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513, 26 × 11 cm, 16th c. A.D., Provenance unknown.



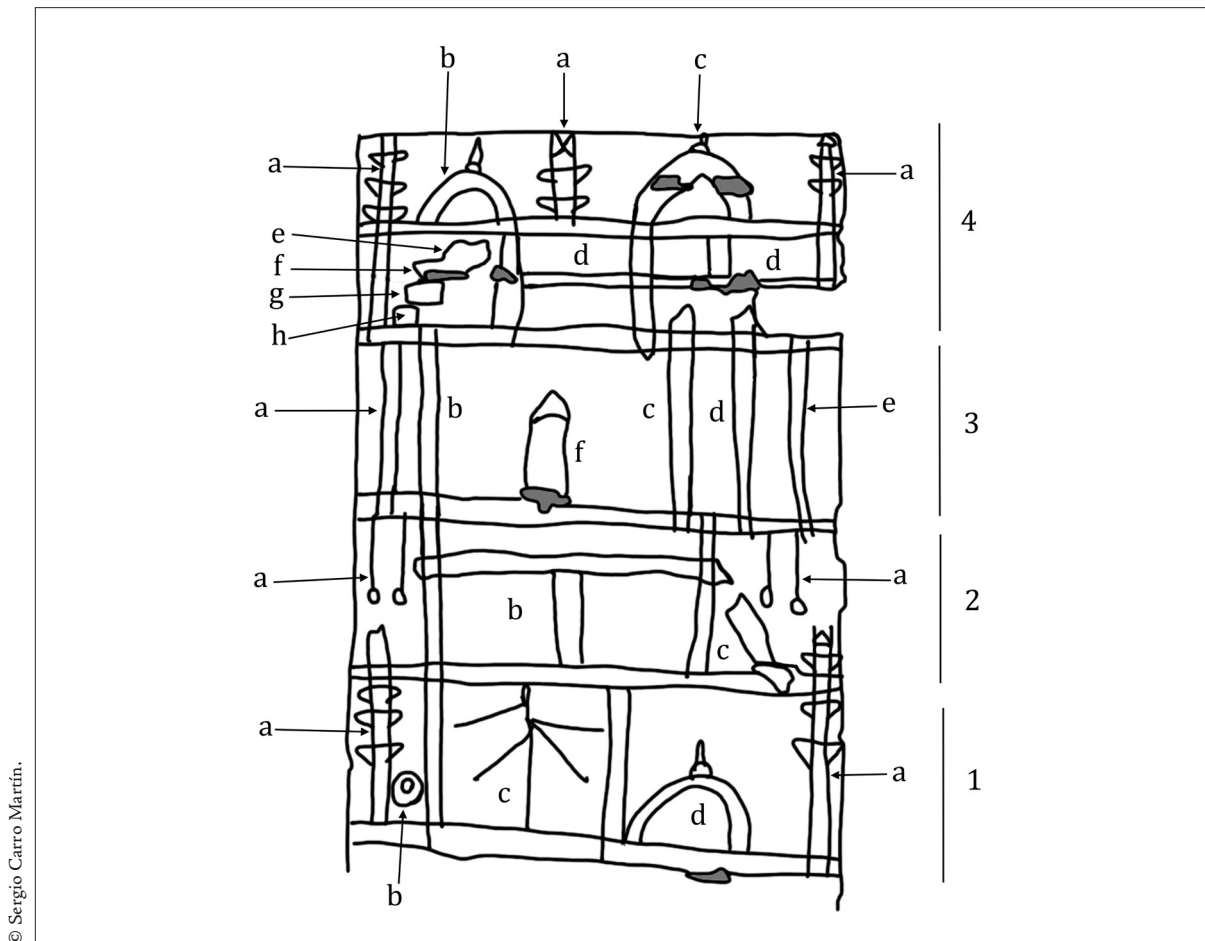
© By courtesy of Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyya.

24. P.PalauRib.Arab.inv. 1042. See Carro Martín, 2019b, pp. 268–279, and Carro Martín, 2021, figs. 5 and 6.

25. Milstein, 2006, p. 183. Cf. Fahmi, 1949, pp. 25–26; El-Basha, 1989, pp. 228–229. On the architectural developments of this mosque, see Sauvaget, 1947. The eight-metre scroll MS E 7750 (Topkapi Palace Museum Archive, Istanbul, ca. 1540), addressed to Sultan Sulaymān I, contains a representation of Medina with five minarets.

26. Munt, 2014, pp. 129–130. According to Munt, scholars began to discuss the permissibility of the visit to his tomb in the 11th/12th century.

27. For example, inv.nr. 543–12 (National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden), plano 53 F1 no. 58 (Leiden University Library), ARC.ct. 38 (Khalili Collection, see comments to this document in lines 7–8), and the certificate published by S. Zwemer (1900, plate 3), all dated in the 19th century.



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Fig. 2. P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513

Section 1: a. Minarets, b. *Bī'r*, c. Fāṭima's garden, d. *Qubbat al-zayt*.

Section 2: a. Hanging oil lamps, b. *Aṣḥāb al-ṣuffa* platform, c. Minbar.

Section 3: a, b, c, d, e. Main pillars inside the mosque, f. The Prophet's *mihrāb*.

Section 4: a. Minarets, b. *Qubbat al-Nabī*, c. *Qubba*, d. Interior spaces, e. Tomb of Muḥammad, f. Tomb of Abū Bakr, g. Tomb of 'Umar, h. Tomb of Fāṭima.

The text consists of ten lines of *nashī* script without vowel markings, written in black ink. The body of the text is horizontal and occupies approximately the bottom half of the paper (10 × 11 cm). It is in two paragraphs: paragraph 1 consists of lines 1–6, and paragraph 2 of lines 7–10. Between the paragraphs there is a hole. The scribe maintains a regular spacing between lines, except at the end of line 6 and the beginning of line 9. Letters contain most of their diacritical marks. The scribe substitutes the *hamza* for the letter *yā'* in *sā'ir* (l. 2) and omits it above or below the letter *alif*. It is a remarkable feature that the scribe does not trace the teeth of the letters *sīn* and *šīn* in *šarrafa* (l. 1), *samāhā* (l. 3), *aṣḥadu* (l. 4), *šarīk* (l. 5), *samāhu* (l. 5), *sayyidunā* (l. 6), *šaḥā'atī* (l. 8) and *sallama* (ll. 8 and 10). The *sīn* is written in a single horizontal stroke excessively stretched to the left, sometimes extended above the preceding letter, see *samāhā* (l. 3), *samāhu* (l. 5), *sayyidunā* (l. 6), *sallama* (ll. 8 and 10) and *rasūl* (l. 10). The scribe has mistakenly written the dots for the letter *yā'* instead of *alif maqṣūra*: *'alā* (l. 2), and *ṣallā* (ll. 7 and 10).

Text

١. الحمد لله الذي شرف المدينة وحماها
٢. واختارها على سائر البقاع واصطفها
٣. وسمها طيبة لأنها طابت من طيب الحبيب
٤. وطاب ثراؤها واشهد أن لا إله إلا الله
٥. وحده لا شريك له) الذي سماه ربه يتس وطه
٦. وإن سيدنا محمدا عبده ورسوله
٧. أما بعد فقد زار وقال صلى الله
٨. عليه وسلم من زار قبري وجبت له شفاعتي
٩. يوم القيامة
١٠. [] ورسول الله ﷺ

2. Translation

1. Praise be to God who exalted Medina and protected her.
2. He preferred her to other places and chose her
3. and He called her Ṭayba because she is fragrant, because of the nobility of the beloved
4. and gratified her land. And I declare that there is no god but God
5. unique, He has no peer (whom his Lord called Yasin and Ṭaha,
6. And that our Lord Muḥammad is His servant and His messenger.
7. After this has visited (blank) and said, blessings of God be upon him: "Whoever visits my grave will be guaranteed my intercession
9. on the Day of Resurrection".
10. [] and the messenger of God, blessings of God be upon him

3. Commentary

1. *Al-ḥamdu li-l-llāh*: the scribe begins to write the *ḥamdala* below the line and progressively ascends until the text regains its horizontality. This causes the following lines (ll. 2–5) to acquire the same curvature in the first words. The *ḥamdala* is also documented in P.Khalili. inv. 1079 (l. 1) and MS.I4.2006 (l. 1) after the *basmala*. P.PalauRib.Arab.inv. 1042 (l. 1) and inv. 1047 (l. 1) begin with the formula *al-ḥamdu Allāh* instead of *al-ḥamdu li-l-llāh*.²⁸

28. Cf. P.HaramCat. 616v, l. 9 (796/1394); P.GenizahCambr. 142 fol. 2r, l. 4 (402/1012).

1–4. *Allādī šarrafa al-Madīna wa-ḥamāhā wa-iḥtārahā ‘alā sā’ir al-biqā’ wa-ḥaṣṭafāhā wa-samāhā Ṭayba li-annahā ṭābat min ṭīb al-ḥabīb wa-ṭāba ṭarā’>’a>hā*: these lines are documented in P.Khalili.inv. 1079 (ll. 1–3), P.PalauRib.Arab.inv. 1042 (ll. 1–4), P.PalauRib.Arab.inv. 1047 (ll. 1–3) and MS.I4.2006 (ll. 1–3). The text emphasises the sacredness of Medina by employing the root ṭ-y-b, which denotes a sense of purity and fragrance, up to four times. Its repeated use in the text borders on poetic prose. — *Ṭayba*: designates the city of Medina in the Arabic sources,²⁹ in which it also received the name of ṭābat (cf. P.PalauRib.Arab.inv. 1047 ending in *tā’ marbūṭa*, l. 2).³⁰—*ḥaṣṭafāhā* instead of *iḥṣafāhā*: the scribe has omitted the initial alif of the third person masculine singular perfect. The affix *hā* (3rd person fem.) is written above the writing line, occupying the space between the first and the second line.—*ṭīb*: constitutes an idāfa with *al-ḥabīb*, “the nobility of the beloved”. This expression is consistent with the mystical and poetic language of the preceding lines.

4–5. *Ašhadu an lā ilāha illā Allāh waḥduhu lā šarīk lahu*: formula of acceptance of the Islamic faith (cf. Quran V, 73).³¹ In this document the *šahāda* constitutes a variant of the simple form *wa-ašhadu an lā ilāha illā Allāh* (cf. Quran XXXVII, 35 and XLVII, 19) by adding the terms *waḥduhu lā šarīk lahu* (cf. Quran VI, 163). The usual structure contains two parts: *ašhadu an lā ilāha illā Allāh* and *wa-ašhadu anna Muḥammadā ‘abduhu wa-rasūluhu*.³² Here, the scribe seems to have become aware of this error in the writing of the complete formula and introduces the omission with an insertion mark in the form of an “opening” round bracket [symbol:)] to indicate that the continuation follows in the middle of next line (see l. 6 below).³³—*waḥduhu lā šarīk* is also attested in P.Khalili.inv. 1079 (l. 3), P.PalauRib.Arab.inv. 1047 (l. 4) and MS.I4.2006 (l. 3). Conversely, the scribe of P.PalauRib.Arab.inv. 1042 (ll. 3–4) has opted for the cardinal number *wāḥidahu*.³⁴

5. *Allādī samāhu rabbuhu Yā’-Sīn wa-Ṭā’-Hā’*: both *Yā’-Sīn* and *Ṭā’-Hā’* are names mentioned in the Qur’ān (Quran XXXVI, 1; Quran XX, 1) and contain what have been called “mysterious letters”.³⁵ They are also considered two of the ninety-nine names given to the Prophet Muḥammad. The same names are mentioned in P.Khalili.inv. 1079 (ll. 4–5), P.PalauRib.Arab.inv. 1047 (l. 5)³⁶ and MS.I4.2006 (l. 4).—*samāhu*: the scribe has written the

29. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa also refers to the city of Medina with this term. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Riḥlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, 1417/1997, p. 349.

30. On the different names of Madina, see Al-Ya’qūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, 1892, VII, p. 78, and Ibn Šabba, I, pp. 162–164. According to Atrim (2012, pp. 36–37) names served to reverse the opinion of non-believers and adversaries of the Prophet about Medina.

31. See Gimaret, 1997 p. 201; Gardet, 2000, p. 389.

32. Cf. Quran VII, 158 and Quran XLIX, 3.

33. See Gacek, 2009, pp. 170–171.

34. Cf. Rippin, 2005, pp. 488–491. Other ways of referring to the oneness of God in the Qur’ān are: *qul huwa Allāhu aḥadun* (Quran CXII, 1); *huwa ilāhu wāḥidun* (Quran VI, 19, XIV, 52 and XVI, 51), *ilāhukum ilāhun wāḥidun* (Quran II, 163; XVI, 22; XLI, 6; XVIII, 110 and XXI, 108), *Allāh ilāhun wāḥidun* (Quran IV, 171).

35. Annemarie Schimmel (1985, chap. 6) suggests that both names are acronyms formed from terms that designate the prophet Muḥammad.

36. In this manuscript *Yasīn* is written as follows: *yā’ + sīn + yā’ + nūn*.

letters *sīn* and *mīm* in a single V-shaped stroke.—*Yā’-Sīn*: The scribe has drawn a curvilinear stroke over the word. This mark is written over an omitted letter (or several letters) as a scribal abbreviation or *portmanteau*, for example, a word made up of two or more words.³⁷

6. *Wa-inna sayyidunā Muḥammadan ‘abduhu wa-rasūluhu*: the text begins in the middle of the line, below the aforementioned sign -) -. The scribe resumes the profession of faith initiated in lines 4–5. The formula *wa-ašhadu anna Muḥammad ‘abduhu wa-rasūluhu* is documented in P.PalauRib.Arab.inv. 1042 (ll. 5–6) and MS.14.2006 (l. 4). A more extensive formula is *wa-ašhadu anna Muḥammadan ‘ab<duhu>lā ilāha illā Allāh waḥduhu lā šarīk lahu*, found in P.PalauRib.Arab.inv. 1047 (ll. 3–4). Another accepted variant is *wa-ašhadu anna Muḥammadan rasūluhu* (cf. Quran VII, 158; XVII, 1; LIII, 10).³⁸—*sayyidunā*: cf. P Khalili. inv. 1079 (l. 4), P.PalauRib.Arab.inv. 1042 (l. 6), P.PalauRib.Arab.inv. 1047 (l. 5) and MS.14.2006 (l. 4).—*wa-rasūluhu*: written above ‘*abduhu*.

7. *Ammā ba‘du fa-qad zāra* (blank): the subject of the document is introduced by the expression *ammā ba‘du*. As was mentioned earlier, the structure of the sentence suggests that the blank space (about three centimetres) between the first words and the beginning of the hadith should be occupied by a proper name, thus recording the name of the person who made the *ziyāra*. According to the conjugation of the verb (3rd person masc.) it would be a man.

7–8. *Wa-qāla ṣallā Allāhu ‘alayhi wa-sallama man zāra qabrī waḡabat lahu šafā‘atī yawm al-qiyāma*: the scribe introduces a hadith collected by al-Dāraquṭnī (305–384/918–995) in his work *Sunna al-Dāraquṭnī*.³⁹ The same hadith is also documented in P.PalauRib.Arab. inv. 1042 (ll. 7–9) and 1047 (ll. 6–7); however, it is not reproduced in the certificates of the TIEM Collection (11th–14th c.). The Day of Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyāma*) is usually expressed as follows in pilgrimage certificates: *ḡakarahu nafa‘ahu Allāh bihā yawm al-qiyāma yawm al-ḡusra wa-l-nidāma* (“may God be conducive to him on the Day of Resurrection, the day of sighs and return”)⁴⁰ and *taqabbala Allāh minhu wa-nafa‘ahu bihā yawm al-qiyama* [sic] (“may God welcome him and be conducive to him on the Day of Resurrection”).⁴¹ In other cases, the scribes introduce Quranic verses such as Quran XXVI, 89; XXVI, 112 and III, 28 that evoke the salvation of Muslims in their last days of their life.⁴² Modern certificates like ARC.ct. 38 (19th c.) from the Khalili Collection include the beginning of this same hadith: *man zāra qabrī waḡabat lahu šafā‘atī*

37. Gacek, 2009, pp. 2–3.

38. Schimmel, 1985, 119–120, 177.

39. Al-Dāraquṭnī, 1432/2011, *Sunna al-Dāraquṭnī*, no. 2669, p. 243.

40. P.CertificatsPelerinage 4 (594/1198); 17 (603/1207); 25 (648/1251); 27 (651/1254); 28 (653/1256); 29 (609/1213); 30 (?); 31 (620/1224); 33 (646/1249); 37 (601/1205) and 38 (602/1206).

41. P.Istanb.EvkMuz.inv. 144, l. 9 (489/1096), edited by Sourdél, Sourdél-Thomine, 1983, pl. 2b.

42. Cf. Sourdél, Sourdél-Thomine, 2006, pp. 40–41. Other certificates reference the gardens of paradise and eternity after earthly life (see, for example, Quran IX, 21–22), thus reminding the reader of the merit earned through the fulfilment of the pilgrimage rites. Gardet, 1986, pp. 235–238; Hasson, 2003, pp. 136–144.

(“whoever visits my tomb, will be guaranteed my intercession”).—*yawm al-qiyāma*: note the closeness of these terms to those in the preceding line (see also l. 10 below). Cf. *al-qiyāma*, P.PalauRib.Arab.inv. 1042 (l. 9) and inv. 1047 (l. 7).

10. [] *wa-rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāhu ‘alayhi wa-sallama*: the loss of support could have affected the beginning of the line.—*ṣallā Allāhu ‘alayhi wa-sallama* is usually written after the Prophet is mentioned, so it is possible that the scribe may have written this sentence here as a continuation of line 6 (see commentary l. 6 above). If we consider this line as an error in the writing of the document, we might also suppose that this could have been the reason for (hypothetically) having discarded the certificate, as it does not contain the name of any pilgrim.

4. Final remarks

The study of P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513 lays bare the fact that the visit to Medina (*ziyāra*) resulted in a specific typology of document in which the devotion of the pilgrims to Muḥammad was recorded in writing and illustrated. This makes us wonder if these documents can be understood in the same bureaucratic and legal context as the certificates of pilgrimage to Mecca. To shed every possible light on this issue we have focused on a global study of the document.

At a textual and codicological level, this document presents a standardized nature that it has not so far been possible to attest before the 16th century. In this regard, only a few certificates of visits to Mecca dated to the middle of the 15th century briefly mention the visit to Medina. This gives us the idea that the *ziyāra* was gaining importance during the next century, either as a complement to the major pilgrimage, or with a particular devotional purpose. However, as this document lacks the name of the pilgrim, we can only suggest that it was not used for legal purposes (for example, a *ziyāra* by proxy). Even if his/her name had been written, we cannot rule out the hypothesis that it was preserved for its material value. As Josef Meri points out, “In addition to commemorative places, such as shrines, portative holy objects, such as copies of the Qur’an and the sandal of the Prophet Muhammad, which were addressed later, possessed *baraka*”.⁴³

It is this character of portability and sanctity which defines certificates that suggests that documents such as P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513 could have been acquired by Muslims on their visit to Medina. In addition, the illustration of the prophet’s mosque would endow the document with the sacredness of that space, and would explain this preservation behaviour. In this regard, the dating of the document to the 16th century, supported by the analysis of its illustrations, has been essential in advancing knowledge about visits to Medina and the material culture that they generated, especially given the lack of documentation on this subject.

The preservation of this document must therefore be understood in association with the sanctity that the prophet’s tomb acquired in the centuries after his death. The hadith about the prophet’s intercession on behalf of those who visit his tomb seems to be in line with this. If we compare P.Cair.EgLib.inv. 513 with the certificates of pilgrimage by proxy, which have

43. Meri, 2002, p. 17.

a clear legal purpose,⁴⁴ this hadith would legitimize its issuance as a certificate. Furthermore, it would validate the visit itself and raise the *ziyāra* to the level of religious precept, which could help explain the controversy that this practice aroused among Muslim jurists and scholars.

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 BL: British Library.
 MIA: Museum of Islamic Art (Qatar).
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 TIEM: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi.

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