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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Urban space, power and people through the optic of cemeteries in late medieval Cairo and Paris

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Abstract

This article argues that a micro-historical and comparative analysis of urban burial spaces can provide fresh insight into cities. Two late medieval cemeteries are considered here: the Qarāfa in Cairo and Saints-Innocents in Paris. Despite the former being geographically peripheral and the latter central, both these relatively large cemeteries were integral to their respective urban spheres. Beyond the role of sultans and kings, collective shaping was key to the longue durée formation of both capitals' cemeteries. They were also shaped by multiple urban communities of the living and the dead at the closer level and offer insight into these communities.

We tend to think about cemeteries as spaces of the dead, conceptually separated from their wider urban contexts. Yet, cemeteries were an integral part of the urban orbit, even when they were, in geographical terms, peripherally located. Rather than being static, cemeteries were dynamic and shifting spaces; they tell us not only about communities of the dead, but crucially also about communities of the living. Moreover, cemeteries present a useful control variable in comparative historical investigations of cities. As important components of urban space, they can provide a micro-historical and comparative lens through which we can gain fresh insight on urban spaces, power and people. From this perspective, the Qarāfa and Saints-Innocents cemeteries are here explored.[1]

Cairo and Paris *c.* 1200–1500 are two cities rarely studied alongside each other. Whilst Paris formed part of the Kingdom of France, Cairo was ruled by the Mamluk regime from 1250. The Mamluk military elite was composed of imported slave soldiers of foreign origin who were converted to Islam, trained and eventually emancipated. Some then rose through the military ranks to the position of amir or even sultan.[2]

[1]Arabic terms have been transliterated following the International Journal of Middle East Studies system, except where a commonplace anglicized term exists. Dates follow the Common Era format.

[2]For a useful overview of Mamluk government, society and identity, see J. Loiseau, *Les Mamelouks (XIIIe–XVIe siècle). Une expérience du pouvoir dans l'Islam médiéval* (Paris, 2014).

However, Cairo and Paris present excellent cases for comparative study. Both cities, having been founded many centuries earlier, became pre-eminent medieval capitals under Capetian and Mamluk rule as the respective centres of royal and sultanic power and the organs of government.[3] They were major hubs for trade, commerce, education and, thus, immigration. Both were spatially and demographically very large cities by medieval standards.[4] And, pertinent to the theme at hand, their city-dwellers, from the poor to kings and sultans, were customarily buried within the Cairene and Parisian spheres.[5] Both the Saints-Innocents and Qarāfa were large pan-civic burial spaces, and thus offer a particularly fruitful comparative angle from which to explore the relationship between cemetery and city.[6]

Through the lens of the cemetery, comparison also challenges an overarching historiographical narrative which has tended to make a conceptual distinction between the European and Islamic city in overly simplistic terms.[7] Focusing on the urban space of the cemetery permits an appreciation of the varied and dynamic nature of Christianity and Islam in an urban context, whilst signalling the limits of their contribution to urban space formation. Broadly, burial in medieval Islam was understood as a collective religious duty to be performed without delay.[8] Burial sites were typically located outside towns as accessible, designated, collective *musabbala* spaces.[9] By contrast, in late medieval Europe, faithful Christians could expect, as a minimum, to be buried in the consecrated space of the parochial churchyard, found throughout towns. However, broader religious differences between Christianity and Islam only shaped the cemetery, one of the most sacred spaces in the late medieval city, to a certain degree. Other comparative dynamics in the shaping of urban space must be considered.

[3]For a consideration of a range of medieval cities and their roles as capitals, see P. Boucheron (ed.), *Les villes capitales au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2006).

[4]Population estimates for pre-plague Paris range between 100,000 and 270,000. For Cairo, estimates range between 250,000 and 500,000. B. Bove and C. Gauvard, 'Les mystères de Paris', in B. Bove and C. Gauvard (eds.), *Le Paris du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2014), 9–10. A. Raymond, 'Cairo's area and population in the early fifteenth century', *Muqarnas*, 2 (1984), 21–31.

[5]Bande uses 'Parisian sphere' to describe French kings' burial at Saint-Denis. See A. Bande, *Le cœur du roi* (Paris, 2009), 142. The term applies for Cairo too; whilst burial might not always be in the physical centres of cities, it was still intimately connected to the urban space of the living.

[6]The parochial cemetery was the normative space for burial in late medieval Europe, but there are several other examples of relatively large, pan-civic cemeteries, such as St Paul's in London. See V. Harding, 'Burial choice and burial location in later medieval London', in S. Bassett (ed.), *Death in Towns: Urban Responses to the Dying and the Dead, 100–1600* (Leicester, 1993), 119–35. Smaller urban parochial cemeteries were still varied spaces that impacted urban topography and warrant further attention in their own right. See, for example, J. Barrow, 'Urban cemetery location in the high Middle Ages', in Bassett (ed.), *Death in Towns*, 78–100. Pan-civic cemeteries were commonplace in late medieval Islamic cities, but the Qarāfa was a particularly vast example.

[7]The concept of the 'Islamic city' has been theoretically challenged in the last 40 years; see, for example, J.L. Abu-Lughod, 'The Islamic city – historic myth, Islamic essence, and contemporary relevance', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 19 (1987), 155–76.

[8]L. Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave: Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Society* (New York, 2007), 149, 168.

[9]W. Diem and M. Schöller, *The Living and the Dead in Islam* (Wiesbaden, 2004), vol. II, 211.

Past scholarship

That cemeteries can reveal much about wider urban spaces and dynamics is an idea that will be more familiar to classicists and historians of Late Antiquity.[10] Yet, late medieval scholarship has less often considered the cemetery as an integral and revealing urban space. Instead, historiographical concern with medieval cemeteries is often framed by broader geographical and chronological questions of change and continuity in wider cultural and religious attitudes towards death and dying. This history of death and dying has tended to evolve on its own terms, particularly in the European context.

Following Febvre's 1952 call to develop a history of death, this field gained traction in Western academia, particularly in France, in the 1970s and 1980s.[11] Notably, Ariès, in his longue durée approach, aimed to explain the pivotal moment of a European early modern shift to suburban burial.[12] More recently, the interdisciplinary work of archaeologists and historians has further complemented this longer-term framing.[13] Several scholars, notably Lauwers, have shed light on the gradual emergence of the European parochial model of burial in consecrated churchyards and its long-term and varied development across a broad geographical range, until it became the norm in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[14] On the other hand, there have been a range of insightful and specifically urban-focused studies on burial and funerary ritual.[15] Nevertheless, within this, there has been much less focus on the particularities of specific cemetery spaces. Thus, we are sometimes left with an impression of the late medieval parochial cemetery as providing an almost invariable spatial context for more dynamic ritual performance.[16]

Although developing along a distinct historiographical trajectory, early interest in studies of death in the Islamic context largely mirrored this greater focus on burial and funerary ritual.[17] However, more recently, there has been a selection of socio-historical studies that have historicized practices alongside burial spaces in their medieval context, utilizing a broad range of medieval Arabic texts and

[10]A well-known example is P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981). For an early modern comparative approach, see V. Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500–1670* (Cambridge, 2002).

[11]L. Febvre, 'La mort dans l'histoire', *Annales*, 7 (1952), 223–5. For a detailed comparative historiographical overview, see M. Lauwers and J. Loiseau, 'Rapport introductif: l'historien (médiéviste) et les morts, Occident chrétien et pays d'Islam', in *Les vivants et les morts dans les sociétés médiévales: XLVIIIe congrès de la SHMESP* (Paris, 2018), 11–39.

[12]P. Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. P. Ranum (London, 1994).

[13]See, for example, M. Lauwers and A. Zemour (eds.), *Qu'est-ce qu'une sépulture? Humanités et systèmes funéraires de la Préhistoire à nos jours* (Antibes, 2016).

[14]M. Lauwers, *La naissance du cimetière: lieux sacrés et terre des morts dans l'Occident médiéval* (Paris, 2005).

[15]Examples include: S. Strocchia, *Death and Ritual in Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore, 1992); C. Lansing, *Passion and Order: Restraint of Grief in the Medieval Italian Communes* (Ithaca, 2008); J. Chiffoleau, *La comptabilité de l'au-delà: les hommes, la mort et la religion dans la région d'Avignon à la fin du Moyen Âge (vers 1320 – vers 1480)* (Rome, 1980).

[16]D. Alexandre-Bidon, 'Images du cimetière chrétien au Moyen-Âge', in H. Galinié and E. Zadora-Rio (eds.), *Archéologie du cimetière chrétien: Actes du 2e colloque ARCHEA* (Tours, 1996), 80.

[17]For a foundational study on Islamic mortuary practice, see I. Goldziher, 'Le culte des ancêtres et les cultes des morts chez les Arabes', *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 10 (1884), 332–59.

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evidence from material culture. Two such studies are Halevi's *Muhammad's Grave* and Scholler and Diem's *The Living and the Dead in Islam*.[18] The first examines early Islamic death rites and how these developed distinctly across several cities and communities within them. The second collates a vast number of epitaphs from across the Islamic world, supplemented with a social historical analysis of what information these inscriptions can provide. There is, however, far less scholarship of this kind for the later medieval period or which has an in-depth focus on specific cities.

In the Parisian context, *ad ecclesiam* burials have unsurprisingly solicited the most interest. Several works focus on the royal necropolis of Saint-Denis, to the north of Paris, illuminating the cultural and hagiographical construction of this space.[19] Bande complements this work in his consideration of royal bi-partite and tri-partite burials and their spatial context.[20] Most recently, Ozenne has studied members of the royal court and their privileged burial spaces within Parisian conventual churches, utilizing material from the *Épitaphier du vieux Paris*.[21] She insightfully investigates elite community representation in specific *ad ecclesiam* burial spaces.[22]

However, for churchyard cemeteries, relatively little research exists.[23] The Saints-Innocents, the largest cemetery of the medieval city, has garnered most interest. An edited volume on the Saints-Innocents cemetery implements an archaeological-historical approach, and includes several papers focusing on the medieval period, providing particularly informative overviews of the cemetery's chronological development, its dimensions and its complex institutional divisions.[24] Additionally, Neyrinck presents a convincing account of King Philip Augustus' motivation in constructing a lieu-saint in the cemetery, and, in a recent article, provides an in-depth exploration of the hagiographical development of the martyred child around which this lieu-saint was formed.[25]

Of studies focusing on medieval cemeteries in the Islamic context, the exceptionally vast Cairene Qarāfa has received by far the most attention. Massignon's study

[18]Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*; Diem and Schöller, *Living and the Dead*; Lauwers and Loiseau, 'Rapport introductif', 24.

[19]For example, G. Spiegel, 'The cult of Saint Denis and Capetian kingship', *Journal of Medieval History*, 1 (1975), 43–69; W.C. Jordan, *A Tale of Two Monasteries: Westminster and Saint-Denis in the Thirteenth Century* (Princeton, 2009).

[20]Bande, *Cœur du roi*, 131–47.

[21]E. Raunié, H. Verlet, A. Lesort and M. Prinet (eds.), *Épitaphier du vieux Paris*, 12 vols. (Paris, 1890–2000).

[22]E. Ozenne, 'Une demeure de choix pour l'éternité: les sépultures parisiennes des gens de la cour du roi (XIIIe–XVe siècle)', in B. Bove *et al.* (eds.), *Paris, ville de cour* (Rennes, 2017), 287–98.

[23]J. Hillairet, *Les 200 cimetières du vieux Paris* (Paris, 1958); and A. Friedmann, *Paris, ses rues, ses paroisses du Moyen Âge à la Révolution. Origine et évolution des circonscriptions paroissiales* (Paris, 1959), are useful studies, although aim to inform more than analyse.

[24]M. Fleury and G. Leproux (eds.), *Les Saints-Innocents* (Paris, 1990).

[25]A. Neyrinck, 'La formation d'un espace sacré à Paris sous Louis VII et Philippe Auguste: cimetière des Innocents, communauté parisienne et exclusion des juifs', *Circé. Histoires, Cultures & Sociétés*, 4 (2014), www.revue-circe.uvsq.fr/la-formation-dun-espace-sacre-a-paris-sous-louis-vii-et-philippe-auguste-cimetiere-des-innocents-communaute-parisienne-et-exclusion-des-juifs/; A. Neyrinck, 'Richard de Pontoise. Le "saint Innocent" parisien', *Histoire urbaine*, 60 (2021), 51–69.

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of the cemetery considered the topographical make-up of the space and the practice of *ziyāra* (visiting of tombs) taking place there. However, the implication of continued practice from an indeterminate medieval past risked giving the impression of a quasi-invariable space across time.[26] Since then, other useful works on medieval *ziyāra* have been produced.[27] More recent scholarship has, furthermore, provided detailed reconstructions of both the cemetery's medieval topography and specific structures therein. Rāġib, in particular, has worked extensively on the cemeteries of medieval Cairo, including studies on the topographies of Christian and Jewish cemeteries and the sanctuary of al-Sayyida Nafisa.[28] Likewise, the works of scholars on the mausolea of the Mamluk elite, all rooted in material evidence and textual support from medieval Cairene sources, mark this increased interest in the architectural-historical approach. In this regard, Behrens-Abouseif provides detailed descriptions and analyses of a number of Mamluk mausolea and Hamza a monograph on the Northern cemetery.[29] These studies, however, have understandably tended to focus on the monumental burial architecture of a relatively small range of elites for which the most extant source material exists. There are few studies that are framed by a wider city purview, both in considering either a broader social range or how the cemetery is bound to the city. Ohtoshi provides a notable exception. He concludes that the Qarāfa were public loci, focusing on interactions between elites and non-elite groups there.[30]

Despite these advances in the scholarship concerning burial practices and spaces more generally, and for Cairo and Paris more specifically, relatively little literature compares cities with regard to death-related themes in specifically Islamic and Christian cities.[31] More remains to be revealed about the cemetery and its relationship with the wider city, especially as illuminated in the comparative perspective.

This article is divided into three sections centred around three corresponding themes. The first section outlines the topographies of these cemeteries, arguing that even geographically peripheral cemeteries should be seen as an integral part of the urban orbit. The second and third sections explore what these spaces reveal about the city at both the broader and more intimate level. At the broader level, cemeteries allow us to explore the degree to which the patronage of kings and sultans shaped these important urban spaces, as opposed to other factors, such as collective tradition and identity. This provides greater nuance to how we understand the formation of urban space in these capitals. At the more intimate level, we

[26]L. Massignon, 'La cité des morts au Caire (Qarâfa – Darb al-Ahmar)', *Bulletin de l'Iinstitut français d'archéologie orientale*, 57 (1958), 25–79; Lauwers and Loiseau, 'Rapport introductif', 16.

[27]C. Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous: Ziyāra and the Veneration of Muslim Saints in Late Medieval Egypt* (Leiden, 1999); T. Ohtoshi, 'The manners, customs, and mentality of pilgrims to the Egyptian city of the dead: 1100–1500 A.D.', *Orient*, 29 (1993), 19–44.

[28]Y. Rāġib, 'Les cimetières chrétiens et juifs de la région du Caire au Moyen âge', *Annales Islamologiques*, 44 (2010), 169–94; Y. Rāġib, 'Al-Sayyida Nafīsa, sa légende, son culte et son cimetière', *Studia Islamica*, 44 (1976), 61–86.

[29]D. Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and Its Culture* (London, 2007); H. Hamza, *The Northern Cemetery of Cairo* (Cairo, 2001).

[30]T. Ohtoshi, 'Cairene cemeteries as public loci in Mamluk Egypt', *Mamluk Studies Review*, 10 (2006), 83–116.

[31]Recognizing this lacuna, comparative study is encouraged by Lauwers and Loiseau, 'Rapport introductif', 39.

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explore some of the multiple urban communities that further constructed, and were constructed by, these spaces, drawing on epigraphy and its interplay with spatial context. This can add to our understanding of how a range of urban communities, both living and dead, represented themselves in space. In a micro-historical approach to the cemetery, we can study one constant, but nevertheless complex and dynamic, urban space.

Cemeteries as key urban spaces

Where does the city end and the non-city begin? The question belies its simple phrasing, today as in the past. Intra muros and extra muros distinctions are complicated when focusing on cemeteries. Despite their differing geographical locations, both cemeteries were conceptually central to their wider urban spaces, not least in offering the final resting place to many.

The Qarāfa was large and continuous, found outside the city walls to the south and east, and spanning some 1,500 hectares.[32] The vast expanse and geographic peripherality of the space is usefully imagined by turning to Figure 1, an early modern depiction of the city and cemetery. The Qarāfa was the main space for interment of late medieval Cairenes, providing a final resting place for military elites as well as the poor, albeit in a very different manner according to social status. These characterizations are presented especially plainly in traveller accounts. One such account is provided by Emmanuel Piloti, a Venetian merchant who spent extended periods in Cairo between 1396 and 1438.[33] He describes the Qarāfa as follows: 'a mile from Cairo is an unwalled city (*cité*), as large as Venice…in which all those who die in Cairo are buried'.[34] Referring to the space as a 'city' rather than a cemetery, he emphasizes: first, the magnitude of the space; secondly, the concentrated form of the space; thirdly, its location beyond the city's walled limits; fourthly, that it was an unwalled space; and fifthly, that 'all' the dead, across different social groups, were buried here.

By contrast, Paris, like other late medieval European cities, largely adhered to a parochial pattern of burial. The *Dit des Monstiers*, composed by an anonymous author between 1326 and 1328, professes to list all the churches of Paris at this time, naming 92 in total.[35] Yet, despite this large number of churches as outlined in the *Dit*, many had very small churchyards and others none at all.[36] In fact, the only cemetery explicitly mentioned by this source is the Saints-Innocents.[37] That this was a relatively large burial space in the European context is highlighted by Guillebert de Mets, a Flemish scribe and book-dealer, who lived in Paris from *c.* 1407 to 1417.[38] His topographical account of the city describes the

[32]G. El-Kadi and A. Bonnamy, *Architecture for the Dead: Cairo's Medieval Necropolis* (Cairo, 2007), 34.

[33]E. Piloti, *L'Égypte au commencement du quinzième siècle, d'après le traité d'Emmanuel Piloti de Crète, incipit 1420*, ed. H. Dopp (Cairo, 1950), xii, xvii.

[34]*Ibid.*, 34–5.

[35]W. Pfeffer, 'The dit des monstiers', *Speculum*, 73 (1998), 81–2.

[36]See Hillairet, *Les 200 cimetières*, 39–59.

[37]Pfeffer, 'The dit', 89.

[38]R.W. Berger (ed.), 'Guillebert de Mets', in *In Old Paris: An Anthology of Source Descriptions 1323–1790* (New York, 2002), 19–20.

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Figure 1. Section of Anonymous, *View of Cairo and the Nile*, from the *Kitab-ı Bahriye* by Piri Reis, mid- to late seventeenth century. The Qarāfa is to the left (south and east) of the image, between the hills to the east and the city to the west. The large structure to the south with a gold-leaf dome is the mausoleum of al-Shafiʿī. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, MS W 658, fol. 305a.

Saints-Innocents as 'a very large cemetery, enclosed by buildings called *charniers*, here where the bones of the dead are piled…One part of the cemetery belongs to the church of the Innocents, the other part is for the large hospital, and the third part is for the churches of Paris which do not have a cemetery.'[39] He emphasizes: first, the magnitude of the space; secondly, that it was a walled space, surrounded by charnel houses; and thirdly, that the cemetery served multiple Parisian institutions. Again, this is usefully imagined via a sixteenth-century map of Paris (Figure 2).

Additional contemporary sources alongside modern archaeological and architectural studies offer further insight into these spaces' respective topographies. Al-Maqrīzī (d. 1442), a Cairene historian, provides a detailed overview of the Qarāfa in his well-known topographical account. He outlines the approximate parameters of the vast space; the Muqaṭṭam hills in the east, acting 'as if it were a wall (*ḥāʾiṭ*) behind it', the walls of al-Fusṭāṭ to the west, al-Ḥabash lake to the south and

[39]G. de Mets, *Description de la Ville de Paris 1434: Medieval French Text with English Translation*, ed. and trans. E. Mullally (Turnhout, 2015), 94.

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Figure 2. Section of Olivier Truschet and Germain Hoyau, *La ville, cité et Université de Paris*, *c.* 1550. North is to the left and the Saints-Innocents is shown here at the centre. Basel University Library, Kartenslg AA 124.

Bāb al-Qarāfa to the north.[40] The sprawling cemetery areas of Cairo were split, in fact, into two principal geographical zones during al-Maqrīzī's time; the north-eastern Ṣaḥrāʾ and the south-eastern Qarāfa. The Southern section was made up of two significant geographical zones, the Qarāfa al-Kubrā and the Qarāfa al-Sughrā, in which were located numerous mosques, mausolea, shrines, khanqahs (Sufi convents) and madrasas (educational institutions for Islamic jurisprudence).[41] The Northern cemetery, originally a hippodrome under the Citadel, began to emerge as a burial zone only under the third reign of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (r. 1293–94, 1299–1309 and 1310–41). Several prominent amirs and members of the sultan's household had their *turab* (mausolea) constructed here.[42] It was further developed as the burial site of the Mamluk elite par excellence,

[40]Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Mawāʿiẓ wa-al-iʿtibār: bi-dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-al-āthār al-maʿrūf bi-al-khiṭaṭ al-maqrīzīyah* (henceforth referred to as *Khiṭaṭ*), ed. K. al-Manṣūr (Beirut, 1998), vol. IV, 330–1.

[41]*Ibid.*

[42]See, for example, inscriptions from Amir Ṭashtimur's mausoleum (1334). *Thesaurus d'Epigraphie Islamique* (*TEI*), 7326, accessed 20 Jul. 2021.

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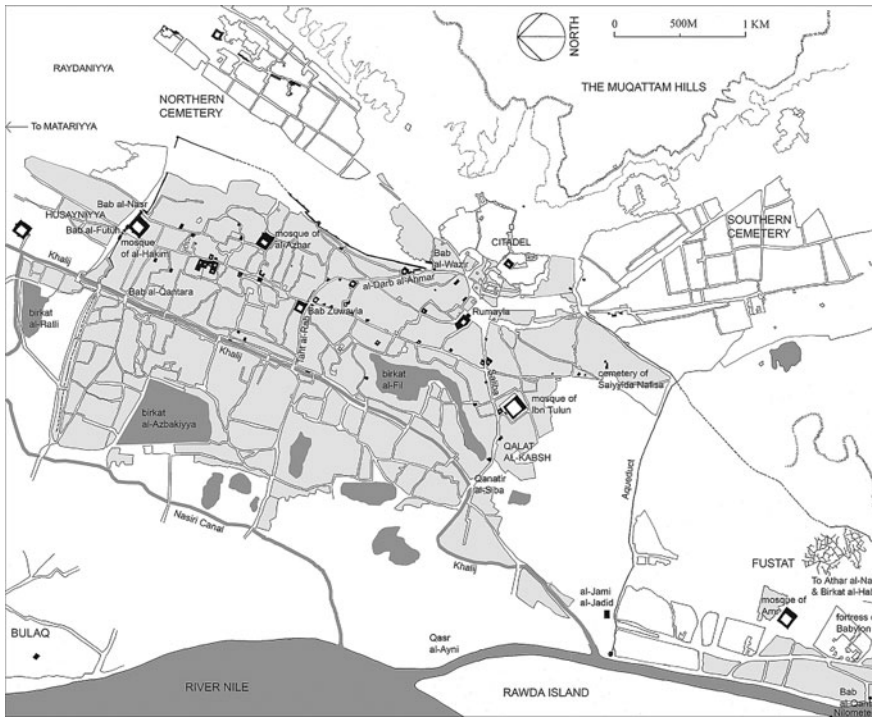

Figure 3. Map of Mamluk Cairo. Illustrator Nicholas Warner, © Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and Its Culture* (London, 2007), 52. I.B. Tauris, used by permission of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. Not to be reused or reproduced without prior permission of the copyright holder.

following the construction of a dynastic mausoleum here by Sultan Faraj (r. 1399–1405 and 1405–12), at the site where his father Barqūq (r. 1382–89 and 1390–99) had been buried.[43] Previously, most Mamluk sultans had been, or at least had planned to be, buried intra muros, most notably in the Bayn al-Qaṣrayn area at the city's centre (Figure 3).[44] The Northern cemetery, although a more exclusive area than the Southern cemetery, still attracted communities of the living, namely Sufis, in the khanqahs therein. It also became an important sultanic processional area. In 1419, Sultan Muʾayyad Shaykh (r. 1412–21) led a collective prayer there, uniting a large cross-section of Cairenes, for deliverance from the plague which had struck the city.[45] This geographically peripheral and exclusive burial space was still connected to the city and its inhabitants across the social range, although to a lesser degree than the Qarāfa cemetery.[46]

[43]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 360–2.

[44]See Figure 3. The Bayn al-Qaṣrayn is located south of the mosque of al-Ḥākim and west of the mosque of al-ʾAzhar.

[45]Ohtoshi, 'Cairene cemeteries', 104.

[46]Faraj attempted to further develop the area with markets, a bakery and and a bath, but they were abandoned after his death. See Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 362.

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Although Saints-Innocents was by far the largest cemetery of late medieval Paris, it was, unlike the Qarāfa, a relatively central space, located on the Right Bank and next to the rue Saint-Denis and Les Halles. Besides its rather small eponymous parish,[47] it served six other larger parishes, two hospitals and all unclaimed bodies from the city and the Seine.[48] Moreover, as the church enshrined the right of free choice of burial, the cemetery provided a final resting place for city-dwellers beyond. Its total area measured approximately 7,200 m^2 during the late medieval period.[49] This was considerably larger than the city's other cemeteries. Saint-Nicolas-Des-Champs, a sizeable cemetery, measured approximately 3,840 m^2 after a 1220 land acquisition.[50] The cemetery of Saint-André-Des-Arts, opened at the end of the thirteenth century, on the other hand, approximately measured 530 m^2.[51] As L'Hermite-Leclercq aptly puts it, 'the population density, [and] the small number and the exiguity of parish cemeteries explained the importance of the Innocents'.[52] Space constraint was felt more keenly in Paris than in the unwalled context of the Qarāfa. This spatial pressure is also reflected in the construction of vaulted charnel houses, as de Mets mentioned, where regularly dug up bones were placed in the open roof spaces.

Thus, the Qarāfa was, in geographical terms, a peripheral space, located outside the city walls, whereas the Saints-Innocents was a relatively central space, within the city walls (Figure 4). However, this seemingly stark distinction between the two is complicated when considering their respective topographies in greater depth. Both cemeteries were integral parts of the wider urban space.

Despite the Qarāfa's geographical peripherality, it was in many ways a more accessible, and seemingly *more* accessed, part of the city than the Saints-Innocents. It was unwalled and easily accessed through several city gates. Cairenes across the social strata were able to frequently visit the cemetery, supported by the infrastructure present therein. Al-Maqrīzī describes the many crowds of men and women being led by shaykhs on pilgrimage routes, visiting the famous graves in the cemetery on Fridays, Saturdays and Wednesdays.[53] The graves of saintly individuals were seen as particularly effective spots for the fulfilment of prayer, due to these individuals' ability to intercede with God on the visitor's behalf.[54] Beyond famous graves, those of friends and family were also regularly visited.[55] Praying for the dead was believed to lessen their punishment in *al-barzakh*, the intermediary zone for the spirit, commonly understood to be located in the grave itself, where final judgment was awaited.[56] Moreover, as Sabra explores, the

[47]There were only 51 taxpayers recorded in the parish in 1299. Friedmann, *Paris, ses rues*, 352.

[48]G. Leproux, 'Le cimetière médiéval', in Fleury and Leproux (eds.), *Les Saints-Innocents*, 41.

[49]Hillairet, *Les 200 cimetières*, 13. There are different estimations of the exact area of the Innocents. See Harding, *Dead and Living*, 101–2.

[50]Hillairet, *Les 200 cimetières*, 13, 59, 97.

[51]*Ibid.*, 104.

[52]P. L'Hermite-Leclercq, 'Les reclus parisiens au bas Moyen Âge', in M. Caron *et al.* (eds.), *Villes et sociétés urbaines au Moyen Âge: hommage à M. le professeur Jacques Heers* (Paris, 1994), 226.

[53]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 357.

[54]Taylor, *Vicinity of the Righteous*, 51–2.

[55]Ohtoshi, 'Manners, customs, and mentality', 20.

[56]Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 211–16.

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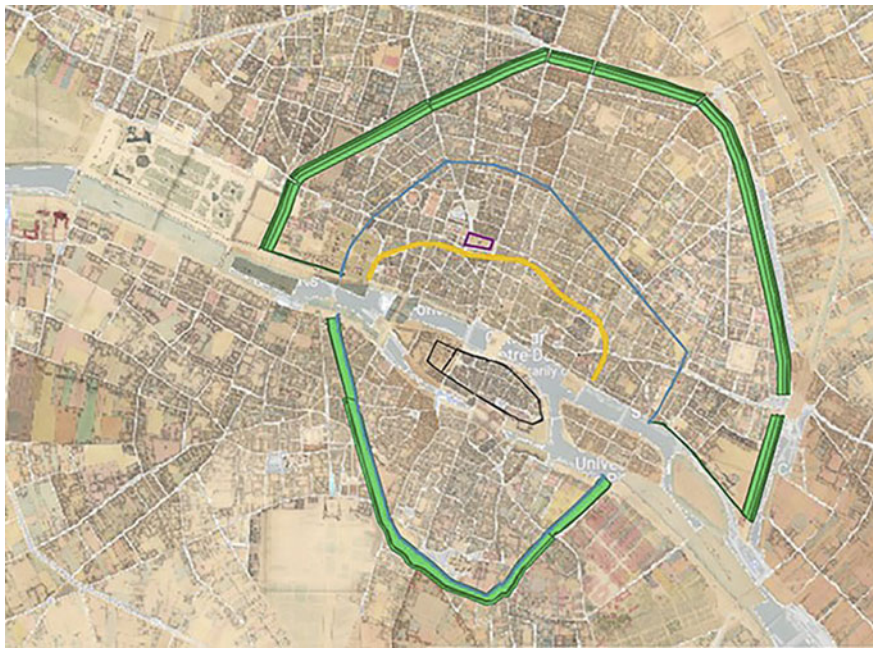

Figure 4. Map of Paris, showing the location of the Saints-Innocents cemetery and the city walls (Carolingian, Philip Augustus' and Charles V's). *ALPAGE: Analyse diachronique de l'espace urbain Parisien: approche Géomatique.* © Alpage | © Bethe A.L. | © Fauchère N. | © Noizet H. | © Rouet P. | © Bourlet C. | © Business Geografic – Ciril GROUP.

cemetery became a particularly important site for the distribution of alms as stipulated in the waqf (pious endowment) deeds established for mausolea, on receipt of which the poor might pray for the benefactor's soul.[57] The Qarāfa was a relatively built-up space, with mosques, madrasas and khanqahs dotted throughout. Crowds also gathered here to benefit from the *baraka* (loosely translated as blessing) of certain living Sufis, and to watch their ritual performances of *dhikr* (remembrance).[58]

However, the activity of the living in the cemetery was by no means limited to *ziyāra*. It was also an inhabited space, with the city's poor as well as Sufis living there.[59] Leo Africanus estimated that 2,000 families lived in the Qarāfa in the early sixteenth century.[60] Moreover, it was a space visited for a multitude of profane reasons. Sources mention grave robbers and bandits targeting visitors.[61] Women gathered and mingled with men in the space in ways which, not infrequently,

[57]A. Sabra, *Poverty and Charity in Medieval Islam: Mamluk Egypt, 1250–1517* (Cambridge, 2000), 95–100.

[58]See Taylor, *Vicinity of the Righteous*, 13–14, 51–2.

[59]See Ohtoshi, 'Cairene cemeteries', 87–92.

[60]He estimated 8,000 families within walled Cairo. M. Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton, 2019), 196.

[61]For example, Ibn Iyās, *Histoire des mamlouks circassiens*, trans. G. Wiet (Cairo, 1945), 228, 243, 405–6.

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attracted criticism and censure.[62] Indeed, al-Maqrīzī quotes that the Qarāfa was 'the greatest gathering place (*mujtamaʿāt*) of the Egyptian people', and that there were frequent and various forms of entertainment (*ṭarab*) occurring near the tomb of al-Shafiʿī, especially at night.[63] The Qarāfa was an integral part of the city.

By contrast, the Saints-Innocents was smaller and was centrally located. Unlike the Qarāfa, it was a walled space attached to a single parish church, limiting its accessibility to some extent, although it was still a frequented space. Although the visiting of cemeteries was less of an established practice than *ziyāra*, it could still be encouraged in the spirit of *memento mori*. A fresco of the *Danse Macabre*, completed in 1425, could be seen along the wall of the *charnier des Lingères* in the cemetery.[64] Sermons in the cemetery attracted large crowds, such as those delivered by Friar Richard, who preached near the *Danse Macabre* in 1429.[65] Similarly to Cairo, the cemetery could also be a place where the living offered prayer on behalf of Purgatory-bound souls.[66] The tomb of a notary who died in 1402 invited a confraternity that circled the cemetery every Monday to pray for his and his family's souls.[67]

Yet, this was also a space that intermixed a multitude of profane social uses. In 1390, a man was accused of stealing a woman's purse during a Good Friday sermon preached in the cemetery approximately 16 years earlier.[68] The fifteenth-century poet François Villon references the Quinze-Vingts, who were permitted to beg in the cemetery.[69] Moreover, booksellers and mercers, amongst others, sold their wares here.[70] Notably, Henry VI of England was paraded through the space during his Royal Entry into Paris in 1431.[71]

Ultimately, although Piloti describes the Qarāfa as a city in its own right and de Mets emphasizes the enclosed nature of the Saints-Innocents, they both highlight the indivisibility of cemeteries and their cities; these were spaces in which large numbers of Cairenes and Parisians, dead, but also living, gathered.

[62]H. Lufti, 'Manners and customs of fourteenth-century Cairene women: female anarchy versus male shar'i order in Muslim prescriptive treatises', in N.R. Keddie and B. Baron (eds.), *Women in Middle Eastern History* (New Haven, 1991), 114–18. Ohtoshi, 'Cairene cemeteries', 113.

[63]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 330.

[64]A. Tuetey (ed.), *Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris, 1405–1449, publié d'après les manuscrits de Rome et de Paris* (Paris, 1881), 203; Leproux, 'Cimetière médiéval', 45.

[65]Tuetey (ed.), *Journal d'un bourgeois*, 234.

[66]A. Perron, 'The medieval cemetery as ecclesiastical community: regulation, conflict, and expulsion 1000–1215', in T. Tomaini (ed.), *Dealing with the Dead: Mortality and Community in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2018), 271–3.

[67]Verlet (ed.), *Épitaphier*, vol. VI, 147–8.

[68]H. Duplès-Agier (ed.), *Registre criminel du Châtelet de Paris, du 6 septembre 1389 au 18 mai 1392*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1861–4), vol. I, 282–3.

[69]F. Villon, *Le Testament Villon*, ed. J. Rychner and A. Henry (Geneva, 1974), 132; B. Geremek, *The Margins of Society in Late Medieval Paris*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1987), 172.

[70]Leproux, 'Cimetière médiéval', 51–2.

[71]Tuetey (ed.), *Journal d'un bourgeois*, 276.

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Sultans, kings and urban collective identities in the formation of capitals' cemeteries

These cemeteries were both integral urban spaces and as such hold the potential to reveal much about the wider city, not least through investigating the interplay between two broader dynamics which shaped these spaces in the longue durée. Emphasis is often placed on the roles of sultans and kings in the respective configurations of these cities which were, after all, capital cities. However, cemeteries, as *lieux de mémoire*, were also significantly shaped by urban collective traditions and identities. Thus, kings and sultans were limited to some extent in their ability to shape these spaces that formed part of their capitals, having to take heed of their significance to Parisian and Cairene collective identity. Focusing on these cemeteries enables an analysis of how these forces could interplay in the formation of urban space.

French and Mamluk rulers certainly impacted the shaping of these spaces, both indirectly and directly. In Cairo, broad shifts occurred between different dynasties in the areas predominantly used for burial. Under the Fatimids (969–1171), burial of Cairenes predominantly occurred to the south, in the Qarāfa al-Kubrā. There was then a shift northward under the Sunni Ayyubids, who adhered to the *madhhab* of the Imam al-Shafiʿī (d. 820) whose tomb thus became an important point of reference and patronage, located in the Qarāfa al-Sughrā.[72] Al-Maqrīzī outlines how in 1211, the prince and future Ayyubid sultan al-Malik al-Kāmil (r. 1218–38) had a large *qubba* built over al-Shafiʿī's mausoleum and an aqueduct constructed to bring water towards it from the al-Ḥabash lake. He explains how this site then exercised a magnet-like influence: 'the people (*al-nās*) moved their structures from the Qarāfa al-Kubrā to…the Qarāfa al-Sughrā', the influence of which increased as that of Qarāfa al-Kubrā faded.[73]

The Saints-Innocents also had a history connecting it to royal power in Paris. It was located at a site once named the Champeaux, a peripheral Merovingian-era burial ground.[74] Its topographical relationship with the city was soon impacted by royal action. An 1139 charter of Louis VII (r. 1137–80) mentions the decision in 1137 by his father, Louis VI (r. 1108–37), to establish a new royal market at the Champeaux.[75] The location was chosen at least partly to limit the control of ecclesiastical lords at the periphery of Paris.[76] Indirectly, the economic stakes here further encouraged the cemetery to be slowly enveloped within the activity of the city as it expanded, its peripherality slowly reducing. Its increasing centrality was cemented, again indirectly, on the building of Philip Augustus' (r. 1180–1223) city walls in 1190. At this point, Saints-Innocents became definitively intra muros.[77]

Yet Egyptian and French rulers also shaped the topography of these sites more directly. Significantly, in 1186, four years prior to the walling of Paris,

[72]S. Mulder, 'The mausoleum of Imam al-Shafiʿi', *Muqarnas*, 23 (2006), 15–20.

[73]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 330.

[74]Leproux, 'Cimetière médiéval', 37.

[75]Neyrinck, 'Richard de Pontoise', 54; R. De Lasteyrie (ed.), *Cartulaire général de Paris, ou Recueil de documents relatifs à l'histoire et à la topographie de Paris* (Paris, 1887), vol. I, 266.

[76]Neyrinck, 'Richard de Pontoise', 54.

[77]Leproux 'Cimetière médiéval', 41.

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Saints-Innocents itself was enclosed by the order of Philip Augustus.[78] Rigord, the late twelfth-century chronicler of Philip Augustus' reign, stated that this was to address waterlogging and the foul smell emanating from the ground.[79] His successor Le Breton pointed to the presence of animals, manure, debris and prostitution in the cemetery. He stated that 'the king, therefore, burning with the zeal of divine love, and indignant that such abominations were permitted in a consecrated cemetery' built the wall.[80] However, as Morsel has argued, the walling of the cemetery should be seen as part of wider actions, including the building of city walls and Les Halles and the paving of the streets, through which Philip Augustus attempted to enforce his rule over the city, constructing tangible markers of his authority.[81] This, itself, is perhaps implied by Le Breton, who compares the building of the cemetery wall with that of city walls.[82]

Under the Mamluks, as noted previously, the cemetery areas were further extended with the development of the Northern cemetery. Seemingly, then, ruling authorities were relatively successful at shaping the topography of Cairene cemeteries, each leaving their distinct mark in their topographical development. As Hamza notes, Mamluk rulers did not build any significant new urban zones in the region besides the Northern cemetery, which might be said to have filled this void.[83] Yet, whilst the Mamluk elite evidently played a significant role in the shaping of this cemetery area, this was less the case with the Southern cemetery. One can, paradoxically, attribute this to two causes. First, we might point to the difficulties of the Mamluks, a recently established ruling elite of foreign origin, who faced challenges to the legitimacy of their rule, in marking out their stake in the Qarāfa al-Sughrā, an area which had benefited from Ayyubid patronage. However, this can equally be attributed to an active desire on the part of Mamluk amirs and sultans to distinguish a separate, privileged space within the wider cemetery areas for themselves, because of their difference and the elite status that this afforded them. Nevertheless, in the shaping of the Qarāfa, we must look beyond their role.

Although rulers significantly impacted the configurations of the cemeteries, the mechanisms by which they did so were not only top-down, even in major capital cities like Cairo or Paris. Collective identities, alongside place-specific expressions of religious-cultural traditions, played an important role in the topographical shaping of these spaces. Rulers attempted to engage in these dynamics to varying extents. The interplay of both nuances the historiographical emphasis on the role played by ruling elites in the formation of urban space in capital cities, whilst emphasizing the importance of these burial spaces to city-dwellers across the social strata.

[78]*Ibid.*, 41.

[79]Rigord, 'Gesta Philippi Augusti', in H. Delaborde (ed.), *Œuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume Le Breton, historiens de Philippe-Auguste*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1882–85), vol. I, 71.

[80]G. Le Breton, *La Philippide: poème par Guillaume le Breton*, ed. F. Guizot (Paris, 1825), 22–3.

[81]J. Morsel, 'Comment peut-on être parisien? Contribution à l'histoire de la genèse de la communauté Parisienne au XIII siècle', in P. Boucheron and J. Chiffoleau (eds.), *Religion et société urbaine au Moyen Âge. Études offertes à Jean-Louis Biget* (Paris, 2000), 371.

[82]Le Breton, *La Philippide*, 23; Neyrinck, 'Formation d'un espace'.

[83]Hamza, *Northern Cemetery*, 55.

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The very location of cemeteries was not simply an expression of the will of kings or sultans. The predominant logic concretizing the specific location of the Qarāfa seemingly was rooted in its proximity to the Muqaṭṭam hills. This site, long revered by both Islamic and Coptic traditions in Egypt, was, and to some extent remains, symbolically contested.[84] It was believed by both traditions to be hallowed land; the North African traveller Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 1369) reported a tradition that al-Muqaṭṭam 'shall be one of the gardens of paradise'.[85] Ibn al-Zayyāt, Cairene author of a late fourteenth-century cemetery guide, provides the context for this. Preparing for Moses' arrival at Mount Sinai, God demanded that all other mountains offer something up to this mountain. In response, al-Muqaṭṭam gave up all its plants, trees and water to Mount Sinai, thus becoming bald and barren. In recompense, God stated, 'the seedling of paradise (*ghirās jannat*) [will be placed] at your foot'.[86] Al-Maqrīzī also reported that during the Islamic conquest of Egypt (639–46), the Coptic leader al-Muqawqis informed the military commander ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ that 'God will grant them [those buried beneath al- Muqaṭṭam] paradise on the Day of Judgment without judging (*ḥisāb*) them'.[87] Al-Muqawqis reportedly offered ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ 70,000 dinars to buy the land, suggesting the importance of the land to the Coptic tradition at this time. Ibn al-Zayyāt adds that Caliph ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb directed ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ that 'we do not know of any seedling of paradise but the faithful, so place there the burial ground (*maqbara*) for those who died before you who were among the believers'.[88] He also relates a tradition that Jesus, passing al-Muqaṭṭam with Mary, foretold that 'the people (*ʾummat*) of my brother Muḥammad' would be buried there.[89] The site was therefore of importance to the expression of Islamic identity through a localized Cairene lens, long before the Mamluk regime came to rule the city. The specifically *localized* importance of the Muqaṭṭam is further emphasized by two maps, both produced outside of the Cairene community. The first, from 1549 and of Italian provenance, incorrectly labels the Muqaṭṭam as '*Monte Carafa*' (see Figure 5). The second, our map of Ottoman provenance, incorrectly labels it as '*Jabal al-Muqaṭṭaʿ*' (see Figure 6).[90]

The base of the Muqaṭṭam hills continued to be an important site over the subsequent centuries into our period. The shifts in the contours and foci of this space across time, for which we have already considered the part that royal shaping played, can be further explained by the presence of tombs of saintly figures.

Ziyāra manuals provide evidence of the many tombs of saintly figures buried in the Southern cemetery. Of these tombs, the mausoleum of Imam al-Shafiʿī was an important example and landmark in the cemetery; al-Maqrīzī claims it was amongst the most important and famous of the cemetery's mausolea and its

[84]G. Du Roy *et al.*, 'Le miracle du Muqaṭṭam à travers les siècles: origines et réinventions d'une légende copte', *Annales Islamologiques*, 52 (2018), 194.

[85]Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, AD 1325–1354*, trans. H.A.R. Gibb and C.F. Beckingham, 4 vols. (London, 1956–94), vol. I, 45.

[86]Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-Sayyārah fī Tartīb al-Ziyārah* (Baghdad, 1967), 12–13.

[87]*Ibid.*, 13. Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 329.

[88]Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib*, 13.

[89]*Ibid.*

[90]*Muqaṭṭaʿ* means cut/torn in Arabic. N. Warner, *The True Description of Cairo: A Sixteenth-Century Venetian View* (Oxford, 2006), vol. I, 60.

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Figure 5. Section of Matteo Pagano and Giovanni Domenico Zorzi, *La vera descritione de la gran cita del Caiero*, 1549. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, 924–100. No: 00028548 bpk / Kupferstichkabinett, SMB / Jörg P. Anders.

Figure 6. Section of Anonymous, *View of Cairo and the Nile*, from the *Kitab-ı Bahriye* by Piri Reis, mid- to late seventeenth century. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, MS W 658, fol. 305a.

enduring importance is emphasized by its dimensions and gold-leaf marking on our Ottoman map (Figure 1).[91] Another notable example is Al-Sayyida Nafīsa's (d. 824) tomb, around which there was much construction, including Shajar al-Durr's (d. 1257) mausoleum, the tomb of the 'Abbāsid Caliphs and a mosque

[91]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 330.

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built there by Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 1314–15.[92] Rulers certainly bestowed their patronage upon such sites, as we saw with al-Kāmil's construction over the tomb of al-Shafiʿī. There is much epigraphical evidence of restoration works and of renewed funerary texts sponsored by rulers at sites of importance throughout the Mamluk period.[93] Yet, these sites had long provided further notions of sanctity to the vast Qarāfa, and particularly to specific sections located near these tombs. Here, visitors, as well as those who selected burial nearby, hoped to benefit from their *baraka*. Thus, their veneration by Cairenes was already a firmly established practice, as reflected in *ziyāra* pilgrimage guides. This encouraged the continued patronage of rulers, not only for their own spiritual interest, but also as a useful political act. Despite the geographical peripherality of the Qarāfa, it was forged as an 'intersection' in which all social strata, dead and living, had stakes.

Similarly, the Saints-Innocents was clearly regarded as an important site in the Parisian imagination. Rigord highlights that this had historically been the Parisian burial space par excellence and that 'many thousands of buried men lie there'.[94] Le Breton adds that many saints were also buried there.[95] Yet, also key to the configuration of the Saints-Innocents cemetery, and the endurance of its topographical form into the early modern period, was its confirmation as a lieu-saint during the reign of Philip Augustus, as Neyrinck explores. The cemetery was dedicated to Saints-Innocents, the biblical child victims of Herod who were exegetically interpreted as martyred Christians.[96] However, late medieval sources very rarely refer to the Saints-Innocents in the plural, but to Saint-Innocent in the singular. Whereas an 1156 charter refers to 'ecclesia Sanctorum Innocentum',[97] significantly, both chroniclers of Philip Augustus' reign refer to the singular.[98]

The singular form was itself connected to the importance of urban tradition and collective identity in shaping this cemetery. The singular form gained currency after a child, Richard, a supposed victim of blood libel in Pontoise in *c.* 1179, was transferred to the Saints-Innocents under Philip Augustus' reign.[99] De Mets later mentions seeing Richard's remains within the church '*enchassé d'or et d'argent*'.[100] Neyrinck convincingly argues that Richard was in fact 'a martyr of circumstance', used as a justifying element in Philip Augustus' fiscal policies against Jewish communities of the royal domain prior to their expulsion.[101] This might explain Le Breton's insertion of the description of the cemetery and its enclosure following his account of the expulsion of Jewish communities.[102] This gave Paris a saint at a time of growing spatialization of Parisian identity in what was a key

[92]Y. Rāġib, 'Al-Sayyida Nafīsa, sa légende, son culte et son cimetière (suite et fin)', *Studia Islamica*, 45 (1977), 53–4.

[93]For example, see Sultan Qaytbay's (r. 1468–96) inscriptions (1480–81) recording restorations to al-Shafiʿī's mausoleum. *TEI*, 11404 and 12203, accessed 20 Jul. 2021.

[94]Delaborde (ed.), *Œuvres*, vol. I, 71.

[95]Le Breton, *La Philippide*, 23.

[96]Neyrinck, 'Richard de Pontoise', 51–2.

[97]De Lasteyrie (ed.), *Cartulaire général*, vol. I, 347–8; Neyrinck, 'Formation d'un espace'.

[98]Leproux, 'Cimetière médiéval', 38.

[99]*Ibid.*, 39.

[100]De Mets, *Description*, 94.

[101]Neyrinck, 'Formation d'un espace'.

[102]Le Breton, *La Philippide*, 20–3.

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urban space.[103] The child, then, was frequently referred to as the 'Saint Innocent', and around him a lieu-saint was created in the cemetery, amplifying its position in the collective Parisian imagination.

Although this was a lieu-saint constructed under the indirect patronage of the king, it had cultural currency because it tapped into wider public feeling and the site's prior religious-cultural association. The success of the cult is reflected in its adoption by both ecclesiastical authorities and inhabitants of Paris. For example, the relics of a 'saint Innocent' featured in large processions to Notre-Dame in 1412 and 1449, the latter purportedly involving thousands of children.[104] Royal involvement and patronage of the space did not end with Philip Augustus. Louis XI (r. 1461–83) had a bronze tomb constructed for the female recluse Alix la Bourgotte, who, as her epitaph reveals, lived in the Notre-Dame chapel of the cemetery voluntarily for 46 years until her death in 1470.[105] Yet, again, here royal patronage reflected wider cultural attachment; paradoxically, female recluses in the Saints-Innocents were important members in the life of the local community, able to sustain their position through the alms of visitors, as well as the sponsorship of the king.[106]

Royal action, particularly under Philip Augustus, significantly influenced the macroscopic shaping of the Saints-Innocents. This royal influence was more pronounced in the Parisian case than the Cairene, where local circumstance, collective identity and veneration across the social strata played a greater role. Nevertheless, in both cases, patronage interacted with and utilized broader city-wide tradition and circumstance, significantly paving the way for these spaces to be further publicly 'appropriated' both in how they were used and imagined by Cairenes and Parisians. The formation of these spaces within these capitals, then, was much more complex than an assessment focused only on top-down royal or sultanic action could provide. Studying the cemetery allows analysis of how these forces combined to shape urban space, whilst emphasizing the importance of these cemeteries to Parisians and Cairenes across the social strata.

Urban communities and cemeteries

These cemeteries, however, were not static spaces. Not only do they provide insight into broader dynamics of urban space formation, but they also illuminate multiple community dynamics, both of the living and the dead. Here, we focus on these two spaces at a closer level in the later medieval period, identifying some examples of individuals and communities who continuously created their own physical and imaginative spheres within these wider burial spaces, as represented in the interplay of space and epigraphy.

In both Cairo and Paris, clear language recorded on epitaphs hints at the spatialization and epigraphical documentation of a commonly expressed community unit,

[103]Neyrinck, 'Formation d'un espace'.

[104]A. Tuetey (ed.), 'Journal parisien des années 1412 et 1413', *Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Ile-de-France*, 44 (1917), 164; Tuetey (ed.), *Journal d'un bourgeois*, 392.

[105]Verlet (ed.), *Épitaphier*, vol. VI, 27–8.

[106]L'Hermite-Leclercq, 'Les reclus', 223–32.

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the family. Cemeteries allow us valuable insights into family structures that can be difficult to study outside of their context, particularly for Cairo. A clear difference between the two cities is that in Paris, tombs themselves were commonly shared between family members, with an epitaph documenting this spatialization of family relationships in death. An example spanning two centuries in the Saints-Innocents is the Gisors family tomb, located in front of the Saints-Innocents church. The epitaph records ten individuals across six generations; the first, Mauges de Gisors, 'merchant and bourgeois of Paris', was buried in 1363 and the last, Anne Turquant, was buried in 1569. This also provides insight into occupational continuity and change within a family unit across generations: the second male recorded was a 'seller of fish at Les Halles, bourgeois of Paris'; the third also held this role but was additionally '*maistre d'hostel* of Duke Philip of Burgundy, *receveur des aides* for the King Our Sire and *tailleir en l'election* of Paris'; the fourth was a 'notary of the King at the Châtelet of Paris', and the fifth also a 'notary'.[107]

Whilst shared tombs were uncommon in Cairo,[108] neighbouring family tombs were seemingly much more common, as were enclosed *turba* for elite or culturally important patrons and their families, ranging from smaller structures to large sultanic and amiral mausolea. A prominent example is a *turba* that Ibn al-Zayyāt describes, where both males and females from the same family, with lineage dating back to ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 661), were buried, albeit in separate, demarcated graves.[109] The epitaph of one of these individuals, Fath al-Dīn Ḥasan (d. 1295–96), records his entire *nasab* (patronymic) back to ʿAlī, mentioning a total of 17 generations.[110] This family *turba* was located in close proximity to the famous shrine of Sayyida Kulthum, a ninth-century woman who also descended from ʿAlī. In locating their *turba* next to the shrine of a revered distant ancestor, the family extended their spatialized community in death beyond their immediate relations.

Although this is an example of a particularly long *nasab*, references to family or household on existing Cairene epitaphs are almost universal. This might range from the simple 'Fāṭima, daughter of ʿAlī'[111] to lengthier examples. Husbands were regularly mentioned on the epitaphs of wives, as in Paris. An example combining both these elements is the grave of 'the blessed Lady-Martyr Baraka, daughter of the deceased ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʾAydakīn al-Khaznadār al-Ẓahirī, wife of the Excellent Amir Kawakīl al-Sayfī' who died in 1316. This, again, gives insight into marriage alliances, in that her father was a Mamluk of the royal household, and her husband an amir who had been a royal Mamluk.[112] The fact she is mentioned as martyred suggests she may well have died during childbirth.[113] As for Mamluks, their

[107]Verlet (ed.), *Épitaphier*, vol. VI, 51.

[108]A more unusual case is recorded where both a man and a woman are referenced on the same epitaph, in a mausoleum endowed by the female. They were both buried during the plague of 1348–49. *TEI*, 1506, accessed 20 Jul. 2021. See also J. David-Weill, 'Quelques textes épigraphiques inédits du Caire', *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale*, 28 (1928), 16–18.

[109]Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib*, 97.

[110]*TEI*, 3718, accessed 20 Jul. 2021.

[111]*Ibid.*, 20731, accessed 20 Jul. 2021.

[112]*Ibid.*, 20725, accessed 20 Jul. 2021. Cf. Verlet (ed.), *Épitaphier*, vol. VI, 302, where father and son-in-law are both bonnet-makers.

[113]Diem and Schöller, *Living and the Dead*, vol. I, 70.

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relationship with their former master who emancipated them (but sometimes with a previous patron or the merchant who initially bought them) was conveyed throughout their life in their *nisba* (adjectival name), or sometimes in the '*min*' (meaning from) form, which they shared with all others from their master's household. This would be inscribed on their tomb, whether simple soldier,[114] or often even sultan.[115] Despite these nuances, the spatialization and epigraphical documentation of familial or household relationships were common to both cities.

Familial expressions in burial can also help shed light more broadly on gender dynamics in urban space. There are instances where female relationships are emphasized more so than paternal or marital ones. A Cairene example is 'the girl Jawziyya, sister of the deceased Shahada, children of the noble Yāḥyā b. Shams al-Dīn al-Laythī'.[116] Here, a sororal relationship is emphasized before the paternal, and also potentially signals that their tombs were in close spatial proximity. In the Saints-Innocents, there is an unusual example of a familial epitaph dated to 1614 which, among others, commemorates the close relationship between aunt and niece, who were buried together in 1468.[117]

There is much evidence of female agency at play in the context of the cemetery, integral urban spaces where both men and women had stakes, and this could be reflected spatially. Burial of wives can particularly contribute to our understanding of spatialized gender dynamics in medieval cities. In Cairo, it was not uncommon for wives to be buried with their own family rather than their husband's. This could allow elite female patrons to found their own funerary structures, such as those of Urdutikin, Tughay, Ṭūlbiyya, Tatar al-Ḥijāziyya and Umm Shaʿbān, wives, mothers and daughters of Qalāwūnid sultans.[118] Yet, we also see examples of this from female patrons of lesser prominence.[119] Although still relatively few, elite Cairene women, particularly in the fourteenth century, seem to have taken the opportunity to found their own structures more than their Parisian counterparts. In Paris, we see examples both of women being buried with her husband's family, and of them being buried with their own. This might be because husbands were buried in more privileged, exclusive spaces, as we see in the example of Colombe de Bonney's 1478 epitaph, which details precisely that her husband Regnault de Dormans, knight and ambassador to the pope amongst other things, was buried before the grand altar in the Chartreux of Paris.[120] Yet in other cases, one can detect

[114]See for example, the rather stripped back epitaph of a presumably lower-ranking Mamluk Janibayh (d. 1494). *TEI*, 11817, accessed 20 Jul. 2021.

[115]See, for example, funerary inscriptions of Sultan Qalāwūn (r. 1279–90). M. Berchem, 'Materiaux pour un corpus inscriptionum arabicarum: Égypte', *Mémoires publiés par les membres de la mission archéologique française au Caire*, 19 (1894), 126–7.

[116]*TEI*, 10186, accessed 20 Jul. 2021.

[117]Verlet (ed.), *Épitaphier*, vol. VI, 182–3.

[118]H. al-Harithy, 'Female patronage of Mamluk architecture in Cairo', in A.E. Sonbol (ed.), *Beyond the Exotic: Women's Histories in Islamic Societies* (Syracuse, 2005), 321–35. Patronage of such structures could, however, involve multiple contributors. See, for example, M. Shaaban, 'The curious case of a fourteenth-century madrasa: agency, patronage and the foundation of the madrasa of Umm al-Ṣultān Sha'bān', in B.J. Walker and A. Al Ghouz (eds.), *Living with the Nature of Things: Contributions to a New Social History of the Middle Islamic Periods* (Göttingen, 2020), 285–309.

[119]See n. 108.

[120]Verlet (ed.), *Épitaphier*, vol. VI, 245–6.

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a clear desire of females to be buried with their own families, as seen in an unusual case from 1504 of a female who died in Blois, but stipulated that her heart should be buried with her father in the Saints-Innocents.[121] Intent is laid out more plainly in testamentary evidence; the 1407 will of Enguerranne de Saint-Benoît, wife of Pierre de Précy, states her desire to be buried next to her parents in the Saints-Innocents.[122]

Another fascinating example demonstrates the spatialization of familial affection in detailed terms. This was recorded on a cast iron cross in the Saints-Innocents cemetery, near the common pit. This burial pit was reserved largely for poorer Parisians from institutions and parishes that the Saints-Innocents served, who were buried there collectively, typically without grave-markers, their bones eventually being dug up and placed in the roof spaces of the *charniers*. The cross commemorated Catherine de Breban along with Girard de Breban, her father, Ysabeau de Sonniere, her mother, Jacques de Breban, her brother, Philippe de Breban, her uncle, and Jeanne de Sonniere, her aunt, all of whom were buried in the pit. Catherine's husband, however, also commemorated on the cross, seems to have been buried outside the pit: 'here lies the honourable and wise Jacques de Bergieres, spice merchant and bourgeois of Paris, who died on the first day of February 1457 – May God have his soul'. Catherine clearly wanted to be buried with her family, who were quite possibly of lower social status, in the pit, but at the same time was commemorated on the epitaph of her bourgeois husband.[123] Her desire to be buried near both *her* family and her husband was fulfilled. In focusing on female burial, we can nuance perceptions of the participation and representation of women, particularly wives, in an integral medieval urban space.

These cemeteries were constantly shaped by, and could indeed play their part in shaping, multiple co-existing communities. They are rich in information about the people who inhabited these late medieval cities and reveal much about their multi-directional engagement with an integral urban space.

Conclusions

This article has argued that a micro-historical focus on urban cemeteries presents a fruitful methodological angle from which to approach a range of larger urban historical questions from a comparative perspective. Here, we have explored how cemeteries can allow us to nuance perceptions of urban peripheries and centres, in highlighting their integral place within the city despite their differing physical locations. Furthermore, consideration of the interaction between royal influence and urban collective identity in the longer-term shaping of these cemeteries sheds a different light on urban space formation in capitals. Although both factors were significant in the shaping of both the Cairene and Parisian burial spaces considered here, the former played a more direct role in Paris. This further challenges

[121] *Ibid.*, vol. VI, 76.

[122] A. Tuetey (ed.), *Testaments enregistrés au Parlement de Paris sous le régne de Charles VI* (Paris, 1880), 217–18.

[123] Verlet (ed.), *Épitaphier*, vol. VI, 231.

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past perceptions of the 'Islamic city', whereby the 'Islamic ruler' was seen as the major force in the shaping of a uniform urban space.[124]

In fact, studying cemeteries in the comparative urban context confirms that the utility of the division between 'Islamic' and 'Christian' city in urban historical studies has been overstated. French scholars in a colonial context proposed the model of the 'Islamic city', attempting to isolate urban features and forms common to cities with predominantly Muslim inhabitants across time and space. This model was framed implicitly by comparison with the ancient city or the European city, defining the 'Islamic city' negatively in terms of what it supposedly lacked.[125] Yet, whilst this approach has rightly received much criticism over the past four decades, comparative studies across Christian and Islamic cities remain few. By comparing cities across the Islamic and Christian divide from a different methodological standpoint, which foregrounds an appreciation of specific urban spaces in their own historical contexts, we can move beyond overly schematized and deterministic notions of religious difference as presented in urban forms, instead isolating particularities of individual cities, as well as similarities across cities.

These were dynamic spaces, shaped by and playing an active role in forming multiple city-dwelling communities, both living and dead. Analysis of cemeteries can tell us much about such communities, beyond what we addressed here. Although the focus here has been on two cemeteries of late medieval Cairo and Paris, there is great potential for further research on a wider range of urban cemeteries and what they can tell us about cities. There are also other themes, outside the remit of this article, which it would be profitable to pursue. One such theme, intimately connected to the story of how these spaces were constructed, is how these spaces, through their physical make-up and through the traditions associated with them, could actively contribute to the shaping of their various uses, from the sacred to the profane, from funerary ritual to criminal activity.

Whilst the Qarāfa and Saints-Innocents were integral urban spaces, their abundant ability to reveal much about the city nevertheless indicates their exceptionality. These were concentrated spaces in which a whole cross-section of urban inhabitants, living and dead, had stakes, from kings and sultans to beggars and recluses. They were intersections with complex jurisdictions. They could be home to both community cohesion and conflict at multiple levels. They represented but also shaped communities past, present and future at one and the same time. Whilst Taylor for his part, interpreted the Qarāfa as a liminal, marginal space, Ohtoshi interpreted Cairo's cemeteries as public loci.[126] Although seemingly contradictory, both have a point. These were spaces that were integral to the city, deeply implicated in the overarching dynamics that shaped the wider urban space, spaces where a whole multitude of different communities created bonds in life and in death. But they could also reveal the city's pressure points, its underbelly. Perhaps in recognizing these cemeteries' centrality to cities, we can rethink our perceptions of cities themselves.

[124]A. Raymond, 'The spatial organization of the city', in S. Jayyusi *et al.* (eds.), *The City in the Islamic World* (Leiden, 2008), vol. I, 50.

[125]For more information, see *ibid.*, 47–52.

[126]Ohtoshi, 'Cairene cemeteries', 115; Taylor, *Vicinity of the Righteous*, 57–9.

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