Ellen Kenney
The American University in Cairo

The Turbah of Sitt Sutaytah: A Funerary Foundation for a Mamluk Noblewoman in Fourteenth-Century Damascus

Introduction

Nestled within a densely built-up quarter in the heart of the old city of Damascus, amidst famous historical monuments, shops, and residential buildings, stand the remains of a small but elegant structure of the early Mamluk period. So narrow is the alley fronting it and so festooned its facade with pennants and posters, one could almost walk past without taking particular notice of it. However, some feature of its worn façade—perhaps the finely dressed masonry of the lower walls, the handsome epigraphic band, or the exquisite stalactite hood above the entrance niche—would alert the observant passer-by to the presence of a significant memento of the city's distant past. In fact, this façade represents nearly all that remains of the Turbah of Sitt Sutaytah, the funerary foundation of one of the highest ranked women in the land at the time of its construction: the "first lady"—as it were—of the Mamluk province of Bilād al-Shām in the early decades of the fourteenth century. However, in spite of the notability of its sponsor and the refinements of its construction, the building has attracted relatively little scholarly attention.[1] This study will examine the history of the building and its site, survey its structural and decorative remains, and analyze its place within the architectural and social context of Mamluk Damascus and Bilād al-Shām.[2] Ultimately, it

[1]Several modern surveys mention or briefly describe the building remains. These include Karl Wulzinger and Carl Watzinger, *Damaskus: Die islamische Stadt* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1924), 43, 71f., pl. 8; Jean Sauvaget, *Les monuments historiques de Damas (*Beirut, 1932), 69, no. 42; Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, *Khiṭaṭ Dimashq: Nuṣūṣ wa-Dirāsāt fī Tārīkh Dimashq al-Tubughrāfī wa-Āthāruhā al-Qadīmah (*Beirut, 1949), 136f.; Muḥammad A. Duhmān, *Wulāt Dimashq fī ʿAhd al-Mamālīk* (Damascus, 1981), 170 ff.; Dorothée Sack, *Damaskus: Entwicklung und Struktur einer orientalisch-islamischen Stadt* (Mainz am Rhein, 1989), 103, no. 3.41; Michael Meinecke, *Die Mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien* (Glückstadt, 1992), 1:87, 99; 2:155, no. 9C/262; Qutaybah Shihābī, *Mushayadāt Dimashq dhawāt al-Aḍriḥah wa-ʿAnāṣiruhā al-Jamālīyah* (Damascus, 1995), 194; Moshe Sharon, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palaestinae* (Leiden, 2009), 4:99. The building is discussed at length only in Sabri Jarrar, "Suq al-Maʿrifa: An Ayyubid Hanbalite Shrine in al-Haram al-Sharif," *Muqarnas* 15 (1998): 71–100.

[2]My work on this paper has progressed in fits and starts. Preparing *Power and Patronage* for publication, I recognized that questions surrounding Sutaytah's *turbah* and its patronage deserved more consideration than I could dedicate to it there (Ellen Kenney, *Power and Patronage in Medieval Syria: The Architecture and Urban Works of Tankiz al-Nāṣirī* [Chicago, 2009], 62, n. 253). The stimulating keynote lecture at the 2012 Historians of Islamic Art Association symposium deliv-

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). Article DOI: doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC. (http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735)

DOI of Vol. XX: 10.6082/M1J10184. See http://hdl.handle.net/11417/727 to download the full volume or individual articles. See http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html for more information about copyright and open access.

will consider the foundation as an example of architecture sponsored by and for females of the Mamluk period. In doing so, it will draw on the boom in scholarship dedicated to better understanding medieval women both as patrons and as end-users that has emerged over the last few decades.[3]

Biography

Sutaytah was born into Mamluk nobility.[4] Her father, Sayf al-Dīn Kawkāʾī al-Manṣūrī al-Silāḥdār, originally served as a mamluk of Sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn. He fought at the Battle of Shaqḥab, held the ceremonial post of arms-bearer *(silāḥdār)* for the sultan, and attained the rank of amir of one thousand.[5] He amassed great wealth, and owned many palaces, horses, textiles, and other riches. Ibn Taghrībirdī mentions that Kawkāʾī erected a minaret and a *turbah* in Cairo's northern cemetery at Rās al-Hadfah, near where Barqūq's funerary monument would later be built. When it came to marrying off his daughter, Kawkāʾī—like most of his fellow Manṣūrī amirs—secured an alliance with another high-

ered by my Ph.D. advisor, Priscilla Soucek, entitled "Wives, Concubines, Daughters and Mothers: the Multiple Paths to Female Patronage of the Visual Arts," reignited my interest in researching the question further. By that time, it was impractical for me to do further field research in Damascus because of unrest in Syria. The same reason spurred me to finish preparing for publication the findings of my fieldwork (conducted 1997–99), in hopes that I can augment them through further research *in situ* in the near future.

[3] Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Rāziq, *La femme au temps des Mamlouks en Égypte* (Cairo, 1973); Nikki R. Keddie and Beth Baron, eds., *Women in Middle Eastern History (*New Haven, 1991); *Asian Art* 6, no. 2 (1993), an issue devoted to women and Islamic art; Ruth Roded, *Women in Islamic Biographical Collections* (Boulder and London, 1994); Annemarie Schimmel, *My Soul is a Woman: The Feminine in Islam,* trans. Susan H. Ray (New York, 1997); Gavin R. G. Hambly, ed., *Women in the Medieval Islamic World* (New York, 1998); D. Fairchild Ruggles, ed., *Women, Patronage, and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies* (Albany, 2000); Amira el-Azhary Sonbol, ed., *Beyond the Exotic: Women's Histories in Islamic Societie*s (Syracuse, 2005); Therese Martin, ed., *Reassessing the Roles of Women as "Makers" of Medieval Art and Architecture,* 2 vols. (Leiden, 2012); and Asma Sayeed, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam* (New York, 2013).

[4] Entries for Sutaytah are found in Khalīl Ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān al-ʿAṣr wa-Aʿwān al-Naṣr,* ed. ʿAlī Abū Zayd et al. (Damascus, 1998), 2:403, no. 695; Ismāʿīl Ibn ʿUmar Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah fī al-Tārīkh* (Cairo, 1932–39), 14:151.

[5] Khalīl Ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-al-Wafayāt,* ed. Aḥmad al-Arnāʾūṭ and Turkī Muṣṭafá (Beirut, 2000), 24:282; idem, *Aʿyān,* 4:162–63, no. 1409; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1961–73), 10:241; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah fī Aʿyān al-Miʾah al-Thāminah* (Beirut, 1993), 3:270, no. 700; Aḥmad Ibn ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Maʿrifat al-Mulūk,* ed. Muṣṭafá Ziyādah et al. (Cairo, 1934–72), 4:103, 359, 360; Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh,* ed. ʿAdnān Darwīsh (Damascus, 1977–94), 2:625. On Kawkāʾī's *turbah* in Cairo, see Meinecke, *Mamlukische Architektur,* 2:212, and Hani Hamza, *The Northern Cemetery of* Cairo (Costa Mesa, 2001), 26.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: **doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC** (**http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735**)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

ranking amir associated with the Manṣūrī regiment. He married Sutaytah to Sayf al-Dīn Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī al-Nāṣirī, originally the mamluk of Ḥusām al-Dīn Lājīn al-Manṣūrī. Kawkāʾī managed to survive the purge of Manṣūrī amirs at the beginning of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign that resulted in the arrest of over forty of his comrades. His good fortune may well have been due to Sutaytah's marriage alliance, since many of these arrests were preceded by quarrels with her husband, Tankiz.[6] In fact, Kawkāʾī lived an exceptionally long life, surviving both his daughter and his son-in-law. He died in 749/1349, succumbing as an old man to the bubonic plague. In spite of his social prominence and longevity, Kawkāʾī's obituary is relatively short, and the family tie between his daughter Sutaytah and Tankiz is one of the main points highlighted in it.

While Sutaytah began life in the upper echelons of Mamluk society, her marriage to Tankiz elevated her even higher. After al-Nāṣir Muḥammad returned to the throne for the third time, he conferred upon Tankiz a series of promotions culminating in an appointment in 1312 to the office of *nāʾib al-shām*. Tankiz retained this post for an unusually long period—until his ultimate downfall in 1340.[7] During his long governorship, Sutaytah's husband distinguished himself as a politician, diplomat, and cultural patron. He contributed widely to the built environment of Bilād al-Shām with religious and charitable constructions, civic works, and palaces. Tankiz survived Sutaytah by a decade.

Sutaytah appears to have been the only legal wife of Tankiz, but she shared his attentions with a large cast of concubines. Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363) reports that at one point there were nine concubines in Tankiz's household and that each was provided with her own staff of servants and slaves.[8] According to her obituary, Sutaytah was the mother of two daughters. One, Fāṭimah, became the wife of the amir Sayf al-Dīn Biljik, who himself was the nephew of the great amir, Qawṣūn, and one of several of Qawṣūn's relatives who attained high rank in Mamluk society (he became an amir of one hundred).[9] Sutaytah's other daughter,

[6] Amir Mazor, *The Rise and Fall of a Muslim Regiment: The Mansuriyya in the First Mamluk Sultanate, 678/1279–741/1341* (Bonn, 2015), 172, and 202–3.

[7] For biography on Tankiz, see al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī,* and Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut, 1973). For discussion of his life, see Kenney, *Power,* 9–13; Stephan Conermann, "Tankiz ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥusāmī al-Nāṣirī (d. 740/1340) as Seen by His Contemporary al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1–24;"Tankiz," *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed.; Michael Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem* (London, 1987), 223; Ḥayāt Nāṣir al-Ḥajjī, "Al-Amīr Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī: Nāʾib al-Shām fī al-Fitrah 712–741/1312–1340 M," in *Dirāsāt fī Tārīkh Salṭanat al-Mamālīk fī Miṣr wa-al-Shām* (Kuwait, 1985), 199–283.

[8] Al-Ṣafadī reports this information in the context of an entry about Tājār al-Dawādār and his astonishment at the scale of Tankiz's wealth (al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān,* 2:565).

[9] Ulrich Haarmann, "Joseph's Law—The Careers and Activities of Mamluk Descendants before the Ottoman Conquest of Egypt," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society,* ed. Thomas Philipp

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: **doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC** (**http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735**)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

Quṭlūmalik, rose even higher on the social ladder, eventually becoming queen: she first married amir Aḥmad ibn Baktimur al-Sāqī (713–33/1313-14–1332-33) in 727/1327,[10] and later, after Aḥmad's death in 733/1332, married Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 738/1337–38 and produced a son who would himself eventually become sultan, al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ṣāliḥ.[11]

The death notices for Sutaytah do not list any sons among her progeny. However, al-Ṣafadī's biographical entry for ʿAlī ibn Tankiz tentatively identifies her as his mother. Although ʿAlī was a sickly child, he was a favorite of Tankiz, upon whom the boy's ill health weighed heavily. When al-Nāṣir Muḥammad proclaimed him an amir in 732 (thus, about one year after Sutaytah's death), ʿAlī was still quite young. A procession in Damascus from the madrasah of Nūr al-Dīn to the Dār al-Saʿādah attended by all the important figures in town marked the event. Within a year from his instatement, however, ʿAlī had died and was buried at his father's mausoleum.[12] According to the chronicle of Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍāʾil, a son—Muḥammad—was born to Tankiz in the same year as Sutaytah's death—but Muḥammad's mother is not identified there.[13] In 738/1337–38, two of Tankiz's sons were married off to two of the daughters of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Although this event figures prominently in the chronicles, the mother (or mothers) of the two grooms goes unnamed. It is possible that Sutaytah also bore one or both of these sons of Tankiz and that the historians neglected to mention her maternity of them, as was the case with ʿAlī ibn Tankiz. Alternatively, the two grooms may have had another mother (or other mothers).[14]

---

and Ulrich Haarmann (Cambridge, 1998), 66. There is some discrepancy about whether Biljik (also rendered as Baljak) is the son of Qawṣūn's brother Susun or his sister (Amalia Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nasir Muhammad Ibn Qalawun,1310–1341* [Leiden, 1995], 39, n. 57. See also Jo van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos: Patronage, Conflict and Mamluk Socio-Political Culture, 1341–1382* (Leiden, 2006), 81).

[10] Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 2:289.

[11] On the suspicious circumstances surrounding Aḥmad's death, see Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "Waqf as Remuneration and the Family Affairs of al-Nasir Muhammad and Baktimur al-Saqi," in *The Cairo Heritage: Essays in Honor of Laila Ali Ibrahim,* ed. Doris Behrens-Abouseif (Cairo and New York, 2000), 58.

[12] Al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān,* 537.

[13] Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʾil, *Al-Nahj al-Sadīd wa-al-Durr al-Farīd (*Freiburg, 1973), 143.

[14] On the relatively equal prospects for offspring of wives and those of concubines, see Carl F. Petry, "Class Solidarity versus Gender Gain: Women as Custodians of Property in Later Medieval Egypt," in *Women in Middle Eastern History,* ed. Keddie and Baron, 122–42, and 141, n. 37. See also Yossef Rapoport, "Women and Gender in Mamluk Society: An Overview," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 11, no. 2 (2007): 10.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: **doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC** (**http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735**)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

"Generous, upright (or: virtuous), and pious": this is how al-Ṣafadī describes al-Khātūn Sitt Sutaytah in his biographical work.[15] Although his notice on Sutaytah is brief and concentrates mainly on establishing her next-of-kin, it includes the frank claim that "she dissuaded her husband from many things"—suggesting, perhaps, that she played some kind of advisory role in Tankiz's affairs of state. Contemporary historians characterize Tankiz as being strong-willed and sometimes impetuous. Al-Ṣafadī's remark may indicate that Sutaytah provided a check to her husband's impulsivity.

When Sutaytah conducted her pilgrimage in 729/1329, departing Damascus on 9 Shawwāl/August 6, an entourage of important notables accompanied her.[16] She died several months later on 3 Rajab/22 April the following year, but none of the sources explicitly mention the cause of her death.[17] If Sutaytah was the mother of Muḥammad ibn Tankiz, born in the same year as her death, her death may have been related to childbirth. Whether the hajj journey precipitated her death or she undertook the hajj when she did because of an impending sense of mortality is impossible to surmise. As we will see below, by the time of her death she had already purchased the land for the mausoleum and expressed her wishes about the charitable functions to be associated with it. However, no explicit connection between her pilgrimage and her foundation is made in the historical sources—as it is, for example, in accounts of the commission by one of Sutaytah's contemporaries, Sitt Hadaq, of a mosque in Cairo to commemorate her pilgrimage.[18]

Sutaytah's birth year is not provided, so her age at death is open to speculation; but given that her daughter had reached a marriageable age by 727/1327,[19] she probably was not younger than thirty when she died in 730/1330. Accounts dealing with her funeral convey the sense that she was widely respected as well as highly positioned. Her death occurred at the grand palace known as Dār al-Dhahab that her husband had recently constructed in "al-Khaḍrā'" quarter just

[15] Al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān,* 2:403. Sutaytah's piety and generosity are echoed in all later accounts as well. See, for example, ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ al-ʿIlmawī, *Mukhtaṣar* ("Description de Damas"), ed. Henri Sauvaire, *Journal Asiatique,* 9. Ser. (5 vols.), 4:255. On the usage of female titles, see ʿAbd al-Rāziq, *La femme,* 107–8.

[16] Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah,* 14:144.

[17] The absence of this information is not exceptional. On the general shortage of mortality causes in biographical literature, see William Tucker, "Environmental Hazards, Natural Disasters, Economic Loss, and Mortality in Mamluk Syria," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 3 (1999): 111–12.

[18] On this monument, see Caroline Williams, "The Mosque of Sitt Hadaq," *Muqarnas* 11 (1994): 55–64.

[19] On customary marriage age, see Yossef Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society* (Cambridge, 2005), 39.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC (http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

south of the Umayyad Mosque.[20] According to al-Birzālī's contemporary account, funerary prayers were conducted for the "great, honorable lady" at the Umayyad Mosque.[21] As a funeral venue, this mosque was the most prestigious and venerated in all Damascus, and her commemoration there serves as an index of her elevated social standing. The funeral was followed by Sutaytah's interment at "the place she had bought for her burial" followed by a wake held nearby in the Madrasah al-Qilijīyah. Al-Birzālī makes a point of mentioning the attendance of "a great many people" among them qadis, amirs, notables, and common people—further testimony to Sutaytah's stature in the community.

Location and Site

The Turbah of Sitt Sutaytah is located inside the city walls of Damascus, southwest of the Umayyad Mosque (Fig. 1). We are told that Sutaytah purchased the plot upon which it was built, but not from whom she bought the property or what purpose it had previously served. The source, al-Birzālī, refers to it simply as a *makān.*[22] This is striking, because the plot Sutaytah had acquired was in a prime, central location: near the Khaṭṭ al-Khawwāṣīn, which ran north-south between the commercial zone outside the western entrance of the Umayyad Mosque, Bāb al-Barīd, and the main east-west artery of the city, Sūq al-Ṭawīl. The block within which the foundation was situated is bounded on the north by a street intersecting Khaṭṭ al-Khawwāṣīn known as Darb Maʿan. On the east side of the block, a street cuts diagonally to the southwest, linking with a north-south cul-de-sac. The area comprising this cul-de-sac and the zone just to its north was known as Ḥārat al-Balāṭah. Bounding the block on the south is a street running perpendicular to Khaṭṭ al-Khawwāṣīn, known as Darb al-Labbān and later as Zuqāq al-Maḥkamah, named after the eighteenth-century law court that was housed in a building on the south side of the street.[23]

Within this block, the plot available for the new construction was constrained by the presence of a number of pre-existing buildings (Fig. 2). The largest and most famous of these earlier monuments was the twelfth-century Madrasah al-Nūrīyah al-Kubrá. That building, together with the smaller tomb and madrasah of amir Jamāl al-Dīn Āqqūsh al-Najībī built contiguous with it around 677/1278,

[20] Kenney, *Power,* 55–61; Mathieu Eychenne, "Toponymie et résidences urbaines à Damas au XIVe siècle: Usage et appropriation du patrimoine ayyoubide au début de l'époque mamelouke," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 31 (2012): 246ff.

[21] Qtd. in al-Nuʿaymī, *Dāris,* 2:211.

[22] Qtd. in al-Nuʿaymī, *Dāris,* 2:211.

[23] That building was largely destroyed in 1925. Remains can be seen in plate 18 of Sack, *Damaskus.* See also: Wulzinger and Watzinger, *Damaskus,* 72; Abdul-Karim Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus, 1723–1783* (Beirut, 1966), 309.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC (http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

still occupy all of the north-east segment of the block in question. Abutting the Nūrīyah to the west was the nearly contemporaneous Madrasah al-Rayḥānīyah (565/1169–70), now lost.[24] Just to the south of the Nūrīyah was a madrasah that dated to the thirteenth century known as the Madrasah al-Ṭayyibah (alternatively known as "al-Shumānīyah"), a building no longer extant today but operational at least until the fifteenth century. Thus, on three sides of Sutaytah's *turbah* site there would have been clear, pre-existing boundaries: to the south, Darb al-Labbān/Zuqāq al-Maḥkamah; to the east, the Madrasah al-Ṭayyibah; and to the north, the southwest corner of the Nūrīyah and the Rayḥānīyah.

Less certain is the disposition of the western segment of the block on which the *turbah* is sited. A topographical source (al-Nuʿaymī, on which more below) mentions two buildings west of it. An institution known as the Madrasah al-Ukuzīyah, erected by 587/1191–92, is described as lying west of the Ṭayyibah and the "Tankizīyah" (i.e., the Turbah of Sitt Sutaytah) and—rather confusingly—to the west of the Madrasah of Umm Ṣāliḥ, which was situated across the Ḥārat al-Balāṭah lane.[25] There appears to be general (though tacit) consensus among modern topographers that this latter coordinate is erroneous and that the Ukuzīyah belongs east of Umm Ṣāliḥ, either on the north side of Darb al-Labbān/Zuqāq al-Maḥkamah, occupying the corner with Ḥarat al-Balāṭah, or farther east along Darb al-Labbān/Zuqāq al-Maḥkamah on its south side.[26] The Madrasah al-Shiblīyah (constructed by 623/1226) is described simply as facing the Ukuzīyah.[27] According to either of the two aforementioned theories for the Ukuzīyah site, this could situate the Shiblīyah at the far west end of the *turbah*'s block.

Today, the Nūrīyah-Najībīyah structure, its northern *īwān* lopped off and paved over for parking, is the only pre-modern monument surviving on the block, aside from Sutaytah's *turbah*. The remains of the *turbah* are surrounded on all three sides by modern buildings. A multi-story residential structure rises to its west, the roof of which affords a birds-eye view of the vicinity. To the east, the *turbah*'s façade is contiguous with a modern building containing shops and businesses. Opposite Sutaytah's building, a modern construction has encroached into the street. Presumably, when the *turbah* was first built one would have been able to admire its façade from a more distant vantage point than is possible at present.

[24] This building was still extant in the early twentieth century, when Wulzinger and Watzinger included it in their survey (*Damaskus,* 70). See also al-Nuʿaymī, *Dāris,* 1:522; E. Combé, J. Sauvaget, and G. Wiet, *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe* (Cairo, 1931–56), 9:3342; Jean Sauvaget et al., *Les Monuments Ayyubides de Damas* (Damascus, 1938–50), 2:51–56.

[25] Al-Nuʿaymī, *Dāris,* 1:274.

[26] Sack suggests the former *(Damaskus)* and al-Munajjid *(Khiṭaṭ),* the latter.

[27] This building is not extant (al-Nuʿaymī, *Dāris*, 1:537; Sauvaire, "Description," 4:265; ʿAbd al-Qādir Badrān, *Munādamāt al-Aṭlāl wa Musāmarat al-Hayāl* [Damascus, 1960], 178).

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: **doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC** (**http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735**)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

Construction History

As soon as Sutaytah's wake concluded, construction of her funerary building began. Al-Birzālī provides a contemporary account: "(They) buried her in the place that she bought for her burial next to Madrasah al-Ṭayyibah, near to al-Khawwāṣīn, inside Damascus ...(here he gives the above-mentioned information about the funeral and wake)... and they embarked on construction of the place that she was buried in, and the equipment and the craftsmen were brought and the work was completed. I was informed that she had requested that the dome *(qubbah)* be constructed on top of the tomb *(ḍarīḥ)* and nearby it a *masjid* and *ribāṭ* for women were built."[28] Another contemporary, Ibn al-Wardī, distinguishes the *turbah* with the descriptor "*ḥasanah.*"[29] Ibn Kathīr and al-Nuʿaymī both claim that she also ordered the construction of a *maktab aytām* (orphans' school) as part of the foundation, and al-Nuʿaymī specifically situates the *ribāṭ* and *maktab* to the west of the *turbah* and *masjid.* Ibn Kathīr's account emphasizes that these works were carried out according to Sutaytah's order.[30]

Thus, although Sutaytah purchased the property for her *turbah* and communicated her intention for the foundation of a *masjid, ribāṭ,* and perhaps also a *maktab* at it, she had died before construction began. The project took only about five months and the following foundation inscription commemorates its completion (Fig. 7):

> In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate. The construction of this blessed mausoleum *(turbah)* was ordered by His Noble and High Excellency, our Master, the Great Amir, the Defender of the Faith, the Holy Warrior, al-Malikī, the Well-served, Sayf al-Dunyā wa-al-Dīn Tankiz, Viceroy of the Magnificent Sultanate in Syria the Well-protected, may his victory be glorious! The achievement took place in the month of Dhū al-Ḥijjah of the year 730 (Sept.–Oct. 1330).[31]

Subsequent History

Later-written sources refer to Sutaytah's funerary foundation by various names. Some are based on her father's name, which itself has been transcribed in different ways by different writers. Thus, in some places the establishment is referred to as the "Kawkīyah" or the "Kawkabīyah" (also erroneously tran-

[28] Qtd. in al-Nuʿaymī, *Dāris,* 2:211.

[29] Ibn al-Wardī, *Tatimmat al-Mukhtaṣar fī Akhbār al-Bashar* (Beirut, 1970), 2:419.

[30] Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah,* 14:151; al-Nuʿaymī, *Dāris,* 2:274f.

[31] Combé et al, *Répertoire,* 14:267–68, no. 5589.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: **doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC** (**http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735**)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

scribed as Qawqabīyah), while elsewhere it appears as the "Tankizīyah" or the "Khātūnīyah".[32] In the eighteenth century, another burial was added under the western dome for Shaykh Aḥmad al-Naḥlawī, a religious scholar who died in 1744. Subsequently, the building came to be known by his name.[33] In his topography of Damascus published in 1855, Alfred von Kremer refers to the monument as "Medreset-en-Nih'lawi" and describes it as a beautiful building.[34] Badran, publishing in the 1940s, reports that in his time the building was referred to—erroneously, he remarks—as "Zāwiyat al-Naḥlawī."[35] Evidently, the establishment had changed in function from one serving as a *ribāṭ* for women, to one serving as a madrasah or *zāwiyah*—presumably for men.[36]

The monument's twentieth-century past reflects the tensions between historical preservation and modern use that characterize the histories of innumerable medieval buildings in the region. The files of the Buildings Department *(Qism al-Mabānī)* under the Ministry of Antiquities record repeated attempts by neighborhood residents or shopkeepers to appropriate portions of the monument for residential or commercial purposes and repeated demands from the Department that such actions be discontinued or reversed. Around the turn of the last century, when Wulzinger and Watzinger recorded the monument, the twin domes still stood (Fig. 3). However, by 1973, an Antiquities Ministry inspector describes the eastern chamber and its dome in good condition, but the western chamber inhabited by a family and its dome replaced with a flat roof. The west dome may have come down as early as 1916, when Herzfeld conducted his survey of Damascus.[37] Despite a 1975 letter from the Antiquities Ministry to the Awqāf Department addressing the illegality of renting cultural property, the western chamber was being put to commercial use in the late 1980s, when Akram al-ʿUlabī published his description of the site. Al-ʿUlabī decries this adaptation, carried out in spite of the general knowledge of the property's status as an endowment and a registered antiquity, and predicts that the day when the *turbah* itself would disappear was not far away. Just over a decade later, Shihābī's publication reports both domes lost, although this development is not reflected in the Qism al-Mabānī reports (Fig. 4).

[32] Ibn Kathīr: "Karakay"; al-Nuʿaymī and al-ʿIlmawī: Kawkabaʾī.

[33] Shihābī, *Mushayadāt,* 194.

[34] Alfred von Kremer, *Topographie von Damaskus* (Vienna, 1855), 2:13.

[35] Badrān, *Munādamāt,* 350.

[36] According to Rapoport's overview, by the Ottoman period women's *ribāṭ*s are no longer found ("Women and Gender," 44).

[37] Stefan R. Hauser and Ann C. Gunter, *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies, 1909–1950* (Leiden, 2004), xiv.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC (http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

Description

The surviving elements of Sutaytah's funerary foundation are a façade, a vestibule, and partial remains of two square spaces flanking it.[38] This configuration is represented in drawings of the building as seen around 1910, published by Wulzinger and Watzinger (Fig. 3). The façade of the *turbah* is composed of a central portal, set within a recess and framed with an elevated, rectangular wall *(pishtaq),* flanked by a pair of windows on either side (Fig. 5). A stone molding traces the central *pishtaq* frame, and runs horizontally over the wall on either side before turning ninety degrees to run vertically, jogging outward about halfway at a height corresponding to that of the windows before running vertically again to the street level. The drawing published by Wulzinger and Watzinger demonstrates that this molding once ended in volutes that curled outward.[39] The masonry of the façade within the molding is finely dressed and slightly set back from the surrounding masonry, which consists only of two narrow strips of more roughly dressed ashlars to the left and right. Two large grilled windows on either side of the portal, each surmounted by a lintel and relieving arch, open into the two square chambers flanking the vestibule. At the west end of the façade extends a wall that is likely of a later date: constructed of stone masonry in its lower courses and plastered brick in its upper story, its masonry does not course through evenly with that of the *turbah* façade.

All four of the window openings have been altered to some extent (Fig. 6). The masonry below the two eastern windows has clearly been disturbed. It appears that two courses of ashlars were added at the bottom of these windows to raise the height of their sills. This alteration was done with care: the ashlars chosen for the job are well cut, they match the scale of the surrounding masonry, and are laid in such a way as to coordinate with the surrounding coursing, even though they do not course through precisely. The two windows on the west side of the portal have been converted into shop entrances and are filled with metal doors.[40]

The portal niche, approximately 1.2 meters deep and about 8.5 meters high, has undergone only minor alterations. The entrance is in-filled on the right side and the top with brick and cement block to enclose a small metal door. The original opening rises to a height of slightly over three meters and extends to nearly a

[38]This description is based on my partial survey of the building, conducted in 1997. At that time, most of the building and its surroundings were inaccessible.

[39]These volutes are visible in the drawing published by Wulzinger and Watzinger, but are lost today (*Damaskus,* pl. 8).

[40]The documents do not appear to provide a date for this alteration, but an inspector from the Antiquities Department in 1964 reports that the property was being rented to individuals by the Awqāf Department, and the Qism al-Mabānī files contain an undated letter containing a request to make one of the windows into a large door, from which to sell products.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: **doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC** (**http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735**)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

meter and a half in width. A monolithic lintel spans the entire width of the recess and bears the above-mentioned foundation inscription. Over it curves a relieving arch, surmounted by a large roundel of joggled masonry around a small oculus. One course above this roundel begins the springing of the recess hood, composed of three tiers of *muqarnas* terminating in a ribbed crown with a scalloped outer profile (Figs. 5 and 8).

The portal opens into a narrow, rectangular vestibule measuring 5.5 by 2.5 meters (Fig. 9). Here, as on the façade, the masonry is finely dressed. In some places, the ashlars are bare, while in others they are covered with a crumbling coat of plaster and paint. On the south wall of the vestibule, a circular niche corresponds to the oculus seen on the exterior and below it a pointed-arched recess encloses the entry door. At the north end of the vestibule, doorways pierce the east and west walls and lead into the flanking chambers. Roughly midway along both of these walls, windows opened into the side chambers as well, both of which are now blocked. Traces of the eastern window jamb and holes there indicate that it was once grilled. Originally, flat lintels and relieving arches surmounted all four of these openings. However, on the west wall, an arch has been inserted below the lintel, perhaps because of damage to the lintel, which is severely cracked down the middle. The masonry coursing around this window is disturbed. The door lintel on the west wall is also badly damaged, its cracks filled in with wood and plaster. The vestibule leads back to an exit on the north wall, leading through a narrow, pointed-arched doorway out to a small modern courtyard.

The uppermost courses of the vestibule walls bear traces of a carved plaster frieze, divided into two registers by three slender moldings. The lower register is decorated with roundels alternating with lobed cartouches, the central roundels on each wall bearing the representation of a footed and ringed goblet, the heraldic emblem *(rank)* of Tankiz *nāʾib al-shām*. The upper register is decorated with a continuous inscription in a stacked cursive script, much of which is lost (Fig. 10). While most of this plasterwork is barely legible, it survives in slightly better condition on the west wall. Although scholars were aware of this interior inscription long ago, when it might have been better preserved, no one published its content and I have yet to find any record providing a transcription. L. A. Mayer, whose primary interest was the goblet emblems, characterizes the epigraphic content as an "unhistorical inscription."[41] It is similarly passed over in the descriptions published by von Kremer, Wulzinger and Watzinger, and Sauvaget.[42] Mayer's de-

[41] L. A. Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry* (Oxford, 1953), 221.

[42] Von Kremer, *Topographie,* 2:13; Wulzinger and Watzinger, *Damaskus,* 71. Sauvaget, *Damas,* 69, no. 42. Badrān, *Munādamāt* (350), ʿUlabī (411), and Shihābī (194) also provide no information about the interior inscription; Duhmān (74) published a photograph taken by Michael Meinecke of the vestibule interior but makes no attempt to read the inscription.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC (http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

scription suggests that the *rank* emblems "intersect" the inscription, but no trace of text is visible in the cartouches between the *rank* roundels. It's possible that Mayer did not view the frieze first-hand, but rather relied upon correspondence for this description. While much of the inscription is barely legible, it survives in somewhat better condition on the east wall of the vestibule. There, several discernable words identify the extant text as fragments of Quran Surah 52:17 and 18: "... [*al-muttaq*]*īna fī jannātin wa-naʿīmin fākihīna bi-mā āt*[*āhum*]..."[43] Presumably, the text preceding and following these fragments would have continued with the same surah.

The vestibule is roofed over with a barrel vault bisected by a central folded cross vault. These roofing elements appear to have been plastered or whitewashed relatively recently, but reflect the same superstructure indicated in Wulzinger and Watzinger's plan drawing. The cross vault culminates in an octagonal opening, which provides light to the relatively gloomy vestibule. In both barrel-vaulted sections, simple metal fixtures probably once served to hang lamps. The Wulzinger and Watzinger drawing indicates that the two chambers flanking the vestibule were surmounted by identical domes. The transition from the square spaces below the domes was effected by octagonal drums, in which small openings were pierced on alternate faces. The drawing depicts cornices along the upper edges of the drums matching the height of the façade *pishtaq*. Today, there is no longer any trace of the domes, which have been replaced by flat roofs over both chambers.

The layouts of the two chambers also appear to have been nearly identical, but both were inaccessible at the time of my survey. The eastern chamber retains more of its original construction than the western one. It was pierced on three sides: on the south wall, windows flanked a central mihrab; on the west wall, a door and window (now blocked) opened into the central vestibule; and on the north wall, two openings let into a modern room built against the *turbah.*[44] These may have originally been windows, but both have been converted into doors, today blocked up by planks. Of these openings, the only one that is not blocked or inaccessible is the east window on the south façade. From this, it is possible to see that on the interior, all of these windows and doors are framed within pointed-arched recesses. A central, rectangular niche articulates the eastern wall. This niche is partly blocked by a later pier that supports a transverse arch spanning the room and ending with a second pier built against the blocked vestibule window. This transverse arch supports the flat roof that currently covers the space.

[43] I am very grateful to Dr. Abdullah Ghouchani for his assistance with reading and identifying this inscription fragment.

[44] Wulzinger and Watzinger's drawing indicates that the wall between the windows on the north side of this chamber dates later than the rest of the construction; I was unable to examine this wall myself.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: **doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC** (**http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735**)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

At the center of the room, components of a large cenotaph are visible within a mound of debris, refuse, and stored goods. The Wulzinger and Watzinger drawing depicts central mihrabs located at the center of the south walls in both chambers, although it indicates that the western mihrab may belong to a modern phase.

Analysis

The plan adopted for the *turbah*'s construction conforms closely to local building tradition. Its double-domed layout had been employed in the region since at least the Ayyubid period and is especially well represented in Damascus architecture. In the case of an earlier example of a similarly planned monument in Damascus, the Madrasah al-Jarkasīyah, the double-domed configuration was the result of incremental construction phases: the first domed chamber was erected around 608/1211 as a mausoleum for the amir Fakhr al-Dīn Jarkas al-ʿĀdilī al-Nāṣirī, while the second domed chamber was added seven years later for his son.[45] Sutaytah's *turbah*, on the other hand, was clearly conceived as a double-domed building from its inception. Typically, buildings in this double-dome category include a central vestibule separating the two *qubbah*s, as is the case here. An antecedent of this configuration is found in Damascus at the mausoleum constructed by al-Malik al-ʿĀdil Kitbughā (d. 702/1303). As at Sutaytah's *turbah,* its two domed chambers share the street frontage and are united by a symmetrically arranged façade.[46]

Such double-domed funerary buildings were not necessarily designed for double burial. Sometimes one of the domed chambers contained a tomb while the other served a non-funerary function.[47] This would have been the case with Sutaytah's mausoleum. The description of the space in historical sources is sketchy, but ʿIlmawī's wording is suggestive. He states that in the *turbah* is a *masjid,* and to its side is the women's *ribāṭ* and orphans' school. This supports the theory that one of the domed chambers served as the funerary space (probably the eastern room, in which the remains of a cenotaph are still visible), while the other (the western chamber) functioned as the prayer hall or *masjid*. A number of these double-domed funerary buildings were fitted with a minaret surmounting the central unit and portal. Wulzinger and Watzinger—probably on the basis of comparison with other examples with this configuration—posit that a minaret

[45] Ernst Herzfeld, "Damascus: Studies in Architecture, III," *Ars Islamica* 11–12 (1946): 50.

[46] Jean Sauvaget, "L'Architecture Musulmane en Syrie," *Revue des Arts Asiatiques* 8 (1934): 43, and fig. 15.

[47] On the development of these mausoleum types, see Sabri Jarrar, "Suq al-Maʿrifa: An Ayyubid Hanbalite Shrine in al-Haram al-Sharif," *Muqarnas* 15 (1998): 71–100.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC (http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

once rose above the portal niche at Sutaytah's *turbah.*[48] However, no evidence of a minaret in this position survives and none is mentioned in any of the early reports about the building. It should be noted that the current superstructure of the vestibule, culminating in a folded cross-vault with an octagonal oculus at its summit, compares with the arrangement at several roughly contemporaneous monuments in greater Syria, although it appears to be one of the earliest extant instances in Damascus.[49] Tankiz's builders employed this roofing device—on a much grander scale—at his madrasah in Jerusalem. Frequently, the vault oculus is surmounted by some kind of lantern or cowl element, permitting the entrance of light and circulation of air into the interior. This is the case at the Jerusalem madrasah and at the same patron's *khān* in that city, where it appears in a smaller vestibule vault not unlike Sutaytah's. Had a minaret once surmounted the vault instead of an oculus, this vestibule would have been gloomy indeed and its stucco decoration would have required lamplight to be legible.

The only remaining evidence of applied decoration at the *turbah* is the stucco work, which survives only in fragments. The historical literature consulted makes no reference to decoration of the building and modern reports mention only the stucco. A more thorough survey of the building than has been published to date, investigating the interiors of the two square chambers as well as the vestibule, might reveal further evidence of decoration. Judging from contemporary analogues, this might include evidence of additional stucco work, marble dado revetment, or other applied ornament such as the glass mosaic employed at the *turbah* and mosque of Tankiz in the same city and many other commissions associated with him and his contemporaries.[50] This evidence could take the form of fragmentary remains of decorative material, fallen or *in situ,* or indications of priming of the mural masonry to receive decoration.

A comparison of the building's remains with the description of Sutaytah's foundation in written sources suggests that a significant element of this building has been lost—namely, the area serving as the women's hospice *(ribāṭ),* presumably containing cells for residents. Sources mention that this element and the orphans' school were located to the side of the *turbah*—one specifying the west side.[51] This would dovetail with the topographical reconstruction of the urban

[48]However, they did not draw it into their elevation sketch (Wulzinger and Watzinger, *Damaskus,* 71).

[49]The nearly simultaneous appearance of the folded cross-vault in Damascus, Jerusalem, and Tripoli is a notable development, closely connected with Tankiz's patronage (Hayat Salam-Liebich, *The Architecture of the Mamluk City of Tripoli* [Cambridge, MA, 1983], 210f.).

[50]Kenney, *Power,* 205–22.

[51]Ibn Kathīr, qtd. in al-Nuʿaymī, *Dāris,* 2:211, specifies the west side as the location of the *ribāṭ* and *maktab.*

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: **doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC** (**http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735**)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

block outlined above. Sources report that an earlier building—the Shumānīyah—was situated to the east of Sutaytah's foundation. The topographical descriptions leave the plot immediately to the west of the twin-domed building unaccounted for. No pre-modern construction survives to the north of the domed chambers and Wulzinger and Watzinger reported "recent" outbuilding on the north side of the eastern chamber.[52] In fact, there is very little space between the northern wall of the existing structure and the southern edge of the Nūrīyah and the adjacent site of the Rayḥānīyah. Perhaps a small court north of the domed rooms provided access on its west side to annexes that could have accommodated the functions of *ribāṭ* and *maktab,* conceivably on more than one floor.

In the absence of the original endowment document, information is lacking about the number of women the institution was meant to house, what the stipulations were for eligibility, how space was allocated, or how the institution was funded and administered. For a general idea of such arrangements, we can consult the *waqfīyah* that Tankiz drew up only one month prior to Sutaytah's date for a multi-function foundation in Jerusalem, which included a women's *ribāṭ.*[53] There, the endowment provided for twelve female residents who were required to be pious and devoted Muslims, elderly, poor, or unmarried. According to Tankiz's stipulations, his own freedwomen were to be given priority at the institution. One of the Jerusalem *ribāṭ* residents was designated as the *shaykhah:* she earned a salary of twenty dirhams per month and a half *raṭl* of daily bread and was responsible for leading a prescribed set of daily prayers, including benedictions in honor of the patron, Tankiz, and Quran readings to the assembled women in one of the building's *īwān*s. Another one of the residents, designated as the *bawwābah,* was tasked with a long list of housekeeping chores for which she was compensated ten dirhams per month and a half *raṭl* of daily bread. The other residents had an allowance of seven and a half dirhams per month and one-third *raṭl* of daily bread.[54] Ibn Kathīr reports that at Sutaytah's foundation in Damascus prayers were made in Sutaytah's name, and it is likely that an endowment document would have stipulated specific readings and devotional schedules for the *ribāṭ* residents.[55]

Ibn Kathīr claims that in addition to the *ribāṭ* function, the foundation also supported an orphans' school *(maktab aytām).*[56] Winter has noted that a standard

---

[52]Wulzinger and Watzinger, *Damaskus,* 71.

[53]Kenney, *Power,* 89–109.

[54]The salaries for the corresponding male functionaries and residents at the same patron's madrasah were double those at the *ribāṭ.*

[55]Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah,* 14:151.

[56]Ibid.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC (http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

number of students to be supported through a *maktab aytām* was ten.[57] Typically, the endowment provided these orphans with a small allowance and daily bread, and sometimes with clothing as well.[58] The orphans received instruction in reading, arithmetic, and Quran. According to Ibn Kathīr, Sutaytah's institution was also a place for the dispensation of voluntary alms *(ṣadaqah)* and charitable deeds *(birr)*.

The building's poor state of preservation and the institution's limited documentary record leave many unanswered questions about the original form and function of the establishment. However, they provide sufficient information to partially reconstruct a case study of elite Mamluk architectural and institutional patronage. This case study can be profitably analyzed in light of recent scholarship on the subject of patronage as it relates to women and the characteristics of institutions founded specifically for women. The text of the building's foundation inscription offers a natural starting point for this discussion. First, it is notable that only the funerary purpose of the building is mentioned there. The text contains no reference to any of the other institutional functions—*masjid, ribāṭ,* or *maktab*—attributed to the foundation in Mamluk-period literary sources. However, such discrepancies between the epigraphic record and the chroniclers' accounts are not uncommon—especially in connection with building function. Another discrepancy warranting examination relates to the attribution of the commission. It is clear that Tankiz, in carrying out this construction, was both following up on an initiative begun by Sutaytah with her purchase of the property and fulfilling her ante mortem wishes. While the literary texts explicitly state that Sutaytah ordered the foundation, the inscription credits Tankiz with the order. The verb formula used, *amara bi-inshāʾ* ("ordered constructed"), is the same phrase frequently used in inscriptions naming two individuals—one who did the ordering and another who instigated or supervised the project. For example, the foundation inscription at the *dār al-qurʾān* that Tankiz constructed later in Damascus employs this phrase with Tankiz as the subject but concludes by naming a second individual, with the following phrase: "*bi-mubāsharat* (at the behest of) *al-ʿabd al-faqīr* Aydamur al-Muʿīnī."[59] Inscriptions on building commissions begun by one patron and completed posthumously by another sometimes

[57] Michael Winter, "Mamluks and their Households in Late Mamluk Damascus: A Waqf Study," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society,* ed. Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni (Leiden, 2004), 307.

[58] Adam Sabra, *Poverty and Charity in Medieval Islam: Mamluk Egypt, 1250–1517* (Cambridge, 2000), 110–11.

[59] Ellen Kenney, "A Mamluk Monument 'Restored': The *Dār al-Qurʾān wa-al-Ḥadīth* of Tankiz al-Nāṣirī in Damascus," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 11, no. 1 (2007): 85–118, especially 108, note 85, re: al-Muʿīnī.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: **doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC** (**http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735**)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

record only the later figure. However, such cases often are interpreted as expressions of competitive supersession, as at the funerary madrasah of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in Cairo, the construction of which was initiated by al-Nāṣir's predecessor and perceived pretender, al-ʿĀdil Kitbughā, but was completed by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who is credited in the foundation inscription's text.[60]

However, when a posthumously erected mausoleum was purpose-built in commemoration of a relative or associate, the name of the deceased generally figures in the foundation inscription—even if its construction order is attributed to a survivor of the deceased. Leonor Fernandes addresses this scenario with respect to the funerary *khānqāh* of Sultan Faraj ibn Barqūq in Cairo, which presents some interesting parallels with our more modest Damascus establishment although it is several decades later in date.[61] There, al-Ẓāhir Barqūq conveyed his wish to erect a funerary monument in the northern cemetery, chose and purchased the property, and set aside funding for the project. Like Sutaytah, he was buried at his selected site before construction began on his mausoleum, by order of his son, Faraj. However, the foundation inscription at his *turbah* recognizes both the initial order of the deceased and his son's subsequent execution of that order.[62]

Why doesn't the foundation inscription on Sutaytah's building convey the same kind of joint participation reflected in al-Ẓāhir Barqūq's mausoleum? While there are instances in which a female patron endowed her foundation in the name of a male relative, we can't know if this would have applied to Sutaytah's establishment: does the inscription's attribution to Tankiz perhaps reflect that she had arranged for the foundation to be endowed in his name?[63] The absence of Sutaytah's name in the building's extant epigraphy is puzzling. In connection with this question, Sheila Blair argues that the name of the person being commemorated usually constitutes an integral component of any funerary inscription—even when the actual construction is ordered by a second party, as is the case here.[64] Blair points out that in such instances, sometimes two inscriptions are found: one documenting the building foundation and the other containing the commemorative information. Given the partial state of preservation of Sutaytah's funerary complex, it may well be the case that a second inscription, now

[60] Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and Its Culture* (London, 2007), 152–56.

[61] "Mamluk Architecture and the Question of Patronage," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 114–15.

[62] Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks,* 231.

[63] Marina Tolmacheva, "Female Piety and Patronage in the Medieval 'Hajj'," in *Women in the Medieval Islamic World,* ed. Gavin R. G. Hambly (New York, 1998), 165.

[64] Sheila Blair, *Islamic Inscriptions* (New York, 1998), 45ff. Cf. Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "The Maḥmal Legend and the Pilgrimage of the Ladies of the Mamluk Court," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 94–95.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC (http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

lost, which mentioned Sutaytah's name, once decorated the building. This explanation may also pertain to similar cases, such as the mausoleum of Fāṭimah Khātūn (Umm al-Ṣāliḥ) in Cairo built by Sultan Qalāwūn for his wife around a year before her death in 683/1284. There, however, the queen has no documented role in the foundation: the sultan ordered its foundation, funded its endowment, and commissioned his supervisor amir ʿAlam al-Dīn Sanjar al-Shujāʿī to oversee its construction.[65]

There are two aspects of the foundation about which there is little doubt of Sutaytah's agency, based on the historical sources. First, she likely would have been involved in the selection of the establishment's location, since she had already purchased the property on which it was to be constructed. Second, it was she who determined the spiritual and charitable functions that the foundation was to serve. Regarding location, sources explicitly refer to her purposeful acquisition of property for the establishment, so this was not a case of a property that she has already long owned being transformed for a new usage. As the historical site survey above demonstrates, Sutaytah's decision to situate her foundation where she did dictated limitations to the scale of the project. Presumably, had she acquired property outside the city walls where space was available at less of a premium she might have been able plan a larger establishment without greater expenditure. Space inside the walled city was becoming increasingly scarce and extramural neighborhoods, such as the Midan district southwest of the walled city and the nearby cemetery zone, the Upper and Lower Sharaf district west of the city, and the northern suburb of Ṣāliḥīyah, had long attracted investment of this kind.

However, rather than locating in any of these peripheral zones, Sutaytah selected a building site in the heart of the walled city for her *turbah-ribāṭ* complex, co-located with a group of earlier institutions, many of them madrasahs. Several attributes of this neighborhood would have offset the disadvantage of the restricted space it provided. The foot traffic generated by the nearby Umayyad Mosque and the surrounding markets would have guaranteed a steady stream of passers-by to offer blessings for the deceased princess. The sanctity of the Umayyad Mosque may well have benefited the spiritual lives of the *ribāṭ* residents and the scholarly character of the neighboring institutions may have expanded their educational opportunities. Furthermore, although the trend at the time of Sutaytah's foundation may have been shifting in favor of extramural sites, it seems that the century preceding it established an entrenched tradition of intramural *ribāṭ*s.

[65]Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks,* 129–31.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC (http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

Of the twenty Damascene *ribāṭ*s tabulated by al-ʿIzz al-Irbilī some time in the 720s/1320s, only five were located outside the city walls.[66]

Perhaps just as important as the spiritual associations of the neighborhood of Sutaytah's foundation would have been the social prestige connected with it. By building in the midst of the city's north-west quadrant, Sutaytah was grouping herself as a builder and charitable patron with some of the most prominent luminaries of the Damascene past, whose institutions crowded the narrow streets in the quarter between the Citadel, the Umayyad Mosque and the Sūq al-Ṭawīl. In the Zangid and Ayyubid periods, this quarter acquired the character of an almost exclusive preserve for patronage of the royal household. The most famous of its royal foundations would have been the funerary madrasah of Nūr al-Dīn Zangī, with which Sutaytah's site shares a city block, in a diagonally adjacent position. Nūr al-Dīn's renowned hospital and his *dār al-ḥadīth* stood approximately two hundred meters to the north, and his great bath complex lay about one hundred meters to the east.

Moreover, it may well have been relevant to Sutaytah's site selection that women of the Zangid and Ayyubid royal households were well represented as architectural and institutional patrons in this neighborhood. Establishments attributed to them include the Hanafi madrasah known as al-Khātūnīyah al-Juwwānīyah founded by a wife of Nūr al-Dīn around 1178 in a location between the Citadel and Nūr al-Dīn's hospital; the madrasah and the *ribāṭ* located south of the Citadel founded by Saladin's niece, ʿAdhrāʾ Khātūn, in the late twelfth century; one of three of the institutions sponsored by Saladin's sister, Sitt al-Shām Zumurrud Khātūn, which was located near Nūr al-Dīn's hospital and opened posthumously around 1231; the funerary madrasah founded by the mother of the Ayyubid sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ismāʿīl (r. 1239–45) by 638/1241; the Madrasah Dammaghīyah, located in the same zone, attributed to a female courtier of the Ayyubid sultan, al-ʿĀdil I (r. 1200–18), donated around 638/1240–41; and the Madrasah al-ʿĀdilīyah al-Ṣughrá, also in the vicinity, founded by the daughter of the same sultan by 1257.[67] Prior to Sutaytah's commission, another Mamluk noblewoman had evidently thought to capitalize on this long tradition of female patronage in the city with the construction of the only madrasah to have been sponsored in Damascus in the Mam-

[66]Rapoport, *Marriage,* 40. In Cairo, women's *ribāṭ*s were commissioned for sites both within the city and in the Qarāfah cemetery zone (Jonathan P. Berkey, "Women and Islamic Education in the Mamluk Period," in *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender,* ed. Nikki R. Keddie and Beth Baron [New Haven, 1991], 150–51).

[67]R. S. Humphreys, "Women as Patrons of Religious Architecture in Ayyubid Damascus," *Muqarnas* 11 (1994): 42–48.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC (http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

luk period by a woman.[68] That institution, known as Madrasah al-Ṭayyibah/al-Shumānīyah, was located immediately to the east of Sutaytah's building site.[69]

In carrying on the strong local building tradition established by women of the Ayyubid family in this particular sector of the city, Sutaytah would have been positioning herself by association on a par with these royal women of history and with their legacies of largess and piety.[70] This linkage with earlier traditions of elite female patronage is further expressed in Sutaytah's choice of foundation type, the second of the two arenas identified above in which her antemortem agency in the patronage process finds expression. Her decision to sponsor both a *maktab aytām* and a women's *ribāṭ* also echoed patronage choices popular among Ayyubid princesses and other early Mamluk noblewomen. Charity to orphans counted among the most frequently cited qualifications of piety in Mamluk women.[71] In fourteenth-century Egypt and Syria, *maktab*s, usually incorporated within larger institutions, were established by both male and female sponsors. However, of Mamluk-period foundations sponsored by women, *maktab*s represent a high proportion of the overall number of commissions. In at least one case, the decision of a male patron to sponsor a *maktab aytām* was attributed to feminine influence, the wish of his late mother.[72]

The propensity of female patrons in the Mamluk period to provide for orphans and to establish women's *ribāṭ*s can be explained as a practical matter as well as an expression of religious virtue. It may have reflected their disposable wealth relative to men's: as we've seen in the specific case of Tankiz's foundation, and as Sabra's survey of charitable works confirms, *ribāṭ*s and *maktab*s could be funded with a fraction of the expenditure invested in madrasahs.[73] Furthermore, just as Tankiz reserved priority at his Jerusalem establishment for his own protégées, Sutaytah may also have intended her foundation to provide for her own relatives or favorites.[74] The sources on Sutaytah's foundation specify that her *ribāṭ* served women, but in Damascus this was the norm—there, the term *ribāṭ* specifically

[68] Hatem Mahamid, "Waqf and Madrasas in Late Medieval Syria," *Educational Research and Reviews* 8, no. 10 (2013): 609.

[69] H. Sauvaire, "Description de Damas (Chaptre III)," *Journal Asiatique* (Mai–Juin 1894): 94, 101.

[70] Sitt al-Shām in particular was renowned for her charity works (Yaacov Lev, "Charity and Gift Giving in Medieval Islam," in *Charity and Giving in Monotheistic Religions,* ed. Lev and Miriam Frenkel [Berlin, 2009], 246).

[71] See, for example, Rapoport, *Marriage,* 31.

[72] Yehoshua Frenkel, "*Awqāf* in Mamluk Bilād al-Shām," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 13, no. 1 (2009): 159–60 (citing Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat* [Cairo, 1962], 1:137).

[73] Sabra, *Poverty,* 92–93.

[74] Kenney, *Power,* 108. As for the other practical incentive, that of confiscation avoidance, there seem to be two schools of thought about women and property security: Behrens-Abouseif argues that women were less likely than their male amiral counterparts to have their property confis-

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: **doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC** (**http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735**)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

connoted a women's hostel.[75] As Chabbi and Rabbat amply demonstrate, the signification of the term *ribāṭ* is contingent on the time and place of its usage.[76] In early Mamluk Cairo and Jerusalem, *ribāṭ*s served as hostels for either male or female residents. Male residents might be Sufis or pilgrims. The qualifications for residence in a women's *ribāṭ* were that the candidates lived pious lives and were either widowed or divorced.[77] Al-Maqrīzī's remarks about the Ribāṭ al-Baghdādīyah in Cairo make it clear that female *ribāṭ* residents were eligible for remarriage.[78] Indeed, Annemarie Schimmel's far-reaching survey of women's hostels in medieval Islam demonstrates that such an institution could house a widowed or divorced woman while she waited out her *ʿiddah*—the forty-day period required before entering into a new marriage.[79]

In the absence of a *waqf* document, we have no way to know what religious obligations were required of the residents at Sutaytah's *ribāṭ,* although some idea might be gleaned from those stipulated for the women at Tankiz's Jerusalem *ribāṭ* discussed above and also from the ideal curriculum sketched out in al-Asyūṭī's fifteenth-century formulary manual for women's *khānqāh*s.[80] The latter recommends that the institution be staffed by both a resident *shaykhah,* whose duty was to lead Sufi devotional ceremonies, and a "learned woman" *(imraʾah ʿālimah),* who could instruct the residents in religious knowledge. Evidently, the *ʿālimah* was not expected to be resident at the establishment. Considered in the context of Asma Sayeed's recent examination of the role women played in hadith transmission, which demonstrates a resurgence in women's participation in Mamluk

cated *(Cairo of the Mamluks),* whereas Sabra maintains that women's foundations would have had as much confiscation-dodging purpose as men's (*Poverty*, 93).

[75]Louis Pouzet, *Damas au VIIe/XIIIe siècle: vie et structures religieuses d'une métropole islamique* (Beirut, 1988), 211.

[76]J. Chabbi and Nasser Rabbat, "Ribāṭ," *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd. edition (Brill Online, 2015). Consulted 27 July 2015 (http://www.brillonline.nl.library.aucegypt.edu:2048/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ribat-COM_0919). However, it should be noted that this essay contains no reference to the usage of *ribāṭ* for a women's residence. Similarly, Robert Hillenbrand's *Islamic Architecture* essentially passes over this building category.

[77]Rapoport, *Marriage,* 40; D. P. Little, "The Nature of *Khanqahs, Ribats,* and *Zawiyas* under the Mamluks," in *Islamic Studies Presented to Charles J. Adams,* ed. Wael B. Hallaq and D. P. Little (Leiden, 1991), 99–102.

[78]Cited in Jonathan Berkey, "Women and Islamic Education in the Mamluk Period," in Keddie, *Shifting*, 150–51, n. 24.

[79]Schimmel, *My Soul,* 48.

[80]Little, "Nature," 101–2.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: **doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC** (**http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735**)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

Damascus, the *ʿālimah*s at Sutaytah's *ribāṭ* might have been any of a great number of qualified female scholars active in that city.[81]

However, in addition to the spiritual and intellectual occupations undoubtedly stipulated in the foundation's endowment contract, at least some of the residents of Sutaytah's *ribāṭ* likely occupied themselves with the more prosaic work of spinning, embroidering, and possibly working the loom. The date of the *ribāṭ*'s commission coincides with an upturn in the patronage of female *ribāṭ*s, which Rapoport links directly to the thirteenth- to fourteenth-century boom in textile production.[82] He argues that the growing demand for textiles, most of which involved female labor, contributed to "the emergence of new forms of female piety," which extolled women's spinning as an occupation of virtue.[83] This probable linkage between the *ribāṭ* residents and textile manufacture could shed further light on the foundation's urban siting. In addition to the ambient *barakah* of the sacred sites nearby and the collateral prestige dispensed from the other noble commissions in the neighborhood, the location of Sutaytah's *ribāṭ* would have offered a practical benefit: its proximity to the urban marketplaces in which textile products were sold and individuals involved in textile production and trade circulated. It would have eased the acquisition of the necessary raw materials for *ribāṭ* residents to execute their tasks and the transmission of the piecework they generated back to the marketplace.[84]

Considering the speed with which Sutaytah's *turbah* was executed, and given that we know she had already purchased the property and dictated its use, she—or a building supervisor acting on her behalf—may well have already embarked on planning the layout as well as the administrative stipulations attached to the endowment. Her mobilization of social position and financial resources to match the location and function of her proposed foundation so optimally reflects the same canny approach to urban development that her husband Tankiz displayed time and again in his building and infrastructure commissions. Indeed, given his personal interest in governing both the construction process and the urban environment of his own foundations and commercial establishments as well as the works he oversaw on the sultan's behalf, Tankiz most certainly would have been

[81] Asma Sayeed, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam* (Cambridge, 2013), 159–80.

[82] Rapoport, *Marriage,* 31–50.

[83] Rapoport builds his argument here largely on the studies of Bethany Walker, "Rethinking Mamluk Textiles," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 4 (2000): 167–217, and Huda Lutfi, *Al-Quds al-Mamlūkīyah* (Berlin, 1985).

[84] Such attention to urban planning and usage is evident in the later urban clearance and restructuring works that Tankiz ordered in the streets between the Umayyad Mosque and Sūq al-Ṭawīl which rationalized traffic flow and market accessibility between the sanctuary and the market zone (Kenney, *Power,* 38–44).

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: **doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC** (**http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735**)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

involved in shaping Sutaytah's establishment even before her death left him with the task of its completion. For this reason, it is illuminating to examine Sutaytah's *turbah* not simply as a stand-alone project but also as part of the larger building program involving Tankiz and its context. Here, I will focus on three aspects of this broader context: Tankiz's focus on women's concerns, his evident patronage of select building professionals, and the expressive use of epigraphy in his commissions.

One of the first commissions that Tankiz undertook after his appointment as *nāʾib al-shām* was to construct a *qaysarīyah* for the sale of women's goods, known as Dahshat al-Nisāʾ, which he established to generate revenue for the endowment of the Umayyad Mosque. Completed in 715/1315 in the area west of the Umayyad Mosque, the merchants of women's sewn textiles ("*qimāsh al-mukhayyaṭ*") operated from there, until their removal to a different *sūq* in 1326.[85] With this project, Tankiz recognized the important role of female consumption in the booming textile economy of the fourteenth century and designed a way for it to contribute to the city's most sacred *waqf*. In Jerusalem, in addition to founding the women's *ribāṭ* described above, Tankiz created a *ṭahārah* for women and may have dedicated one of the two bathhouses that he established nearby for their use.[86] These works seem designed to support women's pious activities in the holy city. Another expression of the *naʾib*'s interest in sustaining female piety is evident in his attentions to a famous ascetic named Umm Yūsuf Fakhrīyah al-Busrawīyah (d. 753/1352), who lived a life of seclusion and voluntary poverty in Jerusalem. According to al-Ṣafadī, Tankiz "visited her several times bearing gold."[87]

Tankiz's patronage of two women's *ribāṭ*s gains further significance in light of the prevalence of divorce in Mamluk society and the role these establishments played in providing respectable accommodations for divorced women. Even more intriguing is the direct involvement of Tankiz with the heated debate concerning divorce driven by Ibn Taymīyah.[88] The *nāʾib*'s support of these women's *ribāṭ*s might be seen as a means to ameliorate the harm imposed on women by the official divorce policy that he helped uphold.

Although Tankiz—independently and together with Sutaytah—sponsored these works for the benefit of women, it should be recalled that they represent a small

[85] ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Rihāwī, "Khānāt Madīnat Dimashq," *Les Annales archéologiques Arabes syriennes* 25 (1975): 54; on the transfer, see Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah,* 14:122.

[86] Kenney, *Power,* 109–16.

[87] Cited in Megan H. Reid, *Law and Piety in Medieval Islam* (Cambridge, 2013), 115–16. Umm Yūsuf always refused these offerings, however, for reasons Reid discusses (115–17).

[88] Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah,* 14:97. On this campaign by Ibn Taymīyah, see Yossef Rapoport, "Ibn Taymiyya on Divorce Oaths," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Winter Levanoni, 191–217.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC (http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

proportion of the overall building projects that he undertook. There is some indication that the expenditure on the women's projects was not commensurate with that invested in male institutions. As noted above, the stipends allocated for the women measure considerably lower than those for the men. Furthermore, there is little evidence that Tankiz employed any of the specialized building experts that he cultivated for his other projects to work on the commissions destined exclusively for female use. In Jerusalem, the women's *ribāṭ*, *ṭahārah,* and bath were allocated privileged urban locations and large sites, given their prime real estate. However, they appear to have been executed with less attention to design and ornament than were other foundations of his, such as the Jerusalem madrasah or his Damascus mosque. At Sutaytah's *turbah* in Damascus, this impression may be partly an accident of preservation. However, its poor preservation may in part be a function of the building's original function: since the foundation appears to have dissolved by the late sixteenth century, as were other women's hostels in Damascus under the Ottomans,[89] its portable furnishings and transferrable building materials might have been removed and re-used elsewhere.

Only the façade survives in a condition close to its original state. Although rendered with expertise, its treatment is somewhat restrained. It lacks the eye-catching verve of the black and white *ablaq* façade at Tankiz's Damascus mosque, the sculptural drama of the more ornate *muqarnas* portals featured there and at his Jerusalem madrasah, and any evidence of the glass mosaic and marble revetment lavished there and elsewhere. Michael Meinecke has explained this differential in terms of the movements of artisans, positing—for example—that the specialized *ablaq* masons formerly working in Damascus were employed in Hama during the time that Sutaytah's *turbah* was being erected.[90] Indeed, around the same time that the *turbah* was being constructed, several other buildings sponsored or supervised by Tankiz in other cities were either in progress or recently completed, and may have been engaging the mosaic and marble experts whom Tankiz had previously supervised on the Umayyad Mosque restoration.[91] On the other hand, a subdued aesthetic may correspond to the ascetic lifestyle that the residents of the *ribāṭ* would have been expected to lead. This would correspond to the tendency that Doris Behrens-Abouseif traced in the architecture of Mamluk Cairo of a differential in scale and opulence in the mausoleums built by the same patron for holy men versus those they built for themselves.[92]

Where the decoration of Sutaytah's *turbah* does correspond to that of other buildings connected with Tankiz is in its program of inscriptions. The profusion

[89] Rapoport, "Women and Gender," 44.

[90] Meinecke, *Mamlukische Architektur,* 1:87.

[91] Kenney, *Power,* 205–22.

[92] *Cairo of the Mamluks,* 17–20.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: **doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC** (**http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735**)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

of the *nāʾib*'s titles and epithets employed in the exterior foundation inscription,[93] the repetition of his heraldic *rank* in the stucco frieze decorating the vestibule interior,[94] and the specialized content of the Quranic text above it are particularly characteristic of his epigraphic decoration elsewhere. The Surah inscribed in the upper band of the frieze deals primarily with the resurrection and a description of the rewards that await the deserving in Paradise. As a general theme, this connects directly with the funerary function of the *turbah* and points to the eligibility of the deceased patroness to receive these rewards.[95] It also relates indirectly with the objectives of women's *ribāṭ*s, as spaces to safeguard the reputations, enrich the spiritual lives, and expand the religious knowledge of the inhabitants, thereby preparing them to share the same heavenly destination. In general, this theme is a perennial favorite for funerary settings, a point that reflects the frequency with which inscriptions in Islamic art and architecture refer to the purpose of the object or monument upon which they appear. Quranic paradise descriptions appear frequently on mausoleums;[96] on many of the inscriptions recorded from the cenotaphs at the Bāb al-Ṣaghīr Cemetery in Damascus;[97] and on the cenotaph from the nearby Mausoleum of Nūr al-Dīn Zangī, where Quran Surah 39:73 evoked Paradise.[98] In fact, Surah 39:73 was one of the "go-to" passages for expressing this theme.

Much less common—actually, unique, in my survey of inscriptions to date—is the use found in Sutaytah's *turbah* of Surah 52. Why this particular Quranic selection was made remains unknown. Even the question of who made the selection is unanswered: was it the deceased, her husband, a religious advisor, a building supervisor, or even a craftsman? Without knowing this, it is difficult to ascribe special significance to the Surah selection. What we can say with certainty is that the selection was unconventional, if not singular, making it more likely that the selection bore special meaning to the person who chose it. This personalized approach to epigraphic content is also reflected in the inscription program at the Tankizīyah in Jerusalem: there too a rarely-inscribed Surah is included

[93] Kenney, *Power,* 223.

[94] Ibid., 220.

[95] On the use of Quranic verse in funerary architecture, see Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "Beyond the Secular and the Sacred: Qurʾanic Inscriptions in Medieval Islamic Art and Material Culture," in *Word of God, Art of Man: The Qurʾan and its Creative Expressions: Selected Proceedings from the International Colloquium, London, 18–21 October 2003, ed. Fahmida Suleman (Oxford, 2007), 41–42.*

[96] Dina Montasser, "Modes of Utilizing Qurʾanic Inscriptions on Cairene Mamluk Religious Monuments," in *Creswell Photographs Re-Examined: New Perspectives on Islamic Architecture,* ed. Bernard O'Kane (Cairo and New York, 2009), 205.

[97] Khaled Moaz, *Inscriptions arabes de Damas: les steles funéraire* (Damascus, 1977), 176–77.

[98] Ernst Herzfeld, "Damascus: Studies in Architecture I," *Ars Islamica* 9 (1942): 41.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC (http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

(5:5), along with an unconventional paraphrasing and truncation of more common verses (3:90 and 9:18).[99] Why would Surah 52 have been chosen for Sutaytah's *turbah* rather than a more conventional option, like Surah 39? Perhaps this has to do with the fact that, while Surah 39 deals more with Judgment Day and the Gates of Heaven, Surah 52 dwells more on descriptions of Paradise, including a reference in the *āyah*s following those inscribed in Sutaytah's stucco frieze to the deceased being joined with their families there. This image of a family reuniting in Heaven seems especially suitable, and poignant, for the funerary monument of a woman who died early in life, before her father and husband and before seeing all her children reach adulthood.[100]

Conclusion

Until further evidence comes to light from literary sources, documents, or a proper archaeological survey at the building, our questions about the exact nature and extent of Sutaytah's agency in the project remain unanswered. Likewise, the precise scale of the foundation, its income sources, and the dictates established for its denizens' use of the building elude our grasp. However, revisiting the Turbah of Sutaytah in the present study has repaid the effort in other respects. The architectural remains and historical references that do survive point to an impressive monument, with a refined—if subtle—external aesthetic. Investigating the previously overlooked Quranic inscription of the *turbah*'s vestibule has provided a contribution to the sorely neglected corpus of "unhistorical" building inscriptions of Damascus, and one that signals a degree of intentionality in selection that might challenge the prevailing notion of standardization for such text selection. Exploring the history, urban setting, and social context of the foundation, especially its *ribāṭ* component, demonstrates the sharp planning acumen of its patrons, Tankiz and Sutaytah, in terms of site selection and institutional function. Together, these interpretations suggest that in Mamluk Damascus, a woman's "place"—both as a locus for commemorating Sutaytah and as an environment serving the needs of the *ribāṭ* residents—was in the historical, religious, and commercial heart of the city.

[99]Kenney, *Power,* 107.

[100]Nerina Rustomji, *The Garden and the Fire: Heaven and Hell in Islamic Culture* (New York, 2009), 44–45.

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: **doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC** (**http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735**)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

Figure 1. Damascus, Turbah of Sutaytah, location map. (Redrawn by Dalia Reda, after Sack, *Damaskus,* Beil. 1)

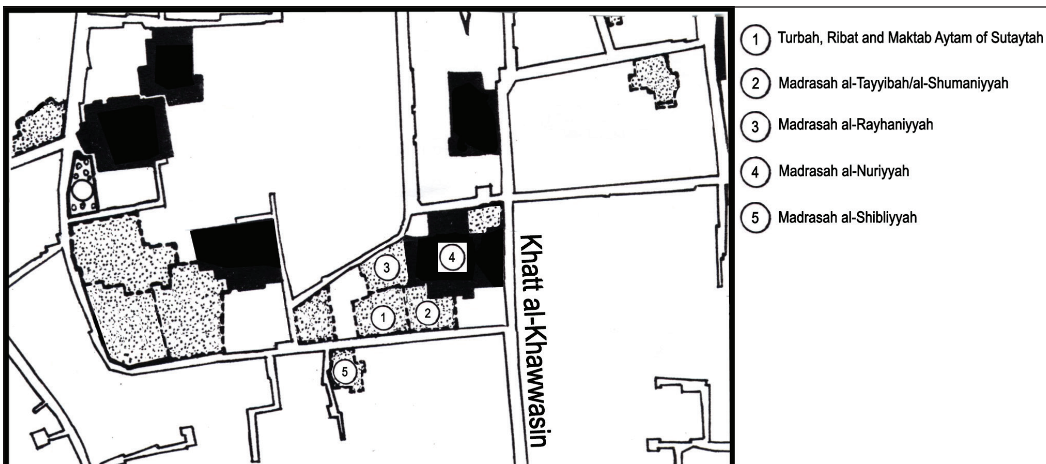

Figure 2. Damascus, Turbah of Sutaytah, site map. (Redrawn by Dalia Reda, after Munajjid, *Khiṭaṭ*)

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC (http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

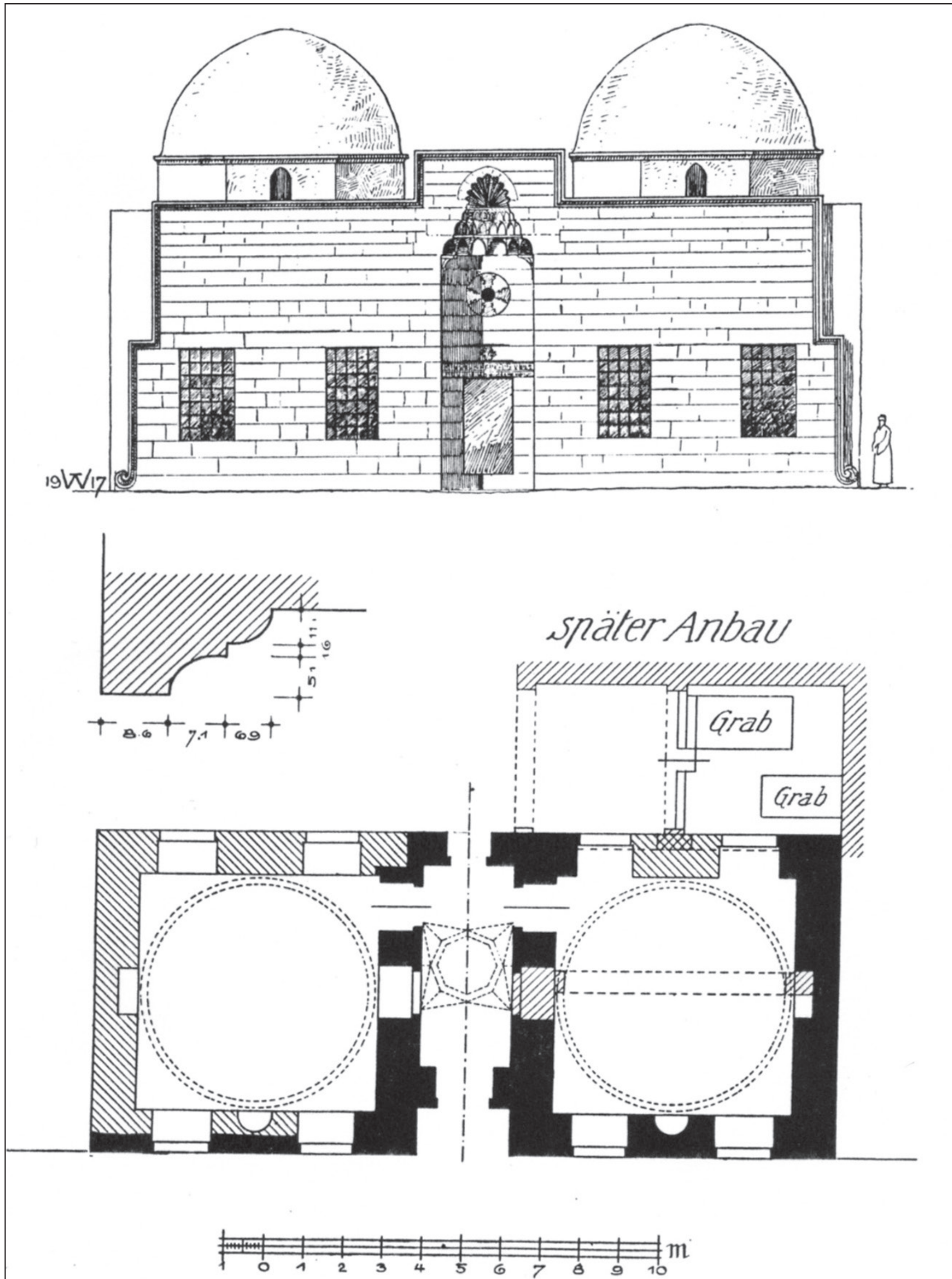

Figure 3. Damascus, Turbah of Sutaytah, plan and elevation. (After Wulzinger and Watzinger, *Damaskus,* Abb. 8)

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: **doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC** (**http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735**)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

Figure 4. Damascus, Turbah of Sutaytah, view of façade. (©Manar Hammad; used with permission; courtesy of archnet.org)

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC (http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

Figure 5. Damascus, Turbah of Sutaytah, view of portal hood. (©Manar Hammad, used with permission; courtesy of archnet.org)

Figure 6. Damascus, Turbah of Sutaytah, detail of façade masonry, west side. (Photo by the author)

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC (http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

Figure 7. Damascus, Turbah of Sutaytah, foundation inscription. (©Michael Greenhalgh, used with permission; courtesy of archnet.org)

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC (http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

Figure 8. Damascus, Turbah of Sutaytah, detail of *muqarnas* hood. (©Michael Greenhalgh, used with permission; courtesy of archnet.org)

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: **doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC** (**http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735**)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).

Figure 9. Damascus, Turbah of Sutaytah, interior of vestibule. (© monummamluk-syrie.org, used with permission)

Figure 10. Damascus, Turbah of Sutaytah, interior of vestibule, detail of inscription. (Photo by the author)

©2017 by Ellen Kenney. Article DOI: doi:10.6082/M1MS3QVC (http://hdl.handle.net/11417/735)
This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY).