Three Coptic Male Gravestones at Beni Mazar-Minia
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Abstract
Deir el-Sanquriya is located 15 kilometers to the west of Beni Mazar, in Bahnasa that is an area famous for its ancient history and monuments. The remaining buildings of the monastery include the restored ancient church (Ramzi, 1994). The gravestones constitute one of the most difficult sections of Islamic and Coptic art as they include various inscriptions and decorative elements in different styles of engraving, as well as various types of calligraphies engraved upon them. The difficulty lies in the different content of these inscriptions on the collection of the gravestones under investigation, as they vary between religious expressions, recorded invocations and poetic lines that must be handled to record these gravestones scientifically (Sirajuddin, 2007). The ultimate objective of this process is to study the civilization of a certain community in a certain historical period, in this context, the purpose of this research is the artistic and archaeological study of these gravestones, as they are Un published. This aims at showing the importance of these gravestones according to the analytical descriptive method of them and the raw material they were constructed of. This is followed by an analytical study of what was written and engraved on them, the decorations and interpretation of their contents.

Key words (Gravestones - Deir el-Sanquriya - Beni Mazar - Mikhail Athanasius - Butrus Athanasius - Yuhanna Athanasius - Calculation of sentences - floral decorations).

Introduction
The origins of this family can be dated back to the late eighteenth century before the advent of the French campaign to Egypt. Athanasius married a villager from the village of Sheikh Mas‘oud, in the city of El-Idwa, Minia governorate. He was poor and after his death, his wife returned to her family in the village of Sheikh Mas‘oud due to her poverty. When her children Michael and Hanna grew up, she returned with them to the village of Ashruba (Al-Madrasa al-Ibteda‘iya al-Qadima). This family had played an important role in the history of the village. In addition, many architectural structures such as palaces and cemeteries with their designated endowments can also be attributed to the members of this family (Butrus, 1907).

Defining the Gravestone
It is a tablet of stone or marble placed on top of the grave. By it is usually placed on top of the grave at the head of the deceased. It includes the name of the deceased and in most cases; it has some Qur‘anic verses and invocations relevant to death and judgment. Moreover, it shows the deceased’s name, birthplace, profession and date of death, including the day, month and year. It is worth mentioning that tracing gravestones provide an opportunity to follow the evolution of Arabic writing in terms of texts, types of calligraphy, methods of carving and means of implementation, (Abdul‘Al, 2013).

Importance of Gravestones
Gravestones are of great value as they state clear facts, correct common mistakes and provide the names of prominent figures. Moreover, they add firm information that is useful in studying the decrees because they include titles and invocations. Investigating the forms of calligraphies by which the gravestones are inscribed show their diversity and development throughout the Islamic history, (Al-‘Imari, 1986). They are also of great importance in clarifying the facts as well as the economic, social, artistic and perhaps the political conditions of the society at the time of their inscription, (Sirajuddin, 2007). By application to the gravestones under investigation, the gravestones indicate the status of Athanasius’ family and the extent of their political and social participation in society. These gravestones provide the names of the Copts’ prominent figures.

Forms of Gravestones
Throughout the Abbasid period, gravestones had rectangular forms. Other gravestones of cylindrical shape were found to replace the flat ones since the Ayyubid period, (Jad, 2010). The gravestones re-took the flat shape during the Mamluk period, while some remained cylindrical and some took the forms of niches with a Mishka a glass cover containing an oil lamp hanging from its top (Al-‘Imari, 1986). By the end of the 18th century, the artist used the rectangular form in the gravestones under investigation.
Heads of Gravestones

The forms of gravestones differed according to their heads and the artist used hats to distinguish between men and women on the one hand and the functions and social classes of the deceased on the other (Suleiman, 1979). The artist used the following in the gravestones under investigation:

- Turban

It refers to the Turkish (kavuğa). It was the customary headwear of Ottomans and was used by the Coptic artist to decorate the gravestones, (Ahmed, 1989). This means the influence of the Ottoman era, on the Coptic artist so he used it to distinguish between men's and women's gravestones in the church of Saint Theodore in Deir el- Sanquriya (pl.9). Each class of the statesmen manages to wear a specific style of turbans in order to distinguish their status, so the forms of turbans varied as some were plain and simple, while others took a geometric form wrapped or ornamented with gems (Suleiman, 1979).

The use of turbans refers to the status of Michael Athanasius’ family in the state and at the same time, it highlights their role in the community. This can be seen clearly in Gravestones pl. (1, 3, 6).

Raw material used in making the gravestones under investigation

Marble is one of the most important materials used in the field of recording the archaeological writings of the Mamluk and Ottoman eras due to its special properties such as the hardness resulting from its natural composition in addition to the natural luster of its glossy surface which adds to the glory of the structure, especially when the light falls on its surface, whether it is natural or synthetic, (Yassin, 2003). In addition, marble is characterized by its durability, which makes it one of the most enduring decorative materials under changing conditions. However, some types of marble are characterized by the easiness of their formation into the required sizes. There are many types and forms of marble varying according to the sources of their importation, (Al-Sayed, 1994).

Methods of Executing the Inscriptions on Marble

There are two methods of writing inscription on the marble, sunk relief (Plate 2.1) and high relief. It is the stage that through it bringing the raw material which is represented in the marble, it is identified the four directions of the piece to be cutting, it is used one of the colors or to use a piece of coal, then determined these four parts, after the selection and cutting the piece that be used, it is used a machine called (the lever) and this piece called by large piece, and then the piece is ready for use, (Abdel-Rahim, 1992).

Determining the method of implementation depends on the surface of the gravestone. There is a third method but it is used less frequently than the previous two, but it is faster in inscribing the text on the surface of the gravestone, namely writing with ink, then incising contiguous points over the ink. These incised points are not deep in the surface, so they are refilled with ink. For the second method that used in the polishing process concerning of marble material represented in using a piece of marble water, sand and then soften the marble, in order to show the marble color and to be brilliant, this was done through the use of sandpaper, after the ending of that a piece of cloth would be brought, it was dipped in water and then would be putting in a flour of niter with Kberitat iron, then it was used to rub the surface of marble to be completely polished (Darwish, 1995).

Hence, the decorations carved in the marbles necessitate the artist’s more accuracy and talent than those implemented to the stones, (Wagdi, 2007). By application to the considered gravestones, it can be seen that the artist used the first method, sunk relief in the marble, which lasts for a longer period of time. This research deals with the study of the artistic and archaeological of three male gravestones of marble. They belong to the family of Athanasius. These are in the Church of Saint Theodore in Deir al-Sanquriya in Beni Mazar.

These gravestones are arranged according to the date of death as follows

1 - The gravestone of Mikhail (1883 AD- 1599 AM).
2 - The gravestone of Butrus (1902 AD - 1618 AM).
3 - The gravestone of John (1903 AD- 1619 AM).

The Gravestone of Mikhail Athanasius

Location: Family Cemetery at the Church of Saint Theodore.
Raw material: Marble.
Font Type: Thuluth.
Number of lines: 11 lines.
Deceased: Michael Athanasius.
Date of death: 1599 AM.
Publication: Un published.
Description

It is a gravestone of marble with sunk relief carvings in the Thuluth calligraphy, pl.1, fig.1. Its inscriptions came eleven lines and began with the words “Haza al-Maqam wal Shahid Bism Mikha’ila allazi Tuwufeya sanat 1883 miladeya, this is the shrine and tombstone of Mikhail, who died in 1883 AD. The inscriptions on this gravestone are as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>In Arabic</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>Haza al-Maqam fima Istata’t Sabila</td>
<td></td>
<td>This place for whoever is able to find there to a way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Fal thamari ‘Aliyuhu Taqila</td>
<td></td>
<td>As the blooming has many yields,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Washrah ma’thar man hawahu muradedan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Explain the good deeds of who lied in it and repeat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Mashi’u men zekral Jamili Jamila</td>
<td></td>
<td>Whatever you want of sweet memories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>Gadaz-zamanu lana ‘ala qadaren behe</td>
<td></td>
<td>Time bestowed him upon us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>Walaqad yakunu behe az-zamanu bakhila</td>
<td></td>
<td>But sometimes it may be unwilling to do so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>Fareqqi reqqi al-zera’ayn ilal ula</td>
<td></td>
<td>So, raise your hands to Heavens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth</td>
<td>Hatta qasadal reddu al-hayate la-aglebu</td>
<td></td>
<td>To grant your life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth</td>
<td>Washada lesanul khayate mu’arekhan</td>
<td></td>
<td>The tongue of mystery whispered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth</td>
<td>Mat al-keramu be-mawte Mikhail</td>
<td></td>
<td>The generosity died with the death of Mikhail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>703 448 292 441</td>
<td>441 292 448 703</td>
<td>In 1883 AD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleventh</td>
<td>سنة 1883 أفريمية</td>
<td>Sanat 1883 a frankeya</td>
<td>In 1883 AD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis

The gravestone took the rectangular shape with a square base consisting of three layers and ends from its upper part with the shape of a turban. It contains eleven lines written in Thuluth calligraphy. Its carvings are all in the sunk relief on the marble. The inscriptions came in the form of lyrical verses in lamentation of the deceased. Then the name of the deceased is mentioned and the lines ended with the date of death in a rectangular line. It was written in numbers calculating the sentences. Geometric decorations were used in the gravestone from its top in the form of a black cross with floral decorations in the form of branch.

The Deceased’s Background

He was a tax collector during the reign of Muhammad Ali Pasha. He managed to collect taxes from Samalut city to Maghagha city. He was poor and his wealth increased until it reached 4500 acres. In 1866, he was appointed as a member of the Shura Council of Khedive Ismail. He played a major role in the Orabi Revolution as he sent four boats full of supplies to Ahmed Orabi. As a result, there was a dispute between him and Khedive Tawfiq, but Pope Cyril V intervened and reconciled between them. He remained in his residence in al-Sakakin until he died in 1883 AD and was buried in the village of Deir al-Sanquriya. He had no sons but he had three daughters, each of them inherited 300 acres. They were called Mustafeya, Batul and Roma. The remaining inheritance was left to his brother Hanna Effendi Athanasius, the father of the late Nashid Beg Hanna, (Butrus, 1907).

The most important of his works was the construction of Qasr al-Sett Batul that is demolished nowadays and sold to the commons. He built al-Qasr al-Dakheli (Al-Madrassa al-Ibteda’i al-Qadima) that is still in place. It is famous for its sublimity and decorations. In addition, he built the palace which is currently in place next to the road and facing the garden; in 1585 AM corresponding to 1869 AD he accomplished its construction. It was renewed by Nashid Beg Hanna in 1916 AD and it was later possessed by Fawzi Beg and Nashid, whose daughter sold it. It is now possessed by Mr. Elisha al-Qummus Marcos. It is worth mentioning that the village of Deir al-Sanquriya was the center of his activity, which prompted him to rebuild the church above the ancient one located in the village. In addition, he established the family cemetery for everyone belonging to the Athanasius (Butrus, 1907).
The Gravestone of Butrus
Location: Family Cemetery at the Church of Saint Theodore.
Raw material: Marble.
Font Type: Thuluth.
Number of lines: 11 lines.
Deceased: Butrus
Date of death: 1618 AM.
Publication: Unpublished.

Description
It is a marble gravestone, with some inscriptions written in Thuluth calligraphy in the manner of sunk relief carving, pl.3, fig.2. These inscriptions consisted of eleven lines that began “Allahu Fatan Azim al-Sha’n”, which means “Oh God, He was a great man”. The gravestone is in the name of Butrus, who died in 1618 AM and the text inscribed on it reads as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>In Arabic</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>ن ﷿م ا ﷨ ﷢ xXY</td>
<td>Allahu Fatan Azim al-Sha’n</td>
<td>Oh God, what a great man was he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>ث v€M ا v~أودت</td>
<td>Behayatehe awdat yadul Hadath</td>
<td>But the hands of destiny spared his life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>و حدار al-Zamanu behe wa’in kama nasha’</td>
<td>Ghadar al-Zamanu behe wa’in kama nasha’</td>
<td>Time betrayed him, despite he grew up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>يبسع وراء الخير والإحسان</td>
<td>Yas’ wara’ al-khayr wal Ihsan</td>
<td>In pursuit of benevolence and charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>و وق حدوا ضريحة هذا وكم</td>
<td>Waqad hawahu darihu haza wakam</td>
<td>His tomb enclosed him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>في مثيلة ملكا ودا سلطانا</td>
<td>Fi mathilihi malikan waza sultana</td>
<td>Just like others of those having sovereignty and influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>فيليدين علي مائره التي</td>
<td>Fal-yubdina ’ala ma’atherehi allati</td>
<td>His good deeds may be seen by all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth Line</td>
<td>حق الثانى لها بكل آسات</td>
<td>Haqqa al-thana’u laha bekolle lisane</td>
<td>To be thanked by each tongue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth</td>
<td>واليوم داعي الفضل</td>
<td>Wal-yawmu da’i al-fadl</td>
<td>Now, boaster of grace!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth</td>
<td>قد حل بطرس في رياض جنان</td>
<td>Qad halla butrus fe riyad el janan</td>
<td>Butrus rested in the gardens of Heavens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 1101 90 271 38 104</td>
<td>104 38 271 90 1101 101</td>
<td>104 38 271 90 1101 101</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleventh Line</td>
<td>سنة 1618 قبطية</td>
<td>Sanat 1618 qibteyah</td>
<td>In 1618 of AM.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis
The gravestone took the rectangular shape with a square base consisting of three layers and ends from its upper part with the shape of a turban. It contains eleven lines written in Thuluth calligraphy. Its carvings are all in the sunk relief on the marble. The inscription on the gravestone began with “Allahu Fatan Azim al-Sha’n which means “Oh God, He was a great man”, to be blessed with the word of God and to point out that the grave is the place of the life to come. The inscriptions also included some words such as “darih”, khayr and Ihsan, which mean the mausoleum, benevolence and charity, respectively. These indicate the deceased’s goodness and benevolence to the poor. It ended with invoking God to have mercy upon the deceased and let him enjoy “riyadel janan or Paradise”. Then the date of death was mentioned in the Coptic calendar, 1618 Coptic, and the artist used the Coptic calendar in this gravestone that corresponds to 1902 AD according to the Gregorian calendar, after adding 284 years, that marked the beginning of the Coptic calendar.

The Deceased’s Background
He was a member of Athanasius’ family and was appointed in the Legislative Council (Majlis Shura al-Qawanin). It is stated that this council demanded the establishment of Coptic schools and the revival of kuttabs by the revolution of the great reformer Pope Cyril IV (Abba Kyrillos IV). He remained a member of the parliament until his death. He spent a great deal of his wealth on churches and charity. Upon death, he was buried in the family’s cemetery in Deir el- Sanquriya, (Butrus, 1907).
The Gravestone of Yuhanna Athanasius
Location: Family Cemetery at the Church of Saint Theodore.
Raw material: Marble.
Font Type: Thuluth.
Number of lines: 11 lines.
Deceased: Yuhanna Athanasius.
Date of death: 1619 AM.
Publication: Un published.

Description
It is a marble gravestone, with some inscriptions written in Thuluth calligraphy in the manner of sunk relief carving, pl.5, fig.3. These inscriptions consisted of eleven lines that began with “Darihun hallahu rajul”. The gravestone is in the name of Yuhanna Athanasius, who died in 1619 AM and the text inscribed on it reads as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>In Arabic</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>ضريح خلّة رجل</td>
<td>Darihun hallahu rajul</td>
<td>A mausoleum occupied by a man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>من الافاطب هو هم</td>
<td>Men al-aqbaty zu hemem</td>
<td>Of Copts and of resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>فطلم قدره فنیا</td>
<td>Fana’lamu qadrahu fina</td>
<td>So, let’s know his position among us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>بما آداأ من خدم</td>
<td>Bima addahu men khedam</td>
<td>Of what he had done of services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>ولما فارق الدنيا</td>
<td>Walamma farqa-addunia</td>
<td>When he departed our life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>وحل الناس في سم</td>
<td>Wahalla annasu fe sadam</td>
<td>And people fall in sorrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>لسان الحال ارجه</td>
<td>Lesamul-hali irkhie</td>
<td>They started saying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth</td>
<td>بما تلسوو من كم</td>
<td>Bema natlouhu men kalim</td>
<td>And repeating in agony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth</td>
<td>توقي الله يوحا</td>
<td>Tawaffa allahu Yuhanna</td>
<td>God took Yuhanna (to Heavens)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth</td>
<td>حليف الخير والكرم</td>
<td>Halifal khayre wal karam</td>
<td>The supporter of goodness and benevolence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleventh</td>
<td>سنة 1903</td>
<td>Sanat 1903</td>
<td>In 1903 AD.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis
The gravestone took the rectangular shape with a square base consisting of three layers and ends from its upper part with the shape of a turban. It contains eleven lines written in Thuluth calligraphy. Its carvings are all in the sunk relief on the marble. The inscription on the gravestone began with “Darihun hallahu rajul” in an indication that the deceased lies in this tomb. The writings describe the deceased’s personality and his good traits and value within the society as well as his fine qualities. In addition, it describes what befall people after the departure of Yuhanna, the charitable and generous. The inscriptions on the gravestone ended with the date of death in 1903 AD.

The Deceased’s Background
He was the son of Athanasius, the head of the family, and the brother of Mikhail Effendi Athanasius. He inherited from his brother about 550 acres. He was a good and generous man. He was the mayor of the village after the death of Mikhail Effendi Athanasius and took charge of the village from 1884 to 1892 AD. After his death in 1903 AD, his son Rashid succeeded him as the mayor and became a member of the House of Representatives. During his reign, Khedive Abbas II Hilmi visited the village and stayed in his palace. Then, he went to Bedaros and gave him a large area of land (Abdul Dayem, 2010).

Analytical Study
The inscription of the Coptic gravestones of Athanasius’ family took a new form in terms of inscribing some religious phrases relevant to death. The Coptic artist managed to mention the religious phrases at the beginning of the gravestone and ended with invoking God to show mercy for the deceased,(Searing,1899). The gravestone also included the name of the deceased, as well as the works he had done in his life in commemoration of his memory. It also began with the symbol of the cross and ended with this symbol to be blessed by the Lord Christ, pl.8, (Qadous, 2002). In addition, the Coptic artist considered himself as a tool working of service to the Lord without supervision of anyone, (Ibrahim, 2012) Moreover, gravestones included some artistic decorations.
1.) Analysis of the Inscriptions Content

Inscriptions on the Coptic gravestones in the late 18th century generally began with some invocatory phrases and verses from the Bible such as:-

(1) كَمَا فِي آدَمَ بُوْتُ الجَمِيعِ كَثَّا فِي الْمَسِحِ بَحْيَا الجَمِيعِ
(22:15: Kama Fe Adam Yamout al-jamea’, Kaza Fe al-Messiah yahya al-jamea’ (As in Adam, all die, the same in Christ all live).

(2) ‘الَّذِي يَقُولُ ‘الْرَّجُلُ’ ‘أَتَّقَيْنَا’
(24:18: ‘ala rajaa’ al-qiyamah al-khaledah, huna raqadat Fe al-rab (On the hope of Eternal Resurrection; here lies the deceased).

(3) Qibteyah). This system was used after declaring Christianity as the official religion of the country, As the Christians considered the year of Diocletian’s ascension to throne, 284 as

(4.) Dating the Gravestones

In the Ottoman era, dates were so often written in numbers and there was a lack of using letters on the gravestones. As for the gravestones under investigation, they were mentioned on the first gravestone, that of Mikhail Athanasius as they were recorded only by the year (Sanat 1883 afrankeya). The second gravestone of Yuhanna Athanasius stated it in the same form (Sanat 1903 miladeya), and the third one of Butrus used the same form as well – (Sanat 1618 qibteyah). Dating by using sentences can be seen on the three gravestones dealt with in this study as the system of the Diocletian era known as Martys’ era (Anno Diocletiani) was also used as the case with the gravestone of Butrus (1618 Qibteyab). This system was used after declaring Christianity as the official religion of the country, (Abdul Dayem, 2010), As the Christians considered the year of Diocletian’s ascension to throne, 284 as a method of numbering years. The use of this era in history was explained as an epoch of its own and as a special Christian system of numbering and counting the Christians’ memories. Despite the use of this system in dating was complex, it can be seen on the gravestones, wills, contracts and other documents. In addition, this temporal system became more widely used in the seventh and eighth centuries and continued for many centuries (Qadous, 2002).
As for the method of calculating the sentences recorded on the gravestones under investigation, calculating the sentences was known for the Jews and Arabs before Islam. The Arabs had a good knowledge of the Indians’ calculation and adopted it from them - the system of numbering sentences. The Arabs in the past used a numerical system relevant to the Arabic alphabet letters and it was called the numbering system according to the calculations of sentences as they assigned a figure to refer to every alphabetic letter, so the alphabetic letters were represented by figures. This method depended on the formation of phrases of short sentences so that the sum of the numerical values of their letters is equal to the intended number. This method was used to record events such as birth, death or building mosques or palaces, (Nasr, 1983).

The Arabic alphabet consists of 28 letters, each of which has a numerical meaning beginning with (1) and ending with (1000). The most common Abjad sequence, read from right to left, is:

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccccccc}
\text{س} & \text{ع} & \text{ف} & \text{ق} & \text{ر} & \text{ش} & \text{ت} & \text{ث} & \text{خ} & \text{م} & \text{n} & \text{م}
\end{array}
\]

This is commonly vocalized as follows

Abjad hawwaz ḥawṣ kalaman sa’afaṣ qarashat thakhadh ḍaẓagh (Al-Bakri, 1954).

The forms of numerating sentences on the gravestones under investigation

1.) The gravestone of Mikhail in the tenth line, it can be seen in the form of "Mat" = (441), "al-keramu" = (292), "be-mawte" = (448), "Mikhaila" = (702).

Comparing the numbers on the gravestone with the calculation of sentences, the date on the gravestone appeared to be true, i.e., it was really 1883.

2.) The gravestone of Butrus in the tenth line, it can be seen in the form of "Qad" = (104), "halla" = (38), "butrus" = (271), "fe" = (90), "riyad" = (1011), "janan" = (101), "wal-karam" = (297).

Comparing the numbers on the gravestone with the calculation of sentences, the date on the gravestone appeared to be true, it was really 1883.

3.) The gravestone of Yuhanna in ninth and tenth lines, it can be seen in the form of "Tawaffa" = (496), "الله" = (66), "Yuhanna" = (75), "Allahu" = (128), "Halif" = (841), "al-khayre" = (297).
Comparing the numbers on the gravestone with the calculation of sentences, the date on the gravestone appeared to be true, it was really 1903.

5.) The Gravestones Decorations
The Coptic artist has drew and engraved the palm tree and palmettos on wood and the different products as a symbol of peace, pl.7, the heart and life of the believer and the martyr, moreover, he drew the olive trees which put extremely on the iconostasis and gravestones and the spandrels of the entrances inlaid with precious ivory as a gesture of peace and prosperity within above inscription peace for the sanctuary of god the good father, (Searing, 1899). The gravestones tackled in this study have various geometrical and floral decorations. It can be found that the Coptic artist used the decorations of the olive branch and the cross within it; he placed this decoration on the top of the gravestone, (Tawadros, 1968). It is well known that the olive branch symbolizes the vine and the vine symbolizes Christ. It denotes the fertility and growth. Therefore, the Copts used the plant of vine to symbolize Christ, (Qadous, 2002). In addition, Christ himself likened himself to the vine. The cross represented Jesus Christ, the means of salvation that came to the earth, which is represented in the sign of the cross on top of the gravestone. It denotes the ascension of the faithful through the blessing which given to him by Christ, while the body descends to the lower world and the souls pass to the afterlife, (Salib, 1999). The floral decorations can be seen in the plant branches of plants coming out of the cross to indicate that the cross represents Christ. It depicts that it draws life from it after death (Searing, 1899). These decorations are evident in the gravestones of Mikhail, Butrus and Yuhanna Athanasius that the study dealt with.

Concluding Remarks
In the light of this descriptive and analytical study, the researcher concluded the following:-
The study revealed that the family of Athanasius was one of the Egyptian Coptic families who had a prominent role in the political and social life during the late nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. The study confirmed the role of Mikhail Athanasius during the reign of Muhammad Ali Pasha, where many of his possessions were endowed in order to construct churches and palaces in the village. The study dealt with three marble gravestones for the family of Athanasius and these are Unpublished. The study showed the use of the numerating sentences in the date written on the gravestones and their conformity with the date mentioned in figures. Using the analytical study, the study was able to shed light on the type of script inscribed on the gravestones, which is the Thuluth. The study explained the methods of engraving the inscriptions and decorations on the gravestones, which proves the development in the technical and artistic style. The study revealed the content and purpose of the writings as well as the plant decorations on the gravestones. The Analytical study showed the use of sunk relief carvings in the implementation of writings on the gravestones. The study showed that the gravestones of Athanasius’ family had no titles.

Bibliography
Appendix of Figures

(Plate.1) Gravestone of Mikhail (Researcher)

(Plate.2) Inscriptions of Mikhail Gravestone (Researcher)

(plate.3) Gravestone of Butrus (Researcher)

(Plate.4) Inscriptions of Butrus gravestone (Researcher)

(plate.5) Inscriptions of Yuhanna gravestone (Researcher)

(Plate.6) Gravestone of Yuhanna (Researcher)
(Figure.1) Illustration of gravestone of Mikhail (Researcher)

(Plate.7) Floral decoration on the gravestone (Researcher)

(Plate.9) Decoration representing the Turban above the gravestone. (Researcher)

(Figure.2) Illustration of gravestone of Mikhail (Researcher)

(Plate.8) Decoration representing the cross (Researcher)

(Figure.3) Illustration of gravestone of Yuhanna (Researcher)
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