

In the early years of the eighteenth century a dervish of a speculative turn discovered and dug out a common-place Moslem tomb, and thought it might be a profitable business to inspire the shepherds who fed their flocks thereabouts with a veneration for the place. Old Cypriot Christians assert that it was he who, in furtherance of this project, circulated the story of miracles performed at the tomb.

Mohammadans however hold that the tomb was underground, and being exposed by rains was found by some shepherds, to whom on entering it there appeared a lady of beautiful and majestic aspect, clothed in white and shining garments. They were astounded, but their fears were soon stilled by the lady who blessed them and their flocks, and revealed to them that she was the aunt of Mohammad, and that her body lay in the tomb which they had found. The vision, which they believed sent by their prophet, who wished to point out for their veneration his aunt's sepulchre, filled them with comfort and happiness, and thenceforth their flocks were ever more and more fruitful. The dervish no doubt had accomplices, who spread through the island the news of the discovery. Crowds rushed to the place: the sick were healed; the lame walked, and left for their homes in perfect health. Such virtue, it was said, lay in the mere touch of the stones.

Offerings rolled in, and the dervish had wherewith to adorn the shrine he had created. His efforts, and the influence of certain devotees, procured him leave from the government to build over the tomb a suitable dome, under which a few persons could assemble, as is customary throughout the East, at the tomb of any notable saint.

Time passed, and the shrine, though frequented and honoured by devotees in the island, was little known beyond it. When the plague of 1760 had ceased, the *Muhassil*, Mehmed Agha, made a kind of wooden barrier to enclose and guard the tomb. But in Islam men are not allowed to congregate with women, so an Imam was appointed to direct