

## ON CIRCUMAMBULATION IN CHELLAH AND ELSEWHERE POPULAR TRADITIONS, LEGAL PROHIBITIONS

*Tamás Iványi*

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest

### 1. Visiting Chellah together with Alexander Fodor

1.1 In May, 1979 I spent three weeks in the Moroccan capital Rabat together with my colleague, Alexander Fodor. On the last day of his sojourn, a Friday, we visited together the Marinid necropolis of Chellah near Rabat, where we witnessed a group of young women making a visit (*ziyāra*) to the tombs of various local saints, further on a spring-fed pond full of water and the *mihrāb* of the ruinous *zāwiya* containing a mosque and *madrasa* of Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb, the first Marinid sultan to be buried in Chellah in 1286. We spent the whole afternoon observing the women's movements.

On this occasion we had only a very short time to spend in the Chellah since Alexander had to prepare for his home journey on the next day. Therefore he asked me, because I was going to stay on for a further period of three months, to go and visit the cemetery and the mosque in the next Fridays in order to observe women's customs, practices and rituals there in detail. This I did enthusiastically though that time I was not in the least interested in either women's customs or popular rituals. I sent my observations in weekly letters to him two or three times to make possible for him to use this material in one of his forthcoming articles. However, he never realized this project of his and my observations were never inserted in his writings. When asked, he replied smiling like a good Egyptian: *bukra, inšalla*.

1.2 In the last quarter of a century, however, my interest has increased in both women in Islam and the reaction of Islamic law to their practices. Thus I decided to publish at least a short notice on the most exciting and at the same time most controversial part of the rituals of the women at Chellah, that is, the circumambulation of the *mihrāb*, at the end of the building opposite the minaret. This, to my knowledge, has not yet been described or even mentioned in the relevant scholarly literature.

Afterwards, I describe some examples of the circumambulation around objects other than the Ka'ba from the Middle Ages, making a short mention of the similar Šūfī practice as well. Then I quote an arbitrary selection of anthropological

*THE ARABIST. BUDAPEST STUDIES IN ARABIC* 37 (2016)

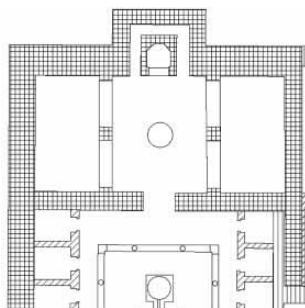
<https://doi.org/10.58513/ARABIST.2016.37.7>

sources, which mention the same phenomenon in the Maghreb, Egypt, Tajikistan, the Indian Subcontinent, Indonesia, Gambia, selecting some cases when circumambulation aims at a healing process. Finally, I collected the critical remarks of some mediaeval religious scholars and modern religious opinions condemning circumambulation around places other than the House of God in Mecca. But I find it even more interesting how the official organs reacted to the increasingly disturbing circumambulation around the praying niches in the Maghreb in the past and in Chellah in the last decades trying to hinder it with physical measures.

## 2. Chellah – the building and the circumambulation

### 2.1 On the history of the building: was it a *zāwiya* or a *madrasa*, or both?<sup>1</sup>

Only some parts of the wall of the *zāwiya* remained intact in the centre of this necropolis. It seems that this religious establishment had been at the same time a mosque, a Qur’ānic school (*madrasa*) and an accommodation for the students and pilgrims coming from all over the Maghreb. This building may have been constructed according to the same principles as the *madrasas* of Fez, not destroyed by earthquake.<sup>2</sup>



*The reconstructed plan of part of the zāwiya (or madrasa) in Chellah, where the niche is supplied with a well observable ambulatory.<sup>3</sup>*

The site was furnished for pilgrims, and at this point we should not forget the almost unique aspect of Chellah designed for them: the corridor for circumambulation around the *miḥrāb*. This feature is more reminiscent of a *zāwiya* than a *madrasa*, although the general architectural features recall the numerous *madrasas*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Basset & Lévi-Provençal 1922:1–92, esp. 81–84 “medersa ou hôtellerie?”

<sup>2</sup> Most parts of the Chellah necropolis were demolished by the great Lisbon earthquake in 1755.

<sup>3</sup> On the basis of Nagy 2014:134.

built by the Marinids.<sup>4</sup> According to some sources the circumambulation of pilgrims was still current in the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup>

The former *zāwiya* could easily provide what was needed for the religious rites performed on the site and receive the pilgrims, who clearly arrived in great numbers. Ibn al-Ḥaṭīb and an-Numayrī – among others – mention that sanctity of the site and the religious practices performed there were widely known (Nagy 2014:144). It has also been proposed that some finds during more recent excavations in Chellah were connected with pilgrimage.<sup>6</sup> Ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ an-Numayrī mentions the great number of travelling Sufis who attain lodgement and are abundantly supplied with provision in the *zāwiya* of Chellah (Ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ an-Numayrī, Fayḍ, 201). In the past it was supposedly the male devotees of the Ṣūfī brotherhoods or orders who performed their pilgrimages in the nearby Chellah instead of traveling to Mecca.

## 2.2 Chellah in the beginning of the 20th century

Within the ruins of the Abū Yūsuf mosque, in the depth of the *ḥalwa*, a strange ceremony was taking place on the 9th day of Dū l-ḥiḡḡa, the day of Arafat. It is an essential day of the Meccan pilgrimage, the vigil of the great feast, *al-ʿīd al-kabīr*. It is just this day when some Muslims gathered at this point of the *ḥalwa*. They were mainly from among the poor, living outside the town proper, in the shabby district of the *agdal* (meadows) of the Sultan (today inside Rabat, and is still called Agdal), in the community of Touarga. They had come here till some years ago, holding the view that it was equivalent with the Meccan pilgrimage. They had worn the usual clothes but they had been barefoot and their head uncovered, as it is prescribed for the pilgrims. They were headed by an imam whom the men followed in line, chanting the *talbiya* of the Meccan pilgrims. The last of these imams was called Sī Ġilālī Bel-Makkī. He died around the beginning of the 20th century.

Just as the pilgrims make seven circumambulations around the Kaʿba, they made seven circulations around the *miḥrāb* in the semi-circular corridor (apse) surrounding it, which separates it from the wall. After the seventh round they set to pray, and afterwards they made another seven tours behind their *imām*. The women, after having placed their donations in the tombs of the saints in the neighbourhood, began to prepare the food of the feast (Basset & Lévi-Provençal 1922:419–420).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Nagy 2014:141–142, esp. fn. 41.

<sup>5</sup> For the rituals, see Basset & Lévi-Provençal 1922:419–22.

<sup>6</sup> See El Khayari & Kbirī & Alaoui 1998:4–6, and Nagy 2014:144, fn. 47.

According to a legend the Prophet Muhammad had also prayed here so it made sufficient at an earlier time to make the circumambulations here around the *mihrāb* to call someone a *ḥāḡḡ*, pilgrim, a title otherwise could only be acquired by a Meccan pilgrimage (Ricard 1919:159).

Similar circumambulation ceremonies existed in other Moroccan places as well. Not, however, around a mihrab but around the tombs of acknowledged saints (Basset & Lévi-Provençal 1922:421).

The respect of this otherwise unlawful custom had been greatly raised by what the Moroccan Sultan did every year around the time of the Meccan pilgrimage: namely, he had made a round trip among his three royal capital visiting his castles and some holy places, for instance Chellah (*Ibid.* 1922:419).

According to Henri Basset and Évariste Lévi-Provençal this custom had been less and less followed during the first two decades of the 20th century. In 1922, only the children imitated these rites for amusing themselves and some families went out to the Chellah as part of their festivities on the vigil of the Great Feast (*Ibid.* 1922:420).

### 2.3 Women circumambulating in Chellah

The custom of circumambulating the *mihrāb* in the Chellah, however, had not extinct totally, only women had occupied the place of the men. The women always came to Chellah on Friday since it is traditionally held to be the most suitable day of the week for this kind of visitation. They arrived in smaller groups, three, four or five together, possibly the members of one family or neighbourhood, never with male company. First they visited the tombs of two unknown saints on the foot of a small mound near the main route of the Chellah garden.

Entering the tomb first they hung up their belts inside the *qubba* of one of the tombs accompanying this practice with a prayer and vow what they would do in case God fulfils their petition – they mainly desired male children. After paying a small sum to the keeper of the tomb, the women moved to the small pond where they stopped for a short prayer and threw small coins into the pond, while spitting into it.. Other more fortunate observers saw “sterile women come and throw peeled boiled eggs (available on the site) to the sacred eels gliding about in the depths. The eels only eat the whites, and the yolks get given to the assembled cats who obviously know the ropes.”<sup>7</sup> They think that the eels found in the pond help keep them healthy.

---

<sup>7</sup> Searight 1999:172. Searight has lived in Casablanca for more than 25 years, working as an archaeologist and tour guide.

At the end of their tour they entered the territory of the ruins going directly to the *mihrāb* to do there circumambulations and other practices of great importance for them. There three-four of them joined their palms and fingers around the prayer niche and began to circumambulate behind and around it. They rotate anti-clockwise around the *mihrāb* – that is, as the pilgrims do in Mecca and as the Arabic writing moves. This is made possible by the special structure of this niche which is built after the pattern of some Spanish (and other) Christian churches where one can circulate around the altar in the ambulatory, a semi-circular recess covered with a hemispherical vault.<sup>8</sup>

#### 2.4 *Mihrābs* with a rear ambulatory

The form of the Christian apse was so strikingly similar to a *mihrāb* that it was not surprising that Arabic sources mention it as a feature borrowed from Christian churches.<sup>9</sup> The *mihrāb* with a rear ambulatory is a strikingly common feature of the mosque built in the Maghreb and Andalusia in the early part of the Middle Ages. Whether it was only an architectural borrowing from the Christian church or it was originally meant to serve the purpose of circumambulation is hard to know but the fact that all of these ambulatories are nowadays blocked in some way well illustrates their “illegal” use in the past.

The *mihrāb* in the Great Mosque of Cordoba is framed by an exquisitely decorated arch behind which is an unusually large space, the size of a small room. “On the right of the *mihrāb* is a door for the *imām* to come in and go out. To the left of the *mihrāb* is another small door with a grating. Connecting these doors and the *mihrāb* is a fine level walk” (Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, *Iqd*, VII, 288).

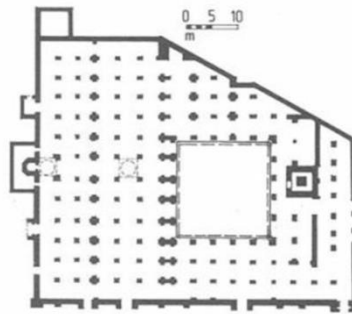
The *mihrāb* in the Great Mosque of Tlemcen in Algeria is one which reveals close connexions to that in Cordova. The niche itself is pentagonal, a form that was to be frequently used in the Maghreb and also in Turkey. The niche is flanked by an opening on either side giving access around the *mihrab*.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Although there are ambulatories around the altar in other countries too, it may have been the Spanish church architecture which exerted an influence on the Maghrebian mosque builders.

<sup>9</sup> Lammens 1912:246; Creswell 1932:98, Fehérváry 1993: “Mihrāb in the Maghreb”.

<sup>10</sup> W. and G. Marcais 1903:140 ff; G. Marcais 1926, i, 313 ff., figs. 213–4, 381–5; Hill, Golvin & Hillenbrand 1976: 11, figs. 208–9.



*It may be observed on the plan of the mosque that there is an ambulatory behind the mihrāb.*

The Great Mosque of Tlemcen was first built in Tlemcen, Algeria in 1082, and then restored in 1135/6. In the Great Mosque of Tinmal in the High Atlas, the *mihrāb*, built in 548/1153, closely resembles that of the Kutubiyya. The same arrangement can be observed here. Again there are flanking niches and an open path behind, once more presenting a free-standing *mihrāb*.<sup>11</sup>

### 3. Circumambulation around places other than the Ka'ba

#### 3.1 In the Middle Ages

##### 3.1.1 The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem<sup>12</sup>

Two explanations are generally given for the Construction of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. The first agrees quite well with the historical circumstances of the years 66–72 A.H. and it was introduced by Ignaz Goldziher.<sup>13</sup> This interpretation is based on texts of the historian al-Ya'qūbī (d. 874). He claims that, since Ibn az-Zubayr was in possession of Mecca, 'Abd al-Malik wanted to divert

<sup>11</sup> G. Marcais 1926, i, 323, 385, figs. 181, 216–17; Hill, Golvin & Hillenbrand 1976:128, figs. 472–3.

<sup>12</sup> See its detailed description by Grabar 1959:33–62.

<sup>13</sup> Goldziher 1889–1890: II, 35: “Der umejjadische Chalife 'Abdalmalik die Wallfahrt nach Mekka hintanhaltend wollte, da griff er zu dem Auskunftsmittel der Lehre vom stellvertretenden Hagg zur Kubbat al-sachra in Jerusalem. Er verordnete, dass an der geweihten Stätte in Jerusalem der obligate Umzug (*tawāf*) mit ebensolcher Giltigkeit geübt werden könne, wie ihn das muhammedanische Gesetz um die Ka'ba üben lässt”.

pilgrims from the Ka'ba by establishing Jerusalem as the religious center of the pilgrimage. It has been asserted that the plan of the Dome of the Rock, with two ambulatories around the Rock itself, originated with the ritual requirements of the *tawāf*.<sup>14</sup> According to the second explanation, put forward by S. D. Goitein (1950:104–108), it is highly improbable that the Umayyad caliph would have wanted to change the site of the pilgrimage explicitly mentioned in the Qur'ān. He also called attention to the fact that no other historical sources mention this momentous attempt. In my opinion, however, there is a third explanation too which occupies a middle position between the two: although it was not meant to replace the Meccan pilgrimage with a Jerusalemian one, it was still built for circumambulation of some kind as its vehement prohibition by Ibn Taymiyya (see later) seems to prove – a prohibition always reflects an existing custom. What is more, however, Ibn Taymiyya states that it was a widely held view in the 13th–14th c. that the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik had built the Dome of the Rock for the purpose of pilgrimage and circumambulation around it, a plan severely criticised by the Ḥanbalite scholar. It is therefore hardly believable that this view had spread only from a single source, *i.e.* al-Ya'qūbī's *History*.<sup>15</sup>

### 3.1.2 Imitation of the ceremonies of 'Arafa and the Ka'ba

A purely spiritual ceremony has been celebrated outside 'Arafa by a *ta'rīf*<sup>16</sup> only in certain regions and in certain periods: in Šīrāz in the ninth century, in Hurāsān and in the Ġabal 'Alam region of Morocco in the nineteenth century. It was an 'Abbāsīd, the *wālī* of Basra who instituted the *ta'rīf* in Basra as far back as the years 37–40, when Syrian rebels occupied the Ḥiğāz, which is to say, the celebration, following the *'aṣr* in the mosque, of the *waqfa* at 'Arafa, in spiritual union with the pilgrims celebrating it down there on 9 ḏū l-Ḥiğġa. This custom was adopted by the Basra school but condemned by the Medina school and was characterised by Mālīk as *bid'a munkara* (forbidden innovation). But the Mālīkite Ibn al-Ḥāğġ called it recommandable as pleasing to God (*mustaḥabb*).

---

<sup>14</sup> *Tārīḥ*, vol. 2, 311: “‘Abd al-Malik prevented the people of Syria to go to Mecca for the pilgrimage ... and when they cried (against this prohibition) he told them that the mosque in Jerusalem will take the place of the Sacred Mosque of Mecca. This is the rock on which the Prophet put his foot when ascending to the Heaven, and this will replace the Ka'ba for you. He then built a dome above the rock... and urged people to circumbulate around it as they used to circumbulate around the Ka'ba.”

<sup>15</sup> For Ibn Taymiyya's reaction to the Umayyad plan see his *Iqtīdā'*, 368.

<sup>16</sup> *at-ta'rīf* = “*yawm 'Arafa yawm al-wuqūf bihā*”, “the day of 'Arafa, the halting there”.

Another ‘Abbāsīd, Caliph Mu‘taṣim (d. 842), living in Samarra at the time of the installation of his Turkish mercenaries, had built for them at Karḥ Fīrūz a square “ka‘ba” surrounded by a courtyard for the circumambulation (*tawāf*) and other sites patterned after Mīna and ‘Arafa; so that they could make the *ḥaḡḡ* without leaving their posts (Massignon 1982: I, 541–542).

### 3.1.3 The Circumambulation of great Ṣūfī masters

For the mystic, the physical Ka‘ba in the world represents the human spiritual heart, the ‘place’ within the human being where the Divine dwells, where the true human being (*al-insān al-kāmil*) meets the Divine face to face. In fact one can say that the Ka‘ba and the heart are not really two things: the real Ka‘ba is the perfect human heart, the original source of prayer, and whoever brings their heart to that state of perfection and prays from there is praying from the Ka‘ba. Thus we can find stories written about mystics who did circumambulation in some form in places other than the Ka‘ba.

#### 3.1.3.1 Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī<sup>17</sup>

Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī (804–875) may have been the first Ṣūfī of whom an improper circumambulation story was told. Farīd ad-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār inserted the following story in his book on the life of the great Ṣūfī masters, *Taḏkirat al-awliyā’*: “A man encountered me on the road,” Abū Yazīd recalled. “‘Where are you going?’ he demanded. ‘‘On the pilgrimage,’ I replied. ‘‘How much have you got?’ ‘‘Two hundred dirhams.’ ‘‘Come, give them to me,’ the man demanded. ‘I am a man with a family. Circle round me seven times. That is your pilgrimage.’ ‘‘I did so, and returned home.’”

In a story about his ecstatic utterances he said: “I saw Mecca (i.e., the Ka‘ba) come to Madīna and circumambulate me (*yaṭūfunī*)!” (Badawī, 1978:185). In another story Ibn Bākuwayh said: “He (Abū Yazīd) ascended with me to the heaven and there circumambulated and prayed (to God)” (*ibid.* 209). According to another saying of his the pilgrims circumambulate the Ka‘ba striving for the eternal life, while the lovers (of God) circumambulate His Throne (‘*arṣ*’) striving for meeting Him (*ibid.* 180).

---

<sup>17</sup> Farid al-Din Attar, *Memorial of the Saints*, 1966:114, Abu Yazid al-Bestami, Anecdotes.



### 3.1.3.2 an-Nūrī

Abū l-Ḥusayn an-Nūrī (840–907), one of the great early Sufis in Baghdad, and a companion of Ḡunayd, was known as the *amīr al-qulūb* (prince of hearts), who defined Sufism as ‘the abandonment of everything that pleases the soul’.<sup>18</sup> According to an-Nūrī the heart is the House (*bayt*) of God, where human and divine natures lodge in perfect harmony. It is at the level of the innermost heart (*lubb*) that a complete realization of the divine unity (*tawḥīd*) is effected.<sup>19</sup> In another story he answered to a dog’s barking with the pilgrims cry in Mecca, the *talbiya*.<sup>20</sup>

### 3.1.3.3 al-Ḥallāğ

al-Ḥusayn b. Mansūr al-Ḥallāğ (858–922) became infamous because of many sayings and writings. Among them there was a letter turned over to the court at the time of the trial of al-Ḥallāğ that he had written to one of his disciples urging him to “destroy the Ka’ba (of his body) in order to rebuild it in Wisdom, so that it might actually take part in the *sağda* and *rak’a* of the true worshippers”, followed by another letter to a disciple: “if you want to make the *ḥağğ*, choose an appropriate room in your house, stand erect outside its door, similar to *wuqūf* at the Ka’ba gate, and enter dressed as *muḥrim*, go out again, go into another part of your house, pray two *rak’as* there, and this will be as if you had prayed in the *maqām* (of Abraham); run from this place to the door of the room which you had previously entered, and this will be as if you had run between Ṣafā and Marwa” (Massignon, 1982: I, 539–540). Because of another saying of his, that “one should circumambulate the Ka’ba of the heart seven times”, he was accused of being a Qarmaṭī, who wanted to undermine the power of the Abbasid Caliphate and to abolish the rites of the pilgrimage.<sup>21</sup>

al-Kalābādī (d. 380/990) writes<sup>22</sup> the following story under the heading “Of other graces accorded to them”<sup>23</sup>, i.e., the great Ṣūfī: “Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Sa’dān relates that he heard one of the great Ṣūfī masters, (referring to al-Ḥallāğ) say to me: “One day I was sitting opposite the House (of God) when I heard a moan coming from the House: O walls, depart from the route of my friends and beloved ones, for whoso visits you for your sake circumambulates around

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in al-Quṣayrī, *Risāla* 439.

<sup>19</sup> Gramlich 1995: I, 394–398. Cf. Knysh 2000:62.

<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., Carl Ernst 1994:97–101, and Gramlich 1995: I, 383–386.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Ernst 1994:108ff and Knysh 2000:76.

<sup>22</sup> al-Kalābādī *Ta’arruf*, Ch. 74, 160, tr. Arberry 1935:181–182.

<sup>23</sup> *min laṭā’if mā ġarā’ alayhim*.

you, but whoso visits Me for my sake circumambulates at me (i.e., in my presence).”<sup>24</sup> al- Hallāḡ interpreted this imagination of his as follows: One must include intermediate things” (*wasā’iṭ*, ‘rituals’). As long as you remain attached to this building you will remain separated from God. But when you have really detached yourself from it, then you will reach the One who built and established it; then, meditating on the temple destroyed in yourself, you will possess the real presence of its Founder.” This is the notion of *isqāṭ al-wasā’iṭ*.<sup>25</sup> That is, since God is omnipresent, it is everywhere possible to attain Him by way of circumambulation.

Another saying of his was preserved in the collection of Muẓaffar Ġulām Ğamīl:<sup>26</sup> “Sheikh Ḥusayn b. Manṣūr Ḥallāḡ recited the following to me: “People make the pilgrimage, I am going on a (spiritual) pilgrimage to my Host. While they offer animals in sacrifice, I offer my heart and my blood. Some of them walk in procession (*tawāf*) around the Temple, without their bodies, for they walk in procession in God, and He has exempted them from the *Ḥarām*” (Massignon 1982: I, 589–590).

#### 3.1.3.4 Abū Sa‘īd

Abū Sa‘īd b. Abī l-Ḥayr (d. 1049), the great mystic of Ḥurāsān, was once asked why he refused to perform the *ḥaḡḡ* like all other good muslims. Abū Sa‘īd replied: Why have I not performed the pilgrimage? It is no great matter that thou shouldst tread under thy feet a thousand miles of ground in order to visit a stone house. The true man of God sits where he is, and the *Bayt al-Ma‘mūr* (the Ka‘ba) comes several times in a day and night to visit him and perform the circumambulation above his head. Look and see!” All who were present looked and saw it.

He used to say: The mystic’s pilgrimage takes place within himself. “If God sets the way to Mecca before any one, that person has been cast out of the Way to the Truth.” Not content with encouraging his disciples to neglect the *ḥaḡḡ*, Abū Sa‘īd used to send those who thought of performing it to visit the tomb of Abū l-

<sup>24</sup> al-Kalābādī, *Ta‘arruf* 182. Arberry’s interpretation is questioned by Massignon, who translates *bika*, *bī* as “en toi-même, en Moi-Même”, and *‘indī* as “en Moi”. See Massignon 1975: I, 589. Cf. al-Kalābādī, *Ta‘arruf* 160: *man zāraka bika tāfa ḥawlaka wa-man zārānī bī tāfa ‘indī*.

<sup>25</sup> “Extinguishing mediations”, i.e., between the believer and God. Or, with another word of similar meaning, *isqāṭ aš-šafā‘a*,

<sup>26</sup> See Massignon 1982: I, 543.

Faḍl Ḥasan at Saraḥs, bidding them circumambulate it seven times and consider that their purpose was accomplished.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.1.3.5 Ibn ‘Arabī

Ibn ‘Arabī (1160–1145) says about the relation between the heart and the House of God, the Ka‘ba:

“When God created your body, He placed within it a ka‘ba, which is your heart. He made this temple of the heart the noblest of houses in the person of faith (*mu‘min*). He informed us that the heavens, in which there is the Frequented House (*al-bayt al-ma‘mūr*), and the earth, in which there is the [physical] Ka‘ba, do not encompass Him and are too confined for Him, but He is encompassed by this heart in the constitution of the believing human. What is meant here by ‘encompassing’ is knowledge of God.”<sup>28</sup>

In a lengthy chapter (72) of his *Futūḥāt* devoted to a detailed explanation of the mysteries of the pilgrimage, Ibn ‘Arabī draws a striking parallel between pilgrims at the Ka‘ba and thoughts crossing the arena of the heart. Just as pilgrims circle the Ka‘ba, some in awareness and some heedless, so do our pilgrim thoughts enter our consciousness at each moment, some thoughts aware of the sacredness of this heart-centre within, others oblivious. “The mystic Kaba is the heart of being – says Ibn ‘Arabī – God says ‘The Temple which contains Me is in your heart’. The mystery of the Divine Essence is no other than the Temple of the heart, and it is around the heart that the spiritual pilgrim circumambulates.”<sup>29</sup>

In another place he describes his meeting a divine person who told him:

“This Ka‘ba of Mine is the Heart of being, and My Throne (the whole universe) is a limited body for my Heart. Neither of them encompasses me but my House which does encompass Me is your heart, which is the sought for goal (*maqsūd*) deposited in your visible body. So those circling around your heart are the secrets (of the Divine Names), who resemble your human bodies circumambulating these rocks (of the earthly Ka‘ba). So just as one who knows those secrets – who are circling about the Heart which encompasses Me – is in the loftiest and most resplendent of stations, so you (human beings) have precedence over those (angels) circling the all-encompassing divine

<sup>27</sup> Nicholson 1921:45–46. Also cf. Meier 1976:202–203, for an early example of preferring pilgrimage to saints’ tombs over the *ḥaḡḡ*.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt* III, 244, paragraph 3 (chapter 355).

<sup>29</sup> See Hirtenstein 2010:1–16. Also in [www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/mystics-kaba.html](http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/mystics-kaba.html).

Throne. For you all are circling the Heart of the Being of the world: you are in the station of the secrets of those who know.”<sup>30</sup>

### 3.1.3.6 Ibn al-Fāriḍ

It frequently occurred that the image of the Ka’ba and its physical reality departed from each other and the imaginary House attained the significance of the real one. This happened with the famous mystical poet of the 13th century Cairo, Ibn al-Fāriḍ (1181–1235) “He looked at me and said, “Oh ‘Umar! You will not be enlightened in Egypt. You will be enlightened only in the Ḥiġāz, in Mecca – may God glorify it! So head for it, for the time of your enlightenment is near!” Then I knew that the man was among the saints of God most high and that he disguised himself with [this] manner of living and by feigning ignorance of the order of ablutions. So I sat before him and said, “Oh sir, I am here but Mecca is there, and I will not find a mount or a travel companion in the non-pilgrimage months.” Then he looked at me and pointed with his hand and said, “This is Mecca before you!” And I looked with him and saw Mecca – may God glorify it! So I left him and sought it, it remaining before me until I entered it at that moment. When I entered, enlightenment came to me wave after wave, and it never left” (Homerin 2001:35–36).

### 3.1.3.7 ad-Dabbāġ

‘Abd al-‘Azīz ad-Dabbāġ (d. Fez, 1719), a famous Moroccan Ṣūfī of the 17th–18th c., is described by his pupil and collector of his sayings and acts, Aḥmad ibn al-Mubārak al-Lamaṭī, as having a vision with angels circumambulating the light ascending from the grave of the Prophet:

“He said-God be pleased with him: 'How many times I've looked at graves in Fez! Then I see lights coming forth from the earth, heading for Barzakh in the form of a reed ... Thus I know that the possessors of those lights are outstanding Friends of God.' ... And it's like this with the light in the grave of our Prophet and our lord Muḥammad. The column of the light of his faith extends from the noble grave up to the dome of Barzakh where his pure spirit is located. The angels come in groups and circle round the noble outstretched light. ... Every angel who's too weak for a secret or too weak to bear a command or has experienced fatigue or is wavering in his post comes to the noble light and circles round it. If he circles round it, he acquires perfect power and immense striving from the Prophet's light and he returns to his place and

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibn Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, I, 92. See also Morris 2005:56–57.

his affair is strengthened. Moreover, he doesn't stop his circumambulation until another group of angels arrives and everyone of them undertakes the circumambulation."<sup>31</sup>

### 3.1.3.8 The attitude of the Qalandar dervishes

A final and really extreme understanding of the circumambulation came from the wandering *Ṣūfīs*, the so called Qalandars of the 10th–16th centuries. Their conception of circumambulation differed utterly from any other *Ṣūfī* or popular interpretations. They deviated from the customary way of thinking under visitation and circumambulation only the Ka'ba and the tombs of saints and other holy places. They considered wanderings a permanent pilgrimage which perceives the entire world as a network of holy places. According to *Hwāḡa* 'Abdallāh Anṣārī of Herat “the Qalandar performs a circumambulation (*tawāf*) around the world, begging for food and wisdom, living in “dead places” (i.e., where people do not live) like sanctuaries, mosques, shrines and cemeteries in order to enjoy a spiritual death. This radical concept of the pilgrimage, which echoes the conception of total poverty, extends the ritual of circumambulation around the Ka'ba, and by imitation around the holy tombs, to the scale of the globe” (Papas 2011:21). These Qalandar wanderers “deliberately provoked the other pilgrims and announced that what they believed to be their most religious act was just not enough, that what they experienced around the Ka'ba or at Sufi mausoleums was merely a play, a performance” (ibid. 25).

### 3.1.4. The circumambulation around the Ka'ba as a litarey *topos*

#### 3.1.4.1 Circumambulation in the 1001 Nights with a sexual reference<sup>32</sup>

A facet of male cleric's worldview is revealed in how certain images of human physical posture invite comparison with other postures associated with religious rituals. A similar image occurs in “‘Azīz and ‘Azīza”. In this case sexual foreplay involving *haml as-sīqān wa-ṭ-ṭawāf bi-l-bayt wa-l-arkān* (“the lifting of the legs and circumambulating the 'House' and 'the Corners'”) is likened to pilgrimage rituals.<sup>33</sup> It runs as follows in Sir Richard Burton's translation:

“Then she undid her petticoat-trousers which slipped down to her anklets, and we fell to clasping and embracing and toying and speaking softly and biting and intertwining of legs and going round about the Holy House and the corners

<sup>31</sup> Lamaṭī 2007:891. Arabic text 787–788.

<sup>32</sup> See El-Shamy 2005:235–268.

<sup>33</sup> El-Shamy 2005:248, Motif Z186.7.1§.

thereof, till her joints became relaxed for love-delight and she swooned away. I entered the sanctuary, and indeed that night was a joy to the sprite and a solace to the sight” (Burton 1885: II, 318).

### 3.1.4.2 The elegy of Abū l-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī

In his *dīwān* called *Saqṭ az-zand* Abū l-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī celebrated in an elegy the father of the two famous Alids, ar-Riḍā and al-Murtaḍā, aṭ-Ṭāhir Abū Aḥmad al-Mūsawī (d. 1010 in Baghdad). It is a *fā’iyya*, to make possible the use of *ṭawāḥf* in the rhyme, and is called by the modern editor “aṭ-Ṭāhir al-ābā”, referring to the name of the father and his being a “pure, virtuous” father. And after praising his deeds the poet continues saying that “two *takbīrs* in front of your grave will equal for a man with the *‘umra* and the *ṭawāḥf* together.”<sup>34</sup>

### 3.1.4.3 A Persian poem from the 16th century

In a poem of the 16th century by Muḥtaṣan Kāšānī<sup>35</sup> written about the holy shrine in Mashhad we find that “the rest of the second section shifts the gaze from the dome to the shrine in Mashhad as a whole and elaborates on its functional meaning as a place of pilgrimage. *Ṭowf*, circumambulation, in verse nine, looks ahead to the image of the Kaaba in the first motto” (Losensky 2011:206).

## 3.2 Circumambulation in modern times

This kind of circumambulation imitating the one around the Ka‘ba cannot be considered as an exclusively Moroccan custom restricted to Chellah. On the contrary, it may have been known all over the Arab and Islamic world although there are only sporadic notations of it.

### 3.2.1 Egypt

#### 3.2.1.1 Cairo, Lane, 1834

Edward William Lane, (1801–1876), describes the grave visitation in his famous book, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, emphasizing the

<sup>34</sup> Abū l-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī, *Saqṭ az-zand*, 34: *takbīratāni ḥiyāla qabrika li-l-fatā – maḥsūbatāni bi-‘umratin wa-ṭawāḥfi*. Cf. Goldziher 1889–1890: II, 314, where he cites the line but mistakenly refers to the poem as the elegy of the two sons, not the father.

<sup>35</sup> An Iranian poet who lived in the time of the Safavid period. He was born in Kashan in 1500 and died there in 1588.

importance of grave circumambulations and its similarity to that of the Ka'ba, from left to right.

“The visiter, on arriving at the tomb, should greet the deceased with the salutation of peace (*taslīm*), and should utter the same salutation on entering the burial-ground; but I believe that few person observe this latter custom. In the former case, the visiter should front the face of the dead, and consequently turn his back (*istidbār*) to the *ḳibleh*. He walks round the *maḳṣoorah* or the monument from left to right; and recites the *Fát'ḥah*, inaudibly, or in a very low voice, before its door, or before each of its four sides. Sometimes a longer chapter of the *Ḳur-án* than the first (or *Fát'ḥah*) is recited afterwards” (Lane, 1860:237).

### 3.2.1.1 Upper-Egypt, Burckhardt, 1813

From the 19th century we have the description of the Swiss traveller J. L. Burckhardt (1784–1817) of the circumambulation in Qena, halfway between Sohag and Aswan:

“I may here add, that the *Towaf* is a Muselman ceremony not exclusively practised in the temple at Mekka. In the summer of 1813, I was present at the annual festival of the patron saint of Kenne, in Upper Egypt, called Seid Abderrahman el Kennawy.<sup>36</sup> Many thousands of the people of the country were assembled on the plain, in which stands the saint's tomb, at a distance of one mile from the town. Each person, as he arrived, walked seven times round the small mosque which contains the tomb; and when the new covering intended to be laid over it for that year was brought in solemn procession, the whole assembly followed it seven times round the building, after which it was placed upon the tomb” (Burckhardt 1829:95).

### 3.2.1.2 Blackman, 1927

Another such description is found in Winifred Susan Blackman's (1872–1950) pioneer work on the *Sa'īdī* customs of Egypt:

“The people flock in crowds to these tombs on certain days of the week—usually Thursdays or Fridays—generally to make some special request, or with the object of being freed from some disease, which they believe the sheikh can cure. A childless woman, or persons possessed by *'afārīt*, will come to beg the sheikh to intercede for them. Indeed, the performances of certain rites at the tomb may in themselves effect a cure. Having removed his or her

---

<sup>36</sup> In reality he was *Sīdī 'Abd ar-Raḥīm al-Qanāwī*, not *'Abd ar-Raḥmān*. He was born in Morocco, near Sabta, in 1127, moved into Egypt and died in Upper-Egypt in 1196.

shoes before entering the building, the visitor then walks from left to right round the catafalque erected beneath the dome three, five, or seven times, reciting meanwhile special passages from the Koran. These perambulations accomplished, the servant of the sheikh takes a broom, kept for this special purpose, and carefully brushes out all the footprints in the interior of the building. Sick animals are also brought by their owners to a sheikh's tomb, round which they are driven seven times” (Blackman: 1927:242).

### 3.2.2 The countries of the Maghreb

#### 3.2.2.1 Tunisia and Algeria

Émile Dermenghem (1892–1971) describes similar circumambulation in Tunisia.<sup>37</sup> He pointed out that among other things the generally accepted order of the rites of visitation (*ziyāra*) comprises the greeting of the saint, prayer, circumambulations, songs, sacrifices and different curative procedures. Visitors turn seven times around a great number of tombs or *qubbas*, anticlockwise, just as the crowd of the pilgrims do around the Ka’ba. He wrote that when he had visited the *maqām* of Sīdī Mḥammed ben ‘Awda, in Blīda, the first thing the keeper (*wakīl*) of the tomb told him was that he had to turn seven times around the mausoleum of the saint.

#### 3.2.2.2 Morocco

In Morocco, as in Tunisia in the second part of the 20th century, after the independence the government, in cooperation with the religious authorities, fought against Ṣūfism and popular religious customs. It was partly the consequence of the earlier opposition of the Ṣūfī brotherhoods to Sultan Muḥammad V before the 1950s, partly the fear of the government of any independent organisation not under its control. In the last twenty years, however, the situation had radically altered and the Ṣūfīs and popular Islam have become the preferred alternative to the extremist or Islamist circles. In consequence, the competent organ of the royal government, the Ministry of Religious Endowments and Islamic Affairs now gives support to the popular grave visitation.

This, of course, provoked a heated debate on the part of some religious circles. A former minister of religious affairs, Muḥammad al-Makkī an-Nāṣirī (1906–1994), for example, wrote a whole book on the falsity of what he called “grave devotion” (*qubūriyya*) published at the first time in 1925 and re-edited with

---

<sup>37</sup> Dermenghem 1954:124–125. Some other examples for the circumambulation can be found in Pierre Dornier 1950:392–396.



voluminous introductions in 2010, the two dates well illustrating what was said above (Nāṣirī, *Izhār*, 175ff). The part of an-Nāṣirī's book dealing with grave visitation has been reproduced by a member of the younger generation of hardliner men of religion, Abū Sufyān Muṣṭafā Bāḥū as-Salāwī (Bāḥū 2007:103–104). The whole part, then, has been put onto a web site under the title “*Maḡrib balad al-100 alf ḍarīḥ*”<sup>38</sup>, subtitled: “The Moroccan Ministry of Religious Endowment sanctifies the violations of the Islamic dogmas through the revivification of the (unlawful) festivals (*mawāsim*, according to the solar year) and the (encouragement) of the polytheistic (visitation of the) grave mausoleums (*ḍarā'ih*).”

an-Nāṣirī, in condemning the many bad customs around the mausoleums, lay special stress on the actions around the grave which are only allowed at the Ka'ba: touching its walls, kissing them and circumambulating around the grave.

These prohibitions in 1925 and their repetition in 2010 show us unequivocally that the popular custom of circumambulation was and has remained in use in Morocco throughout the last hundred years.

### 3.2.3 The Central Asian Muslim republics before and after the disintegration of the Soviet Union

During the Soviet era the communist regime tried to eliminate the religious practices of the popular Islam in its Muslim republics, first of all the veneration of the saints and the visits (*ziyāra*) of the shrines and sanctuaries (*mazār*). Notwithstanding the official orders and pressure, the popular cults remained in use for seventy years, between 1920 and 1990, and the believers could not be efficiently prevented from doing what their ancestors had done. The visits to the graves could actually substitute for the Islamic rituals in the Soviet period. In her paper written about the veneration of the graves in Soviet Central Asia, Věra Exnerová states: “There was periodic debate among believers as to whether the famous graves of saints ... could be considered as a replacement for the pilgrimage to Mecca. For example, according to the female sheikh in the village Oltioriq ‘only Shahimardon was a saintly place that could substitute for the *ḥaḡḡ* to Mecca’ at that time” (Exnerová 2015:528–529).

In the absence of the larger religious structures and communal sites of religious authority or instruction, the mosques and religious schools having been changed to cultural institutions, local shrines became the true centres of religious life, and they have remained a prime feature of religious practice, ritual, and identity in the

---

<sup>38</sup> [www.khayma.com/grave/arabgraves/mgrb4.htm](http://www.khayma.com/grave/arabgraves/mgrb4.htm).

Central Asian Muslim republics after the disintegration of the former Soviet Union.

In fact, in Turkmenistan the government often forbids its citizens to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, out of political consideration, but has organized in its place a tour of all the shrines in the country as an alternative. The shrine of Nejmeddin Kubra (1145–1221) is considered “a second Mecca for Muslims”, the circumambulation of the shrine substituting that of the Ka’ba (O’Dell 2011:1–15).

In Uzbekistan it was also the popular cemetery rituals that remained the main link to the Islam for the Muslims during the Soviet regime and their role has remained as a national unifying force. At the shrine of Ughlanjon-ota<sup>39</sup> a ritual very much similar to that of the women in Chellah was observed by Abramson and Karimov (2007:324) “The tomb, decorated inside and out with designs made from clay, stands as an isolated structure in an arid desert. On one side is a tree tied with numerous handkerchiefs and strips of cloth. Women, often barefoot and in a trancelike state, slowly circumambulate the tomb an odd number of times. As they walk, they make wishes, ask to be cured of an illness, or make other kinds of supplication. They concentrate on the ritual and do not interact with one another. Some women touch their hands to the walls of the tomb as they pass and then touch their eyelids.”

In another place, at the tomb of Bahauddin Naqshband<sup>40</sup> they observed that “the tomb of Bahauddin Naqshband stands amidst a complex which includes a mosque, a madrasa, a cemetery, a man-made pool (*hauz*), a well, a very large tree, and various other buildings. According to a well-known legend, which the sites’ imam-hatib related Bahauddin Naqshband’s walking stick turned into the sacred tree that one can see there today. Pilgrims walk around the tree an odd number of times and make wishes” (Abramson & Karimov 2007:325).

#### 3.2.4 Aceh (Sumatra, Indonesia)

A group of scholars came together in 1939 to form the *Union of ‘Ulamā’* throughout Aceh, Sumatra. They were reformist who saw as politically threatening local particularisms in ritual performance. One leader singled out for particularly sharp criticism from the 1930s onward was the Habib leader, an offspring of the Naqshbandiyya order, of the Seunagan territory on the west coast of the province. In the late nineteenth century, an Acehnese man founded a tariqa in the district of Seunagan. The claim to descent from the Prophet was signalled by the use of the title Habib. The Habib’s followers engaged in a number of

---

<sup>39</sup> Kamashin Rayon, Kashkadarya Viloyat, Uzbekistan.

<sup>40</sup> Bukhara Rayon, Bukhara Viloyat, Uzbekistan.

idiosyncratic ritual practices (and continued so in the 1980s), among others circumambulating the grave of the first Habib, Abdurrahim, by hundreds of his followers on the tenth day of the month of pilgrimage, Dū l-Ḥiġġa, as a local substitute for the Meccan *ṭawāf* around the Ka'ba. The Habibs held that these practices brought the worshipper closer to God by increasing his or her inner knowledge and made performance of the outer ritual unnecessary (Bowen 1989:603). Other cases exist elsewhere in Sumatra (Bowen 1993:12–13).

### 3.2.5 Circumambulation among Indian Muslims

Carl Ernst translated and commented in a paper of his (Ernst 1993:43–67) a small treatise by a learned Indian Ṣūfī of the 18th c. who explained and justified the practice of pilgrimage to saints' tombs according to the traditions of the Čištī Ṣūfī order. Like the *ḥaġġ*, *ziyāra* calls for circumambulation, in this case of the tomb rather than the Ka'ba. Some enthusiastic pilgrims actually found *ziyāra* to be superior to the *ḥaġġ*.<sup>41</sup> Muḥammad Naġīb Čištī wrote this treatise as an introduction to a calendar of saints' festivals: *Mahzan-i a'rās* („Treasury of death anniversaries”). The treatise quotes a Sufī master, who, when asked about the lawfulness of performing circumambulation around the tomb of Šayḥ al-Islām Qutb ad-Dīn Baḥtiyār Kākī (1173–1235) said that according to the prophetic tradition “circumambulation around the tomb of a pious man is lawful” (Ernst 1993: 60). “Ashraf Jahangir Simnani also says that when one comes to make a pilgrimage to tombs, from modesty (*ḥayā'*) he enters the tomb and circumambulates three or seven times.” He also states that there are more benefits of the pilgrimage on Friday than on any other day (Ernst 1993:62).

The same Muhammad Naġīb Čištī says in the *Ādāb at-ṭālibīn*: “When (the master) goes on pilgrimage to the tomb (of one of his own masters) ... if there is no difficulty, he circumambulates it, but should he not do so, there is nothing to worry about. While circumambulating he says: God is great, then the *Fātiḥa*.” Then he emphasizes that on these occasions the pilgrim of the tomb must concentrate on the deceased master and request his help” (Ernst 1993:66).

---

<sup>41</sup> Ernst 1993:50. Cf. Goldziher 1971: II, 288, on circumambulation (*ṭawāf*), and Goldziher 1889–1890: II, 314–315.

### 3.2.6 Circumambulation as a healing process

#### 3.2.6.1 A Macedonian Turkish shrine

The Scottish geographer and linguist Margaret Hasluck (1885–1948) had visited a Turkish shrine in Greek Macedonia before the 1924 population exchange by which the Turks were removed from Greece to Asia Minor. In her opinion the shrine had remained unknown because it was so remote from the ordinary routes of travel. Pilgrims might go to the shrine on any day that they choose, but as usual in the Muslim world, Friday, the day of the ‘gathering’, was the best day for making the pilgrimage. Accordingly Margaret Husluck started from the nearby village, Ineobasi early in the morning of Friday, 13th April, 1923. She describes the circumambulation of the shrine as follows:

“Meanwhile the women ... had arrived. Among them was a young woman with her infant son in her arms. Moving forward to a hole like a natural arch in the rock adjacent to the cave, she passed her infant three times through the hole. Four other children she had borne had died, but she hoped to change her luck and to save this last child by passing it through the holed stone at Lija Baba’s shrine, by bringing it, that is, into contact all round with the rock, the symbol of strength. There were two interesting places down in the gulley, some 30 feet from the cave. Under our very eyes a woman took her daughter’s child down to a heap of ruined, but definitely rectangular, masonry that lay beside the bed of the torrent. The old woman led the child three times round this heap, and then she bent herself, and made the child bend, to kiss the last corner with her brow and lips three times. She hoped this circumambulation of the ruins would make the child stronger than it was. The form of the ruins suggested a rectangular building, perhaps a tomb-chamber” (Hasluck 1929:289, 292.)

#### 3.2.6.2 Southern India

Marc Gaborieau, a specialist of the so-called “peripheric Islamic world”, especially the Indian Islam, mentions in his article (Gaborieau 1994:92) that the sanctuaries built around the sepulchre of the saints have developed into care centres for mentally ill persons where the circumambulation of the tombs is an essential element of the therapy. Elsewhere, in Murugmalla (Bangalore), in Southern India, the tomb (*dargāh*) of a Sufi Muslim saint has become a place of pilgrimage where the sick come to seek healing.

Jackie Assayag, a French anthropologist who has done research in India, has reported (Assayag 1999:35) a healing spirit possession practice, similar to *ḥāzīrī*,

ceremony of women, at a *dargāh* in Southern India. The practice is called *tawāf*, which is the same term used for circumambulation of the Ka'ba in Mecca.

### 3.2.6.3 Circumambulation of mountains in Morocco: Maqām Sīdī Šamharūš

In the Moroccan High Atlas, Berber villagers regularly make an extraordinary type of circumambulation, that is, around mountains containing a saintly shrine. The shrine of Sīdī Šamharūš is located at approximately 2365 m in altitude in Žbal Tubqal. It is around 7 kilometres from the village centre of Imlīl. It takes pilgrims around two hours and a half walking or riding on a mule to attain the summit of Sīdī Šamharūš. The first mountain they circumambulate is Aks (Maarouf 2010: 610). Most of those who circumambulate the mountains to reach the shrine are possessed patients who are called in turn to their own trial in front of the Judge, sultan of jinns Sīdī Šamharūš. The circumambulation of the mountains and the pains of the trajectory all serve to a great devotion to Šamharūš. The circumambulation of the mountains is itself a therapy for the possessed (*ibid.* 630 ff).

### 3.2.7 Circumambulation in Šī'ite Iran

The visitation to the shrines of the *imāms* is highly recommended for Šī'ite believers. It is intended to acknowledge their authority as the leaders of the Muslim community, and to maintain the contact and understanding (*'ahd*) between the Šī'ite believer and his *imām*, who is capable of interceding with God on his behalf on the day of resurrection. Visitation is also aimed at preserving the collective Shi'i memory and group identity as distinguished from that of the Sunnis. Karbala and Husayn's shrine, as focus of devotion for the Šī'ite believers, at times challenged the position of Mecca and the Ka'ba. Indeed in time of strife between the Safavids and the Ottomans, the visitation of Karbala substituted for the pilgrimage to Mecca which was made impossible by the Ottoman enemy.

#### 3.2.7.1 The prescription of visiting the tombs of the *imāms*

ʿAbbās al-Qumī, an Iranian Šī'ite *hadīth* scholar (1877–1940) collected a great number of prescriptions in relation to the visitation of Šī'ite shrines, listing its merits: “And when you had fulfilled all these obligations (together with the circumambulations) your pilgrimage to the shrine of al-Ḥusayn (*al-ḥağğ wal-'umra*) became perfect.” (ʿAbbās al-Qummī, *Maḥāṭib*, 537) “The obligatory prayer at the tomb of al-Ḥusayn equals the Meccan pilgrimage” (*ibid.* 539). The preference of visiting the Riḍā mausoleum in Mašhad over visiting the other Shiite shrines and over the Meccan pilgrimage (*ibid.* 628). “Whoever visited (the shrines

of) Riḍā or any other *imāms* and prayed there *imām* Ğa'far's prayer had gained by every *rak'a* the recompensation of 1000 (Meccan) pilgrimages" (*ibid.* 637).

### 3.2.7.2 The interpretation of circumambulation by a Šī'ite *muğtahid*

On 21 April 1926 (Wednesday, 8 Shawwal 1344 A.H.), the mausoleums in Ğannat al-Baqī', Medina, were destroyed by King Ibn Saud. In the same year, he also demolished the tombs of holy persons at Mualla Cemetery in Mecca where Muhammad 's first wife Khadijah, his grandfather and other ancestors are buried. This happened despite protests by the international Islamic community.

The demolition of Šī'ite tombs in Medina in 1926 pressured the Šī'ite *muğtahids* to clarify the function of the visitation in Šī'ite Islam. In 1927 Muḥammad Ḥusayn Kāšif al-Ġitā' (d. 1954) rejected the Wahhābi accusations that the Šī'ites worshipped the tombs themselves, arguing that the sole function of the visitation was the worship of God. Comparing the circumambulation of the tomb to that of the Ka'ba, he explained that in both cases the act was intended for the worship of God alone (Nakash 1995:160). Moreover, the comparison of the circumambulation and the kissing of the tombs of the *imāms* to that of the Ka'ba asserted an important function of the shrine in Šī'ite Islam. Like the Ka'ba, the shrine too was a magnet attracting believers to the worship of God thus increasing the importance of the religious elite (*ibid.* 162).

### 3.2.7.3 A Lebanese Šī'ite *fatwā* on the lawfulness of the visitation of shrines and on the circumambulation around them

Muḥammad Ğamīl Ḥammūd al-'Āmilī (b. Beirut, 1959), a distinguished Šī'ite *marġi'*, published a lengthy *fatwā* in 09. 10. 2014 about the visitation of graves and the devotional acts executed there under the title *Fiqh az-ziyārāt*.<sup>42</sup> He answered six questions on the lawfulness of different actions: (i) kissing the grave, (ii) giving votive money for the grave not for its inhabitant, (iii) the visitation of the grave of al-Ḥusayn at 20th of Šafar (*ziyārat al-arba'in*), (iv) the circumambulation around the grave of the infallible (*imām*) with the aim of circumambulation it, (v) turning your back on the head of the infallible (*imām*) during prayer (and turning toward the *qibla*), (vi) engraving the picture of the deceased on his grave. He answered positively for the first, second, third and fourth questions, refusing the turning the back on the *imām*, because you could not turn away from him in his life, and prohibiting the engraving. He considered especially recommendable

<sup>42</sup> Markaz al-'Itra aṭ-Ṭāhira li-d-Dirāsāt wa-l-Buḥūt, al-Fiqh, Istiftā'āt wa-Aġwiba, [www.aletra.org/print.php?id=996](http://www.aletra.org/print.php?id=996).

the circumambulation around the shrines and by this making the dead also circumambulate it.

#### 3.2.7.4 Obstruction and regulation of circumambulation around the shrines after the Islamic revolution in Iran

The American anthropologist, Anne Betteridge visited Iran in 2000 and noted the differences between pre- and post-Revolution patterns of shrine visitation. She became astonished to find that the essential part of the visitation of the shrines had been marred in at least two places which she visited.

“It seemed right to begin my visits by paying my respects to the city’s senior saint, Shah Cheragh. I had heard that metal posts had been put in place to divide women pilgrims from men who might jostle against them as they circumambulate the tomb. Rather than what I had supposed would be a line of posts ... the tomb to direct and divide circumambulation, I was surprised to find the shrine divided in two by a fence: the right side as one faced the tomb was for women, while men were directed to the left. The fence was opaque and effective and, most surprising to me, it prevented circumambulation by both men and women. I had thought of circumambulation as an essential element of pilgrimage visit; clearly that was no longer the case” (Betteridge 2002:285–286). “I later saw a similar temporary divider in place at the larger and very popular Seyyed Ala al-Din Husain (Asta-meh) shrine. ... At neither of these very popular shrines was circumambulation possible” (*ibid.* 287–288).

In Qum it was only the mixing of the men and women during the circumambulation of the Imām’s shrine that has been prevented by the new measures. Shahla Haeri observed before 1979: “The mere physical closeness of the flesh in the shrine enclosure, the body heat, scent, and energy that are thereby generated, coupled with the constant circumambulation of the pilgrims around the holy tomb, communicate a strong sense of sensuality. This does not negate the simultaneous presence of spirituality that may be genuinely generated among thousands of worshipping pilgrims.” When revisiting the shrine she found that “evidently, this sensuality, and subversion of the system of veils, has not been lost on the Islamic regime, either. As soon as it consolidated its power, the regime erected a glass wall separating the male and female quarters of worship around the tombs. No longer are the pilgrims allowed to circumambulate the inner sanctum together” (Haeri 1989:9).

## 4 Legal struggle against circumambulation in places other than the Ka'ba

### 4.1 Tradition minded religious scholars against popular customs in the Middle Ages

#### 4.1.1 Ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ

The Mālikite scholar of Morocco, Ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ (Fez, c. 1250 – Cairo, 1336) having spent some years in Egypt was shocked at what he saw there from, according to him, the heretic customs of not only the wider population but even those of the men of religion. When he went to perform the pilgrimage in Mecca, he made the same experience there, having found people touching and kissing places which are not allowed by the Islamic law. He wrote that the man of religion must warn people visiting the mosque and grave of the Prophet in Medina to keep the regulations of the visit and first of all avoiding the circumambulation of the grave of the Prophet in Medina. “It is incumbent upon him to caution them of these heretic customs which have been innovated there, since you can see ignorant people circumambulate the Noble Grave as they circumambulate the Sacred Ka'ba”.<sup>43</sup> He also condemns the custom of touching the Prophet's grave because it was a pre-Islamic way of adoring the idols. Therefore he warns that the Mālikite religious scholars do not allow even touching the walls of the Ka'ba and the mosques or the copy of the Qur'ān (*muṣḥaf*), not with the aim of reading it, “because all these are bad customs and contradict the *Sunna*.” (*Ibid.*)

#### 4.1.2 Ibn Taymiyya

Taqī d-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyya (Ḥarrān, 1263 – Damascus, 1328), a Ḥanbalite religious scholar, had also found the Egyptian popular customs the most alien to Islam as he had conceived it and wrote a voluminous book against them: *Iqtidā' aṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm muḥālafat aṣḥāb al-ḡaḥīm*.

He also sharply criticised the illegal customs of making places similar to the sites of the Meccan pilgrimage, such as the Sacred Mosque or the Ka'ba, which he considered as grave deviation from the Islamic *ṣarī'a*. For instance, some ignorant people made the circumambulation around the Dome of the Rock, and even shaved their head as if they were on pilgrimage to Mecca. He also blamed those pilgrims who, straying from the right path, made the circumambulation

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ, *Madḥal* II, 263: *yanbaḡī lahu an yuḥaddīrahum min tilka l-bida'i llatī uḥdīṭat hunāka jā-tarā man lā 'ilmun 'indahū yaṭūfu bil-qabri š-ṣarīfi kamā yaṭūfu bil-Ka'bati l-Ḥarām.*



(*tawāf*) around the *qubba* on the top of the Mount ‘Arafā as if were the Ka‘ba (Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtidā’* 264).

He says: “As for their travel to the graves to do acts of devotion there, with prayer and supplication and similar things, it is undoubtedly prohibited. Some of them even call the visit to a grave pilgrimage saying that we want the pilgrimage to the grave of XY. It belongs to this kind of visit that a special day of the week is assigned for a gathering at these graves” (*ibid.* 320). Then he adds:

“Every mosque share in the same devotional service, and whatever may be done in a mosque may be done in the rest of the mosques, with the exception of those devotions which are specially bestowed on the Sacred mosque of Mecca, like performing the ritual prayer exclusively toward its direction and the circumambulation around it. As for the Prophet’s mosque and the Aqṣā mosque, whatever devotional service is allowed in them, it is allowed in the rest of the mosques, like performing the ritual prayer, supplication or remembrance of God (*ḍikr*). But no type of devotion is allowed in them which are not allowed in the other mosques. It is not lawful to kiss or to touch or *to circumambulate* anything in them.”<sup>44</sup> “The religious scholars of the Sunna in previous times knew that it is not lawful to touch and kiss (even) the *maqām* Ibrāhīm, although the Qur’ān. II/125 encourages the believers to take it as a place of prayer” (Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtidā’* 361–362).

He also states angrily: “According to some people, the visit to the grave with a sanctuary built over it is more preferable than the pilgrimage to the Ka‘ba. Moreover, they call this kind of visit the greater pilgrimage (*al-ḥaġġ al-akbar*).” (Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtidā’* 325). Speaking about Jerusalem (Ibn Taymiyya, *Qā’ida* 11) he says that “only ordinary acts of worship should be performed in Jerusalem, above all things, the circuit, or *tawāf* must be reserved only for the Ka‘ba in Mecca.” In his severe opinion circumambulation has been made lawful by God only around the Ka‘ba.<sup>45</sup> He also refuses some scholars of religious law who permit or even prescribe turning towards (*istiqbāl*) the grave of the Prophet in Medina instead of the *qibla* during the supplicative prayer or asking God’s blessing on him (*ṣalāt*) (Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtidā’*, 335–336).

<sup>44</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtidā’* 371. Also in Ibn Taymiyya, *Da‘āwā* 343.

<sup>45</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtidā’*, 363. He states the same principle in detail in his *Maġmū’ al-fatāwā* II, 308.

## 4.2 The condemnation of unlawful circumambulation in modern times

### 4.2.1 In the Caucasus

Our knowledge of the popular circumambulation often originates from its condemnation by the religious leaders. In a leaflet circulated in Dagestan in 1999 an unknown religious leader prepared a list of condemned religious activities. Among others he wrote: “Condemned as manifestation of “polytheism” or “idolatry” (*širk*) includes ... circumambulation of any object (e.g., a grave or bonfire) other than the House of God” (Knysh 2007:504).

### 4.2.2 A Gambian preacher’s sermon

We can have information about the Gambian popular custom of circumambulation from a sermon against the cult of saints and visits to graves initiated there by a female saint. It says:

“According to the *sunna*, visiting a tomb, that is, *ziyāra*, is in itself not bad; it is what one says or does there that makes it sinful. How can you expect a dead body to solve your problems and reward you? . . . I have heard that people walk around that grave in the bush, the way people perform the *ṭawāf* around the Ka’ba in Mecca. God forbid, they are turning a tomb into the Ka’ba! Where is the pure Islam? Fire, nobody can boast about ending up in the fire. Nobody can be saved from hell unless he stops worshipping tombs. Let us fear God.” (Janson 2006:511)

The author tells us in a footnote to the sermon that he once attended a *ziyara* at which the participants went round the local marabout’s tomb which was covered with a black cloth so that it resembled the Ka’ba.

### 4.2.3 From the *fatwās* of *al-Lağna ad-Dā’ima lil-Buḥūt al-’Ilmiyya wa-l-’Iftā’*, Saudi-Arabia

In relation to a question on the legality of circumambulation around a newly built mosque during the opening ceremonies, which is generally accepted in some parts of Northern Saudi-Arabia, the Council stated: “It is a heretic innovation (*bid’a*) to circumambulate the mosque seven times as if it were the Holy Ka’ba”. It shows that it was a general custom even in the land of rigid religiosity, Saudi-Arabia. The Council also condemned the Egyptian custom of circumambulating the dome built upon the supposed head of Ḥusayn, the grandson of the Prophet in the

Sayyidunā Ḥusayn mosque in the Gamāliyya quarter of Old Cairo.<sup>46</sup> In another *fatwā* the Council condemned the illicit behaviour of the members of the Ṣūfī orders all over the Muslim world – the build mosques over the graves and circumambulate them, pray to those buried there asking for blessing from them instead of God.<sup>47</sup>

#### 4.2.4 A *fatwā* of Ibn Bāz on circumambulation

‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. ‘Abdallāh Ibn Bāz (1910–1999) was the Grand Muftī of Saudi-Arabia from 1993 to 1999. He said about the legality of grave visitations: “I have legalized visitation of graves, but not the circumambulation around them or seeking blessing from them. I only did it to remind people of the otherworld and of meeting there God.”<sup>48</sup> But he refused the circumambulation of mosques and graves many times in his *fatwās*. Once, however, answering a question of the lawfulness of the circumambulation of the shrine of Abū l-Ḥasan aš-Šādīlī in Ḥumaytara (now Šeyḥ Šazlī), Upper-Egypt.

Question: “Is it possible to call those who circumambulate around the graves without doubt polytheists and unbelievers? Once I was sitting together with Upper-Egyptian brothers from my home country, Egypt, and they said to me: There is a shrine in our village, that of Abū l-Ḥasan aš-Šādīlī. He who circumambulates the grave seven times received the small pilgrimage (*‘umra*), and he who circumambulates it ten times received the pilgrimage (*ḥiğġa*) and he is not obliged to go to Mecca. In my turn I told them that is polytheism and unbelief. Was I right?”

He gave a twofold answer:<sup>49</sup> Yes, you gave the right answer to them, it is not allowed to circumambulate around the graves, not around the grave of Abū l-Ḥasan aš-Šādīlī, nor around the grave of al-Badawī in Tanta, neither around those of al-Ḥusayn or Sayyida Zaynab or Sayyida Nafisa in Cairo. Even the circumambulation of the grave of who is greater than them (i.e., the Prophet) is prohibited. If he made the circumambulation supposing that it is legally allowed, circumambulating for God and not for the sake of Abū l-Ḥasan, then it would be a heretic innovation and forbidden. But if his circumambulation was for the sake of Abū l-Ḥasan and for the sake of approaching him then it is a greater polytheism and unbelief.”

<sup>46</sup> *Fatāwā al-Laġna ad-Dā’ima, Saudi Arabia*

[www.alifta.net/fatawa/fatawaDetails.aspx?](http://www.alifta.net/fatawa/fatawaDetails.aspx?)

<sup>47</sup> *Fatāwā al-Laġna ad-Dā’ima*.

<sup>48</sup> [www.binbaz.org.sa/mat/9794](http://www.binbaz.org.sa/mat/9794), *Maġmū’ fatāwā wa-maqālāt Ibn Bāz* 13/155.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

#### 4.2.5 From the website of “The World Association of Arab Translators and Linguists”<sup>50</sup>

A certain ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Mūsā, researcher of law, writer and critic, wrote about the Ṣūfī custom of visiting the graves of saints and circumambulating there. His opinion is interesting because it is the opinion of an educated but not extremist Muslim. He does not refer to religious prescription, but he rather uses rational arguments. He does not only hold allowable the visitation of graves but also considers it an obligation for the Muslims. As for the circumambulation around these graves, however, he has stronger views. He says: “It is strange and alien to the Islam, since the circumambulation is the basic element (*rukʿn*) of the Meccan pilgrimage and it cannot be performed except for around the Ka’ba, and the grave of a Muslim saint cannot be regarded as a second Ka’ba. Also, the proper circumambulation (*tawāf*) has to be made seven times (*sabat ašwāf*) and the visitor of a grave does not usually make the circumambulation seven times so how could it be called *tawāf*?”

### 5. Physical measures against illicit circumambulation of the *mihrāb* in the Maghreb

#### 5.1 Hindering circumambulations around *mihrābs*

During the centuries orthodox men of religion and state officials have adopted different measures to hinder the circumambulation around *mihrābs* supplied with ambulatory. These ambulatories were blocked throughout the history either definitively by walls without opening, or by walls with locked doors. The Kutubiyya mosque in Marrakesh has been defended against illicit pilgrimage by a wooden fence in front of the *mihrāb*, while the ruinous Tinnel mosque<sup>51</sup> has kept the entrances to the ambulatory on the two sides of the *mihrāb*, but its rear part has been built in.

The Madrasa Bū ‘Ināniyya is a *madrasa* in Fez, Morocco, founded between 1351 and 1356 AD by Abū ‘Inān Fāris. It is unusual in that it hosts a complete mosque, with a *mihrāb* around which there is an ambulatory. It is now obstructed by a wooden construction, containing a small door on each side.

---

<sup>50</sup> WĀTĀ *al-Ġam’iyya ad-Duwalīyya li-l-Mutarġimīn wa-l-Luġawīyyin al-‘Arab*-[www.wata.cc](http://www.wata.cc) › ... › *Muntadā al-Falsafa*, 2009. 10. 20.

<sup>51</sup> Tinnel or Tin Mal is a small mountain village in the High Atlas 100 km from Marrakesh, Morocco. Tinnel was the cradle of the Berber Almohad empire, from where the Almohads started their military campaigns.

## 5.2 Chellah: Measures for protecting Islam against unlawful circumambulation

In Chellah, the religious and state authorities had been taking several steps toward the protection of 'true Islam' preventing, as they say, the irreligious activities around the *miḥrāb*. Each of these steps represented a more severe measure than the previous one. First, this happened in July 1979, they tried to close the opening behind the niche with stinging tree branches, but after some weeks these were removed by someone to make the circumambulation possible again. When I visited Chellah next time, in 1994, I found that tougher measures had been made and an unmovable rusty wire fencing had been placed in the two sides of the ambulatory opening. This, however, did not prevent women from approaching the *miḥrāb* and touching its wall. Eventually in 1997 when revisiting Chellah I observed that the whole ruinous hall in front of the niche had been surrounded by a high, and also rusty, iron fence, that made approaching the niche totally impossible. This state of the prayer hall of the *zāwiya/madrassa* remained unchanged until today.

## REFERENCES

### A. Primary sources

- ‘Abbās al-Qummī, *Maḥāṭib* = ‘Abbās ibn Muḥammad Riḍā al-Qummī, *Maḥāṭib al-ḡinān*. Kuwait: Maktabat al-Faqīh, 2004.
- Abū l-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī, *Saqī az-zand*. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1957.
- Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad. *al-‘Iqd al-farīd*. Vol. VII. Edited by ‘Abd al-Maḡīd at-Tarḥīnī. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1983.
- Ibn ‘Arabī, Muḥyī d-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Alī. *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya fī ma‘rifat al-asrār al-mālikiyya wal-mulkiyya*. Intr. by Muḥammad ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Mar‘ašlī. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ at-Turāṭ al-‘Arabī, no date.
- Ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ, Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad al-‘Abdarī. n.d. *al-Madḥal*. 4 vols., Cairo, Maktabat at-Turāṭ.
- Ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ an-Numayrī, *Fayḍ* = Ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ an-Numayrī, *Fayḍ al-‘ubāb wa-īfāḍat qidāḥ al-ādāb fī l-ḥaraka as-sa‘īda ilā Qasanīna waz-Zāb*. Ed. Muḥammad Ibn Šakrūn, Dār al-Ġarb al-Islāmī, Beirut 1990
- Ibn Taymiyya, Taqī d-Dīn Aḥmad, *Iqtidā’ aš-širāṭ al-mustaqīm muḥālafat ašḥāb al-ḡaḥīm*. Ed. by ‘Išām ad-Dīn aš-Šabābiṭī, Cairo, Dār al-Ḥadīṭ 2002. English tr. by Muhammad Umar Memon, *Ibn Taymiyya’s Struggle against Populart Religion*. The Hague, Mouton, 1976.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Da'āwā al-munāwi'īn*. Dār Ibn al-Ġawzī, Riyad 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Mağmū' al-fatāwā*.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Qā'ida fī ziyārat Bayt al-Maqdis*. In: Charles D. Matthews, “A Muslim Iconoclast (Ibn Taymīyyeh) on the “Merits of Jerusalem and Palestine”, *JAOS*, 56 (1936), pp. 1–21.
- al-Kalābādī, *Ta'arruf* = Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Ishāq al-Kalābādī, *at-Ta'arruf li-maḍhab ahl at-taṣawwuf*. Ed. by 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd. Cairo: Maktabat at-Ṭaqāfa ad-Dīniyya, 2004.
- Quṣayrī an-Naysābūrī 'Abd al-Karīm b. Hūzān al-. *ar-Risāla al-quṣayriyya fī 'ilm at-taṣawwuf*. Ed. by Ma'rūf Muṣṭafā Zurayq. Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 2001.
- al-Ya'qūbī, Aḥmad Ibn Abī Ya'qūb Ibn Wāḍiḥ, *Tārīḥ*. Edited by Maertijn Theodor Houtsma. Leiden: Brill, 1883.

#### B. Secondary sources

- Abramson, David M. & Elyor E. Karimov. 2007. “Sacred Sites, Profane Ideologies: Religious Pilgrimage (Shared Shrines, Contested Practices)”. In Sahadeo & Zanca, eds. 2007. 319–338.
- al-'Āmilī, Muḥammad Ġamīl Ḥammūd. 2014. “Fiqh az-ziyārāt”, Markaz al-'Itra at-Ṭāhira li-d-Dirāsāt wa-l-Buḥūt, al-Fiqh, Istiftā'āt wa-Ağwiba, [www.alettra.org/print.php?id=996](http://www.alettra.org/print.php?id=996).
- Arberry, Arthur J., tr. 1935. *The Doctrine of the Sūfīs (Kitāb at-Ta'arruf li-maḍhab ahl at-taṣawwuf)*. Translated from the Arabic of Abū Bakr al-Kalābādī. Cambridge: University Press.
- Assayag, Jackie. 1999. “But, They Do Move ... Religion, Illness, and Therapeutics in Southern India”. In: Carrin, ed. 1999. 30–50.
- Attar, Farid al-Din, *Memorial of the Saints. Muslim Saints and Mystics*. Transl. of *Tadhkirat al-awliya'* by A. J. Arberry. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966.
- Badawī, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān. 1978. *Šaṭaḥāt aṣ-ṣūfiyya*, Kuwait: Wakālat al-Maṭbū'āt, 3rd ed.
- Bāḥū, Muṣṭafā. 2007. *'Ulamā' al-Mağrib wa-muqāwamatuhum li-l-bida' wa-t-taṣawwuf wa-l-qubūriyya wa-l-mawāsīm*. Casablanca: Mansūrāt Ġarīdat as-Sabīl.
- Basset, Henri & Évariste Lévi-Provençal. 1922. “Chella: Une nécropole mérinide”, *Hespéris: Archives Berbères et Bulletin de l'Institut des Hautes-Études Marocaines* 2. 1–92, 255–316, 385–425.
- Betteridge Anne H. 2002. „Muslim Women and Shrines in Shiraz”, in: Bowen – Early 2002. 276–289.

- Blackman, Winifred S. 1927. *The Fellahin of Upper Egypt. Their religious, social and industrial life to-day with special reference to survivals from ancient times*. London: Harrap. [2nd ed. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2000.]
- Boivin, Michel & Remy Delage. 2016. *Devotional Islam in Contemporary South Asia*: Shrubington – New York, Routledge.
- Bowen, Donna Lee & Evelyn A. Early, eds. 2002. *Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- Bowen, John R. 1989. „Salat in Indonesia: The Social Meaning of an Islamic Ritual”, *Man*, New Series 24, no. 4, pp. 600–619.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Graves, Shrines and Power in a Highland Sumatran Society”, pp. 1–13. In: Smith & Ernst (eds.). 1993.
- Burckhardt, John Lewis. 1829. *Travels in Arabia*. London, Henry Colburn, 1829, repr. Darf Publishers, London 1993,
- Burton, Richard F., tr. 1885. *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*. Printed by the Burton Club.
- Carrin, Marine, ed. 1999. *Managing Distress: Possession and Therapeutic Cults in South Asia*. Delhi: Manohar.
- Creswell, Keppel Archibald Cameron. 1932. *Early Muslim Architecture*. Vol I. Cambridge, University Press.
- Dermenghem, Émile. 1954. *Le culte des saints dans l’islam maghrébin*. Paris, Gallimard.
- Dornier, Pierre. 1950. ‘Le recours aux oualis dans les campagnes du Nord de la Tunisie’, *IBLA* (Institut des Belles Lettres Arabes) 13: 392–396.
- El Khayari, Ahmed Ettahiri Abdelaziz & Mohammed Kbiri-Alaoui. 1998. “Chellah, de l’Antiquité aux pèlerinage moussem”, *Nouvelles Archéologiques et Patrimoniales* 2.
- El-Shamy, Hasan. 2005. “A Motif Index of Alf Laylah wa Laylah: Its Relevance to the Study of Culture, Society, the Individual, and Character Transmutation”, *Journal of Arabic Literature (The Thousand and One Nights)* 36.235–268.
- Ernst, Carl W. 1993. “An Indo-Persian Guide to Sufi Shrine Pilgrimage”, In: Smith & Ernst 1993, 43–67.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994. *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism*, New York, S. Abdul Majeed Co.
- Exnerová, Věra. 2015. “The Veneration and the Visitation of the Graves of Saints in Soviet Central Asia. Insights from the Southern Ferghana Valley, Uzbekistan”. *Archiv Orientální* 83.3.501–536. Special Issue: *Death, Graves and the Hereafter in Islam: Muslim Perceptions of the Last Things During the Middle Ages and Today*. Guest edited by Bronislav Ostránský and Miroslav Melčák.
- Fehérváry, Géza. 1993. “Mihrāb” esp. “Mihrāb in the Maghreb”. *EF* VII, 7–15.

- Gaborieau, Marc. 1994. "Le culte des saints musulmans en tant que rituel: controverses juridiques." *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, 39.85.85–98.
- Goitein, Shelomo Dov. 1950. "The historical background for the erection of the Dome of the Rock", *JAOS* 70.104–108.
- Goldziher, Ignaz. 1889–1890. *Muhammedanische Studien*. 2 vols., Halle: Max Niemeyer.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1971. *Muslim Studies*. 2 vols., Edited and translated by Samuel M. Stern. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Grabar, Oleg. 1959. "The Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem", *Ars Orientalis* 3.33–62.
- Gramlich, Richard. 1995. *Alte Vorbilder de Sufitums*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Haeri, Shahla. 1989. *Temporary Marriage in Shi'i Islam*. Syracuse: University Press.
- Hasluck, Margaret. 1929. "An Unknown Turkish Shrine in Western Macedonia". *JRAS* 2.289–296.
- Hill, Derek & Lucien Golvin & Robert Hillenbrand. 1976. *Islamic architecture in North Africa*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Hirtenstein, Stephen. 2010. "The Mystic's Ka'ba." *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 48.1–16. Also in [www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/mystics-kaba.html](http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/mystics-kaba.html).
- Homerin, Th. Emil. 2001. *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint: Ibn al-Farid, His Verse, and His Shrine*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press.
- Ibn Bāz, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Abdallāh. 2000. *Mağmū' fatāwā wa-maqālāt mutanawwi'a*. I-XXIV. Riyad: Dār al-Qāsim li-n-Našr.
- Janson, Marloes. 2006. „We Are All the Same, Because We All Worship God.' The Controversial Case of a Female Saint in the Gambia" *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 76.502–525.
- Knysh, Alexander. 2000. *Islamic Mysticism. A Short History*. Leiden, Brill.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2007. "Contextualizing the Salafī – Sufi Conflict (from the Northern Caucasus to Hadramawt)". *Middle Eastern Studies* 43.4.503–530.
- al-Lağna ad-Dā'ima li-l-Buḥūt al-'Ilmiyya wa-l-Iftā', Saudi-Arabia. *Fatāwā al-Lağna ad-Dā'ima, Saudi Arabia* [www.alifta.net/fatawa/fatawaDetails.aspx?](http://www.alifta.net/fatawa/fatawaDetails.aspx?)
- Lamaṭī, Aḥmad b. al-Mubārak (as-Siğilmāsī) al-, *Pure Gold from the Words of Sayyidī 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Dabbāgh (Al-Dhabab al-Ibrīz min Kalām Sayyidī Abd al-'Azīz al-Dabbāgh)*. A Translation with Notes and an Outline by John O'Kane and Bernd Radtke Brill, Leiden & Boston 2007.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *al-Ibrīz min kalām Sayyidī Abd al-'Azīz al-Dabbāgh*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2002. Also: [www.soulouk.com/vb/showthread.php?t=95](http://www.soulouk.com/vb/showthread.php?t=95) – pdf.



- Lammens, Henri. 1911–12. “Ziād ibn Abīhi: Vice-roi de l’Iraq, Lieutenant de Mo’awia I”, *RSO*, 1–45, 199–250, 653–693.
- Lane, Edward William. 1860. *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*. The Definitive 1860 Edition. Introduced by Jason Thompson. Cairo, The American University in Cairo Press, 2003.
- Losensky, Paul. 2011. “Coordinates in Space and Time. Architectural Chronograms in Safavid Iran.” In: Mitchell 2011, 198–215.
- Maarouf, Mohammed. 2010. “Saints and Social Justice in Morocco: An Ethnographic Case of the Mythic Court of Sīdī Šamharūs”, *Arabica* 57.589–670.
- Marçais, William & Georges Marçais. 1903. *Les monuments arabes de Tlemcen*. Paris, Thorin et Fils.
- Marçais, Georges. 1926. *Manuel d’art musulman. L’Architecture. Tunisie, Algérie, Maroc, Espagne, Sicile*. Paris: Picard.
- Massignon, Louis. 1975. *La Passion de Husayn Ibn Mansūr Hallāj, martyr mystique de l’Islam, exécuté à Bagdad le 26 mars 922. Étude d’histoire religieuse*. (Nouvelle édition). Paris, Gallimard, 1975
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1982. *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj, Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, tr. by Herbert Mason. Princeton, University Press.
- Meier, Fritz. 1976. “Abū Sa’īd-i Abū l-Hayr (357–440/967–1049), Wirklichkeit und Legend”, *Acta Iranica* 11, 202–203.
- Mitchell, Colin P., ed. 2011. *New Perspectives on Safavid Iran. Empire and Society*. London – New York, Rotledge.
- Morris, James Winston. 2005. *The Reflective Heart*. Louisville, KY, Fons Vitae.
- Mūsā, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. 2009. *al-Ġam’iyya ad-Duwaliyya lil-Mutarġimīn wal-Luġawiyyin al-‘Arab* - [www.wata.cc](http://www.wata.cc) › ... › *Muntadā al-Falsafa*.
- Nagy, Péter Tamás. 2014. “Sultans’ Paradise: The Royal Necropolis of Shāla, Rabat”. *Al-Masaq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 26.132–146.
- Nakash, Yitzhak. 1995. “The Visitation of the Shrines of the Imams and the Shi’i Mujtahids in the Early Twentieth Century”, *Studia Islamica* 81, pp. 153–164.
- an-Nāširī, Muḥammad al-Makkī, *Izhār al-ḥaqīqa wa-‘ilāġ al-ḥalīqa*. Tunis, an-Nahḍa, 1925 and intr. with a study by Idrīs Karam, Rabat, Top Press 2010.
- Nicholson, Reynold A. 1921. *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*. Cambridge, University Press.
- O’Dell, Emily Jane. 2011. “Government Sanctioned Shrine Visitation in Turkmenistan.” *American Councils Final Report*, 26 September 2011, Columbia University, New York.
- Papas, Alexandre. 2016. “Vagrancy and pilgrimage according to the Sufi qalandari path: the illusions of anti-structure”, in: Boivin – Delage 2014. 15–30.

- Searight, Susan. 1999. *Maverick Guide to Morocco*, Gretna, LA, Pelican Publishing.
- Ricard, Prosper. 1919. *Guide de Maroc*. Paris, Guides bleus.
- Smith, Grace Martin & Carl W. Ernst, eds. 1993. *Manifestations of Sainthood in Islam*. Istanbul, The Isis Press.
- Sahadeo, Jeff & Russell Zanca, eds. 2007. *Everyday life in Central Asia. Past and Present*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.