GÖTTINGER BEITRÄGE ZUR ASIENFORSCHUNG

HEFT 2-3, 2003

"Creating and Representing Sacred Spaces"

Special Double Issue

Contents

The Sacred Place is the "No-Place"

Theoretical Reflections, using the Marabout Sidi ʿAbd ar-Rahman in Casablanca, Morocco, as an Example[1]

Anton Escher

Introduction

In Morocco, cities and landscapes are provided with a complex religious geography of mosques, graves of saints, graveyards, places of brotherhood, and neat arrangements of stones. In addition, there are trees, stretches of water, stones and rocks, as well as grottos, to which the significance of a sacred place is ascribed. It is almost impossible to look at a city, a district, a village, or a landscape in Morocco without perceiving a religious place (Verdugo and Fakir 1995).

In Morocco, the cities' and the landscapes' sacred spaces and religious institutions can be categorized into the mutually dependent dichotomy of tension between the practiced Islam of the Moroccan society and the politically propagated Islam of the ruling monarchical organs (Lang 1992: 23). The two poles intersect and are therefore mutually dependent. In accordance with the way of life in Moroccan society and its segregation of the sexes, the socially practiced Islam can generally be characterized as the Islam of the women, and the politically propagated Islam as the Islam of the men (Welte 1990: 29). However, types of access to religiousness in Moroccan society that were conceptually thought of as being separate merge more and more into one another in people's daily behavior and can only be analytically separated to a certain extent. The individually and socially practiced religion of both the socially practiced and the politically propagated Islam is realized through a spatial reference to a differentiated sacred topography. The Great Mosque of Casablanca, built by Hassan II, and the Island of Marabout Sidi ʿAbd ar-Rahman, both visibly located off the coast of the industrial metropolis, each personify and symbolize one of the two poles mentioned above.

Maraboutism[2], the saint cult in Morocco, is today one of the forms of expression of

---

[1] Revised presentation, which was given at the International Workshop "Creating and Representing Sacred Spaces" in Göttingen, Germany, June 29-July 2, 2000.

[2] "The French term Marabout comes via the Portuguese "marabouto" and the Spanish "morabito" from the Arabic expression "murabit" (plural: murabitun), which can be translated as "inhabitant of a ribat" (translated from Dittmar 1995: 21f). The terms Marabout and Maraboutism are barely used at all in Moroccan vernaculars (cf. Etienne 1979). In this text Maraboutism subsumes all elements that comprise the saint cult in Morocco and are related to it.

the socially practiced Islam in Morocco. A saint[3] in Morocco is a human being who has a special magic power of blessing, extraordinary characteristics, a special way of life, and who often has Marabout ancestors or descendants. The graves and grave sites of these saints refer people to another world, saints, spirits, and God, and render access to transcendence possible for them.

Maraboutism in Morocco goes back to the Sufi tradition:

> At the end of the eighteenth century in the Middle East, certain believers reacted against the formalism of Islam and took up an existing mystical movement called Sufism. [...] These Muslims follow special practices decreed by privileged beings who hold benediction. The Sufic doctrine, permitted by the Islamic religion, tends to make the human divine, rather than making the divine become human, and it leads to the worship of saints who are but human (an anthropocentric and hetero-dox practice). Those chosen and faithful beings play the role of the divine media-tors in society. These saints appeal to the heart more than the spirit, and they raised a new enthusiasm for Islam. The worship of nature was the usual practice in North Africa at this time. Maraboutism enabled the transition between Islam and paganism. The marabouts, like the zaouias and the religious brotherhoods, stand on the margins of Muslim orthodoxy. (Verdugo and Fakir 1995: 96).

Up to the present time in the 21st century, the many graves and tombs of Marabouts have not only been an integral part of Moroccan landscape, but apparently also of Mo-roccan everyday life.

Purpose and Approach of the Intended Theoretical Reflections

This article will mainly discuss the significance of the sacred place in the framework of the Marabout cult. The argumentation aims at clarifying the function of the sacred places of the Marabout in Moroccan society in a theoretical context. Although there are many studies on the Marabout cult,

> the sacred place in its ideational conception as well as in its outward appearance [...] receives only little attention (translated from Fartacek 1999: 18).

Hence the given question: How can one grasp the phenomenon of Maraboutism theo-retically as the phenomenon of sacred places in Morocco? The presented theoretical conception is supposed to contribute to a better understanding of the way Moroccan society deals with these sacred places. The main focus of the following will therefore be neither the empirically dense description of the Marabout Sidi ᶜAbd ar-Rahman, which will be used as an example, nor the exact data of people involved in the cult and a possible interpretation of their cultic actions or their different rituals. Instead, the focal point will be the discrepancies within selected empirical data which will help to

---

[3] The saint is addressed in Moroccan-Arabic vernaculars as *sayyid* or *wali*. Often a saint's descent from the prophet Mohammed is constructed, in which case he is called *sarif*; if he descends from an ascetic or "saint," he is called *wali*.

theoretically conceptualize the sacred place in Moroccan society. Maraboutism in Morocco has been the subject of several empirical studies, such as works by Westermarck (1926), Dermenghem (1954), Crapanzano (1975, 1981), Gellner (1969), Welte (1990), Lang (1992), Ensel (1999), and Rausch (2000), to mention just a few publications. The excellent literature on pilgrimages to sacred places by Kroll (1990) and the attempt of a theoretical conceptualization of the phenomenon Marabout in Morocco by Dittmar (1995) also give interesting insights. In addition, there are works that discuss social problems of Morocco and in this context give fundamental statements about Maraboutism, for instance Mernissi (1988) and Eickelman (1976, 1977).

My own observations during repeated visits to the Marabout Sidi ᶜAbd ar-Rahman and other graves of saints, as well as many conversations with members of the cult, have supplemented the important studies of the island Sidi ᶜAbd ar-Rahman by Akhmisse (1984, 1985, 1999), Etienne (1979), Lang (1991), and Zyne (2000). Furthermore, a study of the troupe of acrobats, the "Oulad Sidi Ahmed ou Moussa," whose patron saint, the Sufi Sidi Ahmed ou Moussa, is buried in Tazerwalt in Southern Morocco, has helped me to enhance my understanding of the sacred places.

As a preparatory step for the argumentation I will propose, the most important elements of today's saint cult in Morocco will be reduced to the following interrelated dimensions: the place where the grave of the saint is located (*darih, qubba*), the saint (*sidi, wali, sarif,* or *murabit*), the saint's power of blessing (*baraka*), the pilgrimage to the grave of the saint (*mausim, ziyara*), the communication with the saint (*istihara*), and the guardian of the grave, or servant of the cult (*faqir, suwafa, magdub*), who performs or demonstrates rituals. One must also take into account the people, mainly women from all Moroccan social classes, for whom the sacred places were virtually created.

A Sacred Place in Morocco – the Island Sidi ᶜAbd ar-Rahman

At the coast of the Atlantic, near the beach to the south of Morocco's economic center Casablanca, lies a small island on the coastline of ᶜAin Diab. The island can be reached by foot at low tide, whereas one needs a boat or a raft to reach it without getting wet at high tide. It is an island unlike many others that are located off the coast of Morocco. It is Sidi ᶜAbd ar-Rahman; a sacred place, which is very well-known throughout the whole country, as many other sacred places are. Sidi ᶜAbd ar-Rahman is not only the name of the island, but also the name of the saint that is said to be buried on the island, and also the name of his tomb. One can comfortably reach the Marabout on an asphalt road that leads along the coastline straight to the island. Directly next to the road on the beach a policeman ensures safety and order. People, especially women, perform pilgrimages to the island at all times, which results in a constant com-

ing and going. The island Sidi ᶜAbd ar-Rahman embraces the tomb of the saint Sidi ᶜAbd ar-Rahman, vendors selling devotional and cult objects along the steps leading to the tomb from the water or from the beach, respectively, many small huts and dwelling spaces, unoccupied places, a grotto, and also its entrance. Anyone can set foot on the island, visit and stay at the saint's grave; the grotto, however, is not open to the public. A sign explicitly draws all visitors' attention to the fact that entering the grotto is forbidden under threat of death.

The surroundings of a shrine, i.e., the graves of especially important saints, are called *horm*. The size of such a *horm* varies according to the significance of the saint and ranges from the inner part of a burial chamber to a whole district or a mountain ridge. Sidi ᶜAbd ar-Rahman's *horm* covers the whole island. In the *horm*, safety – virtual asylum – is granted to those present, again according to the significance of the saint.

> These lands are the exclusive property of the families who descend or claim to descend from the saint; they escape the direct authority of the state. (Verdugo and Fakir 1995, 100).

This shows that the island lies, at least legally, beyond the power of the state.

The story of the saint is told as follows:

> He was a saint like many others. One day he came here to glorify God. He did not do it by praying, but by playing his flute. That is why he is called Sidi ᶜAbd ar-Rahman, the flute player. Another saint, Sidi Busaib, heard of this and came here. He said to him: 'Put aside your flute! I want to teach you to pray.' He stayed for seven days; on the eighth day he laid his carpet? on the water and left. Sidi ᶜAbd ar-Rahman, lost in his prayers, did not see him leave. When he finally realized his disappearance, he called after him: 'Come back, I forgot the rules to pray!' He jumped into the water to reach him. Suddenly the sea opened up and an island appeared. When Sidi Busaib saw that, he called: 'Forget everything I taught you, and continue to play your flute! Your baraka is bigger than mine!' And thus Sidi ᶜAbd ar-Rahman stayed on the island and glorified God until the end of his days. (translated from Lang 1991: 220-21).

The narrator mentions incidentally that this is only one of the many different stories about Sidi ᶜAbd ar-Rahman. She tells this story because she likes it best of all.

In the face of so many different life stories the question arises as to whether indeed Sidi ᶜAbd ar-Rahman actually lived at all. This is of no matter either for his function, though, or for the sacredness of the place ascribed to it by the people! A person becomes a saint in Morocco if he or she is treated like a saint; in other words by being worshipped by a group of people. For that matter it is of no consequence whether the person is dead or alive. In Morocco there is no institutional clergy, which is the reason why there cannot be a canonization in the Christian sense. Hence, the story of the

saint, in fact even the saint himself, is substitutable and is of subordinate significance as far as a certain person or figure is concerned!

People strive to participate in the sacredness of the *wali*, which is possible by sharing the saint's power of performing miracles, or the *baraka*. *Baraka*, which is felt to be God's mercy and blessing, is the mysterious power that works wonders (Westermarck 1926). This power of blessing can adhere to either persons or things. As a result, the person becomes a saint, and the thing becomes a fetish. People who possess the *baraka* pass it on to their descendants (*sarif*). The *baraka* can be transferred by saints through physical contact or excretion of any kind. The *baraka* of the saint is particularly present and accessible to everyone at his grave (Lang 1992). The *baraka* is the phenomenon which believers seek to attain to be able to solve their everyday problems, soothe their illnesses, and enable them to lead a happy and pleasant life. Therefore, people seek communication with the Marabout at his grave, the sacred place. The pilgrimages are carried out either in groups, as in the case of the generally annual group pilgrimage (*mausim*), or as individual visits (*ziyara*). Usually, graves of saints are visited predominantly by women. The group pilgrimages, as well as the individual visits, include extensive, prearranged ritual actions (Crapanzano 1981: 203). The pilgrims try to win over the saint to help meet their needs by performing rites. Through the act of dreaming, they can even come into almost direct contact with the saint. The result is that the believer can receive orientation, proposals, or solutions from his saint for dealing with his problems.

> The dream, especially at the grave of a saint, plays an important role within the religious system of values and the closely connected symbolism. (translated from Lang 1991: 216).

One must add here that in Morocco the dream is understood as a different form of reality, as Crapanzano (1975: 148) explains:

> The dream gives access to a reality which, however different it may appear to be from ordinary waking reality, is as real.

This realization shows that the construction of the reality of everyday life is achieved through participation in and communication with subjective experiences.

The cult personnel, the people who permanently or at least for a longer period of time live at or close to the grave site, and who offer their services to help perform the rituals, on the island Sidi ᶜAbd ar-Rahman include clairvoyants (*suwafa*), and often a holy fool (*magdub*). Members of the Marabout family, the descendants of the saint, who often live at the grave site and take care of the tomb, cannot be found on Sidi ᶜAbd ar-Rahman. The island is densely populated. Several dozen women temporarily reside in almost every hut and room.

Rituals are performed in three places on the island: In the saint's shrine one prays, lights candles and performs incense rituals. In the huts the clairvoyants (*suwafa*) exorcise the evil eye and perform all kinds of fortune-telling, generally by using the smoke of lead cooling off in water. Once in a while they organize trance sessions (*lila*) (Welte 1990 and Rausch 2000). The holy fool (*magdub*) retreats to the island, and it is difficult to apprise exactly what the fool does for the pilgrims. In the grotto – not open to the public – rituals of sacrificial offerings and purification are performed, according to reports (Lang 1991) and studies (Akhmisse 1984, 1985, and 1999). Animals are sacrificed and offered to the sea. Women are tied to posts; they are bathed and eulogized. Women cleanse themselves with the water of the seventh wave, which is fetched by the guardian of the grotto, and they hand over their underwear to the sea. Contrary to his expectation, Akhmisse (1999) discovered other "rites et secrets" within different field studies he undertook at 15-year intervals. According to my own observation, this all also goes along with a substitution of the people performing the rituals. The cult personnel are not subjected to supervision or education under central control, but they rather perform individually or on an autodidactic basis. Thus, it becomes clear that certain rites and secrets of the cult, which are only accessible to selected people in need, are subject to change. Only the rites collectively carried out and publicly handed down are being preserved. To sum this up it can be asserted that the cult personnel and their rituals are substitutable!

The question of the meaning and significance of the pilgrimage to Sidi ʿAbd ar-Rahman for the people is answered by the clairvoyant as follows:

> Everybody here on Sidi ʿAbd ar-Rahman is constantly looking for inner peace, for a short moment of silence and rest because everyone lives in constant fear. (Lang 1991: 220)

She also sums up the destiny and the possibilities of the saint Sidi ʿAbd ar-Rahman:

> Who is sick will be healed; who wants to marry will marry; who is possessed will be saved; and who wants to have children will have children. (Lang 1991: 220)

The tomb's guardian expresses herself more elegantly:

> The women come to make peace with life. (Zyne 2000: 22)

The significance of the sacred place can also be presented more systematically, as Kroll (1990) explains: The people fulfill their self-imposed religious duty; they seek to obtain relief through the saint's power of blessing, through which they strive to achieve economic success; to find help when making decisions; they seek support in dealing with the problems of their fellowmen. Furthermore, they seek aid in sickness and deficiencies of all kinds (Gesler 1982).

All this confirms Durkheim's perceptions which he recorded in his book *Les formes élementaires de la vie réligieuse*:

> The general result of the book is that religion is an eminently social matter. Religious ideas are collective ideas that express collective realities. Rites are actions which can only be generated under the protection of assembled groups, and which are supposed to serve the purpose of either preserving or restoring certain states of mind of those groups (translated from Durkheim 1968).

Geertz also remarks in his work *Islam observed. Religious development in Morocco and Indonesia* that even those activities which seem to focus completely on the hereafter are therefore means of coping with problems that are definitely of this world (cf. Geertz 1968). This clearly shows that man has created socially sanctioned dimensions of action beyond everyday life's sphere, which also affect the social, political, and economic reality of mankind to a great extent.

In sum, one can say that the sacred places are newly interpreted in certain intervals over and over again. This happens through pilgrimages that can be described as both individual visits and annual group pilgrimages. The visits and pilgrimages are accompanied by prayers, sacrificial offerings, and festivities, as well as certain ritual activities. People make pilgrimages to graves of saints, i.e., they leave the world and places of everyday life and its activities in order to visit these graves of saints. While men and women take part in group pilgrimages, almost only women visit the graves individually. They attempt to solve their problems, to relieve the intense pressure of suffering caused by the normative demands of a patriarchal Muslim society, through the help of the saints' power of blessing and, if necessary, through the assistance of this saint to also find a remedy in dreams or by other means.

Preliminaries to the presentation of a theoretical categorization of the sacred places in the context of Moroccan society

In order to be able to determine precisely the role and function of the sacred place, it is useful first to query the relevance of the cult's elements; such as its hagiography, the servants of the cult, its rites, and the social determination of the saint, before one can establish the social position of the sacred place. The previous explanations allow the following theses about the cult's elements, the saint, and the sacred place:

The elements of the Moroccan saint cult are substitutable!

As already mentioned above, the Moroccan saint cult consists of different elements, which as structural elements are indispensable, e.g. the saint, the ritual, and the responsible persons. However, we should keep it in mind that authenticity plays only a subordinate role, as our example proves. Therefore, the *hagiography* of the saint is often made up, and a saint is anyone who is worshipped as a saint – no matter whether he

actually lived or not (cf. Lang 1992). Our example shows as well that the *rituals* at the grave of the saint often change and are strongly bound to the people who are in charge of the grave. The *people* who guard the grave or belong to the milieu of the saint cult, like the clairvoyant, the savior, or the holy fool, are also replaceable. This can be seen in connection with the fact that the communication with the saint takes place individually, not on a collective basis. Only the collective rites are distinguished by greater longevity. Thus, it is to be noted that the person of the saint, the individually performed ritual, and the people involved do not, in any qualitative way, represent an invariable structure.

The sacred in context of the Moroccan Marabout cult is "the opposite" of reason!

Based on the aforementioned phenomena, the sacred can be defined as follows: it is the opposite of reason, the indescribable, the placeless and timeless, that which cannot be defined and that which escapes identifiable cognition. From a reasonable point of view, it is the irrational, ontologically seen the unreal, morally the reprehensible, logically the illogical. It is the heterogeneous, the shapeless and uncontrollable, the dream, the Dionysiac frenzy, the madness, the excess, the unproductive exhaustion. It contains what escapes enlightening thought (Meusel 1998 and Caillois 1988). The explanations become comprehensible through the use of examples: the fool is sacred, the Marabout's excretions are sacred! The more irrational, i.e. the more sacred the actions on the island are, the more they become excluded from everyday and public life. This means that the grotto on the island is the inner sanctum of the shrine. In the context of Maraboutism, the rite in the grotto – as shown in the example above – must not and cannot be recounted or witnessed. Thus, none of the actions have taken place in Morocco's social context! For this reason and because the people involved are not allowed to talk about rites and performed actions, it is very problematic to methodically and empirically grasp the sacred! The opposite of reason can by definition only be excluded and cannot be taken as a linguistic or communicative theme! But this is exactly what constitutes the sacred. So the saint as well as the sacred place stand outside of the normalcy of everyday life. The sacred manifests itself in the state of exclusion, just as an island is "excluded" from the landscape of the mainland.

The sacred place is the invariable element of the Marabout cult!

Goldziher explained already in the 1890s where the invariable element in the Marabout cult lies:

> The same sacred place changes its name, according to its respective bearer, from generation to generation. Only the names change, the holiness and divine ordination, the religious purpose of the place, is passed on [...]. (translated from Goldziher 1890: 344).

The sacred places often even exceed in their existence the tradition of Maraboutism.

> The sacred character of a site is perpetuated throughout the centuries and succes-
> sive cults. [...] The popular preacher often chooses such a site as a refuge in order
> to spread his message from places already respected and venerated by the local
> population, capitalizing on traditional practice. (Verdugo and Fakir 1995: 101).

However, it is not only the historical persistence of sites as sacred places, but also the social significance of those sites that they possess due to their sacred character. This significance of the centers of cult worship in the phenomenon of Maraboutism, which is above average, is emphasized by Malik in his explanations on Islamic identities:

> An important integrative function is currently attached to the centers of cult wor-
> ship because it is especially the ritualized collective visits of the saints and the
> shrines which promise important social events, emotional and psychological satis-
> faction, and economic income. Along with the physical movement to the site
> comes a spiritual one as well, [...] or at least a ritual overcoming of individual
> problems and social barriers. (translated from Malik 1999: 214-215).

However, Malik underestimates the intensity of the holiness of the centers of cult worship in Moroccan Maraboutism. Considering this holiness, the opposite of reason, which prevails at these places, and the immoral, i.e. based simply on the concept of the sacred as explained above, it is appropriate and necessary to separate the sacred places from the places or areas of everyday life. It is simply the opposite of reason, the immoral that makes the healing of suffering possible! Everyday social life could not be organized and sustained if more or less sacred conditions prevailed throughout the whole country. This would mean anarchy. It therefore becomes obvious that the sacred place is interpreted in its differentiation from profane, non-sacred places. In the words of a taxi driver as I left his cab in the spring of 2000 to go to the island of Sidi °Abd ar-Rahman with my assistant:

> You're leaving Casablanca now, and you're entering the Middle Ages!

When he referred to my leaving the city of Casablanca he meant it with regard to space and time. One goes to a place, where not only the place is different, where not only the time is different, but where also life is different. One goes to a place and comes back changed after having been there! But from the perspective of Casablanca, this place does not exist, because it is not present in modern times.

> But if the borderline between the areas of reality is crossed in the experience it-
> self, the symbolic relation is dissolved. You moved 'yourself' [...] – in ecstasy, in
> dreams, in mystic unity, etc. – into the 'other' reality. (translated from Luckmann
> 1991: 176)

In Morocco you have already crossed an area of reality when you enter the sacred place of the Marabout. This can be seen as a preparation for the intense experience of

the "other" reality through appropriate rituals.

All this is in opposition to Geertz's remarks, who claims that the most important, if not only context, in which the significance of religious symbols for the creation and preservation of belief is shown, is of course the ritual. Prayers and festivals at the grave of a saint, the passionate excitement, the repetitive prayers in the lodge of a brotherhood, and the obsessive obsequiousness to the sultanate keep Maraboutism alive (see Geertz 1968: 144). The elements mentioned above certainly do not contradict this, but without the sacred places, the most important pillars of Maraboutism, the cult would not be possible and would lose its acceptance among the population!

The spaceless and timeless saint has a place, but the place is not available in everyday social life and in context cannot be reached. The sacred place is invariable, which means that it remains located in history and in landscape, while the other elements of the cult can undergo change and are replaceable!

The Sacred Place in Morocco, the "Other Place"? A Place that Does Not Exist?

The present argumentation has clearly shown that the sacred places are separated from the places of everyday life. In the chosen example of the Sidi ᶜAbd ar-Rahman, the place is even separated from the mainland by water. Thus, the sacred places in Morocco are not places of one's everyday life, but instead other places, namely, other places in the sense of Foucault's *heterotopia*. He describes such places as follows:

> There are also – and this is probably the case in every culture, in every civilization – real places, effective places, which are put into the institution of society, which are so to speak opposed to realized utopia, in which the real places are at the same time represented, disputed, and turned around within the culture. They are to a certain extent places outside all places, although they can actually be located. (translated from Foucault 1999: 149).

The reference to our example becomes even clearer when Foucault calls the other places *heterotopias* of crisis, i.e.:

> There are privileged or sacred or forbidden places that are exclusively for individuals who are in a state of crisis in relationship to society and in the midst of their human surroundings. (translated from Foucault 1999: 150)

Such places and the actions and potential experiences which are possible there contribute to society's stabilization. However, over the course of its history, a society can make a still existing *heterotopia* function differently. Apart from this, *heterotopias* should be able to combine several areas, several positionings, which seem to be incompatible *per se*. *Heterotopias* reach their full functions when people break with the conventions of their time, and therefore also with conventional rules, norms, and patterns. *Heterotopias* always presuppose a system of openings and closures, which

makes them both isolated and at the same time possible to penetrate. In general, a *heterotopian* place is not easily accessible. In my opinion, the most important point of Foucault's concept of "other places" is the function, or the purpose, which the *heterotopian* place, the sacred place for the rest of the area, has for society. It helps preserve the social status quo!

Developing a conception of the sacred place by Sufic mystics in a possible sacred geography of Islam fits right in with the above mentioned explanations, as the following quote, taken from a work by A. Schimmel, should prove:

> In this connection, one has to think of the numerous poems and prose pieces that deal with the Sufis' quest for the sacred place, a place which is, to be sure, beyond human description and which can, at the best, be called the la-makan, 'No-Place' […]. (Schimmel 1991: 165)

So the question is: Did Sufic mysticism already anticipate the concept of Foucault's "other places;" places which do not exist; places on the verge of utopia? The mystics certainly did not approach this discovery from an enlightened perspective, but from a different point of view! Rational and mystical perceptions come together in the theoretical conception of the sacred place. However, the mystics had problems in finding and categorizing their "No-Places," as Schimmel reports:

> For all of them know that they try to confine the la-makan, the No-Place and No-where, of the Divine, into material coordinates and have therefore to use, at the best, weak shadows of the places they have visited in the spirit […]. (Schimmel 1991: 173).

By the time of their death at the latest, the saints in Morocco made their contribution – or better said, the Moroccan society succeeded in the course of its history – in creating the places which mystics can visit, but only as weak shadows of the places visited in spirit.

The people, and especially the women, of Moroccan society who make pilgrimages to the Marabout – to the sacred place – look for "bread and human dignity," as Fatima Mernissi (1988) puts it, which they do not get from official society. This they can only get outside of society, at a place that does not exist for Moroccan society, but which it grants as a sacred place within the border area between immanence and transcendence, particularly because the social custom of going to these places stabilizes the social status quo. It becomes obvious that the established society deals with the sacred places as follows: One cannot talk about them, one excludes them and protects them because they make society itself possible! The sacred place is simply the No-Place!

Bibliography

AKHMISSE, Mustapha (1984): *Rites et Secrets des Marabouts à Casablanca*. Casablanca: S.E.D.I.M.

AKHMISSE, Mustapha (1985): *Médicine, magie et sorcellerie au Maroc*. Casablanca: Impr. Eddar el Beida.

AKHMISSE, Mustapha (1999): *Rites et Secrets, Guérisseurs des Marabouts de Casablanca*. Casablanca: Kortoba (2nd ed.).

CAILLOIS, Roger (1988): *Der Mensch und das Heilige*. München, Wien: Hanser.

CRAPANZANO, Vincent (1975): "Saints, Jnun, and Dreams: An Essay in Moroccan Ethnopsychology." *Psychiatry* 38: 145-59.

CRAPANZANO, Vincent (1981): *Die Hamadsa. Eine ethnopsychiatrische Untersuchung in Marokko*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.

DERMENGHEM, Emile (1954): *Le culte des saints dans l'Islam Maghrébin*. Paris: Gallimard.

DITTMAR, Alexandra (1995): *Der Marabout. Sakrale Autorität bei berbersprachigen Bevölkerungen des Mittleren und Hohen Atlas (Marokko)*. (*Deutsche Hochschulschriften* 1081), Egelsbach, Frankfurt, St. Peter Port: Hänsel-Hohenhausen.

DURKHEIM, Emile (1981): *Die elementaren Formen des religiösen Lebens*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

EICKELMAN, Dale F. (1976): *Moroccan Islam. Tradition and Society in a Pilgrimage Center*. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press.

EICKELMAN, Dale F. (1977): "Ideological Change and Regional Cults. Marabutism and Ties of "Closeness" in Western Morocco." In *Regional Cults*, ed. by Richard P. WERBNER. (*A. S. A. Monographies* 10), London: Acad. Press, pp. 3-28.

ENSEL, Remco (1999*): Saints and Servants in Southern Morocco*. (*Social, Economic and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia* 67). Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill.

ETIENNE, Bruno (1979): "Magie et thérapie à Casablanca." *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord* 18: 262-79.

FARTACEK, Gebhard (1999): *Die Manifestation des Heiligen. Eine ethnologische Untersuchung zur Konstruktion sakraler Plätze in Syrien*. Wien (unpublished thesis).

FOUCAULT, Michel (1999): *Botschaften der Macht: Der Foucault-Reader, Diskurs und Medien*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.

GEERTZ, Clifford (1968): *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.

GELLNER, Ernest (1969): *Saints of the Atlas*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

GESLER, Wilbert (1982): "The Construction of Therapeutic Spaces." In *Sacred Spaces and Public Quarrels: African Cultural and Economic Landscapes*, ed. by Paul TIYAMBE ZELEZA and Ezekiel KALIPENI. Trenton: Africa World Press, pp. 111-25.

GOLDZIHER, Ignaz (1890): "Die Heiligenverehrung im Islam." In *Muhammedanische Studien. Bd.* 2, ed. by Ignaz GOLDZIHER. Halle: Niemeyer, pp. 275-378.

KROLL, Sibylle (1990): *Erscheinungsformen und Funktionen der Wallfahrt in Marokko unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der ziyara.* Köln (unpublished M.A. thesis).

LANG, Hubert (1991): "Heiligenkult in Marokko. Die therapeutische Funktion der Heiligen." *Wuqûf* 4-5, 1989-1990: 213-25.

LANG, Hubert (1992): *Der Heiligenkult in Marokko. Formen und Funktionen der Wallfahrt. (Passauer Mittelmeerstudien, Sonderreihe* 3), Passau: Passavia Universitäts-Verlag.

LUCKMANN, Thomas (1991): *Die unsichtbare Religion.* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

MALIK, Jamal (1999): "Muslimische Identität zwischen Tradition und Moderne." In *Religion und Identität. Im Horizont des Pluralismus*, ed. by Werner GEPHART and Hans WALDENFELS. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

MERNISSI, Fatima (1988): *Der Harem ist nicht die Welt. Elf Berichte aus dem Leben marokkanischer Frauen.* Darmstadt: Luchterhand.

MEUSEL, E. (1998): "Das Andere der Vernunft." *der blaue reiter* 8: 24-6.

RAUSCH, Margaret (2000): *Bodies, Boundaries and Spirit Possession. Moroccan Women and the Revision of Tradition.* Bielefeld: Transcript.

SCHIMMEL, Annemarie (1991): "Sacred Geography in Islam." In *Sacred Places and Profane Spaces. Essays in the Geographics of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. by Jamie SCOTT and Paul SIMPSON-HOUSLEY. New York: Greenwood Press, pp. 163-75.

VERDUGO, Dominique, and Jalila Kadiri FAKIR (1995): "Cultural Landscapes: Marabutic Sites in Morocco." In *Cultural Landscapes of Universal Value. Components of a Global Strategy*, ed. by Bernd VON DROSTE, Harald PLACHTER und Mechtild RÖSSLER. Jena: G.Fischer Verl., pp. 96-105.

WELTE, Frank Maurice (1990): *Der Gnawa-Kult: Trancespiele, Geisterbeschwörung und Besessenheit in Marokko. (Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe 19, Band 18)*, Frankfurt am Main: Lang Verlag.

WESTERMARCK, Edward (1926): *Ritual and Belief in Morocco.* 2 Vols., London: Macmillan.

ZYNE, Anouar (2000): "Les voies mystiques de Casablanca." *L'Economiste. Le premier quotidien économique du Maroc* 19.03.2000: 22-3.
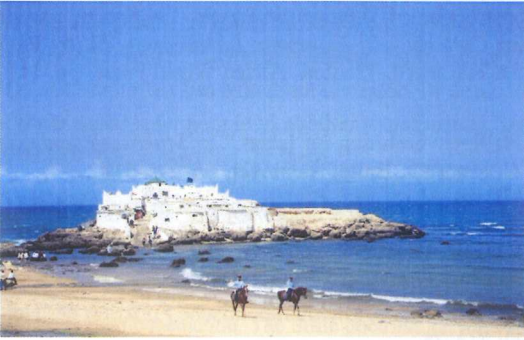
Figure 1: The Island of Sidi ᶜAbderrahman south of Casablanca, at the beach of Ain Diab. The status of the Island is secured by public authorities. (Picture by A. Escher)

Figure 2: The entrance to the Island of Sidi ᶜAbderrahman at ebb tide. (Picture by S. Petermann)

Figure 3: The entrance to the Grotto on the Island of Sidi ᶜAbderrahman. The sign indicates the capital punishment for trespassing. (Picture by S. Petermann)