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VI

SOUFISME ET SYMBOLES

SUFISM AND SYMBOLS



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ABSTRACTS

Constant HAMES (EHESS, Paris)

Alexandre POPOVIC (CNRS - EHESS, Paris)

The dâ'ira or the circle of the djinns in Muslim Balkans

In a confidential publication edited in 1942 at Sarajevo (Bosnia), Muhamed Garcević described a century-old healing ritual practiced by Balkan Muslims, an assembly of djinns inside a circle, convened by a specialist helped by a young child. After translating and annotating the ritual into French the authors give a historical background for Balkan *dâ'ira* rituals. The article also provides an anthropological analysis along with Islamic references.

Thierry ZARCON (CNRS - EPHE, Paris)

Symbolic clothing of the whirling dervishes

From the beginning, Jalâl al-Dîn Rumî and the Mevlevî dervishes have considered their clothes to have symbolic meaning, whether worn in day-to-day life or for the whirling ritual. As it is the case in almost all the other Sufi lineages, the cloak (*hirka*), the hat (*külah*, *sikke*) and the belt (*kemer*, *elifnemed*) have played an important role for Mevlevîs. In general, Mevlevî clothing symbolizes an initiatory death and rebirth, some of which is interpreted in terms of the Arabic letters *alif* and *lâmalif*.

Michel BOIVIN (CNRS - EHESS, Paris)

The symbolic power of Sufism: the case of the beggar bowl (kishtî)

This paper is devoted to the begging bowl (*kashkûl*) of wandering South Asia Sufis (*qalandars*). It became a powerful symbol and artefact reflecting both the spiritual achievement and the regulation of the social order. This article examines the *kashkûl* at the pilgrimage shrine centre of Sehwan Sharif, Pakistan, of La'î Shâhbâz Qalandar (d. 1273). The *kashkûl* is represented as the symbol of his magic power, called a *kishtî*, the 'boat', because it is also a metaphorical vessel through which divine knowledge is transferred.

Jürgen Wasim FREMBGEN (Museum of Ethnology and Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich)

The Symbolism of the boat in Sufi and Shi'a imagery: some examples from the visual cultures of Pakistan and Iran

The rich symbolism concerning the boat and ship in Islam, particularly in Sufi and Shi'a imagery, is variously based on notions of Noah's ark, the "ship of salvation"

of the “Seven Sleepers,” the “ship of faith” of the Prophet Muhammad and members of his family, the “ship of Shi’ism” as well as boats associated with Sufis. These notions are all related to a divinely protected journey through the rough sea of life.

Hümeýra ULUDAĞ (University of Istanbul)

Birds in sufism: the destiny of the nightingale and the pilgrimage of the stork

This study explores bird symbolism in Ottoman Sufism. It is illustrated by an analysis of several sacred fretworks named "tekke writings" (*tekke yazıları*), which combine calligraphies in the form of religious headgears, animals or birds, of the names of sufi saints or prayers with non figurative drawings of symbols or sacred objects. These fretworks are used to adorn sufi lodges. The birds represented in these calligraphies are those which are regarded as the most sacred in sufism, i.e. pigeons, dove, falcon, stork, crane, and legendary birds such as the Anka or the Simurg (phoenix). In general, a symbol of the soul which flies far away from the material world, bird hint also to the ethical, ascetical and devotional behaviour of the sufi master and of the people on the sufi path: for example, the trust in God, *tevekkül*, the testifying to Islam, *şehadet* and the *besmele* (stork), the divine love (nightingale), the return to God (falcon), the spiritual power of the shaykh (falcon, crane), the repetitive prayer / dhikr (dove), etc.

Thierry ZARCONÉ (CNRS - EPHE, Paris)

The sword of ‘Alī (Zülfikar) in Alevism and Bektashism

The sword of ‘Alī b. Abû Tâlib is one of the major symbols to be found in Alevi practice and in the Bektashi Sufi lineage. This famous doubled-edged sword appears in calligraphic compositions and miniatures, adorning walls of the Sufi tombs and lodges. A symbol of the war against the enemies of Islam and especially of the spiritual war against the ego-self, *Zülfikar* is an important metaphor in Alevi-Bektashi poetry and literature also communicating protective virtue in talismanic art.

Sharokh RAEI (Georg-August University of Göttingen)

Some notes on the Khâksâr coat of arms

The Khâksâr Order, like many other orders, uses a specific coat of arms nowadays. The first application of this coat of arms dates back to the time of Mutahhar ‘Alîshâh (died in 1983). It is made up of the images of particular pieces of dervish equipments, which are arranged in a specific order. Today the crest can be observed, among others, in various parts of Khâksâr houses, on their publications and other written works and gravestones. During the last decades, the Khâksâr have occasionally been removing their coat of arms, just like other dervish symbols, from the facades of their houses. This has been due to the current

situation of dervish orders in Iran and the tensions between them and the authorities.

Yayoi KAWAHARA (National Institutes for the Humanities, University of Tokyo)

The Development of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ferghana Valley during the 19th and the 20th century

This study introduces eight documents (*ijâzat-nâmas* and *silsila-nâmas*) from private archives in Central Asia that help to reconsider the history of the spread of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya lineage in the Ferghana Valley, in 19th and early 20th centuries. These documents are particularly linked to the Dahbîdî branch of this lineage. A group of Sufi shaykhs established at Namangan has played a major role in the diffusion of the lineage in the Ferghana Valley. This article focuses on Majdhûb Namangânî, a disciple of the prominent Dahbîdî shaykh, Khalîfa Muhammad Husayn. The latter has trained many disciples, who in turn influential in a wider area. Another major sufis, named Dhâkir Khwâja, Sulaymân Khwâja, and Êshân Mawlawî, have occupied active political roles in the khanate of Khoqand.

WANG Jianxin (University of Lanzhou, People's Republic of China)

Chinese sources of the Lingmingtang Sufi order

This study is based on sources belonging to the Jinling School of Islamic teachings in China, and on some manuscripts collected during the fieldwork carried on by the author on the Lingmingtang sufi order in Gansu province, in 2000-2006. It analyses the theological and sufi ideas defended by the founder of this order and by some of its preachers, and also the transmission of the sufi teaching throughout Northwest China since the 17th century when the Jinling School emerged. The author argues that though sufi traditions and sufi orders entered China around the 11th century, mainly from Central Asia, and then spread over Northwest China, these sufi traditions and orders were integrated into the culture of ancient China which was consequently transformed to adapt to this new situation.

Paulo PINTO (Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil)

The metamorphosis of baraka: ritual, sainthood and charismatic succession in Aleppo

This article analyzes the emergence of a contemporary Muslim saint in the context of leadership succession in the zawiya of Shaykh Amînu (d. 2000), in Aleppo, Syria. I was able to accompany the last year of life of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Fattâh al-Amînu. During that period I could witness the gradual elaboration of the idea that Shaykh Amînu was more than just another sufi shaykh and that his illness and death were indeed a path that led him towards greater closeness to God.

Subsequent fieldwork allowed me to see how Shaykh Amînu was gradually transmuted into a *wâlî* (saint) in the religious experience of many members of the community. Sainthood worked as a charismatic memory of Shaykh Amînu among his followers, and provided a framework of leadership and authority that informed the construction of the charisma of his successor.

Mark SEDGWICK (Aarhus University, Denmark)

The making of a sufi saint of the twentieth century: Shaykh Ahmad al-'Alawî (1869-1934)

The article examines the very different ways in which the success of Shaykh Ahmad al-'Alawî has been understood by European scholars, notably Jacques Berque, Federico Vidal, Ernest Gellner, and Martin Lings. Berque and Gellner emphasized modernism, Vidal emphasized politics, and Lings emphasized traditional mystic Islam. The article examines all these understandings, and shows how they reflect different ideological positions in the European construction of sufism. The article argues that Lings' construction of al-'Alawî's sanctity in terms of mystic Islam and charisma is hard to assess, that the construction of al-'Alawî as a modernist is open to serious objection, and that Vidal's explanation in terms of politics is the most convincing.