

THE MAKING OF SAINTS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD IN 20th CENTURY

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PROGRAM



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SYNOPSIS

From the early beginning of Islam, the saints have never ceased to play an essential role in popular piety. As an intermediary between the believers and God, the saint is supposed to serve, thanks to his miracles and his blessing, the destiny of the world and to answer to the spiritual and day-to-day needs of every Muslims, whether kings or humble people. The cult of saints reflects however very diverse and varied aspects due to the influence of the cultural and geographical milieu into which the saints has emerged. In addition, the veneration of saints and the pilgrimage to their tombs have neither disappeared, nor they have declined at modern times, despite the pressure of the reformist governments who fought superstitions. On the contrary, no even the veneration of saints has continued in the whole of the Muslim world (with the exception of Saudi Arabia where radical Islam - Wahhabism - has fiercely eradicated it), but it has in the course of time became dominant in some areas, while in other places it has regenerated itself and gave birth and is still giving birth to new saintly figures. It is worth mentioning here the names of Shaykh Alawi (1869-1934) in Algeria who has converted Europeans to Islam, of Ahmadou Bamba (m. 1927) in Senegal of whom devotees called "*murid*" have erected a mausoleum and built a sacred city named Touba in 1928 (now the second city in the country), and of Said Nursi (d. 1960) who got thousands of devotees in Turkey. New saintly figures exist also in the Indian subcontinent and in the Indonesian archipelago. Similarly, saint veneration has experienced a revival in the former Soviet Republic of Central Asia since 1991, and in the Muslim provinces of China (Xinjiang, Gansu) after the Cultural Revolution.

The making of the new saintly figures, however, poses many problems to which this conference will try to answer.

– What means sainthood and saint in contemporary Muslim world? Is there a new definition of sanctity, wider than those used until now? For example, in Iran, the "national saint" is a new phenomenon, reflecting a certain "secularisation" of sanctity, as is the martyr in the Iran-Iraq war who has become a saint with the support of the Islamic Republic.

– Is the typology of the new saintly figures distinct from the classical typologies which distinguish: 1. Biblical and Quranic prophets, and Shi'i imams; 2. propagators of Islam, i.e. martyrs and heroes; 3. Mystics or Sufis; 4. kings?

– Under which conditions the new saintly figures are emerging, given that the social and political context in the Muslim world have changed and were transformed by the reforms: Nation-States and/or secular Republics; Islamic states; Communist states? Is the veneration of saints still associated to a pilgrimages at a tomb, following a specific ritual? And is this ritual inherited or reconstructed, not to say entirely recreated?

– What is the spiritual, social and political role played by these new saintly figures?

– What is the link of the new saintly figures with the past and how the devotees write the history of these saints in the "short term", i.e. in the press and journals, and in the "long term" (*longue durée*), i.e. on books? Is the history of all these saintly figures put down on the paper, and in which way: neo-hagiography? Does it exist also a "moving hagiography," i.e. a film/documentary where the life of the saint is "put down" on an audio-visual support?

Besides, all these questions which have until now rarely drawn the attention of the researchers, will help us to define what is Islam nowadays, considering the fact that saint veneration and pilgrimage to the tombs of saints were and are still today one of the most notable forms of devotion in the Muslim world, from Morocco to China and Indonesia, and that it is also quite influential in spirituality as much as in society and politics.

PROGRAM

FRIDAY 2 DECEMBER

9:30 Opening

9:45 About the topic of the conference:

Session 1: Africa and the Middle East

Chair: **Pedram Khosronejad**

10:00 **Cheikh ANTA BABOU** (University of Pennsylvania)

The making of a saint: an exploration of the foundations of Amadou Bamba's religious authority

10:40 **Mark SEDGWICK** (Aarhus University, Denmark)

The Making of a Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century: Shaikh Ahmad al-Alawi and the European Construction of Sufism

11:20 Morning Coffee

11:45 **Paulo PINTO** (Universidade Federal Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro)

The Metamorphosis of Baraka: Ritual, Sainthood and Charismatic Succession in Syrian Sufism

12:25 Questions and discussion

13:00 Lunch Break

Session 2: Shi'ite World and Turkey

Chair: **Michel Boivin**

15:00 **Pedram KHOSRONEJAD** (Department of Social Anthropology, University of St Andrews - Scotland)

Immortal Spirits: Materiality and Immateriality of Iran-Iraq War Martyrs

15:40 **Pierre-Jean LUIZARD** (CNRS-GSRL/EPHE)

The two Sadr in Iraq : from political activism to sanctification or how martyrdom leads to sainthood

16:20 Afternoon Tea

16:45 **Thierry ZARCONE** (CNRS-GSRL/EPHE)

The Making of Saints in Republican Turkey: Sufi shaykhs versus Sufis

17:25 – 18:00 Questions and discussion

19:15 Dinner

SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER

Session 3: India Subcontinent and Central Asia

Chair: Pierre-Jean Luizard

10:00 **Iqbal AKHTAR** (University of Edinburgh)

A modern reimagining of the medieval Khôjâ saint

10:40 **Michel BOIVIN** (CNRS/CEIAS)

The 'hidden Sufi' of India: building sainthood among the Hindu followers of Sufi pîr-s

11:20 Morning Coffee

11:45 **Alexandre PAPAS** (CNRS-CETOBAC/EHESS)

Deconstructing saints: The anti-hagiographic literature in Xinjiang

12:25 Questions and discussion

13:00 Conclusion and Closing

ABSTRACTS

Iqbal AKHTAR (University of Edinburgh):

Iqbal Akhtar is completing his doctoral postgraduate at the University of Edinburgh in the department of religious studies at New College School of Divinity. His research focuses on 19th century Khôjâ history in Eastern and Central Africa, more broadly issues of religious identity and citizenship. His doctoral thesis is entitled *The Oriental African: an ethnographic study of religious identity among the globalized Shî'î Khôjâ of Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar*. His most recent article entitled "Race and Religion in the Political Problematization of the American Muslim" was published in *PS: Political Science and Politics*.

A modern reimagining of the medieval Khôjâ saint

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Muslim saints, such as Pîr Sadradîn Sâhêbê, ostensibly converted Hindus to Islam. Sadradîn is attributed to having converting two communities in Kashmir and the Punjab, known as the *cak* and the Lôhânâ. This transition to a multivocal form of Islam created a new ethnic identity - the Khôjâ. The personalities of these medieval saints were complex embracing Indic notions of piety such as asceticism, vegetarianism, and renunciation (*sannyasana*). Elaborate genealogies from this era, which survive in later manuscripts, present cosmologies that link the avatars of Visnu, such as the demi-avatars of the Buddha, to Aaron, St. Peter, Muhammad and ultimately to 'Alî. The various medieval *panth* religious traditions of the Khôjâ (*khôjapanth*), included tantric rituals and philosophies associated with the Goddess - *mâtâpanth* (*saktîpanth*) and philosophies of asceticism - *sâdûpanth*. These were complex mediations between Islam and Hinduism set in a dynamic period in South Asia, developing in parallel to the processes which eventually led to the founding of Sikhism by Guru Nanak. With the 1853 arrival of Hasan Ali Shah Mehalatee to Bombay from Kerman via Kabul, there resulted an irrevocable fracture of the Khôjâ caste. The faction of Mehalatee, known as the Âgâkhânîs, reinterpreted this

complex medieval religious legacy as simply being Near Eastern Ismâ'îlîs in Indic guise. For these Âgâkhânî Khôjâ, the complexity of attaining liberation (*môksa*) was replaced by a simpler path to salvation (*râhênajât*) through absolute loyalty to the “Imam of the Age” and service to the co unity (*sêvâ*). The Indic cosmologies were rapidly replaced by genealogies that presented the Khôjâ saints as missionaries of an apparently extant Nizârî Ismâ'îlî lineage in Iran.

Conversely, the Ithnâ ‘Asharî Khôjâ took the path of utterly abandoning the medieval Khôjâ saints in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by exclusively focusing on the martyrs of Karbala and the balance of the imams. In the late twentieth century, hagiographies have emerged of Ithnâ ‘Asharî Khôjâ proto-saints, holy men of notable repute such as the chief Khôjâ¹ missionary of East Africa - Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (d. 2002). Rizvi’s grave in the Central Dar es Salaam Khôjâ graveyard is the only marble sarcophagus in the cemetery. Located near the ingress, it is a common point of prayer after the Thursday and Sunday afternoon *majlis*.

The reimagining of the medieval Khôjâ saint in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries occurs by establishing an impeccable Near Eastern pedigree, through promoting doctrinal orthodoxy, and by a distancing of them from their Indic legacies. As the processes of sanctification continue for the Khôjâ of both these traditions loyalty to the Imam, whether present or hidden, and adherence to doctrinal and ritual orthodoxy are the basis for spiritual elevation in the eyes of the larger community and their leadership.

¹. Rizvi worked for the Khôjâ communities in East Africa for more than half a century building the Bilal Muslim Mission, most widely in Tanzania. He was Indian and a claimed descendent of Muhammad, not ethnically Khôjâ.

Cheikh Anta BABOU (University of Pennsylvania):

Cheikh Anta Babou is a Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. His research focuses on mystical Islam in West Africa and Senegal and on the new African diaspora. Professor Babou has published extensively on the Muridiyya Muslim order of Senegal and the Senegalese diaspora. His book, *Fighting the Greater Jihad: Amadou Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya of Senegal, 1853-1913* (Ohio University Press, 2007) has recently appeared in French under the title, *Le Jihad de l'âme: Amadou Bamba et la fondation de la Mouridiyya au Sénégal, 1853-1913* (Karthala, 2011). Dr. Babou’s articles appeared in *African Affairs*, *The Annals*, *Journal of African History*, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, *Africa Today* and other scholarly journals in the United States and in Europe.

The making of a saint: an exploration of the foundations of Amadou Bamba's religious authority

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba Mbacke is the founder of the Muridiyya Muslim order which counts today over four million disciples across four continents. The Muridiyya has been the object of many scholarly studies focusing mainly on its political and economic roles in colonial and post colonial Senegal. Little is known about its founder’s spiritual life. This paper examines the construction of Ahmadou Bamba’s religious authority from a humble Qur’anic teacher in West Central Senegal to a sage and Saint revered by millions of people across the globe. It argues that three things have conspired to pave Bamba’s way to sainthood: genealogy, knowledge, and suffering.

Michel BOIVIN (CNRS/CEIAS):

Michel Boivin is Research Fellow at the Centre for Indian and South Asian Studies (CNRS-EHESS) and he teaches Contemporary History of South Asia. He specializes in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century history of Muslim societies belonging to an area straddling current-day Pakistan and India, roughly from Karachi to Mumbai. His work is informed by texts, historical anthropology and material culture. He has just published *Artefacts of Devotions: A Sufi Repertoire of the Qalandariyya in Sehwan Sharif, Sindh (Pakistan)* (Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2011).

The 'hidden Sufi' of India: building sainthood among the Hindu followers of Sufi pir-s

In 1947, after the end of British rule, the majority of the Hindus from Pakistan migrated to India. Mostly from the province of Sindh, they worshipped a number of local deities, but they were also followers of Sufi *pîr*-s since centuries, to such an extent that sometimes, Hindus *murid*-s became *pîr*-s in turn. In the wake of migration, they transferred a number of Sufi cults where they went to settle, like for example Mumbai, Kuch or Delhi. The presentation wishes to address the making of sainthood in a displaced community. While the process included usual steps like the building a new kind of shrine, usually known as *kothiyas*, and the 'invention' of specific rituals, especially the *varsû*, the first issue was to elaborate the criteria for sainthood. Such criteria were provided by a number of Sufi *kalâm*-s and *janam sakbî*-s (bio-hagiographies) which were collected, edited and published. Since most of them are still unpublished in Pakistan, the presentation will focus on the role played by the Sufi corpus in the making process of the saints, usually tagged as *likal sufi*-s, or 'hidden sufis'.

Pedram KHOSRONEJAD (Department of Social Anthropology, University of St Andrews):

Pedram Khosronejad is an anthropologist and member of staff at the Department of Social Anthropology, University of St Andrews, Scotland. His field of expertise is visual piety, devotional artefacts and religious material culture in the Middle East more broadly, especially the understandings of memory, loss and death, and their relation to material landscapes and visual representations. His published writing includes 'Where is the anthropology of Iran after 70 years?' (*Anthropology News*, 2007); 'Anthropology of Islamic Shiite art and material culture' (*Anthropology News*, 2006). He has edited *The Art and Material Culture of Iranian Shi'ism: Iconography and Religious Devotion in Shi'i Islam* (Tauris, 2011) and is currently editing the forthcoming books; *Women's Rituals and Ceremonies in Islamic World* (Centro Incontri Umani - Tauris); and *War in Iranian Cinema: Religion, Martyrdom and National Identity* (Tauris).

Immortal Spirits: Materiality and Immateriality of Iran-Iraq War Martyrs

When a sight or an event stimulates memory, persons are reminded of war. Seeing a war monument at a town square, for example, could evoke a personal memory, however brief. But war memorials are meant to engender more than accidental reverie. As Jackson observed, "A landscape without political history is a landscape without memory or forethought." Whether a memorial is defined as sacred or profane, it can intentionally be designed to evoke, often forcefully, memories of war. When images of war form shocking reminders of what actually occurred, they become references for the future generations. Carefully preserved in folklore and enthroned as tradition, these images can be invoked for political purposes that transcend party and class factionalism, and serve to unite the nation in a supreme sacrifice in the national interest.

A nation that goes to war unavoidably produces artifacts and establishes places that are often no longer usable when peace is achieved. Sometimes these remains are abandoned landscapes, and

new war remains are created to store artifacts that are returned from battle. War remains may be refitted for other practical uses. Although these businesses and remains evoke memories of war, their practical purpose is not sacred commemoration but rather profitability or utility. In Iran after Iran-Iraq war, war memorial landscapes are going to be more and more sacred, religious and political issues. Today such memorial landscapes include former battlefields, memorial architectures, mausoleum of unknown martyrs, war and martyrdom museums where one can find personal objects and remaining of Iranian martyrs. Today in Iran, the living and the dead meet and come together every day. Memorials, shrines and tombs of war martyrs, whether a popular or a state representation, are always significant. In this paper I will talk about creation, reception and function of religious and sacred memorials” specially “Memorial Shrines of Un-known Martyrs” as new saints and places of worship in Islamic Republic of Iran.

Pierre-Jean LUIZARD (CNRS-GSRL/EPHE)

Pierre-Jean Luizard is a senior research fellow (directeur de recherches) at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) in France. He has lived for long periods of time in most Arab countries in the Middle East, particularly Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt. A historian of contemporary Islam in his native country, he is especially interested in the impact of different manifestations of Islamic faith and the role some of them play within current political systems: the history of the Shiite clergy in Iraq; the history of Islamic reformism, particularly after the reform of Al-Azhar and popular Islam as carried through by Sufi brotherhoods in Egypt. His publications include *La Formation de l'Irak contemporain* (Paris: 1991), *La Question irakienne* (Paris: 2002), *Le Choc colonial et l'islam: les politiques religieuses des puissances coloniales en terres d'islam* (Paris: 2006).

The two Sadr in Iraq : from political activism to sanctification or how martyrdom leads to sainthood

Ayatollah Muhammad Bâqir al-Sadr (March 1, 1935 - April 9, 1980) was an Iraqi Shi'a cleric, a philosopher, and ideological founder of Islamic Dawa Party. He made an important contribution to the renewal of Islamic law and politics in the late 20th century Middle East. Executed in 1980 by the regime of Saddam Hussein, he was the most articulate thinker as well as a major political actor in the revival of Shi'i learning, which placed Najaf at its centre. From the late 1950s, he inspired the revival of the political Shi'a cleric-led movement. He is the father-in-law of Muqtada al-Sadr and cousin of both Muhammad Sâdeq al-Sadr and Imam Mûsa al-Sadr. His father Haydar al-Sadr was a well-respected high-ranking Shi'a cleric.

Contrary to, Ayatollah Muhammad Sâdeq al-Sadr (March 23, 1943 - February 19, 1999), often referred to as *Muhammad Sadiq as-Sadr* which is his father's name, was not a major thinker. The growth of his popularity, often referred to as the followers of the Speaking *Hawza* (the *Hawza* which dare speak in contrast with the silent *Hawza*), also put him in competition with other Shi'a leaders, including Grand Ayatollah Khû'i, the leading *marja'* in Najaf, and Muhammed Bâqer al-Hakîm who was exiled in Iran. At first encouraged by the regime of Saddam Hussein, in order to thwart the major Shi'a clerics, he finally came into conflict with the Iraqi government. With several members of his family, he was assassinated in 1999 by order of the Baghdad regime.

After the fall of the regime of Saddam Hussein, these two contrasted figures became the emblem of the Sadrist movement led by Muqtada al-Sadr, the son of Muhammad Bâqer al-Sadr who could escape from the 1999 massacre. *Al-Sadrayn* (the two Sadr) or *al-Shahîdayn* (the two martyrs) turned into sacred symbols and started to be considered as two inseparable

modern Shi'a saints by all the Iraqi Shi'a beyond the sole Sadrist trend. Being martyrs for the Shi'a cause led them on the path of sainthood.

Alexandre PAPAS (CNRS-CETOBAC/EHESS):

Alexandre Papas, Research Fellow at the CNRS in Paris, is a historian of Islamic Central Asia. His researches focus on Islam and Sufism in Central Asia and the neighbouring regions (Western China and Northern India) from the sixteenth century to present. He is the author of *Soufisme et politique entre Chine, Tibet et Turkestan* (Paris, 2005), *Mystiques et vagabonds en islam* (Paris, 2010), and *Voyage au Pays des Salars* (Paris, 2011). With Th. Welsford and Th. Zarcone, he is the editor of a collaborative volume entitled *Central Asian Pilgrims. Hajj Routes and Pious Visits between Central Asia and the Hijaz* (Berlin, 2011).

Deconstructing saints: The anti-hagiographic literature in Xinjiang

At the end of the twentieth century, a new, yet ephemeral, literary genre emerged in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in China. Written in Uyghur language by Uyghur authors for Uyghur readers, this literature is intended to deconstruct rather than destruct the main figures of sanctity in the Islamic history of Xinjiang. This paper presents a close analysis of three books authored by Abduweli Eli, all published in 2000, which narrate the life and activity of Sufi saints. The author uses an anti-hagiographic style which turns to be more sophisticated or more ambivalent than the Marxist-Maoist vulgate of religious feudalism and fanaticism.

Paulo PINTO (Universidade Federal Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro):

Paulo G. Pinto is Ph.D. in Anthropology from Boston University. He is professor of Anthropology at the Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil, where he is also director of the Center for Middle East Studies. He has done fieldwork in Syria since 1999. His recent publications include "Oh Syria, God Protects You": Islam as Cultural Idiom under Bashar al-Asad", *Middle East Critique* 20 (2): 189-205, 2011; "The Anthropologist and the Initiated: Reflections on the Ethnography of Mystical Experience Among the Sufis of Aleppo, Syria", *Social Compass* 57 (4): 464-478, 2011. He has two edited books forthcoming: *Ethnographies of Islam: Ritual Performances and Everyday Practices*. Co-edited with Baudoin Dupret, Thomas Pierret and Kathryn Spellman-Poots. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012; *Crescent of Another Horizon: Islam in Latin America, the Caribbean and Latino USA*. Co-edited with John Karam and Maria del-Mar Logroño-Narbona. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012.

The Metamorphosis of Baraka: Ritual, Sainthood and Charismatic Succession in Syrian Sufism

This article aims to analyze the connections between sainthood and the transmission and circulation of charisma in the context of contemporary Syrian Sufism. Notions of sainthood have a central role in the construction of religious authority among the Sufi communities in Syria, for there is a conceptual and practical continuity in the perception by the Sufis of the religious power of the saint (*walī*) and that of the Sufi *shaykh*. Sainthood is, indeed, a palpable possibility in the career of the Sufi *shaykhs* in Syria, as many of them end by being considered as saints by their followers after their death. Instead of focusing on the doctrinal definitions of sainthood among Sufis, the analysis will look at how notions of sainthood emerge from the ritual display and manipulation of the *shaykh's baraka* in the context of succession crisis within Sufi communities. In order to demonstrate this proposition I will analyze the process of leadership succession and transformation of the *baraka* of the deceased *shaykh* 'Abd al-Fatāh Amīnū into saintly power,

which took place during my fieldwork research at his *ḥāwīya* (Sufi lodge) in Aleppo. The dramatic character and the long span of time that this process succession took allowed a better perception of the mechanisms involved. The ethnographic data analyzed here were collected from 1999 to 2001, during a sixteen months fieldwork research in Arab and Kurdish Sufi *ḥāwīyas* in Aleppo and the Kurd Dagh, in Syria, as well as during shorter research periods that happened between 2004 and 2010.

Mark SEDGWICK (Aarhus University, Denmark):

Mark Sedgwick is professor of Arab and Islamic Studies at Aarhus University, Denmark, having previously taught for twenty years at the American University in Cairo, Egypt. He is the author of *Against the Modern World: Traditionalism and the Secret Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century* (New York, 2004; French translation Paris, 2008) and maintains the popular blog “Traditionalists” (traditionalistblog.blogspot.com). He has worked on Sufism in the Islamic world as well as in Europe, and has published *Saints and Sons: The Making and Remaking of the Rashidi Ahmadi Sufi Order, 1799-2000* (Leiden, 2005) and *Sufism: The Essentials* (Cairo, 2000; French translation Paris, 2001). His most recent book is a biography of the great Egyptian modernist, *Muḥammad Abdūh* (Oxford and Cairo, 2010).

The Making of a Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century: Shaikh Ahmad al-Alawi and the European Construction of Sufism

Shaikh Ahmad al-Alawi (1869-1934) of Mostaganem, Algeria, is one of the most celebrated Sufi Saints of the modern period. He is the source of the *tariqa* Alawiyya, found today in France as well as North Africa. Al-Alawi is the subject not only of hagiographies in Arabic, but also in European languages. He is the topic of the classic *Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century* of Martin Lings (1909-2005), a book which has remained in print since its first publication in 1961, and has been translated into Arabic and into both major and minor European languages. Given that Lings (also known as Abu Bakr Siraj al-Din) was a leading figure in the Traditionalist movement and presented Al-Alawi as an example of the survival of Tradition into modernity, it is somewhat ironic that the first major publication on Al-Alawi in a European language, in 1936, was an article entitled “Un mystique moderniste” (A modernist mystic), by Augustin Berque, the father of the distinguished French scholar Jacques Berque. The paper argues that both Lings and Berque were right, and that Al-Alawi successfully combined modernism and tradition. Modernism, however, was more acceptable to Arabs than to Europeans, while tradition was more acceptable to Europeans than to Arabs. This, it is argued, reflects important differences between the nature of ascribed spiritual authority in Europe and the Arab world during the twentieth century, and shows that the two civilizational spheres in fact remained separate even when they seemed to be joining.

Thierry ZARCONÉ (CNRS-GSRL/EPHE):

Thierry Zarcone is Senior Researcher (Directeur de Recherches) at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris (Groupe Sociétés Religieuses Laïcité). In addition to being a visiting professor in Kyoto (2005–6) and Fribourg (2007), he is an expert on Islamic studies and the history of systems of thought in the Turco-Iranian region. The author of numerous articles on related scholarly topics, including the history of Sufism and shamanism in the Ottoman Empire, Turkey, Central Asia, and Chinese Turkestan, he has published several works on modern and contemporary Turkish and Central Asian history. Thierry Zarcone’s book *Mystiques, philosophes et francs-maçons en Islam* (Paris, Maisonneuve, 1993) was awarded the Prix Saintour of the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques. His most recent

publications include *Secret et Sociétés secrètes en islam* (Milan, 2002), *La Turquie moderne et l'islam* (Paris, 2004), *La Turquie De l'Empire ottoman à la République d'Atatürk* (Paris, 2005) and *Sufi Pilgrims from Central Asia and India in Jerusalem* (Kyoto, 2009). Thierry Zarccone is also one of the editors (along with Arthur Buehler and Ekrem Işın) of the *Journal of the History of Sufism* (Paris).

The making of saints in Republican Turkey: Sufi Shaykhs versus Sufis

In spite of the banning of the Sufi brotherhoods and of the visitation to the tombs of saints by the Kemalist regime in Republican Turkey in 1925, some Sufi orders (especially the Naqshbandi lineage) have continued to work illegally and to venerate their saints up to our days. However, under the Republic, the Sufi behaviour and the opinion of the shaykhs and of the believers in general about the saints have experienced many changes due to the secularisation following the persecution of the religious practice and of the spreading of positivism and rationalism. At the same time, a Sufi imam named Bediüzzaman Said Nursi (1878-1960) set up a new religious trend (later called Nurcu) to stop the decline of Islam and to adapt to the modern world; his aim was to compromise with the modernity and to abandon several traditional institutions and practices, especially the devotions of the Sufi brotherhood (*tarikah*) and the system of the shaykh, while being respectful and even a sincere devotee of the Sufi doctrine. The Naqshbandi orders and the Nurcu movement have become very powerful in Republican Turkey after 1950, being two major actors of the reislamisation of the country with a political agenda. Our aim here is to analyse the emergence of the “shaykhs-saints” in the Sufi milieu in the Turkish Republic after 1950, comparatively with the unexpected recognition of Said Nursi by many of his disciples as a saint after his death in 1960. Worthy of interest also are the views about sainthood defended by Fethullah Gülen (b. 1942), a disciple of Said Nursi and the head of the powerful Fethullahci community.

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