THE IMAGE OF THE MOROCCAN SAINT IN ORAL AND WRITTEN HAGIOGRAPHY[1]

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In the last few decades the Western world has witnessed a growing interest in hagiography. Although in earlier days hardly any scholarly status was ascribed to saints' legends, the value of this genre is now generally recognized as a source for historical and social research. Saints' legends concerning a particular saint may inform us not only about the times and society in which he lived himself, but about those of his hagiographer as well. In many cases the latter is no contemporary of the former. In addition to this one can try to find connections between, on the one hand, the changing images of sainthood that different legends provide through the ages and, on the other hand, developments of a historical, political, economical, or social nature that take place at the same time. The main questions are, in other words: what are the functions of the saint and the saint's legend in society? What is the role of the saint's legend in the veneration of saints?

Generally speaking, Christian saints' legends have been more thoroughly studied than the Islamic ones. In order to get a clear impression of Islamic saints' legends one cannot confine oneself exclusively to an analysis of written hagiography. Legends form part of a still vivid oral tradition, too. The situation in Morocco is a clear example. During a research project of only two months in Marrakesh (summer 1992) I collected thirty-seven saints' legends (see Errazki-van Beek 1994b). At the same time I studied the rituals that are still performed at the shrines of these Seven Patrons. This proved to be important with regard to the supposed connections mentioned earlier between changes in saints' images and social developments. A brief analysis of a saint's legend that I recorded will elucidate my point[2].

Changes in images

Changes seem to take place in practices and legends concerning the Seven Saints[3]. Changes in reputation happen to other saints as well. A few examples will be des-

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[1] Thanks to Remke Kruk for her constructive suggestions on the draft of this paper.

[2] For the results of my earlier research see Errazki-van Beek 1994a.

[3] See the examples given in Errazki-van Beek 1994a & 1994b show. For example, Sīdī ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's reputation changed and the type of patients visiting him changed accordingly. His change of image did not, however, imply a loss of visitors. Al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ and al-Imām as-Suhailī, however, seem to have been less fortunate, and people in Marrakesh no longer have much to tell about them.

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cribed here. Before the present group of Seven Saints was institutionalized in Marrakesh another group of seven saints is said to have been venerated by the people: seven anonymous brothers who are buried next to each other in seven tombs that can still be visited, close to the sanctuary of Sīdī Abū l-ᶜAbbās as-Sabtī. Since Maulāy Ismāᶜīl decided for political reasons to form another group of Seven Saints, i.e. those who are at present included under that name, the others have tended to sink into oblivion. But although the historians do not talk about the seven brothers, as they are no longer the 'real Seven', there are still people who even after three centuries still consider them to be the Seven of Marrakesh (Jemma 1972:11).

Conflicting ideas may have a political background, but can also be of a more religious nature. That is one of the reasons why Sīdī ᶜAbd ar-Raḥmān al-Maǧdūb, saint and follower of a heterodox mystical creed (*malāmatīya*), is sometimes totally ignored in hagiographies (De Premare 1985:32-33, 119-121). On the whole, the written legends on saints tend to focus on the more orthodox versions of Islamic sainthood[4]. This does not mean, however, that the image of the Moroccan saint in hagiography was a static one. The idea of the saint as warrior, for example, became increasingly important from the sixteenth century onwards (Drouin 1975), because of the threatening Western expansion and the influence of Ǧazūlism, an important movement of mystical reformers founded by Sīdī b. Sulaymān al-Ǧazūlī (the fourth of the Seven Saints of Marrakesh). These factors contributed to turning the saints from mere spiritual guides into social and political leaders as well (Cornell 1992). From that time on even saints who had died centuries earlier or who had spent their lives in total seclusion are presented in the legends as waging war against the Christian intruders (Elboudrari 1985:502; Ferhat 1992:195).

The images of saints in legends also show significant changes when we focus, for instance, on the theme of travel. Initially, when the concept of sainthood was still a diffuse one, saints were portrayed especially as people who were able to exceed the limits of time and space: they flew through the sky or walked on water without any effort. Later on, when the foundation of organized brotherhoods accorded to the saint a well-defined and institutionalized position in Moroccan society, he and his disciples were given roles such as that of protecting travellers on the road. In both instances, however, the covering of distances symbolizes the mystical *ṭarīqa* and the access to divine Power (Sebti 1992).

The fact that the environment may have a strong impact on the function and image of a saint becomes clear in the typical Maghrebi variant of the Islamic saint's

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[4] The same can be said of some caretakers of sanctuaries. One *muqaddam* at Sīdī Abū l-ᶜAbbās as-Sabtī's shrine for example was clearly reluctant to relate some anecdotes about his saint and the miracles that occur around his tomb. As Gilsenan (1990:77-78, 85-87) explains, these people in charge do not want the image of the saint to become too fantastic and spectacular.

legend, too: in the Maghreb saints are often busy creating wells and turning deserts into fertile land (Goldziher [1890] 1971:270, 312-313).

Legends as social phenomena

Although the list of examples may easily be expanded, the material given above may suffice for the moment. The first question which may be asked on the basis of the examples given is: why do changes in images and reputations of saints take place?

It is quite clear that the saint's status is not the same at all times and in all places (see also Geertz 1971; Gilsenan 1990:75-141). Just like anybody else, the saint is a member of society and, accordingly, subject to the changes that take place in society. The examples show that political, religious and even military changes may give rise to the redefinition of sainthood and the function of the saint in the community. But saints and their novices can also, to a certain extent, set in motion these developments themselves, as is clear in the case of Sīdī b. Sulaymān al-Ǧazūlī, whose disciples and their allies called for *ǧihād* and social reform, and many other spiritual leaders in Moroccan history.

The various approaches to sainthood (and the veneration of saints) can be derived from oral and written texts on saints. Yet saints' legends, like the holy men and women they describe, do not only form a reflection of society, but also may have an active function in changing attitudes. Analysis of Christian legends has made this quite clear (see for example Smith 1990). In the Islamic saint's legend similar processes seem to be at work, but no systematic analysis has so far been attemped. The same applies to the Moroccan saint's legend. A considerable amount of research still remains to be done. My research project 'The image of the Moroccan saint in oral and written tradition' intends to contribute something to this field. I will give a brief example of what could possibly result from my study.

A legend about Mūl le-Qṣūṛ and Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā

In what way do the legends that people transmit through time reflect changes in images and reputations of saints? We have seen that in order to answer this question, it is important to analyse not only the legends themselves, but also the context in a broader sense. In this way the different images that emerge may be linked to (1) political, religious and philosophical attitudes and (2) social and economic conditions prevalent at the times concerned. For example, it is important to see which groups of society were in power at a certain moment, which deviations in religious thought were accepted and which were not, and what rituals were practised by the common people. The social and economic positions of the story-tellers, too, are a factor of influence. A caretaker of a sanctuary may tell a positive story about his own saint and his miracles, but a negative one about another saint. This is to be expected: such a caretaker will obviously promote the sanctuary in his care, because his living depends on it. The caretaker of the other saint's sanctuary may do the same the other

way round. To show that this does actually happen a legend about Mūl le-Qṣūṛ (1494-1528) is presented here. The story-teller is Maulāy Ibrāhīm, the *muqaddam* of Mūl le-Qṣūṛ's tomb. He belongs to the descendants of the saint, the *awlād al-walī*:

"(...) Men l-kaṛamat lli hiya neᶜni matălan dyal-u huwa: kan f-waḥed l-weqt ğa ᶜend-u Sid-i Ḥmed u Musa « raḍiya llah ᶜen-hu », kan ğa b-wasiṭăt si malik f-dĭk l-weqt. Ğa ᶜend-u baš yšuf had l-Ġezwani škun a huwa, ašnu huwa šŭġl-u u-ašnu hiya umuṛat-u. U-ḥit ğa hadak ta-ygulu 'anna-hu ğa rakeb ᶜla sbeᶜ. U-ḥit ğa ṭleb men dak l-malik, kan dak l-malik dik s-saᶜa ṭleb men ši wali men duk l-'awlĭya' lli ydir li-h ši fatḥa. Kant ši qaḍiya ᶜend-u fa-smiyt-u u-teqḍa dak l-ġaṛaḍ u-hadak ṭleb men dak l-malik baš hada, Sid-i Ḥmed u Musa, baš yemši ᶜend had l-Ġezwani u-yšuf-u u-ytelleᶜ ᶜla 'ašya' dyal-u u-l-umuṛat dyal-u. Fĭᶜlăn, ğa lᶜend-u, ğa ᶜend-u meᶜṛuḍ b-wasiṭăt l-malik u-dḫel ᶜend-u l-daṛ-u u-tdakeṛ huwa u-yya-h neᶜni f-dak š-ši lli huwa fi-ma bin-hŭm tdakru fi-h, wa-lakin ḥit tḥett ṭ-ṭᶜam gal li-h: "Zid takŭl!", gal li-h: "La", gal li-h, "ana mwellef ta-nakŭl ġir ẓ-zemmita." Gal l-u: "Laš?" Gal l-u: "Iwa, ana hiya lli mwellef." Gal li-h: "Kul-ha. Maᶜend-na suq." Kal hadik ẓ-zemmita neᶜni matălan weṣlat wuqit n-nᶜas ᶜṭa-h maḥell fin yenᶜes. Mul le-Qṣuṛ bqa mᶜa leᶜyal dyal-u yeḍḥek u-mᶜa smiyt-u dyal-u. Gal: "Iwa, hada huwa l-wali." Ḥetta neᶜsu n-nas f-uqit a smiyt-u gaᶜed hada u-mnuwwed kesra u-dak š-ši, l-aḫŭṛ fayeq be-l-qaḍiya. Weṣlat wuqit le-mwedden. Le-mwedden wedden dyal ṣ-ṣubḥ, ma-nad-š Mul le-Qṣuṛ fe-l-weqt lli huwa tqelleq hadak u-bdat ta-tesṛeq š-šems ṣifeṭ l-ḫadem, gal li-ha: "Fiqi had s-seyyed!" Faqt-u ḥit ḫreğ lqa n-nğum u-lqa hadak. Galt li-h: "A sid-i, bġiti tṣelli ṣ-ṣubḥ?", u-huwa kan ta-yšuf š-šems u-kan ta-yšuf smiyt-u wa-lakin ḥit ḫreğ wella ta-yšuf le-mwedden ta-yṣebbeḥ u-smiyt-u. Galt li-h: "A sid-i bġiti le-wḍu?", hadik lli ḫeddam ᶜend-u. Gal li-ha: "Iyeh." Šafet fe-s-sma u-hiya tnezzel waḥed seṭlaᶜamṛa be-l-ma neᶜni dafi f-hadik l-weqt a smiyt-u u-twedda u-dak š-ši. Bqa huwa Sid-i Ḥmed u Musa ta-ygul mᶜa raṣ-u: "Wa-h, kif tṛa l-had š-ši?" Ṣellaw ṣ-ṣubḥ, dḫel lᶜend-u , l-le-ftuṛ, gal li-h: "Zid, takŭl!" Gal l-u: "La. Ana mwellef b-hadik." Ḥetta gᶜed ᶜend-u telt iyyam dima mwellef hadik ẓ-zemmita. Mul le-Qṣuṛ ta-yakŭl neᶜni matălan bezzaf u-le-lḥem, u-l-keskṣu u-hadi u-hadi u-ḥit fḍa u-sala kmelt telt iyyam gal l-u: "A sid-i bit nemši. Ka-yḫess-ek teᶜti-ni ši ḥağa lli yeᶜni hiya matălan nesteᶜmed ᶜli-ha." Gal l-u: "Ašnu hiya?" Gal l-u: "Ġadi ngul l-ek waḥed l-kelma Ḥmed u Musa, ḥna ta-naklu be-ṛṭel, u-ta-nšeṛbu be-ṣ-ṣṭel u-ka-nderku ma derku-h hel l-fiṭaṛ, ma-ši ḥna ta-nemšiw nᶜebdu llah f-le-ḫla bin le-wḥuš lakinna-na nᶜebdu fuq le-fraš u-l-menquš." U-huwa yeḫreğ kayn neqqez b-dak l-faṛăḥ u-dak š-ši. Hadi weḥda men kaṛamat Mul le-Qṣuṛ."

"(...) One of his miracles was for example: one time Sid-i Ḥmed u Musa[5] «may God be pleased with him» came to visit him at the command of the king of that time. He came to find out what kind of person l-Ġezwani was, what kind of work he did and in what kind of matters he was further involved. People say that Sid-i Ḥmed u Musa arrived at l-Ġezwani's house while riding a lion. It was on behalf of the king who ruled at the time that he arrived there. The king had just asked some saint to say a *fatḥa*, a humble prayer on his behalf. The king had had some unknown desire and his wish was fulfilled. Thereupon the king was asked to send Sid-i Ḥmed u Musa to l-Ġezwani so that he could look around at his dwelling place and perhaps reveal something of the matters he was busy with. Thus he arrived at l-Ġezwani's because the king had invited him to do so. He entered his home and they were talking together. When the couscous was put in front of them and l-Ġezwani said: "Come on, eat!", Sid-i Ḥmed u Musa said: "No, I am used to eating *ẓemmita* (food prepared from grilled ground maize, oil, and sometimes honey, ME) only." He asked him : "Why?" He answered: "Well, I am just used to it." He said: "Eat it! It is none of our business." Sid-i Ḥmed u Musa ate his *ẓemmita*, then it was time, let us say, to sleep. l-Ġezwani gave Sid-i Ḥmed u Musa a place to sleep, but he himself stayed with his family, enjoying himself and laughing. Sid-i Ḥmed u Musa said to himself: "This is our saint!" Everybody went to sleep in time, how do you call it, but he was still up and making a lot of noise. This is what Sid-i Ḥmed u Musa noticed. There came the time of the *mwedden*. He called the people to the morning prayer, but Mul le-Qṣuṛ did not get up, while Sid-i

[5] A Berber saint from the south Moroccan countryside.

Ḥmed u Musa was annoyed about this, because the sun had already started to rise. Thereupon he sent his charwoman and told her: "Wake him up!" She woke up Mul le-Qṣuṛ, but when he went outside, the stars were still in the sky. He found Sid-i Ḥmed and asked him: "O *sid-i*, do you want to perform the morning prayer?" The latter had already seen the sun and how-do-you-call-it, but when Mul le-Qṣuṛ came outside he saw the *mwedden* another time calling for prayer and how-do-you-call-it. The charwoman asked him: "Do you want water for the ablution?" He answered: "Yes." She looked up to the sky and let down a bucket filled with water, I mean getting warm at that very moment. Sid-i Ḥmed washed himself and so forth. He kept on asking himself: "Why, how did she do this?" They performed the morning prayer and Sid-i Ḥmed u Musa went inside to l-Ġezwani to have breakfast. He said to him: "Come on, eat!" , but he replied: "No, I am used to this." Three days passed in this way: Sid-i Ḥmed u Musa was eating *ẓemmita*, to which he was accustomed, every time, while Mul le-Qṣuṛ just continued to eat, I mean to say, a lot and meat, couscous, this and that. After these three days, Sid-i Ḥmed u Musa said to Mul le-Qṣuṛ: "O *sid-i*, I want to go. You have to give me something from which I can derive some blessing." He asked: "And that is? I will tell you something, Sid-i Ḥmed u Musa: we eat a pound at a time, we drink from a bucket[6] and we swallow what people swallow at the *fiṭaṛ* (the first meal at the end of Ramadan, ME). We feel no need to go to the barren countryside to serve God among wild animals. We serve God in pleasantly furnished and decorated surroundings." Sid-i Ḥmed u Musa left and jumped around for joy. This is one of the miracles of Mul le-Qṣuṛ."

Analysis of the legend

Even a quick glance at the legend of Mūl le-Qṣūr makes clear that he is the one who is favoured. But how exactly is this favourable image brought about? Narratological analysis of the story according to the methods developed by the Dutch scholar Mieke Bal (1985) may help to answer this question. By paying attention to who is talking, who is looking and who is acting in a given narrative text we may find out who is represented as most powerful. We may suppose that the relations thus found are in some way a reflection of what takes place in society. But, as we stated earlier, the narrative is not a mere reflection of society. It is also a means to manipulate and influence. In this case, it is obvious that in the legend of Mūl le-Qṣūr the listener is directed towards an attitude in favour of this saint. The purpose of the narrator is beyond doubt. To reach this goal, a considerable number of narrative devices are used, as we will show.

Narrator and focus

An external narrator tells the legend of Mūl le-Qṣūr and Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā in the Moroccan Arabic dialect of Marrakesh. The external narrator is not the physical story-teller, Maulāy Ibrāhīm. He was not present when the supposed events that he

[6] The bucket mentioned here may be taken literally by the listener, because there exists a variant of this story in which the saint presents a bucket to Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā to drink from, just to provoke him or to make fun of him.

is telling about took place[7]. We see Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā (mostly) through the eyes of the narrator. The same applies to Mūl le-Qṣūr, but to a lesser extent, because we also get a picture of him through the eyes of his guest. Although it is mostly the narrator who describes Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā's reactions to Mūl le-Qṣūr's behaviour, he gives in one instance some space to the man's personal focus: "This is what Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā noticed." Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā was sent by the king to find out more about Mūl le-Qṣūr and this is exactly what he does. He looks at the saint in a very critical way and clearly does not like the way in which he is behaving himself. He does not find Mūl le-Qṣūr much of a saint. Nevertheless extraordinary things happen at his dwelling place: dawn turns into night again and the charwoman takes a bucket of water from the sky. It is not without meaning that the focus at these important moments at first briefly shifts from the narrator to Sīdī Ḥmad: "This one had already seen the sun and how-do-you-call-it (...)", "(...) he saw the *mwedden* another time calling the people to prayer (...)", and then from the narrator to the charwoman: "She looked up to the sky and let down a bucket filled with water (...)". Now that we are confronted with three witnesses, it becomes more difficult to doubt these miracles. Although Mūl le-Qṣūr does not seem to be the direct instigator of all this, the comments at the beginning ("One of his miracles was for example") and the end of the story ("This is one of the miracles of Mūl le-Qṣūr.") give the impression that he is. He is the hero who is teaching Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā a lesson, as if he knows the latter is criticizing him. This is a characteristic feature of saints: they know not only the visible world, but the invisible and hidden world as well (*al-bāṭin*). That these miracles happen just like that and are even performed by a charwoman gives them an extra dimension. They seem to be part of normal life at Mūl le-Qṣūr's house and nothing to wonder at. But Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā does wonder at all these things. This means that he is not able to do the same thing himself. He cannot even do what an ordinary charwoman does! In this way, Mūl le-Qṣūr really puts him in his place. Sīdī Ḥmad had arrived riding a lion, however, so he must be capable of something. Doubts are cast upon this because the narrator does not want to take responsability for this statement: "this is what people say". The implied suggestion is that it might not be true, since, as we all know, people say many things. The small amount of

[7] Of course this does not mean that the the physical story-teller does not have an impact on the story, because he does, and to a great extent; Maulāy Ibrāhīm intervenes five times in person in the story by saying: *neᶜni* (I mean); The link between the physical story-teller and Mul le-Qṣūr is clearly established, because their common family-name al-Ġazwānī is mentioned more often in the legend than is the nickname of the saint. By doing so, the story-teller and carekeeper of the sanctuary strenghtens both his own status and the validity of the legend. The nickname Mul le-Qṣūr ('the Man of the Castles') refers to another miraculous story in which the saint is involved in the sale of one or more castles in heaven. Le-Qṣūr is also the name of the relatively well-to-do quarter in the *madīna* of Marrakesh in which the *zāwiya* of the saint can be found.

attention that is paid to it in terms of words is also meaningful in this respect. A lion usually makes some impression, but here his appearance is passed over quickly.

Repetition (or lack of it) is an important narrative device in building up the characters. The narrator tells several times that Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā is only eating *zemmita*, while Mūl le-Qṣūr enjoys good food. By explicitly saying that this situation lasted for three days, he implies repetition, too. Miracles happen several times and the feelings which Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā experienced are also described more than once.

Subjects and objects

What is it that the different actors are striving after? Initially Mūl le-Qṣūr does not seem to aspire towards a particular aim. He simply receives a visitor at his dwelling. This changes when he notices what Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā is up to. He is wrong in judging Mūl le-Qṣūr and the behaviour of the guest needs to be corrected by the host. Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā wants to get information about Mūl le-Qṣūr. Because Mūl le-Qṣūr is willing to receive him, he does indeed get a chance to look around at his house. Thus he seems to reach his goal, but not quite in the way that he expected. He expected to find a saint, but he does not. According to him Mūl le-Qṣūr does not behave like a real saint. This is his first impression. Miracles, however, do happen at Mūl le-Qṣūr's dwelling house, so the latter seems nevertheless to have power. We know that Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā changed his mind on account of this, because at the moment he leaves, he asks for some *baraka* from Mūl le-Qṣūr. Again he does not exactly get what he wants, but the remarks of Mūl le-Qṣūr nevertheless seem to have a beneficient effect on him. He dances away. The fact that Sīdī Ḥmad asks for Mūl le-Qṣūr's *baraka* while the latter does not need anything from him is illustrative of their unequal relationship. Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā is dependent on Mūl le-Qṣūr to get something that he wants, but Mūl le-Qṣūr is not dependent on him. He just wants to teach Sīdī Ḥmad a lesson in order to make him more respectful.

Although Mūl le-Qṣūr and Sīdī Ḥmad are both important subjects in this legend, the former is definitely the stronger. Mūl le-Qṣūr does not only decide whether Sīdī Ḥmad gets what he wants or not, but also how and in what form he gets it. The whole story really pivots on the confrontation between the two men who are each other's polar opposites. Yet the listener may feel sympathy for Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā. This is possible, because some incoherency is felt in the legend: Sīdī Ḥmad is not just weak. For example, both he and Mūl le-Qṣūr get what they wanted. In this respect they are each other's equal. The contrast between the two men may, after all, not be so strong as was initially taken for granted. It is striking that differentiations in the opposition are made twice: once at the beginning of the story and once at the end. The mentioning of the lion (and the wild animals) already raises doubts with regard to the powerlessness of Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā. The eulogy «may God be pleased with him» does so, too, because it is not usually used in referring to ordinary believers. The relation between the two men does not seem to be bad in the

beginning and the opposition between them seems to become strong only when Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā behaves as an opponent. When, after a few surprises, his opposition gradually gives way to recognition of Mūl le-Qṣūr's status, so that he ends up being pleased with him, the distance between the two saints is also significantly reduced. Although Mūl le-Qṣūr's activities are responsible for this outcome and he thus seems to be the one who wields power, he (and the narrator) does not succeed in fully obliterating the competence of Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā. Moreover, the competence of Mūl le-Qṣūr does not become very explicit either. We do not know beyond doubt that he was the one who performed the miracles.

Time and space

It is remarkable that the most important events (miracles) take place when Mūl le-Qṣūr and Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā are separated in space and while both are occupied with other matters. Here the factual distance between the two men seems to confirm the figurative one. The fact that Mūl le-Qṣūr is a city- dweller while Sīdī Ḥmad spends most of his time in the countryside corroborates this idea. Both spaces, the city and the countryside, can also be directly linked to their different views on sainthood. It seems to be only natural that these characters clash with each other.

Mūl le-Qṣūr transcends the limits of space and time by the miracles he performs. He puts the clock back and uses the sky as part of his house. That the sky is involved in both miracles is meaningful. God and His heaven are easily associated with the sky and the stars, especially at the time of the morning prayer. At this occasion the people on earth pay tribute to God in His heaven above. By interfering in this heavenly space at this particular hour, Mūl le-Qṣūr convincingly shows that he is in contact with the One up there. Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā's sphere of influence seems to be restricted to the barren countryside, to earth.

As is stated above, we are not really sure about the miracles of Mūl le-Qṣūr. We see them, but we miss the exact link with the saint, because his performance is not described. Because of this ellipsis, the miracles obtain an extra emphasis. They either acquire a more mysterious meaning or leave the impression that they are an ordinary part of life that nobody bothers about much.

In this legend only Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā travels through space. Although we have no definite information on this, he probably moved from the countryside to the city. He takes the trouble to come to Mūl le-Qṣūr, Mūl le-Qṣūr does not come to him. The time between his arrival and departure is important: Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā sees the error of his ways. Maybe his journey from the countryside was already a sign that things were going to change for the better. In this story the city is preferred to the countryside, so a move away from the desert may already presage a favourable turn of events. The harsh life does not seem to have made Sīdī Ḥmad happy. He is just as dull and boring as the countryside. Mūl le-Qṣūr, on the contrary, is just as lively as the city. After Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā has spent three days in the city,

however, he leaves Mūl le-Qṣūr full of happiness. With his change the concept of the city has changed, too. First it is seen as a morass of vice in which Mūl le-Qṣūr lives his mundane life and to which the sober life of Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā in the countryside with its idyllic innocence forms a striking contrast. When Sīdī Ḥmad's judgement about Mūl le-Qṣūr becomes more balanced, the city becomes a more positive place where changes and new developments occur while the countryside lags behind.

In the legend the important change takes place in such a short period in the lives of the actors that we can speak of a crisis. The meaning of the crisis is central, and it permeates all the elements of the story. The crisis moreover is representative for the actors and their mutual relations.

Communication

In many ways the communication between Mūl le-Qṣūr and Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā takes place indirectly. Sīdī Ḥmad does not reveal the real object of his visit to Mūl le-Qṣūr and does not criticize him directly either. Mūl le-Qṣūr however seems to know what is going on and also reacts in an indirect way. His miracles are signals to Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā that he is wrong. The latter does not seem able to retort with similar miracles. For one of his communications he even depends on the charwoman. Communication does not come about smoothly and Mūl le-Qṣūr is the stronger communicator. Just like Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā, he communicates in an indirect way, but his manner of communication demonstrates his power and his knowledge of *al-bāṭin*, while Sīdī Ḥmad's does not. Mūl le-Qṣūr literally has the last word, too. His final speech is the longest and most convincing of all his direct speeches in the legend.

The communication between the king and Mūl le-Qṣūr is indirect, too. The king sends Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā to gather information for him, and, in his turn, the saint lets his charwoman perform part of the miracles. The king does not present himself in a direct way and neither does Mūl le-Qṣūr. The fact that miracles are used as a means of communication is an essential aspect of the saint's legend.

Oppositions and metaphors

Throughout the analysis we have already dealt with some oppositions. The city of Marrakesh versus the countryside is one of them. Other oppositions may be connected with it such as that of the food consumed by the two saints; couscous, which is eaten by Mūl le-Qṣūr, is for rich people and special occasions, while Sīdī Ḥmad's *zemmita* is food for poor people and farmers on ordinary days. Moreover it must not be forgotten that for many citizens who listen to a story such as the one above, the countryside has negative connotations. In their view farmers are stupid and old-fashioned. Throughout Morocco the people of Marrakesh are known for their jollity and proclivity for laughing and joking. Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā is not likely to appeal to these people. He does not seem to enjoy life very much, he eats very little, goes

to bed early and seems to prefer seclusion to social life. He quickly gets irritated: he really is a boorish sort of person. Needless to say, such details work in favour of Mūl le-Qṣūr who, although in origin not from Marrakesh, seems to have adopted the mental attitude to life of its inhabitants.

More legends are known in which the most powerful saints stay in the city of Marrakesh and the weaker ones are placed outside. Mūl le-Qṣūr for instance, is sometimes called *mul ṭ-ṭabeᶜ* (the man of the stamp), because he decided who got a stamp to enter Marrakesh and who did not. This is supposed to explain why Sīdī Yūsuf b. ᶜAlī and al-Imām as-Suhaylī, the first and the last of the Seven Saints, are buried outside the city walls. Another version of the legend presented here says that Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā also came to Marrakesh to ask Mūl le-Qṣūr for a stamp. In this manner, the city becomes a place for winners and the countryside a place for losers. Thus the spaces mentioned in the legend and the oppositions therein turn out to be a strong device to set and underline the meaning of the history presented.

As we saw, Mūl le-Qṣūr and Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā have contrasting life-styles. The former lives a mundane life and seems to be in comfortable circumstances. He can afford a charwoman, eats and drinks well and serves God in pleasantly decorated surroundings. The latter lives the life of a poor ascetic, but this does not seem to make him happy. Mūl le-Qṣūr is much happier. He shows that Sīdī Ḥmad's way of living is of no use, because he, who lives the easy life, is also the one who performs the miracles. People who do not expect a saint to live in the way Mūl le-Qṣūr does have no choice but to give him the benefit of the doubt, because of the miracles that he performs.

As soon as the listener notices that Mūl le-Qṣūr and Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā are opposite characters, a description of one of them automatically implies a description of the other. The listener may be so manipulated by this simple representation that he does not take the trouble to make the differentiations that are necessary with regard to the opposition between the two men (see remarks above).

Psychological and ideological relations

If the two personalities of Mūl le-Qṣūr and Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā are compared, the former seems to have the stronger personality. Mūl le-Qṣūr succeeds in bringing about a change of attitude in Sīdī Ḥmad, while this does not happen the other way round.

The opposition between Mūl le-Qṣūr and Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā is an ideological one, too. On the political level, Sīdī Ḥmad is associated with the king and maybe his lion is symbolic of this. Such an association has not always been a fortunate one in Moroccan history. Historical sources tell us, for example, that Mūl le-Qṣūr did not have very good experiences with the dynasty of the Wattasids who ruled for part of his lifetime, and in the person of Sīdī Ḥmad he seems to ridicule the king's messenger. But he ridicules other saints as well, because it was they who asked the

king to dispatch Sīdī Ḥmad. This implies that they somehow felt that Mūl le-Qṣūr was a threat that had to be controlled, a task for which Sīdī Ḥmad was best equipped. The fact that the latter consented to play this role for the king and his holy advisors is not to his credit. For according to many people true saints are always on the side of the common people, not on that of the king or of any other oppressive authority.

On the religious level, two views on sainthood are expressed. At first Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā is convinced that a saint should be an ascetic, otherwise he is not a saint. Mūl le-Qṣūr, however, does not share this view.

External factors

Some attention must be paid to external, extra-textual factors that have an impact on the way in which the listener gives meaning to the elements in the legend. Before the listener hears this story, he may already have an idea about saints in general or Mūl le-Qṣūr and Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā in particular. He may have acquired his knowledge from other stories, either written or spoken. When he hears something new he has certain expectations concerning these saints which may or may not turn out to be justified. The mere choice of the genre of the saint's legend already arouses certain expectations, too. The listener expects to hear about miracles. Although in this case two saints are involved in the story, it is only Mūl le-Qṣūr who performs miracles, which is significant.

The opposition between city and countryside may not be felt so strongly by listeners who know that Mūl le-Qṣūr spent part of his life in the countryside, too. Several stories are known in which he helped to build roads and to cultivate land in areas which had been inaccessible up till then. Now that he is confronted in this legend with somebody from the countryside, however, the narrator seems to emphasize the contrasts between them with the purpose of shedding a more favourable light on Mūl le-Qṣūr.

It is possible that the listener has the same narrow vision of what a saint should be as Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā. Let us see what happens then. Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā's first and negative ideas about Mūl le-Qṣūr were only based on superficial observations and he did not seem to bother to look any further. That Sīdī Ḥmad could only judge his host from his external appearance and not from the inside, leaves the impression that he does not possess much spiritual power himself. He seems to have no knowledge of *al-bāṭin* and this, in a way, forces Mūl le-Qṣūr to show him something visible to convince him that his *nīya*, his intention, is good and that to God, Mūl le-Qṣūr definitely is a saint. The mere fact that Sīdī Ḥmad judges somebody else is proof of his own pride and haughtiness, because, to a Muslim, nobody is really capable of judging except for God. Provided the listener has shared Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā's view, they both turn out to have been wrong. Both are taught a lesson. One may even wonder whether this is not one of the main purposes of the story, since

a lot of Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā's inner feelings and experiences are shown to the listener. In this way the listener is enabled to feel a bond with him, an important condition to share in his learning process, too. This shows the power of the narrator or focalisator. By giving selective information he pushes the listener in a certain direction.

It does not always turn out this way, however. Not all listeners are the same to begin with. A good example can be found in a written version of a legend about Mūl le-Qṣūr. In this story, too, the saint turns back the clock. Moreover, it is said that the Prophet Muḥammad did the same before. The compilator adds a very critical footnote to the effect that only impostors can pretend that Mūl le-Qṣūr could stop the sun (and the moon). His idea is probably that saints are not capable of performing miracles that encroach so drastically on the natural course of events. He does not go into the powers of Muḥammad (Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Marrākušī 1977:239, 259). As is common practice elsewhere, too, the biographies of Islamic saints are modelled on the life stories (popular or otherwise) of higher authorities such as the prophets. By borrowing elements from them, the legends further strenghten the status of the holy men (Sebti 1992:172). That this strategy is not always effective is sufficiently shown in the example just quoted.

The image of the holy wanderer who lives among wild animals can be found in other literary sources, too (Schwarzbaum 1982:84, 167-168).

The question remains why Mūl le-Qṣūr felt the necessity at all to correct Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā, and why he himself manipulated the picture Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā got of him. Or better: why was a legend that restored the negative image of Mūl le-Qṣūr necessary? Had he been criticized in other stories or elsewhere? The legend must serve some purpose, otherwise it will not be told. Indeed, legends do exist in which Mūl le-Qṣūr plays a less glorious role or is even punished for his pride. In one of these Mūl le-Qṣūr had to recognize the superiority of Sīdī Abū l-ʿAbbās, the third of the Seven Saints of Marrakesh, after a whole series of trials (Basset 1920:282-283.). Another is told in the village of Sīdī Raḥḥāl's sanctuary: Mūl le-Qṣūr shows so much jealousy and pride at the arrival of this saint to Marrakesh that God let a thunderstorm burst over Marrakesh out of wrath (Anonymous 1985). Such rivalry among saints is not an unusual theme in Islamic saints' legends.

In the legend presented here not only the competence of performing miracles and the wisdom of the saints concerned are at stake, but their views on sainthood and their respective life-styles as well. The image of Mūl le-Qṣūr as a man who fully enjoyed life and liked to wear beautiful clothes is relatively widespread in Marrakesh[8]. Accordingly, people talk about the descendants of Mūl le-Qṣūr as people

[8] Nevertheless one variant of the legend which explains his nickname tells about Mūl le-Qṣūr as an ascetic. The story-teller thereby supposes that all saints are like that.

lli la bas ʿli-hum, "who are rich". They do indeed receive an income from the collecting box in the sanctuary of their holy ancestor. Maulāy Ibrāhīm himself lived in the big *zāwiya* until recently, loves good food and likes buying antiques. The *ṭā'ifa* of Mūl le-Qṣūr has in the past been criticized strongly by Ibn al-Muwaqqit (1922:141-142, 144-145) for their various ways of making money in and around the sanctuary. Nowadays it is said that although the *Dalā'il al-ẖairāt*, a book of praise to the Prophet Muḥhammad, is recited every week in the sanctuaries of its author Sīdī b. Sulaymān al-Ǧazūlī, the fourth of the Seven Saints, and Sīdī Abū l-ʿAbbās, the descendants of Mūl le-Qṣūr do not want the reciters to come to their *zāwiya* on such a regular basis out of fear that they might lose some of their income to them. In his turn, Maulāy Ibrāhīm is rather critical about the carekeepers of these and the other sanctuaries of the Seven Saints who, in his opinion, do not know anything. He says that everyone who wants to know something about the Seven Saints comes to him. When the Moroccan king, Hassan II, visits Marrakesh, however, he does not visit Mūl le-Qṣūr. He just goes to Sīdī Abū l-ʿAbbās and al-Ǧazūlī.

Conclusion

A detailed picture emerges from all this. It shows not only two very different saints, but two concepts of holiness as well. Mūl le-Qṣūr represents the mundane saint who is making the most of his life in this world. Sīdī Ḥmad u Mūsā represents the ascetic saint who lives his life in seclusion among wild animals. Over the centuries, these two concepts of holiness have always been at variance, both in the Western and non-Western world. Although Mūl le-Qṣūr seems to be the more powerful in this legend, he does not say that Sīdī Ḥmad's life-style is wrong. He just indicates that it is not necessary to serve God in this way. Since the legend is still being told, the tensions that are felt in it somehow reflect part of the Marrakesh society of today. Critics of Mūl le-Qṣūr or his descendants in other stories or in daily life are actively addressed. More thorough analysis of the legend shows interesting narrative devices which are not always obvious at first sight, but which do influence the listener's ideas. Other saints' legends can be analysed in the same way and compared with the one above. However, that is quite a different topic which will be left for the future.

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