Part II. Tunisia

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Chapter 1. The cult of saints in North-western Tunisia

An analysis of modern pilgrimage structures

In this chapter I shall present a description and analysis of the cult of local saints, as major aspect of modern popular religion in the highlands of Ḫumiriyya[1], north-western Tunisia. This chapter is therefore a contribution to the ethnography of religious behaviour in general and that of rural North Africa in particular. As is the case in much of religious anthropology, studies of popular Islam have tended to concentrate on systems of belief and symbolism, with excursions into the relation between religion and the wider social, economic and political context in which that religion occurs. The behavioural aspect of religion has been somewhat neglected, and as a result for some of the most pertinent questions of contextual religious analysis we have had to content ourselves with tentative answers largely

[1] For the rendering of place-names (including the names Ḫumiriyya for the region, and Ḫumiri / Ḫumiris for its inhabitants), and of Arabic terms and of plurals, *cf.* van Binsbergen 1980a: 71, n.7. The system adopted is merely intended to approximate the (unwritten) Ḫumiri dialect and obviously obscures many of the orthographic and phonetic distinctions of literary Arabic. Long vowels in Ḫumiri Arabic words are indicated by a horizontal stroke whenever the word appears for the first time. This may yield suprises, *e.g.* general Arabic *bắrắkă*, 'grace', becomes *barāka* in the mouth of my Ḫumiri hosts. In Ḫumiriyya the personal names Muḥammad (Arabic) and Mḥammad (Turkish / Ottoman) are clearly distinct, with the first 'a' in Muḥammad tending towards the Italian 'a', in Mḥammad towards the French 'è'. Earlier ethnographic sources on the cult of saints in Ḫumiriyya include: Dornier 1950; Demeerseman 1938, 1939-40, 1964; Dallet 1939-40; Ferchiou 1972; for my own work on this topic, see the end bibliography of this book. I shrink from citing here the enormous literature on Maghrebine rural popular religion. For a dated but useful bibliographical survey with particular reference to Tunisia, *cf.* Louis 1977. Studies of Maghrebine rural religious behaviour applying the canons of modern social science are, however, scarce; I have found much inspiration in the work of Ernest Gellner, especially 1969. He was the original editor of this chapter; in 1976 he also read my thesis on the topic and recommended it for publication – although that writing project has still not been concluded. A useful, though more Islamological than anthropological, survey of popular Islam is: Waardenburg 1979.

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founded on intuition and persuasion; the necessary empirical data have often been lacking. A major problem in this connexion is that an empirical, quantitative description of religious behaviour – such as I shall offer towards the end of this chapter – remains meaningless without an adequate discussion of the symbolic and social-organizational aspects of such behaviour.

Having dealt elsewhere[2] with the historical aspects of saintly cults and the interplay between popular and formal Islam in the Ḫumiri region, in the present chapter I shall largely limit myself to the modern situation concerning pious visits (*zyāra*) to shrines associated with named local saints – touching on local history only in so far this helps to explain the nature of territorial segmentation today, and refraining from a discussion of such significant aspects of Ḫumiri religion as: the veneration of trees and sources; veneration of saints through other rituals than pious visits; the ecstatic cults that are loosely organized in religious brotherhoods and that, although implying saints, form a popular-religious complex somewhat distinct from *zyara*; the symbolic deep structure of such key concepts as sainthood and *baraka*; and finally the formal Islam of the Qur'ān, the mosque, the pilgrimage to Mecca. Even so the ethnographic argument will be too lengthy to allow for a more than cursory discussion of the many wider theoretical implications of the Ḫumiri data.

1.1. Introduction

Having elsewhere[3] dealt with the historical aspects of saintly cults and the interplay between popular and formal Islam in the Ḫumiri region, I shall here largely limit myself to the modern situation concerning pious visits (*zyara*) to shrines associated with named local saints – touching on local history only in so far this helps to explain the nature of territorial segmentation today, and refraining from a discussion of such significant aspects of Ḫumiri religion as: the veneration of trees and sources; veneration of saints through other rituals than pious visits; the ecstatic cults that are loosely organized in religious brotherhoods and that, although implying saints, form a popular-religious complex somewhat distinct from *zyara*; the symbolic deep structure of such key concepts as sainthood and *baraka*; and finally the formal Islam of the Qur'an, the mosque, the pilgrimage to Mecca. Even so the ethnographic argument will be too lengthy to allow for a more than cursory discussion of the many wider theoretical implications of the Ḫumiri data.

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[2] van Binsbergen 1970a, 1970b, 1971a, 1971b, 1971c, 1980a, 1980b and later publications as listed in the end bibliography of this book.

[3] The contentious model of territorial segmentation presented here is argued at great length in van Binsbergen 1970b and 1971a. This model could not have been formulated but for Gellner's (1969) stimulating study of saints and segmentation in the Moroccan High Atlas; *cf.* Hammoudi 1974 and van Binsbergen 1971b. For another interesting case of the distribution of religious centres following secular segmentation, *cf.* Evans-Pritchard 1949, ch. 3. The North African cult of saints is treated in an extensive literature, e.g. Keddie 1972; Eickelman 1976; Gellner 1969, and references cited there.

1.2. Regional and historical background

Ḫumiriyya is a mountainous area in north-western Tunisia, situated between the Tunisian-Algerian border (which is hardly a social and cultural boundary), and the towns of Tabarka and Janduba. The regional capital is the small town of ^{c}Ain Draham, where the region's only mosque is found, built only in the mid-20th c. CE.

Until the late 19th c. CE, the narrow, densely-forested valleys of this remote region provided a relatively prosperous livelihood for a tent-dwelling population engaging in semi-transhumant animal husbandry (cattle, sheep, goats) and small-scale agriculture (wheat, rye, olives). Each of the scattered homesteads consisted of a core of close agnates, with their wives, children and non-agnatically[4] related adult male dependants (herdsmen, who often became sons-in-law). These residential and productive units existed at the basis of a segmentary system, whose explicit ideology was one of patrilineal descent but in which, in fact, factional allegiance, geographical propinquity, and genealogical manipulation were equally important structuring principles. Localized clans, tribes, and confederations of tribes formed the highest levels of the segmentary model. The segmentary organization regulated: rights over pastures, forest areas and springs; special patronage links between social groups and invisible saints, associated with the numerous shrines scattered over the land; and burial rights in local cemeteries situated around a saintly shrine – although, given the large number of shrines and the very small number of cemeteries per valley, most shrines had no cemetery around them.

On all segmentary levels, complementary segments were in competition with each other over scarce resources, women, and honour. The armed conflicts to which this competition frequently gave rise, were in two ways mitigated by the cult of saints.

First, each higher-level segment (encompassing the majority of the population of a valley) would have a twice-annual saintly festival (*zarda*) near the shrine of its patron saint, located at some conspicuous point in that valley. On this occasion, all members of the local segment (*i.e.* all inhabitants of the valley) would make a collective visit to the shrine, and would for several days stay near the shrine, chatting, feasting, and being entertained by dancing and singing. Members of feuding segments in neighbouring valleys were likewise under obligation to make a pious visit to the shrine concerned, attending this festival, and sharing in the collective meal there. Temporary lifting of segmentary opposition was achieved not only through this ritual commensality but also through a safe-conduct for all pilgrims, sanctioned by the invisible saint. Also women who, originating from the local segment, had married into a different valley,

[4] *Agnates* are blood relatives in the paternal line.

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were under obligation to make the pious visit to the shrine on the occasion of the saintly festival.

Secondly, the major shrines – those that had a twice-annual festival catering for an entire valley – were administered by specialist shrine-keepers. The latter were not considered saints in themselves, but they were pious, pacifist men who had placed themselves outside the feuding system and who, on the basis of a saintly safe-conduct and by virtue of the respect that the shrine's flags commanded, were often successful in quenching violence between segments.

The colonial period in Tunisia, which began with the French conquest of Ḫumiriyya in 1881,[5] brought tremendous changes in the social, economic and religious structures of the region. It took the colonial state a quarter of a century to impose its monopoly of violence, but from the beginning of the twentieth century an effective stop was put to feuding as the main motor behind segmentary dynamics. Movement of the population was further restricted by state exploitation of the extensive cork-tree forests, the establishment of settler farms (which in Ḫumiriyya however remained a much more limited phenomenon than in the fertile Tunisian valleys to the south and the east of this mountainous area), and the concentration of land rights in the hands of a few state-appointed chiefs and their families, who were in collusion with the colonial administration. Pressure on the land was exacerbated by dramatic population increase, and massive erosion through over-exploitation of the vulnerable soil system proved inevitable. The economic opportunities in the French-created garrison town of ᶜAin Drāham, even after its development into a regional capital and a tourist resort, could not compensate for the decline of the local subsistence economy; neither could, during the colonial period, labour migration to areas of capitalist farming, and to urban areas, in Tunisia and Algeria.

[5] Today, the international boundary runs some three kilometres West of Sidi Mḥammad, and comes much closer than that to the Tabárka-ᶜAin Drāham motor road near the border village of Babouche, whence the traveller is granted a glimpse across the mountains to the city of Annaba / Bône on the Mediterranean Sea, the ancient Christian bishopric of Hippo, St Augustine's (whose writings incidentally contain interesting information on shrines and funerary customs in the region c. 400 CE, in pre-Islamic times but in many respects continuous with today; after all, at the heart of Ḫumiri popular religion are megalithic constructions from the Bronze Age, up to 3 millennia before St Augustine). The political and religious economy of the regional landscape can only be understood once we take into account the fact that, prior to the 1881 CE French conquest, the international boundary between Algeria (French Protectorate since 1830) and Tunisia (nominally ruled by the Bey of Tunis as part of the Ottoman Empire) was formed by the Wad al-Kabīr – as it was already in Roman Antiquity between Africa Minor and Numidia (Butler 1908 / 1907; Kiepert n.d.). Hence the location of major, domed shrines on hillocks (*raqūbat*) adjacent to that river, from Sidi ᶜAmara at the end of the al-Mazūz valley due North of ᶜAin Drāham, to Sidi ᶜAbd Allah Jr beneath the village of Fīdh al-Míssay (the principal regional shrine of Sidi ᶜAbd Allah Sr is, however, 3 km South of ᶜAin Drāham in the Ulad Hallāl community; the entire series of interconnected ᶜAbd Allah shrines in the region is a vestige of the Northbound expansion of the ᶜArfawi clan associated with the *Qadiri* brotherhood), Sidi Mḥammad, and Sidi Salīma. The shrines' consistent locations bring out the role of the saints as both emphasising, and transcending at the same time, secular socio-political boundaries. This is in line with the shrines' functioning as characteristic attributes of higher-level territorial segments – as we shall see.

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The re-afforesting projects and the unemployment relief work undertaken since Tunisia became independent (1956), did not alter this state of affairs substantially. The ethnographic present of the late 1960s offers the picture of a destitute peasant population, which within the rigid confines of its villages of immobile stone houses and small and fragmented fields keeps going a transformed neo-traditional social and ritual organization, and a no-longer viable local subsistence economy ineffectively supplemented by the state's unemployment relief projects.

1.3. Segmentation in Ḫumiriyya today

The model of a segmentary lineage system has remained the standard idiom by which Ḫumiri participants consciously structure their social environment, distinguish between residential groups, and explain relationships between these groups. In the face of the realities of peripheral capitalism, this lineage model became devoid of such economic and political significance as it had in nineteenth-century Ḫumiriyya. It no longer effectively governs the everyday ongoing social process in the villages. Moreover, as the population became totally sedentary, and pressure on the land increased, the idiom of patrilineal descent is no longer a device for segmentary mobilization in the competition over scarce resources, but has become merely a folk idiom to describe the pattern of organizational alignment of bounded territorial units such as are manifestly visible in the Ḫumiri countryside today – and a means to claim legitimate membership of such units, *i.e.* rights of residence and rights in land.

From the lowest level upwards, we find (*cf.* Fig. 1.1) households, compounds, sub-neighbourhoods or hamlets, neighbourhoods, villages, valleys, chiefdoms. Each of these is clearly marked, and distinguished from complementary units at the same segmentary level, by unmistakable features in the landscape: the walls of dwelling-houses and the open spaces between houses; the cactus fences between compounds and hamlets; the pastures, fields, shrub-covered fallow areas, and patches of forest between neighbourhoods and between villages; and the steep, forested mountain ranges between valleys and between chiefdoms consisting of a number of valleys.

Most of these units are designated by names derived from human proper names: Dar ^{c}Ali ('^{c}Ali's House'), Mḥamdiyya ('Descendants of Muḥammed'), Ulad Ibrahim ('Descendants of Ibrahim'), *etc*. While these labels in fact function as names for residential units, and as toponyms, their evocation of a historical or mythical ancestor from which all born members of that unit are claimed to descend, enables Ḫumiri participants to represent their territorial organization today by a patrilineal genealogy encompassing an entire valley and even chiefdom – despite massive oral-historical evidence at my disposal which clearly establishes that, at least in the 12 km^2 that formed the core of my research area, few compounds and hamlets, and no neighbourhoods, villages or higher-level territorial segments, are composed of a homogeneous set of agnates descending from one common ancestor. On the contrary, the population

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belongs to more than a dozen mutually unrelated patrilineal descent lines, most of which immigrated into their present day territory in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth century; only by virtue of genealogical manipulation can they manage to identify as agnates.

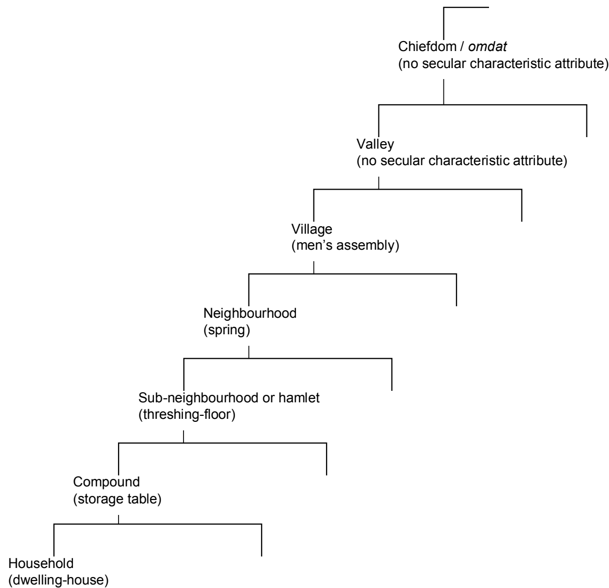

Fig. 1.1. Segmentation in Ḫumiri society: Segmentary levels and their *secular* characteristic attributes.

Ḫumiri territorial segments have distinctive features beyond their visible boundaries and their proper names evoking ancestors. The extent to which the model of territorial segmentation sketched here is not just a researcher's construct, but a living reality to the participants, is clear from the fact that at each level of territorial segmentation a segment has a characteristic attribute which defines it against complementary segments at the same level. Like the unit boundaries, these attributes are clearly visible in the landscape, and they are a result of human activity. Each household is characterized by its own dwelling-house, which defines the basic unit of human reproduction, since by containing the family bed it sets the scene for sex life, child-birth and child-rearing. A few dwelling-houses combine so as to form one compound; this territorial unit is defined by the storage table, which marks the compound as a basic unit of food

processing and consumption.[6] Each hamlet or sub-neighbourhood consisting of a small number of compounds, is characterized by its own threshing-floor, which defines the hamlet as a minimal unit of agricultural production. Neighbourhoods, consisting of a small number of hamlets, each have their own springs, use of which is private to the members of that neighbourhood. The spring defines the neighbourhood as a unit whose members share (for such purposes as water hauling, grazing, collection of firewood, hunting) an overall productive interest in the surrounding countryside, even though the neighbourhood is internally divided into smaller complementary segments with relation to those aspects of production and reproduction that require more prolonged, complicated and socially more intricately-organized tasks. Finally, villages, consisting of a small number of neighbourhoods, are characterized by their own men's assembly: a wind-swept open space overlooking the valley and its main shrines. Here the adult male inhabitants of the village assemble towards the evening, to discuss the ongoing social and political process and to entertain each other with tea-drinking and card-playing. If the village has a store, it is located adjacent to the men's assembly. The men's assembly defines the village as the social unit of sufficient scope and at the same time of sufficient intimacy, to accommodate the ongoing face-to-face social process between people who have widely divergent and conflicting economic interests, as members of lower-level segmentary units. At the men's assembly people meet, most of whom, while not strangers to each other, do not automatically share a day-to-day routine of dwelling and working together; thus the men's assembly provides a social and political arena, a more or less external yet inescapable standard for the evaluation of wealth, honour, and propriety, and as such the wider social framework of the interactional processes on which, within the lower-level segmentary units, the organization of production and reproduction depends.

Ḫumiri territorial segments thus are not just significant units in the organization of geographical space, they also structure the social and economic space in a way that reflects the vital processes going on in this society. The characteristic attributes by which each segmentary level is marked are, as it were, chosen with great wisdom, and their very nature is suggestive of the social and economic significance of the segments at various hierarchical levels. Not surprisingly, in Ḫumiri symbolism the storage table, the dwelling-house, the threshing-floor, the spring and the men's assembly constitute powerful images, around which an important part of the local world-view condensates and finds expression. What is more, each of the characteristic attributes mentioned is conceived as a diffuse, nameless but somewhat personalized, supernatural entity, a distinct power which appears in the dreams of the human members of the segment with which it is associated, and which can mete out benefits and punishment depending on the degree of propriety and respect people display in the

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[6] While this reflects the historical ideal, the breaking-up of commensality between co-residing kin has led to a situation where households, rather than compounds, are in the possession of their own storage table.

specific activities involving that characteristic attribute. Nor are these activities of an exclusively utilitarian nature: dwelling-house, threshing-floor, spring and men's assembly are in themselves subjected to ritual actions, particularly the burning of incense and the sprinkling of chicken blood. The most important symbolic aspect of these characteristic attributes, and one that in the people's eyes sufficiently explains the animistic overtones alluded to here, is that (as latent or primordial shrines) they are all carriers of *baraka*, the Grace or Life-force through which, under the catalytic effects of morality and good social relations, Man succeeds in sharing the non-human power of Nature and of the Divine.

These characteristic attributes with their rich symbolic elaborations are the visible beacons in a structure of territorial segmentation. But although segmentary dynamics have been stagnant as compared with the turbulent pattern obtaining in the 19th century CE, the system of territorial segmentation is by no means entirely static today. Despite rural decline and the pressure on the land, demographic and economic processes are at work which over time propel some lower-level units to higher levels, and vice versa. A compound, while retaining its proper name and ancestral association, may be seen to wax into a neighbourhood and even a village in the course of half a century or less. In those cases the named units, as they break through from one segmentary level to a lower or higher one, will shed the characteristic attribute appropriate to the former level and will adopt one appropriate to the new level. Thus the construction, and the sinking in decay, of dwelling-houses, threshing-floors and men's assemblies, and shifts in patterns of water hauling from one spring to another, all mark, again in a way that is visible in the landscape, the waxing and waning of territorial segments.

This is the moment to introduce shrines into our increasingly complex picture of territorial segmentation in modern Ḫumiriyya.

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1.4. Shrines in Ḫumiriyya

Shrines[7] exist in Ḫumiriyya in a number of variants. I shall leave aside such non-man-made salient features in the landscape as remarkable trees, rock formations and ferruginous springs,[8] which tend to be venerated without being clearly associated with saints. All other shrines are man-made, and considered to be intimately associated with saints: deceased human beings whose *baraka* was and is such that they continue to wield power in the world of man. The association between shrine

[7] For a definition of shrine, and a theory of shrines in relation to social organization and the natural environment, *cf.* van Binsbergen 1981b, *cf.* chapter 2 of the present book. In *The Reality of Religion*, I return to the theory of shrines and present a revised approach. Some characteristic Ḫumiri shrines are depicted in chapter 12, below, where also the pilgrimage path during the Spring Festival is mapped.

[8] In Ḫumiriyya, springs emanating from soil with a high iron content contain reddish foam; these springs with menstrual connotations, which are relatively rare, are invariably the object of a rag cult.

and saint is conceived in either of the following three ways:

1. the shrine was erected upon the saint's grave;
2. the shrine was erected upon a spot that had a special relation with the saint during his lifetime or shortly after his death: as the place where he rested in the course of his wanderings, or where his body was temporarily put before definitively being put into the grave; and finally
3. the shrine has been secondarily erected upon relics brought from a shrine as explained under a or b. For each shrine there tends to be some disagreement among participants as to which option (a, b or c) applies in its particular case. The historical dynamics underlying these patterns fall outside our present scope but receive ample discussion in my other work on Ḫumiri religion.

Saintly shrines comes in variety of material forms. All mimick more or less the human dwelling-house. Many do so in a very crude form, and consist only of a semi-circle of large rocks covered by another rock or by a slab of cork. This is the type commonly called *mzara*, although this term (meaning 'that which is visited') in principle applies to all shrines. In some shrines the inner room within the ground-plan of rocks is more spacious and of more or less rectangular shape; they may be covered by an elaborate reed roof supported by forked poles carrying a roof-beam. This is the type called *kurbi*, a word otherwise reserved for human dwelling-houses constructed out of arboreal material. The most elaborate type of shrine in Ḫumiriyya is the *qubba*: a square, stone building with plastered white-washed walls, a domed roof and horned ornaments on the four corners, as commonly found throughout the Islamic world. Characteristically, most *qubbas* in the research area were built by European contractors in the early 20th c. CE.

All saintly shrines contain minor pious gifts: small amounts of incense wrapped in paper, candles, incense-burners and candle-sticks locally made out of fired clay, and household refuse such as broken teapots and spoons purposely taken to the shrine as token offerings. In addition, those shrines associated with saints which rank high in the local hierarchy of saints), often contain stone balls (*kurra*: the saint is said to have carried them in his life-time, as proof of his sainthood); elaborately decorated flags donated to the shrine as votive gifts; and a wooden chest in which these flags are stored along with other pious gifts, including coins.

Although for the sake of simplicity saints are described here as male, participants acknowledge the existence of female saints. A valley's major saints usually are male. Many saints bear ordinary personal names (Mḥammad, Massauda, A'isha, *etc*.) preceded by the reverential term of address Sidi (master, sir: elder brother), Lalla (madam, miss, grandmother; elder sister) or Jaddi (grandparent). A large number of saints however do not bear human names but derivatives of words denoting natural species: Bu-Ḫaruba ('Man with the Carob-tree'), Bu-Qasbaya ('Man with the Reed'), *etc*. The Ḫumiri saintly cult has an undercurrent of totemism which is also manifest in saintly legends and taboos; but this, however interesting, again falls outside our present scope.

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Neither can I go into detail here with regard to the relationships deemed to exist between saints. Various structuring principles are invoked to establish some degree of order among the large number of local saints with which each Ḫumiri participant is familiar. First, there is a general hierarchy of saints, ranking from Sidi ᶜAbd al-Qadir al-Jilani (who throughout the Maghreb is considered to be the most powerful saint), through a small number of major saints of more than regional significance (*e.g.* Sidi ᶜAbd as-Salam ben Mašiš), to the greatest Ḫumiri saints (the ones whose shrines are best known and whose festivals are best frequented: Sidi ᶜAbd Allah bi-Jamal, Sidi Mḥammad, Sidi Bu-Naqa, Sidi Bu-Ḫaruba, Sidi Ben-Mtir), the lesser saints that are only known within a valley and adjacent valleys, and finally the least powerful saints, the ones that are only known and venerated at the village, neighbourhood or even compound level.

This hierarchy very roughly corresponds with the material form of the principal shrines associated with those saints. Whereas the top-ranking international saints do not even have shrines within the region (they are known through hagiographic legends, and as saints featuring in the songs that pertain to the ecstatic ritual of the brotherhoods), the greatest regional saints have long-established *qubba*s, those immediately below them tend to have large *kurbi* shrines or large rock *mzara*s, whereas the smallest *mzara*s and miniature *kurbi* shrines tend to be associated with the least important saints.

Besides this overall hierarchy, saints associated with shrines within the same valley, or in adjacent valleys, tend to be linked to each other in hagiographic legends that claim specific relationships to exist between these saints: they are described as unrelated equals (neighbours, friends), as non-kin involved in a master-servant relation, or – most frequently – as close agnatic kinsmen: father and son, brothers, brother and sister.

The erection of a shrine upon relics brought from an older shrine often creates a situation where, within a valley or adjacent valleys, a number of shrines are associated with and named after one and the same saint. In that case the main shrine (the one that is the most elaborate, and that has the greatest festival) is considered to be the original shrine – although objective historical research would not always bear out the participants' view on this. This shrine is called 'the Elder' / 'Sr', *al-Kabir*, whereas the other shrines bearing the same name are called 'the Son' / 'Jr' (*al-Wilda*). Thus in the valley of Sidi Mḥammad four shrines of the saint Sidi Mḥammad exist: Sidi Mḥammad al-Kabir is a *qubba* located on a hill-top overlooking the valley,[9] whereas one *qubba* and two *kurbi* shrines, all three called Sidi Mḥammad al-Wilda, are found at a distance of 1 to 1.5 km south of Sidi Mḥammad al-Kabir. In the same valley, four shrines associated with the saint Sidi Bu-Qasbaya exist, all of them fairly large *mzara*s: the

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[9] The valley's central river was the international boundary between Algeria and Tunisia until the latter's annexation by France in 1881. The major shrines of Sidi Mḥammad and Sidi Salima are thus strategically placed in the sacred geography of the Eastern Atlas mountains.

shrines of Sidi Bu-Qasbaya al-Wilda are situated at 0.3 and 1.5 km south and 0.5 km north of the parental shrine.[10]

Here we encounter a most interesting phenomenon, which occurs time and again in saint worship featuring localized shrines:[11] the material multiplicity of shrines associated with one and the same saint tends to create several more or less autonomous cultic foci, despite the fact that the participants are fully aware that at all these shrines the same saint is venerated. Thus the various shrines of Sidi Mḥammad and Bu-Qasbaya are each in their own right objects of ritual attention. Having a relationship *with a saint* does not mean that one can venerate that saint at just any shrine associated with him; for one has also specific relationships with *shrines*. One cannot however visit any of the three shrines Sidi Mḥammad al-Wilda unless as part of a ritual cycle, which, within the same week or so, also includes a visit to Sidi Mḥammad al-Kabir; and the rules of etiquette, which apply in man-saint relationships just as in man-man relationships, would suggest that one visits Sidi Mḥammad al-Kabir first. The point is that the shrine, as a material entity, takes on a personalized and autonomous aspect more or less independent from the invisible saint to which it refers; for no participant would maintain that the saint venerated at the shrine of Sidi Mḥammad al-Wilda is a son of the saint of the hill-top – it is the shrine itself which is the child of the other shrine, and which functions as an irreducible focus of ritual action rather irrespective of the saint with which is associated. This is summarized in the Ḫumiri maxim:

baraka wahada; nzuru kull

('it is the same grace / blessing, [but] we visit them all'). And it is precisely the shrines' capability of taking on such cultic autonomy which enables them to function as beacons in the segmentary structure, even when so many shrines bear the same name.

The reader may have noticed that for the highest territorial levels no utilitarian characteristic attributes have been mentioned. Major shrines, with or without adjacent cemeteries, function as such. As in the nineteenth century, every Ḫumiri valley has a major shrine which serves as its characteristic attribute, and which provides a focus for ritual interaction and identification for people whose life-world is contained within the same steep mountain ranges, even though their day-to-day economic, social and political lives, as members of different villages, only infrequently intersect. But there is more. While the attachment of more or less utilitarian characteristic attributes (dwelling-house, threshing-floor, spring, men's assembly) to territorial segments could be seen as a spilling-over, into the symbolic order, of the essentials of the economic and social

[10] The puzzling status of shrines 3 and 4 as filial branches of shrine 1 is discussed in van Binsbergen 1971a: 281 *f.* and 1980b: 71, n. 15.

[11] For a striking parallel in Andes popular religion, *cf.* Sallnow 1981.

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process, this system is again duplicated in this sense that lesser shrines, in addition to these utilitarian attributes, can be seen to function as ritual attributes of lower-level segments, from the compound level onwards. There are too many territorial segments at the lower levels to make it possible for each segment to be uniquely and exclusively associated with one local shrine. Patterns of shrine ritual are however such that each segment above the household level can be said to be characterized by a fairly unique pattern of saint veneration, in which a number of shrines, venerated with different frequency and intensity, combine in a manner that is manifestly and characteristically different from the combination obtaining in complementary and adjacent segments. In ways which will become increasingly clear in the course of my argument, shrines are intimately associated with segments; and as can be shown on the basis of a detailed reconstruction of the residential history of the valley of Sidi Mḥammad and adjacent valleys since c. 1800, the creation of filial shrines of the saints Sidi Mḥammad and Sidi Bu-Qasbaya is a direct reflection of the fission, migration, and relative waxing and waning of social groups in that area since the middle of the 19th century CE. These processes occur throughout Ḫumiriyya, and invariably find expression in the geographical distribution, and nomenclature, of shrines.

However, the fictive genealogy of humans, encompassing all living inhabitants of the valley via the ancestral toponyms of their villages and neighbourhoods, is never systematically mirrored by a fictive genealogy encompassing all saints and shrines in a valley – easily a score or more. The multiplicity of shrines associated with the same saint, and the non-kin relations supposed to exist between many saints whose shrines are situated near each other, render such a saintly genealogy impossible. Shrine and segment are united not through a saintly parallel of human genealogical fictions, but through patterns of pious visits establishing relationships between saints and the living.

1.5. Saints and the living

Let us therefore now turn from saint-saint relationships to the relationships that the people of Ḫumiriyya claim to exist between living men, and saints. There is no doubt as to the human nature of saints. However exalted their powers and grace are, the legends about them depict them as recognizable human beings, whose exploits of piety and wonder-working often contain a touch of humour and human weakness. The extremely complex and protean semantic and symbolic properties of sainthood in Ḫumiriyya cannot be adequately summarized here. For instance, to stress that saints (as indicated by their most frequent designation: *uli* / *wali*) are Allah's friends and derive their *baraka* from Him, would underplay the fact that for most practical and ritual purposes Ḫumiri saints (not unlike the several shrines with which they are associated) are conceived as autonomous supernatural beings, whose dealings with living humans hardly require Allah's rubber-stamp.

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Saints have the power to open up the potentialities of nature and human life for those humans who approach them in the proper manner, *i.e.* respectfully, sincerely (*qalb bahi*), and with pure intention (*niyya*). There are few provinces of life that are considered to be outside the power of saintly intervention. Saints are invoked to send rain, to assist in the reproduction of domestic animals, to cure madness and reproductive troubles in humans, to enhance the general economic and physical well-being of the family, to control and ward off *jnun* (demons, spirits of the wilds), to enhance the *baraka* of the house, the threshing-floor, the spring and the men's assembly, to protect people who depart on a long journey, to help people in their careers, to render supernatural sanctions to oaths, to inflict misfortune on humans at the request of their human rivals, *etc*.

Much of this saintly intervention is taken for granted, as the automatic result of the routine aspects of the saintly cult in which every Ḫumiri is involved: the frequent invocation of the names of local saints, the regular dedication of a meal to a specific saint, and the pious visit (*zyara*), at least twice a year, to the local shrine or shrines of that saint. At the latter occasion a small offering of incense and candles is left at the shrine, and specially prepared and dedicated oil cakes are consumed, which after having been consecrated at the shrine, are full of the saint's *baraka*. This ongoing routine of the saintly cult is characterized by great spontaneity, fondness and trustful reliance implied in the main descriptive (as distinct from addressive) kinship term Ḫumiri people employ for their local saints: *jaddi, jadda* ('my grandfather', 'my grandmother). Although immensely powerful, the saint is not usually thought of as a stern figure of authority, but rather as a grandparent who, like a real grandparent, can afford to spoil his grandchildren, the living humans, since their disciplining is left to an intermediate generation. This quality of fond intimacy stands out clearly when people recount hagiographic legends about their saint, share a meal dedicated to him or her, or when women, in the course of *zyara*, shed their socially-imposed reticence, and in near-ecstasy dance near the shrine, fondle and kiss the walls and the sacred objects there, and exclaim *jaddi, jaddna* ('grandad', 'our grandad').

While the saint, deceased and invisible, is considered a grandparent, the kinship term *jadda* carries an interesting additional connotation: it also means lineal or collateral ancestor in general. Supposed (often erroneously) to be buried at the main shrine that carries his or her name, the Ḫumiri saint is considered to have lived in the same area in some undefined past, and to be, somehow, among the set of local ancestors. But seldom is the saint the imputed apical ancestor of a social group, to whom descent is traced through a genealogy. Likewise, the ancestors that gave their names to social and territorial units at various levels of segmentation, are never saints. The two sets of personalized historical symbols do not overlap. In rare cases a saint is claimed to have been a brother of a local apical ancestor, but it turned out to be impossible to let participants pinpoint any living lineal descendants of the saints venerated at local shrines; even when my own historical research convinced me that at least one of these saints, Sidi Mḥammad, had actually lived in the area during the nine-

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teenth century, and I thought I could identify his living descendants whose saintly origins had gone lost under the historical and ideological constructions of the modern participants.

Outside the ongoing routine of the saintly cult, there are three complementary modalities for the relationship between man and saint, in addition to the trustful intimacy of the grandparent idiom.

First, in particularly important matters the implicit reliance on saintly intervention tends to give way to explicit supplication. Reminding the saint of the supplicant's ritual prestations in the past, and stressing the (fictive) kinship relation between man and saint, the supplicant describes his or her plight and entreats the saint to intervene. Such supplication normally takes place at the saint's main shrine, in the course of *zyara*. All the predicaments summed up above may apply. Normally supplication is made to one of the saints associated with the territorial segment to which the supplicant belongs. In rare cases, however, typically having to do with illness and impaired human fertility, supplication may be made at distant shrines, associated with one of the regional saints that are well-known throughout Ḫumiriyya. On such occasions the usual, small pious gifts are augmented by more substantial offerings, such as: an expensive, elaborately adorned candle; a flag; a meal dedicated to the saint and eaten at home; a similar meal but prepared at the shrine and distributed gratis among passers-by; and, as the highest prestation stipulated in the Ḫumiri saintly cult, the sacrifice of a domestic animal (chicken, goat, sheep, cow, or bull – in a dramatically increasing order of cost, prestige and supernatural pay-off).

Secondly, the prestations accompanying such supplication often assume a conditional aspect. The saint whose special intervention is requested with regard to a specific problem, is promised a substantial offering, only to be made if the saintly intervention turns out to be successful: if a previously barren woman produces a child, if a mental patient regains sanity, *etc*. Often these conditional promises take on the nature of a gamble. Thus saintly protection over a herd of cattle or a brood of hens is ensured by promising the saint a male specimen of that year's calves or chicks as a sacrifice; if no males are produced, the saint has to accept that his intervention will go unrewarded that year.

Supplications, particularly if of a conditional nature, introduce a contractual element into the man-saint relationship, that stands in some tension with the inclusive, generalized pattern of the grandparent model. Here the saint appears more as a patron. However, both as a patron with whom one has struck a dyadic, conditional contract, and as a grandparent, the man-saint relationship carries, as a third modality, many obligations for the people involved. However much a saint is supposed to love his living protégés and clients, however much he is prepared to intercede on their behalf, every saint insists on respectful treatment. The same *baraka* that can, positively, release the possibilities of nature and human life to the people's benefit, is sure to inflict material misfortune, illness and death, should the people fail in respect, and neglect their gen-

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eral and contractual obligations *vis-à-vis* a saint. On the basis of these sanctions, the saint protects the integrity of his shrine, the sacred objects and pious gifts it contains, and the immediately surrounding area. The dead that may be buried there, remain undisturbed; and; the trees, plants and animals there are taboo. Instant death awaits whoever ventures to hunt there. He also protects his shrine-keepers, and pilgrims in the course of *zyara*. He does not allow people to terminate their relationships with him: whoever has entered, at some point in his life, into a relationship with a saint, is under a life-long obligation to make the twice-annual *zyara* to his shrine and to dedicate meals for him. The saint is supposed to jealously guard his human following against the claims of other saints. Thus the cult of saints acquires an internal momentum of its own which allows it to express and underpin, at its turn, non-religious aspects of segmentary life in Ḫumiriyya.

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1.6. Segmentation and types of *zyara*

The principal set of people who have a definite relationship with a particular saint are the actual members (*i.e.* inhabitants) of the territorial segment with which that saint is associated. All these people, male and female, must partake in the routines of the saintly cult, including dedication of meals, at least twice-annual *zyara*, and observance of the saint's festival.

Male members of the segment are not under formal obligations of *zyara*, although many of them do visit, as individuals, the shrines, and attend the festivals, of the major saints in their own valley and adjacent valleys. Some men are involved in the saintly cult as ritual specialist: as shrine-keepers, and as members of the ecstatic cult in whose songs local saints feature along with international saints, and demons. For most purposes, men rely on the women in their households and compounds to deal with the local saints. Yet men who intend to definitively settle elsewhere, in the realm of a different saint, will find their plans crossed by dreams and omens through which the saint protests against their absconding.

Women, through their dedication of meals and their *zyara*, carry the bulk of the saintly cult in Ḫumiriyya.

This ritual involvement of women is intimately linked to the marriage pattern. Marriage is virilocal: both according to the rule and in c. 95% of actual practice. and since no woman marries into the household in which she was born, every marriage involves a woman's crossing of segmentary boundaries at least at the lowest level of segmentation (in the rare case she marries within the same compound). Like other Islamic societies, an explicit rule as to the preference of agnatic endogamy exists in Ḫumiriyya. Demographic processes, the dynamics of marital alliance, the essentially bilateral kinship system hiding under the patrilineal idiom, and the intergenerational transfer of property, however, are much more complex than that they could be summarized, at the analytical level by the participants' ideology of patrilateral parallel-cousin marriage. This is not

the place to present my very extensive data and analyses on this point. Let it suffice to say that roughly 50% of modern marriages involve partners belonging to different villages, each with their own distinct set of local shrines and saints. A village-exogamous marriage means that a woman leaves her original set of village-level local shrines behind and adopts a new set, that of her husband's female consanguineal relatives. It is part of a woman's extensive incorporation into her husband's segment[12] that she fully adopts the shrines of that group. Within the compound, hamlet and neighbourhood, elder women coordinate food production, food processing, water hauling and firewood collection. From these female leaders the in-marrying woman will learn about the identity and relative importance of the segment's shrines and saints. She will soon dedicate some of her household meals to these saints, and join the other women in collective *zyara* to the shrines. However, she will not as a rule give up her relationship with the shrines in her original segment. Although a woman will not often leave the immediate environment of the village for the purpose of visiting relatives, the hospital, the market, or diviners, she has an unalienable right to visit her original shrines, and thus her segment of origin and her relatives there, twice a year.

A married woman is involved in two complementary sets of relationships with saints – which mirrors, and in fact sustains, her involvement in both her original segment and that of her husband. The picture is further complicated by the relative nature of segmentation. The greater the segmentary distance a woman crosses for marriage, the more different the two sets of shrines will be. If she marries into a different village within the same valley, the two sets will overlap in that the valley's main shrine and festival will be part of both sets; in that case marriage will only add a few lesser shrines of her husband's segment (at the village neighbourhood, hamlet and compound level) to the woman's pre-existing set. With intra-village local endogamy (c. 50% of all marriages) the differences will be even less significant, and in fact the set of shrines before and after marriage may largely coincide. The differences are far more conspicuous in the case of a marriage linking people from different valleys or even chiefdoms. But the principles remain the same throughout.

Thus every Ḫumiri woman has *zyara* obligations *vis-à-vis* the local shrines associated with the territorial segment (or better: nested hierarchy of segments at various levels) to which she belongs at a given point in time; for descriptive purposes, this type of *zyara* will be called *local zyara*. In addition, all women who have migrated from their segment of birth, *i.e.* mainly in the context of marriage, retain *zyara* obligations vis-à-vis the local shrines in that segment; this type of *zyara* will be called *original zyara*. For the sake of completeness, we should not overlook the fact that marriage is the main, but not the exclusive occasion for a woman to adopt a new set of *zyara* obligations:

[12] An indication of this incorporation is that very few widows ever move back to their village of origin; for a set of indicators of female incorporation in a context of marriage, *cf.* Lewis 1965.

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when the household of which she is a dependent member takes up residence elsewhere, a similar situation obtains regardless of her marital status. However, such cases are so rare as compared with the virtual universality of marriage among Ḫumiri women, that they require no separate treatment.

Local *zyara* comes with actual membership of (*i.e.* residence in) a territorial segment, and unites all adult women of that segment under a female leader. The latter coordinates the collective *zyara* of the segment's women to the local shrines, as part of her general tasks of female leadership. In fact these collective visits to local shrines present an amazing spectacle of territorial segmentation in action. At the occasion of the festival of a valley's or village's main shrine, the various female leaders of segments will have agreed on a time for collective *zyara*. Compound by compound, hamlet by hamlet, neighbourhood by neighbourhood, one will see small groups of women in their best clothes converge along the village path, and team up on their way to the shrine, only to break up again, segment-wise, on their return, Alternatively, the fact that virtually every woman in a compound, hamlet and neighbourhood derives obligations of original *zyara* from her own, unique life history, endows her with an individuality in the religious sphere which she will normally be allowed to maintain despite strong social pressures towards incorporation in her husband's segment. the frequent attribution of misfortune to irate, neglected saints suggests however both the practice of individual shedding of original *zyara* obligations, and the deep-lying tensions in the marital and inter-generational sphere that would seem to attend the incorporation process.

Personal *zyara* to major regional saints in the context of illness or infertility results, finally, in the third type of women's *zyara* obligations in Ḫumiriyya. For here again the norm applies that a living human cannot at his or her own initiative terminate a relationship with a saint once entered into. For a variety of reasons (which seem to include female under-nutrition; a very low marital age of women before marital legislation was revised in the 1960s; and a repressive sexual culture instilling profound fears and sexual inhibitions in young people of both sexes) many Ḫumiri women are recorded to have suffered from impaired fertility in the first years of their marriage. In order to remedy this complaint, women would often resort to pilgrimage to distant shrines of regional saints outside the set of shrines falling under local or original *zyara* obligations. The personal relationship between a woman and a regional saint invoked for reproductive troubles would ideally last a lifetime; in later years, as a woman would take her daughters and daughters-in-law with her on this *personal zyara*, the younger generation would automatically inherit this relationship, even though the regional shrine would be too distant to be listed among the territorial segment's local *zyara* obligations. I cannot enter here into a discussion of what the implicit emic distinction between *local, original* and *personal zyara* reveals about the Ḫumiri conception of personhood and of women.

Numerous are the cases when material misfortune, illness and even death are attributed (via various techniques of divination) to irate saints revenging humans' lack of respect, breach of promises, failure to dedicate meals and make

pious visits, or neglect of duties *vis-à-vis* one saint while honouring the expectations of another saint. Since Ḫumiri saints are shown to embody, on the one hand, concepts of intra-kin intimacy and inter-generational relations, on the other hand a structure of complementary opposition of segments, it will be obvious – even without a discussion of specific cases – that the social, mental and psycho-somatic dramas enacted in such cases reveal deeply-rooted tensions and contradictions within the Ḫumiri social process and symbolic order. However, an explanation of misfortune like the Ḫumiri one would represent a welcome escape clause in any religious system: given a certain degree of recognized non-observance of rules and of opportunism[13] among the living humans involved, the supernatural entities invoked are free to honour or to ignore human requests without succumbing to their professional disease: credibility gap. In fact, not all Ḫumiri women attend to their original and personal *zyara* obligations with equal zeal; the factors apparently determining this variation in religious behaviour will be discussed below.

In modern ethnography, paradigmatic consistency and elegance in the *emic*[14] rendering of cultural systems have become reasons for healthy mistrust. Therefore, the above generalized description of the saintly cult, and particularly of *zyara*, in modern Ḫumiriyya needs to be substantiated with evidence on actual religious behaviour as stipulated by the models and rules described here. We find ourselves here in the somewhat exceptional situation that such evidence is, in fact, available, and that it corroborates the generalized description with amazing precision – which is a further reason for surprise, notably at the fact that the system as conceived and employed by the participants turns out to be so elaborate, rational and consistent as to be capable of mathematical representation.

1.7. Local *zyara* in the valley of Sidi Mḥammad

In the remaining sections of this chapter I shall describe the patterns of local, original and personal *zyara* as found among the adult women inhabiting the villages of Sidi Mḥammad

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[13] *Cf.* Köbben 1975, who in fact cites the Ḫumiri case as described by me.

[14] A common though somewhat artificial distinction in ethnography (artificial, for it tends to exaggerate the monolithic homogeneity of local communities) is that between the *insider* especially the born member of a local community, and the *outsider* especially the alien anthropologist who only joined the host society as a (typically young) adult and after having been socialised in a different culture elsewhere. By analogy with the time-honoured linguistic distinction between *phonemic* (= speech sounds as culturally / collectively distinguished on the basis of distinctive features by native speakers) and *phonetic* (= speech sounds in their physical characteristics as picked up by the human ear or by any non-human sound-transmission or -recording device), the insiders' cultural distinctions and content are often labelled 'emic', the outsiders' imposed analytical distinctions and content 'etic'; *cf.* Headland *et al.* 1990; van Binsbergen 2003b: 22 *f.*

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and Mayziyya, in the valley of Sidi Mḥammad.The data were collected in 1968, at a point in my field-work when I had sufficiently mastered the principles of Ḫumiri popular religion and society to phrase my questions properly; and when my stay in the village of Sidi Mḥammad had generated a sufficient amount of trust and rapport to allow me to systematically interview the majority of the adult female population in both villages. In Sidi Mḥammad, of the total population of 42 resident adult women, 35 (= 83%) were thus interviewed. The 17% non-response could be shown to form an a-select sample from the total population of 42, with regard to important background variables: relative economic position of their household; number of years of their marriage had lasted; geographical distance across which their marriage had been contracted (Table 1.1).

		(a) duration of marriage (years)§)															
		2	3	6	8	10	16	18	20	23	24	25	28	30	33	38	total
number of women	in response group	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	13
	in non-response group	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4

§) the analysis is limited to women resident in the village of Sidi Mḥammad but born in a different village

Mann-Whitney U-test, corrected for ties: z = 1.13; p = .13

		(b) distance across which marriage was contracted (km)													
		.0	.1	.2	.3	.4	.5	.6	.7	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.8	2.3	2.5
number of women	in response group	0	7	6	4	2	3	2	0	1	1	1	0	2	0
	in non-response group	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0

		(b) distance across which marriage was contracted (km) (conti.nued)						
		2.6	3.0	3.5	6.2	7.8	10.2	total
number of women	in response group	2	1	1	1	1	0	35
	in non-response group	0	0	1	1	0	0	7

Mann-Whitney U-test, corrected for ties: z = -1.36; p = .09

		(c) relative economic position of household*)			
		poor	medium	wealthy	total
number of women	in response group	21	11	3	35
	in non-response group	2	2	2	6

*) one woman was omittted from the analysis since the wealth of her household could not be assessed with certainty

Mann-Whitney U-test, corrected for ties: z = 1.11; p .13

Table 1.1. Validating the sample of women in the villages of Sidi Mḥammad.

I lived in Sidi Mhammad and my data on Mayziyya, further uphill, are less complete: they adequately cover local *zyara*, but show gaps with regard to *original* and *personal zyara*. The analysis of the latter two types (section 1.8) will exclusively be based on Sidi Mḥammad data.

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Zyara is public behaviour and moreover a source of prestige and *baraka*. It is therefore discussed without reticence, even when the interviewer is a young male foreigner. The interview data were checked against: observational data concerning the various types of *zyara*; systematically elicited statements about the *zyara* behaviour of neighbours; and many accidental statements uttered during everyday conservations or open-ended interviews. The correspondence between these data proved to be almost 100%. Moreover the data show great internal consistency, particularly in the extent to which the responses and observational data on local *zyara* converge for the several women of each segment. This convergence could hardly be a research artifact, because when I collected the data I was not even beginning to realize that Ḫumiri social organization could be described with a model of territorial segmentation. For all these reasons I consider the data to be of good quality, and amenable to such non-parametric statistical tests as I shall perform upon them.[15]

The valley of Sidi Mḥammad stretches from south to north along the Wad al-Kabīr, a river whose tributaries have their sources at the highest peaks of Ḫumiriyya, and which flows into the Mediterranean near the town of Tabarka, c. 15 km north of Sidi Mḥammad. Fig. 1.2 shows the wider surroundings of the valley. This figure conveys the remarkably small geographical scale of the phenomena at hand. The valley of Sidi Mḥammad has an area of about 10 km^2, and comprises only six villages: Sidi Mḥammad, Mayziyya, Tra^{c}aya-sud, Tra^{c}aya-bidh, Fidh al-Missay and Raml al-^{c}Atrus; together these villages comprise c. 600 inhabitants.

Movement between villages is mainly on foot, and here the mountainous terrain imposes severe constraints. Thus from Sidi Mḥammad it takes people half a day to reach the major regional shrine of Sidi ^{c}Abd bi-Jamal, a distance of barely 10 kms as the crow flies. Such a distance forms in fact the effective maximal radius for most purposes of inter-village contacts, including *zyara* and marriage. While illustrating this point, Table 2 suggests that structures of *zyara*, and the affinal networks created by marriage, together constitute on relational region, of the sort which Meillassoux has called a marriage field *(aire matrimoniale*, Meillassoux 1964: 11 and *passim*).

	range (km)	median (km)
distance across which marriages are contracted	.1 – 7.8	. 45
distance across which shrines are visited (all types of *zyara* combined)	.0 – 10.1	. 55

Table 1.2. A comparison of geographical distances across which women resident in the village of Sidi Mḥammad (a) visit shrines and (b) have married.

[15] These tests are not affected by the relatively small number of cases, nor do they imply assumptions as to the scale level (interval, ordinal, nominal) of the variables; *cf.* Siegel, n.d. The short questionnaire, in local vernacular Arabic, used to collect (in addition to observational materials) the quantitative data on *zyara* and other types of religious performance, is to be included in van Binsbergen, forthcoming (b).

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Fig. 1.2. The wider surroundings of the valley of Sidi Mḥammad.

Like Sidi ^{c}Abd Allah bi-Jamal, Sidi Mḥammad is a regional saint. The latter's twice-annual festival lasts for several days and nights. In addition to the people of the valley itself, who are under obligations of local *zyara*, the festival attracts, from all over Ḫumiriyya, scores of women who are under obligation of original or personal *zyara*, and moreover scores of male pilgrims, as well as musicians, showmen, ecstatic dancers, butchers, and peddlers in sweets, candles, incense, haberdashery, *etc*. While the saint Sidi Mḥammad is locally represented by no less than four shrines including two *qubba*s, he is by no means the only saint of the valley. Fig. 1.3 shows, in their relative position *vis-à-vis* the dwelling houses, the location of the eighteen shrines that are found in the immediate environment of the villages of Sidi Mḥammad and Mayziyya alone. Table 3 summarizes the names and physical characteristics of these shrines.

A minority of the local shrines are surrounded by cemeteries, and a segment's right to bury its dead in a particular cemetery, *i.e.* near a particular shrine, is an important expression of the segmentary structure. However, this aspect is not dealt with in my present argument, which concentrates on *zyara*. Of the shrines listed in Table 1.3, the numbers 1 and 8 are surrounded by cemeteries that are still in use, whereas abandoned cemeteries are found around the shrines 5 and 7, as well as several hundred meters south of 9 and 13. Moreover, many of the saints listed in Table 1.3 have shrines elsewhere, outside the villages of Sidi Mḥammad and Mayziyya; those distant shrines are not listed here. The local *zyara* pattern in those two villages is confined to the eighteen shrines of Table 1.3. Of the 18 shrines, the numbers 8 and 9 are not visited by any inhabitant of either village: 8 is, however, visited by inhabitants of the neighbouring village of Tra^{c}aya-bidh.

In order to assess whether the pattern of local *zyara* as found in these two villages is in fact governed by territorial segmentation, we have to go through a number of steps. First, the dwelling-houses, representing the lowest level of segmentation, have to be clustered into higher-level segments, according to their location, to the visible boundaries by which they are surrounded, and to the distribution of utilitarian characteristics attributes (threshing-floors, springs, men's assemblies) over the clusters thus formed. The outcome of this exercise is shown in Fig. 1.4.

The following step is the tracing of the specific pattern of local *zyara* which obtains in each of the territorial segments thus distinguished. A problem arising at this point is that there are far fewer local shrines than territorial segments. The choice is further limited by the fact that not all shrines are available in the same degree as additional, religious attributes of segments. For two adjacent lower-level territorial segments, which are complementary in that they both form part of a higher segment at the next hierarchical level, it would be impossible to express their segmentary opposition by differential patronage of some very minor shrine situated at a considerable distance, say at the other end of the village: the catchment area of that shrine would be too small to reach as far as these segments.

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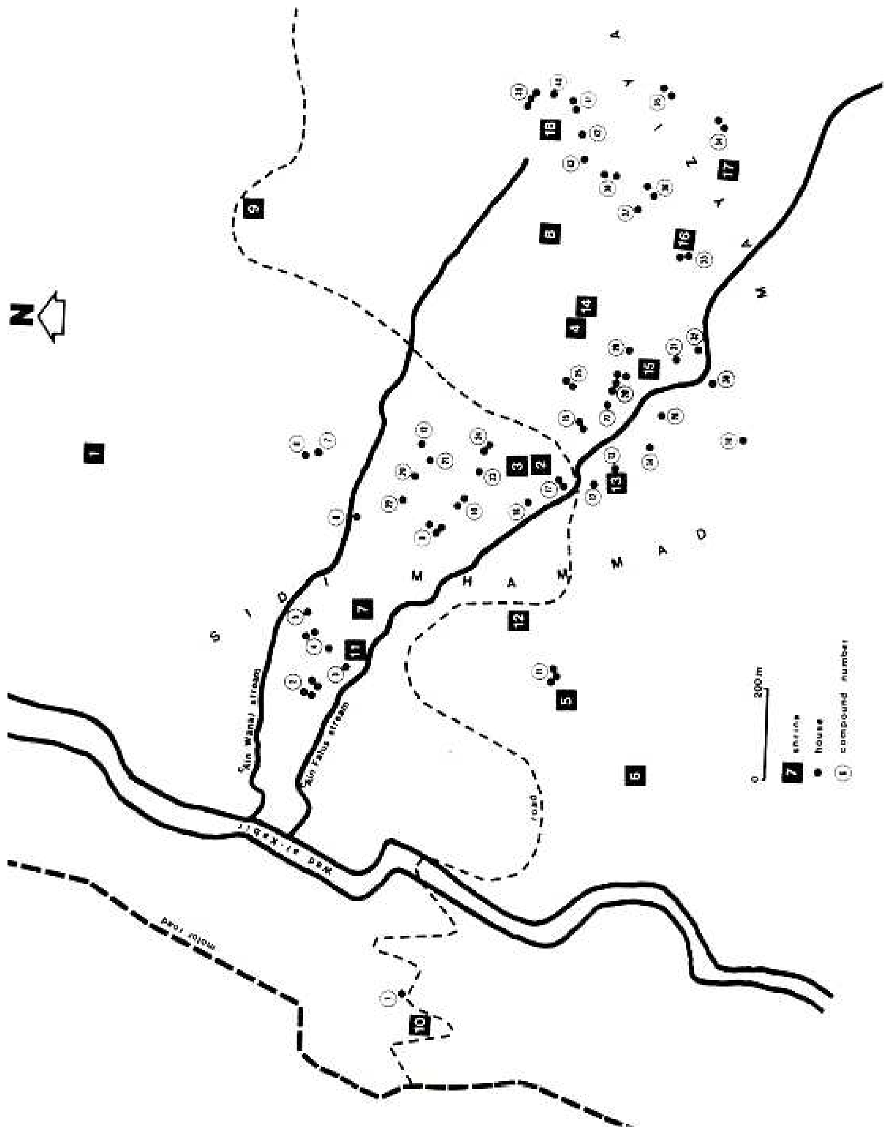

Fig. 1.3. Shrines in the valley of Sidi Mḥammad, numbered as in Table 1.3.

No.	Name	format
1	Sidi Mḥammad al-Kabir / Sr (see Fig. 12.19, below)	*qubba*
2	Sidi Mḥammad al-Wilda / Jr	*qubba*
3	Sidi Mḥammad (al-Wilda) / Jr	*kurbi*
4	Sidi Mḥammad (al-Wilda) / Jr	*kurbi*
5	Sidi Bu-Qasbaya al-Kabir / Sr (see Fig. 12.21a, below)	*mzara*
6	Sidi Bu-Qasbaya al-Wilda / Jr	*mzara*
7	Sidi Bu-Qasbaya al-Wilda / Jr	*mzara*
8	Sidi Rḥuma	*mzara*
9	Sidi Bu-Naqa	*mzara*
10	^{c}A'isha	*mzara*
11	*Mzara* ^{c}Ain Raml (see Fig. 12.21b, below)	*mzara*
12	Ḥajarat al-Brik	*mzara*
13	Sidi Ḥamad	*mzara*
14	Sidi Bel-Aḥsin	*mzara*
15	Jadda Massauda	*mzara*
16	^{c}AliAbu 'l-Qassim	*mzara*
17	Sidi Bu-Ḫaruba	*mzara*
18	Ḥajarat al-Fras	*mzara*

Table 1.3. Names and physical characteristics of shrines in the villages of Sidi Mḥammad and Mayziyya.

Similarly, these segments could not distinguish themselves by differential patronage of the village's or valley's main shrine, for that shrine would already function as the additional, religious attribute of a higher segment encompassing both lower-level segments.

Two devices combine so as to solve these dilemmas. First non-patronage, even of a nearby shrine or combination of nearby shrines, can mark a territorial segment just as much as positive local *zyara*. Secondly, segments can distinguish among themselves not only through the selection or non-selection of local shrines in a particular combination, but also through differences in frequency with which the selected shrines are actually visited. Twice-annual *zyara* constitutes a minimal frequency for any shrine; four times a year is an average frequency for shrines that are visited with more than minimal zeal. As marking devices, non-patronage and differential frequency dramatically increase the number of possible combinations given a limited number of shrines; yet it must be admitted that differential frequency introduces a gradual and analogous (as opposed to absolute and digital / binary) dimension that somewhat spoils the neat combinatory logic of the segmentation model. These devices are clearly at work in the pattern of local *zyara* in the village of Sidi Mḥammad and Mayziyya, as shown in Fig. 1.5.

Here for all compounds of both villages the associated patterns of local *zyara* are shown, on the basis of the interview and observational data discussed above. Combining the information of Figs 1.4 and 1.5 results in Fig. 1.6, which presents the segments' differential local *zyara* patterns in the familiar dendrogram format.

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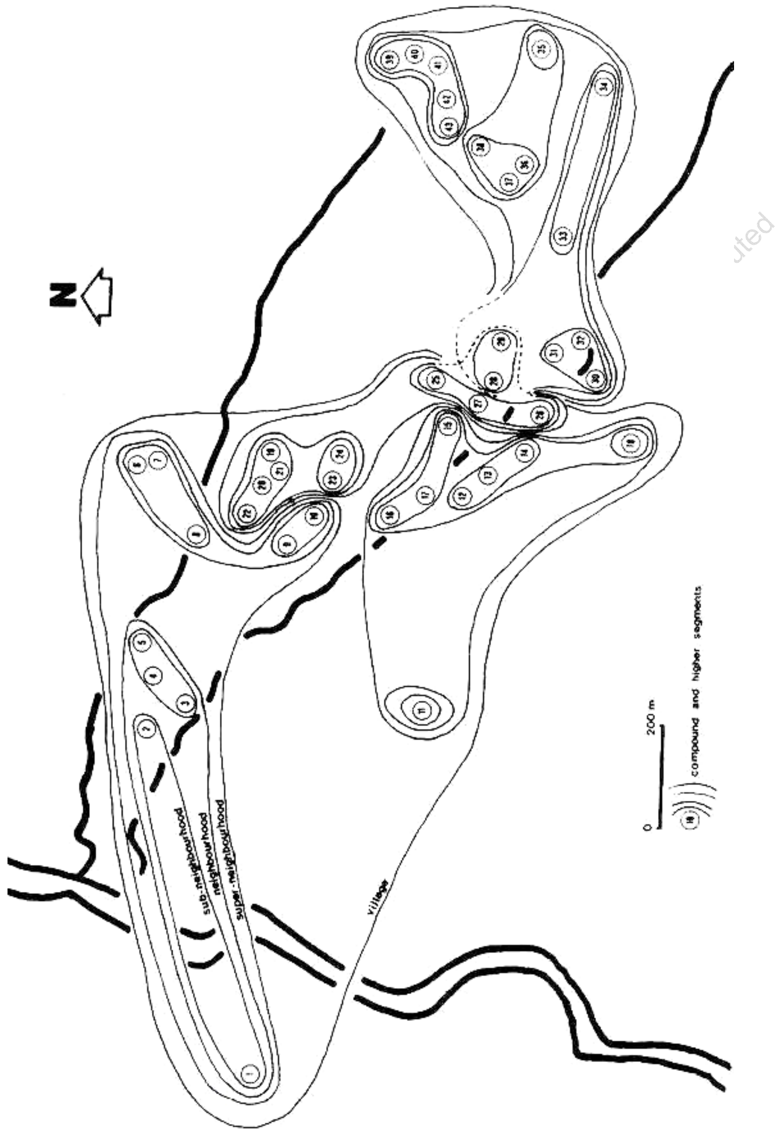

Fig. 1.4. The spatial structure of segmentation in the valley of Sidi Mḥammad.

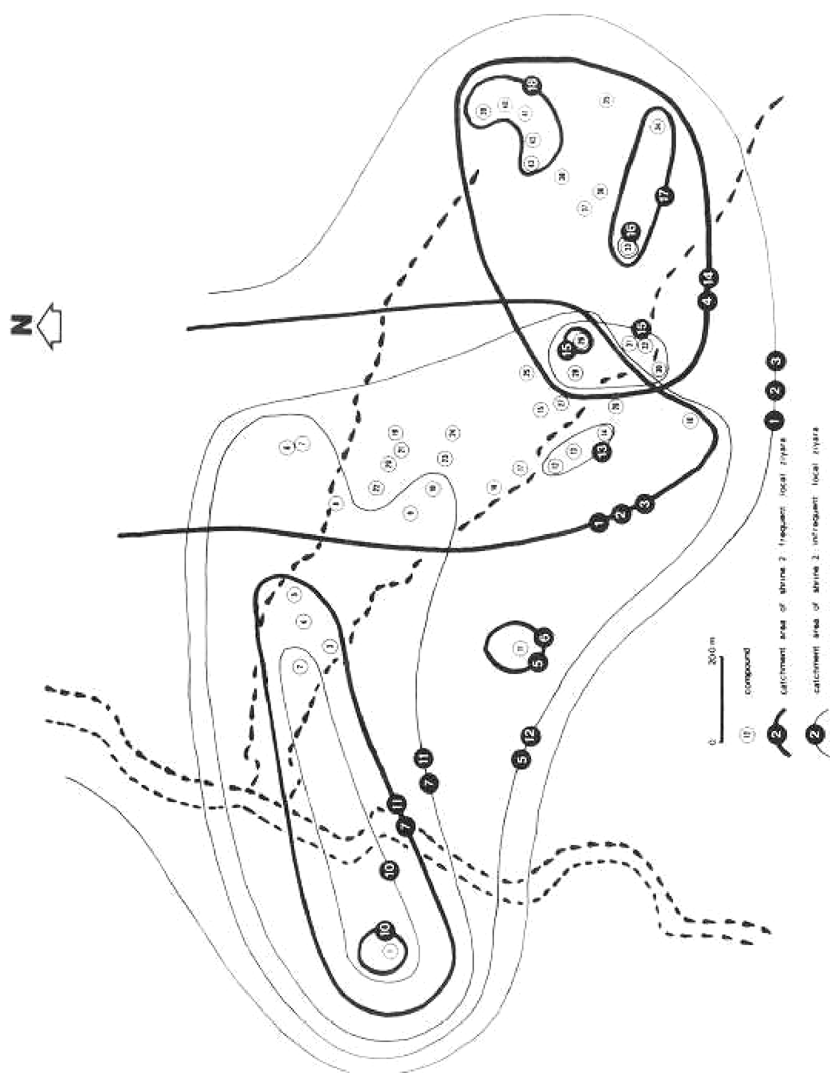

Fig. 1.5. The spatial structure of local *zyara* in the valley of Sidi Mḥammad.

A number of conclusions can be based on Fig. 1.6. Clearly, territorial segmentation provides the key to existing structures of local *zyara*. Territorial segments, whose existence is marked by visible boundaries and the distribution of utilitarian characteristic attributes, distinguish themselves in the religious sphere by the veneration of specific combinations of local shrines, in specific frequencies. What emanates clearly from Fig. 1.6 is the fact that complementary opposition in segmentation only refers to one level at the same time, irrespective of the distribution of distinctive features at higher or lower levels. Thus segments 1.1.2 and 1.2.2 can afford to be both associated with shrines 1, 2 and 3, which both segments visit frequently. There is no direct complementary opposition between these two segments, since they belong to different higher level segments (1.1 and 1.2 respectively), and the difference between the later is marked by shrines 7 and 11. The complementary segment of 1.1.2 is 1.1.1. (this difference is marked by frequent visiting of shrines 7 and 11, as against shrines 1, 2 and 3); the complementary segment of 1.2.2. is 1.2.1, with differences being marked by frequent visiting of shrines 5 and 6 as against 1, 2 and 3, respectively. The inclusion of complementary segments in higher-level segments renders the combinatory logic of characteristic attributes more complicated, but does not destroy it.

However, while the model fits empirical reality amazingly well, the fit is, of course, not 100%. Not all complementary segments at all levels are marked by differential local *zyara*. Thus the sub-neighbourhoods 1.2.2.3, 1.3.1.1, 1.3.1.2 and 1.3.2.1 have an identical pattern of local *zyara*.

Moreover it turns out that, insofar local *zyara* is concerned, three and not two segmentary levels are to be distinguished between compound level and village level; this is particularly the case in the village of Sidi Mḥammad. Environmental conditions and the ongoing dynamics of territorial segmentation can explain these deviations from the simpler model. Permanent water supplies are scarcer in Sidi Mḥammad than in Mayziyya: in the former village there are 9 to 17 households to one permanent water source, against only 8 to 9 in Mayziyya. Hence the spring-defined neighbourhoods are in fact considerably larger in Sidi Mḥammad than in Mayziyya, and begin to approach villages. This process of segmentation also manifests itself in the erection of a separate men's assembly in the southern part of the village of Sidi Mḥammad (super-neighbourhood 1.1, called Qa^{c}a-Raml / 'Sandy Threshing-floor'), and in the growing expression of antagonism between people from that part and the rest of the village. The complex historical background, involving competition between rival clans, aspirations of political leadership, the vicissitudes of marriage alliances, the effects of establishment of a colonist's farm near Qa^{c}a-Raml, and the differential use of cemeteries cannot be elaborated upon here (but see van Binsbergen 1971a, 1980a, 1980b, and forthcoming (b)).

The ongoing segmentation process also explains the ambiguous position sub-neighbourhood 2.1.1.1 occupies in the dendrogram. But here we encounter not fission (as in the Qa^{c}a-Raml case), but fusion: the segment in question, straddling the boundary between the two villages, historically forms part of Mayziyya.

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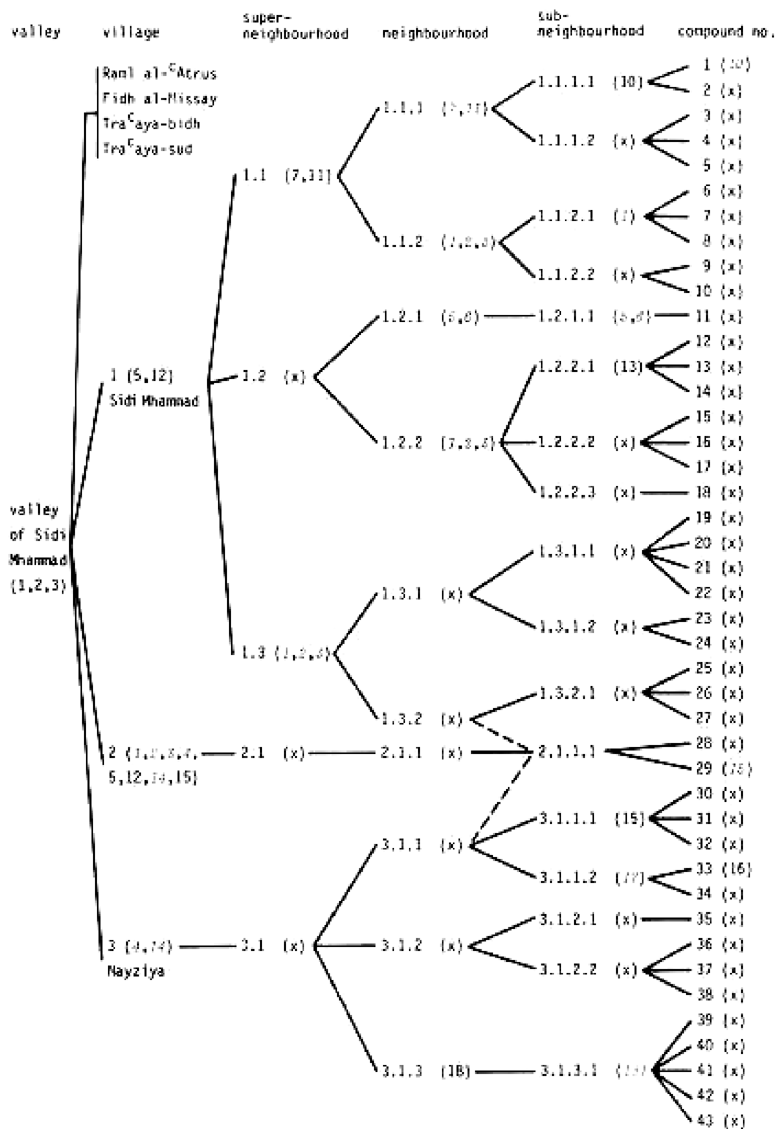

Fig. 1.6. Patterns of local *zyara* (pilgrimage) in the village of Sidi Mḥammad as an expression of segmentation.

However, its members have established strong ties of marriage and clientship with their present neighbours, the administrative chief's family; the latter's residence in the village of Sidi Mḥammad dates back to the 1910s.[16]

Rather than upsetting the model of territorial segmentation as governing local *zyara*, these deviations show that model to be dynamic, and capable of responding to the realities of the social and ecological process. Let us now turn to the quantitative data concerning original and personal *zyara*: forms of religious behaviour that cut across, instead of express, the pattern of territorial segmentation.

1.8. Original and personal *zyara* in the village of Sidi Mḥammad

Turning now to non-local *zyara*, we should first assess the relative incidence of the three types of *zyara*.

The 35 systematically interviewed women in Sidi Mḥammad observed between them 232 *zyara* obligations *vis-à-vis* shrines in Ḫumiriyya. Of these, 219 (= 94%) involved local *zyara*. Each woman observed an average of 6.6. *zyara* obligations, the total range stretching from 5 to 10. Of this average of 6.6, an average 6.3 involved local *zyara* (range 5-8, as can be read from Fig. 1.6). The fact that many shrines are associated with the same saint, means that the number of observed *zyara* obligations *vis-à-vis* different saints is lower than that *vis-à-vis* shrines. The women of the sample have an average of 4.1. (range 3-7) observed *zyara* relations with saints, out of which an average of 3.7 (range 3-5) involve saints associated with the local segments these women belong to at the several hierarchical levels. These data on *zyara* relationships can be converted into figures on actual pious visits made, by taking differential frequency into account. Per period of six months, the women of the sample make 342 *zyara*s between them, of which 329 (= 96%) are local *zyara*s, 10 (= 3%) are original *zyara*s, and only 4 (= 1%) are personal *zyara*s. These figures must be considered estimates. Yet they convincingly demonstrate the overwhelming preponderance of local *zyara*, as stipulated by the

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[16] A peculiarity of the *zyara* pattern of the village of Mayziyya, and one that is not easily accommodated within our tripartite typology of Ḫumiri *zyara*, is that virtually all adult women resident in that village have an infrequent *zyara* relationship with the shrines of Sidi Bu-Ḫaruba and Sidi Bu-Zarura in the adjacent valley of Saydiyya, c. 4 kms east of Mayziyya. Here again segmentary fission provides the explanation: these distant shrines are collectively visited because the majority of the present-day inhabitants of Mayziyya are recent immigrants from Saydiyya; their migration from that valley has not been sufficiently long ago for religious and secular ties with that relatively distant place of origin to have already been severed entirely. Ḫumiri history offers numerous cases of emigrants cutting off such ties after a few decades.

structure of territorial segmentation, over the non-local forms that cut across the segmentary structure.

It is virtually impossible for a woman to resist the strong social pressure and the supernatural sanctions that prompt her participation in the collective local *zyara* of the segment in which she is resident. Original and personal *zyara*, however, are a more individual matter, and here observance of existing obligations shows considerable variation.

The positive data on personal *zyara* are too limited to allow statistical analysis. The three women concerned are between forty and sixty years old. They have exceptionally high prestige and power because of their age, their very close kinship relations with administrative chiefs, and the wealth of their households. Two are effective female leaders of their neighbourhoods, and as such co-ordinate local *zyara*. Their maintaining of personal *zyara* relations with distant shrines, nearly all of which are of regional importance, adds to their local prestige, and renders further independence to their religious and social behaviour as individuals. Moreover, they would hardly be able to fulfil their personal *zyara* obligations if their social position did not provide them with the financial means to undertake a long journey, and with an extensive regional network of social contacts on which they can rely during that journey and at the distant shrine. The data strongly suggest that many other women in the sample contracted personal *zyara* obligations at some time in their lives, but had to drop them because of their less exalted social position within their segments of residence.

Original *zyara* is a somewhat more common phenomenon. Here we can draw on two sets of data: data on the women resident in Sidi Mḥammad; and on the set of women who originate from that village and who (according to the converging evidence of observational data and interviews) either observe, or fail to observe, their obligations of original *zyara vis-à-vis* the regional shrines of Sidi Mḥammad.

Since about 50% of all marriages are contracted within the same village, and since (*cf.* Fig. 1.6) not all segments within a village differ as to the set of shrines to which local *zyara* is directed (although frequencies of *zyara* may differ), not all women in the sample acquired obligations of original *zyara* at marriage. In fact, only 14 women in the sample did so (= 40%); for the remaining 60%, local *zyara* and original *zyara* entirely coincide.

Of these 14 women, 7 (= 50%) observe their original *zyara* obligations, while 7 (=50%) do not. Table 1.4 makes clear that the relative importance of shrines is a crucial factor here. Such importance is measured by the following indicators: the segmentary level at which the shrine functions as an additional, religious attribute; the physical characteristics of the shrine (*qubba*, *kurbi* or *mzara*); and the existence of a twice-annual festival for that shrine.

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importance	range of geographical distance (km)	number of observances	number of non-observances	total
high	2.6 – 8.8	8	1	9
middle	.8 – 3.2	1	7	8
low	.1 – 2.1	0	5	5

Table 1.4. The observance of obligations of original *zyara* among women resident in the village of Sidi Mḥammad, as a function of the importance of the original shrine, and of the geographical distance between that shrine and a woman's current place of residence.

Further statistical analysis (van Binsbergen 1971a: 286 *f.*) demonstrates that such conceivable factors as wealth, prestige, and the number of years elapsed since the woman, by marrying and taking up residence in her present segment, acquired obligations of original *zyara*, do not have a statistically significant impact on the observance of original *zyara* among the resident women of Sidi Mḥammad.

These data are supplemented by those on women who, originating from Sidi Mḥammad, have married outside and therefore are under obligations of original *zyara* focussing on the valley of Sidi Mḥammad. The festival of Sidi Mḥammad is the only occasion at which the necessary observational data could be collected; moreover it is by far the most important occasion for women to observe their original *zyara* obligations. For these reasons I shall concentrate here on *zyara* to the major, regional shrines of Sidi Mḥammad, and ignore *zyara* to lesser shrines in the same valley. A fortunate implication is that thus importance of shrines as a factor determining observance of original *zyara* is kept constant, so that other factors may stand out more clearly. It is important to realize that in these cases we are dealing with women who have married not only outside the village, but also outside the valley of Sidi Mḥammad – for all villages of that valley would make the pious visit to the shrines of Sidi Mḥammad as part of their local *zyara* obligations.

On the basis of my village census and genealogies the full set of women involved can be identified. Limiting the analysis to those who currently live within a distance of 20 km (original *zyara* across wider distances would be practically impossible anyway), the set consists of 22 individuals, 15 of whom (=68%) actually observe original *zyara*, while 7 (=32%) do not.

While no data are available as to the wealth and prestige of these out-marrying women in their present, distant places of residence, the data reveal that the number of years elapsed since marriage (*i.e.* since the departure from the original segment) is significantly associated with observance of original *zyara* (Table 1.5).

duration of marriage (years)		3	4	5	7	8	10	12	15	25	total
number of women	observing	1	1	4	2	2	2	1	1	1	15
	not observing	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	2	7

Mann-Whitney U-test, corrected for ties: $z= -2.81$; $p= .003$

Table 1.5. Observance of original *zyara* obligations among out-marrying women from Sidi Mḥammad, as a function of the duration of marriage.

All women who left the village for marriage ten years ago or less, stick to the rule; those who left longer ago, tend to drop observance. Duration of marriage seems to be a surface factor, underneath which a more important one is hidden: the residence, in the segment of origin, of a surviving parent (Table 1.6). Of course, the longer a marriage has lasted, the older a woman is and the less likely she will have surviving parents.

	at least one living parent resident in Sidi Mḥammad	no living parent resident in Sidi Mḥammad	total
observance	12	3	15
non-observance	0	7	7
total	12	10	22

l =15.30; df=1; p< .001. The l-statistic has the same distribution as χ^2; *cf.* Spitz 1961, as summarised in van Binsbergen 1972c.

Table 1.6. Observance of original *zyara* obligations, among out-marrying women from Sidi Mḥammad, as a function of parents' residence in the segment of origin.

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This factor points to the social functions of original *zyara*, as a unique opportunity to visit living kinsmen. Additional statistical analysis (van Binsbergen 1971a: 288 *f.*) however suggests that, besides sociability and psychological kin support in the vicissitudes of marriage and virilocal incorporation, another structural theme is involved here: the inter-generational transfer of property rights (particularly in relation with land, a scarce asset in Ḫumiriyya). The wish to keep in touch with consanguineal relatives around the original shrine is not a sufficient reason for original *zyara*; for observance of this type of *zyara* is not significantly associated with the residence, in the segment of origin, of an out-marrying woman's brothers – whatever the wealth of the latter. The continued residence of parents suggests an undivided patrimony. By keeping up visits to her segment of origin, the woman, in accordance with Ḫumiri views on land tenure, asserts her right to a share equal to that of her male siblings. *De facto* these rights are waived as, after the father's death, the surviving sons administer the patrimony on their own behalf: initially under the direction of the eldest sons, until such time when fraternal rivalry necessitates division. At that point a reversal of visiting obligations can be seen: more fully incorporated in her husband's segment, the woman tends to drop her original *zyara* obligations, but instead her brothers are under obligation to visit her with presents at the day of the Great Festival (ᶜId al-Kabir, ᶜId al-Adha). The woman's sons, however, retain a latent right in the land administered by the mother's brothers, and in exceptional cases these rights are actually exercised, leading to a man's matrilocal residence.

Combining the evidence on Sidi Mḥammad's resident women and out-marrying women, the main factors determining observance of original *zyara* obligations may be summarized as in Fig. 1.7.

1.9. Conclusion

The ethnography presented here clearly has many interesting openings towards central theoretical concerns in the social science of religion. There is a striking Durkheimian suggestion of one-to-one correspondence in the extent to which the saint and his shrine seem to function, at all levels of social and ritual organization and experience, as a straightforward symbol of the social group with which they are associated. Alternatively, such cutting-across the overall structure of segmentation as can be seen in original and personal *zyara*, points to the potential of religion to provide alternatives to the structural arrangements that govern the more secular aspects of social life.

This calls to mind the theories of pilgrimage and regional cults as advanced by the Turners and by Richard Werbner (Turner 1974; Turner & Turner 1978; Werbner 1977). The possible contribution of the Ḫumiri data to the further development of these theories would at first glance appear to be somewhat negative. Werbner, in an attempt to get away from the classic correspondence paradigm in religious anthropology, has stressed cultic regions' autonomy *vis-à-vis* processes of material production, secular social organization, and political structure. The Ḫumiri case (of predominantly local *zyara*) however would be an example of extreme correspondence between cult and the secular societal process. Moreover, except in the relatively rare cases of original and personal *zyara*, which cut across segmentation, the more massive manifestations of the cult (at the village and valley level, and culminating in festivals) do not seem to involve principles different from those operating at the lowest level: the cult of inconspicuous *mzara*s that are tucked away in some corner of a compound or hamlet, and that have virtually no relevance beyond these small territorial units. In this respect the Ḫumiri cult of saints, while clearly a regional cult in terms of geographical scope and number of people involved, would not stand out as one when its organizational structure is considered.

Similarly, it is only in personal *zyara* to distant saints – the expression of an atomized devotion – that the shrine appears, in Turner's terms, as the 'Center Out there', and that generalizations apply as to pilgrimage as a distinct social process in its own right. In local *zyara*, which constitutes the vast majority of pious visits in Ḫumiriyya, the shrine is not a distant place visited at the end of a long and arduous physical and spiritual journey across unknown parts – it has more the nature of a visit to a close and dearly-loved relative, involving a short passage through familiar surroundings, in the company of people one knows well and identifies with. It is for this reason that i have refrained, in this essay, from using the term pilgrimage – except in the title, for signalling purposes only.

Finally, while these authors would stress the dialectics of inclusiveness / exclusiveness or universalism / particularism as the crux of the cults they describe, the Ḫumiri data would suggest that this dialectic could hardly be adequately

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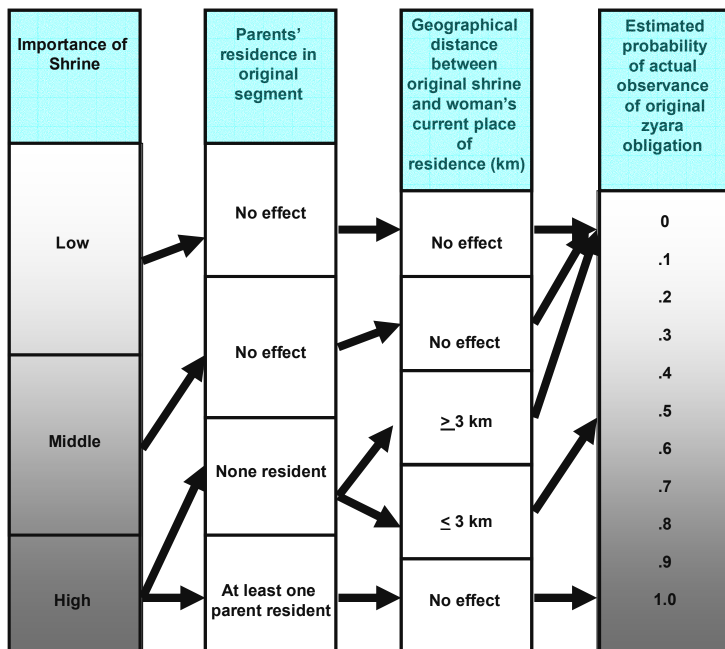
analyzed on the level of popular religion alone. On the one hand the very same dialectic underlies the secular structure of segmentation (where the opposition of complementary segments is resolved at the next level of segmentary inclusion). On the other hand it is on this dialectic that the interplay resolves between formal and popular Islam (which the saints straddle, as epitomes of the former and yet cornerstones of the latter) (van Binsbergen 1980a).



as always in the theory of probability, the probability p of any event taking place, is = 0 < p > 1

Fig. 1.7. A statistical model of the structure of local *zyara* in the valley of Sidi Mḥammad.[17]

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[17] For religious anthropology, this is an unusually powerful and exact statistical analysis, revealing pilgrimage behaviour as highly deterministic, dictated mainly by three basic variables, and rendered fairly precisely predictable on that basis. In the thesis work where these results were first presented (van Binsbergen 1970b, 1971a, *cf.* 1970a), the combination of quantitative religious data with a quantitative approach to Ḫumiri social organisation enabled me to propose even more sophisticated and deterministic mathematical models in the form of differential equations, not only of such religious action as pilgrimage but also of the distribution of interaction partners and marital partners over the local landscape. Such a quantifying ethnographic approach (not uncommon at the time, as demonstrated by the work of Jongmans 1968, 1973; Mitchell 1967, 1980; Meggitt 1965; and Colson 1967) also revealed the seminal influence of my

Another obvious dimension of the Ḫumiri data concerns the dialectics between socio-economic structure and the symbolic order (*cf.* van Binsbergen 1981b for a general theoretical discussion on this point; and Morris 1996: 164-176 for an appraisal). The embeddedness of most of the cult of saints, through patterns of local *zyara*, in a segmentary organizational structure of localized social units entrusted with material production, biological reproduction, and with the regulation of the social relations upon which these fundamental processes depend, would suggest that in the cult essential contradictions of production find expression, and are in themselves being reproduced. Too little could be said here about these contradictions (mainly: those between men and women; and between human patrons and clients) to indicate their relation to the cult of saints. Moreover, the virtual coincidence (Table 1.2) in Ḫumiriyya between the cultic regions as created by various types of *zyara*, and the area within which the biological reproduction of human population takes place (as indicated by the distances across which marriages are contracted) suggests that the relation between religion and societal reproduction operates at an even more profound level than the sheer underpinning of the structures of segmentary organization, and of authority, that govern the local subsistence economy. The saints' involvement in women's reproductive troubles points in the same direction. Marital relations, and more in general the tension between male and female, would seem to constitute a dominant axis in the Ḫumiri cult of saints.[18]

Meanwhile at least one other contradiction would have to be considered, that between the state-supported rural elite (administrative chiefs, officers of the unemployment relief work organization, teachers) and the peasants. The dialectics of their relationships must be understood in the light of the relation between the peasants' less and less viable subsistence economy (with its manifold links with the cult of saints), and the capitalist economy into which Tunisia is increasingly drawn – with as its latest local manifestation (our ethnographic

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first wife, the (bio-)physicist Henny van Rijn. The results reinforced my Durkheimian inclination; brought out the great extent to which religion is a by-product of social organisation; and enhanced my doubts, as a renegade Christian, as to the utility of the concept of religion as a primal socio-cultural phenomenon, autonomously, in its own right and *sui generis* – preparing me for the Marxist materialist approach that dominated my work on *Religious Change in Zambia* (1981b). However the thrust of such extreme *etic* objectification was checked when I changed the implicitly natural-science ideal of my early career with a more *Verstehende*, *emic*, personal, and existentially-internalised approach, from the late 1980s onward – largely under the influence of René Devisch 1984b, 1985a, 1985b, 1985c, 1987, 1990, 1993 and his Louvain School, and of his compatriot the Africanist and musician Patricia Saegerman, my second wife. However, this *emic* trend in my work was initially partly eclipsed by the lure of an historicising approach (represented by Ranger 1972, 1975a – *cf.* Ranger & Kimambo 1972; Ranger & Weller 1975), and of comparative mythology (greatly reinforced under the influence of Michael Witzel, from the early 2000s on, *cf.* Witzel 2001, 2012),

[18] *Cf.* Fernea & Fernea 1972; Dwyer 1978; Davis 1979. Davis' juxtaposition of pious men in Islam versus pious women in Mediterranean Christianity seems scarcely to apply to Ḫumiri popular Islam.

present here being 1968) the massive labour migration to Libya of Ḫumiri men in the 1970s. This interplay of competing relations of production seems to offer, finally, a setting for the persistence of Ḫumiri popular religion, with the cult of saints as its major manifestation, despite the inroad of formal Islam (*cf.* p. 587 below, n. 24). Popular religion lives on at least to the extent to which the non-capitalist local subsistence economy lives on – albeit that the symbolic order tends to either lag behind, or anticipate, the development of economic relations.

I shall, however, resist here the temptation of jumping to theoretical conclusions; these will hopefully be drawn elsewhere (van Binsbergen forthcoming (b)) at greater length and against a fuller background of historical and ethnographic data, and theoretical considerations.

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Chapter 2. Shrines, cults and society in North and Central Africa

A tentative comparative analysis

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For a century or more, anthropologists, historians and students of comparative religion have been writing on cults, oracles and on the shrines that tend to constitute the material focus of both. A considerable amount of research has been carried out on cults and oracles, in various parts of the world and within various theoretical approaches. We are confronted with a growing need to compare notes, particularly with the aim of arriving at such theoretical explicitness and accumulation as are still lacking in this field. Yet, so far, we have (to my knowledge) little in the way of useful and general definitions, and less of a systematic theory.[1] This is unfortunate especially since many of us believe the phenomena studied under these headings to play a pivotal role in society.

The purpose of this chapter is not in the least to go ahead and propound the general, systematic theory I hope we are all waiting for. I merely intend to search for a descriptive and comparative framework out of which such a theory may one day evolve. I shall use that simplest form of comparative analysis, in which an anthropologist compares two societies in which he has himself col-

[1] Such standard reference books as the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (Seligman & Johnson, 1930-1967), *The International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (Shills & Merton 1968) or Gould & Kolb's (1964) *Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, scarcely contain items on any of the central topics at the scientific meeting where this chapter was first presented: the ASA Conference on Regional Cults and Oracles (Annual Conference, Association of Social Anthropologists) Manchester, March-April 1976: cult, regional cult, shrine, oracle.

lected extensive data on the subject under study. Comparative studies move in and out of fashion, and anyway one could imagine a more sophisticated comparative approach than the one I adopt here (Köbben 1966, 1970). Simple comparison is used here mainly as a heuristic device, to highlight some of the theoretical problems, and the potential, in this field. For this purpose, it is immaterial that the two societies (the Ḫumiri of the highlands of N.W. Tunisia, and the Nkoya of the woodland plateau of Western Zambia) have been selected on rather trivial grounds: because I happen to know them.

To these limitations in theoretical pretensions and ethnographic scope, must be added those concerning subject matter. I propose to concentrate on the social-organisational aspects of shrines and cults, and largely ignore moral and symbolic aspects. The latter were intensely studied in my researches. However, social-structural aspects lend themselves more easily to generalised, summary description, and cross-cultural comparison. Behind this lurks however an enormous problem which I can only briefly indicate here.

Religion, including the types concerning us here, takes shape within the social process that goes on between signifying, interacting, moralising and manipulating individuals. It is one of the greatest promises in the religious anthropology of the last few decades, that it has begun to formulate approaches – *e.g.* in Victor Turner's work (1957, 1967, 1968a, 1968b, 1969) – which seek to interpret ritual in terms of the shifting and often inchoate social process, involving a highly specific setting of individuals whose interrelations and biographies are traced in great detail and time depth (extended case method).

This signals the emergence of alternatives to the hitherto dominant, Durkheimian heritage of interpreting ritual by reference to an abstract and rather immobile, total social-structural order.[2] When it comes to cross-cultural comparison, the very specificity of an extended-case approach to religious phenomena presents complex methodological problems, for which no solution has yet been worked out. For this reason, I shall presently remain within the safe grounds of the dominant tradition, and study religious and non-religious phenomena primarily as clearly definable, persistent and comparable institutions, elements of social order. This illusion of monolithic units of analysis conceals how the actual social process (as well as history on a larger scale) in various parts of the world works at cultural and environmental material so as to produce more variation, manipulation and innovation of both meaning and action, than the comparativist can ever take into account. If it is the specific, local social process, instead of the generalised institutions, that really matters in religion, then an institutional approach, comparative or not, is likely to yield insights in social structure more than in religion. Some of us have accepted this limitation gladly.[3] Others have indicated that here, precisely, lies the main short-

[2] Durkheim 1912; also *cf.* my book now in the press (f): *The Reality of Religion: Durkheim Revisited*.

[3] *E.g.* Gellner 1969: 138 and *passim*; van Binsbergen 1971b: 208 *f.* and forthcoming (b).

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coming of current religious anthropology (Geertz 1966: 42).

I shall first describe the social-structural aspects of shrines and cults among the Ḫumiris and the Nkoya, then proceed to the comparative and theoretical parts of this chapter's argument.

2.1. The Ḫumiris of Tunisia

2.2.1. Segmentation

The Ḫumiri highlands[4] form a system of narrow valleys, separated by wooded mountain ranges. Each valley contains a small number of villages (50 – 250 inhabitants each). Villages are surrounded by fields, and separated from each other by stretches of forest. Within each village, smaller units define themselves by: spatial clustering; by particular amenities (house, threshing-floor, spring, men's assembly ground (*raquba*)) exclusively used by one unit; by collective economic action (horticulture, animal husbandry, food preparation); by common recreation; and by common identity and a name. The smallest of these residential units is the individual house. A few houses together constitute a compound, which has its own threshing-floor. A few adjacent compounds constitute a hamlet, which has its own spring. A few neighbouring hamlets constitute a village, which has its own *raquba*. This amounts to a system of territorial segmentation. On various hierarchical levels, well-defined and non-overlapping units exist which are in segmentary opposition *vis-à-vis* similar units at the same level; on a higher level these opposing segments are united as belonging to one higher-order segment. Spatial lay-out and visible, exclusive attributes from house to *raquba* wholly define the system of territorial segmentation from the smallest unit up to the village level. Above the village level, two more local levels are operative in the modern Ḫumiri society: the valley (segmented into a number of villages) and the chiefdom, a colonial creation segmented into a number of valleys. On still higher levels lies the government administration, with its districts, provinces, and the national state.

The spatial arrangement of dwellings and the exclusive use of the characteristic attributes by their segments, demonstrate that this model of territorial segmentation corresponds with an implicit structuring in the Ḫumiri conceptual system. Yet the Ḫumiri explicit participants' model of social organisation is a different one. All territorial segments bear names, derived from an ancestor: Mayziyya (from Bu-Maza), Zrayqiyya (from Zarruq, 'the Blue One'), *etc*. Participants view their social organisation in terms of a segmentary system of patrilineal descent groups. Mythical ancestors associated with the highest segmentary

[4] van Binsbergen 1970a, 1970b, 1971a, 1971b, 1971c; Jongmans 1968, 1973; Demeerseman 1938-1939, 1939-1940, 1964; Souyris-Rolland 1949; Creyghton 1969, 1981; Hartong 1968.

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levels (chiefdom, valley, village) are, through a putative genealogical chain of an unspecified number of generations, linked to the historical ancestors (who died within four generations of the now living). The participants' ideology provides a skeleton model in which they rarely press for specific genealogical and residential details, and which is therefore allowed to be utterly non-consensual, contradictory, and historically inaccurate. The present-day function of the Ḫumiri unilineal segmentation model is mainly to comment on actual social relations. Claims with regard to rights of residence, land and assistance are peripheral to the unilineal model's application: these claims primarily spring from actual, close relationships and current transactions, involving the total bilateral kindred. Crucial relationships are only secondarily underpinned by reference to a genealogical charter, which is sufficiently flexible to be manipulated and altered along with the rapid shifts in the pattern of actual relationships. Such shifts are brought about by the competition for honour and informal leadership, factionalism, individual geographical mobility, marriages, people engaging in or dropping dyadic[5] contracts, *etc*. Genealogical manipulation, aided by the ideal of patrilateral parallel cousin marriage,[6] tends to conceal the actual historical diversity of people's origins under the convenient fiction of common patrilineal descent. Why should this fiction exist at all? It provides an idiom of kinship obligations, to support the actual need for close co-operation between members of territorial segments at various levels. At the lower levels (up to the hamlet), members of segments have common interests in the fulfilment of vital economic needs: domestic budgeting and food preparation (house), horticulture (compound), water (hamlet). Beyond this, there are common interests in terms of social relationships. Politics and conflict settlement mainly take place at village level and centre on the *raquba*.

In addition, local men, as bride-givers and bride-takers, share an interest in local women, most of whom marry within the valley; and even within the village (50%). Marriage is mostly (95%) virilocal. Adult men frequently move to join more profitable dyadic partners as neighbours, but these removals are mostly intra-village. Nowadays, most men, and almost half of the women, live and die in their village of birth, amongst people most of whom they have known all their lives.

Whether viewed as territorial or as unilineal descent segmentation, the segmentary alignment of groups, and the distribution of characteristic attributes at

[5] The concept of dyadic relationships, which has great applicability in Ḫumiri society (*cf*. Jongmans 1968, 1973) is taken here in the sense it has been introduced by Foster (1961, 1963).

[6] In two adjacent villages where I obtained a close to complete insight in the complex genealogical networks between the inhabitants, 65 marriages were in existence in 1968. of these, 10 (15%) were between effective agnates (people who can trace their genealogical relationship in distinct, patrilateral links; on the complex problems involved, *cf*. van Binsbergen 1970a, 1970b); out of these 10 marriages, only 5 (8% of 65) were with FFBD, the other 5 involved more distant agnatic links (van Binsbergen 1970b: 138).

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each segmentary level, is therefore pertinent to the total economic and social dynamics of Ḫumiri society.

As elsewhere in the world, segmentation is process as much as it is structure. Environmental, demographic, economic and local political factors determine at which segmentary level a given, named unit will function. As these factors vary over time, units acquire or lose personnel and functions, and this demands a redefinition of their segmentary relations *vis-à-vis* neighbouring segments. Segments are known to develop within a few decades from *e.g.* compounds to villages, thus dissociating themselves from the village of which they originally formed part. Likewise hamlets and villages can dwindle to compound and even house level. The outwards signs of these segmentary dynamics are not only changes in the spatial lay-out of houses within a valley, but also a redistribution of the other characteristic attributes: threshing-floors, springs, *raquba*s will be abandoned, or new ones created, as beacons in the altered segmentary structure.

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2.2.2. Shrines

Shrines come into this overall segmentary structure in a variety of ways.

In the Ḫumiri highlands, shrines vary from a venerated tree or source (marked by rows of stones and rags of textile tied in knots), via miniature huts built of large stones and arboreal material, to the white-washed, domed *qubba* well-known from throughout the Islamic world. For the Ḫumiri, shrines are associated with deceased human beings: saints. For almost any local shrine people can quote the name of the saint associated with it. A simple myth links saint and shrine: allegedly he lived there, was buried there, stopped there in the course of a journey, or the shrine was created upon relics brought from other shrines having such mythical connotations. Myths may also link various saints associated with the shrines in a valley: a saintly pantheon of close kinsmen and servants. But such myths are used inconsistently and without consensus, and they comprise only a selection of the many shrines in a valley. Therefore these myths only roughly represent the hierarchical, tree-like structure of segments by an analogous model of mythical relationships between the segments' saints. The myths quote as contemporaries of the saints, other saints and mythical ancestors.

Saints associated with local shrines lived in the mythical past, they rarely feature in the skeleton genealogies, and are not supposed to have descendants amongst present-day people (even if analytical historical reconstructions suggest the contrary). Yet people refer to the saints by kinship terms: *jaddi* ('grandparent'), *uboi* ('father'), *sidi* ('elder brother'), *lalla* ('elder sister') – the standard terms of address also used for unrelated, senior living people. Dealings with the local saints are usually characterised by an excited fondness rarely seen in the dealings between local living kinsmen.

Shrines feature as additional characteristic attributes of territorial segments from the lowest level upwards. A minority of houses have a tiny shrine as their characteristic segmentary attribute. Most compounds, and all higher-level segments up

to the valley level, have a neighbouring shrine attached to them. No shrines are attached to the higher administrative levels from the chiefdom upwards.

The association between shrine and segment takes a number of expressions. Individual households in the segment dedicate meals to the saint. Individuals enter into contractual relationships with the saint: they promise him an offering (candles, incense, a flag, an animal sacrifice) in exchange for a major saintly service (cure from illness and barrenness, protection of domestic animals, a job). Members of the segment may visit the shrine individually, particularly on occasion of childbirth, marriage, departure for military service, illness. Twice a year the women of the segment pay a collective visit to the shrine, directed by the senior women, who also co-ordinate the day-to-day economic activities by which the segment is bound together.

Village and valley shrines have a twice-yearly festival, when the shrine structure is repaired, and sheep and cattle are sacrificed and distributed. On this occasion all male members of the segment assemble for some days around the shrine to 'recreate' themselves with tea drinking, card playing, music and ecstatic dancing (see 2.2.3.). Around the same time, three sets of women pay compulsory visits to the shrine: all present female members of the segment; all women born into this segment but since married or otherwise migrated to a different segment at the same level; and women who have belonged to a different segment since birth but who have entered into a personal relationship with the shrine's saint at one stage in their lives (*e.g.* a visit to cure barrenness) – or who have inherited such a relationship from their mothers or mothers-in-law.

In years of extreme drought another collective shrine ritual can be enacted for the shrines at the highest segmentary levels: an animal sacrifice to request rain.[7]

Only valley shrines have a shrine keeper. He performs a ritual at the shrine on Thursdays, co-ordinates the festival and receives a share of the offerings. Ideally a close agnate of a former incumbent to this office, the shrine keeper is usually recruited from among a somewhat larger set, including close matrilateral and affinal kinsmen of a predecessor.

*Raquba*s are always located within view of the major village and valley shrines, and the latter's saints are frequently invoked to strengthen oaths; in very grave cases parties will visit the shrine to swear upon the sacred objects therein.

Finally, many shrines attached at levels from the hamlet upwards are surrounded by cemeteries to bury, again, three sets of people: present members of the segment; people born into the segment but emigrated; and people born elsewhere but tied to the shrine and the segment by a family tradition, based on emigration in a near preceding generation. Usually, the cemetery and the

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[7] This ritual is called *uriyya*. More frequently it is directed at the Prophet Muḥammad, who otherwise is scarcely a subject of direct ritual action among the Ḫumiris, although he features in pious songs. At the festival of his birth (*Mawlad al-Nabi*), a dish of *aṣīda* (meal stir-boiled in water to a stiff porridge) is dedicated to him, just as other dishes are regularly dedicated to the local saints.

festival function of the shrine are spatially apart. One higher–level segment has then at least two shrines attached to it; these may be associated with the same saint and bear the same name.

Ḫumiri shrines appear to have the following social-structural functions.

They reinforce the system of territorial segmentation. This is a dialectical function, integrative and divisive at the same time. Within one segment, the shrine ritual clearly makes for integration. It supports the demarcation of the segment's social group *vis-à-vis* the outside world, reinforces the collective identity, corroborates (though not: legitimates) leadership, makes for a religious focus and religious collective action in addition to the collective action focused on characteristic attributes (from house to *raquba*) with direct economic and social connotations. But true to the segmentary principle, all this implies divisiveness with regard to the relation between two neighbouring segments at the same level. Myths emphasise rivalry between saints whose shrines are of equal segmentary importance. One cannot visit or celebrate their shrines on the same day. Members of rival segments compete over the power and splendour of their respective saints, shrines and festivals; and negative stereotypes between rival segments are phrased in reference to their saints and shrines. On a higher level, however, this divisiveness tends to be balanced by the fact that rival segments together constitute a higher segment, at the village and valley level, where they are united again by a common shrine and common ritual. This is all the more important since on the segmentary level of the valley, no non-religious characteristic attribute exists as focus of collective activities and identification (cemeteries providing a borderline case). However, beyond the valley level even shrine cults fail to create much integration of highest-level segments; thus valleys and chiefdoms oppose each other as segments without effective means of identification and of collective action at any higher segmentary level.

In so far as the Ḫumiri shrine cult stipulates not only ritual for members of segments collectively, but also ritual behaviour of individuals *vis-à-vis* shrines of other segments than these individuals belong to at any level, the shrine cult also cuts across the system of territorial segmentation. Festivals, home-pilgrimages of out-married women, optional visits of individuals, and incidental burials at distant shrines, bring together individuals of non-adjacent segments who would otherwise have very little opportunity to come into contact and develop more permanent relationships.

These cross-cutting contacts are very important. Although the segmentary arrangement of relationships (in which geographical distance is a crucial factor) regulates most aspects of social life, there remains a need for more distant, dyadic contacts which may offer resources locally not available: friendship untroubled by day-to-day close scrutiny of partners and third parties; marriage partners; information on and access to economic opportunities and specialist services elsewhere. Cross-cutting shrine ritual helps to open up and sustain this interlocal field of social relations. Moreover, cross-cutting shrine ritual forms the main

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opportunity to remain informed on kinsmen in distant places, and to assert one's claims on them. The pilgrim from an other valley not just visits the shrine but also his (more typically her) kinsmen. She imposes herself as someone who has latent claims locally, who belongs also there. This is particularly the case for an out-marrying woman. Ḫumiri marriages rarely end in divorce, and women rarely remarry. In theory a woman has a right to her parents' land equal to her resident brother's right.[8] These rights are allowed to become dormant when she marries into a different segment (even if within the same village). But by coming back, annually, to her original segment's shrine, and bringing her children, she asserts these rights, and introduces her children to their maternal uncle who in future may not be able to turn them away if need forces them to ask his support. A similar argument applies to those who keep visiting a distant shrine in view of a personal relationship with the saint, thus keeping alive a memory of having migrated from his segment in a previous generation. At the same time, the distant pilgrimage implies a challenge to the local segment to which these pilgrims now belong. It brings out that they are not wholly dependent upon their present segment, that they have still claims and obligations (both ritual and otherwise) elsewhere. Thus the distant pilgrimage assumes the character of a declaration of independence which is resented by the fellow-members of the pilgrims' present segment. Home pilgrimages (reinforced by the idea of heavy supernatural penalties in case of neglect) form almost the only occasion, the only pretext if you like, on which husband and in-laws allow an out-married woman to go and visit her kinsmen in her original segment. Other visits, lacking such supernatural sanctions, are taken as indications of her marriage breaking down. Similarly, men are bound to their segments on sanction of arousing the saint's anger in case of emigration. Cases of psychosomatic affliction in men and women are often diagnosed[9] as caused by a saint who feels slighted by people moving away from him or failing to celebrate his festival.

Clearly this set-up has great potential for the symbolic expression of cleavages in the local group and amongst kinsmen, in the idiom of the saints of present and original segments. This falls outside our present scope. I should however emphasise that no local saint (nor any other supernatural agent except the High God, Allah), is believed ever to exert direct moral censure on the interaction between the living.

The saint is considered a powerful ally, who can be mobilised through ritual and promises of ritual. He can be insulted by perjury, attacks on pilgrims, failure to honour promises to him – and then he will strike. Not visiting his shrine

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[8] Ḫumiri inheritance law differs on this point from Qur΄anic law.

[9] In the Ḫumiri highlands, divination of causes of illness is performed by various types of specialists : prominent members of the ecstatic cult, particularly those attached to the cult's local lodge (*cf.* 2.3); Qur΄anic teachers (*maddab*), of whom a few live scattered over the Ḫumiri area; migrating diviners who once a year visit the area and who are supposed to descent from non-Ḫumiri saints; and finally diviners (*takaza*) whose technical skills have no special religious connotations, and who are mainly found near the weekly markets.

invokes punishment, but neglecting obligations *vis-à-vis* people living near his shrine does not. Symbolically, the saintly cult does provide an idiom to express and mend breaches in human relations – but only indirectly so.

2.2.3. The ecstatic cult

Every member of Ḫumiri society engages in the cult of local saints, although women much more frequently and deeply than men. In addition to this cult complex, a sizeable proportion of adult men, and much fewer women, have been initiated into a religious specialism (*faqīr, drūish*) whose main manifestation is their entering into trance or ecstasy during public, ritual musical sessions. Upon his initiation, every *faqir* has selected, subconsciously, one cult song (*ṭriq*) out of about twenty available in the area. Only with this song and the proper musical accompaniment will he be able to enter into trance. The lyrics feature local saints, more universal Islamic saints, and other supernatural entities venerated throughout the Islamic world (Sidi ᶜAbd al-Qadir, Sidi Ḥamad, Umm' Lehana, the Prophet Muḥammed, Allah). This cult complex is the Ḫumiri variant of Sufism (Islamic mysticism). Most *fuqra* are considered members of one of several Islamic brotherhoods (foremost the well-known Qadiriyya) that have regional centres or lodges (*zawiyya*) in the Ḫumiri highlands and in the town of El-Kef,[10] and that have ramifications throughout the Islamic world. Nowadays, these cults' organization is extremely weak locally. Few *fuqra* have in fact visited the lodge and have been initiated there. Most have acquired their status and skills through personal training by members in the course of sessions held in the villages; only a minority of such mentors maintain themselves close relations with the lodge.

Village *faqir* sessions are held on two occasions: to add splendour to saintly ritual, and to diagnose and treat affliction. On all occasions the more experienced *fuqra*, while in trance, may divine on such issues as saintly intervention, imminent death, and disrupted relationships within the segment organising the session. When affliction is the occasion, the session may start off a process by which one afflicted is gradually initiated into *faqir*ship. Underneath such affliction (marked by psychosomatic, neurotic or psychotic symptoms) severe psycho-social tensions can be identified, bearing on the patients' immediate consanguineal and affinal relationships. However, such crises are neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for *faqir*ship.[11]

Outside the lodge, *fuqra* mostly perform alone or in very small numbers. *Fuqra*

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[10] A small town 100 km south of the Ḫumiri highlands.

[11] Extensive statistical analysis (van Binsbergen 1971a) suggests occurrence of *faqir*ship amongst a man's close matrilateral kinsmen as the single main factor in the recruitment of *faqirs* – a fact which, given the 'patrilineal ideology of this society, reminds us of Fortes' classic generalisation claiming

> 'interests, rights and loyalties (...) that rely on religion (...) to be generally tied (...) to the complementary line of filiation' (Fortes 1953: 34).

have no common identity, never act as a group, and display no preference for intermarriage or for dyadic contracts amongst themselves rather than with non-*fuqra*. But the ecstatic ritual does catalyse other group processes. *Faqir* session are freely attended by all members of the segment that has invited the *faqir*; the session has a rallying function. The lodge is a building located in the village where the descendants live of the founder of a local branch of a brotherhood. Though most *fuqra* are now outside lodge control, there is still a rudimentary organisation operating in the area. In each valley near the lodge there is one representative who frequents the lodge and the establishment at El-Kef. this representative regularly visits the villages in his area to collect small donations and occasionally stages *faqir* sessions. The lodge leader does the same; in addition he has a large practice as a diviner, diagnosing affliction as caused by saints or land spirits (*jenun*). He also stages the actual treatment for the more severe affliction cases. This treatment takes place twice a year at the lodge. Patients from all over the area, who have previously visited the lodge for diagnosis, come and bring animals for sacrifice; they will spend the night being led into ecstasy, in a bid to allay their possessing spirit. In the lodge ritual, local Ḫumiri saints are ignored and all attention focuses on universal Islamic saints, spirits, the Prophet, and Allah.

2.2.4. Historical and political aspects

Ḫumiri shrines and the ecstatic cult can only be understood against the background of universal Islam – of which Ḫumiri religion is a localised, popular version not unlike the ones encountered amongst peasants in other Islamised parts of the world.

The proliferation of *faqir*ship independent from the lodge; the substitution, outside the lodge, of universal Islamic supernatural agents by local Ḫumiri ones; the weak integration of local *faqir*ship into the international brotherhood organisations: these are all manifestations of a dominant feature of Ḫumiri society – the strong tendency towards local particularism and autonomy. Distant parent units (be they distant segments from which people emigrate; distant lodges; or distant parental shrines) are only for a short time acknowledged in a hierarchical relation *vis-à-vis* their social offspring.

Not unlike the High Atlas as described by Gellner (1969), Ḫumiri society is the scene of a continuous battle between ideology and historical truths: the actual history of diverse origins, migrations, dependence, offspring, – upon which ideology imposes a system of segmentary opposition and integration, claiming common origins, mutual equality between segments performing similar functions, competition for relative autonomy and equal segmentary status irrespective of historical, genealogical ties. In such a segmentary context, religious power and religious foci apparently tend to be atomistic and unrelated.

Local saints and independent *fuqra* are more in line with the local social struc-

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ture than universal Islamic supernatural agents, and an international formal brotherhood organisation. The same pattern applies to the saints themselves. In so far as they were historical local residents,[12] they seem to have been immigrant adherents to a more strict and formal version of Islam than prevailing in the Ḫumiri highlands: representatives, mainly, of the various Islamic brotherhoods that have time and again attempted to replace, in the rural Maghreb (N.W. Africa), the local popular version of Islam by their own, more formal variant.[13] Caught in the dynamics of local Ḫumiri society, these pious strangers after their deaths ended up as cornerstones of the very popular religion they came to transform.

Once the saints, through shrines, had become attached to segments, the localising principle again explains much of the specific local history of the distribution of shrines over modern segments. Detailed historically study of a few adjacent valleys since the early 19th century reveals how this distribution was brought about by fission, fusion and migration mainly in the 19th century CE. Small family groups would, for political and ecological reasons, leave their localised clan segment and settle in a different valley. They would be in need of a shrine, as a focus of identity and ritual. In case they immigrated as clients, dependent upon their hosts, they would have to orientate themselves towards their hosts' local shrines. But when they arrived as an autonomous immigrant group, securing land rights through purchase, exchange or conquest, then they would create a new shrine, often as branch of the shrine of their parent segment. In the latter case the shrine would be erected upon relics brought from the parent shrine, and be given the same name. Initially, immigrants of either type would keep visiting the festivals of their parent segment but as the immigrants became more securely settled locally, this contact would be allowed to lapse, and one would concentrate on local festivals as a sign of the immigrants' incorporation into an other valley. As a group's size, power and wealth increased, its festival and shrine would be made more important and take precedence over other shrines in the valley. Likewise, decline of the local group would lead to its shrine losing prominence. In the past the segmentary, localising tendencies created local saints out of Islamic 'missionary' strangers, and demolished, after initial success, such lodge-type cult organisations as these strangers may have come to found locally. This process is likely to have been going on for many centuries. No doubt ecstatic ritual has a very ancient history locally,[14] but the main present-day Ḫumiri lodge was founded in the 1880s only. In its early decades,

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[12] Not all of them were: *e.g.* Sidi ^{c}Abd Allah and Sidi Salah are Ḫumiri representatives of pan-Maghrebine saints; *cf.* Marçais & Guiga 1925.

[13] *Cf.* Bel 1938; Brunel 1926; Depont & Coppolani 1897, *cf.* 1898; Montet 1909; André 1956; Anawati & Gardet 1961; van Binsbergen 1980a

[14] The ecstatic element in North-African religious brotherhoods is said to derive from three sources : early Islam in the Middle East (*cf.* Molé 1963); ecstatic cults in sub-Saharan Africa (*cf.* Brunel 1926; Trimingham 1965); and autochthonous ecstatic cults dating back to Antiquity (*cf.* Bertholon & Chantre 1913). In addition to anthropological studies, much more historical research is needed on this point.

the lodge had formal representatives in many surrounding valleys. These officials organised impressive annual collections of tribute, to be sent on to El-Kef via the twice-annual convention at the lodge. Moreover, some of them were in charge of the major local shrines.

With the limited effectiveness of non-religious conflict-regulation agencies (peace councils, *jama'a*, whose members were often themselves parties to conflicts), these pacifist officials intervened in battles and provided a venue for peace negotiations between feuding groups. In less than a century, the economic and political functions of the lodge have virtually disappeared. This has been not merely as an effect of localising segmentary tendencies, which are inimical to an interlocal organisation. For in the same period, the segmentary system was confronted with a unifying, bureaucratic power complex of such military and organisational superiority, that the very dynamics of feuding, conquest and ecological competition, the backbones of the segmentary system, were cut out. Up to the French colonisation (1881) the Ḫumiris had succeeded in keeping the Tunis central government out – although occasionally tribute was exacted by armed tax-collectors, who often were associated with Islamic brotherhoods (*e.g.* the Shabbiyya). In an until then acephalous polity, the first chiefs ('shaykh') were appointed in 1883 from amongst locals *outside* the politico-religious power complex of lodge and major shrines. Though backed by a colonial garrison, it took the chiefs a quarter of a century to effectively impose the central power they represented upon the segmentary system, banning warfare, and usurping the conflict-regulatory functions of the shrine keepers and lodge. As a means towards both power and prestige, the colonial and post-colonial chiefs gained control over the shrines by pushing poor kinsmen, their own clients, to be appointed as shrine keepers; and by opposing (aided by governmental regulations against the brotherhoods,[15] the lodge representatives and leaders whilst allowing their own client kinsmen to embark upon careers as village *fuqra* unattached to the lodge. The lodge organisation collapsed partly in response to segmentary localisation, but mainly as a result of the segmentary system being overcome by a more powerful central government.

Under colonialism, the banning of warfare and the increase of population froze the segmentary dynamics to a point where migration, and assimilation of immigrants, could only take place any more at the lowest segmentary level: the individual household. Instead of movable tents, dwellings became immobile stone constructions, and the distribution of groups over land was fixed to the situation at the turn of the century. After 1930 no new shrines were created, merely some hut shrines were embellished to become *qubba*s. If the modern Ḫumiri highlands display segmentation and distribution of shrines, mainly along territorial instead of descent lines, this may be largely due to the colonisation of the area. The colonial impact upon the area's politico-social structure

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[15] For the early colonial era, *cf.* Ling 1967: 59; for the post-colonial era, *cf.* Speight 1966.

is particularly manifest in the preposterous fact that modern Ḫumiri territorial segmentation crucially affects all aspects of life except politics.[16]

One wonders why the lodge, deprived of most of its political and economic powers, has retained and most likely further developed the affliction aspect. What are the links between colonisation, peripheral stagnation, individual suffering and an idiom of ecstasy and mystical liberation? Whilst statistical analysis shows that Ḫumiri *fuqra* are not significantly deprived in wealth and prestige, as compared to their non-*faqir* neighbours, is it possible that their performances enact a collective deprivation syndrome of Ḫumiri society: colonial experience internalised (*cf.* Duvigneau 1968; van Binsbergen 1971d)? Given the great local time depth of ecstatic religion (e.g. Vandenbroeck 1997), such a presentist explanation is unconvincing. Or is it rather that the affliction aspect was harmless enough from the viewpoint of the colonial and post-colonial central power, to be endured – in contrast with the lodge's political aspects (*cf.* section 2.3.5, below)?

2.3. The Nkoya of Zambia

2.3.1. The Nkoya village

Nkoya is an ethnic and linguistic label applying to about 50,000 people inhabiting the wooded plateau of Western Zambia.[17] At the village level, their society shows much of the familiar Central-African pattern. In addition to migrant labour, the economy hinges on shifting horticulture with a fringe of animal husbandry wherever the fly-infested environment allows this. Villages are small: up to a hundred inhabitants, but usually a score or less. Villages continually emerge, mature and decline in response to ecological, demographic and social vicissitudes. The rural male career model stipulates the competition for village leadership and glorious titles. This causes senior men belonging to different villages to compete for patrilateral, matrilateral and affinal junior kin (no matter how remotely related) as co-residing followers. In most other Central-African societies bilateral tendencies are concealed under a formal matrilineal ideology; the Nkoya however are explicitly bilateral, which amounts to children having equal claims concerning support, residence and land on a rather large pool of geographically scattered bilateral kindred, including remote and putative kinsmen (*bathukulu*, 'grandfathers'). Marriage is unstable, many marriages end in divorce, and successive marriages are common practice. Therefore both women and junior men (up to their forties) tend to live in a number of villages successively, staying on for a number of years as long as they

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[16] Apart from the competition for honour and informal leadership of lower segments – which is rather futile in comparison with the enormous power invested in the local representatives of the central government and the national political party.

[17] *Cf.* van Binsbergen 1972a, 1974a, 1974b, 1974c, 1975; Clay 1945; McCulloch 1951; Mainga 1969; Anonymous n.d.; further see my publications on the Nkoya as listed in the end bibliography of this book especially 1992b, 2012a, 2014b, and in press (a). The population figure refers to the original time of writing, 1976.

are effectively attached to senior men, and moving on (after divorce, death, disruption of good relationships with their patrons) when local support is failing or when better opportunities arise elsewhere. Adults rarely live and even more rarely die in the place where they were born. The cultural and ecological similarity in the wider area and a clan system providing means of identification beyond traceable or putative genealogical ties, allow individual geographical mobility (in the pursuit of marriage and clientship) to cut across ethnic and linguistic boundaries, over several hundred kilometres.

With only moderate exaggeration the Nkoya village could be characterised as a small, ephemeral conglomerate of strangers who have not grown up together, are genealogically heterogeneous, and are ready to leave as soon as misfortune befalls them locally and / or they can get better opportunities elsewhere, and are unlikely to die in each other's midst.[18] At the same time, people thrown together in a village share vital interests: in land, the production and distribution of food, a measure of harmony in day-to-day interaction, assistance in individual life crises, conflict regulation to mitigate internal strife and to prevent sorcery, and finally the maintenance (through food exchanges, mutually visited ceremonies, and marital ties) of good relationships with other villages in order to create a pool out of which material support and personnel can be drawn in case village survival is in danger.

How are these vital interests served? First, the senior membership (headman, elders, elder women) spend, in exchange for economic and prestige benefits, most of their time in organising and checking the social process in the desired direction. Secondly, an ideological construction counteracts the heterogeneity and opportunism of individual village membership. In terms of this ideology, all members of the village are close kinsmen. Precise genealogical details, and other historical facts such as historical slave status of part of the membership, are suppressed. The ideology has elaborate religious aspects. Nkoya belief that in addition to the actual living membership, a village's affairs are the concern of all deceased former members both of this village and of all villages from which ever members were drawn. Whatever their names and wherever buried, these ancestors (*mipashi*) are held to keep the affairs of the living in constant scrutiny and to dish out success and health, respectively failure and illness, commensurate to the living people's performance.

2.3.2. The village shrine

Various actions and material substances allow for communication between the living and the death: beer and meat stock; application of white meal, clay, cloth, or water; divination; clapping of hands; prayer. The main material focus for rituals involving these elements is the village shrine (*chihanda, mushuwa*), an inconspicuous shrub or forked pole situated at the centre of the village, near the men's shelter which is the organisational headquarters of the village.

[18] For a similar view of Luapula villages in N.E. Zambia, *cf.* Cunnison 1956.

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Any restoration or enlargement of the village's strength and unity forms occasion for a small ritual at the shrine: childbirth, return after long absence, the tracing of a distant kinsman and potential co-resident of whose existence one was not aware, the settlement of internal conflict, recovery from illness that was diagnosed as caused by the ancestors, success in hunting, *etc*. Ancestors are prayed to at the shrine in cases of illness.

Very rarely, named ancestors are addressed; this is only the case if divination has pointed at a recently deceased as causing the illness. In all other cases, the supernatural entities associated with the shrine are addressed as a nameless collectivity, or as 'Thou, our ancestor'. Name-inheriting ritual constitutes the most elaborate collective ritual in which the Nkoya village shrine plays a part. On all other occasions only current members of the village (and migrants on visit) take part in the ritual. No outsider is under obligation to visit the village shrine and make an offering. But in the name-inheriting rituals, for which a beer party and nocturnal dance are staged, members of surrounding villages in the same and adjacent valleys participate in great number (up to several hundred, if the title of a chief or senior headman is to be inherited).[19] In addition to local visitors, geographically distant members of the extended bilateral kindred of the deceased come and participate in the ritual; many of these have never actually resided in the village in question but have latent claim of membership there, whilst others may once have belonged to the village but moved away – often because they were in conflict with the former, now deceased headman whose title they might now inherit. After long deliberations a heir is appointed by the elders so assembled, and inaugurated at the shrine.

The village shrine forms the main focus of village identity and autonomy, legitimates village authority, and is the material focus of a device to enforce conformity and loyalty by reference to supernatural sanctions. No village can do without a shrine. The ritual of planting a shrine by the headman makes the selection of a site for a new village definitive. New village sites are occupied on two occasions: when after the death of a headman the whole village moves away; and as a result of fission, usually followed by attracting geographically distant followers from other villages than the one that has split. On all occasions village shrines are created directly from forest material, and no relic from the parent village's shrine is brought to the new site. Nor is there any other way in which Nkoya village shrines become associated with each other or incorporated into a wider structure. The nameless shrine comes into being and falls into decay along with the material structure of the village.

2.3.3. The valley and its shrine

The cult complex of the village shrine mainly refers to communal life. Its eco-

[19] Cf. van Binsbergen 1990c. In the area, the only other occasions bringing together this number of people, are girls' puberty ceremonies, and burials (*cf.* van Binsbergen 2003b: ch. 3, and in press (a).

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logical connotations are limited to hunting; horticulture, the land, rain are outside the scope of this ritual complex.[20]

Ignoring such supralocal organisational devises as have been superimposed by the Lozi (Barotse) and British colonisation of the Nkoya area (*cf.* section 3.5.), Nkoya society has few effective organisational levels above the village level. The main named territorial unit besides the village is the valley, which takes its name from the river flowing through it. Rivers yield great quantities of fish in the wet season. Near the river, the wet gardens of the valley's villages lie close to each other; they are rich in yield but cannot be expanded, and therefore are heavily contested. The less fertile, dry gardens are situated around the villages and further uphill, as clearings in the forest which separates valleys from each other. Villages are located halfway the gentle slopes. They are connected by paths along and across the river. Most day-to-day interaction of an economic ritual or recreational nature, and most marital ties, of a village are confined to the other villages in the same valley. While a chief is appointed over a number of adjacent valleys, each valley has a sub-chief, whose main function is the regulation of such conflicts (including occasional referral to the distant Local Court) as could not be settled within the village. Thus the valley is the highest effective social and ecological unit in Nkoya society; its inhabitants have a certain density of interaction, social and economic common interests, common identity and a name.

A valley shrine cult exists which has primarily reference to the valley's ecology. The cult focuses on the grave of the most recently deceased, most senior headman or chief of the valley. The place (in the midst of the previous, deserted chiefly village) is marked by a pole.[21]

In years when the first rains are delayed or stop too soon, the sub-chief and two or three other senior headmen of the valley visit the shrine, clap hands, and ask the deceased and the High God (Nyambi) for rain. To make their need clear, they pour

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[20] By ecological I mean all activities (and the accompanying cognitive processes) by which Man acts upon, structures and transforms his natural, non-human environment, so as to create for himself the material basis of human society (food, shelter, materials, skills, technology *etc*.; van Binsbergen 1981b: 239 *f.*). Among the Nkoya, the ecology is mainly the domain of royal shrine cults, cf. van Binsbergen 1979a, 1981b: ch. 3.

[21] In the second half of the 2nd mill. CE, until the advent of the Kololo from Southern Africa in the course of the *mfecane* upheaval of the early 19th c. CE, socio-political structures throughout Western Zambia seem to have been fairly similar (van Binsbergen 1981b, 1992b), resembling those prevailing in what was to be Nkoyaland, East of the Zambezi Flood Plain, even after the Kololo established their rule – and throughout Central Zambia. The Kololo transformation of Flood Plain society produced the Lozi and Barotseland / Bulozi, for which major royal shrines have been described as priest-administered venues of divine consultation for kings, aristocrats and commoners, and as places of rain-calling (Frazer 1918: II, 536 *f.*, based on Beguin 1903); they are also places where the standard four-tablet divination found all over Southern Africa can be found to be in operation (van Binsbergen 2012: 269, Fig. 8.4, with references). There are indications (*e.g.* the Nkoya collection of oral traditions *Likota lya Bankoya*, I, 6 *f.* – see van Binsbergen 1988d: and 1992b) that a similar situation once obtained in Nkoyaland, but in over forty years I have never witnessed any other action at chief's shrines there than people respectfully bringing the royal salute, and no four-tablet divination except (and well received locally) when administered by myself.

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water on the grave and display seeds or faded seedlings. No other people share in the ritual or visit the shrine at other times. No other ritual is performed for this deceased headman. Not the valley shrine, but the shrine of the last-living chief's village features in chiefly succession ritual. No ritual (except a greeting prayer) is performed either for the other deceased headmen whose burial shrines one may come across if their deaths were yet recent enough to prevent these traces from being completely swallowed by forest regeneration.

2.3.4. Non-ancestral cults of affliction

Besides village and valley shrines a third type of shrines exist: shrines erected and owned by individual specialists. These specialists fall into two main categories: ecological specialists (hunters, fishermen, honey-collectors, ironworkers), and those who, as leaders or adepts, belong to one of the many non-ancestral cults of affliction existing in the area. It is on the latter type that I shall concentrate now.

It is relatively rare for illness and other misfortune to be attributed to a troubling ancestor who can be approached through village shrine ritual. Besides such recognised causes as sorcery and forest beings, for which specialist treatments exist, a large and increasing number of affliction cases is diagnosed as being caused by vague and rather impersonal 'disease principles' (or 'spirits'). In the Nkoya area, at least twenty disease principles are distinguished; some major ones are: *Biyaya, Kasheba, Mayimbwe, Songo, Muwa, Bituma, Mwendapanci.*[22] Each principle is the subject of a cult. A local senior adept of the cult diagnoses whether a person's illness has been caused by the cult's disease principle; if so, the senior adept may provide minor treatment to alleviate the affliction, or, more typically, stage a heal-

[22] Many cult songs are bilingual (*e.g.* Nkoya / Luvale, Nkoya / Mbunda); adepts and leaders of most cults are drawn from among several of the many ethnic groups of Western Zambia, although most cults are considered to originate from one such ethnic group. I did not specifically investigate the meaning, etymology and provenance of these names. Some are completely transparent in the light of the local languages. *E.g.* in Nkoya and neighbouring languages, *mwenda panci* literally means 'you move while down to earth', and this exactly decribes the associated dance: the adept sits on the ground and moves forward in impulsive jerks. Likewise *Bituma* means 'sent it' in Nkoya, and is the equivalent of the literal meaning of *evangelium*, Latinised Greek: 'the good message'. The other names are largely obscure also to the local people and even to the adepts. I would not be surprised if on further research most of them could be shown to go back to foreign originals from the Indian Ocean coast or even from South Asia (*cf.* below, p. 394n), reducing the transparent local meaning to popular etymologies. Something similar could be argued to be at work with Singhalese *mahabera* becoming Nkoya *mukupere* (without clear Bantu etymology), 'hour-glass drum'; general South Asian *Skanda* (god of war, ultimately associated with the Macedonian king Alexander the Great) becoming Nkoya *Shikanda, etc.* This is not the place to explore this point any further. Considering the apparent Buddhist associations surrounding *Bituma* (*e.g.* the cult of the lotus / waterlily; see below, ch. 10), I see a distinct possibility that the Songo cult goes back to the Mahayana Buddhist term of शून्यता *Śūnyatā* (in Sanskrit; in Pali: सुञ्ञता *Suññatā*), 'sacred emptiness', widespread throughout South and East Asia. I also suggest that the West African epic and legendary king we know under the name of Sunyata, might be another trace of Buddhist influence on the African Atlantic coast; gyrating emptiness is a theme not only in that epic (Jansen 1995) but also in the cosmogony of the Dogon of Mali (Griaule 1966; Griaule & Dieterlen 1965).

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ing session (*ngoma*) during which the patient (through dancing, singing, music, sweating baths, private therapeutic conversations, manipulation of the leader's paraphernalia, and ecstasy) is initiated to become an adept of the cult. Often the ecstatic ritual serves as both diagnosis and treatment. Through the ritual the patient acknowledges his special relation *vis-à-vis* the disease principle, honouring and placating the latter so as to be troubled no longer. Once initiated, the adept may continue to visit sessions and may begin to diagnose and treat others.

Cult sessions are held in the novice's or the leader's village. In the former case a newly erected cult shrine is the focus of the session. Musicians and a chorus are recruited in the same or neighbouring villages. Beer and the specialist's fee are furnished by the sponsor, usually a senior kinsman or the spouse of the novice, who in most cases is female. Neighbours and kinsmen may attend in smallish numbers, seldom more than a score. The whole setting suggests a social drama in which tensions and cleavages in crucial social relationships in the village and the kindred are brought to the fore and ritually resolved. This is in fact the case, but a discussion falls outside the scope of this chapter.

The various cults of affliction follow this general pattern whilst differing in details: paraphernalia, texts and music of the songs, vegetal medicines used, form and adornment of the leader's shrine, specific ideas on the nature and symptomatic manifestations of their particular illness principle, *etc*. Almost all women and many men have been initiated in one cult, many in several. All cults of this type now occurring among the Nkoya are considered to be relatively recent innovations, which, only in the 20th century CE, have been either introduced from surrounding areas or developed locally. They have spread like fashions or epidemics, quickly gaining momentum in a wide area, losing vigour soon, to be overtaken by a similar cult only a few years later.

A combination of characteristics enables these cults to spread rapidly, even across linguistic and ethnic boundaries, as they have been doing in Western Zambia.[23] Affliction is attributed to abstract, impersonal supernatural entities, which are relatively free from reference to local social-structural or ritual specificities. Contrary to other locally prevailing interpretations of illness, the cults have an emphatically *a-moral* nature: misfortune is explained not in terms of malice, guilt or neglect (as in the case of sorcery and ancestral affliction), but in terms of accidental possession by an unknown entity with whom one has had no relation previously. The cults therefore offer a venue for healing and collective ritual without disrupting local relations by the search for a culprit. The cult's main symbolic idiom is easily understood, lying in line of the ancestral and chiefly ritual throughout Central Africa. Esoteric knowledge, or complex mental or bodily techniques which it takes years to acquire, do not come in.

[23] A much more developed example from outside the Nkoya area is the Nzila sect, the bureaucratised healing cult (claiming nearly 100,000 adepts), which developed out of the vision of Chief Chana in 1940 (Muntemba 1972).

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These are some of the factors explaining the great receptivity of the modern Nkoya and their neighbours to these cults of affliction.

Most of the non-ancestral cults of affliction described here, have only the most rudimentary organisation. This fact may largely explain why each separate cult subsides quickly. Diffusion through individual adepts who after mastering the cult's idiom establish themselves as leaders makes it possible for these cults to expand over a large area without any organization above the local level. There are however minimal organisational requirements. A sufficient number of adepts must be available locally to form a chorus; these adepts must be mobilised to attend the session and must be prepared to accept the leader's authority during the session. Virtually every session is devoted to recruitment of new adepts, of whom the leader keeps thinking as his or her own patients - although, once the fees have been paid, they will only meet at sessions if they live in each other's proximity, and even then rarely. Whilst the sessions have a rallying function for non-adept attendants, there are no indications that adepts, as such, have a tendency to develop, outside ritual, closer relationships among themselves, or with the leader, than with non-adepts. Yet for each leader the local adepts represent an indispensable ritual following, which is jealously guarded against the encroachment of other leaders within the same or similar cults. The general pattern however allows for variation in two directions. Given the decisive role of individual adepts in the diffusion of the cult, and the lack of a supra-local organisation, there is much room for personal innovation. Many leaders have added a personal touch to the paraphernalia and the song texts of the cults they were transmitting. In a few cases, visionary individuals reach further than that and, in the course of a personal crisis, devise what amounts to a prophetic cult of affliction. Such an innovation retains the material of the general pattern, but adds to this elements from the personal vision of the prophet: a more elaborate conception of the illness principle, particular medicines, food taboos, and myths linking all these. These prophetic versions are highly syncretistic, and combine the general affliction-cult pattern with elements springing from Christianity, possibly other world religions, and local ancestral cults. Two examples from the area are Shimbinga (founder of the *Bituma* cult), and a prophet who later in life was known as Moya, after the *Moya* illness principle featuring in his cult (*cf.* Ikacana 1952). Both started in the 1930s.

In both cults a second direction for variation can be noted: a supra-local Organisation. Once the prophetic vision has reshaped the general pattern into a very specific and elaborate cult, there is a basis for orthodoxy. The prophet and the story of his vision can act as a charter and focus for the adepts, thus lending the cult much more identity than the non-prophetic cults of affliction can derive from their abstract, impersonal illness principle.

Leaders of the common cults of affliction are mainly regarded as skilful doctors who get good payment for their indispensable services; the awe-inspiring nature of the illness principle they deal with, does not emanate onto them. In the

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prophetic cults the situation is different. In the eyes of those adepts who got cured by the prophet or his representatives, the prophet acquires a personal charisma. This seems to form the main basis on which a supralocal organisation is developed. Adepts in distant places are appointed representatives for the cult; they keep in touch and have to forward part of the income they derive from the cult sessions they stage. Both Shimbinga and Moya set up such a supra-local organisation, with a small number of representatives dispersed over an area of thousands of km². Nowadays the *Bituma* and *Moya* organisations still exist but the former has declined enormously. An early schism within the cult between the rival factions of the founder and his cousin Kapata, has estranged most original representatives from the present leader. These dissidents no longer forward money or visit the annual convention. Neither have they retained any organisation among themselves. Shimbinga's original vision means little to them now, and instead they have allowed *Bituma* to routinise into just another, non-prophetic cult of affliction whose local leaders they are. It is thus that *Bituma* is viewed nowadays by most adepts and other Nkoya.[24]

2.3.5. Historical and political aspects

The present-day religious situation of the Nkoya can be interpreted in the light of the area's history over the last centuries. From the middle of the 2nd mill, CE onwards, the penetration of militant immigrants and new political concepts mainly from the North, and the related expansion of regional and long-distance trade, caused a marked increase of political scale. Chiefs began to control larger areas and assumed a more exalted status. A royal cult complex focusing on chiefly paraphernalia, medicines and graves appears to have greatly expanded during that period – if it had already existed before. Among neighbouring groups (Ila, Kaonde, Kwanga) similar processes took place. And particularly among the Lozi, where the development was stimulated by the eminently favourable ecology of the Zambezi flood plain and by the Kololo invasion from Southern Africa. Much of the Nkoya area came under Lozi political influence during the 19th c.CE: tribute was paid, chief's drums (symbols of autonomy) and captives

[24] In this chapter, the emphasis is on rural communities, I have decided not to discuss rural-urban ties. Both village shrine cults and non-ancestral cults of affliction play however an important role in shaping rural-urban relations (van Binsbergen 1972a, 1972b; 1976a, 1997e / 2015: ch. 1, and in press (a)), at least among the present-day Nkoya. Affliction diagnosed as ancestral makes urban migrants refer to their home villages 'or treatment, thus binding them effectively to the economic and political process of the village in which they are forced to keep a stake, also because of the paucity of` urban retirement opportunities for low-class migrants. Non-ancestral affliction binds urban migrants to cult leaders both in town and in their home area (many rural cult leaders occasionally visit town to stage sessions; a few leaders live in town permanently); in addition, the urban cult sessions provide a major rallying point for urban migrants from the Nkoya area and from Western Zambia in general, and therefore constitute a major force in shaping these urban migrants into an urban ethnic group with frequent interaction and common identity among the members who live dispersed over a large city, These urban aspects hardly received attention in my Ḫumiri studies.

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were taken to the Lozi capital, Lozi representatives were stationed at the Nkoya chiefs' courts. The Lozi royal cult was boosted along with Lozi political expansion, and became the central focus of identity and chiefly legitimacy in the Lozi kingdom (Mainga 1972). But Nkoya chieftainship and chiefly ritual declined, due to the expansion of the Lozi and to a lesser extent, through Kaonde, Yeke, Ndebele, and Ila raids. This decline seems the main reason why today the Nkoya chiefly cult (at valley level) is a very modest affair, as compared to that of the Lozi. To this should be added that Nkoya from outside the Zambezi flood plain never participated in the Lozi royal cult - except as court musicians or occasional human sacrifices; coming under Lozi political influence did not imply adopting the Lozi royal cult. Viewed as a neighbourhood ecological cult, the Nkoya valley cult is also much less elaborate than that of neighbouring peoples (Ila, Tonga) who, lacking a pre-colonial state organization, have made neighbourhood shrines the key element in their supra-local order (Smith & Dale 1921; Jaspan 1953; Colson 1962, 1969; Fielder 1970).

In the second half of the 19th century CE the expansion of the slave trade and raiding threw together in the fly-infested, less hospitable parts of Western Zambia, concentrations of refugees from a variety of ethnic and linguistic groups (Gielgud 1900-1902). They boosted the villages of petty local chiefs, and gave these a considerable heterogeneity. Present-day Nkoya are largely descendants of these people. The present heterogeneity of the Nkoya village has therefore a precedent at least in those days. And so has, probably, the crucial function of the village shrine as a device to create unity, conformity, identity and authority, amongst a heterogeneous set of co-residents. This however suggests that, prior to the political expansion and general upheaval during the 19th century, village shrines may have played a lesser role. It is not unlikely that, before the 19th century, more elaborate supra-local shrine cults existed among the Nkoya of which however the iconoclastic witchcraft-eradication movements of the early 20th c. CE, and Christianity coming up in the same period, obliterated all traces; of these the modern valley shrines may then form a dim reminiscence, drawn into the realm of the locally more recent, chiefly cult (van Binsbergen 1979a, 1981b).

It is equally difficult to fix the time dimension of the general pattern of the non-ancestral cults of affliction, although it is fairly certain that all the specific cults now occurring among the Nkoya are relatively recent innovations. The great similarity in details between these cults and the village shrine ritual suggests that these cults are partly modern mutants of older village shrine cults; this point was first made by C.M.N. White (1949). On the other hand, these cults of affliction contain elements (mediumship) reminiscent of cults of forest beings and of deceased chiefs such as have been recorded in other parts of Central and Southern Africa (van Binsbergen 1972b, 1972b, 1981b), and for which a very recent origin is hardly likely. Elsewhere (1981b: ch. 4) I have argued in detail why, amongst the religious variation in Western Zambia over the last few centuries, the cults of affliction in their present form represent a truly modern innovation: geared to the type of society which emerged in Central Africa as a result of thorough changes in the 19th and early 20th century. I shall not repeat the argument here. I do however wish to draw attention to the fact that, with their extremely weak organisational structure, these cults re-

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present a form of religion which cannot accumulate and exert social power – beyond the face-to-face relationship between leader and local adepts, and then mainly during the ritual. It is almost as if these cults were devised so as to preserve the peace of mind of colonial administrators who ever since the early colonial uprisings in Southern Rhodesia (Ranger 1966, 1968) and Tanganyika (Gwassa 1972) had been afraid of the anti-colonial political potential of African religion. For this reason the administration had very strongly acted against the prophet Mupumani, African Watchtower, and witchcraft eradication movements (*Mcape*) in the period 1910 – 1940, most of which had only rather weak supralocal organisations too.[25] Significantly, when Shimbinga founded the *Bituma* cult, the Nkoya area had just seen three crises rapidly succeeding each other within a few years: the ceasing of migrant labour recruitment due to the international Depression famine due to locust plagues; and massive spread of the Watchtower movement, which because of the anti-government and anti-Lozi statements of the preachers had been forcibly repressed by both the administration and the Lozi paramount chief. Had the religious idiom of Shimbinga's movement pursued any of these lines, his cult would not only have been better documented in the archives than it is now – it would also have been prohibited to develop and maintain even the rudimentary organisation Shimbinga worked out for it. This does not explain, of course, the positive reasons why the people of Western Zambia adopted *Bituma* and similar cults so eagerly; but it does suggest that the colonial situation imposed, as conditions for survival, certain types of content and organisation upon religious movements. Cults of affliction could flourish only if they did not present a political threat. They did lack an organisation that might be mobilised for African political action; and even if they had, like the prophetic cults, the rudiments of such an organisation, the ideological dimension of the cults wholly concentrated on suffering and treatment – an extreme individual-centredness which sharply contrasts with the other cults from Mupumani to Watchtower, and in which an eschatological blueprint of a radically transformed *social* order formed the main source of mass inspiration. If the cults of affliction were to function in a rural society where a central government and its recognised African associates (chiefs) held a rigid monopoly of power, they could hardly have developed an effective supra-local organisation. On the other hand, what extra-religious functions could a more effective organisation have had? I cannot see any conditions in Nkoya colonial societal which could call for such supra-local yet non-political organisation. Conflict regulation above the village level was already included in the central power monopoly, and such relationships (mainly with kin) as existed above the valley level were sufficiently reinforced by occasional visits, name-inheriting ritual, and frequent individual removals over wide distances. I realise however that in social science, the explanation of the absence of a feature on the basis of the absence of a need for it, is hardly less dangerous than explaining the presence of a feature on the basis of its being needed!

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[25] *Cf.* Rotberg 1967; Hooker 1965; Shepperson & Price 1958; Ranger 1972; van Binsbergen 1981b.

2.4. Comparison of Ḫumiri and Nkoya data

The preceding sections of this chapter provide sufficient data for a detailed and systematic comparison between Ḫumiri and Nkoya society and cults (see section 2.6). Data of this kind must be treated with reservation. I have scored both societies on over 40 variables, most of which dichotomous. These variables were suggested to me by my analysis of each society, by preliminary intuitive comparison between both societies, and by my general theoretical views on society and ritual. Other researchers in this field might have selected a rather different set of variables as crucial and then differences and similarities between Nkoya and Ḫumiri society and ritual might have shown themselves in an entirely different way. Although it is in most respects an advantage that I myself collected the data in both societies and did the scoring, an element of personal bias may have crept in.

The comparison yielded the following results. In terms of macro structure and history, Ḫumiri and Nkoya society have some striking points in common. Each is similar in language, culture and religion to neighbouring groups over a large area. Each has existed for some time in the periphery of distant states, until European colonisation imposed upon them a centralised polity, which after the nation-state's attainment of political independence underwent few changes at the local level. Local social structure is similar in that valleys constitute the main effective local communities; in that they have a predominantly horticultural subsistence economy; are not stratified; are dominated by multiplex, inclusive relationships; and have a bilateral underlying kinship structure. They differ however greatly in the density of population, the social organisational density within the community, the stability of community membership, local leadership pattern, the marriage pattern (endogamy, stability and seriality of marriage, effective incorporation of women in their husband's group), and the economic opportunities of women.

As regards communal shrine cults[26] the two societies seem to display a com-

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[26] I had some doubt about the concept of *regional cult*, as it was defined by Werbner and Garbett (1975) for the purpose of the 1976 Manchester ASA conference where this chapter was first presented. Subsequently, Garbett had to abandon this publication project, and Werbner's elaboration of the final book (1979) took some distance from their initial position as conveners. Their definition ran along the following lines: *a regional cult is a cult which*

(a) *reaches beyond a political or ethnic community;*
(b) *whose membership tends to be recruited across major socio-economic divisions;*
(c) *whose staff's capacity to pronounce on matters of moral and ritual concern is effective both within and between communities.*

> 'A regional cult is thus intermediate in span and falls between the extremes of an exclusive, parochial cult whose congregation is drawn from a single ethnic, political or narrowly localised community, and a universal church which, in principle, recruits members irrespective of their more specific communal affiliations.'

Communal shrine cults among the Ḫumiris (saintly shrines) and the Nkoya (village and valley shrines) have a catchment area with a radius of about 10 km: the valley and adjacent valleys. This amounts to a

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mon basic pattern. Shrines are attached to residential groups, for which they are a focus of identity and collective ritual; by virtue of this, communal shrines have a major rallying function for community members and outside contacts; shrines at the maximum community level have keepers; if affliction is attributed to beings associated with communal shrines, this symbolically reflects the in-group social process. But upon that basic pattern, Ḫumiri and Nkoya cults show marked differences, in the following respects:

- permanency of shrines;
- their being linked to other communal shrines through myths and ritual;
- the extent to which the cult at the maximum community level involves all community members in collective ritual;
- the cult's providing a device (through compulsory, supernaturally sanctioned pilgrimages) for the maintaining of outside contacts;
- the preponderance of women in cults;
- and the extent to which supernatural beings associated with the shrine are believed to take a moral interest in the interaction between community members.

In addition there are minor aspects in which the Ḫumiri shrine cult now resembles the Nkoya village shrine cult, then the Nkoya valley shrine cult. These aspects include: the material form of the shrine; is the shrine the burial place of an important person; are shrines named after, and associated with, individual supernatural beings; and has the cult strong ecological connotations?

As regards the non-communal cults which in both societies occur along with the communal shrine cult, here again a striking similarity between both societies suggests an underlying basic pattern, including: involvement of a sizeable minority of the male population; membership through initiation; ecstasy; cult leaders are associated with shrines; cult sessions have a moderate rallying function, which does not encompass the total maximum community; a strong political aspect is absent; the cults' extension beyond the ethnic and linguistic confines of the societies under study. To this may be added the historical point that current local versions of the cults all appear to be of relatively recent origin – no earlier than the 19th c. CE. Variations of this basic pattern, making for differences within either society as well as between societies, include such aspects

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catchment area of over 200 km^2. Is this enough to qualify as 'intermediate in span'? I should think so. Yet in neither case is there (*cf.* criterion (a)) any reaching beyond the political and ethnic community, which in both cases is much wider (valleys being ecological and interactional, but not political or ethnic communities). In both non-stratified societies the major socio-economic divisions are along gender and generation lines; participation in the communal shrine cult includes all community members, so I suppose criterion (b) is met;. I cannot see how criterion (c) is met in either case. The suggestion is that criteria (a), (b) and (c) represent different typological dimensions which only rarely coincide. A similar argument can be presented for the ecstatic cults in both societies, although there Werbner and Garbett's definition fits somewhat better. I therefore opt for the simpler concepts of communal cult (involving shrines associated with a residential group characterised by internal interaction and common identity), and non-communal cults (all others).

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as: the cults' concentration on individual affliction; the ritual's requiring more than one officiant, in a role structure of leader and adepts; the extent to which cult membership is exclusive; the extent to which the cult's ritual concentrates on recruitment as the major treatment of affliction; and the extent to which the non-communal cult is linked to the communal shrine cult in the same society. Only three major differences stand out between Ḫumiri and Nkoya non-communal cults: the percentage of the female population involved; the cult leaders' making, or not making, public moral pronouncements concerning the sponsoring community; and the occurrence of major cash transactions between cult leader and sponsors.

2.5. Conclusion: Towards a theory of shrines and cults in their social context

My comparison of Ḫumiri and Nkoya cults in their social context brings out a number of theoretical and historical questions. How general and basic are the common patterns I tentatively formulated for both the communal and the non-communal cults? To answer this question, we shall have to refer to additional comparative data from many other societies. Comprehensive comparative analysis may be somewhat facilitated by my series of variables (appendix 1), which forms a heuristic device to ask apparently relevant questions about societies where cults of this type occur. But, no doubt, some variables could be omitted and others will have to be added.

From a wider comparison, I expect two outcomes.

In the first place, in addition to the basic cult patterns now formulated, other irreducible varieties may be brought to light, peculiar to types of societies greatly different from Ḫumiri and Nkoya society – which despite their being 6,000 km apart have much in common. Secondly, the two basic patterns formulated now may turn out to be far from basic, but instead to include some secondary features which these two societies just happen to have in common, and to lack other essential features present in both societies but overlooked in my analysis. Thus the political aloofness of both Ḫumiri and Nkoya non-communal shrine cults may well turn out to be a secondary feature: for some other regional cults (*cf.* Werbner 1977; Ranger 1985a; Schoffeleers 1979; Farnell 1907) have great political significance, even though otherwise they are similar to Ḫumiri and Nkoya cults and have in part operated within a colonial and post-colonial framework similar to that affecting Ḫumiri and Nkoya.

The next question is then: how can we make sense, social-scientifically, of the combination of features in the two basic patterns now formulated? With the uncertain status of these patterns, I think we should not try to propound a speculative theory at this stage. We should wait for the outcome of further

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comparison. But it is not just a matter of more data to link the various features in the basic patterns, we need nothing less than a general theory linking: social structure; the on-going social, economic and political process; material religious objects (shrines); religious symbolism; ritual; and altered states of consciousness. In short, an integrated theory of shrines and cults in society. Prolegomena for such a theory are available throughout the anthropology of religion, from Durkheim (whose ideas on the relation between group and symbol are clearly relevant here) to modern work, including my own. But I shrink from pursuing this line of argument at the end of an already too long chapter.

Once we shall have succeeded in identifying one, or very few, universal basic patterns of communal and non-communal cults, the perennial question of cross-cultural comparison will have to be faced: are similarities due to a similar functional set-up in synchronic conditions, or to historical diffusion which at best reflects functional similarities at the time of transmission? In other words, is there a type of society which will, sui generis, produce the basic cult patterns as encountered among the Ḫumiri and the Nkoya; or is the distribution of this basic pattern due to diffusion? A combination of answers can be envisaged. Cults are not the only aspects of societies to have a history; and by attempting a time series of synchronic functional analysis interesting hypotheses can be generated – and perhaps verified.[27] On the other hand, data now available on spirit mediumship in Africa and its apparent spread throughout the continent in the last few centuries (Beattie & Middleton 1969; Carter 1972; *cf.* p. 400, below) suggest that at least in the ecstatic variety of non-communal cults diffusion is important; not, I think, out of any impetus of its own, but largely because such diffusion is sustained by fundamental processes of change which constitute, outside religion, major related themes in the continent's modern history: expansion of long-distance contacts and trade; state formation; and colonisation. Strictly speaking, any *ad hoc* generalisations suggested by the analysis of one or two societies, should be carefully considered in the light of a larger comparative sample before they can be accepted as valid even for the case study for which they were advanced.[28] But while waiting for a theory and for enlargement of our comparative mini-sample, I am yet inclined to attach some explanatory value to the social-structural similarities concomitant with the similarities in basic cult patterns between Nkoya and Ḫumiris. Non-communal cults might not have crossed (either way) the boundaries of Ḫumiri respectively Nkoya society, if these local societies had not been embedded into a general linguistic, cultural and social-structural complex of considerable homogeneity,

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[27] I have done something like this for communal shrine cults and political change in Central Africa (van Binsbergen 1979a, 1981b).

[28] This is the extreme comparativist position, based on the perhaps controversial methodological view that, as explanation implies generalisation, the power of an explanation depends on the extent to which it can be generalised.

comprising similar and historically-related societies over a very large area.[29] Moreover, the difficulty these non-communal cults have in both societies to develop or maintain a supra-local organisation with major political functions, seems definitely related to two social-structural factors: the tendency to localisation (springing, I am inclined to say, from the limited size, the sharp delimitation, and relative isolation of the maximum effective community, the valley), and the confrontation with a centralised political system. Likewise there is an intuitive link between the communal shrine cults providing. in both societies, a focus of identity, collective ritual and a rallying point both within and between communities – and such social-structural aspects as subsistence economy, absence of stratification, predominance of multiplex, inclusive relationships, and bilateral kinship. Without too much effort, these hints could lead to fertile hypotheses which, once subjected to wider cross-cultural comparison and built into a coherent theory, may enhance our understanding of communal and non-communal cults in any human society. Those aspects in which Nkoya-Ḫumiri differences in communal, and non-communal cults occur in conjunction with social-structural differences, offer equally fascinating fields for exploration. The rather different parts women play in the cults in both societies appear to be closely related to the marked differences in the marriage pattern, women's membership of their groups of orientation and procreation, and their access to economic opportunities independent from men. Similarly, if shrines are so intimately linked to residential groups, the extent to which these groups' membership (both male and female) is stable will directly bear on the form and function of communal shrine cults, on the beliefs concerning communal shrines, and even on the material form of the shrines, their permanency *etc*. In the same vein, if shrine-owning residential communities are hardly integrated in specific ways with other such communities at a higher level, we hardly expect the associated shrines to be linked to each other through myths and ritual; if there is high social-organisational density, then we expect the reverse to be true. If the local leadership is articulate and operative, communal shrine cults are more likely to support such leadership than when local leadership is diffuse and eclipsed by the central power of the national state. Whilst in both societies communal and non-communal cults symbolically reflect on the in-group social process, a penetrating analysis of social control mechanisms, symbolism and gender roles is required before the differential distribution of moral aspects over communal respectively non-communal cults can be understood. Finally, further analysis may also provide insights into the interrelation between the two major types of cults encountered in both Ḫumiri and Nkoya society. Is their co-occurrence mere coincidence? Are there societies where only the communal

[29] In the Ḫumiri highlands, the local inhabitants' nominal adherence to the universal religion of Islam, in conjunction with the local segmentary autonomy, provided (together with clientship / herdsmanship) the main entrance for individual strangers to settle: they were welcome as specialists in the universal religion, could develop local esteem, security and ability to act as conflict-resolving outsiders on that basis, to the extent of being turned into local saints after their deaths.

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shrine cult, or the non-communal cult, exists? And, if both types co-exist in a given society, are moral aspects, and personnel of either gender, allocated to either cult type by a blind game of functional and historical free variation? Or is there (as I suspect) a more intimate and systematic relation between communal and non-communal cults?

This chapter does little more than proposing a research programme, and hinting at some of its possible results. It leaves the reader with a limited and inconclusive argument, and two too sketchy case studies. However, the fascination, if not the progress, of social science lies not in the occasionally stumbling upon a correct answer, but in the sustained pursuit of meaningful questions. Such value as my argument may have, I hope lies in this direction.

2.6. Appendix to Chapter 2: Systematic comparison of Ḫumiri and Nkoya society, shrines and cults

K [= Kh] = Ḫumiri; N = Nkoya; + = yes; – = no; n.a. = not applicable; ( ) = difficult to classify; estimate
* = major difference between Ḫumiris and Nkoya

variable	Ḫumiriyya	Nkoya	remarks
1. MACRO STRUCTURE AND HISTORY			
1.1. Local society belongs to a general linguistic, cultural and social-structural complex extending over whole subcontinent	+	(+)	K: Maghreb; N: Central Bantu, but more distinct vis-à-is neighbours , than K
1.2. Participants consider their religion a local variant of a general religion shared with neighbours	+	(+)	K: Islam; N: recognise identity in neighbours' veneration of High God, ancestors *etc* .
1.3. prior to European colonisation, local pol. system in periphery of sphere of influence of remote state	+	+	K: Bey of Tunis *etc*.; N: Lozi
1.4. Year of European colonisation	1881	1900	
1.5. The rigid monopoly of colonial central power was inherited by the independent state without major changes	+	+	
2. LOCAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE			
***2.1, Density of population (inhab./km^2)**	60	7	
2.2, Effective local communities (valleys) are imposed by ecological/ geomorphologic features	+	+	

***2.3. High social-organisational density of the community**	+	-		K: highly segmented on many well-defined levels; N: villages only
***2.4. Local communities have a stable membership and are highly endogamous**	+	-		
***2.5. Marriage tends to be stable and (for women) once in life**	+	-		
***2 .6. Women become effectively incorporated in the group into which they marry**	+	-		
2.7. Whatever the explicit participants ' ideology, the underlying kinship structure is bilateral	+	+		K: *cf.* van Binsbergen 1970a, 1970b; N: 1992b, 2014b, in press (a)
2.8. Subsistence economy, predominantly horticulture	+	+		
2.9. No stratification	(+)	(+)		K: rural classes beginning to emerge; N: headmanship, being a slave was an individual, achieved status, did not precipitate ascribed and endogamous classes
2.10. Multiplex, inclusive relationships dominant	+	+		
***2.11. Outside central power, local leadership is diffuse and shifting**	+	-		
***2.12. Women lack economic opportunities of their own**	+	-		
3. COMMUNITY SHRINES	K	N village	N valley	in K/N comparison, N village shrines prevail over valley shrines since they feature much more in ritual
(*)3.1. Material form of shrines	see remarks	see remarks		K: trees, springs, huts, stone buildings; N(village): wooden poles, shrubs; N(valley): poles
(*)3.2. Shrines are places where an important man or woman was buried	(+)	-	+	K: also other associations than burial occur
***3.3. Regular cemeteries are located around shrines**	+	-	-	
3.4. There are keepers for shrine at maximum community level	+	n.a.	+	
3.5. Shrine cult has ecological connotations mainly	(-)	(-)	+	
3, 6. No residential groups without a shrine	+	+	+	
***3.7. Cult at maximum community level involves all members in collective ritual**	+	n.a.	-	
***3.8. Shrines are permanent structures**	+	-	-	

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	K lodge	K outside lodge	N non-prophetic	N prophetic	
***3,9. Shrines are linked to other similar shrines through myths and ritual**	+		-	-	
***3.10. Shrines are named and associated with individual, supernatural beings**	+		-	+	
3.11. Shrines are a focus of identity and collective ritual	+		+	-	
3.12. Shrine cults have a major rallying function for community members and outside contacts	+		+	-	
***3.13. Compulsory pilgrimages form a device to maintain interlocal contacts**	+		-	-	
***3.14.association with shrines legitimates local leadership**	(-)		+	(+)	K: used to be so when the lodge / shrine complex was still in power, while nowadays govt.-appointed chiefs strife in vain to derive legitimacy from association with shrine; N(val): officiants must be community leaders, but effect is reinforcement not legitimation
***3.15. The beings associated with the shrines are believed to take a moral interest in the interaction between community members**	–		+	(+)	N(val.) :scarcely documented in Nkoya data but ties in with general Central African equation of sin / sorcery / murder, drought, and infertility
3.16. Affliction attributed to beings associated with community shrine reflects in-group social process	+		+	n.a .	
***3.17. Collective shrine ritual is mainly a women's affair**	+		-	-	
***3.18. Cult staff, as such, pronounce on matters of moral concern**	(-)		(+)	-	K: did so in past, before eclipsed by govt. chiefs (1930s); N(vil): leadership in cult coincides with village leadership, no special cult staff, but moral issues abound
4. ECSTATIC CULTS	K lodge	K outside lodge	N non-prophetic	N prophetic	
4.1. Percentage of male population invilved	20%		20%		N: extensive quantitative data collected
***4.2. Percentage of female population involved**	5%		80%		
4.3. Membership through initiation	+		+		
4.4. ritual involves ecstasy	+		+		
4.5. Individual affliction is the cult's central theme	+	(-)	+	+	K (outside lodge): Veneration of local saints main theme
4.6. Leaders have cult shrines	+	(+)	+	+	K (lodge.): the lodge building itself; K (outside lodge): faqirs concentrating on a particular local saint have special relation with that saint's shrine

4.7. sessions usually involve sets of performers , in a role structure of leader and adept(s)	+	(-)	+	+	K (outside lodge): village faqirs often perform alone
4.8. Cult membership is exclusive	(+)	(+)	-	(+)	K (inside and outside lodge): brotherhhoods represented locally are tolerant of multiple membership, but each *faqir* sticks to one major Saint as his object of veneration; N (prophetic): prophetic cults in their first phase are exclusive, but *e.g. Bituma* is not anymore
4.9. Cult ritual is mainly devoted to recruitment (as a means to treat affliction)	+	(-)	+	+	K(outside lodge): only rarely so – veneration of local saints predominates
4.10. Cult sessions have a moderate rallying function of the local group, not encompassing the total community	(+)	+	+	+	K (lodge) only if lodge-attached faqirs perform outside the lodge
***4.11. Major cash transactions take place between cult leader and sponsors**	(-)	(-)	+	+	K(inside and outside lodge): gifts are only given for divination, not for treatment
*4.12. During the session the cult leader makes public moral pronouncements concerning the sponsoring community	+	+	(-)	(-)	N(prophetic, non-prophetic) : may allude to in–group strife
4.13. There is a regional cult centre	+	-	-	+	
4.14. There is an interlocal organization	(+)	-	-	(+)	K (lodge), Nkoya (prophetic): weak and declining
4.15. Strong political aspect	(-)	-	-	-	K(lodge): before colonisation major political functions, since collapsed
4.16. Prototypes of the cult have an ancient history locally, but specific cult forms date from about 1900 or even more recently	+	(+)	+	+	K(outside lodge): most songs feature local saints whose shrines locally date from the 19th century
1.17. Linked to communal shrine cult	(-)	+	-	-	K (lodge): closely linked in the past
4.18. Continuity with non-communal cults beyond the linguistic and ethnic confines of the local society under study	+	(+)	+	+	K (outside lodge): cult forms are identical outside the Ḫumiri highlands, but other local saints are substituted

Table 2.1. Systematic comparison of Ḫumiri and Nkoya shrines and society.